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

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

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

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

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00:00:13,680 --> 00:00:20,840

to see is not a news broadcast.

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00:00:20,840 --> 00:00:25,440

In Mississippi, a hike in the woods ends in tragedy when 17-year-old Norman Latimer is

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00:00:25,440 --> 00:00:30,680

shot and killed. The local coroner rules the death of suicide. Norman Latimer's parents

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00:00:30,680 --> 00:00:36,400

are convinced that their son was murdered. At a lonely highway rest stop, truck driver

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00:00:36,400 --> 00:00:42,720

Dwayne McCorkinville was brutally gunned down in cold blood for \$25. Perhaps you can help

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00:00:42,720 --> 00:00:45,320

find his killers.

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00:00:45,320 --> 00:00:49,880

More than a century ago, a mysterious carpenter arrived at a tiny chapel in Santa Fe, New

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00:00:49,880 --> 00:00:56,240

Mexico. He left behind a wondrous legacy, a magnificent spiral staircase, and vanished.

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00:00:56,240 --> 00:01:03,880

Was he just an itinerant craftsman, or as the nuns believed, God's answer to their prayers.

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00:01:03,880 --> 00:01:08,800

Nileen Marshall disappeared during a picnic seven years ago. She is now 12 and a man who

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00:01:08,800 --> 00:01:13,120

claims to be holding her has mailed taunting letters to the authorities.

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00:01:13,120 --> 00:01:18,600

Also tonight, a poignant update on our story about a seven-year-old girl who made a solemn

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00:01:18,720 --> 00:01:24,760

vow to her sick friend 21 years ago. Thanks to our viewers, Nikki Crowder has finally fulfilled

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00:01:24,760 --> 00:01:30,760

her promise and we filmed their joyous reunion. Join me for another edition of Unsolved Mysteries.

17

00:02:19,600 --> 00:02:25,600

Norman Charles Ladner, a Picayune, Mississippi, was a third child and eldest son in a family

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00:02:26,840 --> 00:02:32,840

of seven. He was a senior in high school, a good student, and a skilled craftsman with

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00:02:32,840 --> 00:02:39,000

his own workshop in the family barn.

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00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:44,200

On August the 21st, 1989, Norman left his parents' country store to go hunting on the

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00:02:44,200 --> 00:02:51,200

family farm. It was a muggy summer day that apparently began like any other.

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00:02:57,440 --> 00:03:01,440

Norman, you are a property very well. It's fenced on all four sides, even though it's

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00:03:01,440 --> 00:03:08,440

122 acres. It has some repastional and about 60 acres of more timber and woods. So he knew

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00:03:08,440 --> 00:03:15,440

most every foot of it. He'd walked it a number of times.

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00:03:19,440 --> 00:03:26,440

He loved to fish. He loved to hunt. He loved to be among the wild animals, squirrels. He

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00:03:30,720 --> 00:03:36,520

would come back so excited when he would see a young deer in the back pasture. It was

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00:03:36,960 --> 00:03:43,960

just his fascination and love of being out there where it was peaceful and quiet.

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00:03:44,960 --> 00:03:51,960

Norman would always be back by 7 to 7.30 in the afternoon or in the evening without fail

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00:03:53,000 --> 00:04:00,000

to help sweep up and mop up the store and restock the coolers. And about 7 o'clock

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00:04:00,800 --> 00:04:05,360

up again, he got worried about it because he was very punctual and it was the most

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00:04:05,360 --> 00:04:11,360

unusual. You could almost set your clock on him. That's the type of young man he was

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00:04:11,360 --> 00:04:14,360

very punctual.

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00:04:14,360 --> 00:04:21,360

Norman's not back yet, man. Getting a little worried. Yeah, I went down to the barn. He's

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00:04:22,360 --> 00:04:29,360

not there either. But bring the dog and meet me at the farm. We'll go look for him.

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00:04:29,360 --> 00:04:36,360

I helped to some degree in the search. But then I decided that it would be best had I

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00:04:39,560 --> 00:04:45,560

waited at the store for him. Perhaps if he was lost he could come to the store or if

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00:04:45,560 --> 00:04:52,560

he was limping from a snake bite or whatever. He would come to the store first. And I felt

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00:04:52,600 --> 00:04:55,600

my place should be there.

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00:04:55,600 --> 00:04:58,600

Norman!

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00:04:58,600 --> 00:05:01,600

Norman!

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00:05:01,600 --> 00:05:07,600

Norman!

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00:05:15,600 --> 00:05:22,600

I fell down by him and I felt it. I felt he was cold so I knew he had been dead for a

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00:05:33,600 --> 00:05:40,600

while. It's a deep shock and a tragedy to come on by and find your own son. Because

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00:05:41,240 --> 00:05:48,240

you could never imagine or think how this could happen or the loss of a child until

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00:05:49,480 --> 00:05:53,440

you've experienced the gone through it.

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00:05:53,440 --> 00:05:57,880

Just after 10 p.m. the Pearl River County Sheriff's Department cordoned off the death

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00:05:57,880 --> 00:06:02,480

scene and began an investigation.

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00:06:02,480 --> 00:06:08,840

Power play is the first thing that I normally address in the course of an investigation.

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00:06:08,840 --> 00:06:15,840

I ruled it out in this instance because I saw nothing there to indicate that.

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00:06:15,840 --> 00:06:17,840

The gun was part like that, right?

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00:06:17,840 --> 00:06:23,840

Yes it was. You notice it's been broken in the pan before.

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00:06:23,840 --> 00:06:29,840

At first I thought it might have been an accident. In viewing the scene it looked as though he

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00:06:29,840 --> 00:06:35,840

might have been in a tree nearby and subsequently fallen out of the tree and the gun discharged

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00:06:35,840 --> 00:06:42,840

him.

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00:06:42,840 --> 00:06:49,840

After they found him a deputy came to the store and approached the door and he looked

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00:06:55,440 --> 00:07:02,440

at me as if trying to find the right words to tell a mother that her son was dead. And

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00:07:02,840 --> 00:07:09,840

I said is he dead? And he said yes.

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00:07:11,340 --> 00:07:18,340

I can tell you it's the most shattering experience anyone can go through.

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00:07:33,440 --> 00:07:39,440

We felt that it was an accident and even when the coroner came back to the store after

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00:07:39,440 --> 00:07:45,440

the results of his examination he came up with two devotees and he said he felt that

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00:07:45,440 --> 00:07:52,440

it was 90% sure that it was an accidental shooting.

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00:07:52,440 --> 00:07:56,440

The case of Norman Ladner became a living nightmare for his parents when the coroner

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00:07:56,440 --> 00:08:02,440

heard his findings. He officially ruled their son's death a suicide caused by a close contact

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00:08:02,440 --> 00:08:09,440

wound in which the bullet had entered at Norman's right temple and exited at his left.

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00:08:09,440 --> 00:08:14,440

Imagine for a moment that you were Norman Ladner's parents. You understand the corner

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00:08:14,440 --> 00:08:20,440

to say that your son's death is an accident. This is at best difficult to accept but it

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00:08:20,440 --> 00:08:25,440

becomes nearly impossible to accept when you are told it is not an accident after all.

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00:08:25,440 --> 00:08:32,440

Their son has committed suicide. It was impossible for it to be a suicide. I knew my son too well.

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00:08:35,440 --> 00:08:41,440

He enjoyed and he lived life to the fullest. He was happy. He was outgoing. He was not

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00:08:41,440 --> 00:08:48,440

depressed in any way and he had too many things going for him. The results of that autopsy

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00:08:48,440 --> 00:08:57,440

is what I base my findings as to believing that it was a self-inflicted wound.

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00:08:57,440 --> 00:09:07,440

I think that he went back into an area where he felt comfortable. He enjoyed going and for reasons

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00:09:07,440 --> 00:09:13,440

that I don't know, we don't know that he decided to take his life.

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00:09:19,440 --> 00:09:26,440

We believe the boy was standing when the shot was fired because of his body position in

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00:09:26,440 --> 00:09:35,440

relation to the gun at the sink. They made no attempt to locate the bullet. They never

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00:09:35,440 --> 00:09:46,440

finger pointed the gun. They cannot say with any facts that his gun was the weapon that

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00:09:46,440 --> 00:09:57,440

he was used to killing. Even with their ruling of suicide, I still believe that it was an

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00:09:57,440 --> 00:10:08,440

accident and for several weeks we did nothing about it. Until we started to piece the jigsaw

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00:10:08,440 --> 00:10:18,440

together, then we realized that it was definitely not a suicide. As a matter of fact, it definitely

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00:10:18,440 --> 00:10:25,440

was not an accident. One particular item in the coroner's report made no sense to the

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00:10:25,440 --> 00:10:31,440

ladders. The coroner described a one and a quarter inch long laceration on the very top of

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00:10:31,440 --> 00:10:39,440

Norman's head. If Norman had committed suicide, how would he sustain such a wound? The coroner and

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00:10:39,440 --> 00:10:44,440

the pathologist found this jagged root at the death scene. They say it was spattered with

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00:10:44,440 --> 00:10:51,440

blood and believed the root caused the laceration. We didn't see how that could happen because

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00:10:51,440 --> 00:10:58,440

falling straight back, you would hit your head on the side or directly in the back, not up in the

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00:10:58,440 --> 00:11:05,440

crown of your head, up in the peak of his head. Because the authorities had never found the bullet

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00:11:05,440 --> 00:11:11,440

that killed Norman, the ladders began their own investigation. They dug through the earth in

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

the area where their son had fallen. I remember so well the feeling that I had of having to

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00:11:17,440 --> 00:11:33,440

sift through the dried particles of brain tissue and blood of my son. We found a bullet that was

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00:11:33,440 --> 00:11:41,440

longer than a bullet that Norman's gun would hold. The chamber was not bored out for the length

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00:11:41,440 --> 00:11:49,440

of that bullet. And the bullet was intact. It had a slight twist on it and it had a nick on it. And it

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00:11:49,440 --> 00:11:57,440

had blood studying, dried blood, and a hair that we examined under the magnifying glass. We have no

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00:11:57,440 --> 00:12:03,440

way of knowing where that bullet came from. We don't have any reason to believe that it was the bullet

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00:12:03,440 --> 00:12:11,440

that was fired that caused the boy's death. Mainly because we feel that the boy was standing at the time

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00:12:11,440 --> 00:12:24,440

the gun was fired. And if that being the case, with the direction of travel that the pathologist says

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00:12:24,440 --> 00:12:28,440

the bullet had taken, it would not have been in the ground underneath his head.

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00:12:28,440 --> 00:12:38,440

Finding the bullet indicated that our son was not in a standing position when he was killed. The bullet was

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00:12:38,440 --> 00:12:44,440

retrieved out of the ground which had, the bullet was embedded about two or two and a half inches in the

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00:12:44,440 --> 00:12:55,440

ground. And we came to the conclusion that he was lying on the ground and he was shot by someone in a standing

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00:12:55,440 --> 00:13:03,440

position. A state ballistics expert was unable to determine whether the bullet had been fired by Norman's rifle. He

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00:13:03,440 --> 00:13:11,440

returned the bullet to the Ladner's but they say it is not the one they found. Three weeks after their son's death, the

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00:13:11,440 --> 00:13:18,440

Ladner's went to the coroner's office to question his ruling. According to Mrs. Ladner, a stranger interrupted the

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00:13:18,440 --> 00:13:20,440

conversation.

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00:13:25,440 --> 00:13:34,440

As we were a distance away, he said, Mrs. Ladner, don't open this case up. You have other children. I suggest you raise them

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00:13:34,440 --> 00:13:44,440

for your own good. You'll never find the person that killed your son. And then the man left. My reaction to that

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00:13:44,440 --> 00:13:54,440

statement was that it was a warning. That we would experience some type of problems if we would investigate this

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00:13:54,440 --> 00:14:06,440

case. But my feeling on this issue is that this was my son and I will not back down under any circumstances.

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00:14:07,440 --> 00:14:13,440

Undaunted, Norman's father returned to the area where his son had died.

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00:14:24,440 --> 00:14:26,440

Hey, come here.

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00:14:27,440 --> 00:14:32,440

300 yards away, he found a strange radio-like device that looked homemade.

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00:14:36,440 --> 00:14:40,440

Who's that? I don't know. Come up there.

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00:14:40,440 --> 00:14:49,440

We figured we had a piece of evidence of some sort that we must try to find somebody that you wanted to have.

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00:14:50,440 --> 00:14:57,440

State authorities felt it was not an important clue, but a neighbor suggested he take it to an ex-narcotics agent living in the

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00:14:57,440 --> 00:15:10,440

area. The former DEA agent said that this was a type of devices that drug dealers used to signal aircraft by sending out a low-range signal

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00:15:10,440 --> 00:15:16,440

for the proper alignment to drop shipment of drugs.

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00:15:17,440 --> 00:15:27,440

Well, that led me to speculate that Norman possibly came upon someone picking up a shipment of drugs on our land.

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00:15:27,440 --> 00:15:38,440

And possibly this was the reason he was murdered, that he would have recognized the person or persons.

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00:15:46,440 --> 00:16:12,440

I don't think that that's what happened in this case. It's very hard to accept a death period. It's that much harder to accept a suicide.

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00:16:13,440 --> 00:16:25,440

It's my feeling that if this case was ruled an accidental death today, they would say nothing else about it.

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00:16:27,440 --> 00:16:33,440

What really happened to young Norman Ladner? Authorities continue to stand by the coroner's ruling.

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00:16:33,440 --> 00:16:38,440

Norman's parents refuse to believe that their son could have killed himself.

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00:16:39,440 --> 00:16:47,440

This stays with you almost constantly, almost 24 hours a day, every waking hour you think about this.

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00:16:50,440 --> 00:17:02,440

It's a part of us that's missing, and it's a great deal of strain knowing that he was murdered and nothing has been done to bring his murderers to justice.

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00:17:03,440 --> 00:17:13,440

We have to proceed. We will not stop this investigation, no matter what, until it is finished.

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00:17:15,440 --> 00:17:26,440

We owe it to our son, and we owe it to our children, we owe it to ourselves, and we owe it to the other people's children out there as well.

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00:17:26,440 --> 00:17:29,440

We want to know what happened to our son.

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00:17:33,440 --> 00:17:48,440

In 1969, 7-year-old Nikki Crowder was hospitalized in Los Angeles, California to have several tumors removed from her throat.

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00:17:48,440 --> 00:17:51,440

There she met 8-year-old Sherita Lynn Hardy.

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00:17:51,440 --> 00:17:54,440

Sherita had a rare and dangerous form of cancer.

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00:17:55,440 --> 00:18:07,440

I looked up to Sherita because once she was older, and she was there first, so she kind of initiated me of being in a new place, a new atmosphere.

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00:18:09,440 --> 00:18:13,440

In the days that followed, a warm and caring friendship blossomed between the two girls.

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00:18:14,440 --> 00:18:25,440

There was a bond there because we mattered to one another, we looked out for what went on, and we had something in common, and that was our illnesses itself.

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00:18:27,440 --> 00:18:32,440

A few weeks after they met, Sherita underwent several hours of grueling surgery.

134

00:18:33,440 --> 00:18:35,440

Mommy, is this going to happen to me?

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00:18:35,440 --> 00:18:38,440

No, honey, this isn't going to happen to you.

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00:18:38,440 --> 00:18:41,440

She has a different type of operation than you're going to have.

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00:18:41,440 --> 00:18:51,440

So that's when my mother explained to me that Sherita had had a very, very delicate surgery, and that she wouldn't be able to have kids.

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00:18:51,440 --> 00:18:56,440

And I remember feeling like, oh, that was just the worst thing in the world.

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00:18:59,440 --> 00:19:02,440

That night, Nikki did her best to comfort her friend.

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00:19:02,440 --> 00:19:07,440

I'm sorry you're feeling so bad. Does it hurt?

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

I said, you don't have to cry because if I ever have a baby, I said, you can share it with me and we can both be its mommy.

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00:19:19,440 --> 00:19:23,440

I said, I don't even name it Sherita after you.

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00:19:23,440 --> 00:19:25,440

Don't worry.

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00:19:25,440 --> 00:19:28,440

Five weeks later, Nikki was released from the hospital.

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00:19:28,440 --> 00:19:31,440

The two friends never saw each other again.

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00:19:37,440 --> 00:19:40,440

Today, Nikki is the mother of a beautiful three-year-old girl.

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00:19:40,440 --> 00:19:46,440

She wants to christen her daughter Sherita and keep the promise she made in 1969.

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00:19:46,440 --> 00:19:50,440

I promise. I'll name her after you.

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00:19:50,440 --> 00:19:57,440

A few minutes after Nikki's story aired, we learned that Sherita Lynn Harding was alive and well and living in Oklahoma.

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00:19:57,440 --> 00:20:00,440

We immediately contacted Nikki with a good news.

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00:20:01,440 --> 00:20:08,440

Just 10 days after our broadcast and more than 21 years after they said goodbye,

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00:20:08,440 --> 00:20:14,440

Sherita Lynn Harding and Nikki Crowder were finally reunited at Nikki's home in Los Angeles.

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00:20:14,440 --> 00:20:18,440

Oh, my God. I can't believe it.

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00:20:18,440 --> 00:20:20,440

It's been a long time.

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00:20:20,440 --> 00:20:24,440

I'm so glad to see you. I'm so glad you're alive.

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00:20:24,440 --> 00:20:27,440

I don't think Nikki has changed that much.

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00:20:27,440 --> 00:20:30,440

She was always caring, giving person.

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00:20:30,440 --> 00:20:32,440

It seems like she still is the same.

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00:20:32,440 --> 00:20:38,440

She would have to be to try to find me in all these years and be so persistent about it.

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00:20:40,440 --> 00:20:44,440

Father in the name of Jesus, watch over this child,

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00:20:44,440 --> 00:20:48,440

protect her all of the days of her life.

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00:20:48,440 --> 00:20:54,440

On October 20, 1990, Nikki Crowder was finally able to fulfill her promise.

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00:20:54,440 --> 00:21:00,440

A child is a gift you can't buy. It's the most perfect gift in the world.

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00:21:00,440 --> 00:21:02,440

And it comes from God.

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00:21:02,440 --> 00:21:08,440

Nobody should be deprived of that, whether they have it naturally or can share it with somebody.

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00:21:08,440 --> 00:21:14,440

And that's something that I wanted to share with Sherita.

167

00:21:14,440 --> 00:21:22,440

Because of all the joy and strength she gave me, I could give her back something that she missed.

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00:21:22,440 --> 00:21:27,440

Lord, bless them even as Godparents cause your spirit to rest upon them.

169

00:21:27,440 --> 00:21:31,440

Being a Godmother is special to me because I don't have any kids.

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00:21:31,440 --> 00:21:39,440

And you know, that's giving me a child of my own that I can share.

171

00:21:40,440 --> 00:21:45,440

I'm just honored, so I'll try to live up to it as best as I can.

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00:21:46,440 --> 00:21:48,440

I'm very happy.

173

00:21:48,440 --> 00:21:51,440

Very happy that I've had Sherita.

174

00:21:51,440 --> 00:21:57,440

And now I can go on, and I can go on on a positive note because she's a liar.

175

00:21:58,440 --> 00:22:01,440

And I just like to say thanks to everybody.

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00:22:03,440 --> 00:22:08,440

I christened the Sherita Kennedy Crowder.

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00:22:09,440 --> 00:22:15,440

November 12, 1988, Chandler, Oklahoma.

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00:22:15,440 --> 00:22:22,440

An anonymous caller reported seeing the body of a man lying beside a phone booth at a highway rest stop.

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00:22:22,440 --> 00:22:28,440

At approximately 8 p.m., the Oklahoma Highway Patrol arrived on the scene.

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00:22:28,440 --> 00:22:31,440

The man was a man, and he was a man.

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00:22:31,440 --> 00:22:33,440

The man had been murdered.

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00:22:33,440 --> 00:22:37,440

Coins were scattered about his body.

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00:22:39,440 --> 00:22:47,440

The dead man was Dwayne McCorkendale, a 27-year-old truck driver and father of twin girls from Kansas City, Kansas.

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00:22:47,440 --> 00:22:52,440

He had been killed by a single shotgun blast, fired a close range into his back.

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00:22:52,440 --> 00:22:55,440

The apparent motive? Robbery.

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00:22:55,440 --> 00:23:02,440

If Dwayne had been killed in an accident, I could have stood it a lot better.

187

00:23:02,440 --> 00:23:11,440

It seemed so ironic that he was killed for money when the last thing a trucker will do is carry very much for that very reason.

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00:23:11,440 --> 00:23:15,440

Boston to Bakersfield, San Antonio, Seattle.

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00:23:15,440 --> 00:23:21,440

Every day, thousands of big rigs travel the highways and back roads of America.

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00:23:21,440 --> 00:23:25,440

Though they come from many walks of life, truckers have one thing in common.

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00:23:25,440 --> 00:23:28,440

That's double-wavvy, head back to Kansas City, come on back.

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00:23:28,440 --> 00:23:31,440

Seemingly, the truckers have a lot of work to do.

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00:23:31,440 --> 00:23:34,440

The truckers have a lot of work to do.

194

00:23:34,440 --> 00:23:37,440

The truckers have a lot of work to do.

195

00:23:37,440 --> 00:23:41,440

That's double-wavvy, head back to Kansas City, come on back.

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00:23:41,440 --> 00:23:45,440

CB Radio's their lifeline to the rest of the world.

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00:23:45,440 --> 00:23:48,440

Well, I have a two-baby girl waiting for me back there.

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00:23:48,440 --> 00:23:55,440

But for Dwayne McCorkendale, an idle conversation over the airwaves may have signed his death warrant.

199

00:23:58,440 --> 00:24:02,440

Dwayne's final run began like any other.

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00:24:02,440 --> 00:24:09,440

On November 10, 1988, he left Detroit, Michigan, en route to Oklahoma City.

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00:24:09,440 --> 00:24:16,440

McCorkendale made a regular run bringing parts to an Oklahoma City automobile plant.

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00:24:16,440 --> 00:24:20,440

We have no reason to believe anything was different that night.

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00:24:20,440 --> 00:24:25,440

He enters the turnpike, he's given a ticket with the time on it.

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00:24:25,440 --> 00:24:30,440

And through that ticket, we're able to determine that he made no other stops.

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00:24:30,440 --> 00:24:34,440

He drove directly from the turnpike gate to the rest area.

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00:24:36,440 --> 00:24:40,440

Other truckers reported that at approximately 545 P.M.,

207

00:24:40,440 --> 00:24:45,440

Dwayne McCorkendale told them he was stopping at the Chandler rest stop to call his wife.

208

00:24:45,440 --> 00:24:49,440

I'm gonna pull over here at this rest area, call the wife, see how things are back at home.

209

00:24:49,440 --> 00:24:51,440

We'll catch you on the other side.

210

00:24:51,440 --> 00:24:53,440

It's double-wavvy, we gone, bye-bye.

211

00:24:53,440 --> 00:24:57,440

We theorize that someone had been listening to him on the CB

212

00:24:57,440 --> 00:25:01,440

and actually followed him into that rest area where perhaps was already there waiting for him.

213

00:25:09,440 --> 00:25:13,440

It looked like he was walking up to the telephone, perhaps counting change out in his hands

214

00:25:13,440 --> 00:25:16,440

and so it was changed there at the base of the phone booth

215

00:25:16,440 --> 00:25:20,440

and was killed as he stepped up to make the call.

216

00:25:27,440 --> 00:25:39,440

Whoever was involved in this killed McCorkendale, just shot him in the back

217

00:25:39,440 --> 00:25:42,440

and he was dead before he hit the ground, it killed him instantly.

218

00:25:42,440 --> 00:25:46,440

Then checked him to see if he had any money on him, any valuables at all.

219

00:25:46,440 --> 00:25:53,440

So people like that are, to us, scary because those type of people in our minds are very likely to do it again

220

00:25:53,440 --> 00:25:56,440

and that's why we've placed so much emphasis on this case.

221

00:25:59,440 --> 00:26:04,440

Investigators determined that the only items missing were Dwayne's keys and his wallet.

222

00:26:06,440 --> 00:26:10,440

They estimate that the killer's take was no more than \$25.

223

00:26:12,440 --> 00:26:16,440

Being killed for that little money seems ridiculous,

224

00:26:17,440 --> 00:26:21,440

especially when I know that if they had come up to him,

225

00:26:23,440 --> 00:26:26,440

in any threatening manner, he would have handed it over.

226

00:26:26,440 --> 00:26:33,440

Early on in the investigation, I hate to say we were to dead end but our leads were thin, they were very thin.

227

00:26:33,440 --> 00:26:39,440

One of the things that the agent started doing is he started putting notices in the trucker magazines across the United States

228

00:26:39,440 --> 00:26:41,440

and the call started coming in.

229

00:26:44,440 --> 00:26:49,440

Within days, investigators received reports about a brown Ford Pinto equipped with a CB radio.

230

00:26:50,440 --> 00:26:54,440

Several truckers told of a dangerous game of Captain Mouse.

231

00:26:55,440 --> 00:27:02,440

At the time of the McCorkindale death, we have reports that the Pinto was driving very erratically on the highway,

232

00:27:03,440 --> 00:27:05,440

trying to cut 18-wheelers off.

233

00:27:05,440 --> 00:27:08,440

Hey man, what do you think you're doing? Trying to get somebody hurt out there?

234

00:27:08,440 --> 00:27:13,440

You don't know who you're messing with, good buddy. We'll drive anyway, we won't.

235

00:27:13,440 --> 00:27:17,440

Hey man, don't worry, Billy, come on now, behave right here, you're gonna get somebody hurt.

236

00:27:17,440 --> 00:27:22,440

So we've already killed one trucker and we'll kill another if you stand our way.

237

00:27:22,440 --> 00:27:26,440

And when the truck driver would call him on the CB, they were abusive.

238

00:27:26,440 --> 00:27:33,440

They said that leave us alone or we'll do to you what we did to this other trucker.

239

00:27:35,440 --> 00:27:39,440

Three weeks later, authorities received a call from trucker Ed Heitkamp.

240

00:27:39,440 --> 00:27:45,440

He was breaking for lunch at a rest stop when he was approached by a young woman who was acting strangely.

241

00:27:45,440 --> 00:27:51,440

Hey there, how you doing? Let's see if you can let us have something.

242

00:27:51,440 --> 00:27:55,440

She was, well, I hate to say it about her, she looked kind of trashy.

243

00:27:55,440 --> 00:28:00,440

I mean, it looked like she had been on something and she was just awful shaky.

244

00:28:00,440 --> 00:28:04,440

Well, me and my crew, we've been down in Texas visiting some friends.

245

00:28:04,440 --> 00:28:09,440

We're trying to get back to Alabama. Can you help us find the road to get there?

246

00:28:10,440 --> 00:28:15,440

I kind of turned to reach to get a map and next thing she's got her hold in the front half inside the truck.

247

00:28:18,440 --> 00:28:24,440

Well, then she started asking if I could spare some money. She needed to fix awful bad.

248

00:28:24,440 --> 00:28:27,440

So I wasn't about to give her none for that.

249

00:28:27,440 --> 00:28:36,440

And about that time this brown panel pulled up and then she jumped down off the truck and headed for the car and they took off.

250

00:28:37,440 --> 00:28:45,440

The next day, just 13 miles south on the same highway, Dwayne McCorkindale was gunned down.

251

00:28:45,440 --> 00:28:50,440

After I read that article, I thought maybe I'm lucky that I didn't get out of the truck.

252

00:28:50,440 --> 00:28:55,440

Otherwise I might have been the one that would have got shot because they was desperate.

253

00:28:55,440 --> 00:29:01,440

While we have no way of knowing if the pinto was actually involved in this or not, it is without a doubt our strongest lead.

254

00:29:01,440 --> 00:29:08,440

And we have got to locate the pinto and ultimately the people to talk to them to see if nothing else we can eliminate them from this situation.

255

00:29:12,440 --> 00:29:15,440

Dwayne McCorkindale was murdered doing the thing he loved best.

256

00:29:15,440 --> 00:29:21,440

But for him, the freedom of the road ended in one senseless and violent split second.

257

00:29:22,440 --> 00:29:34,440

Having the twins grow up, knowing their father only from pictures has been hard because they see other little girls and boys with their daddies.

258

00:29:34,440 --> 00:29:42,440

And they've asked where their daddy is and we've had to tell them that their daddy's in heaven with Jesus.

259

00:29:42,440 --> 00:29:49,440

Later on, I'm going to have to find a way to tell them what somebody did to them.

260

00:29:52,440 --> 00:30:01,440

When we return, the legend of the miracle staircase in Santa Fe, New Mexico, no one knows who built this mysterious and ethereal structure.

261

00:30:12,440 --> 00:30:17,440

Santa Fe, New Mexico is a city rich in the tradition and lore of the Old West.

262

00:30:17,440 --> 00:30:27,440

A century and a half ago, it was a last outpost along the Santa Fe Trail, a bustling untamed haven for outlaws, gamblers, mavericks and renegades.

263

00:30:27,440 --> 00:30:36,440

In 1852, the Sisters of Loretto, a religious order in Kentucky, dispatched seven nuns to bring religion and education to the frontier.

264

00:30:36,440 --> 00:30:42,440

It was a journey fraught with danger, harsh weather, hostile Indians and disease.

265

00:30:43,440 --> 00:30:53,440

When they were on their way, they were attacked by cholera. One of the Sisters died and one had to return because she was too ill to travel.

266

00:30:53,440 --> 00:30:58,440

So five Sisters continued the trip to the West.

267

00:30:58,440 --> 00:31:00,440

This is an A.

268

00:31:00,440 --> 00:31:06,440

Once in Santa Fe, the Sisters established a school and began making plans to build a chapel.

269

00:31:07,440 --> 00:31:15,440

Finally in April of 1878, the Sisters celebrated the completion of the Chapel of Our Lady of Light. It still stands today.

270

00:31:21,440 --> 00:31:27,440

More than 20 French and Italian stone masons spent five years constructing the magnificent Gothic Chapel.

271

00:31:28,440 --> 00:31:31,440

Our chapel is so splendid.

272

00:31:31,440 --> 00:31:38,440

The Sisters were delighted except for one minor detail. There was no staircase leading to the choir loft.

273

00:31:38,440 --> 00:31:44,440

The Sisters finally had their chapel, but no means of ascending to the music chamber.

274

00:31:45,440 --> 00:31:51,440

Many of the lofts of early churches in New Mexico had no staircases.

275

00:31:51,440 --> 00:31:56,440

They simply leaned a ladder up and climbed the ladder and sang.

276

00:31:56,440 --> 00:32:03,440

But the Sisters couldn't climb a ladder in their long robes, so they needed a staircase.

277

00:32:03,440 --> 00:32:09,440

A conventional stairway was not feasible as it would require the removal of too many seats.

278

00:32:09,440 --> 00:32:19,440

Some carpenters had come in and looked the situation over, but shook their heads in dismay and said there was just no way.

279

00:32:19,440 --> 00:32:26,440

And so they decided they would not do anything until they made a novena to St. Joseph, the patron of carpenters.

280

00:32:29,440 --> 00:32:33,440

A novena requires nine days of meditation and regular prayer.

281

00:32:36,440 --> 00:32:39,440

Three days, the Sisters prayed. Nothing happened.

282

00:32:39,440 --> 00:32:45,440

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

283

00:32:45,440 --> 00:32:50,440

On the ninth and final day of the novena, a stranger arrived at the chapel.

284

00:32:51,440 --> 00:32:52,440

Come in, sir.

285

00:32:53,440 --> 00:32:56,440

Mother Superior, I'm seeking work.

286

00:32:56,440 --> 00:32:58,440

And what is your trade, sir?

287

00:32:58,440 --> 00:33:00,440

I'm a carpenter.

288

00:33:01,440 --> 00:33:05,440

We do have need of a stairway to be built in our chapel, but it's a great...

289

00:33:05,440 --> 00:33:09,440

The Sisters left the stranger a tent, but so many had said it was impossible.

290

00:33:11,440 --> 00:33:14,440

They were hopeful their prayers had been answered.

291

00:33:16,440 --> 00:33:26,440

If the carpenter had a name that has long since been forgotten, according to the legend he carried only three tools, a hammer, a saw and a T-square.

292

00:33:26,440 --> 00:33:30,440

Some say he worked for six months, others say it was more.

293

00:33:30,440 --> 00:33:33,440

When he was finished, he called the nuns together.

294

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

You have your staircase, he announced, then he left without being paid and was never heard from again.

295

00:33:51,440 --> 00:33:55,440

The carpenter obviously had to be a very fine carpenter.

296

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

He had to be a master carpenter to build the staircase that was built.

297

00:34:00,440 --> 00:34:02,440

Because you see, there's no center support.

298

00:34:02,440 --> 00:34:05,440

This is what makes that staircase so extraordinary.

299

00:34:05,440 --> 00:34:07,440

There is no center post.

300

00:34:08,440 --> 00:34:12,440

It rests by its own geometric balance and design.

301

00:34:13,440 --> 00:34:21,440

It's very steep, 22 feet, going around and around, because it makes two 360 degree turns.

302

00:34:22,440 --> 00:34:32,440

And once again, with no center post, there's a certain springiness when you walk up it and you realize you're climbing a very, very special staircase.

303

00:34:32,440 --> 00:34:41,440

Sisters, I've counted the stairs. There's 33. The exact number of years on Lord Jesus Christ was on this earth.

304

00:34:43,440 --> 00:34:48,440

I never failed to count those steps whenever I go up or come down, and it's still 33.

305

00:34:49,440 --> 00:34:52,440

The sisters planned a feast for the carpenter.

306

00:34:52,440 --> 00:34:58,440

When he failed to appear, they searched the town. The mysterious stranger was missing.

307

00:34:58,440 --> 00:34:59,440

You've seen him around town?

308

00:34:59,440 --> 00:35:07,440

Nobody had seen him. Nobody knew where he slept. Nobody ever fed him.

309

00:35:07,440 --> 00:35:12,440

They made a novena to St. Joseph, the patron of carpenters.

310

00:35:13,440 --> 00:35:17,440

So it's understandable that they would believe St. Joseph did it.

311

00:35:25,440 --> 00:35:29,440

So far as anyone knows, the carpenter never returned to Santa Fe.

312

00:35:32,440 --> 00:35:34,440

The chapel is now a tourist attraction.

313

00:35:34,440 --> 00:35:38,440

Through the years, the mystery surrounding the staircase persisted.

314

00:35:39,440 --> 00:35:45,440

Then in 1965, Oscar Hadweiger, a third-generation master carpenter, visited the chapel.

315

00:35:48,440 --> 00:35:52,440

He went in and he saw the staircase, and of course he was overwhelmed.

316

00:35:52,440 --> 00:35:58,440

Being a builder, any builder is overwhelmed when they see this magnificent piece of carpentry.

317

00:35:59,440 --> 00:36:08,440

And he remembered a story in the family that his grandfather had come to this country and had built a staircase.

318

00:36:08,440 --> 00:36:17,440

Oscar's grandfather, Johann Hadweiger, was a renowned European carpenter who spent two years traveling and working in Colorado and New Mexico.

319

00:36:17,440 --> 00:36:22,440

It was during that two-year period that the spiral staircase was built.

320

00:36:23,440 --> 00:36:26,440

Oscar Hadweiger became obsessed with the staircase.

321

00:36:26,440 --> 00:36:30,440

Over the next ten years, he created ten perfectly-scaled models.

322

00:36:30,440 --> 00:36:35,440

He sent a letter to the sisters, contending that his grandfather had been the builder.

323

00:36:35,440 --> 00:36:38,440

The sisters were skeptical.

324

00:36:38,440 --> 00:36:44,440

The sisters are indeed surprised, shocked at his claim all of a sudden.

325

00:36:44,440 --> 00:36:51,440

And they tell him that perhaps he can't prove this claim, and that if he can't prove it, it might be fraudulent.

326

00:36:52,440 --> 00:36:57,440

They have nothing except their word of mouth that he did it.

327

00:37:00,440 --> 00:37:03,440

I really can't, I don't buy it.

328

00:37:05,440 --> 00:37:09,440

In 1970, Oscar Hadweiger found what he felt was proof.

329

00:37:09,440 --> 00:37:14,440

In a storage room in his sister's home, he came across his grandfather's toolbox.

330

00:37:14,440 --> 00:37:18,440

Inside was a faded sketch of a spiral staircase.

331

00:37:18,440 --> 00:37:22,440

The drawing was an overhead view with 33 steps.

332

00:37:22,440 --> 00:37:26,440

Oscar Hadweiger passed away in 1980.

333

00:37:26,440 --> 00:37:30,440

The sketch was never authenticated and has since disappeared.

334

00:37:30,440 --> 00:37:35,440

All that exists today is this photocopy of the drawing.

335

00:37:35,440 --> 00:37:40,440

As for Johann Hadweiger's tools, they too have disappeared.

336

00:37:43,440 --> 00:37:47,440

Who was a stranger who answered the sisters prayers?

337

00:37:47,440 --> 00:37:51,440

Was it Johann Hadweiger, the European builder?

338

00:37:51,440 --> 00:37:59,440

Or could it have been, as the sisters of Loretto believed 100 years ago, a messenger of God on a sacred mission?

339

00:38:05,440 --> 00:38:12,440

Next, a family's desperate search for their missing daughter, and a man who claims he will never return her.

340

00:38:18,440 --> 00:38:28,440

In 1983, four-year-old Nyleen K. Marshall disappeared while picnicking with family and friends near her home in Montana.

341

00:38:28,440 --> 00:38:34,440

For over seven years, Nyleen's family has been trapped by the agony of not knowing what happened to her.

342

00:38:36,440 --> 00:38:38,440

Nyleen's story is all too familiar.

343

00:38:38,440 --> 00:38:45,440

Every year, thousands of children in the United States disappear, and tragically many of them are never found.

344

00:38:45,440 --> 00:38:48,440

With your help, Nyleen's case may have a different ending.

345

00:38:48,440 --> 00:38:55,440

Two and a half years after she disappeared, authorities received this letter from an anonymous man who claims he has Nyleen.

346

00:38:55,440 --> 00:38:59,440

He writes, she's a sweet little girl.

347

00:38:59,440 --> 00:39:02,440

I realize how much her family must miss her.

348

00:39:02,440 --> 00:39:06,440

I love her and I have her. I just can't let her go.

349

00:39:06,440 --> 00:39:10,440

Please watch carefully. You may know the man who wrote this letter.

350

00:39:10,440 --> 00:39:13,440

You may even know Nyleen K. Marshall.

351

00:39:15,440 --> 00:39:19,440

June 25, 1983, Helena, Montana.

352

00:39:19,440 --> 00:39:24,440

A group of local families were enjoying a picnic in a remote wooded area.

353

00:39:24,440 --> 00:39:31,440

Less than a hundred yards away, Nyleen and several other children were playing on the banks of a shallow creek.

354

00:39:31,440 --> 00:39:35,440

At around 4 p.m., Nyleen vanished.

355

00:39:36,440 --> 00:39:41,440

For ten days, more than 2,800 searchers combed the area.

356

00:39:42,440 --> 00:39:46,440

The dogs weren't successful. The grid search was unsuccessful.

357

00:39:46,440 --> 00:39:53,440

It was just absolutely nothing to indicate if she was even there.

358

00:39:55,440 --> 00:40:00,440

Authorities were baffled. Then, Nyleen's mother learned of a chilling possibility.

359

00:40:02,440 --> 00:40:08,440

Some of the children playing near Nyleen told her they remembered seeing a strange man dressed in a jogging suit.

360

00:40:09,440 --> 00:40:13,440

Two little girls had walked by Nyleen while she was sitting there.

361

00:40:13,440 --> 00:40:16,440

A man stepped out from behind the trees.

362

00:40:16,440 --> 00:40:20,440

The first little girl didn't recognize him as part of the group.

363

00:40:20,440 --> 00:40:25,440

Nyleen was heard by her saying, my brother can run faster than you.

364

00:40:25,440 --> 00:40:28,440

She was still sitting there with her little legs crossed.

365

00:40:28,440 --> 00:40:33,440

A second child, an eight-year-old girl, came by and saw the man.

366

00:40:33,440 --> 00:40:35,440

The man took a step closer to Nyleen.

367

00:40:36,440 --> 00:40:38,440

Have you ever played Follow the Shadow?

368

00:40:38,440 --> 00:40:39,440

What?

369

00:40:39,440 --> 00:40:40,440

Follow the Shadow.

370

00:40:40,440 --> 00:40:44,440

One of the little boys, a six-year-old, said that Nyleen had told him.

371

00:40:44,440 --> 00:40:47,440

The man had told her to follow the shadow.

372

00:40:47,440 --> 00:40:49,440

And they haven't been seen since.

373

00:40:52,440 --> 00:40:56,440

Convinced that Nyleen was abducted, Nancy Marshall and her husband, Kim,

374

00:40:56,440 --> 00:40:59,440

distributed thousands of missing posters across the United States.

375

00:40:59,440 --> 00:41:04,440

They received dozens of reported sightings, but none could be confirmed.

376

00:41:04,440 --> 00:41:11,440

Then on November 27, 1985, the case of Nyleen came out and took a dramatic turn.

377

00:41:11,440 --> 00:41:15,440

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received an anonymous

378

00:41:15,440 --> 00:41:20,440

phone call from a man who claimed he had Nyleen.

379

00:41:20,440 --> 00:41:24,440

Two months later, an organization called Child Find of America

380

00:41:24,440 --> 00:41:27,440

received a typewritten letter from the same man.

381

00:41:27,440 --> 00:41:30,440

In the letter, the man claimed that he was raising Nyleen,

382

00:41:30,440 --> 00:41:35,440

but he loved her and had no intention of returning her to her parents.

383

00:41:35,440 --> 00:41:39,440

This man said he was taking good care of her,

384

00:41:39,440 --> 00:41:46,440

but during the same phone conversation or same letter that he would write,

385

00:41:46,440 --> 00:41:53,440

would also make reference to things that he was having Nyleen do,

386

00:41:53,440 --> 00:41:55,440

which would be sexual abuse.

387

00:41:56,440 --> 00:42:01,440

Over the next six months, Child Find of America received two more letters

388

00:42:01,440 --> 00:42:03,440

and another two phone calls.

389

00:42:03,440 --> 00:42:07,440

These phone calls were coming from the Madison, Wisconsin area,

390

00:42:07,440 --> 00:42:10,440

as were letters that he was sending.

391

00:42:10,440 --> 00:42:16,440

The FBI, to my understanding, had actually located the phone booth

392

00:42:16,440 --> 00:42:19,440

that the phone calls were coming from.

393

00:42:19,440 --> 00:42:23,440

Coincidentally, after locating the phone booth, however, the phone calls abruptly stopped.

394

00:42:24,440 --> 00:42:28,440

In his letters, the man reveals a few clues that might help find Nyleen.

395

00:42:28,440 --> 00:42:31,440

He claims that he lives off substantial investments

396

00:42:31,440 --> 00:42:33,440

and that he and Nyleen travel frequently.

397

00:42:36,440 --> 00:42:40,440

I teach her at home and she likes to go with me when I travel.

398

00:42:40,440 --> 00:42:44,440

She would gladly recount to you trips to San Francisco, New York, Oklahoma City,

399

00:42:44,440 --> 00:42:48,440

New Orleans, Nashville, Chicago, Puerto Rico, or Canada.

400

00:42:48,440 --> 00:42:52,440

We were even in Britain for a month last year and she loved it.

401

00:42:52,440 --> 00:42:54,440

Nobody questions passports.

402

00:42:55,440 --> 00:42:59,440

There were numerous leads about Nyleen's sightings all over the United States.

403

00:42:59,440 --> 00:43:01,440

Well, that ties in.

404

00:43:01,440 --> 00:43:07,440

If he is, in fact, traveling, that would account for the sightings from one coast to another coast.

405

00:43:09,440 --> 00:43:13,440

Just last June, authorities received another possible lead in the case.

406

00:43:13,440 --> 00:43:17,440

Nyleen Marshall's uncle saw this composite of a man and woman

407

00:43:17,440 --> 00:43:20,440

wanted for child abduction in another part of the country.

408

00:43:20,440 --> 00:43:23,440

He believes he saw them during the first day of the search for Nyleen.

409

00:43:25,440 --> 00:43:32,440

It's not really all that unusual for a person to remain at the scene of a crime,

410

00:43:32,440 --> 00:43:38,440

get lost in a crowd, and stick around to see what was going to happen next.

411

00:43:41,440 --> 00:43:45,440

I still look for her. I always will.

412

00:43:45,440 --> 00:43:50,440

Every time I'm at an airport, every time I'm at a resort,

413

00:43:50,440 --> 00:43:53,440

every time I'm at an amusement park,

414

00:43:55,440 --> 00:43:58,440

sure, I look like I'm having a good time,

415

00:43:59,440 --> 00:44:04,440

but I'm looking for my child every minute that I'm out.

416

00:44:06,440 --> 00:44:09,440

Today, Nyleen K. Marshall will be 12 years old.

417

00:44:09,440 --> 00:44:12,440

This is a computer-aged photograph of what she may look like.

418

00:44:12,440 --> 00:44:16,440

At the time of her disappearance, she had dark brown hair and blue eyes.

419

00:44:18,440 --> 00:44:23,440

Once again, the anonymous man placed the phone calls from a phone booth in Madison, Wisconsin.

420

00:44:23,440 --> 00:44:27,440

He states that he now calls Nyleen by her middle name, K.

421

00:44:27,440 --> 00:44:31,440

In his letters, he mentions that his parents and younger sister were killed in a car accident

422

00:44:31,440 --> 00:44:34,440

when his sister was nine years old.

423

00:44:43,440 --> 00:44:49,440

Next week on Unsolved Mysteries, in Aurora, Missouri, a prominent citizen is burned to death in her own home.

424

00:44:49,440 --> 00:44:54,440

A young, retarded man named Johnny Wilson confesses to the crime, but later recants.

425

00:44:54,440 --> 00:44:59,440

Two years later, the case takes a bizarre twist when another man confesses to the murder

426

00:44:59,440 --> 00:45:01,440

and says Johnny is innocent.

427

00:45:01,440 --> 00:45:03,440

But Johnny Lee says that he is innocent.

428

00:45:03,440 --> 00:45:05,440

He says that he is innocent.

429

00:45:05,440 --> 00:45:07,440

He says that he is innocent.

430

00:45:07,440 --> 00:45:11,440

Next, when another man confesses to the murder and says Johnny is innocent,

431

00:45:11,440 --> 00:45:15,440

but Johnny Lee Wilson is still behind bars.

432

00:45:15,440 --> 00:45:19,440

Two men in a bar fight over a woman in Edmore, North Dakota.

433

00:45:19,440 --> 00:45:23,440

The next day, one of the combatants, Kenneth Engie, is found dead in his garage.

434

00:45:23,440 --> 00:45:26,440

An accident or murder.

435

00:45:27,440 --> 00:45:29,440

Join me next week.

436

00:45:29,440 --> 00:45:33,440

Perhaps you can help solve a mystery.