

1

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

This is a god killer. This is death itself.

2

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

At some point though, in the 1400s, they vanish.

3

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

Yeah.

4

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

It looks like a structure. How awesome is that?

5

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

If this is real, it's history changing.

6

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

Look at that. There's bones everywhere.

7

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

Iceberg! Turn! Turn!

8

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

My name is Josh Gates.

9

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

With a degree in archaeology and a passion for exploration,

10

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

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

11

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

It's just straight down! Unbelievable!

12

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

My travels have taken me to the ends of the Earth

13

00:01:03,000 --> 00:01:04,000

Oh God!

14

00:01:04,000 --> 00:01:07,000

as I investigate the greatest legends in history.

15

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

We're good to try. Let's go.

16

00:01:08,000 --> 00:01:11,000

This is Expedition Unknown.

17

00:01:17,000 --> 00:01:19,000

The Vikings.

18

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

Fearless warriors and intrepid seafarers

19

00:01:23,000 --> 00:01:27,000

dominated northern Europe for hundreds of years beginning in the 8th century.

20

00:01:29,000 --> 00:01:33,000

Their accomplishments are many, but how did they pull it off?

21

00:01:35,000 --> 00:01:38,000

My mission is to unlock the secrets of their success

22

00:01:38,000 --> 00:01:41,000

and discover how far they truly traveled.

23

00:01:41,000 --> 00:01:44,000

I began in the Viking homeland of Denmark,

24

00:01:44,000 --> 00:01:46,000

where I worked with archaeologists,

25

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

excavating the fortress of a powerful Viking king.

26

00:01:49,000 --> 00:01:52,000

I discovered that far from being just brute fighters,

27

00:01:52,000 --> 00:01:56,000

Vikings worked in unison on complex military projects.

28

00:01:56,000 --> 00:01:57,000

There's real engineering here.

29

00:01:57,000 --> 00:01:59,000

It's the first time in Denmark.

30

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

At another site, I learned that while they may have raided,

31

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

they were also skilled artists and traders

32

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

who crafted amazing precious objects.

33

00:02:08,000 --> 00:02:10,000

That's incredible!

34

00:02:10,000 --> 00:02:13,000

At a Viking festival, I channeled my inner Norse fighter

35

00:02:13,000 --> 00:02:17,000

to find out what made the Vikings such lethal warriors.

36

00:02:17,000 --> 00:02:18,000

Dying was a promotion.

37

00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:20,000

Yes, absolutely.

38

00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:24,000

And then quickly met my own demise on the battlefield.

39

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

Oh, ho, here I come.

40

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

I also discovered that one of the biggest keys to their domination

41

00:02:32,000 --> 00:02:34,000

was in their mastery of shipbuilding.

42

00:02:37,000 --> 00:02:39,000

Which allowed them to construct fast,

43

00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:44,000

hardy vessels that they used to spread across the known world and beyond.

44

00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:49,000

Now, I'm following the path of the Vikings by heading west.

45

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

I've flown to the island nation of Iceland,

46

00:02:51,000 --> 00:02:55,000

which was first settled by the Vikings in the year 874.

47

00:02:55,000 --> 00:02:59,000

I meet with archaeologists Kevin Smith and Gudmundur Olyfsson.

48

00:02:59,000 --> 00:03:01,000

Josh. Hey, I'm Kevin. Nice to meet you.

49

00:03:01,000 --> 00:03:02,000

Hi, nice to meet you.

50

00:03:02,000 --> 00:03:05,000

They're investigating Norse mythology, the gods, monsters and magic

51

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

that have come to define the Vikings.

52

00:03:08,000 --> 00:03:12,000

But the question is, how did this mythology help to make the Vikings

53

00:03:12,000 --> 00:03:14,000

such a dominant force?

54

00:03:14,000 --> 00:03:16,000

We'd like to take you up into the mountains here,

55

00:03:16,000 --> 00:03:19,000

where mythology and archaeology all come together.

56

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

Let's go. Come on.

57

00:03:21,000 --> 00:03:25,000

We pile into my defender and head away from town to ward Kevin's sight,

58

00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:27,000

a cave deep in the backcountry.

59

00:03:27,000 --> 00:03:31,000

To help illustrate what made the Vikings such a powerhouse,

60

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

he suggests we take the direct route,

61

00:03:33,000 --> 00:03:38,000

which means leaving the highway in favor of basically no way.

62

00:03:38,000 --> 00:03:43,000

I think in ten years of driving on some of the worst roads in the world,

63

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

you've found the worst one.

64

00:03:45,000 --> 00:03:46,000

Perfect.

65

00:03:46,000 --> 00:03:49,000

And before long, we hit a minor obstacle.

66

00:03:50,000 --> 00:03:51,000

The road is gone.

67

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

Gudmundur, do you think we can get through that?

68

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

I think we can make it in this car.

69

00:03:57,000 --> 00:03:58,000

All right.

70

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

Okay, boys, hold your breath.

71

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

Okay.

72

00:04:11,000 --> 00:04:13,000

It's deep in here.

73

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

It's real deep. It's dragging it.

74

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

Hold on. Hold on. Hold on. Here we go. Here we go.

75

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

Come on, girl.

76

00:04:27,000 --> 00:04:28,000

There we go.

77

00:04:37,000 --> 00:04:38,000

Go!

78

00:04:38,000 --> 00:04:39,000

Ha-ha!

79

00:04:39,000 --> 00:04:40,000

We got it!

80

00:04:40,000 --> 00:04:41,000

Nicely done.

81

00:04:42,000 --> 00:04:43,000

Woo-hoo!

82

00:04:45,000 --> 00:04:46,000

We're alive!

83

00:04:48,000 --> 00:04:51,000

We roll on, and I notice that we've gone from water

84

00:04:51,000 --> 00:04:54,000

to a land that looks like it's been scorched by fire.

85

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

Iceland has 130 volcanoes,

86

00:04:59,000 --> 00:05:02,000

one of which was blanketing this section of the island

87

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

with massive rivers of lava just when the Vikings landed.

88

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

So when the Vikings arrived here,

89

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

this eruption happened soon after?

90

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

Probably within the first decades of people's arrival.

91

00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:15,000

I mean, to the Vikings,

92

00:05:15,000 --> 00:05:18,000

that must have seemed totally supernatural.

93

00:05:18,000 --> 00:05:21,000

Viking mythology is populated with not just gods

94

00:05:21,000 --> 00:05:23,000

like Odin and Thor,

95

00:05:23,000 --> 00:05:25,000

but giants and evil creatures

96

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

who face off in the ultimate battle called Ragnarok.

97

00:05:29,000 --> 00:05:31,000

Yes, that Ragnarok.

98

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

They believed that a massive fire monster named Surtur

99

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

would emerge from the underworld

100

00:05:36,000 --> 00:05:38,000

and engulf the Earth in flames.

101

00:05:39,000 --> 00:05:42,000

So it may be that this whole notion of these Norse fire gods

102

00:05:42,000 --> 00:05:44,000

was kind of born here.

103

00:05:44,000 --> 00:05:47,000

It may be a product of sitting on their front porch

104

00:05:47,000 --> 00:05:48,000

watching the world end.

105

00:05:54,000 --> 00:05:58,000

Finally, Kevin's GPS indicates we've arrived at the end of the world.

106

00:05:58,000 --> 00:06:02,000

Finally, Kevin's GPS indicates we've arrived at our destination.

107

00:06:03,000 --> 00:06:05,000

You can pull over anywhere up here.

108

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

Okay.

109

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

Parking in lava.

110

00:06:08,000 --> 00:06:11,000

We pull over, grab helmets,

111

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

and Kevin leads us toward a terrifying site.

112

00:06:22,000 --> 00:06:24,000

Oh, man!

113

00:06:24,000 --> 00:06:26,000

Josh, welcome to the Cave of Surtur.

114

00:06:29,000 --> 00:06:31,000

The fire god who will end the world.

115

00:06:31,000 --> 00:06:33,000

And he is this fire giant.

116

00:06:33,000 --> 00:06:34,000

This is a god killer.

117

00:06:34,000 --> 00:06:38,000

This is death itself, the death of the world in all existence.

118

00:06:38,000 --> 00:06:41,000

This cave has been associated with the fire demon Surtur

119

00:06:41,000 --> 00:06:43,000

since the Vikings were here.

120

00:06:44,000 --> 00:06:47,000

And Kevin's eager to show me what's lurking inside.

121

00:06:48,000 --> 00:06:49,000

And in we go.

122

00:06:50,000 --> 00:06:51,000

Wow!

123

00:06:51,000 --> 00:06:52,000

I mean, it's enormous.

124

00:06:53,000 --> 00:06:56,000

Some of these boulders that have fallen are the size of a car.

125

00:06:56,000 --> 00:06:57,000

And heavier.

126

00:06:58,000 --> 00:07:01,000

Your helmet is just there to protect your dental records.

127

00:07:01,000 --> 00:07:02,000

Great.

128

00:07:02,000 --> 00:07:03,000

Great, great, great.

129

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

Surtur Cave is actually a lava tube,

130

00:07:08,000 --> 00:07:13,000

formed when flowing magma heartens into a crust that creates a massive tunnel.

131

00:07:16,000 --> 00:07:17,000

Oh, wow!

132

00:07:17,000 --> 00:07:20,000

This is a part of the cave that the ceiling has collapsed.

133

00:07:21,000 --> 00:07:22,000

This looks like a wall.

134

00:07:22,000 --> 00:07:23,000

And it is.

135

00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:24,000

That's man-made.

136

00:07:24,000 --> 00:07:25,000

That's man-made.

137

00:07:25,000 --> 00:07:26,000

The top...

138

00:07:26,000 --> 00:07:27,000

It blocks that big.

139

00:07:27,000 --> 00:07:31,000

Which is about four and a half feet wide, three and a half feet high, many tons.

140

00:07:31,000 --> 00:07:35,000

The top of this wall was 15 feet above the original floor of the cave.

141

00:07:35,000 --> 00:07:36,000

And it's 30 feet wide.

142

00:07:36,000 --> 00:07:40,000

It's one of the biggest man-made constructions from Viking Age Iceland.

143

00:07:40,000 --> 00:07:41,000

Why would you put a wall there?

144

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

Yeah, that's a very good question.

145

00:07:43,000 --> 00:07:46,000

Is it to keep somebody out or to keep something in?

146

00:07:46,000 --> 00:07:48,000

So that's where the real story is.

147

00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:49,000

Beyond the Wall.

148

00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:50,000

Beyond the Wall.

149

00:07:51,000 --> 00:07:54,000

We make like Jon Snow and go over the wall,

150

00:07:54,000 --> 00:07:58,000

traversing more boulders into the collapsed section of the lava tube.

151

00:08:12,000 --> 00:08:14,000

Now it is getting dark.

152

00:08:15,000 --> 00:08:18,000

And this is what makes this cave so incredible.

153

00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:20,000

Look at that, there's bones everywhere.

154

00:08:20,000 --> 00:08:21,000

Wow!

155

00:08:21,000 --> 00:08:23,000

It's littered with bones.

156

00:08:27,000 --> 00:08:30,000

About 750,000 bone fragments.

157

00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:32,000

And these are all animal bones?

158

00:08:32,000 --> 00:08:33,000

Absolutely.

159

00:08:33,000 --> 00:08:35,000

In fact, on the walls behind you,

160

00:08:35,000 --> 00:08:38,000

we can see that there is dark or dark.

161

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

And this is what makes this cave so incredible.

162

00:08:40,000 --> 00:08:42,000

Look at that, there's bones everywhere.

163

00:08:42,000 --> 00:08:43,000

Wow!

164

00:08:43,000 --> 00:08:45,000

There is dark organic staining.

165

00:08:45,000 --> 00:08:48,000

It tells us that the bone pile was originally three feet thick.

166

00:08:48,000 --> 00:08:50,000

This would have been all bone.

167

00:08:50,000 --> 00:08:51,000

All bone.

168

00:08:53,000 --> 00:08:55,000

One of the things that's really strange about it

169

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

is that there's no burned bone at all in this pile.

170

00:08:57,000 --> 00:08:58,000

Okay.

171

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

Fragments of animal bones in the prime of their life,

172

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

but not cooked here.

173

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

So why were these animals here if not to be cooked and eaten?

174

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

Why build a rock wall in a cave?

175

00:09:10,000 --> 00:09:12,000

Kevin has a theory.

176

00:09:12,000 --> 00:09:17,000

Is it possible that what you're doing is giving offerings to searcher?

177

00:09:17,000 --> 00:09:19,000

This fire giant.

178

00:09:19,000 --> 00:09:20,000

It's his home.

179

00:09:20,000 --> 00:09:23,000

And we have a wall out there which blocks the passageway

180

00:09:23,000 --> 00:09:25,000

to prevent searcher from coming out.

181

00:09:25,000 --> 00:09:26,000

Right.

182

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

And the punchline is in that case,

183

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

whatever they did here would seemingly have worked.

184

00:09:30,000 --> 00:09:32,000

The volcano here never erupted again.

185

00:09:32,000 --> 00:09:34,000

They survived the apocalypse.

186

00:09:34,000 --> 00:09:37,000

It appears the Vikings may have pilgrimage to this cave

187

00:09:37,000 --> 00:09:42,000

in a brave effort to appease one of the angriest demons in their mythology.

188

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

It just for me underscores again that the Vikings are living and exploring

189

00:09:48,000 --> 00:09:51,000

and thriving really, all across the North Atlantic

190

00:09:51,000 --> 00:09:55,000

in places that seem to us in the modern world uninhabitable.

191

00:09:55,000 --> 00:09:56,000

Absolutely.

192

00:09:56,000 --> 00:09:59,000

And constantly creating a new reality as they go.

193

00:09:59,000 --> 00:10:02,000

The Vikings lived in a sort of blended reality

194

00:10:02,000 --> 00:10:05,000

between the natural and mythological worlds.

195

00:10:05,000 --> 00:10:08,000

They may have interpreted the volcanic events in Iceland

196

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

as a real fire demon and an impending apocalypse,

197

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

stopping at nothing to keep them at bay.

198

00:10:14,000 --> 00:10:18,000

This is perhaps the greatest secret to the Vikings' accomplishments,

199

00:10:18,000 --> 00:10:21,000

their unwavering commitment in the face of adversity,

200

00:10:21,000 --> 00:10:24,000

both real and mythological.

201

00:10:26,000 --> 00:10:27,000

It's amazing.

202

00:10:27,000 --> 00:10:28,000

Yeah.

203

00:10:28,000 --> 00:10:30,000

Okay, so we have a horrible drive home.

204

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

Everybody ready?

205

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

So yeah, let's do it.

206

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

Let's go.

207

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

My ass is hurting already.

208

00:10:36,000 --> 00:10:41,000

With a deeper appreciation of the high stakes world of Viking beliefs,

209

00:10:41,000 --> 00:10:45,000

I say goodbye to Kevin and Gutmunder and continue my expedition.

210

00:10:50,000 --> 00:10:54,000

I've learned a great deal about what made the Vikings so successful in Iceland,

211

00:10:54,000 --> 00:10:58,000

but they left behind other enduring mysteries in the next place they settled,

212

00:10:58,000 --> 00:11:01,000

like why their entire colony vanished.

213

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

I'm walking in the footsteps of the Vikings on the island nation of Iceland.

214

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

But now, my journey is taking me to the site of one of the strangest Norse mysteries of all.

215

00:11:17,000 --> 00:11:21,000

The mystery begins with the Viking explorer Eric Thorbilsen,

216

00:11:21,000 --> 00:11:24,000

better known as Eric the Red.

217

00:11:24,000 --> 00:11:27,000

Eric got himself banished from Iceland for manslaughter,

218

00:11:27,000 --> 00:11:31,000

so in 986 he set off to explore a new land,

219

00:11:31,000 --> 00:11:36,000

now I'm flying west, following the same route he traveled a millennium ago.

220

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

When Eric the Red sailed here, he tried to convince other Vikings to follow,

221

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

and so in one of the great marketing scams of all time,

222

00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:49,000

he named this place Greenland,

223

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

but one look out the window reveals a chilly reality.

224

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

Greenland, the largest island on Earth,

225

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

locked under nearly a million square miles of ice.

226

00:12:04,000 --> 00:12:09,000

In the interior, a frosted oblivion where no man can survive.

227

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

The 50,000 people who lived here,

228

00:12:14,000 --> 00:12:16,000

and the people who lived here,

229

00:12:16,000 --> 00:12:19,000

were the only ones left to survive.

230

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

The 50,000 people who live here cling to the coasts,

231

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

which is the 20% of the island that isn't parked under a glacier.

232

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:35,000

It's only a few hours from Iceland to Greenland.

233

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

But unlike the bustling streets of Reykjavik,

234

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

things are a little quieter here.

235

00:12:44,000 --> 00:12:46,000

This is the town of Narcisswok.

236

00:12:46,000 --> 00:12:50,000

Now that I'm here, the population has skyrocketed to 131.

237

00:12:50,000 --> 00:12:53,000

There's an airstrip here because this used to be a US base

238

00:12:53,000 --> 00:12:56,000

for Allied planes crossing the Atlantic in World War II.

239

00:12:56,000 --> 00:12:59,000

But today, it is a typical Greenlandic village.

240

00:12:59,000 --> 00:13:03,000

Colorful, functional, and very quiet.

241

00:13:03,000 --> 00:13:06,000

Modern Greenlanders live a lot like their ancestors did.

242

00:13:06,000 --> 00:13:11,000

They farm, they fish, hell they still kill whales and seal and walrus,

243

00:13:11,000 --> 00:13:14,000

but they're not descended from the Vikings,

244

00:13:14,000 --> 00:13:16,000

and Eric the Red.

245

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

People that are here now are mainly Inuit.

246

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

So what happened to all the Norse people?

247

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

There's an archaeologist named Christian Kokmadsen

248

00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:28,000

who might be about to find the answer.

249

00:13:29,000 --> 00:13:32,000

But reaching him won't be easy.

250

00:13:34,000 --> 00:13:36,000

There are virtually no roads here,

251

00:13:36,000 --> 00:13:39,000

so if you want to get between any two towns,

252

00:13:39,000 --> 00:13:41,000

you have to travel by water.

253

00:13:42,000 --> 00:13:43,000

Got it?

254

00:13:45,000 --> 00:13:47,000

Alright, gear is on the board.

255

00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:49,000

Let's set sail.

256

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

The entire coastline of Greenland looks like a million-piece jigsaw puzzle.

257

00:14:03,000 --> 00:14:06,000

So to reach the archaeologist I've come to see,

258

00:14:06,000 --> 00:14:10,000

we'll have to navigate a winding route to his excavation site.

259

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

Navigating through Greenland today is nearly as challenging as it was

260

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

when the Vikings were here.

261

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

It's just endless fjords and bays,

262

00:14:23,000 --> 00:14:26,000

many of them choked with ice and fog.

263

00:14:26,000 --> 00:14:29,000

Today we have GPS and sonar systems,

264

00:14:29,000 --> 00:14:31,000

but a thousand years ago,

265

00:14:31,000 --> 00:14:35,000

they had only the stars, the sun, and a lot of courage.

266

00:14:35,000 --> 00:14:37,000

The icebergs are still moving.

267

00:14:41,000 --> 00:14:44,000

While today's advanced technology helps identify icebergs,

268

00:14:44,000 --> 00:14:46,000

the system isn't infallible.

269

00:14:47,000 --> 00:14:50,000

So the captain asks that we remain hyper-vigilant,

270

00:14:52,000 --> 00:14:55,000

as he keeps the vessel moving at a steady pace.

271

00:14:55,000 --> 00:14:59,000

You really just have to watch and keep your eyes wide open.

272

00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:09,000

Iceberg, turn! Turn!

273

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

I'm navigating the fog-covered southern coast of Greenland

274

00:15:26,000 --> 00:15:31,000

on a mission to find out what happened to its once-flourishing Viking population.

275

00:15:31,000 --> 00:15:34,000

But getting to my destination means playing a game

276

00:15:34,000 --> 00:15:37,000

of dangerous dodgeberg.

277

00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:40,000

Iceberg, turn! Turn!

278

00:15:51,000 --> 00:15:53,000

Out of nowhere!

279

00:15:54,000 --> 00:15:56,000

Oh, man!

280

00:15:56,000 --> 00:16:00,000

Relieved that I won't be the subject of the next James Cameron movie,

281

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

we continue on through the mist.

282

00:16:04,000 --> 00:16:08,000

We approach the GPS coordinates of the archaeological site

283

00:16:08,000 --> 00:16:13,000

and are soon met by a small inflatable boat to transport us into the shallows.

284

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

Is one of you Christian?

285

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

Yeah, I'm Christian.

286

00:16:17,000 --> 00:16:19,000

Hey, I'm Josh. Pleasure.

287

00:16:20,000 --> 00:16:22,000

Okay, here we go.

288

00:16:22,000 --> 00:16:25,000

Christian and his team ferry me to an awaiting tractor,

289

00:16:25,000 --> 00:16:28,000

the only vehicle capable of making it to his site.

290

00:16:30,000 --> 00:16:33,000

By the 11th century, north settlers are farming along the coasts

291

00:16:33,000 --> 00:16:38,000

and hunting for valuable walrus meat and ivory in this unforgiving environment.

292

00:16:47,000 --> 00:16:50,000

So what you're standing on here is actually an entire Norse farm,

293

00:16:50,000 --> 00:16:52,000

most of it covered by sand.

294

00:16:52,000 --> 00:16:55,000

At some point, though, in the 1400s, they vanish.

295

00:16:55,000 --> 00:16:57,000

Yeah, still a mystery.

296

00:16:57,000 --> 00:16:59,000

And I'm hoping the inside I'm going to take you to now

297

00:16:59,000 --> 00:17:01,000

can be part of solving that puzzle.

298

00:17:01,000 --> 00:17:03,000

Awesome. Yeah, let's go.

299

00:17:03,000 --> 00:17:07,000

We travel on to a massive sandy expanse that Christian believes

300

00:17:07,000 --> 00:17:09,000

may be the main part of the farm.

301

00:17:09,000 --> 00:17:11,000

To find out what's really buried here,

302

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

his team has enlisted the help of geophysicist Steve Scruggs.

303

00:17:15,000 --> 00:17:16,000

How are you, man?

304

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

Doing great.

305

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

Okay, so what's the plan for today?

306

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

I have what's called the EM-38 conductivity device.

307

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

If there's any structure, the EM-38 will pick it up.

308

00:17:26,000 --> 00:17:29,000

Got it. You're going to use your cool high-tech machine to look for structures.

309

00:17:29,000 --> 00:17:31,000

Yeah. Yeah.

310

00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:34,000

I'm hoping it's going to give us a snapshot of those last days

311

00:17:34,000 --> 00:17:36,000

and what happened.

312

00:17:36,000 --> 00:17:38,000

Awesome. Let's do it, guys.

313

00:17:39,000 --> 00:17:43,000

The EM meter sends an electromagnetic signal into the ground

314

00:17:43,000 --> 00:17:47,000

and measures how it's conducted by the soil beneath the surface.

315

00:17:47,000 --> 00:17:52,000

Steve scans the area, making meticulous passes over every inch of the site.

316

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

After hours of collecting data,

317

00:17:57,000 --> 00:18:01,000

we gather around the computer to learn what's really under our feet.

318

00:18:01,000 --> 00:18:03,000

Look at Christian foaming at the house.

319

00:18:03,000 --> 00:18:04,000

I'm excited.

320

00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:06,000

Okay, what did you find?

321

00:18:06,000 --> 00:18:09,000

I see this. This is at the top of the dune.

322

00:18:09,000 --> 00:18:11,000

You can see right angles,

323

00:18:11,000 --> 00:18:14,000

and if you connect the dots, you kind of get a shape.

324

00:18:14,000 --> 00:18:16,000

It looks like a structure.

325

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

It looks like a structure, doesn't it?

326

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

Yeah.

327

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

I'm super excited here.

328

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

We have some lines.

329

00:18:24,000 --> 00:18:25,000

So there could be a room.

330

00:18:25,000 --> 00:18:26,000

It's possible.

331

00:18:26,000 --> 00:18:28,000

How awesome is that?

332

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

We could put in a trench somewhere to check.

333

00:18:30,000 --> 00:18:32,000

It looks like under the surface.

334

00:18:32,000 --> 00:18:37,000

One of the bonuses about this is it will also identify metallic content as well.

335

00:18:37,000 --> 00:18:39,000

Did you find anything metallic out there?

336

00:18:39,000 --> 00:18:41,000

There's definitely something there.

337

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

Okay, great. Let's get to it, yeah?

338

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

Come on, let's go.

339

00:18:45,000 --> 00:18:48,000

We walk over to the newly identified area

340

00:18:48,000 --> 00:18:51,000

and break out metal detectors to search the surface,

341

00:18:51,000 --> 00:18:54,000

while Christian's team begins excavating a test pit.

342

00:18:57,000 --> 00:18:59,000

Oh, got a hit here.

343

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

There we go.

344

00:19:04,000 --> 00:19:05,000

What's that?

345

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

It's a nail.

346

00:19:07,000 --> 00:19:08,000

That's incredible.

347

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:10,000

It's a Smith nail.

348

00:19:10,000 --> 00:19:11,000

How old?

349

00:19:11,000 --> 00:19:12,000

Well, this is Norse.

350

00:19:12,000 --> 00:19:13,000

It's Norse?

351

00:19:13,000 --> 00:19:14,000

Yeah.

352

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

Look at that.

353

00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:17,000

That is awesome.

354

00:19:18,000 --> 00:19:20,000

I mean, literally just at your feet.

355

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

There's history here.

356

00:19:21,000 --> 00:19:22,000

Now we're cooking.

357

00:19:22,000 --> 00:19:23,000

Okay, let's go.

358

00:19:26,000 --> 00:19:27,000

Right there.

359

00:19:27,000 --> 00:19:28,000

Oh, look.

360

00:19:28,000 --> 00:19:29,000

It's a rivet.

361

00:19:29,000 --> 00:19:30,000

It's a rivet.

362

00:19:30,000 --> 00:19:31,000

Oh, it's a Norse.

363

00:19:31,000 --> 00:19:32,000

Wow.

364

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

That's a nice find.

365

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

Awesome.

366

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

Of course, not all my finds are winners.

367

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

That is poop.

368

00:19:41,000 --> 00:19:42,000

That is sheep poop.

369

00:19:42,000 --> 00:19:43,000

That is gross.

370

00:19:45,000 --> 00:19:47,000

With the test pit open,

371

00:19:47,000 --> 00:19:48,000

Hey, Christian.

372

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

it's time to see if there's anything significant hidden underground.

373

00:19:52,000 --> 00:19:53,000

What do you got?

374

00:19:53,000 --> 00:19:56,000

So we've seen a stone here is definitely placed.

375

00:19:56,000 --> 00:19:57,000

Uh-huh.

376

00:19:57,000 --> 00:19:58,000

Running under the soil.

377

00:19:58,000 --> 00:20:00,000

So we have a preserved wall here.

378

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

So does that mean that we're inside a structure?

379

00:20:02,000 --> 00:20:04,000

We are inside a building here.

380

00:20:04,000 --> 00:20:05,000

That's incredible.

381

00:20:06,000 --> 00:20:09,000

So that means there could be good stuff preserved down here.

382

00:20:09,000 --> 00:20:11,000

It could be mostly buried under the sand.

383

00:20:11,000 --> 00:20:12,000

Yeah.

384

00:20:13,000 --> 00:20:15,000

We continue to scan the site,

385

00:20:15,000 --> 00:20:19,000

and the farm continues to yield more metal and stone artifacts.

386

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

Is this a strike stone?

387

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

Yeah, part of a fire startup.

388

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

But it's what we're not finding here

389

00:20:23,000 --> 00:20:27,000

that may reveal the true fate of the Vikings in Greenland.

390

00:20:28,000 --> 00:20:32,000

Well, it seems like they took valuable parts only left to what they didn't need it.

391

00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:36,000

So that suggests that there was like an orderly abandonment in farms.

392

00:20:36,000 --> 00:20:40,000

So we don't see their riches and their fine items kind of left in the house.

393

00:20:40,000 --> 00:20:41,000

Things are just gone.

394

00:20:41,000 --> 00:20:43,000

So what do you think ultimately happens to them?

395

00:20:43,000 --> 00:20:46,000

Basically, they lost a reason to be here.

396

00:20:46,000 --> 00:20:48,000

What they came for in the first place,

397

00:20:48,000 --> 00:20:49,000

which was the Wall-Ros ivory,

398

00:20:49,000 --> 00:20:50,000

was following a value.

399

00:20:50,000 --> 00:20:52,000

Surprise is not good enough anymore.

400

00:20:52,000 --> 00:20:56,000

I think people just took off to start a new life in some wells.

401

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

So they were economically driven to come here,

402

00:20:59,000 --> 00:21:02,000

and if that economy dries up, then they go elsewhere.

403

00:21:02,000 --> 00:21:03,000

Yeah, exactly.

404

00:21:04,000 --> 00:21:07,000

Well, I'm excited to hear what's underneath all this sand.

405

00:21:07,000 --> 00:21:08,000

You guys will keep digging?

406

00:21:08,000 --> 00:21:09,000

Absolutely.

407

00:21:09,000 --> 00:21:10,000

Awesome.

408

00:21:10,000 --> 00:21:11,000

Hey, thanks guys.

409

00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:12,000

It was a real pleasure.

410

00:21:12,000 --> 00:21:13,000

Thanks.

411

00:21:14,000 --> 00:21:19,000

With the fog lifted,

412

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

the mystery of the disappearing North settlers is now clear.

413

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

As skilled traders and farmers,

414

00:21:25,000 --> 00:21:28,000

they knew when it was time to move on.

415

00:21:28,000 --> 00:21:31,000

But where did they go?

416

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

The answer may lie with the son of Eric the Red.

417

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

Explorer Leif Erickson has gone down in history

418

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:42,000

as the architect of the Vikings' final phase of westward expansion.

419

00:21:46,000 --> 00:21:50,000

It seems strange to find this huge statue of Leif Erickson

420

00:21:50,000 --> 00:21:54,000

up on this hilltop in one of the most remote places in the world,

421

00:21:54,000 --> 00:21:55,000

but it's here for good reason.

422

00:21:55,000 --> 00:21:59,000

This may be the very spot that Leif Erickson set off from

423

00:21:59,000 --> 00:22:03,000

when he sailed southwest to a mysterious destination known as Vinland.

424

00:22:03,000 --> 00:22:04,000

Now, if you look at a map,

425

00:22:04,000 --> 00:22:07,000

the only thing in that direction is North America.

426

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

So, how far south?

427

00:22:09,000 --> 00:22:10,000

How far west?

428

00:22:10,000 --> 00:22:14,000

The answers to those questions may rewrite the pages of history.

429

00:22:24,000 --> 00:22:26,000

I'm in majestic Greenland,

430

00:22:26,000 --> 00:22:28,000

getting ready to continue my journey west

431

00:22:28,000 --> 00:22:31,000

to investigate the greatest Viking mystery of all.

432

00:22:31,000 --> 00:22:32,000

Vinland.

433

00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:36,000

It is a settlement that has vexed historians for centuries.

434

00:22:37,000 --> 00:22:40,000

Leif Erickson landed at the site in the year 1000.

435

00:22:40,000 --> 00:22:44,000

The name appears in Viking sagas and historical records,

436

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

as well as on a controversial map that shows Greenland,

437

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

and then, far to the west,

438

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

a mysterious coastline labeled Vinland.

439

00:22:52,000 --> 00:22:55,000

No one is sure of its exact location,

440

00:22:55,000 --> 00:22:58,000

though archaeologists believe there's a strong contender.

441

00:22:58,000 --> 00:23:02,000

In the 1960s, a site was discovered in Newfoundland, Canada,

442

00:23:02,000 --> 00:23:05,000

known as Lansall Meadows.

443

00:23:05,000 --> 00:23:08,000

Based on radiocarbon dating of artifacts,

444

00:23:08,000 --> 00:23:11,000

this is a confirmed Viking settlement.

445

00:23:11,000 --> 00:23:15,000

But is it Vinland, or did they travel farther south?

446

00:23:15,000 --> 00:23:19,000

Some believe they landed in what is now the United States.

447

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

There's only one way to find out.

448

00:23:25,000 --> 00:23:27,000

Which means I'm headed home.

449

00:23:28,000 --> 00:23:30,000

Beantown, baby.

450

00:23:33,000 --> 00:23:37,000

Welcome to Boston, a.k.a. my hometown.

451

00:23:37,000 --> 00:23:39,000

It's the cradle of New England.

452

00:23:39,000 --> 00:23:42,000

Yeah, I'm coming home.

453

00:23:42,000 --> 00:23:46,000

Famous for the arts, educational institutions,

454

00:23:46,000 --> 00:23:50,000

a nearly fanatical devotion to sports, and of course seafood.

455

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

This is a town built on revolution.

456

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

Where patriotism runs deep.

457

00:23:55,000 --> 00:23:58,000

And where everyone runs on Duncan.

458

00:24:12,000 --> 00:24:14,000

And while I'm proud to be a local,

459

00:24:14,000 --> 00:24:18,000

I admit that I've worked hard to bury my native accent.

460

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

Otherwise, I might say that I freaking love Boston, bro.

461

00:24:21,000 --> 00:24:23,000

I'm from here. My father was born here.

462

00:24:23,000 --> 00:24:25,000

Later on, we're going up to Revia Beach,

463

00:24:25,000 --> 00:24:28,000

maybe go to Calloon, get a poopoo platter up in Saugus.

464

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

We're going to the socks game, hit the packy store,

465

00:24:30,000 --> 00:24:33,000

get a sixer, get wicked, freaking hammer, bro.

466

00:24:34,000 --> 00:24:38,000

Excuse me. Let us continue our search for the Vikings.

467

00:24:41,000 --> 00:24:43,000

The truth is, here in Massachusetts,

468

00:24:43,000 --> 00:24:48,000

stories of Viking landings are as beloved as baseball and baked beans.

469

00:24:52,000 --> 00:24:55,000

Growing up around here, I was convinced that the Vikings discovered

470

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

what is now the United States.

471

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

I thought this was like an accepted historic fact.

472

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

Yet this, in high school, I even portrayed Leif Erickson

473

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

in a play where he discovered New England.

474

00:25:05,000 --> 00:25:08,000

Now you might say, Josh, that is crazy.

475

00:25:08,000 --> 00:25:11,000

But here in Massachusetts, the signs are everywhere.

476

00:25:13,000 --> 00:25:17,000

This is Com Ave, a major road that runs right through the heart of the city

477

00:25:17,000 --> 00:25:20,000

and it is being lured over by a Viking.

478

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

It was put up in 1887 during a period known as the Norse Revival.

479

00:25:24,000 --> 00:25:28,000

This was a time when New Englanders were consumed with this idea

480

00:25:28,000 --> 00:25:30,000

that the Vikings had discovered America.

481

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

So surely, there has to be some evidence to support this.

482

00:25:35,000 --> 00:25:36,000

Right?

483

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

Consider exhibit A.

484

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

The Norumbega Tower.

485

00:25:41,000 --> 00:25:44,000

It was put up here in 1889.

486

00:25:44,000 --> 00:25:46,000

According to this very elaborate plaque,

487

00:25:46,000 --> 00:25:49,000

this was the site of a Viking fort.

488

00:25:49,000 --> 00:25:52,000

It mentions Leif Erickson coming here in the year 1000.

489

00:25:52,000 --> 00:25:56,000

And it mentions Vinland, saying that right here, where we are right now,

490

00:25:56,000 --> 00:25:57,000

was part of Vinland.

491

00:25:57,000 --> 00:25:59,000

And so what is the evidence?

492

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

Well, it's all in a name.

493

00:26:01,000 --> 00:26:05,000

This area today is western mass, but it used to be called Norumbega.

494

00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:08,000

And during this Norse Revival period, people were convinced

495

00:26:08,000 --> 00:26:13,000

that Norumbega was a variation of Norvega, or Norway.

496

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

In other words, that Vikings must have come here

497

00:26:15,000 --> 00:26:17,000

and that's how this area got its name.

498

00:26:17,000 --> 00:26:19,000

There is just one small problem.

499

00:26:19,000 --> 00:26:21,000

That's nonsense.

500

00:26:22,000 --> 00:26:25,000

There's no archaeological evidence to support the claim.

501

00:26:28,000 --> 00:26:32,000

Continuing south, I pack my car in Fall River.

502

00:26:32,000 --> 00:26:34,000

This, right here, this is it!

503

00:26:34,000 --> 00:26:36,000

A plaque that says,

504

00:26:36,000 --> 00:26:40,000

A skeleton in armor was found near this spot by Hannah Borden Cook

505

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

in the month of May 1831.

506

00:26:43,000 --> 00:26:48,000

And some historians believe that this skeleton was the remains of a Viking.

507

00:26:48,000 --> 00:26:51,000

It had some sort of a metal chest plate on.

508

00:26:51,000 --> 00:26:54,000

And the poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, actually wrote a poem

509

00:26:54,000 --> 00:26:58,000

about this skeleton claiming that it was a Viking.

510

00:26:58,000 --> 00:27:00,000

Unfortunately, about 12 years later,

511

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

the skeleton and the armor it was wearing were lost in a fire,

512

00:27:03,000 --> 00:27:06,000

which means what could be a bombshell piece of evidence

513

00:27:06,000 --> 00:27:10,000

cannot be confirmed, but it also can't be dismissed.

514

00:27:14,000 --> 00:27:16,000

I cross the border into Rhode Island

515

00:27:16,000 --> 00:27:18,000

and continue south toward the coast

516

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

for one more attempt to salvage my Vikings in New England,

517

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

hopes and dreams.

518

00:27:23,000 --> 00:27:25,000

This is the Newport Tower,

519

00:27:25,000 --> 00:27:28,000

which many people have claimed is the remains of a Viking structure,

520

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

which would be incredible if that wasn't actually

521

00:27:31,000 --> 00:27:34,000

the remains of a stone windmill built in the 1600s.

522

00:27:34,000 --> 00:27:39,000

Okay, so it's clear my childhood was all a lie,

523

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

and these landmarks were built on a foundation of wishful thinking.

524

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

Basically, it was a way for Boston's Protestant elite

525

00:27:46,000 --> 00:27:49,000

to align with a Viking origin story,

526

00:27:49,000 --> 00:27:52,000

instead of with Columbus and his Catholic heritage.

527

00:27:52,000 --> 00:27:55,000

One of the biggest proponents was a Harvard chemistry professor

528

00:27:55,000 --> 00:27:58,000

named Eben Horseford, who spearheaded the construction

529

00:27:58,000 --> 00:28:00,000

of most of the landmarks.

530

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

But before I close out my debunking tour of New England,

531

00:28:03,000 --> 00:28:06,000

there's one last piece of evidence I need to check out.

532

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

There is one supposed Viking artifact here in Massachusetts

533

00:28:10,000 --> 00:28:12,000

that has never been debunked,

534

00:28:12,000 --> 00:28:15,000

and it could be the one that's the real deal.

535

00:28:15,000 --> 00:28:18,000

It's located off the coast of Martha's Vineyard,

536

00:28:18,000 --> 00:28:22,000

so named in the 1600s for its abundant wild grapevines,

537

00:28:22,000 --> 00:28:25,000

perhaps also called Vinland 600 years earlier

538

00:28:25,000 --> 00:28:29,000

for the very same reason that it was the most expensive vineyard

539

00:28:29,000 --> 00:28:31,000

for the very same reason.

540

00:28:38,000 --> 00:28:41,000

To many, this upscale island south of Cape Cod

541

00:28:41,000 --> 00:28:44,000

is a summer refuge for tourists.

542

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

But to me, it's the filming location of my favorite movie

543

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

and its fictional town of Amity Island.

544

00:28:51,000 --> 00:28:54,000

Can we put up the gratuitous Jaws reference counter, please?

545

00:28:54,000 --> 00:28:55,000

Ah!

546

00:28:55,000 --> 00:28:56,000

Perfect.

547

00:28:57,000 --> 00:28:59,000

Gates, what is that, a 20-furter?

548

00:28:59,000 --> 00:29:01,000

25, three tons of them.

549

00:29:02,000 --> 00:29:03,000

Ding!

550

00:29:04,000 --> 00:29:06,000

Amity, as you know, means friendship.

551

00:29:07,000 --> 00:29:09,000

Not talking about pleasure boatin',

552

00:29:09,000 --> 00:29:10,000

not talking about day sailin',

553

00:29:10,000 --> 00:29:11,000

I'm talking about workin' for a livin',

554

00:29:11,000 --> 00:29:13,000

I'm talking about sharkin'!

555

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

Nice finish, London!

556

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

How are ya?

557

00:29:17,000 --> 00:29:19,000

They need a bigger boat.

558

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

I'm out on a dock at the crack of It's Still Dark Out,

559

00:29:31,000 --> 00:29:32,000

not to hunt for sharks,

560

00:29:32,000 --> 00:29:36,000

but to meet with Stone Mason Brothers, Jim and Bill Vieira.

561

00:29:37,000 --> 00:29:38,000

What's up, Josh?

562

00:29:38,000 --> 00:29:40,000

They think they know the whereabouts of a Viking artifact

563

00:29:40,000 --> 00:29:43,000

that could genuinely upend everything we think we know

564

00:29:43,000 --> 00:29:45,000

about the discovery of America.

565

00:29:46,000 --> 00:29:49,000

Okay, first of all, why am I awake at this time, Godly Hour?

566

00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:52,000

Because we're going to Noamans Land about three miles off the coast.

567

00:29:52,000 --> 00:29:53,000

What is Noamans Land?

568

00:29:53,000 --> 00:29:54,000

It's an island.

569

00:29:54,000 --> 00:29:56,000

It's now a wildlife refuge.

570

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

Okay, so this is like an island off of Martha's Vineyard.

571

00:29:58,000 --> 00:29:59,000

Yeah, correct.

572

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

And what's out there?

573

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

In 1926, the original owner found what looks like a runic stone.

574

00:30:04,000 --> 00:30:05,000

And it was photographed?

575

00:30:05,000 --> 00:30:07,000

Yes, back in the 20s.

576

00:30:08,000 --> 00:30:11,000

The large stone with runic letters carved into its face

577

00:30:11,000 --> 00:30:13,000

was found on a remote section of beach,

578

00:30:13,000 --> 00:30:17,000

and it appears in a number of photographs from the early 20th century.

579

00:30:19,000 --> 00:30:20,000

And so what do you see in the photos?

580

00:30:20,000 --> 00:30:22,000

Well, you can see it says Leif Erikson,

581

00:30:22,000 --> 00:30:28,000

and it says M.I., which is 1001.

582

00:30:28,000 --> 00:30:31,000

The Vikings certainly would have been exposed to Roman numerals at that point.

583

00:30:31,000 --> 00:30:32,000

Yes.

584

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

So it is possible.

585

00:30:33,000 --> 00:30:34,000

Yes.

586

00:30:34,000 --> 00:30:36,000

So there's both Roman numerals and runic inscriptions on it.

587

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

Yeah, the other thing that's interesting is Leif Erikson is written.

588

00:30:39,000 --> 00:30:40,000

It's all I's.

589

00:30:40,000 --> 00:30:42,000

There was no E in the alphabet back then.

590

00:30:42,000 --> 00:30:43,000

Huh.

591

00:30:44,000 --> 00:30:46,000

So if this is a hoax, it's a very ingenious hoax.

592

00:30:46,000 --> 00:30:47,000

Or it's the real deal.

593

00:30:47,000 --> 00:30:48,000

Yes.

594

00:30:48,000 --> 00:30:51,000

If this is real, it's history changing.

595

00:30:51,000 --> 00:30:55,000

But the island was later turned into an off-limits military test site

596

00:30:55,000 --> 00:30:57,000

and remains uninhabited to this day.

597

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

And it's just been sitting out there this whole time.

598

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

What was a bombing range?

599

00:31:01,000 --> 00:31:04,000

It has unexploded ordnance, maybe even in the water, too.

600

00:31:04,000 --> 00:31:05,000

Wow.

601

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

Okay, this is sounding better and better.

602

00:31:07,000 --> 00:31:08,000

Okay.

603

00:31:08,000 --> 00:31:12,000

And do we think that the rock is still on dry land out there, or is it submerged?

604

00:31:12,000 --> 00:31:14,000

From what we understand, it's submerged.

605

00:31:14,000 --> 00:31:16,000

We get 100-year storms every three years now.

606

00:31:16,000 --> 00:31:17,000

Correct.

607

00:31:17,000 --> 00:31:21,000

This thing could easily get flipped out into the surf on its head

608

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

or covered with sand and disappear forever.

609

00:31:23,000 --> 00:31:24,000

Right.

610

00:31:24,000 --> 00:31:25,000

So now it's time to go find it.

611

00:31:25,000 --> 00:31:26,000

Got it.

612

00:31:26,000 --> 00:31:27,000

All right, let's go find it.

613

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

You ready?

614

00:31:28,000 --> 00:31:29,000

You got it.

615

00:31:30,000 --> 00:31:33,000

We grab our scuba gear and hop aboard,

616

00:31:35,000 --> 00:31:38,000

making our way the three miles to Noamans Land

617

00:31:38,000 --> 00:31:41,000

before the sea starts to get too gnarly for diving.

618

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

Conditions out here sound like they're not great.

619

00:31:47,000 --> 00:31:48,000

It's choppy.

620

00:31:48,000 --> 00:31:50,000

The visibility can be questionable.

621

00:31:50,000 --> 00:31:53,000

And to add a little spice into the mix,

622

00:31:53,000 --> 00:31:57,000

there are now great white sharks that frequent this area with the WOMA.

623

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

Get out of here.

624

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

Yes.

625

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

Really?

626

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

That is correct.

627

00:32:01,000 --> 00:32:02,000

Make sure I'm keeping score here.

628

00:32:02,000 --> 00:32:07,000

We got rough water, unexploded bums, and now great white sharks.

629

00:32:07,000 --> 00:32:08,000

Got it.

630

00:32:18,000 --> 00:32:22,000

I'm in a boat with expert masons Jim and Bill Vieira,

631

00:32:22,000 --> 00:32:25,000

speeding out from the coast of Martha's Vineyard.

632

00:32:25,000 --> 00:32:29,000

The theory is that Leith Erickson arrived on these shores at the turn of the millennium

633

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

and carved the Viking equivalent of I Was Here

634

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

onto the face of a stone at his landing spot.

635

00:32:35,000 --> 00:32:38,000

If we can find and date those markings,

636

00:32:38,000 --> 00:32:40,000

it would rewrite American history.

637

00:32:40,000 --> 00:32:44,000

The American history is the most important thing in the history of the world.

638

00:32:44,000 --> 00:32:47,000

In the 30s, it would rewrite American history.

639

00:32:47,000 --> 00:32:49,000

That's Norman's land right there.

640

00:32:49,000 --> 00:32:50,000

That's it?

641

00:32:50,000 --> 00:32:51,000

Yeah, that's it.

642

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

Wow, it's actually huge.

643

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

Yeah.

644

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

Do we know where off the island this rock is?

645

00:33:03,000 --> 00:33:05,000

It's off the south cliff.

646

00:33:05,000 --> 00:33:08,000

Okay, we still got a lot of coastline here, so how do we narrow that?

647

00:33:08,000 --> 00:33:12,000

In the 30s, it was 40 feet from the bottom of the cliff.

648

00:33:12,000 --> 00:33:13,000

Okay.

649

00:33:13,000 --> 00:33:17,000

And it's next to this very large bowl called the Whale Rock.

650

00:33:17,000 --> 00:33:18,000

Okay.

651

00:33:18,000 --> 00:33:19,000

We have a picture of that.

652

00:33:19,000 --> 00:33:21,000

These are the photos from the 20s and 30s right here.

653

00:33:21,000 --> 00:33:22,000

Yeah, let's see.

654

00:33:22,000 --> 00:33:24,000

So this is the supposed Viking rock here.

655

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

Correct.

656

00:33:27,000 --> 00:33:31,000

And based on this guy sitting on top of it, what, it's about five feet long?

657

00:33:31,000 --> 00:33:32,000

That's what it looks like.

658

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

Okay.

659

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

And then you're saying it's next to a bigger rock though.

660

00:33:36,000 --> 00:33:37,000

Yeah.

661

00:33:37,000 --> 00:33:39,000

It's nestled right up against Whale Rock.

662

00:33:39,000 --> 00:33:41,000

Okay, so this is the Viking rock down here.

663

00:33:41,000 --> 00:33:42,000

Yes.

664

00:33:44,000 --> 00:33:47,000

And this giant thing here, this is Whale Rock.

665

00:33:47,000 --> 00:33:48,000

Yes.

666

00:33:48,000 --> 00:33:49,000

So that's what we're looking for.

667

00:33:49,000 --> 00:33:51,000

Find Whale Rock, you find the Viking rock.

668

00:33:51,000 --> 00:33:52,000

You got it.

669

00:33:52,000 --> 00:33:58,000

A shifting coastline and rising seas have completely submerged what the Vieras believe is the Rune Stone.

670

00:33:58,000 --> 00:34:03,000

But due to its much larger size, the Whale Rock could still be partially visible.

671

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

Could it be whenever these waves are breaking off of right here?

672

00:34:09,000 --> 00:34:11,000

It seems a little too far out.

673

00:34:11,000 --> 00:34:12,000

It's in the cliffs.

674

00:34:14,000 --> 00:34:15,000

This one's out, definitely.

675

00:34:15,000 --> 00:34:16,000

Wrong shape.

676

00:34:16,000 --> 00:34:18,000

It needs to have a smooth top.

677

00:34:18,000 --> 00:34:20,000

Not flat enough on top.

678

00:34:20,000 --> 00:34:22,000

Check that one off the list.

679

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

Okay, moving on.

680

00:34:25,000 --> 00:34:26,000

What about that one right there?

681

00:34:26,000 --> 00:34:27,000

Right there.

682

00:34:27,000 --> 00:34:28,000

Right?

683

00:34:28,000 --> 00:34:29,000

That guy, the flat one.

684

00:34:29,000 --> 00:34:30,000

Oh yeah.

685

00:34:30,000 --> 00:34:31,000

That looks like the photo.

686

00:34:31,000 --> 00:34:33,000

Look at the top, it's exactly the same shape.

687

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

Oh yeah.

688

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

I mean that's the first thing we've seen that's got that flat top to it.

689

00:34:36,000 --> 00:34:37,000

Exactly.

690

00:34:38,000 --> 00:34:41,000

What I don't see is this step down here.

691

00:34:42,000 --> 00:34:45,000

Right now the tide's a little high to see that.

692

00:34:45,000 --> 00:34:46,000

See that notch?

693

00:34:46,000 --> 00:34:47,000

Right at the waterline.

694

00:34:50,000 --> 00:34:51,000

Yes, it does it.

695

00:34:51,000 --> 00:34:53,000

It notches down just like the photo.

696

00:34:58,000 --> 00:34:59,000

I didn't even find it.

697

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

Alright, now.

698

00:35:01,000 --> 00:35:02,000

Step one.

699

00:35:02,000 --> 00:35:03,000

Step one.

700

00:35:03,000 --> 00:35:04,000

Oh yeah.

701

00:35:04,000 --> 00:35:06,000

The problem is the thing we're really looking for is down here underneath it.

702

00:35:06,000 --> 00:35:08,000

This is our Viking rock.

703

00:35:08,000 --> 00:35:10,000

So that would be definitely submerged.

704

00:35:10,000 --> 00:35:11,000

Yes.

705

00:35:11,000 --> 00:35:12,000

What's the move here?

706

00:35:12,000 --> 00:35:13,000

What do we do?

707

00:35:13,000 --> 00:35:14,000

Kind of rough conditions.

708

00:35:14,000 --> 00:35:15,000

One scuba.

709

00:35:15,000 --> 00:35:17,000

Camera down there.

710

00:35:17,000 --> 00:35:18,000

Let's see if we can get some pictures.

711

00:35:18,000 --> 00:35:19,000

Okay, cool.

712

00:35:19,000 --> 00:35:21,000

This is going to be interesting.

713

00:35:29,000 --> 00:35:30,000

Tough spot.

714

00:35:31,000 --> 00:35:33,000

Easiest thing to do would be to walk along that beach

715

00:35:33,000 --> 00:35:34,000

and wait out in the surf,

716

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

but you can't go on the island.

717

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

It's strictly prohibited and it's literally full of unexploded ordinances.

718

00:35:38,000 --> 00:35:40,000

So only way in is from the water side

719

00:35:40,000 --> 00:35:43,000

and conditions are less than ideal.

720

00:35:58,000 --> 00:35:59,000

Come on, get the camera down.

721

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

Have a look, yeah?

722

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

Yeah.

723

00:36:01,000 --> 00:36:02,000

Here we go.

724

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

The visibility is low

725

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

and the Atlantic surf is getting ready to rumble.

726

00:36:13,000 --> 00:36:17,000

But it isn't long before I find a rock that could be the one.

727

00:36:24,000 --> 00:36:26,000

Okay, this rap.

728

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

It's more than six feet.

729

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

You're bigger than the one I thought it was.

730

00:36:30,000 --> 00:36:31,000

That's what I think too.

731

00:36:31,000 --> 00:36:33,000

The photo, it's down by the notch over here.

732

00:36:33,000 --> 00:36:34,000

Yeah, it's further off.

733

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

Let me drop down and look over there.

734

00:36:39,000 --> 00:36:42,000

So back down I go to look for another candidate.

735

00:37:03,000 --> 00:37:06,000

So that's just over five feet.

736

00:37:06,000 --> 00:37:07,000

That seems perfect.

737

00:37:07,000 --> 00:37:09,000

Based on the guy in the photo, I think that's what we're looking at.

738

00:37:09,000 --> 00:37:11,000

It's got the same shape too as the photo.

739

00:37:11,000 --> 00:37:12,000

That's right, yeah.

740

00:37:12,000 --> 00:37:13,000

It has a new view.

741

00:37:13,000 --> 00:37:14,000

Amazing.

742

00:37:14,000 --> 00:37:17,000

So the problem is it's covered in seaweed.

743

00:37:17,000 --> 00:37:20,000

Let's see if we can take a little bit of that top growth off it, yeah?

744

00:37:20,000 --> 00:37:21,000

Nothing too intrusive.

745

00:37:21,000 --> 00:37:23,000

We don't want to damage it at all.

746

00:37:23,000 --> 00:37:25,000

We need to find some sign of those carvings

747

00:37:25,000 --> 00:37:27,000

to confirm this is the real deal.

748

00:37:27,000 --> 00:37:28,000

Here we go.

749

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

The vegetation is nearly impossible to remove.

750

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

So Bill switches from snorkel to scuba and joins me.

751

00:37:45,000 --> 00:37:48,000

I'll take this flat side, you take the far side.

752

00:37:48,000 --> 00:37:49,000

You got it.

753

00:37:52,000 --> 00:37:54,000

Pretty soon it's all hands on deck

754

00:37:54,000 --> 00:37:57,000

to find the runes on this rock.

755

00:37:58,000 --> 00:38:01,000

Okay, we've loosened a bunch of seaweed.

756

00:38:01,000 --> 00:38:03,000

I'm going to take a closer look.

757

00:38:09,000 --> 00:38:12,000

Nothing here, not seeing anything.

758

00:38:17,000 --> 00:38:19,000

Wait, what's that?

759

00:38:19,000 --> 00:38:21,000

We got something.

760

00:38:21,000 --> 00:38:24,000

There's definitely something coming.

761

00:38:24,000 --> 00:38:28,000

There's definitely something carved into the rock here.

762

00:38:28,000 --> 00:38:30,000

A straight line.

763

00:38:30,000 --> 00:38:32,000

Jettapot.

764

00:38:40,000 --> 00:38:44,000

I'm on the eastern Massachusetts coast with the Vieira brothers,

765

00:38:44,000 --> 00:38:46,000

feverishly scraping away sea growth

766

00:38:46,000 --> 00:38:51,000

to reveal what could be evidence that the Vikings landed here a thousand years ago.

767

00:38:51,000 --> 00:38:53,000

Wait, what's that?

768

00:38:53,000 --> 00:38:57,000

There's definitely something carved into the rock here.

769

00:38:57,000 --> 00:38:59,000

A straight line.

770

00:39:05,000 --> 00:39:07,000

Jettapot.

771

00:39:07,000 --> 00:39:10,000

Yes, that's a straight line for sure.

772

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

And another one here.

773

00:39:15,000 --> 00:39:17,000

That's amazing.

774

00:39:17,000 --> 00:39:21,000

With our adrenaline pumping, I film as many close-ups as I can.

775

00:39:22,000 --> 00:39:25,000

But the ocean current starts getting too strong

776

00:39:25,000 --> 00:39:28,000

for us to stay on top of the site any longer.

777

00:39:30,000 --> 00:39:33,000

Not wanting to get bashed to bits against whale rock,

778

00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:36,000

we're forced to call it.

779

00:39:41,000 --> 00:39:43,000

Those look like markings.

780

00:39:43,000 --> 00:39:45,000

Yeah? I think this is the rock.

781

00:39:45,000 --> 00:39:47,000

Is that it? Oh, absolutely.

782

00:39:47,000 --> 00:39:49,000

No question.

783

00:39:49,000 --> 00:39:51,000

Whatever was etched on that rock,

784

00:39:51,000 --> 00:39:54,000

the remains of it, however faint, is still on it.

785

00:39:54,000 --> 00:39:57,000

The million-dollar question, of course, is, is it Viking?

786

00:39:57,000 --> 00:40:01,000

I hate to drop the harbor word inconclusive.

787

00:40:01,000 --> 00:40:06,000

But it's so eroded, and the markings are so fine.

788

00:40:06,000 --> 00:40:10,000

Nothing could have been in a place where it could really be analyzed.

789

00:40:10,000 --> 00:40:12,000

We have to be proclamous.

790

00:40:12,000 --> 00:40:15,000

But hey, maybe this is that first step.

791

00:40:15,000 --> 00:40:18,000

If it doesn't get pulled out of here, it's going to be lost to time.

792

00:40:19,000 --> 00:40:21,000

It wasn't washed to sea.

793

00:40:21,000 --> 00:40:23,000

It wasn't blown away by a hurricane.

794

00:40:23,000 --> 00:40:25,000

It wasn't hit by a bomb.

795

00:40:25,000 --> 00:40:27,000

No sharks, they hated you.

796

00:40:27,000 --> 00:40:29,000

That's awesome. Hey, nice work, man.

797

00:40:29,000 --> 00:40:30,000

I'm top, seriously.

798

00:40:30,000 --> 00:40:32,000

Yeah, nice work, dude.

799

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

Come on!

800

00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:37,000

If the rock can be recovered and thoroughly studied,

801

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

some believe it could be proof, literally written in stone,

802

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

that the Viking set foot on what is now U.S. soil,

803

00:40:43,000 --> 00:40:47,000

nearly 500 years before Columbus made his voyage to the New World.

804

00:40:48,000 --> 00:40:58,000

My four-country exploration of the Vikings has brought me,

805

00:40:58,000 --> 00:41:01,000

of all places, back to my childhood home.

806

00:41:01,000 --> 00:41:06,000

I stand on the opposite side of the same ocean the Vikings looked over

807

00:41:06,000 --> 00:41:10,000

a thousand years ago, and I try to imagine them.

808

00:41:10,000 --> 00:41:13,000

Would I be able to leave the safety of my home

809

00:41:13,000 --> 00:41:16,000

and sail into the frigid unknown?

810

00:41:17,000 --> 00:41:20,000

My journey has revealed to me that the Vikings

811

00:41:20,000 --> 00:41:24,000

weren't the one-dimensional raiders and pirates of popular culture.

812

00:41:24,000 --> 00:41:26,000

They were organized builders.

813

00:41:26,000 --> 00:41:30,000

They were artists, master engineers, sailors,

814

00:41:30,000 --> 00:41:33,000

and yes, fierce warriors.

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

As to the true location of Vinland,

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

we'll see what evidence emerges.

817

00:41:39,000 --> 00:41:42,000

But I believe it's probably somewhere in Canada.

818

00:41:42,000 --> 00:41:46,000

But the fact that New Englanders have so fiercely embraced the Vikings

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00:41:46,000 --> 00:41:50,000

only underscores the power they still hold over our culture.

820

00:41:50,000 --> 00:41:52,000

They were a force of nature,

821

00:41:52,000 --> 00:41:55,000

and their adventures are still being discovered.

822

00:41:55,000 --> 00:41:59,000

I can't wait to see where they take us next.