

1

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

This program is about unsolved mysteries.

2

00:00:03,680 --> 00:00:06,520

Whenever possible, the actual family members and police

3

00:00:06,520 --> 00:00:09,480

officials have participated in recreating the events.

4

00:00:09,480 --> 00:00:12,280

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

5

00:00:16,280 --> 00:00:19,760

Tonight on Unsolved Mysteries, the residents of a Florida

6

00:00:19,760 --> 00:00:22,760

nudist camp were stunned to discover that one of their most

7

00:00:22,760 --> 00:00:27,000

popular members was allegedly a fraud, a cheat, and a child.

8

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

In Ypsilanti, Michigan, a small town realtor was calloused

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

a gun down in his office by two unknown killers.

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

Was this regular family man the victim of a professional hit?

11

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

In a tiny church in Ambridge, Pennsylvania,

12

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

the congregation are certain that they

13

00:00:43,000 --> 00:00:45,000

have witnessed a miracle.

14

00:00:45,000 --> 00:00:47,000

The eyes of Jesus and the carved wooden statue

15

00:00:47,000 --> 00:00:49,000

over their altar were once open.

16

00:00:49,000 --> 00:00:52,000

Now they say the eyes are closed.

17

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

The family members were stunned to discover

18

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

the eyes are closed.

19

00:00:57,000 --> 00:01:00,000

Join me for these fascinating stories.

20

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

Perhaps someone somewhere has that one vital clue that

21

00:01:03,000 --> 00:01:05,000

can help solve a mystery.

22

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

Perhaps that someone is watching.

23

00:01:07,000 --> 00:01:09,000

Perhaps it's you.

24

00:01:54,000 --> 00:02:01,000

Ypsilanti, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, January 11, 1984.

25

00:02:01,000 --> 00:02:04,000

The real estate office of Jack Brown.

26

00:02:07,000 --> 00:02:10,000

At approximately 11.10 a.m., two men entered.

27

00:02:10,000 --> 00:02:14,000

As one stood guard, the other headed toward Jack's office.

28

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

Yeah.

29

00:02:16,000 --> 00:02:18,000

We have trouble here.

30

00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:21,000

It appeared that the men were familiar with the man

31

00:02:21,000 --> 00:02:23,000

out of the building.

32

00:02:23,000 --> 00:02:25,000

I think you're pretty smart, don't you?

33

00:02:25,000 --> 00:02:27,000

Well, maybe.

34

00:02:27,000 --> 00:02:29,000

Don't move or I'll shoot.

35

00:02:29,000 --> 00:02:31,000

Where's the bathroom?

36

00:02:31,000 --> 00:02:32,000

Way in the back.

37

00:02:32,000 --> 00:02:33,000

Way in the back.

38

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

Hurry.

39

00:02:34,000 --> 00:02:35,000

Oh, God.

40

00:02:35,000 --> 00:02:37,000

Did you have your bathroom?

41

00:02:37,000 --> 00:02:38,000

Come on.

42

00:02:38,000 --> 00:02:39,000

Come on.

43

00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:41,000

Get in there and close the door.

44

00:02:41,000 --> 00:02:42,000

Now.

45

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

Leaving the three employees locked in the bathroom,

46

00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:47,000

the two men walked away.

47

00:02:47,000 --> 00:02:49,000

Jack Brown died in the hospital.

48

00:02:49,000 --> 00:02:52,000

He was in the hospital for a week.

49

00:02:52,000 --> 00:02:55,000

Jack Brown died 12 hours later from a single bullet wound

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00:02:55,000 --> 00:02:56,000

to the neck.

51

00:02:56,000 --> 00:02:59,000

He never regained consciousness.

52

00:02:59,000 --> 00:03:03,000

Jack Brown had lived in Ypsilanti for most of his life,

53

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

and was a member of the local Chamber of Commerce and Rotary

54

00:03:05,000 --> 00:03:07,000

Club.

55

00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:11,000

At the time of his death, he was 47 years old.

56

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

The murder of Jack Brown was no random act of violence,

57

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

nor was robbery the motive.

58

00:03:16,000 --> 00:03:20,000

The contract killing planned and executed by professionals.

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00:03:20,000 --> 00:03:22,000

But Brown was no mafia don.

60

00:03:22,000 --> 00:03:24,000

He was a small town realtor.

61

00:03:24,000 --> 00:03:26,000

Who ordered him killed and why?

62

00:03:26,000 --> 00:03:29,000

A five-year investigation has not been able to answer

63

00:03:29,000 --> 00:03:31,000

these questions.

64

00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:34,000

I've seen old tires coming out of the thing.

65

00:03:34,000 --> 00:03:35,000

Annie, hi.

66

00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:36,000

How you doing?

67

00:03:36,000 --> 00:03:38,000

Jack's real estate brokering business put him in contact

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00:03:38,000 --> 00:03:40,000

with many members of the community.

69

00:03:40,000 --> 00:03:43,000

They could not imagine why he would have been targeted

70

00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:44,000

by a killer.

71

00:03:44,000 --> 00:03:47,000

You asked us to find you a classic victory.

72

00:03:47,000 --> 00:03:50,000

There was absolutely nothing in Jack's background

73

00:03:50,000 --> 00:03:54,000

that I was aware of that would warrant any kind of problem

74

00:03:54,000 --> 00:03:55,000

whatsoever.

75

00:03:55,000 --> 00:04:01,000

And surely not the tragedy that happened here.

76

00:04:01,000 --> 00:04:06,000

My opinion of the gunman is that they came here to challenge

77

00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:08,000

Jack in some way.

78

00:04:08,000 --> 00:04:09,000

We got trouble here.

79

00:04:09,000 --> 00:04:13,000

I heard the gunman say, you think you're smart, don't you?

80

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

Well.

81

00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:19,000

And I heard Jack say in kind of a halting voice, well, well,

82

00:04:19,000 --> 00:04:20,000

maybe.

83

00:04:20,000 --> 00:04:22,000

At that point the gun went off.

84

00:04:22,000 --> 00:04:27,000

And I guess I really figured that we had bought the farm,

85

00:04:27,000 --> 00:04:31,000

that they were then going to get rid of three eyewitnesses

86

00:04:31,000 --> 00:04:32,000

to a murder.

87

00:04:32,000 --> 00:04:36,000

But I guess looking back on it, it would seem to me to be a case

88

00:04:36,000 --> 00:04:41,000

where whatever problem they had was with Jack and not the rest

89

00:04:41,000 --> 00:04:45,000

of us that happened to be in the office that fateful morning.

90

00:04:45,000 --> 00:04:50,000

No one seems to know anything shady about Jack or anything

91

00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:55,000

that he might have been involved in that could be termed shady,

92

00:04:55,000 --> 00:05:00,000

which leads us to believe that maybe he was living a double life,

93

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

was involved in something that no one knew about his family,

94

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

friends, or anyone in this area.

95

00:05:06,000 --> 00:05:10,000

The night before Jack's murder, his brother saw him on the phone

96

00:05:10,000 --> 00:05:12,000

on a state of extreme agitation.

97

00:05:12,000 --> 00:05:13,000

Where's Jack?

98

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

He's back on the phone back there.

99

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

When I arrived, Jack was on the phone.

100

00:05:18,000 --> 00:05:24,000

I could tell, you know, by this conversation, that he was getting upset.

101

00:05:24,000 --> 00:05:28,000

So when he finally, you know, hung the phone up,

102

00:05:28,000 --> 00:05:32,000

I asked him if there was a problem.

103

00:05:32,000 --> 00:05:34,000

Oh, that's nothing.

104

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

I just got a few problems.

105

00:05:35,000 --> 00:05:36,000

I got to work out.

106

00:05:36,000 --> 00:05:38,000

You guys have a good time at the poker game.

107

00:05:38,000 --> 00:05:40,000

I'll see you tomorrow. Okay?

108

00:05:40,000 --> 00:05:41,000

Okay.

109

00:05:41,000 --> 00:05:47,000

I honestly feel, you know, in my own heart that something about that phone call,

110

00:05:47,000 --> 00:05:51,000

you know, was involved with what happened the following day.

111

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

It's really strange when someone is murdered or taken from you suddenly like this,

112

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

that you look back and you search your mind.

113

00:05:59,000 --> 00:06:01,000

You search everywhere for clues.

114

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

And you remember things that someone said that didn't fit.

115

00:06:07,000 --> 00:06:09,000

It was a fun party, wasn't it?

116

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

Yeah, I really liked it.

117

00:06:11,000 --> 00:06:12,000

Jack and I had been to a Christmas party,

118

00:06:12,000 --> 00:06:15,000

and I was just a little irritated with him because he had a bit much to drink,

119

00:06:15,000 --> 00:06:17,000

and he was kind of rambling.

120

00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:22,000

What would you do if you knew some very important people,

121

00:06:22,000 --> 00:06:29,000

some very powerful people, did something very wrong?

122

00:06:29,000 --> 00:06:36,000

Would you write their names in a list and put it in a safe deposit box?

123

00:06:36,000 --> 00:06:38,000

What are you talking about?

124

00:06:38,000 --> 00:06:42,000

Probably safer for you not to know.

125

00:06:42,000 --> 00:06:47,000

You know, when I talk to you and tell you these things that my husband said to me,

126

00:06:47,000 --> 00:06:49,000

I'm almost embarrassed.

127

00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:51,000

It just sounds so unreal.

128

00:06:51,000 --> 00:06:55,000

Politically powerful people doing something really wrong,

129

00:06:55,000 --> 00:06:57,000

and then you just let it drop.

130

00:06:57,000 --> 00:06:59,000

I mean, I'm an intelligent person,

131

00:06:59,000 --> 00:07:02,000

and you say, well, why didn't she find out more about it?

132

00:07:02,000 --> 00:07:06,000

I mean, and I look back and I really wished I had,

133

00:07:06,000 --> 00:07:10,000

but he told me that it was not something I should know,

134

00:07:10,000 --> 00:07:14,000

and it may sound silly, but I believed him.

135

00:07:14,000 --> 00:07:18,000

After I recovered from the initial shock of his death,

136

00:07:18,000 --> 00:07:23,000

then these little comments that he dropped in conversation started coming back to me,

137

00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:27,000

and I searched for that safety deposit key.

138

00:07:27,000 --> 00:07:30,000

It was nowhere in my house.

139

00:07:30,000 --> 00:07:32,000

I mean, I have just searched.

140

00:07:32,000 --> 00:07:34,000

I'd like this resolved.

141

00:07:34,000 --> 00:07:38,000

I want to know, I want to know who those powerful people were.

142

00:07:38,000 --> 00:07:40,000

I want to know what their names are.

143

00:07:40,000 --> 00:07:42,000

I want the killers, the people that actually did it,

144

00:07:42,000 --> 00:07:45,000

but I want to know the people that hired them.

145

00:07:45,000 --> 00:07:47,000

The same day that Jack was murdered,

146

00:07:47,000 --> 00:07:49,000

a major drug bust occurred in the area,

147

00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:51,000

triggered by an anonymous informant.

148

00:07:51,000 --> 00:07:54,000

Could there have been a connection?

149

00:07:54,000 --> 00:07:58,000

I think it's very possible there are people in the community

150

00:07:58,000 --> 00:08:01,000

that know more about what happened.

151

00:08:01,000 --> 00:08:05,000

That, for some reason, either they're afraid to say,

152

00:08:05,000 --> 00:08:10,000

or maybe, for instance, if he knew something about someone else,

153

00:08:10,000 --> 00:08:15,000

that person's obviously not going to tell us what they know.

154

00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:22,000

It really seems unfair because Jack didn't deserve to die.

155

00:08:22,000 --> 00:08:26,000

If he did do something wrong, he did something bad,

156

00:08:26,000 --> 00:08:30,000

you know, I've thought in my mind that maybe I didn't want to know,

157

00:08:30,000 --> 00:08:33,000

that if he did something bad, I don't want to know about him.

158

00:08:33,000 --> 00:08:35,000

But it's not true.

159

00:08:35,000 --> 00:08:37,000

I can think of anything he could have done

160

00:08:37,000 --> 00:08:42,000

that would give those people the right to come in and take his life.

161

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

The man who shot Jack was 35 to 40 years old,

162

00:08:47,000 --> 00:08:49,000

approximately six feet in height,

163

00:08:49,000 --> 00:08:51,000

and wore a beige jacket and light-colored pants.

164

00:08:51,000 --> 00:08:55,000

He was armed to the .38 caliber revolver.

165

00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:58,000

His accomplice was approximately 50 years in age

166

00:08:58,000 --> 00:09:00,000

and was about five feet 10 in height.

167

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

He was wearing coveralls and a blue knit stocking cap.

168

00:09:03,000 --> 00:09:06,000

He was also armed with an automatic handgun.

169

00:09:10,000 --> 00:09:12,000

Next, the story of an extraordinary occurrence

170

00:09:12,000 --> 00:09:14,000

at a tiny Pennsylvania church.

171

00:09:14,000 --> 00:09:16,000

The parishioners at Holy Trinity believe

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00:09:16,000 --> 00:09:19,000

they witnessed a genuine miracle.

173

00:09:26,000 --> 00:09:31,000

To many Catholics, miracles are an accepted part of their religious beliefs.

174

00:09:31,000 --> 00:09:33,000

These miracles can take many forms,

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

but usually involve phenomena occurring before witnesses,

176

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

that cannot be explained by any known science.

177

00:09:39,000 --> 00:09:41,000

But the church is extremely conservative

178

00:09:41,000 --> 00:09:44,000

when it comes to officially recognizing a miracle.

179

00:09:44,000 --> 00:09:47,000

To date, only a handful have been seriously investigated,

180

00:09:47,000 --> 00:09:50,000

and only three in this century have been authenticated.

181

00:09:51,000 --> 00:09:55,000

In 1917, Fatima, Portugal

182

00:09:55,000 --> 00:09:58,000

was the site of the most famous 20th century miracle.

183

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

That year, three young children said that God had promised

184

00:10:03,000 --> 00:10:05,000

to show a sign of his existence.

185

00:10:05,000 --> 00:10:08,000

And on the day, in specified time,

186

00:10:08,000 --> 00:10:11,000

in the middle of a rainstorm and in front of a huge crowd,

187

00:10:11,000 --> 00:10:15,000

the clouds parted and according to witnesses and reporters,

188

00:10:15,000 --> 00:10:17,000

the sun apparently touched the earth.

189

00:10:20,000 --> 00:10:23,000

Today, thousands annually make the pilgrimage to Fatima

190

00:10:23,000 --> 00:10:26,000

to celebrate this divine occurrence.

191

00:10:28,000 --> 00:10:31,000

More recently, another miracle is said to be taking place

192

00:10:31,000 --> 00:10:34,000

in a small Yugoslavian village called Medjugorje.

193

00:10:36,000 --> 00:10:38,000

Since 1981, four girls and two boys

194

00:10:38,000 --> 00:10:42,000

claim that they are being regularly visited by the Virgin Mary.

195

00:10:42,000 --> 00:10:45,000

She still appears to for them daily in a local church

196

00:10:45,000 --> 00:10:47,000

and has told them that this will be the last time

197

00:10:47,000 --> 00:10:49,000

she will appear until the second coming of Christ,

198

00:10:49,000 --> 00:10:52,000

a visit that will signal the end of the world.

199

00:10:52,000 --> 00:10:56,000

This miracle has been dismissed by the bishop in Medjugorje,

200

00:10:56,000 --> 00:11:00,000

but at the request of the Pope, it is currently being reinvestigated.

201

00:11:03,000 --> 00:11:06,000

Right now, in a small town in Pennsylvania,

202

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

another miracle is said to have occurred,

203

00:11:08,000 --> 00:11:10,000

this time in front of a number of witnesses.

204

00:11:10,000 --> 00:11:13,000

Some skeptics believe that this is nothing more than a hallucination.

205

00:11:13,000 --> 00:11:15,000

Others suspect a hoax.

206

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

But many eyewitnesses are positive,

207

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

but they experience something that has no physical or scientific explanation.

208

00:11:21,000 --> 00:11:25,000

A phenomenon they insist was divinely inspired.

209

00:11:29,000 --> 00:11:31,000

20 miles north of Pittsburgh,

210

00:11:31,000 --> 00:11:34,000

the area surrounding Ambridge, Pennsylvania has been slowly dying.

211

00:11:37,000 --> 00:11:40,000

Abandoned steel mills line the banks of the Ohio River,

212

00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:43,000

a grim reminder of the region's lost prosperity.

213

00:11:44,000 --> 00:11:47,000

But the many residents of Ambridge refuse to move out of town.

214

00:11:48,000 --> 00:11:51,000

Some of these people gather together in the Holy Trinity Church

215

00:11:51,000 --> 00:11:54,000

to gain strength from their religious beliefs and one another.

216

00:12:01,000 --> 00:12:04,000

The Holy Trinity Church is a simple house of worship,

217

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

a reflection of the people that gather under its steeple.

218

00:12:08,000 --> 00:12:11,000

But the church is justifiably proud of its beautiful structure

219

00:12:11,000 --> 00:12:14,000

and is justifiably proud of its beautiful suspended crucifix.

220

00:12:15,000 --> 00:12:19,000

This wooden plaster icon has been at the church since 1931.

221

00:12:19,000 --> 00:12:23,000

It was refurbished last January by local artist Dominic Leo.

222

00:12:25,000 --> 00:12:31,000

I became really deeply involved for two weeks with the crucifix.

223

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:37,000

It was a crucifix that had been here at this church for possibly over 60 years.

224

00:12:37,000 --> 00:12:39,000

So now it was time to restore it.

225

00:12:40,000 --> 00:12:45,000

And when I completed everything and finally got to the face,

226

00:12:45,000 --> 00:12:49,000

I actually worked on all of the face and the eyes last of all.

227

00:12:50,000 --> 00:12:53,000

And when I got to the eyes, then I just painted them

228

00:12:53,000 --> 00:12:57,000

and put the color of the blue grain to the retina.

229

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

And then I started to put some accents into the socks of the eye

230

00:13:02,000 --> 00:13:06,000

to show the color of death.

231

00:13:08,000 --> 00:13:14,000

On March 24th, 1989, a special three-hour mass was held to celebrate Good Friday.

232

00:13:15,000 --> 00:13:18,000

Worshiping together was a devoted prayer group.

233

00:13:18,000 --> 00:13:22,000

300 men and women who take their Catholic beliefs very seriously.

234

00:13:25,000 --> 00:13:28,000

Jim Savitkovich is a nephew of the parish priest,

235

00:13:28,000 --> 00:13:31,000

and that night he was serving as an altar boy.

236

00:13:32,000 --> 00:13:33,000

Everything was normal.

237

00:13:33,000 --> 00:13:37,000

We had our readings and sang the songs and veneration of the cross.

238

00:13:37,000 --> 00:13:41,000

I got communion and I went down on the side of the altar,

239

00:13:41,000 --> 00:13:43,000

just waiting for everyone else to get done.

240

00:13:43,000 --> 00:13:46,000

That's when my brother Tom came up next to me.

241

00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:50,000

And I was looking up and I was praying.

242

00:13:51,000 --> 00:13:56,000

As Jim looked heavenward into the face of Christ, he had a stunning surprise.

243

00:13:58,000 --> 00:14:02,000

The eyes that were once open now appear to be closed.

244

00:14:04,000 --> 00:14:08,000

When I first noticed that the eyes were closed, I was shocked.

245

00:14:08,000 --> 00:14:10,000

I didn't know what to believe at first.

246

00:14:11,000 --> 00:14:15,000

I was happy, but I was scared at the same time,

247

00:14:15,000 --> 00:14:19,000

because you know, you figure that God, you know, he did this right there

248

00:14:19,000 --> 00:14:21,000

while I was kneeling right there.

249

00:14:22,000 --> 00:14:23,000

Tom.

250

00:14:23,000 --> 00:14:24,000

What?

251

00:14:24,000 --> 00:14:26,000

And I turned to tell my brother Tom.

252

00:14:26,000 --> 00:14:27,000

Just look.

253

00:14:27,000 --> 00:14:30,000

And he looked up and verified what I saw.

254

00:14:31,000 --> 00:14:32,000

His eyes are closed.

255

00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:36,000

Go to the other side and check.

256

00:14:36,000 --> 00:14:39,000

But then we thought maybe it was just the lights or something.

257

00:14:39,000 --> 00:14:42,000

Just to make sure that, you know, we just weren't seeing things.

258

00:14:42,000 --> 00:14:44,000

I had to go to the other side.

259

00:14:45,000 --> 00:14:48,000

I looked up and noticed that the eyes were still closed.

260

00:14:49,000 --> 00:14:52,000

It didn't hit me until we went into the back.

261

00:14:52,000 --> 00:14:55,000

And I had time to think about it for a few minutes.

262

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

And that's when I started crying, because you know,

263

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

you don't expect something like that to happen.

264

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

And you know, it was something that I was a part of.

265

00:15:02,000 --> 00:15:03,000

They were crying.

266

00:15:04,000 --> 00:15:06,000

And I asked them what happened, and they said,

267

00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:09,000

the eyes on the cross are closed.

268

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

So I went back out with another priest who was helping me that evening.

269

00:15:13,000 --> 00:15:14,000

And we looked.

270

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

And there was a change.

271

00:15:18,000 --> 00:15:21,000

And I started to look around in church at the people.

272

00:15:22,000 --> 00:15:24,000

And I happened to look in the back.

273

00:15:24,000 --> 00:15:29,000

Going out the doors was the artist who had refurbished a cross.

274

00:15:29,000 --> 00:15:34,000

And I called his name two or three times and asked him to come to the altar area.

275

00:15:34,000 --> 00:15:36,000

And I just simply said to him,

276

00:15:36,000 --> 00:15:39,000

would you look at the cross and tell me what you see?

277

00:15:40,000 --> 00:15:42,000

First, when he told me that, I was wondering, I said,

278

00:15:42,000 --> 00:15:44,000

what could possibly be wrong?

279

00:15:44,000 --> 00:15:47,000

You know, I said, is it falling down?

280

00:15:47,000 --> 00:15:50,000

And the second thing I said, it doesn't look like it's falling down.

281

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

I said, is it a defect?

282

00:15:53,000 --> 00:15:56,000

Some of the plaster is falling down or something, you know?

283

00:15:56,000 --> 00:15:57,000

And it wasn't that.

284

00:15:57,000 --> 00:16:01,000

And then my attention and everything was just grabbed.

285

00:16:01,000 --> 00:16:03,000

And my neck just flipped back.

286

00:16:03,000 --> 00:16:06,000

And my eyes just went straight up to the crucifix.

287

00:16:06,000 --> 00:16:09,000

And when I looked up there, I couldn't believe what I saw because,

288

00:16:09,000 --> 00:16:13,000

not only were the eyes closed, but there were,

289

00:16:13,000 --> 00:16:15,000

there was like all kinds of tears underneath it.

290

00:16:15,000 --> 00:16:18,000

And it were fleshy like, and it was,

291

00:16:19,000 --> 00:16:22,000

the eyelids were moving and moving like this.

292

00:16:22,000 --> 00:16:25,000

And all the tears were in there.

293

00:16:26,000 --> 00:16:30,000

It was just like as if the crucifixion was,

294

00:16:30,000 --> 00:16:33,000

had just started again from 2000 years.

295

00:16:33,000 --> 00:16:35,000

It looked just like that.

296

00:16:35,000 --> 00:16:37,000

They were all underneath and everything.

297

00:16:37,000 --> 00:16:40,000

I could never forget that. Never, never.

298

00:16:50,000 --> 00:16:52,000

Don, go ahead.

299

00:16:53,000 --> 00:16:57,000

Since the crucifix was suspended 22 feet in the air,

300

00:16:57,000 --> 00:17:00,000

a ladder was brought in to allow for a closer look.

301

00:17:02,000 --> 00:17:05,000

Dominic was the first to make the climb.

302

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

I went up to the tip top of the a-latter.

303

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

I straddled the ladder at the top of it,

304

00:17:13,000 --> 00:17:15,000

and I had a very close look at the eyes.

305

00:17:16,000 --> 00:17:18,000

The left eye is closed,

306

00:17:18,000 --> 00:17:22,000

and the right eye is slightly, slightly open.

307

00:17:22,000 --> 00:17:24,000

It was just unbelievable what I saw.

308

00:17:24,000 --> 00:17:28,000

This eye here, this eye here was close completely,

309

00:17:28,000 --> 00:17:31,000

except for a little sliver of gray.

310

00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:34,000

But this eye here was open slightly,

311

00:17:34,000 --> 00:17:37,000

and you could just see the bottom, the bottom of the retina.

312

00:17:37,000 --> 00:17:40,000

And this is what really did it because when I seen that,

313

00:17:40,000 --> 00:17:43,000

it looked like it was burned, that it had been burned,

314

00:17:43,000 --> 00:17:45,000

you know, from energy of some sort.

315

00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:49,000

Another parishioner who had to see for himself

316

00:17:49,000 --> 00:17:52,000

was Pennsylvania State Trooper Chris Marion.

317

00:17:53,000 --> 00:17:56,000

I wanted to make sure nobody had tampered with it.

318

00:17:56,000 --> 00:17:59,000

And I got real close, like a three-year-old,

319

00:17:59,000 --> 00:18:01,000

and looked into its father's face.

320

00:18:01,000 --> 00:18:03,000

And as I looked at it, I realized there's no way,

321

00:18:03,000 --> 00:18:05,000

it was too high.

322

00:18:05,000 --> 00:18:07,000

I knew no one could have tampered with it,

323

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

and it was fine, and I felt good about it.

324

00:18:09,000 --> 00:18:11,000

I'm sort of glad that this happened to me

325

00:18:11,000 --> 00:18:14,000

because as a state trooper, and I've been one for 28 years,

326

00:18:14,000 --> 00:18:16,000

I've been trained to look at things

327

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

a little differently than normal, the normal eye,

328

00:18:18,000 --> 00:18:21,000

just like I knew the crucifix a lot better than everybody.

329

00:18:21,000 --> 00:18:23,000

Well, I knew that everything that happened here,

330

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

this wasn't some hoax, this wasn't a bunch of people

331

00:18:26,000 --> 00:18:27,000

just making this up.

332

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

These are the type of people you drink beer with every day,

333

00:18:29,000 --> 00:18:32,000

and everything that happened here was for a reason,

334

00:18:32,000 --> 00:18:34,000

and was definitely the most religious experience

335

00:18:34,000 --> 00:18:37,000

that I've ever heard of in my lifetime.

336

00:18:40,000 --> 00:18:43,000

Sue Tolfer was another member of the prayer group

337

00:18:43,000 --> 00:18:45,000

familiar with the cross.

338

00:18:45,000 --> 00:18:50,000

The cross used to be in an alcove area

339

00:18:50,000 --> 00:18:54,000

where anyone could come and light the big candles.

340

00:18:54,000 --> 00:18:56,000

And I've done that lots of times,

341

00:18:56,000 --> 00:18:59,000

and anybody that has ever lit a candle,

342

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

when you look up, Jesus is looking at you.

343

00:19:03,000 --> 00:19:07,000

I remember the eyes were opened very clearly,

344

00:19:07,000 --> 00:19:11,000

the eyeballs, the white, the blueish-gray.

345

00:19:12,000 --> 00:19:17,000

He was a live Christ dying on the cross,

346

00:19:17,000 --> 00:19:20,000

and his eyes were still opened,

347

00:19:20,000 --> 00:19:24,000

and that on Good Friday, they closed.

348

00:19:28,000 --> 00:19:30,000

That night, as he stood beneath the cross,

349

00:19:30,000 --> 00:19:33,000

a parishioner claimed to have received a divine message.

350

00:19:33,000 --> 00:19:37,000

He wrote it down and shared it with his fellow believers.

351

00:19:38,000 --> 00:19:40,000

It read in part,

352

00:19:40,000 --> 00:19:44,000

I have given this sign for all those who have faithfully come.

353

00:19:44,000 --> 00:19:47,000

Truly, my presence is within this church.

354

00:19:47,000 --> 00:19:49,000

Within the months to come,

355

00:19:49,000 --> 00:19:52,000

many will flock to see what I have done.

356

00:19:52,000 --> 00:19:56,000

Welcome them, just as the people of Medjugorje,

357

00:19:56,000 --> 00:19:59,000

welcome those who flock to see my mother.

358

00:20:01,000 --> 00:20:05,000

Medjugorje has more than a spiritual connection with Ambridge.

359

00:20:07,000 --> 00:20:12,000

Many of the Holy Trinity parishioners are of Yugoslav descent,

360

00:20:12,000 --> 00:20:17,000

and four former Ambridge priests were born in the small town.

361

00:20:19,000 --> 00:20:24,000

Today, some members of the prayer group regularly make pilgrimages to Medjugorje.

362

00:20:26,000 --> 00:20:28,000

Suzanne Rini is a Catholic scholar.

363

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

She feels that the parishioners' impassioned faith

364

00:20:31,000 --> 00:20:34,000

led them into seeing something that did not exist.

365

00:20:34,000 --> 00:20:39,000

It is a very, very great possibility that it could be a subjective reality

366

00:20:39,000 --> 00:20:44,000

that's born of the desire to share in the same kind of thing

367

00:20:44,000 --> 00:20:46,000

that has happened in Medjugorje,

368

00:20:46,000 --> 00:20:49,000

a terrific hunger to have it happen here,

369

00:20:49,000 --> 00:20:53,000

and also as a kind of affirmation

370

00:20:53,000 --> 00:20:56,000

that their prayer group is a successful prayer group,

371

00:20:56,000 --> 00:20:58,000

that it's pleasing to God,

372

00:20:58,000 --> 00:21:01,000

and therefore he sends them this sign.

373

00:21:01,000 --> 00:21:03,000

The Catholic Church shares in the skepticism

374

00:21:03,000 --> 00:21:07,000

for this event cannot be authenticated by the Church as a miracle

375

00:21:07,000 --> 00:21:10,000

until it undergoes a rigorous investigation,

376

00:21:10,000 --> 00:21:14,000

in this case by a commission headed by the local bishop of Pittsburgh.

377

00:21:15,000 --> 00:21:19,000

There is always value when people return to their faith,

378

00:21:19,000 --> 00:21:22,000

but you would want them to return for the right reasons

379

00:21:22,000 --> 00:21:27,000

for what if they found out later that there was some deception here

380

00:21:27,000 --> 00:21:32,000

or some defraud that could be very harmful to their faith,

381

00:21:32,000 --> 00:21:35,000

and that's what the Church is always concerned about

382

00:21:35,000 --> 00:21:38,000

in an investigation like this,

383

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:41,000

that we are very objective, that we are very careful

384

00:21:41,000 --> 00:21:44,000

because of the harm that can come to faith.

385

00:21:46,000 --> 00:21:47,000

Since that Good Friday,

386

00:21:47,000 --> 00:21:50,000

Ambridge has been visited by thousands of people

387

00:21:50,000 --> 00:21:53,000

who want to see the crucifix for themselves.

388

00:21:53,000 --> 00:21:56,000

But what really happened in the Holy Trinity Church?

389

00:21:56,000 --> 00:22:00,000

Miracle or hallucination?

390

00:22:03,000 --> 00:22:05,000

Even if the eyes of Christ didn't close,

391

00:22:05,000 --> 00:22:09,000

one can readily admit that some kind of a miracle has taken place.

392

00:22:09,000 --> 00:22:13,000

Ambridge has retreated from his inexorable slide into depression,

393

00:22:13,000 --> 00:22:16,000

and many of his residents have found a new reason to believe

394

00:22:16,000 --> 00:22:19,000

in their Church and in each other.

395

00:22:21,000 --> 00:22:25,000

At times I sit here and wonder if, you know, is this of God?

396

00:22:25,000 --> 00:22:28,000

Is this of something evil that's taken place?

397

00:22:28,000 --> 00:22:31,000

But I know that people are coming here praying.

398

00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:36,000

I know people are coming here, you know, they have dreams.

399

00:22:36,000 --> 00:22:40,000

They come from all over the place, and when they leave, they have peace.

400

00:22:40,000 --> 00:22:43,000

So to me, this is all positive.

401

00:22:43,000 --> 00:22:46,000

I think my little nephew summed it up best for me.

402

00:22:46,000 --> 00:22:48,000

He said to me, Uncle Chris, I know what happened.

403

00:22:48,000 --> 00:22:50,000

He's five years old, and I said, what happened?

404

00:22:50,000 --> 00:22:54,000

He said, well, God closed his eyes so everybody else would open theirs.

405

00:22:55,000 --> 00:23:00,000

We all need signs of affection, signs of love at time.

406

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

We need to be reassured, and I think maybe miracles are a way

407

00:23:04,000 --> 00:23:08,000

of God's reassuring us of His love.

408

00:23:10,000 --> 00:23:13,000

Several weeks after we completed filming the story,

409

00:23:13,000 --> 00:23:16,000

the Bishop of Pittsburgh's commission announced his decision

410

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

on the events that took place in Ambridge.

411

00:23:19,000 --> 00:23:22,000

The Bishop's commission reviewed videotape and photographs

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00:23:22,000 --> 00:23:26,000

to show the crucifix before and after the alleged miracle of Good Friday

413

00:23:26,000 --> 00:23:29,000

and stated that there was no convincing evidence

414

00:23:29,000 --> 00:23:33,000

that the miracle properly defined occurred at Holy Trinity Church.

415

00:23:33,000 --> 00:23:38,000

This decision means that the Vatican will take no further action on this case.

416

00:23:39,000 --> 00:23:43,000

However, the Bishop's commission did go on to say that the witnesses were sincere,

417

00:23:43,000 --> 00:23:46,000

and many of the people we interviewed for this story are still convinced

418

00:23:46,000 --> 00:23:48,000

that what they saw really happened.

419

00:23:48,000 --> 00:23:52,000

They are unshaken in their belief that a miracle did in fact occur.

420

00:23:52,000 --> 00:23:55,000

Whatever the truth, the events of this Good Friday did serve

421

00:23:55,000 --> 00:24:00,000

to bring a troubled community together under one roof and under one God.

422

00:24:00,000 --> 00:24:05,000

To many people on Ambridge, this is one miracle that cannot be dismissed.

423

00:24:06,000 --> 00:24:10,000

In a moment, we'll reveal how our viewers helped put an embezzler

424

00:24:10,000 --> 00:24:14,000

who built the Medicare system out of \$16 million behind bars.

425

00:24:14,000 --> 00:24:25,000

Last May, we examined the shocking case of Sheldon Weinberg,

426

00:24:25,000 --> 00:24:28,000

a New York businessman who along with his two sons,

427

00:24:28,000 --> 00:24:32,000

Ronald and Jay, stole an estimated \$16 million of taxpayers' money

428

00:24:32,000 --> 00:24:34,000

that was earmarked for medical care for the poor.

429

00:24:34,000 --> 00:24:36,000

The solicit father and son operation

430

00:24:36,000 --> 00:24:41,000

made him the largest Medicaid fraud case ever prosecuted in the United States.

431

00:24:42,000 --> 00:24:48,000

In 1979, Sheldon Weinberg and his sons opened the Bed-Stuy Health Care Clinic

432

00:24:48,000 --> 00:24:51,000

in one of Brooklyn, New York's most impoverished neighborhoods.

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00:24:51,000 --> 00:24:54,000

A facility employed over 25 physicians

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00:24:54,000 --> 00:24:57,000

and catered primarily to Medicaid recipients.

435

00:24:57,000 --> 00:25:00,000

The Weinbergs immediately began defrauding the system

436

00:25:00,000 --> 00:25:05,000

by submitting up to \$30,000 per week and false billings to the government.

437

00:25:05,000 --> 00:25:12,000

They began small, manually writing up phony records and phony bills.

438

00:25:12,000 --> 00:25:17,000

But once they started getting away with it, they realized the scam was working.

439

00:25:18,000 --> 00:25:22,000

When the Weinbergs started using a computer to create bills and medical records

440

00:25:22,000 --> 00:25:24,000

for non-existent visits and services,

441

00:25:24,000 --> 00:25:28,000

their profits soared from thousands to millions of dollars.

442

00:25:28,000 --> 00:25:30,000

Jay, can we bring these numbers up?

443

00:25:30,000 --> 00:25:32,000

Why not?

444

00:25:32,000 --> 00:25:36,000

They used Medicaid like it was a private bank account for them.

445

00:25:36,000 --> 00:25:42,000

And from that bank account, the Weinbergs led the high life on the backs of poor people.

446

00:25:42,000 --> 00:25:48,000

I think their appetite for conspicuous living, for fancy clothes

447

00:25:48,000 --> 00:25:54,000

and especially shoes was only outdone by Imelda Marcos.

448

00:25:55,000 --> 00:25:58,000

For seven years, the money rolled in.

449

00:25:58,000 --> 00:26:03,000

But in April of 1986, the Weinbergs' elaborate scheme started to unravel

450

00:26:03,000 --> 00:26:07,000

when authorities began to investigate the clinic's billing practices.

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00:26:10,000 --> 00:26:14,000

For over four weeks, auditors painstakingly searched through the clinic's records

452

00:26:14,000 --> 00:26:17,000

and traced the phony Medicaid billings.

453

00:26:17,000 --> 00:26:21,000

If you look at the medical chart, you'll see that a four-year-old boy

454

00:26:21,000 --> 00:26:25,000

was shown as having smoked four packs of cigarettes a day

455

00:26:25,000 --> 00:26:27,000

and having drank a quarter of booze a day.

456

00:26:27,000 --> 00:26:30,000

You found men with gynecological problems.

457

00:26:30,000 --> 00:26:35,000

And that's the type of things that jumped out off the paper at you.

458

00:26:36,000 --> 00:26:41,000

On November 30th, 1988, Sheldon Weinberg and his two sons, Ronald and Jay,

459

00:26:41,000 --> 00:26:44,000

were convicted of grand larceny, conspiracy,

460

00:26:44,000 --> 00:26:48,000

and 63 other counts relating to their Medicaid fraud scheme.

461

00:26:49,000 --> 00:26:54,000

Ronald Weinberg was sentenced to spend five to 15 years in prison.

462

00:26:54,000 --> 00:26:57,000

Jay Weinberg received an eight to 25-year sentence

463

00:26:57,000 --> 00:27:00,000

plus additional prison terms for tax evasion.

464

00:27:01,000 --> 00:27:04,000

Three days before Sheldon Weinberg was to be sentenced,

465

00:27:04,000 --> 00:27:07,000

he disappeared along with his wife, Roslyn.

466

00:27:07,000 --> 00:27:11,000

He was sentenced in absentia to a seven to 21-year prison term.

467

00:27:12,000 --> 00:27:15,000

Update.

468

00:27:15,000 --> 00:27:17,000

Within three hours of our broadcast,

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00:27:17,000 --> 00:27:21,000

Sheldon Weinberg was arrested by FBI agents in Scottsdale, Arizona,

470

00:27:21,000 --> 00:27:24,000

where he and his wife were living under assumed names.

471

00:27:26,000 --> 00:27:31,000

Right after the show aired, we got specific information from callers

472

00:27:31,000 --> 00:27:34,000

who had seen them all over the Scottsdale area.

473

00:27:34,000 --> 00:27:40,000

And one of the callers told us that the Weinbergs were using the alias Davida

474

00:27:40,000 --> 00:27:44,000

and this corresponded with information we previously had back here in New York

475

00:27:44,000 --> 00:27:46,000

that they were traveling under that name.

476

00:27:46,000 --> 00:27:50,000

So when the caller told us that he had seen people that looked like the Weinbergs

477

00:27:50,000 --> 00:27:54,000

using the name Davida in Scottsdale, we knew we had our man.

478

00:27:56,000 --> 00:27:59,000

On May 19th, Weinberg was extradited back to New York.

479

00:27:59,000 --> 00:28:04,000

Three days later, it appeared before New York State Supreme Court Justice Ruth Moskowitz

480

00:28:04,000 --> 00:28:07,000

to reimpose the seven to 21-year sentence.

481

00:28:08,000 --> 00:28:11,000

I do not regard this as a white-collar crime.

482

00:28:11,000 --> 00:28:17,000

This is a crime of violence to all of the people of New York City.

483

00:28:17,000 --> 00:28:23,000

This is a crime of violence to the Medicaid recipients.

484

00:28:23,000 --> 00:28:30,000

Medicaid state funds should not go so that people could live in Trump Towers,

485

00:28:30,000 --> 00:28:35,000

so that people could live in luxury on Florida estates.

486

00:28:36,000 --> 00:28:43,000

Hopefully, the message will go out loud and clear to other people

487

00:28:43,000 --> 00:28:51,000

that the court system will not tolerate this type of crime, execute sentence.

488

00:28:54,000 --> 00:28:57,000

To date, authorities have recovered less than \$6 million

489

00:28:57,000 --> 00:29:02,000

at the estimated \$16 million that Weinberg and his son stole from taxpayers.

490

00:29:03,000 --> 00:29:06,000

Sheldon Weinberg is currently serving his sentence

491

00:29:06,000 --> 00:29:10,000

at the Attica Correctional Facility in Upstate New York.

492

00:29:22,000 --> 00:29:26,000

Next, the story of a conman who allegedly fleeced thousands of dollars

493

00:29:26,000 --> 00:29:30,000

out of his friends and neighbors at a Florida nudist camp.

494

00:29:33,000 --> 00:29:40,000

For 40,000 Americans, nudity is a way of life.

495

00:29:40,000 --> 00:29:45,000

Sunny Sands Resort in northeast Florida is one of the 200 nudist clubs

496

00:29:45,000 --> 00:29:47,000

in the American Sunbathing Association.

497

00:29:47,000 --> 00:29:50,000

Clothes are outlawed here, just avoided.

498

00:29:50,000 --> 00:29:55,000

Many outsiders consider public nudity strange or sexually exploited,

499

00:29:55,000 --> 00:29:58,000

but to the 66 families of Sunny Sands,

500

00:29:58,000 --> 00:30:01,000

being nude is only being natural.

501

00:30:01,000 --> 00:30:06,000

There's a real unfortunate misconception that being in a nudist club

502

00:30:06,000 --> 00:30:10,000

means sexual behavior, means a lot of drinking,

503

00:30:10,000 --> 00:30:13,000

a lot of party atmosphere, that kind of thing.

504

00:30:13,000 --> 00:30:16,000

And here you don't find that kind of atmosphere.

505

00:30:16,000 --> 00:30:18,000

Here you find families.

506

00:30:18,000 --> 00:30:22,000

In a nudist club, you'll find that things are a lot more wholesome

507

00:30:22,000 --> 00:30:26,000

than at Daytona Beach or in the state of Florida.

508

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

And at Daytona Beach or downtown Orlando or a lot of places.

509

00:30:31,000 --> 00:30:35,000

While many of us consider nudity offbeat,

510

00:30:35,000 --> 00:30:39,000

its devotees feel that lifestyle without clothes is healthier and more open.

511

00:30:39,000 --> 00:30:42,000

However, from time to time, the clubs attract single men

512

00:30:42,000 --> 00:30:45,000

whose only purpose is to exploit this environment.

513

00:30:45,000 --> 00:30:48,000

So they must carefully screen their applicants.

514

00:30:48,000 --> 00:30:51,000

They don't always succeed, as we'll see in our next story.

515

00:30:56,000 --> 00:31:00,000

Good morning. May I help you?

516

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

Hi, my name's Rusty.

517

00:31:02,000 --> 00:31:05,000

In February 1988, a clever con man calling himself

518

00:31:05,000 --> 00:31:08,000

Garland Houston Russell, Rusty for short,

519

00:31:08,000 --> 00:31:12,000

arrived at the Sunny Sands Resort and asked to join the camp.

520

00:31:15,000 --> 00:31:17,000

Rusty was immediately likable.

521

00:31:17,000 --> 00:31:19,000

He was not high pressure.

522

00:31:19,000 --> 00:31:21,000

He explained to us that he was looking for a place to live,

523

00:31:21,000 --> 00:31:23,000

but he understood when we told him that he could not.

524

00:31:23,000 --> 00:31:26,000

He couldn't move in right away, that we needed time to have him

525

00:31:26,000 --> 00:31:29,000

get to know us and us to get to know him.

526

00:31:29,000 --> 00:31:32,000

Being a single guy, we're a little careful.

527

00:31:32,000 --> 00:31:36,000

And as far as, I think probably the easiest way to say is he seemed,

528

00:31:36,000 --> 00:31:39,000

he was very friendly and very comfortable,

529

00:31:39,000 --> 00:31:41,000

but he was also very lonely.

530

00:31:41,000 --> 00:31:44,000

And he was looking, he gave you the feeling like he was looking for a family.

531

00:31:44,000 --> 00:31:47,000

And he was looking for a family.

532

00:31:47,000 --> 00:31:50,000

And he was looking for a family.

533

00:31:50,000 --> 00:31:55,000

And he was looking for someone to share his life with.

534

00:31:55,000 --> 00:32:00,000

Rusty told the camp's owners that he had been discharged from the Air Force

535

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

after the tragic sudden death of his parents in a car crash.

536

00:32:04,000 --> 00:32:09,000

He claimed their estate was in probate and he'd be wealthy when it was settled.

537

00:32:09,000 --> 00:32:11,000

I traveled around a bit and wound up here,

538

00:32:11,000 --> 00:32:14,000

and when I came here, it felt like it should be home.

539

00:32:14,000 --> 00:32:16,000

We're glad you feel that way.

540

00:32:16,000 --> 00:32:18,000

We've had a chance to talk to some of the people that have met you since you've been here.

541

00:32:18,000 --> 00:32:21,000

And they all seem to like you, and it seems that's such a fit in really well.

542

00:32:21,000 --> 00:32:23,000

And we'd like to have you stay.

543

00:32:23,000 --> 00:32:27,000

The rental's available, and if you'd like it, it's yours.

544

00:32:27,000 --> 00:32:28,000

Appreciate it.

545

00:32:28,000 --> 00:32:29,000

Welcome aboard.

546

00:32:29,000 --> 00:32:30,000

Everybody seemed to like Rusty.

547

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

He did everything for everybody.

548

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

The part that amazed me, he really loved children.

549

00:32:35,000 --> 00:32:37,000

And my children loved him.

550

00:32:37,000 --> 00:32:41,000

They thought of him as like a big brother or an uncle.

551

00:32:41,000 --> 00:32:45,000

Rusty renovated an empty store in Crescent City, 15 miles away,

552

00:32:45,000 --> 00:32:50,000

and stocked it with videotapes he said he'd acquired while in the service.

553

00:32:50,000 --> 00:32:56,000

Police now suspect he stocked the entire store with inventory stolen in Texas.

554

00:32:56,000 --> 00:32:58,000

Put that down there, okay?

555

00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:00,000

Okay, how you been Rusty?

556

00:33:00,000 --> 00:33:03,000

For members of Sunny Sands, he had a special deal.

557

00:33:03,000 --> 00:33:05,000

Thanks, Rusty.

558

00:33:05,000 --> 00:33:09,000

He sold the tapes to his friends and bought them back at a slightly higher price,

559

00:33:09,000 --> 00:33:11,000

a tax dodge, he told them.

560

00:33:11,000 --> 00:33:12,000

Here's the deal.

561

00:33:12,000 --> 00:33:15,000

You're gonna give me a check for \$500.

562

00:33:15,000 --> 00:33:17,000

I'm gonna give you a check for \$600.

563

00:33:17,000 --> 00:33:19,000

You hold that check for 90 days.

564

00:33:19,000 --> 00:33:22,000

You pick up 20% on your money, you cash the check after 90 days.

565

00:33:22,000 --> 00:33:25,000

You pick up 20% on your money, you get to watch the tapes,

566

00:33:25,000 --> 00:33:27,000

you give the tapes back to me,

567

00:33:27,000 --> 00:33:30,000

and then I'll rip these tapes out as used tapes, you see.

568

00:33:30,000 --> 00:33:31,000

Okay.

569

00:33:31,000 --> 00:33:32,000

And then I get over on the government, right?

570

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

Sounds beautiful.

571

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

Right, you make the money.

572

00:33:34,000 --> 00:33:36,000

I'd rather give it to you than the government.

573

00:33:36,000 --> 00:33:37,000

That sounds great.

574

00:33:37,000 --> 00:33:38,000

Wouldn't it is great.

575

00:33:38,000 --> 00:33:42,000

The people we spoke to who had invested with Rusty early on,

576

00:33:42,000 --> 00:33:45,000

everybody had seemed to have made their money back.

577

00:33:45,000 --> 00:33:47,000

Their principal, plus their 20% interest.

578

00:33:47,000 --> 00:33:52,000

They had, at a maximum, people had invested maybe \$1,000 with Rusty,

579

00:33:52,000 --> 00:33:56,000

and had made \$1,000 plus their \$200 interest.

580

00:33:56,000 --> 00:33:58,000

Who is it?

581

00:33:58,000 --> 00:33:59,000

Rusty.

582

00:33:59,000 --> 00:34:00,000

Oh, Rusty.

583

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

After four months, Rusty wanted to expand the store.

584

00:34:04,000 --> 00:34:05,000

Hello.

585

00:34:06,000 --> 00:34:09,000

He approached the neighbor for a \$20,000 loan.

586

00:34:09,000 --> 00:34:11,000

She quickly agreed.

587

00:34:11,000 --> 00:34:12,000

Good.

588

00:34:12,000 --> 00:34:15,000

Listen, I have an opportunity to share some wealth with you.

589

00:34:15,000 --> 00:34:16,000

Let me see that.

590

00:34:16,000 --> 00:34:20,000

Just six weeks later, Rusty asked a second couple for \$20,000 more.

591

00:34:20,000 --> 00:34:24,000

See, what I want to do is to save some money on my tax.

592

00:34:24,000 --> 00:34:27,000

He didn't tell this couple about the first investor.

593

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

He needed money to buy more tapes, more equipment, and so forth.

594

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

And we wanted to make a little interest on the money.

595

00:34:38,000 --> 00:34:41,000

So it was just an investment, as far as we were concerned,

596

00:34:41,000 --> 00:34:44,000

and helping out somebody at the same time.

597

00:34:44,000 --> 00:34:45,000

Hey, Rusty.

598

00:34:45,000 --> 00:34:46,000

Hello.

599

00:34:46,000 --> 00:34:47,000

Hey, thank you.

600

00:34:47,000 --> 00:34:48,000

Hey, Robert.

601

00:34:48,000 --> 00:34:50,000

Now, don't you fill up on that, because this is.

602

00:34:50,000 --> 00:34:52,000

Rusty flourished his sunny sands.

603

00:34:52,000 --> 00:34:55,000

Surrounded by happy families who supported his business,

604

00:34:55,000 --> 00:34:58,000

this lonely man seemed to have found his place in the sun.

605

00:35:05,000 --> 00:35:10,000

On August 28, 1988, Rusty's careful setup began to unravel

606

00:35:10,000 --> 00:35:13,000

when the 11-year-old daughter of his closest friends

607

00:35:13,000 --> 00:35:16,000

fled in tears from his trailer.

608

00:35:16,000 --> 00:35:19,000

She said that he threw her against the wall,

609

00:35:19,000 --> 00:35:21,000

and then he threw her on the bed,

610

00:35:21,000 --> 00:35:23,000

and that he was touching her all over.

611

00:35:23,000 --> 00:35:26,000

The rest is a little personal.

612

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

And in trying to do that, that's when she hit him.

613

00:35:29,000 --> 00:35:33,000

And she hit him three times before she got away from him.

614

00:35:34,000 --> 00:35:37,000

State attorneys issued a warrant for Rusty's arrest

615

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

for sexual battery against a child under 12,

616

00:35:40,000 --> 00:35:43,000

a charge for which he would be held without bond.

617

00:35:48,000 --> 00:35:51,000

Blue Sheik County Sheriff's Department.

618

00:35:51,000 --> 00:35:52,000

Come on in.

619

00:35:57,000 --> 00:35:59,000

Investigators of Blue Sheik County Sheriff's Department,

620

00:35:59,000 --> 00:36:00,000

we have a warrant for your arrest.

621

00:36:00,000 --> 00:36:01,000

We have a warrant for my arrest.

622

00:36:01,000 --> 00:36:04,000

Blue Sheik County Warrant No. 88090744.

623

00:36:04,000 --> 00:36:06,000

Officer, it's a mistake.

624

00:36:06,000 --> 00:36:07,000

Telling a warrant.

625

00:36:07,000 --> 00:36:10,000

We handcuffed him, put him back in the back of the mart car,

626

00:36:10,000 --> 00:36:13,000

and took him over to operations to be processed

627

00:36:13,000 --> 00:36:15,000

and to try to interview him.

628

00:36:15,000 --> 00:36:18,000

He verified the little girl's story,

629

00:36:18,000 --> 00:36:20,000

except he put a different slant on it.

630

00:36:20,000 --> 00:36:22,000

He put a different light on it.

631

00:36:22,000 --> 00:36:25,000

He did say that, yeah, they were nude and they were in the trailer.

632

00:36:25,000 --> 00:36:27,000

Of course, that's not so unusual.

633

00:36:27,000 --> 00:36:29,000

They're in a nudist camp.

634

00:36:29,000 --> 00:36:36,000

And he admitted to touching her, touching the little girl,

635

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

pretty much all over her body.

636

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

And the way he explained it was he said,

637

00:36:40,000 --> 00:36:41,000

we were having fun.

638

00:36:41,000 --> 00:36:42,000

We were wrestling.

639

00:36:42,000 --> 00:36:43,000

That didn't ring true.

640

00:36:43,000 --> 00:36:45,000

It just wasn't right.

641

00:36:45,000 --> 00:36:47,000

But he held fast to a story that there was,

642

00:36:47,000 --> 00:36:51,000

that he had no intent to assault her.

643

00:36:51,000 --> 00:36:55,000

When Rusty was arrested, nobody believed it.

644

00:36:55,000 --> 00:36:57,000

The people in the camp were all shocked.

645

00:36:57,000 --> 00:37:00,000

You know, here we were taking this man who everybody liked.

646

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

He was everybody's friend, everybody's big brother,

647

00:37:03,000 --> 00:37:06,000

and turned around and said, well, he did something so despicable.

648

00:37:06,000 --> 00:37:08,000

And they turned against us.

649

00:37:08,000 --> 00:37:11,000

It was a lot easier to say, oh no, that child's lying.

650

00:37:11,000 --> 00:37:14,000

You know, it's easier to blame the child than it is to say,

651

00:37:14,000 --> 00:37:19,000

well, this guy who's so nice isn't, you know, as nice as we thought.

652

00:37:19,000 --> 00:37:25,000

I would have believed that Rusty would have stolen our entire 50 acres

653

00:37:25,000 --> 00:37:27,000

and walked away with it before I would have believed

654

00:37:27,000 --> 00:37:29,000

that he hurt a little girl.

655

00:37:29,000 --> 00:37:35,000

Only because that's the way he presented himself.

656

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

Rusty's loyal friends convinced the judge

657

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

to grant Rusty release on \$25,000 bail.

658

00:37:41,000 --> 00:37:44,000

Rusty asked Bob Pickens, his landlord,

659

00:37:44,000 --> 00:37:46,000

at the video store to post his bond.

660

00:37:46,000 --> 00:37:49,000

Before this has happened, her grandparents are coming down

661

00:37:49,000 --> 00:37:53,000

to testify on my behalf.

662

00:37:53,000 --> 00:37:58,000

Bob, you've got to get me out of this place.

663

00:37:58,000 --> 00:38:00,000

Rusty, I'll do what I can.

664

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

I was surprised when Rusty was arrested.

665

00:38:03,000 --> 00:38:10,000

And very frankly, he convinced me that he was innocent.

666

00:38:10,000 --> 00:38:15,000

That I suppose indicates some naivety on my part,

667

00:38:15,000 --> 00:38:19,000

but he was very convincing.

668

00:38:19,000 --> 00:38:23,000

Bob Pickens arranged to have the money available in 24 hours.

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

In those same 24 hours, the Noonans were also trying to raise Rusty's bail.

670

00:38:29,000 --> 00:38:31,000

As they looked into Rusty's business accounts,

671

00:38:31,000 --> 00:38:35,000

they were shocked to see he was seriously overdrawn at the bank

672

00:38:35,000 --> 00:38:37,000

and had lied to them about what he owned.

673

00:38:37,000 --> 00:38:41,000

He ends up being overdrawn by over \$1,000, \$1,068.

674

00:38:41,000 --> 00:38:42,000

That's not right.

675

00:38:42,000 --> 00:38:46,000

The facade that Rusty had built about being the honest business man that he was

676

00:38:46,000 --> 00:38:49,000

is now coming apart like a bad brick wall.

677

00:38:49,000 --> 00:38:52,000

And in fact, if he was a bad guy financially, the chances are,

678

00:38:52,000 --> 00:38:57,000

he was a bad guy with the child on all station charges.

679

00:38:57,000 --> 00:39:00,000

We tried to get a hold of the bonding agent.

680

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

We spoke to her and explained what was going on,

681

00:39:03,000 --> 00:39:07,000

but she wouldn't tell us who was posting the collateral.

682

00:39:07,000 --> 00:39:10,000

We tried to find out, but before we could,

683

00:39:10,000 --> 00:39:13,000

find out who was posting the collateral for his bail,

684

00:39:13,000 --> 00:39:15,000

he was out.

685

00:39:15,000 --> 00:39:17,000

We missed him by minutes.

686

00:39:19,000 --> 00:39:20,000

I was really shocked.

687

00:39:20,000 --> 00:39:25,000

You know, he got out on bail and he shouldn't have.

688

00:39:25,000 --> 00:39:29,000

I was told by the investigator he was not going to be granted bail,

689

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

but then he managed to caught his way into it.

690

00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:38,000

In the next 48 hours, Rusty persuaded Bob Pickens to buy his business,

691

00:39:38,000 --> 00:39:43,000

telling him that his reputation as a businessman had been ruined.

692

00:39:43,000 --> 00:39:49,000

Bob learned later he was the third person to whom Rusty had sold his inventory.

693

00:39:49,000 --> 00:39:53,000

As soon as I found out there were other individuals,

694

00:39:53,000 --> 00:39:59,000

I made every effort to have Rusty apprehended and the bail removed,

695

00:39:59,000 --> 00:40:02,000

but I was unsuccessful.

696

00:40:02,000 --> 00:40:07,000

Rusty raised more cash by selling his car to two different unsuspecting partners.

697

00:40:08,000 --> 00:40:11,000

Then he rented another car and disappeared.

698

00:40:11,000 --> 00:40:14,000

He never showed up for his court date.

699

00:40:15,000 --> 00:40:26,000

When Rusty took off, I felt sick, disappointed, surprised, and somewhat of a fool.

700

00:40:28,000 --> 00:40:31,000

This guy took us all for a ride.

701

00:40:31,000 --> 00:40:35,000

No matter what happens, we know we'll never get our money back.

702

00:40:36,000 --> 00:40:41,000

But right at this point, the money is immaterial.

703

00:40:41,000 --> 00:40:45,000

Right now, the big thing I want Rusty caught is what he did to that child.

704

00:40:45,000 --> 00:40:49,000

That child will never be the same for the rest of her life.

705

00:40:49,000 --> 00:40:54,000

I want him caught. I want him punished and I want him stopped.

706

00:40:54,000 --> 00:40:59,000

I want him to go to jail where he can't get his hands on other children.

707

00:40:59,000 --> 00:41:04,000

Police have since learned that Garland Houston Russell is not Rusty's real name.

708

00:41:04,000 --> 00:41:09,000

It is one of the 42 aliases used by William Eugene Hilliard.

709

00:41:09,000 --> 00:41:15,000

The real Garland Russell, a man from Tennessee, is another innocent victim of Hilliard's cons.

710

00:41:15,000 --> 00:41:20,000

Hilliard has been arrested in 14 states and has wanted for fraud in Florida and Texas.

711

00:41:20,000 --> 00:41:23,000

His swindles total at least half a million dollars.

712

00:41:23,000 --> 00:41:26,000

Hilliard has green eyes and is nearly bald.

713

00:41:26,000 --> 00:41:31,000

He disguises his appearance with a toupee of straight brown hair, often worn with a headband.

714

00:41:31,000 --> 00:41:36,000

He is 44 years old, weighs 200 pounds and is 6 feet tall.

715

00:41:39,000 --> 00:41:44,000

Within minutes of our broadcast, several viewers from South Carolina called our telecenter

716

00:41:44,000 --> 00:41:47,000

to report that they recognized William Eugene Hilliard.

717

00:41:51,000 --> 00:41:55,000

The morning after our broadcast, Hilliard was arrested by Georgetown County Sheriff's Deputies

718

00:41:55,000 --> 00:42:00,000

at a convenience store in Murl's and Litt, South Carolina, a small town just south of Myrtle Beach.

719

00:42:01,000 --> 00:42:04,000

He is living under the assumed name Ronald Edward Kent.

720

00:42:06,000 --> 00:42:13,000

On October 20th, Hilliard was returned to Florida to face charges of fraud and sexual battery against a child under 12.

721

00:42:13,000 --> 00:42:18,000

If convicted of the sexual battery charge, Hilliard could receive the death penalty.

722

00:42:31,000 --> 00:42:37,000

A final note on tonight's broadcast.

723

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

Last week we presented the poignant story of Jim Mead, a helicopter pilot who was injured in Vietnam.

724

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

Eventually he made a startling recovery and for 15 years,

725

00:42:46,000 --> 00:42:50,000

searched for the nurse who taught him how to walk and talk again.

726

00:42:50,000 --> 00:42:53,000

The morning after our broadcast, Jim's search came to an end.

727

00:42:53,000 --> 00:42:59,000

We received a surprise phone call from Karen Stevens, who I'd just mentioned to you.

728

00:42:59,000 --> 00:43:04,000

She lives in the city of Stevens, who identified herself as the Army Lieutenant who nursed Jim.

729

00:43:04,000 --> 00:43:09,000

She lives only 30 miles from Jim. She was astounded to see her own story on national television.

730

00:43:09,000 --> 00:43:16,000

Jim and Karen are planning to get together soon, and we will bring her their heartwarming reunion from one of our next broadcasts.