

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 --> 00:00:12,080

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

5

00:00:16,080 --> 00:00:18,660

At the close of the Second World War,

6

00:00:18,660 --> 00:00:20,360

a young woman entrusted her daughter

7

00:00:20,360 --> 00:00:24,160

to a sailor returning home from service overseas.

8

00:00:24,160 --> 00:00:27,000

Now, 49 years later, the family members

9

00:00:27,000 --> 00:00:28,560

and police.

10

00:00:28,560 --> 00:00:32,800

Now, 49 years later, the smoker car baby has grown up

11

00:00:32,800 --> 00:00:35,040

and needs your help to find the mother who

12

00:00:35,040 --> 00:00:38,840

reluctantly gave her away.

13

00:00:38,840 --> 00:00:42,080

East Chicago, Indiana, 1981.

14

00:00:42,080 --> 00:00:44,520

It was politics as usual that a fundraiser

15

00:00:44,520 --> 00:00:47,080

for a leading candidate for mayor.

16

00:00:47,080 --> 00:00:49,680

Then a local mover and shaker named Jay Given

17

00:00:49,680 --> 00:00:52,520

was gunned down in the lobby of the Alts Club.

18

00:00:52,520 --> 00:00:56,320

And the prime suspect turned out to be a deputy police chief.

19

00:00:58,000 --> 00:01:02,800

In 1992, Larry Costa was gunned down at his ranch in Florida.

20

00:01:02,800 --> 00:01:05,600

That same night, his girlfriend, Melissa Joe Sermon,

21

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

mysteriously vanished.

22

00:01:07,600 --> 00:01:11,320

Joe's family fears that she too may have met with foul play.

23

00:01:11,320 --> 00:01:16,080

But police believe she may have been involved in Larry's death.

24

00:01:16,080 --> 00:01:18,080

Join me.

25

00:01:18,080 --> 00:01:21,680

For every mystery, there is some who knows the truth.

26

00:01:21,680 --> 00:01:23,120

Perhaps it's you.

27

00:01:57,000 --> 00:01:57,240

The

28

00:02:21,240 --> 00:02:24,480

East Chicago, Indiana is a classic industrial blue collar

29

00:02:24,600 --> 00:02:25,880

community.

30

00:02:25,880 --> 00:02:28,280

Like his famous name, Saikon, Illinois,

31

00:02:28,280 --> 00:02:30,760

everyday life in East Chicago was for years

32

00:02:30,760 --> 00:02:34,320

controlled by the local political machine.

33

00:02:34,320 --> 00:02:37,120

For two decades, one of the city's power brokers

34

00:02:37,120 --> 00:02:39,640

was an attorney named Jay Given.

35

00:02:39,640 --> 00:02:43,160

Given was a master fundraiser, clever behind the scenes

36

00:02:43,160 --> 00:02:45,480

operator who traded on favors to create

37

00:02:45,480 --> 00:02:48,800

strong political alliances.

38

00:02:48,800 --> 00:02:51,480

My father was very powerful.

39

00:02:51,480 --> 00:02:54,720

He understood how to win elections.

40

00:02:54,720 --> 00:03:00,200

He was intimately familiar with the politicians.

41

00:03:00,200 --> 00:03:05,240

People in power knew all the skeletons in their closet.

42

00:03:05,240 --> 00:03:13,720

And that makes you very powerful in a town like this.

43

00:03:13,720 --> 00:03:17,200

But by the 1970s, the political machines in the Midwest

44

00:03:17,200 --> 00:03:19,360

were beginning to come apart.

45

00:03:19,360 --> 00:03:23,040

In 1970, Given had helped elect Bob Pastrick, the city

46

00:03:23,040 --> 00:03:25,800

controller as mayor of East Chicago.

47

00:03:25,800 --> 00:03:28,680

But within two years, they were on the outs

48

00:03:28,680 --> 00:03:31,520

and no longer allies.

49

00:03:31,520 --> 00:03:37,360

On a number of issues, my father and Mr. Pastrick split.

50

00:03:37,360 --> 00:03:39,400

Obviously, my father's attentions

51

00:03:39,400 --> 00:03:43,080

were starting to turn towards electing somebody else other

52

00:03:43,080 --> 00:03:44,560

than Bob Pastrick as mayor.

53

00:03:45,240 --> 00:03:50,680

On May 15, 1981, the local Elks Club

54

00:03:50,680 --> 00:03:53,000

was a scene of a Las Vegas-style fundraiser

55

00:03:53,000 --> 00:03:56,120

for county commissioner Ann Adderson Spand.

56

00:03:56,120 --> 00:03:58,880

Spand, the city's foremost black politician,

57

00:03:58,880 --> 00:04:00,640

is considering a run for mayor.

58

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

I'm going to go right there.

59

00:04:01,640 --> 00:04:02,540

OK.

60

00:04:02,540 --> 00:04:06,000

Well, Jay Given is here.

61

00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:07,240

How are you this evening?

62

00:04:07,240 --> 00:04:08,560

Well, I'm delighted to be here.

63

00:04:08,560 --> 00:04:10,720

Jay Given's appearance at the fundraiser

64

00:04:10,720 --> 00:04:12,440

was regarded by many as an attempt

65

00:04:12,440 --> 00:04:16,120

to solidify East Chicago's white and black power blocks

66

00:04:16,120 --> 00:04:19,360

against the growing political strength of Hispanic Americans

67

00:04:19,360 --> 00:04:22,200

who were backing Bob Pastrick for reelection.

68

00:04:22,200 --> 00:04:24,280

John, it's a pleasure to meet you.

69

00:04:24,280 --> 00:04:26,600

Given worked the room for two hours.

70

00:04:26,600 --> 00:04:29,440

Shortly after 11 PM, he said his goodbyes

71

00:04:29,440 --> 00:04:32,000

and headed out of the club.

72

00:04:32,000 --> 00:04:33,800

He never made it through the front door.

73

00:04:42,640 --> 00:04:44,960

Jay Given was shot once in the back of the head

74

00:04:44,960 --> 00:04:47,040

at point blank range.

75

00:04:47,040 --> 00:04:49,160

He died in the entryway of the Elks Club

76

00:04:49,160 --> 00:04:51,800

with an ear shot of 400 people.

77

00:04:51,800 --> 00:04:55,520

Incredibly, no one ever admitted to witnessing the shooting.

78

00:04:55,520 --> 00:04:59,760

12 years later, police have yet to charge a suspect.

79

00:04:59,760 --> 00:05:01,720

But on the night of the murder, detectives

80

00:05:01,720 --> 00:05:04,240

thought the case might be wrapped up quickly,

81

00:05:04,240 --> 00:05:07,040

especially after they found a shell casing in the foyer

82

00:05:07,040 --> 00:05:10,880

of the club and a spent 45 caliber bullet in the street.

83

00:05:12,720 --> 00:05:15,360

I was astonished at the remarkable condition

84

00:05:15,360 --> 00:05:17,400

that this evidence was in.

85

00:05:17,400 --> 00:05:21,320

Projectile come through the front part of his forehead,

86

00:05:21,320 --> 00:05:24,200

went through the glass doors, hit the building

87

00:05:24,200 --> 00:05:26,960

across the street, brick building,

88

00:05:26,960 --> 00:05:29,240

and bounced back into the street.

89

00:05:29,240 --> 00:05:31,400

It was in perfect condition, with the exception

90

00:05:31,400 --> 00:05:34,160

of the nose of the projectile.

91

00:05:34,160 --> 00:05:36,440

Inspector DeCera marked the evidence

92

00:05:36,440 --> 00:05:39,160

and locked it in his desk drawer rather than check it

93

00:05:39,160 --> 00:05:40,640

into the vault.

94

00:05:40,640 --> 00:05:41,720

And which is not uncommon.

95

00:05:41,720 --> 00:05:42,880

I've done it with other evidence.

96

00:05:42,880 --> 00:05:45,080

My partner has done it with other evidence.

97

00:05:45,080 --> 00:05:47,840

I just wanted the other teams to look at what we had

98

00:05:47,840 --> 00:05:48,760

as far as evidence.

99

00:05:48,760 --> 00:05:51,840

And I said, this is unbelievable.

100

00:05:51,840 --> 00:05:54,000

Four days later, Inspector DeCera

101

00:05:54,000 --> 00:05:55,880

was shocked when he opened his drawer

102

00:05:55,880 --> 00:05:58,800

and discovered that someone had tampered with the evidence

103

00:05:58,800 --> 00:06:01,800

in an apparent attempt to prevent investigators from matching

104

00:06:01,800 --> 00:06:05,280

the bullet to a gun.

105

00:06:05,280 --> 00:06:09,960

On the shell casing, a hole was punched through the primer.

106

00:06:09,960 --> 00:06:14,000

The projectile, someone had taken a sharp instrument

107

00:06:14,000 --> 00:06:16,120

and tried to cut the lens and grooves where

108

00:06:16,120 --> 00:06:18,400

you could identify it.

109

00:06:18,400 --> 00:06:21,080

The only people with access to the evidence drawer

110

00:06:21,080 --> 00:06:23,080

worked in the police department.

111

00:06:23,080 --> 00:06:28,320

The tampering had all the earmarks of an inside job.

112

00:06:28,320 --> 00:06:30,780

DeCera sent the altered bullet and shell casing

113

00:06:30,780 --> 00:06:33,200

to the FBI for analysis.

114

00:06:33,200 --> 00:06:36,200

Despite the damage, they identified the murder weapon

115

00:06:36,200 --> 00:06:39,320

as a rare handgun called a detonix.

116

00:06:39,320 --> 00:06:42,760

The casing was eventually linked to one of only 58 detonix

117

00:06:42,760 --> 00:06:46,920

with a specially modified ejecting mechanism.

118

00:06:46,920 --> 00:06:49,480

Incredibly, one of those guns was traced back

119

00:06:49,480 --> 00:06:52,160

to the East Chicago Police Department.

120

00:06:52,160 --> 00:06:55,920

The weapon was once owned by Deputy Chief John Cardona, who

121

00:06:55,920 --> 00:06:58,920

was a prime suspect in the case.

122

00:06:58,920 --> 00:07:01,960

Cardona had been a member of a Latino political club that

123

00:07:01,960 --> 00:07:03,960

was at odds with Jay Given.

124

00:07:03,960 --> 00:07:06,920

And several eyewitnesses placed him at the Elks Club

125

00:07:06,920 --> 00:07:08,000

on the night of the shooting.

126

00:07:10,960 --> 00:07:15,040

Mr. Cardona was very active in the Spanish organization.

127

00:07:15,040 --> 00:07:18,320

They were not welcome at this event.

128

00:07:18,320 --> 00:07:20,200

I think he gave it two or three different reasons

129

00:07:20,200 --> 00:07:23,400

why he was there based on different conversations.

130

00:07:23,400 --> 00:07:24,800

He at some point in time acknowledged

131

00:07:24,800 --> 00:07:26,960

that he was there to watch Jay Given.

132

00:07:31,680 --> 00:07:33,920

According to investigators, a witness

133

00:07:33,920 --> 00:07:36,240

claims that Cardona seemed to be following

134

00:07:36,240 --> 00:07:40,320

Given at one point during the evening.

135

00:07:40,320 --> 00:07:43,480

Given had made it clear that if his people came in power

136

00:07:43,480 --> 00:07:45,800

in the city, there were going to be some changes.

137

00:07:45,800 --> 00:07:47,960

And Cardona was one of those changes.

138

00:07:47,960 --> 00:07:50,120

As a matter of fact, the comment that was used that if he got

139

00:07:50,120 --> 00:07:53,840

in, Cardona would be walking the beat.

140

00:07:53,840 --> 00:07:56,400

None of the witnesses saw Cardona when Given made

141

00:07:56,400 --> 00:07:58,320

his way towards the exit.

142

00:07:58,320 --> 00:08:01,680

However, one party goers says that shortly before the shooting,

143

00:08:01,680 --> 00:08:03,640

he saw Given engage in a discussion

144

00:08:03,640 --> 00:08:05,440

with a man in the lobby.

145

00:08:05,440 --> 00:08:10,600

Investigators believe the man could have been John Cardona.

146

00:08:10,600 --> 00:08:13,240

He described the man that was talking with Mr. Given

147

00:08:13,240 --> 00:08:18,720

as approximately 6'1 black wavy hair in a bluish gray suit.

148

00:08:18,720 --> 00:08:21,880

That could have been consistent with what Mr. Cardona was

149

00:08:21,880 --> 00:08:24,200

wearing at the time and his size.

150

00:08:24,200 --> 00:08:26,480

He went into the washroom.

151

00:08:26,480 --> 00:08:29,320

And as he was in the washroom, he heard a gunshot.

152

00:08:29,320 --> 00:08:31,320

When he came out of the washroom immediately,

153

00:08:31,320 --> 00:08:35,520

he saw Mr. Given lying face down on the floor

154

00:08:35,520 --> 00:08:36,680

and the other person was gone.

155

00:08:39,360 --> 00:08:43,040

Cardona said that he was in the bar when Given was gunned down.

156

00:08:43,040 --> 00:08:45,040

However, according to investigators,

157

00:08:45,040 --> 00:08:47,680

several people said they did not remember seeing him

158

00:08:47,680 --> 00:08:49,800

there at the time.

159

00:08:49,800 --> 00:08:53,800

Witnesses who were seated at the bar who know him

160

00:08:53,800 --> 00:08:55,520

could not place him there.

161

00:08:55,520 --> 00:08:58,440

The only person that puts John in the bar at the time

162

00:08:58,440 --> 00:09:00,800

of the shooting is John himself.

163

00:09:00,800 --> 00:09:04,560

Did you tell the investigator the truth about this case?

164

00:09:04,560 --> 00:09:05,400

Yes.

165

00:09:05,400 --> 00:09:08,280

Over the next few weeks, everyone in the police department

166

00:09:08,280 --> 00:09:10,480

was asked to take a polygraph exam,

167

00:09:10,480 --> 00:09:13,000

including Deputy Chief Cardona.

168

00:09:13,000 --> 00:09:15,520

Cardona failed the test and later,

169

00:09:15,520 --> 00:09:19,320

he refused to take a second exam.

170

00:09:19,320 --> 00:09:22,240

Investigators believe the three key pieces of evidence

171

00:09:22,240 --> 00:09:24,480

pointed to John Cardona.

172

00:09:24,480 --> 00:09:26,480

He apparently fit the description of the man

173

00:09:26,480 --> 00:09:28,560

seen talking with Given.

174

00:09:28,600 --> 00:09:31,400

He owned a Daytonics handgun, even though he said

175

00:09:31,400 --> 00:09:34,000

it had been stolen six months earlier.

176

00:09:34,000 --> 00:09:36,880

And Cardona did have access to the drawer

177

00:09:36,880 --> 00:09:40,320

where the evidence had been kept.

178

00:09:40,320 --> 00:09:42,080

But when viewed in a different light,

179

00:09:42,080 --> 00:09:45,040

what appears to be overwhelming circumstantial evidence

180

00:09:45,040 --> 00:09:48,920

actually makes John Cardona an unlikely suspect.

181

00:09:48,920 --> 00:09:51,720

Why would a man as prominent as a deputy police chief

182

00:09:51,720 --> 00:09:54,200

make a very visible appearance at a fundraiser

183

00:09:54,200 --> 00:09:57,280

attended by 400 people?

184

00:09:57,280 --> 00:09:58,880

Why would he then shadow the movements

185

00:09:58,880 --> 00:10:02,120

of a known political rival for at least part of the evening

186

00:10:02,120 --> 00:10:04,560

as alleged by one witness?

187

00:10:04,560 --> 00:10:07,560

And why would he murder that rival with an earshot

188

00:10:07,560 --> 00:10:10,920

of every guest at the party?

189

00:10:10,920 --> 00:10:12,760

Perhaps it was these very questions

190

00:10:12,760 --> 00:10:15,560

that kept prosecutors from pressing charges.

191

00:10:15,560 --> 00:10:20,520

In fact, the case was never even brought before the grand jury.

192

00:10:20,520 --> 00:10:23,600

I think the concern that the local prosecutor had

193

00:10:23,600 --> 00:10:26,880

was that he could not afford to lose this case.

194

00:10:26,880 --> 00:10:32,360

He wanted basically a case that was a tight case.

195

00:10:32,360 --> 00:10:34,400

And he didn't think his case was tight enough.

196

00:10:34,400 --> 00:10:36,000

I would like to see an indictment.

197

00:10:36,000 --> 00:10:37,160

I'd like to see a trial.

198

00:10:37,160 --> 00:10:40,000

And if John Cardona didn't do it, then fine.

199

00:10:40,000 --> 00:10:42,240

Let's put it to a jury.

200

00:10:42,240 --> 00:10:45,400

And if he didn't do it, in the eyes of the jury,

201

00:10:45,400 --> 00:10:47,560

beyond a reasonable doubt, there you have it.

202

00:10:47,560 --> 00:10:50,200

Let's go after the next, you know, who else,

203

00:10:50,200 --> 00:10:53,280

whoever did do it.

204

00:10:53,280 --> 00:11:00,400

It's very frustrating to not have some closure on this.

205

00:11:00,400 --> 00:11:02,360

Who murdered J. Gibbon?

206

00:11:02,360 --> 00:11:04,040

At this point, police believe there

207

00:11:04,040 --> 00:11:09,080

are witnesses who may be able to help answer that question.

208

00:11:09,080 --> 00:11:11,320

Just prior to the shooting, five people

209

00:11:11,320 --> 00:11:14,040

were descending the stairway of the Elks Club.

210

00:11:14,040 --> 00:11:16,200

Three of them, all men, were approaching

211

00:11:16,200 --> 00:11:18,240

the foot of the steps at the precise moment

212

00:11:18,240 --> 00:11:20,560

that J. Gibbon was gunned down.

213

00:11:20,560 --> 00:11:23,240

The three men have never been identified.

214

00:11:23,240 --> 00:11:25,800

The police hope that one of them saw the killer

215

00:11:25,800 --> 00:11:27,880

and will now come forward with information.

216

00:11:33,480 --> 00:11:36,680

When we return, a Florida rancher is murdered

217

00:11:36,680 --> 00:11:39,120

and his girlfriend mysteriously vanishes.

218

00:11:48,800 --> 00:11:51,480

Larry Costine was a Southern cowboy

219

00:11:51,480 --> 00:11:53,320

Just before the turn of the century,

220

00:11:53,320 --> 00:11:55,680

his great-great grandfather had homesteaded

221

00:11:55,680 --> 00:11:57,960

a stretch of harsh land in central Florida

222

00:11:57,960 --> 00:12:00,040

near the city of Lakeland.

223

00:12:00,040 --> 00:12:03,040

Larry took his ranching heritage seriously.

224

00:12:03,040 --> 00:12:05,560

He had spent his entire 31 years working

225

00:12:05,560 --> 00:12:08,360

with horses and cattle.

226

00:12:08,360 --> 00:12:13,120

Larry was riding a horse from the time he was two years old.

227

00:12:13,120 --> 00:12:15,560

He loved to work.

228

00:12:15,560 --> 00:12:19,840

He loved to rodeo.

229

00:12:19,840 --> 00:12:24,960

He was stout, husky, strong as a mule.

230

00:12:24,960 --> 00:12:27,800

He was the type of person to get into trouble.

231

00:12:27,800 --> 00:12:29,160

He stayed away from trouble.

232

00:12:29,160 --> 00:12:31,560

Of course, if it came along, he no doubt take care of himself.

233

00:12:34,680 --> 00:12:37,800

Larry's uncle, Erlo, was the barn manager for the Cattleman's

234

00:12:37,800 --> 00:12:39,280

livestock auction market.

235

00:12:39,280 --> 00:12:40,160

Hey, Erlo.

236

00:12:40,160 --> 00:12:40,960

How are you?

237

00:12:40,960 --> 00:12:41,960

How are you?

238

00:12:41,960 --> 00:12:43,880

All right.

239

00:12:43,880 --> 00:12:47,080

One of Erlo's employees was Melissa Joe Sermons, whom

240

00:12:47,080 --> 00:12:49,360

everyone called Joe.

241

00:12:49,360 --> 00:12:50,080

Joe, I'm all done.

242

00:12:50,080 --> 00:12:50,980

He's up to office.

243

00:12:50,980 --> 00:12:51,880

Be back later.

244

00:12:51,880 --> 00:12:53,320

OK, I'll see you later.

245

00:12:53,320 --> 00:12:55,240

Hey, you ain't said nothing to him about us, have you?

246

00:12:55,240 --> 00:12:56,140

Erlo?

247

00:12:56,140 --> 00:12:58,040

No, I didn't say anything.

248

00:12:58,040 --> 00:12:58,840

I didn't say anything.

249

00:12:58,840 --> 00:13:00,960

Unbeknownst even to Erlo, Joe and Larry

250

00:13:00,960 --> 00:13:02,800

were romantically involved.

251

00:13:02,800 --> 00:13:04,600

They kept their relationship a secret,

252

00:13:04,600 --> 00:13:06,760

because Larry had just split up with his wife,

253

00:13:06,760 --> 00:13:07,960

and Joe were their boyfriend.

254

00:13:07,960 --> 00:13:08,860

You do?

255

00:13:08,860 --> 00:13:10,080

OK, well, that's good.

256

00:13:10,080 --> 00:13:13,000

The boyfriend often worked at the auction market, too.

257

00:13:13,000 --> 00:13:17,040

By all accounts, he wasn't taking the break up well.

258

00:13:17,040 --> 00:13:19,520

There were different occasions I've called him.

259

00:13:19,520 --> 00:13:23,440

He would be following her, watching her.

260

00:13:23,440 --> 00:13:26,280

He was just very upset that the fact

261

00:13:26,280 --> 00:13:29,320

that she had left his house, and he was

262

00:13:29,320 --> 00:13:31,560

having to live by himself again.

263

00:13:31,560 --> 00:13:33,760

He followed her continuously.

264

00:13:33,760 --> 00:13:35,480

Joe and my other daughter went to the store.

265

00:13:35,480 --> 00:13:36,560

He would follow them.

266

00:13:36,560 --> 00:13:37,800

Midnight, you'd see.

267

00:13:37,800 --> 00:13:40,360

We even caught him sneaking down under the kitchen window,

268

00:13:40,360 --> 00:13:42,560

listening to their conversation one night.

269

00:13:42,560 --> 00:13:43,600

We asked him what he was doing.

270

00:13:43,600 --> 00:13:45,960

He said, oh, I just thought I heard something out here,

271

00:13:45,960 --> 00:13:47,160

and I was just looking.

272

00:13:47,160 --> 00:13:49,240

But he was eavesdropping.

273

00:13:49,240 --> 00:13:52,120

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to Sassus Arena

274

00:13:52,120 --> 00:13:53,520

in Lagouti, Florida.

275

00:13:53,520 --> 00:13:56,840

On Saturday, May 2, 1992, Larry and Joe

276

00:13:56,840 --> 00:13:59,400

were in Dade City, Florida for the weekly rodeo.

277

00:13:59,400 --> 00:14:03,920

The event starts and steers out of shoot number one right now.

278

00:14:03,920 --> 00:14:06,560

The events got underway around 10 PM.

279

00:14:06,560 --> 00:14:09,120

Larry and Joe never missed the rodeo.

280

00:14:09,120 --> 00:14:10,880

Larry was one of the local stars,

281

00:14:10,880 --> 00:14:15,360

and his favorite event was team-on-game.

282

00:14:15,640 --> 00:14:17,800

That night, Joe stuck by Larry's sign.

283

00:14:17,800 --> 00:14:19,740

Right up to the minute, he and his partner

284

00:14:19,740 --> 00:14:21,000

were called into the box.

285

00:14:21,000 --> 00:14:21,960

Yeah!

286

00:14:21,960 --> 00:14:22,940

Come on!

287

00:14:22,940 --> 00:14:25,280

The horse!

288

00:14:25,280 --> 00:14:26,280

The horse!

289

00:14:26,280 --> 00:14:27,280

Come on!

290

00:14:27,280 --> 00:14:28,280

The horse!

291

00:14:28,280 --> 00:14:29,280

The horse!

292

00:14:29,280 --> 00:14:30,280

The horse!

293

00:14:30,280 --> 00:14:31,280

The horse!

294

00:14:31,280 --> 00:14:32,040

The horse!

295

00:14:32,040 --> 00:14:33,040

The horse!

296

00:14:33,040 --> 00:14:34,120

The horse!

297

00:14:34,120 --> 00:14:35,120

The horse!

298

00:14:35,120 --> 00:14:37,120

The horse!

299

00:14:37,120 --> 00:14:38,120

The horse!

300

00:14:38,120 --> 00:14:39,120

The horse!

301

00:14:39,120 --> 00:14:40,120

The horse!

302

00:14:40,120 --> 00:14:41,120

The horse!

303

00:14:41,120 --> 00:14:42,120

The horse!

304

00:14:42,120 --> 00:14:44,800

Ladies and gentlemen, we are looking

305

00:14:44,800 --> 00:14:47,120

a brand new wedding time.

306

00:14:47,120 --> 00:14:48,600

Five-year-old Larry.

307

00:14:48,600 --> 00:14:50,560

Taking home the potluck.

308

00:14:50,560 --> 00:14:51,560

I'm looking for him.

309

00:14:51,560 --> 00:14:52,560

I'm looking for him.

310

00:14:52,560 --> 00:14:53,560

I'm looking for him.

311

00:14:53,560 --> 00:14:54,560

I'm looking for him.

312

00:14:54,560 --> 00:14:55,560

I'm looking for him.

313

00:14:55,560 --> 00:14:56,560

I'm looking for him.

314

00:14:56,560 --> 00:14:57,560

I'm looking for him.

315

00:14:57,560 --> 00:15:02,560

Larry and his partners put a \$350 purse.

316

00:15:02,560 --> 00:15:04,800

The rodeo finished late that night.

317

00:15:04,800 --> 00:15:07,640

Around 2 AM, Larry and Joe went out to breakfast

318

00:15:07,640 --> 00:15:09,000

with a friend.

319

00:15:09,000 --> 00:15:12,080

They dropped him off at 4 AM.

320

00:15:12,080 --> 00:15:14,640

It is believed Joe and Larry arrived back at his trailer

321

00:15:14,640 --> 00:15:16,400

around 4.15 Sunday morning.

322

00:15:19,400 --> 00:15:21,880

No one knows exactly what happened after that.

323

00:15:25,000 --> 00:15:26,640

When Joe didn't come home that night,

324

00:15:26,640 --> 00:15:29,120

her mother called Erlo costume.

325

00:15:29,120 --> 00:15:32,680

For the first time, you learned of Joe and Larry's relationship.

326

00:15:32,680 --> 00:15:35,880

Erlo called Larry's trailer, but Larry didn't answer.

327

00:15:35,880 --> 00:15:38,560

The next morning, when Joe didn't show up for work,

328

00:15:38,560 --> 00:15:40,880

Erlo drove to Larry's trailer.

329

00:15:40,880 --> 00:15:42,680

He found Larry's truck in the driveway

330

00:15:42,680 --> 00:15:45,440

and heard a radio on inside the trailer.

331

00:15:45,440 --> 00:15:48,040

Erlo's frantic knocks at the door went unanswered.

332

00:15:51,560 --> 00:15:55,680

As soon as I got to the trailer and seen the situation,

333

00:15:55,680 --> 00:15:57,840

I immediately called back to my wife

334

00:15:57,840 --> 00:15:59,880

and told her to call the sheriff's department

335

00:15:59,880 --> 00:16:02,080

to get him out there.

336

00:16:02,080 --> 00:16:06,840

And I just, a feeling came to me that I knew in my mind

337

00:16:06,840 --> 00:16:08,240

that something bad was wrong.

338

00:16:08,240 --> 00:16:09,040

I'm coming out.

339

00:16:09,040 --> 00:16:09,760

I really appreciate this.

340

00:16:09,760 --> 00:16:10,800

I'm Erlo Costime.

341

00:16:10,800 --> 00:16:11,920

Bob Clayton, how you doing?

342

00:16:12,280 --> 00:16:14,160

Pleasure.

343

00:16:14,160 --> 00:16:17,280

I'm worried to death about my nephew Larry.

344

00:16:17,280 --> 00:16:19,400

Have you tried to go inside the house yet?

345

00:16:19,400 --> 00:16:21,640

No, I haven't.

346

00:16:21,640 --> 00:16:25,280

I'm afraid to be honest about it.

347

00:16:25,280 --> 00:16:26,440

Does anybody have a key to it?

348

00:16:26,440 --> 00:16:27,360

I got the key.

349

00:16:36,600 --> 00:16:38,200

Sheriff's office, is anybody home?

350

00:16:42,840 --> 00:16:44,840

Mr. Costime, is anybody home?

351

00:16:46,840 --> 00:16:47,840

Exactly what I got.

352

00:16:54,840 --> 00:16:58,440

When the deputy put the key in and opened the door,

353

00:16:58,440 --> 00:17:00,840

the smell was unreal.

354

00:17:00,840 --> 00:17:03,640

And I knew then that Larry was dead.

355

00:17:03,640 --> 00:17:06,240

But I felt like that both of them would be there

356

00:17:06,240 --> 00:17:08,320

when we opened the door, being both of them

357

00:17:08,320 --> 00:17:09,920

was missing at the time.

358

00:17:10,920 --> 00:17:13,320

As soon as they told Erlo, there was only one body.

359

00:17:13,320 --> 00:17:15,240

He called us and told us at that time

360

00:17:15,240 --> 00:17:16,520

that my daughter was missing.

361

00:17:16,520 --> 00:17:17,920

They did not know where she was at.

362

00:17:21,760 --> 00:17:24,960

Larry Costime had been found nude on his bedroom floor,

363

00:17:24,960 --> 00:17:28,080

shot through the head four times with a handgun.

364

00:17:28,080 --> 00:17:30,200

His bed had not been slept in.

365

00:17:30,200 --> 00:17:32,920

There was no sign of a struggle or robbery.

366

00:17:32,920 --> 00:17:34,920

And one of Larry's guns was missing.

367

00:17:35,920 --> 00:17:38,800

It was the last time he was seen in Larry.

368

00:17:38,800 --> 00:17:40,560

The Polk County Sheriff's Department

369

00:17:40,560 --> 00:17:42,960

launched an all-out investigation,

370

00:17:42,960 --> 00:17:45,960

at first suspicion focused on Joe's ex-boyfriend.

371

00:17:45,960 --> 00:17:47,160

Take some photographs for me.

372

00:17:47,160 --> 00:17:48,680

We interviewed him.

373

00:17:48,680 --> 00:17:51,880

He was able to give us an alibi for his particular time

374

00:17:51,880 --> 00:17:56,080

and location when the actual murder occurred.

375

00:17:56,080 --> 00:18:00,280

I don't feel that the ex-boyfriend at this time

376

00:18:00,280 --> 00:18:01,320

has any involvement.

377

00:18:01,320 --> 00:18:04,120

I have no evidence to indicate that.

378

00:18:04,120 --> 00:18:05,840

Let's move down to that end.

379

00:18:05,840 --> 00:18:08,520

Soon, Joe herself became a suspect.

380

00:18:08,520 --> 00:18:11,880

But Erlo Costime is convinced that Joe Sermons did not

381

00:18:11,880 --> 00:18:12,840

murder his nephew.

382

00:18:15,120 --> 00:18:19,040

I feel like that somebody watched Larry.

383

00:18:19,040 --> 00:18:20,760

New Larry was at her open.

384

00:18:20,760 --> 00:18:23,560

New Joe was with Larry.

385

00:18:23,560 --> 00:18:28,680

Followed Larry home or knew when he was coming home

386

00:18:28,680 --> 00:18:29,680

and was waiting for him.

387

00:18:30,240 --> 00:18:33,240

No, you don't watch that.

388

00:18:33,240 --> 00:18:34,240

Let's get out of here.

389

00:18:34,240 --> 00:18:35,240

You don't need to.

390

00:18:35,240 --> 00:18:39,600

I just personally, I feel like it was somebody real jealous

391

00:18:39,600 --> 00:18:41,600

of his actions that particular night.

392

00:18:41,600 --> 00:18:43,720

Ben was Joe, spending the night with Joe.

393

00:18:54,720 --> 00:18:58,040

I said, didn't I tell you to stay away from him?

394

00:18:58,040 --> 00:19:01,240

I think Joe was probably taking a gun point.

395

00:19:01,240 --> 00:19:03,440

And at a later time, murdered.

396

00:19:03,440 --> 00:19:05,800

I think Joe's did.

397

00:19:05,800 --> 00:19:09,360

If we want to look at Joe's ex-boyfriend

398

00:19:09,360 --> 00:19:12,600

as a suspect in this case, I think

399

00:19:12,600 --> 00:19:16,000

that he would have probably committed the offense

400

00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:18,240

in a different situation.

401

00:19:18,240 --> 00:19:20,400

I don't think that it would have happened in the residence.

402

00:19:20,400 --> 00:19:23,400

I don't think he would have allowed Joe and Larry

403

00:19:23,400 --> 00:19:27,120

to spend time in the residence alone.

404

00:19:27,120 --> 00:19:30,640

And also the fact that, of course, there's no struggle.

405

00:19:30,640 --> 00:19:32,360

The authorities believe Joe Sermons

406

00:19:32,360 --> 00:19:34,280

may be the only person who could have gotten

407

00:19:34,280 --> 00:19:38,240

close enough to Larry Costine to kill him without a struggle.

408

00:19:38,240 --> 00:19:40,400

Is it possible that something happened in the trailer

409

00:19:40,400 --> 00:19:45,640

that night, something that provoked Joe to violence?

410

00:19:45,640 --> 00:19:49,120

I think Larry could have made her mad.

411

00:19:49,120 --> 00:19:53,760

He can make anybody mad in a split second.

412

00:19:53,800 --> 00:19:58,000

He'll push and push and push until he does make you mad.

413

00:19:58,000 --> 00:20:00,480

They might have gotten an argument,

414

00:20:00,480 --> 00:20:02,440

and it led into one thing or another.

415

00:20:05,120 --> 00:20:08,000

I mean, she could have been joking,

416

00:20:08,000 --> 00:20:11,480

but it just led into something violent.

417

00:20:11,480 --> 00:20:12,400

Shut down, Joe.

418

00:20:12,400 --> 00:20:13,400

Shut it down.

419

00:20:13,400 --> 00:20:14,480

OK, go ahead and shoot me.

420

00:20:14,480 --> 00:20:15,480

Go ahead.

421

00:20:15,480 --> 00:20:16,480

Go ahead.

422

00:20:28,480 --> 00:20:33,360

In my heart, I strongly believe that she is life

423

00:20:33,360 --> 00:20:34,480

and that she is hiding.

424

00:20:35,480 --> 00:20:42,480

Based on everything that I've learned at this time,

425

00:20:42,480 --> 00:20:47,920

I feel that Joe is in some way involved in the murder,

426

00:20:47,920 --> 00:20:50,240

either actually committing the murder

427

00:20:50,240 --> 00:20:53,720

or possibly a witness to it.

428

00:20:53,720 --> 00:20:57,120

But she has some type of involvement and or knowledge

429

00:20:57,120 --> 00:20:59,000

about it.

430

00:20:59,000 --> 00:21:01,480

I think her ex-boyfriend's kidnapped her.

431

00:21:02,120 --> 00:21:06,040

I think her ex-boyfriend's kidnapped her.

432

00:21:06,040 --> 00:21:09,040

I hope she, I would like to think she's still alive,

433

00:21:09,040 --> 00:21:12,280

but I really don't believe that they could hold her this long.

434

00:21:12,280 --> 00:21:14,080

I believe she's dead.

435

00:21:14,080 --> 00:21:15,720

I've come to terms with God.

436

00:21:15,720 --> 00:21:17,560

I just want him to help me settle this case,

437

00:21:17,560 --> 00:21:21,080

to find out who did it and let them pay the penalty

438

00:21:21,080 --> 00:21:22,040

that they should pay.

439

00:21:24,920 --> 00:21:27,440

Ever since the night Larry Costine was murdered,

440

00:21:27,440 --> 00:21:29,520

there have been sightings of Melissa Joe sermons

441

00:21:29,560 --> 00:21:33,480

at truck stops in Florida, Texas, and Kansas.

442

00:21:33,480 --> 00:21:36,560

The authorities believe the sightings are reliable.

443

00:21:36,560 --> 00:21:40,080

Erlo Costine does not.

444

00:21:40,080 --> 00:21:48,480

I feel like by now that she made a move to come back

445

00:21:48,480 --> 00:21:51,400

or see her mother and her sisters.

446

00:21:51,400 --> 00:21:57,200

I just, I can't believe that anybody's ever really seen her.

447

00:21:57,200 --> 00:21:59,720

They've seen people that they thought maybe was her.

448

00:22:03,440 --> 00:22:05,680

The authorities continue to investigate this case

449

00:22:05,680 --> 00:22:08,920

on the assumption that Joe sermons is still alive.

450

00:22:08,920 --> 00:22:11,720

Joe holds a license to operate a tractor trailer.

451

00:22:11,720 --> 00:22:14,160

Two witnesses have claimed they saw her behind the wheel

452

00:22:14,160 --> 00:22:16,160

of a big rig hauling livestock.

453

00:22:17,160 --> 00:22:23,160

The Young Mother.

454

00:22:23,160 --> 00:22:25,800

Nearly 50 years ago, the young mother,

455

00:22:25,800 --> 00:22:29,760

barely able to support herself, reluctantly gave up her baby.

456

00:22:29,760 --> 00:22:32,720

Perhaps you can help reunite them next.

457

00:22:32,720 --> 00:22:50,040

August 14, 1945, the end of the Second World War.

458

00:22:50,040 --> 00:22:52,400

All across the country, people spontaneously

459

00:22:52,400 --> 00:22:55,440

took to the streets, enjoy a celebration.

460

00:22:55,440 --> 00:22:57,320

There would be no more fighting.

461

00:22:57,320 --> 00:22:59,440

The troops were coming home.

462

00:22:59,440 --> 00:23:00,680

Life would return to normal.

463

00:23:03,160 --> 00:23:05,920

In November of that year, seaman first class Donald

464

00:23:05,920 --> 00:23:08,600

Caffrey boarded a train in Seattle heading home

465

00:23:08,600 --> 00:23:11,800

to his wife in Omaha, Nebraska, after almost two years at sea.

466

00:23:14,800 --> 00:23:17,600

In the smoker car, Donald ran into a young woman

467

00:23:17,600 --> 00:23:18,600

named Dorothy Johnson.

468

00:23:18,600 --> 00:23:20,120

Very beautiful.

469

00:23:20,120 --> 00:23:22,960

Separated from her husband in just 17,

470

00:23:22,960 --> 00:23:25,160

Dorothy was traveling to Utica, New York

471

00:23:25,160 --> 00:23:28,240

with her 11-month-old daughter, Yvonne.

472

00:23:29,240 --> 00:23:30,240

Do you mind holding her awhile?

473

00:23:30,240 --> 00:23:31,240

No.

474

00:23:31,240 --> 00:23:33,240

No, not at all.

475

00:23:33,240 --> 00:23:35,240

Donald was delighted to hold Yvonne.

476

00:23:35,240 --> 00:23:38,240

And before long, he became her unofficial babysitter.

477

00:23:42,240 --> 00:23:45,240

That evening, as the train proceeded east,

478

00:23:45,240 --> 00:23:47,240

Dorothy sat with Donald and slowly revealed

479

00:23:47,240 --> 00:23:49,240

the details of her life.

480

00:23:49,240 --> 00:23:51,240

When we get to Utica, I'm going to have

481

00:23:51,240 --> 00:23:54,240

to put her in a foster home.

482

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

Dorothy was in dire financial crisis.

483

00:23:57,240 --> 00:24:00,240

She was in dire financial straits and had no way of supporting

484

00:24:00,240 --> 00:24:01,240

her baby.

485

00:24:01,240 --> 00:24:04,240

I simply can't take care of her.

486

00:24:04,240 --> 00:24:06,240

I'm sorry.

487

00:24:06,240 --> 00:24:08,240

I talk quite a bit to her.

488

00:24:08,240 --> 00:24:09,240

It's OK.

489

00:24:09,240 --> 00:24:10,240

I'm going to get a job.

490

00:24:10,240 --> 00:24:13,240

And as we started getting closer to Omaha,

491

00:24:13,240 --> 00:24:17,240

I asked her if she'd like to have me take the baby home

492

00:24:17,240 --> 00:24:21,240

with me until she got settled and could send for the baby.

493

00:24:21,240 --> 00:24:24,240

Or maybe I could bring it to her.

494

00:24:24,240 --> 00:24:25,240

And she agreed on that.

495

00:24:28,240 --> 00:24:32,240

I thought I'd better get something on paper

496

00:24:32,240 --> 00:24:37,240

to prove that I wasn't kidnapping the child.

497

00:24:37,240 --> 00:24:40,240

So I thought of this idea of writing up this agreement.

498

00:24:43,240 --> 00:24:45,240

The agreement stated that Dorothy had willingly

499

00:24:45,240 --> 00:24:48,240

entrusted Yvonne to Donald's care.

500

00:24:48,240 --> 00:24:51,240

And that if she did not call for the child within 60 days,

501

00:24:51,240 --> 00:24:54,240

Donald and his wife could begin adoption proceedings.

502

00:24:58,240 --> 00:25:01,240

I feel at that time she was at her last rope.

503

00:25:01,240 --> 00:25:05,240

She didn't know what to do with this child.

504

00:25:05,240 --> 00:25:10,240

I think that she picked him because she could see that he

505

00:25:10,240 --> 00:25:12,240

cared.

506

00:25:12,240 --> 00:25:16,240

And he has compassion for people.

507

00:25:16,240 --> 00:25:18,240

And he has a very good heart.

508

00:25:18,240 --> 00:25:21,240

And I feel like she knew that.

509

00:25:21,240 --> 00:25:26,240

She knew that when she said, will you take this child?

510

00:25:26,240 --> 00:25:31,240

That she could trust him.

511

00:25:34,240 --> 00:25:38,240

At 2 PM on November 16, the train pulled into Omaha.

512

00:25:38,240 --> 00:25:40,240

Donald's wife Barbara and his parents

513

00:25:40,240 --> 00:25:42,240

were there to give him a hero's welcome.

514

00:25:42,240 --> 00:25:43,240

Donald!

515

00:25:43,240 --> 00:25:44,240

Barbara!

516

00:25:44,240 --> 00:25:47,240

I got off the train and hugged and kissed.

517

00:25:47,240 --> 00:25:50,240

And then I told her they were good news.

518

00:25:50,240 --> 00:25:51,240

Who's this?

519

00:25:51,240 --> 00:25:54,240

Well, she needed a home.

520

00:25:55,240 --> 00:25:57,240

A woman on the train asked me to keep her.

521

00:25:57,240 --> 00:26:02,240

That kind of shocked her, set her back on her heels.

522

00:26:02,240 --> 00:26:04,240

I tried to explain this, you know, the whole thing

523

00:26:04,240 --> 00:26:05,240

to my wife.

524

00:26:05,240 --> 00:26:09,240

And she didn't really believe it at first.

525

00:26:09,240 --> 00:26:15,240

She thought it was probably some of my scouting around.

526

00:26:19,240 --> 00:26:21,240

Barbara soon got over her initial shock.

527

00:26:21,240 --> 00:26:24,240

Within days, both of the cafes were completely

528

00:26:24,240 --> 00:26:27,240

in love with Yvonne.

529

00:26:27,240 --> 00:26:29,240

However, when county officials caught wind

530

00:26:29,240 --> 00:26:32,240

of the unusual arrangement, Donald and Barbara became fearful

531

00:26:32,240 --> 00:26:36,240

that Yvonne would be taken from them.

532

00:26:36,240 --> 00:26:39,240

They decided to file for legal custody before they agreed

533

00:26:39,240 --> 00:26:43,240

upon 60 days.

534

00:26:43,240 --> 00:26:47,240

A few days later, Donald received a wire from Dorothy Johnson.

535

00:26:47,240 --> 00:26:49,240

Thank you very much.

536

00:26:50,240 --> 00:26:53,240

Arrived home Tuesday, and I want Yvonne very much.

537

00:26:53,240 --> 00:26:55,240

How is she anyway?

538

00:26:55,240 --> 00:26:58,240

Dorothy Johnson.

539

00:26:58,240 --> 00:27:00,240

Donald was in a quandary.

540

00:27:00,240 --> 00:27:02,240

The very next day, he and Barbara were due in court

541

00:27:02,240 --> 00:27:04,240

for the custody hearing.

542

00:27:04,240 --> 00:27:07,240

Donald decided to proceed, believing it was in Yvonne's

543

00:27:07,240 --> 00:27:09,240

best interests.

544

00:27:09,240 --> 00:27:13,240

What is the word from the child's natural mother, Dorothy

545

00:27:13,240 --> 00:27:14,240

Johnson?

546

00:27:14,240 --> 00:27:15,240

She has not appeared.

547

00:27:15,240 --> 00:27:17,240

The judge said that before making a decision,

548

00:27:17,240 --> 00:27:20,240

he would need to speak personally with Dorothy Johnson.

549

00:27:20,240 --> 00:27:22,240

The child is held.

550

00:27:22,240 --> 00:27:24,240

A new court date was scheduled.

551

00:27:24,240 --> 00:27:26,240

Yvonne was placed in temporary foster care

552

00:27:26,240 --> 00:27:30,240

and became an overnight celebrity.

553

00:27:30,240 --> 00:27:35,240

Newspapers throughout the country seized upon the story.

554

00:27:35,240 --> 00:27:40,240

They dubbed Yvonne the smoker car baby.

555

00:27:40,240 --> 00:27:44,240

Dorothy Johnson was summoned to Omaha to explain her actions.

556

00:27:44,240 --> 00:27:48,240

Otherwise, she might be charged with parental neglect.

557

00:27:48,240 --> 00:27:52,240

Dorothy never appeared in court, but a witness did show up

558

00:27:52,240 --> 00:27:54,240

to challenge the calfreys custody suit.

559

00:27:54,240 --> 00:27:58,240

Your Honor, Dorothy is afraid to come to Omaha herself

560

00:27:58,240 --> 00:28:00,240

as she faces charges of neglect.

561

00:28:00,240 --> 00:28:02,240

She fears going to jail.

562

00:28:02,240 --> 00:28:04,240

I'm Dorothy Johnson's sister.

563

00:28:04,240 --> 00:28:08,240

I've come from New York in hopes of adopting the baby myself.

564

00:28:08,240 --> 00:28:11,240

I feel I can provide a good and decent home for the child,

565

00:28:11,240 --> 00:28:16,240

and I'm sure in time the baby would respond to me as her own mother.

566

00:28:16,240 --> 00:28:20,240

Request denied.

567

00:28:20,240 --> 00:28:22,240

I've never seen anybody.

568

00:28:22,240 --> 00:28:25,240

Nobody ever showed up on my doorstep or called me

569

00:28:25,240 --> 00:28:29,240

or asked me for the baby back or a thing.

570

00:28:29,240 --> 00:28:32,240

So we just went ahead and decided to adopt her.

571

00:28:32,240 --> 00:28:35,240

In light of your ongoing commitment to the child...

572

00:28:35,240 --> 00:28:39,240

In June of 1947, after a two-year struggle,

573

00:28:39,240 --> 00:28:43,240

a juvenile court judge awarded the calfreys sole custody.

574

00:28:43,240 --> 00:28:47,240

The custody of the child to Donald and Barbara Caffrey.

575

00:28:47,240 --> 00:28:51,240

By now, Yvonne had been renamed Sandra Lee.

576

00:28:51,240 --> 00:28:57,240

The smoker car baby ceased to be headline material.

577

00:28:57,240 --> 00:29:01,240

When Sandra was nine, her parents separated.

578

00:29:01,240 --> 00:29:05,240

She spent most of her time with her grandmother.

579

00:29:05,240 --> 00:29:12,240

When Sandra was 18, her adopted mother finally told her the truth about her past.

580

00:29:12,240 --> 00:29:20,240

When I found out that I was adopted, I was really surprised.

581

00:29:20,240 --> 00:29:24,240

I came back home and I said, grandmother, was I adopted?

582

00:29:24,240 --> 00:29:30,240

And my grandmother said yes, with tears in her eyes,

583

00:29:30,240 --> 00:29:36,240

because I really don't think she ever really wanted me to know.

584

00:29:36,240 --> 00:29:41,240

A few months later, Sandra received an unusual letter in the mail.

585

00:29:41,240 --> 00:29:47,240

For the first time, she saw the face of her natural mother.

586

00:29:47,240 --> 00:29:54,240

When the picture came in this envelope, there was no address, no note.

587

00:29:54,240 --> 00:29:59,240

It could have been my mother that sent the article.

588

00:29:59,240 --> 00:30:02,240

Maybe she was afraid to come out.

589

00:30:02,240 --> 00:30:08,240

Maybe she just wanted to be in the background, but let me be able to see.

590

00:30:08,240 --> 00:30:14,240

It's a mystery. It's a mystery.

591

00:30:14,240 --> 00:30:17,240

The letter was postmarked Omaha, Nebraska.

592

00:30:17,240 --> 00:30:22,240

Only later did Sandra discover that an anonymous woman had phoned her grandmother

593

00:30:22,240 --> 00:30:28,240

and asked if she could send Sandra clippings about the smoker car baby.

594

00:30:28,240 --> 00:30:33,240

Today, armed with little more than faded clippings and a single photograph of Dorothy Johnson,

595

00:30:33,240 --> 00:30:37,240

Sandra is more determined than ever to reunite with a mother

596

00:30:37,240 --> 00:30:42,240

who reluctantly gave her away nearly 50 years ago.

597

00:30:42,240 --> 00:30:52,240

I think she got scared. I think she wanted me, but I don't think she had any help,

598

00:30:52,240 --> 00:31:02,240

maybe from her family, to help her try to get back to me.

599

00:31:02,240 --> 00:31:13,240

There's a void in my life. I know in her life there's that void too, and there's lots of hurt.

600

00:31:13,240 --> 00:31:18,240

On the night of our broadcast, Sandra Lee Nelson's long search came to a bittersweet end.

601

00:31:18,240 --> 00:31:24,240

A viewer called our phone center with the sad news that Dorothy Johnson had passed away in 1968.

602

00:31:24,240 --> 00:31:30,240

However, Sandra was overjoyed to learn that she had an Uncle Mickey and two aunts, Jan and Alice,

603

00:31:30,240 --> 00:31:36,240

who had always wondered about Sandra and were anxious to meet her.

604

00:31:36,240 --> 00:31:42,240

A month later, on December 28, 1993, Sandra and her husband, Chet, arrived in Syracuse, New York

605

00:31:42,240 --> 00:31:46,240

to receive a most remarkable Christmas gift.

606

00:31:46,240 --> 00:31:59,240

A house full of relatives waiting to meet Sandra for the very first time.

607

00:31:59,240 --> 00:32:11,240

I didn't think I'd ever find anyone. It just gave me chills. It just made me feel real warm, like, oh gee, what a nice family.

608

00:32:11,240 --> 00:32:13,240

This is Dorothy and Harold. That's her.

609

00:32:13,240 --> 00:32:15,240

Oh, it's him, Wayne.

610

00:32:15,240 --> 00:32:20,240

Sandra and her new family began to compare notes on Dorothy Johnson's life.

611

00:32:20,240 --> 00:32:26,240

Although Sandra was unable to learn the identity of her birth father, she did discover that in the early 1950s,

612

00:32:26,240 --> 00:32:31,240

Dorothy had married a man named Wayne Rogers. Sandra now would like to find Wayne Rogers

613

00:32:31,240 --> 00:32:36,240

in the hope that she can fill in the remaining gaps in her past.

614

00:32:36,240 --> 00:32:40,240

So this is the only picture I have of her.

615

00:32:40,240 --> 00:32:48,240

I'm getting little bits and pieces from friends and relatives telling me a little bit about her,

616

00:32:48,240 --> 00:32:52,240

and which, you know, these little things mean a great deal to me.

617

00:32:52,240 --> 00:33:00,240

I have found a family, a wonderful family, that I never thought I'd ever have.

618

00:33:00,240 --> 00:33:02,240

This is the best holiday.

619

00:33:02,240 --> 00:33:03,240

One more hug.

620

00:33:03,240 --> 00:33:05,240

Okay.

621

00:33:05,240 --> 00:33:12,240

This is the best time in my life.

622

00:33:12,240 --> 00:33:21,240

When we return, authorities need your help in the case of a vicious, unknown assailant who targets young girls.

623

00:33:22,240 --> 00:33:27,240

The Neighborhood Park.

624

00:33:27,240 --> 00:33:35,240

In a perfect world, a refuge from the realities of urban life, filled with the sounds of children at play.

625

00:33:35,240 --> 00:33:46,240

But on May 26, 1992, a park in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, became the backdrop for a parents' worst nightmare.

626

00:33:46,240 --> 00:33:50,240

Mom, I forgot my shoes.

627

00:33:50,240 --> 00:33:55,240

Across the street from the park, a three-year-old girl named Mandy lived with her aunt.

628

00:33:55,240 --> 00:34:00,240

Mandy had spent most of the afternoon in the playground, which was almost like her own backyard.

629

00:34:00,240 --> 00:34:04,240

At 6 p.m., she returned to retrieve her shoes.

630

00:34:04,240 --> 00:34:17,240

I don't care about that time.

631

00:34:17,240 --> 00:34:19,240

Go, go, go, go, go, go!

632

00:34:19,240 --> 00:34:21,240

Come on, you can do it!

633

00:34:21,240 --> 00:34:25,240

Come on, baby, make some space, man!

634

00:34:27,240 --> 00:34:29,240

Okay, guys, make some space.

635

00:34:29,240 --> 00:34:31,240

Go ahead, get in there for a sec.

636

00:34:31,240 --> 00:34:33,240

Go to the next house.

637

00:34:46,240 --> 00:34:50,240

I got worried and I went out to go and find her.

638

00:34:50,240 --> 00:34:56,240

And when I did get out to the park, there was a guy out there playing ball hockey with his kids.

639

00:34:56,240 --> 00:34:59,240

Did you see Mandy or I've been looking all over for her?

640

00:34:59,240 --> 00:35:09,240

He said he had just seen Mandy about five minutes earlier getting her shoes, but he didn't see which way Mandy went.

641

00:35:13,240 --> 00:35:15,240

Mandy!

642

00:35:15,240 --> 00:35:18,240

Audrey combed the neighborhood for two solid hours.

643

00:35:18,240 --> 00:35:20,240

Finally, she called the police.

644

00:35:20,240 --> 00:35:23,240

They launched their own search, but also came up empty-handed.

645

00:35:24,240 --> 00:35:34,240

19 hours later, a group of horseback riders came across Mandy in a remote field, nine miles from her home.

646

00:35:34,240 --> 00:35:38,240

Oh, my God, Daryl, just a minute. Just a minute, Laurie.

647

00:35:38,240 --> 00:35:43,240

She had a one-inch welt on her neck from being choked and had been sexually assaulted.

648

00:35:43,240 --> 00:35:46,240

She was partially clothed and both of her shoes were missing.

649

00:35:46,240 --> 00:35:50,240

But amazingly, Mandy was still alive.

650

00:35:51,240 --> 00:35:55,240

It was quite obvious to everyone involved that she had been left for dead.

651

00:35:55,240 --> 00:36:01,240

She was injured to such an extent that the perpetrator definitely wanted her to be dead.

652

00:36:01,240 --> 00:36:07,240

I wouldn't have believed that she could have made it out there where they found her.

653

00:36:07,240 --> 00:36:13,240

But then when I thought about it after, she was a miracle.

654

00:36:13,240 --> 00:36:16,240

It was a miracle that she lived through that.

655

00:36:17,240 --> 00:36:23,240

Apparently, the assailant had driven into the field and thrown Mandy from the car without stopping.

656

00:36:23,240 --> 00:36:26,240

But he had left nothing in the way of evidence.

657

00:36:26,240 --> 00:36:30,240

Mandy initially wasn't able to tell us an awful lot.

658

00:36:30,240 --> 00:36:33,240

She was only three and a half years old.

659

00:36:33,240 --> 00:36:37,240

However, as time progresses, she is giving us more and more information.

660

00:36:37,240 --> 00:36:40,240

She is actually a very bright young girl.

661

00:36:40,240 --> 00:36:46,240

In my opinion, if she sees the person or person responsible, she will be able to identify them.

662

00:36:49,240 --> 00:36:51,240

I think we have something over here.

663

00:36:52,240 --> 00:36:55,240

Within five miles of the spot where Mandy was found,

664

00:36:55,240 --> 00:36:59,240

the police chanced upon tattered pieces of her skirt and one of her sneakers.

665

00:36:59,240 --> 00:37:03,240

The police believed the items were discarded by the assailant,

666

00:37:03,240 --> 00:37:06,240

shortly after he dumped Mandy by the side of the road.

667

00:37:07,240 --> 00:37:09,240

The shoe was minus the laces.

668

00:37:09,240 --> 00:37:12,240

We're still missing at this time her left shoe.

669

00:37:12,240 --> 00:37:19,240

The person responsible may be saving these items as a bit of a trophy, a keepsake.

670

00:37:19,240 --> 00:37:24,240

And we're hopeful as well that perhaps somebody may have seen the shoe

671

00:37:24,240 --> 00:37:28,240

or perhaps a part of that jeans skirt in a person's vehicle.

672

00:37:30,240 --> 00:37:32,240

The investigation soon stalled.

673

00:37:32,240 --> 00:37:36,240

Four months later, on September 4th, a local newspaper reported

674

00:37:36,240 --> 00:37:39,240

that the police had uncovered no further clues.

675

00:37:39,240 --> 00:37:42,240

Essentially, the case was at a dead end.

676

00:37:46,240 --> 00:37:50,240

Two days later, a six-year-old girl and her five-year-old friend

677

00:37:50,240 --> 00:37:55,240

were playing outside their apartment building, just four miles from where Mandy lived.

678

00:38:02,240 --> 00:38:04,240

The police found the shoe.

679

00:38:21,240 --> 00:38:24,240

Minutes later, an 11-year-old boy looked out his window

680

00:38:24,240 --> 00:38:28,240

and saw a man getting into a blue van with a little girl.

681

00:38:32,240 --> 00:38:36,240

The abducted girl was six-year-old Corinne Gustafson, who was nicknamed Punky.

682

00:38:36,240 --> 00:38:39,240

The police immediately set up a command post

683

00:38:39,240 --> 00:38:43,240

and aided by dozens of volunteers launched a widespread search.

684

00:38:43,240 --> 00:38:48,240

Punky's parents, Karen and Raymond, could do little more than sit at home and wait.

685

00:38:50,240 --> 00:38:56,240

We were just feeling sick and worried, what could have happened to her

686

00:38:57,240 --> 00:39:02,240

and what could you be doing to her and

687

00:39:05,240 --> 00:39:07,240

if we ever find her.

688

00:39:11,240 --> 00:39:13,240

Three days passed.

689

00:39:13,240 --> 00:39:17,240

Then on September 8th, at a truck yard in the southeast section of Edmonton,

690

00:39:17,240 --> 00:39:20,240

a driver noticed what he thought was a ragged dog.

691

00:39:22,240 --> 00:39:25,240

Punky Gustafson had been murdered.

692

00:39:27,240 --> 00:39:30,240

Punky had been raped and smothered.

693

00:39:30,240 --> 00:39:34,240

Her death brought Mandy's assault back into the public eye.

694

00:39:34,240 --> 00:39:38,240

However, unlike Mandy's case, clues had been left at the scene.

695

00:39:40,240 --> 00:39:44,240

We were able to obtain footprints and tire prints.

696

00:39:44,240 --> 00:39:50,240

The tire prints indicated that the suspect drove a mid-sized North American front-wheel drive vehicle

697

00:39:50,240 --> 00:39:55,240

with Goodyear-invented GLs on the back with approximately 20% wear

698

00:39:55,240 --> 00:39:57,240

and ball tires on the front.

699

00:39:58,240 --> 00:40:05,240

The footprints indicated that he wore a miter type baseball cleat size 5.5 to 7.

700

00:40:05,240 --> 00:40:09,240

This is a patented tread design manufactured in Canada.

701

00:40:10,240 --> 00:40:14,240

We were able to determine that Karen was in fact killed at another location

702

00:40:14,240 --> 00:40:20,240

and dumped in the truck yard, much the same as what happened to Mandy being dumped in the field.

703

00:40:21,240 --> 00:40:24,240

The distance the victims were transported after abduction

704

00:40:24,240 --> 00:40:28,240

was done to the victims by the offender.

705

00:40:29,240 --> 00:40:36,240

All facts of the case lead me to believe that both crimes were committed by the same individual.

706

00:40:38,240 --> 00:40:42,240

Ron McKay is Canada's foremost criminal profiler.

707

00:40:42,240 --> 00:40:46,240

He has developed a detailed personality portrait of the assailant.

708

00:40:47,240 --> 00:40:52,240

In my opinion, this offender is in his late teens to early 20s.

709

00:40:52,240 --> 00:40:56,240

He probably doesn't have a girlfriend, somewhat of a loner.

710

00:40:57,240 --> 00:41:04,240

He's a fantasy-motivated individual, and his fantasy is only satisfied temporarily.

711

00:41:05,240 --> 00:41:12,240

So therefore, after he regains some confidence and if the fantasy continues untreated,

712

00:41:13,240 --> 00:41:20,240

then the probability of him real fending in a similar fashion is a very real probability.

713

00:41:22,240 --> 00:41:27,240

Since Punky's death, the Edmonton police have launched their largest media campaign ever.

714

00:41:28,240 --> 00:41:37,240

Someone out there knows this guy, be it their next door neighbor, their schoolmate, their fellow employee,

715

00:41:38,240 --> 00:41:40,240

or the little paper boy that lived down the block.

716

00:41:41,240 --> 00:41:49,240

Our bad guy doesn't have to look like any kind of a monster. He could just look like your boy next door.

717

00:41:49,240 --> 00:41:53,240

I'm going to bring you on stage here for just a minute. Okay, how old are you?

718

00:41:54,240 --> 00:41:55,240

Six.

719

00:41:55,240 --> 00:42:00,240

Oh, bummer. You've got to be seven to do this trick. Yeah, seven. Seven. How old are you?

720

00:42:01,240 --> 00:42:02,240

Seven.

721

00:42:03,240 --> 00:42:06,240

This home video was taken two months before Corinne died.

722

00:42:07,240 --> 00:42:13,240

The police have not ruled out the possibility that the same man who murdered Corinne may have also attacked Mandy.

723

00:42:14,240 --> 00:42:22,240

I know it would give our family a sense of relief knowing that he's behind bars and somebody else isn't going to have to go through it,

724

00:42:23,240 --> 00:42:28,240

what we're going through and some poor little kid isn't going to have to suffer like Corinne must have.

725

00:42:29,240 --> 00:42:33,240

As long as he's out on the streets, every little kid is in jeopardy.

726

00:42:43,240 --> 00:42:47,240

I'm going to bring you on stage here for just a minute.

727

00:43:00,240 --> 00:43:05,240

Join me next time for another intriguing edition of Unsolved Mysteries.