

1

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

This program is about unsolved mysteries.

2

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

Whenever possible, the actual family members and police

3

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

officials have participated in recreating the events.

4

00:00:09,280 --> 00:00:12,120

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

5

00:00:16,560 --> 00:00:18,960

Just two months ago, a kind-hearted truck driver

6

00:00:18,960 --> 00:00:22,720

in Virginia treated a young homeless man to a hot meal.

7

00:00:22,720 --> 00:00:25,000

Incredibly, this chance encounter has now

8

00:00:25,000 --> 00:00:27,360

become a key piece of evidence of the crime.

9

00:00:27,360 --> 00:00:30,960

In the strange case of 28-year-old John Cheek.

10

00:00:30,960 --> 00:00:33,560

Cheek, a Memphis businessman, mysteriously

11

00:00:33,560 --> 00:00:36,520

dropped from sight in December of 1993,

12

00:00:36,520 --> 00:00:39,040

just days before finalizing a deal that would

13

00:00:39,040 --> 00:00:40,760

have made him a millionaire.

14

00:00:40,760 --> 00:00:44,560

Now his family needs your help to find him.

15

00:00:44,560 --> 00:00:47,320

Earl and Donna Chalkpacks scrimped and saved for years

16

00:00:47,320 --> 00:00:49,760

to build a log cabin home of their own.

17

00:00:49,760 --> 00:00:51,720

But when they handed over their life savings

18

00:00:51,720 --> 00:00:54,560

to a smooth-talking contractor named Mark Mitchell,

19

00:00:54,560 --> 00:00:57,000

the Chalkpacks never guessed that they'd become the latest

20

00:00:57,000 --> 00:01:01,160

victims of a lucrative million-dollar scam.

21

00:01:01,160 --> 00:01:05,040

In 1917, three peasant children in Fatima, Portugal,

22

00:01:05,040 --> 00:01:07,000

claimed they were visited several times

23

00:01:07,000 --> 00:01:09,640

by a vision of the Virgin Mary.

24

00:01:09,640 --> 00:01:11,480

During the controversy that followed,

25

00:01:11,480 --> 00:01:14,560

they revealed that the Virgin would make one final appearance

26

00:01:14,560 --> 00:01:16,960

and perform a great miracle.

27

00:01:16,960 --> 00:01:20,560

Many of the 70,000 religious pilgrims who came for the occasion

28

00:01:20,560 --> 00:01:22,000

were not disappointed.

29

00:01:22,040 --> 00:01:23,560

Tonight, we'll take you to Portugal

30

00:01:23,560 --> 00:01:25,720

to investigate the fabled miracles of Fatima.

31

00:01:28,720 --> 00:01:32,680

Join me for these intriguing new stories and more.

32

00:01:32,680 --> 00:01:35,320

Another edition of Unsolved Mysteries.

33

00:02:22,160 --> 00:02:24,800

The Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City

34

00:02:24,800 --> 00:02:28,600

is visited each year by millions of Catholic pilgrims.

35

00:02:28,600 --> 00:02:31,440

According to legend, it was on this very spot

36

00:02:31,440 --> 00:02:33,880

that the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ,

37

00:02:33,880 --> 00:02:37,920

appeared to a Christian convert in 1531.

38

00:02:37,920 --> 00:02:40,960

Catholic authorities have judged the vision to be a miracle,

39

00:02:40,960 --> 00:02:41,960

worthy of belief.

40

00:02:41,960 --> 00:02:43,960

The Virgin Mary, the Virgin Mary,

41

00:02:43,960 --> 00:02:46,960

was the first Virgin to be visited in the city of Mexico.

42

00:02:46,960 --> 00:02:49,760

The Virgin Mary was the first Virgin to be visited in the city

43

00:02:49,880 --> 00:02:54,000

and the vision to be a miracle, worthy of belief.

44

00:02:54,000 --> 00:02:57,000

Millions also make the pilgrimage to the Basilica at Lourdes,

45

00:02:57,000 --> 00:03:00,240

France, where Catholic traditions, as the Virgin Mary,

46

00:03:00,240 --> 00:03:03,840

appeared in 1858.

47

00:03:03,840 --> 00:03:06,120

And then there is Fatima, Portugal.

48

00:03:06,120 --> 00:03:10,040

It was here in 1917 that many believed the Virgin Mary made

49

00:03:10,040 --> 00:03:14,760

her most dramatic appearance, seen by 3,000 children, 10-year-old

50

00:03:14,760 --> 00:03:18,400

Lucia Santos and her two younger cousins, Jacinta

51

00:03:18,440 --> 00:03:20,840

and Francisco Marto.

52

00:03:20,840 --> 00:03:23,800

Their extraordinary account began in the quiet solitude

53

00:03:23,800 --> 00:03:29,320

of rural Portugal, where the following scenes were filmed.

54

00:03:29,320 --> 00:03:33,640

May 13, 1917, a Sunday in the small farming community

55

00:03:33,640 --> 00:03:35,080

of Fatima.

56

00:03:35,080 --> 00:03:37,760

Lucia Santos and her cousins had taken their sheep

57

00:03:37,760 --> 00:03:41,000

to an area known as a Cova da Hiria, land owned

58

00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:42,840

by Lucia's family.

59

00:03:42,840 --> 00:03:47,640

As a flock grazed, the children began to play.

60

00:03:48,080 --> 00:03:52,640

They were building a little wall around a tree

61

00:03:52,640 --> 00:03:55,640

when there was a flash of light.

62

00:03:55,640 --> 00:03:58,640

And Lucia thought the flash was a sign of rain.

63

00:03:58,640 --> 00:04:00,640

She thought that it was lightning.

64

00:04:00,640 --> 00:04:05,640

So she said, let's go home so we don't get caught by the rain.

65

00:04:05,640 --> 00:04:08,640

The children glimpsed a second flash of lightning,

66

00:04:08,640 --> 00:04:12,640

which heralded something far greater than a rainstorm.

67

00:04:13,640 --> 00:04:15,640

Oh, my God.

68

00:04:15,640 --> 00:04:18,640

You were not afraid.

69

00:04:18,640 --> 00:04:20,640

I didn't do anything wrong.

70

00:04:20,640 --> 00:04:23,640

According to Lucia, the glowing figure said she had come

71

00:04:23,640 --> 00:04:25,640

from heaven and that she would not harm them.

72

00:04:25,640 --> 00:04:28,640

What can I do if you want me?

73

00:04:28,640 --> 00:04:32,640

I came here six months ago, I didn't care about this,

74

00:04:32,640 --> 00:04:37,640

but I will tell you who I am and what I want.

75

00:04:37,640 --> 00:04:40,640

And I will go to heaven too?

76

00:04:41,640 --> 00:04:45,640

The lady told Lucia that she and her two cousins

77

00:04:45,640 --> 00:04:47,640

would be called to heaven.

78

00:04:47,640 --> 00:04:49,640

She then asked the children to be her messengers

79

00:04:49,640 --> 00:04:51,640

and warned them that in doing so,

80

00:04:51,640 --> 00:04:53,640

they would endure great hardships.

81

00:04:53,640 --> 00:04:56,640

Sacrace de Deus será vosco forte.

82

00:04:59,640 --> 00:05:02,640

The astonishing visitation was over,

83

00:05:02,640 --> 00:05:06,640

but Lucia Santucia and her cousins had become the key figures

84

00:05:06,640 --> 00:05:09,640

in an episode that is now regarded as one of the great miracles

85

00:05:09,640 --> 00:05:11,640

of Catholicism.

86

00:05:11,640 --> 00:05:15,640

Six times, Lucia would claim the Virgin Mary appeared to them.

87

00:05:15,640 --> 00:05:18,640

On the sixth occasion, tens of thousands were on hand

88

00:05:18,640 --> 00:05:21,640

for a final dazzling spectacle.

89

00:05:21,640 --> 00:05:25,640

Not everyone, however, was inspired by the rumors of a miracle.

90

00:05:25,640 --> 00:05:29,640

Lucia's mother was in fact furious at her daughter's involvement.

91

00:05:40,640 --> 00:05:43,640

Her mother punished her every now and again.

92

00:05:43,640 --> 00:05:47,640

João Marto, Lucia's cousin, was then a young boy.

93

00:05:47,640 --> 00:05:49,640

It wasn't that her mother was bad,

94

00:05:49,640 --> 00:05:52,640

but she wanted to have her daughter to say that this was a lie,

95

00:05:52,640 --> 00:05:54,640

but Lucia kept saying,

96

00:05:54,640 --> 00:05:58,640

how can I say it was a lie if I actually saw her?

97

00:05:59,640 --> 00:06:03,640

For Lucia Santucia, the suffering predicted by the lady had begun.

98

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

But even in the face of her family's hostility,

99

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

Lucia returned with her cousins to the Cova da Iria on June 13.

100

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

They were joined by some 50 villagers

101

00:06:13,640 --> 00:06:16,640

drawn by rumors of the impending visitation.

102

00:06:23,640 --> 00:06:26,640

Once again, the three children said the lady from heaven

103

00:06:26,640 --> 00:06:27,640

appeared to them.

104

00:06:27,640 --> 00:06:31,640

As in the first visitation, only Lucia spoke to the vision.

105

00:06:32,640 --> 00:06:36,640

All those some claimed that an unusual cloud of light was visible.

106

00:06:36,640 --> 00:06:39,640

No one else saw the lady from heaven.

107

00:06:55,640 --> 00:06:58,640

When news of the second episode reached Lucia's mother,

108

00:06:58,640 --> 00:07:00,640

she was still outraged to find her daughter

109

00:07:00,640 --> 00:07:03,640

involved in what she regarded as a hoax.

110

00:07:14,640 --> 00:07:17,640

In an act of startling disobedience for the time and place,

111

00:07:17,640 --> 00:07:21,640

10-year-old Lucia Santucia refused to discuss the lady from heaven

112

00:07:21,640 --> 00:07:25,640

with Fatima's parish priest, Father Emmanuel Fajera.

113

00:07:28,640 --> 00:07:33,640

Father Fajera found himself in a politically delicate position.

114

00:07:33,640 --> 00:07:36,640

The government saw the Catholic Church as a bitter rival

115

00:07:36,640 --> 00:07:38,640

for the public's loyalty.

116

00:07:38,640 --> 00:07:41,640

Fajera feared any endorsement of Lucia's claims

117

00:07:41,640 --> 00:07:44,640

would be taken as an attempt to boost the church's influence

118

00:07:44,640 --> 00:07:47,640

and would bring the wrath of the politicians upon him.

119

00:07:59,640 --> 00:08:02,640

The church, for example, could be taken over by the government

120

00:08:02,640 --> 00:08:05,640

in the sense that the government would seize all of the church property in Portugal.

121

00:08:05,640 --> 00:08:09,640

There was the possibility of the government physically removing bishops,

122

00:08:09,640 --> 00:08:12,640

imprisoning them or sending them out of the country.

123

00:08:12,640 --> 00:08:14,640

That was done with some bishops, not all.

124

00:08:14,640 --> 00:08:17,640

So there are many things that the government could do.

125

00:08:17,640 --> 00:08:20,640

You're making a mistake, you're making a mistake.

126

00:08:20,640 --> 00:08:24,640

You're making a mistake and you're making a mistake to bring false promises to men.

127

00:08:25,640 --> 00:08:28,640

Well, obviously, for a 10-year-old child being,

128

00:08:28,640 --> 00:08:31,640

word of a priest was an important thing to hear,

129

00:08:31,640 --> 00:08:34,640

and Lucia left the church with a very big problem.

130

00:08:34,640 --> 00:08:38,640

She had to admit that maybe the demon had got into her that

131

00:08:38,640 --> 00:08:41,640

this was an illusion created by the devil,

132

00:08:41,640 --> 00:08:43,640

that perhaps her mother was right,

133

00:08:43,640 --> 00:08:46,640

that she hadn't really seen anything at all.

134

00:08:47,640 --> 00:08:50,640

In her memoirs, which she began writing when she was 28,

135

00:08:50,640 --> 00:08:54,640

Lucia Santous described her tortured internal debate.

136

00:08:55,640 --> 00:09:00,640

As I heard people say that the devil always brings conflict and disorder,

137

00:09:00,640 --> 00:09:05,640

I began to think that truly, ever since I had started seeing these things,

138

00:09:05,640 --> 00:09:08,640

our home was no longer the same,

139

00:09:08,640 --> 00:09:11,640

for joy and peace had fled.

140

00:09:11,640 --> 00:09:13,640

What anguish I felt.

141

00:09:14,640 --> 00:09:20,640

July 13, 1917, the appointed day for the third appearance.

142

00:09:20,640 --> 00:09:23,640

By now, word of the miraculous visions had spread.

143

00:09:23,640 --> 00:09:26,640

Pilgrims clogged the road leading to the cova,

144

00:09:26,640 --> 00:09:31,640

and many beseeched Lucia to intervene with the Lady from Heaven on their behalf.

145

00:09:34,640 --> 00:09:37,640

At 12 noon, the Lady once again appeared,

146

00:09:37,640 --> 00:09:40,640

and once again only to the three children.

147

00:09:41,640 --> 00:09:43,640

We wanted to know who she was.

148

00:09:46,640 --> 00:09:50,640

Please, make the miracle so that all people believe that your God is here.

149

00:09:52,640 --> 00:09:56,640

The Lady reminded Lucia to return at noon on the 13th day of each month.

150

00:09:56,640 --> 00:09:59,640

She also promised that on her sixth appearance

151

00:09:59,640 --> 00:10:03,640

she would perform a miracle for all to see and believe.

152

00:10:05,640 --> 00:10:09,640

The Lady from Heaven then invoked a terrifying vision of hell,

153

00:10:09,640 --> 00:10:12,640

which Lucia would later describe in her memoirs.

154

00:10:12,640 --> 00:10:16,640

Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form,

155

00:10:16,640 --> 00:10:19,640

amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair,

156

00:10:19,640 --> 00:10:23,640

which horrified us and made us tremble with fear.

157

00:10:26,640 --> 00:10:29,640

Lucia claimed the specter of hell was a Lady's warning

158

00:10:29,640 --> 00:10:32,640

that God was offended by recent events in Europe.

159

00:10:32,640 --> 00:10:36,640

World War I was then in his third relentless year.

160

00:10:36,640 --> 00:10:39,640

The Lady predicted that the war would soon end,

161

00:10:39,640 --> 00:10:42,640

only to be replaced by a more serious threat, Russia.

162

00:10:44,640 --> 00:10:47,640

Lucia knew nothing of that nation or its revolution,

163

00:10:47,640 --> 00:10:51,640

but she claimed the Lady deemed Russia an offense to God.

164

00:10:52,640 --> 00:10:56,640

Many believe these words anticipated the rise of an atheistic government,

165

00:10:56,640 --> 00:10:58,640

the communists.

166

00:10:58,640 --> 00:11:02,640

According to Lucia, the Lady promised another destructive war

167

00:11:02,640 --> 00:11:04,640

if Russia was not restored to faith.

168

00:11:05,640 --> 00:11:08,640

Lucia said the Lady from Heaven made one other pronouncement,

169

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

but was adamant that Lucia keep it a secret.

170

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

One month later, Lucia's will would be severely tested.

171

00:11:21,640 --> 00:11:24,640

August 13th, the day of the fourth appearance,

172

00:11:24,640 --> 00:11:28,640

a local government administrator, Arturo Santosh,

173

00:11:28,640 --> 00:11:32,640

offered to personally escort Lucia, Jacinta,

174

00:11:32,640 --> 00:11:34,640

and Francisco to the Coda.

175

00:12:03,640 --> 00:12:06,640

The abduction was a stunning turn of events.

176

00:12:06,640 --> 00:12:10,640

Lucia and her cousins were whisked away to an uncertain fate

177

00:12:10,640 --> 00:12:13,640

that a government prison some nine miles from Fatima.

178

00:12:13,640 --> 00:12:17,640

The administrator was convinced the children were perpetrating a hoax

179

00:12:17,640 --> 00:12:20,640

at the behest of the church, and he was certain he could coax

180

00:12:20,640 --> 00:12:24,640

a Lady's secret if there was such a thing from young Lucia.

181

00:12:33,640 --> 00:12:36,640

Well, as you refuse to tell me what you know,

182

00:12:36,640 --> 00:12:40,640

the only alternative I have is to take them to a frying pan.

183

00:12:40,640 --> 00:12:43,640

The oil is ready, and I too.

184

00:12:54,640 --> 00:12:56,640

Go on, Lucia.

185

00:12:56,640 --> 00:13:00,640

Don't be afraid, Lucia. I'll see you again in Heaven.

186

00:13:02,640 --> 00:13:04,640

I'll be back.

187

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

So, you still refuse to tell me?

188

00:13:16,640 --> 00:13:19,640

Your cousins are dead.

189

00:13:19,640 --> 00:13:22,640

Do you want to tell the same thing as them?

190

00:13:25,640 --> 00:13:28,640

I promised our Lady I wouldn't tell.

191

00:13:32,640 --> 00:13:35,640

All the while, the children's families and angry villagers

192

00:13:35,640 --> 00:13:37,640

clamored at the walls.

193

00:13:37,640 --> 00:13:39,640

Lucia!

194

00:13:39,640 --> 00:13:42,640

Lucia, please, don't tell me what you're doing.

195

00:13:42,640 --> 00:13:45,640

Finally, the administrator had no choice but to admit his failure.

196

00:13:45,640 --> 00:13:48,640

He allowed the children to return home.

197

00:13:50,640 --> 00:13:53,640

According to Lucia Santus, the Lady from Heaven

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00:13:53,640 --> 00:13:56,640

appeared a fourth time and a fifth, as scheduled.

199

00:13:56,640 --> 00:13:59,640

As the date for the sixth appearance approached,

200

00:13:59,640 --> 00:14:02,640

the sightment built to a fever pitch.

201

00:14:02,640 --> 00:14:05,640

October 13, 1917.

202

00:14:05,640 --> 00:14:08,640

The day of the long-awaited miracle dawned wet and miserable.

203

00:14:08,640 --> 00:14:11,640

Thousands descended on Fatima,

204

00:14:11,640 --> 00:14:15,640

and an ill-humored crowd milled impatiently outside of Lucia's home.

205

00:14:15,640 --> 00:14:18,640

There were even mutterings of reprisals against Lucia

206

00:14:18,640 --> 00:14:21,640

if no miracle took place.

207

00:14:21,640 --> 00:14:24,640

These photographs show some of the estimated

208

00:14:24,640 --> 00:14:27,640

70,000 onlookers who gathered that day.

209

00:14:27,640 --> 00:14:30,640

The city had come from hundreds of miles away.

210

00:14:30,640 --> 00:14:33,640

Soon after Lucia arrived at the Kovadairia,

211

00:14:33,640 --> 00:14:36,640

the torrential downpour had come to an end.

212

00:14:36,640 --> 00:14:39,640

The huge crowd included both the curious and the faithful.

213

00:14:39,640 --> 00:14:42,640

Shepherds and servants mingled with the nobility.

214

00:14:42,640 --> 00:14:45,640

Also in attendance were sceptical reporters

215

00:14:45,640 --> 00:14:48,640

from the major newspapers.

216

00:14:48,640 --> 00:14:51,640

The local priest, fearing a public fiasco

217

00:14:51,640 --> 00:14:54,640

that would embarrass the church,

218

00:14:54,640 --> 00:14:57,640

was among the most vocal of the doubters.

219

00:15:18,640 --> 00:15:21,640

The unruly crowd grew silent as Lucia began to speak.

220

00:15:21,640 --> 00:15:25,640

Although to the onlookers, she appeared to be talking at a thin air.

221

00:15:51,640 --> 00:15:54,640

According to many eyewitness accounts,

222

00:15:54,640 --> 00:15:56,640

the sun began to undulate,

223

00:15:56,640 --> 00:15:59,640

ribbons of multicolored light shooting across the heavens.

224

00:15:59,640 --> 00:16:02,640

Then suddenly, the sun seemed to fall.

225

00:16:07,640 --> 00:16:11,640

Later, many eyewitnesses would say that they feared being scorched.

226

00:16:14,640 --> 00:16:18,640

The crowd watched dumbstruck as the sun abruptly reversed course

227

00:16:18,640 --> 00:16:21,640

and returned to its rightful place in the sky.

228

00:16:23,640 --> 00:16:25,640

The miracle of the sun at Fatima

229

00:16:25,640 --> 00:16:28,640

is certainly the most spectacular physical manifestation,

230

00:16:28,640 --> 00:16:32,640

physical miracle that has been associated with our Lady.

231

00:16:32,640 --> 00:16:37,640

She had to manifest her presence in a grand manner

232

00:16:37,640 --> 00:16:40,640

in a very convincing and spectacular manner

233

00:16:40,640 --> 00:16:43,640

because it was important that people all over the world

234

00:16:43,640 --> 00:16:46,640

should believe what she had said.

235

00:16:47,640 --> 00:16:51,640

The awesome celestial display supposedly lasted for 12 minutes.

236

00:16:51,640 --> 00:16:55,640

Accounts from within a 600-square-mile area around Fatima

237

00:16:55,640 --> 00:16:58,640

substantiated many of the first-hand descriptions.

238

00:16:58,640 --> 00:17:02,640

But incredibly, some eyewitnesses at the COVA

239

00:17:02,640 --> 00:17:05,640

claimed they saw absolutely nothing out of the ordinary.

240

00:17:05,640 --> 00:17:09,640

Still, history has favored the more spectacular accounts.

241

00:17:09,640 --> 00:17:14,640

Avelino de Almeida, the editor of a government-controlled newspaper,

242

00:17:14,640 --> 00:17:18,640

came to Fatima a confirmed skeptic and left a believer.

243

00:17:18,640 --> 00:17:22,640

At the hour foretold, the rain ceased to fall.

244

00:17:22,640 --> 00:17:26,640

The dense mass of clouds parted and the sun began to whirl around

245

00:17:26,640 --> 00:17:28,640

in a wild and violent dance

246

00:17:28,640 --> 00:17:34,640

with such lovely glowing colors passing successively over the sun's surface.

247

00:17:35,640 --> 00:17:38,640

In years to come, the events of October 13

248

00:17:38,640 --> 00:17:41,640

would be the subject of considerable debate.

249

00:17:41,640 --> 00:17:45,640

Some dismissed the spectacle as a textbook case of mass hysteria,

250

00:17:45,640 --> 00:17:48,640

but many found the eyewitness accounts to be credible

251

00:17:48,640 --> 00:17:52,640

and words spread across Europe and around the world.

252

00:17:55,640 --> 00:17:58,640

Today, a basilica stands for Lucia and her cousins

253

00:17:58,640 --> 00:18:01,640

claimed to have seen the Lady from Heaven.

254

00:18:01,640 --> 00:18:05,640

In 1930, the Catholic Church recognized the events at Fatima

255

00:18:05,640 --> 00:18:08,640

as a miracle worthy of belief.

256

00:18:09,640 --> 00:18:14,640

Jacinta and Francesco Marto did not live to witness this official confirmation.

257

00:18:14,640 --> 00:18:19,640

Both died during a worldwide influenza epidemic within three years of the visions.

258

00:18:19,640 --> 00:18:23,640

Many believe it was a fulfillment of the Virgin's promise

259

00:18:23,640 --> 00:18:26,640

that they would soon be called to Heaven.

260

00:18:38,640 --> 00:18:43,640

Over the decades, Fatima's call to the faithful has grown ever more powerful.

261

00:18:43,640 --> 00:18:48,640

The tide of pilgrims has swelled from the thousands who joined Lucia in 1917

262

00:18:48,640 --> 00:18:51,640

to several million in recent years.

263

00:18:52,640 --> 00:18:55,640

Even those who remain skeptical of miracles

264

00:18:55,640 --> 00:18:58,640

puzzle over the mystifying events at Fatima

265

00:18:58,640 --> 00:19:03,640

and the ten-year-old girl who many believe was chosen to be called to Heaven.

266

00:19:03,640 --> 00:19:07,640

While there were some who admired me and considered me a saint,

267

00:19:07,640 --> 00:19:12,640

there were always others who called me a hypocrite and a sorceress.

268

00:19:12,640 --> 00:19:14,640

They are all mistaken.

269

00:19:14,640 --> 00:19:18,640

I am not a saint and I am not a liar.

270

00:19:18,640 --> 00:19:21,640

Only God knows what I am.

271

00:19:21,640 --> 00:19:27,640

Many believe that the Lady from Heaven predicted some of the most important events of the 20th century.

272

00:19:27,640 --> 00:19:31,640

The end of World War I, the onset of World War II,

273

00:19:31,640 --> 00:19:34,640

the rise and fall of communism in Europe,

274

00:19:34,640 --> 00:19:37,640

even the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II,

275

00:19:37,640 --> 00:19:41,640

which took place on May 13, 1919,

276

00:19:41,640 --> 00:19:44,640

and the fall of the United States of America,

277

00:19:44,640 --> 00:19:47,640

the rise and fall of the United States of America,

278

00:19:47,640 --> 00:19:52,640

was Pope John Paul II, which took place on May 13, 1981,

279

00:19:52,640 --> 00:19:56,640

64 years to the day after the appearance of the First Vision.

280

00:19:56,640 --> 00:19:59,640

To the skeptical is all simply coincidence.

281

00:19:59,640 --> 00:20:05,640

To the faithful, it is proof that a miracle did occur at Fatima.

282

00:20:07,640 --> 00:20:10,640

When we return, a family's dream of building a home

283

00:20:10,640 --> 00:20:14,640

is snuffed out by a smooth-talking con artist.

284

00:20:17,640 --> 00:20:22,640

Come on, kids, let's get up here and look at the view, all right?

285

00:20:22,640 --> 00:20:24,640

Come on, property, Alex.

286

00:20:24,640 --> 00:20:27,640

It is hard to imagine a more beautiful setting for a home

287

00:20:27,640 --> 00:20:30,640

than this meadow in Steamboat Springs, Colorado,

288

00:20:30,640 --> 00:20:32,640

200 miles northwest of Denver.

289

00:20:32,640 --> 00:20:34,640

Don't you think we ought to build a log house right here

290

00:20:34,640 --> 00:20:36,640

and a big picture window?

291

00:20:36,640 --> 00:20:39,640

It was here, on six acres of land,

292

00:20:39,640 --> 00:20:43,640

that Earl and Donna Chotlacks planned to build their dream home.

293

00:20:43,640 --> 00:20:45,640

For several years,

294

00:20:45,640 --> 00:20:48,640

they had scrimped and saved until they finally had enough

295

00:20:48,640 --> 00:20:51,640

to begin construction on a modern-day log cabin,

296

00:20:51,640 --> 00:20:55,640

similar to this one, for themselves and their two children.

297

00:20:55,640 --> 00:21:00,640

But in 1991, the Chotlacks' hopes came crashing down,

298

00:21:00,640 --> 00:21:03,640

shattered not by accident or act of God,

299

00:21:03,640 --> 00:21:05,640

but by the deeds of this man,

300

00:21:05,640 --> 00:21:09,640

a sophisticated con artist who called himself Mark Mitchell.

301

00:21:09,640 --> 00:21:12,640

Look, Earl, here's an ad about a log home

302

00:21:12,640 --> 00:21:14,640

company that needs funds.

303

00:21:14,640 --> 00:21:17,640

In April of that year, Earl and Donna

304

00:21:17,640 --> 00:21:19,640

answered an innocent-looking newspaper ad

305

00:21:19,640 --> 00:21:23,640

and talked to the owner of Colorado log homes, Mark Mitchell.

306

00:21:23,640 --> 00:21:26,640

Well, you know, Earl, we're kind of a young business,

307

00:21:26,640 --> 00:21:28,640

but we do have a couple of clients up there in Breckenridge.

308

00:21:28,640 --> 00:21:31,640

It seemed like a great opportunity for us

309

00:21:31,640 --> 00:21:33,640

because the company supposedly was growing,

310

00:21:33,640 --> 00:21:37,640

which is one of the reasons that we really started

311

00:21:37,640 --> 00:21:39,640

going with this company.

312

00:21:39,640 --> 00:21:42,640

Instead of a more established company somewhere else.

313

00:21:42,640 --> 00:21:43,640

Also, that...

314

00:21:43,640 --> 00:21:45,640

Mitchell's plan was simple.

315

00:21:45,640 --> 00:21:49,640

The Chotlacks would invest \$25,000 in his growing business.

316

00:21:49,640 --> 00:21:52,640

In return, Mitchell would give them a large discount

317

00:21:52,640 --> 00:21:55,640

on the construction of their log cabin.

318

00:21:55,640 --> 00:22:00,640

Plus, the \$25,000 investment would be returned with interest.

319

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

\$25,000 off the price of your home.

320

00:22:02,640 --> 00:22:03,640

This.

321

00:22:03,640 --> 00:22:05,640

What about you?

322

00:22:05,640 --> 00:22:06,640

Isn't that great?

323

00:22:06,640 --> 00:22:08,640

One home, they were done.

324

00:22:08,640 --> 00:22:12,640

In early May, an architect and a salesman from Mitchell's office

325

00:22:12,640 --> 00:22:16,640

came up to inspect the Chotlacks property.

326

00:22:16,640 --> 00:22:19,640

They looked at different views from our property

327

00:22:19,640 --> 00:22:21,640

and kept using the word stunning.

328

00:22:21,640 --> 00:22:24,640

They could build us a stunning home.

329

00:22:24,640 --> 00:22:26,640

If you're ready to go with us, Earl,

330

00:22:26,640 --> 00:22:28,640

I have a contract with me right here.

331

00:22:28,640 --> 00:22:31,640

Well, you know, we've got the money down at the bank.

332

00:22:31,640 --> 00:22:33,640

After the Chotlacks attorney's visit,

333

00:22:33,640 --> 00:22:37,640

Earl and Donna would hand over a \$25,000 deposit

334

00:22:37,640 --> 00:22:39,640

to Mitchell's salesman.

335

00:22:39,640 --> 00:22:44,640

We had been saving money and living very frugally

336

00:22:44,640 --> 00:22:46,640

from the moment we got married.

337

00:22:46,640 --> 00:22:53,640

So when we gave them the \$25,000, that was our whole dream.

338

00:22:53,640 --> 00:22:55,640

All right, now, this is my copy.

339

00:22:55,640 --> 00:22:56,640

That's your home.

340

00:22:56,640 --> 00:22:57,640

That's mine.

341

00:22:57,640 --> 00:22:58,640

OK.

342

00:22:58,640 --> 00:22:59,640

Come on.

343

00:22:59,640 --> 00:23:00,640

A box of books.

344

00:23:00,640 --> 00:23:01,640

That's your home.

345

00:23:01,640 --> 00:23:02,640

That's mine.

346

00:23:02,640 --> 00:23:03,640

OK.

347

00:23:03,640 --> 00:23:04,640

Come on.

348

00:23:04,640 --> 00:23:05,640

I'll buy you lunch.

349

00:23:05,640 --> 00:23:06,640

All right.

350

00:23:06,640 --> 00:23:07,640

Congratulations.

351

00:23:07,640 --> 00:23:08,640

OK, thanks.

352

00:23:08,640 --> 00:23:11,640

It seems like we've been waiting for such a long time.

353

00:23:11,640 --> 00:23:13,640

And it was all coming true.

354

00:23:13,640 --> 00:23:16,640

I mean, they said it was real, and we believed them.

355

00:23:24,640 --> 00:23:26,640

The log yard at Mitchell's Denver headquarters

356

00:23:26,640 --> 00:23:29,640

gave every appearance of legitimacy.

357

00:23:31,640 --> 00:23:33,640

Workers processed hundreds of logs,

358

00:23:33,640 --> 00:23:37,640

and the shells of cabins were carefully preassembled.

359

00:23:37,640 --> 00:23:39,640

Supposedly, each shell would later

360

00:23:39,640 --> 00:23:41,640

be taken apart, trucked to a building site,

361

00:23:41,640 --> 00:23:44,640

and reassembled on a concrete foundation,

362

00:23:44,640 --> 00:23:46,640

laid by one of Mitchell's crew.

363

00:23:50,640 --> 00:23:53,640

But after eight weeks, there was absolutely no progress

364

00:23:53,640 --> 00:23:55,640

at Earl and Donna's property.

365

00:23:55,640 --> 00:23:58,640

The critical job of measuring and pouring the foundation

366

00:23:58,640 --> 00:24:00,640

was yet to begin.

367

00:24:00,640 --> 00:24:02,640

The shot vaks made the four-hour drive

368

00:24:02,640 --> 00:24:04,640

to Mitchell's log yard in Denver

369

00:24:04,640 --> 00:24:07,640

to see for themselves what was wrong.

370

00:24:07,640 --> 00:24:08,640

There you go.

371

00:24:08,640 --> 00:24:09,640

Into your new home.

372

00:24:09,640 --> 00:24:10,640

All right.

373

00:24:10,640 --> 00:24:11,640

Temporarily.

374

00:24:11,640 --> 00:24:12,640

Take a look at the logs.

375

00:24:12,640 --> 00:24:16,640

However, Mark Mitchell was able to lay their anxieties to rest.

376

00:24:16,640 --> 00:24:17,640

Oh, that's nice.

377

00:24:17,640 --> 00:24:18,640

Very nice, huh?

378

00:24:18,640 --> 00:24:19,640

Feel it.

379

00:24:19,640 --> 00:24:20,640

Feel it.

380

00:24:20,640 --> 00:24:23,640

They had started our shell, and it

381

00:24:23,640 --> 00:24:27,640

seemed to have all the basic things that were in our plans,

382

00:24:27,640 --> 00:24:28,640

all measured it.

383

00:24:28,640 --> 00:24:33,640

And the kids, you know, we took pictures of ourselves inside of it.

384

00:24:33,640 --> 00:24:37,640

And it just seemed real exciting, you know?

385

00:24:37,640 --> 00:24:39,640

It seemed like it was really happening again.

386

00:24:39,640 --> 00:24:42,640

And so, of course, then we were back up.

387

00:24:42,640 --> 00:24:43,640

That's great.

388

00:24:43,640 --> 00:24:44,640

Yeah, this is nice.

389

00:24:44,640 --> 00:24:45,640

Look at up here.

390

00:24:45,640 --> 00:24:49,640

But weeks more passed without any construction at the property.

391

00:24:49,640 --> 00:24:52,640

It took a siege of phone calls for Earl and Donna

392

00:24:52,640 --> 00:24:54,640

to convince Mitchell to dispatch a work crew.

393

00:24:58,640 --> 00:25:02,640

They sent an excavator up, and we pounded in the nails

394

00:25:02,640 --> 00:25:05,640

and measured where the corners of the house were

395

00:25:05,640 --> 00:25:09,640

and stood in the spot where the living room was going to be

396

00:25:09,640 --> 00:25:10,640

and imagined our view.

397

00:25:10,640 --> 00:25:11,640

This is the foundation.

398

00:25:11,640 --> 00:25:13,640

So where you'll be, the first floor will be up here,

399

00:25:13,640 --> 00:25:14,640

but the windows will be here.

400

00:25:14,640 --> 00:25:17,640

We were starting to think, well, it's not going to be done by Christmas,

401

00:25:17,640 --> 00:25:19,640

but it might be done by March.

402

00:25:19,640 --> 00:25:26,640

We still really didn't believe that it wasn't going to happen.

403

00:25:26,640 --> 00:25:29,640

Well, Earl and Donna, I'm sorry I had to keep you waiting.

404

00:25:29,640 --> 00:25:31,640

Please come in and have a seat.

405

00:25:31,640 --> 00:25:36,640

On October 1st, the bitter reality finally hit Earl and Donna.

406

00:25:36,640 --> 00:25:39,640

They had applied to their local bank for a construction loan

407

00:25:39,640 --> 00:25:43,640

and were stunned to discover that the request had been denied.

408

00:25:43,640 --> 00:25:46,640

Well, I'm afraid the news isn't good.

409

00:25:46,640 --> 00:25:48,640

Now, it has nothing to do with you two.

410

00:25:48,640 --> 00:25:50,640

The problem is with the builder.

411

00:25:50,640 --> 00:25:52,640

It appears this man is in some serious trouble.

412

00:25:52,640 --> 00:25:55,640

He has been taking deposit money just as he did yours

413

00:25:55,640 --> 00:25:59,640

and then has not started construction on the homes.

414

00:25:59,640 --> 00:26:03,640

As a matter of fact, Mark Mitchell is not even his real name.

415

00:26:03,640 --> 00:26:05,640

It's Wade Mitchell Parker.

416

00:26:05,640 --> 00:26:07,640

I'm awfully sorry.

417

00:26:07,640 --> 00:26:09,640

I wish there was something more that I could do.

418

00:26:09,640 --> 00:26:13,640

At that point, I felt nauseous.

419

00:26:13,640 --> 00:26:21,640

I mean, I just suddenly just was sick feeling as though we were going to lose all of our money.

420

00:26:21,640 --> 00:26:29,640

We were going to lose all the money that we had given to Mark Mitchell.

421

00:26:29,640 --> 00:26:35,640

On October 5th, 1991, Donna and Earl once again drove to Colorado log homes

422

00:26:35,640 --> 00:26:40,640

where they had a 10 a.m. appointment with a man they now knew was Wade Mitchell Parker.

423

00:26:40,640 --> 00:26:43,640

He showed up more than two hours late.

424

00:26:43,640 --> 00:26:44,640

I don't know what to tell you.

425

00:26:44,640 --> 00:26:47,640

Yeah, we've been waiting for almost two and a half hours.

426

00:26:47,640 --> 00:26:48,640

I'm sorry, it's my secretary.

427

00:26:48,640 --> 00:26:50,640

You could have called us before we left home.

428

00:26:50,640 --> 00:26:51,640

I tried.

429

00:26:51,640 --> 00:26:52,640

I'm sorry, I just got tired.

430

00:26:52,640 --> 00:26:53,640

We're 200 miles to get down here.

431

00:26:53,640 --> 00:26:54,640

I know, and I'm sorry.

432

00:26:54,640 --> 00:26:56,640

Let's go inside and we'll talk about what I got.

433

00:26:56,640 --> 00:26:59,640

Well, you know, nothing's been happening with our log show.

434

00:26:59,640 --> 00:27:00,640

Yeah, we got a little hang up.

435

00:27:00,640 --> 00:27:01,640

What's going on around here?

436

00:27:01,640 --> 00:27:03,640

Well, just, Earl, just a little hang up.

437

00:27:03,640 --> 00:27:05,640

If we go and sit down and cool off a little,

438

00:27:05,640 --> 00:27:08,640

make a couple phone calls, we'll get your money out here to you.

439

00:27:08,640 --> 00:27:09,640

We'll get it all done.

440

00:27:09,640 --> 00:27:10,640

Do you have our money?

441

00:27:10,640 --> 00:27:11,640

No, no, I don't have it.

442

00:27:11,640 --> 00:27:12,640

You don't have our money?

443

00:27:12,640 --> 00:27:13,640

No, I don't.

444

00:27:13,640 --> 00:27:14,640

I know, but let's go and sit down.

445

00:27:14,640 --> 00:27:17,640

Wade Parker agreed to refund Earl and Donna's deposit,

446

00:27:17,640 --> 00:27:19,640

claiming to be short of cash.

447

00:27:19,640 --> 00:27:25,640

He gave them a promissory note, essentially, a \$25,000 IOU.

448

00:27:25,640 --> 00:27:27,640

We're going to sign it.

449

00:27:27,640 --> 00:27:30,640

Ellen, you want to witness this, please?

450

00:27:30,640 --> 00:27:32,640

We're still trying to be nice about it,

451

00:27:32,640 --> 00:27:35,640

but I think deep down inside, we really

452

00:27:35,640 --> 00:27:39,640

bugged him that probably we weren't ever going to see our money.

453

00:27:39,640 --> 00:27:40,640

30 days, folks.

454

00:27:40,640 --> 00:27:41,640

We'll get this all wrapped up.

455

00:27:41,640 --> 00:27:42,640

That'll be the end of it.

456

00:27:42,640 --> 00:27:44,640

We finished up the meeting and we left,

457

00:27:44,640 --> 00:27:47,640

and that's the last time we ever saw him.

458

00:27:47,640 --> 00:27:51,640

I spoke to him maybe three or four times after that

459

00:27:51,640 --> 00:27:53,640

on the telephone, but we never saw him again.

460

00:27:59,640 --> 00:28:02,640

Within the month, Wade Mitchell Parker declared bankruptcy

461

00:28:02,640 --> 00:28:05,640

and disappeared.

462

00:28:05,640 --> 00:28:07,640

The Chut Vax never received a dime,

463

00:28:07,640 --> 00:28:10,640

and they soon discovered that they were not the only people

464

00:28:10,640 --> 00:28:11,640

taken in by the combat.

465

00:28:12,640 --> 00:28:16,640

In November of 1991, the Chut Vax joined more than 30

466

00:28:16,640 --> 00:28:18,640

of Parker's other victims at a meeting organized

467

00:28:18,640 --> 00:28:20,640

by Colorado authorities.

468

00:28:20,640 --> 00:28:24,640

As a group, their total loss exceeded \$1 million.

469

00:28:24,640 --> 00:28:27,640

We should have gotten together long time ago, Jerry.

470

00:28:27,640 --> 00:28:29,640

Yeah, he's really slick, isn't he?

471

00:28:29,640 --> 00:28:32,640

In the end, I got my plans, and I guess

472

00:28:32,640 --> 00:28:35,640

that was probably worth about \$1,000,

473

00:28:35,640 --> 00:28:37,640

and I lost \$1,000.

474

00:28:37,640 --> 00:28:40,640

I expected to have a log home from Mark.

475

00:28:40,640 --> 00:28:43,640

I'd expected to have my \$20,000 back,

476

00:28:43,640 --> 00:28:45,640

and I expected all of this to happen

477

00:28:45,640 --> 00:28:48,640

within a very expedient amount of time,

478

00:28:48,640 --> 00:28:49,640

and it didn't happen.

479

00:28:49,640 --> 00:28:53,640

So I lost almost \$25,000, and I don't have a log home.

480

00:28:53,640 --> 00:28:56,640

What did he tell you about the land in Bennett's?

481

00:28:56,640 --> 00:28:59,640

When we finally came to terms with the fact

482

00:28:59,640 --> 00:29:02,640

that we lost the money, we felt stupid.

483

00:29:02,640 --> 00:29:05,640

We felt like we were going to lose the money.

484

00:29:05,640 --> 00:29:07,640

We felt stupid.

485

00:29:07,640 --> 00:29:10,640

We just felt like we had done a stupid thing.

486

00:29:10,640 --> 00:29:14,640

When we realized that lots of big time people,

487

00:29:14,640 --> 00:29:18,640

not just the naive young couple with two small children,

488

00:29:18,640 --> 00:29:22,640

a lot of big time people lost a lot of money too,

489

00:29:22,640 --> 00:29:25,640

we didn't feel quite so stupid.

490

00:29:28,640 --> 00:29:30,640

A number of people have asked us whether we think

491

00:29:30,640 --> 00:29:33,640

that Wade Mitchell Parker was just a bad businessman,

492

00:29:33,640 --> 00:29:36,640

or whether we think he was a con person from the very beginning.

493

00:29:36,640 --> 00:29:38,640

\$35,000 on the price of your home.

494

00:29:38,640 --> 00:29:41,640

Some of the transactions he made are just plain crooked.

495

00:29:41,640 --> 00:29:44,640

There's no other explanation for what he did.

496

00:29:44,640 --> 00:29:46,640

Also, we haven't been able to find the money,

497

00:29:46,640 --> 00:29:48,640

and we think it's got to be out there somewhere.

498

00:29:48,640 --> 00:29:50,640

The fact that we haven't been able to find it,

499

00:29:50,640 --> 00:29:53,640

and that Parker fled during the bankruptcy proceedings,

500

00:29:53,640 --> 00:29:57,640

is a real indication to us that this was a con from the beginning.

501

00:29:58,640 --> 00:30:01,640

Some of Parker's wealthier victims

502

00:30:01,640 --> 00:30:03,640

have been able to absorb their losses

503

00:30:03,640 --> 00:30:06,640

or write them off as business expenses.

504

00:30:06,640 --> 00:30:09,640

But for Earl and Donna Chotpacks and many others like them,

505

00:30:09,640 --> 00:30:12,640

the dream of owning a home has been snuffed out,

506

00:30:12,640 --> 00:30:15,640

perhaps forever.

507

00:30:15,640 --> 00:30:17,640

I don't think that you ever want to give up on a dream,

508

00:30:17,640 --> 00:30:19,640

and I think that in a way,

509

00:30:19,640 --> 00:30:24,640

we were realizing that we might have a dream.

510

00:30:24,640 --> 00:30:27,640

We might never ever get another opportunity

511

00:30:27,640 --> 00:30:32,640

to give someone money to build us a home.

512

00:30:32,640 --> 00:30:34,640

Update.

513

00:30:34,640 --> 00:30:36,640

On August 11th, 1994,

514

00:30:36,640 --> 00:30:39,640

Wade Mitchell Parker was arrested in Cobb County, Georgia,

515

00:30:39,640 --> 00:30:42,640

some 1,300 miles from Colorado.

516

00:30:42,640 --> 00:30:44,640

There Parker was using two new aliases,

517

00:30:44,640 --> 00:30:47,640

Ronald Anderson and Larry Wheeler.

518

00:30:47,640 --> 00:30:49,640

But information developed from our program

519

00:30:49,640 --> 00:30:51,640

that was not only the case,

520

00:30:51,640 --> 00:30:54,640

but information developed from our program

521

00:30:54,640 --> 00:30:57,640

helped reveal his true identity.

522

00:30:59,640 --> 00:31:02,640

On September 26, 1994,

523

00:31:02,640 --> 00:31:04,640

Wade Mitchell Parker was arraigned in Colorado

524

00:31:04,640 --> 00:31:06,640

on fraud and theft charges.

525

00:31:06,640 --> 00:31:09,640

Our cameras are not allowed inside the courtroom.

526

00:31:09,640 --> 00:31:11,640

However, Earl and Donna Chotpacks

527

00:31:11,640 --> 00:31:15,640

made sure they were on hand to see justice done.

528

00:31:15,640 --> 00:31:18,640

If he'd been an honest man,

529

00:31:18,640 --> 00:31:21,640

he'd be living in our home right now

530

00:31:21,640 --> 00:31:23,640

and raising our children.

531

00:31:23,640 --> 00:31:28,640

I think that anybody who has been ripped off this way

532

00:31:28,640 --> 00:31:30,640

could take heart from this,

533

00:31:30,640 --> 00:31:33,640

knowing that with enough perseverance,

534

00:31:33,640 --> 00:31:35,640

they may get their guy.

535

00:31:35,640 --> 00:31:40,640

So it certainly gave me a lot of heart

536

00:31:40,640 --> 00:31:43,640

when I was beginning to lose hope.

537

00:31:48,640 --> 00:31:53,640

Next, a family is reunited.

538

00:31:53,640 --> 00:31:55,640

Thanks to you, our viewers.

539

00:31:55,640 --> 00:31:58,640

Bill O'Neill of Santa Monica, California

540

00:31:58,640 --> 00:32:01,640

was always told he was just a baby when his father died.

541

00:32:01,640 --> 00:32:03,640

But throughout his childhood,

542

00:32:03,640 --> 00:32:05,640

Bill was plagued by the nagging family

543

00:32:05,640 --> 00:32:08,640

that had been around him for a long time.

544

00:32:08,640 --> 00:32:11,640

The family was always in the same boat.

545

00:32:11,640 --> 00:32:13,640

And he was always in the same boat.

546

00:32:13,640 --> 00:32:15,640

And he was always in the same boat.

547

00:32:15,640 --> 00:32:17,640

But throughout his childhood,

548

00:32:17,640 --> 00:32:19,640

Bill was plagued by the nagging suspicion

549

00:32:19,640 --> 00:32:23,640

that he was somehow different from his older brothers and sisters.

550

00:32:23,640 --> 00:32:26,640

I was the only one with hazel eyes.

551

00:32:26,640 --> 00:32:29,640

And everybody else had these bright blue eyes.

552

00:32:29,640 --> 00:32:32,640

My skin was more like an olive skin,

553

00:32:32,640 --> 00:32:34,640

where they were fairer skinned.

554

00:32:34,640 --> 00:32:36,640

Not that anything was ever said to me

555

00:32:36,640 --> 00:32:40,640

or anything like that that was different than anybody else,

556

00:32:40,640 --> 00:32:43,640

like my mom didn't treat me any different.

557

00:32:43,640 --> 00:32:48,640

Just a feeling inside, like something was lost.

558

00:32:48,640 --> 00:32:51,640

Years later, Bill's suspicions were confirmed

559

00:32:51,640 --> 00:32:54,640

when he discovered that his father, Hugh Paul O'Neill,

560

00:32:54,640 --> 00:32:57,640

had in fact died two years before Bill was born.

561

00:32:57,640 --> 00:33:02,640

When Bill confronted his mother, she told him everything.

562

00:33:02,640 --> 00:33:05,640

Bill learned that in November of 1958,

563

00:33:05,640 --> 00:33:08,640

Paul O'Neill was a patient at Chicago's VA hospital.

564

00:33:08,640 --> 00:33:11,640

There, Bill's mother met a friend of Paul's

565

00:33:11,640 --> 00:33:13,640

Jim Burke, a divorced father of four.

566

00:33:13,640 --> 00:33:16,640

So this must be the beautiful lady you've been keeping from me.

567

00:33:16,640 --> 00:33:19,640

Sadly, within a month, Paul O'Neill would die.

568

00:33:19,640 --> 00:33:20,640

My wife?

569

00:33:20,640 --> 00:33:22,640

Nice meeting you.

570

00:33:22,640 --> 00:33:24,640

Nice meeting you.

571

00:33:24,640 --> 00:33:27,640

Before long, Jim Burke became a familiar presence

572

00:33:27,640 --> 00:33:29,640

in the O'Neill household.

573

00:33:29,640 --> 00:33:32,640

Two years later, Bill was born.

574

00:33:32,640 --> 00:33:34,640

His mother was pregnant again

575

00:33:34,640 --> 00:33:36,640

when the relationship with Jim Burke ended.

576

00:33:36,640 --> 00:33:39,640

Bill was stunned when his mother also told him

577

00:33:39,640 --> 00:33:42,640

that his younger sister, who he thought was dead,

578

00:33:42,640 --> 00:33:46,640

had actually been put up for adoption.

579

00:33:46,640 --> 00:33:49,640

In 1990, Bill O'Neill was reunited

580

00:33:49,640 --> 00:33:51,640

with his sister Karen Althaus.

581

00:33:51,640 --> 00:33:54,640

Together, they set their sights on one final goal,

582

00:33:54,640 --> 00:33:57,640

finding their natural father, Jim Burke.

583

00:33:57,640 --> 00:33:59,640

Yep.

584

00:33:59,640 --> 00:34:01,640

On the night of our broadcast,

585

00:34:01,640 --> 00:34:04,640

a woman named Eileen Essler of New Lenox, Illinois

586

00:34:04,640 --> 00:34:07,640

called our phone center and identified herself

587

00:34:07,640 --> 00:34:11,640

as one of Jim Burke's four children from his previous marriage.

588

00:34:11,640 --> 00:34:13,640

Bill and Karen were saddened to hear

589

00:34:13,640 --> 00:34:15,640

that their father had passed away in 1988,

590

00:34:15,640 --> 00:34:19,640

but they were overjoyed that Eileen and another half-sister,

591

00:34:19,640 --> 00:34:23,640

Sheila Ann Haskins, were anxious to meet them.

592

00:34:23,640 --> 00:34:28,640

A week later, Bill O'Neill, Karen Althaus, and their families

593

00:34:28,640 --> 00:34:31,640

gathered at Karen's house to await the arrival

594

00:34:31,640 --> 00:34:33,640

of Eileen and Sheila Ann.

595

00:34:33,640 --> 00:34:35,640

Hello there.

596

00:34:35,640 --> 00:34:37,640

Hi.

597

00:34:37,640 --> 00:34:39,640

Hi.

598

00:34:39,640 --> 00:34:42,640

I didn't know I was gonna die.

599

00:34:42,640 --> 00:34:45,640

I didn't know I was gonna do this.

600

00:34:45,640 --> 00:34:48,640

I felt a connection, a definite connection.

601

00:34:48,640 --> 00:34:51,640

Like, when I reached out to hug them,

602

00:34:51,640 --> 00:34:53,640

I don't know.

603

00:34:53,640 --> 00:34:56,640

I didn't, I honestly, to be honest, I just...

604

00:34:56,640 --> 00:35:03,640

I didn't feel like I was gonna be as emotionally tied

605

00:35:03,640 --> 00:35:05,640

as I felt, did I?

606

00:35:07,640 --> 00:35:11,640

For Sheila Ann and Eileen, the bond was just as strong.

607

00:35:13,640 --> 00:35:17,640

As soon as I saw Bill, as soon as I saw his face,

608

00:35:17,640 --> 00:35:20,640

there was absolutely no doubt in my mind

609

00:35:20,640 --> 00:35:22,640

that he was a brother, no doubt.

610

00:35:22,640 --> 00:35:27,640

I felt wonderful. I mean, I, like, Sheila, I wanted to touch him.

611

00:35:27,640 --> 00:35:31,640

I just wanted to touch him to have a baby brother

612

00:35:31,640 --> 00:35:33,640

and baby sister. I know they're not.

613

00:35:33,640 --> 00:35:35,640

There's so much of a toe in the way.

614

00:35:35,640 --> 00:35:37,640

OK.

615

00:35:37,640 --> 00:35:39,640

This is our father.

616

00:35:39,640 --> 00:35:41,640

Later that afternoon, Bill and Karen sat down

617

00:35:41,640 --> 00:35:44,640

with their new sisters to learn about their father, Jim Burke.

618

00:35:44,640 --> 00:35:46,640

And how was it related to her?

619

00:35:46,640 --> 00:35:48,640

This is what I've wondered all my life.

620

00:35:48,640 --> 00:35:51,640

Who are my parents? Do I have more family?

621

00:35:51,640 --> 00:35:54,640

Did I have brothers and sisters, things like that?

622

00:35:54,640 --> 00:35:57,640

And it's exciting to finally see them,

623

00:35:57,640 --> 00:36:00,640

to touch them, to get to know them.

624

00:36:01,640 --> 00:36:04,640

The reunion was especially poignant for Bill O'Neill.

625

00:36:04,640 --> 00:36:06,640

His lifelong feelings of isolation

626

00:36:06,640 --> 00:36:09,640

were replaced with a new sense of belonging.

627

00:36:12,640 --> 00:36:16,640

I just, I figured, hey, we'll get together with him and make nice.

628

00:36:16,640 --> 00:36:18,640

He'll be like me and Mabers.

629

00:36:18,640 --> 00:36:20,640

Yeah, you know, get some pictures,

630

00:36:20,640 --> 00:36:22,640

get some more information about our dad,

631

00:36:22,640 --> 00:36:25,640

but it wasn't like that. It wasn't like that at all.

632

00:36:25,640 --> 00:36:28,640

It was more, um...

633

00:36:28,640 --> 00:36:31,640

It was just an inside warm feeling

634

00:36:31,640 --> 00:36:34,640

that everything was now completed.

635

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

That's true.

636

00:36:36,640 --> 00:36:39,640

Oh, great to hear.

637

00:36:41,640 --> 00:36:43,640

For Bill, Karen, Eileen and Sheila Ann,

638

00:36:43,640 --> 00:36:46,640

this was just the first of many gatherings to come.

639

00:36:46,640 --> 00:36:49,640

Bill and Karen have since met one of their half-brothers.

640

00:36:49,640 --> 00:36:51,640

And next March, they hope to meet another

641

00:36:51,640 --> 00:36:53,640

at a family wedding in Illinois.

642

00:36:53,640 --> 00:36:55,640

Also in attendance will be a grandmother,

643

00:36:55,640 --> 00:36:58,640

an aunt and 12 cousins.

644

00:37:07,640 --> 00:37:10,640

John Cheek seemed destined for success.

645

00:37:10,640 --> 00:37:13,640

At 26, fresh out of business school,

646

00:37:13,640 --> 00:37:15,640

he had been hired as a chief financial officer

647

00:37:15,640 --> 00:37:19,640

of one of the larger real estate companies in Tennessee.

648

00:37:19,640 --> 00:37:21,640

By the age of 28,

649

00:37:21,640 --> 00:37:24,640

John had purchased this home in a comfortable part of East Memphis.

650

00:37:24,640 --> 00:37:28,640

At work, he was engineering the deal of a lifetime.

651

00:37:31,640 --> 00:37:34,640

For months, John had helped lay the groundwork

652

00:37:34,640 --> 00:37:36,640

to take his company public.

653

00:37:36,640 --> 00:37:38,640

He had logged countless 18-hour days

654

00:37:38,640 --> 00:37:41,640

and flown thousands of miles to talk with investors

655

00:37:41,640 --> 00:37:44,640

around the country and overseas.

656

00:37:44,640 --> 00:37:47,640

By December of 1993,

657

00:37:47,640 --> 00:37:50,640

the complex plan was on the verge of completion.

658

00:37:50,640 --> 00:37:52,640

Millions of dollars were at stake.

659

00:37:52,640 --> 00:37:54,640

If the deal was successful,

660

00:37:54,640 --> 00:37:56,640

the company would be thrust into national prominence

661

00:37:56,640 --> 00:37:58,640

literally overnight.

662

00:38:00,640 --> 00:38:02,640

John was very proud of his accomplishment

663

00:38:02,640 --> 00:38:04,640

of getting this job,

664

00:38:04,640 --> 00:38:07,640

and he worked very hard non-stop,

665

00:38:07,640 --> 00:38:11,640

almost to see that his duties were fulfilled

666

00:38:11,640 --> 00:38:15,640

and that every eye was dotted and every T was crossed.

667

00:38:16,640 --> 00:38:18,640

In their wildest dreams,

668

00:38:18,640 --> 00:38:20,640

John Cheek's family and friends never imagined

669

00:38:20,640 --> 00:38:23,640

he would end up the focus of an anguished search,

670

00:38:23,640 --> 00:38:26,640

his face peering out from thousands of flyers

671

00:38:26,640 --> 00:38:29,640

plastered around their hometown of Memphis, Tennessee.

672

00:38:30,640 --> 00:38:33,640

But on December 2, 1993,

673

00:38:33,640 --> 00:38:35,640

John Cheek did not show up for work.

674

00:38:35,640 --> 00:38:39,640

At company headquarters, surprise quickly turned to concern.

675

00:38:40,640 --> 00:38:43,640

I thought possibly that maybe he was just tired

676

00:38:43,640 --> 00:38:46,640

and he might be somewhere resting.

677

00:38:46,640 --> 00:38:49,640

That's what I was, we were all hoping that's what had happened,

678

00:38:49,640 --> 00:38:51,640

but it was out of character,

679

00:38:51,640 --> 00:38:55,640

and then as the day went on and then that night,

680

00:38:55,640 --> 00:38:57,640

when no one had heard from John,

681

00:38:57,640 --> 00:39:01,640

we began to know that something terribly was wrong.

682

00:39:02,640 --> 00:39:05,640

Early the next morning, John's car was discovered.

683

00:39:05,640 --> 00:39:08,640

It had been abandoned on Interstate 55,

684

00:39:08,640 --> 00:39:11,640

where the highway crosses over the Mississippi River,

685

00:39:11,640 --> 00:39:13,640

about 12 miles from John's home.

686

00:39:14,640 --> 00:39:17,640

There was no signs of foul play on the car, the car was checked.

687

00:39:17,640 --> 00:39:20,640

Everything appeared to be intact.

688

00:39:20,640 --> 00:39:23,640

The Cheek family examined the car also,

689

00:39:23,640 --> 00:39:26,640

and it appeared to be just the way John would have left it.

690

00:39:28,640 --> 00:39:31,640

Police theorize that John Cheek had taken his own life

691

00:39:31,640 --> 00:39:34,640

by leaping into the swift waters of the Mississippi.

692

00:39:34,640 --> 00:39:37,640

However, extensive searches of the river and its banks

693

00:39:37,640 --> 00:39:39,640

failed to locate his body.

694

00:39:40,640 --> 00:39:42,640

To those who knew John,

695

00:39:42,640 --> 00:39:45,640

suicide seemed out of the question from the start.

696

00:39:45,640 --> 00:39:47,640

We didn't believe that,

697

00:39:47,640 --> 00:39:52,640

that he could be normal right up until 11 p.m. one night,

698

00:39:52,640 --> 00:39:54,640

and then all of a sudden,

699

00:39:54,640 --> 00:39:58,640

we'd jump off the bridge the next day, so...

700

00:40:00,640 --> 00:40:03,640

we were just left with the same position we are right now,

701

00:40:03,640 --> 00:40:06,640

that it was just some big mystery that happened to him,

702

00:40:06,640 --> 00:40:08,640

and we didn't know what.

703

00:40:09,640 --> 00:40:11,640

Two months passed with no leads,

704

00:40:11,640 --> 00:40:13,640

no word from John,

705

00:40:13,640 --> 00:40:15,640

no reason to believe he was even alive,

706

00:40:15,640 --> 00:40:18,640

until February 14, 1994.

707

00:40:22,640 --> 00:40:24,640

On that day, a trucker named Ron Jackson

708

00:40:24,640 --> 00:40:27,640

rolled into West Memphis, Arkansas.

709

00:40:27,640 --> 00:40:31,640

Over the years, Jackson has seen hundreds of missing person flyers

710

00:40:31,640 --> 00:40:34,640

at truck stops all across the country,

711

00:40:34,640 --> 00:40:37,640

but now he was stunned to find himself staring into the face

712

00:40:37,640 --> 00:40:39,640

of someone he recognized,

713

00:40:39,640 --> 00:40:42,640

a young man he had befriended just the day before.

714

00:40:43,640 --> 00:40:46,640

You never really expected to jump right out of there and say,

715

00:40:46,640 --> 00:40:48,640

hey, I know this person, hey,

716

00:40:48,640 --> 00:40:50,640

I had breakfast with this person the other morning,

717

00:40:50,640 --> 00:40:53,640

so that was added to my surprise of seeing this poster,

718

00:40:53,640 --> 00:40:55,640

and this identity was so strong,

719

00:40:55,640 --> 00:40:57,640

and it just kind of grabbed the hold of me and shook me

720

00:40:57,640 --> 00:41:00,640

like this was the individual period.

721

00:41:00,640 --> 00:41:04,640

It was in Ruffine, Virginia, some 700 miles east,

722

00:41:04,640 --> 00:41:08,640

that Ron found a young drifter sleeping inside a truck stop.

723

00:41:08,640 --> 00:41:10,640

Do you have breakfast yet?

724

00:41:10,640 --> 00:41:11,640

No.

725

00:41:11,640 --> 00:41:12,640

I have no money.

726

00:41:12,640 --> 00:41:13,640

No problem, let's go.

727

00:41:13,640 --> 00:41:15,640

I'm buying you breakfast.

728

00:41:15,640 --> 00:41:17,640

My first impression of this man when I saw him

729

00:41:17,640 --> 00:41:19,640

is that he was not homeless people.

730

00:41:19,640 --> 00:41:21,640

He was not street people.

731

00:41:21,640 --> 00:41:24,640

In the conversation, there was no street lingo.

732

00:41:24,640 --> 00:41:28,640

He was clean, and the white shirt was so white,

733

00:41:28,640 --> 00:41:30,640

it looked like he had just come out of the laundry.

734

00:41:30,640 --> 00:41:32,640

OK, help yourself.

735

00:41:32,640 --> 00:41:34,640

The young man didn't volunteer his name.

736

00:41:34,640 --> 00:41:37,640

He spoke only of an Arkansas homeless shelter

737

00:41:37,640 --> 00:41:39,640

that had recently taken care of him.

738

00:41:39,640 --> 00:41:42,640

Sir, for a while, I mean, a whole rock.

739

00:41:42,640 --> 00:41:43,640

I didn't press him.

740

00:41:43,640 --> 00:41:47,640

He just was rambling on in the cafeteria line.

741

00:41:47,640 --> 00:41:49,640

This is all a meeting.

742

00:41:49,640 --> 00:41:53,640

I would have to say that he was definitely not 100%

743

00:41:53,640 --> 00:41:57,640

in all mental capabilities.

744

00:41:57,640 --> 00:41:58,640

Have a good breakfast.

745

00:41:58,640 --> 00:41:59,640

Yeah.

746

00:41:59,640 --> 00:42:01,640

Where are you headed?

747

00:42:01,640 --> 00:42:03,640

Richmond.

748

00:42:03,640 --> 00:42:07,640

Ron and the drifter were headed in opposite directions.

749

00:42:07,640 --> 00:42:08,640

Good luck.

750

00:42:08,640 --> 00:42:11,640

Outside the cafeteria, they parted ways.

751

00:42:15,640 --> 00:42:17,640

Well, there were several things about the encounter that

752

00:42:17,640 --> 00:42:21,640

made us feel optimistic that it was a positive identification

753

00:42:21,640 --> 00:42:22,640

for John.

754

00:42:22,640 --> 00:42:25,640

And the first was the white shirt and tie,

755

00:42:25,640 --> 00:42:29,640

because that would be typical for him to be wearing that,

756

00:42:29,640 --> 00:42:32,640

because that's what he wore every day.

757

00:42:32,640 --> 00:42:35,640

He also mentioned the fact that he used very correct English

758

00:42:35,640 --> 00:42:38,640

and sounded like he was a well-educated person, which

759

00:42:38,640 --> 00:42:40,640

was obviously correct.

760

00:42:40,640 --> 00:42:41,640

Morning yet?

761

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

Oh, yes, it's morning.

762

00:42:42,640 --> 00:42:45,640

For John's parents, the clincher was Jackson's description

763

00:42:45,640 --> 00:42:47,640

of the man's shoes.

764

00:42:47,640 --> 00:42:50,640

Their son had had just such a pair of slip-on moccasins,

765

00:42:50,640 --> 00:42:53,640

a pair that was now missing.

766

00:42:53,640 --> 00:42:56,640

When we knew that John had a pair of shoes like this,

767

00:42:56,640 --> 00:43:01,640

we had not mentioned that to anyone up until this point in time.

768

00:43:01,640 --> 00:43:05,640

He was a very emotional bit of information,

769

00:43:05,640 --> 00:43:08,640

and immediately my thought was we've got to find him quick

770

00:43:08,640 --> 00:43:10,640

and get him home.

771

00:43:10,640 --> 00:43:14,640

He's wandering around and not knowing who he is.

772

00:43:14,640 --> 00:43:17,640

No one can be sure why John Cheek disappeared,

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00:43:17,640 --> 00:43:20,640

but his father believes John suffered a sudden episode

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00:43:20,640 --> 00:43:25,640

of stress induced amnesia, known as the fugue state.

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It's sort of a self-preservation mechanism.

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00:43:29,640 --> 00:43:31,640

If something in their past has become so stressful

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00:43:31,640 --> 00:43:33,640

that they can't stand it any longer,

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00:43:33,640 --> 00:43:35,640

then that's how they deal with it.

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00:43:35,640 --> 00:43:38,640

They just block it all out, and you're no longer John Cheek,

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00:43:38,640 --> 00:43:40,640

and you're no longer a financial officer,

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00:43:40,640 --> 00:43:44,640

and you're no longer putting together a big deal.

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Since Ron Jackson's sighting in February of 1994,

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00:43:48,640 --> 00:43:52,640

there has been no further word of John Cheek.

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John has brown hair, blue eyes, and stands six feet tall.

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00:43:56,640 --> 00:43:59,640

Before disappearing, he weighed 150 pounds.

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00:43:59,640 --> 00:44:03,640

John Cheek is 28 years old.

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00:44:03,640 --> 00:44:07,640

There's a hole in my heart, and I'm hoping that all of this publicity

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00:44:07,640 --> 00:44:11,640

will find someone that can fill that void,

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00:44:11,640 --> 00:44:14,640

and a mother never gives up.

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00:44:23,640 --> 00:44:25,640

Join me next time.

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00:44:25,640 --> 00:44:29,640

Perhaps you may be able to help solve a mystery.