

1

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

Woo-hoo!

2

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

The white bird might be the most important missing airplane

3

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

in history.

4

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

No piece of the plane is ever found.

5

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

It's like the Brunner Triangle of the Northeast.

6

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

Hey, Josh, I got a hit over here.

7

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

You got something?

8

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

Whoa, whoa, whoa!

9

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

Oh, f***, look at this!

10

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

That's an airplane wreck!

11

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

That's an airplane!

12

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

When it comes to exploration,

13

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

some daring pioneers make history,

14

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

while others shape the future.

15

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

In 1927, Charles Lindbergh becomes the first person

16

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

to fly from New York to Paris nonstop

17

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

in the spirit of St. Louis.

18

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

His feat turns him into a global icon

19

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

and charts a course for America's dominance

20

00:01:06,000 --> 00:01:08,000

in commercial air travel.

21

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

But history and the future were almost very different.

22

00:01:12,000 --> 00:01:15,000

Just two weeks before Lindbergh's historic flight,

23

00:01:15,000 --> 00:01:17,000

French pilot Charles Nune Jassaire

24

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

and navigator François Collis

25

00:01:19,000 --> 00:01:22,000

attempt the crossing in the opposite direction,

26

00:01:22,000 --> 00:01:24,000

aboard a plane known as the Lusso Blanc,

27

00:01:24,000 --> 00:01:26,000

or the White Bird.

28

00:01:26,000 --> 00:01:29,000

Thousands gather to watch their triumphant landing

29

00:01:29,000 --> 00:01:31,000

in front of the Statue of Liberty.

30

00:01:31,000 --> 00:01:33,000

Except the plane never arrives.

31

00:01:33,000 --> 00:01:36,000

It vanishes without a trace.

32

00:01:36,000 --> 00:01:40,000

One of the largest search and rescue operations in history

33

00:01:40,000 --> 00:01:42,000

comes up empty-handed.

34

00:01:42,000 --> 00:01:44,000

It was assumed that the White Bird

35

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

never made it across the Atlantic,

36

00:01:46,000 --> 00:01:48,000

but now newly discovered evidence suggests

37

00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:51,000

that it may have reached North America.

38

00:01:51,000 --> 00:01:54,000

One expert is targeting the wilderness of Newfoundland,

39

00:01:54,000 --> 00:01:56,000

where a fragment of metal could prove

40

00:01:56,000 --> 00:01:59,000

the plane broke apart in a remote pond.

41

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

And another group thinks they've tracked the plane's final flight

42

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

to a secluded forest in Maine.

43

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

So prepare for takeoff on an historic mission

44

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

to discover the fate of a flight

45

00:02:10,000 --> 00:02:14,000

and two heroic pilots who dared to change the world.

46

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

My name is Josh Gates.

47

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

Hello!

48

00:02:22,000 --> 00:02:24,000

Explorer.

49

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

Adventurer.

50

00:02:25,000 --> 00:02:26,000

Amazing!

51

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

Woo!

52

00:02:27,000 --> 00:02:30,000

And a guy who ends up in some very strange situations.

53

00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:31,000

Oh, s***!

54

00:02:31,000 --> 00:02:32,000

Woo! That was exciting.

55

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

With a degree in archaeology

56

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

and a passion for the unexplained,

57

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

I travel to the ends of the Earth,

58

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

investigating the greatest legends in history.

59

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

Now let's punch it!

60

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

This is Expedition Unknown.

61

00:02:53,000 --> 00:02:57,000

Today, we think nothing of flying between Europe

62

00:02:57,000 --> 00:02:58,000

and the United States.

63

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

Every day, thousands of planes

64

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

crisscross above the vast waters of the Atlantic.

65

00:03:04,000 --> 00:03:07,000

But you have to remember, it was less than a century ago

66

00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:10,000

that this feat, a nonstop flight across the pond,

67

00:03:10,000 --> 00:03:12,000

it had never been accomplished.

68

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

And it was something that many people thought

69

00:03:14,000 --> 00:03:17,000

was downright impossible.

70

00:03:17,000 --> 00:03:19,000

In fact, in 1927,

71

00:03:19,000 --> 00:03:23,000

very few people ever had the chance to fly in a biplane.

72

00:03:23,000 --> 00:03:25,000

Today, well, same thing.

73

00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:28,000

There's not many of them left from the early 20th century.

74

00:03:28,000 --> 00:03:29,000

You're ready?

75

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

I am ready.

76

00:03:30,000 --> 00:03:32,000

Let's fly.

77

00:03:37,000 --> 00:03:38,000

Woo-hoo!

78

00:03:42,000 --> 00:03:43,000

It's magic!

79

00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:44,000

It's magic!

80

00:03:44,000 --> 00:03:45,000

Amazing!

81

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

Woo!

82

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

This is a travel air full of thousand biplane.

83

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

It was built in 1928,

84

00:03:55,000 --> 00:03:58,000

the year after the disappearance of the White Bird.

85

00:03:58,000 --> 00:04:00,000

A lot smaller, a different design,

86

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

but it gives you an idea of the reality of aviation

87

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

nearly a century ago.

88

00:04:09,000 --> 00:04:10,000

In case you're wondering,

89

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

yes, this is me trying not to cry,

90

00:04:12,000 --> 00:04:15,000

as we soar above the French countryside.

91

00:04:15,000 --> 00:04:18,000

It might sound silly, but it's hard not to be.

92

00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:19,000

Emotional.

93

00:04:19,000 --> 00:04:21,000

This is flying.

94

00:04:21,000 --> 00:04:24,000

Some wires, a few struts, fabric, cables.

95

00:04:24,000 --> 00:04:28,000

We're just out here, floating in midair.

96

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

There's nothing like it.

97

00:04:30,000 --> 00:04:32,000

To find the White Bird,

98

00:04:32,000 --> 00:04:35,000

we have to understand the era in which she flew.

99

00:04:37,000 --> 00:04:41,000

In 1919, aviation was still highly experimental.

100

00:04:41,000 --> 00:04:42,000

To spark innovation,

101

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

French-American hotel mogul Raymond Ortigue

102

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

offered up the Ortigue de la Corte de la Corte.

103

00:04:47,000 --> 00:04:49,000

He offered up the Ortigue Prize.

104

00:04:49,000 --> 00:04:53,000

\$25,000 to the first aviator to travel non-stop

105

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

between New York and Paris.

106

00:04:55,000 --> 00:04:59,000

By 1927, five teams had made attempts.

107

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

All failed in test trials or during takeoff,

108

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

with planes too heavy for the journey.

109

00:05:04,000 --> 00:05:07,000

Four pilots already lay dead.

110

00:05:07,000 --> 00:05:12,000

On May 8, 1927, two daring French aviators,

111

00:05:12,000 --> 00:05:15,000

Ungesser and Collie, attempted to capture the prize

112

00:05:15,000 --> 00:05:19,000

by flying in a custom-built biplane to Soar

113

00:05:19,000 --> 00:05:21,000

into the pages of history.

114

00:05:21,000 --> 00:05:26,000

The White Bird was based on the Leve Soar PL-4 Reconnaissance Biplane,

115

00:05:26,000 --> 00:05:28,000

but was extensively modified.

116

00:05:28,000 --> 00:05:30,000

The wings were lengthened.

117

00:05:30,000 --> 00:05:32,000

The fuselage was widened and reinforced,

118

00:05:32,000 --> 00:05:36,000

creating enough room for the pilots to sit side by side.

119

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

The landing gear was designed to detach,

120

00:05:38,000 --> 00:05:42,000

saving weight but forcing the plane to land on water.

121

00:05:42,000 --> 00:05:45,000

Meanwhile, three fuel tanks carrying a little over

122

00:05:45,000 --> 00:05:49,000

a thousand gallons of gas were all they had to get to New York.

123

00:05:49,000 --> 00:05:53,000

This is how Charles Ungesser and François Collie

124

00:05:53,000 --> 00:05:55,000

flew for more than 30 hours straight,

125

00:05:55,000 --> 00:05:59,000

at a top speed of just 120 miles an hour.

126

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

Today, we seal ourselves inside metal tubes

127

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

and shut ourselves off from the sky.

128

00:06:05,000 --> 00:06:08,000

But this, this is the purest expression of flight

129

00:06:08,000 --> 00:06:10,000

I've ever experienced.

130

00:06:13,000 --> 00:06:15,000

Nice flying, Baptiste.

131

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

Nice. Thank you.

132

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

People across.

133

00:06:19,000 --> 00:06:22,000

Feeling properly odd, we wing our way back to the hangar,

134

00:06:22,000 --> 00:06:25,000

and I headed to the city to continue my search.

135

00:06:28,000 --> 00:06:30,000

As for Ungesser and Collie,

136

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

they aren't exactly household names in America,

137

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

but here in Paris, they seem to be everywhere.

138

00:06:36,000 --> 00:06:39,000

Commemorated in street names, memorial parks,

139

00:06:39,000 --> 00:06:41,000

hell, there's even an entire restaurant

140

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

themed in their honor.

141

00:06:45,000 --> 00:06:48,000

This is the Lusso Blanc restaurant and bar

142

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

on the rooftop of the Peninsula Paris Hotel.

143

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

It is a wall-to-wall celebration of the pioneering spirit

144

00:06:55,000 --> 00:06:57,000

of our two daring aviators.

145

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

It has sweeping views of the Eiffel Tower,

146

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

a replica of the white bird perched above the city,

147

00:07:03,000 --> 00:07:05,000

and a Michelin star menu.

148

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

So, you know, I might be here a while.

149

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

All of this has me asking one very important question.

150

00:07:10,000 --> 00:07:12,000

Who were these guys?

151

00:07:14,000 --> 00:07:17,000

I reluctantly leave my five-star meal behind

152

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

and head to Le Bourget Airport just north of Paris.

153

00:07:20,000 --> 00:07:23,000

This is where the white bird took flight,

154

00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:26,000

and where Charles Lindberg landed two weeks later.

155

00:07:26,000 --> 00:07:30,000

Today, it's home to France's stunning Air and Space Museum.

156

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

In ours, we have the spirit of St. Louis.

157

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

They have a Concorde,

158

00:07:35,000 --> 00:07:38,000

the supersonic airliner which crossed the Atlantic

159

00:07:38,000 --> 00:07:40,000

in just three and a half hours.

160

00:07:40,000 --> 00:07:42,000

I'm here to meet Marion Wickerly,

161

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

who oversees the museum's collection

162

00:07:44,000 --> 00:07:47,000

of more than 400 historic planes.

163

00:07:47,000 --> 00:07:50,000

Okay, there's one plane I want to talk about that's not here,

164

00:07:50,000 --> 00:07:53,000

which is the Lusso Blanc, the white bird.

165

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

Let's start with Nondresser and Collie.

166

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

Looking at photos of them,

167

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

they look like something out of a movie.

168

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

You know, who were these guys really?

169

00:08:02,000 --> 00:08:06,000

Charles Ningerer was a World War I fighter ace pilot,

170

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

and he shot down 43 German aircraft during the war.

171

00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:10,000

Wow.

172

00:08:10,000 --> 00:08:14,000

And that's called, made him one of the deadliest French aces.

173

00:08:14,000 --> 00:08:18,000

After the war, Nondresser did what all flying aces do.

174

00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:19,000

He went to Hollywood.

175

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

He married a socialite and flew on the silver screen

176

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

as a barnstorming stunt pilot.

177

00:08:24,000 --> 00:08:26,000

And Collie?

178

00:08:26,000 --> 00:08:28,000

Collie was actually a sailor,

179

00:08:28,000 --> 00:08:31,000

and he began the war as a lowly infantry private.

180

00:08:31,000 --> 00:08:35,000

Collie worked his way up to pilot and even squadron commander.

181

00:08:35,000 --> 00:08:39,000

But when in 1918, he lost one of his eyes in a plane crash,

182

00:08:39,000 --> 00:08:42,000

he instead became a skilled navigator.

183

00:08:42,000 --> 00:08:44,000

People here really loved these guys, right?

184

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

They were heroic characters of French.

185

00:08:46,000 --> 00:08:47,000

Yeah, they were national heroes.

186

00:08:47,000 --> 00:08:50,000

So when the two of them decide to make this attempt

187

00:08:50,000 --> 00:08:52,000

to win the Ortig Prize,

188

00:08:52,000 --> 00:08:54,000

is there a lot of confidence in them?

189

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

Absolutely.

190

00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:58,000

Everybody was certain that they would succeed.

191

00:08:59,000 --> 00:09:04,000

May 8th, 1927, they take off from where?

192

00:09:04,000 --> 00:09:06,000

From here, actually, from Le Bourget.

193

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

Literally here, right?

194

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

Literally here.

195

00:09:08,000 --> 00:09:10,000

In a field right out here.

196

00:09:10,000 --> 00:09:13,000

They took off at dawn at 5.17 a.m.

197

00:09:13,000 --> 00:09:17,000

with a big crow watching them and encouraging them.

198

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

Wade down by its own fuel,

199

00:09:19,000 --> 00:09:23,000

the white bird barely cleared the trees at the end of the runway.

200

00:09:23,000 --> 00:09:24,000

A couple of hours later,

201

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

a priest on the coast of Ireland claimed to have seen the plane,

202

00:09:27,000 --> 00:09:29,000

though it's unconfirmed.

203

00:09:29,000 --> 00:09:32,000

Having sacrificed their radio to make room for more fuel,

204

00:09:32,000 --> 00:09:36,000

after they took off, they were utterly alone.

205

00:09:36,000 --> 00:09:39,000

Their intended route would take them 3,630 miles

206

00:09:39,000 --> 00:09:42,000

across the open waters of the North Atlantic,

207

00:09:42,000 --> 00:09:46,000

eventually reaching the coast of North America over Newfoundland

208

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

and flying down to New York City.

209

00:09:48,000 --> 00:09:52,000

At what point do people realize there's a problem here?

210

00:09:52,000 --> 00:09:56,000

On the 9th of May, about 40 hours after the takeoff,

211

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

because at this point, it was absolutely sure

212

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

that they could not have enough fuel to still be airborne.

213

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

Tens of thousands of New Yorkers gathered to watch the white bird's landing.

214

00:10:06,000 --> 00:10:08,000

It never arrived.

215

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

What was the response here in France when they disappeared?

216

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

A total disaster. People were shocked

217

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

because everybody was so sure that they would succeed.

218

00:10:17,000 --> 00:10:18,000

Right.

219

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

Lindbergh would arrive in Paris two weeks later.

220

00:10:21,000 --> 00:10:23,000

The French gave him a hero's welcome,

221

00:10:23,000 --> 00:10:27,000

despite their national grief over their two lost pilots.

222

00:10:27,000 --> 00:10:30,000

Lindbergh even traveled to Nunchessar's mother's house

223

00:10:30,000 --> 00:10:33,000

to offer his condolences personally.

224

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

No piece of the plane is ever found,

225

00:10:36,000 --> 00:10:39,000

like no part of the plane survives, right?

226

00:10:39,000 --> 00:10:41,000

Actually, there is one piece.

227

00:10:41,000 --> 00:10:42,000

There's a piece of the plane?

228

00:10:42,000 --> 00:10:45,000

One. We have it right here at the museum.

229

00:10:45,000 --> 00:10:46,000

That's right.

230

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

We're about to see the only known surviving piece of the white bird.

231

00:10:51,000 --> 00:10:54,000

George, this is the landing gear of the white bird.

232

00:10:55,000 --> 00:10:58,000

Wow. This is the actual landing gear?

233

00:10:58,000 --> 00:10:59,000

Yes, absolutely.

234

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

It was designed to be left behind.

235

00:11:01,000 --> 00:11:04,000

It's actually more a taking off gear than a landing one.

236

00:11:04,000 --> 00:11:07,000

This is all that remains of Leusso Blanc,

237

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

the gear that intentionally fell away from the plane

238

00:11:10,000 --> 00:11:12,000

after takeoff to save weight

239

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

and transformed the aircraft into a flying boat

240

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

for its landing in New York Harbor.

241

00:11:17,000 --> 00:11:19,000

Wow.

242

00:11:19,000 --> 00:11:20,000

Unbelievable.

243

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

Just to think that this went rolling down that airfield out there

244

00:11:24,000 --> 00:11:25,000

almost a hundred years ago.

245

00:11:25,000 --> 00:11:27,000

And this is the white paint from the plane?

246

00:11:27,000 --> 00:11:29,000

Yes, it's the same color.

247

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

And then blue underneath?

248

00:11:31,000 --> 00:11:35,000

Yes, there is a little bit of blue painting on the middle.

249

00:11:35,000 --> 00:11:37,000

Crazy. Crazy.

250

00:11:37,000 --> 00:11:39,000

All right, so now I have a difficult question.

251

00:11:39,000 --> 00:11:41,000

Where's the rest of the plane?

252

00:11:41,000 --> 00:11:43,000

The time the leading theory was at first

253

00:11:43,000 --> 00:11:46,000

that they crashed near the French coast,

254

00:11:46,000 --> 00:11:47,000

maybe in the English Channel.

255

00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:48,000

So immediately?

256

00:11:48,000 --> 00:11:49,000

Immediately.

257

00:11:49,000 --> 00:11:52,000

But there is another theory which is very intriguing,

258

00:11:52,000 --> 00:11:55,000

which is that they actually did cross,

259

00:11:55,000 --> 00:11:56,000

but crashed in North America.

260

00:11:56,000 --> 00:11:59,000

In fact, several groups have been looking for the plane,

261

00:11:59,000 --> 00:12:03,000

and right now a group in Maine is still looking for it.

262

00:12:03,000 --> 00:12:04,000

In Maine?

263

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

In Maine.

264

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

All right, well, back across the pond.

265

00:12:08,000 --> 00:12:11,000

The white bird was lost crossing the Atlantic.

266

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

Now I'm doing it twice.

267

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

This time I fly from Paris to Bangor, Maine.

268

00:12:19,000 --> 00:12:21,000

Known for lobster rolls and lighthouses,

269

00:12:21,000 --> 00:12:25,000

the gorgeous state down east is also the home of Stephen King,

270

00:12:25,000 --> 00:12:30,000

which means there's a decent chance this whole place is actually cursed.

271

00:12:30,000 --> 00:12:33,000

I have an appointment nearby with Peter Nauden,

272

00:12:33,000 --> 00:12:36,000

the former president of the Maine Aviation Historical Society,

273

00:12:36,000 --> 00:12:38,000

and James Cicetto,

274

00:12:38,000 --> 00:12:41,000

the son of one of the society's founding members.

275

00:12:41,000 --> 00:12:42,000

How you doing? I'm Josh.

276

00:12:42,000 --> 00:12:43,000

James Cicetto.

277

00:12:43,000 --> 00:12:44,000

Nice to meet you.

278

00:12:44,000 --> 00:12:45,000

Pete Nauden. Good to meet you.

279

00:12:45,000 --> 00:12:46,000

Great to meet you as well.

280

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

Okay, part of what you do is look for lost wrecked planes, right?

281

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

Yeah, there's a group of us that actually document historic crash sites,

282

00:12:53,000 --> 00:12:55,000

and we look for missing aircraft.

283

00:12:55,000 --> 00:12:57,000

How many of these missing aircraft have you found?

284

00:12:57,000 --> 00:12:59,000

Just about 50.

285

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

Five-zero?

286

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

Yes.

287

00:13:01,000 --> 00:13:03,000

It's like the Bruneer Triangle of the Northeast.

288

00:13:03,000 --> 00:13:05,000

Why are there so many wrecked planes up here?

289

00:13:05,000 --> 00:13:08,000

There were a lot of military aircraft in this area.

290

00:13:08,000 --> 00:13:11,000

There were over 745 military accidents here in Maine.

291

00:13:11,000 --> 00:13:12,000

Wow.

292

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

Large dense woods,

293

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

a lot of places for airplanes to go down and disappear.

294

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

Well, there is one plane in particular I'm very interested in, as you know.

295

00:13:19,000 --> 00:13:20,000

That we're all interested in, yes.

296

00:13:20,000 --> 00:13:21,000

The Whitebird.

297

00:13:21,000 --> 00:13:22,000

Yes.

298

00:13:22,000 --> 00:13:23,000

Which is also, I guess, kind of a white whale, right?

299

00:13:23,000 --> 00:13:24,000

In many ways, yes.

300

00:13:24,000 --> 00:13:26,000

People have been driven mad looking for this plane.

301

00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:27,000

Yeah.

302

00:13:27,000 --> 00:13:28,000

You think it's here in Maine?

303

00:13:28,000 --> 00:13:29,000

Definitely.

304

00:13:29,000 --> 00:13:30,000

Definitely. Okay.

305

00:13:30,000 --> 00:13:31,000

Make the case. Why is it here?

306

00:13:31,000 --> 00:13:33,000

Well, it starts with the witnesses.

307

00:13:33,000 --> 00:13:34,000

Wait, there are witnesses?

308

00:13:34,000 --> 00:13:35,000

There are witnesses.

309

00:13:40,000 --> 00:13:42,000

People have been driven mad looking for this plane.

310

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

Yeah.

311

00:13:43,000 --> 00:13:44,000

You think it's here in Maine?

312

00:13:44,000 --> 00:13:45,000

Definitely.

313

00:13:45,000 --> 00:13:46,000

Definitely.

314

00:13:46,000 --> 00:13:49,000

In the back country of Maine, I'm joining a pair of veteran wreck chasers,

315

00:13:49,000 --> 00:13:52,000

who believe they know where to search for the Whitebird,

316

00:13:52,000 --> 00:13:55,000

one of the most important lost planes in history.

317

00:13:55,000 --> 00:13:56,000

Make the case. Why is it here?

318

00:13:56,000 --> 00:13:58,000

Well, it starts with the witnesses.

319

00:13:58,000 --> 00:13:59,000

Wait, there are witnesses?

320

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

There are witnesses.

321

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

May 9th, 1927, there were a group of people that heard an aircraft pass over,

322

00:14:06,000 --> 00:14:08,000

which was a very rare thing in 1927.

323

00:14:08,000 --> 00:14:09,000

People have to remember that.

324

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

In 1927, a plane goes overhead.

325

00:14:11,000 --> 00:14:12,000

It's a big deal.

326

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

It was a big deal.

327

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

Right.

328

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

So this is a map of the region we're in right now.

329

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

The first people to hear the aircraft that morning were the Scots,

330

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

a married couple traveling by car.

331

00:14:20,000 --> 00:14:22,000

They heard an airplane approach.

332

00:14:24,000 --> 00:14:28,000

They pulled over and shut the car off and get out to listen to it pass.

333

00:14:28,000 --> 00:14:30,000

To them, no question, that was a plane.

334

00:14:30,000 --> 00:14:31,000

No question, that was a plane.

335

00:14:31,000 --> 00:14:32,000

Okay.

336

00:14:32,000 --> 00:14:35,000

Shortly thereafter, we have the Magoons up here on their farm,

337

00:14:35,000 --> 00:14:40,000

who actually saw an unusual white biplane

338

00:14:40,000 --> 00:14:43,000

come out of the fog, circle their farm once,

339

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

and then flew off to the southeast.

340

00:14:46,000 --> 00:14:50,000

And the father was concerned enough after the plane flew to the southeast

341

00:14:50,000 --> 00:14:52,000

that he organized a search party of neighbors

342

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

and went searching that area where he believed it had crashed.

343

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

I mean, that's really compelling.

344

00:14:56,000 --> 00:15:00,000

I mean, what other white biplane is flying around up here in 1927?

345

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

Exactly.

346

00:15:01,000 --> 00:15:03,000

And one of the things I'm getting looking at all of this

347

00:15:03,000 --> 00:15:06,000

is that there seems to be a consistency this plane is flying south.

348

00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:07,000

Yes.

349

00:15:07,000 --> 00:15:12,000

The Scots, the Magoons, and other witnesses all report seeing or hearing a plane

350

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

moving in a southwesternly direction.

351

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

So they're on fumes, came in over Newfoundland.

352

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

They're not going to make New York.

353

00:15:18,000 --> 00:15:19,000

Yeah, they're not going to make New York.

354

00:15:19,000 --> 00:15:22,000

It's possible that the first large body of water that they may have seen

355

00:15:22,000 --> 00:15:24,000

that to land on would be Tunk Lake right behind us.

356

00:15:24,000 --> 00:15:25,000

This is Tunk Lake.

357

00:15:25,000 --> 00:15:26,000

This is Tunk Lake.

358

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

Tunk Lake lies in line with the direction of the aircraft that the witnesses described.

359

00:15:31,000 --> 00:15:36,000

And there's another reason Peter and his team have honed in on this location.

360

00:15:36,000 --> 00:15:38,000

Now, I see one other flag on this map.

361

00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:39,000

Yes.

362

00:15:39,000 --> 00:15:42,000

Down here, Millet, which is pointing to this lake.

363

00:15:42,000 --> 00:15:43,000

Yes.

364

00:15:43,000 --> 00:15:44,000

So is Millet another eyewitness?

365

00:15:44,000 --> 00:15:45,000

No.

366

00:15:45,000 --> 00:15:48,000

He found something really interesting here about 30 years later.

367

00:15:48,000 --> 00:15:49,000

What's Millet's story?

368

00:15:49,000 --> 00:15:53,000

Millet was with a group of hunters staying at a camp right here on this lake.

369

00:15:53,000 --> 00:15:56,000

So on one particular day they go up over a mountain.

370

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

As they descend down the other side, they decide to stop for lunch.

371

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

Millet sees a ledge that looks comfortable to sit on.

372

00:16:04,000 --> 00:16:11,000

And he discovers part of an engine sticking up out of the ground.

373

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

He also discovers some pieces of white canvas.

374

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

He discovers a bone that might have been a human tibia.

375

00:16:21,000 --> 00:16:24,000

Did they note this exact location where this happened?

376

00:16:24,000 --> 00:16:25,000

They did not.

377

00:16:25,000 --> 00:16:26,000

How do you pick up the pieces?

378

00:16:26,000 --> 00:16:28,000

How do you find where Millet was?

379

00:16:28,000 --> 00:16:30,000

Millet left behind some clues for us.

380

00:16:30,000 --> 00:16:31,000

Okay.

381

00:16:31,000 --> 00:16:32,000

What did he leave behind?

382

00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:35,000

He found this hunting partner and got to the top of the mountain.

383

00:16:35,000 --> 00:16:39,000

They found a marker that he said was like a US Geological Survey benchmark.

384

00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:43,000

These were markers that were put out as part of topographic surveys.

385

00:16:43,000 --> 00:16:44,000

They're all over the country, these things.

386

00:16:44,000 --> 00:16:45,000

Yes.

387

00:16:45,000 --> 00:16:46,000

All right.

388

00:16:46,000 --> 00:16:49,000

And many of the mountains in this area have coastal survey markers on them.

389

00:16:49,000 --> 00:16:51,000

So, obvious question.

390

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

Do any of these coastal markers exist on any of these peaks?

391

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

There are two of them on mountains that are likely suspect.

392

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

And so, have you searched them?

393

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

We searched one of them.

394

00:17:01,000 --> 00:17:02,000

Any other?

395

00:17:02,000 --> 00:17:04,000

You ready for hiking the main woods?

396

00:17:04,000 --> 00:17:05,000

Hell yes I am.

397

00:17:05,000 --> 00:17:06,000

Let's do it.

398

00:17:06,000 --> 00:17:07,000

Come on.

399

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

The wreckage spotted by Millet nearly three-quarters of a century ago was left behind and has

400

00:17:12,000 --> 00:17:13,000

never been found.

401

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

If it is airplane wreckage, there's every chance it's from the white bird.

402

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

We board a boat and speed across Tunk Lake toward the peak that may have a geologic

403

00:17:24,000 --> 00:17:26,000

marker matching what Millet described.

404

00:17:26,000 --> 00:17:32,000

Waiting at the base of the hill, though, is someone I never knew I was dying to meet.

405

00:17:32,000 --> 00:17:34,000

What an issue to the owner of the dock.

406

00:17:34,000 --> 00:17:35,000

Hi, I'm Lee Bird.

407

00:17:35,000 --> 00:17:36,000

Hi, Lee.

408

00:17:36,000 --> 00:17:37,000

Nice to meet you.

409

00:17:37,000 --> 00:17:38,000

I'm Josh.

410

00:17:38,000 --> 00:17:39,000

Nice to meet you.

411

00:17:39,000 --> 00:17:40,000

Thanks for letting us use the dock.

412

00:17:40,000 --> 00:17:41,000

My pleasure.

413

00:17:41,000 --> 00:17:42,000

You might be familiar with Lee's grandfather.

414

00:17:42,000 --> 00:17:44,000

Your grandfather is?

415

00:17:44,000 --> 00:17:45,000

Admiral Bird.

416

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

Your grandfather is Admiral Richard Bird?

417

00:17:48,000 --> 00:17:49,000

Yes.

418

00:17:49,000 --> 00:17:50,000

Yes.

419

00:17:50,000 --> 00:17:56,000

Your grandfather is one of the most famous aviators and explorers ever.

420

00:17:56,000 --> 00:18:01,280

One of the biggest names in the history of polar exploration, pioneering American aviator

421

00:18:01,280 --> 00:18:07,000

Richard Bird was the first person to fly over both the North and South Poles.

422

00:18:07,000 --> 00:18:11,000

Like Nungesser and Coley, Bird wanted to claim the Ortig Prize.

423

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

Unfortunately, his plane was damaged during a test flight from which he barely walked

424

00:18:16,000 --> 00:18:17,000

away.

425

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

Meanwhile, Linberg came along, and so my grandfather offered him the field to take off in and gave

426

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

him his navigational instruments to make the flight.

427

00:18:27,000 --> 00:18:28,000

It's insane.

428

00:18:28,000 --> 00:18:32,000

Your grandfather, and I mean this is the highest compliment, was nuts.

429

00:18:32,000 --> 00:18:33,000

Well, he was.

430

00:18:33,000 --> 00:18:34,000

I mean, he was.

431

00:18:34,000 --> 00:18:36,000

He did the most amazing stuff.

432

00:18:36,000 --> 00:18:40,000

Yeah, he did, but he always really calculated it all out, and it's amazing.

433

00:18:40,000 --> 00:18:41,000

He survived.

434

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

That is the ultimate, it's a small world.

435

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

It is.

436

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

You never know who you're going to meet in the woods of Maine.

437

00:18:46,000 --> 00:18:47,000

Good luck.

438

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

All right.

439

00:18:48,000 --> 00:18:49,000

Thank you so much.

440

00:18:49,000 --> 00:18:50,000

All right.

441

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

I'm speechless.

442

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

Here we go.

443

00:18:52,000 --> 00:18:58,000

And with that, we set off into less inhabited territory in search of our lost survey marker.

444

00:18:58,000 --> 00:19:02,000

And there isn't exactly a manicured trail leading to the summit.

445

00:19:02,000 --> 00:19:06,000

It's going to be pushing through some pretty dense stuff, it looks like.

446

00:19:06,000 --> 00:19:07,000

Yeah.

447

00:19:07,000 --> 00:19:14,000

You think, how could an entire airplane go missing in a place like Maine?

448

00:19:14,000 --> 00:19:18,000

And then you come out here and you realize these woods are no joke.

449

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

It's getting steep now.

450

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

Up, up, up.

451

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

Let's get a Baron so we can pick a direction.

452

00:19:40,000 --> 00:19:42,000

Quarter mile from the target.

453

00:19:42,000 --> 00:19:44,000

Straight on really, right?

454

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

We're getting close, but we're not out of the woods yet, so to speak.

455

00:19:55,000 --> 00:19:57,000

Should be 500 feet straight ahead, Peter.

456

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

Yep.

457

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

See an opening over there.

458

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

It does look like a clearing.

459

00:20:02,000 --> 00:20:03,000

100 feet.

460

00:20:05,000 --> 00:20:06,000

Does it open up?

461

00:20:06,000 --> 00:20:07,000

Yeah, it does.

462

00:20:07,000 --> 00:20:08,000

20 feet.

463

00:20:09,000 --> 00:20:10,000

Wow, I found something.

464

00:20:10,000 --> 00:20:11,000

You got it?

465

00:20:11,000 --> 00:20:13,000

Hey, we got it.

466

00:20:13,000 --> 00:20:14,000

Look at that.

467

00:20:14,000 --> 00:20:15,000

All right, man.

468

00:20:16,000 --> 00:20:17,000

Nice work, man.

469

00:20:17,000 --> 00:20:18,000

All right.

470

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

Good coordinates.

471

00:20:19,000 --> 00:20:23,000

This is from 1945 this was hammered in.

472

00:20:23,000 --> 00:20:26,000

This really could be the very spot that these hunters were, right?

473

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

Yeah.

474

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

Exactly.

475

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

So then we got to follow the story from there.

476

00:20:29,000 --> 00:20:32,000

They came to this marker, they left, and where did they go from here?

477

00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:33,000

They went down the hill.

478

00:20:33,000 --> 00:20:34,000

Okay.

479

00:20:34,000 --> 00:20:37,000

They went down into a clearing, they broke for lunch.

480

00:20:37,000 --> 00:20:40,000

One of these guys sat down on the ledge to have some lunch.

481

00:20:40,000 --> 00:20:42,000

And that's when he saw the wreck.

482

00:20:42,000 --> 00:20:44,000

All right, let's get back in the woods.

483

00:20:44,000 --> 00:20:47,000

Can we just enjoy this clearing and this breeze for a moment?

484

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

Yeah, that's possible.

485

00:20:51,000 --> 00:20:52,000

Back into the trees.

486

00:20:52,000 --> 00:20:57,000

I have to admit, I've never looked for a decades old lunch spot in the middle of a forest before,

487

00:20:57,000 --> 00:20:59,000

but that's what we're doing.

488

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

Wherever these hunters decided to grab a sandwich,

489

00:21:02,000 --> 00:21:04,000

maybe where they found the white bird.

490

00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:14,000

Definitely looks like an elevation change over here.

491

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

Excellent.

492

00:21:15,000 --> 00:21:18,000

My lunch sense starts tingling.

493

00:21:20,000 --> 00:21:22,000

I mean, great ledge right here.

494

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

Look at this.

495

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

Wow.

496

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

This feels perfect to the description, right?

497

00:21:27,000 --> 00:21:30,000

Sit right here, legs are dangling.

498

00:21:30,000 --> 00:21:31,000

Wreckage.

499

00:21:31,000 --> 00:21:33,000

It's a great place to have lunch.

500

00:21:33,000 --> 00:21:34,000

It's consistent.

501

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

I mean, the real question though is that after all these years, all this deadfall here,

502

00:21:36,000 --> 00:21:38,000

would any of that stuff still be showing?

503

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:39,000

Possibly not.

504

00:21:39,000 --> 00:21:42,000

This is a good place to break out the metal detector and sweep this whole area.

505

00:21:42,000 --> 00:21:43,000

Okay, great.

506

00:21:43,000 --> 00:21:44,000

Let's do it.

507

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

We quickly assemble our metal detectors and fan out into the trees.

508

00:21:57,000 --> 00:22:01,000

Metal detecting, as I'm sure you all know by now, is feast or famine.

509

00:22:01,000 --> 00:22:04,000

And so far, we're going hungry.

510

00:22:04,000 --> 00:22:08,000

So a lot of area to search, a lot of difficult area to search.

511

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

Hey, hey, hey, guys, come here.

512

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

Whoa, what do you got?

513

00:22:19,000 --> 00:22:20,000

James, come here.

514

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

Piece of metal over here.

515

00:22:23,000 --> 00:22:24,000

It's aluminum.

516

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

Wow.

517

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

That screams aviation.

518

00:22:26,000 --> 00:22:27,000

It really does, right?

519

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

It really does.

520

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

This looks like it's from an airplane.

521

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

It does.

522

00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:33,000

It's all riveted on this side?

523

00:22:33,000 --> 00:22:34,000

Yeah.

524

00:22:34,000 --> 00:22:35,000

It's got white paint on it.

525

00:22:35,000 --> 00:22:36,000

Wow, I mean, that is white paint, right?

526

00:22:36,000 --> 00:22:37,000

Is the red the primer?

527

00:22:37,000 --> 00:22:38,000

Yeah, I think so.

528

00:22:38,000 --> 00:22:39,000

Yeah, the red's the primer.

529

00:22:39,000 --> 00:22:40,000

Yeah, so it's white.

530

00:22:40,000 --> 00:22:41,000

This was painted white, whatever it was.

531

00:22:41,000 --> 00:22:43,000

So there's not a lot of metal on the white bird.

532

00:22:43,000 --> 00:22:45,000

I mean, what's on it that's metal?

533

00:22:45,000 --> 00:22:48,000

The three fuel tanks, which were riveted, those were riveted large.

534

00:22:48,000 --> 00:22:51,000

And there are a few other aluminum panels on the aircraft.

535

00:22:51,000 --> 00:22:52,000

There's stuff on the belly, right?

536

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

Yeah, it strikes me as aviation.

537

00:22:54,000 --> 00:22:55,000

Yeah.

538

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

So, I mean, first question, I guess, is there anything else right here?

539

00:22:58,000 --> 00:22:59,000

Everybody look around for a second.

540

00:22:59,000 --> 00:23:00,000

Yeah, a second look.

541

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

Anything like right here?

542

00:23:01,000 --> 00:23:02,000

Yeah.

543

00:23:02,000 --> 00:23:13,000

We mark the location of the find on GPS and fan out in a circle to search the surrounding area.

544

00:23:13,000 --> 00:23:17,000

Everybody keep your eyes open, camera as well, just anything you see that looks out of place here.

545

00:23:17,000 --> 00:23:18,000

Whoa, whoa, whoa.

546

00:23:18,000 --> 00:23:19,000

You got something?

547

00:23:19,000 --> 00:23:20,000

Whoa.

548

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

We got beer.

549

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

What is it?

550

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

I don't know.

551

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

It looks like an airframe.

552

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

A what?

553

00:23:25,000 --> 00:23:26,000

Holy s***, look at this.

554

00:23:30,000 --> 00:23:37,000

In the wilds of Maine, searching for the remains of the legendary plane, the white bird, we've

555

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

found what might be a piece of aviation history.

556

00:23:40,000 --> 00:23:42,000

That's a wreck.

557

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

Whoa, whoa, whoa, yeah.

558

00:23:46,000 --> 00:23:48,000

That's an airplane wreck.

559

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

That's an airplane.

560

00:23:50,000 --> 00:23:52,000

That's an airplane wreck.

561

00:23:52,000 --> 00:23:54,000

That's an airplane wreck.

562

00:23:54,000 --> 00:23:56,000

That's an airplane wreck.

563

00:23:56,000 --> 00:23:57,000

That's an airplane.

564

00:23:57,000 --> 00:23:58,000

That's an airplane.

565

00:23:58,000 --> 00:23:59,000

That's an airplane.

566

00:23:59,000 --> 00:24:01,000

That's a s*** airplane, yes?

567

00:24:01,000 --> 00:24:02,000

Yeah, it's an airplane.

568

00:24:02,000 --> 00:24:04,000

Come here, bring a camera over here.

569

00:24:04,000 --> 00:24:05,000

Look, there's wood in this.

570

00:24:05,000 --> 00:24:07,000

This is part of the plane, right?

571

00:24:07,000 --> 00:24:08,000

Yeah.

572

00:24:08,000 --> 00:24:10,000

This is actually part of the construction of the plane.

573

00:24:10,000 --> 00:24:11,000

Yeah, that's the wingspar, yes.

574

00:24:11,000 --> 00:24:12,000

Right, you've got a wooden wingspar.

575

00:24:12,000 --> 00:24:15,000

I mean, this thing is what, like 20s, 30s?

576

00:24:15,000 --> 00:24:17,000

Yeah, early aircraft.

577

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

That's amazing.

578

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

Josh, look around that tree right at the base right there.

579

00:24:21,000 --> 00:24:22,000

The ring.

580

00:24:22,000 --> 00:24:23,000

That collector?

581

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

That's an exhaust collector ring from a radio aircraft.

582

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

That's from the radio engine?

583

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

Yeah.

584

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

Oh, did the tree grow through it?

585

00:24:27,000 --> 00:24:29,000

The tree has grown up through it over the years, yes.

586

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

Well, that gives you some idea of how long this plane has been here.

587

00:24:32,000 --> 00:24:33,000

We've got to be in the right era.

588

00:24:33,000 --> 00:24:34,000

Yeah.

589

00:24:34,000 --> 00:24:35,000

Whoa, whoa.

590

00:24:35,000 --> 00:24:37,000

Is that fuel or oil?

591

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

That's a portable fuel can.

592

00:24:39,000 --> 00:24:41,000

That's one of those four-gallon portable fuel cans

593

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

that you used to fuel the aircraft with.

594

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

Do you have any sense of what this is?

595

00:24:45,000 --> 00:24:46,000

It's an aircraft.

596

00:24:46,000 --> 00:24:47,000

It's not our aircraft.

597

00:24:47,000 --> 00:24:49,000

This is well that steel frame.

598

00:24:49,000 --> 00:24:51,000

Right, it's not the white bird.

599

00:24:53,000 --> 00:24:54,000

So what is it?

600

00:24:54,000 --> 00:24:56,000

You see that piece of aluminum right there on the wingspaw?

601

00:24:56,000 --> 00:24:57,000

Yeah.

602

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

That piece of aluminum right there is very distinctive

603

00:24:59,000 --> 00:25:02,000

to the early Fairchild bush planes.

604

00:25:02,000 --> 00:25:07,000

It was an old Canadian mail plane that went down around 1930.

605

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

The Canadian Airways Fairchild 71 was on an early postal route

606

00:25:11,000 --> 00:25:15,000

between St. John New Brunswick and Montreal, Quebec,

607

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

when the engine on the plane quit and refused to restart.

608

00:25:18,000 --> 00:25:22,000

Both the pilot and mechanic aboard survived and hiked out,

609

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

but the aircraft was lost to the wilderness.

610

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

Has anybody been out here to see this?

611

00:25:27,000 --> 00:25:30,000

I'm not sure anybody has ever found it and photographed it.

612

00:25:30,000 --> 00:25:31,000

That's nuts.

613

00:25:31,000 --> 00:25:34,000

I mean, this is a piece of history sitting here.

614

00:25:34,000 --> 00:25:36,000

This is a very historic site,

615

00:25:36,000 --> 00:25:38,000

and that's why we look for these things.

616

00:25:38,000 --> 00:25:42,000

And to think that nobody's been out here to see this thing

617

00:25:42,000 --> 00:25:47,000

since two guys crawled out of it almost 100 years ago is insane.

618

00:25:47,000 --> 00:25:50,000

For a second, I saw the white bird, but no.

619

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

Hey, I'll take it.

620

00:25:51,000 --> 00:25:52,000

Outstanding.

621

00:25:52,000 --> 00:25:53,000

Nice work, guys.

622

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

Another aviation mystery solved.

623

00:25:55,000 --> 00:25:59,000

Our expedition in the woods has revealed the lost resting place

624

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

of a missing aircraft.

625

00:26:01,000 --> 00:26:04,000

Peter and James will continue to document the wreck

626

00:26:04,000 --> 00:26:07,000

and scour the forest for other evidence.

627

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

But as for me, Maine is not the only place

628

00:26:09,000 --> 00:26:12,000

where the white bird is being hunted.

629

00:26:12,000 --> 00:26:15,000

I pack my bags so I can travel to my third country

630

00:26:15,000 --> 00:26:20,000

on Nunjesser's Trail, 800 miles north in Newfoundland, Canada.

631

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

Welcome to the island of Newfoundland,

632

00:26:31,000 --> 00:26:34,000

a place I have always wanted to visit.

633

00:26:34,000 --> 00:26:38,000

Behind me is the easternmost point in all of North America,

634

00:26:38,000 --> 00:26:42,000

and below, nestled in this rocky harbor, is St. John's,

635

00:26:42,000 --> 00:26:46,000

the oldest European-founded city on the continent.

636

00:26:47,000 --> 00:26:50,000

The official name of the province is Newfoundland and Labrador,

637

00:26:50,000 --> 00:26:54,000

and if you're a dog person, you know exactly what I'm about to cut to.

638

00:26:54,000 --> 00:26:59,000

I don't know whose dog this is, but you're coming home with me.

639

00:26:59,000 --> 00:27:01,000

Oh, you are the best dog.

640

00:27:01,000 --> 00:27:05,000

St. John's is home to wildly dramatic shorelines

641

00:27:05,000 --> 00:27:09,000

and rainbow-hued homes designed to lift people's spirits

642

00:27:09,000 --> 00:27:11,000

during dark winter months, which around here

643

00:27:11,000 --> 00:27:13,000

are basically all but three of them.

644

00:27:14,000 --> 00:27:17,000

But fear not, the locals will warm your spirits,

645

00:27:17,000 --> 00:27:19,000

and so will the booze.

646

00:27:19,000 --> 00:27:22,000

Welcome to Newfoundland.

647

00:27:22,000 --> 00:27:25,000

I could spend a week walking through St. John's,

648

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

but I have an appointment at The Rooms,

649

00:27:28,000 --> 00:27:33,000

a museum dedicated to preserving Newfoundland's rich cultural legacy.

650

00:27:33,000 --> 00:27:37,000

Waiting for me is the executive director of the International Group

651

00:27:37,000 --> 00:27:41,000

for Historic Aircraft Recovery, my old friend Rick Gillespie.

652

00:27:41,000 --> 00:27:42,000

Hey, Rick, how are you?

653

00:27:42,000 --> 00:27:43,000

Josh, how are you doing?

654

00:27:43,000 --> 00:27:44,000

I'm good, good to see you, man.

655

00:27:44,000 --> 00:27:45,000

Good to see you.

656

00:27:45,000 --> 00:27:50,000

Long-time EXU fans will remember Rick from the very first episode of this show

657

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

when he helped educate me about the search for Amelia Earhart's lost plane.

658

00:27:54,000 --> 00:27:58,000

And now, here we are talking about another great aviation mystery.

659

00:27:58,000 --> 00:28:01,000

Just as big a mystery and a more important mystery,

660

00:28:01,000 --> 00:28:06,000

this might be the most important missing airplane in history

661

00:28:06,000 --> 00:28:08,000

and one of the least known.

662

00:28:08,000 --> 00:28:11,000

That's one of the things that really drew me to this story.

663

00:28:11,000 --> 00:28:13,000

To many people in the States, it's just unknown.

664

00:28:13,000 --> 00:28:14,000

That's right.

665

00:28:14,000 --> 00:28:22,000

And the white bird and its disappearance is a key to the Lindbergh triumph.

666

00:28:22,000 --> 00:28:23,000

Right.

667

00:28:23,000 --> 00:28:26,000

If these guys had succeeded in flying the Atlantic,

668

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

Lindbergh would not have flown the Atlantic,

669

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

and every school child in America would know the names of Charles Nugessar

670

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

and Francois Collis and Wuzzleblanc.

671

00:28:36,000 --> 00:28:37,000

That's right.

672

00:28:37,000 --> 00:28:38,000

It would be a different world.

673

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

Now, there have been a lot of theories as to where the white bird disappeared.

674

00:28:43,000 --> 00:28:44,000

I've been to Maine.

675

00:28:44,000 --> 00:28:45,000

You've looked there as well, right?

676

00:28:45,000 --> 00:28:47,000

For eight years, we looked in Maine.

677

00:28:47,000 --> 00:28:48,000

Right.

678

00:28:48,000 --> 00:28:51,000

You have another theory that's brought me here to St. John's?

679

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

No, I have evidence that brought you here to St. John's.

680

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

I love this.

681

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

Okay.

682

00:28:56,000 --> 00:28:58,000

How convinced are you that the white bird is here?

683

00:28:58,000 --> 00:29:00,000

Well, let me show you the Newfoundland evidence.

684

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

Rick has been scouring the archives here at the rooms

685

00:29:03,000 --> 00:29:07,000

and has uncovered sworn affidavits from 1927.

686

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

Witnesses to what Rick believes could be the white bird.

687

00:29:11,000 --> 00:29:15,000

I, James Petle, was walking out on Cottage Road when I heard the sound

688

00:29:15,000 --> 00:29:18,000

like an airplane out of the northeast.

689

00:29:18,000 --> 00:29:20,000

About two minutes after hearing this sound,

690

00:29:20,000 --> 00:29:24,000

I saw what I am certain was an airplane of white color

691

00:29:24,000 --> 00:29:27,000

for a few moments, then she turned quickly about south.

692

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

Using these witness statements,

693

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

Rick has been able to establish a potential flight path for the white bird.

694

00:29:33,000 --> 00:29:37,000

But there are some that have told Rick not just about the position of the plane,

695

00:29:37,000 --> 00:29:39,000

but her condition as well.

696

00:29:39,000 --> 00:29:41,000

One such witness was John Dobbins.

697

00:29:41,000 --> 00:29:46,000

Dobbins sees an airplane headed toward Redhead,

698

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

which is a terrain feature along this coastline,

699

00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:54,000

tall red-colored cliff, very prominent feature.

700

00:29:54,000 --> 00:29:57,000

He's cutting wood and he sees an airplane

701

00:29:57,000 --> 00:30:02,000

that he says is trailing white smoke.

702

00:30:02,000 --> 00:30:03,000

White smoke?

703

00:30:03,000 --> 00:30:06,000

An airplane on fire doesn't trail white smoke, it trails black smoke.

704

00:30:06,000 --> 00:30:07,000

Big time.

705

00:30:07,000 --> 00:30:11,000

Well, the white bird had a liquid-cooled engine,

706

00:30:11,000 --> 00:30:14,000

and if one of the coolant pipes ruptured,

707

00:30:14,000 --> 00:30:19,000

the airplane is going to trail a huge cloud of white steam.

708

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

And one person, Rick discovered, may even have been an ear witness

709

00:30:23,000 --> 00:30:25,000

to the white bird's final moments.

710

00:30:25,000 --> 00:30:32,000

Nicholas McGraw on the Redhead River hears three loud explosions off in the distance.

711

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

Boom, boom, boom.

712

00:30:33,000 --> 00:30:35,000

And has no explanation.

713

00:30:35,000 --> 00:30:37,000

So your theory is that what happens?

714

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

The white bird had three fuel tanks lined up right behind the engine.

715

00:30:41,000 --> 00:30:44,000

He's got to find calm water to land this airplane on.

716

00:30:44,000 --> 00:30:47,000

And sure enough, he turns inland,

717

00:30:47,000 --> 00:30:51,000

and the first acceptable pond, it's the gall pond.

718

00:30:51,000 --> 00:30:56,000

But because the white bird is what it is with these three big fuel tanks

719

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

and an engine way out there, he can't see over the nose at all.

720

00:31:01,000 --> 00:31:06,000

What he doesn't see is a rocky island in the middle of the pond.

721

00:31:06,000 --> 00:31:11,000

And he lands, touches down, hits that island.

722

00:31:11,000 --> 00:31:18,000

So we actually can complete the line down the coast to Dobbins,

723

00:31:18,000 --> 00:31:22,000

across the bay, Redhead, to the gall pond.

724

00:31:22,000 --> 00:31:24,000

There are accounts of wreckage out there.

725

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

It is an established story.

726

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

Oh, the gall pond, yeah, that's the pond with the plane in it.

727

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

Wow.

728

00:31:32,000 --> 00:31:37,000

And so have you been out to this place? Have you been to gall pond?

729

00:31:37,000 --> 00:31:39,000

I have been to the pond many times.

730

00:31:39,000 --> 00:31:43,000

So when you went out there, you didn't find the wreckage of a plane

731

00:31:43,000 --> 00:31:45,000

just sitting on that little rocky island?

732

00:31:45,000 --> 00:31:49,000

No, we didn't. But we did find something.

733

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

You did find something out there?

734

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

Yes. You want to see it?

735

00:31:52,000 --> 00:31:53,000

You have it?

736

00:31:53,000 --> 00:31:56,000

It's right here in the archives.

737

00:31:56,000 --> 00:32:00,000

Rick brings me down to the museum's special collections,

738

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

where director Laurie Temple has something very special indeed.

739

00:32:04,000 --> 00:32:07,000

So you have something here that Rick found?

740

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

I do.

741

00:32:08,000 --> 00:32:10,000

This is the highlight of the collection here at the rooms, right?

742

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

It is one of the many treasures, but my favorite.

743

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

Get out of here.

744

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

You found this out at that pond?

745

00:32:25,000 --> 00:32:27,000

Get out of here.

746

00:32:27,000 --> 00:32:33,000

We found it with a metal detector off the end of a little rocky island

747

00:32:33,000 --> 00:32:35,000

in the middle of the gall pond.

748

00:32:35,000 --> 00:32:39,000

Aviation investigator Rick Gillespie believes this debris

749

00:32:39,000 --> 00:32:43,000

might be from the legendary lost plane, the white bird.

750

00:32:43,000 --> 00:32:45,000

Can we inspect it?

751

00:32:45,000 --> 00:32:47,000

Sure. We'll just put some gloves on.

752

00:32:47,000 --> 00:32:49,000

For sure.

753

00:32:51,000 --> 00:32:54,000

Is there anything on it that's diagnostic?

754

00:32:54,000 --> 00:32:58,000

I mean, is there any rivets or any markings that we can discern on it?

755

00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:01,000

The only thing on it is paint.

756

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

Oh, look at that. Yes.

757

00:33:03,000 --> 00:33:05,000

Yeah, kind of a light blue-grey paint.

758

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

Look at that.

759

00:33:06,000 --> 00:33:10,000

And the steel parts of the white bird were painted gray blue.

760

00:33:10,000 --> 00:33:14,000

I mean, I have seen the only part of the white bird that's left,

761

00:33:14,000 --> 00:33:18,000

and there is paint on it that looks really similar to that.

762

00:33:18,000 --> 00:33:20,000

I mean, there is.

763

00:33:20,000 --> 00:33:23,000

Whatever this is, it has a story.

764

00:33:23,000 --> 00:33:26,000

We just don't know what its story is.

765

00:33:26,000 --> 00:33:28,000

All right, so is there more out there?

766

00:33:28,000 --> 00:33:31,000

I mean, one thing I've never heard is anybody saying

767

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

they pulled an engine block out of that pond.

768

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

No.

769

00:33:34,000 --> 00:33:37,000

Which, if it's the white bird, weighed almost 1,000 pounds

770

00:33:37,000 --> 00:33:41,000

and was roughly as big as the table we're standing in.

771

00:33:41,000 --> 00:33:42,000

So where is it?

772

00:33:42,000 --> 00:33:44,000

Could it be out at that pond?

773

00:33:44,000 --> 00:33:47,000

There's only one way to know.

774

00:33:47,000 --> 00:33:49,000

We have to go look.

775

00:33:51,000 --> 00:33:54,000

With fog rolling in, bad weather in the forecast,

776

00:33:54,000 --> 00:33:58,000

and no roads to gull pond, this is going to be interesting.

777

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

Let's do it. Here we go.

778

00:34:01,000 --> 00:34:06,000

The trip takes us over some of the most remote terrain on Earth,

779

00:34:06,000 --> 00:34:10,000

an endless expanse of rocks, bogs, and ponds.

780

00:34:11,000 --> 00:34:15,000

Yeah, once you get outside the city, it's just wilderness.

781

00:34:15,000 --> 00:34:16,000

It's incredible.

782

00:34:16,000 --> 00:34:19,000

We got the caribou over here at 3 o'clock.

783

00:34:19,000 --> 00:34:21,000

Look at that. Beautiful.

784

00:34:21,000 --> 00:34:22,000

Wow.

785

00:34:22,000 --> 00:34:25,000

We're coming up on Redhead.

786

00:34:25,000 --> 00:34:27,000

These clips right here.

787

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

We are now really in the exact place where Dobbins saw this airplane

788

00:34:32,000 --> 00:34:35,000

for the last time, point last seen right here.

789

00:34:38,000 --> 00:34:40,000

We're doing about 100, 110 knots,

790

00:34:40,000 --> 00:34:43,000

which is just what the white bird would have been doing.

791

00:34:43,000 --> 00:34:46,000

They're coming in this hot, no landing gear, no wheels.

792

00:34:46,000 --> 00:34:47,000

That's right.

793

00:34:47,000 --> 00:34:49,000

I mean, I can totally understand that.

794

00:34:49,000 --> 00:34:53,000

I'll put myself in this position of desperately looking for a place to land.

795

00:34:53,000 --> 00:34:57,000

Josh, this is Gulpot. This is it. This is the place.

796

00:34:57,000 --> 00:35:01,000

And this is for sure the largest body of water I've seen out here.

797

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

This is a place you could try to put a plane down, for sure.

798

00:35:05,000 --> 00:35:07,000

And where's that island?

799

00:35:07,000 --> 00:35:08,000

Right over here.

800

00:35:08,000 --> 00:35:12,000

So all those stories and the metal that you found from that little island?

801

00:35:12,000 --> 00:35:13,000

Yep.

802

00:35:13,000 --> 00:35:16,000

Okay. Now we just got to find a place to land.

803

00:35:17,000 --> 00:35:20,000

The helicopter drops us off to meet Redhead.

804

00:35:21,000 --> 00:35:25,000

The helicopter drops us off to meet Rick's team who have already choppered in.

805

00:35:25,000 --> 00:35:28,000

Magnetic imaging experts and drone operators,

806

00:35:28,000 --> 00:35:31,000

Kiyavish Parver and Andrew Ganyon-Nandrum

807

00:35:31,000 --> 00:35:34,000

and airplane archaeologist Lisa Daly.

808

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

Okay, let's talk about this beast right here.

809

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

This is a drone?

810

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

Yeah, right here we have a commercial multi-copter drone

811

00:35:41,000 --> 00:35:44,000

that we use for geophysical surveys.

812

00:35:44,000 --> 00:35:48,000

Andrew has mounted a powerful magnetometer to his drone,

813

00:35:48,000 --> 00:35:52,000

allowing him to conduct the first ever aerial mag scan of the lake.

814

00:35:52,000 --> 00:35:55,000

The hope is to get a hit on the aircraft's engine.

815

00:35:55,000 --> 00:36:01,000

What we're hoping to detect is probably the only thing that's left of the white bird

816

00:36:01,000 --> 00:36:06,000

because the airplane was wood and fabric and it blew up and burned.

817

00:36:06,000 --> 00:36:12,000

The hypothesis that we're testing is that the airplane came in from the east,

818

00:36:12,000 --> 00:36:16,000

attempted to land on the pond and struck this rocky island.

819

00:36:16,000 --> 00:36:19,000

I'm going to press GO and it's going to follow its GPS track and start surveying.

820

00:36:19,000 --> 00:36:20,000

Mowing the lawn.

821

00:36:20,000 --> 00:36:21,000

Mowing the lawn, exactly.

822

00:36:21,000 --> 00:36:23,000

All right, mow away. Let's do it.

823

00:36:26,000 --> 00:36:30,000

The drone lifts off and begins its pre-programmed grid over the pond,

824

00:36:30,000 --> 00:36:35,000

flying 100 feet in the air to cover almost 100 acres of territory

825

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

in a fraction of the time it would take from the ground.

826

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

So how long is it going to take to scan this whole pond?

827

00:36:41,000 --> 00:36:45,000

The whole lake will take about three to four hours to fly.

828

00:36:45,000 --> 00:36:47,000

All right, so we get some time in our hands.

829

00:36:54,000 --> 00:36:58,000

A few hours later, the drone has landed and the data is in.

830

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

I'm excited to see if we've bagged the white bird.

831

00:37:01,000 --> 00:37:03,000

So walk us through the color patterning first.

832

00:37:03,000 --> 00:37:10,000

So blue would be low magnetic intensity and the reds into the purples and the pinks are the higher end.

833

00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:13,000

So the bedrock here does have a lot of magnetic signal.

834

00:37:13,000 --> 00:37:18,000

So what we're looking for here is a few of the smaller outliers that sort of don't fit the pattern.

835

00:37:18,000 --> 00:37:21,000

We can't really explain based on the geology.

836

00:37:21,000 --> 00:37:23,000

And did you find targets like that?

837

00:37:23,000 --> 00:37:24,000

Yes.

838

00:37:24,000 --> 00:37:29,000

We have four or five suspicious targets that I cannot explain geologically.

839

00:37:29,000 --> 00:37:32,000

Like this one, kind of like a butterfly thing, as you can see.

840

00:37:32,000 --> 00:37:33,000

Right.

841

00:37:33,000 --> 00:37:36,000

And that is not what geology does in this area.

842

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

All right.

843

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

Can you show us where we are in relation to the island?

844

00:37:39,000 --> 00:37:45,000

Yeah, the island is here and the anomaly that we just saw is over here.

845

00:37:45,000 --> 00:37:48,000

That's why I'm like a little bit more suspicious on downward.

846

00:37:48,000 --> 00:37:50,000

Second target is going to be this one.

847

00:37:50,000 --> 00:37:52,000

So it's this here we're talking about?

848

00:37:52,000 --> 00:37:53,000

Right near the island.

849

00:37:53,000 --> 00:37:54,000

Yes.

850

00:37:54,000 --> 00:37:55,000

Okay.

851

00:37:55,000 --> 00:37:56,000

So something there that may not be natural.

852

00:37:56,000 --> 00:37:57,000

Exactly.

853

00:37:58,000 --> 00:38:07,000

The scan has revealed several promising targets that could support the theory that the white bird crashed under the small rocky island in the middle of Galpond.

854

00:38:07,000 --> 00:38:09,000

And now we just need to get a closer look.

855

00:38:09,000 --> 00:38:12,000

If there are answers, that's where they are.

856

00:38:12,000 --> 00:38:14,000

To check out our targets, we're going to need boats.

857

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

The good news is we brought some with us.

858

00:38:16,000 --> 00:38:20,000

The bad news, some assembly is required.

859

00:38:20,000 --> 00:38:24,000

Use the hand or foot operated air pump to inflate the boat.

860

00:38:24,000 --> 00:38:27,000

Inflation must be done by a train geologist.

861

00:38:27,000 --> 00:38:29,000

It's a good thing we're here then.

862

00:38:29,000 --> 00:38:31,000

Just trying to get out of it.

863

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

Fill each chamber until it is stiff to the touch, but not hard.

864

00:38:37,000 --> 00:38:39,000

Moving on.

865

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

I got it, Rick.

866

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

I got it.

867

00:38:45,000 --> 00:38:46,000

I know you do.

868

00:38:50,000 --> 00:38:52,000

White bird, meet the white boat.

869

00:38:53,000 --> 00:38:57,000

The water is near freezing, so we don't use immersion suits.

870

00:38:57,000 --> 00:39:02,000

This far from civilization, hypothermia is not something you want to mess with.

871

00:39:02,000 --> 00:39:05,000

Then it's finally time to launch.

872

00:39:05,000 --> 00:39:08,000

Here we go. Nice and slow, it's slippery out here.

873

00:39:08,000 --> 00:39:10,000

And if you fall, fall toward the boat.

874

00:39:10,000 --> 00:39:12,000

That's a good advice.

875

00:39:14,000 --> 00:39:18,000

And hey, speaking of engines, our portable boat doesn't have one.

876

00:39:18,000 --> 00:39:21,000

But hey, no motor, no problem.

877

00:39:24,000 --> 00:39:27,000

There's really no good place to bring this ashore,

878

00:39:27,000 --> 00:39:29,000

so let's really slowly try to walk it in here.

879

00:39:29,000 --> 00:39:31,000

Watch out for these sharp rocks.

880

00:39:32,000 --> 00:39:35,000

So, where did you find that piece of metal?

881

00:39:35,000 --> 00:39:38,000

Right off this end of the island.

882

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

Right in here.

883

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

Okay, well, we've got strong metal detectors with us.

884

00:39:42,000 --> 00:39:45,000

We'll definitely scan this whole area again.

885

00:39:45,000 --> 00:39:47,000

Maybe we get lucky, who knows.

886

00:39:49,000 --> 00:39:53,000

Hey, Rick, I'm going to start scanning over here and work my way around to you.

887

00:39:54,000 --> 00:39:57,000

It shouldn't take long to cover an island this small,

888

00:39:57,000 --> 00:40:01,000

but the terrain turns a simple task into an arduous affair.

889

00:40:01,000 --> 00:40:05,000

I mean, it's so rocky here with so many little nooks.

890

00:40:05,000 --> 00:40:08,000

Who knows, there could be debris anywhere out here.

891

00:40:10,000 --> 00:40:11,000

Nothing out here.

892

00:40:11,000 --> 00:40:13,000

Rick, you got anything in there?

893

00:40:13,000 --> 00:40:14,000

No.

894

00:40:18,000 --> 00:40:20,000

I'm going to head a little further out.

895

00:40:20,000 --> 00:40:21,000

Maybe we get lucky out here.

896

00:40:28,000 --> 00:40:30,000

Hey, Josh, I got a hit over here.

897

00:40:30,000 --> 00:40:31,000

You got something?

898

00:40:35,000 --> 00:40:38,000

The Rooms is a repository for Newfoundland's history,

899

00:40:38,000 --> 00:40:43,000

including a personal connection that Melanie Tucker is helping me explore for the first time.

900

00:40:44,000 --> 00:40:49,000

So, all I really know is that my grandmother on my father's side came from Newfoundland.

901

00:40:49,000 --> 00:40:50,000

Okay.

902

00:40:50,000 --> 00:40:52,000

So, what'd you find?

903

00:40:52,000 --> 00:40:56,000

I looked her up, found her birth record, and we found her parents' names.

904

00:40:56,000 --> 00:40:58,000

Samuel and Trefina?

905

00:40:58,000 --> 00:41:00,000

These are my great grandparents.

906

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

That's right.

907

00:41:01,000 --> 00:41:04,000

And do we know anything about my grandmother's siblings, about their children?

908

00:41:04,000 --> 00:41:07,000

Here they are in the 1945 census.

909

00:41:08,000 --> 00:41:12,000

John King and Lily, and they lived here in St. John's.

910

00:41:12,000 --> 00:41:13,000

They lived here in St. John's.

911

00:41:13,000 --> 00:41:15,000

He was with the police department.

912

00:41:15,000 --> 00:41:16,000

Uh-huh.

913

00:41:16,000 --> 00:41:20,000

And they were listed in the 1960s as living at one Fort Townsend.

914

00:41:20,000 --> 00:41:21,000

Guess where you're standing?

915

00:41:22,000 --> 00:41:23,000

It was here?

916

00:41:23,000 --> 00:41:24,000

This is Fort Townsend.

917

00:41:24,000 --> 00:41:25,000

They lived right here?

918

00:41:25,000 --> 00:41:26,000

They lived on this spot.

919

00:41:26,000 --> 00:41:28,000

So, you're telling me I own this whole place?

920

00:41:28,000 --> 00:41:29,000

Is that...

921

00:41:29,000 --> 00:41:31,000

This is all mine, everybody.

922

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

Hey, Josh, I got a hit over here.

923

00:41:38,000 --> 00:41:39,000

You got something?

924

00:41:39,000 --> 00:41:40,000

Well, I got a hit.

925

00:41:40,000 --> 00:41:46,000

Aviation investigator Rick Gillespie and I are hunting the lost plane known as the White Bird,

926

00:41:46,000 --> 00:41:49,000

and we might just have found something.

927

00:41:49,000 --> 00:41:50,000

Okay, what do you got?

928

00:41:50,000 --> 00:41:53,000

Good news is I've got a strong hit.

929

00:41:53,000 --> 00:41:57,000

The bad news is it's under a giant rock.

930

00:41:57,000 --> 00:41:58,000

Yeah, look at this thing.

931

00:41:58,000 --> 00:41:59,000

Big flat rock.

932

00:42:02,000 --> 00:42:03,000

Oh, yeah.

933

00:42:04,000 --> 00:42:05,000

I got it.

934

00:42:08,000 --> 00:42:09,000

Something there.

935

00:42:09,000 --> 00:42:12,000

Oh, let's think about this for a second.

936

00:42:12,000 --> 00:42:14,000

Rock doesn't grow.

937

00:42:14,000 --> 00:42:15,000

No.

938

00:42:16,000 --> 00:42:18,000

And we're not getting any return off the rocks.

939

00:42:18,000 --> 00:42:20,000

It's not like we've got hot rocks out here.

940

00:42:20,000 --> 00:42:21,000

No.

941

00:42:21,000 --> 00:42:26,000

So, it's got to be a piece of metal that got under that rock somehow.

942

00:42:27,000 --> 00:42:28,000

Hold this, will you?

943

00:42:29,000 --> 00:42:30,000

You're going to pick up the rock.

944

00:42:30,000 --> 00:42:31,000

I'm not that strong.

945

00:42:31,000 --> 00:42:32,000

You're Josh Gates.

946

00:42:32,000 --> 00:42:33,000

Come on.

947

00:42:34,000 --> 00:42:37,000

But I may be able to reach down a little bit.

948

00:42:37,000 --> 00:42:38,000

Yeah.

949

00:42:38,000 --> 00:42:39,000

Come on, what is this?

950

00:42:40,000 --> 00:42:41,000

Oh, I got something.

951

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

Oh, ow.

952

00:42:43,000 --> 00:42:44,000

I just found something sharp.

953

00:42:45,000 --> 00:42:46,000

I got something.

954

00:42:49,000 --> 00:42:50,000

What is that?

955

00:42:50,000 --> 00:42:51,000

I don't know.

956

00:42:52,000 --> 00:42:54,000

It's a fishing hook.

957

00:42:54,000 --> 00:42:55,000

I don't think it is a fishing hook.

958

00:42:55,000 --> 00:42:56,000

No.

959

00:42:56,000 --> 00:42:57,000

It's not a fishing hook.

960

00:42:57,000 --> 00:42:58,000

No, it's not.

961

00:42:59,000 --> 00:43:00,000

It's a piece of wire.

962

00:43:01,000 --> 00:43:02,000

Is it safety wire?

963

00:43:03,000 --> 00:43:09,000

Safety wire is used to this day in order to lock fasteners in place where vibration can cause them to loosen or fall out.

964

00:43:10,000 --> 00:43:12,000

For example, in a biplane in 1927.

965

00:43:14,000 --> 00:43:17,000

I don't know what that is, but it's fascinating that it's here.

966

00:43:17,000 --> 00:43:19,000

I mean, it's not a piece of fishing tack, I don't think.

967

00:43:19,000 --> 00:43:22,000

I don't know if I broke it on the end or if there's anything else down there.

968

00:43:24,000 --> 00:43:25,000

There is more.

969

00:43:25,000 --> 00:43:26,000

Oh, there is more.

970

00:43:26,000 --> 00:43:27,000

There's more.

971

00:43:27,000 --> 00:43:28,000

It's something sharp here.

972

00:43:28,000 --> 00:43:33,000

I just don't know if it's a rock or trying to free it.

973

00:43:33,000 --> 00:43:38,000

We've been so busy digging in the rocks, we fail to notice some important big picture details.

974

00:43:38,000 --> 00:43:39,000

Are you there?

975

00:43:39,000 --> 00:43:42,000

As I learn when my producer Dave calls on the radio.

976

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

What's going on, Dave?

977

00:43:44,000 --> 00:43:45,000

We got weather coming in.

978

00:43:46,000 --> 00:43:50,000

Like coming in right this second, we need to leave or coming in sooner than expected?

979

00:43:54,000 --> 00:43:56,000

Yeah, we can see those clouds as well.

980

00:43:56,000 --> 00:43:57,000

Wind's definitely picking up.

981

00:43:57,000 --> 00:44:01,000

Let's have the helicopter take a first load of people out and we'll start making our way back to

shore.

982

00:44:01,000 --> 00:44:02,000

Copy you.

983

00:44:02,000 --> 00:44:05,000

I'm going to give this two more minutes and then I'm getting out of here.

984

00:44:05,000 --> 00:44:07,000

Suddenly, we're in a race against time.

985

00:44:07,000 --> 00:44:12,000

The last thing we want is to be trapped on this tiny island when a thunderstorm hits.

986

00:44:12,000 --> 00:44:16,000

But I can't bring myself to leave for just a few more seconds.

987

00:44:16,000 --> 00:44:17,000

I got something.

988

00:44:17,000 --> 00:44:18,000

Oh, I got something else.

989

00:44:18,000 --> 00:44:19,000

Hold on.

990

00:44:20,000 --> 00:44:21,000

I got something else.

991

00:44:21,000 --> 00:44:22,000

Hold on.

992

00:44:27,000 --> 00:44:28,000

I don't know.

993

00:44:28,000 --> 00:44:29,000

Can lid?

994

00:44:29,000 --> 00:44:30,000

What do you think?

995

00:44:31,000 --> 00:44:32,000

No, it's not a can lid.

996

00:44:32,000 --> 00:44:33,000

It's way too heavy.

997

00:44:33,000 --> 00:44:37,000

Let's keep that underwater because if we expose it to air, it will deteriorate.

998

00:44:37,000 --> 00:44:40,000

So we put it in a bag of water.

999

00:44:40,000 --> 00:44:43,000

As much as it looks like a can lid, I don't think it is.

1000

00:44:43,000 --> 00:44:47,000

This lid is too heavy and thick to be from a common can.

1001

00:44:47,000 --> 00:44:53,000

It feels like a plate or a cover to a piece of equipment and could be a significant piece of evidence.

1002

00:44:53,000 --> 00:44:54,000

That was it.

1003

00:44:54,000 --> 00:44:55,000

We got nothing else down here.

1004

00:44:55,000 --> 00:44:56,000

You got the wire as well?

1005

00:44:56,000 --> 00:44:57,000

I've got the wire as well.

1006

00:44:57,000 --> 00:45:00,000

Hey, Peter, the helipilot says we've got to get out now.

1007

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

You don't want to f**k with this weather.

1008

00:45:03,000 --> 00:45:07,000

That leaves us a target out in the deeper water there, but I don't think we're going to get to that.

1009

00:45:07,000 --> 00:45:08,000

Rick, I've got some bad news for you.

1010

00:45:08,000 --> 00:45:10,000

You're going to have to come back to this island again, I think.

1011

00:45:10,000 --> 00:45:12,000

I've never had a better reason to come back to this island.

1012

00:45:12,000 --> 00:45:13,000

There you go, exactly.

1013

00:45:13,000 --> 00:45:14,000

All right, guys, here we go.

1014

00:45:14,000 --> 00:45:15,000

Let's get off this island.

1015

00:45:17,000 --> 00:45:22,000

We pile back into the boat as the rain intensifies and flee our small island.

1016

00:45:22,000 --> 00:45:26,000

I'm glad we stuck around, but we're paying for it on the way back.

1017

00:45:26,000 --> 00:45:31,000

The wind and rain are upon us as we row for shore just ahead of the storm.

1018

00:45:31,000 --> 00:45:38,000

Rain is coming down now.

1019

00:45:38,000 --> 00:45:42,000

Hustle, hustle, hustle.

1020

00:45:42,000 --> 00:45:43,000

Let's get everything wrapped up.

1021

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

We've got to get people out of here.

1022

00:45:56,000 --> 00:45:57,000

Okay, we're aboard.

1023

00:45:58,000 --> 00:46:01,000

All right, well, let's get in our teeth.

1024

00:46:01,000 --> 00:46:02,000

Let's get in our teeth.

1025

00:46:02,000 --> 00:46:03,000

Nice work.

1026

00:46:03,000 --> 00:46:04,000

Thank you.

1027

00:46:04,000 --> 00:46:05,000

Yeah, beautiful.

1028

00:46:08,000 --> 00:46:12,000

Though we are forced to flee, Gulpond remains.

1029

00:46:12,000 --> 00:46:18,000

Rick and his team will return when the conditions improve to further explore the magnetometer hits we discovered.

1030

00:46:19,000 --> 00:46:26,000

The two pieces of potential evidence we recovered were sent to the rooms in St. John's for conservation and analysis.

1031

00:46:26,000 --> 00:46:28,000

And now we have an update.

1032

00:46:29,000 --> 00:46:37,000

X-ray fluorescence reveals that the disc is made of steel and does not appear to match any common

or mass market lid that can be identified.

1033

00:46:37,000 --> 00:46:44,000

It is plated with nickel and zinc on one side to prevent rust, but more curious is the slight convex depression.

1034

00:46:44,000 --> 00:46:50,000

If it was not a feature of the disc's manufacture, it may suggest evidence of an explosion.

1035

00:46:50,000 --> 00:46:59,000

As to the wire, it's made of copper and turns out to be a perfect match for aviation safety wire used in the era of the white bird.

1036

00:46:59,000 --> 00:47:08,000

Along with the mysterious debris that Rick previously recovered, the evidence is mounting that there may be more to Gulpond just waiting to be found.

1037

00:47:09,000 --> 00:47:12,000

Sometimes history turns on a single event.

1038

00:47:12,000 --> 00:47:23,000

Charles Lindbergh's success only 12 days after the disappearance of the white bird positioned the United States as the aviation innovator in the period leading into World War II.

1039

00:47:23,000 --> 00:47:32,000

But if Charles Nundgeser and François Collie had reached New York, Charles Lindbergh would merely be a footnote in another aviator's heroic story.

1040

00:47:33,000 --> 00:47:43,000

Investigators like Rick Gillespie and Peter Nadin will carry the torch for the spirit of exploration that inspired Nundgeser and Collie to attempt the impossible.

1041

00:47:43,000 --> 00:47:54,000

Through their dedication, perhaps those of us on this side of the pond will finally come to remember and appreciate the bravery and sacrifice of the white bird's crew.

1042

00:47:54,000 --> 00:47:59,000

Not in Lindbergh's shadow, but as the pioneers they truly were.