

UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST | THE SUDDEN DEPARTURE OF GRANGER TAYLOR, PART ONE
S1E6 TRANSCRIPT

ROBERT KELLER: He said, "I had a dream last night. Someone came to me and told me that they needed me and they needed my thoughts and my expertise in some things and they wanted to take me with them. I believe they're from another planet."

NARRATION:

ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 29TH, 1980, A THICK TORRENT OF RAIN AND GALE FORCE WINDS TEAR THROUGH THE CENTRAL PORTION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, KNOCKING OUT THE ELECTRICITY IN SOME AREAS AND SENDING LOCALS SCURRYING FOR SHELTER. IN THE MIDST OF THIS VIOLENT STORM, 32-YEAR-OLD GRANGER TAYLOR LEAVES A NOTE TAPED TO HIS PARENT'S BEDROOM DOOR. IT READS: "DEAR MOTHER AND FATHER, I HAVE GONE AWAY TO WALK ABOARD AN ALIEN SPACESHIP, AS RECURRING DREAMS ASSURE A 42-MONTH INTERSTELLAR VOYAGE TO EXPLORE THE VAST UNIVERSE, THEN RETURN. I AM LEAVING BEHIND ALL MY POSSESSIONS TO YOU, AS I WILL NO LONGER REQUIRE THE USE OF ANY. PLEASE USE THE INSTRUCTIONS IN MY WILL AS A GUIDE TO HELP. LOVE, GRANGER." AFTER LEAVING THE NOTE, GRANGER WALKS OUT OF HIS PARENT'S HOME, AND IS NEVER HEARD FROM AGAIN.

I'M STEVE FRENCH, AND THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: "THE SUDDEN DEPARTURE OF GRANGER TAYLOR, PART 1."

ON THE SHORE OF SOMENOS LAKE, SITUATED IN THE MISTY FORESTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, GRANGER TAYLOR MAINTAINS THE FAMILY FARM, AND AT THE SAME TIME, FILLS ITS ACRES WITH MECHANICAL WONDERS OF ALL KINDS. IT TURNS OUT THAT GRANGER HAS AN INCREDIBLE TALENT WHEN IT COMES TO REBUILDING OLD VEHICLES AND CREATING NEW ONES. HE'S A TALL MAN, A BURLY, GENTLE GIANT WHOSE CLOTHES ARE PERPETUALLY STAINED WITH GREASE FROM THE REPAIR JOB OF THE DAY. WITH HIS BELOVED DOG, LADY, BY HIS SIDE, GRANGER OFTEN TRAVELS TO THE NEARBY TOWN OF DUNCAN, WHERE HE HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING THE ODD MAN AROUND TOWN. BUT TO THOSE WHO KNOW HIM WELL, LIKE HIS BEST FRIEND, ROBERT KELLER, GRANGER'S ECCENTRICITIES ARE EXACTLY WHAT MAKE HIM SPECIAL.

ROBERT KELLER: When I was seven years old, my father worked with a gentleman named Granger Taylor. He was kind of a quiet kind of guy. He never really spoke loud. He was soft spoken. A lot of people really thought he was kind of a strange, weird, crazy person. People didn't think he was, like, dangerous. They just thought he was simple and strange. Unless, of course they knew him, and the people that knew him, just loved him and just loved being around the guy. He had a train that, I think my father was involved in recovering, which was a locomotive that Granger found out in those mountains and brought it back, and tore it apart, and rebuilt it, and now he had 300 feet of track in his farm field and he's driving this train up and down this railroad track, and so, to a kid, that's like Disneyland. We got to go and play on

the train. Of course, Granger would take us to the end of the track and then put it in reverse and back us up to the back and we'd just go back and forth on this piece of track, but it was fun because it was an old steam locomotive.

NARRATION:

DESPITE HIS REPUTATION AS A SOMEWHAT STRANGE MAN, GRANGER'S MECHANICAL TALENTS WERE WIDELY REGARDED. WHEN HE WAS JUST 12 YEARS OLD, HE FOUND AND RESTORED A ONE-CYLINDER CAR. AT 17, HE OVERHAULED A BULLDOZER, WHICH HE OFTEN USED TO HELP HIS NEIGHBORS. HE RESTORED A WORLD WAR II KITTYHAWK AIRPLANE THAT SAT PERCHED NEAR A STORE ON THE VANCOUVER ISLAND HIGHWAY, AND HIS FULL-SIZE STEAM LOCOMOTIVE EVENTUALLY WENT ON DISPLAY AT THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST DISCOVERY CENTER.

ROBERT KELLER: A lot of people say that he was a genius, and a lot of people say he was just a mechanical genius. But I think he was a *genius* genius, you know, because he thought different than other people.

GAY REYNOLDS: He was called an industrial archaeologist, specialist in restoration work of historical interest. So, he had a lot, a lot of things on our property, not just a steam engine.

NARRATION:

WITH SEVEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS, GRANGER IS CLOSEST WITH HIS SISTER GAY, WHO REMEMBERS SPENDING LONG SUMMERS WITH HIM ON THE FAMILY FARM.

GAY REYNOLDS: We were very close. Like, we spent a lot of time swimming every summer. That's all we did, was swim down there as kids. We had lots of fun together. You know, he just listened to music in his room and I'd go in there and listen to it, too. Those were good memories.

NARRATION:

GRANGER'S FASCINATION WITH THE MECHANICAL WORLD IS RIVALED ONLY BY HIS INTEREST IN SPACE, AND THE THEORETICAL REALMS OF EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE. HE IS A KEEN BELIEVER IN UFOS.

GAY REYNOLDS: In the late 70s, Granger built a spaceship out of two large satellite receiving dishes which he welded together. And he spent hours sitting in the contraption. He was obsessed with finding out how spaceships were powered. All of his friends knew of his interest. It was one subject about which Granger never reticent about talking about.

NARRATION: OF THE MANY FRIENDS WITH WHOM GRANGER SHARES HIS LOVE OF SPACE, NONE EMBRACE IT MORE THAN ROBERT KELLER.

ROBERT KELLER: He always had a huge interest in space. We did talk about space a lot. And he would use the averages that I've seen Carl Sagan use as well. If we were just one out of billions

and billions of planets, you know, there would still be millions upon millions of planets that have life, right? So, the odds that we're the only ones in this entire universe, he just thought was ludicrous to think that we were the only ones.

NARRATION:

IN ADDITION TO HIS LOVE FOR SPACE, GRANGER ALSO WANTS TO IMPRESS UPON ROBERT THE IMPORTANCE OF HARD WORK AND DISCIPLINE. AS A YOUNG TEEN, ROBERT HAD STARTED TO HEAD DOWN A ROUGH PATH.

ROBERT KELLER: I decided, you know, like a lot of kids do, that I knew more than the teachers did. So, I decided to drop out of the eighth grade. And thought that, you know, I could live without their rules and regulations, and I didn't need the education. And one day, we were sitting in the house and Granger came to visit and he just, out of the blue, he looked over and he said, you know, I dropped out of school at a young age, too. And, of course, my Dad said, "Yeah, but you're a friggin' genius, right? This guy here," pointing at me, "He's far, far from being a genius." And Granger said, "Well." He looked at me and said, "Well, what are you doing during the day?" And I said, "I don't know. I'm just hanging out in the streets, you know?" So, he said, "You know, how about hanging out with me?" And I said sure.

NARRATION:

GRANGER MAKES IT HIS PERSONAL MISSION TO STEER ROBERT TO A BETTER LIFE. HE WAKES HIM UP AT 8AM EVERY DAY, WITH A NEW PROJECT READY TO TACKLE. WHETHER IT'S PICKING UP SCRAP METAL FROM THE JUNKYARD, REBUILDING FORGOTTEN VEHICLES, OR PAINTING GRANGER'S TRUCK PEPTO BISMOL PINK, MUCH TO THE AMUSEMENT OF THOSE IN TOWN.

ROBERT KELLER: Something that I thought was going to last, you know, a few weeks, lasted a little better than three years. If he hadn't stepped to the plate that day, I think I probably would either be in prison or dead, now, today. As far as mentors, Granger was my best friend in the entire world and it was a sad day when he left.

ROBERT KELLER: We were, I think, pulling the wing off that Japanese zero plane that he had, and he said, "I had a dream last night."

NARRATION:

TWO WEEKS BEFORE HIS EVENTUAL DISAPPEARANCE, GRANGER STARTS TO DESCRIBE A SERIES OF VIVID DREAMS, FILLED WITH STRANGE BEINGS FROM OUTER SPACE.

ROBERT KELLER: This is just out of the blue conversation. He said, "I had a dream last night," and I said, "Oh, yeah, what was it about?" You know, like. And he says, "No, this is really serious." That's when he explained, he says, "Someone came to me and told me that they needed me and they needed my thoughts, and my expertise in some things, and they wanted to take me with them." So, at first, I'm thinking, you know, the government's coming to get him, right? Then he said, "Well, I believe they're from another planet." And I kind of looked at him like that, really you're gonna go there? Right? And I said, "Really?" I said, "What planet?" And

he did actually have a name of the planet. And then we kind of just blew it off. And he said, "Well, you know, probably just a dream. It's nothing." So, the next day, he says, "I had another one. It was just as vivid as the one I had the night before." And I said, "Well, what'd they say this time?" And he said, "Well, they confirmed that they are coming. It's going to be on this day. It's going to be on a really stormy night. They're coming and I got to go and meet them at a certain place." And of course, I tried to get that out of him, "Where are you going to go?" And he said, "I can't tell you that. They made it very clear that I can't tell anybody where the meeting place is, or what time, because they don't want anybody following."

NARRATION:

AS THE PROSPECT OF AN INTERSTELLAR VOYAGE GROWS CLEARER IN HIS MIND, GRANGER BEGINS TO SHARE HIS EXCITEMENT, AND WORD OF HIS STRANGE DREAMS SPREADS THROUGH THE TOWN OF DUNCAN.

ROBERT KELLER: The people that knew Granger, they kind of just went, oh, well, that's Granger. Right? And they were always interested in hearing the story. Nobody ever really put any merit to it, but they were interested in hearing the story, and the people that didn't know Granger, that saw him as a simple weirdo, of course, just, that just made him even a bigger weirdo.

NARRATION:

AFTER TWO WEEKS OF VIVID DREAMS AND MENTAL PREPARATIONS, THE DAY OF GRANGER'S DEPARTURE ARRIVES: NOVEMBER 29, 1980. AND AS GRANGER PREDICTED, A STORM BEGINS TO GATHER IN THE SKIES ABOVE VANCOUVER ISLAND.

ROBERT KELLER: The day that Granger left, first thing in the morning, he come and got me, and everything was just the same as normal, but he seemed a little anxious, almost like excited, like a kid going to Disneyland. And he said, "Today's the day." And I looked and I said, "Yeah, it's cloudy and overcast and kind of a crappy day, but it's not the storm you were claiming that it was supposed to be." And he said, "Oh well, just wait for it." We don't get a whole lot of thunderstorms on the island like, right on the coast like this. But this was like a super cell. It was right over top of the city on that day. I don't remember seeing anything that bad in my lifetime at that point. I believe even the TV and the newspapers called it the storm of the century for this area. It was, like, we're talking serious forked lightning and it was black, like even at noon, it was, you'd swear it was midnight outside, it was so dark from the clouds and whatnot. It was just a crazy, crazy, bad day. But Granger, two weeks prior to this storm, knew that it was going to be the worst storm ever. How could he have known that that day was going to be that stormy? Because I'm pretty sure, like I said back in the 80s, even the meteorologists couldn't give you two weeks in advance notice. And I said, "Well, why?" You know, "why are they coming on such a stormy night?" Right? And he said, "Because they can hide their ships." And, you know, a ship shows up on a clear day, everybody sees it. A ship shows up on a, even a cloudy day, they hear it. You know, he says, "They show up on a stormy day, they just hide behind the clouds and the thunder and everything. The lightning just hides their ships. So, it's the perfect time for them." And I kind of thought, "Oh." And I said, "Are they going to create the storm?" And he says, "Oh, I don't know." He says, "Possibly." And I said, "Okay." I said,

“When I see it, I'll believe it.” So that was the first day I didn't spend the entire day with him. I just spent the morning with him. And of course, he came by when he was on his way, when he left.

NARRATION:

SOME TIME AFTER LEAVING ROBERT'S HOUSE, GRANGER RETURNS HOME TO WRITE A NOTE TO HIS PARENTS.

ROBERT KELLER: It was kind of just he needed to make arrangements to go right, just had to kind of button up a few things. And he had left a note for his stepfather and his mother on a door, explaining that he was going for the 42-month journey, and not to worry about him, that he would be back.

NARRATION:

GRANGER ALSO LEAVES A WILL FOR HIS PARENTS, INSTRUCTING THEM WHAT TO DO WITH HIS BELONGINGS AND PUTTING HIS LOYAL DOG, LADY, IN THEIR CARE. IN THIS WILL, GRANGER MAKES AN UNUSUAL CHANGE: HE CROSSES OUT THE WORDS “DEATH” AND “DECEASED” AND WRITES IN THE WORDS “DEPARTURE” AND “DEPARTED,” AND HE ALSO DELETES THE WORD “FUNERAL,” LEADING HIS FAMILY AND ROBERT TO BELIEVE THAT GRANGER FULLY INTENDS TO RETURN.

AT AROUND 6PM THAT EVENING, GRANGER ROLLS UP TO BOB'S GRILL IN DUNCAN IN HIS BRIGHT PINK TRUCK. HE'S A REGULAR THERE. LINDA BARON, WHO'S WORKING IN THE KITCHEN, SEES HIM ENTER AND SIT AT A TABLE BY HIMSELF. SHE REPORTS THAT HE HAD ON A BROWN KNIT SWEATER WITH A ZIP-UP FRONT, THE SAME BLACK T-SHIRT THAT HE ALWAYS WORE, BLUE JEANS, AND LOGGER BOOTS. SHE DOESN'T RECALL ANY CONVERSATION, BUT SAYS GRANGER WAS THE QUIET TYPE. WHEN HE LEAVES AROUND 6:30PM, LINDA NOTICES THAT HE DOESN'T HAVE HIS WINTER COAT, WHICH SHE THINKS IS STRANGE, AS THE STORM IS STARTING TO BEAR DOWN ON THE TOWN. AFTER LEAVING THE RESTAURANT, GRANGER PAYS ROBERT ONE FINAL VISIT.

ROBERT KELLER: When he showed up at our place, you know, I said, “Oh, Granger's here, of course.” It almost sounds silly when I say think of it now but, you know, even though I was 15, it was like, Granger's here. And I ran down the stairs and I said, “Ah man!” I says, you know, like, “The day is already over.” I says, “We're not gonna get anything done.” And he said, “Well, I'm serious.” He said, “The aliens are coming today. Like tonight.” My dad took that as a big joke. And, so, of course, when I said, “Well, can I go with you?” My dad said, “Yeah, no, no, it's fine. It's good. Go. Take him. You know, I'm good with that. He's not going to school anyways, and blah, blah, blah. So, it's good with me,” and Granger says, “I really can't.” And dad said, “Why not?” And he said, “Well, first of all, he wasn't invited. And second of all, 42 months at the speed of light,” He says, “42 months, time will pass for me, and it'll be 42 months. But here on Earth, time will travel faster. So, when I return, I'll be only 42 months older, but you guys will be...” I forget, but I think it was like, we would age 150 years here on Earth. So that was the reason why he couldn't take me with him because I was, at the time, 15 years old, and he

couldn't do that to me. So it was, that really was heartbreaking, you know. It was, that I'd never see him again. And he did say, you know, "I promise you, I will come and visit you when I get back." Which ... just hang on a sec... which to me meant that he would come and visit my grave.

ROBERT KELLER (CONT'D): Well, after he told me I couldn't go with him, for that reason, I had too much on this planet to live for, to be here for, he basically said, "You know, this is going to be the greatest thing that could ever happen to any human being ever." He said, "So, you know, I get to see things that no other human being on the existence of our planet gets to see, gets to experience." He said, "So, you know, be happy for me. This is a great thing." So, you know, I guess we just kind of wished him luck, and gave him a hug and that was it. He went out, got in his truck, and I stood in the front window and watched his truck back out of the driveway and drive away. And that was the last time anybody on this planet had seen him.

NARRATION:

ON NOVEMBER 30, AFTER THE SKIES CLEAR, GRANGER TAYLOR IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.

ROBERT KELLER: You know, when he left, he said he was going so I, you know, at eight o'clock that morning when I got up and he wasn't there to pick me up, you know, reality kind of started setting in for me that, you know, I believe he's gone. But just to make sure, you know, I waited until I believe it was around 9:30. I phoned his family home and spoke with his sister. And she said that he wasn't there, and she didn't know where he was. And you know, it was just he wasn't around. So, nobody really took it seriously, I guess. And then after a few more days went by, I think it started sinking into people, with people, that you know, he's gone. He's not coming back. And then of course, the talk started. Nobody's seen or heard from him for, you know, a few days. I think the family and everybody was starting to get super concerned by then.

GAY REYNOLDS: Dad was the one that was home. My mom was in Hawaii. So, when she came back, I guess saw this news. So, I guess she was pretty upset. She thought that if she hadn't gone to Hawaii, it wouldn't have happened. Maybe. But anyways, my parents reported it to the police that he was a missing person. And so, they searched a lot, all up in Mount Prevost and had dogs and everything.

NARRATION:

THE DUNCAN DETACHMENT OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE BEGINS AN AGGRESSIVE SEARCH FOR GRANGER, WHICH INCLUDES HELICOPTER SCANS OF THE DENSELY WOODED MOUNTAINS IN THE AREA. BUT THEY DON'T FIND A SINGLE CLUE. THEY CHECK THE PASSPORT OFFICE, AND GRANGER'S NAME IS ADDED TO THE NATIONAL POLICE COMPUTER SYSTEM. BUT THE BIGGEST MYSTERY OF ALL IS HOW GRANGER'S BRIGHT PINK TRUCK HAS MANAGED TO COMPLETELY VANISH WITHOUT A TRACE.

ROBERT KELLER: The police came and spoke with my father. And to this day, I've never really understood why the police never spoke to me because, I mean, I spent pretty much all my waking hours with this guy for three years before he disappeared. You know, I've spoke to my mother about it and she says that, you know, I was a child back then and dad really didn't want

them to, you know, get me involved in this. So, you know, he didn't give them permission to talk to me. But that doesn't make sense to me. I don't know why nobody ever questioned me.

NARRATION:

GRANGER'S FRIENDS AND FAMILY ARE CONFUSED AND DISTURBED BY HIS SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE, BUT THEY CONTINUE TO HOLD OUT HOPE THAT HE MIGHT STILL RETURN.

ROBERT KELLER: I wasn't able to talk to Granger's mother, Grace, until she returned home from Hawaii. And, you know, I did go and speak to her, and we sat down at the kitchen table and we talked, and cried, and did everything you do when somebody's missing, and she was just, you know, Granger says he's coming back. He will be back. You know, Granger has never steered anybody wrong, you know, that even she knew about. She said, "Granger's not a liar. He wouldn't lie to us about this, you know. He will be coming home." And she believed 100% in her heart that he's coming home. I kind of knew the very first day after, when he didn't show up, that he was serious and that he went to space. And, of course, and I believed it, 100%. So, you know, I was going out every night, looking up at the sky, hoping to see a flash of light go across the sky that looked unusual, or something, to say, you know, there they go. But, of course, it never happened.

NARRATION:

FOR OVER THREE YEARS, GRANGER'S PARENTS LEAVE THE DOOR UNLOCKED EVERY NIGHT, HOPING FOR THEIR SON'S RETURN. AS THE 42-MONTH MARK APPROACHES, CHATTER STARTS AROUND TOWN THAT GRANGER WILL SOON BE BACK FROM HIS JOURNEY WITH THE ALIENS.

ROBERT KELLER: The talk that was going around the town was, you know, the 42 months is up. And it was, you know, I was almost expecting a parade the way people were talking, you know. It was like, people were gonna start gathering and waiting to see, you know, here he comes, where is he? I was getting bombarded with, "Are you excited?" And I wasn't excited, because he had already explained to me that he's not going to be back in 42 Earth months. He will be back, but he won't be back in our lifetime. He's going to be back in my grandchildren's lifetime, maybe. But to have that many people getting excited about him coming back, you know. They may have thought he was a weirdo, but he also, they also were, I guess in some way, they were believing too, because everybody waited for him. And then when he didn't come back, you know, it just kind of, almost got shuffled under the rugs. Like everybody shrugged their shoulders and went, "Eh, he didn't come back."

NARRATION:

AS THE 42-MONTH MARKER COMES AND GOES WITHOUT ANY SIGN OF GRANGER, HIS FAMILY FINALLY COMES TO TERMS WITH THE FACT THAT HE IS LIKELY NOT GOING TO RETURN, AT LEAST NOT IN THEIR LIFETIME.

GAY REYNOLDS: After a few years, in order to dispose of all his, you know, savings and property, they had to say that he was dead. But we never had a funeral 'cause we don't really know if he's dead.

NARRATION:

ROBERT MOVES ON WITH HIS LIFE, BUT CONTINUES TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH GRANGER'S MOTHER FOR YEARS AFTER HIS DEPARTURE. THEY OFTEN SIT AT HER KITCHEN TABLE AND REMINISCE ABOUT GRANGER.

ROBERT KELLER: I believe that, maybe after so many years, it was just that hope. And always looking over your shoulder, wondering if he's going to walk through the door type thing. You know, she was getting up there in age, was just, was maybe getting to be too much for her. So, how I understood it is that she asked the police to close the case and declare him dead. And they obliged.

NARRATION:

MANY IN DUNCAN RESIGN THEMSELVES TO THE IDEA THAT THEY MAY NEVER KNOW WHETHER GRANGER TAYLOR ASCENDED TO THE STARS, OR IF PERHAPS HE SUCCUMBED TO A MORE TERRESTRIAL FORM OF DISAPPEARANCE. PERHAPS HE ESCAPED TO THE RAINFORESTS OF SOUTH AMERICA, OR WAS ABDUCTED BY THE CIA. OR MAYBE HE MANAGED TO END HIS LIFE WITHOUT LEAVING A SINGLE TRACE. IT ISN'T UNTIL SIX YEARS AFTER GRANGER TAYLOR'S SUDDEN DEPARTURE THAT A CLUE TO THIS MYSTERY IS FINALLY DISCOVERED.

NEXT ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES...

CHRIS MANSEAU: It was very fortunate that that site was found. If that site was found today, it would have been completely overgrown. There are lots of plane crashes that have never been found. There's lots of sites where people have gone and lived for 25 years in the bush. There's a lot of places in BC where people want to go and get themselves lost, and they're very successful at it.

NARRATION: Unsolved Mysteries is a production of Cosgrove Meurer Productions and Cadence 13. It is executive produced by Terry Dunn Meurer and Chris Corcoran. Produced by Lloyd Lochridge, Christine Lenig (LEH-nig) and Courtney Ennis (rhymes with Dennis) and Paige Hymson. The Story Producer for this episode is Cynthia Bowles, and it was edited by Ryan Dann. From Cadence 13, editing, mixing and mastering by Chris Basil, Andy Jaskiewicz and Bill Schultz. Production support by Sean Cherry and Ian Mandt. Artwork and design is by Curt Courtenay. Publicity by Josefina Francis and Hillary Schupf. The original theme music was composed by Gary Malkin and Michael Boyd.

THANKS FOR LISTENING TO EPISODE 6 OF UNSOLVED MYSTERIES.