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

The gravestone of a daredevil whose outrageous claims confounded the nation.

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00:00:05,000 --> 00:00:08,000

By the next morning, every newspaper in the city has a story.

3

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

A statue that celebrates an extraordinary American first.

4

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

People were so excited about seeing an animal they had only heard about.

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00:00:17,000 --> 00:00:19,000

They lined up by the droves.

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00:00:19,000 --> 00:00:23,000

And a national park that witnessed a hero's tragic fall.

7

00:00:23,000 --> 00:00:25,000

A shadow of doubt was cast upon him.

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00:00:25,000 --> 00:00:29,000

And people wondered, maybe he hadn't crashed at all.

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

Sometimes the greatest secrets lie in plain sight.

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00:00:33,000 --> 00:00:37,000

These are monumental mysteries.

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00:00:44,000 --> 00:00:47,000

Among the wooded reservoirs of Westchester County,

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

just 50 miles north of Midtown Manhattan,

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00:00:50,000 --> 00:00:54,000

is the historic hamlet of Somers, New York.

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

Somers has beautiful picturesque walkways and trees,

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

and it's real country.

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

So it's a nice place to be.

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00:01:02,000 --> 00:01:07,000

And at a quaint crossroads in the heart of this bedroom community,

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00:01:07,000 --> 00:01:12,000

stands an extraordinary monument to this town's most unusual resident.

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00:01:12,000 --> 00:01:17,000

In the center of town is a 20-foot obelisk granite shaft.

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00:01:17,000 --> 00:01:24,000

And at the top sits a three-foot tall, four-foot long surprise.

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00:01:25,000 --> 00:01:29,000

It's an elephant.

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00:01:29,000 --> 00:01:32,000

But the diminutive size of this particular pachyderm

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00:01:32,000 --> 00:01:36,000

does not reflect the mammoth impact its real-life cousin

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00:01:36,000 --> 00:01:40,000

had on the town of Somers and the country.

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00:01:40,000 --> 00:01:45,000

So how did this enchanting elephant leave an indelible stamp

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00:01:45,000 --> 00:01:48,000

on American popular culture?

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00:01:52,000 --> 00:01:54,000

1805.

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00:01:54,000 --> 00:01:57,000

Westchester County cattleman, Hacialaya Bailey,

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00:01:57,000 --> 00:02:00,000

is relaxing in a bar after a hard day's work

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

when he drops in on an unusual conversation

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00:02:03,000 --> 00:02:06,000

between a pair of sea captains.

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00:02:06,000 --> 00:02:10,000

The over here is one sea captain describing a humongous beast

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00:02:10,000 --> 00:02:14,000

that has enormous strength.

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00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:20,000

The prospect of an exotic, all-powerful beast of burden intrigues the agrarian.

35

00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:23,000

Hacalaya is thinking, I have a farm.

36

00:02:23,000 --> 00:02:26,000

I could bring in this humongous animal.

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00:02:26,000 --> 00:02:29,000

It would save time. It would save money.

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00:02:29,000 --> 00:02:33,000

So Hacalaya approaches the sea captain and makes him an offer.

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00:02:33,000 --> 00:02:39,000

For the sum of \$1,000, he will buy the mysterious creature, Sight Unseen.

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00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:41,000

It's said that the sea captain agrees,

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00:02:41,000 --> 00:02:45,000

but tells the inquisitive farmer he will have to wait for his prize,

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00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:49,000

for it must come all the way from India.

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00:02:49,000 --> 00:02:53,000

And several months later, after a long voyage by sea,

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00:02:53,000 --> 00:02:57,000

Bailey takes possession of the mysterious beast.

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00:02:57,000 --> 00:03:00,000

Just as the captain had described,

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00:03:00,000 --> 00:03:05,000

it has huge legs and weighs several tons.

47

00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:09,000

It's an elephant.

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00:03:09,000 --> 00:03:14,000

In fact, it's one of the first ever to set foot on American soil.

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00:03:14,000 --> 00:03:18,000

When he sees the elephant, he is just in shock.

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00:03:18,000 --> 00:03:21,000

Hacalaya is so excited.

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00:03:21,000 --> 00:03:26,000

Hacalaya marches the bizarre-looking behemoth, which he names Old Bet,

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00:03:26,000 --> 00:03:29,000

back to his farm in Somers.

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00:03:29,000 --> 00:03:34,000

But along the way, the mammoth creature creates such a stir among locals who see her

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00:03:34,000 --> 00:03:37,000

that Hacalaya has another idea.

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00:03:37,000 --> 00:03:41,000

What was going to be this beast of burden to work on a farm?

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00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:44,000

His entrepreneurial skills kicked in,

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00:03:44,000 --> 00:03:48,000

and he thought, I can do something more with this animal.

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00:03:48,000 --> 00:03:52,000

At this time, few Americans had even heard of such a beast,

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

let alone seen one in the flesh.

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00:03:55,000 --> 00:03:59,000

So rather than put the packaderm to work on his farm,

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

Hacalaya decides he will put her on display

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

and charge a fee to those who want to see her.

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00:04:08,000 --> 00:04:13,000

Hacalaya prints flyers advertising the arrival of the beast.

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00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:17,000

And as the new business takes off,

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00:04:17,000 --> 00:04:21,000

the enterprising farmer acquires more and more exotic animals,

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00:04:21,000 --> 00:04:25,000

until he has a veritable traveling menagerie,

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00:04:25,000 --> 00:04:29,000

and a new form of entertainment is born.

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00:04:30,000 --> 00:04:34,000

So Hacialaya barely really began the American circus as we know it.

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00:04:34,000 --> 00:04:39,000

And for several years, the star of Hacialaya's sensational circus

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00:04:39,000 --> 00:04:41,000

is its trusty elephant, Old Bet.

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00:04:41,000 --> 00:04:45,000

People were so excited about seeing an animal they had only heard about,

72

00:04:45,000 --> 00:04:49,000

they lined up by the droves to see this elephant.

73

00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:53,000

And it was almost like a dream come true.

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00:04:53,000 --> 00:04:56,000

But then tragedy strikes.

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00:04:57,000 --> 00:05:02,000

One day, Old Bet and Hacialaya are traveling along a road,

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00:05:03,000 --> 00:05:05,000

when they are confronted by a stranger.

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00:05:05,000 --> 00:05:10,000

From the bushes steps a man, holding a shotgun.

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00:05:12,000 --> 00:05:15,000

He's agitated and he's angry.

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00:05:17,000 --> 00:05:19,000

And he shoots Old Bet.

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00:05:20,000 --> 00:05:25,000

And Old Bet falls to the ground, right in front of Hacialaya Bailey.

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00:05:26,000 --> 00:05:29,000

The great elephant is dead.

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00:05:30,000 --> 00:05:33,000

Hacialaya Bailey yells, this is murder.

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00:05:33,000 --> 00:05:35,000

This must be prosecuted.

84

00:05:38,000 --> 00:05:41,000

The elephant slayer is taken into custody,

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00:05:41,000 --> 00:05:46,000

where he reveals himself to be a local farmer named Daniel Davis.

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00:05:46,000 --> 00:05:50,000

There are a few theories as to why the farmer shot Old Bet.

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00:05:50,000 --> 00:05:55,000

The thought might have been that it was a very, very difficult year for farming.

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00:05:55,000 --> 00:06:00,000

And here comes a man with an elephant making lots and lots of money.

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00:06:02,000 --> 00:06:05,000

And jealousy enter into the picture.

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00:06:05,000 --> 00:06:08,000

Others point out that the incident occurred on a Sunday,

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00:06:08,000 --> 00:06:11,000

and since the farmer was a devout Christian,

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00:06:11,000 --> 00:06:17,000

he may have been enraged by the flouting of local blue laws by Hacialaya and his circus troupe.

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00:06:19,000 --> 00:06:21,000

This was a terrible loss.

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00:06:21,000 --> 00:06:26,000

The elephant that brought so much love and happiness to people is gone.

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00:06:27,000 --> 00:06:31,000

But the story of Hacialaya Bailey and Old Bet doesn't end there.

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00:06:32,000 --> 00:06:39,000

Old Bet's skeleton is donated to the famous showman P.T. Barnum's American Museum in New York City.

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00:06:39,000 --> 00:06:44,000

And Hacialaya Bailey's nephew, James Bailey, joins forces with Barnum.

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00:06:44,000 --> 00:06:48,000

And together, they form the Barnum and Bailey Circus.

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00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:52,000

They travel from community to community.

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00:06:52,000 --> 00:06:54,000

The laughter and the happiness is still there.

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00:06:54,000 --> 00:07:00,000

And to think that it began with one elephant in a town called Somers, New York, is astonishing.

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00:07:01,000 --> 00:07:08,000

In 1827, Hacialaya Bailey commissions a granite ironwork and concrete monument to Old Bet,

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00:07:08,000 --> 00:07:11,000

which still stands in Somers, New York,

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00:07:11,000 --> 00:07:19,000

as a proud memorial to a legendary animal whose legacy has brought joy to the hearts of millions of Americans.

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00:07:27,000 --> 00:07:32,000

Nestled in the picturesque Allegheny Mountains is Lewisburg, Virginia,

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00:07:32,000 --> 00:07:38,000

a sleepy hamlet filled with antebellum homes, green pastures and enchanting ends.

107

00:07:39,000 --> 00:07:47,000

And on the outskirts of this charming town is a small rural cemetery that is home to a distinctive granite headstone.

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00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:56,000

It is about four feet tall and about two feet wide, and the first time that I saw it, the mist was sort of rising around the grave.

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00:07:57,000 --> 00:08:05,000

Playwright Kathy Kraussoyer is just one of many captivated by this marker, which bears a strange and chilling title.

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00:08:05,000 --> 00:08:07,000

The Greenbrier Ghost.

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00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:14,000

This stone monument tells the tale of justice that's rendered from beyond the grave.

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00:08:15,000 --> 00:08:18,000

So who was the Greenbrier Ghost?

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00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:25,000

And what unprecedented role did the spirit play in a tragic story of murder and revenge?

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00:08:26,000 --> 00:08:30,000

The 1890s, Greenbrier County.

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00:08:30,000 --> 00:08:39,000

Two young newlyweds, Erasmus Trout-Chu and his wife, Zona, have recently settled in this rural corner of West Virginia.

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00:08:40,000 --> 00:08:43,000

Trout-Chu was a handsome man, strong and muscular.

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00:08:43,000 --> 00:08:50,000

Zona was a dark-haired beauty, dark-eyed. People around here called her a wild red rose.

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00:08:51,000 --> 00:08:57,000

It seems the striking couple is destined to enjoy a long and blissful life together.

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00:08:58,000 --> 00:09:02,000

But just three months after the two wed, tragedy strikes.

120

00:09:04,000 --> 00:09:08,000

One day while Trout is away at work, a neighbor calls on Zona.

121

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

But when he opens the door, he comes across a horrifying sight.

122

00:09:14,000 --> 00:09:19,000

He sees Zona lying at the foot of the stairs, and he realizes that she's dead.

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00:09:20,000 --> 00:09:25,000

The boy hurries to deliver the shocking news to Trout, who immediately rushes home.

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00:09:27,000 --> 00:09:32,000

When the coroner arrives to examine the body, he finds Trout beside himself with grief.

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00:09:33,000 --> 00:09:39,000

Trout was cradling the head and sobbing and it's just grieving like the doctor has never seen.

126

00:09:39,000 --> 00:09:47,000

In fact, the widower is so distraught that he refuses to let the coroner even approach his wife's lifeless body.

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00:09:48,000 --> 00:09:54,000

Every time he would get close enough to examine the body, Trout would start sobbing.

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00:09:55,000 --> 00:09:57,000

So the doctor did a cursory examination.

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00:09:58,000 --> 00:10:02,000

He determined that the cause of death was an everlasting fate.

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00:10:02,000 --> 00:10:04,000

Basically it meant he really didn't know.

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00:10:04,000 --> 00:10:11,000

The grief-stricken widower dresses his departed wife in her Sunday best, a beautiful high-collared gown.

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00:10:12,000 --> 00:10:14,000

He then wraps her neck in her favorite scarf.

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00:10:15,000 --> 00:10:20,000

The tradition at the time was that the women of the village would dress the body.

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00:10:21,000 --> 00:10:22,000

This was very unusual.

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00:10:23,000 --> 00:10:27,000

Not long after, Zona's shoe's body is buried in the town cemetery.

136

00:10:28,000 --> 00:10:30,000

Where it is hoped, she will rest in peace.

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00:10:30,000 --> 00:10:36,000

But no one could foresee the bizarre turn of events that are about to unfold.

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00:10:38,000 --> 00:10:47,000

As the story goes, a few weeks after the funeral, Zona's mother, Mary Jane Heaster, receives a strange visit in the middle of the night.

139

00:10:48,000 --> 00:10:51,000

She notices sort of a chill in the air and a mist.

140

00:10:52,000 --> 00:10:55,000

And as she looks toward the mist, she saw Zona.

141

00:10:55,000 --> 00:11:02,000

And this ethereal form makes a disturbing claim that she did not die of natural causes at all.

142

00:11:04,000 --> 00:11:09,000

Zona tells her, very specifically, that Trout had killed her.

143

00:11:10,000 --> 00:11:16,000

Trout had gone into a fit of rage over the fact that Zona had not cooked meat for supper.

144

00:11:16,000 --> 00:11:22,000

And grabbed her by the neck and squeezed her neck until he crushed her windpipe.

145

00:11:23,000 --> 00:11:29,000

At first, Mary Jane dismisses the incident as a hallucination triggered by her grief.

146

00:11:30,000 --> 00:11:36,000

But when the apparition reappears the next three nights, she can no longer ignore its counsel.

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00:11:37,000 --> 00:11:41,000

So will anyone believe that Mary Jane has seen her daughter's spirit?

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00:11:41,000 --> 00:11:43,000

And will justice be done?

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00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:51,000

It's 1897 in Greenbrier County, West Virginia.

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00:11:52,000 --> 00:12:00,000

When a young woman named Zona Heaster-Shu dies in what appears to be a fall down the stairs, her family is devastated.

151

00:12:01,000 --> 00:12:02,000

No one more so than her husband Trout.

152

00:12:03,000 --> 00:12:08,000

But one month after the tragedy, the young woman's mother, Mary Jane, is found dead.

153

00:12:08,000 --> 00:12:18,000

But one month after the tragedy, the young woman's mother, Mary Jane Heaster, claims that her daughter's ghost has visited her and delivered a chilling message.

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00:12:19,000 --> 00:12:22,000

That she was murdered and her husband was the killer.

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00:12:24,000 --> 00:12:30,000

Mary Jane walks straight into the county prosecutor's office and demands that her daughter's body be exhumed.

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00:12:31,000 --> 00:12:38,000

Despite the unusual nature of the request, the authorities agree to have Zona's body exhumed.

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00:12:39,000 --> 00:12:44,000

And when her remains are finally examined, the evidence is damning.

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00:12:45,000 --> 00:12:50,000

The doctor said that her windpipe had been crushed and the ligaments around it torn and ruptured.

159

00:12:51,000 --> 00:13:01,000

The authorities conclude that Trout's extravagant show of grief was actually a cunning ruse to prevent the coroner from examining the body.

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00:13:02,000 --> 00:13:10,000

And that his insistence on dressing his wife's corpse in a high-coloured was nothing but a ploy to conceal the bruises on her neck.

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00:13:11,000 --> 00:13:15,000

Trout was immediately arrested and charged with the murder of Zona Heaster-Shu.

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00:13:16,000 --> 00:13:25,000

But at the ensuing trial, Trout's lawyer argues that evidence given by a ghost is inadmissible in court and that the case be thrown out.

163

00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:31,000

But Zona's mother, Mary Jane, is resolute and insists her story is true.

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00:13:32,000 --> 00:13:38,000

She remained very calm, very convincing, never wavered from her story.

165

00:13:39,000 --> 00:13:46,000

And investigators uncover something shocking that does seem to corroborate Mary Jane's story.

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00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:49,000

Trout, allegedly, has a history of violence.

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00:13:50,000 --> 00:13:56,000

He had been married twice before. The first wife, he had beaten her and eventually she got away from him.

168

00:13:57,000 --> 00:13:59,000

And the second wife had died very mysteriously.

169

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

Supposedly they were fixing a chimney on the house and one of the bricks fell and hit her on the head and killed her.

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00:14:09,000 --> 00:14:17,000

In July of 1897 Trout is found guilty and sentenced to life in prison for the murder of Zona Heaster-Shu.

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00:14:19,000 --> 00:14:25,000

It's said that after the trial with justice served, Zona's specter never appears again.

172

00:14:26,000 --> 00:14:37,000

And to this day hers remains the only known legal case in US history where it's said that a ghost helped convict a killer in a court of law.

173

00:14:39,000 --> 00:14:49,000

In 1981 an historical marker honoring the Greenbrier ghost is erected near Zona's cemetery plot to immortalize this distinction.

174

00:14:50,000 --> 00:15:01,000

And today this gravestone stands as a testament to the extraordinary tale of a young woman who lost her life but found her voice from beyond the grave.

175

00:15:02,000 --> 00:15:10,000

Kauai is the northernmost island in the Hawaiian archipelago.

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00:15:11,000 --> 00:15:23,000

And here on Kauai's southwestern shore, in the small harbor of Waimea, stands a monument to a man whose fate will be forever linked to this idyllic destination.

177

00:15:24,000 --> 00:15:29,000

The statue stands about 15 feet tall. It looks out of the ocean. It has this commanding presence to it.

178

00:15:29,000 --> 00:15:36,000

For writer Martin Dugard, it's a fitting tribute to an adventurer whose exploits span the globe.

179

00:15:36,000 --> 00:15:38,000

Personally I believe he's the greatest explorer of all time.

180

00:15:39,000 --> 00:15:45,000

But this monument also stands as a memorial to his tragic downfall and violent death.

181

00:15:48,000 --> 00:15:55,000

Who was this daring voyager? And what terrible fate befell him? On a picturesque Hawaiian shore.

182

00:15:56,000 --> 00:16:15,000

The late 1770s, the Pacific Ocean. The greatest seaman of his age, Captain James Cook of the British Royal Navy is on his latest mission to find the Holy Grail of navigation, a sea route that connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans through the Arctic.

183

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

The fabled Northwest Passage, which if navigable, would revolutionize global trade.

184

00:16:25,000 --> 00:16:29,000

He's looking for this mythic route that will link Europe with the Pacific.

185

00:16:30,000 --> 00:16:45,000

Towards the end of 1778, Cook and the crew of his ship, the HMS Resolution, are sailing north along the western fringes of what is now Alaska, when their progress is halted by increasingly dangerous ice flows.

186

00:16:47,000 --> 00:16:51,000

Unable to go on, Cook orders his ship to head south for the winter.

187

00:16:52,000 --> 00:16:59,000

His men can only take so much, he's forced to turn around, knowing that he can come back later and continue the search when the weather gets good again.

188

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

Then, in January 1779, as they make their journey south to warmer climates, Cook spies land on the horizon.

189

00:17:12,000 --> 00:17:18,000

It's the big island of Hawaii, and Cook and his men are the first Europeans to set eyes on it.

190

00:17:19,000 --> 00:17:30,000

A year earlier, while en route to the Northwest Passage, Captain Cook and his crew had discovered and made landfall on another island in the Hawaiian archipelago, Kauai.

191

00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:38,000

Now, as the resolution approaches the shores of Hawaii, Cook and his men behold an extraordinary sight.

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00:17:39,000 --> 00:17:43,000

As throngs of natives come out in their canoes to greet the vessel.

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00:17:44,000 --> 00:17:49,000

The people are so happy to see him that he is just mobbed with enthusiastic Hawaiian.

194

00:17:50,000 --> 00:17:55,000

In the following days, great feasts are held in the esteemed navigator's honor.

195

00:17:57,000 --> 00:18:03,000

Then, two weeks after they first came ashore, Cook and his crew set sail to resume their quest.

196

00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:11,000

But within days of leaving the island paradise, bad weather forces the resolution back to the safe harbor of Hawaii.

197

00:18:14,000 --> 00:18:19,000

But this time, when Cook arrives, not a single canoe comes out to greet him.

198

00:18:20,000 --> 00:18:23,000

What sinister fate awaits Captain Cook?

199

00:18:28,000 --> 00:18:32,000

It's February 1779 on the big island of Hawaii.

200

00:18:33,000 --> 00:18:38,000

After a storm forced him to temporarily abort his quest to find the legendary Northwest Passage,

201

00:18:38,000 --> 00:18:44,000

British naval captain James Cook sailed into the supposed safe haven of this island paradise.

202

00:18:45,000 --> 00:18:48,000

Just a few days earlier, he had received a hero's welcome.

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00:18:49,000 --> 00:18:52,000

But it seems that the tide had turned against Captain Cook.

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00:18:55,000 --> 00:19:01,000

In the middle of the night, on February 14th, Islanders steal one of Resolution's small dinghies.

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00:19:02,000 --> 00:19:07,000

The next morning, Cook takes it upon himself to investigate.

206

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:11,000

Cook goes ashore to speak with the Islanders.

207

00:19:12,000 --> 00:19:18,000

Cook and his men confront the chief and his tribe, but they refuse to give back the stolen craft.

208

00:19:19,000 --> 00:19:21,000

What Cook does next seals his fate.

209

00:19:22,000 --> 00:19:26,000

He grabs one of the tribal chiefs, which is just not something you would ever do. You would never touch it.

210

00:19:27,000 --> 00:19:28,000

That's when things immediately go south.

211

00:19:28,000 --> 00:19:35,000

This warrior stabs Cook in the back with his dagger and then literally a crowd of thousands descend upon Cook.

212

00:19:36,000 --> 00:19:44,000

In an instant, Captain James Cook, hero of the British Royal Navy, is brutally murdered, along with four of his men.

213

00:19:47,000 --> 00:19:56,000

But one question remains. Why did the Hawaiians suddenly turn on the same man they had welcomed with excitement and reverence only a few days earlier?

214

00:19:58,000 --> 00:20:06,000

Some historians have an intriguing theory that the Islanders thought that Cook was more than a mere mortal.

215

00:20:09,000 --> 00:20:18,000

When the HMS Resolution sailed into Hawaii, the Islanders were anxiously awaiting the appearance of the god of agriculture and fertility, Lono.

216

00:20:20,000 --> 00:20:26,000

And according to legend, Lono's arrival is heralded by white banners flown from crossbars.

217

00:20:27,000 --> 00:20:33,000

One of the big symbols of Lono is the big white sheets, and that's exactly what the masts of the ship would have looked like.

218

00:20:34,000 --> 00:20:42,000

Unbeknownst to Cook, he had timed his departure perfectly, sailing out of the bay at the end of the Lono celebration.

219

00:20:43,000 --> 00:20:52,000

But when he returned just days later, the festival was over, making the Islanders fearful and suspicious.

220

00:20:53,000 --> 00:20:59,000

Lono is a seasonal god, so when Cook leaves and comes back, it's like, Lono, you're not supposed to be here anymore. We're done with you.

221

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

In fact, his ill-timed return may have signaled that Cook was no god at all.

222

00:21:07,000 --> 00:21:09,000

When he came back, they were angry, and they did not want him there.

223

00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:17,000

Leading Cook's legacy of exploration to come to a violent end on these idyllic shores.

224

00:21:18,000 --> 00:21:28,000

The Captain James Cook Monument in Kaua'i's Waimea town commemorates the first island the famed explorer discovered in the Hawaiian archipelago.

225

00:21:29,000 --> 00:21:37,000

And today, visitors can reflect on the intrepid adventurer who sailed the seven seas and the tragedy that ended his life.

226

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:51,000

Burlington, Vermont is the Green Mountain State's largest city and sits on the shores of an historic body of water.

227

00:21:52,000 --> 00:21:59,000

Lake Champlain, which is named for the first European explorer to discover it in 1609, Samuel de Champlain.

228

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

And on the shores of this majestic natural wonder sits an imposing slab of stone.

229

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

It's a very curious object, about four feet wide, six inches deep. It's made out of white marble, and etched on this marble is a sea monster.

230

00:22:19,000 --> 00:22:28,000

The strange, serpent-like monster depicted here has been the subject of an unsolved mystery that has plagued the region for decades.

231

00:22:29,000 --> 00:22:36,000

There's something mysterious that's in the lake, and the search for this infamous creature is taken on mythical proportions.

232

00:22:37,000 --> 00:22:42,000

So what elusive entity lurks in the depths of these placid waters?

233

00:22:44,000 --> 00:22:54,000

July 1977, Northern Vermont. A young mother named Sandra Mansi is relaxing with her family on the shores of Lake Champlain.

234

00:22:54,000 --> 00:23:01,000

When she notices an odd disturbance on the lake.

235

00:23:02,000 --> 00:23:09,000

And she sees something rise out of the water. It has a head and a long neck with a hump on the back.

236

00:23:13,000 --> 00:23:21,000

The stunned woman collects herself just in time to grab her camera and snap a photo of the creature before it slips beneath the surface.

237

00:23:24,000 --> 00:23:29,000

When she has the picture film developed, Mansi can't believe what it shows.

238

00:23:31,000 --> 00:23:35,000

A sinister, serpent-like creature looming out of the water.

239

00:23:36,000 --> 00:23:47,000

Puzzled by the bizarre image, Sandra Mansi sends the picture to the University of Arizona to see if scientists there can shed any light on the matter.

240

00:23:48,000 --> 00:23:52,000

They couldn't determine whether it was a live animal or whether it was an animal.

241

00:23:54,000 --> 00:23:58,000

All they could determine was that the photo had not been altered in any way.

242

00:23:59,000 --> 00:24:01,000

There was no trickery, there was no montage.

243

00:24:02,000 --> 00:24:08,000

In the following weeks and months, the image is circulated to a range of scientific institutions.

244

00:24:09,000 --> 00:24:17,000

And eventually, on January 30th, 1981, it finds its way to the pages of one of the country's most venerable publications.

245

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

Sandra's picture was posted on the front page of the science section of the New York Times.

246

00:24:26,000 --> 00:24:33,000

And it caused a huge stir of excitement. How could this possibly be a lake monster? Was the photo real?

247

00:24:34,000 --> 00:24:42,000

In the storm of controversy triggered by the image, Mansi learns that she's not the only one who has seen such a creature in Lake Champlain.

248

00:24:43,000 --> 00:24:53,000

Over the last 400 years, there have been more than 300 eyewitness accounts of people having seen something on the lake. Some sort of lake monster.

249

00:24:55,000 --> 00:25:04,000

And even more astonishing is that the first sighting purportedly came from the famed explorer who is credited with the discovery of the lake itself.

250

00:25:05,000 --> 00:25:07,000

Samuel de Champlain.

251

00:25:08,000 --> 00:25:13,000

Samuel de Champlain, who was a naturalist, had a journal that he kept.

252

00:25:14,000 --> 00:25:20,000

And he would know different kinds of creatures that he'd seen. And the natives have told him about a monster that was in the lake.

253

00:25:21,000 --> 00:25:27,000

It had very sharp teeth and was four, five feet long, and it was greatly feared by the natives.

254

00:25:29,000 --> 00:25:35,000

So does the Lake Champlain monster truly exist? And if so, what is it?

255

00:25:38,000 --> 00:25:51,000

It's 1977, Vermont. A woman named Sandra Mansi snaps a photo of what appears to be a strange reptilian creature rising from the depths of Lake Champlain.

256

00:25:52,000 --> 00:26:02,000

And when the image is authenticated by experts and then published in the New York Times, the public starts to wonder what frightening beast lurks in this New England lake.

257

00:26:03,000 --> 00:26:10,000

With the release of the photo, public interest in the creature reaches a fever pitch.

258

00:26:11,000 --> 00:26:17,000

There was a lot of interest by both scientists and other folks that were convinced that there was something in the lake.

259

00:26:18,000 --> 00:26:28,000

Some hypothesize that it may actually be a plesiosaur, a species of aquatic dinosaur that is believed to have gone extinct 65 million years ago.

260

00:26:28,000 --> 00:26:40,000

It is a marine reptile, has a very long neck, has very sharp teeth. They thought it was a plesiosaur because it had such a narrow head, a long neck with a hump-like body.

261

00:26:41,000 --> 00:26:50,000

But whether a population of dinosaur-like creatures could have survived for millions of years without being identified seems unlikely.

262

00:26:51,000 --> 00:26:59,000

It would have had to have a huge breeding population, probably 500 animals, in order to maintain its population.

263

00:27:00,000 --> 00:27:02,000

There should have been some sort of fossil evidence.

264

00:27:03,000 --> 00:27:09,000

Others argue that the so-called monster was simply some kind of giant fish or marine mammal.

265

00:27:10,000 --> 00:27:19,000

Could it have been a row of otters and you see the humps of the animals? Could it have been a sturgeon which can get to be over six feet long?

266

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

But to many, the image snapped by Sandra Mansi doesn't look like a sturgeon or a series of otters.

267

00:27:29,000 --> 00:27:35,000

Researchers have shown something that is picked up through the sonar, something 20 to 30 feet long.

268

00:27:36,000 --> 00:27:45,000

While different accounts vary, the evidence does seem to suggest that there is something extraordinary and unusual about this mystical body of water.

269

00:27:46,000 --> 00:27:53,000

People are saying something on the lake and we get more eyewitness accounts, people sharing stories with us.

270

00:27:55,000 --> 00:28:04,000

So in 1984, the state of Vermont unveils a tribute to the elusive creature that has intrigued both believers and skeptics for years.

271

00:28:05,000 --> 00:28:18,000

And today, the tale of the legendary beast that lurks in Lake Champlain is a reminder that there are still some mysteries out there waiting to be solved, if we dare to take the plunge.

272

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

Set against the iconic skyline of America's most populous city is the country's biggest and one of its oldest graveyards.

273

00:28:29,000 --> 00:28:33,000

This is the Calvary Cemetery in Queens, New York.

274

00:28:34,000 --> 00:28:42,000

And among the three million or so graves here is one large weathered monolith that commemorates an unforgettable tale.

275

00:28:43,000 --> 00:28:48,000

It's a huge imposing granite structure. It's about six feet tall with a pyramid on top.

276

00:28:49,000 --> 00:28:58,000

This massive memorial marks the final resting place of one New Yorker whose audacious achievements stunned and confounded the nation.

277

00:28:58,000 --> 00:29:04,000

It's a story of late 19th century celebrity, of hucksterism, of high wire, daredevils. It's a great New York story.

278

00:29:05,000 --> 00:29:10,000

So who was this daredevil showman and what is his dubious claim to fame?

279

00:29:11,000 --> 00:29:14,000

1886, New York City.

280

00:29:15,000 --> 00:29:24,000

It's just three years since the Brooklyn Bridge was opened to the public and the towering crossing commands a sense of awe in all who gaze upon it.

281

00:29:25,000 --> 00:29:31,000

It's a huge endeavor. It's the longest bridge by a mile. Many people didn't really believe that the bridge would stay up.

282

00:29:32,000 --> 00:29:36,000

So it was a place that mingled fascination as well as sort of danger.

283

00:29:36,000 --> 00:29:43,000

But one mid-summer afternoon, something happens which sparks a mystery that still remains unsolved to this day.

284

00:29:45,000 --> 00:29:52,000

A group of people on the banks of the East River see a figure fall from the Brooklyn Bridge into the swirling waters below.

285

00:29:53,000 --> 00:29:56,000

This figure dropped 125 feet into the East River.

286

00:29:56,000 --> 00:30:00,000

Moments later, witnesses see a man crawling on shore on the Manhattan side.

287

00:30:01,000 --> 00:30:05,000

He is a 25-year-old news boy named Steve Brody.

288

00:30:06,000 --> 00:30:12,000

And he earns the honor of being the first person to plunge off the Brooklyn Bridge and live to tell the tale.

289

00:30:14,000 --> 00:30:19,000

An era where jumping and daredevils was quite a big thing by becoming a bridge.

290

00:30:19,000 --> 00:30:21,000

Brody cements his place in history.

291

00:30:22,000 --> 00:30:26,000

Lauded as a hero, Brody becomes an overnight sensation.

292

00:30:27,000 --> 00:30:33,000

By the next morning, every newspaper in the city has a story successfully leaked from the bridge in all the papers across the city.

293

00:30:35,000 --> 00:30:40,000

Sensing an opportunity to capitalize on his newfound fame, Brody goes into business.

294

00:30:41,000 --> 00:30:43,000

Brody is a big-time business man.

295

00:30:44,000 --> 00:30:52,000

Sensing an opportunity to capitalize on his newfound fame, Brody goes into business and opens up a bar called Steve Brody's Saloon.

296

00:30:53,000 --> 00:30:56,000

And the whole bar is sort of a shrine to his job.

297

00:30:57,000 --> 00:31:04,000

And on the wall, he has a framed affidavit from one of the men who fished Brody out of the water after his death-defying leap.

298

00:31:06,000 --> 00:31:11,000

Brody's the great showman. He tells all these stories. He's a celebrity. And the bar becomes a great success.

299

00:31:14,000 --> 00:31:17,000

For the first year, Brody's bar does a roaring trade.

300

00:31:18,000 --> 00:31:23,000

But by the fall of 1889, the crowds at the saloon are starting to thin.

301

00:31:24,000 --> 00:31:29,000

The public's interest is set to wane. He has supposedly done this one feat in his life, but not much else.

302

00:31:30,000 --> 00:31:39,000

Keen to breathe new life into his flanking business, Brody conjures an audacious scheme to conquer the mighty Niagara Falls.

303

00:31:40,000 --> 00:31:49,000

His plan is to paddle out in a robo onto the Niagara River, then plunge over the treacherous 200-foot wall of water.

304

00:31:50,000 --> 00:31:56,000

He goes up to Niagara Falls, much like the Brooklyn Bridge doesn't fall war on journalists. And he just emerges out of water at the bottom.

305

00:31:57,000 --> 00:32:04,000

And while Brody claims to have gone over the immense cascade, something about the feat doesn't seem quite right.

306

00:32:05,000 --> 00:32:06,000

He is almost entirely unscathed.

307

00:32:06,000 --> 00:32:11,000

But the reception Brody gets is not what he anticipated.

308

00:32:12,000 --> 00:32:16,000

He is arrested and tried for attempting to commit suicide.

309

00:32:17,000 --> 00:32:29,000

And after examining the evidence, the magistrate, who is dubious of Brody's story, insists that the defendant come clean, offering him the chance to expunge the charges.

310

00:32:30,000 --> 00:32:37,000

The magistrate gives him a simple choice. Say that you did this and I'll put you in jail and say you didn't do it and I'll let you off.

311

00:32:38,000 --> 00:32:41,000

The legendary stuntman then makes a shocking admission.

312

00:32:42,000 --> 00:32:44,000

He says, well, it was a hoax and I'm off.

313

00:32:46,000 --> 00:32:55,000

As Brody's confession makes headlines across the nation, the public begins to wonder about the veracity of the stuntman's other daredevil feat.

314

00:32:55,000 --> 00:32:59,000

The news coming out of Nagfors really casts doubt on his achievement at the Brooklyn Bridge.

315

00:33:00,000 --> 00:33:10,000

So did Steve Brody really jump off the Brooklyn Bridge? Or was the death defying leap that made him a national star also an elaborate hoax?

316

00:33:13,000 --> 00:33:22,000

In 1886, Steve Brody catapults to national fame after he reportedly leaps off the Brooklyn Bridge and lives to tell the tale.

317

00:33:23,000 --> 00:33:33,000

But when the daredevil's next stunt at Niagara Falls is exposed as a probable hoax, people start to wonder, did Brody really leap from the Brooklyn Bridge?

318

00:33:35,000 --> 00:33:46,000

A reporter from the Washington Post decides to investigate the famous feat and in 1901, publishes a stunning account from those who had supposedly witnessed the jump.

319

00:33:46,000 --> 00:33:56,000

He finds the people that swore to have either seen Brody jump off the bridge or picked him up in the water and nobody would admit to having seen Brody jump.

320

00:33:57,000 --> 00:34:03,000

The very people who's affidavits lined the inside of Brody's bar later admitted that they were paid for their signatures.

321

00:34:05,000 --> 00:34:10,000

According to the Post, the informants claim that Brody never leapt from the bridge.

322

00:34:11,000 --> 00:34:16,000

He instead had an accomplice toss a weighted mannequin into the water.

323

00:34:16,000 --> 00:34:25,000

Brody had constructed this rather elaborate dummy and tied lead weights to the bottom so they would sink into the bottom of the river and never be found. Thus getting rid of the evidence.

324

00:34:26,000 --> 00:34:34,000

And Brody, who was purportedly hiding under a pier in a small boat, slipped into the river when the dummy was flung off the bridge.

325

00:34:35,000 --> 00:34:40,000

And as soon as the dummy hits the water and starts to sink, Brody pops up out of the East River.

326

00:34:42,000 --> 00:34:55,000

Yet the man who now stands exposed as a fame-seeking fraud stubbornly sticks by his claim and continues to insist that his jump was real until the day he passes away in 1901.

327

00:34:57,000 --> 00:35:02,000

In the end, the showman achieved the notoriety he so desperately craved.

328

00:35:02,000 --> 00:35:10,000

He made a movie about him in 1933. They made a musical. His reputation has survived as a man who grabbed the main chance and ran with it.

329

00:35:13,000 --> 00:35:25,000

And today, the elegant tombstone at the Calvary Cemetery in Queens is a lasting tribute to the showman whose dubious tale of a daredevil stunt continues to stand the test of time.

330

00:35:32,000 --> 00:35:41,000

Nestled among the snowy spires and deep-etched valleys of California's Sierra Nevada Mountains is Kings Canyon National Park.

331

00:35:42,000 --> 00:35:48,000

It rivals Yosemite, Yellowstone. It's one of the least known about parks and one of the most intriguing.

332

00:35:49,000 --> 00:36:00,000

This majestic land of spectacular rock formations and colossal sequoia trees also hides a tragic tale of survival, suspicion and shame.

333

00:36:02,000 --> 00:36:07,000

The park was a stage of one of the most controversial survival epics in American history.

334

00:36:08,000 --> 00:36:15,000

So what extraordinary events played out here? And how did they lead to the downfall of an innocent man?

335

00:36:16,000 --> 00:36:25,000

1957, the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union are locked in a deadly arms race.

336

00:36:26,000 --> 00:36:31,000

And the pinnacle of American aviation technology is the T-33 trainer jet.

337

00:36:32,000 --> 00:36:41,000

The T-33 was the first jet to actually gain 500 miles per hour at level flight, which was the cutting-edge technology of the time.

338

00:36:42,000 --> 00:36:56,000

May 9th, Hamilton Air Force Base, Northern California. Air traffic controllers are tracking the flight of a T-33 as it flies on a routine mission over the Sierra Nevada Mountains to Selma, Alabama.

339

00:36:57,000 --> 00:37:02,000

Piloting the jet is 23-year-old flying ace Lieutenant David Steves.

340

00:37:02,000 --> 00:37:10,000

David Steves was the top gun fighter pilot of his era. Dashing good looks, he was Tom Cruise, 1950s.

341

00:37:11,000 --> 00:37:17,000

And the flying conditions on this day are set to take this hotshot's skills to the limit.

342

00:37:18,000 --> 00:37:23,000

The Sierras were completely shrouded by a winter storm. He was going to fly above the clouds.

343

00:37:24,000 --> 00:37:32,000

Radar operators track Steves' jet as far as the King's Canyon region, but soon after he enters the airspace above the park.

344

00:37:33,000 --> 00:37:35,000

He vanishes from their scopes.

345

00:37:35,000 --> 00:37:42,000

There was no crash reported, there was no distress signal, there was just silence. It was really a mystery.

346

00:37:44,000 --> 00:37:51,000

A search and rescue mission is immediately launched. But blizzard conditions make finding the downed plane impossible.

347

00:37:51,000 --> 00:37:55,000

They had to accept the fact that Lieutenant Steves was gone.

348

00:37:56,000 --> 00:38:01,000

But 54 days later, something happens that takes everyone by surprise.

349

00:38:02,000 --> 00:38:08,000

A group of campers in King's Canyon National Park encounters a haggard and bedraggled figure.

350

00:38:09,000 --> 00:38:13,000

He was emaciated, he was bearded, they described him as a ghost.

351

00:38:14,000 --> 00:38:22,000

The man, starving and on the brink of death, identifies himself as the missing pilot, Lieutenant David Steves.

352

00:38:23,000 --> 00:38:31,000

He fractured both ankles, he was suffering from hypothermia, but overall he was still in an incredibly good shape.

353

00:38:32,000 --> 00:38:36,000

Back at base, Steves has an amazing tale to tell.

354

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

Lieutenant Steves described that there was an explosion in the jet.

355

00:38:43,000 --> 00:38:48,000

That he had bailed out, slammed into a granite peak and doing so he broke his ankles.

356

00:38:49,000 --> 00:38:57,000

Despite his debilitating injuries, Steves claims he managed to find shelter and eventually crawled back to civilization.

357

00:38:59,000 --> 00:39:04,000

When the public hears of Steves' harrowing journey, he becomes an instant sensation.

358

00:39:05,000 --> 00:39:08,000

Steves was transformed into a national celebrity.

359

00:39:08,000 --> 00:39:13,000

Newspapers were clamoring to interview him and I think that he enjoyed the celebrity.

360

00:39:14,000 --> 00:39:24,000

But some in the Air Force aren't convinced that the pilot is telling the truth, citing the fact that his plane was never found as cause for suspicion.

361

00:39:25,000 --> 00:39:29,000

A shadow of doubt was cast upon him and people wondered, maybe he hadn't crashed at all.

362

00:39:30,000 --> 00:39:33,000

Then a more sinister theory emerges.

363

00:39:35,000 --> 00:39:38,000

That Steves is really a Soviet spy.

364

00:39:42,000 --> 00:39:44,000

It's 1957, California.

365

00:39:45,000 --> 00:39:53,000

Lieutenant David Steves of the US Air Force disappears while flying his T-33 jet somewhere over King's Canyon National Park.

366

00:39:53,000 --> 00:39:58,000

When no trace of the plane or its pilot are found, Steves is presumed dead.

367

00:39:59,000 --> 00:40:05,000

But two months later he suddenly reappears and recounts an incredible story of survival in the wilderness.

368

00:40:06,000 --> 00:40:08,000

But is Lieutenant Steves really telling the truth?

369

00:40:10,000 --> 00:40:17,000

With the nation in the grips of the Cold War, some begin to suspect that the celebrated figure is actually a spy.

370

00:40:17,000 --> 00:40:22,000

Steves went from the survival hero to potential Russian spy, treason.

371

00:40:23,000 --> 00:40:29,000

It was the age of McCarthyism when people didn't trust their own neighbors and the fact that they could not find his wreckage.

372

00:40:29,000 --> 00:40:37,000

People wondered, perhaps he had sold the technology to the Russians, snuck back into the mountains and staged the whole thing.

373

00:40:38,000 --> 00:40:42,000

Steves insists that his story is true, but the Air Force isn't convinced.

374

00:40:43,000 --> 00:40:48,000

It was kind of one of the situations where it's either you quit or we're going to let you go.

375

00:40:49,000 --> 00:40:54,000

After his departure, Steves dedicates his life to proving his innocence.

376

00:40:55,000 --> 00:41:02,000

Steves knew that the only way he'd be able to vindicate himself was to locate the wreckage, and so he devoted his life to doing just that.

377

00:41:03,000 --> 00:41:05,000

But his efforts are in vain.

378

00:41:06,000 --> 00:41:13,000

Then in 1965, at the age of 31, he is killed in a plane crash.

379

00:41:14,000 --> 00:41:16,000

So he died with this shadow of doubt.

380

00:41:17,000 --> 00:41:27,000

But then in 1977, 20 years after his plane vanished, hikers in King's Canyon National Park make an astonishing find.

381

00:41:28,000 --> 00:41:37,000

It was the canopy of a T-33 jet, and it matched the serial numbers on the T-33 that was Lieutenant Steves.

382

00:41:38,000 --> 00:41:40,000

Lieutenant Steves was vindicated.

383

00:41:41,000 --> 00:41:52,000

Though the precise cause of the crash is never determined, the discovery of the part of the plane is enough to prove that Steves was telling the truth all along.

384

00:41:53,000 --> 00:42:04,000

And today, King's Canyon National Park, where this incredible journey began, is a tragic backdrop to a brave story of survival.

385

00:42:05,000 --> 00:42:09,000

A shunned hero who was finally exonerated 20 years too late.

386

00:42:10,000 --> 00:42:18,000

From a pioneering pack-a-derm to a paranormal plaintiff, a devious daredevil to a downed pilot.

387

00:42:19,000 --> 00:42:25,000

I'm Don Wildman, and these are Monumental Mysteries.