

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:09,600

This program is about unsolved mysteries. Whenever possible, the actual family members

2

00:00:09,600 --> 00:00:13,680

and police officials have participated in recreating the events. What you are about

3

00:00:13,680 --> 00:00:20,400

to see is not a news broadcast.

4

00:00:20,400 --> 00:00:26,160

Tonight on Unsolved Mysteries, the poignant saga of Amelia Earhart. Fifty-three years

5

00:00:26,160 --> 00:00:31,280

ago, she vanished in the South Pacific during a round-the-world flight. But eyewitness accounts

6

00:00:31,280 --> 00:00:37,800

suggest that Amelia Earhart may have survived and been captured by the Japanese Navy.

7

00:00:37,800 --> 00:00:42,320

In Woodstock, Illinois, Colleen Ritter and Rick Church were typical high school sweethearts

8

00:00:42,320 --> 00:00:49,880

until their romance went sour. Now Colleen's parents are dead and Rick Church has disappeared.

9

00:00:49,880 --> 00:00:54,520

Using an electronic store as a front, FBI agents in Florida go undercover to capture

10

00:00:54,520 --> 00:01:03,360

the kingpins of a South American drug ring, a real-life story of Miami Vice.

11

00:01:03,360 --> 00:01:08,040

Also we will present a follow-up to our story about a popular 16-year-old girl who mysteriously

12

00:01:08,040 --> 00:01:13,240

vanished most stable forks in New York. Last year she was apparently in Los Angeles at

13

00:01:13,240 --> 00:01:17,640

a concert for the musical group New Kids on the Block and may even have been captured on

14

00:01:17,640 --> 00:01:22,640

film in their rock video. Perhaps you can help find Carrie Lynn Nixon.

15

00:01:47,640 --> 00:02:16,640

Two years ago we examined the strange disappearance of a 16-year-old girl.

16

00:02:17,640 --> 00:02:22,000

Tonight an update on her case and an urgent appeal from her family and members of the

17

00:02:22,000 --> 00:02:30,000

Teenage Recording Group, New Kids on the Block. Carrie Lynn Nixon was an above-average student

18

00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:38,160

and well-known and liked in the small community of Osable Forks, New York. At around 10 p.m.

19

00:02:38,160 --> 00:02:44,480

on June 22, 1987, Carrie was returning home after running an errand for her father. A

20

00:02:44,520 --> 00:02:49,840

few minutes later and only 700 feet from her doorstep, Carrie Lynn Nixon disappeared.

21

00:02:49,840 --> 00:02:56,120

My immediate reaction was terror and has been a nightmare ever since.

22

00:02:56,120 --> 00:03:05,560

Was Carrie's disappearance the result of foul play or had she simply run away?

23

00:03:05,560 --> 00:03:12,480

Carrie wrote some letters to a friend and in these letters she indicated she would like to live in

24

00:03:12,480 --> 00:03:20,080

Hawaii, move to Florida, possibly California and in fact leave the town of Osable Forks when she

25

00:03:20,080 --> 00:03:26,320

turned 18. My theory on this case is Carrie Lynn Nixon was abducted. Her father gave her \$20 for

26

00:03:26,320 --> 00:03:31,760

groceries. She went to Thomas' store for her father, left Thomas' store with the bag of groceries.

27

00:03:32,720 --> 00:03:36,800

If she was a runaway she would have done none of those things. She would have been dressed better.

28

00:03:36,800 --> 00:03:40,720

She would have taken money with her that she had in her bedroom after we searched her bedroom.

29

00:03:41,680 --> 00:03:44,080

She is a victim of a kidnapping.

30

00:03:46,560 --> 00:03:52,240

Authorities investigated dozens of reported sightings of Carrie but were unable to confirm her identity.

31

00:03:53,680 --> 00:03:59,760

Nothing has been found, not one thing. She's walked off the face of the earth as far as we're concerned.

32

00:04:01,440 --> 00:04:06,080

As the years in the investigation dragged on, Carrie's parents began to give up hope of ever

33

00:04:06,080 --> 00:04:11,360

finding their daughter. But all that changed in March of this year when they saw a videotape of a

34

00:04:11,360 --> 00:04:20,880

concert given by the popular singing group New Kids in the Block. On June 5th, 1989, the group filmed

35

00:04:20,880 --> 00:04:34,160

their Hangin' Tough Live concert in Los Angeles, California. Among the crowd of teenage fans,

36

00:04:34,160 --> 00:04:36,640

Kathy and Gary Nixon saw a familiar face.

37

00:04:40,560 --> 00:04:43,280

You couldn't believe how much that this girl looked like our daughter.

38

00:04:44,400 --> 00:04:50,240

So we just kept rewinding it and going over and over and over and we just couldn't believe it because

39

00:04:51,200 --> 00:04:56,800

we never really had any hope that she was alive and then there's this girl that looks so much like

40

00:04:56,800 --> 00:05:02,480

her. I'm not 100% convinced but it looks like our Carrie.

41

00:05:03,360 --> 00:05:07,600

By viewing the tape, I picked the girl out immediately the first time it ran through. It was

42

00:05:07,600 --> 00:05:12,720

obvious to me that this girl did look like Carrie Nixon and appear to be her.

43

00:05:13,440 --> 00:05:18,160

This detail-enhanced photograph was made from the videotape and compared with a picture of

44

00:05:18,160 --> 00:05:25,440

Carrie taken shortly before she disappeared. There's obviously many similarities, the hair length,

45

00:05:25,440 --> 00:05:33,680

the hair color, the shape of the face, the chin, the mouth, and it displayed a multiple of earrings

46

00:05:33,680 --> 00:05:39,360

in the right ear in which Carrie Nixon has four earrings in her right ear and two on her left.

47

00:05:39,920 --> 00:05:46,720

So the photo-enhanced finished product further convinced the Nixons that this could be their

48

00:05:46,720 --> 00:05:52,880

daughter. Members of the New Kids on the Block did not recognize the girl in the crowd,

49

00:05:52,880 --> 00:05:56,400

but after hearing Carrie's story wanted to make a personal appeal.

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00:05:58,320 --> 00:06:03,600

Well I'd just like to say to Carrie that if you're out there the best thing to do would just be to

51

00:06:03,600 --> 00:06:08,560

call somebody and you know even if you go to your local police and just just tell them your

52

00:06:08,560 --> 00:06:13,360

situation that maybe they can help you out. Or if any of you viewers out there who have seen her

53

00:06:13,360 --> 00:06:19,840

at a New Kids show or just seen her on the street, if you could contact someone you know to let them

54

00:06:19,840 --> 00:06:27,200

know where she is, if she's alright or anything that would be a big help. We need to find this girl,

55

00:06:27,200 --> 00:06:32,160

find out who she is, whether it's Carrie or not, just so that if it's not we can go on

56

00:06:32,800 --> 00:06:49,680

to something else to try and find her. I love you Carrie, and I need to talk to you.

57

00:06:49,840 --> 00:07:05,680

Music

58

00:07:05,680 --> 00:07:11,120

Six decades ago Amelia Earhart was one of the most famous women in the world. She had the figure of

a

59

00:07:11,120 --> 00:07:17,120

movie star in the face of an angelic tomboy. The first woman to pilot an aircraft across the

60

00:07:17,200 --> 00:07:25,120

Atlantic in 1932, Amelia defied labels and definitions. Part all-American girl, part daredevil,

61

00:07:25,120 --> 00:07:31,200

she was a perfect hero for her time. But she was also ahead of her time, a south of facing yet

62

00:07:31,200 --> 00:07:41,520

outspoken champion of women's rights. I hope that such equality could be carried out in other fields

63

00:07:42,160 --> 00:07:47,440

so that men and women may achieve equally in any endeavor they set out.

64

00:07:49,200 --> 00:07:55,200

On May 20th, 1937, Amelia Earhart and her navigator Fred Noonan prepared for takeoff from

65

00:07:55,200 --> 00:08:01,840

Oakland, California. Amelia was 39 years old. This flight was designed to be the capstone of her

66

00:08:01,840 --> 00:08:07,920

brilliant career as an aviator. She was attempting to become the first person, man or woman, to fly

67

00:08:07,920 --> 00:08:16,160

around the world at his widest point, the equator. Today, 53 years later, new evidence has deepened

68

00:08:16,160 --> 00:08:24,160

the mystery surrounding Amelia Earhart's last flight. The first leg of Amelia's flight was via

69

00:08:24,160 --> 00:08:31,040

Burbank to Tucson. From there she went on to New Orleans, Miami, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Brazil.

70

00:08:32,160 --> 00:08:36,720

Amelia and Fred then crossed the Atlantic landing in Seneca on the African coast.

71

00:08:36,720 --> 00:08:41,760

They made several short hops across Africa, then headed for Karachi in what is now Pakistan.

72

00:08:42,560 --> 00:08:50,560

From there to Calcutta, Rangoon, Singapore and two stops in Java, then Australia and finally

73

00:08:50,560 --> 00:09:00,560

Lé Nugini. Amelia and Fred had flown almost two-thirds of the way around the world and they'd

74

00:09:00,560 --> 00:09:06,240

done it fairly quickly. They must have been very tired when they got to Lé Nugini. They had two

75

00:09:06,240 --> 00:09:12,160

days there, they tried to rest up, but after that amount of flying time they must have been exhausted

76

00:09:12,160 --> 00:09:18,320

and here they were facing the most difficult leg of their flight. From Nugini, Amelia and Fred faced

77

00:09:18,320 --> 00:09:24,720

a grueling 18 hours in the air. They also had to hit an inconceivably tiny target, Howland Island.

78

00:09:25,520 --> 00:09:31,200

Howland is just a mile and a half long and a half mile wide. At its highest point, the island is only

79

00:09:31,200 --> 00:09:40,400

20 feet above sea level, about half the height of a telephone pole. The difficulty factor on a scale

80

00:09:40,400 --> 00:09:49,120

of 1 to 10, piloting from Lé Nugini to Howland Island in 1937, in that aircraft, make it a 10,

81

00:09:49,120 --> 00:09:56,000

the most difficult. It would be like flying across the United States and locating the 18th

82

00:09:56,000 --> 00:10:05,360

green of a golf course in New Jersey. On July 1st, 1937, Amelia Earhart and Fred Nugin prepared to

83

00:10:05,360 --> 00:10:12,800

leave Nugini. Squalls were predicted along their route. They decided to postpone takeoff. Amelia

wired

84

00:10:12,800 --> 00:10:17,120

her husband that she would not make it back to Oakland on the 4th of July as planned.

85

00:10:17,360 --> 00:10:26,960

At precisely 10 a.m. on the 2nd of July, Amelia and Fred took off. They planned to cross the

86

00:10:26,960 --> 00:10:30,800

international dateline and land on Howland Island 18 hours later.

87

00:10:33,760 --> 00:10:37,680

Though she had the best navigator in the world, set them beside her, Fred Nugin,

88

00:10:37,680 --> 00:10:41,920

she was responsible for running that airplane. She had to fly the heading. She had to watch the

89

00:10:41,920 --> 00:10:46,160

weather. She had to watch the fuel flows. She had to watch the mixtures, the carburetor air,

90

00:10:46,160 --> 00:10:49,920

make sure they weren't getting carburetor ice. She was responsible for the airplane

91

00:10:49,920 --> 00:10:54,480

maintaining altitude, maintaining trim. All these things were constant. Plus,

92

00:10:54,480 --> 00:11:02,080

she had to do the radio transmissions. Amelia was not competent where radio was concerned.

93

00:11:02,800 --> 00:11:10,880

She would never take the time to learn properly. I think it can be honestly said that the radio

94

00:11:10,960 --> 00:11:18,640

was the Achilles heel of that flight. It may seem incredible now, but in 1937,

95

00:11:18,640 --> 00:11:24,240

before radar came into use, a battery-powered radio was Amelia's only link with the world.

96

00:11:26,400 --> 00:11:31,440

Plying the waters around Howland Island, the Coast Guard cutter Atasca stood ready to communicate

97

00:11:31,440 --> 00:11:37,280

by radio with Amelia as soon as she came within range. With a radio bearing, the Atasca could

98

00:11:37,280 --> 00:11:40,320

rescue Amelia and Fred at sea should anything go wrong.

99

00:11:43,600 --> 00:11:49,600

For 16 hours, nothing did. Then Amelia's lack of radio expertise came into play.

100

00:11:52,240 --> 00:11:57,600

About 17 hours and 14 minutes into the flight, now we're really getting to the critical part.

101

00:11:58,400 --> 00:12:05,520

She reports that she's approximately 200 miles out, and she wants them to take a radio bearing on

102

00:12:05,520 --> 00:12:14,800

her, and she whistles into the microphone. Want bearing on 3105, kill a cycle on hour.

103

00:12:23,600 --> 00:12:28,800

She stopped whistling. Amelia did not whistle long enough to give the Atasca a consistent signal.

104

00:12:29,520 --> 00:12:34,560

What Amelia failed to understand was that whistling wasn't necessary, simply allowing an

105

00:12:34,560 --> 00:12:38,720

uninterrupted radio signal to play for 30 seconds would have been enough.

106

00:12:38,720 --> 00:12:42,720

Please repeat last transmission on 750. I repeat.

107

00:12:44,640 --> 00:12:50,000

19 hours into the flight, in one hour behind schedule, Amelia and Fred calculated that they

108

00:12:50,000 --> 00:12:54,960

should be directly above Howland Island, where they had also established clear radio contact.

109

00:12:55,600 --> 00:12:59,760

Looking down, they saw only ocean. Fred, I don't see Howland Island.

110

00:13:00,880 --> 00:13:03,920

I don't know where it is. We should be right up top of it. It's not on my side.

111

00:13:04,560 --> 00:13:10,720

I don't see it here either. Something was badly wrong. Only once had Amelia indicated that she

112

00:13:10,720 --> 00:13:16,640

could hear the Atasca, even though they could hear her perfectly. Again, all Amelia had to do

113

00:13:16,640 --> 00:13:21,680

was open her radio line to let a signal play so the Atasca could take a bearing and find out

114

00:13:21,680 --> 00:13:28,720

how far off course she was. Instead, Amelia stopped her radio transmissions. She had overused the radio

115

00:13:28,720 --> 00:13:33,040

and drained her battery on a flight the year before, so she was reluctant simply to let the

116

00:13:33,040 --> 00:13:40,480

transmitter run. They know they've missed the island, gone past it, but they don't know which

117

00:13:40,480 --> 00:13:45,280

side. They have no way of knowing. They have to take a radio bearing. So, Amelia does the only

118

00:13:45,280 --> 00:13:50,400

thing she can. 20 hours and 13 minutes into the flight, Amelia sends her last message.

119

00:13:50,960 --> 00:13:54,000

Her voice is talking very rapidly and very tense.

120

00:13:54,000 --> 00:14:01,280

We're in 137. We'll repeat message. We will repeat this message on 6210.

121

00:14:02,240 --> 00:14:08,080

In her final radio message, Amelia said she was switching frequencies to 6210 kilosecels.

122

00:14:08,720 --> 00:14:14,560

The Atasca could not reach her on that frequency. They assumed that Amelia, once again unfamiliar

123

00:14:14,560 --> 00:14:20,080

with emergency radial procedure, had turned her radio dial to the wrong setting. Frantically,

124

00:14:20,080 --> 00:14:24,720

the Atasca tried other frequencies with no luck. This is the Atasca. Come in over.

125

00:14:24,720 --> 00:14:29,120

We have an emergency. Notify all the ships in the area. Amelia Earhart's plane may be going down.

126

00:14:29,200 --> 00:14:35,280

We may be losing her. That was the last verified transmission ever heard from Amelia Earhart

127

00:14:35,280 --> 00:14:41,280

and Fred Ninen. They must have ran out of fuel and within a minute or two from a thousand feet would

128

00:14:41,280 --> 00:14:50,080

have had to ditch the airplane into the ocean. Immediately a search effort began. The largest

129

00:14:50,080 --> 00:14:56,640

ever mounted to look for a single plane. Ten ships, 65 airplanes and 4,000 men covered this

130

00:14:56,720 --> 00:15:03,040

250,000 square mile area around Holland Island. The search continued for 16 days.

131

00:15:04,320 --> 00:15:09,120

Experts agreed that Amelia's plane with this empty gas tanks would have floated for five to eight

132

00:15:09,120 --> 00:15:14,880

hours. On the plane, Amelia and Fred had life preservers and a two person inflatable life raft

133

00:15:14,880 --> 00:15:18,400

to quit with emergency supplies so they could have been afloat for days.

134

00:15:29,360 --> 00:15:32,560

Experts believe Amelia went down somewhere near Holland Island,

135

00:15:33,440 --> 00:15:40,160

but incredibly unconfirmed sightings have placed Amelia and Fred 2,500 miles west northwest of

136

00:15:40,160 --> 00:15:48,480

Holland on Saipan in the Mariana Islands. When Amelia Earhart and Fred Ninen disappeared, Saipan

137

00:15:48,480 --> 00:15:54,480

was an important military headquarters for the Japanese. Intent on expanding its empire,

138

00:15:54,480 --> 00:16:00,400

Japan was about to attack China and had begun to build up military operations on key islands in the

139

00:16:00,400 --> 00:16:10,080

South Pacific. July 1944, seven years after Amelia Earhart's plane vanished, the island of Saipan was

140

00:16:10,080 --> 00:16:17,040

now controlled by American forces. Sergeant Thomas Devine was a member of the 244th Army Unit.

141

00:16:18,320 --> 00:16:25,360

I first became aware of matter pertaining to Amelia Earhart. Soon after my arrival on the island,

142

00:16:26,400 --> 00:16:33,120

Lieutenant Liebig, who was our first lieutenant, had secured a jeep and told me that I was to

143

00:16:33,120 --> 00:16:38,320

drive into Aslido airfield, which was a short distance away from our Bibouac area.

144

00:16:38,640 --> 00:16:46,640

Devine and the lieutenant drove along a heavily guarded road. They pulled up in front of a padlocked aircraft hangar.

145

00:16:50,480 --> 00:16:54,320

I'm sorry, sir, this is a restricted area. Restricted to whom?

146

00:16:54,320 --> 00:16:56,160

In all due respect, sir, that's none of your concern.

147

00:16:56,160 --> 00:17:01,680

While he waited, Thomas Devine overheard snatches of conversation from a nearby group of Marines.

148

00:17:01,680 --> 00:17:06,880

We got Amelia Earhart's plane in that hangar. You guys wouldn't believe when we found him.

149

00:17:07,680 --> 00:17:11,600

Suddenly, an official in civilian clothes reprimanded the Marines.

150

00:17:12,800 --> 00:17:17,280

New people want to knock off the chatter here. You understand what's going on. This is a classified

151

00:17:17,280 --> 00:17:22,400

project. You've come about that damn close to compromising the project right now. I'm telling you,

152

00:17:22,400 --> 00:17:25,760

I want you to sit down, do your jobs and shut up. You understand?

153

00:17:29,040 --> 00:17:34,720

As we went back, we dropped the subject because it was just a minor incident at the place.

154

00:17:35,040 --> 00:17:43,840

Later on that same day, I heard a roar from the airfield. But we didn't pay too much attention

155

00:17:44,480 --> 00:17:51,040

until suddenly it came overhead, very, very low. And you could see the markings on it. It was not

156

00:17:51,040 --> 00:17:59,200

a military plane. It was a civilian plane. The marking was very evident, NR16-020. We all looked

157

00:17:59,280 --> 00:18:05,840

up. We all wondered what in the world was going on. Thomas Devine wrote down the identification

158

00:18:05,840 --> 00:18:11,760

numbers on the aircraft. They corresponded exactly to the numbers on Amelia Earhart's plane.

159

00:18:16,240 --> 00:18:21,040

That same evening, Tom saw the plane again. Now it was on fire.

160

00:18:22,000 --> 00:18:31,120

And I was a guest to see this plane, the so-called Earhart plane, engulfed in flames.

161

00:18:33,360 --> 00:18:39,520

I saw that plane personally on three occasions that day. The last time the plane was in flames.

162

00:18:42,880 --> 00:18:47,440

At about the same time, Bob Wallach was one of the Marines stationed on Saipan.

163

00:18:47,440 --> 00:18:59,680

I was in the first battalion, 29th Marines. We were in the second wave going into Saipan.

164

00:19:00,480 --> 00:19:06,320

During the daytime, we had nothing to do except look around, souvenir hunting. We're looking through

165

00:19:06,320 --> 00:19:13,840

some government-looking buildings, brick buildings. We found this safe that was there.

166

00:19:13,840 --> 00:19:20,560

One of the guys was a demolition person, the noodle, and he thought he could blow the door

167

00:19:20,560 --> 00:19:30,240

off the safe and we'd have something. We thought it was a millionaire, so...

168

00:19:31,040 --> 00:19:37,520

But anyway, there was a briefcase that I grabbed. And I thought I had it packed full of money or

169

00:19:37,520 --> 00:19:43,600

something like that. To my surprise, it was something I didn't expect to see, but it was full

170

00:19:43,600 --> 00:19:51,120

of Amelia Earhart's papers. Hey, Joe, come take a look at this. What do you got, Wallach?

171

00:19:52,320 --> 00:19:56,960

Amelia Earhart. What's this stuff doing here? I may have only been 18 years old,

172

00:19:56,960 --> 00:20:01,760

but I knew I had a piece of history in my hand. This is incredible. Hey, I think you're gonna have

173

00:20:01,760 --> 00:20:08,960

to turn that stuff in. Yeah. Wallach turned the briefcase and its contents over to a commanding

174

00:20:08,960 --> 00:20:18,960

officer. He never saw it again. That briefcase is still someplace in this country. I believe that,

175

00:20:18,960 --> 00:20:26,000

because that officer that I gave it to was a high enough rank that he didn't just take it and throw

176

00:20:26,000 --> 00:20:35,120

it away. He had something valuable to. I do not believe Amelia Earhart died at sea. I think Amelia

177

00:20:35,120 --> 00:20:43,200

Earhart survived the downing on an island in the southern... Buddy Brennan has been investigating

178

00:20:43,200 --> 00:20:50,720

the Amelia Earhart mystery for more than 11 years. In 1987, he interviewed a woman in Saipan who said

179

00:20:50,720 --> 00:20:56,720

she had witnessed Amelia's death. Unsolved mysteries went to Saipan and interviewed the same woman.

180

00:20:57,280 --> 00:21:06,000

What follows is edited from both interviews. This woman was brought ashore by the Japanese.

181

00:21:12,080 --> 00:21:19,040

It was said they had captured two spy people. The Japanese soldiers brought the spies into town.

182

00:21:19,360 --> 00:21:23,360

Many of us went there to see them.

183

00:21:31,360 --> 00:21:39,360

I think they want us to strip. The Japanese cars made them take off all their clothes, everything they had on their bodies.

184

00:21:42,560 --> 00:21:46,160

It was then we could see that one of the spies was a woman.

185

00:21:49,200 --> 00:21:52,800

I had never known before a woman who wore men's trousers.

186

00:22:02,480 --> 00:22:07,840

All the things that happened to that woman, the soldiers put her in jail.

187

00:22:11,040 --> 00:22:13,280

They removed her jewelry from her hands.

188

00:22:14,240 --> 00:22:18,640

Then the Japanese came and gave her rice. She threw it out.

189

00:22:22,400 --> 00:22:28,000

When they took her out of the prison, they tied her hands. They blindfolded her.

190

00:22:29,600 --> 00:22:33,600

I was working on a farm. I saw a Japanese motorcycle.

191

00:22:37,600 --> 00:22:41,600

The woman was in a little seat on the side of the motorcycle.

192

00:22:44,080 --> 00:22:57,600

I watched and they took her to this place where a hole had been dug.

193

00:23:00,080 --> 00:23:03,600

They made her kneel in front of the hole.

194

00:23:08,480 --> 00:23:10,480

Then they shot her.

195

00:23:13,440 --> 00:23:27,600

I planted a breadfruit tree near her grave.

196

00:23:30,480 --> 00:23:37,680

In 1987, Buddy Brennan conducted an excavation of the grave site. He was only allowed to dig for 12 hours.

197

00:23:38,240 --> 00:23:48,080

We got down to six and a half feet below what they said would have been the surface in 1944.

198

00:23:48,080 --> 00:23:53,040

Which is the date Ms. Bloss gave us of having witnessed the execution.

199

00:23:54,240 --> 00:23:57,600

And that's where we retrieved the blindfold.

200

00:23:59,600 --> 00:24:04,640

Brennan believes this tattered fragment of cloth was a blindfold worn by Amelia Earhart.

201

00:24:05,440 --> 00:24:09,440

However, no human remains were unearthed.

202

00:24:12,560 --> 00:24:16,960

What really happened in Saipan? Was Amelia Earhart executed here?

203

00:24:17,840 --> 00:24:23,760

Was her aircraft burned here on an American airfield? If so, who burned it and why?

204

00:24:24,640 --> 00:24:31,040

Or did Amelia Earhart and Fred Newman go down with her plane and perish somewhere in the vast South Pacific?

205

00:24:31,600 --> 00:24:35,600

I am convinced that the most probable end to the Amelia Earhart flight

206

00:24:36,400 --> 00:24:43,600

ended with them running out of fuel just like they'd said on the radio and just like the official accident investigation report

207

00:24:44,160 --> 00:24:51,440

indicated from Captain Noyes on the Lexington that they were forced to ditch northwest of Holland Island after their fuel was exhausted

208

00:24:52,160 --> 00:24:55,600

and they couldn't find Holland Island because of a navigational error.

209

00:24:56,320 --> 00:25:02,800

Elgin Long believes Amelia Earhart and Fred Newman ran into three problems.

210

00:25:03,600 --> 00:25:08,720

The United States nautical charts Fred was using had mislocated Holland Island by six miles.

211

00:25:10,320 --> 00:25:14,320

A faulty compass on their aircraft took them seven miles farther off course.

212

00:25:15,760 --> 00:25:20,080

Finally wind drifts and related factors pushed them another 22 miles west.

213

00:25:20,640 --> 00:25:26,640

According to Elgin Long, Amelia and Fred ended up a full 35 miles off course.

214

00:25:27,680 --> 00:25:32,880

I stick with where the airplane went down. What happened to Amelia? I'm pretty not positive about it.

215

00:25:32,880 --> 00:25:35,360

We won't know until we locate the airplane.

216

00:25:36,880 --> 00:25:45,280

I think if we can raise our airplane and prove once and for all the solution to the Amelia Earhart mystery

217

00:25:45,680 --> 00:25:53,760

it will be something very very worthwhile for our heritage. We can't afford to throw our heroes away.

218

00:25:56,400 --> 00:26:01,680

Many believe that the mystery of Amelia Earhart could be solved simply by a deep-sea diving expedition.

219

00:26:02,400 --> 00:26:08,080

Perhaps so. Or perhaps Amelia Earhart is destined to remain a legendary figure.

220

00:26:08,640 --> 00:26:13,440

A hero suspended in time at the apex of an unsolved mystery.

221

00:26:16,240 --> 00:26:26,240

When we return, the chilling tale of a teenager who apparently embarked on a murderous rampage when his girlfriend broke up with him.

222

00:26:37,280 --> 00:26:42,000

Ray and Ruth Ann Ritter grew up in Woodstock, Illinois, a small town north of Chicago.

223

00:26:42,880 --> 00:26:48,080

They married in 1968 and had three children, Colleen, Steve and Matthew.

224

00:26:49,520 --> 00:26:53,760

The Ritters were a close knit family, strong church goers and community workers.

225

00:26:55,520 --> 00:27:00,880

When 15-year-old Colleen began a day to childhood friend, Rick Church, it seemed only natural.

226

00:27:02,880 --> 00:27:06,000

Colleen and Rick were both students at a small Catholic high school.

227

00:27:06,560 --> 00:27:10,560

At first, their relationship seemed like a typical teenage infatuation.

228

00:27:11,520 --> 00:27:13,520

Hi, Rick.

229

00:27:14,160 --> 00:27:16,160

How are you?

230

00:27:16,960 --> 00:27:23,360

How was school? I first started dating Rick when I was a sophomore. At that point, he was a senior.

231

00:27:25,360 --> 00:27:31,520

Rick was really good looking. He was involved in sports activities. He was real quiet though.

232

00:27:32,080 --> 00:27:34,080

He had a lot of friends, but he was real quiet.

233

00:27:35,040 --> 00:27:38,080

I know. It's not a fun position to be in.

234

00:27:38,080 --> 00:27:42,080

A year after Colleen and Rick began dating, Rick went away to college.

235

00:27:42,080 --> 00:27:44,080

But Colleen, the romance, began to cool.

236

00:27:46,080 --> 00:27:52,080

The waning of young lovers on every day occurs. Fortunately, most teenage hearts mend quickly.

237

00:27:52,080 --> 00:27:58,080

In the case of Colleen Ritter and Rick Church, however, something went wrong. Very wrong.

238

00:27:58,720 --> 00:28:02,000

Rick seemed unable to accept the idea that the courtship might be over.

239

00:28:02,640 --> 00:28:06,480

From his college dorm, he called Colleen nearly every night, upset and on edge.

240

00:28:07,200 --> 00:28:10,400

No one suspected that Rick Church was coming unhinged.

241

00:28:15,680 --> 00:28:18,160

Hello? Hey Colleen, it's me. How are you doing?

242

00:28:18,160 --> 00:28:20,720

Hi Rick, I'm fine. Yeah, what are you doing?

243

00:28:21,280 --> 00:28:26,080

Oh, I have a math test. I really haven't studied much. I have to go.

244

00:28:28,080 --> 00:28:31,520

Just call the talk to you for a second. But you never have anything to say.

245

00:28:32,080 --> 00:28:38,160

That's not true. Look, I'm sorry. I just, I really have to study. I'll have to call you tomorrow.

246

00:28:39,040 --> 00:28:41,520

Okay, fine. Well, good luck on your math test.

247

00:28:42,480 --> 00:28:55,920

Rick, I have been doing a lot of thinking.

248

00:28:57,200 --> 00:29:03,120

In June of 1988, Rick came home from college to find that his parents had separated and his

249

00:29:03,120 --> 00:29:07,760

girlfriend had reached a decision. So what are you, what are you getting at?

250

00:29:08,560 --> 00:29:12,240

I think we should see other people.

251

00:29:16,240 --> 00:29:21,440

Am I good enough for you? At the beginning of that summer, he became very possessive.

252

00:29:22,160 --> 00:29:27,040

Um, you know, where are you going? Who are you going to be with? You know, that type of thing.

253

00:29:27,040 --> 00:29:31,120

And then that just like crowded me too much. I couldn't stand that.

254

00:29:31,760 --> 00:29:33,360

You were calling me all the time.

255

00:29:34,320 --> 00:29:36,400

I'm really sorry if I inconvenienced you.

256

00:29:37,280 --> 00:29:38,240

You're too possessive.

257

00:29:39,360 --> 00:29:39,600

What?

258

00:29:40,400 --> 00:29:44,800

I found it was really hard breaking up with Rick. I still wanted to be friends. We had known each

259

00:29:44,800 --> 00:29:48,640

other, you know, practically all our lives. And I did consider him a good friend.

260

00:29:51,520 --> 00:29:55,840

So I thought maybe this just wasn't, it was like a friendship trying to turn into a romance and it

261

00:29:55,840 --> 00:30:01,760

just didn't, didn't cut it. You know, it just didn't work. So then I just wanted us to be friends

262

00:30:01,760 --> 00:30:06,240

once again because he really didn't, he really needed somebody and I wanted to be, you know,

263

00:30:06,240 --> 00:30:09,280

a friend for him, but I just couldn't be his girlfriend anymore. It was too hard.

264

00:30:10,320 --> 00:30:12,160

Anyway, um, I went to this ghost.

265

00:30:12,160 --> 00:30:16,480

Two months later on the night of Saturday, August 20th, Colleen had a friend sleeping

266

00:30:16,480 --> 00:30:22,960

over as did her brother Matthew. Ray and Ruth Ann Ritter were out with friends and their other son was away.

267

00:30:26,000 --> 00:30:26,480

Hello?

268

00:30:26,880 --> 00:30:27,360

Colleen?

269

00:30:27,920 --> 00:30:28,320

Hi.

270

00:30:28,720 --> 00:30:34,800

At 11 30 p.m. Rick Church telephoned upset because he wanted one last Saturday night with Colleen.

271

00:30:37,840 --> 00:30:42,960

He was kind of depressed. He sounded very depressed, very silent, really quiet.

272

00:30:44,640 --> 00:30:50,480

Like he knew something he didn't want to tell me or something. And he,

273

00:30:51,200 --> 00:30:55,840

immediately then I said, well, you know, don't talk to me like that. If you're gonna act like this,

274

00:30:55,840 --> 00:30:58,400

you know, I don't want to talk to you tonight. I'll just talk to you tomorrow then. He said,

275

00:30:58,400 --> 00:31:02,560

well, fine. He just hung up on me. I don't, I don't know exactly how the fight started,

276

00:31:02,560 --> 00:31:07,920

but it ended up where he just hung up on me. I don't think there was very, there was anything

277

00:31:07,920 --> 00:31:12,000

really unusual about that. We had gotten an argument before and he had hung up on me before

278

00:31:12,000 --> 00:31:18,800

and I had done the same. It wasn't, um, unusual. I don't think in any circumstance, it was just a

279

00:31:19,600 --> 00:31:21,120

basic fight.

280

00:31:21,440 --> 00:31:45,440

Music

281

00:31:45,440 --> 00:31:48,800

Around 5.15 a.m. Rick Church entered the Ritter's House.

282

00:31:51,120 --> 00:31:56,080

What the police believe happened next is based on their investigation and eyewitness accounts.

283

00:31:59,120 --> 00:32:02,240

Ray and Ruth Ann Ritter were asleep in their ground floor bedroom.

284

00:32:12,320 --> 00:32:15,360

By 5.25 a.m. they were both dead.

285

00:32:15,360 --> 00:32:18,720

Music

286

00:32:18,720 --> 00:32:21,440

Upstairs, 11-year-old Matthew Ritter awoke.

287

00:32:24,480 --> 00:32:25,600

He was stabbed twice.

288

00:32:25,600 --> 00:32:39,520

Music

289

00:32:39,520 --> 00:32:41,600

Howling radically died on time one month.

290

00:32:41,680 --> 00:32:45,200

Music

291

00:32:45,200 --> 00:32:47,280

Rick broke into the room. She ran.

292

00:32:50,800 --> 00:32:53,840

Rick never spoke. He began to stab Colleen.

293

00:32:56,000 --> 00:32:58,560

Help me! Help me!

294

00:32:58,560 --> 00:33:03,040

I had a cedar chest and I was like laying on the cedar chest just pretending I was dead so he

295

00:33:03,040 --> 00:33:08,160

would stop or just trying to do anything so he would stop. I was like playing dead and that

296

00:33:08,240 --> 00:33:14,000

didn't work. He kept attacking me. I told him I just yelled at I love you just so I thought maybe

297

00:33:14,000 --> 00:33:16,800

he would stop. I was trying anything at that point.

298

00:33:16,800 --> 00:33:35,600

Music

299

00:33:35,600 --> 00:33:38,240

Rick fled when two neighbors came to Colleen's aid.

300

00:33:44,240 --> 00:33:48,160

Inside the house, young Matthew Ritter had managed to get to the telephone and give his

301

00:33:48,160 --> 00:33:55,440

address to the 911 operator. The police arrived almost immediately. Went that way, went back inside.

302

00:33:55,440 --> 00:34:01,520

It's okay, I'm an MTA. Operating under the false impression that Rick had run back into the Ritter

303

00:34:01,520 --> 00:34:06,720

house. The police concentrated their initial search efforts there. Matthew,

304

00:34:06,720 --> 00:34:12,560

bloody and in shock, huddled with his friend who was unharmed. Colleen's girlfriend had also

305

00:34:12,560 --> 00:34:19,120

escaped uninjured. In the downstairs bedroom, they found the bodies of Colleen and Matthew's parents.

306

00:34:21,440 --> 00:34:25,760

Meanwhile, Rick Church had run the 12 blocks to his home and was hurriedly packing his things.

307

00:34:31,520 --> 00:34:40,400

Music

308

00:34:40,400 --> 00:34:44,240

At 5.45 a.m. Rick took his mother's truck and vanished.

309

00:34:44,960 --> 00:34:48,720

In less than a half hour, had lapsed since a bloody attack on the Ritter family.

310

00:34:52,000 --> 00:34:54,480

The Woodstock police issued an all-points bulletin.

311

00:34:56,480 --> 00:35:00,720

This was not a criminal or somebody that's hanging out on the street or anything like that. This was

312

00:35:01,200 --> 00:35:04,960

a kid who'd gone to school here all his life and knew a lot of people and had a lot of friends and

313

00:35:04,960 --> 00:35:09,760

went on to college and then all of a sudden, you know, was accused of a crime like this. And I would

314

00:35:09,760 --> 00:35:14,560

think he'd be totally out of character for something like this. And I really don't know today yet

315

00:35:15,840 --> 00:35:19,600

what the motive might have been. You know, speculation is the breakup, boyfriend, girlfriend,

316

00:35:19,600 --> 00:35:25,840

relationship. That's the do something like this. That's really something over that, but

317

00:35:25,840 --> 00:35:27,920

you know, that's what we have at this point, the reason.

318

00:35:27,920 --> 00:35:29,760

Music

319

00:35:29,760 --> 00:35:34,160

At the hospital, police put Colleen Ritter and her brother Matthew under 24-hour

320

00:35:34,160 --> 00:35:39,760

guard in case Rick Church showed up again. Matthew was treated and released the next day,

321

00:35:39,760 --> 00:35:44,720

but Colleen was critically injured with more than 20 stab wounds, most of them in the back of her head.

322

00:35:46,160 --> 00:35:50,720

Some of Colleen's doctors feared she would be permanently blind or suffer irreversible brain

323

00:35:50,720 --> 00:35:57,520

damage. Two days later, while Colleen was still in intensive care, her parents were buried.

324

00:35:57,920 --> 00:35:59,120

Music

325

00:35:59,120 --> 00:36:02,480

The hardest part throughout all of this is,

326

00:36:04,960 --> 00:36:13,920

I guess, not having my parents there. That's real hard. That's two of your best friends

327

00:36:15,120 --> 00:36:20,560

and they're gone. So that's hard and not being able to say goodbye because I wasn't at their funeral.

328

00:36:20,560 --> 00:36:24,400

That was hard. So I did that in my own way and I still am.

329

00:36:24,400 --> 00:36:27,360

Music

330

00:36:27,760 --> 00:36:39,360

Music

331

00:36:40,640 --> 00:36:47,360

Next, the story of a risky undercover operation conducted by the FBI to capture Colombian drug lords.

332

00:36:47,360 --> 00:36:49,360

Music

333

00:36:49,600 --> 00:36:57,200

Music

334

00:36:58,400 --> 00:37:04,240

In South America, the country of Colombia continues to fight for its life in the ugly war against drugs.

335

00:37:07,040 --> 00:37:12,720

The Colombian drug cartels have taken full credit for making terrorism and political assassination

336

00:37:12,720 --> 00:37:17,280

a way of life in their country and have made no secret of the fact that they want to increase

337

00:37:17,280 --> 00:37:24,080

their power in the United States. The cartels, the leaders of the cartels, the members of the

338

00:37:24,080 --> 00:37:29,760

cartels in South America and their representatives in the United States are particularly vicious.

339

00:37:29,760 --> 00:37:37,600

There is no premium on human life. These people make the mafia look like Boy Scouts.

340

00:37:38,480 --> 00:37:43,120

They are totally violent. They will kill almost for the sake of killing.

341

00:37:43,280 --> 00:37:45,520

Music

342

00:37:45,520 --> 00:37:49,120

Colombian drug cartels bring in more than five billion dollars a year.

343

00:37:49,840 --> 00:37:53,840

In an effort to stem the tide of the cartels' influence inside our borders,

344

00:37:53,840 --> 00:37:58,480

the FBI three years ago mounted one of the riskiest thing operations in United States history.

345

00:37:59,120 --> 00:38:03,600

Because drug traffickers need above all else, efficient and unbuggable telecommunications,

346

00:38:04,240 --> 00:38:06,880

the FBI set its trap in an electronic store.

347

00:38:06,880 --> 00:38:12,800

Music

348

00:38:12,800 --> 00:38:18,560

The sting operation began in May of 1987 in Miami, Florida. Its center was the unassuming

349

00:38:18,560 --> 00:38:24,400

RA communications company which sold sophisticated telephone systems and electronic devices.

350

00:38:24,400 --> 00:38:26,480

The first customers were quick to arrive.

351

00:38:26,480 --> 00:38:27,280

Music

352

00:38:27,280 --> 00:38:29,120

That's some information on your sanitary phones.

353

00:38:29,120 --> 00:38:30,000

Music

354

00:38:30,000 --> 00:38:35,200

Okay, well we sell and service cellular phones. We also service beepers and sell beepers.

355

00:38:35,200 --> 00:38:36,480

Where's that you're interested in?

356

00:38:36,480 --> 00:38:37,040

Music

357

00:38:37,040 --> 00:38:41,680

The receptionist Sandy and the manager Jay were both highly trained FBI agents.

358

00:38:41,680 --> 00:38:43,680

Music

359

00:38:43,680 --> 00:38:45,680

Music

360

00:38:45,680 --> 00:38:51,280

Well Sandy, do me a favor, take messages.

361

00:38:51,280 --> 00:38:53,440

Music

362

00:38:53,440 --> 00:38:56,000

The drug runners wanted the latest in car phones,

363

00:38:56,000 --> 00:39:01,200

ship to shore radios, beepers, remote phones and airplane telecommunications devices.

364

00:39:01,200 --> 00:39:06,720

Music

365

00:39:06,800 --> 00:39:11,920

We did everything we could to provide them. By so doing of course we knew how they were

366

00:39:11,920 --> 00:39:16,160

operating, we knew what frequencies they were operating on and it gave us the leg up.

367

00:39:16,160 --> 00:39:19,360

Music

368

00:39:19,360 --> 00:39:23,600

The drug traffickers overriding need was for untraceable means of communication.

369

00:39:24,240 --> 00:39:26,880

The word on the street was RA had the best.

370

00:39:27,760 --> 00:39:33,040

All the employees at RA who were cooperating fully with the FBI were men the drug runners trusted.

371

00:39:33,040 --> 00:39:36,560

Music

372

00:39:36,560 --> 00:39:42,080

I'm gonna talk to the man on the moon right? Now listen, I gotta know the man on the moon's wife

373

00:39:42,080 --> 00:39:47,040

isn't listening in. Okay, what you want to know is if this phone is tapable right?

374

00:39:47,040 --> 00:39:52,960

And I'm telling you listen to me now trust me there's no way you can tap into this phone.

375

00:39:52,960 --> 00:39:57,200

In your experience there's no problem. I'm an expert I just told you this is the top of the line

376

00:39:57,200 --> 00:40:03,200

state-of-the-art unit. We held ourselves out as being a service component of the drug business.

377

00:40:03,920 --> 00:40:10,400

We made it attractive for them to remain, talk, converse and that became a place to congregate.

378

00:40:10,400 --> 00:40:15,280

It took on an aura of a clubhouse type of effect. Our clientele probably six months into the

379

00:40:15,280 --> 00:40:22,000

operation was entirely drug traffickers. Soon the really major players in the drug underworld began

380

00:40:22,000 --> 00:40:28,480

to drop into the RA clubhouse. One of them was Columbia National Jesus Penaalveir known by the

381

00:40:28,560 --> 00:40:33,840

FBI to handle regular shipments of cocaine worth as much as 50 million dollars.

382

00:40:35,680 --> 00:40:43,360

Jesus came to trust the undercover agents and cooperative parties working in RA communications.

383

00:40:45,840 --> 00:40:51,520

He bragged that he'd been involved in some violent incidents in Columbia South America,

384

00:40:51,520 --> 00:40:57,440

talked about his desire to flood the United States with cocaine. He freely discussed with us the

385

00:40:57,440 --> 00:41:01,360

movement from Columbia South America through the Bahamas and into the United States.

386

00:41:06,400 --> 00:41:12,000

Inside the clubhouse, Penaalveir felt safe enough to make drug deals using the company phone.

387

00:41:13,200 --> 00:41:17,360

His conversations were videotaped and monitored by FBI agents.

388

00:41:27,680 --> 00:41:32,800

Penaalveir's cronies joined him and in the clubhouse it was not uncommon to see as many as

389

00:41:32,800 --> 00:41:37,840

three different drug traffickers doing business simultaneously into the early morning hours.

390

00:41:41,360 --> 00:41:45,360

One of those traffickers was cartel operative Julio Marco Cruz.

391

00:41:50,640 --> 00:41:56,560

Julio Marco Cruz was a customer, a purchaser, someone who was going to receive in excess of

392

00:41:56,640 --> 00:42:02,640

100 kilos of cocaine. Cruz had arranged to receive his large cocaine shipment

393

00:42:02,640 --> 00:42:09,040

nearly November on a boat called the tremolo. Through RA's personnel, the FBI discovered

394

00:42:09,040 --> 00:42:18,880

the tremolo's route in time to alert the United States Coast Guard. On November 19, 1988, the

395

00:42:18,880 --> 00:42:24,640

tremolo entered U.S. waters and the Coast Guard moved in to intercept the massive shipment of cocaine.

396

00:42:27,040 --> 00:42:29,040

The crew and your crew had to step to the star side of the boat and come on board.

397

00:42:33,200 --> 00:42:38,000

Under the tremolo's floorboards, agents discovered over 800 pounds of cocaine,

398

00:42:38,000 --> 00:42:40,960

their street value nearly 40 million dollars.

399

00:42:44,160 --> 00:42:48,640

The next day, Cruz showed up at RA Communications accompanied by his bodyguards.

400

00:42:49,200 --> 00:42:52,560

Amazingly, he seemed to know nothing about the tremolo's capture.

401

00:42:57,520 --> 00:43:05,520

Jay made a quick decision. To keep his cover intact, he told Cruz about the drug bust on the tremolo.

402

00:43:12,560 --> 00:43:17,760

Cruz was infuriated, but he never suspected that the man who told him about the bust were in fact

403

00:43:17,760 --> 00:43:24,320

responsible for it. He continued to use the same telephones he had used before, and the FBI

404

00:43:24,320 --> 00:43:35,040

continued to gather information. It appeared as if the RA's thing might go on indefinitely,

405

00:43:36,240 --> 00:43:42,000

but during the fall of 1988, Jesus Peñalver had begun forcing his attentions on Sandy.

406

00:43:44,720 --> 00:43:49,760

The FBI feared that Sandy and their other agents might be in jeopardy.

407

00:43:49,760 --> 00:43:59,520

The agents who are involved in undercover activity are exposed to potential danger at any given time.

408

00:44:02,560 --> 00:44:08,400

And really, we very closely reviewed and evaluated with the FBI headquarters and the other agencies

409

00:44:08,400 --> 00:44:13,200

who participated that we had accomplished a great deal, and it was the appropriate time

410

00:44:13,840 --> 00:44:16,640

to bring forward the matters to a prosecuted phase.

411

00:44:17,200 --> 00:44:23,040

On December 6, 1988, the FBI brought charges against nearly 100 drug traffickers.

412

00:44:23,040 --> 00:44:25,600

RA communications was shut down.

413

00:44:28,160 --> 00:44:35,440

We had a significant amount of arrest to undertake. We had a very detailed plan of the 93 people

414

00:44:35,440 --> 00:44:39,840

indicted throughout the United States. We were able to apprehend 68 some people.

415

00:44:47,040 --> 00:45:13,120

Next week on Unsolved Mysteries, in 1965, one of the first Black Deputy

416

00:45:13,120 --> 00:45:19,120

sheriffs in Louisiana was gunned down in cold blood while on duty. 24 years later,

417

00:45:19,120 --> 00:45:22,320

new leads prompted the FBI to reopen the case.

418

00:45:24,960 --> 00:45:31,600

For every mystery, there is someone, somewhere who knows the truth. Perhaps it's you.

419

00:46:13,120 --> 00:46:14,580

you