

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,000

This program is about unsolved mysteries.

2

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

Whenever possible, the actual family members and police

3

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

officials have participated in recreating the events.

4

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

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

5

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

In 1949, Annie Curry lost custody of her two young boys in a

6

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

bitter divorce case and vanished from their lives.

7

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

Her son Jim has never forgotten his mother, even though he

8

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

hasn't seen her for more than 40 years.

9

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

Recently, two inmates escaped from an Oklahoma jail and embarked

10

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

on a vicious murder spree in which four people have lost

11

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

their lives.

12

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

These dangerous fugitives must be captured before they kill

13

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

again.

14

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

And scoss in her sprawling mansion, Ellen McClung Berry was

15

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

a classic southern lady, imperious, well-bred and proud.

16

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

In 1978, an elegant, mysterious visitor, Charm Mrs. Berry,

17

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

moved into her estate, became her most trusted confidant,

18

00:01:03,000 --> 00:01:07,000

and robbed her blind.

19

00:01:07,000 --> 00:01:11,000

Join me for another edition of Unsolved Mysteries.

20

00:01:41,000 --> 00:01:43,000

Hey, Santa!

21

00:01:43,000 --> 00:01:45,000

Hey!

22

00:01:45,000 --> 00:01:48,000

Yeah, yeah, see, clear winged ones.

23

00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:50,000

Hey, Santa!

24

00:01:50,000 --> 00:01:52,000

Hey!

25

00:01:52,000 --> 00:01:55,000

Yeah, yeah, see, clear winged ones.

26

00:01:55,000 --> 00:01:59,000

On September 19, 1991, two-time convicted killer,

27

00:01:59,000 --> 00:02:02,000

Michael St. Clair, orchestrated a daring escape from

28

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

Bryan County Jail in Durant, Oklahoma.

29

00:02:05,000 --> 00:02:08,000

The two-time convicted killer, Michael St. Clair,

30

00:02:08,000 --> 00:02:11,000

was arrested in a car crash in the city of San Diego,

31

00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:13,000

in the city of San Diego.

32

00:02:13,000 --> 00:02:15,000

Michael St. Clair orchestrated a daring escape from

33

00:02:15,000 --> 00:02:18,000

Bryan County Jail in Durant, Oklahoma.

34

00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:20,000

What's the matter?

35

00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:22,000

Shut up.

36

00:02:22,000 --> 00:02:23,000

Get your heart out of here.

37

00:02:23,000 --> 00:02:26,000

Get the ground up and call the police.

38

00:02:26,000 --> 00:02:28,000

St. Clair released fellow inmate Dennis Reese.

39

00:02:28,000 --> 00:02:31,000

He was a waiting trial for robbery and murder.

40

00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:42,000

That night, Michael St. Clair and Dennis Reese

41

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

ignited a murderous crime spree that is stretched

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00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:48,000

across eight states and left at least four dead in its wake.

43

00:02:52,000 --> 00:02:54,000

Authorities urgently need your help to capture

44

00:02:54,000 --> 00:02:56,000

Michael St. Clair and Dennis Reese.

45

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

With each passing day, the odds increase that another

46

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

innocent person will fall victim to their brutal rampage.

47

00:03:02,000 --> 00:03:04,000

Please watch carefully.

48

00:03:04,000 --> 00:03:07,000

You may help save someone's life.

49

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

Less than three months ago, Michael St. Clair was convicted

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

on two counts of first-degree murder and was sentenced

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00:03:14,000 --> 00:03:18,000

to three consecutive life prison terms.

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00:03:18,000 --> 00:03:21,000

Michael St. Clair has been involved with various

53

00:03:21,000 --> 00:03:24,000

drug trafficking organizations in southern Oklahoma

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

as well as northern Texas.

55

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

His uncle was moving in on his drug operations

56

00:03:29,000 --> 00:03:32,000

and he felt that his profits were being threatened,

57

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

so he contracted out to have his uncle killed.

58

00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:40,000

After his uncle was killed, he then assassinated

59

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

the hit man.

60

00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:46,000

Two days after the fugitives escaped,

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00:03:46,000 --> 00:03:48,000

newspaper reporter Tom Mullins received a chilling

62

00:03:48,000 --> 00:03:51,000

phone call from Michael St. Clair.

63

00:03:51,000 --> 00:03:53,000

Just a minute, man, let me get my tape recorder hooked up.

64

00:03:53,000 --> 00:03:56,000

For almost 20 months now, I've been covering Michael St. Clair.

65

00:03:56,000 --> 00:03:59,000

I've gotten to know him fairly well and I've always tried

66

00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:03,000

to give his side of the story in all fairness.

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00:04:03,000 --> 00:04:07,000

When he got out, I was the obvious choice for him

68

00:04:07,000 --> 00:04:10,000

to get his message out, that message being that

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00:04:10,000 --> 00:04:15,000

he wouldn't be taken alive and that when the time came,

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00:04:15,000 --> 00:04:18,000

if any law enforcement came around his court

71

00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:21,000

was anyone wearing a badge or a kill.

72

00:04:21,000 --> 00:04:24,000

Three weeks later, near Elizabeth Town, Kentucky,

73

00:04:24,000 --> 00:04:27,000

a state trooper pulled over a pickup truck

74

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

which was seen fleeing from a burning vehicle.

75

00:04:31,000 --> 00:04:34,000

As the pickup truck came to a halt,

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00:04:34,000 --> 00:04:37,000

the man on the passenger side, who we now believe was St. Clair,

77

00:04:37,000 --> 00:04:43,000

instantly got out of the truck.

78

00:04:43,000 --> 00:04:50,000

The man fired at the trooper's car two times.

79

00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:54,000

The trooper fortunately was not injured at all.

80

00:04:54,000 --> 00:04:57,000

Within just a matter of minutes, the maroon truck

81

00:04:57,000 --> 00:05:01,000

was actually found disabled and abandoned along the interstate.

82

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

Apparently, it had crossed the interstate

83

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

and in doing so had blown both front tires.

84

00:05:07,000 --> 00:05:10,000

The truck belonged to 56-year-old Francis Brady,

85

00:05:10,000 --> 00:05:14,000

a retired distillery worker and father of three.

86

00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:16,000

Brady had disappeared 12 hours earlier

87

00:05:16,000 --> 00:05:21,000

after cashing a check at a convenience store.

88

00:05:21,000 --> 00:05:24,000

Brady's body was found approximately 12 miles north

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00:05:24,000 --> 00:05:27,000

of Elizabeth Town, Kentucky.

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00:05:27,000 --> 00:05:29,000

He had been shot execution style.

91

00:05:29,000 --> 00:05:34,000

He had been handcuffed and had been shot in the head.

92

00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:37,000

What is remarkable about this type of execution

93

00:05:37,000 --> 00:05:41,000

is that it's almost identical to the way St. Clair's uncle,

94

00:05:41,000 --> 00:05:45,000

Ronnie St. Clair, had been executed a few years before.

95

00:05:45,000 --> 00:05:48,000

The other truck the St. Clair and Reese had set fire to

96

00:05:48,000 --> 00:05:54,000

was registered to a Denver, Colorado paramedic named Tim Keeling.

97

00:05:54,000 --> 00:05:57,000

Like Francis Brady, Keeling also vanished

98

00:05:57,000 --> 00:06:01,000

after patronizing a convenience store.

99

00:06:01,000 --> 00:06:03,000

His body was found in a roadside ditch

100

00:06:03,000 --> 00:06:08,000

outside of Clayton, New Mexico.

101

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

Five days after firing on the state trooper,

102

00:06:11,000 --> 00:06:13,000

Michael St. Clair and Dennis Reese

103

00:06:13,000 --> 00:06:18,000

apparently struck again this time in Tennessee.

104

00:06:18,000 --> 00:06:20,000

Two men matching their descriptions

105

00:06:20,000 --> 00:06:23,000

robbed a video store in Myland, Tennessee.

106

00:06:23,000 --> 00:06:25,000

They brutally executed the clerk,

107

00:06:25,000 --> 00:06:29,000

a 20-year-old mother of two.

108

00:06:29,000 --> 00:06:31,000

30 minutes later, the same two men

109

00:06:31,000 --> 00:06:34,000

robbed another video store just eight miles away.

110

00:06:34,000 --> 00:06:41,000

Again, the young female clerk was gunned down in cold blood.

111

00:06:41,000 --> 00:06:46,000

Individuals who would kill for \$150 or \$200

112

00:06:46,000 --> 00:06:49,000

are extremely desperate individuals.

113

00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:53,000

It indicates that they do not have any type of support apparatus

114

00:06:53,000 --> 00:06:57,000

going for them, so these are people who are constantly moving.

115

00:06:57,000 --> 00:07:00,000

They're very concerned about staying in one location

116

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

for any period of time.

117

00:07:02,000 --> 00:07:04,000

They're very paranoid, they're very dangerous,

118

00:07:04,000 --> 00:07:08,000

and will take any actions to prevent their apprehension.

119

00:07:08,000 --> 00:07:11,000

These individuals seem to be leaving no witnesses

120

00:07:11,000 --> 00:07:13,000

in their crimes that they're committing,

121

00:07:13,000 --> 00:07:15,000

and so the public needs to be very much aware of that,

122

00:07:15,000 --> 00:07:18,000

and if they see them, absolutely do not approach them

123

00:07:18,000 --> 00:07:21,000

because they are extremely violent.

124

00:07:21,000 --> 00:07:44,000

Music

125

00:07:44,000 --> 00:07:48,000

Next, a gothic tale of murder, betrayal and greed,

126

00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:52,000

set against the fading background of the Old South.

127

00:07:52,000 --> 00:08:03,000

Music

128

00:08:03,000 --> 00:08:06,000

The state of Tennessee, like much of the American South,

129

00:08:06,000 --> 00:08:09,000

is dotted with majestic antebellum estates.

130

00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:12,000

A type of aristocracy still thrives here,

131

00:08:12,000 --> 00:08:16,000

and Ellen McClung Berry is typical of that upper-crust group.

132

00:08:16,000 --> 00:08:19,000

By 1978, when she was 85 years old,

133

00:08:19,000 --> 00:08:23,000

Mrs. Berry lived in solitary splendor on a mountain top

134

00:08:23,000 --> 00:08:25,000

outside the city of Knoxville,

135

00:08:25,000 --> 00:08:28,000

which had been founded by her great-great-grandfather.

136

00:08:28,000 --> 00:08:30,000

They did a gorgeous morning.

137

00:08:30,000 --> 00:08:32,000

Oh, yes, it's very beautiful.

138

00:08:32,000 --> 00:08:35,000

You ready for your teens, Mrs. Berry?

139

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

I think she would have been considered

140

00:08:37,000 --> 00:08:39,000

definitely one of the local grand-doms of the old school,

141

00:08:39,000 --> 00:08:42,000

and probably there were not many.

142

00:08:42,000 --> 00:08:44,000

That means that you can live on the mountain like she did

143

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

and have everybody come to you, like Muhammad.

144

00:08:47,000 --> 00:08:50,000

It's just that simple.

145

00:08:50,000 --> 00:08:53,000

Music

146

00:08:53,000 --> 00:08:57,000

One of the people who came to the mountain back in 1978

147

00:08:57,000 --> 00:09:00,000

was Dan Tondevald, a vaguely mysterious man

148

00:09:00,000 --> 00:09:02,000

who claimed to be from Denmark.

149

00:09:02,000 --> 00:09:04,000

For more than 15 years,

150

00:09:04,000 --> 00:09:06,000

he had corresponded with Mrs. Berry,

151

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

but the true nature of their relationship was unclear.

152

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

Sometimes Mrs. Berry said Tondevald was her godson.

153

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

Sometimes that he was a friend of her late son Hugh.

154

00:09:16,000 --> 00:09:18,000

And how is your health?

155

00:09:18,000 --> 00:09:20,000

Well, my health is great, Dan.

156

00:09:20,000 --> 00:09:21,000

Are you sure?

157

00:09:21,000 --> 00:09:23,000

I'm sure. A little drained emotionally,

158

00:09:23,000 --> 00:09:24,000

but otherwise I'm fine.

159

00:09:24,000 --> 00:09:26,000

You look wonderful, really.

160

00:09:26,000 --> 00:09:29,000

I had the strangest gut feeling that this kid was bad news,

161

00:09:29,000 --> 00:09:32,000

but he was making Ellen happy.

162

00:09:32,000 --> 00:09:34,000

She was happy that he was there,

163

00:09:34,000 --> 00:09:38,000

and if he was, in fact, a friend of her late son Hugh,

164

00:09:38,000 --> 00:09:42,000

for lots of reasons, I was happy that she was happy,

165

00:09:42,000 --> 00:09:46,000

and at least somebody was on the mountain with her at night

166

00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:49,000

in case she fell or got sick and could get help.

167

00:09:52,000 --> 00:09:55,000

He was taking the place of her son.

168

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

He looked like her son, apparently.

169

00:09:58,000 --> 00:10:00,000

And I know that was the attraction.

170

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

Mrs. Berry's attraction to Dan

171

00:10:03,000 --> 00:10:06,000

is that he was playing that role.

172

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

Mrs. Berry's only child, Hugh,

173

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

had left a dark stain on the family tree.

174

00:10:13,000 --> 00:10:16,000

In 1951, at the age of 18,

175

00:10:16,000 --> 00:10:19,000

Hugh Berry flew into a rage over his inheritance,

176

00:10:19,000 --> 00:10:23,000

turned a shotgun on his grandmother, and killed her.

177

00:10:26,000 --> 00:10:30,000

A judge ruled Hugh Berry mentally incompetent to stand trial.

178

00:10:30,000 --> 00:10:32,000

Rumor had it that Hugh was lobotomized

179

00:10:32,000 --> 00:10:34,000

and sent to live in Mexico.

180

00:10:34,000 --> 00:10:36,000

In New Year's Eve, 1963,

181

00:10:36,000 --> 00:10:39,000

Mr. and Mrs. Berry received word that Hugh had died of pneumonia.

182

00:10:39,000 --> 00:10:43,000

Later, Mrs. Berry hinted that he had in fact committed suicide.

183

00:10:43,000 --> 00:10:45,000

According to his friends,

184

00:10:45,000 --> 00:10:48,000

Hugh's body was never returned to the United States.

185

00:10:48,000 --> 00:10:51,000

When her husband died in February of 1978,

186

00:10:51,000 --> 00:10:54,000

Ellen Berry was left all alone.

187

00:10:59,000 --> 00:11:01,000

Almost too conveniently,

188

00:11:01,000 --> 00:11:03,000

the mysterious stranger from Denmark

189

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

stepped in to fill the void in Mrs. Berry's life.

190

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

Dan Tandovald moved into her guest house

191

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

and quickly took over the day-to-day operation

192

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

of her estate, Berrymount.

193

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

Before long, he had made himself indispensable to Mrs. Berry.

194

00:11:17,000 --> 00:11:20,000

Not only was Tandoval running Berrymount,

195

00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:22,000

he was running her.

196

00:11:22,000 --> 00:11:24,000

I have some checks for you to sign if you don't mind.

197

00:11:24,000 --> 00:11:28,000

Sure, and I'm so glad you're taking care of this for me.

198

00:11:28,000 --> 00:11:31,000

I didn't know this place was in such disrepair.

199

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

Mrs. Berry signed anything Tandovald put in front of her.

200

00:11:34,000 --> 00:11:37,000

She also began to cater to his predilection

201

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

for expensive show horses.

202

00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:45,000

By 1983, Dan Tandoval owned a stable

203

00:11:45,000 --> 00:11:49,000

of seven Tennessee walkers financed by Mrs. Berry.

204

00:11:49,000 --> 00:11:51,000

He named all the horses Berrymount,

205

00:11:51,000 --> 00:11:55,000

adding only the numbers 1 through 7 to individualize them.

206

00:11:55,000 --> 00:11:57,000

Mrs. Berry seemed delighted to finance

207

00:11:57,000 --> 00:12:01,000

what was fast becoming a million-dollar hobby.

208

00:12:02,000 --> 00:12:05,000

Mrs. Berry's words to me was,

209

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

Mr. Tandovald's hobby did not make a dent in my fortune.

210

00:12:10,000 --> 00:12:13,000

That was a hobby I wanted him to have.

211

00:12:13,000 --> 00:12:15,000

Yes, I would like to go ahead and close the deal

212

00:12:15,000 --> 00:12:17,000

in that stallion for \$20,000.

213

00:12:17,000 --> 00:12:21,000

It was as if Dan Tandovald had cast a spell over Mrs. Berry.

214

00:12:21,000 --> 00:12:26,000

In April of 1982, she granted him power of attorney.

215

00:12:26,000 --> 00:12:29,000

She was a willing pigeon, so to speak.

216

00:12:29,000 --> 00:12:32,000

Other people, I think, have tried to tell her

217

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:35,000

that there was something wrong,

218

00:12:35,000 --> 00:12:38,000

that he just didn't make sense,

219

00:12:38,000 --> 00:12:40,000

possibly was a con artist.

220

00:12:40,000 --> 00:12:41,000

I don't know.

221

00:12:41,000 --> 00:12:43,000

And she ignored it.

222

00:12:43,000 --> 00:12:47,000

In 1984, Tandovald talked Mrs. Berry

223

00:12:47,000 --> 00:12:50,000

into taking a winter vacation in Charleston, South Carolina.

224

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

Before they left, he composed a classified ad for a chauffeur

225

00:12:54,000 --> 00:12:56,000

requesting men who were single

226

00:12:56,000 --> 00:12:59,000

and asking that applicants submit a photograph.

227

00:12:59,000 --> 00:13:04,000

Secretly, Tandovald placed the ad in the Charleston papers.

228

00:13:06,000 --> 00:13:09,000

At the end of their four months in Charleston,

229

00:13:09,000 --> 00:13:12,000

Mrs. Berry and Tandovald made plans to return home.

230

00:13:12,000 --> 00:13:15,000

She and her hired companion would fly to Tennessee.

231

00:13:15,000 --> 00:13:19,000

Tandovald would drive the Mercedes back to Berrymount.

232

00:13:19,000 --> 00:13:22,000

Susanian, I thought we left lights on when we left.

233

00:13:22,000 --> 00:13:23,000

Mrs. Berry, we did.

234

00:13:23,000 --> 00:13:26,000

Mrs. Berry and her companion arrived at Berrymount

235

00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:28,000

on March 31, 1985.

236

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

There was no sign of the Mercedes or of Dan Tandovald.

237

00:13:31,000 --> 00:13:32,000

Susanian!

238

00:13:34,000 --> 00:13:35,000

Yes, Mrs. Berry?

239

00:13:35,000 --> 00:13:36,000

The phone's dead, do you?

240

00:13:36,000 --> 00:13:40,000

The telephone at Berrymount, as well as all the utilities,

241

00:13:40,000 --> 00:13:42,000

had been inexplicably cut off.

242

00:13:44,000 --> 00:13:47,000

The bank is going to foreclose on the house.

243

00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:49,000

Your checking accounts and saving accounts

244

00:13:49,000 --> 00:13:51,000

are completely depleted.

245

00:13:51,000 --> 00:13:54,000

Mrs. Berry was virtually bankrupt.

246

00:13:54,000 --> 00:13:57,000

Tandovald had even borrowed money against Berrymount

247

00:13:57,000 --> 00:13:59,000

to the tune of \$85,000.

248

00:13:59,000 --> 00:14:01,000

For the first time in her life,

249

00:14:01,000 --> 00:14:03,000

Mrs. Berry had a mortgage to pay.

250

00:14:03,000 --> 00:14:07,000

For the first time in her life, she had no way to pay it.

251

00:14:07,000 --> 00:14:09,000

Her money was gone.

252

00:14:09,000 --> 00:14:11,000

Her checking account was empty.

253

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

He just gutted her.

254

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

Took away her wealth and her pride and everything.

255

00:14:21,000 --> 00:14:25,000

Meanwhile, Dan Tandovald turned up 100 miles south of Charleston

256

00:14:25,000 --> 00:14:29,000

at an exclusive resort on Fripp Island, South Carolina.

257

00:14:29,000 --> 00:14:31,000

Unaware that his secret was out,

258

00:14:31,000 --> 00:14:34,000

Tandovald continued to live in high style.

259

00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:35,000

Mr. Tandovald.

260

00:14:35,000 --> 00:14:36,000

How do you do?

261

00:14:36,000 --> 00:14:37,000

Fine, sir, and you?

262

00:14:37,000 --> 00:14:38,000

Fine, thank you.

263

00:14:38,000 --> 00:14:40,000

I would like to speak to you about possibly upgrading

264

00:14:40,000 --> 00:14:42,000

my accommodations to something more suitable.

265

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

Tandovald had been running up massive bills

266

00:14:44,000 --> 00:14:46,000

on Mrs. Berry's credit cards,

267

00:14:46,000 --> 00:14:48,000

but now that jig was up,

268

00:14:48,000 --> 00:14:50,000

all the cards were over their limit.

269

00:14:50,000 --> 00:14:52,000

If it was substantial,

270

00:14:52,000 --> 00:14:54,000

I'm going to have to request some sort of payment.

271

00:14:54,000 --> 00:14:56,000

Let me go back to my villa.

272

00:14:56,000 --> 00:14:58,000

I shall get you a check and pay you immediately.

273

00:14:58,000 --> 00:14:59,000

I'll be right back.

274

00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:01,000

Yes, thank you, Mr. Tandovald.

275

00:15:01,000 --> 00:15:03,000

Dan Tandovald never returned.

276

00:15:03,000 --> 00:15:06,000

The next day, a hastily scrawl suicide note

277

00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:10,000

and a last will in testament were found in his suite.

278

00:15:10,000 --> 00:15:14,000

Two weeks later,

279

00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:17,000

in a swampy, deserted area of Fripp Island,

280

00:15:17,000 --> 00:15:19,000

a man's body was found.

281

00:15:19,000 --> 00:15:24,000

He had apparently shot himself in the left temple.

282

00:15:24,000 --> 00:15:26,000

An antique gun was a few inches away.

283

00:15:26,000 --> 00:15:28,000

It belonged to Ellen Berry.

284

00:15:28,000 --> 00:15:32,000

A dog also shot through the head lay nearby.

285

00:15:32,000 --> 00:15:35,000

The dead man carried no identification,

286

00:15:35,000 --> 00:15:38,000

but he did carry Ellen Berry's credit cards.

287

00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:41,000

What we need to do is have the security guard last.

288

00:15:41,000 --> 00:15:44,000

The body was partially decomposed.

289

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

Nevertheless, the coroner brought in a resort security guard

290

00:15:47,000 --> 00:15:49,000

to identify him.

291

00:15:49,000 --> 00:15:52,000

It's going to be difficult because he's been dead for a while.

292

00:15:52,000 --> 00:15:55,000

According to what the security guard said,

293

00:15:55,000 --> 00:15:58,000

he is the person who came to Fripp Island

294

00:15:58,000 --> 00:16:00,000

and said, I am Dan Tandovald.

295

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

It looks like him.

296

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

And the best I can tell, sir, that's Mr. Tandovald.

297

00:16:03,000 --> 00:16:05,000

Possibly may be considered more circumstantial

298

00:16:05,000 --> 00:16:07,000

than anything else.

299

00:16:07,000 --> 00:16:10,000

Investigation revealed that he allegedly did not have

300

00:16:10,000 --> 00:16:15,000

a social security card nor a driver's license

301

00:16:15,000 --> 00:16:19,000

and had supposedly never had either of these.

302

00:16:21,000 --> 00:16:23,000

The body was immediately cremated

303

00:16:23,000 --> 00:16:26,000

as Tandovald had requested in his handwritten will.

304

00:16:26,000 --> 00:16:28,000

His death was ruled a suicide,

305

00:16:28,000 --> 00:16:31,000

but not everyone believed the man found in the swamp

306

00:16:31,000 --> 00:16:34,000

was Dan Tandovald.

307

00:16:34,000 --> 00:16:36,000

I'm not sure he's dead.

308

00:16:36,000 --> 00:16:39,000

Nobody that knew him identified him.

309

00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:41,000

You know, the coroner found him,

310

00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:44,000

the police officer kind of secured the guard to deal.

311

00:16:44,000 --> 00:16:46,000

That's him, and he hadn't seen him,

312

00:16:46,000 --> 00:16:49,000

but just driving by in a little security shack.

313

00:16:49,000 --> 00:16:51,000

Well, you can't negate the possibility

314

00:16:51,000 --> 00:16:53,000

that he didn't indeed kill himself.

315

00:16:53,000 --> 00:16:55,000

That's possible.

316

00:16:55,000 --> 00:16:57,000

I just don't believe it.

317

00:16:57,000 --> 00:16:59,000

It doesn't make sense to me that somebody who went

318

00:16:59,000 --> 00:17:02,000

through all that trouble to get all that money

319

00:17:02,000 --> 00:17:04,000

and to be as nefarious about the whole thing

320

00:17:04,000 --> 00:17:06,000

from beginning to end as he was,

321

00:17:06,000 --> 00:17:09,000

was out to kill himself.

322

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

A month after the cremation,

323

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

Pete Ballard found a copy of Tandovald's

324

00:17:13,000 --> 00:17:18,000

classified ad for a chauffeur in the Barrymont Guest Cottage.

325

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

Now, I would find it ridiculous that he would need to

326

00:17:22,000 --> 00:17:25,000

put an ad in the Charleston paper

327

00:17:25,000 --> 00:17:28,000

for a chauffer for Barrymont.

328

00:17:28,000 --> 00:17:32,000

You can get them in the area, I'm sure, just as easily.

329

00:17:32,000 --> 00:17:36,000

And I suddenly realized that maybe he was looking for a look-alike.

330

00:17:36,000 --> 00:17:39,000

Absolutely gorgeous place. I think you'd enjoy it.

331

00:17:39,000 --> 00:17:42,000

Ballard is convinced that Tandovald remained in South Carolina

332

00:17:42,000 --> 00:17:46,000

not to hire a chauffer, but to find a victim.

333

00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:48,000

Come on, doesn't have to trust you.

334

00:17:48,000 --> 00:17:51,000

The look-alike, I feel, would have been the person

335

00:17:51,000 --> 00:17:55,000

he ultimately killed, and then he just sort of scooted off

336

00:17:55,000 --> 00:17:59,000

to wherever he had planned to go.

337

00:17:59,000 --> 00:18:02,000

It was never reported that he was ever seen in the company

338

00:18:02,000 --> 00:18:04,000

of anybody, male or female.

339

00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:08,000

So there's no reason for me to believe

340

00:18:08,000 --> 00:18:11,000

that it was anybody but Dan Tandovald.

341

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

I'm not going to say that that's not a possibility,

342

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

but I certainly do not believe it to be one.

343

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

The authorities remain convinced that Dan Tandovald

344

00:18:21,000 --> 00:18:24,000

had committed suicide, yet a shadow of doubt lingered,

345

00:18:24,000 --> 00:18:28,000

giving rise to a piece about rages gossip.

346

00:18:28,000 --> 00:18:33,000

The idea is that Dan Tandovald is, in fact,

347

00:18:33,000 --> 00:18:37,000

Mr. and Mrs. Barry's son, who was supposed to have died in

348

00:18:37,000 --> 00:18:42,000

Mexico, a very easy way to bring somebody back

349

00:18:42,000 --> 00:18:45,000

under an assumed name to get off the hook

350

00:18:45,000 --> 00:18:49,000

after having shot and killed his grandmother.

351

00:18:52,000 --> 00:18:55,000

Adding fuel to the rumor that Tandovald and Huberi

352

00:18:55,000 --> 00:18:58,000

were the same person was a complete lack of any official

353

00:18:58,000 --> 00:19:00,000

record of Dan Tandovald.

354

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

But finally, Tandovald's resume was found among his letters

355

00:19:04,000 --> 00:19:07,000

to Mrs. Barry, which had been stored away.

356

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

The resume listed his hometown as Las Vegas, Nevada.

357

00:19:11,000 --> 00:19:13,000

Mr. Tandovald, please.

358

00:19:13,000 --> 00:19:15,000

An unsolved mysteries researcher turned up this

359

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

1951 yearbook from Las Vegas High School.

360

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

Dan Tandovald was a member of the senior class,

361

00:19:22,000 --> 00:19:25,000

a not surprisingly president of the Thespian Club.

362

00:19:25,000 --> 00:19:28,000

Many people in Knoxville considered Tandovald's

363

00:19:28,000 --> 00:19:31,000

Danish accent an affectation.

364

00:19:31,000 --> 00:19:34,000

Perhaps it was simply bad acting.

365

00:19:34,000 --> 00:19:37,000

In any case, the rumor that Dan Tandoval and Huberi

366

00:19:37,000 --> 00:19:42,000

are the same person has finally been put to rest.

367

00:19:42,000 --> 00:19:46,000

I think he was her son's replacement.

368

00:19:46,000 --> 00:19:52,000

And here is this lovely little old lady left.

369

00:19:52,000 --> 00:19:54,000

Left without any money.

370

00:19:54,000 --> 00:19:56,000

I mean, she is poor.

371

00:19:56,000 --> 00:20:01,000

But also left without any love.

372

00:20:01,000 --> 00:20:04,000

I mean, what does she have at this point?

373

00:20:04,000 --> 00:20:06,000

Nothing.

374

00:20:06,000 --> 00:20:09,000

Today, Ellen McClung-Barry is 97 years old

375

00:20:09,000 --> 00:20:12,000

and has lost much of her ability to communicate.

376

00:20:12,000 --> 00:20:14,000

She lives in an apartment financed by the interest

377

00:20:14,000 --> 00:20:18,000

on an endowment she made to the University of Tennessee.

378

00:20:18,000 --> 00:20:21,000

No one knows exactly how much money Mrs. Barry lost

379

00:20:21,000 --> 00:20:25,000

to Dan Tandovald, but estimates run into the millions.

380

00:20:25,000 --> 00:20:28,000

Authorities believe he transferred Mrs. Barry's funds

381

00:20:28,000 --> 00:20:32,000

to European accounts, possibly in France or Denmark.

382

00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:49,000

Music

383

00:20:49,000 --> 00:20:52,000

On a recent broadcast, we feature the compelling story

384

00:20:52,000 --> 00:20:55,000

of John Nellis, a man whose life has been torn apart

385

00:20:55,000 --> 00:20:57,000

by two wars.

386

00:20:57,000 --> 00:21:01,000

During one conflict, John lost his father, an American GI.

387

00:21:01,000 --> 00:21:04,000

In the other, he lost his son.

388

00:21:04,000 --> 00:21:07,000

Still wish he could come with me.

389

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

When John was five years old, his father, Melvin Nellis,

390

00:21:10,000 --> 00:21:12,000

was ordered back to the United States

391

00:21:12,000 --> 00:21:15,000

from his duty in war-ravelling China.

392

00:21:15,000 --> 00:21:17,000

Because his parents weren't legally married,

393

00:21:17,000 --> 00:21:19,000

John and his mother of Vietnamese national

394

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

were forced to stay behind.

395

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

John never saw his father again.

396

00:21:27,000 --> 00:21:30,000

27 years later, John was among the last group of people

397

00:21:30,000 --> 00:21:34,000

to flee South Vietnam after the U.S. withdrew its troops.

398

00:21:34,000 --> 00:21:38,000

Tragically, amid the confusion and chaos,

399

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:42,000

John's five-year-old son Daniel was left behind.

400

00:21:42,000 --> 00:21:47,000

If my father and my son watching me right now,

401

00:21:47,000 --> 00:21:51,000

I would like to tell them how much I miss them

402

00:21:51,000 --> 00:21:55,000

and I love them.

403

00:21:55,000 --> 00:22:00,000

And I'd like to reunite and see them again.

404

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

Thanks to our broadcast, John Nellis learned

405

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

that his father's now retired and living in Tokyo, Japan.

406

00:22:09,000 --> 00:22:11,000

Incredibly, just three weeks later,

407

00:22:11,000 --> 00:22:14,000

John's search for his son Daniel also came to an end

408

00:22:14,000 --> 00:22:18,000

when they were reunited after more than 17 years.

409

00:22:35,000 --> 00:22:38,000

For so many years, I miss him.

410

00:22:38,000 --> 00:22:41,000

I think of him all the time and I'm so happy to see him.

411

00:22:41,000 --> 00:22:44,000

This is a real dream come true.

412

00:22:47,000 --> 00:22:49,000

It's a miracle.

413

00:22:51,000 --> 00:22:54,000

When I saw my dad, I was so excited and very happy.

414

00:22:57,000 --> 00:22:59,000

When I looked into his eyes and saw his family,

415

00:22:59,000 --> 00:23:01,000

I found happiness.

416

00:23:03,000 --> 00:23:06,000

Daniel's first day in America was overwhelming.

417

00:23:06,000 --> 00:23:08,000

Not only did he reunite with his father,

418

00:23:08,000 --> 00:23:12,000

he also met his stepmother and half-sister for the first time.

419

00:23:14,000 --> 00:23:16,000

Now he's with me.

420

00:23:16,000 --> 00:23:18,000

I want to do my best,

421

00:23:18,000 --> 00:23:22,000

give him a good chance in life and a better future for him

422

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

and make up for what he has lost.

423

00:23:38,000 --> 00:23:42,000

March 1949, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

424

00:23:42,000 --> 00:23:44,000

Annie Currie, an English war bride,

425

00:23:44,000 --> 00:23:48,000

says goodbye to her husband, Donald, and her two little boys.

426

00:23:54,000 --> 00:23:56,000

After only five years of marriage,

427

00:23:56,000 --> 00:23:59,000

Annie and Donald had to leave for the US.

428

00:23:59,000 --> 00:24:01,000

After five years of marriage,

429

00:24:01,000 --> 00:24:03,000

they were married.

430

00:24:03,000 --> 00:24:05,000

They were married for five years.

431

00:24:05,000 --> 00:24:07,000

After only five years of marriage,

432

00:24:07,000 --> 00:24:09,000

Annie and Donald had divorced.

433

00:24:09,000 --> 00:24:12,000

He has received custody of both sons,

434

00:24:12,000 --> 00:24:15,000

Darrell, three years old, and Jim, five.

435

00:24:16,000 --> 00:24:19,000

They haven't seen their mother for more than 40 years.

436

00:24:22,000 --> 00:24:26,000

I was never given the sense that I could say how much I missed her,

437

00:24:26,000 --> 00:24:29,000

that I could ask questions about where's my mom.

438

00:24:29,000 --> 00:24:32,000

She's a big question mark, and I would like to hear her voice.

439

00:24:32,000 --> 00:24:35,000

I would like to hear what she has to say about her life.

440

00:24:35,000 --> 00:24:38,000

I'd like her to know me.

441

00:24:38,000 --> 00:24:40,000

In most ways, Jim Currie is no different

442

00:24:40,000 --> 00:24:43,000

from anybody else searching for a lost parent.

443

00:24:43,000 --> 00:24:46,000

But there is one odd twist in his story.

444

00:24:47,000 --> 00:24:51,000

Jim has spent most of his life looking for other people's parents.

445

00:24:51,000 --> 00:24:53,000

Jim Currie is senior investigator

446

00:24:53,000 --> 00:24:55,000

for a California Public Defender's Office,

447

00:24:55,000 --> 00:24:59,000

an advocate for defendants who may be facing the death sentence.

448

00:25:02,000 --> 00:25:06,000

I've had adopted defendants before and had to find their mothers.

449

00:25:06,000 --> 00:25:09,000

And I've been very successful in doing that.

450

00:25:10,000 --> 00:25:17,000

It just is very ironic to me that I can find so much about these people's history.

451

00:25:17,000 --> 00:25:21,000

And I can't complete my own. It's very frustrating.

452

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

Jim's parents met in 1943 during the darkest days of World War II.

453

00:25:26,000 --> 00:25:31,000

Donald Currie was 23, a Canadian sergeant serving in England.

454

00:25:31,000 --> 00:25:35,000

Annie Fry was a 19-year-old country girl from Wales.

455

00:25:35,000 --> 00:25:39,000

The two fell in love and were married that same year.

456

00:25:42,000 --> 00:25:45,000

My mother was described to me as a woman,

457

00:25:45,000 --> 00:25:48,000

a woman who was not a woman,

458

00:25:48,000 --> 00:25:51,000

but a woman who was not a woman.

459

00:25:51,000 --> 00:25:55,000

My mother was described to me as being an outgoing,

460

00:25:55,000 --> 00:25:59,000

socially oriented, kind of upbeat person with a lot of vitality.

461

00:25:59,000 --> 00:26:01,000

She was a young girl, really.

462

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

In 1944, London was still being bombed by the Nazis.

463

00:26:07,000 --> 00:26:12,000

Annie was pregnant when the impact of one of the bombs knocked her to the ground.

464

00:26:12,000 --> 00:26:14,000

She miscarried.

465

00:26:14,000 --> 00:26:18,000

She was born again, and Donald sent her to live with his parents in Vancouver.

466

00:26:18,000 --> 00:26:22,000

On December 20, 1944, Jim was born.

467

00:26:22,000 --> 00:26:24,000

Go to sleep.

468

00:26:24,000 --> 00:26:29,000

Annie's delight was tempered by the absence of Donald, still stationed in England.

469

00:26:30,000 --> 00:26:32,000

I'm sleepy, getting tired.

470

00:26:34,000 --> 00:26:39,000

She's in a foreign country. She doesn't know anybody except for my dad's immediate family.

471

00:26:39,000 --> 00:26:44,000

She makes the best adjustment she can, but it's a lonely kind of existence for her.

472

00:26:44,000 --> 00:26:49,000

And I think fraught with a lot of fear, you know, that whether or not my dad was going to make it home.

473

00:26:49,000 --> 00:26:51,000

Go to sleep.

474

00:26:51,000 --> 00:26:53,000

Good night.

475

00:27:01,000 --> 00:27:05,000

In June of 1945, Annie's prayers were answered.

476

00:27:05,000 --> 00:27:13,000

The war in Europe was finally over, and after more than a year of separation from his wife, Donald Curry was home.

477

00:27:22,000 --> 00:27:24,000

Annie!

478

00:27:24,000 --> 00:27:26,000

Oh!

479

00:27:32,000 --> 00:27:37,000

Donald, this is Jimmy. That's your son.

480

00:27:37,000 --> 00:27:39,000

Jimmy, this is Daddy.

481

00:27:39,000 --> 00:27:46,000

Donald was overjoyed to meet his son for the first time, but the happiness of his homecoming was short-lived.

482

00:27:46,000 --> 00:27:48,000

Always can be, Daddy.

483

00:27:48,000 --> 00:27:50,000

The war had changed him forever.

484

00:27:50,000 --> 00:27:55,000

It was a very traumatic experience for my father.

485

00:27:55,000 --> 00:27:58,000

He thought war was wrong.

486

00:27:58,000 --> 00:28:11,000

He told me once that you'll never know how much it can change you when you see your closest friends blown into a thousand pieces in front of your eyes, and you can do nothing about it.

487

00:28:11,000 --> 00:28:18,000

I think he lost a lot of faith. He closed down emotionally to protect himself.

488

00:28:19,000 --> 00:28:27,000

In 1945, a second son, Darrell, was born, and Donald Curry found a position as a customs official.

489

00:28:27,000 --> 00:28:31,000

His job took him out of the house every night.

490

00:28:31,000 --> 00:28:37,000

Annie was left alone and began spending time with one of her neighbors, a much older married man.

491

00:28:38,000 --> 00:28:44,000

Soon the relationship turned into a full-fledged affair.

492

00:28:44,000 --> 00:28:50,000

A relative broke the news to Donald, and he sued Annie for divorce and for custody of the boys.

493

00:28:50,000 --> 00:28:58,000

I believe the petitioner, Mr. Curry, implicitly. He's a clean, wholesome individual with a fine war record.

494

00:28:58,000 --> 00:29:05,000

I hear by granted decree in his favor against Anne Allen Curry, and the custody of his two children.

495

00:29:08,000 --> 00:29:17,000

My understanding of the judgment against my mother was that my dad was to have sole custody of both children, and she was to have no visitation rights.

496

00:29:17,000 --> 00:29:22,000

It would be up to my father whether or not she would be allowed to see the children.

497

00:29:23,000 --> 00:29:31,000

Mr. Curry, you must realize that there is more good than evil in this girl. So do not burn your bridges.

498

00:29:31,000 --> 00:29:35,000

She has been a clean and decent girl until she met the correspondent.

499

00:29:35,000 --> 00:29:41,000

The judge's decree doesn't indicate hostility toward her. It indicates that even there may be something worth salvaging,

500

00:29:41,000 --> 00:29:45,000

that she was under the blishments of an older, more sophisticated man.

501

00:29:45,000 --> 00:29:54,000

In spite of all the negatives I've heard, and on the surface of being a very nasty divorce, there was still something that came through for the judge.

502

00:29:54,000 --> 00:29:56,000

This was basically a good person.

503

00:29:56,000 --> 00:29:58,000

Well, you think you need to long, Johns?

504

00:29:58,000 --> 00:29:59,000

Yeah.

505

00:29:59,000 --> 00:30:00,000

All right.

506

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

Donald Curry elected to send his younger son, Darrell, to live with a couple he knew in Vancouver.

507

00:30:06,000 --> 00:30:08,000

And don't talk back to your father.

508

00:30:08,000 --> 00:30:11,000

Annie, powerless, tried to put on a brave face.

509

00:30:12,000 --> 00:30:14,000

Do you want your favorite shirt?

510

00:30:14,000 --> 00:30:16,000

Yes, I think so.

511

00:30:17,000 --> 00:30:22,000

And Darrell, I want you to know, just because I'm not there doesn't mean I don't love you.

512

00:30:29,000 --> 00:30:33,000

Just after the divorce was final, Donald Curry broke his family apart.

513

00:30:35,000 --> 00:30:40,000

Darrell would eventually be adopted. Jim would see his mother one final time.

514

00:30:45,000 --> 00:30:51,000

Several months after the divorce, Donald Curry decided to move to Los Angeles with Jim.

515

00:30:51,000 --> 00:30:56,000

Just before the departure, Donald let Annie tell Jim goodbye.

516

00:30:56,000 --> 00:30:58,000

He needs his mother.

517

00:30:58,000 --> 00:31:00,000

I don't think so.

518

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

He needs his brother.

519

00:31:03,000 --> 00:31:05,000

He needs me.

520

00:31:05,000 --> 00:31:06,000

Look at him.

521

00:31:06,000 --> 00:31:08,000

I don't have to.

522

00:31:08,000 --> 00:31:10,000

I know what he feels.

523

00:31:10,000 --> 00:31:14,000

Despite Annie's pleas, Donald remained unmoved.

524

00:31:16,000 --> 00:31:22,000

There was a sense in me at the time that it was the last time I would see her.

525

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

I don't remember any hugging.

526

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

I don't remember any arguing.

527

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

But I do remember it being sad.

528

00:31:32,000 --> 00:31:37,000

I remember my feeling sad and confused.

529

00:31:38,000 --> 00:31:46,000

And sort of like just not very powerful in this situation.

530

00:31:46,000 --> 00:31:49,000

Whatever was happening was out of my control.

531

00:31:53,000 --> 00:31:56,000

In Los Angeles, Donald Curry married twice.

532

00:31:56,000 --> 00:31:59,000

Both stepmothers were kind to Jim.

533

00:31:59,000 --> 00:32:02,000

Still, he yearned for the mother he barely remembered.

534

00:32:03,000 --> 00:32:10,000

My dad was always very reticent to talk about his early life and my mother in particular.

535

00:32:10,000 --> 00:32:17,000

Anything that would lead my dad to believe that I wanted to find her was very upsetting to him.

536

00:32:19,000 --> 00:32:22,000

Donald Curry died in 1989.

537

00:32:22,000 --> 00:32:27,000

After his father's death, Jim Curry began to search for his mother in earnest.

538

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

Although Jim is unearthed, no new clues to Annie Curry's whereabouts.

539

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

He has found his brother.

540

00:32:34,000 --> 00:32:37,000

Darrell is married and still living in Vancouver.

541

00:32:37,000 --> 00:32:39,000

He and Jim have been reunited.

542

00:32:39,000 --> 00:32:43,000

But Darrell's loyalty is to his adoptive mother and father.

543

00:32:43,000 --> 00:32:46,000

He has no memory of Annie or Donald.

544

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

Despite Darrell's reaction, Jim is more committed than ever to finding his mother.

545

00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:01,000

There's an unconditional love that a mother has for her son,

546

00:33:01,000 --> 00:33:04,000

and I feel that that was pulled away from me.

547

00:33:05,000 --> 00:33:10,000

I don't think I'd have to say a word to her for hours if I met her.

548

00:33:10,000 --> 00:33:12,000

I don't think I'd have to say anything.

549

00:33:15,000 --> 00:33:20,000

Annie Ellen Curry married again in 1951, but that marriage too ended in divorce.

550

00:33:20,000 --> 00:33:26,000

She may be using the last name from her second marriage, McDonald, or her maiden name, Fry.

551

00:33:26,000 --> 00:33:30,000

Jim believes she could be living in the United States, Canada, or England.

552

00:33:46,000 --> 00:33:50,000

The 1930s, the Great Depression,

553

00:33:50,000 --> 00:33:56,000

bread lines, hobos, and shabby towns were an all too visible part of the American landscape.

554

00:33:56,000 --> 00:34:02,000

Millions lost their jobs, their homes, their savings, and finally their pride.

555

00:34:03,000 --> 00:34:09,000

Many times a destitute relied upon strangers to help them in their time of need.

556

00:34:11,000 --> 00:34:15,000

One such stranger was an ordinary farmer named Charlie Best.

557

00:34:16,000 --> 00:34:20,000

Charlie lived with his wife Alba and three children, Zella May, Carl and Verlin,

558

00:34:20,000 --> 00:34:23,000

in the rolling hills of eastern Tennessee.

559

00:34:25,000 --> 00:34:30,000

They managed to stave off the hardships of the Depression by growing watermelons and tobacco.

560

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

As darkness fell on a warm spring evening in 1939,

561

00:34:38,000 --> 00:34:42,000

an unknown traveler and two young girls sought refuge at Charlie's farmhouse.

562

00:34:46,000 --> 00:34:47,000

Evening.

563

00:34:48,000 --> 00:34:49,000

There's Tom Underwood.

564

00:34:50,000 --> 00:34:51,000

Charlie Best.

565

00:34:51,000 --> 00:34:52,000

Jocelyn Bullard.

566

00:34:52,000 --> 00:34:53,000

Lucky.

567

00:34:53,000 --> 00:34:57,000

Charlie's daughter, Zella May, then a teenager, remembers that evening vividly.

568

00:34:57,000 --> 00:35:02,000

Well actually I was trying to find a place where the girls could pass the night under a roof for a change.

569

00:35:03,000 --> 00:35:10,000

He just come up to the porch and asked Daddy if he would give the two little girls a bed to sleep in.

570

00:35:10,000 --> 00:35:12,000

And said he would sleep in the barn.

571

00:35:13,000 --> 00:35:18,000

And Daddy told him though that he could stay in, you know, house too.

572

00:35:19,000 --> 00:35:20,000

Where's home?

573

00:35:21,000 --> 00:35:22,000

To be honest with you, we don't have one.

574

00:35:22,000 --> 00:35:23,000

We've been on the move for so long.

575

00:35:23,000 --> 00:35:25,000

But we come down from Knoxville.

576

00:35:25,000 --> 00:35:29,000

Tom Underwood was a man who had fallen upon hard times.

577

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

His daughters Madeline, nine and eight of seven, had traveled the back roads of them for months

578

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

as he searched in vain for work.

579

00:35:38,000 --> 00:35:40,000

Their mother had died years before.

580

00:35:48,000 --> 00:35:51,000

They spent the night and I cooked breakfast for them.

581

00:35:52,000 --> 00:35:56,000

And well, up in the morning I probably sat in my radar call.

582

00:35:57,000 --> 00:35:59,000

He left to walk them with the little girls again.

583

00:36:00,000 --> 00:36:01,000

All right.

584

00:36:02,000 --> 00:36:03,000

What are you folks heading?

585

00:36:03,000 --> 00:36:05,000

Well, I got Kim Folk just north of here.

586

00:36:05,000 --> 00:36:07,000

I think we'll head in that direction for a while.

587

00:36:07,000 --> 00:36:08,000

All right.

588

00:36:08,000 --> 00:36:09,000

You take care.

589

00:36:09,000 --> 00:36:13,000

Tom told Charlie that he was taking the two girls to live with friends in another part of Tennessee

590

00:36:13,000 --> 00:36:16,000

while he continued his search for a job.

591

00:36:18,000 --> 00:36:20,000

I wish they could have stayed with us.

592

00:36:20,000 --> 00:36:22,000

That'd be all right.

593

00:36:23,000 --> 00:36:27,000

Right as they left, I said, Daddy, why didn't we just keep those little girls?

594

00:36:28,000 --> 00:36:30,000

I just didn't figure I would ever see them anymore.

595

00:36:30,000 --> 00:36:31,000

I'm sorry.

596

00:36:34,000 --> 00:36:38,000

But a few days later, Tom and the girls passed through the area again.

597

00:36:39,000 --> 00:36:43,000

By pure coincidence, Selame best happened upon them.

598

00:36:44,000 --> 00:36:46,000

Hey, that man was at my house the other day.

599

00:36:48,000 --> 00:36:49,000

Hold on a second, I'll be back.

600

00:36:50,000 --> 00:36:52,000

Hey, Mr. Underwood.

601

00:36:52,000 --> 00:36:53,000

Hey, Mr. Underwood.

602

00:36:54,000 --> 00:36:55,000

Where are you going?

603

00:36:56,000 --> 00:36:59,000

Well, my Kim Folk couldn't take care of the girls, so we're going to Knoxville.

604

00:36:59,000 --> 00:37:03,000

Well, I talked to my pa last night, and he said that you all could come stay with us.

605

00:37:03,000 --> 00:37:05,000

Oh, can we, Dad, please?

606

00:37:05,000 --> 00:37:07,000

I don't know, Selame. I don't think that's a good idea.

607

00:37:08,000 --> 00:37:10,000

Why don't you at least come talk to him?

608

00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:11,000

Please?

609

00:37:14,000 --> 00:37:15,000

All right, let's try it.

610

00:37:16,000 --> 00:37:22,000

Tom would later agree to leave the girls in Charlie's care until he could get back on his feet again.

611

00:37:23,000 --> 00:37:32,000

Times were hard, and it was hard for us to survive, but he was willing to take them and give them a home and give them what we had to eat.

612

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

It might not have been everything, but we never did go hungry.

613

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

Madeleine and Ada were immediately accepted as part of the family.

614

00:37:41,000 --> 00:37:43,000

Charlie treated them as if they were his own children.

615

00:37:45,000 --> 00:37:49,000

The two girls shared in everything with Selame, Berlin and Carl.

616

00:37:52,000 --> 00:37:54,000

We went to school together, we went to church together.

617

00:37:54,000 --> 00:37:57,000

We worked in the fields. They went to the fields with us.

618

00:37:57,000 --> 00:38:04,000

And we had mules, and we had cows, and we'd have shuck corn and feed them twice a day full of husk.

619

00:38:04,000 --> 00:38:07,000

They'd shuck off and put their little troughs to feed them.

620

00:38:08,000 --> 00:38:12,000

They worked as hard as me and Berlin did, you know, they'd shuck corn just like we did.

621

00:38:14,000 --> 00:38:16,000

Thank you for your interviews, name?

622

00:38:16,000 --> 00:38:17,000

Amen.

623

00:38:18,000 --> 00:38:23,000

They just didn't seem like no strangers. It's like I'd always knew them.

624

00:38:24,000 --> 00:38:27,000

I always wanted a sister, and I knew I never would have one.

625

00:38:27,000 --> 00:38:28,000

Thanks, sir.

626

00:38:28,000 --> 00:38:31,000

So they took the place of a sister.

627

00:38:33,000 --> 00:38:34,000

Hey, Mama.

628

00:38:34,000 --> 00:38:35,000

Sugar.

629

00:38:35,000 --> 00:38:39,000

Madeleine became especially close to her surrogate mother, Charlie's wife, Alva.

630

00:38:39,000 --> 00:38:44,000

Alva suffered from a rare nerve disorder, which left her unable to care for herself.

631

00:38:44,000 --> 00:38:45,000

Yes, my dad.

632

00:38:45,000 --> 00:38:46,000

Oh, Christ.

633

00:38:51,000 --> 00:38:57,000

I think daddy was as happy as the girls was, and I think the girls was as happy as daddy was.

634

00:38:58,000 --> 00:39:03,000

They would skip and hop, you know, and he'd hold their hands, and they would just happy.

635

00:39:05,000 --> 00:39:10,000

You know, there was never nothing said about, you know, them being a stranger or anything like

that.

636

00:39:10,000 --> 00:39:15,000

They just sort of liked one of us, and we really enjoyed, you know, them being with us.

637

00:39:17,000 --> 00:39:21,000

Zellame remembers that Tom Underwood visited his girls at least twice.

638

00:39:22,000 --> 00:39:26,000

Then, after Madeleine and Ada had been with the best for 26 months,

639

00:39:27,000 --> 00:39:30,000

Tom returned to the farmhouse for the final time.

640

00:39:31,000 --> 00:39:32,000

Yeah.

641

00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:34,000

Mr. Underwood.

642

00:39:34,000 --> 00:39:36,000

Zellame, I come for the children.

643

00:39:36,000 --> 00:39:41,000

None of those things are any. I just didn't watch that on the lawn. Could you wait till dad gets home?

644

00:39:41,000 --> 00:39:45,000

I really can't tell them. Maybe it's coming on nightfall, and I need to be on the road for dark.

645

00:39:45,000 --> 00:39:48,000

If you'll just pack some things for me and let me see the girls.

646

00:39:49,000 --> 00:39:58,000

Ada said that his health was bad, and that he had married, and he wanted the children to be with the children.

647

00:39:58,000 --> 00:40:00,000

Zellame, I want to go.

648

00:40:01,000 --> 00:40:03,000

Sorry, I'm a bit too happy.

649

00:40:03,000 --> 00:40:04,000

Why?

650

00:40:04,000 --> 00:40:06,000

The girls got everything?

651

00:40:06,000 --> 00:40:07,000

Zellame.

652

00:40:07,000 --> 00:40:08,000

Okay.

653

00:40:08,000 --> 00:40:11,000

Well, Charlie, did you say bye?

654

00:40:11,000 --> 00:40:13,000

I'm totally doubt we're going to be the failed ones.

655

00:40:13,000 --> 00:40:15,000

How's it? Get your swat?

656

00:40:15,000 --> 00:40:16,000

Let's go.

657

00:40:17,000 --> 00:40:19,000

Ada, come on!

658

00:40:20,000 --> 00:40:25,000

I think the reason he wouldn't wait till daddy come in, he was afraid that daddy would buck on him.

659

00:40:25,000 --> 00:40:29,000

That daddy might say, hey, you're not going to take the children, you pay me some money.

660

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

Now, that's just what I thought. Now, well, that's true. I don't know. That's the way I felt.

661

00:40:35,000 --> 00:40:37,000

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Best.

662

00:40:37,000 --> 00:40:41,000

Three months later, Charlie received a curious letter from Madeline and Ada.

663

00:40:41,000 --> 00:40:42,000

Where daddy left us.

664

00:40:42,000 --> 00:40:45,000

Their father had placed them in an orphanage in Nashville.

665

00:40:45,000 --> 00:40:47,000

I think I left my...

666

00:40:47,000 --> 00:40:51,000

Charlie immediately contacted the orphanage and asked if he could adopt the girls.

667

00:40:51,000 --> 00:40:53,000

We love you, Madeline and Ada.

668

00:40:53,000 --> 00:40:59,000

But by the time the letter arrived, Tom Underwood had once again retrieved his children.

669

00:40:59,000 --> 00:41:03,000

It was the last time the best family heard from Madeline and Ada.

670

00:41:05,000 --> 00:41:14,000

Today, more than 50 years later, Charlie and Zelame still live within 10 miles of the old farmhouse.

671

00:41:15,000 --> 00:41:17,000

Zelame is 66.

672

00:41:18,000 --> 00:41:20,000

Charlie is 91 years old.

673

00:41:22,000 --> 00:41:24,000

How are you, daddy?

674

00:41:26,000 --> 00:41:28,000

I said, how are you?

675

00:41:28,000 --> 00:41:31,000

Why didn't you meet and tell me you were all right? How are you?

676

00:41:31,000 --> 00:41:35,000

Well, if daddy could see her again, it would make him cry.

677

00:41:35,000 --> 00:41:38,000

And of course, I know he'd tell her that he loved her. He called some of the little girls.

678

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

Now, he don't call them. He don't look at them as being women.

679

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

He called some of the little girls.

680

00:41:43,000 --> 00:41:47,000

This time of the day, he said, have you heard any more about the little girls?

681

00:41:48,000 --> 00:41:52,000

And I said, no, daddy, but they're coming. They're coming.

682

00:41:53,000 --> 00:41:58,000

The night the story aired, Ada Underwood, now 59 years old,

683

00:41:58,000 --> 00:42:01,000

was watching our broadcast at her home in Indiana.

684

00:42:01,000 --> 00:42:05,000

Ada was shocked to see herself and her older sister Madeline profiled.

685

00:42:05,000 --> 00:42:08,000

Sadly, Madeline passed away several years ago.

686

00:42:08,000 --> 00:42:14,000

But for Ada, Charlie and Zelame story stir distant childhood memories.

687

00:42:15,000 --> 00:42:21,000

Ten days after our broadcast, Ada Underwood traveled to Madisonville, Tennessee

688

00:42:21,000 --> 00:42:27,000

for a very special reunion with Charlie Best and his two children, Zelame and Carl.

689

00:42:30,000 --> 00:42:34,000

Well, I was anxious to see her. It was exciting to know she was coming.

690

00:42:34,000 --> 00:42:37,000

Where do you feel like, you see her?

691

00:42:37,000 --> 00:42:39,000

No, what oldie?

692

00:42:39,000 --> 00:42:41,000

When you got to come.

693

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

It is. It's the day I have been waiting for.

694

00:42:45,000 --> 00:42:49,000

Really for 50 more years.

695

00:42:49,000 --> 00:42:52,000

How was your father?

696

00:42:52,000 --> 00:42:55,000

Well, getting that kind of old.

697

00:42:55,000 --> 00:42:59,000

I was very excited when I heard that they were looking for me

698

00:42:59,000 --> 00:43:03,000

because somebody cared enough about me to hump over me that long.

699

00:43:07,000 --> 00:43:10,000

Although only eight years old when she last saw Charlie,

700

00:43:10,000 --> 00:43:15,000

Ada never forgot the warmth and kindness he and his family brought into her life.

701

00:43:18,000 --> 00:43:21,000

Well, this year is eight of that, as you remember.

702

00:43:21,000 --> 00:43:26,000

Charlie had to be very good to my sister and I for him to take us in

703

00:43:26,000 --> 00:43:30,000

and take care of us when we had nobody else to take care of us.

704

00:43:30,000 --> 00:43:34,000

So I think he had to be a really great man.

705

00:43:35,000 --> 00:43:36,000

You're pretty.

706

00:43:36,000 --> 00:43:37,000

Thank you.

707

00:43:37,000 --> 00:43:39,000

You're pretty.

708

00:43:40,000 --> 00:43:46,000

It just meant a lot to daddy and I feel that in his own mind,

709

00:43:46,000 --> 00:43:49,000

a dream has come true.

710

00:44:00,000 --> 00:44:05,000

Sadly, eight weeks after we filmed this update, Charlie best passed away.

711

00:44:05,000 --> 00:44:08,000

According to his family, the reunion with Ada

712

00:44:08,000 --> 00:44:11,000

brought Charlie great comfort in his final days.

713

00:44:20,000 --> 00:44:25,000

Join me next time for an all new edition of Unsolved Mysteries.