

1

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

This program is about unsolved mysteries.

2

00:00:04,000 --> 00:00:06,800

Whenever possible, the actual family members and police

3

00:00:06,800 --> 00:00:09,800

officials have participated in recreating the events.

4

00:00:09,800 --> 00:00:12,800

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

5

00:00:17,800 --> 00:00:19,200

Kansas City, Missouri.

6

00:00:19,200 --> 00:00:22,400

It started as a small fire at a construction site,

7

00:00:22,400 --> 00:00:25,200

and suddenly it exploded with unrestrained fury,

8

00:00:25,200 --> 00:00:27,600

instantly killing six firemen.

9

00:00:27,800 --> 00:00:30,600

Later investigators discovered that the blaze had been

10

00:00:30,600 --> 00:00:33,800

deliberately set, meaning the deaths were in reality

11

00:00:33,800 --> 00:00:37,400

cold-blooded murders.

12

00:00:37,400 --> 00:00:39,800

Imagine the eerie feeling of stepping off a train

13

00:00:39,800 --> 00:00:42,600

and coming face to face with a total stranger who looks

14

00:00:42,600 --> 00:00:46,600

exactly like you, in effect, your mirror image.

15

00:00:46,600 --> 00:00:49,600

That is precisely what happened to a soldier named Ken Palmer

16

00:00:49,600 --> 00:00:51,600

during World War II.

17

00:00:51,600 --> 00:00:55,600

Some 50 years later, he's still searching for his own body.

18

00:00:56,600 --> 00:00:58,600

On a small plane loaded with marijuana,

19

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

crashed in the Virginia countryside,

20

00:01:00,600 --> 00:01:03,600

it blew the lid off one of the East Coast's biggest drug

21

00:01:03,600 --> 00:01:04,600

lines.

22

00:01:04,600 --> 00:01:07,600

Authorities began to close in on the mastermind,

23

00:01:07,600 --> 00:01:10,600

a charismatic pilot named Wallace Thrasher,

24

00:01:10,600 --> 00:01:13,600

only to hear he had apparently died in Central America.

25

00:01:13,600 --> 00:01:15,600

But reports of the drug lord's death

26

00:01:15,600 --> 00:01:17,600

may have been a clever hoax.

27

00:01:17,600 --> 00:01:20,600

Officials now believe that Wallace Thrasher got away,

28

00:01:20,600 --> 00:01:23,600

Scott Friedman, and his wife,

29

00:01:23,600 --> 00:01:27,600

Wallace Thrasher got away, Scott Friedman.

30

00:01:27,600 --> 00:01:30,600

Join me for another fascinating edition

31

00:01:30,600 --> 00:01:32,600

of Unsolved Mysteries.

32

00:01:53,600 --> 00:01:57,600

MUSIC

33

00:02:23,600 --> 00:02:27,600

Tonight, a woman named Pam Page is missing.

34

00:02:27,600 --> 00:02:30,600

For more than four years, her family's endured the agony

35

00:02:30,600 --> 00:02:32,600

of not knowing what happened to her.

36

00:02:32,600 --> 00:02:36,600

In 1977, Pam and her husband, Rob, left Arkansas

37

00:02:36,600 --> 00:02:39,600

and eventually moved to a suburb of Phoenix, Arizona,

38

00:02:39,600 --> 00:02:41,600

where they opened a video rental business.

39

00:02:41,600 --> 00:02:46,600

Despite one shaky period in 1987, Pam and Rob seemed happy.

40

00:02:46,600 --> 00:02:51,600

In fact, on July 7th, 1989, Pam went back to Arkansas

41

00:02:51,600 --> 00:02:55,600

for a family reunion and told everyone that things were great.

42

00:02:55,600 --> 00:02:59,600

MUSIC

43

00:02:59,600 --> 00:03:02,600

Two weeks later, however, on July 22nd, 1989,

44

00:03:02,600 --> 00:03:08,600

Rob Page said he noticed that his wife was behaving strangely.

45

00:03:08,600 --> 00:03:10,600

During the middle of the night, on the early morning hours

46

00:03:10,600 --> 00:03:13,600

of Saturday, Mr. Page awoke and discovered

47

00:03:13,600 --> 00:03:16,600

that his wife was not in bed.

48

00:03:16,600 --> 00:03:19,600

He went downstairs and discovered her on the sofa.

49

00:03:19,600 --> 00:03:21,600

Honey, what are you doing?

50

00:03:21,600 --> 00:03:24,600

I just couldn't sleep. My back really hurts.

51

00:03:24,600 --> 00:03:28,600

She was going through family photographs and she was crying.

52

00:03:28,600 --> 00:03:30,600

I'll just leave for a little while.

53

00:03:30,600 --> 00:03:32,600

She told him that her back was bothering her

54

00:03:32,600 --> 00:03:34,600

and that she didn't feel well.

55

00:03:34,600 --> 00:03:37,600

And Mr. Page said that he encouraged her to go see a doctor

56

00:03:37,600 --> 00:03:40,600

in the morning and he returned back to bed.

57

00:03:40,600 --> 00:03:44,600

Mr. Page said he got up at 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning,

58

00:03:44,600 --> 00:03:46,600

went downstairs and found his wife

59

00:03:46,600 --> 00:03:48,600

assorting through clothing.

60

00:03:48,600 --> 00:03:51,600

Sorting through some clothes for goodwill.

61

00:03:51,600 --> 00:03:53,600

I've been wanting to do this for a while.

62

00:03:53,600 --> 00:03:55,600

It's almost 8 o'clock.

63

00:03:55,600 --> 00:03:57,600

Are you going to go down to the shop?

64

00:03:57,600 --> 00:03:59,600

I really don't feel very good.

65

00:03:59,600 --> 00:04:01,600

Well, you only to open up for you?

66

00:04:01,600 --> 00:04:02,600

Would you?

67

00:04:02,600 --> 00:04:03,600

Yeah, sure.

68

00:04:03,600 --> 00:04:04,600

Well, that would be good.

69

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

Okay. Well, I got the keys.

70

00:04:05,600 --> 00:04:06,600

Okay, thanks.

71

00:04:06,600 --> 00:04:07,600

Right.

72

00:04:07,600 --> 00:04:09,600

He did leave the home.

73

00:04:09,600 --> 00:04:11,600

Stated he had trouble starting his vehicle

74

00:04:11,600 --> 00:04:13,600

because he has an ignition switch problem.

75

00:04:13,600 --> 00:04:16,600

Worked on his truck for a little bit, got us started,

76

00:04:16,600 --> 00:04:19,600

and went up and opened up the video store.

77

00:04:22,600 --> 00:04:24,600

Rob Page said that 8 hours later,

78

00:04:24,600 --> 00:04:29,600

he came home to an empty house and a letter from Pam.

79

00:04:29,600 --> 00:04:32,600

Rob, by the time you read this,

80

00:04:32,600 --> 00:04:34,600

I'll be a long way from here.

81

00:04:34,600 --> 00:04:36,600

I have thought this thing out

82

00:04:36,600 --> 00:04:39,600

and have been planning this for several months.

83

00:04:39,600 --> 00:04:42,600

The letter stated that Pam had left town

84

00:04:42,600 --> 00:04:44,600

with a woman named Sarah.

85

00:04:44,600 --> 00:04:46,600

Rob Page claimed he was embarrassed

86

00:04:46,600 --> 00:04:49,600

because he thought his wife had left him for a woman.

87

00:04:49,600 --> 00:04:53,600

He did not call Arkansas to tell Pam's family.

88

00:04:53,600 --> 00:04:55,600

Four days later, however,

89

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

Pam's older sister Trina did call Rob.

90

00:04:58,600 --> 00:04:59,600

She was Trina.

91

00:04:59,600 --> 00:05:01,600

I was calling to see how Pam was doing.

92

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

She's gone.

93

00:05:02,600 --> 00:05:04,600

What do you mean she's gone?

94

00:05:04,600 --> 00:05:08,600

Well, I came home on Saturday and she left me a letter.

95

00:05:08,600 --> 00:05:11,600

It seemed out of character to me for her not to let anyone

96

00:05:11,600 --> 00:05:13,600

know where she was at.

97

00:05:13,600 --> 00:05:15,600

But I didn't think about that at first.

98

00:05:15,600 --> 00:05:18,600

I just had one thing on mind,

99

00:05:18,600 --> 00:05:22,600

was getting my word to somebody that she was missing.

100

00:05:22,600 --> 00:05:25,600

By the time you read this, I will be a long way from here.

101

00:05:25,600 --> 00:05:28,600

One by one, the members of Pam's family called Rob

102

00:05:28,600 --> 00:05:31,600

and listened as he read the letter.

103

00:05:31,600 --> 00:05:35,600

To each and every one, something seemed odd.

104

00:05:35,600 --> 00:05:38,600

Rob told him the police had taken a report,

105

00:05:38,600 --> 00:05:41,600

but Pam's father wanted to see the letter anyway.

106

00:05:41,600 --> 00:05:42,600

I'm leaving because I'm not happy.

107

00:05:42,600 --> 00:05:44,600

He asked Rob to fax it to Arkansas.

108

00:05:44,600 --> 00:05:46,600

I thought living back home would make me happy.

109

00:05:46,600 --> 00:05:47,600

It walked.

110

00:05:47,600 --> 00:05:49,600

When I received that faxed letter,

111

00:05:49,600 --> 00:05:53,600

I knew that something was bad wrong.

112

00:05:53,600 --> 00:05:56,600

For one thing, I looked at the signature.

113

00:05:56,600 --> 00:06:01,600

I had birthday cards and letters and so on from Pam.

114

00:06:01,600 --> 00:06:06,600

And the signature wasn't her signature.

115

00:06:06,600 --> 00:06:09,600

Finally, Pam's sister, Jimmy, called the police in Arizona

116

00:06:09,600 --> 00:06:12,600

that they had never heard of the case.

117

00:06:12,600 --> 00:06:14,600

The family was stunned.

118

00:06:14,600 --> 00:06:18,600

I knew from that second that she was dead.

119

00:06:18,600 --> 00:06:22,600

It scared me because I didn't know if we would find her body

120

00:06:22,600 --> 00:06:25,600

or if we would know what happened to her.

121

00:06:25,600 --> 00:06:27,600

But I knew she was dead.

122

00:06:27,600 --> 00:06:29,600

I was sure of that.

123

00:06:29,600 --> 00:06:34,600

She wouldn't leave under no circumstances.

124

00:06:34,600 --> 00:06:37,600

She would have let mama know they were too close.

125

00:06:44,600 --> 00:06:47,600

Rob page told detectives that on the day of Pam's disappearance,

126

00:06:47,600 --> 00:06:50,600

he left home around 8 AM.

127

00:06:50,600 --> 00:06:53,600

Later, he went to several auto parts stores,

128

00:06:53,600 --> 00:06:58,600

looking without success for an ignition switch for his truck.

129

00:06:58,600 --> 00:07:03,600

In the parking lot of one store, the truck finally gave out.

130

00:07:03,600 --> 00:07:06,600

Rob said he called home, got no answer,

131

00:07:06,600 --> 00:07:09,600

and assumed Pam had gone to the video shop after all.

132

00:07:09,600 --> 00:07:12,600

He phoned for a taxi to take him home.

133

00:07:12,600 --> 00:07:15,600

I need a taxi.

134

00:07:15,600 --> 00:07:18,600

Rob said he never went into the house, only the garage.

135

00:07:18,600 --> 00:07:21,600

He got apart for his truck, hopped on his bike,

136

00:07:21,600 --> 00:07:23,600

and went back to the store.

137

00:07:25,600 --> 00:07:32,600

When the truck finally started, he drove home and found the letter.

138

00:07:32,600 --> 00:07:35,600

The letter stated that Pam had taken all their money,

139

00:07:35,600 --> 00:07:41,600

\$60,000 in cash, out of the safe at the video store.

140

00:07:41,600 --> 00:07:43,600

Rob page said he went straight to the store,

141

00:07:43,600 --> 00:07:48,600

and indeed, the cash was gone.

142

00:07:48,600 --> 00:07:51,600

The letter also said that Pam had left the couple's Corvette

143

00:07:51,600 --> 00:07:53,600

at a Winchell's donut shop.

144

00:07:53,600 --> 00:07:57,600

Rob page claimed he drove to every Winchells in the area,

145

00:07:57,600 --> 00:08:02,600

until finally the next day he located the Corvette.

146

00:08:02,600 --> 00:08:07,600

Soon, however, police began to question the details of Rob's story.

147

00:08:07,600 --> 00:08:11,600

None of the employees at the last auto parts store remembered Rob,

148

00:08:11,600 --> 00:08:15,600

or anyone, asking about an ignition switch.

149

00:08:15,600 --> 00:08:19,600

In addition, Rob page had said his truck, which was very distinctive,

150

00:08:19,600 --> 00:08:24,600

was parked at the store for nearly four hours that afternoon.

151

00:08:24,600 --> 00:08:27,600

None of the employees ever recall seeing that truck,

152

00:08:27,600 --> 00:08:30,600

being out front of the store, anyone ever working on it,

153

00:08:30,600 --> 00:08:33,600

and one particular employee stated if that truck had been out

154

00:08:33,600 --> 00:08:37,600

in front of his business, he would have known it.

155

00:08:37,600 --> 00:08:40,600

The police also found it curious that the donut shop

156

00:08:40,600 --> 00:08:43,600

or Pam had allegedly parked the Corvette.

157

00:08:43,600 --> 00:08:46,600

The shop which had taken Rob page several hours to locate

158

00:08:46,600 --> 00:08:51,600

was right across the street from the auto parts store.

159

00:08:51,600 --> 00:08:55,600

However, police did verify Rob's claim that a cab took him home

160

00:08:55,600 --> 00:09:01,600

from that location on July 22, 1989.

161

00:09:01,600 --> 00:09:04,600

Next, investigators turned their attention to the letter

162

00:09:04,600 --> 00:09:07,600

and the traveling companion named Sarah.

163

00:09:07,600 --> 00:09:12,600

Rob said he had never met Sarah, but had heard Pam talk about her.

164

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

Mr. Page felt that his wife had met Sarah at the video store.

165

00:09:19,600 --> 00:09:22,600

From checking with the video store, the customers by the name of Sarah,

166

00:09:22,600 --> 00:09:27,600

we were not able to find a woman by that name who knew Mrs. Page.

167

00:09:27,600 --> 00:09:31,600

Finally, three weeks after Pam page disappeared,

168

00:09:31,600 --> 00:09:34,600

the Arizona State Crime Lab verified that the signature on the letter

169

00:09:34,600 --> 00:09:38,600

was almost certainly not Pam's.

170

00:09:38,600 --> 00:09:42,600

Mr. Page refused to believe me and was adamant that his wife

171

00:09:42,600 --> 00:09:44,600

had in fact signed the letter.

172

00:09:44,600 --> 00:09:48,600

After continuing your question, Mr. Page, about the signature on the letter,

173

00:09:48,600 --> 00:09:53,600

he admitted to me that he in fact did sign that letter.

174

00:09:53,600 --> 00:10:03,600

Rob Page now became a suspect and suddenly he began to tell a very different story.

175

00:10:03,600 --> 00:10:08,600

Mr. Page stated that the Thursday preceding his wife's disappearance,

176

00:10:08,600 --> 00:10:11,600

that while he was on the family's home computer,

177

00:10:11,600 --> 00:10:15,600

he discovered a letter that he claims his wife had authored

178

00:10:15,600 --> 00:10:19,600

in which in essence that she was going to be leaving him.

179

00:10:19,600 --> 00:10:22,600

I was working on the computer just now and I found something very interesting.

180

00:10:22,600 --> 00:10:23,600

What did you find?

181

00:10:23,600 --> 00:10:27,600

Mr. Page stated he confronted his wife about that letter.

182

00:10:27,600 --> 00:10:30,600

I'm sorry you found this. I wrote this a long time ago.

183

00:10:30,600 --> 00:10:32,600

Oh, then you weren't planning to leave me, huh?

184

00:10:32,600 --> 00:10:34,600

No, I wasn't. I wrote this when I was upset.

185

00:10:34,600 --> 00:10:37,600

Oh, then you're not going to take our money and run off, huh?

186

00:10:37,600 --> 00:10:40,600

Rob, why do you have to blow everything out of proportion?

187

00:10:40,600 --> 00:10:42,600

Let's talk about this when you've cooled down.

188

00:10:42,600 --> 00:10:44,600

Come back here. We're not finished.

189

00:10:44,600 --> 00:10:46,600

On Thursday, he went to the video store,

190

00:10:46,600 --> 00:10:49,600

opened it up and stayed at the store until about noon

191

00:10:49,600 --> 00:10:52,600

and then he returned home to check on his wife.

192

00:10:55,600 --> 00:10:59,600

Rob now told police that when he came home from the video store,

193

00:10:59,600 --> 00:11:02,600

he found the house in disarray.

194

00:11:02,600 --> 00:11:03,600

Pam?

195

00:11:03,600 --> 00:11:08,600

Rob said that all of Pam's clothes except the items she had set aside for goodwill were gone.

196

00:11:08,600 --> 00:11:13,600

All the family pictures and one of their dogs, a Dockstunt named Reron, were missing.

197

00:11:13,600 --> 00:11:17,600

Pam's credit cards and house keys were on the kitchen table,

198

00:11:17,600 --> 00:11:20,600

but Rob said he couldn't find her driver's license.

199

00:11:20,600 --> 00:11:27,600

Rob Page said he went downstairs and added four innocuous sentences to the letter in the computer,

200

00:11:27,600 --> 00:11:30,600

printed it out and signed Pam's name.

201

00:11:32,600 --> 00:11:34,600

Then Rob drove the Corvette to Winchills,

202

00:11:34,600 --> 00:11:38,600

went to the payphone across the street and called a taxi.

203

00:11:39,600 --> 00:11:43,600

Mr. Page stated that he fabricated some of the things he did

204

00:11:43,600 --> 00:11:46,600

and acted out some of the things that he did

205

00:11:46,600 --> 00:11:52,600

because no one would ever believe him that his wife had in fact left him had he not done this.

206

00:11:53,600 --> 00:11:58,600

Due to Mr. Page's inconsistent statements throughout this investigation

207

00:11:58,600 --> 00:12:03,600

and as well as his suspicious circumstances surrounding the disappearance of his wife,

208

00:12:03,600 --> 00:12:08,600

he was offered a polygraph examination on several occasions

209

00:12:08,600 --> 00:12:13,600

to eliminate him as a suspect in his wife's disappearance

210

00:12:13,600 --> 00:12:17,600

and he declined to take a polygraph on each occasion that it was offered.

211

00:12:19,600 --> 00:12:21,600

Despite the suspicions about Rob Page,

212

00:12:21,600 --> 00:12:26,600

there was no evidence that he had done anything wrong except change his story.

213

00:12:26,600 --> 00:12:30,600

No charges were filed and the investigation sputtered to a halt.

214

00:12:31,600 --> 00:12:34,600

This is a picture of your sister Pam.

215

00:12:34,600 --> 00:12:38,600

Frustrated, Pam's sister Jimmy Rice decided to visit Carol Paite,

216

00:12:38,600 --> 00:12:40,600

a psychic in Little Rock, Arkansas,

217

00:12:40,600 --> 00:12:43,600

who has worked with the police there for ten years.

218

00:12:43,600 --> 00:12:47,600

Carol had never been to Arizona and knew nothing about the pages.

219

00:12:47,600 --> 00:12:50,600

She had only a photograph of Pam to go on.

220

00:12:50,600 --> 00:12:52,600

That's very good. Thank you.

221

00:12:53,600 --> 00:12:58,600

I just handed her a picture, she put her hand on it and started describing Pam's...

222

00:12:58,600 --> 00:13:02,600

front room. And, you know, unless you've ever been there,

223

00:13:02,600 --> 00:13:05,600

she didn't know if Pam lived in a trailer apartment or whatever,

224

00:13:05,600 --> 00:13:09,600

but to describe the downstairs and how you go up the stairs and the balcony

225

00:13:09,600 --> 00:13:15,600

and going into a bedroom. You knew she was actually seeing all this.

226

00:13:15,600 --> 00:13:22,600

I saw her with a man in what appeared to be her house and she was arguing with him.

227

00:13:22,600 --> 00:13:25,600

The argument goes up the stairs, she's going up the stairs,

228

00:13:25,600 --> 00:13:32,600

she's going down the hallway. He knocks her to the floor, he's trying to strangle her.

229

00:13:32,600 --> 00:13:39,600

He grabs a pillow and all of a sudden she's quiet.

230

00:13:41,600 --> 00:13:49,600

Then a female comes, she assists him on placing her in the trunk.

231

00:13:50,600 --> 00:13:58,600

Now I'm seeing them pull out of the garage and they're driving.

232

00:13:58,600 --> 00:14:09,600

The name Coolidge comes into my mind and 2-4-1.

233

00:14:09,600 --> 00:14:17,600

Then I'm seeing a factory and it's gray in color.

234

00:14:17,600 --> 00:14:26,600

It appears to be to my left and there's a railroad track parallel

235

00:14:26,600 --> 00:14:33,600

and then crossing over the railroad track onto a small road.

236

00:14:34,600 --> 00:14:44,600

Then he pulls over on the side of the road and removes the body and begins to dig.

237

00:14:44,600 --> 00:14:54,600

When he apparently it is deep enough, he places her in the grave and then drives away.

238

00:14:55,600 --> 00:15:05,600

Janna Thorson, an Arizona newspaper reporter covering the case, was in touch with Pam's family in Arkansas.

239

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

She decided to check out Carol Pay's three strongest clues, the factory, the numbers 2-4-1 and the name Coolidge.

240

00:15:16,600 --> 00:15:25,600

Incredibly, Thorson did find a gray factory building near railroad tracks right in Peoria, Arizona.

241

00:15:25,600 --> 00:15:31,600

Nearby was assigned with the numbers 2-4-1.

242

00:15:31,600 --> 00:15:40,600

One of the routes between the Page Home and a friend's house passed both of these sites and ended at a street named Coolidge.

243

00:15:40,600 --> 00:15:48,600

There is no way of knowing if Carol Pay's information means anything until we know whether Pam Page met with foul play or chose to disappear.

244

00:15:48,600 --> 00:15:53,600

From the beginning, Rob Pay just maintained that he believes his wife is alive.

245

00:15:53,600 --> 00:16:04,600

In a letter to Unsolved Mysteries, he declined a request for an interview but said that if we air this story, he hoped Pam would be found.

246

00:16:04,600 --> 00:16:11,600

Pam Page would today be 36 years old. She has red hair and is 5 feet 8 inches tall.

247

00:16:35,600 --> 00:16:43,600

It was just after Thanksgiving, 1988, firemen raced to extinguish two small blazes burning at the edge of the city.

248

00:16:43,600 --> 00:16:51,600

It was a most routine of calls. Then in the blink of an eye, one of the fires exploded with unprecedented fury.

249

00:17:04,600 --> 00:17:15,600

He could have retired several years ago but he loved it so much that he just stayed.

250

00:17:15,600 --> 00:17:22,600

He wasn't even supposed to have been working. He was filling in for somebody else.

251

00:17:22,600 --> 00:17:29,600

I'd rather have him go this way than to lay in a coma or be sick because that would never be Jim Kilvitt.

252

00:17:30,600 --> 00:17:34,600

He didn't want to fly an airplane because he didn't want to risk his life on an airplane.

253

00:17:34,600 --> 00:17:38,600

I said, but you risk your life every day being a fireman.

254

00:17:38,600 --> 00:17:42,600

He said, well, he's in control when he's at the fire department.

255

00:17:44,600 --> 00:17:56,600

Michael Oldham, Robert McConaughy, James Kilvinton, Jean Herd,

256

00:17:57,600 --> 00:18:03,600

Thomas Fry, Gerald Hallerman.

257

00:18:05,600 --> 00:18:12,600

They were among Kansas City's best. Six firefighters with more than 100 years of service between them.

258

00:18:12,600 --> 00:18:15,600

All have been married, all had children.

259

00:18:15,600 --> 00:18:20,600

Underlying the tragedy is the ugly fact that the fires have been deliberately set.

260

00:18:20,600 --> 00:18:25,600

And arson means that the deaths are nothing less than cold-blooded murders.

261

00:18:25,600 --> 00:18:30,600

In spite of a massive investigation, no charges have been filed, no convictions won.

262

00:18:30,600 --> 00:18:36,600

Today the case remains Kansas City's most notorious unsolved crime.

263

00:18:38,600 --> 00:18:41,600

The first minutes gave no hint of what was to come.

264

00:18:41,600 --> 00:18:51,600

At about 3.40 a.m. on November 29, 1988, two security guards at a highway construction site discovered a pickup truck in flames.

265

00:18:52,600 --> 00:18:54,600

Yes, I want to report a fire.

266

00:18:54,600 --> 00:18:56,600

71 Highway, southbound length.

267

00:18:56,600 --> 00:19:01,600

Some 500 yards away, a second blaze crackled around a storage trail.

268

00:19:01,600 --> 00:19:05,600

Look, there's some explosives there that are burning near the fire.

269

00:19:05,600 --> 00:19:07,600

OK, we'll get somebody to store it.

270

00:19:07,600 --> 00:19:09,600

The dispatch went to station 41.

271

00:19:10,600 --> 00:19:13,600

Pumper 41 is a pickup truck.

272

00:19:13,600 --> 00:19:20,600

Captain Jim Kilvinton and fireman Robert McConaughy and Mike Oldham were out the door in just over 90 seconds.

273

00:19:20,600 --> 00:19:26,600

Pumper 41, a pickup truck, 8-7, south 71 Highway on the west side of the highway.

274

00:19:29,600 --> 00:19:32,600

Pumper 41 used portion information to the calling party.

275

00:19:32,600 --> 00:19:35,600

There may be explosives stored in that construction site.

276

00:19:35,600 --> 00:19:38,600

The pickup truck may be in the construction site.

277

00:19:38,600 --> 00:19:40,600

41's clear.

278

00:19:40,600 --> 00:19:48,600

As Pumper 41 whipped through town, Jim Kilvinton's wife, Cecilia, heard the dispatch over the police scanner she kept at work.

279

00:19:50,600 --> 00:19:58,600

I just didn't think anything about it at the time because it's just going to a regular track fire down on the highway.

280

00:19:58,600 --> 00:20:04,600

I just thought of some teenagers truck, and they said they caught it on fire for insurance reasons.

281

00:20:13,600 --> 00:20:14,600

Hi.

282

00:20:14,600 --> 00:20:15,600

Yeah, we're the ones that called.

283

00:20:15,600 --> 00:20:16,600

Yeah.

284

00:20:16,600 --> 00:20:17,600

Captain, talk to the captain.

285

00:20:17,600 --> 00:20:18,600

Are you the captain?

286

00:20:18,600 --> 00:20:19,600

I'm glad you're here.

287

00:20:19,600 --> 00:20:21,600

Well, we'll be using one small screen.

288

00:20:21,600 --> 00:20:24,600

Thanks for getting here so quickly that the truck's totaled.

289

00:20:24,600 --> 00:20:26,600

But there is a fire on the other side of the highway.

290

00:20:26,600 --> 00:20:27,600

Yes, I think there's explosives in there.

291

00:20:27,600 --> 00:20:28,600

On the other side of the highway.

292

00:20:28,600 --> 00:20:29,600

Yes, sir.

293

00:20:29,600 --> 00:20:35,600

From the onset, arson seemed probable, given two fires that were apparently started simultaneously.

294

00:20:35,600 --> 00:20:38,600

Send another Pumper company.

295

00:20:38,600 --> 00:20:45,600

The highway construction site, a frequent target of vanills, lay some 10 miles from downtown Kansas City.

296

00:20:45,600 --> 00:20:49,600

The burning trailer was located here, perched on a hillside.

297

00:20:49,600 --> 00:20:58,600

Roughly 500 yards of the northwest across a highway was the pickup truck.

298

00:20:58,600 --> 00:21:02,600

Kilvinton and his crew soon had the truck blaze under control.

299

00:21:02,600 --> 00:21:08,600

However, fire still burned unchecked through the trailer.

300

00:21:08,600 --> 00:21:15,600

Within minutes, Captain Gerald Halleran, along with fireman Thomas Fry and Gene Herd, arrived from station 30.

301

00:21:15,600 --> 00:21:19,600

Pumper 30 is tonight, sir.

302

00:21:19,600 --> 00:21:20,600

Hey, Gene, how you doing?

303

00:21:20,600 --> 00:21:21,600

Jim, where we got?

304

00:21:21,600 --> 00:21:26,600

Well, Gerald, looks like we've got a pickup down here that we pretty well got under control.

305

00:21:26,600 --> 00:21:28,600

Why don't you go up on top of the hill and handle that?

306

00:21:28,600 --> 00:21:32,600

Halleran and his men headed up the hill to work the trailer fire.

307

00:21:32,600 --> 00:21:41,600

Pumper 41 stayed behind to wrap up the first blaze.

308

00:21:41,600 --> 00:21:51,600

To Captain Halleran, a check of the area suggested that the explosives had been properly stored and clearly marked metal sheds known as bunkers.

309

00:21:51,600 --> 00:21:55,600

Just the fact that the bunker was there, in fact, there was two bunkers there.

310

00:21:55,600 --> 00:21:57,600

That's what that Captain believed.

311

00:21:57,600 --> 00:22:03,600

That's what the explosives was, and this trailer was just a regular normal construction trailer with tools and equipment in it.

312

00:22:03,600 --> 00:22:10,600

And therefore, there was no danger that he was going to put that fire out and it'd be done for the night.

313

00:22:10,600 --> 00:22:23,600

Roughly eight minutes later, Captain Kilvinton and his crew joined the others at the trailer.

314

00:22:23,600 --> 00:22:27,600

At 408 AM, the battalion chief pulled into the construction site.

315

00:22:27,600 --> 00:22:35,600

He was a quarter mile from the flames, just minutes from one of the worst tragedies in Kansas City history.

316

00:22:35,600 --> 00:22:38,600

Battalion chief, you guys are...

317

00:22:38,600 --> 00:22:41,600

We're the security guards. We're the ones that reported the fire.

318

00:22:41,600 --> 00:22:43,600

Tell me a bit about it. We just got on the scene.

319

00:22:43,600 --> 00:22:46,600

Well, my truck was on fire and they came and took care of that.

320

00:22:46,600 --> 00:22:49,600

And I think the firefighters went over to the site across the street and...

321

00:22:49,600 --> 00:22:54,600

Down around the trailers down there. We understand there's some explosives there in a bunker.

322

00:22:54,600 --> 00:22:58,600

Yeah, and we think that there's some in the trailers over there as well.

323

00:22:58,600 --> 00:23:00,600

The trailers that are on fire?

324

00:23:00,600 --> 00:23:01,600

Yeah.

325

00:23:01,600 --> 00:23:03,600

Let's get them out of there, John.

326

00:23:04,600 --> 00:23:05,600

107...

327

00:23:20,600 --> 00:23:24,600

It was just the loudest noise I'd ever heard.

328

00:23:24,600 --> 00:23:30,600

It just kind of went through you. It was just so loud. I can't describe it. I'm serious.

329

00:23:30,600 --> 00:23:36,600

It was just incredible. And we live about 12 miles away from where the explosion was.

330

00:23:39,600 --> 00:23:46,600

Knocked me out of bed and I got up and looked to the east and I saw a big, big ball of fire.

331

00:23:46,600 --> 00:23:52,600

And I said to myself, I'm...Gerald's going to have to go to that because that's his district.

332

00:23:52,600 --> 00:23:57,600

And I just knew he had to go. I knew he'd be there.

333

00:23:58,600 --> 00:24:02,600

We're on a family step, Patrick.

334

00:24:02,600 --> 00:24:04,600

Little sound.

335

00:24:04,600 --> 00:24:11,600

Explosions. This is where we pulled up in here. Get us all kinds of ambulances and at least a couple, three more companies.

336

00:24:14,600 --> 00:24:18,600

Fifteen companies of Kansas City firefighters rushed to aid their comrades.

337

00:24:18,600 --> 00:24:24,600

But safety considerations forced them to wait, frustrated, on the sidelines.

338

00:24:25,600 --> 00:24:28,600

They feared that there were more explosives up there on the hill.

339

00:24:28,600 --> 00:24:34,600

And it was still dark. From the sounds of the explosions, they were pretty sure that nobody had survived.

340

00:24:34,600 --> 00:24:44,600

And so we made the decision that we were going to wait until daylight because we didn't want to go up there and stumble around on more explosives and get more people injured and killed.

341

00:24:45,600 --> 00:24:55,600

40 minutes after the initial blast, a second explosion did indeed rip through the site.

342

00:24:56,600 --> 00:25:04,600

Pumper 41 or Pumper 30, answer. Pumper 41 or Pumper 30?

343

00:25:04,600 --> 00:25:13,600

Pumper 30, Pumper 41, answer. Pumper 30, Pumper 41, please answer.

344

00:25:13,600 --> 00:25:20,600

I knew something had happened. Why couldn't he get to his radio? Or any back into the radio?

345

00:25:21,600 --> 00:25:28,600

I said everything will be okay. I just sort of blocked it out of my mind.

346

00:25:28,600 --> 00:25:33,600

Then she come through, there were about five after six, come through the door.

347

00:25:33,600 --> 00:25:40,600

He says they're gone, but legally they cannot pronounce them gone until the coroner gets there.

348

00:25:40,600 --> 00:25:45,600

I said no way, they're still alive. He said no, they're gone.

349

00:25:46,600 --> 00:26:03,600

His captain came to the door and when he came in and I said, don't tell me it isn't true. And I just started crying.

350

00:26:04,600 --> 00:26:16,600

Daylight revealed a stark landscape. In the dismal aftermath, agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

351

00:26:16,600 --> 00:26:21,600

joined Kansas City Police to sift the wreckage for clues.

352

00:26:21,600 --> 00:26:28,600

It was evident that nobody could have survived that. It was just totally devastated.

353

00:26:28,600 --> 00:26:36,600

I don't think any of the group that went up there was expecting what we found.

354

00:26:36,600 --> 00:26:40,600

I don't think anybody had any idea that it was that bad.

355

00:26:40,600 --> 00:26:45,600

I'd been in Vietnam and seen B-52 strikes, what the aftermath of those were.

356

00:26:45,600 --> 00:26:49,600

And these craters were much larger than 2,000 pound bombs leave.

357

00:26:50,600 --> 00:26:56,600

And as we found the firefighters, we came to the last one.

358

00:26:56,600 --> 00:26:59,600

He was laying there and his radio was still on.

359

00:26:59,600 --> 00:27:05,600

And you could hear the voice of the dispatcher still coming out over the radio, calling.

360

00:27:05,600 --> 00:27:11,600

And it just kind of shattered the stillness of it. It's just a very surreal looking scene.

361

00:27:12,600 --> 00:27:18,600

A public outcry erupted, following the revelation that arson had led to the firefighters' deaths.

362

00:27:18,600 --> 00:27:24,600

Angry residents inundated the police department with literally hundreds of leads.

363

00:27:24,600 --> 00:27:31,600

The tips have ranged anywhere from someone out trying to steal, someone out just for fun,

364

00:27:31,600 --> 00:27:35,600

someone out just because they like to set fires, wanting to see what would happen.

365

00:27:35,600 --> 00:27:40,600

But as time went by, the police were trying to find out what was going on.

366

00:27:40,600 --> 00:27:45,600

But as time wore on, these leads soon wore out.

367

00:27:47,600 --> 00:27:51,600

Meanwhile, federal agents pursued the investigation from a different angle.

368

00:27:51,600 --> 00:27:56,600

The highway project had long been the focus of a bitter labor dispute.

369

00:27:56,600 --> 00:28:05,600

We know that there was labor unrest and it primarily dealt with Union versus non-union companies.

370

00:28:05,600 --> 00:28:10,600

We learned that there were a number of violent acts directed at non-union companies.

371

00:28:10,600 --> 00:28:13,600

They were putting acid into company equipment.

372

00:28:13,600 --> 00:28:16,600

They were putting a dirt into the diesel lines.

373

00:28:16,600 --> 00:28:22,600

And there were a number of incidents where fire was used to destroy equipment.

374

00:28:22,600 --> 00:28:28,600

And if you take away the tragedy of that night of the six firefighters dying,

375

00:28:28,600 --> 00:28:32,600

we can look at some of these previous incidents being very similar to what happened that night.

376

00:28:32,600 --> 00:28:39,600

You had equipment damaged and then in this instance, you had a security guard's truck set on fire also.

377

00:28:42,600 --> 00:28:47,600

The untimely deaths of the six firemen reverberated across the entire country.

378

00:28:47,600 --> 00:28:53,600

Firefighters from every state joined in memorial services at Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium.

379

00:28:53,600 --> 00:28:59,600

To this day, surviving family members have been the focus of unflagging community support.

380

00:29:00,600 --> 00:29:07,600

We were all very proud of our husbands and we were proud of the people in Kansas City because they gave us such support.

381

00:29:07,600 --> 00:29:13,600

Everyone was back of us and we weren't alone.

382

00:29:16,600 --> 00:29:21,600

I guess I feel like if I knew who did it, we'd know why they did it.

383

00:29:21,600 --> 00:29:25,600

And I don't think they were trying to kill six firemen,

384

00:29:25,600 --> 00:29:32,600

but somebody was trying to do something to somebody and six men are gone.

385

00:29:32,600 --> 00:29:34,600

And that's hard to deal with.

386

00:29:34,600 --> 00:29:37,600

Today, I think about this case tomorrow.

387

00:29:37,600 --> 00:29:41,600

I'll think about this case and I'll think about it until it's resolved.

388

00:30:21,600 --> 00:30:41,600

When we return, the case of the enigmatic Wallace Thrasher, Deb and Air Country Gentlemen, an alleged drug lord.

389

00:30:52,600 --> 00:31:00,600

On October 17th, 1984, Virginia State Troopers converged on an eerie scene.

390

00:31:00,600 --> 00:31:10,600

A small airplane had crashed in a remote mountain wilderness.

391

00:31:10,600 --> 00:31:16,600

Still strapped in the cockpit was a body charred beyond recognition.

392

00:31:16,600 --> 00:31:20,600

But it was a plane's cargo that riveted the attention of police.

393

00:31:20,600 --> 00:31:30,600

In smoldering heaps strewn over the crash site was 1200 pounds of high-grade marijuana, street value more than one billion dollars.

394

00:31:30,600 --> 00:31:34,600

For the authorities, the crash was something of a godsend.

395

00:31:34,600 --> 00:31:40,600

Eventually they would connect both the plane and the dead pilot to Wallace Thrasher, the Bland County, Virginia,

396

00:31:40,600 --> 00:31:47,600

one of the most successful and most flagrant drug runners in the eastern United States.

397

00:31:47,600 --> 00:31:51,600

Back in high school, when he belonged to the Key Club and the Latin Club,

398

00:31:51,600 --> 00:31:55,600

Wallace Thrasher hardly seemed the type to end up peddling drugs.

399

00:31:55,600 --> 00:32:02,600

He played on the football team and earned the nickname Squirrel for his ability to outrun trouble.

400

00:32:02,600 --> 00:32:06,600

But somewhere along the way, Wallace Thrasher went wrong.

401

00:32:06,600 --> 00:32:10,600

Today is whereabouts of the subject of unending speculation.

402

00:32:10,600 --> 00:32:14,600

Former associates insist Thrasher died in Central America,

403

00:32:14,600 --> 00:32:22,600

but authorities suspect that the Squirrel is once again on the run.

404

00:32:22,600 --> 00:32:32,600

From the late 70s to the early 80s, Thrasher's operation flew tons of marijuana and cocaine into the western region of Virginia.

405

00:32:32,600 --> 00:32:40,600

Distributors then smuggled the drugs north to Chicago, Detroit and other big cities.

406

00:32:40,600 --> 00:32:50,600

Thrasher often piloted the planes himself, and many of his neighbors seemed to regard him as a kind of local hero.

407

00:32:50,600 --> 00:32:56,600

Here in western Virginia for probably 200 years, kind of these swashbuckling pirate,

408

00:32:56,600 --> 00:32:59,600

book-and-ear type people out here were the local moonshiners.

409

00:32:59,600 --> 00:33:03,600

And to some extent, dope pilots are the modern-day moonshiners.

410

00:33:03,600 --> 00:33:09,600

It takes the same kind of talents to smuggle dope in by air as it does to run a load of moonshine.

411

00:33:09,600 --> 00:33:13,600

He was a tight person. He wasn't afraid to let everybody know what he was doing.

412

00:33:13,600 --> 00:33:21,600

Basically, everybody had contact with him at the airport and in areas where he was doing his drug business, he was transporting drugs.

413

00:33:22,600 --> 00:33:30,600

The rewards of Wally's Thrasher's life of crime were on display for everyone to see.

414

00:33:30,600 --> 00:33:36,600

He and his wife owned a 10-acre country estate and surrounded themselves with luxury.

415

00:33:36,600 --> 00:33:47,600

Wally Thrasher was a very charming fellow, very generous to his associates and the people who lived around him.

416

00:33:47,600 --> 00:33:53,600

He spent money very freely, so there are a great many people who will tell you kind things about him.

417

00:33:55,600 --> 00:34:00,600

For nearly a decade, Wally's Thrasher managed to stay two steps ahead of the law

418

00:34:00,600 --> 00:34:06,600

until that fateful night when one of his pilots slammed an airplane full of marijuana into a mountainside.

419

00:34:07,600 --> 00:34:17,600

It would take two weeks of painstaking investigation to turn up undeniable proof that Thrasher owned the plane.

420

00:34:17,600 --> 00:34:23,600

Detectives were planning to move in until this article appeared in the local paper.

421

00:34:23,600 --> 00:34:26,600

Wally's Thrasher was dead.

422

00:34:27,600 --> 00:34:29,600

Can I help you gentlemen?

423

00:34:29,600 --> 00:34:34,600

Soon after, Virginia authorities tried to speak directly with Thrasher's wife.

424

00:34:34,600 --> 00:34:36,600

No, I'm afraid now is not a good time.

425

00:34:36,600 --> 00:34:38,600

Well, we read that Wally's Thrasher died.

426

00:34:38,600 --> 00:34:39,600

That's correct.

427

00:34:39,600 --> 00:34:41,600

Exactly how did he die?

428

00:34:41,600 --> 00:34:43,600

In a plane crash, he was a pilot.

429

00:34:43,600 --> 00:34:44,600

And where did he die?

430

00:34:44,600 --> 00:34:45,600

In Jamaica.

431

00:34:45,600 --> 00:34:46,600

When did this happen?

432

00:34:46,600 --> 00:34:47,600

November 5th.

433

00:34:47,600 --> 00:34:49,600

Gentlemen, I'm sorry. I have to go.

434

00:34:49,600 --> 00:34:50,600

Goodbye.

435

00:34:50,600 --> 00:34:51,600

Thank you.

436

00:34:51,600 --> 00:34:54,600

The investigators departed unimpressed.

437

00:34:54,600 --> 00:35:01,600

Later, Mrs. Thrasher produced this death certificate as proof of her husband's fatal crash in Jamaica.

438

00:35:01,600 --> 00:35:08,600

Still suspicious, police sought to verify the information.

439

00:35:08,600 --> 00:35:16,600

The investigation revealed that the death certificate was fraudulent and there was no evidence from any witnesses

440

00:35:16,600 --> 00:35:24,600

or anyone in Jamaica that knew of any such crash.

441

00:35:24,600 --> 00:35:33,600

The disclosures convinced authorities that Wally's Thrasher was still alive and as a result, they filed charges against him.

442

00:35:33,600 --> 00:35:39,600

But with Thrasher's whereabouts unknown, his wife was again questioned by the authorities.

443

00:35:39,600 --> 00:35:43,600

Eventually, she agreed to tell investigators what she knew.

444

00:35:44,600 --> 00:35:53,600

She began with a night of the crash and confirmed that there had been a second pilot on board the aircraft.

445

00:35:53,600 --> 00:35:59,600

Although severely injured, the pilot was able to drag himself to a pay phone.

446

00:35:59,600 --> 00:36:08,600

Thrasher picked him up at the very moment police were racing to the crash scene.

447

00:36:08,600 --> 00:36:10,600

What happened?

448

00:36:10,600 --> 00:36:12,600

Oh, my God.

449

00:36:12,600 --> 00:36:14,600

We've got to get him to hospital.

450

00:36:14,600 --> 00:36:20,600

Almost immediately, Wally's Thrasher began to assess the damage to his operation.

451

00:36:20,600 --> 00:36:21,600

What happened?

452

00:36:21,600 --> 00:36:24,600

We were trying to come in low under the cloud cover. It was just too low, man.

453

00:36:24,600 --> 00:36:35,600

Thrasher was well aware that the plane could be traced back to him, that it was just a matter of time before the authorities would be knocking at his door.

454

00:36:35,600 --> 00:36:37,600

I think we got real problems.

455

00:36:37,600 --> 00:36:39,600

We've got to get him to hospital.

456

00:36:39,600 --> 00:36:48,600

Later, Thrasher spirited the injured pilot to an out of state hospital and dropped from sight himself.

457

00:36:48,600 --> 00:36:57,600

Mrs. Thrasher went on to tell police that about two weeks after the crash, her husband stuffed a quarter of a million dollars in cash into a travel bag

458

00:36:58,600 --> 00:37:03,600

and departed for the Central American country of Belize.

459

00:37:03,600 --> 00:37:10,600

Thrasher had said that he planned to buy a load of marijuana and return to the United States.

460

00:37:10,600 --> 00:37:19,600

But some believe Thrasher never intended to come home and that the \$250,000 was a down payment on a new life.

461

00:37:19,600 --> 00:37:24,600

Hello?

462

00:37:24,600 --> 00:37:35,600

About a week later, Mrs. Thrasher received a call from two of their Confederates down in Belize, advising her that Mr. Thrasher had been killed on takeoff in a massive crash.

463

00:37:35,600 --> 00:37:37,600

My God!

464

00:37:37,600 --> 00:37:47,600

The fire had been so intense that literally the plane was burned down to the outline of a plane on the ground and that there would be very little for them to send back and no reason for her to come down.

465

00:37:47,600 --> 00:37:48,600

My God!

466

00:37:48,600 --> 00:38:01,600

Mrs. Thrasher contacted her attorney with the basic problem of how to handle her husband's estate, how would she inherit things, how would she spend money, take money from accounts and so forth.

467

00:38:01,600 --> 00:38:08,600

In the end, Thrasher's wife admitted she bought the fake death certificate and concocted the tale of a Jamaican plane crash.

468

00:38:08,600 --> 00:38:17,600

She had feared that her property would be confiscated if authorities learned her husband was on a drug run when he died.

469

00:38:17,600 --> 00:38:27,600

But even the crash in Belize started to seem like a fabrication after one of Wallace Thrasher's former associates showed up in May of 1986.

470

00:38:27,600 --> 00:38:30,600

So, what did you find?

471

00:38:30,600 --> 00:38:36,600

Well, I went to Belize to the spot where the plane went down and apparently the fire was really bad.

472

00:38:36,600 --> 00:38:43,600

So the guys just bulldozed whatever was left into a hole and the fire was so bad there wasn't much.

473

00:38:43,600 --> 00:38:46,600

I did get some proof though.

474

00:38:51,600 --> 00:38:53,600

It's a wedding ring.

475

00:38:53,600 --> 00:38:57,600

I got that from one of the guys that I was there when he crashed.

476

00:38:57,600 --> 00:39:03,600

The ring was in perfect condition. The inscription as sharp as the day it had been engraved.

477

00:39:03,600 --> 00:39:07,600

For detectives, that was part of the problem.

478

00:39:07,600 --> 00:39:11,600

Mrs. Thrasher did advise me it was definitely Wallace Thrasher's wedding ring.

479

00:39:11,600 --> 00:39:27,600

We find it kind of tough to believe that an aircraft could go in with that amount of fuel, cause that amount of destruction to the point where literally the substructure of the plane was melted and the ring itself would still be in that kind of condition.

480

00:39:33,600 --> 00:39:40,600

A decade has passed since Wallace Thrasher left for Belize with a change of clothes and a quarter of a million dollars.

481

00:39:40,600 --> 00:39:49,600

Did he perish in a fiery crash in the jungles of Central America or did the squirrel once again dash to freedom?

482

00:39:49,600 --> 00:39:59,600

I think that at the time that Mr. Thrasher disappeared he was facing a lot of different problems and it may have been an opportunity for him to, as they say, exit stage left.

483

00:40:00,600 --> 00:40:10,600

We know that he was having problems within his own organization. He knew that if he got caught this time, it wouldn't be a matter of 18 months at a country club.

484

00:40:10,600 --> 00:40:17,600

It would be some serious prison time. So I think it was an excellent time for him to make that decision if he was going to make it.

485

00:40:18,600 --> 00:40:29,600

This photograph shows Wallace Thrasher at about the age of 36. He has graying hair, an athletic build and stands 5 feet 10 inches tall.

486

00:40:34,600 --> 00:40:42,600

Next, the amazing encounter of two lookalikes, identical strangers who may in fact be long lost blood relatives.

487

00:40:48,600 --> 00:41:03,600

One of the odds is somewhere in the world is another person who looks exactly like you. One in a million, one in 50 million, the chances of actually standing nose to nose with your double seem beyond calculation.

488

00:41:05,600 --> 00:41:15,600

And yet around 50 years ago, that is precisely what happened to a young soldier named Ken Palmer, tonight with your help he hopes to beat the odds again.

489

00:41:18,600 --> 00:41:29,600

In December of 1943, Ken Palmer was a newly commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps, on his way from Texas to Wisconsin.

490

00:41:29,600 --> 00:41:37,600

During a momentary stop to change trains in Cincinnati, Ohio, Ken had the most remarkable encounter

of his life.

491

00:41:38,600 --> 00:41:44,600

Ken sensed that someone was staring at him. A quick glance told him why.

492

00:41:45,600 --> 00:41:51,600

Incredibly, improbably, Ken Palmer had found his exact double.

493

00:41:52,600 --> 00:41:59,600

I was amazed. And both of us saw it and both of us reacted so much to it.

494

00:42:00,600 --> 00:42:07,600

Both of us sat down our bags and stared. And until I got hold of myself and extended my hand, he didn't move.

495

00:42:08,600 --> 00:42:23,600

He was just frozen, looking at himself in a different uniform.

496

00:42:24,600 --> 00:42:30,600

I'm Ken Palmer. My name is Palmer.

497

00:42:31,600 --> 00:42:35,600

My first thought, of course, was that he's closely related.

498

00:42:36,600 --> 00:42:42,600

Look, my father is from Brownsville, Minnesota, just across from the cross Wisconsin. Do you know Brownsville?

499

00:42:43,600 --> 00:42:45,600

No, I have no family there.

500

00:42:45,600 --> 00:42:56,600

We began to exchange our father's names, our grandfather's names, where we lived, things of this nature. And that didn't get it.

501

00:42:57,600 --> 00:42:59,600

My grandfather's from Brownsville.

502

00:42:59,600 --> 00:43:09,600

Surprisingly, the two men could not find a single relative in common. But when Ken began to recount an old family legend, he was stung by the stranger's response.

503

00:43:09,600 --> 00:43:13,600

My family often talks of this lost treasure in India.

504

00:43:14,600 --> 00:43:21,600

Two Palmer brothers were at a party in the court of St. James. They cut the cue off a court official.

505

00:43:21,600 --> 00:43:24,600

Yeah, that's right. They had to flee England. I mean, that's the story.

506

00:43:24,600 --> 00:43:34,600

Well, not alone did he know about it. He added details that I checked out with Dad later and they were accurate. Things that I didn't know.

507

00:43:34,600 --> 00:43:45,600

So it was perfectly obvious that we were related and yet we couldn't understand how we could be.

508

00:43:47,600 --> 00:43:49,600

This is my train. I've got to go.

509

00:43:49,600 --> 00:43:51,600

Look, do you have a pen?

510

00:43:53,600 --> 00:43:54,600

Yeah, I don't know.

511

00:43:54,600 --> 00:43:59,600

You write down your name and address. When I get back home, I'm going to contact you.

512

00:44:00,600 --> 00:44:05,600

This is good. This is good. Do.

513

00:44:05,600 --> 00:44:06,600

I will.

514

00:44:06,600 --> 00:44:10,600

I took his name and address, stuffed it in my pocket.

515

00:44:10,600 --> 00:44:15,600

I'll write it. Goodbye. Goodbye.

516

00:44:15,600 --> 00:44:19,600

I picked up my luggage and scooted off from my train.

517

00:44:20,600 --> 00:44:34,600

If I'd had the sense that God gave geese, I would have stopped right then and we would have spent some time together.

518

00:44:36,600 --> 00:44:45,600

When I got on the train and settled, I reached in my pocket to get that slip of paper. It wasn't there.

519

00:44:50,600 --> 00:44:55,600

It all fell apart at that moment. I was devastated.

520

00:44:57,600 --> 00:45:03,600

Ken Palmer never saw his double again and all attempts to find the man have been unsuccessful.

521

00:45:07,600 --> 00:45:10,600

These pictures of Ken Palmer were taken in the 1940s.

522

00:45:12,600 --> 00:45:17,600

The man he met at the train station so long ago was virtually identical.

523

00:45:19,600 --> 00:45:24,600

Like Ken, his last name was Palmer. His first name may have been Robert or James.

524

00:45:26,600 --> 00:45:30,600

Ken believes the man lived in the eastern United States, possibly New Jersey.

525

00:45:33,600 --> 00:45:38,600

At the time, Ken's double was either a technical or staff sergeant in the Army Air Corps.

526

00:45:41,600 --> 00:45:46,600

I would like very much to find him and or part of his family.

527

00:45:47,600 --> 00:45:58,600

Doug, how many times are you going to walk across the station and see that double out of all the people in the United States?

528

00:45:58,600 --> 00:46:04,600

Out of everybody that could happen?

529

00:46:04,600 --> 00:46:15,600

That split second timing when in this great crowd and all these people, we walk into one another and we set down our bags and stare at one another.

530

00:46:16,600 --> 00:46:18,600

Magical moment.

531

00:46:29,600 --> 00:46:37,600

Join me next Friday. Perhaps you hold the key. Perhaps you may be able to help solve a mystery.

532

00:47:16,600 --> 00:47:18,600

You