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

An ancient forest hides a mystery that's out of this world.

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

He watches the bullet leave the gun in slow motion.

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

A sculpture of a little-known hero with a suspicious past.

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

There was no record of him for a very good reason.

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

And a subterranean world that inspired a top-secret weapon.

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

It was a crazy scheme to bring down one of America's enemies.

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

Sometimes the greatest secrets lie in plain sight.

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00:00:31,000 --> 00:00:34,000

These are monumental mysteries.

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

Perch on the shores of Spirit Lake is the small town of Monaga, Minnesota.

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

Along with its natural beauty, the so-called Gateway to the Pines

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

boasts one of the country's most curious monuments.

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00:00:58,000 --> 00:01:02,000

Standing 14 feet tall and made of fiberglass,

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

this bearded figure looks to have returned from an unusual hunting expedition.

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00:01:08,000 --> 00:01:17,000

He's carrying a pitchfork and impaled on the pitchfork is a giant grasshopper.

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00:01:19,000 --> 00:01:21,000

According to historian Brian Horrigan,

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00:01:21,000 --> 00:01:26,000

this peculiar monument has a strangely controversial history.

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00:01:27,000 --> 00:01:31,000

Seeing a big statue like this makes you wonder, who is this guy?

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00:01:31,000 --> 00:01:34,000

And why is he in Monaga?

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00:01:38,000 --> 00:01:44,000

Every year on March 16, residents of Monaga celebrate a major holiday.

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00:01:45,000 --> 00:01:49,000

Dressed in colorful costume, they parade past this colossal statue

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00:01:49,000 --> 00:01:53,000

that acts as the centerpiece of the day's festivities.

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00:01:53,000 --> 00:02:00,000

Crowds of excited parade goers and party goers running around, wearing purple and green.

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

It's a big wacky festival.

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00:02:03,000 --> 00:02:08,000

Though it falls just before St. Patrick's Day and shares many similarities,

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00:02:08,000 --> 00:02:11,000

this event salutes a very different figure.

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00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:19,000

This festival is in honor of the lesser known patron saint of Finland, St. Erhol.

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00:02:19,000 --> 00:02:27,000

And like the celebrated Irish apostle, Erhol has his own tale of heroic deeds.

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00:02:28,000 --> 00:02:33,000

The story goes that Erhol was given a parish in a rural area.

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00:02:34,000 --> 00:02:38,000

According to legend, one harvest season many centuries ago,

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00:02:38,000 --> 00:02:43,000

Finnish farmers discovered that a plague of grasshoppers had infested their vineyards.

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00:02:43,000 --> 00:02:47,000

Fearing the insects would destroy their entire crop,

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00:02:47,000 --> 00:02:51,000

they sought the help of their new priest, Father Erhol.

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00:02:53,000 --> 00:02:56,000

Erhol studied the grapes, paused for a thought,

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00:02:56,000 --> 00:03:01,000

and then gave the troublesome pests an almighty command.

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00:03:02,000 --> 00:03:08,000

He said in his booming voice, grasshoppers, grasshoppers, go away.

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00:03:11,000 --> 00:03:14,000

And with that, the insects were driven away,

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00:03:14,000 --> 00:03:17,000

and Erhol had saved the vital crops.

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00:03:18,000 --> 00:03:26,000

And according to this story, he was canonized as the patron saint of Finland for his great deed.

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00:03:28,000 --> 00:03:32,000

And when Finnish immigrants settled in Minaga in the 19th century,

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00:03:32,000 --> 00:03:35,000

the fable says they brought the story with them.

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

Yet strangely, while Minnesotans celebrate St. Erhol every year,

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00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:45,000

in Finland, most people would say they've never heard of it.

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00:03:46,000 --> 00:03:53,000

In fact, Finns claim the guardian recognized in their country is actually a 12th century English missionary.

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00:03:54,000 --> 00:03:57,000

There is a patron saint of Finland, St. Henry,

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00:03:57,000 --> 00:04:03,000

but there seems to be no mention whatsoever about St. Erhol.

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

And that's not the only part of this story that doesn't quite add up.

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00:04:10,000 --> 00:04:13,000

Finland has very little wine making.

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00:04:13,000 --> 00:04:19,000

It's a cold climate, and they don't really grow grapes in Finland.

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00:04:19,000 --> 00:04:28,000

Even more bizarre, the first documented record of the venerated figure only appears in 1956.

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00:04:31,000 --> 00:04:38,000

That year in March, a Minnesota newspaper published an article about a party held in honor of St. Erhol

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00:04:38,000 --> 00:04:40,000

at a local department store.

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00:04:41,000 --> 00:04:48,000

The article states that an Irish-American employee was teasing her Finnish-American manager, Richard Mattson,

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00:04:48,000 --> 00:04:53,000

that Finland lacks a proper patron saint like Ireland's St. Patrick.

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

Mattson said, well, you're wrong.

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00:04:56,000 --> 00:05:00,000

Finland does have a patron saint, and his name is St. Erhol.

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

Mattson then delivered an enthralling account of how the legendary figure had banished swarms of ravaging pests

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00:05:07,000 --> 00:05:09,000

from the Finnish vineyards.

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

Mattson told a great story, and people embraced this hero.

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00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:22,000

And when Mattson concluded his charming tale, the store employees held a celebration in honor of this revered Finnish apostle,

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00:05:22,000 --> 00:05:26,000

also marking it as the first known account of St. Erhol.

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00:05:27,000 --> 00:05:31,000

Before this point, there was no record of St. Erhol for a very good reason.

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00:05:32,000 --> 00:05:36,000

Richard Mattson made it up out of Finland.

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00:05:37,000 --> 00:05:43,000

It's believed that Mattson chose the name Erho because it means brave in Finnish.

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00:05:43,000 --> 00:05:47,000

It just sounded strong, and it just had a great ring to it.

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00:05:48,000 --> 00:05:54,000

Following the party, the story spread among the locals, and eventually became a favorite in the state.

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00:05:56,000 --> 00:06:01,000

It got repeated over time as stories do, and grew and grew.

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

I think St. Erhol is one of the most wonderful legends that Minnesota has.

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00:06:07,000 --> 00:06:10,000

It's really very much a part of Minnesota culture.

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00:06:10,000 --> 00:06:14,000

People also love the excuse to have a great party.

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00:06:15,000 --> 00:06:20,000

And today, this eccentric statue of St. Erhol in Minnaga, Minnesota,

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00:06:20,000 --> 00:06:23,000

endures as a tribute to a fictional folk hero,

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00:06:23,000 --> 00:06:29,000

whose whimsical story is so delightful that few people mind that it isn't even true.

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00:06:37,000 --> 00:06:42,000

Crawling across five counties of southeastern Wyoming and spanning over a million acres,

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00:06:42,000 --> 00:06:47,000

lies one of the most enchanting natural treasures in the United States.

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00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:54,000

It's old growth forests, beautiful epic mountains, crystal blue lakes and rivers.

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00:06:56,000 --> 00:07:00,000

Named for the Native American healing rituals once held on these grounds,

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

this is Medicine Bow National Forest.

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

But according to author, Charis Molina Brown,

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

this alluring wilderness was also the site of a close encounter that defies explanation.

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00:07:14,000 --> 00:07:20,000

One man's unique experience here provided mysteries that science still can't explain.

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00:07:20,000 --> 00:07:26,000

So what other worldly events are said to have transpired within this ancient woodland?

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

October 25th, 1974, Medicine Bow National Forest.

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00:07:33,000 --> 00:07:38,000

A search and rescue team is combing the back woods for veteran hunter Carl Higdon,

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00:07:38,000 --> 00:07:40,000

reported missing by his wife.

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00:07:41,000 --> 00:07:47,000

After an exhaustive search, they finally locate the woodsmen, bruised and disoriented.

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00:07:47,000 --> 00:07:49,000

He doesn't know his own name.

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00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:52,000

He has no idea what day it is, where he is.

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00:07:52,000 --> 00:07:56,000

He's completely discombobulated and confused.

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00:07:57,000 --> 00:08:02,000

The rescue team takes Higdon to a local hospital, where he begins to regain his memory.

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00:08:02,000 --> 00:08:05,000

1974, when he was caught.

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00:08:05,000 --> 00:08:09,000

But what he tells the doctors is bizarre.

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00:08:10,000 --> 00:08:11,000

I was in the woods.

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00:08:11,000 --> 00:08:17,000

Higdon claims that two days earlier, he was hunting in the forest when he spotted a herd of elk.

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00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:22,000

But when he took aim and fired his gun, something extraordinary happened.

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00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:28,000

He tells the doctor that he watches the bullet leave the gun in slow motion,

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00:08:28,000 --> 00:08:31,000

like pushing through a wall of invisible jello.

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00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:36,000

And then after going about 50 feet, the bullet just hits the ground.

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00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:41,000

And then he says he picks up the bullet and it's crumbled in a very strange way

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00:08:41,000 --> 00:08:44,000

considering it fell out of thin air.

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00:08:44,000 --> 00:08:49,000

But Higdon says this is far from the strangest part of his experience.

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

As he inspected the bullet, out of the forest, stepped what appeared to be a six foot tall man.

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00:08:57,000 --> 00:09:04,000

Carl says at this point his blood runs cold because he realizes it's not any type of man that he's ever seen before.

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00:09:05,000 --> 00:09:12,000

He has very small eyes, a lipless mouth, very coarse hair that looked like a man.

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00:09:12,000 --> 00:09:15,000

Very coarse hair that looked like straw.

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00:09:15,000 --> 00:09:22,000

And emerging from the ends of these black sleeves is just a long, thin drill bit like a pendant.

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00:09:23,000 --> 00:09:27,000

Higdon is convinced that the creature was not from planet Earth.

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00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:35,000

He says he tried to run, but before he could get away, it forced him inside a transparent cube-like vehicle

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00:09:35,000 --> 00:09:38,000

and instantly transported him to a distant planet.

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00:09:39,000 --> 00:09:46,000

They get out of the cube and there's a large structure that looks almost like the space needle.

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00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:50,000

And the alien tells Carl he's on another planet.

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00:09:51,000 --> 00:09:57,000

Higdon then tells the now incredulous doctor that the alien used some kind of scanning device

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00:09:57,000 --> 00:10:02,000

to give him a full physical exam before delivering some surprising news.

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

Carl says the alien tells him that he does not fit the standards that they're looking for.

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00:10:09,000 --> 00:10:13,000

And he's instantly transported back to the forest.

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00:10:13,000 --> 00:10:14,000

I'm not a simple.

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00:10:15,000 --> 00:10:23,000

And though Higdon was missing for several hours, it seemed to him that the bizarre ordeal ended only minutes after it began.

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00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:31,000

But while Higdon is convinced he's the victim of an intergalactic kidnapping, doctors suspect something else altogether.

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00:10:31,000 --> 00:10:35,000

That the hunter is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

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00:10:35,000 --> 00:10:41,000

But when they run a barrage of tests, the results are unlike anything they could have expected.

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00:10:42,000 --> 00:10:45,000

It's 1974 in southern Wyoming.

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00:10:45,000 --> 00:10:53,000

After going missing in Medicine Bone National Forest, veteran hunter Carl Higdon claims that he was abducted by aliens.

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00:10:53,000 --> 00:10:59,000

Suspecting that he's either delusional or on drugs, doctors at a local hospital order a barrage of tests.

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00:10:59,000 --> 00:11:02,000

But the results are not what they expected.

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00:11:02,000 --> 00:11:09,000

There are no drugs in his system. There's no alcohol. There's no sign of any type of physiological stress.

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

But not all the tests come back normal.

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00:11:13,000 --> 00:11:20,000

Carl had been exposed to tuberculosis several years before, which left him with really bad scar tissue in his lungs.

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00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:28,000

He was not only a person who had been exposed to tuberculosis, but also a person who had been exposed to tuberculosis for several years.

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00:11:28,000 --> 00:11:35,000

He was also exposed to tuberculosis for several years before, which left him with really bad scar tissue in his lungs.

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00:11:35,000 --> 00:11:40,000

However, the X-rays of Higdon's chest reportedly show something astounding.

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00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:44,000

His lungs are completely clean with no scar tissue at all.

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00:11:44,000 --> 00:11:47,000

Doctors have no idea how this could have possibly happened.

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00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:55,000

According to modern medical science, there is almost no way that this scar tissue could have vanished like that.

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00:11:55,000 --> 00:11:59,000

It's proof that his lungs were cured through unearthly means.

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00:11:59,000 --> 00:12:05,000

And that's not the only evidence that supports Higdon's story.

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00:12:05,000 --> 00:12:14,000

For the several hours that the rescue team is looking for Carl, they as well as residents of the nearby town were noticing unusual lights in the sky.

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00:12:14,000 --> 00:12:22,000

And an inspection of the bullet suggests that it smashed into a solid surface with immense force.

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00:12:23,000 --> 00:12:26,000

The bullet was inspected by a metallurgist consultant.

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00:12:26,000 --> 00:12:30,000

The sheriff said that it looked like someone superhuman had turned it inside out.

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00:12:30,000 --> 00:12:35,000

He said that it had to have hit something harder than a rock or a tree.

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00:12:35,000 --> 00:12:41,000

Some ufologists believe the bullet smashed into a mysterious force field.

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00:12:41,000 --> 00:12:45,000

So what is the truth behind Higdon's incredible tale?

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00:12:45,000 --> 00:12:51,000

While skeptics claim that Higdon was delusional or fabricated his bizarre story,

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00:12:51,000 --> 00:12:57,000

ufologists claim the evidence proves this is an authentic case of alien abduction.

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00:12:57,000 --> 00:13:03,000

No one knows exactly what happened, but to this day in Medicine Bowl National Force,

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00:13:03,000 --> 00:13:09,000

people often report strange lights in the sky, report seeing starships.

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

And as visitors come to admire the beauty of this scenic oasis,

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

they are also reminded that we may not be alone in the universe.

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00:13:22,000 --> 00:13:25,000

Flint, Michigan.

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00:13:25,000 --> 00:13:30,000

Once a preeminent producer of carriages and a major auto manufacturing hub,

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00:13:30,000 --> 00:13:36,000

the vehicle city is filled with historical markers commemorating its industrious past.

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00:13:38,000 --> 00:13:42,000

But in front of the county courthouse, there is a plaque from a different era

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00:13:42,000 --> 00:13:45,000

that is as unusual as the story it tells.

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00:13:46,000 --> 00:13:51,000

It's unique in that it has two sides just as the person that it honors had two sides.

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00:13:54,000 --> 00:13:57,000

According to local museum director Emily Fiegel,

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00:13:57,000 --> 00:14:03,000

this marker is a tribute to a valiant soldier whose true identity astounded the nation.

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00:14:03,000 --> 00:14:07,000

The person honored in this plaque was both brave and daring,

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

but they've had a surprising secret. Everyone was completely shocked.

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00:14:13,000 --> 00:14:20,000

So what stunning tale of bravery and deception does this double-sided marker reveal?

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00:14:22,000 --> 00:14:25,000

It's the spring of 1861.

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00:14:25,000 --> 00:14:30,000

Hostilities erupt between the north and south, marking the start of the Civil War.

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00:14:30,000 --> 00:14:33,000

And as the Union calls for volunteers,

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00:14:33,000 --> 00:14:39,000

officers in Flint, Michigan recruit an eager young man by the name of Franklin Thompson.

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00:14:40,000 --> 00:14:46,000

Franklin was roused like everybody else was by the patriotism of defending the Union

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00:14:46,000 --> 00:14:48,000

and enlisted right away.

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00:14:49,000 --> 00:14:54,000

Signing up alongside Thompson is fellow Flint resident Damon Stewart.

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00:14:54,000 --> 00:14:59,000

The pair are deployed to Washington, where Thompson is assigned as an army nurse

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00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:02,000

and Stewart a combat soldier.

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00:15:03,000 --> 00:15:07,000

Damon and Franklin became good friends and were well liked among the troops.

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00:15:07,000 --> 00:15:12,000

Franklin especially was a very positive person and kept their spirits up.

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00:15:13,000 --> 00:15:19,000

But on May 5th, 1862, their courage is put to the ultimate test.

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00:15:19,000 --> 00:15:25,000

The regiment engages Confederate troops at the Battle of Williamsburg, and the conflict is brutal.

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00:15:25,000 --> 00:15:30,000

Hundreds of Union troops lay injured, and while Stewart fights on the front line,

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00:15:30,000 --> 00:15:33,000

Thompson carries the wounded from the field to safety.

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00:15:34,000 --> 00:15:37,000

Thompson was both brave and daring.

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00:15:37,000 --> 00:15:42,000

He just couldn't handle the cruelty of leaving these wounded and dying men behind.

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00:15:43,000 --> 00:15:49,000

When Stewart is shot through the thigh, it's his friend Thompson who drags him out of harm's way.

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00:15:54,000 --> 00:16:00,000

Stewart is sent back to Flint to recover, but Thompson continues to serve valiantly for the next year.

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

He appeared to be a very dedicated soldier, and he really inspired a lot of the men he served with.

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00:16:06,000 --> 00:16:12,000

But then, in April 1863, Thompson apparently abandons the cause.

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00:16:13,000 --> 00:16:17,000

When the regiment awakes in the morning, Thompson's bed is completely empty.

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00:16:17,000 --> 00:16:19,000

He disappeared from the camp without a trace.

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00:16:21,000 --> 00:16:27,000

There seems to be no reason for his abrupt departure, or any indication of where the missing fighter has gone.

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00:16:27,000 --> 00:16:33,000

How and why would this seemingly devoted, upstanding Union soldier just disappear in the middle of a war?

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00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:43,000

It's 1863. The Civil War is raging.

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00:16:43,000 --> 00:16:49,000

For over a year, Army nurse Franklin Thompson has faithfully served his fellow Union soldiers,

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00:16:49,000 --> 00:16:52,000

until one night when he suddenly disappears.

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00:16:52,000 --> 00:16:57,000

So what would cause this dedicated servant to abandon his post?

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00:16:59,000 --> 00:17:06,000

It was highly unusual for a soldier so dedicated and well-beloved to just leave. It was a total mystery.

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

The Civil War finally comes to an end in the spring of 1865.

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00:17:11,000 --> 00:17:15,000

But Franklin Thompson never resurfaces.

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00:17:16,000 --> 00:17:27,000

Then, 20 years later, Thompson's old bunk mate, Damon Stewart, is working at a dry good store when he receives an unexpected visitor.

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00:17:27,000 --> 00:17:31,000

A well-dressed woman appears in the store and approaches him with an unusual question.

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00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:34,000

Do you know someone named Franklin from the war?

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00:17:34,000 --> 00:17:39,000

She wanted to know if he knew the address for Franklin Thompson.

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00:17:40,000 --> 00:17:47,000

Stewart is surprised by her question. It's been two decades since he last saw his old comrade.

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00:17:47,000 --> 00:17:52,000

But then, he is struck by something strangely familiar about this person in front of him.

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00:17:52,000 --> 00:17:57,000

Stewart noticed a resemblance between this woman and his friend Frank, and he actually asked her,

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

Are you his mother or his sister?

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

And the woman replied, No, I'm not.

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00:18:03,000 --> 00:18:10,000

With Stewart perplexed, the mystery woman checks the store for customers and then slips him a handwritten note.

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00:18:10,000 --> 00:18:17,000

When he opened this slip of paper, he saw that it said, Be quiet, I am Franklin Thompson.

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00:18:19,000 --> 00:18:22,000

Stewart was just completely shocked.

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00:18:22,000 --> 00:18:29,000

When the two are alone, the woman tells Stewart her real name is actually Sarah Emma Edmonds.

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00:18:30,000 --> 00:18:34,000

She then explains that when the war broke out, she felt a duty to serve,

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00:18:34,000 --> 00:18:38,000

and so joined up under a secret male persona.

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00:18:38,000 --> 00:18:42,000

She assumed the identity of a man, Franklin Thompson.

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00:18:42,000 --> 00:18:45,000

Luckily, it was uncommon for the men to undress in front of each other,

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

and she worked very hard to hide her female identity.

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00:18:48,000 --> 00:18:51,000

Hello, nice to meet you, my lady.

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00:18:51,000 --> 00:18:54,000

She practiced the talk, the walk, the gestures.

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

Franklin, Franklin, hello.

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00:18:57,000 --> 00:19:04,000

But if Sarah was fooling everyone and proudly serving her country, then why did she suddenly disappear?

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00:19:04,000 --> 00:19:09,000

Sarah said that she had to leave the camp because she came down with a case of malaria.

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00:19:09,000 --> 00:19:17,000

Fearing that treatment would reveal her true identity, the female soldier was forced to seek medical attention elsewhere.

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00:19:17,000 --> 00:19:21,000

She was very devoted to her cause, but there was no other option.

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

Over the years, Sarah's health took a turn for the worse, and her medical bills piled up.

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

So, to pay off her debt, she needs her veteran's pension, still owed to her for a military service,

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00:19:35,000 --> 00:19:38,000

but unclaimed because of her secret persona.

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00:19:38,000 --> 00:19:43,000

But I fought in the war the same way that you did, and now I need the same benefits that you receive.

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00:19:43,000 --> 00:19:48,000

She told Stewart that she needed him to give an affidavit that she was actually Franklin Thompson,

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00:19:48,000 --> 00:19:51,000

the soldier that had fought during the war.

222

00:19:53,000 --> 00:19:58,000

In the following weeks, Stewart and the rest of their old regiment affirm that man or woman

223

00:19:58,000 --> 00:20:04,000

private Thompson exhibited outstanding character and service during the war.

224

00:20:04,000 --> 00:20:11,000

And eventually, Sarah is granted a monthly veteran's pension that lasts for the rest of her life.

225

00:20:12,000 --> 00:20:22,000

Today, this unique double-sided monument in Flint, Michigan reflects the remarkable wartime contributions of Sarah Emma Edmonds.

226

00:20:22,000 --> 00:20:26,000

One side reflects her female identity as Sarah Emma Edmonds.

227

00:20:26,000 --> 00:20:31,000

The other side reflects her secret persona of Franklin Thompson.

228

00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:42,000

Together, the two sides of this marker tell the full story of the bravery and dedication of this courageous, cross-dressing Civil War soldier.

229

00:20:47,000 --> 00:20:55,000

Situated on Arkansas's western border, Fort Smith was established in 1817 as the region's first U.S. Army garrison.

230

00:20:56,000 --> 00:21:04,000

And in a tranquil park along the city's riverfront stands a 15-foot-tall figure that harkens back to those pioneering days.

231

00:21:07,000 --> 00:21:15,000

It is a bronze installation of a gentleman sitting on a horse holding a Winchester rifle with his duck off to his right.

232

00:21:15,000 --> 00:21:24,000

Judge Jim Spears launched the campaign to build this majestic sculpture as a tribute to one of the American veterans.

233

00:21:25,000 --> 00:21:28,000

The first to be painted on the frontiers real-life heroes.

234

00:21:28,000 --> 00:21:36,000

Because of his courage and unbelievable physical prowess, the person depicted here became known as the Invincible Marshal.

235

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:45,000

Who was this extraordinary man of law and what crime-fighting fictional character did he later

inspire?

236

00:21:48,000 --> 00:21:51,000

1875, Fort Smith, Arkansas.

237

00:21:51,000 --> 00:21:57,000

Just beyond this small border town lies an untamed land that is a haven for outlaws.

238

00:21:57,000 --> 00:22:00,000

The so-called Indian Territory.

239

00:22:02,000 --> 00:22:09,000

It was an area where there was no law and it was a wild, dangerous, dangerous place.

240

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

The task of imposing order falls to 200 newly appointed federal marshals.

241

00:22:17,000 --> 00:22:20,000

Among them is a man named Bass Reeves.

242

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

Born a slave, he seized his opportunity to escape during the Civil War.

243

00:22:27,000 --> 00:22:32,000

Bass Reeves fled into Indian Territory and there he prospered.

244

00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:39,000

He learned the different ways of the tribes and he knew every rock and every creek in the area.

245

00:22:40,000 --> 00:22:44,000

These skills lead Reeves to attain an extraordinary position.

246

00:22:45,000 --> 00:22:50,000

He was one of the very first African-American United States Deputy Marshals.

247

00:22:50,000 --> 00:22:55,000

And the lawman becomes, propoutedly, one of the best marksmen in the land.

248

00:22:55,000 --> 00:22:59,000

Bass Reeves was a crack shot with a pistol and a rifle.

249

00:22:59,000 --> 00:23:03,000

He could use either hand. Something not easily done.

250

00:23:05,000 --> 00:23:12,000

But prejudice is rampant and the talented Marshal is often slighted by those who resent his position of authority.

251

00:23:13,000 --> 00:23:20,000

Here is a former slave who's wearing a badge and carrying a gun with the authority of the United States government behind him.

252

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

So he had a lot of issues to overcome.

253

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

But Reeves will soon face the ultimate test of his career.

254

00:23:29,000 --> 00:23:36,000

In 1883, he is handed the arrest warrant for a notorious murderer named Jim Webb.

255

00:23:36,000 --> 00:23:39,000

Jim Webb was a really dangerous man.

256

00:23:39,000 --> 00:23:42,000

He was quick to shoot and eager to kill.

257

00:23:42,000 --> 00:23:47,000

Webb is arguably the deadliest outlaw Bass Reeves has ever faced.

258

00:23:47,000 --> 00:23:51,000

So to catch him, Reeves devises a cunning plan.

259

00:23:51,000 --> 00:23:56,000

By posing as a cowboy, he hopes to ambush the suspect on his own ranch.

260

00:23:56,000 --> 00:24:02,000

He was going to move in, not wearing a badge like he was looking to help on the ranch.

261

00:24:03,000 --> 00:24:09,000

Reeves rides through dangerous territory before finding Webb and a ranch hand on this farm.

262

00:24:11,000 --> 00:24:15,000

Both men are armed and wary of their unexpected guest.

263

00:24:16,000 --> 00:24:21,000

Reeves presented himself as this man looking for a job, looking for a meal.

264

00:24:21,000 --> 00:24:26,000

And when Webb lowers his guard, the Marshal seizes his chance.

265

00:24:26,000 --> 00:24:29,000

He grabs Webb around the neck and around the mouth.

266

00:24:29,000 --> 00:24:33,000

But as Reeves and Webb tangle, Webb's accomplice grabs a pistol.

267

00:24:34,000 --> 00:24:37,000

He shoots at Bass Reeves at almost point blank range.

268

00:24:39,000 --> 00:24:41,000

But miraculously misses.

269

00:24:41,000 --> 00:24:44,000

Then Bass Reeves shoots him dead.

270

00:24:45,000 --> 00:24:51,000

Despite facing two opponents at close range, Reeves has managed to dodge a hail of bullets.

271

00:24:53,000 --> 00:24:56,000

Victorious, the deputy throws Webb into jail.

272

00:24:57,000 --> 00:25:01,000

But the notorious criminal doesn't remain locked up for long.

273

00:25:01,000 --> 00:25:08,000

While awaiting trial, he's able to post a \$17,000 bond to get out of jail.

274

00:25:08,000 --> 00:25:10,000

And he doesn't bother to come back.

275

00:25:13,000 --> 00:25:18,000

With Webb on the lam, the Marshal must find a way to catch him all over again.

276

00:25:19,000 --> 00:25:22,000

So will Reeves ever get his man?

277

00:25:26,000 --> 00:25:30,000

It's the 1880s in the Indian territory west of Arkansas.

278

00:25:30,000 --> 00:25:35,000

Bass Reeves, one of the nation's first African American federal marshals,

279

00:25:35,000 --> 00:25:42,000

is facing the ultimate test of his career, bringing the murderous outlaw Jim Webb to justice.

280

00:25:42,000 --> 00:25:45,000

So will Reeves ever get his man?

281

00:25:47,000 --> 00:25:52,000

Upon learning that Webb has been spotted at a general store in the Indian territory,

282

00:25:52,000 --> 00:25:54,000

the Marshal races to the location.

283

00:25:55,000 --> 00:25:59,000

And when he finds a suspect, a violent confrontation breaks out.

284

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

Webb sees him coming and starts firing.

285

00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:08,000

The outlaw reels off four quick shots at the Marshal.

286

00:26:10,000 --> 00:26:15,000

Bullets were whizzing all around Bass Reeves, but miraculously, he is untouched.

287

00:26:16,000 --> 00:26:18,000

Leaving him free to take aim and shoot back.

288

00:26:19,000 --> 00:26:23,000

Reeves returns fire, striking Webb two times.

289

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

At last, Reeves has gotten his man.

290

00:26:27,000 --> 00:26:33,000

And as the bandit breathes his last breath, he delivers an unexpected show of respect.

291

00:26:34,000 --> 00:26:36,000

Webb handed Reeves his gun.

292

00:26:37,000 --> 00:26:40,000

He says, you're a brave man, Bass Reeves.

293

00:26:40,000 --> 00:26:45,000

With Reeves evading death not once, but twice at the hand of Jim Webb,

294

00:26:45,000 --> 00:26:50,000

even those who once scorned the former slave are left amazed.

295

00:26:50,000 --> 00:26:55,000

People have started to refer to Bass Reeves as the Invincible Marshal.

296

00:26:56,000 --> 00:27:03,000

In 1907, Bass Reeves hangs up his badge, marking the end of a remarkable 32-year career.

297

00:27:04,000 --> 00:27:07,000

During his time, he rests over three years.

298

00:27:07,000 --> 00:27:12,000

And despite several close calls, the Invincible Marshal was reportedly never once shot.

299

00:27:15,000 --> 00:27:19,000

Contemporary experts even believe that this legendary crime fighter

300

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

may have inspired the beloved comic book and television hero, the Lone Ranger.

301

00:27:25,000 --> 00:27:29,000

Like Reeves, the masked vigilante was an expert marksman

302

00:27:29,000 --> 00:27:34,000

who often dressed in disguise to try to get him to the top of the world.

303

00:27:34,000 --> 00:27:38,000

And today, this statue of Bass Reeves in Fort Smith, Arkansas

304

00:27:39,000 --> 00:27:42,000

stands as a tribute to the indestructible man of law

305

00:27:42,000 --> 00:27:45,000

and his unrelenting pursuit of justice.

306

00:27:50,000 --> 00:27:54,000

Nestled amid majestic mountains, in the heart of the Sonoran Desert,

307

00:27:54,000 --> 00:27:57,000

is the sprawl of the Indian territory.

308

00:27:58,000 --> 00:28:01,000

The Indian territory is the largest in the world.

309

00:28:01,000 --> 00:28:06,000

In the heart of the Sonoran Desert is the sprawling metropolis of Phoenix, Arizona.

310

00:28:07,000 --> 00:28:13,000

And less than 10 miles from the city center lies one of the most intriguing sights in the entire southwest.

311

00:28:16,000 --> 00:28:20,000

Rising out of the scorched terrain is a strange stone structure

312

00:28:20,000 --> 00:28:23,000

that looks like it belongs in a fairy tale.

313

00:28:24,000 --> 00:28:26,000

It's 8,000 square feet.

314

00:28:26,000 --> 00:28:31,000

There's 18 rooms built out of recycled items that were repurposed.

315

00:28:31,000 --> 00:28:36,000

Every room is different. Every room has a style and it's kind of like a puzzle.

316

00:28:37,000 --> 00:28:42,000

This is the Mystery Castle, a truly unique architectural gem.

317

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

But as tour guide Rita Dunham points out, the story behind this hodgepodge construction

318

00:28:48,000 --> 00:28:52,000

is even more peculiar than its unusual facade.

319

00:28:52,000 --> 00:28:57,000

The builder left a secret that would change the life of one young woman forever.

320

00:28:59,000 --> 00:29:02,000

Who is the mastermind behind this eccentric dwelling?

321

00:29:03,000 --> 00:29:09,000

And what bizarre tale of death, disease and buried treasure led to its creation?

322

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

1929, Seattle, Washington.

323

00:29:15,000 --> 00:29:19,000

Five-year-old Mary Lou Gully enjoys a happy life with her adoring parents.

324

00:29:19,000 --> 00:29:24,000

She especially loves building sand castles at the beach with her father, Boyce,

325

00:29:24,000 --> 00:29:27,000

a sales clerk by day and artist by night.

326

00:29:28,000 --> 00:29:31,000

Boyce and his daughter like to think in terms of fairy tales.

327

00:29:31,000 --> 00:29:34,000

Boyce would call her princess and say,

328

00:29:34,000 --> 00:29:38,000

someday he'd actually build her a real castle that she could live in.

329

00:29:39,000 --> 00:29:43,000

But Mary Lou's picture-perfect existence is about to be shattered.

330

00:29:44,000 --> 00:29:50,000

One evening, the young girl and her mother discover that Boyce has suddenly disappeared.

331

00:29:50,000 --> 00:29:54,000

It was shocked to him. They did not know why he had left.

332

00:29:55,000 --> 00:30:02,000

The pair scour the region and contact the authorities to check whether Boyce has been injured or even killed.

333

00:30:02,000 --> 00:30:07,000

They go to the morgue and the hospital and check and see if he possibly was there.

334

00:30:08,000 --> 00:30:09,000

He was not.

335

00:30:10,000 --> 00:30:17,000

But several months later, the devastated girl receives a message from her father confirming that he's alive and safe.

336

00:30:17,000 --> 00:30:24,000

However, he offers no explanation as to why he walked out or where exactly he is.

337

00:30:26,000 --> 00:30:36,000

16 years later, Mary Lou, now 22 years old, receives a telegram from an attorney explaining that her father has passed away.

338

00:30:37,000 --> 00:30:43,000

The lawyer also gives her and her mother a note, written just days before Boyce's death.

339

00:30:44,000 --> 00:30:48,000

He penned them a letter explaining why he had left them. They were amazed.

340

00:30:49,000 --> 00:30:52,000

What stunning confession does this letter reveal?

341

00:30:59,000 --> 00:31:01,000

It's 1945, Seattle, Washington.

342

00:31:02,000 --> 00:31:10,000

It's 16 years since Boyce Gully walked out of the house and never came back, leaving his daughter, Mary Lou, forever wondering why.

343

00:31:11,000 --> 00:31:17,000

Having learned of his recent death, Mary Lou is about to uncover her father's heartbreaking secret.

344

00:31:19,000 --> 00:31:22,000

The reason he had left is because he had tuberculosis.

345

00:31:23,000 --> 00:31:26,000

In the note, Boyce begs for his daughter's forgiveness.

346

00:31:26,000 --> 00:31:33,000

Then explains that since the lung infection was highly contagious, he made the desperate decision to leave.

347

00:31:35,000 --> 00:31:41,000

His instinct was to try to protect his family. He did not want his little daughter and his wife to catch the disease.

348

00:31:43,000 --> 00:31:49,000

Boyce chose Phoenix as his new home because the dry desert air was supposed to ease his tuberculosis.

349

00:31:50,000 --> 00:31:52,000

And it's there that he spent his remaining years.

350

00:31:53,000 --> 00:31:54,000

But that's not all.

351

00:31:54,000 --> 00:31:57,000

The letter contains another stunning revelation.

352

00:31:58,000 --> 00:32:06,000

He informed Mary Lou and her mother that they had a very unusual inheritance and they physically had to come to Arizona in order to receive it.

353

00:32:07,000 --> 00:32:13,000

Boyce's attorney informs them that the cryptic bequest can only be claimed at a specific address.

354

00:32:16,000 --> 00:32:21,000

Mary Lou and her mother travel for days before finally arriving at their destination in the middle of the night.

355

00:32:22,000 --> 00:32:27,000

All of a sudden they turn to corner and she saw this massive structure on the side of the mountain.

356

00:32:29,000 --> 00:32:41,000

And as Mary Lou gazes upon the monstrous maze of parapets, towers and balconies, the stunned young woman realizes that her father has kept his promise made years ago at the beach.

357

00:32:42,000 --> 00:32:46,000

She was amazed that her daddy would actually build a castle for her.

358

00:32:46,000 --> 00:32:57,000

Returning the next morning, Mary Lou and her mother tour the eclectic 18 room dwelling made of salvaged objects.

359

00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:05,000

There are items like telegraph pole, railroad track, box car siding, refrigerator dishes and farming equipment.

360

00:33:06,000 --> 00:33:07,000

Just about anything that somebody might throw away.

361

00:33:08,000 --> 00:33:20,000

Mary Lou learns from the locals how her father gathered abandoned artifacts for the project and over the years acquired the basic engineering know-how to build the structure.

362

00:33:21,000 --> 00:33:25,000

But this unlikely tale has a final twist.

363

00:33:28,000 --> 00:33:36,000

In his writings, Boyce states that within the castle is a hidden chamber that holds one more surprise for the daughter he was forced to abandon.

364

00:33:37,000 --> 00:33:50,000

Following his instructions, Mary Lou locates a trap door leading to a secret room where she finds two gold nuggets, a thousand dollars in cash and her father's portrait.

365

00:33:51,000 --> 00:34:00,000

But for the young woman, perhaps the most precious item is a small piece of paper, an old Valentine's Day card she had given him when she was a little girl.

366

00:34:01,000 --> 00:34:06,000

Mary Lou was very teary-eyed when she saw the Valentine. It showed he loved her.

367

00:34:07,000 --> 00:34:11,000

The fairy tale home eventually comes to be known as the Mystery Castle.

368

00:34:12,000 --> 00:34:17,000

And it's here that the proud daughter remains till her death in 2010.

369

00:34:18,000 --> 00:34:26,000

Today, this labor of love still stands as a moving reminder of a father's quest to make his child's dreams come true.

370

00:34:27,000 --> 00:34:41,000

Outside the remote mining town of Carlsbad, New Mexico is a magnificent desert panorama featuring jagged cacti and dry limestone legends.

371

00:34:42,000 --> 00:34:49,000

But beneath this sunscorched terrain lies a wondrous subterranean landscape.

372

00:34:49,000 --> 00:35:01,000

We have towering stalagmites, jagged stalactites, huge open spaces all underground. It's been called the Eighth Wonder of the Natural World.

373

00:35:04,000 --> 00:35:14,000

These are the Carlsbad caverns, comprised of some of the largest caves in the world and home to hundreds of thousands of bats.

374

00:35:15,000 --> 00:35:25,000

And as park ranger Manny Bemis can attest, these nocturnal creatures were once considered the key

to a covert military operation.

375

00:35:26,000 --> 00:35:34,000

The bats would be the main players in one crazy scheme to bring down one of America's enemies.

376

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

What extraordinary secret weapon was conceived in these underground chambers?

377

00:35:42,000 --> 00:35:45,000

1941, New Mexico.

378

00:35:46,000 --> 00:35:52,000

Dental surgeon and amateur inventor Dr. Lytle Adams tours the Carlsbad caverns on vacation.

379

00:35:53,000 --> 00:35:59,000

As with many visitors, he is impressed by the number of bats exiting the caves.

380

00:35:59,000 --> 00:36:05,000

The bats fly out in a great swarm, almost looks like smoke coming out from the cave.

381

00:36:06,000 --> 00:36:15,000

But as he heads home, the captivated explorer is unaware that at that very moment, a swarm of a different kind is approaching Pearl Harbor.

382

00:36:16,000 --> 00:36:18,000

Japanese fighter planes.

383

00:36:19,000 --> 00:36:29,000

And on December 8th, 1941, the day after the attack, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declares war.

384

00:36:32,000 --> 00:36:37,000

Upon hearing the news, Dr. Adams ponders how he can help his country.

385

00:36:38,000 --> 00:36:46,000

There was the fervor here in the United States with people coming up with all kinds of ideas to win this war that we were suddenly thrust into.

386

00:36:48,000 --> 00:36:53,000

The dentist realizes that almost all of the buildings in Japan are made of wood.

387

00:36:54,000 --> 00:37:08,000

Dr. Adams was a smart man and he came up with the idea that if there could be fires starting all over Japan, there would be widespread destruction of the infrastructure, but very little loss of life.

388

00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:17,000

And inspired by the bats' mass exodus from the Carlsbad caverns, Adams conceives of a radical weapon.

389

00:37:18,000 --> 00:37:22,000

One with a far greater radius of destruction than a conventional bomb.

390

00:37:23,000 --> 00:37:40,000

He envisioned 200,000 bats, each one carrying a small and sin-period device, and flying off into the cubby holes and the attics and under the bridges, setting thousands of fires simultaneously over several miles.

391

00:37:41,000 --> 00:37:50,000

By tapping into a high-ranking connection, Dr. Adams manages to get his proposal into the hands of the President, who immediately sends a memo to his generals.

392

00:37:51,000 --> 00:37:59,000

The note said, this man is not a nut. It seems like a wild idea, but it just might work.

393

00:38:01,000 --> 00:38:08,000

Dr. Adams and the military soon begin a top-secret project to turn bats into bombs.

394

00:38:08,000 --> 00:38:21,000

They were able to create a bomb about the size of a lipstick tube with a small timer device so that it would set on fire about 15 minutes after the bat was released.

395

00:38:23,000 --> 00:38:28,000

After months of work, the scientists and Dr. Adams prepare a dramatic test.

396

00:38:29,000 --> 00:38:34,000

They place thousands of bats into refrigeration chambers to send them into hibernation.

397

00:38:34,000 --> 00:38:40,000

Then the team glues the tiny explosives onto the bodies of the sleeping creatures.

398

00:38:41,000 --> 00:38:46,000

Which of course ensured that the bat was going to be cremated when the bomb went off.

399

00:38:47,000 --> 00:38:48,000

But we were at war.

400

00:38:50,000 --> 00:38:55,000

Finally, the bats are transferred to a military base to await a test operation.

401

00:38:56,000 --> 00:38:58,000

Dr. Adams, of course, was very excited.

402

00:38:59,000 --> 00:39:01,000

Those on the bat bomb team didn't know.

403

00:39:01,000 --> 00:39:03,000

Was it going to work or not?

404

00:39:04,000 --> 00:39:10,000

What will become of Dr. Adams' bat bombs? Can they really help to win the war?

405

00:39:31,000 --> 00:39:40,000

They have armed thousands of bats with tiny incendiary devices and released them over Japan in the

hopes of destroying the country's wooden infrastructure.

406

00:39:41,000 --> 00:39:44,000

But will these bat bombs actually work?

407

00:39:46,000 --> 00:39:53,000

The hibernating bats are transferred to the Carl's Bat Auxiliary Airfield in New Mexico to await the crucial test.

408

00:39:54,000 --> 00:39:59,000

But shortly after arriving, some of the bats wake up sooner than expected.

409

00:39:59,000 --> 00:40:03,000

It was very difficult to hold these squirming bats.

410

00:40:04,000 --> 00:40:08,000

The handlers dropped the bats and the bats went flying off into the airfield.

411

00:40:09,000 --> 00:40:14,000

Then the agitated creatures do exactly what they are meant to do in Japan.

412

00:40:15,000 --> 00:40:18,000

Seeking shelter, they fly directly into the surrounding structures.

413

00:40:19,000 --> 00:40:25,000

And within 15 minutes, the bats ignited and the entire airfield burned to the ground.

414

00:40:25,000 --> 00:40:28,000

Hangars, buildings, everything.

415

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

Despite the accidental incineration of the airfield, the mission is declared a success.

416

00:40:36,000 --> 00:40:43,000

And soon, in the summer of 1944, preparations are underway to carry out Operation Bat Bomb.

417

00:40:44,000 --> 00:40:50,000

One million incendiary units were ordered and they made plans to collect one million bats.

418

00:40:50,000 --> 00:40:57,000

But just months before the deployment of these radical explosives, Dr. Adams receives an unexpected message.

419

00:40:58,000 --> 00:41:05,000

He suddenly got the news that the entire project had been canceled. Everybody was to go home. It was over.

420

00:41:09,000 --> 00:41:16,000

It's not until the summer of 1945 that Dr. Adams and his team understand why the project was canned.

421

00:41:16,000 --> 00:41:23,000

The military had decided to put the resources into a different bomb program, the atomic bomb.

422

00:41:26,000 --> 00:41:35,000

In August of that year, the United States drops the world's first nuclear weapons on Japan, killing an estimated quarter million people.

423

00:41:37,000 --> 00:41:43,000

Dr. Adams was always disappointed and he always maintained that the bat bombs would have worked.

424

00:41:43,000 --> 00:41:48,000

Japan could have been devastated, yet with small loss of life.

425

00:41:49,000 --> 00:41:56,000

The atomic bombs ended World War II and history will never know if this experimental weapon would have done the same.

426

00:41:57,000 --> 00:42:08,000

But today, the Coral's Bad Caverns and its multitude of bats stand as a remarkable reminder that ingenuity can be found in the most unexpected places.

427

00:42:14,000 --> 00:42:22,000

From an alien abduction to a fantastical fortress. A fictitious saint to a cross-dressing combatant.

428

00:42:23,000 --> 00:42:27,000

I'm Don Wildman and these are Monumental Mysteries.