

1

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

A bizarre accident rooted in science and magic.

2

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

He was dabbling in dark forces beyond his control.

3

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

A disastrous threat to the top of the world.

4

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

This is a story of ambition, tragedy, and redemption.

5

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

And a sprawling field linked to a death-defying flight.

6

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

The plane was shaking. You didn't know if it was going to make it.

7

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

Sometimes the greatest secrets lie in plain sight.

8

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

These are the mysteries of the monument.

9

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

To Pasadena, California, the city of roses is known for its temperate climate,

10

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

mountain views, and exquisite gardens.

11

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

It's also home to one of the world's most celebrated sporting events,

12

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

the Rose Bowl Football Game.

13

00:01:02,000 --> 00:01:10,000

But on the town's north side looms a massive structure with a more sinister reputation.

14

00:01:10,000 --> 00:01:14,000

It's about 250 feet wide by 100 feet tall.

15

00:01:14,000 --> 00:01:20,000

It's a giant concrete expanse in amidst this kind of bucolic landscape.

16

00:01:20,000 --> 00:01:22,000

This is Devil's Gate Dam.

17

00:01:22,000 --> 00:01:29,000

It was named after a nearby rock face that is said to resemble the profile of a horned devil.

18

00:01:29,000 --> 00:01:35,000

But according to author George Pendle, the dam is also linked to a brilliant scientist

19

00:01:35,000 --> 00:01:39,000

who led a diabolical double life.

20

00:01:40,000 --> 00:01:42,000

Some people thought he was a genius.

21

00:01:42,000 --> 00:01:47,000

Others thought he was dabbling in dark forces beyond his control.

22

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

How is this concrete structure linked to a fiendish tale of science, secrecy, and the occult?

23

00:01:59,000 --> 00:02:02,000

June 17th, 1952, Pasadena.

24

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

It's a calm summer afternoon on Leafy Orange Grove Avenue.

25

00:02:07,000 --> 00:02:11,000

But just after 5 p.m., the peace is suddenly shattered...

26

00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:16,000

by a deafening blast.

27

00:02:16,000 --> 00:02:23,000

There was a huge explosion and smoke in a mushroom cloud coming up above the trees.

28

00:02:25,000 --> 00:02:31,000

A crowd of concerned neighbors gathers as police cordon off one of the street's historic homes.

29

00:02:33,000 --> 00:02:34,000

The windows were blown out.

30

00:02:34,000 --> 00:02:37,000

There was a splintered wood and twisted metal.

31

00:02:37,000 --> 00:02:42,000

Officers emerge from the charred house with the body of its occupant.

32

00:02:42,000 --> 00:02:45,000

37-year-old Jack Parsons.

33

00:02:46,000 --> 00:02:50,000

His shoes were shredded, his legs were bent at kind of obscene angles.

34

00:02:50,000 --> 00:02:52,000

It was a horrific sight.

35

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

Immediately, rumors start to swirl about the cause of the deadly explosion.

36

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

And it's reported that Parsons was involved in arcane activities.

37

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

He was known to have loud parties in the house.

38

00:03:06,000 --> 00:03:10,000

There were bongos, there was chanting, there was all sorts of crazy stuff going on.

39

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

One person said there was a black magic cult at this house.

40

00:03:14,000 --> 00:03:16,000

Another said they were devil worshipers.

41

00:03:19,000 --> 00:03:24,000

In fact, Jack Parsons was an active member of a black magic cabal...

42

00:03:24,000 --> 00:03:29,000

that followed the teachings of its infamous occult leader, Alistair Crowley.

43

00:03:30,000 --> 00:03:34,000

From a young age, Parsons had always been interested in the occult and in other dimensions.

44

00:03:34,000 --> 00:03:39,000

And he really believed in the idea that he could contact weird, mystical beings.

45

00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:47,000

It's said Parsons even conducted magic rituals at Devil's Gate Dam.

46

00:03:47,000 --> 00:03:52,000

Occultists consider it to be a portal to the underworld.

47

00:03:54,000 --> 00:03:59,000

And as authorities investigate Parsons' demise, they uncover a bizarre theory...

48

00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:05,000

that the fatal explosion could have been the result of a black arts ritual gone wrong.

49

00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:11,000

Many of his friends in the occult world thought that maybe he was trying to conjure a fire demon.

50

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

And the fire demon had consumed him before disappearing.

51

00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:22,000

The police, however, pursue a more plausible explanation.

52

00:04:24,000 --> 00:04:29,000

At the scene of the accident, they find traces of a highly volatile explosive...

53

00:04:29,000 --> 00:04:31,000

called Mercury Fulminate.

54

00:04:32,000 --> 00:04:35,000

If you dropped Mercury Fulminate, it would explode all by itself.

55

00:04:37,000 --> 00:04:42,000

But why was Jack Parsons handling the unstable compound at his home?

56

00:04:43,000 --> 00:04:47,000

In fact, this was not the first time he had worked with explosives.

57

00:04:47,000 --> 00:04:51,000

Just two years earlier, he had been enjoying a celebrated career...

58

00:04:52,000 --> 00:04:54,000

as a rocket scientist.

59

00:04:54,000 --> 00:04:57,000

Jack Parsons was one of the leading lights of rocketry in the Second World War...

60

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

and was seen as this crazy wild genius.

61

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

During World War II, his research team had conducted covert rocketry experiments for the government...

62

00:05:06,000 --> 00:05:09,000

in the secluded shadow of Devil's Gate Dam.

63

00:05:10,000 --> 00:05:13,000

They had to do their experiments by the Devil's Gate Dam...

64

00:05:13,000 --> 00:05:15,000

because they were so dangerous.

65

00:05:15,000 --> 00:05:17,000

Every time they did an experiment, windows would shatter...

66

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

and people would run for their lives.

67

00:05:21,000 --> 00:05:26,000

But in 1950, Parsons was accused of making off with classified documents...

68

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

then stripped of his security clearances and fired.

69

00:05:30,000 --> 00:05:34,000

And it was then that the FBI said, this guy cannot work in rocketry ever again.

70

00:05:37,000 --> 00:05:41,000

Yet if the government had banned Parsons from working with rockets...

71

00:05:41,000 --> 00:05:43,000

why was he handling hazardous substances?

72

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

It seems that the eccentric scientist had launched a new career.

73

00:05:50,000 --> 00:05:51,000

In Hollywood.

74

00:05:51,000 --> 00:05:56,000

At the time, movie studios were churning out films about World War II.

75

00:05:56,000 --> 00:05:59,000

And with the need to create on-screen explosions...

76

00:05:59,000 --> 00:06:03,000

pyrotechnic experts like Jack Parsons were in high demand.

77

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

So Parsons was using the formative mercury...

78

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

probably to make special effects for Hollywood films.

79

00:06:10,000 --> 00:06:13,000

In fact, investigators discovered that on the day he died...

80

00:06:13,000 --> 00:06:16,000

Parsons was working on a new movie project.

81

00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:20,000

It seems at one point the can which he was using to mix his chemicals...

82

00:06:20,000 --> 00:06:22,000

slipped out of his hand.

83

00:06:22,000 --> 00:06:25,000

The can hit the ground, the chemicals inside it ignited.

84

00:06:30,000 --> 00:06:33,000

Officials rule Parsons' death and accident...

85

00:06:33,000 --> 00:06:35,000

and close the case.

86

00:06:35,000 --> 00:06:38,000

But to this day, the controversial rocketeer...

87

00:06:38,000 --> 00:06:41,000

remains an object of fascination.

88

00:06:41,000 --> 00:06:44,000

Parsons is perhaps best known today as an occultist.

89

00:06:44,000 --> 00:06:47,000

Which I think is a bit of a shame. He was a wonderful scientist.

90

00:06:47,000 --> 00:06:50,000

You sometimes need people who are willing to believe in the unbelievable.

91

00:06:50,000 --> 00:06:53,000

That's what Parsons' story is all about.

92

00:06:56,000 --> 00:06:59,000

And the Devil's Gate Dam, where the pioneering scientist...

93

00:06:59,000 --> 00:07:01,000

carried out some of his earliest work...

94

00:07:01,000 --> 00:07:05,000

still stands as a reminder of his groundbreaking ideas...

95

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

and his enigmatic double life.

96

00:07:11,000 --> 00:07:13,000

Rockingham County, North Carolina.

97

00:07:13,000 --> 00:07:18,000

Although this rural community lies just 30 miles from the city of Winston-Salem...

98

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

its quiet roads and lush fields seem a world away.

99

00:07:25,000 --> 00:07:28,000

And just off Highway 65 stands a structure...

100

00:07:28,000 --> 00:07:32,000

that encapsulates historic elegance and southern charm.

101

00:07:32,000 --> 00:07:35,000

It has a dramatic brick facade...

102

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

with two soaring columns that rise toward a pediment that frames the entrance.

103

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

This is the Rockingham County Courthouse.

104

00:07:43,000 --> 00:07:46,000

According to author Carl Menninger...

105

00:07:46,000 --> 00:07:51,000

this century-old structure once witnessed a salacious celebrity scandal...

106

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

that riveted the nation.

107

00:07:54,000 --> 00:07:56,000

This was a tabloid sensation.

108

00:07:56,000 --> 00:07:58,000

Two of the most famous people in America...

109

00:07:58,000 --> 00:08:03,000

involved in one of the greatest unsolved mysteries this country has ever seen.

110

00:08:03,000 --> 00:08:07,000

July 6, 1932, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

111

00:08:07,000 --> 00:08:09,000

It's just before 7 a.m.

112

00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:13,000

and Sheriff Transu Scott is responding to an urgent call...

113

00:08:13,000 --> 00:08:15,000

at the most famous address in town.

114

00:08:15,000 --> 00:08:17,000

The Reynolds Estate.

115

00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:21,000

The heir to the \$40 million Reynolds tobacco fortune.

116

00:08:21,000 --> 00:08:26,000

21-year-old Smith Reynolds has reportedly taken his own life.

117

00:08:26,000 --> 00:08:28,000

Smith is dead.

118

00:08:28,000 --> 00:08:30,000

An apparent suicide.

119

00:08:30,000 --> 00:08:34,000

His hysterical widow, the famous actress Libby Holman...

120

00:08:34,000 --> 00:08:38,000

is confined to her bedroom under the care of her physician.

121

00:08:38,000 --> 00:08:42,000

While Reynolds' corpse lies on a gurney at the local hospital...

122

00:08:42,000 --> 00:08:47,000

Sheriff Scott begins piecing together the events leading up to his death.

123

00:08:47,000 --> 00:08:50,000

You can imagine how shocked Scott was.

124

00:08:50,000 --> 00:08:53,000

Here is this young millionaire...

125

00:08:53,000 --> 00:08:55,000

married to this beautiful brother.

126

00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:57,000

He's a man of his own.

127

00:08:57,000 --> 00:08:59,000

A millionaire.

128

00:08:59,000 --> 00:09:01,000

Married to this beautiful Broadway star.

129

00:09:01,000 --> 00:09:03,000

And he's committed suicide.

130

00:09:06,000 --> 00:09:11,000

The rich and charming Reynolds had swept Libby Holman off her feet.

131

00:09:11,000 --> 00:09:14,000

And after a whirlwind courtship, they were married.

132

00:09:14,000 --> 00:09:18,000

Their picture-perfect lives were the toast of the society pages.

133

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

Sheriff Scott is informed that Libby is too distraught to talk to him.

134

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

And in any case, she has no recollection of the events the previous night.

135

00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:31,000

Libby claims a sort of amnesia.

136

00:09:31,000 --> 00:09:37,000

She is unable to remember anything before the gunshot or after it.

137

00:09:40,000 --> 00:09:45,000

The sheriff is directed to the room of Reynolds' live-in assistant, Ab Walker...

138

00:09:45,000 --> 00:09:48,000

who was also in the mansion on the previous night.

139

00:09:48,000 --> 00:09:53,000

Ab Walker was one of Smith's closest and trusted friends.

140

00:09:53,000 --> 00:09:59,000

Walker tells Sheriff Scott that the evening began with an extravagant soiree.

141

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

If you can imagine something out of the great Gatsby, it was like that.

142

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

But the lavish affair was spoiled when Smith and his wife began arguing violently.

143

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

Ab tells Scott that Libby gets drunk and she's flirting with people.

144

00:10:17,000 --> 00:10:20,000

And this enrages Smith.

145

00:10:20,000 --> 00:10:27,000

According to Walker, this wasn't the first time that the volatile tobacco air had become angry with his wife.

146

00:10:27,000 --> 00:10:33,000

So he wasn't surprised when the couple retired upstairs together after the party.

147

00:10:33,000 --> 00:10:40,000

But then, Walker tells the sheriff that just before 1 a.m., he heard something unnerving.

148

00:10:40,000 --> 00:10:45,000

A heavy thud and a loud cry from Libby.

149

00:10:45,000 --> 00:10:48,000

She's screaming that Smith has shot himself.

150

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

Walker describes how he arrived to find Smith Reynolds lying in a pool of blood.

151

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

He tells the sheriff that he and Libby rushed Smith to the hospital...

152

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

where he perished hours later.

153

00:11:04,000 --> 00:11:12,000

But as he listens to Walker's account, Sheriff Scott suddenly spots something unusual in the witness's bedroom.

154

00:11:13,000 --> 00:11:17,000

Under the bed, he notices a pair of woman's slippers.

155

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

And when he asks him about them, Ab is flustered.

156

00:11:21,000 --> 00:11:26,000

Ab Walker nervously admits that the slippers belong to Libby.

157

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

But he can't explain why they're under his bed.

158

00:11:30,000 --> 00:11:34,000

The response immediately arouses Scott's suspicion.

159

00:11:34,000 --> 00:11:36,000

Or Ab and Libby having an affair.

160

00:11:36,000 --> 00:11:39,000

Ab Walker denies the suggestion outright.

161

00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:45,000

But when the sheriff speaks to the rest of Reynolds' staff, he hears a very different story.

162

00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:54,000

It seems that the millionaire's jealousy the previous night was sparked by the sight of his wife

kissing Ab Walker.

163

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

So clearly, something was amiss.

164

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

To Sheriff Scott, the answer seems clear.

165

00:12:01,000 --> 00:12:05,000

With Smith dead, Libby stood to inherit millions of dollars.

166

00:12:06,000 --> 00:12:09,000

And would be free to pursue a romance with Ab Walker.

167

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

Sheriff Scott finally begins to think that Smith was murdered.

168

00:12:16,000 --> 00:12:22,000

On August 4th, Ab Walker and Libby Holman are indicted on charges of first-degree murder.

169

00:12:22,000 --> 00:12:26,000

The penalty if they're found guilty, the electric chair.

170

00:12:27,000 --> 00:12:30,000

It's 1932 in North Carolina.

171

00:12:30,000 --> 00:12:37,000

Sheriff Tran Sue Scott is investigating the apparent suicide of a wealthy tobacco heir named Smith Reynolds.

172

00:12:37,000 --> 00:12:43,000

But when he discovers that the dead man's wife may have been having an affair with their handsome assistant,

173

00:12:43,000 --> 00:12:47,000

he begins to wonder, was Smith Reynolds smoked?

174

00:12:49,000 --> 00:12:53,000

On August 8th, 1932, Libby and Ab Walker were killed.

175

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

On August 8th, 1932, Libby enters the Rockingham County Courthouse,

176

00:12:58,000 --> 00:13:02,000

wearing a bizarre black turban and widow's veil.

177

00:13:03,000 --> 00:13:07,000

What no one knows is she is about to deliver a bombshell.

178

00:13:07,000 --> 00:13:15,000

Libby's lawyers tell the judge that they wish to post bail because Libby should not be in jail in her delicate condition.

179

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

It seems that Libby Holman is pregnant.

180

00:13:20,000 --> 00:13:26,000

The judge grants her request for bail and sets a trial date for November 21st.

181

00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:32,000

But then, another twist to this tale leaves the courtroom reeling.

182

00:13:32,000 --> 00:13:36,000

The family of Smith Reynolds does something completely unexpected.

183

00:13:36,000 --> 00:13:42,000

They send a letter to the state requesting that all of the charges in Smith's debt be dropped.

184

00:13:42,000 --> 00:13:46,000

Libby's day in court never materializes.

185

00:13:46,000 --> 00:13:50,000

Though the Reynolds family doesn't explain their change of heart,

186

00:13:50,000 --> 00:13:54,000

many speculate they simply couldn't bear the shame of the scandal

187

00:13:54,000 --> 00:13:58,000

and wanted to put the sordid affair behind them.

188

00:13:59,000 --> 00:14:07,000

As for Libby Holman, she gives birth to a baby boy, Christopher Smith Reynolds, in January 1933.

189

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

Although she escapes prosecution, she lives under a cloud of suspicion for the rest of her life.

190

00:14:15,000 --> 00:14:22,000

And today, this historic courthouse still stands as a reminder of a tobacco heirs untimely death

191

00:14:22,000 --> 00:14:26,000

and an infamous trial that went up in smoke.

192

00:14:30,000 --> 00:14:36,000

San Francisco, California, the city's three most popular sites are among its most iconic,

193

00:14:36,000 --> 00:14:42,000

the Golden Gate Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf, and Alcatraz Island.

194

00:14:44,000 --> 00:14:51,000

But along the bay's scenic waterfront lies a lesser-known attraction with a surprising past.

195

00:14:51,000 --> 00:14:55,000

It's 127 acres of beachfront bluff and tidal marsh.

196

00:14:55,000 --> 00:15:00,000

It's got wild birds, beautiful trees, gorgeous views of the water.

197

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

But because of its natural beauty, it's hard to believe that just until recently, it was all cement.

198

00:15:07,000 --> 00:15:09,000

This is Chrissy Field.

199

00:15:09,000 --> 00:15:13,000

This pristine state park was once a military airstrip.

200

00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:21,000

And as writer Richard CORE knows, in its early days, it witnessed the launch of a death-defying quest.

201

00:15:22,000 --> 00:15:26,000

This is an epic tale of survival that changed aviation history forever.

202

00:15:30,000 --> 00:15:32,000

1925, San Francisco.

203

00:15:33,000 --> 00:15:37,000

It's been 22 years since the Wright brothers made their pioneering flight.

204

00:15:37,000 --> 00:15:43,000

And the U.S. Navy believes aviation can play a crucial role in protecting American waters.

205

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

One of the most ardent supporters of this idea is 44-year-old Commander John Rogers.

206

00:15:50,000 --> 00:15:52,000

Rogers was passionate about aviation.

207

00:15:52,000 --> 00:15:57,000

We thought that they could protect the coast by using airplanes and aerial technology.

208

00:15:57,000 --> 00:16:02,000

And we wanted to pioneer a new front, the air branch of the Navy.

209

00:16:02,000 --> 00:16:07,000

Yet many Americans remain wary of this new fangled mode of transport.

210

00:16:10,000 --> 00:16:13,000

So to showcase the potential of planes to the public,

211

00:16:13,000 --> 00:16:19,000

Rogers will take part in an unprecedented feat, a 2100-mile non-stop flight

212

00:16:19,000 --> 00:16:23,000

to one of the most remote places on Earth, Hawaii.

213

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

This was the first attempted trans-Pacific flight from mainland U.S. to Hawaii at that time.

214

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

It had never been done before.

215

00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:39,000

For the demonstration, Rogers will fly a newly developed seaplane called the PN-9.

216

00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:42,000

The PN-9 was a prototype flying pontoon.

217

00:16:42,000 --> 00:16:47,000

It was made to be light to carry as much fuel as possible for the entire flight without refueling.

218

00:16:47,000 --> 00:16:52,000

And even part of the wing structure was made out of fabric to keep it very light.

219

00:16:53,000 --> 00:16:59,000

On August 31st, crowds lined the San Francisco shore to watch Rogers and his four-man crew

220

00:16:59,000 --> 00:17:03,000

prepare for the historic flight and take off from Crissy Field.

221

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

Crowd goes wild as the plane lifts off and sails out the bay.

222

00:17:09,000 --> 00:17:11,000

It was an exciting moment for everybody.

223

00:17:12,000 --> 00:17:14,000

As the PN-9 soars over the Pacific,

224

00:17:14,000 --> 00:17:19,000

Commander Rogers makes regular progress reports to the Navy by radio.

225

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

All goes according to plan, the trip should take them 28 hours to complete the 2100-mile journey.

226

00:17:25,000 --> 00:17:32,000

All is well as the crew passes the 800-mile mark and the 1000-mile mark.

227

00:17:32,000 --> 00:17:37,000

But 1200 miles into the journey, things start to go awry.

228

00:17:40,000 --> 00:17:45,000

Rogers reports that despite their huge gas tank, they were running dangerously low on fuel.

229

00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:52,000

Strong headwinds have caused the plane to consume fuel at a much faster rate than expected.

230

00:17:53,000 --> 00:17:58,000

Hundreds of miles from their destination, the gas tank runs empty.

231

00:17:58,000 --> 00:18:01,000

The crew prepares for an emergency water landing.

232

00:18:02,000 --> 00:18:06,000

As the plane's going down, Rogers was nervous because the plane was shaking.

233

00:18:06,000 --> 00:18:07,000

Mayday, mayday!

234

00:18:07,000 --> 00:18:09,000

He didn't know if it was going to make it.

235

00:18:09,000 --> 00:18:10,000

Mayday, mayday!

236

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

September, 1925.

237

00:18:19,000 --> 00:18:23,000

After a Navy seaplane runs out of fuel somewhere over the Pacific Ocean,

238

00:18:23,000 --> 00:18:26,000

the crew is left with only one option.

239

00:18:27,000 --> 00:18:29,000

They must attempt an emergency water landing.

240

00:18:30,000 --> 00:18:32,000

But will they survive this dire dilemma?

241

00:18:35,000 --> 00:18:41,000

The radio transmission cuts out as the PN-9 splashes down in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

242

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

Miraculously, the men are unharmed.

243

00:18:45,000 --> 00:18:51,000

But with their radio damaged and no rescue in sight, Rogers makes a critical decision.

244

00:18:53,000 --> 00:18:54,000

We're going to sail there.

245

00:18:54,000 --> 00:18:55,000

You could not fly the plane.

246

00:18:55,000 --> 00:18:57,000

He was going to sail the plane.

247

00:18:59,000 --> 00:19:03,000

He instructs his men to use fabric from the wings to create sails.

248

00:19:04,000 --> 00:19:08,000

The crew also improvises an ingenious way to steer the craft.

249

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:16,000

Rogers and his crew use some of the floorboards off the plane to devise a rudder system so that they can navigate.

250

00:19:17,000 --> 00:19:22,000

The group sails their makeshift vessel in what they believe is the direction of Hawaii.

251

00:19:23,000 --> 00:19:30,000

But as hours turn into days with no land in sight, the men can only hope they will be spotted by rescuers.

252

00:19:30,000 --> 00:19:34,000

It was becoming very clear that the chances of survival were slim to none.

253

00:19:34,000 --> 00:19:41,000

Back at headquarters, the U.S. Navy has been overseeing a massive rescue effort.

254

00:19:42,000 --> 00:19:48,000

But after scouring hundreds of miles of open sea for nine days, the plane is nowhere in sight.

255

00:19:49,000 --> 00:19:54,000

Finally, the Navy calls off the search and the missing men are presumed dead.

256

00:19:55,000 --> 00:19:59,000

It appears as if Rogers and his crew has completely disappeared.

257

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

But the very next day, the Navy receives a stunning report.

258

00:20:05,000 --> 00:20:12,000

A submarine on a routine patrol around Kauai spots the PN-9 almost 500 miles away from its last transmission.

259

00:20:13,000 --> 00:20:18,000

The sailors on the sub approach the downed plane and see something amazing.

260

00:20:23,000 --> 00:20:25,000

Rogers and the crew are alive.

261

00:20:26,000 --> 00:20:27,000

This was a marvel.

262

00:20:28,000 --> 00:20:31,000

It's hard to believe that they could have survived that journey that long.

263

00:20:34,000 --> 00:20:43,000

Although the men of the PN-9 fell short of their goal, their flight of 1992 miles sets a world record for sea planes.

264

00:20:44,000 --> 00:20:48,000

The momentous journey also demonstrates the great potential of aviation.

265

00:20:49,000 --> 00:20:58,000

Because of the journey of the PN-9, Congress rewards the Navy with a thousand more planes and allows them to continue developing their aeronautical branch.

266

00:20:59,000 --> 00:21:06,000

In 1926, Commander Rogers, lauded for his leadership, is made assistant chief of naval aeronautics.

267

00:21:07,000 --> 00:21:19,000

And today, the vast expanse of Chrissy Field sits in silent tribute to these heroic men who took to the skies and against all odds landed in the history books.

268

00:21:24,000 --> 00:21:31,000

Known as the city of Seven Hills, Worcester, Massachusetts is home to nine colleges and universities.

269

00:21:32,000 --> 00:21:41,000

It also boasts such architectural highlights as the music venue Mechanics Hall and a medieval style castle known as Bankcroft Tower.

270

00:21:43,000 --> 00:21:52,000

But within the confines of the historic Notre Dame Cemetery stands a small and deceptively simple monument that is easily overlooked.

271

00:21:53,000 --> 00:21:57,000

It's in the section where the monuments are very organized, very regimented. They're all looking like soldiers in a row.

272

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

And it's made of black granite which has been polished.

273

00:22:03,000 --> 00:22:14,000

The name on this headstone is unfamiliar to most. But according to historian Bill Wallace, the man commemorated here created something extraordinary that took the world by storm.

274

00:22:15,000 --> 00:22:19,000

He had no idea that what he created would become one of the most recognizable icons in history.

275

00:22:20,000 --> 00:22:24,000

1963, Worcester.

276

00:22:25,000 --> 00:22:35,000

An insurance company called State Mutual has just undergone a merger with a rival company. And office morale is at an all-time low.

277

00:22:36,000 --> 00:22:42,000

It was a great deal of a parent concern about what your responsibility was and how your life was changing as an employee of these companies.

278

00:22:43,000 --> 00:22:51,000

Concerned that the gloomy mood will damage their business, management decides to launch a campaign to boost morale.

279

00:22:52,000 --> 00:22:58,000

So the vice president boasted his marketing person and says we need to get people to cheer up and go to smile on their faces around here.

280

00:22:59,000 --> 00:23:08,000

After some brainstorming, the two colleagues agree they need a cheerful image that can be distributed on buttons, cards and posters.

281

00:23:08,000 --> 00:23:13,000

And they know the perfect man for the job.

282

00:23:14,000 --> 00:23:17,000

Graphic designer and local resident, Harvey Ball.

283

00:23:18,000 --> 00:23:24,000

Harvey Ball was the typical commercial artist. He was the person you hire on an hourly basis to do your job.

284

00:23:25,000 --> 00:23:30,000

Ball, who owns a small one-man shop on Main Street, accepts the commission.

285

00:23:31,000 --> 00:23:41,000

As he searches his mind for a symbol that will put a smile on the faces of downbeat employees, he wonders if simplicity might be the key.

286

00:23:42,000 --> 00:23:51,000

He takes a piece of yellow paper, makes two eyes, one was slightly longer than the other one, then he drew the mouth. The job is done.

287

00:23:51,000 --> 00:24:01,000

When Ball presents his design to management, it's so simple, so childlike, they're taken aback.

288

00:24:02,000 --> 00:24:16,000

But they soon come around, paying Ball \$45 for his design. The company orders 100 buttons for their agents to wear and to hand out to clients.

289

00:24:16,000 --> 00:24:26,000

It appears on January 3rd of 1964 in their newsletter where they announce that Smiley Face is the center of this happiness campaign.

290

00:24:29,000 --> 00:24:40,000

Within weeks, the Smiley Face campaign has spread throughout the company. And so popular are the pins that management is soon reordering them by the thousands.

291

00:24:41,000 --> 00:24:49,000

The employees enjoyed having their buttons. They would get them for their kids' scout groups, that they would give them to their friends. It was very much a part of their lives.

292

00:24:50,000 --> 00:24:52,000

But that's not the end of the story.

293

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

No, it could end with a babe, but what happened next?

294

00:24:56,000 --> 00:25:15,000

It's the late 1960s in Worcester, Massachusetts. When graphic artist Harvey Ball comes up with a Smiley Face symbol to boost morale at an insurance company, the people of Worcester love it.

295

00:25:16,000 --> 00:25:21,000

But little does he know, his simple yellow sketch is about to take on a life of its own.

296

00:25:22,000 --> 00:25:38,000

What began as an internal campaign to lift employee morale has spread far beyond the company. Soon, the Smiley will become more popular than either Harvey Ball or State Mutual could ever have imagined.

297

00:25:39,000 --> 00:25:52,000

1970, Philadelphia. Bernard and Murray Spain, two brothers who own a novelty company, are looking for a way to boost sales when they stumble across one of Harvey Ball's buttons.

298

00:25:53,000 --> 00:26:06,000

Realizing the vast potential of the simple design, the Spain brothers trademark their own version of the face by adding a simple phrase, have a nice day.

299

00:26:08,000 --> 00:26:17,000

It's a time when many Americans could really use a lift. The nation is undergoing a period of tremendous social change and political unrest.

300

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

In 1970, America is torn by the realities of the war in Vietnam, the implications of the Cold War. There is great uncertainty, but there's also a mood of change.

301

00:26:29,000 --> 00:26:37,000

The simple image of the Smiley Face resonates with the American public, and it starts to appear as a fashion accessory across the country.

302

00:26:38,000 --> 00:26:45,000

Smiley Face is a basic symbol that everyone shares. It's about being happy, which is what everyone wants after years of turmoil.

303

00:26:47,000 --> 00:26:54,000

By the end of 1971, the Spain brothers have sold an estimated 50 million buttons.

304

00:26:55,000 --> 00:27:12,000

But back in Worcester, Harvey Ball never makes another penny on the Smiley Face. Beyond the original \$45 he was paid, neither he nor State Mutual trademarked the simple design.

305

00:27:13,000 --> 00:27:16,000

But for Ball, it was never just about the money.

306

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

Harvey Ball had a certain amount of pride that he had created Smiley Face, but was well known for saying, when people would ask him if he made a lot of money off of him, Smiley Face, I can only eat one steak at a time.

307

00:27:28,000 --> 00:27:33,000

Ball's creation goes on to become an indelible cultural icon worldwide.

308

00:27:34,000 --> 00:27:42,000

Smiley Face is everywhere. We all need to smile. We all need to be happy, and this is a common symbol that requires no interpretation.

309

00:27:43,000 --> 00:27:55,000

And this grave serves as a cheerful memorial to the inventive artist whose design changed the face of pop culture and pinned smiles on millions of people throughout the world.

310

00:27:59,000 --> 00:28:05,000

The Himalayas in South Central Asia span some 1500 miles and five countries.

311

00:28:05,000 --> 00:28:11,000

Considered to be the world's greatest mountain range, it is home to the planet's highest peaks.

312

00:28:13,000 --> 00:28:18,000

But among these snow-clad monoliths, one silhouette stands apart.

313

00:28:19,000 --> 00:28:31,000

It's this tall, jagged formation that rises out of the other mountains. It's cold and it's desolate and intimidating. The terrain is extreme. But for some, it's the most exciting place on Earth.

314

00:28:32,000 --> 00:28:40,000

This is Mount Everest. At more than 29,000 feet, it is the highest place on Earth.

315

00:28:41,000 --> 00:28:46,000

And reaching its summit is perhaps the most glorious achievement for any mountaineer.

316

00:28:47,000 --> 00:28:57,000

But according to journalist Stephanie Jackenfall, this marvel of nature was recently at the center of one of the most devastating disasters in mountaineering history.

317

00:28:57,000 --> 00:29:06,000

This is a story of ambition, tragedy and redemption that really struck at the heart of the mountaineering community.

318

00:29:07,000 --> 00:29:14,000

What is the truth behind the notorious 1996 summit attempt that left the climbing world divided?

319

00:29:19,000 --> 00:29:22,000

May 1996, not Everest.

320

00:29:23,000 --> 00:29:28,000

Its spring climbing season and Everest Base Camp is buzzing with activity.

321

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

Among those planning to reach the summit are two rival expeditions, adventure consultants and mountain madness.

322

00:29:39,000 --> 00:29:48,000

Led by expert mountaineers, each team has equipped its climbers with essential gear, including harnesses, helmets and life-sustaining oxygen tanks.

323

00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:57,000

When you're up past 20,000 feet, the air gets thinner, so it's hard to breathe. You can die up there.

324

00:29:58,000 --> 00:30:05,000

So a lot of climbers have to carry these bottles of supplemental oxygen to keep ascending the mountain.

325

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

On the morning of May 6th, both teams leave Base Camp for the arduous trip to the peak.

326

00:30:13,000 --> 00:30:18,000

The weather is clear and the climbers count on summiting Everest within a week.

327

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

But five days later, the world wakes up to devastating news.

328

00:30:26,000 --> 00:30:31,000

A ferocious blizzard has slammed into Mount Everest, killing an unprecedented number of climbers.

329

00:30:32,000 --> 00:30:38,000

Eight people died on the mountain that day. This is the worst disaster to strike Mount Everest and made headlines around the world.

330

00:30:38,000 --> 00:30:43,000

In the wake of the tragedy, the press clamors to uncover exactly what happened.

331

00:30:44,000 --> 00:30:53,000

Among the first survivors to step forward with an account is 42-year-old journalist John Krakauer, a climber with the adventure consultants team.

332

00:30:54,000 --> 00:31:00,000

John Krakauer is on assignment to write a story about his experience and he witnessed what went on firsthand.

333

00:31:01,000 --> 00:31:08,000

In a published account, Krakauer explains that he had reached the summit and was descending the mountain when the storm hit.

334

00:31:09,000 --> 00:31:14,000

Members of the two rival teams tried to scramble to safety as quickly as they could.

335

00:31:15,000 --> 00:31:18,000

So when the blizzard hit, suddenly there was some complete chaos.

336

00:31:19,000 --> 00:31:25,000

Slowed down by the storm, some of them ran out of oxygen and succumbed to exposure.

337

00:31:26,000 --> 00:31:30,000

But Krakauer has an even more startling revelation.

338

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

He suggests that some of the victims could have been saved, were it not for the reckless actions of a Russian guide named Anatoly Bukriev.

339

00:31:40,000 --> 00:31:44,000

Anatoly Bukriev was a guide for the other team, the mountain madness team.

340

00:31:45,000 --> 00:31:51,000

Krakauer claims Bukriev tried to show off by climbing Everest without any oxygen tanks.

341

00:31:51,000 --> 00:31:58,000

He believes this act of bravado left the guide unable to help the clients when the blizzard struck.

342

00:31:59,000 --> 00:32:05,000

Instead, the journalist claims Bukriev abandoned the climbers and bolted down the mountain.

343

00:32:06,000 --> 00:32:12,000

Krakauer feels that had Bukriev used supplemental oxygen, he could have stayed on the summit and he could have saved more lives.

344

00:32:13,000 --> 00:32:17,000

He really painted Bukriev as the villain and it just shredded his reputation.

345

00:32:17,000 --> 00:32:24,000

The journalist eventually expands the article into the best-selling book, Into Thin Air.

346

00:32:25,000 --> 00:32:29,000

It becomes the definitive version of the 1996 disaster.

347

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

But then, one year later, in 1997, Anatoly Bukriev publishes his own account of that tragic day.

348

00:32:40,000 --> 00:32:45,000

And his book, The Climb, offers a very different version of events.

349

00:32:45,000 --> 00:32:49,000

He feels like Krakauer's account told the wrong story.

350

00:32:56,000 --> 00:33:06,000

It's 1997. Journalist John Krakauer has published a best-selling account of a storm that killed eight climbers on Mount Everest a year earlier.

351

00:33:07,000 --> 00:33:15,000

Krakauer argues that lives could have been saved had it not been for the reckless actions of Expedition Guide Anatoly Bukriev.

352

00:33:16,000 --> 00:33:21,000

But then, Bukriev publishes his own very different version of events.

353

00:33:23,000 --> 00:33:32,000

In his book, The Villified Guide Anatoly Bukriev explains his decision to forego oxygen tanks was not an act of bravado.

354

00:33:32,000 --> 00:33:35,000

Rather, it was an exercise in safety.

355

00:33:37,000 --> 00:33:45,000

Bukriev had trained his body to ascend without supplemental air, so he would never need to worry about running out of oxygen.

356

00:33:46,000 --> 00:33:50,000

With supplemental oxygen, you're going higher than your body would naturally allow it to go.

357

00:33:51,000 --> 00:33:54,000

And so, Bukriev feels that it gives your body a false sense of security.

358

00:33:55,000 --> 00:33:59,000

If you were to run out of it, then you'll die up there.

359

00:34:02,000 --> 00:34:09,000

In fact, Bukriev explains, without the extra weight of the tanks, he could better respond to his client's needs.

360

00:34:10,000 --> 00:34:17,000

He claims that when the storm hit, he left not to save himself, but to retrieve equipment for those who were stranded.

361

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

After Bukriev got into camp, he actually turned around and went right back up and brought up extra oxygen to help out.

362

00:34:27,000 --> 00:34:30,000

In fact, Bukriev's actions saved three climbers on the mountain.

363

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

Following the release of his book, other climbers who were on Everest that fateful day soon come forward to back Bukriev's story.

364

00:34:42,000 --> 00:34:47,000

And the Russian mountaineer receives the American Alpine Club's highest honor for his heroic deeds.

365

00:34:48,000 --> 00:34:54,000

So Bukriev's book ultimately saved his reputation and gave people a whole new perspective.

366

00:34:55,000 --> 00:35:05,000

The controversy surrounding the 1996 Everest disaster continues to divide the mountaineering community to this day.

367

00:35:06,000 --> 00:35:10,000

But all climbers of Everest can agree on one thing.

368

00:35:11,000 --> 00:35:17,000

The magnificent ascent to the rooftop of the world remains one of the planet's most treacherous journeys.

369

00:35:18,000 --> 00:35:25,000

In upstate New York is the historic town of Seneca Falls, once a prosperous industrial hub.

370

00:35:26,000 --> 00:35:29,000

Today, the region is celebrated for its fine wines.

371

00:35:30,000 --> 00:35:36,000

But overlooking the Seneca River is a monument that reflects what this city may be most famous for.

372

00:35:37,000 --> 00:35:41,000

It's made of bronze. The statue shows three women meeting.

373

00:35:41,000 --> 00:35:50,000

While the woman on the left is wearing an outfit completely typical of 1850s women's fashion, the women on the right are wearing something much more unusual.

374

00:35:51,000 --> 00:35:57,000

The garments these women are wearing were the seeds of a revolution that would transform the nation.

375

00:35:58,000 --> 00:36:02,000

These clothes ignited a controversy that would reshape American society.

376

00:36:03,000 --> 00:36:05,000

Winter, 1851.

377

00:36:05,000 --> 00:36:13,000

A rapidly growing population is turning Seneca Falls into the unlikely birthplace of a new social movement, women's rights.

378

00:36:14,000 --> 00:36:19,000

And one of the leading activists in town is 33-year-old Amelia Bloomer.

379

00:36:20,000 --> 00:36:26,000

Amelia is the publisher and editor of the first newspaper in America for women by women called The Lily.

380

00:36:27,000 --> 00:36:34,000

Bloomer, a feminist pioneer, is frustrated with the fact that she is a woman who is not a woman.

381

00:36:35,000 --> 00:36:40,000

She is frustrated that women are still denied the right to vote, own property or divorce.

382

00:36:41,000 --> 00:36:50,000

So while men occupy these positions of power, women lacked confidence to really have any significant part in American public life.

383

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

And Bloomer believes that one facet of society that serves to keep women in their lowly position is fashion.

384

00:36:59,000 --> 00:37:04,000

Women's fashion in their 1850s is very much about femininity and curves.

385

00:37:05,000 --> 00:37:12,000

Women would wear these incredibly tightly laced corsets and they'd layer petticoats one on top of the other underneath their gowns.

386

00:37:13,000 --> 00:37:21,000

These garments meant to exaggerate a woman's natural hourglass figure, physically prevented them from doing the same things as men.

387

00:37:21,000 --> 00:37:30,000

An average outfit could weigh from 15 to 20 pounds and you really couldn't perform any kind of physical activity or exert yourself.

388

00:37:31,000 --> 00:37:34,000

Your breathing was restricted, you were likely in pain.

389

00:37:35,000 --> 00:37:40,000

For Amelia, these clothes are representative of women's oppressed position within society.

390

00:37:44,000 --> 00:37:50,000

But one day, she sees a friend wearing an unusual outfit, unlike anything she's ever seen.

391

00:37:51,000 --> 00:37:56,000

Her friend is wearing Turkish style pants. This is completely shocking.

392

00:37:57,000 --> 00:38:03,000

This is completely against every established rule for women's decorum and gentility in public.

393

00:38:04,000 --> 00:38:06,000

As she watches her friend, Amelia has an idea.

394

00:38:07,000 --> 00:38:13,000

She immediately notices that she can undertake many different daily tasks with much more ease.

395

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

Amelia realizes her friend's pants can help women achieve independence and equality.

396

00:38:23,000 --> 00:38:29,000

So she shares the idea with feminists around the country by publishing the design in a newspaper.

397

00:38:30,000 --> 00:38:35,000

She really hoped that this would be a stepping stone to greater legal freedoms for women.

398

00:38:36,000 --> 00:38:40,000

To Amelia's delight, the article causes a sensation.

399

00:38:41,000 --> 00:38:49,000

Amelia was inundated with letters from women all over the country who wanted to know where they could buy a pattern to make the look for themselves.

400

00:38:50,000 --> 00:38:56,000

As word of the avant-garde creation spreads, Amelia's last name becomes synonymous with the garment.

401

00:38:58,000 --> 00:38:59,000

Bloomers.

402

00:39:01,000 --> 00:39:06,000

But when women around the country begin sporting the design in public, they're in for a surprise.

403

00:39:07,000 --> 00:39:12,000

Women had never worn anything like this before and they didn't know what to expect.

404

00:39:19,000 --> 00:39:21,000

It's 1851 in Seneca Falls, New York.

405

00:39:22,000 --> 00:39:28,000

Newspaper editor Amelia Bloomer has just presented a radical new style of clothing for women, dubbed Bloomers.

406

00:39:29,000 --> 00:39:33,000

She hopes that if women ditch their courses and don these pants,

407

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

it will send a message that they mean to be liberated from the oppressive constraints of a male-dominated society.

408

00:39:40,000 --> 00:39:42,000

But what will the public think?

409

00:39:45,000 --> 00:39:49,000

When Amelia and others step out onto the streets in their billowy pants,

410

00:39:50,000 --> 00:39:55,000

the reaction from both men and some women is overwhelmingly negative.

411

00:39:56,000 --> 00:39:58,000

Have you no decency? But you've gone to church that way.

412

00:39:58,000 --> 00:40:05,000

They were being yelled at, they were being called unattractive, they were accused of trying to dress like men and act like men.

413

00:40:06,000 --> 00:40:10,000

In the press, the pantaloons and their wearers are mercilessly lampooned.

414

00:40:14,000 --> 00:40:17,000

Bloomers failed to catch on with Main Street America.

415

00:40:18,000 --> 00:40:27,000

Four years later, Amelia Bloomer stops publishing *The Lily*, but continues her work on behalf of women's rights until her death in 1894.

416

00:40:28,000 --> 00:40:32,000

As it turns out, she was three decades ahead of her time.

417

00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:39,000

In the 1890s, we see the rise of what's known as America's new woman.

418

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

This is a new ideal in American femininity, where women are athletic there, beginning to take on more prominent public roles.

419

00:40:48,000 --> 00:40:57,000

The 19th century's last decade sees middle-class women increasingly venture outside the home as volunteers, as temperance advocates,

420

00:40:58,000 --> 00:40:59,000

as charities.

421

00:41:02,000 --> 00:41:10,000

Young women in particular rediscover Amelia's ideas about fashion and adopt bloomers as a symbol of their liberation.

422

00:41:11,000 --> 00:41:17,000

Once women started wearing trousers, it was really just a short step to greater political and economic freedom

423

00:41:18,000 --> 00:41:23,000

and the opportunity to work and be present in many other areas of American society.

424

00:41:28,000 --> 00:41:35,000

And today, in Seneca Falls, the legacy of feminism is celebrated by the bronze figure of Amelia Bloomer,

425

00:41:36,000 --> 00:41:43,000

wearing the iconic garment that inspired women to demand control over their wardrobe and ultimately, their lives.

426

00:41:46,000 --> 00:41:54,000

From a shadowy scientist to a suspicious star, a tragic climb to a courageous flight.

427

00:41:54,000 --> 00:41:58,000

I'm Don Wilder and these are the Mysteries at the Monument.