

1

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

The End

2

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

Tonight on Unsolved Mysteries

3

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

Married only three months,

4

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

Yishai Witherall died in this tragic fall.

5

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

Her husband said it was an accident.

6

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

Her family believed she was murdered.

7

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

It was a whirlwind romance with a bitter ironic twist.

8

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

The groom was a convicted killer serving life in prison

9

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

until he convinced his new wife to help him escape.

10

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

Now her children would like to find her

11

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

and the police say she is free to come home

12

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

without fear of punishment.

13

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

Party time in Tijuana,

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

but for this college student the revelry proved fatal.

15

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

Was Jason Artis hit by a car

16

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

or did he anger the Tijuana police?

17

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

Carl McWilliams is friendly and personal.

18

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

He is also a fugitive on the run from statutory rape charges.

19

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

Police need your help.

20

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

Experience a world of mystery, heartbreak and intrigue.

21

00:01:04,000 --> 00:01:08,000

Join me for Unsolved Mysteries.

22

00:01:24,000 --> 00:01:29,000

Unsolved Mysteries

23

00:01:29,000 --> 00:01:34,000

Unsolved Mysteries

24

00:01:34,000 --> 00:01:39,000

Unsolved Mysteries

25

00:01:39,000 --> 00:01:44,000

Unsolved Mysteries

26

00:01:44,000 --> 00:01:49,000

Unsolved Mysteries

27

00:01:49,000 --> 00:01:53,000

Unolved Mysteries

28

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

A cold winter night in a small town near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,

29

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

the broken body of Michelle Witherall

30

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

lay sprawled on the asphalt outside her apartment.

31

00:02:06,000 --> 00:02:10,000

Michelle was just 24 years old, a newlywed.

32

00:02:10,000 --> 00:02:12,000

She and her husband Jeremy have been living in Pittsburgh

33

00:02:12,000 --> 00:02:14,000

since their marriage three months earlier.

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00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:16,000

They had moved from their home in Denver

35

00:02:16,000 --> 00:02:18,000

expecting to build a new life.

36

00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:21,000

Now Michelle was in critical condition,

37

00:02:21,000 --> 00:02:24,000

bleeding heavily from severe head injuries.

38

00:02:24,000 --> 00:02:26,000

Tell me what happened up there.

39

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

I don't know what happened to me.

40

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

Jeremy Witherall told police Michelle had fallen

41

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

from their balcony three flights up.

42

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

He said he had been playing solitaire

43

00:02:36,000 --> 00:02:38,000

in the living room of their apartment.

44

00:02:38,000 --> 00:02:41,000

When he heard a sound, he stepped outside,

45

00:02:41,000 --> 00:02:43,000

looked over the railing,

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

and saw his wife's body on the ground below.

47

00:02:47,000 --> 00:02:50,000

Paramedics rushed Michelle to the trauma unit

48

00:02:50,000 --> 00:02:52,000

at a Pittsburgh hospital.

49

00:02:52,000 --> 00:02:57,000

It was December 20, 1992, just five days before Christmas.

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

Within hours, Michelle's parents claimed

51

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

Jeremy's mother called them with the awful news

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

and a second version of his story.

53

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

She told me that there had been a terrible accident

54

00:03:11,000 --> 00:03:15,000

and that Michelle had been in a very bad condition.

55

00:03:15,000 --> 00:03:19,000

Michelle had been out on the balcony at their apartment

56

00:03:19,000 --> 00:03:22,000

and that she had been putting up Christmas lights

57

00:03:22,000 --> 00:03:27,000

and that the balcony had collapsed, causing her to fall.

58

00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:33,000

Michelle and Jeremy Witherall had planned

59

00:03:33,000 --> 00:03:36,000

to go home to Denver for the holidays.

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00:03:36,000 --> 00:03:38,000

We're looking for Michelle Witherall.

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00:03:38,000 --> 00:03:41,000

Instead, Michelle's family flew to Pittsburgh

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00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:43,000

on the first flight out.

63

00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:45,000

The left side of Michelle's head was fractured

64

00:03:45,000 --> 00:03:47,000

and she was in a coma.

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00:03:47,000 --> 00:03:50,000

In addition, her jaw was broken,

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

but strangely, her nose and teeth were unharmed

67

00:03:53,000 --> 00:03:55,000

by the three-story fall.

68

00:03:55,000 --> 00:03:57,000

I think stronger.

69

00:03:57,000 --> 00:03:59,000

At that very moment, I think questions were beginning

70

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

to come into our thoughts.

71

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

How did she get her eye busted open

72

00:04:05,000 --> 00:04:09,000

and her jaw broken with no damage in between?

73

00:04:09,000 --> 00:04:11,000

How do you want her to sit down?

74

00:04:11,000 --> 00:04:14,000

Those who believe Michelle knew they were with her

75

00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:17,000

and tried her best to let them know.

76

00:04:20,000 --> 00:04:23,000

She was squeezing my hand.

77

00:04:23,000 --> 00:04:27,000

We really think that her squeezing Ebb's hand,

78

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

she was telling us goodbye.

79

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

And then the doctor walked in from the back and said that,

80

00:04:37,000 --> 00:04:39,000

I'm sorry, but you're going to have to leave.

81

00:04:39,000 --> 00:04:42,000

Michelle has died.

82

00:04:42,000 --> 00:04:45,000

It would seem only two people in the world

83

00:04:45,000 --> 00:04:47,000

knew how Michelle had been injured.

84

00:04:47,000 --> 00:04:50,000

One of them was now gone.

85

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

Michelle's parents claim that moments later,

86

00:04:53,000 --> 00:04:56,000

Jeremy Witherall came up with another version,

87

00:04:56,000 --> 00:04:59,000

a third version of how she fell.

88

00:04:59,000 --> 00:05:01,000

What happened, Jeremy?

89

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

We just got home from dinner

90

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

and I was playing a game of Solitaire.

91

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

And Michelle and I, we weren't even talking.

92

00:05:10,000 --> 00:05:13,000

And then she went out to the balcony for something

93

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

and when I looked up, there she was, she was hanging.

94

00:05:17,000 --> 00:05:20,000

And I should have got her.

95

00:05:20,000 --> 00:05:22,000

She was just barely hanging there.

96

00:05:22,000 --> 00:05:24,000

I could have got her.

97

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

Jeremy Witherall declined to be interviewed.

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00:05:27,000 --> 00:05:31,000

However, he claims he gave just one version of Michelle's fall,

99

00:05:31,000 --> 00:05:34,000

that he only discovered she had fallen

100

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

when he saw her body on the ground below.

101

00:05:37,000 --> 00:05:40,000

The melamas still insist they were given

102

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

three different stories.

103

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

Three stories or one, who is right?

104

00:05:46,000 --> 00:05:48,000

According to detectives,

105

00:05:48,000 --> 00:05:51,000

the Witheralls were having trouble in their marriage.

106

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

They say Jeremy admitted arguing with Michelle that evening

107

00:05:54,000 --> 00:05:56,000

while driving back from a restaurant,

108

00:05:56,000 --> 00:05:59,000

an argument that continued at home.

109

00:05:59,000 --> 00:06:01,000

What do you mean? I don't have to listen to you.

110

00:06:01,000 --> 00:06:04,000

Neighbors say Michelle and Jeremy have been fighting frequently.

111

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

Fight so loud, one neighbor complained repeatedly

112

00:06:07,000 --> 00:06:10,000

to the building manager.

113

00:06:10,000 --> 00:06:12,000

Violence is what she called it,

114

00:06:12,000 --> 00:06:15,000

physically throwing each other around the apartment.

115

00:06:15,000 --> 00:06:20,000

And somewhere in the area of one to three weeks before Michelle's death,

116

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

she came into my office and said,

117

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

in no uncertain terms, she said,

118

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

someone's going to get killed up there.

119

00:06:27,000 --> 00:06:29,000

And she was very frightened, she was scared.

120

00:06:30,000 --> 00:06:33,000

The melamas became more and more suspicious.

121

00:06:33,000 --> 00:06:36,000

They began questioning the police investigation.

122

00:06:36,000 --> 00:06:38,000

That's the whole story.

123

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

When the detectives would start out by saying,

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

well, Jeremy says, our thought was,

125

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

well, you guys are homicide detectives.

126

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

You were called into this evidently for a reason.

127

00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:52,000

Now, if all you're telling us is what Jeremy says,

128

00:06:52,000 --> 00:06:55,000

what's the point?

129

00:06:55,000 --> 00:06:59,000

If this man is a suspect in a homicide,

130

00:06:59,000 --> 00:07:04,000

and by his own admission, he said he was the only one there,

131

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

then why would you take his word?

132

00:07:09,000 --> 00:07:13,000

The melamas found troubling inconsistencies in Jeremy's account.

133

00:07:13,000 --> 00:07:16,000

One, Michelle's wrists were broken,

134

00:07:16,000 --> 00:07:19,000

but her palms were completely unscratched.

135

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

If she fractured her wrist trying to break her fall,

136

00:07:22,000 --> 00:07:24,000

her palms should have been cut.

137

00:07:24,000 --> 00:07:27,000

Two, one of Michelle's shoes was discovered

138

00:07:27,000 --> 00:07:32,000

26 feet from her body, the other shoe was never found.

139

00:07:32,000 --> 00:07:36,000

And finally, Jeremy Witheral took the time

140

00:07:36,000 --> 00:07:39,000

to double lock his apartment before allegedly racing

141

00:07:39,000 --> 00:07:41,000

to his wife's side.

142

00:07:41,000 --> 00:07:48,000

Unscayed palms, a missing shoe, a locked door,

143

00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:51,000

the melamas wondered why.

144

00:07:52,000 --> 00:07:56,000

According to the police, Jeremy Witheral took not one,

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00:07:56,000 --> 00:07:58,000

but two polygraph tests.

146

00:07:58,000 --> 00:08:00,000

They say he passed both.

147

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

The Allegheny County Coroner officially labeled

148

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

the cause of Michelle's death as undetermined,

149

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

homicide, accident, or suicide.

150

00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:13,000

The melamas insist it couldn't have been suicide.

151

00:08:13,000 --> 00:08:17,000

Michelle had a high regard for life.

152

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

Michelle was a happy person.

153

00:08:19,000 --> 00:08:22,000

Michelle had so many goals in life,

154

00:08:22,000 --> 00:08:24,000

and when she had made the statement to me

155

00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:27,000

about separating from Jeremy,

156

00:08:27,000 --> 00:08:31,000

she had dealt with the situations in her marriage

157

00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:33,000

that she was not pleased with.

158

00:08:33,000 --> 00:08:36,000

And she had also made her plan

159

00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:39,000

on how to remedy those situations,

160

00:08:39,000 --> 00:08:41,000

and that was to separate and ask

161

00:08:41,000 --> 00:08:44,000

that Jeremy get professional help.

162

00:08:44,000 --> 00:08:48,000

The melamas also believed the accident theory was unlikely.

163

00:08:48,000 --> 00:08:51,000

The balcony was 48 inches,

164

00:08:51,000 --> 00:08:53,000

chest high for Michelle.

165

00:08:53,000 --> 00:08:58,000

The wall was too high for anybody to lose their balance.

166

00:08:58,000 --> 00:09:01,000

It wasn't a poorly constructed balcony.

167

00:09:01,000 --> 00:09:03,000

It was very adequate in height

168

00:09:03,000 --> 00:09:06,000

to prevent something like that from happening.

169

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

Michelle's parents sent her medical records

170

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

to three board-certified forensic pathologists.

171

00:09:12,000 --> 00:09:16,000

Their unanimous verdict, Michelle was murdered,

172

00:09:16,000 --> 00:09:19,000

but possibly not by a fall.

173

00:09:19,000 --> 00:09:22,000

According to forensic experts,

174

00:09:22,000 --> 00:09:24,000

if Michelle had fallen three stories,

175

00:09:24,000 --> 00:09:28,000

she should have had injuries on both sides of her brain.

176

00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:31,000

The head injuries that Michelle,

177

00:09:31,000 --> 00:09:35,000

whether all demonstrated at autopsy, were quite extensive,

178

00:09:35,000 --> 00:09:38,000

but these were all left-sided.

179

00:09:38,000 --> 00:09:41,000

These injuries are what we call COO,

180

00:09:41,000 --> 00:09:45,000

direct impact injuries, as from a blow.

181

00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:50,000

Wex says Michelle's other injuries also indicated an assault.

182

00:09:50,000 --> 00:09:53,000

In addition, what wasn't harmed is significant.

183

00:09:53,000 --> 00:09:55,000

Her pelvis was unbroken,

184

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

and her internal organs were undamaged.

185

00:09:58,000 --> 00:10:01,000

That is extremely inconsistent,

186

00:10:01,000 --> 00:10:06,000

very atypical of the kinds of injuries

187

00:10:06,000 --> 00:10:09,000

that we would find in a fall.

188

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

Another red flag.

189

00:10:12,000 --> 00:10:15,000

Michelle's body was allegedly found

190

00:10:15,000 --> 00:10:18,000

more than nine feet from the building.

191

00:10:18,000 --> 00:10:22,000

If I had to pick one single physical factor in this case

192

00:10:22,000 --> 00:10:25,000

that leads me to the conclusion

193

00:10:25,000 --> 00:10:28,000

that it was not an accidental fall or a suicidal fall,

194

00:10:28,000 --> 00:10:33,000

it would be that somebody can dive in a suicidal attempt

195

00:10:33,000 --> 00:10:36,000

and leap several feet away from the building,

196

00:10:36,000 --> 00:10:40,000

or you can be thrown and wind up several feet from the building.

197

00:10:40,000 --> 00:10:44,000

You do not accidentally fall and wind up nine feet.

198

00:10:44,000 --> 00:10:46,000

The body doesn't bounce.

199

00:10:46,000 --> 00:10:50,000

Finally, the Allegheny County Coroner's office

200

00:10:50,000 --> 00:10:53,000

opened the first official inquiry into the case.

201

00:10:54,000 --> 00:10:57,000

The verdict was quick and clear.

202

00:10:58,000 --> 00:11:03,000

We will amend the original from undetermined to homicidal.

203

00:11:04,000 --> 00:11:08,000

We're thankful for the outcome of the hearing today.

204

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

The coroner's report didn't specify how Michelle died,

205

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

but her parents feel certain they know.

206

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

Don't you raise your voice for me!

207

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

Don't you talk to me like that! If you keep that, I'm leaving you!

208

00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:24,000

I think that night she made the mistake of telling Jeremy

209

00:11:24,000 --> 00:11:26,000

she was going to leave him.

210

00:11:26,000 --> 00:11:29,000

We think she ran from the apartment,

211

00:11:29,000 --> 00:11:31,000

fleeing for her life at that point,

212

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

and the assault, you know,

213

00:11:34,000 --> 00:11:38,000

she was then found and assaulted outside of the apartment.

214

00:11:40,000 --> 00:11:44,000

The Melamas believe the balcony story was a quickly improvised cover-up,

215

00:11:44,000 --> 00:11:48,000

a safe way for Jeremy Witherell to explain Michelle's injuries.

216

00:11:49,000 --> 00:11:53,000

While no one on Jeremy's side was willing to be interviewed,

217

00:11:53,000 --> 00:11:56,000

they emphasized that despite the Melamas' suspicions,

218

00:11:56,000 --> 00:12:00,000

Jeremy did pass a police polygraph twice.

219

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

We told Jeremy from the day Michelle died that we want to find out

220

00:12:05,000 --> 00:12:08,000

and we plan to find out everything there is to find out

221

00:12:08,000 --> 00:12:10,000

about what happened to Michelle,

222

00:12:10,000 --> 00:12:14,000

and we will pursue justice in this case,

223

00:12:14,000 --> 00:12:17,000

no matter where it takes us.

224

00:12:30,000 --> 00:12:34,000

Next, he was a convicted murderer.

225

00:12:34,000 --> 00:12:36,000

She was a lonely widow.

226

00:12:36,000 --> 00:12:39,000

Together they staged a daring prison break.

227

00:12:54,000 --> 00:12:57,000

All right, make a wish and blow those candles out.

228

00:13:01,000 --> 00:13:05,000

Sherri Nickerson's 15th birthday was hardly a joyous event.

229

00:13:05,000 --> 00:13:07,000

She was living with her uncle's family,

230

00:13:07,000 --> 00:13:09,000

and though they did their best,

231

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

it was impossible to pretend anyone was happy.

232

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

I was numb. I didn't feel anything.

233

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

I wasn't happy. It was the worst birthday of my life.

234

00:13:19,000 --> 00:13:21,000

Small wonder.

235

00:13:21,000 --> 00:13:24,000

Sherri's party included a number of uninvited guests.

236

00:13:24,000 --> 00:13:28,000

Oklahoma State Troopers stationed inside the house and out.

237

00:13:28,000 --> 00:13:32,000

They were there because of a crime involving Sherri's mother,

238

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

a crime committed nine days earlier.

239

00:13:35,000 --> 00:13:37,000

Let's go, let's go!

240

00:13:37,000 --> 00:13:41,000

Two lifers had escaped from a nearby Oklahoma prison.

241

00:13:41,000 --> 00:13:44,000

Sherri's mother, Donna Moses Brown,

242

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

had driven the getaway car.

243

00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:51,000

Sherri's mom has been on the run ever since.

244

00:13:51,000 --> 00:13:53,000

However, she has never been charged with any crime

245

00:13:53,000 --> 00:13:57,000

because both her family and the authorities view her as a victim.

246

00:13:57,000 --> 00:14:01,000

A lonely widow, so desperate for love that she could be manipulated

247

00:14:01,000 --> 00:14:05,000

by a convicted killer named Michael Wayne Brown.

248

00:14:05,000 --> 00:14:07,000

Hi. Hi.

249

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

I'm Michael.

250

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

I know. I'm Donna.

251

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

Ironically, it was a good D that introduced Donna to Brown's world.

252

00:14:15,000 --> 00:14:18,000

Her church group started writing letters to convicts

253

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

to help them find spiritual comfort.

254

00:14:20,000 --> 00:14:23,000

But these pen pals quickly became more.

255

00:14:23,000 --> 00:14:25,000

You know, I don't know if I could make it in this place

256

00:14:25,000 --> 00:14:27,000

but it wasn't for those letters that I get from you.

257

00:14:27,000 --> 00:14:29,000

Well, you know, whatever we can do to help.

258

00:14:29,000 --> 00:14:32,000

No, you do. I mean, you do so much.

259

00:14:32,000 --> 00:14:34,000

You're always so supportive.

260

00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:38,000

Oh, yeah. You know, you write real sweet letters, too.

261

00:14:38,000 --> 00:14:42,000

I cannot get over how beautiful you are.

262

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

Oh, she was lonely.

263

00:14:44,000 --> 00:14:47,000

She hadn't had anybody for a very long time.

264

00:14:47,000 --> 00:14:49,000

And she needed that companionship, you know,

265

00:14:49,000 --> 00:14:52,000

someone, you know, to talk to her about things

266

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

and show her love and affection.

267

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

And that's what she got from him.

268

00:14:56,000 --> 00:14:59,000

How you doing?

269

00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:02,000

I'm okay. It's hard.

270

00:15:02,000 --> 00:15:04,000

He spoke with her.

271

00:15:04,000 --> 00:15:07,000

And I think that that's pretty much all that mattered.

272

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

He wrote her.

273

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

It was somebody new in her life.

274

00:15:11,000 --> 00:15:16,000

And I think that it probably could have been anybody to him.

275

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

But she was the victim that fell into the line of fire, I guess.

276

00:15:21,000 --> 00:15:23,000

Look what I brought you.

277

00:15:23,000 --> 00:15:26,000

Oh, wow. These are great.

278

00:15:26,000 --> 00:15:29,000

Michael and Brown, like Law of the Minute,

279

00:15:29,000 --> 00:15:31,000

are incarcerated for long periods of time.

280

00:15:31,000 --> 00:15:35,000

They really don't have any concern for other people's rights or lives.

281

00:15:35,000 --> 00:15:40,000

They've got all the time in the world to scam, to scheme on people.

282

00:15:40,000 --> 00:15:42,000

And they get quite good at it.

283

00:15:42,000 --> 00:15:45,000

They can sell you a chainsaw in the desert.

284

00:15:45,000 --> 00:15:49,000

She wrote them every day. She talked to them on the phone every day.

285

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

It kind of started and went full force.

286

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

There was no slowing down.

287

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

I think Donna Brown was under the misconception that Michael Wayne Brown

288

00:15:58,000 --> 00:16:01,000

was just a misunderstood young man

289

00:16:01,000 --> 00:16:05,000

who, through unfortunate circumstances, was doing time.

290

00:16:05,000 --> 00:16:09,000

But Michael Wayne Brown was hardly misunderstood.

291

00:16:09,000 --> 00:16:11,000

Everyone but Donna knew what he was.

292

00:16:11,000 --> 00:16:14,000

And what he was was a cold-blooded killer.

293

00:16:14,000 --> 00:16:19,000

Nine years earlier, when Brown was only 18,

294

00:16:19,000 --> 00:16:22,000

he and another teenager, Dennis Woodward,

295

00:16:22,000 --> 00:16:26,000

burglarized an insurance office in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

296

00:16:26,000 --> 00:16:38,000

What are you doing here? Huh? What are you doing here? Shut up!

297

00:16:38,000 --> 00:16:41,000

Insurance investigator Richard Sullivan

298

00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:45,000

picked the wrong time to stop by for a file.

299

00:16:45,000 --> 00:16:50,000

Turn around. Turn around and face the wall.

300

00:16:50,000 --> 00:16:53,000

Give me the gun. Turn around!

301

00:16:57,000 --> 00:17:01,000

Brown was very, very hyper after that offense.

302

00:17:01,000 --> 00:17:04,000

He said, I killed him. I killed him, almost bragging about it.

303

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

He looks over at Woodward and he said,

304

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

if I had one more bullet, I would have shot his eyes out.

305

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

Thereafter, they went off to have breakfast at a local restaurant.

306

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

While Brown was eating his bacon and eggs,

307

00:17:19,000 --> 00:17:23,000

41-year-old Richard Sullivan bled to death on his office floor.

308

00:17:23,000 --> 00:17:26,000

He left behind a wife and a young daughter.

309

00:17:26,000 --> 00:17:31,000

Michael Wayne Brown was put on death row for murdering Richard Sullivan.

310

00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:35,000

However, that sentence was later commuted to life without parole.

311

00:17:35,000 --> 00:17:38,000

By the time Brown met Donna Moses in 1984,

312

00:17:38,000 --> 00:17:42,000

he had spent nine years in prison.

313

00:17:42,000 --> 00:17:45,000

Meanwhile, Donna had served a different kind of time.

314

00:17:45,000 --> 00:17:48,000

She had been married twice and widowed twice.

315

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

Both husbands had been murdered.

316

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

Raising two children on her own was a constant struggle.

317

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

Perhaps it was just another ironic twist in Donna's hard luck life

318

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

that she now found herself in love with a murderer ten years her junior.

319

00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:07,000

It was consuming her too much.

320

00:18:07,000 --> 00:18:10,000

You know, she didn't have time for anything else but him.

321

00:18:10,000 --> 00:18:13,000

I mean, she could visit him every weekend,

322

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

and it was like the whole week was preparing to see him.

323

00:18:17,000 --> 00:18:19,000

This is your copy?

324

00:18:19,000 --> 00:18:22,000

There she is.

325

00:18:22,000 --> 00:18:24,000

Hi.

326

00:18:24,000 --> 00:18:26,000

Less than three months after Brown first met Donna,

327

00:18:26,000 --> 00:18:29,000

he performed a brief transformation

328

00:18:29,000 --> 00:18:32,000

from shackled prisoner to eager bridegroom.

329

00:18:32,000 --> 00:18:34,000

Yes, sir.

330

00:18:34,000 --> 00:18:37,000

Do you, Michael Wayne Brown, take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife?

331

00:18:37,000 --> 00:18:40,000

To love her and to cherish her? As long as you both might live?

332

00:18:40,000 --> 00:18:42,000

I do.

333

00:18:42,000 --> 00:18:44,000

Do you, Donna Moses, take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband

334

00:18:44,000 --> 00:18:46,000

to love and to cherish him from this day forward?

335

00:18:46,000 --> 00:18:48,000

As long as you both shall live?

336

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

I do.

337

00:18:53,000 --> 00:18:55,000

I love you.

338

00:18:55,000 --> 00:18:57,000

I love you.

339

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

Moments after the ceremony, the honeymoon was over.

340

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

Brown, back in shackles and prison orange, was returned to his cell.

341

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:11,000

Donna sent her children to stay with relatives and followed Brown

342

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

as he was transferred from prison to prison,

343

00:19:13,000 --> 00:19:16,000

sometimes living out of her car.

344

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

Between visiting days, she wrote letters.

345

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

Michael Wayne Brown became Donna's whole world.

346

00:19:23,000 --> 00:19:26,000

In November of 1984, Brown was transferred to a minimum security prison.

347

00:19:26,000 --> 00:19:28,000

It was a perfect opportunity,

348

00:19:28,000 --> 00:19:30,000

and Brown wasted little time.

349

00:19:30,000 --> 00:19:32,000

Less than three weeks later,

350

00:19:32,000 --> 00:19:34,000

Michael Wayne Brown and another inmate

351

00:19:34,000 --> 00:19:36,000

jumped a four-foot fence and raced for freedom.

352

00:19:36,000 --> 00:19:38,000

By the time guards discovered them missing, it was too late.

353

00:19:38,000 --> 00:19:40,000

Let's go, let's go!

354

00:19:40,000 --> 00:19:43,000

Police have remained a stepper to behind Brown ever since.

355

00:19:43,000 --> 00:19:46,000

A few days after the escape, they tracked him to Paris, Texas,

356

00:19:46,000 --> 00:19:48,000

but missed him by a matter of minutes.

357

00:19:48,000 --> 00:19:52,000

Since then, Brown has known to have lived in Kentucky, New Jersey,

358

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

Texas and Virginia.

359

00:19:57,000 --> 00:20:00,000

In the morning, the police found a man in a car.

360

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

He was a man who had been in the car for three weeks.

361

00:20:03,000 --> 00:20:05,000

He was in a car for three weeks.

362

00:20:05,000 --> 00:20:07,000

He was in a car for three weeks.

363

00:20:07,000 --> 00:20:09,000

He was in Virginia.

364

00:20:12,000 --> 00:20:15,000

For three years, Donna's family had no word from her.

365

00:20:15,000 --> 00:20:17,000

No idea if she was alive or dead.

366

00:20:17,000 --> 00:20:22,000

Finally in 1987, Donna Brown made an unexpected call to her daughter.

367

00:20:24,000 --> 00:20:25,000

Hello.

368

00:20:25,000 --> 00:20:26,000

Hi, Sherry.

369

00:20:26,000 --> 00:20:27,000

Yeah.

370

00:20:27,000 --> 00:20:28,000

Hi, it's me, Mom.

371

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

Mom?

372

00:20:29,000 --> 00:20:31,000

Are you okay?

373

00:20:31,000 --> 00:20:33,000

Yeah, I'm okay.

374

00:20:33,000 --> 00:20:35,000

I'm out of Oklahoma, but I want to come home.

375

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

I broke up, but I had to go to the hospital.

376

00:20:37,000 --> 00:20:39,000

You know, it was just kind of a quick thing, and that's all.

377

00:20:39,000 --> 00:20:41,000

She told me she loved me, and that was it.

378

00:20:43,000 --> 00:20:47,000

Though Donna had said she wanted to come home, she never did.

379

00:20:47,000 --> 00:20:49,000

Four years went by.

380

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

Donna called again, asking if she had grandchildren.

381

00:20:52,000 --> 00:20:54,000

At that time, she didn't.

382

00:20:54,000 --> 00:20:57,000

Thank you, Mommy.

383

00:20:57,000 --> 00:20:58,000

Thank you, Mommy.

384

00:20:58,000 --> 00:21:01,000

Since then, however, Donna's children, Sherry and David,

385

00:21:01,000 --> 00:21:03,000

have each had a son.

386

00:21:03,000 --> 00:21:06,000

Both would like nothing more than to introduce the boys

387

00:21:06,000 --> 00:21:09,000

to their long-lost grandmother.

388

00:21:09,000 --> 00:21:12,000

I'm afraid that she's afraid that we don't want her back.

389

00:21:16,000 --> 00:21:20,000

I'm afraid that my mom feels like that she did something really bad,

390

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

and that she can't face us anymore.

391

00:21:23,000 --> 00:21:25,000

How are we going to act to her?

392

00:21:25,000 --> 00:21:29,000

And what I say to her is, it's okay.

393

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

There is nothing to stop Donna Brown from rejoining her family,

394

00:21:32,000 --> 00:21:34,000

except Donna Brown.

395

00:21:34,000 --> 00:21:36,000

She can come home at any time.

396

00:21:36,000 --> 00:21:41,000

There's no arrest warrant either issued by the state of Oklahoma

397

00:21:41,000 --> 00:21:44,000

or by the federal government for her.

398

00:21:44,000 --> 00:21:48,000

She's not wanted on any charges, and in fact, we would encourage her.

399

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

If she's no longer with Brown, or if, in fact, she is with Brown,

400

00:21:51,000 --> 00:21:54,000

to immediately contact the authorities.

401

00:22:30,000 --> 00:22:34,000

Coming up, a college student clashed with Tijuana police.

402

00:22:34,000 --> 00:22:37,000

His family believes the police retaliated.

403

00:22:42,000 --> 00:22:44,000

Tijuana.

404

00:22:44,000 --> 00:22:47,000

It's been one of Mexico's most popular border towns for decades,

405

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

especially for college students.

406

00:22:49,000 --> 00:22:52,000

Hundreds hit nightclubs every weekend,

407

00:22:52,000 --> 00:22:54,000

hunting big fun at bargain rates.

408

00:22:54,000 --> 00:22:57,000

But a good time doesn't always come cheap.

409

00:22:57,000 --> 00:23:00,000

It can cost you your life.

410

00:23:02,000 --> 00:23:04,000

1.30 a.m., Tijuana time.

411

00:23:04,000 --> 00:23:07,000

Stephen Tomlas was looking for his brother Jason

412

00:23:07,000 --> 00:23:10,000

in the crowds parting on Avenida Revolution.

413

00:23:10,000 --> 00:23:14,000

They'd become separated while heading back to their car.

414

00:23:15,000 --> 00:23:17,000

I looked to the right of me.

415

00:23:17,000 --> 00:23:19,000

I turned around and my brother wasn't there.

416

00:23:19,000 --> 00:23:21,000

I mean, it was like that.

417

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

An hour and a half after Jason disappeared,

418

00:23:26,000 --> 00:23:30,000

a Tijuana police officer discovered his battered body

419

00:23:30,000 --> 00:23:32,000

in the road.

420

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

Jason was drinking, and he was loud and obnoxious,

421

00:23:37,000 --> 00:23:40,000

and maybe out of control.

422

00:23:40,000 --> 00:23:45,000

That night, I believe that Jason was murdered

423

00:23:45,000 --> 00:23:48,000

by the Tijuana police.

424

00:23:48,000 --> 00:23:50,000

20-year-old Jason Otters had moved from Virginia

425

00:23:50,000 --> 00:23:53,000

to Los Angeles one year earlier to go to college.

426

00:23:53,000 --> 00:23:55,000

A week before his death, he brought his younger brother

427

00:23:55,000 --> 00:23:57,000

Stephen out for a visit.

428

00:23:57,000 --> 00:24:01,000

They spent a week touring the top tourist spots in Los Angeles.

429

00:24:01,000 --> 00:24:04,000

Then Jason decided he couldn't let Stephen go back home

430

00:24:04,000 --> 00:24:07,000

without showing him a good time south of the border.

431

00:24:10,000 --> 00:24:13,000

Saturday night, August 1, 1998,

432

00:24:13,000 --> 00:24:16,000

Tijuana's main drag, Avenida Revolution,

433

00:24:16,000 --> 00:24:18,000

was packed with party people.

434

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

The feel of fiesta was part of the draw,

435

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

but for many, the loose drinking laws

436

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

were the biggest attraction.

437

00:24:27,000 --> 00:24:31,000

That night, Jason, Steve, and their friend Michael Justin

438

00:24:31,000 --> 00:24:33,000

started bar hopping about nine,

439

00:24:33,000 --> 00:24:36,000

mostly hitting places that offered all you could drink

440

00:24:36,000 --> 00:24:38,000

for less than \$5.

441

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

Jason was usually friendly and easygoing,

442

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

but he had a reputation as a rowdy drinker.

443

00:24:43,000 --> 00:24:45,000

By the time he ran into a tequila man

444

00:24:45,000 --> 00:24:47,000

where he was already a little drunk,

445

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

he didn't realize a tequila cost extra, \$6 a shot.

446

00:24:55,000 --> 00:24:57,000

Now you owe me \$12.

447

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

\$12? You please!

448

00:24:59,000 --> 00:25:01,000

Jason didn't want to give up the money,

449

00:25:01,000 --> 00:25:03,000

so I had to say, Jason, give him the money.

450

00:25:03,000 --> 00:25:05,000

Just give him the money and let's get out of here.

451

00:25:05,000 --> 00:25:07,000

You know what I'm saying? This ain't the spot we need to be at.

452

00:25:10,000 --> 00:25:13,000

Jason and Stephen left Michael at the bar

453

00:25:13,000 --> 00:25:15,000

and went back out on the strip.

454

00:25:15,000 --> 00:25:18,000

My strategy was to hurry up and find the car

455

00:25:18,000 --> 00:25:20,000

so we can go sit down. We're kind of drunk,

456

00:25:20,000 --> 00:25:22,000

you know what I'm saying? Walk around Tijuana.

457

00:25:24,000 --> 00:25:26,000

Walkin' down the street.

458

00:25:26,000 --> 00:25:28,000

And that's when my brother accidentally bumped into a female officer.

459

00:25:33,000 --> 00:25:37,000

According to Stephen, another Tijuana police officer

460

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

had tried to shake them down earlier that evening,

461

00:25:39,000 --> 00:25:41,000

demanding cash or jewelry.

462

00:25:41,000 --> 00:25:43,000

Jason was still angry.

463

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

We're American citizens. We're just trying to get home.

464

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

Tell the wind got the money!

465

00:25:47,000 --> 00:25:49,000

We have no money, okay? I swear.

466

00:25:49,000 --> 00:25:51,000

We have no money on it.

467

00:25:51,000 --> 00:25:54,000

I was kind of frustrated at my brother

468

00:25:54,000 --> 00:25:56,000

for the simple fact of being that drunk.

469

00:25:56,000 --> 00:25:59,000

My feelings were just, I'm ready to go home.

470

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

I'm ready to get back to Van Nuys.

471

00:26:01,000 --> 00:26:03,000

Jason, man, you acting crazy, man. This ain't our country.

472

00:26:03,000 --> 00:26:05,000

You almost just got out of here.

473

00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:07,000

I told him, walk behind me.

474

00:26:07,000 --> 00:26:09,000

Come on, let's hurry up and try to find his car.

475

00:26:09,000 --> 00:26:11,000

Who likes to go check for the car? So just keep moving, alright?

476

00:26:11,000 --> 00:26:13,000

Yeah, alright. I'll keep moving, okay?

477

00:26:13,000 --> 00:26:15,000

You just go on and find the car.

478

00:26:15,000 --> 00:26:18,000

He's like three or four yards behind me at first.

479

00:26:18,000 --> 00:26:21,000

That's when I walked up some more to another block.

480

00:26:21,000 --> 00:26:24,000

So I walked up, I looked to the right,

481

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

and I looked behind me and my brother wasn't there.

482

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

My first reaction was probably that he's sitting down on a curb somewhere,

483

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

or sitting up against a building or anything like that,

484

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

you know what I'm saying? Because we were kind of intoxicated.

485

00:26:37,000 --> 00:26:40,000

Soon after Steven lost sight of Jason,

486

00:26:40,000 --> 00:26:44,000

Michael Justin claims he spotted him in the back of a police car.

487

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

I looked and I said,

488

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

what is he doing in the back of a police car?

489

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

There were the last people I saw Jason with.

490

00:26:51,000 --> 00:26:55,000

I saw Jason with my own eyes in the back of a police car,

491

00:26:55,000 --> 00:26:57,000

like I know my hand.

492

00:26:59,000 --> 00:27:02,000

Michael and Steven never saw Jason again.

493

00:27:02,000 --> 00:27:04,000

Two days later, the American consulate

494

00:27:04,000 --> 00:27:06,000

said word that Jason was dead.

495

00:27:06,000 --> 00:27:08,000

His aunt, Tina Martin Smith,

496

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

went to Tijuana to identify the body.

497

00:27:12,000 --> 00:27:15,000

I remember thinking this is not Jason there.

498

00:27:15,000 --> 00:27:18,000

Jason is somewhere in a jail in Tijuana,

499

00:27:18,000 --> 00:27:21,000

and someone has robbed him,

500

00:27:21,000 --> 00:27:23,000

and they've taken his ID,

501

00:27:23,000 --> 00:27:26,000

and this person is in the morgue.

502

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

And I looked down, and it was Jason.

503

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

It was Jason.

504

00:27:36,000 --> 00:27:39,000

Tijuana authorities told Jason's family

505

00:27:39,000 --> 00:27:43,000

he must have gotten lost trying to make his way back to the border.

506

00:27:50,000 --> 00:27:54,000

The authorities called it a tragic hit and run accident,

507

00:27:54,000 --> 00:27:57,000

but there were a number of unanswered questions.

508

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

I believe that it had something to do with the police.

509

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

I feel that for a fact.

510

00:28:02,000 --> 00:28:05,000

After Michael told me that he's seen my brother

511

00:28:05,000 --> 00:28:07,000

in the back of a police car,

512

00:28:07,000 --> 00:28:10,000

he said, well, we'll see what happens.

513

00:28:10,000 --> 00:28:13,000

Tijuana police deny the allegation.

514

00:28:13,000 --> 00:28:16,000

They say they never had Jason Arduis in custody.

515

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

We checked, a double check,

516

00:28:21,000 --> 00:28:24,000

almost a whole month of August,

517

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

and there is no detention with that name.

518

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

Sometimes it happens that they miswrite the name in our computer,

519

00:28:33,000 --> 00:28:36,000

but we don't have to run it with the three names.

520

00:28:36,000 --> 00:28:38,000

We found nothing.

521

00:28:39,000 --> 00:28:42,000

Jason's family got a copy of the autopsy report

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00:28:42,000 --> 00:28:44,000

through the American Consulate,

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00:28:44,000 --> 00:28:47,000

and had it translated into English.

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00:28:47,000 --> 00:28:49,000

Nothing was adding up.

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00:28:49,000 --> 00:28:53,000

First of all, they stated that Jason was hit by a car,

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00:28:53,000 --> 00:28:56,000

and we had these conflicting things.

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00:28:57,000 --> 00:29:02,000

We had the photos of him with no injuries to his lower extremities,

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00:29:02,000 --> 00:29:07,000

with these unexplained five-inch marks

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00:29:07,000 --> 00:29:11,000

all over his body and chest area and in his face.

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00:29:13,000 --> 00:29:15,000

At the request of Unsolved Mysteries,

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00:29:15,000 --> 00:29:19,000

three forensic pathologists reviewed the autopsy report.

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00:29:20,000 --> 00:29:25,000

One said Jason's death did indeed appear to be the result of a simple hit-and-run.

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00:29:25,000 --> 00:29:30,000

Two others, however, agreed that the inconsistencies were puzzling.

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

I would be very skeptical of one of the autopsy findings

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00:29:35,000 --> 00:29:38,000

and the assertion that this was simply a hit-and-run accident.

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00:29:38,000 --> 00:29:43,000

One has to apply a high degree of skepticism to the entire autopsy, in my view.

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00:29:44,000 --> 00:29:49,000

For instance, the Tijuana Corner claimed the car had hit Jason and the chest

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00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:51,000

hard enough to rupture his heart.

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00:29:52,000 --> 00:29:57,000

In order for a blunt blow to get through the sternum and rupture the heart,

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00:29:57,000 --> 00:29:59,000

Jason would have to virtually crush the chest.

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00:29:59,000 --> 00:30:04,000

And it's quite evident from the autopsy that that chest is not badly mashed.

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00:30:04,000 --> 00:30:07,000

There are no bruises on it, there are no big hematomas.

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00:30:07,000 --> 00:30:09,000

So that becomes incredible.

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00:30:09,000 --> 00:30:12,000

The autopsy report becomes incredible.

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00:30:12,000 --> 00:30:16,000

Another point, Jason's injuries included head wounds

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00:30:16,000 --> 00:30:19,000

that might easily have been the result of a beating.

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00:30:20,000 --> 00:30:24,000

Certainly the lesions around the head and the skull, which were severe,

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

certainly consistent with the butt of a rifle or any other

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00:30:27,000 --> 00:30:33,000

sharp or even blunt object that could be used on an individual.

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

I believe that he was beaten.

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00:30:37,000 --> 00:30:41,000

And after he was beaten, perhaps in an attempt to destroy the evidence

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00:30:41,000 --> 00:30:45,000

that they perhaps ran over and or drug him.

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

And I believe that when he was run over, that he was already dead.

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00:30:52,000 --> 00:30:57,000

Though Tijuana authorities say the case is still under investigation,

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00:30:57,000 --> 00:31:01,000

they also believe Jason's family may be overreacting.

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00:31:02,000 --> 00:31:07,000

We have had responses from the families in conflict with the saying

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00:31:07,000 --> 00:31:11,000

of the autopsy and the statement from our department.

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00:31:12,000 --> 00:31:17,000

Even in some times where there are witnesses of an accident

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00:31:17,000 --> 00:31:20,000

and there is a driver responsible for the accident,

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00:31:20,000 --> 00:31:26,000

there have been some families stating that they are not accepting

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00:31:26,000 --> 00:31:28,000

that it was an accident.

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

Maybe he should have gone to jail for the night, but he didn't.

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

Nobody. Nobody deserves to die that way.

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

Next, Tara Roy was losing her battle with cancer

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00:31:42,000 --> 00:31:48,000

until she touched the headstone of a little girl who died over three decades earlier.

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00:31:54,000 --> 00:31:56,000

Lourdes France,

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00:31:58,000 --> 00:32:00,000

Fatima, Portugal

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00:32:02,000 --> 00:32:05,000

and Medjugorje in the former Yugoslavia.

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00:32:06,000 --> 00:32:09,000

Every year they come by the millions,

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00:32:09,000 --> 00:32:12,000

the dying, the disabled, the sick at heart.

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00:32:15,000 --> 00:32:18,000

They come in the hope of being miraculously healed,

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00:32:18,000 --> 00:32:20,000

in the hope of being touched by God.

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00:32:22,000 --> 00:32:26,000

Now many are making a pilgrimage to a new mecca for miracles.

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

The tomb of a young girl buried in a small graveyard

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00:32:30,000 --> 00:32:33,000

in a tiny town in rural Louisiana.

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00:32:34,000 --> 00:32:36,000

Her name was Charlene Richard.

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00:32:37,000 --> 00:32:41,000

Many people say that even from the grave, she has the power to heal.

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00:32:42,000 --> 00:32:44,000

One of those was Nicole Price.

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00:32:45,000 --> 00:32:49,000

When Nicole was two years old, she was diagnosed with a lethal cancer.

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00:32:50,000 --> 00:32:53,000

She was expected to die within months, perhaps less.

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00:32:54,000 --> 00:32:56,000

She and her family prayed for Charlene's help.

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00:32:57,000 --> 00:32:59,000

They believed that thanks to Charlene Richard,

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

Nicole lived not just a few months, but nine more years.

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00:33:04,000 --> 00:33:07,000

I feel that Charlene's intervention in Nicole's life

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00:33:08,000 --> 00:33:11,000

gave us the nine extra years we had with her.

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00:33:12,000 --> 00:33:15,000

I feel somehow God reached out through Charlene and touched Nicole.

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00:33:19,000 --> 00:33:22,000

Donald Ledger also believes in Charlene's healing power.

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00:33:23,000 --> 00:33:27,000

In 1979, Donald, a sergeant in the United States Army,

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00:33:28,000 --> 00:33:30,000

had an accidental fall that injured his feet,

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00:33:30,000 --> 00:33:32,000

shattering both heels.

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

Doctors doubted he would ever walk again.

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00:33:36,000 --> 00:33:38,000

Donald started praying to Charlene.

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00:33:39,000 --> 00:33:42,000

To everyone's surprise, he didn't just walk, he even started running.

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00:33:46,000 --> 00:33:51,000

Without the intercession of Charlene, I feel that I would not be able to walk.

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00:33:52,000 --> 00:33:54,000

I truly believe this.

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00:33:55,000 --> 00:33:57,000

I believe in miracles. I do.

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

But who was Charlene Richard?

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00:34:04,000 --> 00:34:05,000

It was 1959.

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

Charlene had leukemia and was suffering great pain.

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00:34:10,000 --> 00:34:13,000

Yet when Father Brennan found the courage to tell her she was dying,

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00:34:14,000 --> 00:34:16,000

it was she who comforted him.

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00:34:17,000 --> 00:34:21,000

Father Brennan, when I see the Blessed Mother,

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00:34:22,000 --> 00:34:24,000

I'll tell her that you said hello.

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

During her last days, Charlene thought often of others.

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00:34:31,000 --> 00:34:36,000

She believed in the Catholic idea that one person's suffering can save another.

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00:34:37,000 --> 00:34:41,000

Though she was dying, she selflessly offered her pain as redemption

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00:34:42,000 --> 00:34:44,000

for other patients in the hospital.

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00:34:45,000 --> 00:34:49,000

When the sickness came and the pain came,

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00:34:49,000 --> 00:34:54,000

she grew in crisis. She became great.

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00:34:56,000 --> 00:34:59,000

Charlene prayed for others every day for two weeks,

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

even as her own time was running out.

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00:35:03,000 --> 00:35:07,000

I will be gone tomorrow. I want to say goodbye.

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

I will be praying for you.

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00:35:12,000 --> 00:35:15,000

The next day, Charlene died.

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00:35:17,000 --> 00:35:23,000

I felt a presence in that room of the Divine.

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

There was a aura of peace in that room.

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00:35:32,000 --> 00:35:36,000

Charlene's death deeply touched her small community.

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00:35:37,000 --> 00:35:41,000

Over the years, her life was a little bit more than just a dream.

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00:35:42,000 --> 00:35:45,000

Her words spread over courage and saintly ways.

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00:35:46,000 --> 00:35:50,000

People started praying to her, asking her to intercede for them with God.

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

Now thousands gather each year for a memorial mass.

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00:35:55,000 --> 00:36:00,000

More and more say they've experienced Charlene's power to heal firsthand.

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00:36:02,000 --> 00:36:07,000

In 1994, 21-year-old Tara Roy developed colon cancer.

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00:36:08,000 --> 00:36:14,000

She was diagnosed with a Duke's Class C Stage 3 carcinoma.

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

And I've done enough research and reading about it

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00:36:19,000 --> 00:36:21,000

to where I know that you don't come back from those.

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

Tara started heavy doses of chemotherapy.

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00:36:26,000 --> 00:36:28,000

Despite its debilitating side effects,

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00:36:29,000 --> 00:36:31,000

she was determined not to give in to the disease.

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00:36:32,000 --> 00:36:34,000

I didn't want this to interfere with my life,

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00:36:34,000 --> 00:36:39,000

but I didn't want it to totally take over and dictate what I would do and how I would do it.

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00:36:40,000 --> 00:36:44,000

I just wanted to be a college student and go to class and do my job.

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00:36:46,000 --> 00:36:49,000

But Tara's determination wasn't enough to make her better.

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00:36:50,000 --> 00:36:51,000

Every day she felt worse.

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00:36:52,000 --> 00:36:55,000

She soon felt she needed more than medicine.

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00:36:57,000 --> 00:37:01,000

Tara and her parents started making frequent trips to Charlene's grave.

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00:37:01,000 --> 00:37:07,000

On their last trip, however, Tara was so sick they thought she might die within weeks.

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00:37:08,000 --> 00:37:11,000

With accumulative chemotherapy kicking in real strong,

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00:37:12,000 --> 00:37:14,000

we almost turned around and came home.

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00:37:15,000 --> 00:37:16,000

I didn't want to go. I felt terrible.

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00:37:17,000 --> 00:37:19,000

It was probably one of those days that I just didn't want to do anything.

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00:37:20,000 --> 00:37:21,000

Laying in bed was a challenge.

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00:37:22,000 --> 00:37:23,000

Deep down I wanted to go to the grave that day.

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00:37:24,000 --> 00:37:26,000

I just didn't physically feel up to it at all.

645

00:37:27,000 --> 00:37:31,000

Tara knelt by Charlene's grave as usual.

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00:37:32,000 --> 00:37:36,000

Then some impulse inspired her to do something she had never done before.

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00:37:38,000 --> 00:37:42,000

With her fingers, she traced the letters of Charlene's name.

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00:37:47,000 --> 00:37:53,000

And in about 20 seconds, she turned around and she was transformed.

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00:37:53,000 --> 00:37:57,000

And when I saw her, I was stunned.

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00:37:58,000 --> 00:38:01,000

I felt like a lot had been lifted right then.

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00:38:02,000 --> 00:38:05,000

Just like a weight off my shoulder was lifted right then.

652

00:38:06,000 --> 00:38:07,000

Pop, I'm going to be okay.

653

00:38:08,000 --> 00:38:12,000

I just felt that I definitely would be healthy again and I would beat this.

654

00:38:14,000 --> 00:38:18,000

Tara did beat it, both the cancer and the effects of the chemotherapy.

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00:38:18,000 --> 00:38:22,000

She is now back to being a healthy and happy young woman.

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00:38:23,000 --> 00:38:28,000

She finished college, went on to get a master's degree in social work and is engaged to be married.

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00:38:30,000 --> 00:38:31,000

I saw the hand of God.

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00:38:32,000 --> 00:38:34,000

I saw what I needed to see that day.

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00:38:35,000 --> 00:38:37,000

We saw a miracle, no doubt.

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

Does a spirit of Charlene Richard reach out from her grave to help those who send her their prayers?

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00:38:44,000 --> 00:38:46,000

Skeptics aren't convinced.

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00:38:47,000 --> 00:38:53,000

Yet for the thousands who visit Charlene's grave, the answer isn't unwavering, yes.

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00:38:55,000 --> 00:39:01,000

Next, help authorities catch Carl McWilliams, wanted by state college police for child molestation.

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00:39:08,000 --> 00:39:15,000

Recently, authorities in Pennsylvania contacted us with a request to profile a fugitive considered to be very manipulative and dangerous.

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00:39:16,000 --> 00:39:21,000

Please watch closely. You may be able to help put this individual behind bars.

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00:39:24,000 --> 00:39:25,000

State College, Pennsylvania.

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00:39:26,000 --> 00:39:32,000

A young mother struggling to raise her three young children alone met Carl McWilliams in the fall of 1992.

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00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:38,000

He lived only a few doors away and they were both students at Pennsylvania State University.

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00:39:40,000 --> 00:39:45,000

The two became friends and eventually Carl McWilliams became like family.

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00:39:46,000 --> 00:39:52,000

For the sake of her children, their mother, who we will call Sarah, asked that we not reveal her identity.

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00:39:54,000 --> 00:40:00,000

Carl was a very personable man. He was friendly. He got along beautifully with my children. They adored him.

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00:40:02,000 --> 00:40:07,000

He was to me like the perfect father figure for my children.

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00:40:08,000 --> 00:40:17,000

The fact was, Carl McWilliams was a convicted child molester. He had spent six years in prison for molesting his eight-year-old daughter.

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00:40:18,000 --> 00:40:24,000

One day, Sarah came home from work early to find Carl McWilliams had become her worst nightmare.

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00:40:25,000 --> 00:40:28,000

He was allegedly locked in a bedroom with her young daughter.

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00:40:29,000 --> 00:40:34,000

He opened the door and he was as pale as a ghost and he had broken out into a real cold sweat.

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00:40:35,000 --> 00:40:42,000

And even till this day, it's something so vile that I could never even put a hand on it.

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00:40:43,000 --> 00:40:47,000

I couldn't imagine someone doing that to a five-year-old child.

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00:40:50,000 --> 00:40:58,000

Sarah and her children moved away from the area and for seven years she anguished about whether to report the incident to police.

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00:40:59,000 --> 00:41:06,000

I felt that if I exposed them to the police and agencies that it would be worse for the girls.

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00:41:07,000 --> 00:41:12,000

And I felt it was better for me as their mother to try to handle it.

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00:41:14,000 --> 00:41:18,000

Finally, Sarah realized the police needed to know about McWilliams' behavior.

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00:41:20,000 --> 00:41:27,000

Authorities found Carl McWilliams living with another woman and her children just two miles from the neighborhood Sarah and her children were living in.

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00:41:28,000 --> 00:41:29,000

The woman had fled.

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

Carl McWilliams was ordered to leave the house and relocated to a nearby motel while police investigated the allegations against him.

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00:41:40,000 --> 00:41:49,000

He stayed there one night and checked out the next morning and that's the last indication of any specific location that we knew he possibly could have been.

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00:41:50,000 --> 00:41:58,000

Carl McWilliams has been charged with rape, statutory rape, aggravated indecent assault and indecent assault.

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00:41:59,000 --> 00:42:04,000

He is most likely working in the logging industry in the United States or Canada.

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00:42:05,000 --> 00:42:14,000

Carl has on occasion changed his appearance. He's changed his hairstyle. He's changed his glasses style or maybe lost a little weight, gained a little weight.

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00:42:15,000 --> 00:42:24,000

It wouldn't surprise me right now if he is somewhere living with another woman who has little girls because that's what he does.

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00:42:25,000 --> 00:42:35,000

I think it's important that he is caught so that he doesn't have the opportunity to do this to other children. No one has that right to violate a child like that.

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00:42:44,000 --> 00:42:49,000

The next fascinating edition of Unsolved Mysteries.

693

00:43:14,000 --> 00:43:19,000

The next edition of Unsolved Mysteries.

694

00:43:44,000 --> 00:43:49,000

The next edition of Unsolved Mysteries.