

1

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

A political giant who took on the model.

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

This was one of the great political stunts of New York City's history.

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

A mountain of sand that hides a Hollywood secret.

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

There's a rumor that a lost relic from another time still survives buried under the sand.

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

And a Victorian home with a haunting tale of possession.

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

This was their daughter inside of another girl's body.

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

Sometimes the greatest secrets lie in plain sight.

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

These are monumental mysteries.

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

On the New England coastline, surrounding the busiest port in Massachusetts,

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

is one of America's oldest cities, Boston.

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00:00:58,000 --> 00:01:04,000

With its rich revolutionary history, it has become known as the cradle of liberty.

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00:01:04,000 --> 00:01:10,000

But one monument here epitomizes modern democracy in action.

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00:01:10,000 --> 00:01:15,000

It has a beautiful brick front and is capped by a gold dome.

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00:01:15,000 --> 00:01:21,000

And it is one of the earliest and most pristine examples of federal architecture in the nation.

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

Built in 1798, this is the Massachusetts State House.

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00:01:26,000 --> 00:01:31,000

It's home to both the governor's office and the legislative chambers.

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00:01:31,000 --> 00:01:41,000

But as tour guide Mark Linehan can attest, this polished pillar of politics was once at the center of an unusual abduction.

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00:01:41,000 --> 00:01:48,000

This majestic building found itself embroiled in a crisis that brought government to a standstill.

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00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:55,000

What embarrassing stunt left the State House reeling and prompted an unprecedented manhunt?

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

April 26, 1933, Boston.

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

The day's legislative sessions are at an end when a reporter working the late shift in the State House press room answers an unexpected call.

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00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:17,000

And on the other end, the voice tells him there's something missing from the State House and then abruptly hangs up.

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00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:23,000

The startled journalist takes the bait and notifies security.

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00:02:23,000 --> 00:02:29,000

And when the guard enters the House of Representatives chamber, he makes a shocking discovery.

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00:02:29,000 --> 00:02:35,000

Something very important is indeed missing. The Sacred Cod.

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00:02:35,000 --> 00:02:47,000

The Sacred Cod is a five-foot-long wood carving of a codfish that has hung in the House of Representatives since 1798 as an unofficial good luck charm.

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00:02:47,000 --> 00:02:57,000

The Sacred Cod is representative of Boston's cod fishing industry, which is symbolic of our early prosperity and our success as a colony.

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00:02:59,000 --> 00:03:06,000

With this emblem of civic pride missing, the State House is locked down and the police are summoned.

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00:03:06,000 --> 00:03:13,000

The three questions police have right off the bat is who took it, why did they take it,

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00:03:13,000 --> 00:03:18,000

but also how did they take it with no one noticing?

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00:03:18,000 --> 00:03:25,000

Angling for a lead, detectives investigate the fishy situation, but can't seem to catch a break.

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00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:34,000

Then, two days later, a Harvard campus policeman named Charles Aptid receives a mysterious phone call.

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00:03:34,000 --> 00:03:46,000

The voice tells him that if he wants the Sacred Cod back, he's got to drive to a park about seven miles southwest of the center of town and to look for a car with no license plate.

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00:03:48,000 --> 00:03:53,000

In hopes of netting the crafty cod nappers, Aptid takes the bait.

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00:03:53,000 --> 00:03:59,000

He speeds off to the park, where he indeed spots a car with no license plate.

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00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:06,000

But before he can even get out of his car to investigate, the car takes off and Charles Aptid immediately gives chase.

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00:04:07,000 --> 00:04:14,000

Believing he has his suspects on the hook, the policeman tails the mysterious vehicle for 20 minutes.

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00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:18,000

Charles Aptid is able to overtake them and force them to stop.

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00:04:20,000 --> 00:04:25,000

As Aptid leaps from his car, he sees two men get out of the other vehicle.

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00:04:26,000 --> 00:04:33,000

Their collars are upturned and their hats are pulled down and they throw the Sacred Cod into his arms.

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00:04:33,000 --> 00:04:37,000

And before he can react, they jump back into their car and take off.

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00:04:40,000 --> 00:04:47,000

Although the thieves get away, Aptid is able to return the Sacred Cod to the Massachusetts State House.

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00:04:48,000 --> 00:04:55,000

But the question remains, who were the cod nappers? And why do they swipe the cherished symbol?

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

A group of undergraduates thinks they know the answer.

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

They believe the stunt might be the work of the famous college humor publication, The Harvard Lampoon.

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00:05:07,000 --> 00:05:14,000

And when police investigate further, they discover that staff at the State House had seen two young men,

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00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:17,000

roaming inside the building on the day of the theft.

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

One of them is carrying this oversized flower box that had lilies sticking out of one end.

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

Detectives theorize that these young men were in fact Lampoon writers,

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00:05:31,000 --> 00:05:39,000

who broke into the chambers, clipped the wires of the Sacred Cod, and stowed their catch in the oversized flower box.

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00:05:40,000 --> 00:05:45,000

Under questioning, however, the Lampoon writers are not forthcoming.

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

The police threaten them with fines, with jail time, but no matter what they try, the students are tight lipped.

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00:05:54,000 --> 00:06:01,000

And the police never end up having enough evidence in order to prosecute anybody for the crime of stealing the Sacred Cod.

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00:06:02,000 --> 00:06:09,000

But while the young comedians never own up to the stunt, they go on to pull off many other notorious pranks,

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00:06:09,000 --> 00:06:13,000

and eventually found the world-renowned National Lampoon.

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00:06:15,000 --> 00:06:21,000

As for the Sacred Cod, it's rehung in its original spot, but with one distinction.

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

They raise it about six inches, so now it's inaccessible except by a step ladder.

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00:06:26,000 --> 00:06:32,000

To this day, the Sacred Cod has remained mercifully un molested at the Massachusetts State House.

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00:06:34,000 --> 00:06:39,000

Suspended as a reminder of a fishy theft that helped spawn a comical legend.

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00:06:44,000 --> 00:06:52,000

Toledo, Ohio is renowned for its contribution to the glass-making industry, earning it the title The Glass Capital of the World.

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00:06:53,000 --> 00:06:58,000

But few are aware of the town's pioneering role in a very different arena.

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

Baseball.

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00:07:02,000 --> 00:07:10,000

And in the shadows of the local ballpark is a modest marker that commemorates one of the sport's greatest unsung heroes.

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00:07:10,000 --> 00:07:17,000

The plaque is eight and a half feet tall, about three and a half feet wide, with a brown background and yellow writing.

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00:07:18,000 --> 00:07:28,000

According to Professor Lisa Doris Alexander, this unassuming plaque celebrates a pioneer who is almost entirely absent from the history books.

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00:07:29,000 --> 00:07:33,000

Many think this trailblazing athlete should be credited for an amazing first.

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00:07:34,000 --> 00:07:38,000

So what is this forgotten hero's astonishing achievement?

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00:07:40,000 --> 00:07:42,000

1883. Toledo, Ohio.

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00:07:43,000 --> 00:07:48,000

It's almost two decades since the Civil War ended slavery in the United States.

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00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:55,000

Although the government has enshrined racial equality in the eyes of the law, in truth, public attitude lags behind.

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

Unfortunately, racial relations in the United States have started to slip backwards a bit.

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00:08:01,000 --> 00:08:04,000

It is not an easy time for black people in the North or the South.

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00:08:06,000 --> 00:08:10,000

And professional baseball is no exception to this social injustice.

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00:08:10,000 --> 00:08:16,000

But there is one ambitious player who has his mind set on playing for the major leagues.

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00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:23,000

Known for his excellent catching ability and powerful throwing arm, his name is Moses Fleetwood Walker.

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00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:26,000

Walker was a highly intelligent man.

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00:08:27,000 --> 00:08:29,000

He graduated from Overland College.

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00:08:30,000 --> 00:08:33,000

Then he attended the University of Michigan where he played baseball.

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00:08:34,000 --> 00:08:40,000

Despite the color of Walker's skin, he gets the attention of his local minor league team.

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00:08:41,000 --> 00:08:47,000

The manager of the Toledo Blue Stockings signed Moses Fleetwood Walker to a contract,

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00:08:48,000 --> 00:08:50,000

proving that he was more concerned with talent than race.

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

However, once on the team, Walker faces racist taunts, even from his own teammates.

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

There were some players that did not want to take signs from a black catcher.

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00:09:03,000 --> 00:09:08,000

So as a catcher, you have no idea what pitch is coming towards you at any time.

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

As if that's not enough, Walker is about to receive a curveball of the cruelest kind.

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00:09:19,000 --> 00:09:20,000

August 1883.

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00:09:21,000 --> 00:09:27,000

The Toledo Blue Stockings are scheduled to play an exhibition game against the Chicago White Stockings,

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00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:30,000

whose manager is a man named Cap Anson.

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00:09:31,000 --> 00:09:36,000

Cap Anson was known for being very intimidating, very loud, and a generally unpleasant person.

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00:09:38,000 --> 00:09:44,000

When Anson arrives for the game, he takes one look at the Blue Stockings lineup and makes a shocking demand.

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00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:54,000

Cap Anson became very agitated and swore that he would not let his team take the field if there was a black man on the roster.

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00:09:55,000 --> 00:10:01,000

So will Cap Anson's bigotry and Walker's dream of playing in the major leagues?

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00:10:05,000 --> 00:10:07,000

Ohio, 1883.

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00:10:08,000 --> 00:10:13,000

The minor league baseball team, the Toledo Blue Stockings, is about to play the Chicago White Stockings.

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

But Chicago's manager refuses to put his team on the field unless Toledo's African-American player, Moses Fleetwood Walker,

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00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:27,000

is benched. So will Walker get to play ball?

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00:10:29,000 --> 00:10:33,000

Tension mounts during Cap Anson's racist tirade.

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00:10:34,000 --> 00:10:36,000

Walker was quite angry.

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00:10:37,000 --> 00:10:42,000

But the Blue Stockings manager refuses to be publicly bullied by his prejudiced opponent.

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00:10:43,000 --> 00:10:51,000

He decided that he was going to play Moses Fleetwood Walker and told Cap Anson that if his team did not take the field, then they could forfeit the day's receipts.

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00:10:52,000 --> 00:10:59,000

With his takings at risk, Anson eventually gives in and allows the game to proceed as scheduled.

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

You're playing and you're up.

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00:11:03,000 --> 00:11:12,000

When Walker goes up to bat, he scores a run and plays an errorless game and his remarkable form continues throughout the season.

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00:11:13,000 --> 00:11:19,000

Walker had an impressive year and partially due to that, the Toledo Blue Stockings won the pennant that year.

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00:11:22,000 --> 00:11:30,000

The following season, the Toledo Blue Stockings joined the American Association, what we now call Major League Baseball.

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00:11:32,000 --> 00:11:40,000

And on opening day, May 1st, 1884, Moses Fleetwood Walker proudly takes the field.

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00:11:41,000 --> 00:11:45,000

At that moment, we believe that he becomes the first African-American Major League Baseball player.

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00:11:46,000 --> 00:11:52,000

But after playing 42 games, Walker faces yet more prejudice.

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00:11:55,000 --> 00:12:07,000

In 1883, African-Americans are subjected to a new set of statutes passed down by the Supreme Court, the Jim Crow Laws, which mandate racial segregation.

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00:12:09,000 --> 00:12:13,000

Very quickly, the United States became a very segregated nation.

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

And in 1887, the Major League adopts a so-called gentleman's agreement, banning black players.

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00:12:23,000 --> 00:12:27,000

Walker never plays Major League Baseball again.

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00:12:28,000 --> 00:12:38,000

White mainstream historians were not interested in Walker's career at that time, and Moses Fleetwood Walker's accomplishments fade into history.

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

It's another 60 years before the gentleman's agreement is banned.

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00:12:46,000 --> 00:12:52,000

And on April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson plays in a professional baseball game.

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00:12:53,000 --> 00:12:58,000

But instead of Walker, he is hailed as the first African-American Major League Baseball player.

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00:12:59,000 --> 00:13:03,000

But now the baseball historians are starting to realize that honor goes to Moses Fleetwood Walker.

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

Today, this plaque stands as a reminder of Toledo's forgotten hometown hero.

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

A trailblazing and inspiring baseball player whose fiercest opponent was racism.

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00:13:24,000 --> 00:13:32,000

New York City attracts over 50 million tourists a year and is home to some of the most iconic statues in the country.

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00:13:34,000 --> 00:13:40,000

But tucked away in downtown Manhattan is a sculpture of a man that is often overlooked.

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00:13:41,000 --> 00:13:50,000

The figure is only five foot two. He's gesticulating with his hands saying something and walking with real purpose.

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00:13:51,000 --> 00:13:57,000

This is the statue of New York Mayor, Viarella LaGuardia, nicknamed the Little Flower.

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00:13:58,000 --> 00:14:01,000

He was famous for tackling the city's problems with theatrical flair.

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

And as Professor Douglas Muzio can attest, one of LaGuardia's greatest performances relied on an item more at home on the dinner plate than city hall.

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00:14:14,000 --> 00:14:21,000

This man conceived and executed one of the great political stunts of New York City's history.

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00:14:22,000 --> 00:14:31,000

How did LaGuardia enact one of New York's most bizarre pieces of legislation involving, of all things, a vegetable.

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00:14:33,000 --> 00:14:37,000

1934, New York City is in the midst of the Great Depression.

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00:14:38,000 --> 00:14:44,000

Virtually a quarter of all workers are unemployed and thousands wait in bread lines.

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00:14:45,000 --> 00:14:52,000

To make matters worse, local government is riddled with corruption, fueled by a power hungry mafia.

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00:14:53,000 --> 00:14:58,000

You have the politicians and the gangsters and real alliance here.

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00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:08,000

New Yorkers are desperate for change and elect Viarella LaGuardia as their new mayor on the back of his promise to rid the city of the mafia.

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00:15:10,000 --> 00:15:13,000

He's going to save the city from organized crime.

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00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:19,000

He had a deep visceral hatred for them and what they did.

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00:15:20,000 --> 00:15:29,000

The mob makes much of its income through various illegal activities, from bookmaking to bootlegging, and its insidious reach is growing.

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00:15:30,000 --> 00:15:38,000

LaGuardia wants to send this loud message that the times they are a change in and I'm going to be the instrument of this change.

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00:15:42,000 --> 00:15:48,000

And he recognizes that the way to hurt any business enterprise is through money.

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00:15:50,000 --> 00:16:00,000

So on December 21, 1935, in sub-zero temperatures, the mayor calls an impromptu press conference from the back of a delivery truck

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00:16:01,000 --> 00:16:05,000

and announces he's about to shut down the mob's latest racket.

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00:16:06,000 --> 00:16:08,000

But it's not speakeasies or brothels.

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

Instead, he proclaims a city-wide food emergency.

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00:16:14,000 --> 00:16:17,000

And everybody's wondering, well, what's the food emergency?

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

And he announces that he's banning the sale, display and distribution of miniature artichokes.

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00:16:28,000 --> 00:16:29,000

What?

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00:16:30,000 --> 00:16:32,000

So why is LaGuardia banning artichokes?

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00:16:33,000 --> 00:16:38,000

And what does this harmless vegetable have to do with his war on organized crime?

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00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:44,000

It's December 1935, New York City.

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

Mayor Fiorel LaGuardia is on a mission to break the mafia's grip on the city's economy.

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

But at a bizarre press conference, instead of attacking alcohol or prostitution,

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00:16:58,000 --> 00:17:03,000

he outlaws the sale, possession and display of artichokes.

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00:17:04,000 --> 00:17:08,000

Reporters are turning to one another. Why artichokes?

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00:17:09,000 --> 00:17:12,000

And they're bewildered. What is he doing?

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00:17:13,000 --> 00:17:18,000

What the citizens of the city of New York don't know is that by banning the artichoke,

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00:17:19,000 --> 00:17:25,000

LaGuardia is trying to bankrupt one of the city's most notorious mobsters, Zero Teranova.

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00:17:26,000 --> 00:17:31,000

He is boss of all bosses in Italian East Harlem and the Bronx,

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00:17:32,000 --> 00:17:38,000

and he controls the sale, display and distribution of the artichoke.

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00:17:39,000 --> 00:17:45,000

As a staple of Italian cuisine, the artichoke is a best seller among the immigrant community.

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00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:51,000

Teranova and his gang are extorting millions of dollars from storekeepers and grocers

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00:17:51,000 --> 00:17:53,000

who offer the favorite vegetable.

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00:17:55,000 --> 00:17:58,000

The artichoke is his golden goose. It's his moneymaker.

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00:17:59,000 --> 00:18:01,000

He's known as the artichoke king.

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00:18:02,000 --> 00:18:07,000

The day after Christmas, LaGuardia's embargo on the artichoke goes into effect.

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00:18:08,000 --> 00:18:16,000

He's attacking Teranova's cash flow, and he knows if he strangles that cash flow, Teranova's dead.

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00:18:17,000 --> 00:18:24,000

With the ban in place, LaGuardia reorganizes the transport and distribution of artichokes,

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00:18:25,000 --> 00:18:27,000

creating a system that bypasses the mobsters.

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00:18:28,000 --> 00:18:34,000

Stripped of his monopoly on the obscure vegetable, Teranova's cash flow plummets.

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00:18:35,000 --> 00:18:39,000

So Teranova's out of business. He's got no money, no power, he's finished.

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00:18:40,000 --> 00:18:45,000

And he becomes destitute. He winds up on the streets. He becomes a vagrant.

169

00:18:47,000 --> 00:18:55,000

When LaGuardia lifts the ban, his coalition brings back the artichoke with great fanfare, and at much lower prices.

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00:18:56,000 --> 00:19:02,000

All of a sudden the artichoke becomes a hot item. Once it was just Italians, they ate it.

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00:19:03,000 --> 00:19:08,000

Now it becomes a cultural phenomenon. The sales of artichokes boom.

172

00:19:09,000 --> 00:19:15,000

In bringing down Teranova, LaGuardia has shown that he is ready to wage war on the rest of the mob.

173

00:19:17,000 --> 00:19:25,000

This was the signal to the other racketeers that this is the first guy, and you're next, and you're not as tough and I'm tougher than you are.

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00:19:26,000 --> 00:19:36,000

By the end of his first term in 1937, LaGuardia succeeds in lowering crime by 20%, and over his next eight years in office,

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00:19:37,000 --> 00:19:41,000

he continues to crusade against corruption, leaving a lasting legacy.

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00:19:41,000 --> 00:19:49,000

He is not only the greatest New York City mayor, but I would argue the greatest American city mayor.

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00:19:50,000 --> 00:20:02,000

And this statue of Fiora LaGuardia stands as a testament to a man whose actions, with the help of a vegetable, transformed New York City into the metropolis it is today.

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00:20:03,000 --> 00:20:12,000

On the northeast border of Illinois, straddling the Iroquois River is the tiny city of Watzika.

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00:20:15,000 --> 00:20:22,000

And on its rural outskirts is an architectural gem and the area's most unusual attraction.

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

It's a brick Italian-y style home. It's about four stories. It's got the big arching windows.

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00:20:28,000 --> 00:20:33,000

It really captures the time period of Watzika in the 1860s.

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00:20:34,000 --> 00:20:36,000

This is the rough home.

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00:20:38,000 --> 00:20:48,000

And as historian Troy Taylor knows, the chilling tale behind this Victorian abode is one of spirit's possession and the afterlife.

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00:20:48,000 --> 00:20:57,000

There was a supernatural event that occurred in this house that really changed an entire town because of one little girl.

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00:20:59,000 --> 00:21:07,000

So what phenomenon did this house witness and how did it call into question the very nature of life and death itself?

186

00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:14,000

July 1877, Watzika, Illinois.

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

The members of the Venom family are worried. Their 13-year-old daughter, Laranze, is suffering from a bizarre and inexplicable sickness.

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00:21:26,000 --> 00:21:34,000

Laranze would go into trances and seizures. She would contort, twist and convulse the body.

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00:21:34,000 --> 00:21:38,000

And it just terrified and paralyzed the family.

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00:21:39,000 --> 00:21:46,000

Laranze's doctors conduct a series of examinations, but none of them can explain her frightening condition.

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00:21:47,000 --> 00:21:50,000

The young girl seems destined for the insane asylum.

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00:21:51,000 --> 00:22:02,000

But in January 1878, Hope arrives in the form of Dr. E. W. Stevens, who agrees to make a final assessment of the ailing child.

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00:22:03,000 --> 00:22:10,000

This was one last chance, someone who could see Laranze and perhaps figure out what was going on with her.

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

Dr. Stevens begins by asking a series of simple questions.

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00:22:19,000 --> 00:22:23,000

But he soon realizes Laranze isn't at all herself.

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00:22:25,000 --> 00:22:30,000

She was very confused. She said that she was in a place she didn't recognize.

197

00:22:31,000 --> 00:22:37,000

She didn't recognize the Venoms. She began acting very strangely.

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00:22:39,000 --> 00:22:43,000

Intrigued, Dr. Stevens continues his questioning.

199

00:22:44,000 --> 00:22:48,000

He asks her what her name is, expecting her to say Laranze Venom.

200

00:22:50,000 --> 00:22:53,000

Instead she answers, my name is Mary Roth.

201

00:22:53,000 --> 00:22:58,000

Dr. Stevens and the Venoms are stunned.

202

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

Mary Roth was a young woman who had lived in Watsika. She had gone through the same kind of seizure.

203

00:23:06,000 --> 00:23:12,000

And she had been put away in the insane asylum. And she later died there.

204

00:23:14,000 --> 00:23:20,000

Laranze was only one year old at the time and would have no way of knowing the girl's tragic tale.

205

00:23:21,000 --> 00:23:25,000

It seemed that Laranze was possessed by the spirit of Mary Roth.

206

00:23:27,000 --> 00:23:35,000

The desperate girl is so distraught by her now unfamiliar surroundings that she begs the Venoms to take her to live with the Roths.

207

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

Who she believes to be her real parents.

208

00:23:41,000 --> 00:23:48,000

In the days that followed Laranze or Mary, spent so much time crying and weeping the Venoms. Didn't know who she was anymore.

209

00:23:49,000 --> 00:23:57,000

Finally the Venoms contact the Roths and beg them to take Laranze into their home in hopes of snapping her out of her bizarre state.

210

00:23:58,000 --> 00:24:07,000

The Roths were just as confused as the Venoms were. But because their daughter Mary had gone through the same kind of thing and had died, they had great sympathy.

211

00:24:11,000 --> 00:24:16,000

But on her arrival at the Roths' home, Laranze does something astonishing.

212

00:24:19,000 --> 00:24:28,000

She saw Mary's piano and she sat down and began to play songs that Mary had loved when she was alive.

213

00:24:31,000 --> 00:24:35,000

This had to be very unnerving for the Roths.

214

00:24:36,000 --> 00:24:42,000

But what made it even stranger is that Laranze didn't know how to play the piano.

215

00:24:43,000 --> 00:24:52,000

Has Laranze really been possessed by the spirit of Mary Roth? Or is there another explanation for her astonishing behavior?

216

00:24:57,000 --> 00:25:06,000

It's 1878, Watzika, Illinois. 13 year old Laranze Venom seems to be possessed by the spirit of Mary Roth.

217

00:25:07,000 --> 00:25:10,000

A teenage girl who died over a decade earlier.

218

00:25:12,000 --> 00:25:18,000

In the hopes of helping Laranze recover her senses, the Roth family have taken her into their home.

219

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

So what's the truth behind this bizarre possession?

220

00:25:24,000 --> 00:25:32,000

Over the course of the next four months, Laranze recognized the Roths' family members, cousins, neighbors, people that only Mary knew.

221

00:25:33,000 --> 00:25:40,000

They really truly come to believe that this really was their daughter inside of another girl's body.

222

00:25:42,000 --> 00:25:47,000

But then one morning, the girl tearfully approaches the Roths with some news.

223

00:25:48,000 --> 00:25:51,000

Mary explained that she was going to have to leave them and return to heaven.

224

00:25:52,000 --> 00:25:57,000

And it was time for Laranze to return to her own body and her own family.

225

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

The Roths bid farewell to what they perceive as the spirit of their deceased daughter and returned Laranze back to her real family.

226

00:26:09,000 --> 00:26:14,000

Suddenly, Mary was simply gone. Laranze was herself again.

227

00:26:15,000 --> 00:26:19,000

The whole thing just seemed to be a very vague dream.

228

00:26:20,000 --> 00:26:23,000

She really didn't know where she'd been for the last four months.

229

00:26:24,000 --> 00:26:27,000

The Venoms are relieved to have their daughter back.

230

00:26:28,000 --> 00:26:32,000

But was Laranze really possessed by the spirit of Mary Roth?

231

00:26:33,000 --> 00:26:39,000

Some people claim the whole thing was a hoax, some sort of trick by the families to get rich.

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00:26:40,000 --> 00:26:49,000

Such doubters point to the huge success of a book written by Laranze's physician, Dr. Stevens, entitled *The What Seek a Wonder*.

233

00:26:50,000 --> 00:26:56,000

But the skeptics are confounded by one final and stunning twist to the tale.

234

00:26:57,000 --> 00:27:04,000

When Laranze went back home to her real family, the seizures, the trances, all of it was gone.

235

00:27:05,000 --> 00:27:10,000

And she believed, as did the two families, that she'd been healed by the spirit of Mary Roth.

236

00:27:11,000 --> 00:27:16,000

Throughout the rest of her life, she never again suffered from any seizures or trances.

237

00:27:17,000 --> 00:27:21,000

The mystery of this miraculous healing is still unsolved.

238

00:27:21,000 --> 00:27:28,000

For many people, this case became a very convincing event that we really do live on after we die.

239

00:27:29,000 --> 00:27:32,000

And that in some cases, we can't come back.

240

00:27:35,000 --> 00:27:43,000

Today, the alleged possession of Laranze Venom by Mary Roth remains one of the most enduring supernatural mysteries in America.

241

00:27:44,000 --> 00:27:50,000

And the Roth family home stands as a haunting reminder of this quaint town's connection.

242

00:27:51,000 --> 00:27:53,000

With the other side.

243

00:27:56,000 --> 00:28:02,000

In southeast Louisiana, along the Mississippi River, lies the port city of New Orleans.

244

00:28:03,000 --> 00:28:11,000

Nicknamed the Big Easy, the city's French-influenced food and Spanish colonial architecture attracts millions of tourists each year.

245

00:28:12,000 --> 00:28:21,000

But tucked away in a 31-acre public space in the neighborhood of Tremay is an unusual sculpture that often goes unnoticed.

246

00:28:22,000 --> 00:28:31,000

The statue is made of bronze. It is about seven feet tall. There are three identical heads and four coordinates.

247

00:28:32,000 --> 00:28:38,000

It looks like several musicians, but actually it's one musician shown in the throes of playing.

248

00:28:39,000 --> 00:28:46,000

According to historian Michael White, this statue is a monument to a tragic musical hero.

249

00:28:47,000 --> 00:28:55,000

This figure descended from madness, but he also created one of the most important musical forms the world has ever known.

250

00:28:56,000 --> 00:29:04,000

What musical style did this man pioneer? And how is his breakthrough also linked to a mysterious inner demon?

251

00:29:04,000 --> 00:29:19,000

1895. New Orleans is a melting pot of French, Spanish, Italian and African-American immigrants who all share a common love. Music.

252

00:29:20,000 --> 00:29:27,000

There was music in the streets, there was music in social clubs, in picnics, parades, so music was the soul of the city.

253

00:29:28,000 --> 00:29:30,000

It was the glue that held people together.

254

00:29:30,000 --> 00:29:36,000

And one of the newest talents is an 18-year-old cornet player named Charles Buddy Bolden.

255

00:29:37,000 --> 00:29:45,000

Buddy Bolden was a dynamic dapper young man. He was well dressed, he was good looking, the ladies loved him, everybody loved him.

256

00:29:46,000 --> 00:29:50,000

Bolden and his band have modest success playing the day's popular melodies.

257

00:29:50,000 --> 00:30:02,000

Bolden was playing typical dance music, ragtime, marches, waltzes. Although Buddy was very popular, he was probably at first just an average musician.

258

00:30:03,000 --> 00:30:10,000

But while his early career is unspectacular, by 1900 something has changed.

259

00:30:10,000 --> 00:30:20,000

The crowd noticed that something strange was going on with Bolden. He seemed to be in a trance as if he were possessed. And then he started to improvise.

260

00:30:21,000 --> 00:30:25,000

Each time songs were played they were done differently.

261

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

The crowd has never heard anything like it before, but they love it.

262

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

He sends the audience into a frenzy. He made his music talk and sing and shout. Sort of like a conversation. And then all of a sudden he would come out of it just as if he had been transported somewhere else.

263

00:30:48,000 --> 00:30:56,000

Before long, audiences throughout New Orleans are mesmerized by Bolden's eccentric performances and innovative music.

264

00:30:57,000 --> 00:31:06,000

It was so exciting and so emotional, so free, so loose. It captured the entire range of human emotions in a way never heard before.

265

00:31:07,000 --> 00:31:13,000

But Buddy's sudden musical breakthrough is accompanied by a dark shift in his personality.

266

00:31:14,000 --> 00:31:20,000

At times he showed signs of paranoia. He was angry and violent.

267

00:31:21,000 --> 00:31:28,000

And the wilder his performances become, the more erratic his behavior is. Some even described it as demonic.

268

00:31:29,000 --> 00:31:36,000

In 1906, during a performance at the annual Labor Day Parade, Bolden loses control.

269

00:31:37,000 --> 00:31:48,000

As Buddy played in the parade, he laid down his cornet and went completely mad. He began foaming at the mouth, waving his hands erratically and talking crazy.

270

00:31:49,000 --> 00:31:57,000

What is the cause of Bolden's frightening breakdown? And could it be linked to his revolutionary new sound?

271

00:32:01,000 --> 00:32:13,000

It's 1906, New Orleans, Louisiana. 29-year-old cornet player Buddy Bolden has been thrilling audiences with a musical style they've never heard before. Improvisation.

272

00:32:14,000 --> 00:32:20,000

Yet as his popularity reaches new heights, his mental state deteriorates into psychosis.

273

00:32:21,000 --> 00:32:28,000

So what is the cause of Bolden's sudden breakdown? And could it be linked to his revolutionary new sound?

274

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

Eventually he went completely mad. He was arrested and charged with insanity.

275

00:32:38,000 --> 00:32:43,000

Bolden is kicked out of the band and committed to the Louisiana State Asylum.

276

00:32:44,000 --> 00:32:52,000

At this point Buddy was having hallucinations. He talked to himself, he heard voices. He was frightened. He was erratic. He was angry.

277

00:32:53,000 --> 00:32:57,000

The doctor at the insane asylum diagnosed him with a form of dementia.

278

00:32:57,000 --> 00:33:04,000

In the meantime, however, the city's performers take up the unpredictable musical style that Bolden pioneered.

279

00:33:05,000 --> 00:33:16,000

This eventually became known as jazz. Had it not been for Buddy Bolden's improvisations, popular music probably would have remained just ragtime.

280

00:33:17,000 --> 00:33:26,000

But while jazz music takes the world by storm, Bolden remains in the Jackson insane asylum and never plays again.

281

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

In 1931, at the age of 54, he dies a broken man.

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00:33:34,000 --> 00:33:41,000

But was Bolden's shocking collapse into madness linked to a simultaneous musical transformation?

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00:33:43,000 --> 00:33:49,000

Years later the medical community reclassifies Buddy's condition as schizophrenia.

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00:33:50,000 --> 00:33:58,000

And in 2001, British psychiatrist Dr. Sean Spence presents a controversial theory.

285

00:33:59,000 --> 00:34:06,000

Dr. Sean Spence theorized that Bolden schizophrenia may have something to do with the creation of

jazz itself.

286

00:34:07,000 --> 00:34:17,000

Dr. Spence explains that schizophrenia affects the area of the brain used for creativity and the onset of the disease usually occurs in young adulthood.

287

00:34:18,000 --> 00:34:22,000

The very time that Bolden developed his improvisational style.

288

00:34:23,000 --> 00:34:31,000

Dr. Spence's theory is pretty provocative to think that jazz America's beloved contribution to the arts could be the result of Buddy Bolden's mental illness.

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

But whatever the root of Bolden's genius, his influence lives on in the jazz music that he pioneered.

290

00:34:42,000 --> 00:34:56,000

And in his hometown of New Orleans, this three-headed statue honors an emotionally torn yet musically brilliant Charles Buddy Bolden who helped create the revolutionary art form of jazz.

291

00:34:59,000 --> 00:35:05,000

With 38 million people calling it home, California is the nation's most populous state.

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00:35:06,000 --> 00:35:15,000

But sandwiched between the mega cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco is a unique environment seemingly untouched by modern society.

293

00:35:16,000 --> 00:35:25,000

It's host to rare ecosystems and endangered animals, all kinds of plant life, and it's gained its recognition as a national natural landmark.

294

00:35:26,000 --> 00:35:31,000

This is the magnificent what Lupin de Pomodun's preserve.

295

00:35:32,000 --> 00:35:37,000

Peaking at 500 feet, these are the highest sand dunes in the western United States.

296

00:35:40,000 --> 00:35:52,000

And as museum president Brian Cooper can attest, this natural wonderland has become legendary not only for the height of these massive drifts, but also for the secrets that hide beneath them.

297

00:35:55,000 --> 00:36:01,000

There's a rumor that a lost relic from another time still survives buried under the sand.

298

00:36:03,000 --> 00:36:08,000

What strange, seemingly ancient wonder may rest below these fragile dunes.

299

00:36:11,000 --> 00:36:14,000

1923, Los Angeles, California.

300

00:36:14,000 --> 00:36:21,000

Hollywood is the world's leading producer of silent films, churning out over 800 movies each year.

301

00:36:22,000 --> 00:36:30,000

And at the forefront of this boom is one of Tinseltown's most acclaimed directors, Cecil B. DeMille.

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00:36:31,000 --> 00:36:39,000

DeMille was a showman. Everything he touched turned to gold and he really ruled the roost as far as the directors of that time.

303

00:36:40,000 --> 00:36:50,000

But DeMille wants to expand his horizons, so he embarks on his biggest project to date, an

unprecedented biblical odyssey called the Ten Commandments.

304

00:36:51,000 --> 00:36:58,000

\$750,000 is going to go towards this production. It's one of the largest budget films of that time.

305

00:36:59,000 --> 00:37:06,000

But this epic story of Moses leading the Israelites to the Promised Land is set in the sweltering Egyptian desert.

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00:37:06,000 --> 00:37:10,000

In Los Angeles, there isn't anything that's going to look like an Egyptian desert.

307

00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:14,000

But the dunes in Guadalupe gave DeMille the look that he needed.

308

00:37:14,000 --> 00:37:19,000

While DeMille has the perfect location, he still needs to create an Egyptian city.

309

00:37:20,000 --> 00:37:26,000

These are the days before CGI, you didn't computer generate anything. You built it from the ground up.

310

00:37:26,000 --> 00:37:32,000

So roughly 1500 workers spend six weeks building this city.

311

00:37:32,000 --> 00:37:43,000

It includes four 35 foot tall Ramesses statues and 21 sphinxes and a grand avenue leading up to the city's entrance.

312

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

Over the two months of filming, 3,000 actors and 5,000 animals bring DeMille's epic vision to life.

313

00:37:52,000 --> 00:37:55,000

It is Paramount Pictures' most expensive movie to date.

314

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

And when it's released, it also becomes its most profitable.

315

00:38:02,000 --> 00:38:09,000

But while the movie wows audiences throughout North America, the story of its elaborate set is just beginning.

316

00:38:10,000 --> 00:38:16,000

It was common in those days for sets to be reused by another production for a lower budget film.

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00:38:16,000 --> 00:38:23,000

But any filmmakers hoping to make a quick buck off the back of DeMille's masterpiece set are soon disappointed.

318

00:38:24,000 --> 00:38:26,000

At that point, the set mysteriously vanished.

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00:38:29,000 --> 00:38:35,000

So how did DeMille's massive Egyptian set simply disappear overnight?

320

00:38:36,000 --> 00:38:41,000

1923, Central California.

321

00:38:42,000 --> 00:38:50,000

Cecil B. DeMille has just finished shooting his blockbuster, *The Ten Commandments*, on a massive set built on the Guadalupe Nepomo Dunes.

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00:38:51,000 --> 00:38:58,000

But when the movie opens to sold out theaters across America, the giant construction mysteriously vanishes.

323

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

So what happened to DeMille's Egyptian city?

324

00:39:02,000 --> 00:39:07,000

For decades, the fate of the lost set remains a mystery.

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00:39:08,000 --> 00:39:10,000

But then over the years, people begin searching around for clues.

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00:39:12,000 --> 00:39:14,000

1982, Los Angeles.

327

00:39:16,000 --> 00:39:26,000

Film school graduate Peter Brosnan and a friend are discussing the mystery of the lost set when Brosnan's friend announces that he has the answer to the riddle.

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00:39:27,000 --> 00:39:29,000

He buried it and he said, you know, what?

329

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

Brosnan doesn't believe him and he wants proof.

330

00:39:34,000 --> 00:39:37,000

So his friend whips out DeMille's autobiography.

331

00:39:38,000 --> 00:39:55,000

Brosnan's friend points out a passage in DeMille's book stating that if archeologists dug beneath the sands of Guadalupe a thousand years later, DeMille hoped they wouldn't jump to the conclusion that the Egyptian civilization once expanded to the Pacific coast of North America.

332

00:39:56,000 --> 00:40:02,000

Enthralled by the text, Brosnan immediately makes the connection to DeMille's The Ten Commandments.

333

00:40:04,000 --> 00:40:11,000

Brosnan knows that if this set does in fact exist, it would be one of the last remaining sets from a 1920s film.

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00:40:12,000 --> 00:40:19,000

For Brosnan, finding Hollywood's Egyptian palace would be a chance to save a rare and invaluable piece of movie history.

335

00:40:20,000 --> 00:40:31,000

So in June 1983, with hopes that DeMille's creation may exist somewhere at Guadalupe Napomo, Brosnan ventures out to the mass of dunes.

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00:40:32,000 --> 00:40:37,000

He finds a local who agrees to show him the location where they think the film was shot.

337

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

Brosnan searches the desert-like landscape for hours.

338

00:40:42,000 --> 00:40:48,000

And finally he sees sticking out of the sand what looks to be a piece of the set from 1923.

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00:40:50,000 --> 00:40:55,000

He realizes at this time that the rumors are true, this lost set survives.

340

00:40:57,000 --> 00:40:58,000

But something doesn't make sense.

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

How did DeMille's mammoth construction just disappear in 1923 and end up hidden under the dunes?

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00:41:08,000 --> 00:41:13,000

Film historians conclude that DeMille's ego had everything to do with it.

343

00:41:14,000 --> 00:41:18,000

There were fears in DeMille's mind that another production would repurpose his set.

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00:41:19,000 --> 00:41:20,000

He didn't want that to happen.

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00:41:20,000 --> 00:41:25,000

He wanted the first time that people see this set on the big screen in his movie The Ten Commandments.

346

00:41:28,000 --> 00:41:39,000

So to protect the unique aura that surrounded the film, DeMille secretly ordered the crew to dynamite the Egyptian city and bury it under the very sands on which it stood.

347

00:41:44,000 --> 00:41:57,000

And in October 2012, with the help of archaeologists, Brosnan excavates the dunes and recovers several undamaged pieces of DeMille's wondrous set.

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00:41:59,000 --> 00:42:09,000

Today, many of the treasured artifacts of the Ten Commandments still remain under a blanket of sand here at the Guadalupe Napomo dunes,

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00:42:09,000 --> 00:42:15,000

forever preserving an epic reminder of Tinseltown's golden age of silent film.

350

00:42:16,000 --> 00:42:23,000

From a fishy theft to a possessed daughter, a buried city to a king of jazz.

351

00:42:24,000 --> 00:42:28,000

I'm Don Wildman and these are Monumental Mysteries.