

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:20,960

Music

2

00:00:20,960 --> 00:00:26,560

Welcome to Sightings. I'm Tim White. When you think of the word voodoo, what comes to mind?

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00:00:27,120 --> 00:00:34,160

Zombies rising from the dead, magic potions, evil spells cast by sticking pins into voodoo dolls.

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00:00:34,160 --> 00:00:38,160

Well, these may be the popular voodoo images learned from pulp fiction,

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00:00:38,160 --> 00:00:43,440

but they aren't reality. While real voodoo practiced in the United States is more benign

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00:00:43,440 --> 00:00:48,320

than you may think, black magic disguised as voodoo is more evil than you can imagine.

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00:00:49,600 --> 00:00:55,360

In November 1991, the law catches up with the reputed Florida drug lord Romeo Mathis.

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00:00:55,920 --> 00:01:00,800

For the past four years, many people believe Mathis has controlled a million-dollar drug empire

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00:01:00,800 --> 00:01:05,920

with powers he acquired through black magic. In fact, documents have been found showing

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00:01:05,920 --> 00:01:12,480

Mathis targeted 58 people for spells intended to cause death. Among those allegedly cursed were a

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00:01:12,480 --> 00:01:18,480

U.S. attorney, a federal judge, and a prosecutor. The black magic spells evoked by Mathis have been

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00:01:18,480 --> 00:01:24,720

called voodoo, but real voodoo is not black magic. It is a complicated religion, almost

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00:01:24,720 --> 00:01:27,760

completely misunderstood by the uninitiated.

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00:01:28,080 --> 00:01:51,440

Voodoo to Americans means black magic and zombies and pins and dolls.

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00:01:51,600 --> 00:02:01,360

Voodoo to a scholar is the study or the observance of holy things. So the word voodoo actually means

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00:02:01,360 --> 00:02:08,160

holy or sacred. Pollywood is largely responsible for the misconceptions about voodoo, and tabloid

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00:02:08,160 --> 00:02:13,360

journalists have taken one of the world's oldest religions and reduced it to a series of sensational

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00:02:13,360 --> 00:02:19,840

headlines. True voodoo evolved from various African religions coming together during slave

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00:02:19,920 --> 00:02:25,840

trading in the 19th century on the island of Edin. After gaining independence from the French,

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00:02:25,840 --> 00:02:30,080

Haitians brought their practice of voodoo out of the mountains and into the open.

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00:02:30,080 --> 00:02:36,960

The Haitians are 90% Catholic, 10% Protestant, and 100% voodoo. I don't think that Haiti would

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00:02:36,960 --> 00:02:41,920

have been the first black republic. I don't think the Haitians would have achieved their independence

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00:02:41,920 --> 00:02:50,640

without the religion of voodoo. Voodoo gave them solidarity, which no other institution could

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00:02:50,640 --> 00:02:57,600

have given them. Today, voodoo thrives outside of Haiti, kept alive in peristals or temples around

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00:02:57,600 --> 00:03:03,520

the world. In Philadelphia, the peristyle Haitian sanctuary is just one of more than a thousand

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00:03:03,520 --> 00:03:05,520

voodoo sanctuaries in the United States.

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00:03:12,000 --> 00:03:20,880

Voodoo has become synonymous with the word evil and satanic. So it's something that everybody

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00:03:20,880 --> 00:03:25,280

hates and know nothing about. It's amazing the tremendous amount of ignorance people have about

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00:03:25,280 --> 00:03:31,120

something and yet have such a definite firm opinion about it. It is a perfect example of how

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00:03:31,120 --> 00:03:38,000

in this country people have lost the capacity for analysis, reflection, and clear thinking.

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00:03:38,720 --> 00:03:44,720

Voodoo's sacred secrets are guarded by priests and priestesses like Angela Novanyom. Angela

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00:03:44,720 --> 00:03:50,960

believes she was called to voodooism by a mysterious power. I had a dream about this place and I

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00:03:50,960 --> 00:03:56,720

didn't know what it was. I went to the travel agent and they showed me pictures. That's where I want

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00:03:56,720 --> 00:04:02,480

to go. They said that's Haiti and I was very sick and I lost my job. I didn't have anything to lose.

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00:04:03,040 --> 00:04:11,200

I went to Haiti and I became a priestess there. The voodoo service involves a complicated series

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00:04:11,200 --> 00:04:18,000

of rituals and ceremonies. Drumming and singing are used to call spiritual forces or loas to visit

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00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:23,920

the congregation. Believers claim to have a direct line to the spirit world when loas temporarily

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00:04:24,080 --> 00:04:25,920

possess the priests and talk through them.

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00:04:34,320 --> 00:04:39,840

Lower possession can be sudden and for some believers very traumatic. The writhing body

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00:04:39,840 --> 00:04:44,400

movements and altered state of consciousness are particularly disturbing the first time a

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00:04:44,400 --> 00:04:52,320

practitioner is possessed. When I came out of that possession my mother had me pinned up against

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00:04:52,320 --> 00:05:00,480

the refrigerator with my arms stretched out and she was crying Jesus Jesus Jesus Jesus Jesus

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00:05:00,480 --> 00:05:07,680

the blood of Jesus and then my mother said you possessed a devil. Since possession is frequently

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00:05:07,680 --> 00:05:13,200

associated with evil it has been difficult for voodoo practitioners to convince outsiders

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00:05:13,200 --> 00:05:20,240

that lower possession is benign and in fact positive. The constant metaphor used in a voodoo

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00:05:20,240 --> 00:05:28,000

ceremony is that the loa are like horsemen and the worshipers are like horses and during

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00:05:28,000 --> 00:05:36,240

a voodoo ceremony the loa will come down and ride the backs of the worshipers the way a horseman

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00:05:36,240 --> 00:05:43,600

rides a horse. It is believed that a loa completely obliterates the personality of the priest or

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00:05:43,600 --> 00:05:49,600

priestess being possessed and sometimes that kind of total possession will affect a member of the

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00:05:49,600 --> 00:06:01,200

congregation with frightening results. Anybody can become possessed which is a danger because

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00:06:01,200 --> 00:06:07,600

not anyone can handle possession. There's a word in Haitian Creole it's the word is basal which is

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00:06:07,600 --> 00:06:14,080

means wild and if a person hasn't been properly initiated if she or he is contacted by the energy

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00:06:14,080 --> 00:06:22,160

of the loa is basically out of control. The first time that I got hit lightly with a possession I

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00:06:23,440 --> 00:06:30,000

was quite shocked and I said boy this is a lot realer than I thought it's so close it's a very

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00:06:30,000 --> 00:06:38,240

humbling experience you realize that it's beyond us. Anybody who's ever seen a voodoo ceremony and

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00:06:38,240 --> 00:06:45,600

isn't prepared for the phenomena of spirit possession would be I think shocked perhaps upset

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00:06:46,160 --> 00:06:51,840

if that person was not used to seeing people worship with their body as well as with their minds.

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00:06:54,080 --> 00:06:59,840

The rituals practiced at the Peristyle Haitian Sanctuary in Philadelphia are voodoo as a religion

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00:07:00,720 --> 00:07:07,200

offering guidance a strong sense of community spirit and a path to spiritual enlightenment.

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00:07:07,200 --> 00:07:12,400

How then did the myths about voodoo's dark side become so ingrained in popular culture?

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00:07:14,800 --> 00:07:20,800

Some scholars believe it happened here in New Orleans early in this century when voodoo was

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00:07:20,800 --> 00:07:27,120

popularized some say commercialized by priestess Marie Laveaux. One blue candle I brought is a

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00:07:27,120 --> 00:07:32,960

special offering to the spirit of Marie Laveaux because blue was her favorite color and she always

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00:07:33,040 --> 00:07:38,000

wore blue shawl and that was the blue that represented her great compassion and healing

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00:07:38,000 --> 00:07:44,960

quality of the mother. All of the power structure of New Orleans came to consult with her because as

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00:07:44,960 --> 00:07:50,160

a voodoo priestess of course she was able to talk to the law she was recognized as sort of the

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00:07:50,160 --> 00:07:57,520

unofficial mayor of the city. The voodoo practiced by Marie Laveaux and generations of disciples

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00:07:57,520 --> 00:08:04,080

after her has been preserved in the New Orleans voodoo museum but what is called voodoo here

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00:08:04,080 --> 00:08:09,280

is really a mix of many traditions including elements of black magic. New Orleans voodoo is

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00:08:09,280 --> 00:08:14,640

probably the most eclectic because people came here from all of the islands so they brought their

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00:08:14,640 --> 00:08:19,440

tradition with them and I think this is what's wonderful about New Orleans voodoo because it

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00:08:19,440 --> 00:08:27,760

really allows you to be creative to express yourself through spiritual means. In small shops

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00:08:27,760 --> 00:08:33,680

called botanicas throughout the french quarter potions are available that believers claim can cast

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00:08:33,680 --> 00:08:40,320

spells on people. There are love potions, money potions, even a potion thought to cause a state of

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00:08:40,320 --> 00:08:46,160

waking death. Some voodoo practitioners claim zombies are human beings who have been given this

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00:08:46,160 --> 00:08:54,240

hallucinogenic potion but despite Hollywood's continuing fascination with the dark side of

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00:08:54,240 --> 00:09:02,320

voodoo practitioners of true voodoo deny the very existence of zombies. The fight to establish the

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00:09:02,320 --> 00:09:07,600

legitimacy of voodoo as a positive faith has been made difficult by their practice of animal

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00:09:07,600 --> 00:09:13,920

sacrifice. Believers insist that what may look evil to outsiders is an important part of their

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00:09:13,920 --> 00:09:24,720

religion. For us the animal sacrificing is asking the loa to bless your offering so that you can

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00:09:24,720 --> 00:09:35,040

have holy meat to eat and is only done at a ceremony a real big ceremony which is a time where priests

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00:09:35,040 --> 00:09:41,040

and priestess must feed the poor. While some believers continue to concentrate on the positive

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00:09:41,120 --> 00:09:47,440

forces of voodoo there will always be those who exploit voodoo for their own purposes and as long

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00:09:47,440 --> 00:09:53,120

as the spells and curses of people like Romeo Mathis are exploited in headlines and on television

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00:09:53,120 --> 00:09:59,920

the religion of voodoo will remain feared and misunderstood. Voodoo gave purpose to my life.

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00:09:59,920 --> 00:10:05,040

I mean you're talking about a young african-american male coming up on the streets from the poor

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00:10:05,040 --> 00:10:10,560

community and not only physically cleaned me up but spiritually provided and nourished me.

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00:10:10,560 --> 00:10:18,800

It gave me things to learn new things fresh things new ideas new directions things that I never thought

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00:10:18,800 --> 00:10:27,840

of before. In the voodoo religion voodoo dolls are not as evil as we've come to believe the pins

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00:10:27,840 --> 00:10:33,360

traditionally stuck in the dolls were actually holding messages for the spirits. The idea that

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00:10:33,360 --> 00:10:38,800

these pins were meant to hurt people is pure imagination invented by writers trying to cash

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00:10:38,800 --> 00:10:46,400

in on the fear of voodoo cults. Coming up the psychic powers of healing and crime solving are

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00:10:46,400 --> 00:10:53,840

alive and well in Russia. What's the secret meet the amazing Russian psychics next. With a sightings

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00:10:53,840 --> 00:10:59,600

investigative team working in Russia we've been intrigued by the amount of respect and credibility

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00:10:59,680 --> 00:11:05,280

given to the paranormal by government agencies there. In Moscow the scientific research center

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00:11:05,280 --> 00:11:10,720

for traditional medicine is conducting serious research into psychic healing. For them psychics

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00:11:10,720 --> 00:11:17,440

who heal illness are put into the category of traditional medicine. Red Square continues to

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00:11:17,440 --> 00:11:23,920

symbolize the heart and soul of what used to be the Soviet Union. The military parades and communist

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00:11:23,920 --> 00:11:30,400

presence of the past are gone now but a team of psychics is free to make to perform an exorcism

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00:11:30,400 --> 00:11:34,400

on the evil spirits they believe haunt the Kremlin and Lenin's tomb.

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00:11:39,120 --> 00:11:45,360

Lenin's ghost is evil. He is still here with many other high-level communists who are buried in the

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00:11:45,360 --> 00:11:52,880

square. It's our duty as psychics to purge the Kremlin of these demons who have a stranglehold

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00:11:52,880 --> 00:11:59,840

on the people. Exorcising ghosts in a nation's capital may seem like a bizarre practice to Americans

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00:11:59,840 --> 00:12:05,360

but Russia is a land where psychic power is accepted by not only the citizens but by the

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00:12:05,360 --> 00:12:11,280

scientific community as well. This psychic claims that the supernatural energy emanating from his

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00:12:11,280 --> 00:12:17,680

hands is so strong that he can control the needle of a compass and beyond street demonstrations

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00:12:17,680 --> 00:12:23,680

like this psychics work with doctors to reportedly heal a variety of life-threatening illnesses.

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00:12:24,320 --> 00:12:30,320

The Moscow Police Department regularly employs psychics in unsolved cases including kidnapping,

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00:12:30,320 --> 00:12:37,360

missing persons and murder. The central clearinghouse for the study of clairvoyance and psychic healing

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00:12:37,360 --> 00:12:43,280

is the scientific research center of traditional medicine in Moscow. The center's director is Dr.

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00:12:43,360 --> 00:12:50,640

Vladimir Galperin. Our center is a fantastic research and treatment clinic. After conferring

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00:12:50,640 --> 00:12:56,880

with their own doctors, patients make appointments for sessions with our psychic healers. The healers

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00:12:56,880 --> 00:13:02,080

meet with the patients and design a program that heals the person without drugs or machines.

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00:13:03,120 --> 00:13:07,680

Our psychics are the best in the world and have documented results without even touching the person.

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00:13:08,640 --> 00:13:14,640

Dr. Galperin backs up his claims with data and statistics from years of scientific study.

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00:13:14,640 --> 00:13:19,120

He claims his psychics have had success with cases where medical doctors have given up hope.

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00:13:19,680 --> 00:13:23,680

People with terminal illnesses see this center as their last chance.

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00:13:25,040 --> 00:13:30,000

Every psychic on our staff is certified yearly by the scientific committee. They test the

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00:13:30,000 --> 00:13:36,480

psychics powers and verify their abilities. Only board certified healers work here. We guard against

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00:13:36,480 --> 00:13:42,640

charlatans and fakes. There's too much important work to be done. In addition to healing, the

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00:13:42,640 --> 00:13:48,880

psychics working at the center have branched out into other areas. Here, Moscow police detectives

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00:13:48,880 --> 00:13:57,360

ask the psychics help in solving a missing persons case. A man came from Priso to Moscow to visit

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00:13:57,360 --> 00:14:03,920

relatives. After visiting, he disappeared without a trace. The number of unsolved crimes in Moscow

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00:14:03,920 --> 00:14:10,320

has risen dramatically. Overworked police are using every means possible to solve crimes. So,

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00:14:10,320 --> 00:14:14,160

you want to use our psychics as a means of finding the whereabouts of these people.

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00:14:16,480 --> 00:14:20,400

Absolutely. We find less than 10% of these people using traditional methods.

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00:14:24,000 --> 00:14:29,600

The police files are presented to the staff in a round table meeting. Dr. Galperin asks each

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00:14:29,600 --> 00:14:36,320

psychic to focus on the energy of the victim. This is not black magic. Our psychics have gifts

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00:14:36,320 --> 00:14:41,680

from God that they use to focus and interpret energy particles that are too small to be detected

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00:14:41,680 --> 00:14:48,080

by standard instruments. They use photographs only as a tool to help them visualize. The observations

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00:14:48,080 --> 00:14:54,640

of each psychic are recorded and the results are startling. The group unanimously agrees as to the

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00:14:54,640 --> 00:14:59,760

fate of the victim. They say that the man in this photograph was brutally murdered by organized

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00:14:59,760 --> 00:15:06,800

crime because he knew too much. The psychic Podlyagin receives the clearest visions and working with

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00:15:06,800 --> 00:15:12,480

the Moscow street map, he indicates exactly where he believes the man's body can be found.

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00:15:12,960 --> 00:15:26,240

Podlyagin led police to this location, an old Russian Orthodox cemetery in east Moscow. Strangely,

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00:15:26,240 --> 00:15:32,000

cemeteries are a common hiding place for murder victims in Russia. Organized crime often buries

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00:15:32,000 --> 00:15:37,920

bodies under existing coffins. To pinpoint the exact location of the body in this case,

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00:15:37,920 --> 00:15:44,160

Podlyagin uses divining rods, thin stainless steel pointers he believes pick up psychic energy.

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00:15:44,720 --> 00:15:51,760

It's a macabre form of dowsing designed not to find water but bodies. Podlyagin concludes that

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00:15:51,760 --> 00:15:57,600

the body is within 30 meters of this location. The group then relays their findings to police

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00:15:57,600 --> 00:16:02,160

detective Mikhail Ivanovich who has had success working with psychics in the past.

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00:16:03,120 --> 00:16:08,480

I've worked many cases with Podlyagin and I know him to be correct more than 80% of the time.

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00:16:09,360 --> 00:16:13,680

The case we are currently investigating is no different. In the past we have brought in the

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00:16:13,680 --> 00:16:19,600

canine squad with a homicide detective. The team follows the lead that Podlyagin has given them.

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00:16:19,600 --> 00:16:25,440

When the dog signals that something is buried, the men immediately dig. In the winter, this is a

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00:16:25,440 --> 00:16:30,880

difficult process. The frozen ground can hold up an investigation. But in the past, when we've had

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00:16:30,960 --> 00:16:36,800

such clear indications, it has only been a matter of time before the body was found. When a body

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00:16:36,800 --> 00:16:41,120

is unearthed, it is very gruesome as bodies that have been buried for a long time without

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00:16:41,120 --> 00:16:47,120

preservatives decay very rapidly. Once the positive idea is made with police techniques,

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00:16:47,120 --> 00:16:53,440

the case is closed and we can all go home. I cannot say that every case has a positive resolution

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00:16:53,440 --> 00:17:00,320

because many crimes just remain unsolved. But despite his cautious attitude,

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00:17:00,400 --> 00:17:05,840

Detective Ivanovich remains hopeful that psychics like Podlyagin will be a successful addition to

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00:17:05,840 --> 00:17:12,080

his department. During our investigation, Podlyagin believes he has located the exact location of

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00:17:12,080 --> 00:17:17,920

this victim, buried directly underneath the coffin in this burial plot. At the time of our

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00:17:17,920 --> 00:17:23,920

investigation, the frozen ground and a scarcity of resources forced the police to postpone digging

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00:17:23,920 --> 00:17:31,360

at this site. Everything is difficult in Moscow right now. Our access to the necessary equipment

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00:17:31,360 --> 00:17:36,320

is limited. We are frustrated because we would like to dig immediately. But the case must wait

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00:17:36,320 --> 00:17:40,640

until spring when the ground is softer. Investigation will continue at that time.

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00:17:41,760 --> 00:17:47,600

The tragedy of cases like this one takes its toll on the psychics. But they are encouraged by the

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00:17:47,600 --> 00:17:51,680

healing work that they're also involved with at Dr. Galparen's Research Center.

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00:17:52,480 --> 00:17:57,440

We have many people who want to invest in our work and we want to teach the world about these

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00:17:57,440 --> 00:18:04,000

things. It's exciting to help so many people find health. And for those we cannot save,

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00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:10,480

we can at least illuminate the mystery and with a light on mystery, we will be led to true understanding.

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00:18:12,320 --> 00:18:17,600

Moscow police have now confirmed that after the spring thaw, they will dig at the site indicated

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00:18:17,680 --> 00:18:22,480

by the psychic Podlyagin. The fact that the Moscow police department credits their psychic

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00:18:22,480 --> 00:18:29,120

detectives with an 80% success rate is astounding. Perhaps with the new spirit of openness between

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00:18:29,120 --> 00:18:34,240

Russia and the United States, some of their psychics may soon be invited here to test their

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00:18:34,240 --> 00:18:42,240

accuracy on American soil. Coming up next, has science discovered the cosmic secret to time travel?

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00:18:42,240 --> 00:18:46,480

If you create the right kind of wormhole, you could also use it to travel through time.

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00:18:47,200 --> 00:18:53,040

For astronomers, few phenomena are as intriguing as black holes. To us, they may seem like little

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00:18:53,040 --> 00:18:59,200

more than dark, empty voids in space. But to the trained scientist, black holes represent

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00:18:59,200 --> 00:19:04,240

a world of possibilities, including the potential for real life time travel.

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00:19:07,280 --> 00:19:11,520

Literally black holes are star-gobbling objects. According to some estimates,

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00:19:11,520 --> 00:19:17,120

there are about 100 million black holes in our galaxy. So there's a very, very, very slight chance

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00:19:17,120 --> 00:19:20,880

that sometime over the next couple of hundred billion years, we might run into a black hole.

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00:19:21,920 --> 00:19:26,720

The Hubble Space Telescope recently took what may be among the most historic photos in the history

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00:19:26,720 --> 00:19:30,800

of science. And those are photos of what appears to be a black hole. This is the first really

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00:19:30,800 --> 00:19:36,160

convincing evidence that black holes do exist. This photo shows what appears to be a kind of

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00:19:36,160 --> 00:19:42,000

donut-shaped object surrounding a point of light. It's the area around the black hole where matter

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00:19:42,000 --> 00:19:46,400

tends to clump together just before it sucks ultimately to its doom inside the black hole.

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00:19:47,360 --> 00:19:52,960

Now that these new pictures have changed black holes from scientific theory to scientific fact,

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00:19:52,960 --> 00:19:57,200

space researchers are exploring the possibility that theories about time travel

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00:19:57,200 --> 00:20:01,360

and interdimensional space travel could also one day be scientific fact.

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00:20:02,320 --> 00:20:08,000

For years when people looked at black holes, they thought of them as time machines. What people

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00:20:08,000 --> 00:20:14,320

are talking about instead now are things called cosmic wormholes, which are special cousins of

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00:20:14,320 --> 00:20:19,760

the black holes. Although it has yet to be proven, scientists are pursuing the idea that wormholes

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00:20:19,760 --> 00:20:25,840

are really tears in the fabric of space. Could these holes be the intergalactic subway tunnels

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00:20:25,840 --> 00:20:30,640

of the future? If you create the right kind of wormhole, you could also use it to travel through

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00:20:30,720 --> 00:20:36,000

time. If time travel is possible, then why haven't we been invaded by hordes of tourists from the

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00:20:36,000 --> 00:20:43,200

future? Just as black holes were once only theory, scientists hope to someday prove that time travel

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00:20:43,200 --> 00:20:49,600

is also possible, and they're looking to the stars for that proof. The universe is an enormous place,

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00:20:49,600 --> 00:20:55,360

and people have to remember that the numbers are definitely in favor of the possibility of the

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00:20:55,360 --> 00:21:00,240

existence of life, perhaps even intelligent life, on other worlds. I am very hopeful that

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00:21:00,400 --> 00:21:06,480

wormholes do exist because they would create the option of being able to travel to the distant stars.

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00:21:08,080 --> 00:21:12,160

If you've had a paranormal experience, our sightings investigative team would like to know.

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00:21:12,160 --> 00:21:18,320

At 1-900-740-SIGHT, each call 75 cents a minute, average call last two minutes, and you must be 18

197

00:21:18,320 --> 00:21:19,680

years or older.