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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,500

They have been feared, burned and mostly misunderstood.

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00:00:05,500 --> 00:00:10,500

We've been underground after nine million people were burned, hanged and tortured.

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00:00:10,500 --> 00:00:15,500

They can journey to the darkness where good and evil can become one.

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00:00:15,500 --> 00:00:19,000

It's often been said that the gods of the old become the devils of the new.

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00:00:19,000 --> 00:00:23,500

In actual fact, witches don't even believe in the devil let alone worship him.

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00:00:23,500 --> 00:00:29,000

They were born in an age when magic was a religion and they live amongst today.

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

They are witches.

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00:00:59,000 --> 00:01:05,000

To the nightfall of catastrophe, journey to a universe of the unexplained.

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00:01:05,000 --> 00:01:09,000

The unforeseen, the unbelievable.

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00:01:09,000 --> 00:01:15,000

A place beyond reality where no question will go unanswered.

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00:01:15,000 --> 00:01:20,000

And a place where myth and legend are all superstition of science.

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00:01:29,000 --> 00:01:34,000

The unforeseen, the unbelievable.

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00:01:34,000 --> 00:01:39,000

The unforeseen, the unbelievable.

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00:01:39,000 --> 00:01:44,000

The unforeseen, the unbelievable.

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00:01:44,000 --> 00:01:48,000

It's time for our journey to begin.

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00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:53,000

The unforeseen, the unbelievable.

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00:01:53,000 --> 00:01:58,000

You stand at the crossroads between superstition and reality.

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

You are witches.

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00:02:08,000 --> 00:02:14,000

Knowledge surrounds these library walls and with these instruments that knowledge can be ours.

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00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:32,000

When some of us imagine a witch, we think of a cloaked hag huddled over a boiling pot filled with unspeakable ingredients.

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00:02:32,000 --> 00:02:35,000

Or flying through the night upon a broomstick.

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00:02:35,000 --> 00:02:39,000

That image, alas, is far from the truth.

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00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:45,000

To discover what of witch really is, we must journey back to an ancient time when magic was a way of life.

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

And the gods battled for the hearts and minds of humanity.

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00:02:53,000 --> 00:02:58,000

Time is running out. The ways of the old gods were no longer the ways of the people.

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00:02:58,000 --> 00:03:02,000

The wise priests knew that their magic was no longer welcome.

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00:03:02,000 --> 00:03:09,000

So on that last hallows eve, they came to this spot where the moon touched the earth to put their magic to rest.

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The secrets that had been spoken loudly so the world could hear would now be whispered, for a new god had risen, and his priests would not tolerate the old ways.

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It was somehow appropriate that they should consign their tools to the soil, for the gods had taught them to venerate the ground, the sky,

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00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:36,000

and they would protect the knowledge until the time is right to rise again.

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But the whispers would rustle through the dark forests, the silent rivers, the ways of the wicker, would never be forgotten.

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Their beliefs would live on, their descendants known as witches.

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00:03:51,000 --> 00:04:06,000

Do what thou wilt, and let it hurt none. This is the credo of many modern witches, witches whose rituals take many different forms.

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There are four basic kinds of witches, hereditary, traditional, cardinarian, and alexandrian.

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Hereditary witches have kept the traditions of magic alive through their families for thousands of years, quietly, behind closed doors.

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Traditional witches pay close attention to preserving historical rituals from Europe, though they can be found the world over.

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Cardinarian witches take their name from the studies of Gerald Gardner, an English witch and author, who died in 1964.

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Another personality-driven cult is the alexandrian, named for a modern English witch who emphasized

ceremony and codified ritual.

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Because of their persecution, very little about how witchcraft began has been recorded.

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Its shadowy past has done much to perpetuate stereotypes, but as is often the case, those cliches do have some basis in reality.

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For example, some witches still use a broomstick during their meetings called covens, not to fly, but for ceremony.

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The broomstick is frequently associated with witches. They were thought to ride through the air on their broomstick going to the Sabbath site.

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This is a distortion of what actually happened in the early days.

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There was a time of year when the village people would go down to the fields and they would take along with them broomsticks.

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And they would ride astride them like on a hobby horse.

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00:05:44,000 --> 00:05:51,000

And as they danced around, they would jump up in the air and they felt that the higher they jumped, the higher the crops would grow.

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00:05:51,000 --> 00:05:53,000

It's what we would call sympathetic magic.

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Another popular witch cliché is the cauldron, bubbling with unspeakable ingredients.

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In actuality, the cauldron has a far more palatable origin.

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

The cauldron was used in the early days when witches came from miles around to gather at the

Sabbath sites to celebrate the main festivals.

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And they would bring with them the food that they wanted to eat having traveled some distance.

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

And they would cook it in a big cauldron over a fire set up before getting down to the religious side of things.

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This is where the cauldron came to be associated with witches.

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The misconceptions surrounding witchcraft are legion. And one day witches are attempting to set the record straight.

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The most upsetting misconceptions are that witches are Satanists and that we worship Satan or the devil.

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And witches don't have any Satan or any devils or demons in their belief structure.

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00:06:43,000 --> 00:06:50,000

People assume that witches are going to do something bad or wrong or hurt them.

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00:06:50,000 --> 00:06:54,000

I have no desire to hurt anybody. That's not part of my life.

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

Our motto is, as it harm none, do as he will, witches don't believe in harming any living thing.

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

Witches look like everybody else looks. They're human beings.

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00:07:04,000 --> 00:07:12,000

They're going to have your general yuppie look, your Gucci skirt, your fashion plate, your dungarees.

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00:07:12,000 --> 00:07:18,000

Often many witches who work in the bank will wear black most of the time.

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

And no one really knows the difference because right now it's very fashionable.

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00:07:22,000 --> 00:07:26,000

Within witchcraft there are no ten commandments. There's no catechism or anything like that.

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00:07:26,000 --> 00:07:31,000

There's just one law. And that law is, and it harm none, do what they will.

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00:07:31,000 --> 00:07:36,000

This basically means that you can do anything you like, so long as you harm no one else.

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00:07:36,000 --> 00:07:40,000

And this is really the only law that we find that we need.

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One of the most startling facts about witches is that there are more of them today than ever before.

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00:07:51,000 --> 00:07:58,000

The rituals have remained unchanged for thousands of years, though they have adapted to our modern world

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in occasionally surprising and shocking ways.

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These are witches' tools. Innocent in appearance, mysterious in function.

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00:08:11,000 --> 00:08:18,000

They're easily purchased in many places. They only become powerful when used as ritualistic tools

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00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:24,000

to summon and control powers beyond our wildest dreams or nightmares.

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

Hail, Aradia, goddess of the east, powers of air. We invoke you and call upon you

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

by the breath that is her spirit, send forth your light.

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00:08:35,000 --> 00:08:40,000

We are not in medieval Germany nor hidden in the boughs of some castle in England.

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00:08:40,000 --> 00:08:44,000

No, this is Woodland Hills, California, in the United States.

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00:08:44,000 --> 00:08:47,000

And these are modern-day witches.

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00:08:48,000 --> 00:08:55,000

This covenant gathers together often and follows the procedures passed down through the ages.

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00:08:59,000 --> 00:09:06,000

Here they prepare to consecrate the earth, for this is a time of joining, of becoming and of singing.

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00:09:07,000 --> 00:09:13,000

We all come from the goddess, and to her we shall return.

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00:09:13,000 --> 00:09:20,000

There is so much energy and love that goes around, that comes out of the voices.

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

Even those of us who can't carry a tune to save our lives sound great.

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00:09:25,000 --> 00:09:30,000

Do you feel that love there in yourself and in your friends?

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00:09:30,000 --> 00:09:33,000

That's what we call love.

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00:09:33,000 --> 00:09:36,000

Love is in you, in yourself and in your friends.

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00:09:36,000 --> 00:09:39,000

That's what singing does for me anyway.

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00:09:50,000 --> 00:09:53,000

These arcane ceremonies can take on many different forms,

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00:09:53,000 --> 00:09:58,000

but they all share one thing in common, symbolic magic achieved by arcane ritual,

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00:09:58,000 --> 00:10:01,000

empowered by modern-day belief.

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00:10:01,000 --> 00:10:07,000

The idea of sympathetic magic is that like attracts like, so that like in our society,

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

we think of money as being green.

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

If you want to draw money to you, you would use a green candle.

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00:10:13,000 --> 00:10:22,000

Or you'd make up a little herbal amulet of herbs that are associated with the monetary planets like Jupiter or something like that.

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00:10:22,000 --> 00:10:30,000

You'd put those herbs together and sew them up into a green sack that you would carry with you, that kind of thing.

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Some modern-day witches argue that ritual needs to adapt to the times to take on a more contemporary guise.

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00:10:37,000 --> 00:10:46,000

But as in anything, tradition is hard to cast aside and to some people, the rewards are worth the risks of ridicule.

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00:10:46,000 --> 00:10:49,000

It's something that brings out the best in me.

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00:10:49,000 --> 00:10:56,000

It's really hard to describe how I feel in circle and how I feel afterwards.

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00:10:56,000 --> 00:10:58,000

It's kind of like runner's high.

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00:10:58,000 --> 00:11:00,000

Really.

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

Feel it flowing around through the hands joined together.

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

The old ways die hard.

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

Some of the symbols and ceremonies associated with witchcraft have survived virtually unchanged for thousands of years,

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

dating back to an age when magic was a science.

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00:11:27,000 --> 00:11:31,000

In some ways, magic is a state of mind.

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00:11:31,000 --> 00:11:39,000

Through the use of objects and symbols such as these, witches can focus their psychic energies upon any target they choose.

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00:11:39,000 --> 00:11:44,000

These objects are prompts, if you will, in a strange form of mental theatre.

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00:11:44,000 --> 00:11:52,000

Now, most modern-day witches consider themselves to be whites or good magicians, though black magic can be practiced as well.

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00:11:52,000 --> 00:11:57,000

And these dark practices have done much to cloud mass perception.

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00:11:57,000 --> 00:12:05,000

Magic can be practiced anytime, but on the eight annual days of gathering called sabbaths, it can be particularly potent.

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One of the most notorious of these sabbaths takes place on all Hallows Eve, October 31st.

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We know that day as Halloween, and mark it by following an ancient tradition.

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00:12:15,000 --> 00:12:23,000

In medieval times, fearful peasants would place lit candles inside carved gourds to frighten away marauding witches.

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00:12:23,000 --> 00:12:28,000

A habit that has passed down to today's decorative pumpkins.

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00:12:28,000 --> 00:12:34,000

Black magic and the fear it inspires has led to witches being on the defensive for centuries.

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00:12:34,000 --> 00:12:41,000

That's an understatement when one considers the great witch hunts that took place in the late 15 and early 1600s.

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00:12:41,000 --> 00:12:48,000

Many of those unfortunate accused of being witches were actually persecuted for darker reasons.

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00:12:48,000 --> 00:12:56,000

And the more we understand those reasons, the less chance there is of witch hunts occurring again.

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00:12:56,000 --> 00:13:04,000

This book, written in medieval times, is called the Malafikarum, or Witch's Hammer.

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

It's a step-by-step guide into the world of hysteria.

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

It shows in gruesome detail the ways to extract confessions from accused witches.

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

And in these trials by torture, there's no such thing as innocence, only degrees of guilt.

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00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:30,000

In the late 1500s in Europe, a wave of hysteria swept the land.

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00:13:30,000 --> 00:13:35,000

Organised religion felt that the waves of the wicker were a grave threat to their belief systems.

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It became a platform for the denunciation and then extermination of anyone suspected of consorting with the old gods.

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In Europe, especially during the Middle Ages, when schizans wracked the church,

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00:13:52,000 --> 00:13:55,000

there was a move to purify the church from within.

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00:13:55,000 --> 00:13:59,000

And there were many investigations, the inquisition and so forth.

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00:13:59,000 --> 00:14:04,000

In the centuries in Europe, there had been tremendously brutal witch hunts.

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00:14:04,000 --> 00:14:10,000

And church leaders conducted these. This went on in England as well.

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

The New World was not immune to these insanities.

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

And in 1692, in the time of Salem in Massachusetts in the United States,

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00:14:18,000 --> 00:14:22,000

the worst of the old world corrupted the new.

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

There had been incidents of witchcraft in New England for a 50-year period preceding the hysteria of 1692.

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00:14:31,000 --> 00:14:39,000

But when the hysteria broke out in Salem, it was much more dramatic in terms of numbers and the degree of panic.

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00:14:40,000 --> 00:14:43,000

This panic began innocently.

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00:14:43,000 --> 00:14:50,000

A group of bold school girls amused themselves by dabbling in black magic, taught to them by a West Indian slave.

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00:14:50,000 --> 00:14:54,000

This experiment soon got out of control.

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00:14:55,000 --> 00:14:58,000

In the winter, people were pretty well confined to their homes.

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00:14:58,000 --> 00:15:02,000

And teenagers had very little to do, especially young women.

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00:15:02,000 --> 00:15:09,000

However, they found some entertainment in talking to Tijiba, who was a West Indian.

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

And in fact, she taught them some charms and pretended, I think, to read their futures and so on.

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

Of course, they were caught and were asked whether they had been signed on, if you will, as Satan's own.

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00:15:24,000 --> 00:15:26,000

And they said yes.

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00:15:27,000 --> 00:15:33,000

These confessions soon ignited the flame of hysteria unprecedented in the Americas.

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00:15:33,000 --> 00:15:41,000

Neighbor turned against neighbor, making ludicrous and unsubstantiated charges that were nevertheless accepted at face value.

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00:15:42,000 --> 00:15:46,000

So the courts were busy trying, torturing, condemning.

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00:15:46,000 --> 00:15:50,000

When this summer was over, 19 people had been hanged.

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00:15:50,000 --> 00:15:53,000

One man had been crushed to death because he would not speak.

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00:15:53,000 --> 00:15:57,000

Crushed to death under stones were placed on his chest.

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00:15:57,000 --> 00:15:59,000

They were called firebrands of hell.

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

And because of this, they were denied burial.

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00:16:03,000 --> 00:16:10,000

The bodies were flung down Gallows Hill and left for animals to devour.

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00:16:11,000 --> 00:16:13,000

Soon the fever burned itself out.

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

In all, 24 men and women lost their lives.

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00:16:17,000 --> 00:16:25,000

Salem still remembers its dark past, though some say the full impact of the horror has diminished with time.

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00:16:27,000 --> 00:16:32,000

I think what I have the most trouble with is the trivialization of injustice.

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00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:41,000

When you see witch key rings and wall plaques on sale virtually everywhere in Salem, it's a little difficult to swallow.

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00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:51,000

I suspect I feel it's more like selling Indian feathers at wounded knee or ashes in vials at Dachau.

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00:16:51,000 --> 00:16:57,000

I find no humor. I find no eeriness. I find only horror.

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00:17:02,000 --> 00:17:15,000

Today, witchcraft arises interest and some suppressed fear.

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00:17:15,000 --> 00:17:19,000

But it is hardly viewed as a direct threat to anyone.

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00:17:19,000 --> 00:17:27,000

Its converts feel that rather than a threat, it's a powerful, forceful good, literally changing the world for the better.

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00:17:28,000 --> 00:17:35,000

It was a time when magic was taken for granted. Its power accepted in much the same way as we accept electricity.

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00:17:35,000 --> 00:17:43,000

The world has grown more complex since those innocent times and today, man is detached from the mystic world.

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00:17:43,000 --> 00:17:46,000

Viewing it as an object of ridicule, even entertainment.

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00:17:47,000 --> 00:17:57,000

I think there will always be places where witches are not accepted and I would hope that the places in which witches are accepted would become larger.

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00:17:57,000 --> 00:18:05,000

Witchcraft, although it's what might be thought of as an ancient religion, is actually very relevant to the present.

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00:18:05,000 --> 00:18:15,000

It ties in very much with the ecological movements, with the women's rights movements and because of this, it's become very, very popular.

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00:18:15,000 --> 00:18:26,000

We are people, we are families, we are men and women and children. The misconceptions go on and on and on and of course we take responsibility for that.

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

And that's what we are trying to do now, help people to understand us so that we are not the disposal for the ills of the earth.

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

Because if they're looking for evil in us, they're looking in the wrong place.

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00:18:38,000 --> 00:18:52,000

These men and women who can so easily sail into the mystic world are not to be feared, they have to be understood.

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00:18:52,000 --> 00:19:02,000

For they may have knowledge that can benefit us all, helping us to comprehend the boundaries of our real world a little more fully.

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00:19:03,000 --> 00:19:12,000

The ancient ways live on, your gods still exist as long as you believe.

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00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:20,000

Witches, because of a magical past.

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00:19:32,000 --> 00:19:50,000

Secrets and mysteries presents information based in part on theories and opinions, some of which are controversial.

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The producer's purpose is not to validate any side of an issue, but through the use of actualities and dramatic recreation relate a possible answer, but not the only answer to this material.

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00:20:02,000 --> 00:20:09,000

The truth is that the truth is not to be feared, it is to be understood.

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00:20:09,000 --> 00:20:15,000

The truth is not to be feared, it is to be understood.

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00:20:15,000 --> 00:20:21,000

The truth is not to be feared, it is to be understood.

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00:20:21,000 --> 00:20:26,000

The truth is not to be feared, it is to be understood.

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00:20:51,000 --> 00:20:56,000

The truth is not to be feared, it is to be understood.