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Halloween and horror movies just naturally go together.

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And if you've ever rented an old black and white horror movie,

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you've seen the wild-eyed, wild-haired mad scientist

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hunched over a weird contraption spewing electricity.

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But did you know that that character is based on a real-life American scientist?

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His name was Nikola Tesla,

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and there are those who believe that he was mad.

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The night he inadvertently blew up part of Siberia.

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The Night of the Dead

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On June 30, 1908,

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a remote area of Siberia known as Tunguska

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is devastated by a mysterious force

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2,000 times greater than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

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It left no crater or residue,

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the usual calling card of a meteor.

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Russian investigators who found metal fragments of the site

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suggested the blast had been caused by an alien spacecraft

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colliding with Earth.

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But a new, compelling theory about the Tunguska incident

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suggests that a highly concentrated beam of electrical energy

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caused the total devastation in this region,

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and that only one man had the scientific knowledge to pull it off.

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Nikola Tesla, I feel he's the greatest inventor of the past 500 years.

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He is a Michelangelo.

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He is a Leonardo da Vinci of science.

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He gave us AC power, the fluorescent light, radio, robotics.

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By 1900, he was the emperor of invention.

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He had eclipsed Edison.

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He was one of the half-dozen most famous men in the world.

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And he prays for a man we seem to know so little about.

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When Tesla emigrated to the United States from Croatia in 1884,

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his dream of working for his hero, Thomas Edison, became a reality.

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But Tesla's development of a more efficient form of electricity

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called AC, alternating current,

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couldn't sit well with his new boss,

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who had already developed the more cumbersome director, or DC.

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Edison just shut him down.

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He said, it's DC here.

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America, Washington, DC.

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Forget this AC stuff.

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You're working for me. I don't want to hear another word of it.

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But AC was superior, as Tesla's biographer Ted Wise points out.

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DC is like a fine wine that doesn't travel well.

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It's a power that cannot be stepped up to extremely high frequencies,

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whereas AC can be transported in these extremely high voltages

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and then stepped down very safely to be used in a home or school or a factory.

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Tesla's brilliant discovery so impressed industrialist George Westinghouse

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that he enlisted Tesla in his bid to harness the hydroelectric power of Niagara Falls.

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Finally, the movers and shakers of the day were noticing Tesla.

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He met Kipling, he became a good friend of Mark Twain's,

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and he met all the millionaires.

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He made a point of meeting all the millionaires.

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One of those millionaires was J.P. Morgan.

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And J.P. Morgan was the fellow that gave him \$150,000,

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probably the equivalent of \$10 million or better today, to build Wharton Cliff.

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Wharton Cliff was the name Tesla chose for what he believed would be his greatest contribution,

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a huge transmitter that would provide electrical power to the world without the use of wires.

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What he didn't tell Morgan was that he wanted to send power to the world for free.

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Journalist Ellen Sherman believes this was the beginning of the end for Wharton Cliff.

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J.P. Morgan did not want to back something that was going to give free energy to people

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who he could put no meter on, he could not get any money from it whatsoever.

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When Morgan pulled his support, he not only ended Tesla's career as the major scientist of his day,

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but he made laughing stock of it in the eyes of his scientific peers.

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When that was all pulled away from him, he was a desperate man on any number of fronts.

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And that desperation may have led him to use the partially constructed tower

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to conduct a fateful experiment in the summer of 1908.

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Tesla was something of a showman. He had lost the backing of his principal financial supporters,

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and he was the kind of person who might try a large public event that would bring attention to his work.

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Oliver Nicholson has found evidence that Nicola Tesla may have been planning to aim his electrical beam at the North Pole

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in order to put on a dramatic light show for Admiral Perry, who was in the midst of his historic expedition.

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A small miscalculation in distance could have had devastating results.

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There was Tesla's research station in Long Island, and I drew the line to Tinduska in Russia.

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Then interestingly enough, that line crossed right near the North Pole and came very close to Ellesmere Island

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where Perry would be camping over for the winter.

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Nicholson and others theorized that Tesla's aim was true, but he grossly underestimated the effect gravity would have on his electrical energy beam.

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Instead of this operating as he thought it was going to, there is a tremendous explosion in the Siberian region.

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Forest are laid flat, reindeer herds disappeared, small towns are completely gone.

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J.W. McGinnis of the International Tesla Society is convinced that the Tunguska tragedy is linked to Tesla.

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He disagrees with those who believe Tesla was purposely building a weapon of mass destruction on a global scale.

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Of all of the great scientists of this country that went to work for the Manhattan Project, there was one scientist that refused to do that,

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and that was Nikola Tesla. He did not believe in a general destructive weapon and wanted to introduce something that was a lot more incisive and certainly indefensible, and that was his death ray.

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This thing was so powerful, it would deliver 50 million volts into an area that was one-tenth of a millionth of an inch in diameter.

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If you put that much pressure in that smallest space, there is nothing that can stand up to it. You

could cut a ship in half.

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While the U.S. government went ahead with its atomic bomb strategy, a secretive interest in Tesla's work seemed to be at work shortly after his death in 1943.

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The day following his death, the FBI under the auspices of the OAP, which is the Office of Alien Protection, broke into his apartment, broke into his safe and stole, or confiscated, all of his papers and effects.

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Now, the OAP had no business being there. He had been a citizen of the United States since the previous century. So this was a ruse. They needed to get in there somehow.

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Recently, declassified documents only hinted at the great discoveries that may have been hidden in Tesla's safe.

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He had developed a sophisticated particle beam death ray, and he had to know how to successfully transmit an enormously powerful wave of electrical current through the atmosphere and halfway across the world.

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Could it be that through his Perloin papers, our government gained knowledge that should, by rights, make Nikola Tesla the father of Star Wars technology?

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They realized that Tesla was always ahead of his time.

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What amazing discoveries did the FBI find inside Tesla's safe at the Hotel New Yorker? We may never know.

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Shortly after their retrieval, the files disappeared and have not been seen, at least not publicly, since then.