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

The Nazca Lines.

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

Cryptic messages from a lost civilization.

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

Today, newly discovered symbols may finally unlock one of the world's greatest mysteries.

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

Whoa!

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

The sun was setting in the middle of the line.

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

It has to have a meaning.

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

That is so cool. New Nazca Lines.

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

Yes, this is what I wanted to show you.

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

Incredible. It's huge!

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

When you think of Peru, what comes to mind?

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

The soaring Andes Mountains?

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

Maybe the lush jungles of the Amazon?

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

Well, if you head a bit further south,

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

you'll find yourself in one of the driest and most desolate environments on Earth.

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

2,000 years ago, a mysterious civilization thrived here.

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00:01:02,000 --> 00:01:08,000

Little was known about them until the 1920s, when commercial flights spotted their giant glyphs.

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00:01:08,000 --> 00:01:12,000

Symbols inscribed in the sand that became known as the Nazca Lines.

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00:01:16,000 --> 00:01:18,000

They depict huge animals,

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00:01:19,000 --> 00:01:20,000

strange figures,

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00:01:20,000 --> 00:01:23,000

and complex geometric shapes.

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00:01:24,000 --> 00:01:28,000

For nearly a century, people have been fiercely debating the Nazca Lines.

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00:01:28,000 --> 00:01:33,000

But several months ago, a sandstorm in the desert revealed something incredible.

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

Never before seen symbols that may be the key to solving the entire puzzle.

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00:01:40,000 --> 00:01:46,000

Scientists have also uncovered clues that may reveal how the lines were made with such mathematical precision.

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00:01:46,000 --> 00:01:49,000

And more importantly, why?

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

Were they used to pray to the gods or for drug-induced rituals?

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00:01:53,000 --> 00:01:55,000

Were they a giant astronomical calendar?

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

Or, as some wild theories suggest, a way to communicate with UFOs?

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00:02:01,000 --> 00:02:04,000

Well, thanks to the new discoveries, we may finally know the answer.

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

My mission?

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

Get to Peru and immerse myself in the world of the Nazca.

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00:02:09,000 --> 00:02:11,000

I'll examine the new evidence in the case,

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00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:16,000

and then look for definitive answers to one of the strangest mysteries in the world.

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00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:22,000

My name is Josh Gates.

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00:02:23,000 --> 00:02:27,000

With a degree in archaeology and a passion for exploration,

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00:02:28,000 --> 00:02:32,000

I have a tendency to end up in some very strange situations.

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00:02:32,000 --> 00:02:35,000

There has got to be a better way to make a living.

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00:02:35,000 --> 00:02:41,000

My travels have taken me to the ends of the earth as I investigate the greatest legends in history.

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00:02:41,000 --> 00:02:42,000

We're good to fly, let's go.

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00:02:42,000 --> 00:02:45,000

This is Expedition Unknown.

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00:02:50,000 --> 00:02:55,000

After an eight-hour flight, I touch down in Peru's capital city of Lima.

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00:02:55,000 --> 00:02:58,000

In order to get to the Nazca lines, we have to get to Nazca.

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00:02:58,000 --> 00:03:02,000

In order to do that, we have to head a few hundred miles south.

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00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:09,000

Everybody in Peru honks all the time.

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00:03:09,000 --> 00:03:12,000

They honk when they're happy, they honk when they'd like to get by you,

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00:03:12,000 --> 00:03:13,000

they honk when they're angry.

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00:03:13,000 --> 00:03:15,000

Just any time you...

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00:03:15,000 --> 00:03:17,000

Here's a kid crossing the road.

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00:03:17,000 --> 00:03:18,000

I'll beep at him.

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

They love it.

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00:03:20,000 --> 00:03:24,000

Having honked my way out of Lima, I'm embarking on a 300-mile trek down the coast

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00:03:24,000 --> 00:03:28,000

to the desert town of Nazca and the never-before-seen Nazca lines

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00:03:28,000 --> 00:03:30,000

revealed by a recent sandstorm.

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00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:35,000

The fastest and, well, only way to get there is on the infamous Pan-American Highway.

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00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:37,000

This is the world's longest road,

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00:03:37,000 --> 00:03:42,000

30,000 miles of lonely pavement that links almost every country in the Americas.

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00:03:42,000 --> 00:03:45,000

On one side, steep cliffs drop down to the top of the road,

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

on the other, endless desert.

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00:03:49,000 --> 00:03:52,000

This region gets less than an inch of rain a year,

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00:03:52,000 --> 00:03:55,000

but amidst the barren dunes, there is something unlikely.

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00:03:56,000 --> 00:03:57,000

Life.

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

Water in the middle of the desert.

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

Amazing.

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

This is Huacachina, home to about 100 people.

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00:04:10,000 --> 00:04:13,000

It is the only true desert oasis in the Americas.

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00:04:13,000 --> 00:04:17,000

A small pond of water that somehow defies the dried-up landscape all around it.

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

Basically, there's this natural oasis here.

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00:04:20,000 --> 00:04:24,000

People just flock to it, and they created a community around the water.

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00:04:25,000 --> 00:04:28,000

This thirst-quenching oasis wasn't around during the time of the Nazca,

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00:04:28,000 --> 00:04:30,000

but the desert was,

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00:04:30,000 --> 00:04:34,000

and I'm here to get a first-hand look at the landscape the Nazca people somehow conquered.

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

To do that, I need to go off-road.

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00:04:37,000 --> 00:04:42,000

Once you leave the highways in southern Peru, this is what's left.

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00:04:42,000 --> 00:04:44,000

Nothing this.

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00:04:44,000 --> 00:04:47,000

It's one of the harshest landscapes in the world.

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

This is Elmer, a local driver who's agreed to show me around.

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00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:54,000

He's not much for conversation, but he knows these dunes like the back of his hand.

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

It's my kind of driving.

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00:05:11,000 --> 00:05:14,000

Peru's deserts are about the size of New York State,

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00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:17,000

but if I didn't know better, I'd think I was on Mars.

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

This is crazy.

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00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:36,000

Elmer, you're crazy!

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00:05:37,000 --> 00:05:39,000

You're crazy!

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

I'm not sure what direction we're going, or whether Elmer here has a license,

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00:05:43,000 --> 00:05:48,000

but I'm quickly learning that out here in the middle of nowhere, there's definitely no speed limit.

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00:05:48,000 --> 00:05:50,000

Holy s***!

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00:05:52,000 --> 00:05:57,000

2,000 years ago, the Nazca people walked this scorching desert on foot.

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00:05:57,000 --> 00:06:02,000

Luckily, modern humans have come up with a much more fun and dangerous way to traverse these dunes.

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

I got this!

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00:06:15,000 --> 00:06:17,000

I got this!

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00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:19,000

I got this!

92

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

Nailed it!

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00:06:28,000 --> 00:06:31,000

You know, I didn't break my legs.

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00:06:31,000 --> 00:06:37,000

With the sun setting and a lot of sand in my boxers,

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00:06:37,000 --> 00:06:44,000

we make our way back to the paved road with a new appreciation for how vast and dry the world of the Nazca really was.

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00:06:51,000 --> 00:06:55,000

By the light of a new day, I continue rumbling down the Pan-American Highway.

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00:06:56,000 --> 00:07:01,000

After a few more hours on the monotonous road, the dusty outline of buildings appears in the distance.

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

Welcome to Nazca, the city of eternal summer.

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00:07:08,000 --> 00:07:12,000

This area has been occupied by humans since time immemorial.

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00:07:12,000 --> 00:07:17,000

Once home to the ancient Nazca people, it was later a Spanish settlement, a wine region,

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00:07:17,000 --> 00:07:22,000

and today a quiet town and an outpost for archaeologists and adventurous travelers.

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00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:27,000

Everywhere you look, there are representations of the Nazca lines.

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00:07:27,000 --> 00:07:29,000

But I'm here to see the real thing.

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00:07:29,000 --> 00:07:34,000

Just outside of town, I pull over to get my first look at these mysterious glyphs.

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

We have arrived at the Nazca lines.

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

Can you see them?

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00:07:41,000 --> 00:07:43,000

Me neither.

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00:07:43,000 --> 00:07:48,000

The problem is that they're so huge and it's so flat here that without any elevation,

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00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:53,000

they kind of disappear into the desert, which has raised a lot of questions about how they were made

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00:07:53,000 --> 00:07:56,000

and why were they made if you can't really see them from down here.

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00:07:56,000 --> 00:08:00,000

In order to get a good view of them, we're going to have to go up.

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00:08:01,000 --> 00:08:07,000

The Nazca lines were first recorded in 1553 by the Spanish conquistador Pedro Ciesadillón,

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00:08:07,000 --> 00:08:10,000

but he mistook them for primitive roads.

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00:08:11,000 --> 00:08:15,000

If only this rickety tower had been built hundreds of years ago,

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00:08:15,000 --> 00:08:20,000

then perhaps he could have seen the true nature of the lines, which only reveals itself from above.

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00:08:21,000 --> 00:08:22,000

Wow.

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00:08:23,000 --> 00:08:24,000

Look at this.

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00:08:25,000 --> 00:08:26,000

Coming up.

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00:08:27,000 --> 00:08:28,000

Hey, Dutch.

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00:08:28,000 --> 00:08:29,000

No, we see it.

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00:08:29,000 --> 00:08:30,000

That's a crowd.

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00:08:30,000 --> 00:08:31,000

New Nazca lines.

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

What does it mean?

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00:08:33,000 --> 00:08:34,000

That's a crowd.

125

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

New Nazca lines.

126

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

What does it mean?

127

00:08:46,000 --> 00:08:50,000

I've crossed the deserts of Peru and I'm climbing this lonely observation tower

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00:08:50,000 --> 00:08:53,000

for my first look at one of the world's greatest enigmas.

129

00:08:54,000 --> 00:08:55,000

Wow.

130

00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:57,000

Look at this.

131

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

Those are the Nazca lines.

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00:09:04,000 --> 00:09:07,000

These lines are a mystery on a massive scale.

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00:09:07,000 --> 00:09:12,000

There are nearly 100 gigantic figures, as well as strange geometric symbols

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00:09:12,000 --> 00:09:18,000

and thousands of straight lines that cover an area twice the size of Washington, D.C.

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

The most famous designs are the huge animals,

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00:09:22,000 --> 00:09:23,000

the hummingbird,

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00:09:24,000 --> 00:09:25,000

the condor,

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00:09:26,000 --> 00:09:27,000

the spider,

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00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:29,000

and the monkey.

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00:09:29,000 --> 00:09:33,000

Shapes drawn with a single line that never crosses itself.

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

It's still only a very small piece of the Nazca lines.

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00:09:38,000 --> 00:09:42,000

This extends for miles and miles in every direction, but at least we've got a first glimpse.

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00:09:44,000 --> 00:09:48,000

The big questions are, how were these lines made and what were they for?

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

There's been a stunning new development.

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

Previously buried Nazca lines were just revealed by a sandstorm

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00:09:54,000 --> 00:09:58,000

and some scientists believe they could help solve the mystery.

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00:09:58,000 --> 00:10:03,000

But before seeking them out, I need to know more about the Nazca people.

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00:10:03,000 --> 00:10:08,000

I swang into the nearby Museo Antonini, which is filled with relics from the Nazca world,

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00:10:08,000 --> 00:10:11,000

as well as some grim remains of the Nazca themselves.

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00:10:14,000 --> 00:10:19,000

This is really one of the most striking and in some ways disturbing part of the Nazca culture.

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00:10:19,000 --> 00:10:21,000

You see these incredibly well preserved heads,

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00:10:22,000 --> 00:10:24,000

and they have a whole drill for it.

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00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:26,000

And they've come to be known as trophy heads.

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00:10:27,000 --> 00:10:32,000

Some archaeologists have painted the Nazca as peaceful and the skulls as objects that they revered,

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00:10:32,000 --> 00:10:37,000

while others believe the Nazca were aggressive headhunters, but nobody knows for sure.

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00:10:39,000 --> 00:10:43,000

In terms of trying to understand more about the Nazca people, you have to look at their pottery.

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

You know, this is really what they left behind,

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

and all of these broken pieces are actually the remains of the Nazca people.

159

00:10:50,000 --> 00:10:55,000

You know, this is really what they left behind, and all of these broken pieces are actually clues in a puzzle.

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00:10:56,000 --> 00:10:59,000

There are several competing theories about the function of the Nazca lines,

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00:10:59,000 --> 00:11:01,000

and I'm hoping to hone in on the right answer.

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

Theory one. The lines were used as a sort of massive astronomical calendar,

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

evidenced by their position beneath the heavens,

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

and symbols for stars painted on the sides of various ceramics.

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00:11:16,000 --> 00:11:19,000

Theory two. Since it's hard to see the lines from the ground,

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00:11:19,000 --> 00:11:22,000

and since so many of them look like landing runways,

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00:11:22,000 --> 00:11:26,000

many fringe theorists insist that they were built with the help of aliens.

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00:11:30,000 --> 00:11:33,000

Theory three. The lines were used in drug-fueled rituals,

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00:11:33,000 --> 00:11:37,000

where wild ceremonies took place to pray for resources from the gods.

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00:11:38,000 --> 00:11:42,000

Some of these deities were represented by animals, like the monkey or the killer whale.

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00:11:42,000 --> 00:11:48,000

Pottery depicting psychedelic cactuses and dancing shamans seemed to support this idea.

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00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:53,000

So which theory is right? I plan to test them out.

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00:11:53,000 --> 00:11:58,000

First, I want to see if the lines could really be a massive astronomical calendar.

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

The late German mathematician Maria Reiche was the loudest proponent of this theory,

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00:12:02,000 --> 00:12:07,000

and she's just about single-handedly responsible for preserving the lines as a World Heritage Site.

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00:12:07,000 --> 00:12:11,000

Her image is everywhere in Nazca, and her home is now a museum.

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00:12:11,000 --> 00:12:15,000

To better understand the so-called Lady of the Lines and her theory,

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00:12:15,000 --> 00:12:18,000

I'm meeting with the head of her foundation, Anna Maria Cagorno.

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00:12:19,000 --> 00:12:22,000

How did she first come to see the lines?

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00:12:22,000 --> 00:12:28,000

She was very involved with many scientists in the Museum of Lima.

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00:12:28,000 --> 00:12:34,000

She met there Dr. Paul Kossack from the University of Long Island, New York.

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00:12:35,000 --> 00:12:41,000

So they flew, and when they were flying, they saw so many different roads.

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00:12:41,000 --> 00:12:43,000

They didn't know what they were.

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00:12:44,000 --> 00:12:49,000

Then they decided to come in the car, and Maria was very curious.

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00:12:49,000 --> 00:12:57,000

Suddenly, Maria saw that the sun was setting exactly in the middle of the line.

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

So then she was shocked. It had to have a meaning.

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00:13:03,000 --> 00:13:08,000

And do you believe that the lines and the glyphs align to celestial bodies?

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00:13:08,000 --> 00:13:10,000

Well, some of them, yes.

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00:13:14,000 --> 00:13:21,000

Reiche spent over half a century fighting to prove the astronomical purpose of the lines,

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

but her work is still hotly debated.

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00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:32,000

At the Museum's nearby planetarium, I'm meeting Eduardo Azabache from the Peruvian Astronomical Institute.

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00:13:32,000 --> 00:13:34,000

Hola. Hola.

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00:13:34,000 --> 00:13:39,000

He's giving me a first-hand look at Maria's theory by showing me how the lines relate to the sky above.

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00:13:44,000 --> 00:13:54,000

Maria, as she worked on the desert for 40 years, she discovered groups of lines pointed to the

rising or setting of the brightest stars, the sun and the moon.

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00:13:54,000 --> 00:14:04,000

For example, the hummingbird, and she noticed at the longest line point the rising of the sun at summer solstice day.

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00:14:05,000 --> 00:14:10,000

It does. It goes straight to where the sun came up during the solstice. That's very compelling.

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00:14:10,000 --> 00:14:17,000

It appears that the hummingbird is in perfect alignment with important astronomical events, and so are other shapes.

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00:14:17,000 --> 00:14:26,000

This is the corner of the line crossing the bird figure, which was oriented to the setting of the sun at winter solstice day.

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00:14:26,000 --> 00:14:36,000

And the third figure was the eran. Well, Maria also, noticed that the long beak used to point to the rising of the sun at winter solstice day.

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00:14:37,000 --> 00:14:47,000

As soon as the sun set or rose on these particular lines, the Nazca would have known it was the first day of winter or the first day of summer, their rainy season.

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00:14:47,000 --> 00:14:52,000

This calendar could have been a vital agricultural tool for growing crops or collecting water.

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00:14:52,000 --> 00:14:58,000

But there are hundreds of other lines and animal shapes that don't match up to the sun or stars.

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00:14:58,000 --> 00:15:03,000

So Maria's work offers only a partial explanation. Time to move on to the next theory.

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00:15:07,000 --> 00:15:14,000

The next morning I motor out to a blank section of desert to tackle the wildest theory about the lines.

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00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:21,000

People, and I mean a lot of people, have been insisting for years that since the Nazca couldn't really see their handiwork from the ground,

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00:15:21,000 --> 00:15:26,000

and since the lines are massive, they must have been made with the help of aliens.

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00:15:26,000 --> 00:15:33,000

One of the Nazca lines is even referred to as the astronaut, and it does bear a striking resemblance to a notable extraterrestrial.

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00:15:33,000 --> 00:15:38,000

But I'm not sure I'm buying this as just a giant desert airport for E.T. and his buddies.

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00:15:40,000 --> 00:15:43,000

So in terms of how the Nazca lines were made, what's the simplest explanation?

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00:15:43,000 --> 00:15:49,000

Well, maybe the Nazca people just came out here into the desert and they just drew these shapes freestyle.

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00:15:49,000 --> 00:15:58,000

So that's what I'm going to try to do. This is the spider, one of the most famous of the Nazca lines, and I'm going to attempt to recreate it using this simple piece of bamboo.

212

00:15:58,000 --> 00:16:03,000

J.J., what's your confidence level here on a scale of 1 to 10 as to how good a job I'm going to do?

213

00:16:03,000 --> 00:16:10,000

Two, you do know that 10 is the best that I could possibly do. One is the worst, and he's down to a 1.

214

00:16:13,000 --> 00:16:18,000

Boy, this is not as easy as it looks.

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00:16:18,000 --> 00:16:23,000

Move away the dark iron-rich sand on top and you reveal lighter-colored sand below.

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00:16:23,000 --> 00:16:28,000

But since every single footprint and scrape here is permanent, there's little room for error.

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00:16:30,000 --> 00:16:34,000

The replica I'm attempting is large, but the real Nazca lines are downright huge.

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00:16:34,000 --> 00:16:42,000

I usually feel tall at 6'2", but next to the larger shape, the 935-foot heron, I'd be the size of an ant.

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00:16:42,000 --> 00:16:44,000

That is wrong, that's wrong.

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

You really can't make a mistake because once you kick more sand over it, it just makes more white spots.

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

This needs to be a mistake-free endeavor.

222

00:16:53,000 --> 00:16:58,000

Kind of looking like a spider, or a menorah.

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

Here's why this doesn't work. It doesn't work because I'm terrible at it, but it also doesn't work because if you look at the drawing,

224

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

you see that it's for the most part very symmetrical, very even-spinning, and it's not as sharp as it looks.

225

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

You see that it's for the most part very symmetrical, very even-spacing in between the legs.

226

00:17:15,000 --> 00:17:18,000

These glyphs are hundreds of feet long.

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00:17:18,000 --> 00:17:24,000

There's no way, freehand, they could possibly make it this exact and have it turn out well.

228

00:17:24,000 --> 00:17:27,000

I kind of don't get it. I don't know how they're doing it.

229

00:17:27,000 --> 00:17:29,000

There has to be something else in play here.

230

00:17:30,000 --> 00:17:42,000

I'm in the Peruvian Desert chasing answers to the mystery of the world-famous Nazca lines.

231

00:17:42,000 --> 00:17:48,000

After trying my hand at drawing my own version, it's obvious I need some professional help.

232

00:17:48,000 --> 00:17:55,000

I'm enlisting one of the world's foremost experts on the lines, Mario Oleacea, the head archaeologist at the Ministry of Nazca,

233

00:17:55,000 --> 00:17:57,000

and his researcher, Alejandra.

234

00:17:58,000 --> 00:18:04,000

Our plan is to recreate the famous hummingbird glyph, though I have no idea how.

235

00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:11,000

So we have a paddle of some kind, a stick, and it looks like some string and some stakes.

236

00:18:11,000 --> 00:18:13,000

Okay, show me the way. Let's do it.

237

00:18:13,000 --> 00:18:21,000

I'm not sure if we're going to build a sandcastle, fly a kite, or stake a desert vampire, but at this point, I'll try anything.

238

00:18:21,000 --> 00:18:23,000

Keep walking straight until he tells you to stop.

239

00:18:24,000 --> 00:18:29,000

In the past, archaeologists theorized that the Nazca must have built platforms to oversee their work.

240

00:18:29,000 --> 00:18:33,000

One historian even built a hot-air balloon out of ancient materials to pull it off.

241

00:18:33,000 --> 00:18:40,000

However, the only physical evidence are small wooden stakes discovered in the sand, which might just lead us to the answer.

242

00:18:43,000 --> 00:18:45,000

The tail has to be a little bit more to the left.

243

00:18:45,000 --> 00:18:49,000

Despite the flat desert, there are actually lots of hills on the edges.

244

00:18:49,000 --> 00:18:54,000

The Nazca could have used a foreman on high ground who relayed instructions to workers below.

245

00:18:54,000 --> 00:19:02,000

Mario believes the Nazca staked out the ends of the shapes, and then, using string, scaled up smaller drawings using mathematical precision.

246

00:19:03,000 --> 00:19:04,000

Go ahead.

247

00:19:05,000 --> 00:19:06,000

Hold on, hold on.

248

00:19:11,000 --> 00:19:15,000

To draw a line, we use wide paddles and start to connect the dots.

249

00:19:20,000 --> 00:19:26,000

Finally, we connect the last line in our shape.

250

00:19:27,000 --> 00:19:30,000

Perfecto, no, no, no, perfecto, está bien ahí.

251

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

From this view, it's perfect.

252

00:19:32,000 --> 00:19:33,000

Perfect.

253

00:19:33,000 --> 00:19:34,000

Yes.

254

00:19:34,000 --> 00:19:35,000

Great.

255

00:19:35,000 --> 00:19:36,000

Awesome.

256

00:19:36,000 --> 00:19:37,000

Great work.

257

00:19:37,000 --> 00:19:38,000

Yeah, Mario, you're brilliant.

258

00:19:38,000 --> 00:19:39,000

Great work, buddy.

259

00:19:39,000 --> 00:19:40,000

We made a Nazca line.

260

00:19:41,000 --> 00:19:48,000

I'm astonished to see that our hummingbird is actually really accurate, and we managed to make it with a diagram and a compass.

261

00:19:48,000 --> 00:19:51,000

We made it with a diagram and just a few simple tools.

262

00:19:51,000 --> 00:19:52,000

Take that, UFOs.

263

00:19:56,000 --> 00:20:05,000

Okay, we've debunked the theory that the lines were made by aliens or with the use of complex tools, and the astronomical theory only works on a small portion of the lines.

264

00:20:05,000 --> 00:20:12,000

So I'm driving on to explore the third option, that these lines were purely religious, made for worshipping the gods.

265

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

These roads, if you can call them that, are a crisscrossed maze of trails.

266

00:20:18,000 --> 00:20:22,000

But finally, I arrive at what seems like just another set of dunes.

267

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

But beneath the sand, there are secrets.

268

00:20:30,000 --> 00:20:37,000

This is Cahuachi, the heart of the Nazca civilization and the only architectural remains of their

empire.

269

00:20:38,000 --> 00:20:44,000

Founded around 100 BC, its mud structures are buried under mounds of windblown sand.

270

00:20:56,000 --> 00:20:57,000

Hear that?

271

00:20:57,000 --> 00:21:00,000

That is the sound of absolutely nothing.

272

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

It's completely still out here.

273

00:21:02,000 --> 00:21:05,000

Nearby is a sprawling Nazca cemetery.

274

00:21:05,000 --> 00:21:08,000

And it's not for the faint of heart.

275

00:21:08,000 --> 00:21:13,000

Archaeologists have excavated bodies wrapped in embroidered cotton and painted with resin.

276

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

The mummification process and dry climate have kept the remains eerily intact.

277

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

The burials are very ceremonial.

278

00:21:23,000 --> 00:21:31,000

You know, you have these very fine textiles and bits of pottery, and you see that the pots are filled with things like corn, and we have shells, and we have offerings,

279

00:21:31,000 --> 00:21:35,000

and so much of it is about food and sustenance in the earth.

280

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

Definitely a culture that was religious.

281

00:21:41,000 --> 00:21:45,000

I'm meeting historian David Rivas to unlock more mysteries here.

282

00:21:45,000 --> 00:21:46,000

What a spot!

283

00:21:46,000 --> 00:21:51,000

If you had blindfolded me and brought me here, I would say that I was in like ancient Sumeria or Egypt.

284

00:21:51,000 --> 00:21:57,000

It's just 4% of the 24 square kilometers they still have to dig. This is just the beginning.

285

00:21:57,000 --> 00:21:58,000

This is the 4%?

286

00:21:58,000 --> 00:21:59,000

Yes.

287

00:22:01,000 --> 00:22:03,000

96% of it is unexcavated.

288

00:22:03,000 --> 00:22:06,000

It will go all the way down there, and you see those hills over there?

289

00:22:06,000 --> 00:22:07,000

Yeah.

290

00:22:07,000 --> 00:22:09,000

It probably will go over there.

291

00:22:09,000 --> 00:22:16,000

Archaeological evidence now suggests that Kowachi was a sacred pilgrimage site used for religious ceremonies and offerings.

292

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

It overlooks many of the lines, strengthening the theory that the shapes in the sand were highly ceremonial.

293

00:22:24,000 --> 00:22:28,000

And while the Nazca who built this site are long gone, their rituals have endured.

294

00:22:31,000 --> 00:22:39,000

This shaman traces his heritage back to the Nazca people, and I'm being invited to participate in an age-old ceremony in the heart of this ruined temple.

295

00:22:39,000 --> 00:22:41,000

It's an honor. Thank you very much.

296

00:22:48,000 --> 00:22:55,000

Nazca are depicted on pottery in a drug-induced trance, which was likely the result of ingesting the local San Pedro cactus.

297

00:22:56,000 --> 00:23:06,000

2000 years ago, our ancestors used all these hallucinogens in order to be in touch with the spirits, in order to find how the future is going to become for them.

298

00:23:06,000 --> 00:23:13,000

Since I have to work in the morning, I'm drinking a less potent brew, hoping to avoid a psychedelic journey to the Nazca spirit world.

299

00:23:13,000 --> 00:23:21,000

This is it. This is it. And now you can share with the world.

300

00:23:22,000 --> 00:23:29,000

The ritual is a window to the past, and a clear indication that the Nazca did use hallucinogenic plants to induce visions.

301

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

Between the highly ceremonial burials and this spiritual temple, it overlooks the lines.

302

00:23:45,000 --> 00:23:51,000

There's no question in my mind that the Nazca built their symbols in the sand, in part, to reach out to the gods.

303

00:23:51,000 --> 00:23:55,000

But the question is, what were the lines trying to say?

304

00:23:57,000 --> 00:24:03,000

The answers may be found in never-before-seen lines that were spotted recently by a pilot after a sandstorm.

305

00:24:03,000 --> 00:24:08,000

Can these new shapes help decode the puzzle of the Nazca lines, once and for all?

306

00:24:09,000 --> 00:24:13,000

Hey guys, how are ya?

307

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

At dawn, I head over to Nazca's tiny airport to meet with historian Antonio San Cristobal and get a bird's eye view of ancient history.

308

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

Okay, let's do it.

309

00:24:28,000 --> 00:24:33,000

As our plane soars over the arid desert, the sand seems to stretch out like a blank canvas.

310

00:24:33,000 --> 00:24:37,000

But then, rising from the dunes, shapes appear.

311

00:24:37,000 --> 00:24:39,000

Everyone.

312

00:24:51,000 --> 00:24:57,000

We soar over several of the massive animal glyphs, including the spider and the condor.

313

00:24:57,000 --> 00:25:02,000

I also have a newfound respect for the soaring hummingbird we attempted to copy.

314

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

But I'm also here to see something else.

315

00:25:07,000 --> 00:25:14,000

A few months ago, a pilot spotted previously unknown shapes revealed by the shifting sands.

316

00:25:14,000 --> 00:25:21,000

We bank the plane toward the coordinates for one of the first looks at these mysterious lines.

317

00:25:22,000 --> 00:25:29,000

I'm in southern Peru, circling massive, 1500-year-old drawings in the desert known as the Nazca lines.

318

00:25:29,000 --> 00:25:36,000

We're also hoping to get a look at a set of never-before-seen lines that have just been revealed by a recent sandstorm.

319

00:25:36,000 --> 00:25:37,000

I see it!

320

00:25:37,000 --> 00:25:38,000

I can't see it!

321

00:25:38,000 --> 00:25:39,000

Look!

322

00:25:39,000 --> 00:25:40,000

I see it!

323

00:25:40,000 --> 00:25:41,000

I see it!

324

00:25:41,000 --> 00:25:42,000

I see it!

325

00:25:42,000 --> 00:25:43,000

I see it!

326

00:25:43,000 --> 00:25:44,000

I see it!

327

00:25:44,000 --> 00:25:45,000

I see it!

328

00:25:45,000 --> 00:25:46,000

I see it!

329

00:25:46,000 --> 00:25:47,000

I see it!

330

00:25:47,000 --> 00:25:48,000

I see it!

331

00:25:48,000 --> 00:25:49,000

I see it!

332

00:25:49,000 --> 00:25:50,000

I see it!

333

00:25:50,000 --> 00:25:51,000

Look at that!

334

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

That is so cool!

335

00:25:53,000 --> 00:25:54,000

Amazing!

336

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

New Nazca lines!

337

00:25:57,000 --> 00:26:05,000

The lines appear to show a 200-foot snake, a bird, and strange zigzag lines.

338

00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:23,000

The Paracas were the tribe who ruled the desert before the Nazca, and archaeologists believe these lines may be some of the oldest ever discovered.

339

00:26:35,000 --> 00:26:36,000

What does it mean?

340

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

What does it mean, Antonio?

341

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

That's a real question.

342

00:26:40,000 --> 00:26:43,000

Question 5, Nasi Niko.

343

00:26:47,000 --> 00:26:51,000

Back on the ground, and I'm back in my 4x4 on the trail of answers.

344

00:26:51,000 --> 00:26:56,000

So to understand the Nazca people, we have to understand the Paracas people.

345

00:26:56,000 --> 00:27:00,000

To do that, we're going to head to the city of Paracas, which is about four hours north.

346

00:27:01,000 --> 00:27:06,000

From Nazca, it's a few hundred miles through the desert to the small port town of Paracas.

347

00:27:06,000 --> 00:27:11,000

Situated in a wide bay on the Pacific, this town has been inhabited for thousands of years.

348

00:27:11,000 --> 00:27:19,000

The prehistoric tribe that once ruled here has made quite an impression on the current population, though they aren't very talkative.

349

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

Sir, I'm going to bother you.

350

00:27:21,000 --> 00:27:24,000

I'm just hoping to learn the secrets of the Nazca people.

351

00:27:24,000 --> 00:27:26,000

Very grumpy.

352

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

A few blocks down the street is the Paracas History Museum.

353

00:27:32,000 --> 00:27:36,000

As I browse the collection, the story of the Paracas comes into view.

354

00:27:40,000 --> 00:27:45,000

They lived in these deserts at least a thousand years prior to the Nazca, who invaded them from the north.

355

00:27:47,000 --> 00:27:55,000

After the Nazca conquered the Paracas, they absorbed their culture and continued the animal glyphs and lines that began centuries earlier.

356

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

But what really jumps out at me is their shared fascination with heads.

357

00:28:06,000 --> 00:28:15,000

This is incredible. The Paracas people engaged in this really strange ritual of binding and elongating their skulls.

358

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

No, these are not alien artifacts. The elongation was accomplished by tying rocks and rope to infants and deforming the skulls while they're still soft.

359

00:28:24,000 --> 00:28:30,000

Why the Paracas did this, we don't fully know, but it is believed to have been something reserved for nobility.

360

00:28:30,000 --> 00:28:32,000

Why the long face?

361

00:28:33,000 --> 00:28:37,000

Come on. Too soon? Two thousand years ago.

362

00:28:43,000 --> 00:28:50,000

Since the newly discovered lines were made by the Paracas people, it stands to reason that the Nazca lines were inspired by this older culture.

363

00:28:50,000 --> 00:28:55,000

In fact, the oldest and strangest of the Paracas lines can only be seen from the ocean.

364

00:28:56,000 --> 00:29:01,000

I'm hitching a ride with local archaeologist Rolando Aibar to see where the lines began.

365

00:29:01,000 --> 00:29:04,000

This is our boat. This is it? Yes.

366

00:29:04,000 --> 00:29:11,000

Our vessel has seen better days, but I'm sure she's seaworthy. The engine is new. The engine's new. That's all that matters.

367

00:29:15,000 --> 00:29:17,000

The term new is being thrown around pretty loosely here.

368

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

We got it. Here we go.

369

00:29:27,000 --> 00:29:32,000

Despite the lethally dry desert inland, offshore feels like a Peruvian Galapagos.

370

00:29:37,000 --> 00:29:45,000

Humboldt penguins, sea lions, and flocks of beautiful Peruvian boobies. Those are birds, by the way. The sea here is utterly alive.

371

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

Dolphins. Yes. Beautiful.

372

00:29:50,000 --> 00:30:07,000

The Paracas and the Nazca were desert cultures, but the links to the sea are hard to ignore.

373

00:30:08,000 --> 00:30:17,000

The marine wildlife is mirrored in the desert with glyphs like the killer whale and even the famed astronaut, which archaeologists now believe could represent a fisherman.

374

00:30:20,000 --> 00:30:27,000

Down in Nazca, I kept thinking, how could the ancient people survive here, but now that I see this,

I realize how dependent they must have been on the sea.

375

00:30:28,000 --> 00:30:35,000

Yes, because those people that came to live here or to stay here, they mainly were fishermen.

376

00:30:36,000 --> 00:30:43,000

The Paracas and the Nazca are starting to come into focus for me. Their lines are deeply tied to their environment and their dependence on water.

377

00:30:44,000 --> 00:30:51,000

Then, as our boat rounds the peninsula, I see something that leaves me speechless.

378

00:30:52,000 --> 00:30:55,000

Judge, this is what I wanted to show you. Look at that sign.

379

00:30:56,000 --> 00:31:01,000

Oh my God, that is incredible. It's huge.

380

00:31:01,000 --> 00:31:18,000

I'm in Peru trying to understand the purpose behind the Nazca lines, and my guide has just shown me a big piece of the puzzle.

381

00:31:19,000 --> 00:31:22,000

Judge, this is what I wanted to show you. Look at that sign.

382

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

Oh my God, that is incredible. It's huge.

383

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

This is why we call it the Candelabra.

384

00:31:37,000 --> 00:31:43,000

The Candelabra glyph can be seen from 12 miles out to sea. It was made by the Paracas people.

385

00:31:45,000 --> 00:31:46,000

How old is it?

386

00:31:47,000 --> 00:31:52,000

It's about 2200 years old. The Paracas did not come from Candelabras. It was born by the Spanish.

387

00:31:53,000 --> 00:31:55,000

But this could be a cactus.

388

00:31:55,000 --> 00:32:04,000

The big branch, the big column in the middle, if you elongate that column, it is linked to the hummingbird of Nazca lines.

389

00:32:05,000 --> 00:32:06,000

Really?

390

00:32:07,000 --> 00:32:09,000

That one represents the beginning of the rainy season there in Nazca.

391

00:32:10,000 --> 00:32:11,000

They point to the same direction?

392

00:32:12,000 --> 00:32:13,000

Exactly.

393

00:32:14,000 --> 00:32:15,000

Wow, that's incredible. It all comes down to water.

394

00:32:16,000 --> 00:32:17,000

Yes, exactly.

395

00:32:18,000 --> 00:32:23,000

Hearing that the Paracas Candelabra is aligned to the Nazca hummingbird bolsters the theory that the shapes are tied to water.

396

00:32:24,000 --> 00:32:29,000

One historian who believes he can prove that has a bold new theory about the lines.

397

00:32:34,000 --> 00:32:40,000

Back on shore and a few miles inland, I'm meeting with the director of the Paracas History Museum, Brian Forrester.

398

00:32:41,000 --> 00:32:43,000

Brian, I hear you're the man to talk to about the Paracas people.

399

00:32:44,000 --> 00:32:46,000

Well, I guess I'm one of them, but sure, I'll take the job.

400

00:32:47,000 --> 00:32:50,000

Quickly learning that to understand the Nazca, you've got to understand the Paracas.

401

00:32:51,000 --> 00:32:52,000

It's essential.

402

00:32:52,000 --> 00:32:53,000

So, how do I do that?

403

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

Well, I've got a couple of special places I want to show you.

404

00:32:57,000 --> 00:32:58,000

All right. 4x4?

405

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

No.

406

00:33:01,000 --> 00:33:02,000

Why not?

407

00:33:02,000 --> 00:33:03,000

Sand.

408

00:33:04,000 --> 00:33:05,000

More sand.

409

00:33:05,000 --> 00:33:06,000

Yeah.

410

00:33:11,000 --> 00:33:17,000

Brian is taking me deep into Paracas territory, where exactly I'm not sure, but I'm anxious to see what he has in store.

411

00:33:17,000 --> 00:33:23,000

The Paracas thrived in one of the most inhospitable deserts on Earth, and ultimately, they died here too.

412

00:33:24,000 --> 00:33:25,000

Is that bone?

413

00:33:25,000 --> 00:33:26,000

Yeah.

414

00:33:28,000 --> 00:33:35,000

This is a recently dug-up grave of someone at least 500, maybe a thousand, maybe even 2,000 years old.

415

00:33:36,000 --> 00:33:43,000

Brian has led me to a massive Paracas cemetery, a necropolis that's a mile wide and five miles long.

416

00:33:44,000 --> 00:33:46,000

Rough estimate, how many people do you think are buried here?

417

00:33:46,000 --> 00:33:48,000

I would say at minimum 10,000.

418

00:33:49,000 --> 00:33:50,000

Unbelievable.

419

00:33:50,000 --> 00:33:55,000

But this site is completely unattended, and at the mercy of any looter with enough gas to get out here.

420

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

Many of the graves have been totally destroyed.

421

00:33:58,000 --> 00:34:00,000

These trenches that I see along the way here, those are looted graves?

422

00:34:01,000 --> 00:34:02,000

Yes.

423

00:34:02,000 --> 00:34:05,000

And underneath here, still preserved burials as well, I assume.

424

00:34:05,000 --> 00:34:06,000

Oh, many, many more.

425

00:34:07,000 --> 00:34:09,000

This is someone's skull.

426

00:34:13,000 --> 00:34:14,000

Unbelievable.

427

00:34:15,000 --> 00:34:17,000

That is incredible.

428

00:34:18,000 --> 00:34:22,000

I'm looking face to face at a... a... a parakeet, probably.

429

00:34:22,000 --> 00:34:23,000

Yeah.

430

00:34:24,000 --> 00:34:32,000

I've never had the experience before of stopping in a place and picking up a human skull out of the ground.

431

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

We carefully return the skull to the ground and recover it with sand.

432

00:34:38,000 --> 00:34:44,000

After hundreds of years of being in peace, put them back in a state of peace like that.

433

00:34:47,000 --> 00:34:50,000

Back on the ATVs, we head deeper into the desert.

434

00:34:50,000 --> 00:34:58,000

Brian has researched the glyphs and lines in the area and calculated that a number of the lines intersect at a location several miles to the east.

435

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

I'm anxious to find out why.

436

00:35:01,000 --> 00:35:05,000

As we round the bend, a buried Caracas temple looms before us.

437

00:35:09,000 --> 00:35:10,000

Wow.

438

00:35:14,000 --> 00:35:20,000

Much like the Nazca temple of Cahuaqi, this Parakean pyramid was a gathering place for religious ceremonies.

439

00:35:20,000 --> 00:35:21,000

That's incredible.

440

00:35:21,000 --> 00:35:22,000

Yeah.

441

00:35:22,000 --> 00:35:24,000

Just unexcavated.

442

00:35:24,000 --> 00:35:25,000

Yeah.

443

00:35:25,000 --> 00:35:26,000

Trapped in the dunes.

444

00:35:26,000 --> 00:35:27,000

Yeah.

445

00:35:27,000 --> 00:35:28,000

A pyramid.

446

00:35:28,000 --> 00:35:30,000

How many of these do you think there are here?

447

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

In this area, there are hundreds.

448

00:35:32,000 --> 00:35:37,000

The foundation of it at least would be 2,000 plus years old.

449

00:35:38,000 --> 00:35:41,000

The Paracas were the first established culture of this area.

450

00:35:41,000 --> 00:35:49,000

So the Paracas were responsible for at least 50% of the geoglyphs and lines, and then the Nazca, the second 50%.

451

00:35:49,000 --> 00:35:56,000

When you look at the Nazca lines, when you look at the glyphs and the geometric shapes and the Paracas shapes, what do you think they're for?

452

00:35:56,000 --> 00:35:59,000

There's no real cohesion or basic pattern.

453

00:35:59,000 --> 00:36:03,000

I think some of them are for solar and lunar alignment.

454

00:36:03,000 --> 00:36:05,000

Some of them are ceremonial pathways.

455

00:36:05,000 --> 00:36:09,000

Some of them are for tracking underground water systems.

456

00:36:09,000 --> 00:36:12,000

This is a bombshell.

457

00:36:12,000 --> 00:36:25,000

Brian believes that not only were the lines used for ceremonial purposes to pray for water, but that many of them may actually lead to water, a sort of physical map over laying underground rivers and pointing to natural wells.

458

00:36:25,000 --> 00:36:27,000

You think there's ancient water sources here?

459

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

It's possible that slightly under the ground of that area, we can find water today.

460

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

Looking for water in the desert?

461

00:36:38,000 --> 00:36:39,000

Yep.

462

00:36:39,000 --> 00:36:41,000

Sounds like a challenge.

463

00:36:45,000 --> 00:36:54,000

The lines that led us to this pyramid likely guided the Paracas on ceremonial processions, but might also have functioned as directions to water.

464

00:36:54,000 --> 00:36:56,000

What do we think these depressions are?

465

00:36:56,000 --> 00:37:00,000

It could actually be accesses like little wells for water.

466

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

Really?

467

00:37:01,000 --> 00:37:02,000

Yeah.

468

00:37:02,000 --> 00:37:04,000

So you're saying that there may be water under this?

469

00:37:04,000 --> 00:37:06,000

Well, I'm saying it's possible, yeah.

470

00:37:08,000 --> 00:37:10,000

Well, let's give it a whirl. Let's see if there's anything here.

471

00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:11,000

Okay.

472

00:37:14,000 --> 00:37:23,000

Brian's theory strikes me as impossible, mostly because this is an absolutely lifeless desert, but he's convinced, so I've got little choice but to start digging.

473

00:37:23,000 --> 00:37:26,000

This is a ridiculous way to spend an afternoon.

474

00:37:28,000 --> 00:37:32,000

Update, I'm parched, I'm sweating, and it's 8,000 degrees out.

475

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

The more we dig, the more I feel like the only thing I'm going to find beneath the sand is sand.

476

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

How far down do you think it really is?

477

00:37:39,000 --> 00:37:41,000

I wouldn't think even 10 feet below, really?

478

00:37:41,000 --> 00:37:43,000

Yeah, well, we're hitting a lot of roots.

479

00:37:43,000 --> 00:37:44,000

Yeah, that's a good sign.

480

00:37:44,000 --> 00:37:49,000

These roots are dead, and if Brian and I don't get back to the road before dark, we might be too.

481

00:37:49,000 --> 00:37:54,000

But if there is an underground stream here, we might also answer the riddle of the Nazca lines.

482

00:37:58,000 --> 00:38:02,000

I can't help but notice that I'm down in the pit shoveling and you're supervising.

483

00:38:02,000 --> 00:38:04,000

Well, I'm a local.

484

00:38:04,000 --> 00:38:05,000

Right.

485

00:38:05,000 --> 00:38:08,000

It's your right as a visitor to Explorer.

486

00:38:08,000 --> 00:38:10,000

I appreciate you letting me do that.

487

00:38:10,000 --> 00:38:11,000

My honor.

488

00:38:14,000 --> 00:38:16,000

The soil's getting harder.

489

00:38:16,000 --> 00:38:17,000

Yeah.

490

00:38:20,000 --> 00:38:21,000

Whoa.

491

00:38:21,000 --> 00:38:23,000

Oh, wait, wait.

492

00:38:30,000 --> 00:38:34,000

I've come to Peru to investigate the mystery of the Nazca lines.

493

00:38:34,000 --> 00:38:39,000

After following these symbols deep into the desert, we're digging to see if they were used to locate water.

494

00:38:39,000 --> 00:38:40,000

Whoa.

495

00:38:40,000 --> 00:38:42,000

Oh, wait, wait.

496

00:38:43,000 --> 00:38:44,000

Look at that.

497

00:38:44,000 --> 00:38:45,000

Wet soil.

498

00:38:45,000 --> 00:38:47,000

Yep, you've hit the water table.

499

00:38:49,000 --> 00:38:50,000

Water.

500

00:38:50,000 --> 00:38:56,000

There is water down here in the desert.

501

00:38:56,000 --> 00:38:57,000

Yeah.

502

00:38:57,000 --> 00:39:06,000

This discovery at the convergence of these lines is compelling evidence that the prehistoric tribes of Peru might have carved their massive symbols to track water.

503

00:39:06,000 --> 00:39:08,000

That is so cool.

504

00:39:08,000 --> 00:39:09,000

Amazing.

505

00:39:09,000 --> 00:39:10,000

You know what?

506

00:39:10,000 --> 00:39:13,000

I don't want to say that I doubted you, but I really doubted you.

507

00:39:13,000 --> 00:39:15,000

Thanks for the hard work.

508

00:39:15,000 --> 00:39:16,000

This is incredible.

509

00:39:16,000 --> 00:39:20,000

It really may be that the shapes in the Nazca lines do point to water.

510

00:39:20,000 --> 00:39:22,000

Some of them at least, yeah.

511

00:39:22,000 --> 00:39:23,000

Yeah, that's incredible.

512

00:39:23,000 --> 00:39:24,000

It's hard to argue with that.

513

00:39:24,000 --> 00:39:26,000

Wet soil right here.

514

00:39:27,000 --> 00:39:35,000

As we leave the sand-choked ruins of the Paracas civilization and head back to Nazca, there are other clues that may back this theory up.

515

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

With just an inch of rain a year, the Nazca became masters of water management.

516

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

Some of the lines, including the newly discovered lines, depict strange spiral shapes.

517

00:39:44,000 --> 00:39:50,000

And on the edge of town, there are similarly shaped holes that actually serve a very real purpose.

518

00:39:53,000 --> 00:39:55,000

So these are called ojos.

519

00:39:55,000 --> 00:39:59,000

It's basically a very elaborate looking manhole.

520

00:40:00,000 --> 00:40:04,000

It's a check well that goes down to an underground aqueduct system.

521

00:40:04,000 --> 00:40:07,000

This is the very bottom of the system.

522

00:40:07,000 --> 00:40:10,000

And what's so cool about this is there's no cement lining this.

523

00:40:10,000 --> 00:40:12,000

There's no concrete here.

524

00:40:12,000 --> 00:40:20,000

There's just naturally piled rocks, and they're using the natural sediment of the floor here to allow this water to just pass through.

525

00:40:20,000 --> 00:40:23,000

It doesn't absorb, it just passes like an underground river.

526

00:40:23,000 --> 00:40:28,000

These wells led to tiny underground streams that flow down from the Andes.

527

00:40:28,000 --> 00:40:34,000

2,000 years ago, the Nazca figured out how to tap into them, and it's so well built that it still works.

528

00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:36,000

It's so cold.

529

00:40:36,000 --> 00:40:38,000

You can see that down here.

530

00:40:38,000 --> 00:40:48,000

This system is working exactly as it did 1,500 years ago, providing clean, drinkable water to the Nazca people.

531

00:40:51,000 --> 00:40:55,000

But in the past, terrible droughts created constant need for other water sources.

532

00:40:55,000 --> 00:40:59,000

And I now believe we have the answer to the riddle of the lines.

533

00:41:03,000 --> 00:41:05,000

The lines don't have one purpose.

534

00:41:05,000 --> 00:41:08,000

That's why there's so little order to their layout.

535

00:41:08,000 --> 00:41:13,000

They serve several functions, all related to the most precious resource in a desolate world.

536

00:41:13,000 --> 00:41:15,000

Water.

537

00:41:17,000 --> 00:41:24,000

We've seen that some of the lines were astronomical, a way to track the very brief rainy season and plan for crops.

538

00:41:24,000 --> 00:41:30,000

We've also seen that the lines are clearly ceremonial, massive glyphs used to pray for water.

539

00:41:30,000 --> 00:41:32,000

The thirsty hummingbird.

540

00:41:32,000 --> 00:41:34,000

The resilient cactus.

541

00:41:34,000 --> 00:41:35,000

The fisherman.

542

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

All symbols tied to water.

543

00:41:38,000 --> 00:41:44,000

The newly discovered lines show a snake and wavy lines, both ancient symbols for water.

544

00:41:44,000 --> 00:41:50,000

And finally, it seems that some of the lines may actually point to or overlay subterranean water sources,

545

00:41:50,000 --> 00:41:54,000

a dusty map that evolves over generations.

546

00:41:55,000 --> 00:42:01,000

In time, the Nazca culture was absorbed by other tribes, just as they absorbed the paracas.

547

00:42:01,000 --> 00:42:03,000

Their legacy is beneath our feet.

548

00:42:03,000 --> 00:42:10,000

There are still thousands of structures trapped in the dunes, and there's no doubt that more symbols are destined for discovery.

549

00:42:10,000 --> 00:42:14,000

The Nazca were masters of conservation in a punishing world.

550

00:42:14,000 --> 00:42:18,000

We now know that their lines were a complex system for survival.

551

00:42:18,000 --> 00:42:25,000

But with so much of their culture still unexplored, who knows what new mysteries will emerge from beneath the sands.