

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,680

This program is about unsolved mysteries.

2

00:00:03,680 --> 00:00:06,280

Whenever possible, the actual family members and police

3

00:00:06,280 --> 00:00:09,280

officials have participated in recreating the events.

4

00:00:09,280 --> 00:00:11,880

What you are about to see is not a news broadcast.

5

00:00:16,880 --> 00:00:21,000

In 1978, 19-year-old Gus Hoffman was accosted by a motorcycle

6

00:00:21,000 --> 00:00:23,360

gang in San Jose, California.

7

00:00:23,360 --> 00:00:26,360

For 10 years, his mother has haunted gang hangouts

8

00:00:26,360 --> 00:00:32,720

in a desperate attempt to find her son or his killers.

9

00:00:32,720 --> 00:00:36,200

In 1927, two weeks before Charles Lindbergh's famous

10

00:00:36,200 --> 00:00:38,880

Atlantic crossing, a pair of intrepid French aviators

11

00:00:38,880 --> 00:00:40,640

attempted the same flight.

12

00:00:40,640 --> 00:00:42,200

Some believe they made it.

13

00:00:42,200 --> 00:00:46,200

An aviation history will have to be rewritten.

14

00:00:46,200 --> 00:00:50,080

In 1987, Patsy Wright was killed by a lethal dose of strick

15

00:00:50,080 --> 00:00:51,720

in her cold medicine.

16

00:00:51,720 --> 00:00:53,800

Police believe he was a criminal.

17

00:00:53,920 --> 00:00:57,080

In her cold medicine, police believe the murderer

18

00:00:57,080 --> 00:00:59,960

was someone close to her.

19

00:00:59,960 --> 00:01:02,600

In 1942, the oil tanker Muscogee was

20

00:01:02,600 --> 00:01:04,200

sunk by a German U-boat.

21

00:01:04,200 --> 00:01:06,040

All hands were lost.

22

00:01:06,040 --> 00:01:09,160

45 years later, the son of the Muscogee's captain

23

00:01:09,160 --> 00:01:11,320

has asked the Nazi U-boat commander

24

00:01:11,320 --> 00:01:14,240

to help locate the missing relatives of the men lost

25

00:01:14,240 --> 00:01:16,480

at sea.

26

00:01:16,480 --> 00:01:19,400

Tonight, four stories in which ordinary people

27

00:01:19,400 --> 00:01:22,560

are thrust into the most extraordinary circumstances,

28

00:01:22,600 --> 00:01:25,800

each needing one vital clue to solve a mystery.

29

00:01:25,800 --> 00:01:28,480

Perhaps someone watching tonight can help.

30

00:01:28,480 --> 00:01:29,800

Perhaps it's you.

31

00:01:59,800 --> 00:02:25,920

In 1977, Gus Hoffman was a popular 19-year-old in San Jose,

32

00:02:25,920 --> 00:02:27,240

California.

33

00:02:27,240 --> 00:02:29,520

He had a reputation as an excellent musician

34

00:02:29,560 --> 00:02:31,280

and a mechanical whiz.

35

00:02:31,280 --> 00:02:34,080

Gus was not a biker, but one of his hobbies

36

00:02:34,080 --> 00:02:36,200

was restoring vintage motorcycles,

37

00:02:36,200 --> 00:02:38,040

and he took great pride in his work.

38

00:02:41,160 --> 00:02:45,920

In October of 1977, Gus bought a 1966 Harley-Davidson

39

00:02:45,920 --> 00:02:47,200

Sportster.

40

00:02:47,200 --> 00:02:49,680

He spent eight months and \$4,000

41

00:02:49,680 --> 00:02:51,960

restoring it to mint condition.

42

00:02:51,960 --> 00:02:54,160

The motorcycle became a source of conflict

43

00:02:54,160 --> 00:02:58,000

between Gus and his parents.

44

00:02:58,000 --> 00:02:59,280

We didn't like it at all.

45

00:02:59,280 --> 00:03:03,200

My husband gave him an ultimatum.

46

00:03:03,200 --> 00:03:06,640

He said, either you go or the bike.

47

00:03:06,640 --> 00:03:08,520

I said, I don't want you to leave, Gus.

48

00:03:08,520 --> 00:03:10,720

I said, you've got to do something.

49

00:03:10,720 --> 00:03:12,440

And neither does your dad want you to leave.

50

00:03:12,440 --> 00:03:15,560

So he's just afraid that something's going to happen to you.

51

00:03:15,560 --> 00:03:18,080

We don't want you to have that bike.

52

00:03:18,080 --> 00:03:20,400

He said, well, I'll just fix it up and I'll sell it.

53

00:03:20,400 --> 00:03:21,320

That's what he told us.

54

00:03:25,360 --> 00:03:29,200

On July the 4th, 1978, Gus put the finishing touches

55

00:03:29,200 --> 00:03:30,680

on his motorcycle.

56

00:03:30,680 --> 00:03:32,880

He showed it off to his brother and told him

57

00:03:32,880 --> 00:03:35,000

he was taking the bike out for a short ride.

58

00:03:39,280 --> 00:03:43,680

Gus Hoffman's family would never see him again.

59

00:03:43,680 --> 00:03:46,760

When Gus did not return, his mother Rose Hoffman

60

00:03:46,760 --> 00:03:49,600

called the police to report her son missing.

61

00:03:49,600 --> 00:03:52,720

Because they could take no action until 48 hours had passed,

62

00:03:52,720 --> 00:03:55,280

she started to investigate on her own.

63

00:03:55,280 --> 00:03:58,160

This began a 10-year quest in which Rose Hoffman never

64

00:03:58,200 --> 00:04:01,720

stopped trying to find out what had happened to her son.

65

00:04:01,720 --> 00:04:04,320

Rose has asked that an actress portray her in recreating

66

00:04:04,320 --> 00:04:06,000

these most painful moments.

67

00:04:09,520 --> 00:04:13,160

When Gus didn't return, Rose canvassed the neighborhood.

68

00:04:13,160 --> 00:04:15,000

She questioned one of Gus's friends

69

00:04:15,000 --> 00:04:16,880

who worked at a nearby gas station.

70

00:04:16,880 --> 00:04:20,480

But about two days ago, I saw him pull up on his motorcycle.

71

00:04:20,480 --> 00:04:22,640

What were these two other guys that went choppers with him?

72

00:04:23,320 --> 00:04:27,560

He said that he saw Gus riding by meridian.

73

00:04:27,560 --> 00:04:30,680

And he said there was two motorcycles in back of him

74

00:04:30,680 --> 00:04:32,400

and a blue Monte Carlo.

75

00:04:32,400 --> 00:04:34,520

And he said the reason he recognized it

76

00:04:34,520 --> 00:04:39,000

was because these same two motorcycle guys came in

77

00:04:39,000 --> 00:04:43,880

to the gas station, and they were like real mean to him.

78

00:04:43,880 --> 00:04:46,440

And so he remembered them.

79

00:04:46,440 --> 00:04:51,520

And they had real long hair, and they were just real long hair.

80

00:04:51,560 --> 00:04:54,360

And they were just real tough guys, guys

81

00:04:54,360 --> 00:04:57,680

that you don't fool around with.

82

00:04:57,680 --> 00:05:01,560

A second witness later said that the two bikers had stopped Gus,

83

00:05:01,560 --> 00:05:03,680

argued, and threatened him with chains.

84

00:05:08,400 --> 00:05:11,160

When Gus pulled away, they roared after him,

85

00:05:11,160 --> 00:05:15,160

the blue Monte Carlo in pursuit.

86

00:05:15,160 --> 00:05:17,600

The two witnesses identified one of the bikers

87

00:05:17,600 --> 00:05:21,320

as Michael Hodges, a member of the forgotten few motorcycle

88

00:05:21,320 --> 00:05:22,280

gang.

89

00:05:22,280 --> 00:05:24,920

The other was Michael Stevenson, another member

90

00:05:24,920 --> 00:05:27,080

of the same gang.

91

00:05:27,080 --> 00:05:30,400

If there was ever a person who you could say was a criminal,

92

00:05:30,400 --> 00:05:32,160

the name would be Michael Stevenson.

93

00:05:32,160 --> 00:05:33,920

He's probably the most violent person

94

00:05:33,920 --> 00:05:35,120

that I've ever investigated.

95

00:05:38,800 --> 00:05:41,160

The San Jose police did not have enough evidence

96

00:05:41,160 --> 00:05:44,320

to bring Stevenson and Hodges in for interrogation.

97

00:05:44,320 --> 00:05:46,600

So they began to question other gang members who

98

00:05:46,600 --> 00:05:47,600

knew the two men.

99

00:05:47,600 --> 00:05:48,500

Yeah.

100

00:05:48,500 --> 00:05:49,400

We're with the San Jose police.

101

00:05:49,400 --> 00:05:50,840

Got a few questions to ask him.

102

00:05:50,840 --> 00:05:51,640

All right.

103

00:05:51,640 --> 00:05:52,600

What's up?

104

00:05:52,600 --> 00:05:54,760

Yeah, do you know Gus Hoffman, buddy, Chance?

105

00:05:54,760 --> 00:05:55,840

No, I've never heard of him.

106

00:05:55,840 --> 00:05:57,880

No one was willing to talk.

107

00:05:57,880 --> 00:06:00,840

It appeared that everyone feared Michael Stevenson.

108

00:06:00,840 --> 00:06:03,960

Are you coming in now, or will then arrest me,

109

00:06:03,960 --> 00:06:05,680

or get the heck out of here?

110

00:06:05,680 --> 00:06:08,000

After they found out who they were,

111

00:06:08,000 --> 00:06:11,640

they told me, expect the worst.

112

00:06:11,640 --> 00:06:13,080

I got very angry.

113

00:06:13,080 --> 00:06:15,400

My husband got angry.

114

00:06:15,400 --> 00:06:17,160

We said, no, this can't happen.

115

00:06:18,000 --> 00:06:19,520

I just wanted to go after them after that.

116

00:06:19,520 --> 00:06:23,200

I mean, that's all I thought about was going after them.

117

00:06:28,400 --> 00:06:30,800

In order to turn up leads for the police,

118

00:06:30,800 --> 00:06:32,720

Rose and a friend named Carol Jensen

119

00:06:32,720 --> 00:06:37,800

went undercover to infiltrate motorcycle gang hangouts.

120

00:06:37,800 --> 00:06:41,280

I tried to dress like a biker person, a woman that's

121

00:06:41,280 --> 00:06:44,240

been around in the biker world.

122

00:06:44,280 --> 00:06:50,280

I had to, I wore my hair all wild and tight pants

123

00:06:50,280 --> 00:06:54,000

and tight jeans and heels and bracelets.

124

00:06:54,000 --> 00:06:58,520

And just, I tried to look tough.

125

00:06:58,520 --> 00:07:02,520

It was scary, but I don't think I was as afraid

126

00:07:02,520 --> 00:07:03,480

as I should have been.

127

00:07:03,480 --> 00:07:04,360

What about you?

128

00:07:04,360 --> 00:07:05,280

You seen this guy?

129

00:07:07,280 --> 00:07:10,080

No.

130

00:07:10,080 --> 00:07:13,080

We just let it be known that he was a biker.

131

00:07:13,080 --> 00:07:15,920

We just let it be known that I had a loaded gun.

132

00:07:15,920 --> 00:07:19,680

It was not loaded, but we let him think it was,

133

00:07:19,680 --> 00:07:22,560

and that I would use it any moment to protect Rose.

134

00:07:26,240 --> 00:07:27,960

Rose Hoffman spent hundreds of hours

135

00:07:27,960 --> 00:07:32,400

going to biker bars, different low class establishments,

136

00:07:32,400 --> 00:07:34,720

soliciting information from informants,

137

00:07:34,720 --> 00:07:37,200

buying information when necessary.

138

00:07:37,200 --> 00:07:40,720

She followed up every lead which she shared with us.

139

00:07:40,720 --> 00:07:46,440

She and her daughters, family members and friends

140

00:07:46,440 --> 00:07:48,920

covered the whole area, knocking on doors,

141

00:07:48,920 --> 00:07:52,920

talking to anybody whose name they were given.

142

00:07:57,000 --> 00:07:58,400

The witness is in the motor home.

143

00:07:58,400 --> 00:08:00,480

She doesn't want you to know who she is.

144

00:08:00,480 --> 00:08:03,680

So she doesn't want you to see face to face.

145

00:08:03,680 --> 00:08:05,520

Rose hired a private investigator

146

00:08:05,520 --> 00:08:09,120

with connections to motorcycle gangs.

147

00:08:09,120 --> 00:08:11,480

He set up a meeting with a woman who claimed

148

00:08:11,480 --> 00:08:15,640

she knew what had happened to Gus.

149

00:08:15,640 --> 00:08:19,040

I understand you have information about my son.

150

00:08:19,040 --> 00:08:20,880

Yes, I do.

151

00:08:20,880 --> 00:08:23,440

She told me that my son was dead.

152

00:08:23,440 --> 00:08:27,880

And she told me that my son was tortured.

153

00:08:27,880 --> 00:08:32,280

He was tortured for three to five days.

154

00:08:32,280 --> 00:08:40,280

And I begged her.

155

00:08:40,280 --> 00:08:46,480

I said, please tell me who did it.

156

00:08:46,480 --> 00:08:50,000

You got to talk to the police.

157

00:08:50,000 --> 00:08:51,120

You got to talk to the police.

158

00:08:51,120 --> 00:08:51,640

I begged her.

159

00:08:51,640 --> 00:08:52,680

I offered her money.

160

00:08:52,680 --> 00:08:55,480

I said, I'll give you anything you want, anything.

161

00:08:55,480 --> 00:08:57,400

Please talk to the police and tell them.

162

00:08:58,160 --> 00:09:05,360

And she, anyway, the investigator, he just said, no,

163

00:09:05,360 --> 00:09:07,000

there's no way he could let her talk.

164

00:09:07,000 --> 00:09:09,120

He said, he just wanted her to let me know what happened

165

00:09:09,120 --> 00:09:11,080

to my son.

166

00:09:11,080 --> 00:09:14,120

And I begged him too.

167

00:09:14,120 --> 00:09:15,000

And he said, I can't.

168

00:09:15,000 --> 00:09:17,240

He said, I don't want to be responsible for her death.

169

00:09:22,960 --> 00:09:25,520

Rose now felt she knew the horrible truth of what

170

00:09:25,520 --> 00:09:27,160

had happened to her son.

171

00:09:27,160 --> 00:09:32,720

But she had no hard evidence that could lead to an arrest.

172

00:09:32,720 --> 00:09:35,800

I think they enticed him.

173

00:09:35,800 --> 00:09:38,400

I think they said, well, let me see your bike.

174

00:09:38,400 --> 00:09:39,280

Let me see your bike.

175

00:09:39,280 --> 00:09:41,400

And then he was intimidated and said, well,

176

00:09:41,400 --> 00:09:44,720

because they're real rough, tough-looking guys, real tough

177

00:09:44,720 --> 00:09:45,960

guys.

178

00:09:45,960 --> 00:09:49,360

And I think he was more intimidated into everything.

179

00:09:52,840 --> 00:09:54,000

What are you guys chasing him for?

180

00:09:54,000 --> 00:09:54,800

Oh, damn.

181

00:09:54,800 --> 00:09:55,800

I wasn't chasing him.

182

00:09:55,800 --> 00:09:56,800

I wasn't chasing him.

183

00:09:57,800 --> 00:10:02,160

And I think that once that he got off his bike, that was it.

184

00:10:02,160 --> 00:10:05,440

I think they wheeled the bike into the garage

185

00:10:05,440 --> 00:10:08,200

and then walked him into the garage.

186

00:10:08,200 --> 00:10:11,600

And when that garage door went down,

187

00:10:11,600 --> 00:10:14,480

he was never seen again.

188

00:10:14,480 --> 00:10:15,760

Never seen again.

189

00:10:18,640 --> 00:10:22,200

On June the 19th, 1986, Michael Stevenson

190

00:10:22,200 --> 00:10:25,200

was killed during a failed extortion attempt.

191

00:10:25,240 --> 00:10:29,080

His death provided an unexpected break in the Hoffman case.

192

00:10:32,080 --> 00:10:34,720

With Stevenson dead, police re-question

193

00:10:34,720 --> 00:10:38,040

members of biker gangs and other possible witnesses.

194

00:10:38,040 --> 00:10:41,200

Now they talk and they name names.

195

00:10:41,200 --> 00:10:42,840

That's Michael Stevenson.

196

00:10:42,840 --> 00:10:47,000

It appears that Gus Hoffman was forced

197

00:10:47,000 --> 00:10:50,120

through intimidation to go to Mike Stevenson's residence

198

00:10:50,120 --> 00:10:51,400

in San Jose.

199

00:10:51,400 --> 00:10:55,080

Was forced through intimidation to enter the garage.

200

00:10:55,120 --> 00:10:57,240

There were certain acts of violence

201

00:10:57,240 --> 00:11:00,880

against Gus Hoffman inside the garage, which ultimately resulted

202

00:11:00,880 --> 00:11:04,000

in his death and the disappearance of his motorcycle.

203

00:11:04,000 --> 00:11:07,240

Police immediately arrested Michael Hodges, one of the man

204

00:11:07,240 --> 00:11:10,400

witnesses had linked to Gus's murder.

205

00:11:10,400 --> 00:11:12,400

Richard Daller, a friend of Hodges,

206

00:11:12,400 --> 00:11:15,000

was picked up at San Quentin, where he was already

207

00:11:15,000 --> 00:11:17,960

serving time for a parole violation.

208

00:11:17,960 --> 00:11:20,720

The third remaining suspect, John Stell,

209

00:11:20,720 --> 00:11:23,600

was finally captured in Northern California.

210

00:11:23,640 --> 00:11:25,600

He was carrying a loaded handgun.

211

00:11:28,080 --> 00:11:32,320

Tragically, no trace of Gus Hoffman has ever been found.

212

00:11:32,320 --> 00:11:35,640

Rose Hoffman wants to give her son the dignity and death

213

00:11:35,640 --> 00:11:38,360

that he was denied at the end of his life.

214

00:11:38,360 --> 00:11:41,480

She hopes one of our viewers can help.

215

00:11:41,480 --> 00:11:46,520

You can help me as if anyone knows.

216

00:11:46,520 --> 00:11:53,240

If anybody knows where my son is, please.

217

00:11:53,280 --> 00:11:55,000

I beg you.

218

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

Please tell the police or call me.

219

00:11:58,000 --> 00:12:00,080

I want my son.

220

00:12:00,080 --> 00:12:01,640

That's the most important thing.

221

00:12:01,840 --> 00:12:06,460

What if reported?

222

00:12:06,460 --> 00:12:13,460

The End

223

00:12:26,060 --> 00:12:29,420

On a previous broadcast we brought you the story of a Los Angeles resident

224

00:12:29,420 --> 00:12:33,060

who one midnight last summer went to an automatic teller machine to make a cash

225

00:12:33,060 --> 00:12:33,820

withdrawal.

226

00:12:33,820 --> 00:12:39,660

He never returned home.

227

00:12:39,660 --> 00:12:45,780

On June 8th, 1988, 22 year old Matthew Chase left his house and drove to his bank a few blocks away.

228

00:12:45,780 --> 00:12:52,780

That night, a hidden camera took these photographs of an unknown man standing next to Matthew

229

00:12:52,780 --> 00:12:55,060

as he used the automatic teller machine.

230

00:12:55,060 --> 00:12:58,340

The person standing next to Matt was

231

00:12:58,340 --> 00:13:03,140

somewhat shorter, somewhat stockier, and overall he shouldn't have been

232

00:13:03,140 --> 00:13:07,500

in the photograph. No one is going to let someone stand that close to him

233

00:13:07,500 --> 00:13:11,020

while they're using an ATM machine where they can see the pin number.

234

00:13:11,020 --> 00:13:15,700

Police believe that Matthew was abducted in a robbery attempt

235

00:13:15,700 --> 00:13:18,860

and that this mysterious figure was his kidnapper.

236

00:13:18,860 --> 00:13:23,340

Today I sense that he's still alive

237

00:13:23,340 --> 00:13:28,300

and that has kept us going and we'll never

238

00:13:28,300 --> 00:13:31,540

stop looking for him until we find him and I know we'll find him.

239

00:13:32,420 --> 00:13:38,340

Over the next few months, Matthew's friends and family scoured Los Angeles,

240

00:13:38,340 --> 00:13:39,860

searching for the missing youth.

241

00:13:39,860 --> 00:13:43,500

They turned up nothing.

242

00:13:43,500 --> 00:13:47,500

Los Angeles can be a dangerous place at night.

243

00:13:47,500 --> 00:13:50,820

We saw a lot of things that were very frightening, I think,

244

00:13:50,820 --> 00:13:55,020

and that only made it more real to us that

245

00:13:55,020 --> 00:13:58,380

that something perhaps

246

00:13:58,460 --> 00:14:02,340

very serious had happened to Matt.

247

00:14:02,340 --> 00:14:06,460

On March 29th, one chapter of this mysterious case came to a close

248

00:14:06,460 --> 00:14:09,940

when the Los Angeles coroner's office positively identified the body

249

00:14:09,940 --> 00:14:13,940

of Matthew Chase.

250

00:14:13,940 --> 00:14:17,340

His remains were discovered in a ravine in nearby Pasadena

251

00:14:17,340 --> 00:14:22,820

on September the 17th of last year, three months after he disappeared.

252

00:14:22,820 --> 00:14:28,020

Identification was delayed by the difficulty in tracking down dental records.

253

00:14:28,060 --> 00:14:31,380

The cause of death was a gunshot wound.

254

00:14:31,380 --> 00:14:35,900

We had estimated that he had been down in this canyon area

255

00:14:35,900 --> 00:14:40,500

since the last week in June of last year to

256

00:14:40,500 --> 00:14:43,700

September when he was located.

257

00:14:43,700 --> 00:14:48,940

This case is being handled as a robbery, homicide at this point.

258

00:14:48,940 --> 00:14:52,420

The man in the bank photograph is wanted

259

00:14:52,420 --> 00:14:56,100

for questioning and the disappearance and death of

260

00:14:56,140 --> 00:14:59,380

Matthew Chase.

261

00:14:59,380 --> 00:15:02,620

This is an artist's rendering of the prime suspect in this case

262

00:15:02,620 --> 00:15:07,460

based on computer enhancements of the bank photographs.

263

00:15:07,460 --> 00:15:10,620

Matthew's car was also stolen and later abandoned.

264

00:15:10,620 --> 00:15:14,860

The killer may have been seen driving this car in early June.

265

00:15:14,860 --> 00:15:19,100

It was a red two-door 1983 Volkswagen GTI.

266

00:15:19,100 --> 00:15:23,380

When this car was recovered, a blue bandana was found inside.

267

00:15:23,460 --> 00:15:27,540

It is thought the bandana may have belonged to the killer.

268

00:15:27,540 --> 00:15:33,220

I do hope to find his killer and I think that we need to see this through

269

00:15:33,220 --> 00:15:37,220

and we will see it through and this person must be brought to justice.

270

00:15:54,220 --> 00:15:59,220

On May 21, 1927, Charles Lindberg electrified the world

271

00:15:59,220 --> 00:16:04,220

by being the first to fly nonstop across the Atlantic from New York to Paris.

272

00:16:04,220 --> 00:16:10,220

All together, shout it now, there's no time.

273

00:16:10,220 --> 00:16:14,220

When he returned home, he received a hero's welcome.

274

00:16:15,060 --> 00:16:21,060

Ten days earlier, two French pilots, Charles Nungasser and Francois Collier,

275

00:16:21,060 --> 00:16:26,060

were preparing to beat Lindbergh across the Atlantic in their plain lois au blanc,

276

00:16:26,060 --> 00:16:29,060

the white bird.

277

00:16:29,060 --> 00:16:33,060

Their plan was to take off from an airfield near Paris

278

00:16:33,060 --> 00:16:38,060

and land their watertight land on the coast of Paris.

279

00:16:38,060 --> 00:16:43,060

The French pilot, Charles Nungasser and Francois Collier,

280

00:16:43,060 --> 00:16:48,060

land their watertight plane in the New York harbor at the base of the Statue of Liberty.

281

00:16:48,060 --> 00:16:53,060

Nungasser was France's most decorated World War I pilot.

282

00:16:53,060 --> 00:16:59,060

Collier was the first man to fly nonstop across the Mediterranean.

283

00:16:59,060 --> 00:17:04,060

He had promised his wife that this would be his last adventure.

284

00:17:04,060 --> 00:17:09,060

As fate would have it, he kept his promise.

285

00:17:10,060 --> 00:17:15,060

The white bird was last seen by escort planes as it crossed the coast of France

286

00:17:15,060 --> 00:17:20,060

and headed out over the vast reaches of the Atlantic.

287

00:17:20,060 --> 00:17:23,060

It was never seen again.

288

00:17:23,060 --> 00:17:28,060

Most experts assumed the plane simply crashed at sea.

289

00:17:31,060 --> 00:17:36,060

Nearly 50 years later, in 1971, Jim Reid, a local hunter,

290

00:17:36,060 --> 00:17:41,060

was deep in the remote woods of Maine when he came across a strange, moss-covered mound.

291

00:17:41,060 --> 00:17:46,060

I saw something that just didn't look right. I thought it was a boulder at first.

292

00:17:46,060 --> 00:17:52,060

And shortly thereafter, I went up and I probed around and it was an engine, an aircraft engine.

293

00:17:52,060 --> 00:17:58,060

I was a mechanic and was definitely not a diesel engine or an automobile engine.

294

00:17:58,060 --> 00:18:04,060

The cooling elements, the way it was built, it indicated to me it was an aircraft engine.

295

00:18:05,060 --> 00:18:12,060

Jim Reid was never able to relocate the engine, although he made several attempts to retrace his steps through the dense woods.

296

00:18:12,060 --> 00:18:16,060

Could it have been the last remains of the white bird

297

00:18:16,060 --> 00:18:22,060

and proof that the French pilots actually crossed the Atlantic two weeks before Lindberg?

298

00:18:23,060 --> 00:18:27,060

It's very much like trying to assemble a jigsaw puzzle.

299

00:18:27,060 --> 00:18:33,060

In little bit by little bit, the pieces come together and make a picture of the white bird.

300

00:18:33,060 --> 00:18:40,060

And we have enough of a picture now to convince us that we're on to the trail.

301

00:18:40,060 --> 00:18:43,060

Rick Gillespie and his wife Pat Thrasher are aircraft archeologists

302

00:18:43,060 --> 00:18:46,060

who've been searching for the white bird for over four years.

303

00:18:46,060 --> 00:18:52,060

They're so convinced the plane crashed in Maine, they've given up their jobs to devote their lives to search for the missing plane.

304

00:18:52,060 --> 00:19:00,060

After 50 years, most of the aircraft made of wooden fabric will have totally disintegrated, but they feel they are close.

305

00:19:01,060 --> 00:19:10,060

Using a helicopter equipped with an infrared scanner, the investigators surveyed the area near

Machias, Maine, where the engine had been sighted.

306

00:19:10,060 --> 00:19:17,060

They were hoping to find traces of metal that would indicate where the white bird had crashed.

307

00:19:17,060 --> 00:19:23,060

From the very beginning of this project, we felt that technology would be the answer.

308

00:19:23,060 --> 00:19:28,060

And we have driven ourselves nuts trying to find that technology.

309

00:19:28,060 --> 00:19:33,060

And time and time again, what has worked is people.

310

00:19:33,060 --> 00:19:37,060

People have succeeded. People have led us closer.

311

00:19:39,060 --> 00:19:48,060

Rick and Pat concentrated their investigation on longtime Maine residents who might have seen or heard the white bird 50 years ago.

312

00:19:49,060 --> 00:19:54,060

They visited a retired blueberry farmer who had lived in the area for 77 years.

313

00:19:54,060 --> 00:19:59,060

I was outside and all of a sudden this plane was overhead.

314

00:19:59,060 --> 00:20:01,060

You heard the aircraft?

315

00:20:01,060 --> 00:20:02,060

I heard the airplane.

316

00:20:02,060 --> 00:20:08,060

Harold Vining is the last person still alive who claims to have heard the white bird on its final flight.

317

00:20:08,060 --> 00:20:14,060

At that time, we was all keyed up, listening for Lindbergh.

318

00:20:15,060 --> 00:20:22,060

Due to the fact that this plane was traveling in the wrong direction, it couldn't have been Lindbergh.

319

00:20:25,060 --> 00:20:31,060

I was out chopping wood when I heard this plane go over.

320

00:20:31,060 --> 00:20:37,060

I honestly believe that that's the first plane that I ever heard in my life.

321

00:20:37,060 --> 00:20:42,060

That's why this so outstanding in my mind.

322

00:20:42,060 --> 00:20:51,060

Not knowing that it was these French people who try and make history, I just had no time to do it.

323

00:20:54,060 --> 00:21:03,060

Three miles from Harold Vining's home, a young couple, Everett and Abigail Scott, heard a plane and stopped their car to listen.

324

00:21:07,060 --> 00:21:16,060

Two miles away, Mary Gould was in her kitchen when she too heard the sound of a plane.

325

00:21:16,060 --> 00:21:20,060

It was real foggy for several days.

326

00:21:20,060 --> 00:21:22,060

I remember the day well.

327

00:21:22,060 --> 00:21:29,060

Maurice Berry's cousin, Hanson Berry, was fishing when he too heard a plane fly over.

328

00:21:29,060 --> 00:21:32,060

Then heard its engine stop.

329

00:21:37,060 --> 00:21:42,060

Hanson said that he heard a ripping rain.

330

00:21:42,060 --> 00:21:45,060

I believe the man, I believe what he said.

331

00:21:45,060 --> 00:21:54,060

And I fully believe that that airplane is down there somewhere.

332

00:21:54,060 --> 00:21:57,060

You just haven't stumbled onto it.

333

00:22:00,060 --> 00:22:05,060

The team searched one possible crash site near where the old timers heard the plane.

334

00:22:05,060 --> 00:22:08,060

There they discovered an unusual piece of wood.

335

00:22:08,060 --> 00:22:10,060

Hey, Pat!

336

00:22:10,060 --> 00:22:19,060

It turns out to be a single stalk of something that has been run through a roller, man-fashioned.

337

00:22:19,060 --> 00:22:26,060

The kind of generic material that would have been used for any kind of a padding purpose.

338

00:22:26,060 --> 00:22:32,060

But not in Maine, because it's not from Maine and it's not even apparently from North America.

339

00:22:32,060 --> 00:22:36,060

Eventually they found 23 more fragments of the same strip.

340

00:22:36,060 --> 00:22:43,060

Together they formed a length of two meters, the exact width of the white bird's wing.

341

00:22:43,060 --> 00:22:48,060

We will continue on the project as long as it seems reasonable to do it.

342

00:22:48,060 --> 00:22:53,060

What has kept us going in the past has been the new information keeps coming out,

343

00:22:53,060 --> 00:22:56,060

the corroborates, what's come before.

344

00:22:56,060 --> 00:23:01,060

And there's very much a feeling of getting closer and closer and closer.

345

00:23:03,060 --> 00:23:06,060

Watch the ground, watch your lines.

346

00:23:06,060 --> 00:23:12,060

Rick believes that there still may be a hunter who has spent time in the desolate woods near Mishias, Maine,

347

00:23:12,060 --> 00:23:16,060

and who has seen some clue to the fate of the white bird.

348

00:23:16,060 --> 00:23:20,060

They intend to search until the ill-fated French plane is found.

349

00:23:20,060 --> 00:23:27,060

Only then will Nungasser and Coley be awarded their rightful place in the annals of aviation history.

350

00:23:32,060 --> 00:23:43,060

Music

351

00:23:43,060 --> 00:23:47,060

October 1987, Arlington, Texas.

352

00:23:47,060 --> 00:23:54,060

The friends and family of 43-year-old Patsy Bolton Wright mourned her tragic and unexpected death.

353

00:23:54,060 --> 00:24:00,060

She had died suddenly at three in the morning in her own bedroom, and no one knew why.

354

00:24:02,060 --> 00:24:09,060

You would never ever expect that to happen, because, you know, I mean, she was, she was so alive, she was so healthy.

355

00:24:09,060 --> 00:24:14,060

There was nothing wrong with her, and when it happened, you're just in awe,

356

00:24:14,060 --> 00:24:18,060

because you would never ever have expected that to happen to her.

357

00:24:18,060 --> 00:24:23,060

There's not a day that goes by that we can even believe that this has happened.

358

00:24:23,060 --> 00:24:28,060

We can all, you know, still see Patsy coming into the room smiling, and we can hear her laugh,

359

00:24:28,060 --> 00:24:33,060

and, you know, it just doesn't seem real at all.

360

00:24:33,060 --> 00:24:38,060

Eight days after Patsy's memorial service, a routine autopsy was performed.

361

00:24:38,060 --> 00:24:45,060

A mass spectrometer checked for 56,000 different foreign substances in Patsy's blood samples.

362

00:24:45,060 --> 00:24:51,060

Suddenly, the machine showed a violent, positive reaction.

363

00:24:51,060 --> 00:24:55,060

The lab technician immediately requested identification.

364

00:24:55,060 --> 00:24:58,060

Within seconds, the chilling answer came back.

365

00:24:58,060 --> 00:25:01,060

Strick Nine.

366

00:25:01,060 --> 00:25:07,060

Because of its horrible side effects, Strick Nine poisoning is considered an unusually cruel way to die.

367

00:25:07,060 --> 00:25:10,060

Death by Strick Nine is also very rare.

368

00:25:10,060 --> 00:25:19,060

According to a leading toxicologist, since 1950, there's only been one confirmed case of homicide by Strick Nine poisoning in the entire United States.

369

00:25:19,060 --> 00:25:23,060

In the death of Patsy Wright, the Texas authorities faced a puzzling question.

370

00:25:23,060 --> 00:25:27,060

How had this virulent poison entered Patsy's bloodstream?

371

00:25:30,060 --> 00:25:36,060

3 a.m., the morning of Patsy's death, Steve and Sally Horning were awakened by a frantic phone call.

372

00:25:36,060 --> 00:25:39,060

Oh, I need to talk to Sally.

373

00:25:39,060 --> 00:25:41,060

Patsy, what's the matter?

374

00:25:41,060 --> 00:25:43,060

I can't breathe.

375

00:25:43,060 --> 00:25:45,060

The caller was Sally's sister, Patsy Wright.

376

00:25:45,060 --> 00:25:47,060

Hello, Patsy?

377

00:25:47,060 --> 00:25:49,060

Oh, something's really wrong.

378

00:25:49,060 --> 00:25:51,060

What's the matter? What is it?

379

00:25:51,060 --> 00:25:55,060

Patsy? Patsy?

380

00:25:57,060 --> 00:26:02,060

We got to the house and parked in the driveway and went up to the front door.

381

00:26:02,060 --> 00:26:06,060

And of course, the door was locked and we couldn't get in.

382

00:26:06,060 --> 00:26:08,060

Patsy, she's right over there.

383

00:26:08,060 --> 00:26:11,060

Patsy, open up. It's Sally.

384

00:26:11,060 --> 00:26:18,060

I went around to the side. The window was open just, I suppose, for getting fresh air in there.

385

00:26:18,060 --> 00:26:23,060

Opened it up, jumped through the window, came through and I saw Patsy on the bed.

386

00:26:27,060 --> 00:26:28,060

Jim Patsy!

387

00:26:28,060 --> 00:26:31,060

When we got in, she was in the bedroom.

388

00:26:31,060 --> 00:26:33,060

She just looked like she had kind of fainted.

389

00:26:33,060 --> 00:26:35,060

So I thought, that's what had happened.

390

00:26:35,060 --> 00:26:38,060

And so we tried to get her up.

391

00:26:38,060 --> 00:26:40,060

And that didn't work.

392

00:26:40,060 --> 00:26:42,060

All right, we need an ambulance.

393

00:26:42,060 --> 00:26:45,060

Three out of one, seven, home of Good Arlington immediately.

394

00:26:45,060 --> 00:26:48,060

My sister's not breathing.

395

00:26:48,060 --> 00:26:53,060

I worked on both her heart and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

396

00:26:53,060 --> 00:26:58,060

During that, a lot of green fluid came up from her.

397

00:26:58,060 --> 00:27:04,060

And I would continually spit that out onto the bed or there was a towel there, as I remember.

398

00:27:04,060 --> 00:27:07,060

Sometime after that, the medics came.

399

00:27:07,060 --> 00:27:09,060

Was it the last time they'll talk to her?

400

00:27:09,060 --> 00:27:12,060

About three o'clock this morning, they should just stop talking to us.

401

00:27:12,060 --> 00:27:15,060

We think the phone dropped and we rushed over here as quick as we could.

402

00:27:15,060 --> 00:27:16,060

This is the way y'all found us?

403

00:27:16,060 --> 00:27:17,060

Yes.

404

00:27:17,060 --> 00:27:23,060

We at first thought that she was responding because I could see the monitor going up and down.

405

00:27:23,060 --> 00:27:27,060

But it was every time they were pushing on her chest that that's what it was.

406

00:27:27,060 --> 00:27:29,060

Coming down.

407

00:27:29,060 --> 00:27:31,060

Down.

408

00:27:31,060 --> 00:27:33,060

Coming down.

409

00:27:33,060 --> 00:27:40,060

I wrote to the hospital in the ambulance with her.

410

00:27:40,060 --> 00:27:43,060

And they said that they were not able to save her.

411

00:27:43,060 --> 00:27:46,060

And they said they had done everything they could do.

412

00:27:46,060 --> 00:27:49,060

And there just wasn't anything they could do.

413

00:27:49,060 --> 00:27:55,060

Neither Sally nor the police had any reason to suspect foul play.

414

00:27:55,060 --> 00:27:59,060

But in her phone call, Patsy had mentioned taking cold medicine.

415

00:27:59,060 --> 00:28:03,060

So police collected the bottle for possible analysis.

416

00:28:03,060 --> 00:28:07,060

Patsy's cold medicine contained huge amounts of strict 9.

417

00:28:07,060 --> 00:28:11,060

The FBI ruled out product tampering.

418

00:28:11,060 --> 00:28:17,060

Patsy's right seemed to have everything to live for.

419

00:28:17,060 --> 00:28:23,060

She had two children, a son Wayne and a daughter Leslie, to whom she was very close.

420

00:28:23,060 --> 00:28:26,060

Patsy and her sister Sally were successful business winners.

421

00:28:26,060 --> 00:28:30,060

They owned two wax museums worth over \$6 million.

422

00:28:30,060 --> 00:28:34,060

Also Patsy had just bought three prize quarter horses.

423

00:28:34,060 --> 00:28:37,060

And she planned to train them herself.

424

00:28:37,060 --> 00:28:42,060

In my professional opinion, it's highly unlikely that Patsy committed suicide

425

00:28:42,060 --> 00:28:46,060

or was a high risk for suicide.

426

00:28:46,060 --> 00:28:51,060

Sergeant Jay Gustafson of the Arlington, Texas police began to investigate Patsy's death

427

00:28:51,060 --> 00:28:53,060

as a murder of a woman.

428

00:28:53,060 --> 00:29:00,060

He had two clues which made him think that the murder was probably someone Patsy knew very well.

429

00:29:00,060 --> 00:29:06,060

First, Patsy's burglar alarm had not been set on the night she died.

430

00:29:06,060 --> 00:29:12,060

Secondly, only those close to Patsy knew it was her habit to take nighttime gold medicine

431

00:29:12,060 --> 00:29:14,060

when she had trouble sleeping.

432

00:29:14,060 --> 00:29:21,060

I can pretty much say that this case involved someone that knew Patsy had been killed.

433

00:29:21,060 --> 00:29:25,060

That knew Patsy knew her habits.

434

00:29:25,060 --> 00:29:29,060

And then I have to put together motive and opportunity.

435

00:29:29,060 --> 00:29:36,060

The first people Sergeant Gustafson questioned were Patsy's sister and brother-in-law Sally and Steve Horning.

436

00:29:36,060 --> 00:29:40,060

They started asking a lot of questions of all of us.

437

00:29:40,060 --> 00:29:46,060

And I guess we came to the realization that we were all pretty much suspects.

438

00:29:46,060 --> 00:29:50,060

And they had to ask us some questions that were not very comfortable.

439

00:29:50,060 --> 00:29:55,060

And I don't ever want to go through that again.

440

00:29:55,060 --> 00:29:57,060

The sergeant looked for a motive.

441

00:29:57,060 --> 00:30:02,060

Patsy's wealth came from the two wax museums she owned with her sister.

442

00:30:02,060 --> 00:30:04,060

Hey, y'all come here.

443

00:30:04,060 --> 00:30:06,060

Whoa!

444

00:30:06,060 --> 00:30:12,060

Not only were the museum's tourist attractions, they were also centers of social life in the respective towns.

445

00:30:12,060 --> 00:30:18,060

When Patsy died, the museums were inherited by Steve and Sally Horning.

446

00:30:18,060 --> 00:30:26,060

We as family members were being asked questions that you never even think you're ever going to be asked.

447

00:30:26,060 --> 00:30:30,060

So, surprise and hurt.

448

00:30:30,060 --> 00:30:36,060

And yet knowing that questions like these have to be asked.

449

00:30:36,060 --> 00:30:40,060

Did you put that strychnine in Patsy's cold medicine?

450

00:30:40,060 --> 00:30:41,060

No.

451

00:30:41,060 --> 00:30:46,060

The authorities also speculated that if Steve Horning had poisoned Patsy,

452

00:30:46,060 --> 00:30:49,060

he would not have performed mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on her,

453

00:30:49,060 --> 00:30:53,060

taking potentially deadly liquid into his own mouth.

454

00:30:53,060 --> 00:30:59,060

Steve and Sally, along with other family members, voluntarily took polygraph tests.

455

00:30:59,060 --> 00:31:02,060

All of them passed.

456

00:31:02,060 --> 00:31:07,060

Police also gave Patsy's former boyfriend Leo Fikes a polygraph test.

457

00:31:07,060 --> 00:31:15,060

He was one of the ones that would have been close enough to her to have known about her taking the liquid cold medicine on occasion.

458

00:31:15,060 --> 00:31:24,060

He was very much in love with Patsy, but for reasons from Patsy herself, she did not want to get remarried.

459

00:31:24,060 --> 00:31:28,060

Do you know for sure who caused Patsy to be poisoned?

460

00:31:28,060 --> 00:31:29,060

No.

461

00:31:29,060 --> 00:31:35,060

I had no fear of any questions. I had no fear of a polygraph test.

462

00:31:36,060 --> 00:31:43,060

In realizing that I was a suspect, I think the most difficult part of it for me was that Patsy had rejected me,

463

00:31:43,060 --> 00:31:49,060

and we had not been real close for seven or eight months prior to that.

464

00:31:49,060 --> 00:31:59,060

I'd seen her, been out with her two or three times, but there was a certain tenseness when we were together.

465

00:31:59,060 --> 00:32:03,060

Leo Fikes passed his polygraph test.

466

00:32:03,060 --> 00:32:08,060

Patsy's ex-husband, Robert Cox, was another person questioned by the police.

467

00:32:08,060 --> 00:32:15,060

Patsy had obtained a restraining order against Cox during their separation because she claimed he was harassing her.

468

00:32:15,060 --> 00:32:26,060

I had some people give me statements that Patsy had some fears of her ex-husband, Bob Cox.

469

00:32:26,060 --> 00:32:35,060

I understand that there are times that Patsy believed that Bob Cox had driven by or parked close to her house.

470

00:32:41,060 --> 00:32:49,060

We knew that Patsy was going to be testifying against her second husband in an upcoming civil suit about an arson fire.

471

00:32:49,060 --> 00:32:57,060

And we knew that he had called her on a number of occasions and asked her to change this or that story,

472

00:32:57,060 --> 00:33:00,060

and she had told him that she was going to tell the truth.

473

00:33:00,060 --> 00:33:14,060

He was offered a polygraph test, the same as several others that I had interviewed and taken statements from, and he refused to take a polygraph test.

474

00:33:15,060 --> 00:33:24,060

Robert Cox maintains his innocence, as does Leo Fikes, and there is evidence to suggest that neither of them is guilty.

475

00:33:24,060 --> 00:33:30,060

Next to Patsy's bed on the night she died were two empty dinner plates on a tray.

476

00:33:30,060 --> 00:33:36,060

It seems highly unlikely that Patsy would have spent an intimate evening with either Robert Cox or Leo Fikes.

477

00:33:36,060 --> 00:33:43,060

Could there have been an unknown visitor that night, intimate enough to know Patsy's personal habits

478

00:33:43,060 --> 00:33:46,060

and to share a late night dinner with her?

479

00:33:50,060 --> 00:33:56,060

The day after Patsy died, her daughter Leslie received a strange phone call.

480

00:33:56,060 --> 00:33:59,060

No, she's not right now. I'm going to take a message.

481

00:33:59,060 --> 00:34:03,060

I said, hello, and this person asked for my mother, and I said, well, she's not here right now.

482

00:34:03,060 --> 00:34:09,060

You know, can I take a message? And this person persisted in wanting to talk with her.

483

00:34:10,060 --> 00:34:13,060

Well, she passed away yesterday.

484

00:34:13,060 --> 00:34:19,060

She said something to the effect that, well, good, I wanted her dead or something like that.

485

00:34:19,060 --> 00:34:25,060

I don't know if it was a prank phone call, if it meant something, maybe somebody wanted to find out if she had died

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00:34:25,060 --> 00:34:33,060

by taking the cold medicine with a poison in it. You know, it could be totally unrelated. It could be related, I don't know.

487

00:34:34,060 --> 00:34:42,060

The authorities are still convinced that the murderer is someone who knew Patsy well.

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00:34:45,060 --> 00:34:50,060

It's frightening because we do know that somebody knew her very well and knew her habits

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00:34:50,060 --> 00:34:56,060

and was close enough to her to know how to get in and to use that cold medicine.

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00:34:56,060 --> 00:35:02,060

So it is very frightening, and we are afraid that we do know the person pretty well.

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00:35:02,060 --> 00:35:10,060

It's a hard thing for, I guess, my brother and I just from the point that this person knew her very well,

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00:35:10,060 --> 00:35:18,060

and we obviously have to know them just because we are such a big part of my mother's life that we knew most of the people that she didn't know.

493

00:35:18,060 --> 00:35:24,060

And it's hard just because you don't really know who to trust anymore.

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00:35:24,060 --> 00:35:40,060

This is not unlike someone who wanted to set a trap out in the woods to trap something illegal.

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00:35:40,060 --> 00:35:48,060

He knows what path the animal goes down. He knows if he sets a trap and walks away from it that he

can be alone,

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00:35:48,060 --> 00:35:54,060

he can be in a crowd of people when the trap goes off.

497

00:35:58,060 --> 00:36:05,060

What we've got is Patsy home, alone. She decided to take medication that night,

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00:36:05,060 --> 00:36:11,060

and that medication was like a trap. It was laced with strict non-poison.

499

00:36:19,060 --> 00:36:26,060

In a moment the story of an American oil tank with a Nazi submarine that sunk over 45 years later,

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00:36:26,060 --> 00:36:29,060

the real story can finally be told.

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00:36:37,060 --> 00:36:40,060

December 7th, 1941.

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00:36:41,060 --> 00:36:49,060

On that day of infamy, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and the United States was thrust into World War II.

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00:36:49,060 --> 00:36:53,060

In the Pacific, the Japanese claimed victory after victory,

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00:36:53,060 --> 00:36:59,060

but in the Atlantic, the German Navy threatened the sea lanes in America's backyard.

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00:36:59,060 --> 00:37:06,060

The German submarines, known as U-boats, even infiltrated the waters of New York Harbor and Chesapeake Bay.

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00:37:11,060 --> 00:37:17,060

In 1941, 39-year-old William Betts, a father of two boys, was captain of the Muskogee,

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00:37:17,060 --> 00:37:22,060

a tanker that transported crude oil up and down the Atlantic coast.

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00:37:22,060 --> 00:37:29,060

The oil was vital to the burgeoning war effort, because Betts had no time to go home to his family.

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00:37:29,060 --> 00:37:32,060

Ellen, his wife, would go to him.

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00:37:32,060 --> 00:37:40,060

On February 2nd, 1942, two months after Pearl Harbor, the Muskogee was preparing to leave its home port.

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00:37:40,060 --> 00:37:44,060

William and Ellen exchanged what would be their final farewells.

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00:37:47,060 --> 00:37:52,060

Ellen returned home to her sons and waited for word of her husband.

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00:37:52,060 --> 00:37:54,060

Are you Mrs. Betts?

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00:37:56,060 --> 00:37:59,060

I have a telegram for Mrs. William Betts.

515

00:38:03,060 --> 00:38:14,060

I received a telegram from the company saying that the ship was probably lost on its way north.

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00:38:16,060 --> 00:38:21,060

And that is all they said. They didn't know anything.

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00:38:23,060 --> 00:38:28,060

Ellen had no idea what happened to her husband, the father of her two boys.

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00:38:29,060 --> 00:38:37,060

One year later, the older son, George, was drafted into the military, but he remained haunted by his father's unknown fate.

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00:38:37,060 --> 00:38:40,060

For 13 years, it was no clue.

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00:38:40,060 --> 00:38:49,060

Then in 1955, in a strange coincidence, a friend at work showed him a book about German submarines called the Sea Wolves.

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00:38:49,060 --> 00:38:53,060

And George had his first clue as to what happened to his father.

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00:38:54,060 --> 00:39:06,060

It told of how this submarine, the U-123, as soon as they arrived in their battle zone, why they came upon the tanker Muskogee, and sunk it.

523

00:39:06,060 --> 00:39:17,060

After I got done work that day, I hopped in my car and rode north to my mother's home, to see if I could find out if that's where the Muskogee had come from, was Wilmington.

524

00:39:17,060 --> 00:39:23,060

And she said yes. I said, well, then I've just found out what happened to that ship, when it went down.

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00:39:33,060 --> 00:39:39,060

The Muskogee was just one of 413 ships sunk by German U-boats in 1942.

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00:39:40,060 --> 00:39:47,060

29,000 merchant sailors lost their lives, among them the 34 missing mariners of the SS Muskogee.

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00:39:50,060 --> 00:39:58,060

These are photographs taken from the deck of the German submarine, the U-123, only minutes after it torpedoed the Muskogee.

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00:39:58,060 --> 00:40:08,060

They were taken by a German war correspondent and show seven survivors from William Betts' ship. All seven would perish at sea.

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00:40:09,060 --> 00:40:15,060

These photographs took George Betts an important step closer to uncovering the complete story of his father's death.

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00:40:15,060 --> 00:40:23,060

As George learned more about the last moments of the Muskogee, he began to develop a bond with this merchant marine captain he never really knew.

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00:40:23,060 --> 00:40:28,060

By learning about his father's death, he was establishing a closeness they never shared in life.

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00:40:29,060 --> 00:40:33,060

Well, it was fascinating to see the pictures at last.

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00:40:33,060 --> 00:40:43,060

And it made me feel closer to my dad's demise when I saw the pictures here in the book.

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00:40:43,060 --> 00:40:55,060

I naturally looked to see if I could recognize my father on the raft, but I didn't seem there and I could quite understand it because the basic rules of CR

535

00:40:55,060 --> 00:41:00,060

are that the captain sees that all able-bodied men are off the vessel before he leaves it.

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00:41:00,060 --> 00:41:05,060

So therefore I felt it was a safe assumption that my dad went down with his ship.

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00:41:08,060 --> 00:41:20,060

In 1979, George contacted the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and obtained a microfilm copy of German war records, including the captain's log of the U-123.

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00:41:21,060 --> 00:41:32,060

Of course it was in German, but I could see the American name of the Muskogee ship sunk and I could read some of the fact that the ship was being fired on.

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00:41:32,060 --> 00:41:44,060

Then I could see where the Muskogee was on that plotting chart and it would show the day and he even had it marked on there like SS Muskogee gesunken, meaning they sunk the ship.

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00:41:45,060 --> 00:41:59,060

Captain Reinhardt Hartigan commanded the U-123 through most of the war. He sunk 23 Allied ships totaling 200,000 tons and was personally congratulated by Adolf Hitler.

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00:42:01,060 --> 00:42:07,060

Only one out of ten U-boat personnel survived the war. Reinhardt Hartigan was among them.

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00:42:08,060 --> 00:42:18,060

After the war he was elected to the West German Parliament and served 32 years. George began writing to Hartigan and they agreed to meet in Canada.

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00:42:20,060 --> 00:42:28,060

I was all for it. A long last thought, I'm now going to talk to this man. I had no animosity toward him. That's the way I felt.

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00:42:28,060 --> 00:42:35,060

I felt here's one World War II veteran that was on one side and one World War II veteran that was

on the other side.

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00:42:36,060 --> 00:42:40,060

And in our cases we were two of the lucky ones that survived the battles.

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00:42:42,060 --> 00:42:51,060

In October of 1987 the two met. Reinhardt Hartigan gave George a chilling eyewitness report of the last moments of the Muskogee.

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00:42:52,060 --> 00:43:05,060

In the morning of the 22nd of March in 1942 I saw steam and some mast and then I tried to get in front of the course of the ship.

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00:43:05,060 --> 00:43:14,060

The ship was zig-zagging a little bit of nearly 15 degrees to every side. After nearly two hours I was in a good position and then I dived.

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00:43:15,060 --> 00:43:28,060

And then I shot a torpedo with my stern tube. This torpedo hit in the engine room of the tanker.

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00:43:29,060 --> 00:43:36,060

Therefore the tanker didn't burn and she sank very quick and it was all over.

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00:43:36,060 --> 00:43:46,060

And it was too short for the crew to take lifeboats in the water and therefore there were only two rafts.

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00:43:46,060 --> 00:43:53,060

I gave the crew on the rafts food and water cigarettes and told them their position.

553

00:43:53,060 --> 00:44:03,060

I thought the next day the ship will find their rafts and so it was very sad information for me to learn from George Betts that no one of the crew was rescued.

554

00:44:07,060 --> 00:44:13,060

Now that George knew the truth about the Muskogee he was determined to let the families of the other crew members share in his knowledge.

555

00:44:14,060 --> 00:44:29,060

He managed to contact eight families. In September of 1988 he drove over 200 miles to meet with the family of Clifford Chesley, the radio man of the Muskogee. Clifford was 26 when he perished at sea.

556

00:44:31,060 --> 00:44:37,060

Now there's a picture of the ship going down from the deck, the bridge of the...

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00:44:37,060 --> 00:44:48,060

The Chesley family had no idea what had happened to Clifford. Thanks to George for the first time the Chesleys learned the fate of their loved one 46 years earlier.

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00:44:49,060 --> 00:44:56,060

We just assumed that it was either a storm or something that the ship was missing.

559

00:44:56,060 --> 00:45:09,060

Up till now we didn't even know actually if it went down. I mean there were so many prisoners of war and MIAs now could have happened the same thing back then.

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00:45:10,060 --> 00:45:23,060

One day I almost thought I saw him walking across the street. You know they say everyone has a double but I almost ran over and I just was wondering you know where he could be.

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00:45:23,060 --> 00:45:38,060

Now that I know it definitely was the sinking of the boat and he's gone out. Definitely will leave my mind to say you know my oldest brother and that's how he's gone.

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00:45:39,060 --> 00:45:46,060

It's just a little more peace than finally knowing what really did happen.

563

00:45:46,060 --> 00:46:01,060

Of the seven men in this photograph, three have been identified. They are third mate Nathaniel Foster, chief mate Morgan Finucan, enable body semen Anthony Souza.

564

00:46:01,060 --> 00:46:09,060

The other four have never been identified but they are among these 34 men who disappeared on board the Muscogee.

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00:46:10,060 --> 00:46:18,060

Like so many brave men who served in the Merchant Marine, they died unheralded, unrecognized until now.

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00:46:32,060 --> 00:46:43,060

Next week on Unsolved Mysteries. The story of a 16 year old school girl who vanished just yards away from her parents home.

567

00:46:44,060 --> 00:46:52,060

A year later she may have been 1000 miles away in South Carolina. Then she disappeared again. Perhaps you can help find Carrie Lynn Nixon.

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00:46:53,060 --> 00:47:05,060

Also a fascinating treasure hunt in New Mexico. 50 years ago a prospector discovered a maze of secret tunnels in a mountain which he claimed led to an underground chamber filled with gold bars and priceless relics.

569

00:47:06,060 --> 00:47:11,060

Join me next week for another edition of Unsolved Mysteries.