

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:29,000

This man claims he's in direct contact with the spirits of dead painters.

2

00:00:29,000 --> 00:00:35,000

But is it really possible to receive messages from beyond the grave?

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00:00:35,000 --> 00:00:41,000

In the sales room, can mediums conjure up the spirits of the dead?

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00:00:41,000 --> 00:00:47,000

Does this rare blue orchid hold the key to the question of life after death?

5

00:00:47,000 --> 00:00:52,000

Mysteries from the files of Arthur C. Clarke, scientist, writer and visionary.

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00:00:52,000 --> 00:00:56,000

The scientist who invented the communication satellite, the writer of 2010,

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00:00:56,000 --> 00:01:04,000

and now in retreat in Sri Lanka, the visionary who ponders the riddles of this and other worlds.

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00:01:04,000 --> 00:01:12,000

The ancient port of Galle on the southern tip of Sri Lanka contains many relics of its colonial past.

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00:01:12,000 --> 00:01:16,000

Fewer more evocative than this old Dutch church, the Grote Kerk.

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00:01:16,000 --> 00:01:25,000

Its monuments and tombstones are grim reminders that, for the early European settlers, life was fragile and short.

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00:01:25,000 --> 00:01:31,000

Few of their children survived to see their second one soon.

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00:01:31,000 --> 00:01:38,000

Grief at the death of loved ones is a universal emotion and therein is the seat of spiritualism.

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00:01:38,000 --> 00:01:43,000

But the spiritualists believe that even when the body dies, the soul lives on.

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00:01:43,000 --> 00:01:50,000

And more than that, they believe that if you can establish the right connection, you can communicate with the dead.

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00:01:50,000 --> 00:01:57,000

It's a seductive idea, but is it anything more than wishful thinking?

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00:02:21,000 --> 00:02:26,000

Bell Grave Square, London.

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00:02:26,000 --> 00:02:31,000

During the day, the embassies and consulates here buzz with diplomatic activity.

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00:02:31,000 --> 00:02:36,000

But it is by night that number 33 comes to life.

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00:02:36,000 --> 00:02:40,000

For this is the headquarters of the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain.

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00:02:40,000 --> 00:02:44,000

Every room is a light with the hopes of the faithful.

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00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:51,000

To draw portraits of dead people, psychic artist Coral Polch needs the right connection.

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00:02:51,000 --> 00:02:54,000

We're a little more than a telephone line.

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00:02:54,000 --> 00:02:59,000

Answer up because that strengthens the contact so much.

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00:02:59,000 --> 00:03:04,000

Many of our spirit friends have never done this sort of thing before.

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00:03:04,000 --> 00:03:07,000

They don't often get the chance to have their pictures drawn.

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00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:12,000

So I know sometimes you're nervous, but I'm sure sometimes they are nervous.

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00:03:12,000 --> 00:03:17,000

Now, my first problem always is to sort out the people I'm drawing.

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00:03:17,000 --> 00:03:23,000

Quite a young link here. I've got a boy killed in an accident, went over quite suddenly.

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00:03:23,000 --> 00:03:27,000

Oh, stay calm, lad. I've got one of these links that...

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00:03:27,000 --> 00:03:35,000

I don't know what happened to him, but it's a dreadful feeling that I've shot into the next world.

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00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:40,000

If they get too excited, I end up with a load of scribble if I'm not careful.

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00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:47,000

I'm being drawn. There's a lady there. You've got a blue...

33

00:03:47,000 --> 00:03:49,000

sort of blue colour on there.

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00:03:49,000 --> 00:03:52,000

Do you have a brother in the spirit world? No.

35

00:03:52,000 --> 00:03:55,000

No. I know someone who passed through there.

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00:03:55,000 --> 00:03:57,000

Into the spirit world. A young man.

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00:03:57,000 --> 00:03:59,000

Do you remember his hairstyle? Yes.

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00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:01,000

It was rather like that. Yes.

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00:04:01,000 --> 00:04:02,000

Oh, OK.

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00:04:02,000 --> 00:04:04,000

He calls it a bit like a buzzbee.

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00:04:04,000 --> 00:04:07,000

You know, it's sort of the hair that stood up rather.

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00:04:07,000 --> 00:04:09,000

You know what buzzes look like. Yes, I did.

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00:04:09,000 --> 00:04:13,000

Well, that's slightly exaggerated, but it's that sort of style.

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00:04:13,000 --> 00:04:16,000

I might get him right now, because I wasn't happy when I started.

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00:04:16,000 --> 00:04:19,000

The head condition was making me go all off balance,

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00:04:19,000 --> 00:04:22,000

and I couldn't see what I was drawing. That's better.

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00:04:22,000 --> 00:04:26,000

You all remember him sticking his hands in his pockets, won't you? I do, yes.

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00:04:26,000 --> 00:04:29,000

Yes, because he said if there's one thing you often told him about,

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00:04:29,000 --> 00:04:33,000

take your hands out of your pocket, you do look slummacky or slouchy, sort of thing.

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00:04:33,000 --> 00:04:38,000

And there's also his nose. He says, good size, isn't it?

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00:04:38,000 --> 00:04:41,000

Yes, it was. You used to tell me I had a big nose.

52

00:04:41,000 --> 00:04:44,000

Yes, it was. He said I'm glad she's not drawing my feet, though.

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00:04:44,000 --> 00:04:46,000

They're pretty big feet. They were big feet, yes.

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00:04:46,000 --> 00:04:51,000

And he says, you know, I didn't think being in the spirit world would be so much fun.

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00:04:51,000 --> 00:04:55,000

Obviously one thinks of a young man like that passing so subtly tragic,

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00:04:55,000 --> 00:04:58,000

but he said, oh, I don't mind at all. It's great fun over here.

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00:04:58,000 --> 00:05:00,000

I can do anything I like.

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00:05:00,000 --> 00:05:04,000

It's terribly strange.

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00:05:04,000 --> 00:05:09,000

That is my sister, because everything fits.

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00:05:09,000 --> 00:05:13,000

She was only 40-odd and she actually took her own life.

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00:05:13,000 --> 00:05:16,000

I mean, it's not perfect, but it's all there.

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00:05:16,000 --> 00:05:22,000

I just feel very shaken and very moved that she should want to contact me.

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00:05:22,000 --> 00:05:27,000

This is definitely a picture of my father, and this would be a picture of him

64

00:05:27,000 --> 00:05:30,000

in the last two or three weeks of his life, I know.

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00:05:31,000 --> 00:05:37,000

With their portraits packed away, the spiritualists move on to sample the other attractions,

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00:05:37,000 --> 00:05:40,000

like sand reading.

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00:05:40,000 --> 00:05:44,000

Here, handprints seem to allow the spirits to provide, through the medium,

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00:05:44,000 --> 00:05:48,000

amazing insights into the characters of the sitters.

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00:05:48,000 --> 00:05:57,000

Looking at this, I realise that the person concerned has over a period of years

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00:05:57,000 --> 00:06:01,000

passed through many upheavals.

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00:06:01,000 --> 00:06:12,000

Your son tells me that you've always been very domineering, obstinate and brave.

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00:06:12,000 --> 00:06:17,000

Even the fly you bring seems to reveal your secrets to the spirits.

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00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:21,000

If I just expand a little that this leaf is telling me this,

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00:06:21,000 --> 00:06:23,000

I see that you have a very fine sense of humour.

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00:06:23,000 --> 00:06:28,000

You can speak to somebody who would be a little bit uneasy and nervous

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00:06:28,000 --> 00:06:32,000

and get them laughing, get them speaking quite naturally.

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00:06:36,000 --> 00:06:41,000

And the pets at the psychic surgery have been brought from miles around

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00:06:41,000 --> 00:06:45,000

by owners who are convinced that the spirits can work miracles.

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00:06:45,000 --> 00:06:48,000

Yeah, because it's like patches, he was blind.

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00:06:48,000 --> 00:06:51,000

He's the best that he'd never see, actually.

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00:06:51,000 --> 00:06:54,000

And he went for contact healing twice.

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00:06:54,000 --> 00:06:59,000

And then recently, since absent healing, we've had confirmation that yes,

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00:06:59,000 --> 00:07:03,000

he's got tunnel vision and his vet thinks he's quite incredible

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00:07:03,000 --> 00:07:06,000

and it's quite a miracle.

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00:07:06,000 --> 00:07:12,000

The people who try to establish contact between the living and the dead are called mediums.

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00:07:12,000 --> 00:07:14,000

To master the techniques of mediumship,

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00:07:14,000 --> 00:07:18,000

apprentices need years of training and development classes.

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00:07:18,000 --> 00:07:22,000

We're going through these psychic centres, we're going to open up those centres

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00:07:22,000 --> 00:07:29,000

starting with the emotional, solar plexus, the spleen and the heart centres.

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00:07:29,000 --> 00:07:35,000

Feel that power coming up, now bringing it up to your throat

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00:07:35,000 --> 00:07:40,000

and now the clairvoyant eye between your eyebrows.

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00:07:40,000 --> 00:07:43,000

Once prepared, trainees are invited to try out their powers.

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00:07:43,000 --> 00:07:47,000

Your mother's telling me that you have three brothers?

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00:07:47,000 --> 00:07:48,000

No.

95

00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:49,000

OK.

96

00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:51,000

How did you get it?

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00:07:51,000 --> 00:07:53,000

Um...

98

00:07:53,000 --> 00:07:55,000

You didn't bring it up, did you?

99

00:07:55,000 --> 00:07:56,000

I didn't do that, no.

100

00:07:56,000 --> 00:08:00,000

You see, always accept, dear, that if something occurs, an error,

101

00:08:00,000 --> 00:08:04,000

then in some way you've not used your mechanism properly

102

00:08:04,000 --> 00:08:07,000

or you've interfered mentally or something.

103

00:08:07,000 --> 00:08:08,000

Right.

104

00:08:08,000 --> 00:08:10,000

Never let it pass. Go back.

105

00:08:14,000 --> 00:08:24,000

Spiritualism, now a worldwide movement, began in this house in Hidesville, New York State, in 1848.

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00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:31,000

Katie Fox and her two sisters, Leah and Margaretta, claimed they were in touch with the dead.

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00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:35,000

They said that the spirits communicated by making furniture fly about the room

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00:08:35,000 --> 00:08:38,000

and by wrapping in answer to questions.

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00:08:39,000 --> 00:08:42,000

Spiritualism became the rage on both sides of the Atlantic.

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00:08:42,000 --> 00:08:46,000

Mediums vied with one another in curious stunts.

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00:08:46,000 --> 00:08:53,000

In America, Marjorie Crandon claimed she could materialize a spirit hand for sitters to shake.

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00:08:53,000 --> 00:09:00,000

She also exuded ectoplasm, a mysterious substance said to come from beyond the grave.

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00:09:00,000 --> 00:09:07,000

In Europe in 1868, Daniel Hume astonished friends by appearing to fly from one third-floor window to another.

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00:09:07,000 --> 00:09:10,000

He held more than 1500 sales.

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00:09:10,000 --> 00:09:16,000

Some mediums like Florence Cook said they could conjure life-sized spirits from the dead.

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00:09:16,000 --> 00:09:20,000

A diaphanous form called Katie King was photographed at her sales.

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00:09:20,000 --> 00:09:24,000

Eminent physicist Sir William Crookes pronounced the phenomena genuine,

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00:09:24,000 --> 00:09:28,000

while another scientist Sir Oliver Lodge, along with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,

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00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:32,000

championed spiritualism in lectures, magazines and books.

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00:09:32,000 --> 00:09:41,000

Today, spiritualists from all over America go for their holidays to camp Chesterfield in Indiana.

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00:09:41,000 --> 00:09:47,000

This psychic holiday camp offers all manner of methods for communicating with the dead.

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00:09:47,000 --> 00:10:03,000

In the Museum and Art Gallery are a range of treasures said to come from beyond the grave,

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00:10:03,000 --> 00:10:07,000

including spirit paintings depicting life after death.

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00:10:07,000 --> 00:10:12,000

They claim these gems and arrowheads are gifts from the spirits.

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00:10:12,000 --> 00:10:16,000

There's everything here that a spiritualist holidaymaker could wish for.

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00:10:16,000 --> 00:10:18,000

Camp Leader Louise Irvine

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00:10:18,000 --> 00:10:25,000

Spiritualists expect to have family gatherings, whether they are in the physical body or out of the physical body.

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00:10:25,000 --> 00:10:30,000

They still come together together in this beautiful holiday atmosphere.

129

00:10:30,000 --> 00:10:35,000

And they consider this to be a family reunion, just the same as other people throughout the world.

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00:10:35,000 --> 00:10:39,000

Have a reunion in a park or at the lake somewhere.

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00:10:39,000 --> 00:10:43,000

We're all, all of the family gathers together from great distances.

132

00:10:43,000 --> 00:10:49,000

And so to them, they do this here, their family reunion in the body and out.

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00:10:49,000 --> 00:10:55,000

Many of them describe the tremendous burdens and weights that they feel as they have come here,

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00:10:55,000 --> 00:11:01,000

just simply being released and just leaving them like a vaporous cloud.

135

00:11:01,000 --> 00:11:09,000

They find that they are in a place like none other that they have ever been in before upon this earth.

136

00:11:09,000 --> 00:11:13,000

It is its hallowed ground, its holy ground.

137

00:11:15,000 --> 00:11:22,000

The camp offers a strange mixture, Christian guidance with red Indian spirit guides.

138

00:11:26,000 --> 00:11:30,000

It's exhilarating when visitors hear from their dead relatives.

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00:11:30,000 --> 00:11:38,000

One time during a storm, the vibrations were very, very high because of all the energy.

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00:11:38,000 --> 00:11:47,000

And the two worlds must have been very close together because my aunt, who had only been gone for about six months, came to me.

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00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:50,000

And I was so shocked that I couldn't talk to her.

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00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:55,000

And all I could say was, oh, and she repeated the word for me.

143

00:11:55,000 --> 00:11:58,000

And then she says, Jimmy, don't you realize who I am?

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00:11:58,000 --> 00:12:01,000

And then I says, no.

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00:12:01,000 --> 00:12:04,000

And she says, I'm your aunt, Myrtle.

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00:12:04,000 --> 00:12:13,000

And I talked to her a little bit and she told me how wonderful it was on the other side and how well she was getting along.

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00:12:13,000 --> 00:12:16,000

And it was fantastic.

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00:12:16,000 --> 00:12:20,000

And it was a very uplifting experience for me.

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00:12:22,000 --> 00:12:29,000

This Brazilian psychologist claims that when he goes into trance, he's in direct contact with the spirits of great painters of the past.

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00:12:29,000 --> 00:12:32,000

And he turns out old masters in a matter of minutes.

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00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:35,000

He says that Van Gogh works through his fingers.

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00:12:46,000 --> 00:12:55,000

Under the scrutiny of the art department of Leeds Polytechnic, Luis Gaspareto produces the unmistakable brushstrokes by slapping the paint on with his fingers.

153

00:13:02,000 --> 00:13:09,000

And when the mood of the music changes, so does the artist.

154

00:13:09,000 --> 00:13:16,000

And when the music changes, the artist is in the mood to be a musician.

155

00:13:16,000 --> 00:13:22,000

And when the music changes, the artist is in the mood to be a musician.

156

00:13:22,000 --> 00:13:27,000

And when the music changes, the artist is in the mood to be a musician.

157

00:13:27,000 --> 00:13:34,000

And when the mood of the music changes, so does the style of his paintings.

158

00:13:57,000 --> 00:14:02,000

And when the music changes, so does the style of his paintings.

159

00:14:27,000 --> 00:14:34,000

In this session, Gaspareto produced eight crayon drawings and five oil paintings in less than an hour.

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00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:40,000

And everyone carried the signature of a master.

161

00:14:48,000 --> 00:14:51,000

But do they convince the experts?

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00:14:51,000 --> 00:14:56,000

I thought it was incredible. Absolutely wonderful.

163

00:14:56,000 --> 00:15:03,000

There's a very superficial resemblance in some of the work to the styles of some of the artists.

164

00:15:03,000 --> 00:15:14,000

But in the end, personally, I have to judge the whole business on how good drawing and painting quality is in the end, and it's very poor.

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00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:23,000

If those artists had drawn and painted in that fashion, there's no way their work would be hanging in the galleries of the world.

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00:15:27,000 --> 00:15:34,000

Retired teacher Stella Horrocks also claims to be in creative communication with the dead.

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00:15:34,000 --> 00:15:39,000

In her case, they seem to come through by automatic writing.

168

00:15:39,000 --> 00:15:46,000

I'm in touch with over 200 spirits at the present time, but some come and go.

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00:15:46,000 --> 00:15:52,000

You see, when you get dead over there, you don't just stay dead forever and ever.

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00:15:52,000 --> 00:15:55,000

Some of them are born pretty quickly again.

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00:15:55,000 --> 00:15:59,000

My uncles come through this week and they're burying him today.

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00:15:59,000 --> 00:16:03,000

And my aunt Janet came through on the train coming home from her funeral last week.

173

00:16:03,000 --> 00:16:09,000

But it isn't only her relations. Among her contacts, she includes a galaxy of famous people.

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00:16:09,000 --> 00:16:14,000

They seem to be able to write much faster through Stella than they did when they were alive.

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00:16:14,000 --> 00:16:24,000

From her pen have come letters, diaries and books, each in different handwriting, from Virginia Woolf, John F. Kennedy and Jane Austen.

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00:16:24,000 --> 00:16:30,000

They go to terrific speed. When the Austen one came through, I got through, I counted up, I couldn't believe it.

177

00:16:30,000 --> 00:16:35,000

2000 words an hour. David didn't even come through this year.

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00:16:35,000 --> 00:16:41,000

Noel Coward is a regular visitor. And my authors are Charles Dickensard.

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00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:45,000

Some set him on. He's written a whole book called The War Web.

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00:16:45,000 --> 00:16:50,000

He was very interested in why he did a bit of espionage work, I think, and it's four war stories.

181

00:16:50,000 --> 00:16:56,000

And Noel digs into the paper with his pen. They're all different touches.

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00:16:56,000 --> 00:17:01,000

Another one who's coming through the next novel is Thomas Hardy.

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00:17:01,000 --> 00:17:09,000

But in spite of all Stella's efforts, there have so far been no best sellers amongst these volumes dictated by the dead.

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00:17:10,000 --> 00:17:17,000

Well, there's certainly a strange talent operating here.

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00:17:17,000 --> 00:17:24,000

But these second hand productions are mere pale shadows of the original works of art.

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00:17:24,000 --> 00:17:29,000

They almost suggest that even if we do survive death, our skills don't.

187

00:17:29,000 --> 00:17:33,000

As a writer, I'm not prepared to accept those terms.

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00:17:33,000 --> 00:17:42,000

What I find most depressing about the claims of the spiritualists is that so often they turn out to be deceptive.

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00:17:42,000 --> 00:17:48,000

Spiritualism was tainted with fraud from the start. Margarita Fox, one of the founding sisters,

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00:17:48,000 --> 00:17:53,000

confessed in 1888 that she'd faked the spirit raps by clicking her toes.

191

00:17:53,000 --> 00:18:01,000

There were scandalous court cases. Henry Cavendish sued three charlatans for the return of a quarter of a million pounds.

192

00:18:01,000 --> 00:18:04,000

Many mediums were caught using conjuring apparatus.

193

00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:13,000

In this chair, the unscrupulous Mr. Eldred hid all the props for a spectacular spirit show until he was exposed in 1903.

194

00:18:13,000 --> 00:18:19,000

The great escape artist Harry Houdini tirelessly campaigned against the charlatans of the spiritualist world.

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00:18:19,000 --> 00:18:26,000

He used his experience as a magician to expose their tricks.

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00:18:26,000 --> 00:18:31,000

In 1944, Scottish medium Helen Duncan was jailed for fraud.

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00:18:31,000 --> 00:18:37,000

Sceptics said her spirits were made of cardboard, coat hangers and old vests.

198

00:18:37,000 --> 00:18:40,000

Even Camp Chesterfield suffered from scandals.

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00:18:40,000 --> 00:18:44,000

In 1960, the psychic observer came out in mourning.

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00:18:44,000 --> 00:18:46,000

Fraud had been uncovered at the camp.

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00:18:46,000 --> 00:18:54,000

Editor Tom O'Neill had believed that an infrared camera would provide proof that spirit materialization was genuine.

202

00:18:54,000 --> 00:18:56,000

He was welcomed by the camp authorities.

203

00:18:56,000 --> 00:19:03,000

But to everyone's horror, the film showed all too clearly that the spirits were far from dead.

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00:19:03,000 --> 00:19:16,000

The mysterious forms were actually well-known camp staffs waved in shifon.

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00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:24,000

In nearby Indianapolis, former Camp Chesterfield medium Lamar Keen demonstrates the secrets of the sales room.

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00:19:24,000 --> 00:19:27,000

Good evening friends of Earth.

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00:19:27,000 --> 00:19:29,000

This is Dr. Charles Bailey.

208

00:19:29,000 --> 00:19:34,000

I am the instrument in charge of the seance.

209

00:19:34,000 --> 00:19:40,000

It is a pleasure for me to meet you here today and to speak to you.

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00:19:40,000 --> 00:19:47,000

I might reveal the magnificent truth of spiritualism as we know it.

211

00:19:47,000 --> 00:19:53,000

Let's have the lights on please.

212

00:19:53,000 --> 00:20:00,000

We're actually in a hotel room converted into a makeshift seance room.

213

00:20:00,000 --> 00:20:09,000

Think of how much more effective it would be in a real seance room with spiritual music, with prayer, with singing.

214

00:20:09,000 --> 00:20:12,000

And in a real atmosphere.

215

00:20:12,000 --> 00:20:20,000

In this book, Keen confessed he'd always been a fake and explained how he hoodwinked sitters in trumpet seances.

216

00:20:20,000 --> 00:20:25,000

Actually, in a real trumpet seance what you would see would be this trumpet floating about the room.

217

00:20:25,000 --> 00:20:28,000

The spirit voice built within.

218

00:20:28,000 --> 00:20:35,000

The trumpet moving, perhaps landing in your lap, perhaps resting in the palms of your hand.

219

00:20:35,000 --> 00:20:39,000

You would see the luminous bands here, here and here.

220

00:20:39,000 --> 00:20:46,000

You would feel the resonance of the trumpet from the voice apparently within.

221

00:20:46,000 --> 00:20:51,000

But actually what would be happening would be that I would be speaking through this trumpet

222

00:20:51,000 --> 00:20:57,000

and the voice would be vibrating and bouncing from the other trumpet, making it resonate or vibrate.

223

00:20:57,000 --> 00:21:03,000

He also revealed that there'd been a vast filing system kept in a secret vault under the cathedral.

224

00:21:03,000 --> 00:21:08,000

In it they'd stored information, filtered from visitors during seances.

225

00:21:08,000 --> 00:21:12,000

Later the sitters would be amazed at the medium's knowledge.

226

00:21:12,000 --> 00:21:16,000

With tricks like these, he'd done very well for himself.

227

00:21:16,000 --> 00:21:20,000

I made quite a lot of money. I didn't always have time to count it all.

228

00:21:20,000 --> 00:21:27,000

Sometimes when camp was over, I would leave with a suitcase full of money.

229

00:21:28,000 --> 00:21:34,000

As you'll have realised by now, I'm not very much impressed by the evidence.

230

00:21:34,000 --> 00:21:39,000

But here's a story, one of the very few that makes me wonder.

231

00:21:39,000 --> 00:21:43,000

During the war, Georgina Fieckes was living in this house.

232

00:21:43,000 --> 00:21:49,000

Part of the family had emigrated to South Africa, and her cousin, Owen Howison joined the army there.

233

00:21:49,000 --> 00:21:52,000

In 1944 he was killed in action.

234

00:21:53,000 --> 00:21:59,000

Soon afterwards, she claims, he appeared before her, rising from a ball of golden mist.

235

00:21:59,000 --> 00:22:05,000

He said his tongue had been hit, but he still felt very much alive.

236

00:22:05,000 --> 00:22:12,000

Would I please tell his mum and please give his love to Thor Helen?

237

00:22:13,000 --> 00:22:17,000

Georgina says she was dumbstruck, but she wanted evidence.

238

00:22:18,000 --> 00:22:24,000

And I tried to speak, although my lips were numb and frozen.

239

00:22:24,000 --> 00:22:30,000

I said, proof, give me proof. And he said, watch.

240

00:22:33,000 --> 00:22:44,000

And to my amazement, he opened the top of his shirt and took out a beautiful blue flower, a penetrating perfume.

241

00:22:45,000 --> 00:22:53,000

It was very beautiful, it wasn't just a daisy stuck on top of a stalk, it was long and bell-like, orchid-like.

242

00:22:53,000 --> 00:22:57,000

Wonderful scent permeated the entire room.

243

00:22:58,000 --> 00:23:06,000

And while I stared in amazement, he put it back in the shirt, took it out and put it back and took it out.

244

00:23:06,000 --> 00:23:10,000

This extraordinary behaviour.

245

00:23:11,000 --> 00:23:23,000

And then he said, quite lovely, tell mum, Table Mountain, and instantly shivered and shook and it all went.

246

00:23:24,000 --> 00:23:32,000

She wrote it once to Owen's mother. Back from her Aunt Beatrice in South Africa came this curious explanation.

247

00:23:32,000 --> 00:23:50,000

Owen had one day gone up Table Mountain, something she was quite unable to do, and had picked one protected blue flower and brought it home, hidden in his shirt.

248

00:23:52,000 --> 00:24:00,000

The flower was a rare blue orchid that grows on Table Mountain. It was a criminal offence to pick

one and Owen had risked prison to bring it back to show her.

249

00:24:00,000 --> 00:24:03,000

Naturally he was jumpy when he did so.

250

00:24:03,000 --> 00:24:15,000

While he was showing it to her, the doors slammed and he hastily hid it again, but it was a false alarm and he took the flower out and she was able to examine it.

251

00:24:17,000 --> 00:24:23,000

Georgina says she couldn't have known about the blue flower because her aunt had kept the story secret to protect Owen.

252

00:24:24,000 --> 00:24:29,000

His second appearance seemed to provide more evidence that Owen's spirit had survived his death.

253

00:24:30,000 --> 00:24:41,000

The next time Owen appeared, again and always in golden mist, he approached me bitterly for not having contacted Helen.

254

00:24:41,000 --> 00:24:54,000

I was very distressed about this because I had tried and his mother had been through all his correspondence. There was no letter signed Helen or even an abbreviation for Helen.

255

00:24:54,000 --> 00:25:06,000

But there had been a Helen in Owen's life. He'd written her romantic letters and poems. She contacted the family when she saw the story of the blue orchid in the newspapers. Otherwise they might never have known.

256

00:25:06,000 --> 00:25:11,000

So could Owen Howison really have returned from beyond the grave?

257

00:25:14,000 --> 00:25:27,000

There's no doubt that spiritualists get great comfort from their beliefs. And who would wish to rob them of that? But personally I remain a skeptic. Will we ever know the truth until we join these dead?