

1

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

Tonight on Unsolved Mysteries.

2

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

The name alone is enough to make you stop and think twice.

3

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

Welcome to the devil's backbone in central Texas.

4

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

Locals say it's the most haunted spot in the country.

5

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

A mother load of restless spirits should have frightened you.

6

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

Or perhaps even possess you.

7

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

A Romeo and Juliet love affair ends tragically

8

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

when Leroy's father, the late Prince,

9

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

writes goodbye to his girlfriend

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

and just minutes later smashes his car into a tree.

11

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

The coroner called it suicide,

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

but Leroy's sister Vicki believes she has compelling evidence

13

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

that Leroy was murdered.

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

When David Kempton invited a new friend home to dinner,

15

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

he never imagined his wife and this friend would become lovers.

16

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

Within months, David's wife left him.

17

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

Then she dropped from sight along with David's four-year-old daughter.

18

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

Join me. Perhaps tonight you can make a difference.

19

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

Perhaps you can help solve a mystery.

20

00:01:55,000 --> 00:02:00,000

Well County, Colorado, Memorial Day, 1968.

21

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

Leroy Dreyth is killed instantly.

22

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

The coroner's ruling is suicide.

23

00:02:13,000 --> 00:02:16,000

25 years later, at his family's request,

24

00:02:16,000 --> 00:02:19,000

the body of Leroy Dreyth is exhumed for an autopsy.

25

00:02:19,000 --> 00:02:22,000

It is a combination of a long strife

26

00:02:22,000 --> 00:02:27,000

for Leroy's sister Vicki, who is convinced that her brother was murdered.

27

00:02:27,000 --> 00:02:31,000

I took a vow that I would do this for my brother,

28

00:02:31,000 --> 00:02:34,000

and I don't feel like I can stop until it's done

29

00:02:34,000 --> 00:02:36,000

because I would be letting him down.

30

00:02:36,000 --> 00:02:39,000

I already feel like the authorities let him down

31

00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:43,000

and that obviously someone took his life

32

00:02:43,000 --> 00:02:46,000

and that he can't, I can't let him down.

33

00:02:46,000 --> 00:02:49,000

Someone has to be responsible for his death.

34

00:02:49,000 --> 00:02:51,000

He can't, I can't let him down.

35

00:02:51,000 --> 00:02:54,000

Someone has to stand up and talk for him.

36

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

Vicki Marling is a woman on a relentless quest.

37

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

A quarter of a century may seem like an eternity,

38

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

but for Vicki, time has stood still since the day her brother died.

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

Her mission is simple, to bring Leroy's killer to justice,

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00:03:11,000 --> 00:03:13,000

no matter how long it takes.

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

Leroy Dreythe was the oldest of four children.

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00:03:18,000 --> 00:03:23,000

At 17, Leroy fell in love with a 16-year-old Hispanic girl named Patty.

43

00:03:23,000 --> 00:03:26,000

A year later, they were engaged.

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

On the day he died, Memorial Day 1968,

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

Leroy attended a party at Patty's house.

46

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

He left in the late afternoon.

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00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:39,000

A block and a half away, Leroy's car smashed head-on into a tree.

48

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

Word of the accident spread quickly.

49

00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:47,000

The first people on the scene were Leroy's father and brother.

50

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

I tried to hug him and I said,

51

00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:02,000

how gets up, gonna go get you some help?

52

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

So I run to the truck and told Doug,

53

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

let's run to the grocery store and call the ambulance.

54

00:04:10,000 --> 00:04:12,000

Got away, sir.

55

00:04:12,000 --> 00:04:14,000

Need to clear that.

56

00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:16,000

Need to clear this area.

57

00:04:16,000 --> 00:04:18,000

Out of the way, sir.

58

00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:20,000

Folks, does anybody know what happened here?

59

00:04:20,000 --> 00:04:22,000

He had a fight with his girlfriend.

60

00:04:22,000 --> 00:04:24,000

He said he's gonna kill himself.

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

It was that off-handed remark from a bystander

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00:04:27,000 --> 00:04:30,000

that set the suicide scenario in motion.

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00:04:30,000 --> 00:04:33,000

OK, on three, four, two, and three.

64

00:04:33,000 --> 00:04:36,000

Ambulance driver, Delbert Mickelson remembers.

65

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

The coroner come to the hospital and went over what happened.

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00:04:43,000 --> 00:04:48,000

And then I was the first one to relay the story to him

67

00:04:48,000 --> 00:04:50,000

that he'd had a fight with his girlfriend

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00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:53,000

and was going to kill himself.

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00:04:53,000 --> 00:04:55,000

Based on that information,

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00:04:55,000 --> 00:04:58,000

the coroner deemed no autopsy was necessary.

71

00:04:58,000 --> 00:05:02,000

He attributed Leroy's death to quote, auto suicide.

72

00:05:02,000 --> 00:05:04,000

I went to the hospital and I found out

73

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

I went to the district attorney in Greeley

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00:05:08,000 --> 00:05:11,000

and I said, I don't believe this was a suicide.

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00:05:11,000 --> 00:05:13,000

I believe it was a murder.

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00:05:13,000 --> 00:05:17,000

And I need for you to investigate it.

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00:05:17,000 --> 00:05:19,000

And he was very rude.

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00:05:19,000 --> 00:05:22,000

He said, you're just a distraught parent.

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00:05:22,000 --> 00:05:25,000

There's no reason for us to investigate this.

80

00:05:25,000 --> 00:05:28,000

You just go on home and get over it.

81

00:05:28,000 --> 00:05:31,000

I just cried and went home.

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00:05:31,000 --> 00:05:33,000

I never got over it.

83

00:05:33,000 --> 00:05:35,000

Why don't you take this?

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00:05:35,000 --> 00:05:37,000

You always liked it.

85

00:05:40,000 --> 00:05:43,000

For 11-year-old Vicki, Leroy's death

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00:05:43,000 --> 00:05:46,000

would prove to be the defining moment in her life.

87

00:05:48,000 --> 00:05:52,000

I remember that my mom was crying for a long time.

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00:05:52,000 --> 00:05:56,000

And even though I was only 11, I knew there was something wrong.

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00:05:56,000 --> 00:05:58,000

But I had to wait until I was an adult

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00:05:58,000 --> 00:06:01,000

to attempt to solve the problem.

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

I never did believe that Leroy committed suicide.

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

June 1988, Vicki paid a surprise visit

93

00:06:09,000 --> 00:06:11,000

to the Boulder County Coroner's office.

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00:06:11,000 --> 00:06:14,000

She fully expected to be stonewalled.

95

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

Instead, she discovered that the current regime

96

00:06:16,000 --> 00:06:19,000

had already noted the lack of a thorough investigation

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00:06:19,000 --> 00:06:21,000

into Leroy's death.

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00:06:21,000 --> 00:06:23,000

Well, you see, there's only three recorded auto suicides

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

in the whole history of Colorado.

100

00:06:25,000 --> 00:06:27,000

Only three?

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00:06:27,000 --> 00:06:30,000

And also because, you see, the other two cases,

102

00:06:30,000 --> 00:06:32,000

you know, had six-month investigations

103

00:06:32,000 --> 00:06:35,000

with reams and reams of paperwork.

104

00:06:35,000 --> 00:06:38,000

And as you can see with this report,

105

00:06:38,000 --> 00:06:40,000

it's very minimal.

106

00:06:40,000 --> 00:06:43,000

Well, yeah, two pages.

107

00:06:43,000 --> 00:06:46,000

Why is there only two pages?

108

00:06:46,000 --> 00:06:48,000

I really couldn't tell you,

109

00:06:48,000 --> 00:06:51,000

but I want to encourage you to look further into this.

110

00:06:51,000 --> 00:06:54,000

And if I were you, I would hire a private investigator.

111

00:06:54,000 --> 00:06:57,000

I felt like it was a real strange thing for them,

112

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

for the authorities to bring it to my attention

113

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

as dramatically as they did,

114

00:07:03,000 --> 00:07:06,000

that something's wrong here.

115

00:07:06,000 --> 00:07:09,000

Vicki became her own investigator.

116

00:07:09,000 --> 00:07:11,000

She knocked on doors.

117

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

She talked to Patty's neighbors,

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

looking for anyone who had any memory

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00:07:15,000 --> 00:07:17,000

of the day her brother died.

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00:07:17,000 --> 00:07:19,000

Yeah, well, that's what they said, that there has been a fighting.

121

00:07:19,000 --> 00:07:22,000

Oh, they said there was a big fight.

122

00:07:22,000 --> 00:07:25,000

According to the townspeople,

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00:07:25,000 --> 00:07:28,000

there was a party going on at Patty's house.

124

00:07:28,000 --> 00:07:30,000

And there had been a fight,

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00:07:30,000 --> 00:07:33,000

but that it had not been between Patty and Leroy.

126

00:07:33,000 --> 00:07:35,000

Yeah, it wasn't me and the fight.

127

00:07:35,000 --> 00:07:39,000

That there had been several other family members there

128

00:07:39,000 --> 00:07:42,000

that did not like Leroy

129

00:07:42,000 --> 00:07:44,000

and that had been drinking all day.

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

Vicki heard similar stories from a number of people,

131

00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:50,000

but not everyone was convinced

132

00:07:50,000 --> 00:07:52,000

that he was a criminal.

133

00:07:52,000 --> 00:07:54,000

After the situation then suicide,

134

00:07:54,000 --> 00:07:57,000

Vicki had little luck with the son of the original coroner.

135

00:07:57,000 --> 00:08:00,000

I'm very sorry, but I just want you to know one thing.

136

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

My father was a coroner here for 25 years.

137

00:08:03,000 --> 00:08:05,000

He was very good at what he did.

138

00:08:05,000 --> 00:08:07,000

I'm sure he did everything he could.

139

00:08:07,000 --> 00:08:09,000

Now there's really nothing more I can help you with.

140

00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:11,000

I'm sorry, excuse me.

141

00:08:11,000 --> 00:08:14,000

Finally, Vicki placed an ad in the local paper,

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00:08:14,000 --> 00:08:17,000

urging Leroy's former girlfriend Patty to contact her.

143

00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:19,000

It worked.

144

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

Patty was a coroner and got the coroner's report

145

00:08:23,000 --> 00:08:26,000

and it stated that you had told the authorities

146

00:08:26,000 --> 00:08:29,000

that he was going to leave your house to kill himself.

147

00:08:29,000 --> 00:08:31,000

Did you say that?

148

00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:34,000

No, no, I never said that.

149

00:08:34,000 --> 00:08:36,000

Can you tell me anything about that day?

150

00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:38,000

Anything else?

151

00:08:38,000 --> 00:08:40,000

No.

152

00:08:40,000 --> 00:08:44,000

I felt like Patty knew answers, but was reluctant to talk.

153

00:08:44,000 --> 00:08:46,000

As far as Vicki was concerned,

154

00:08:46,000 --> 00:08:49,000

the evidence was becoming undeniable.

155

00:08:49,000 --> 00:08:54,000

I just, I don't think about that day anymore.

156

00:08:54,000 --> 00:08:56,000

Next came the exhumation.

157

00:08:56,000 --> 00:08:58,000

At long last, after 25 years,

158

00:08:58,000 --> 00:09:02,000

the body of Leroy Dreith would be autopsy.

159

00:09:02,000 --> 00:09:05,000

It was a tough decision.

160

00:09:05,000 --> 00:09:08,000

It took me about six months to finally decide

161

00:09:08,000 --> 00:09:11,000

that they weren't going to do anything

162

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

and couldn't do anything unless we did the exhumation.

163

00:09:14,000 --> 00:09:17,000

It almost didn't seem right,

164

00:09:17,000 --> 00:09:21,000

but on the other hand, it seemed wrong to just stop there

165

00:09:21,000 --> 00:09:24,000

and say, oh well.

166

00:09:24,000 --> 00:09:27,000

It was immediately apparent that this young man

167

00:09:27,000 --> 00:09:30,000

had sustained some sort of incised wound to the neck,

168

00:09:30,000 --> 00:09:33,000

actually two incised wounds to the neck.

169

00:09:33,000 --> 00:09:36,000

And they were very characteristic of what I see all the time

170

00:09:36,000 --> 00:09:40,000

and other persons who have received stab or slash wounds

171

00:09:40,000 --> 00:09:43,000

to the neck from a knife.

172

00:09:44,000 --> 00:09:46,000

Vicki was stunned.

173

00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:48,000

In simple layman's terms,

174

00:09:48,000 --> 00:09:50,000

the two incisions translated into a stab wound

175

00:09:50,000 --> 00:09:54,000

nearly two inches long and a slash four inches long,

176

00:09:54,000 --> 00:09:57,000

a severed Leroy's windpipe.

177

00:09:57,000 --> 00:10:00,000

Based upon Dr. Allen's findings,

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00:10:00,000 --> 00:10:02,000

the cause of Leroy's death was changed

179

00:10:02,000 --> 00:10:04,000

from auto-suicide to undetermined,

180

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

for Vicki, crucial questions remained.

181

00:10:07,000 --> 00:10:11,000

Who killed her brother and why?

182

00:10:11,000 --> 00:10:14,000

In retrospect, everything leads back to Patty's house.

183

00:10:14,000 --> 00:10:16,000

Every time I think of a scenario,

184

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

think of what happened, the same conclusion

185

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

and the same thought that it started at Patty's house

186

00:10:23,000 --> 00:10:26,000

with an argument.

187

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

Leroy arrived at around 5 p.m.

188

00:10:30,000 --> 00:10:31,000

Hi.

189

00:10:31,000 --> 00:10:32,000

How are you?

190

00:10:32,000 --> 00:10:33,000

Good, how are you?

191

00:10:33,000 --> 00:10:34,000

You look beautiful.

192

00:10:34,000 --> 00:10:35,000

Thank you.

193

00:10:35,000 --> 00:10:38,000

One of the guests was Patty's sister-in-law, Carolyn.

194

00:10:38,000 --> 00:10:42,000

Leroy come over that day and a lot of Patty's family was there

195

00:10:42,000 --> 00:10:47,000

and everyone had been drinking quite heavily that day.

196

00:10:47,000 --> 00:10:51,000

I was married to Patty's brother

197

00:10:51,000 --> 00:10:56,000

and I was living in the house with the family

198

00:10:56,000 --> 00:11:02,000

for about eight months before and after this happened.

199

00:11:02,000 --> 00:11:04,000

Looking away from you.

200

00:11:04,000 --> 00:11:05,000

Looking away from you.

201

00:11:05,000 --> 00:11:11,000

Patty's family and Leroy had a slight argument,

202

00:11:11,000 --> 00:11:16,000

kind of a racial argument over girlfriends and boyfriends.

203

00:11:16,000 --> 00:11:18,000

I love her and she loves me, OK?

204

00:11:18,000 --> 00:11:19,000

You're a punk.

205

00:11:32,000 --> 00:11:36,000

Soon after the argument, Patty escorted Leroy to his car.

206

00:11:36,000 --> 00:11:39,000

Vicki is convinced that just before he drove off,

207

00:11:39,000 --> 00:11:43,000

Leroy was attacked by one of Patty's family members.

208

00:11:44,000 --> 00:11:47,000

I believe that they continue to arguing

209

00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:54,000

and that a male person just quickly reached out

210

00:11:54,000 --> 00:11:56,000

and cut Leroy's throat.

211

00:11:58,000 --> 00:12:02,000

I feel that Leroy was probably fleeing for his life in the automobile

212

00:12:02,000 --> 00:12:04,000

and then lost consciousness or lost control of the vehicle

213

00:12:04,000 --> 00:12:05,000

because of the injuries.

214

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

He would have been in pain and would have been extremely afraid,

215

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

but the actual cause of death were injuries sustained

216

00:12:13,000 --> 00:12:14,000

from the automobile crash.

217

00:12:20,000 --> 00:12:24,000

I feel like I have become a cop in this whole scenario,

218

00:12:24,000 --> 00:12:28,000

which is very difficult at times because I have no training

219

00:12:28,000 --> 00:12:29,000

and I don't know what to do

220

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

and I'm sure I've made the wrong mistakes at times,

221

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:37,000

but I also know that I care deeply about my family

222

00:12:37,000 --> 00:12:39,000

and that I love my brother very much

223

00:12:39,000 --> 00:12:42,000

and I know that as long as I'm doing this,

224

00:12:42,000 --> 00:12:47,000

it's my heart pure and doing it for the good reasons

225

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

that there is going to be a conclusion.

226

00:13:10,000 --> 00:13:15,000

Here at Unsolved Mysteries,

227

00:13:15,000 --> 00:13:18,000

each and every case solved brings his feelings

228

00:13:18,000 --> 00:13:20,000

of immense satisfaction.

229

00:13:20,000 --> 00:13:23,000

Tonight's update is particularly gratifying.

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

It involves a young man sentenced to life in prison

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00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:29,000

for a murder most people are convinced he did not commit.

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00:13:32,000 --> 00:13:35,000

On Sunday night, April 13th, 1986,

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00:13:35,000 --> 00:13:38,000

fire and rescue squads raced to a raging house fire

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00:13:38,000 --> 00:13:40,000

in Alora, Missouri.

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00:13:43,000 --> 00:13:45,000

When firemen were finally able to search the wreckage,

236

00:13:45,000 --> 00:13:48,000

they found the body of 79-year-old Pauline Martz.

237

00:13:48,000 --> 00:13:51,000

She had been bound, gagged, and left to die.

238

00:13:51,000 --> 00:13:56,000

Investigators concluded the fire had been deliberately set.

239

00:13:56,000 --> 00:13:59,000

Five days later, the police questioned

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00:13:59,000 --> 00:14:03,000

a local 20-year-old named Johnny Lee Wilson.

241

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

Wilson is mildly retarded with an IQ in the mid-60s.

242

00:14:08,000 --> 00:14:11,000

And he sat here and looked you right in the eye and said,

243

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

John, you was there before that fire started.

244

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

After a grueling four-hour interrogation, Wilson confessed,

245

00:14:18,000 --> 00:14:21,000

a confession he would later recant.

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00:14:21,000 --> 00:14:26,000

At the end of the interrogation, he forced my head back

247

00:14:26,000 --> 00:14:30,000

and that's when I said, OK, OK, I did it.

248

00:14:30,000 --> 00:14:34,000

But when I really did, that's when I lied.

249

00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:36,000

Johnny's attorneys recommended that he plead guilty

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00:14:36,000 --> 00:14:39,000

to avoid the possibility of the death penalty.

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00:14:39,000 --> 00:14:43,000

In doing so, he waived his right to a trial by jury.

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00:14:43,000 --> 00:14:46,000

In April of 1987, Johnny Lee Wilson

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00:14:46,000 --> 00:14:49,000

was sentenced to life in prison.

254

00:14:49,000 --> 00:14:54,000

He was immediately remanded to the Missouri State Penitentiary.

255

00:14:54,000 --> 00:14:57,000

Several legal experts incensed by this apparent injustice

256

00:14:57,000 --> 00:15:01,000

sprang to Johnny's defense.

257

00:15:01,000 --> 00:15:05,000

It's one of those cases, perhaps there's only one in 1,000

258

00:15:05,000 --> 00:15:09,000

where an innocent man is doing time in the penitentiary.

259

00:15:09,000 --> 00:15:11,000

And Johnny Lee Wilson is innocent.

260

00:15:11,000 --> 00:15:14,000

And if he had a trial, he would probably be acquitted.

261

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

I don't think the jury would deliberate more than an hour

262

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

before they acquitted him.

263

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

And it's a shame that he never got a chance to prove his innocence.

264

00:15:24,000 --> 00:15:28,000

All I want somebody to believe me, you know,

265

00:15:28,000 --> 00:15:33,000

just that I didn't do this.

266

00:15:33,000 --> 00:15:37,000

Over the years, a case against Johnny Lee Wilson began to fall apart.

267

00:15:37,000 --> 00:15:40,000

A key witness recanted his testimony.

268

00:15:40,000 --> 00:15:44,000

An inmate in another prison actually confessed to the crime.

269

00:15:44,000 --> 00:15:46,000

Nevertheless, both the State Court of Appeals

270

00:15:46,000 --> 00:15:50,000

and the Missouri Supreme Court refused to grant Johnny a trial.

271

00:15:50,000 --> 00:15:55,000

Johnny Lee Wilson had only one other option, one last hope.

272

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

Here's Keely Shaysmith with the details.

273

00:15:58,000 --> 00:16:02,000

In July of 1994, Johnny's case came before Missouri Governor

274

00:16:02,000 --> 00:16:04,000

Mel Carnahan.

275

00:16:04,000 --> 00:16:07,000

Johnny's attorneys had requested a pardon on the grounds

276

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

that there was no evidence against their client.

277

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

Only, quote, a pathetic, desperate confession after hours of interrogation.

278

00:16:15,000 --> 00:16:21,000

My counsel re-interviewed the witnesses, talked to the prosecutors and the police,

279

00:16:21,000 --> 00:16:26,000

looked at the evidence, read the transcripts, a year-long study.

280

00:16:26,000 --> 00:16:29,000

And we became convinced that it wasn't appropriate,

281

00:16:29,000 --> 00:16:34,000

not only wasn't appropriate for him to remain in prison, but that he was innocent.

282

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

The pardon was granted.

283

00:16:36,000 --> 00:16:41,000

On September 29, 1995, Johnny Lee Wilson was finally a free man,

284

00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:46,000

exonerated of all charges.

285

00:16:46,000 --> 00:16:51,000

I never thought that I would see the day that I would walk out to his door

286

00:16:51,000 --> 00:16:54,000

and be driving away from that place.

287

00:16:54,000 --> 00:16:58,000

It felt great.

288

00:16:58,000 --> 00:17:04,000

Altogether, Johnny had spent nine years, five months and ten days behind bars.

289

00:17:04,000 --> 00:17:11,000

At a hastily assembled news conference, Johnny's thoughts turned to Pauline Martz.

290

00:17:11,000 --> 00:17:15,000

Why would someone hurt a nice lady like Pauline?

291

00:17:15,000 --> 00:17:27,000

She was a wonderful person, a friend of my grandmother's, and she was a very good person.

292

00:17:27,000 --> 00:17:32,000

Following his release, Johnny was reunited with his mother and grandmother.

293

00:17:32,000 --> 00:17:38,000

My mother and I cried, and we just, you know, we hugged each other and all of us,

294

00:17:38,000 --> 00:17:40,000

and we were really happy.

295

00:17:40,000 --> 00:17:47,000

We could hardly believe it, you know, after all those years.

296

00:17:47,000 --> 00:17:51,000

Johnny now lives with his mother and grandmother in his hometown of Aurora, Missouri,

297

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

where he hopes to put his long-ordeal behind him.

298

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

I have no bitterness or nothing.

299

00:17:59,000 --> 00:18:04,000

I got so much faith, you know, I knew sometimes, somehow, that I wasn't gonna get out.

300

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

I just, I'm just glad I did.

301

00:18:09,000 --> 00:18:21,000

The New Year's Eve, 1952

302

00:18:21,000 --> 00:18:28,000

A time of hope and guarded optimism.

303

00:18:28,000 --> 00:18:30,000

I could have been elected president.

304

00:18:30,000 --> 00:18:34,000

The conflict in Korea was drawing to a close.

305

00:18:34,000 --> 00:18:41,000

But in Glendale, California, David Kempton's world was about to come apart.

306

00:18:41,000 --> 00:18:43,000

I'm here with my wife.

307

00:18:43,000 --> 00:18:44,000

Oh, my beautiful wife.

308

00:18:44,000 --> 00:18:47,000

David's wife, Barbara, was in love with another man.

309

00:18:47,000 --> 00:18:48,000

Hey, what's wrong with you?

310

00:18:48,000 --> 00:18:50,000

Well, we don't hug anymore.

311

00:18:50,000 --> 00:18:51,000

We don't kiss anymore.

312

00:18:51,000 --> 00:18:52,000

David!

313

00:18:52,000 --> 00:18:57,000

Nine months later, Barbara would disappear, along with a couple's young daughter, Donna.

314

00:18:57,000 --> 00:19:03,000

The last time I saw her was just a few weeks after I got married.

315

00:19:03,000 --> 00:19:08,000

A few weeks after her fourth birthday.

316

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:12,000

It's been a very long time.

317

00:19:12,000 --> 00:19:15,000

So I'm sitting there with this guy, I'm at down at the plant.

318

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

He says, watch this.

319

00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:21,000

David Kempton's troubles began in July of 1951, when he brought a co-worker home for dinner.

320

00:19:21,000 --> 00:19:25,000

And a couple seconds later, he flags me over and I meet Barbara, Stanwyck.

321

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

At the time, the Kemptons lived in Ohio.

322

00:19:28,000 --> 00:19:36,000

David and Barbara had been married for five years and had two children, Steven and Donna.

323

00:19:36,000 --> 00:19:39,000

David's new friend, Charles, was an engaging storyteller.

324

00:19:39,000 --> 00:19:46,000

He entertained everyone with delightful tales of his adventures around the country.

325

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

Charles was a person who lived an unusual kind of life.

326

00:19:52,000 --> 00:19:59,000

Almost anything or any place you wanted to talk about, he had some stories related to it.

327

00:19:59,000 --> 00:20:03,000

There's restaurants, there's nightclubs, there's dancing.

328

00:20:03,000 --> 00:20:07,000

Charles never stopped talking about California, the promised land.

329

00:20:07,000 --> 00:20:12,000

Eventually, David and Barbara decided that was a place to be.

330

00:20:12,000 --> 00:20:17,000

All went well, until Charles joined the Kemptons on the West Coast.

331

00:20:17,000 --> 00:20:19,000

I'm in love with Charles.

332

00:20:19,000 --> 00:20:21,000

What?

333

00:20:21,000 --> 00:20:23,000

I want a divorce.

334

00:20:23,000 --> 00:20:25,000

Son of a...

335

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

I was totally unhorsed.

336

00:20:28,000 --> 00:20:29,000

Charlie!

337

00:20:29,000 --> 00:20:30,000

Stanwyck!

338

00:20:30,000 --> 00:20:32,000

I had never considered such a thing.

339

00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:35,000

I didn't know there was anything that wrong with the marriage.

340

00:20:35,000 --> 00:20:37,000

Sorry, but I'm leaving.

341

00:20:37,000 --> 00:20:44,000

Eventually, what we decided was that if that's where things were going to be,

342

00:20:44,000 --> 00:20:50,000

I would step out of the picture, he would step into my shoes.

343

00:20:50,000 --> 00:20:56,000

It would be as little disruption as possible with the kids.

344

00:20:56,000 --> 00:20:59,000

And I went back to Cleveland.

345

00:20:59,000 --> 00:21:03,000

David, it's Barbara. I'm in Arizona.

346

00:21:03,000 --> 00:21:09,000

But within about a month or five or six weeks, I got a phone call.

347

00:21:09,000 --> 00:21:11,000

Charles is gone.

348

00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:16,000

It was totally out of the blue, a thunderbolt.

349

00:21:16,000 --> 00:21:19,000

I'm with the kids and I want to come home.

350

00:21:19,000 --> 00:21:27,000

I sent her the bus tickets and I tore out and dug up a house for us to live in.

351

00:21:27,000 --> 00:21:29,000

David's joy was short-lived.

352

00:21:29,000 --> 00:21:32,000

Within weeks, Charles was back in the picture.

353

00:21:32,000 --> 00:21:35,000

Barbara moved out again. She moved back in.

354

00:21:35,000 --> 00:21:38,000

Then she dropped another bombshell.

355

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:43,000

I'll live here and I'll take care of our children.

356

00:21:43,000 --> 00:21:48,000

But don't ask me for anything more.

357

00:21:48,000 --> 00:21:51,000

At the time David left, and he took the children with him.

358

00:21:51,000 --> 00:21:56,000

A judge soon granted David temporary custody of both Stephen and Donna.

359

00:21:56,000 --> 00:22:01,000

Barbara received weekend visitation rights.

360

00:22:01,000 --> 00:22:07,000

On the occasion of the first weekend visitation, she called me ahead of time to say

361

00:22:07,000 --> 00:22:12,000

that she was in a rooming house and couldn't accommodate both kids.

362

00:22:12,000 --> 00:22:14,000

Could she just take Donna?

363

00:22:14,000 --> 00:22:16,000

See you guys Sunday afternoon.

364

00:22:16,000 --> 00:22:18,000

Bye, sweetie.

365

00:22:18,000 --> 00:22:21,000

So on Friday I had delivered Donna.

366

00:22:21,000 --> 00:22:23,000

I'm just here to pick up my daughter Donna.

367

00:22:23,000 --> 00:22:27,000

And Sunday evening, I went back to pick her up.

368

00:22:27,000 --> 00:22:29,000

Do I just go on inside?

369

00:22:29,000 --> 00:22:31,000

Oh, no. They left yesterday.

370

00:22:31,000 --> 00:22:33,000

They packed up some family business and had to leave.

371

00:22:33,000 --> 00:22:36,000

Wait, that's not right, ma'am. I'm supposed to pick up Donna today.

372

00:22:36,000 --> 00:22:38,000

She wasn't there.

373

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

They weren't there.

374

00:22:41,000 --> 00:22:46,000

It was devastating because I had no way, not a way in the world,

375

00:22:46,000 --> 00:22:51,000

to know where they might have gone.

376

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

More than 40 years have now passed.

377

00:22:54,000 --> 00:23:02,000

40 years of birthdays, dances, graduations, perhaps a wedding, and even grandchildren.

378

00:23:02,000 --> 00:23:08,000

I'd like Donna to know that she's always been a part of my feeling.

379

00:23:08,000 --> 00:23:13,000

Whenever anyone mentions what kids do I have,

380

00:23:13,000 --> 00:23:18,000

usually I'll include her in the count.

381

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

I want to say hello and that I love you.

382

00:23:23,000 --> 00:23:28,000

If in whatever way that's possible under the circumstances,

383

00:23:28,000 --> 00:23:31,000

I have love for you.

384

00:23:39,000 --> 00:23:45,000

We'll be back in a moment to investigate the mysterious disappearance

385

00:23:45,000 --> 00:23:47,000

of a young woman named Bonnie Haim.

386

00:23:47,000 --> 00:23:52,000

Some people believe her husband knows more about Bonnie's fate than he is saying.

387

00:23:52,000 --> 00:23:59,000

Christmas Morning, 1992.

388

00:23:59,000 --> 00:24:05,000

In Jacksonville, Florida, a young wife and mother, Bonnie Haim, opened presents.

389

00:24:05,000 --> 00:24:10,000

Bonnie's husband, Michael, captured the moment forever on videotape.

390

00:24:10,000 --> 00:24:12,000

Less than two weeks later,

391

00:24:12,000 --> 00:24:17,000

Bonnie's husband, Michael, was found in a hospital in Jacksonville, Florida.

392

00:24:17,000 --> 00:24:22,000

Police began to suspect that Bonnie was dead, a victim of foul play.

393

00:24:22,000 --> 00:24:25,000

Their suspicions soon focused on Michael Haim.

394

00:24:25,000 --> 00:24:30,000

Among the most damning evidence was the extraordinary testimony of a surprising witness,

395

00:24:30,000 --> 00:24:36,000

Michael and Bonnie's three-year-old son.

396

00:24:36,000 --> 00:24:41,000

Bonnie Haim's unsurpassed, unbeknownst to her husband, Michael,

397

00:24:41,000 --> 00:24:46,000

was found in a hospital in Jacksonville, Florida.

398

00:24:46,000 --> 00:24:49,000

Bonnie Haim's uncertain fate and the clot of suspicion

399

00:24:49,000 --> 00:24:53,000

that hangs over her husband, Michael, has spawned a contorted family dispute.

400

00:24:53,000 --> 00:24:57,000

On one hand, Bonnie's own parents believe that she was unhappily married

401

00:24:57,000 --> 00:24:59,000

and willfully abandoned Michael and her son.

402

00:24:59,000 --> 00:25:04,000

And yet some members of Michael's family are convinced that Bonnie is dead,

403

00:25:04,000 --> 00:25:07,000

murdered by Michael Haim.

404

00:25:07,000 --> 00:25:11,000

Bonnie, I'm sorry to say, is gone.

405

00:25:11,000 --> 00:25:16,000

She's not alive. If she was alive and had one ounce of life in her,

406

00:25:16,000 --> 00:25:20,000

she would have contacted someone.

407

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

There are thousands of women that leave their husbands and families every year.

408

00:25:28,000 --> 00:25:33,000

And it's always a complete surprise to their families.

409

00:25:37,000 --> 00:25:39,000

Michael worked as a manager,

410

00:25:39,000 --> 00:25:43,000

an instruction supply company owned by his aunt, Yvonne, and her husband.

411

00:25:43,000 --> 00:25:45,000

Bonnie did their accounts.

412

00:25:45,000 --> 00:25:47,000

Bonnie, let's go to lunch.

413

00:25:47,000 --> 00:25:51,000

Yvonne claims that Michael was often abusive to Bonnie at the office.

414

00:25:51,000 --> 00:25:53,000

Well, just go without me.

415

00:25:53,000 --> 00:25:55,000

What is so important that you can't go to lunch?

416

00:25:55,000 --> 00:25:57,000

Bonnie, don't start.

417

00:25:57,000 --> 00:26:03,000

Yvonne also claims that at least once, Michael's abuse became physical.

418

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

One day they got into an argument in a fight in the parking lot

419

00:26:07,000 --> 00:26:11,000

and she came in crying and he had slammed her hand in the door and her nails were broken.

420

00:26:11,000 --> 00:26:14,000

She was very upset at that point.

421

00:26:17,000 --> 00:26:20,000

Yvonne says that Bonnie eventually decided to leave her husband

422

00:26:20,000 --> 00:26:24,000

and in preparation opened a bank account in her own name.

423

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

To keep her plans secret, Bonnie had the bank statements mailed to her at work.

424

00:26:29,000 --> 00:26:33,000

According to Yvonne, Michael was enraged when he found out.

425

00:26:33,000 --> 00:26:36,000

Michael, what are you doing?

426

00:26:36,000 --> 00:26:38,000

No, what are you doing, Bonnie?

427

00:26:38,000 --> 00:26:40,000

Why don't I know about this?

428

00:26:40,000 --> 00:26:42,000

We're married.

429

00:26:42,000 --> 00:26:44,000

This is our money. It should be in our account.

430

00:26:44,000 --> 00:26:46,000

Well, it's from my paycheck.

431

00:26:46,000 --> 00:26:49,000

Well, you're going to close it. You're going to close it today.

432

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

Do you understand me?

433

00:26:57,000 --> 00:27:00,000

Bonnie closed the account.

434

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

But according to those closest to her, Bonnie never wavered in her plan to divorce Michael.

435

00:27:05,000 --> 00:27:08,000

She secreted money with a friend for safekeeping

436

00:27:08,000 --> 00:27:11,000

and went so far as to put a deposit on an apartment

437

00:27:11,000 --> 00:27:14,000

and enroll her son in a new preschool.

438

00:27:18,000 --> 00:27:24,000

On the evening of January 6, 1993, Bonnie came home from work at around 7.30 p.m.

439

00:27:24,000 --> 00:27:30,000

She intended to drop by Yvonne's at 8 to finalize plans for a co-worker's baby shower.

440

00:27:30,000 --> 00:27:32,000

Hello?

441

00:27:32,000 --> 00:27:34,000

Hello?

442

00:27:34,000 --> 00:27:38,000

About 8.30 that evening, she called me on the phone.

443

00:27:38,000 --> 00:27:43,000

Hi. Listen, about tonight, I'm not going to be able to make it.

444

00:27:43,000 --> 00:27:46,000

She was crying and she was upset.

445

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

Bonnie, is something the matter?

446

00:27:48,000 --> 00:27:53,000

I asked why. She said that her and Mike had gotten into a discussion.

447

00:27:53,000 --> 00:27:57,000

And I asked her if she wanted me to call her back later.

448

00:27:57,000 --> 00:28:02,000

And she said no, that she would just talk to me in the morning.

449

00:28:02,000 --> 00:28:06,000

Actually, not too good. I think I'm coming down with something.

450

00:28:06,000 --> 00:28:10,000

But the next morning, neither Bonnie nor Michael showed up at work.

451

00:28:10,000 --> 00:28:16,000

She's not here. I don't know. She, uh, we had an argument.

452

00:28:16,000 --> 00:28:21,000

I know she got mad at me last night and took off. I don't know where she's at.

453

00:28:22,000 --> 00:28:28,000

However, hopes for Bonnie's safe return began to dim that same morning.

454

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

Her purse turned up roughly five miles from home,

455

00:28:32,000 --> 00:28:36,000

buried in a motel dumpster near the Jacksonville airport.

456

00:28:38,000 --> 00:28:43,000

Robbery, apparently, was not a motive due to the amount of money and the credit cards being there.

457

00:28:43,000 --> 00:28:47,000

It had, uh, all of her identification checkbook,

458

00:28:47,000 --> 00:28:50,000

and the purse was secured by the maintenance worker

459

00:28:50,000 --> 00:28:54,000

and a police officer was called to the scene along with family members.

460

00:28:55,000 --> 00:29:00,000

One hundred, one sixty, seventy, one hundred and seventy-three.

461

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

Does there appear to be anything missing from the purse?

462

00:29:03,000 --> 00:29:05,000

No, it's all there. As far as I can tell.

463

00:29:05,000 --> 00:29:08,000

Hi, John. You okay, Michael?

464

00:29:08,000 --> 00:29:14,000

When I walked into the room, Mike and his dad were in there.

465

00:29:14,000 --> 00:29:16,000

You didn't tell me anything.

466

00:29:16,000 --> 00:29:20,000

Michael didn't say much about Bonnie being missing.

467

00:29:20,000 --> 00:29:22,000

What the hell was Bonnie doing with all that money?

468

00:29:22,000 --> 00:29:27,000

He didn't just come out and, like, oh my God, my wife is gone.

469

00:29:27,000 --> 00:29:31,000

Where is she? Um, just nothing, nothing.

470

00:29:34,000 --> 00:29:39,000

Michael has insisted from the start that he was not involved in his wife's disappearance.

471

00:29:39,000 --> 00:29:42,000

He says it on the night of January 6th.

472

00:29:42,000 --> 00:29:46,000

He's alone after an argument at around 11 p.m.

473

00:29:46,000 --> 00:29:48,000

Mom, thanks for calling.

474

00:29:48,000 --> 00:29:50,000

He stated that he called his mother, Carolyn Hayman,

475

00:29:50,000 --> 00:29:52,000

asked her to come over to the house in early morning hours

476

00:29:52,000 --> 00:29:56,000

and watch the child while he went and looked for Bonnie.

477

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

I won't be long. You be careful.

478

00:29:58,000 --> 00:30:03,000

According to Carolyn, Mike, he was gone approximately 45 minutes.

479

00:30:04,000 --> 00:30:08,000

Then after he allegedly did that, he returned to the house

480

00:30:08,000 --> 00:30:10,000

where he waited until the next morning,

481

00:30:10,000 --> 00:30:14,000

never calling the police and called in and told his employer

482

00:30:14,000 --> 00:30:17,000

that he was going to be sick that day.

483

00:30:19,000 --> 00:30:23,000

Detective Henson was less than convinced by Haymes' account.

484

00:30:23,000 --> 00:30:27,000

His instincts led him back to the Jacksonville airport near the motel.

485

00:30:27,000 --> 00:30:29,000

Herb, isn't that it?

486

00:30:29,000 --> 00:30:32,000

Sure enough, there was Bonnie's car,

487

00:30:32,000 --> 00:30:35,000

abandoned in a lot for long-term parking.

488

00:30:36,000 --> 00:30:39,000

What was unusual about Bonnie's car when we found it at the airport

489

00:30:39,000 --> 00:30:43,000

was the positioning of the seat, the driver's seat of the car,

490

00:30:43,000 --> 00:30:45,000

which appeared to be farther back

491

00:30:45,000 --> 00:30:49,000

than would have been comfortable for Bonnie to have driven the car.

492

00:30:49,000 --> 00:30:54,000

It was more in relation to someone about Michael Haymes' size.

493

00:30:55,000 --> 00:30:58,000

After the vehicle was processed, we found a shoe print

494

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

in the driver's side floorboard.

495

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

It was a very pristine print.

496

00:31:05,000 --> 00:31:07,000

Police concluded that the print had been made

497

00:31:07,000 --> 00:31:10,000

by the last person to drive the car.

498

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

The distinctive tread pattern was traced to a rare style of athletic shoe.

499

00:31:15,000 --> 00:31:18,000

One pair was owned by none other than Michael Haymes.

500

00:31:20,000 --> 00:31:27,000

The shoe print in the car is interesting,

501

00:31:27,000 --> 00:31:35,000

but beyond that, if it's his footprint, I'm not sure it means anything.

502

00:31:35,000 --> 00:31:37,000

My footprint is in my wife's car.

503

00:31:38,000 --> 00:31:42,000

That doesn't mean I've ever done her any harm.

504

00:31:44,000 --> 00:31:46,000

Did you ever see your mommy's that?

505

00:31:46,000 --> 00:31:47,000

Mm-hmm.

506

00:31:47,000 --> 00:31:49,000

Was she okay or was she hurt?

507

00:31:49,000 --> 00:31:50,000

He was hot.

508

00:31:50,000 --> 00:31:52,000

In a bold attempt to uncover the truth,

509

00:31:52,000 --> 00:31:55,000

investigators arranged for child psychologists

510

00:31:55,000 --> 00:31:57,000

to interview Bonnie and Michael's son.

511

00:31:57,000 --> 00:31:58,000

I think it hurt.

512

00:31:58,000 --> 00:31:59,000

Yes.

513

00:31:59,000 --> 00:32:01,000

How did she get hurt?

514

00:32:01,000 --> 00:32:03,000

I think she was hurt.

515

00:32:03,000 --> 00:32:05,000

I think she was hurt.

516

00:32:05,000 --> 00:32:07,000

It's not her damn.

517

00:32:07,000 --> 00:32:10,000

From what the child told us that day,

518

00:32:10,000 --> 00:32:14,000

my only conclusion was that there had been a domestic fight,

519

00:32:14,000 --> 00:32:16,000

and that Michael Haymes had killed his wife

520

00:32:16,000 --> 00:32:18,000

and had removed her,

521

00:32:18,000 --> 00:32:21,000

and that their three-and-a-half-year-old son had witnessed this.

522

00:32:21,000 --> 00:32:23,000

I don't know if my mommy was hurt.

523

00:32:23,000 --> 00:32:25,000

I don't know if my mommy was hurt.

524

00:32:25,000 --> 00:32:28,000

The credibility of a child is something that you have to,

525

00:32:28,000 --> 00:32:31,000

like I said, judge in perspective.

526

00:32:31,000 --> 00:32:36,000

He's said a couple of things that we know were not true.

527

00:32:36,000 --> 00:32:39,000

Mom's car is in the lake.

528

00:32:39,000 --> 00:32:41,000

We know her car wasn't there.

529

00:32:41,000 --> 00:32:47,000

The issue of child witness credibility is always a concern,

530

00:32:47,000 --> 00:32:51,000

but generally, children do not lie about what they see,

531

00:32:51,000 --> 00:32:55,000

and they do not lie about what happens to them.

532

00:32:56,000 --> 00:32:59,000

At this point, custody of Bonnie and Michael's son

533

00:32:59,000 --> 00:33:01,000

is still in litigation.

534

00:33:01,000 --> 00:33:03,000

However, he is safe.

535

00:33:03,000 --> 00:33:07,000

Meanwhile, the families remain split about what, if anything,

536

00:33:07,000 --> 00:33:12,000

Michael Haymes knows about his wife's disappearance.

537

00:33:12,000 --> 00:33:19,000

I'm not saying that I'm 100% convinced that Mike is innocent.

538

00:33:19,000 --> 00:33:23,000

I haven't seen any evidence that convinces me he's guilty.

539

00:33:23,000 --> 00:33:33,000

His behavior and general attitude convinces me that he's not guilty.

540

00:33:33,000 --> 00:33:39,000

I think that Michael did something to Bonnie.

541

00:33:39,000 --> 00:33:45,000

I think her son was there, and I think he's seen exactly what happened.

542

00:33:45,000 --> 00:33:49,000

I think he witnessed his mother's murder.

543

00:33:49,000 --> 00:33:53,000

I refuse to give up hope that Bonnie is alive

544

00:33:53,000 --> 00:34:02,000

until we get some proof, some evidence that Bonnie's dead.

545

00:34:02,000 --> 00:34:06,000

Through his attorney, Michael Haymes declined our request for an interview.

546

00:34:06,000 --> 00:34:09,000

He has not been formally charged with any crime.

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00:34:09,000 --> 00:34:14,000

However, authorities still consider him to be the prime suspect in Bonnie's disappearance.

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00:34:14,000 --> 00:34:18,000

In addition, investigators believe Michael may have had an accomplice,

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00:34:18,000 --> 00:34:21,000

someone who picked him up after he left Bonnie's car at the airport

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00:34:21,000 --> 00:34:24,000

and also helped the dispose of his wife's body.

551

00:34:24,000 --> 00:34:29,000

The possibility remains, of course, that Bonnie Haymes is still alive.

552

00:34:49,000 --> 00:34:55,000

Next, if you like a good fright, you love the Devil's Backbone.

553

00:34:55,000 --> 00:34:58,000

Many believe it's the most haunted spot in America,

554

00:34:58,000 --> 00:35:01,000

and the eyewitness accounts leave little doubt.

555

00:35:19,000 --> 00:35:24,000

I was feeling extremely scared.

556

00:35:24,000 --> 00:35:29,000

It was a ghost. It had to be. I didn't tell anybody about it.

557

00:35:29,000 --> 00:35:34,000

That chilling sensation I got kind of stayed with me.

558

00:35:34,000 --> 00:35:36,000

There's something here.

559

00:35:36,000 --> 00:35:38,000

What it is, I don't know.

560

00:35:38,000 --> 00:35:43,000

I've had probably 25, 30 recordings of different spirits and ghosts from different people.

561

00:35:43,000 --> 00:35:45,000

They'll never leave.

562

00:35:46,000 --> 00:35:49,000

I'll be dead and gone. They'll be here.

563

00:35:51,000 --> 00:35:54,000

They call it the Devil's Backbone.

564

00:35:54,000 --> 00:35:56,000

And when it comes to ghosts per square mile,

565

00:35:56,000 --> 00:36:03,000

few places shown to purgatory can match these 4,700 acres in central Texas.

566

00:36:03,000 --> 00:36:07,000

To get here, you head south, out of the state capital Austin,

567

00:36:07,000 --> 00:36:11,000

about 50 miles and some 200 years.

568

00:36:12,000 --> 00:36:15,000

The gnarled canyons of the Devil's Backbone

569

00:36:15,000 --> 00:36:18,000

are once home to Comanche and Apache Indians.

570

00:36:18,000 --> 00:36:22,000

And the 1700s Spaniards pushed through on the road to conquest.

571

00:36:22,000 --> 00:36:25,000

Among them was a Franciscan monk named Espinosa,

572

00:36:25,000 --> 00:36:28,000

infamous for his ruthless ambition.

573

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

More than a century later,

574

00:36:30,000 --> 00:36:33,000

renegade Confederate soldiers on a doomed quest for gold,

575

00:36:33,000 --> 00:36:36,000

breathe their last in the Devil's Backbone.

576

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

Today, their spirits live on.

577

00:36:38,000 --> 00:36:41,000

Or so says longtime resident Bert Wall.

578

00:36:51,000 --> 00:36:56,000

I had a situation one time where I was finishing a particular thing I was riding.

579

00:36:56,000 --> 00:36:58,000

And it was late at night, about midnight,

580

00:36:58,000 --> 00:37:01,000

and the dogs started barking a little bit but not loud.

581

00:37:01,000 --> 00:37:04,000

The wind was blowing. It was a cold night.

582

00:37:09,000 --> 00:37:13,000

I looked through the window, that's when I saw the Spanish monk.

583

00:37:18,000 --> 00:37:20,000

I don't believe it could have been a person.

584

00:37:20,000 --> 00:37:24,000

There's no way he was definitely from the 1700s.

585

00:37:24,000 --> 00:37:28,000

He was dressed that way in his habit or whatever, his crosshanging.

586

00:37:30,000 --> 00:37:34,000

I probably watched him for all 15 seconds maybe, which is a long time.

587

00:37:35,000 --> 00:37:40,000

He disappeared in a way that was more of a... gone.

588

00:37:49,000 --> 00:37:53,000

The luminous Spanish monk is but one of many spirits at Prowl the Ranch.

589

00:37:53,000 --> 00:37:55,000

Just ask John Myers.

590

00:37:55,000 --> 00:37:58,000

He came to Bert Wall's place to hunt deer,

591

00:37:58,000 --> 00:38:02,000

but hunting in the Devil's Backbone isn't like anywhere else in the world.

592

00:38:04,000 --> 00:38:08,000

The stand I was on was a tree stand.

593

00:38:08,000 --> 00:38:14,000

Once I got up and situated myself, you have to be real quiet, real still,

594

00:38:14,000 --> 00:38:16,000

and watch for the deer.

595

00:38:16,000 --> 00:38:20,000

As I was sitting up in the stand waiting, and that's what you do a lot,

596

00:38:20,000 --> 00:38:22,000

deer hunting is just wait.

597

00:38:26,000 --> 00:38:32,000

I heard footprints or footsteps, I should say, walking around the tree, the base of the tree.

598

00:38:35,000 --> 00:38:39,000

I couldn't see because I was sitting on a platform,

599

00:38:39,000 --> 00:38:43,000

and it kept just walking in a circle, whatever it was.

600

00:38:47,000 --> 00:38:53,000

I started getting a little eerie feeling because it wouldn't move away from the tree,

601

00:38:53,000 --> 00:38:55,000

it just kept going in this circle.

602

00:38:55,000 --> 00:38:59,000

And finally, it just stopped.

603

00:38:59,000 --> 00:39:03,000

It didn't walk away, the sounds just stopped.

604

00:39:04,000 --> 00:39:08,000

And the sun started going down, and it started getting darker.

605

00:39:08,000 --> 00:39:13,000

And I thought, well, I'm just going to get out off the tree, walk back to the house.

606

00:39:13,000 --> 00:39:19,000

Didn't see any footprints, twigs broken or branches broken or anything like that.

607

00:39:19,000 --> 00:39:23,000

I kept getting this feeling that someone was watching me.

608

00:39:23,000 --> 00:39:29,000

So I stopped and I turned back and looked toward the tree, and there was an Indian.

609

00:39:30,000 --> 00:39:35,000

It was a very cold night, it was in the 20s, and he was without a shirt.

610

00:39:35,000 --> 00:39:40,000

And he was looking at me rather strangely, like, who are you?

611

00:39:41,000 --> 00:39:45,000

So immediately I turned around and started back toward the house.

612

00:39:45,000 --> 00:39:50,000

I noticed to my right, out of the corner of my eye, that he was there,

613

00:39:50,000 --> 00:39:53,000

and he was walking parallel with me.

614

00:39:54,000 --> 00:39:59,000

I didn't feel threatened by him, it's just, you know, like, who are you and what are you doing here?

615

00:39:59,000 --> 00:40:05,000

And I made about two steps toward him, and when I did, he vanished.

616

00:40:11,000 --> 00:40:15,000

It was a ghost, it had to be, you know, to be able to do that.

617

00:40:17,000 --> 00:40:21,000

The Bonk House was a sight of yet another extraordinary vision.

618

00:40:21,000 --> 00:40:26,000

If you believe Lynn Gentry, one-time foreman at Burt Falls Ranch.

619

00:40:28,000 --> 00:40:31,000

I was kind of relaxing off in the distance, I heard.

620

00:40:31,000 --> 00:40:33,000

What at first I thought was thunder.

621

00:40:36,000 --> 00:40:44,000

Then as the sound came closer, I realized that it was horses hooves in a very fast run.

622

00:40:45,000 --> 00:40:50,000

There were several horses with probably 15 or 20 riders on them,

623

00:40:50,000 --> 00:40:53,000

what I believed to have been Confederate soldiers.

624

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

They certainly looked real to me at the time, but then when you begin to slowly realize that,

625

00:41:06,000 --> 00:41:08,000

hey, what I'm looking at is not real.

626

00:41:08,000 --> 00:41:12,000

You know, this is, these are ghosts.

627

00:41:15,000 --> 00:41:20,000

Perhaps most amazing of all was the experience of John Villarreal.

628

00:41:20,000 --> 00:41:25,000

A few years back, John was hiking with two friends in an area known as the Haunted Valley.

629

00:41:26,000 --> 00:41:32,000

John claims he not only saw a supernatural vision of a wolf, but that the spirit actually possessed him.

630

00:41:34,000 --> 00:41:40,000

Cory and B.C. were often another part of the creek, and I got this sensation,

631

00:41:40,000 --> 00:41:44,000

and basically saw a vision of a wolf.

632

00:41:51,000 --> 00:41:55,000

I was looking up, watching it come towards me, and it leapt at me.

633

00:41:59,000 --> 00:42:07,000

And where it would have hit me, I felt the just chilling sensation go through me.

634

00:42:07,000 --> 00:42:14,000

We didn't see anything mysterious. It's all what John says that he saw.

635

00:42:16,000 --> 00:42:20,000

When we got back into the truck, it got extremely cold in the truck.

636

00:42:20,000 --> 00:42:25,000

He was sitting in between B.C. and I. I was sitting on the passenger side,

637

00:42:25,000 --> 00:42:30,000

so the whole left-hand side of my body got extremely numb and cold.

638

00:42:31,000 --> 00:42:36,000

It's almost like if there was a big block of ice sitting next to me.

639

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

When we got back to the ranch that night, I didn't know what was going on.

640

00:42:42,000 --> 00:42:48,000

I didn't know if my friend was going to be all right. I was actually pretty worried about him.

641

00:42:52,000 --> 00:42:56,000

According to his friends, John initially lapsed into a silent trance.

642

00:42:56,000 --> 00:42:59,000

When he did speak, his voice was an unearthly baritone.

643

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

John suddenly seemed obsessed with Indian massacres, ambushes,

644

00:43:03,000 --> 00:43:07,000

and other little-known events from the history of Devil's Backbone.

645

00:43:09,000 --> 00:43:12,000

While I was standing there, I was feeling extremely scared,

646

00:43:12,000 --> 00:43:18,000

and all of a sudden a big gust of wind came out of the kitchen.

647

00:43:21,000 --> 00:43:24,000

I was just in shock. I didn't know what that was.

648

00:43:25,000 --> 00:43:28,000

I stood there kind of frozen and kept asking questions,

649

00:43:28,000 --> 00:43:30,000

what was that? What was that?

650

00:43:30,000 --> 00:43:36,000

And that's when someone said, I think the spirits left him. I think it's gone now.

651

00:43:37,000 --> 00:43:40,000

I don't know for sure what kind of spirit was inside of me,

652

00:43:40,000 --> 00:43:46,000

but something that knew about this ranch, that knew about the history of the ranch,

653

00:43:46,000 --> 00:43:48,000

had to be going through me.

654

00:43:49,000 --> 00:43:56,000

And it's hard to believe, but it, you know, basically that's what would have had to happen.

655

00:43:59,000 --> 00:44:04,000

Here in the Devil's Backbone, ghosts are as common as spines on a cactus.

656

00:44:04,000 --> 00:44:09,000

But why should this particular patch of land prove so irresistible to spirits?

657

00:44:10,000 --> 00:44:14,000

The Devil's Backbone is haunted because it's loved.

658

00:44:15,000 --> 00:44:19,000

It's loved by the spirits. It's loved by myself.

659

00:44:20,000 --> 00:44:25,000

And I imagine someday when I'm gone, I will haunt the same son of a gun.

660

00:44:29,000 --> 00:44:32,000

If the local accounts are anything close to true,

661

00:44:32,000 --> 00:44:36,000

Burt Wall would join a host of other souls who once called his place home,

662

00:44:36,000 --> 00:44:40,000

a bold company in which to spend the rest of eternity.

663

00:44:58,000 --> 00:45:05,000

Join me next time for another intriguing edition of Unsolved Mysteries.

664

00:45:28,000 --> 00:45:33,000

The Devil's Backbone