

1

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

on this episode of Expedition X.

2

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

When I saw something large, black,

3

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

just walking on the road.

4

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

My team is heading deep into the wild forests of the Ozarks.

5

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

That's scaring me.

6

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

Where terrified witnesses are reporting seeing a monstrous creature

7

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

and hearing its horrific scream.

8

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

Oh my gosh.

9

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

Somebody stood there with a shotgun.

10

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

Some believe it's on a killing rampage.

11

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

We had a piece of it eaten out of its side.

12

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

Holy sh**.

13

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

There's a big chunk of meat over here.

14

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

That is so fresh.

15

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

Phil and Jess hunt for evidence of this mysterious predator.

16

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

Is that an echo?

17

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

I thought I heard an alien.

18

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

Oh, right there, right there.

19

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

It's terrifying actually.

20

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

Or are they the ones being hunted?

21

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

I just saw something.

22

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

Let's get close.

23

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

Oh, f**k.

24

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

The Ozark Howler.

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

My name is Josh Gates.

26

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

In my travels, I've experienced strange things that defy logic

27

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

and made me question everything.

28

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

Oh my god.

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00:01:08,000 --> 00:01:13,000

Now, I've put together a team to investigate the stranger side of the unknown.

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00:01:13,000 --> 00:01:15,000

Let's go.

31

00:01:15,000 --> 00:01:19,000

Phil Torres is a scientist who hunts for rational explanations.

32

00:01:19,000 --> 00:01:23,000

This is the criminal who actually found two stones.

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00:01:23,000 --> 00:01:28,000

Jessica Chobot's paranormal research has made her a true believer.

34

00:01:28,000 --> 00:01:30,000

If you're here with us, knock again.

35

00:01:30,000 --> 00:01:32,000

Together, we're searching for answers.

36

00:01:32,000 --> 00:01:34,000

What is happening here, Jess?

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00:01:34,000 --> 00:01:37,000

To the world's most extraordinary mysteries.

38

00:01:37,000 --> 00:01:41,000

This is Expedition X.

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00:01:44,000 --> 00:01:47,000

Alright guys, I want to start today by playing an audio recording for you.

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00:01:47,000 --> 00:01:50,000

Phil, as our resident biologist, I'm very eager for your take on this.

41

00:01:50,000 --> 00:01:52,000

Give a listen.

42

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

Oh wow.

43

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

Sounds almost like a wolf, but not quite.

44

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

It's weird, right? One more time. Listen.

45

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

I mean, that's freaky.

46

00:02:08,000 --> 00:02:09,000

It is freaky.

47

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

What is it?

48

00:02:10,000 --> 00:02:11,000

That's a great question.

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00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:14,000

That's what people in the Ozarks want to know, which is where this was recorded.

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00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:17,000

And it's what they refer to as the Ozark Howler.

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00:02:17,000 --> 00:02:19,000

Okay, I have heard of this.

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00:02:19,000 --> 00:02:21,000

It's kind of like a hellhound sort of thing.

53

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

It's a mess. It's a hellhound. It's a mutant cat, bear, wolf.

54

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

No one knows what it is.

55

00:02:26,000 --> 00:02:30,000

But people have been seeing and especially hearing it in the Ozarks for hundreds of years.

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00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:35,000

And one of the alleged witnesses is an iconic hero from American history.

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00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:41,000

The Ozarks.

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00:02:41,000 --> 00:02:45,000

47,000 square miles of ancient mountains and plateaus,

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

carved by time into a labyrinth of rugged cliffs.

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00:02:49,000 --> 00:02:55,000

Much of it is unexplored, riddled with dangerous sinkholes and over 300 caves.

61

00:02:55,000 --> 00:03:02,000

And if the legends are to be believed, there's a large and dangerous predator prowling these woods.

62

00:03:04,000 --> 00:03:11,000

1810. As the story goes, one famous explorer had seen pretty much every native animal on the American frontier,

63

00:03:11,000 --> 00:03:16,000

but a run-in with the so-called Howler made him flip his coon skin cap.

64

00:03:16,000 --> 00:03:23,000

It is said that none other than Daniel Boone wrote a letter to his sister-in-law about his encounter with a creature that was, quote,

65

00:03:23,000 --> 00:03:27,000

black and swarthy, with horns atop his scalp.

66

00:03:27,000 --> 00:03:32,000

I am told of the sound that it makes, a terrible howling in the middle of the night.

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00:03:32,000 --> 00:03:36,000

Warnings of this for settlers should be passed along.

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00:03:37,000 --> 00:03:44,000

By the late 1800s, reports of violent and sometimes fatal confrontations with the beast increase.

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00:03:44,000 --> 00:03:52,000

Survivor descriptions are similar, a large, agile, dark and horrifying creature with a blood-curdling cry,

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00:03:52,000 --> 00:03:57,000

described as a cross between a wolf's howl and an elk's call.

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

In the last decade, claims of run-ins with the beast have exploded.

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

Farmers, hunters, hikers all recount terrifying brushes with this mysterious apex predator.

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

Some say that as more and more people build homes at the edge of the forest,

74

00:04:17,000 --> 00:04:21,000

perhaps these creatures are emerging to protect their territory.

75

00:04:21,000 --> 00:04:26,000

Now, there's a sudden rise in the number of livestock and pets that have gone missing,

76

00:04:26,000 --> 00:04:30,000

or even worse, have been found chewed to pieces.

77

00:04:30,000 --> 00:04:38,000

Some fear it's only a matter of time before there's a deadly confrontation between a human and the Ozark Howler.

78

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

So, what do you think?

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00:04:44,000 --> 00:04:49,000

Josh, when you mentioned the Ozarks, I thought you were talking about a new season of the Jason Bateman Show.

80

00:04:49,000 --> 00:04:52,000

A pop culture reference from Phil, watch it!

81

00:04:52,000 --> 00:04:53,000

Did I do it right?

82

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

Yeah, there's no way you watch Ozarks.

83

00:04:55,000 --> 00:04:56,000

You know, I watch some shows.

84

00:04:56,000 --> 00:04:57,000

Yeah, bugs.

85

00:04:57,000 --> 00:04:59,000

Yeah, the 24-hour bug news network.

86

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

Is that real?

87

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

No.

88

00:05:01,000 --> 00:05:02,000

I would watch that.

89

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

I know you would.

90

00:05:03,000 --> 00:05:09,000

Listen, with the Ozark Howler, I kind of love the story because there's clearly a lot of eyewitnesses and we have this recording.

91

00:05:09,000 --> 00:05:14,000

So, if we figure out what known animal made that noise, we solve the case.

92

00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:18,000

And in this area, there are black bears, there's mountain lions, a lot of large predators,

93

00:05:18,000 --> 00:05:22,000

and any big animal is going to leave behind some biological evidence.

94

00:05:22,000 --> 00:05:26,000

So, I want to get out there and look for DNA, for hairs, for scat.

95

00:05:26,000 --> 00:05:31,000

I mean, my only issue with this is that none of the descriptions match anything that's out there.

96

00:05:31,000 --> 00:05:37,000

But if you run across a black bear in the middle of the night, that's enough to scare the scat out of anyone.

97

00:05:37,000 --> 00:05:38,000

That's pretty good.

98

00:05:38,000 --> 00:05:40,000

However, black bears don't have horns.

99

00:05:40,000 --> 00:05:41,000

Yeah, and they don't howl.

100

00:05:41,000 --> 00:05:47,000

I'll admit I'm a little baffled, but that's why I think we should try to get our own recording and try to find some physical evidence out there.

101

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

So, that's your mission.

102

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

I've connected with the witnesses that recorded this audio.

103

00:05:51,000 --> 00:05:52,000

I want you to go meet them.

104

00:05:52,000 --> 00:05:54,000

Go to the place where they heard this.

105

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

See if you can hear the same thing.

106

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

See if you can find that elusive physical evidence.

107

00:05:59,000 --> 00:06:04,000

Is this a misidentified animal or is this an Ozark mystery beast?

108

00:06:04,000 --> 00:06:05,000

Misidentified.

109

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

Oh, boy.

110

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

Good luck, guys.

111

00:06:07,000 --> 00:06:08,000

Good luck, guys.

112

00:06:11,000 --> 00:06:17,000

Phil and Jess fly just over a thousand miles from New York City to Springfield, Missouri,

113

00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:20,000

and then drive straight into the heart of Ozark Country.

114

00:06:24,000 --> 00:06:25,000

Wow, that's pretty.

115

00:06:25,000 --> 00:06:33,000

The cliffs, rivers, and remote forests of this land lost in time hide rare and unusual wildlife,

116

00:06:33,000 --> 00:06:37,000

like a giant nocturnal salamander known as the Ozark Hellbender,

117

00:06:37,000 --> 00:06:43,000

and a blind subterranean fish that lives deep in caves and dines on Batguano.

118

00:06:43,000 --> 00:06:47,000

It's enough to make you wonder what else could be hiding out here.

119

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

I wonder why they call Missouri the show-me-state.

120

00:06:52,000 --> 00:06:53,000

No idea.

121

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

But I hope it shows me that Ozark howler.

122

00:06:56,000 --> 00:06:58,000

Such a stupid joke.

123

00:06:59,000 --> 00:07:01,000

It's what I'm here for, Jess.

124

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

Stupid jokes.

125

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

But they also call it the cave-state.

126

00:07:05,000 --> 00:07:06,000

Well, there you go.

127

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

That's where the Ozark howler is hiding.

128

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

I've arranged for Phil and Jess to meet with the witnesses who recorded those eerie howls.

129

00:07:15,000 --> 00:07:19,000

They say they captured more strange sounds just a few nights ago.

130

00:07:19,000 --> 00:07:21,000

Welcome to the Hot Ozarks.

131

00:07:21,000 --> 00:07:27,000

Steve Robinson is a former Navy SEAL, and his wife Sharon was a professional animal trainer.

132

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

They have lived the edge of the Ozark forest for over 20 years.

133

00:07:31,000 --> 00:07:34,000

We gotta hear this thing. What recording do you have?

134

00:07:34,000 --> 00:07:35,000

Got them in rainstorm?

135

00:07:35,000 --> 00:07:37,000

Let me see here.

136

00:07:48,000 --> 00:07:50,000

You can hear it over the rain?

137

00:07:50,000 --> 00:07:51,000

Yeah.

138

00:07:51,000 --> 00:07:52,000

That tells you that must have been allowed.

139

00:07:52,000 --> 00:07:54,000

Let me try the yellow one.

140

00:08:01,000 --> 00:08:03,000

Oh my gosh.

141

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

Just went on for 45 minutes.

142

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

That's scary sounding.

143

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

Yeah, he was...

144

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

Well, I stood there with a shotgun.

145

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

And it does not sound like a happy animal.

146

00:08:12,000 --> 00:08:13,000

He was not.

147

00:08:13,000 --> 00:08:15,000

So I have to ask, you guys live near the woods.

148

00:08:15,000 --> 00:08:17,000

You must hear all sorts of wild animals.

149

00:08:17,000 --> 00:08:18,000

And that's the thing.

150

00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:21,000

You hear coyote packs running, and you kick and run in or howling.

151

00:08:21,000 --> 00:08:25,000

You hear the neighborhood dogs, and foxes have some odd sounds.

152

00:08:25,000 --> 00:08:29,000

So all of those things that are natural, we hear over and over again.

153

00:08:29,000 --> 00:08:31,000

And this does not...

154

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

It's not something we can identify.

155

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

You know, I can't either.

156

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

Steve gives us a copy of his audio files so we can have the sounds analyzed.

157

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

Awesome, I'll take care of this.

158

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

Then they share a suggestion for where to look next.

159

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

Pre-animals need water.

160

00:08:46,000 --> 00:08:49,000

If this thing is hunting prey animals, it's gonna be near water.

161

00:08:49,000 --> 00:08:50,000

Perfect.

162

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

I like your logic.

163

00:08:52,000 --> 00:08:56,000

Steve and Sharon claim the howling happens only after dark.

164

00:08:57,000 --> 00:09:01,000

It's getting close to sunset, so we head out to a remote area along the water.

165

00:09:05,000 --> 00:09:06,000

Hey, you ready?

166

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

Yeah, let's get out there.

167

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

This will take us deeper, more remote.

168

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

I mean, there's just nothing around here.

169

00:09:32,000 --> 00:09:35,000

Trees, as far as the eye can see.

170

00:09:49,000 --> 00:09:52,000

I'm not sure what animal made those sounds Steve and Sharon recorded,

171

00:09:52,000 --> 00:09:57,000

but I still think that most eye witnesses in a moment of intense fear

172

00:09:57,000 --> 00:10:00,000

simply misidentified a black bear in the distance.

173

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

Before it gets dark, I want to look for hare, prince, scat, anything that backs up my theory.

174

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

See any tracks or anything like that?

175

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

Ooh, check this out, Jess.

176

00:10:14,000 --> 00:10:16,000

That's a cave.

177

00:10:17,000 --> 00:10:21,000

Many animals, including bears and mountain lions, will be able to see the animals.

178

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

The bears and mountain lions will seek shelter from the elements

179

00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:28,000

or a place to hide their young from predators or humans.

180

00:10:29,000 --> 00:10:33,000

Any animal living here would leave some physical evidence behind,

181

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

like hare, paw prints or bones from its prey.

182

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

And of course, Jess is hoping to find some heller DNA in here.

183

00:10:40,000 --> 00:10:41,000

Look at that.

184

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

Oh, you can see where it's like the water's starting to eat away at it.

185

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

Oh, yeah.

186

00:10:47,000 --> 00:10:50,000

We're not seeing any signs right now that this thing is inhabited.

187

00:10:50,000 --> 00:10:52,000

What's that smell, though?

188

00:10:52,000 --> 00:10:53,000

Who's smelling?

189

00:10:53,000 --> 00:10:55,000

I mean, it's just stinks. I don't know what I'm smelling.

190

00:10:55,000 --> 00:10:57,000

It smells kind of like urine.

191

00:10:57,000 --> 00:10:59,000

There are different types of animal pee.

192

00:10:59,000 --> 00:11:03,000

Some is just to, you know, process urine, but others is more musky.

193

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

That would mark its territory, maybe mark this cave.

194

00:11:06,000 --> 00:11:07,000

Yeah.

195

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

For decades, witnesses have reported seeing and hearing the howler at night.

196

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

So our senses are now on high alert.

197

00:11:16,000 --> 00:11:20,000

Check this out, Jess.

198

00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:25,000

These are the native black cat raspberries here, also known as bear food.

199

00:11:28,000 --> 00:11:33,000

Bears are omnivores, meaning that they eat meat and also plants, roots and fruit.

200

00:11:33,000 --> 00:11:39,000

Bears do have a sweet tooth, so where there are berries, good chance there are bears.

201

00:11:41,000 --> 00:11:42,000

Holy s***!

202

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

Oh my God.

203

00:11:51,000 --> 00:11:53,000

Holy s***!

204

00:11:53,000 --> 00:11:55,000

See a big pad there?

205

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

Oh, what is that?

206

00:11:56,000 --> 00:11:57,000

It's hard to tell.

207

00:11:57,000 --> 00:12:01,000

This is not a bear track. They have five toes, not four.

208

00:12:01,000 --> 00:12:06,000

And they have strong nails at the tip of each toe, useful for fighting or foraging.

209

00:12:06,000 --> 00:12:09,000

So we might see claw marks here if it was a bear.

210

00:12:09,000 --> 00:12:15,000

If it was a wolf track, we'd also see claw imprints, but I'm not making out any here.

211

00:12:15,000 --> 00:12:22,000

I don't see claw marks there, so there's a chance that could be a big cat print.

212

00:12:22,000 --> 00:12:26,000

Retractable claws are a trait that is almost exclusive to felines.

213

00:12:26,000 --> 00:12:31,000

While bobcats are known to roam these forests, mountain lions seldom do.

214

00:12:31,000 --> 00:12:36,000

Once plentiful here, they were pushed out by humans and now are just rare visitors,

215

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

and I'm not aware of any breeding populations here.

216

00:12:39,000 --> 00:12:41,000

So I'm going to try to get a 3D scan of them.

217

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

Okay.

218

00:12:43,000 --> 00:12:47,000

I'll need a better view in order to identify what animal left this print.

219

00:12:47,000 --> 00:12:50,000

I'll make an impression of it with a lidar scan.

220

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

Lidar means light detection and ranging.

221

00:12:53,000 --> 00:12:54,000

Okay.

222

00:12:54,000 --> 00:12:58,000

A pulse laser scans a surface and creates a detailed 3D rendering.

223

00:12:58,000 --> 00:12:59,000

That's pretty good.

224

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

I can compare those images to known prints from different species.

225

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

That's really cool.

226

00:13:05,000 --> 00:13:06,000

Let's keep going.

227

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

The tracks seem to head in this direction.

228

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

Alright, let's put the camera traps up.

229

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

Okay.

230

00:13:15,000 --> 00:13:17,000

I'll hit the ballerina in the spring.

231

00:13:17,000 --> 00:13:19,000

You should want to go closer on the creek bed.

232

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

Okay.

233

00:13:23,000 --> 00:13:28,000

We spread out over a half-mile wide area and set up the motion-activated cameras.

234

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

Oh boy.

235

00:13:29,000 --> 00:13:31,000

Or at least, I do.

236

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

Fills easily distracted.

237

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

That's a big spider.

238

00:13:36,000 --> 00:13:38,000

I never scaled that thing.

239

00:13:41,000 --> 00:13:43,000

I love these woods.

240

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

Let's set up camera trap.

241

00:13:55,000 --> 00:13:57,000

Pointing right on that game trail.

242

00:13:58,000 --> 00:14:00,000

You see that right up there.

243

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

Anything would cross right here.

244

00:14:07,000 --> 00:14:10,000

Actually, check if there's any air on this.

245

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

Holy s***.

246

00:14:15,000 --> 00:14:16,000

Look at that.

247

00:14:16,000 --> 00:14:17,000

We got a hair.

248

00:14:17,000 --> 00:14:20,000

It even has the root of the hair on it,

249

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

which means good chance we get to you now.

250

00:14:28,000 --> 00:14:29,000

Okay.

251

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

We got a hair.

252

00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:35,000

Look at that.

253

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

It definitely doesn't look like deer.

254

00:14:37,000 --> 00:14:40,000

It's way too thick, way too dark.

255

00:14:41,000 --> 00:14:43,000

I mean, this could be a bear.

256

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

Or it could be a owl or a spelling bear.

257

00:14:49,000 --> 00:14:50,000

Amazing.

258

00:14:53,000 --> 00:14:57,000

I won't have a definitive answer until I have it analyzed at a lab.

259

00:14:57,000 --> 00:14:59,000

So for now, Jess and I have something planned

260

00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:05,000

that may bring whatever animal left his hair running back toward us along this trail.

261

00:15:05,000 --> 00:15:08,000

I set up my camera trap right down there closer to the princess.

262

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

Why don't we set up around here and do our calls from here

263

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

and see what we can get, maybe we can lure something in.

264

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

No one can identify the creature making the eerie howls

265

00:15:18,000 --> 00:15:20,000

that witnesses have heard and recorded.

266

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

Maybe if we amplify its unique cry out into the forest,

267

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

the howls will attract more of its kind.

268

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

Whatever that is.

269

00:15:32,000 --> 00:15:34,000

We can use this limestone chore to vanish too.

270

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

Just blast sounds out this way.

271

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

And let go off here and just really resonate through this part of the forest.

272

00:15:42,000 --> 00:15:46,000

It will also help us basically retrieve any sounds back

273

00:15:46,000 --> 00:15:48,000

if anything calls back to us.

274

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

Many large animals like wolves, coyotes, and even some big cats

275

00:15:53,000 --> 00:15:58,000

communicate with each other over long distances by howling or roaring.

276

00:15:59,000 --> 00:16:03,000

Animals do this to identify their location for their pack or pride.

277

00:16:03,000 --> 00:16:08,000

To find a mate or as a warning to others to stay out of their territory.

278

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

Let's hope the message we're about to send out is friendly.

279

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

I can play the howler noise.

280

00:16:22,000 --> 00:16:23,000

You ready?

281

00:16:24,000 --> 00:16:27,000

I break out the fleer to detect any heat signatures.

282

00:16:29,000 --> 00:16:32,000

Now we have eyes and ears ready for any responses.

283

00:16:33,000 --> 00:16:35,000

Howler noise.

284

00:16:43,000 --> 00:16:46,000

I thought I heard something, but I think it might just be the water from the spray.

285

00:16:47,000 --> 00:16:49,000

Okay, howler noise.

286

00:16:49,000 --> 00:16:50,000

Okay, ready?

287

00:16:50,000 --> 00:16:51,000

Yeah, I'm ready.

288

00:17:03,000 --> 00:17:05,000

Howler noise.

289

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

It is dead silent out there.

290

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

I'm not getting anything.

291

00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:32,000

Zero.

292

00:17:32,000 --> 00:17:33,000

He sent you two files, right?

293

00:17:33,000 --> 00:17:36,000

So why don't we just play this second one to see if we get lucky.

294

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

Okay.

295

00:17:52,000 --> 00:17:53,000

Was that an echo?

296

00:17:53,000 --> 00:17:54,000

I thought I heard it immediately.

297

00:17:54,000 --> 00:17:56,000

Oh, right there, right there.

298

00:17:56,000 --> 00:17:57,000

I did hear it.

299

00:17:57,000 --> 00:17:59,000

It was over here to the left.

300

00:18:03,000 --> 00:18:07,000

Why don't we use the parabolic mic if we can isolate that audio

301

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

and compare it to this and see if it's a match.

302

00:18:10,000 --> 00:18:12,000

Okay, go grab the mic.

303

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

Parabolic microphones have a reflector that concentrates sound waves.

304

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

Look at that guy.

305

00:18:19,000 --> 00:18:24,000

The device amplifies distant noises and helps us track their direction.

306

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

Okay.

307

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

Everybody done?

308

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

Parabolic microphones.

309

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

We had it.

310

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

We absolutely had something going back to us.

311

00:18:55,000 --> 00:18:58,000

Maybe the 360 mic got it because it is running right now.

312

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

You better have it, but I gotta say.

313

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

Shh.

314

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

Come on, it's over there.

315

00:19:06,000 --> 00:19:08,000

Could be multiple.

316

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:09,000

Could be surrounding us.

317

00:19:23,000 --> 00:19:24,000

Come on, it's over there.

318

00:19:25,000 --> 00:19:26,000

Could be multiple.

319

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

Could be surrounding us.

320

00:19:31,000 --> 00:19:33,000

Something's moving toward us.

321

00:19:35,000 --> 00:19:37,000

Play it one more time just to see if it's coming over here.

322

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

Maybe it's getting closer.

323

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

I'm gonna play a clip and then pause it immediately after.

324

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

Okay.

325

00:19:43,000 --> 00:19:44,000

Ready?

326

00:19:44,000 --> 00:19:45,000

Yeah.

327

00:19:56,000 --> 00:19:58,000

I'm not hearing it anymore.

328

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

Maybe you got our scent.

329

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

If that is what people call the howler here, we got it on tape.

330

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

Oh yeah.

331

00:20:09,000 --> 00:20:13,000

I still can't identify what animal it is from the howls we captured.

332

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

So the next morning, we connect with Josh to figure out our next steps.

333

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

Hi.

334

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

Hey Josh.

335

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

Hey, how are you?

336

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

Have you found the Ozark howler?

337

00:20:22,000 --> 00:20:24,000

Daniel Boone and I are dying to know.

338

00:20:24,000 --> 00:20:26,000

Well, we definitely found something.

339

00:20:26,000 --> 00:20:29,000

We played howler noises out into the woods last night

340

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

and we actually got a real time response.

341

00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:34,000

Yeah, Josh, take a listen to this.

342

00:20:34,000 --> 00:20:36,000

I'm gonna play you what Steve gave us,

343

00:20:36,000 --> 00:20:38,000

that he's been hearing around his property.

344

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

And this is what we heard back.

345

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

That is insane.

346

00:20:49,000 --> 00:20:51,000

You got that as a response?

347

00:20:51,000 --> 00:20:54,000

Yeah, it happened immediately after we played out Steve's recording.

348

00:20:54,000 --> 00:20:55,000

Wow.

349

00:20:55,000 --> 00:20:56,000

Play it again.

350

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

That is not the sound of a bear.

351

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

No, it is not.

352

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

Phil, what do you think it is?

353

00:21:03,000 --> 00:21:04,000

It's a howler.

354

00:21:04,000 --> 00:21:09,000

I'll be honest, I'm starting to lean a little bit more away from this bear theory.

355

00:21:09,000 --> 00:21:11,000

I'm just not sure where I'm leaning towards.

356

00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:15,000

We did find some large animal tracks last night that we were able to scan

357

00:21:15,000 --> 00:21:17,000

and I collected a hair sample.

358

00:21:17,000 --> 00:21:19,000

Send all of it my way, we will get it analyzed.

359

00:21:19,000 --> 00:21:24,000

In the meantime, word of your investigation is traveling fast in the Ozarks.

360

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

I just got an email from a woman and her son who say they actually have a photo

361

00:21:28,000 --> 00:21:30,000

of the howler that they want to show you in person.

362

00:21:30,000 --> 00:21:32,000

Oh wow, I can't wait to see that.

363

00:21:32,000 --> 00:21:35,000

Perfect, yeah, Texas address, we'll head there now.

364

00:21:35,000 --> 00:21:37,000

Good luck you guys, stay safe.

365

00:21:37,000 --> 00:21:38,000

Awesome, bye.

366

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

You got it.

367

00:21:39,000 --> 00:21:41,000

A photograph is huge.

368

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

People in the Ozarks have reported seeing an unknown beast for more than a century.

369

00:21:45,000 --> 00:21:49,000

But this could be the first photographic evidence of it.

370

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

Phil and I drive half an hour to Highlandville, Missouri,

371

00:21:54,000 --> 00:21:59,000

a small town nestled in the Ozarks with a population of only about a thousand people.

372

00:21:59,000 --> 00:22:04,000

Josh has connected us with Stephanie Wigger and her son Kendall Nacado.

373

00:22:04,000 --> 00:22:06,000

You had pigs back here?

374

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

Just these four guys.

375

00:22:07,000 --> 00:22:12,000

Stephanie has lived in the area for over 25 years and raises livestock on her farm.

376

00:22:12,000 --> 00:22:15,000

So you guys have a lot of property out here, 55 acres.

377

00:22:15,000 --> 00:22:20,000

Her son Kendall is a college student pursuing a degree related to wildlife and agriculture.

378

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

Well just right around where we're standing, I've seen wild boars and coyotes,

379

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

well as other wildlife.

380

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

So we're interested in that other wildlife.

381

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

So you believe you've seen the Ozark howler?

382

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

Yeah, the first time I saw it was just about five months ago

383

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

when you come up the driveway, it was in that tree.

384

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

Really?

385

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

Yeah.

386

00:22:40,000 --> 00:22:45,000

When I turned around and looked back, I saw it come down the tree and go around the side of the barn.

387

00:22:45,000 --> 00:22:47,000

An animal in a tree is a big clue.

388

00:22:47,000 --> 00:22:54,000

Canines are lousy tree climbers, so whatever Stephanie saw wouldn't have been a coyote or a wolf.

389

00:22:54,000 --> 00:22:58,000

I didn't believe her at first and had just thought she must have seen, you know,

390

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

the normal black bear or something in the tree until I was driving to the gym

391

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

less than a quarter mile from here.

392

00:23:05,000 --> 00:23:12,000

I saw something large black with brown rings and it was very skinny like it was emaciated almost.

393

00:23:14,000 --> 00:23:15,000

How big are we talking about?

394

00:23:15,000 --> 00:23:16,000

150 pounds.

395

00:23:16,000 --> 00:23:17,000

Oh my gosh.

396

00:23:17,000 --> 00:23:20,000

I'm just wondering why I wouldn't come after one of your hogs out here.

397

00:23:20,000 --> 00:23:24,000

We have had livestock go up missing and had some of them.

398

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

Like what?

399

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

There was a time when our sheep was actually attacked.

400

00:23:27,000 --> 00:23:31,000

My sheep was on the ground screaming and it had a piece of wood on it.

401

00:23:31,000 --> 00:23:36,000

It was sitting in the middle of the pen, something had jumped in there and pinned it down and eaten it

402

00:23:36,000 --> 00:23:40,000

and jumped out of the pen when it heard me run out the door.

403

00:23:40,000 --> 00:23:44,000

Stephanie shows us the photo of the predator captured on a game camera.

404

00:23:44,000 --> 00:23:47,000

That is from one of the driveway cams.

405

00:23:50,000 --> 00:23:54,000

That does look really suspicious.

406

00:23:54,000 --> 00:23:58,000

I mean the body looks like a big cat, but I can't see it.

407

00:23:58,000 --> 00:24:01,000

So that doesn't rule out the howler.

408

00:24:01,000 --> 00:24:05,000

The only big cat that should be out here would be a Cougar or mountain lion.

409

00:24:05,000 --> 00:24:09,000

And I've never heard of a black mountain lion or one with ring markings.

410

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

There are no black big cats native to the United States.

411

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

But what about escaped exotic pets?

412

00:24:16,000 --> 00:24:22,000

It is estimated that there are as many as 10,000 privately owned big cats in the U.S.

413

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

More tigers are kept in private collections.

414

00:24:25,000 --> 00:24:29,000

Then there are in accredited zoos or in the wild.

415

00:24:29,000 --> 00:24:38,000

Ownership of these animals is a serious issue brought into the spotlight by media attention on a controversial breeder of tigers and other big cats.

416

00:24:38,000 --> 00:24:44,000

Real name is Joseph Muldenado Passage and everybody knows me as Joe Xotic.

417

00:24:44,000 --> 00:24:49,000

We are a zoo open to the public that takes unwanted animals.

418

00:24:49,000 --> 00:24:56,000

There's also a booming black market and since it's off the radar, no one is monitoring the safety of the situation.

419

00:24:56,000 --> 00:25:02,000

Every year some big cats escape captivity, making headlines across the nation.

420

00:25:02,000 --> 00:25:05,000

And those are just the ones that are reported.

421

00:25:05,000 --> 00:25:09,000

What about sounds? Have you guys noticed any strange sounds coming from this thing?

422

00:25:09,000 --> 00:25:10,000

Yeah, definitely.

423

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

Howls, screams, guttural sounds.

424

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

Little after dusk and stuff. Like it makes the hair on my arms stand up.

425

00:25:17,000 --> 00:25:24,000

Okay, well, crazy. I feel like we are in ground zero for something very big and wild out there.

426

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

Would you mind if we try to kind of take on your property tonight?

427

00:25:28,000 --> 00:25:33,000

Maybe we could set up some trail cams and things like that to try to document what you guys have been seeing.

428

00:25:33,000 --> 00:25:34,000

Sure, go ahead.

429

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

Perfect. Thanks guys.

430

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

Woo!

431

00:25:50,000 --> 00:25:54,000

We head out into the forest on Stephanie's property just before nightfall.

432

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

Big cats are mostly nocturnal hunters.

433

00:26:01,000 --> 00:26:09,000

We're going to set up cameras designed to capture full color images in low light, so there will be no question what creature we're seeing.

434

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

I definitely think we should set up some game trails along here.

435

00:26:12,000 --> 00:26:17,000

Not only does that give us a chance of getting a photograph of whatever she's talking about, but also what it's eating out here.

436

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

Let's go and hold it deeper.

437

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

Yeah, I would agree.

438

00:26:25,000 --> 00:26:29,000

Phil wonders if people are seeing either a wild cat or an escaped big cat.

439

00:26:29,000 --> 00:26:35,000

But I don't believe 200 years of Ozark howler sightings can be written off as mere misidentifications.

440

00:26:35,000 --> 00:26:38,000

This looks like a good location, right?

441

00:26:38,000 --> 00:26:39,000

Yeah.

442

00:26:39,000 --> 00:26:41,000

We're looking for game trails.

443

00:26:41,000 --> 00:26:50,000

If what Stephanie saw running off in this direction was a large cat, this trail would lead it to water, shelter, and the food source that is unfortunately their barn.

444

00:26:50,000 --> 00:26:52,000

Looks like the path goes that way.

445

00:26:52,000 --> 00:26:53,000

Yeah.

446

00:26:53,000 --> 00:26:54,000

Goes that way.

447

00:26:54,000 --> 00:26:55,000

And that way.

448

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

So, are we going to set it up right there?

449

00:26:57,000 --> 00:26:58,000

Yeah.

450

00:27:03,000 --> 00:27:04,000

Okay.

451

00:27:08,000 --> 00:27:09,000

Okay.

452

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

Wait, I thought I just saw something.

453

00:27:18,000 --> 00:27:20,000

I thought I just saw an eye-shine over there.

454

00:27:23,000 --> 00:27:24,000

Oh, I just saw it too.

455

00:27:24,000 --> 00:27:25,000

Right?

456

00:27:25,000 --> 00:27:26,000

I just saw it too.

457

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

Yeah?

458

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

Definitely an eye-shine.

459

00:27:28,000 --> 00:27:29,000

It was red.

460

00:27:29,000 --> 00:27:30,000

Let's get close.

461

00:27:35,000 --> 00:27:36,000

Oh!

462

00:27:36,000 --> 00:27:37,000

What is it?

463

00:27:37,000 --> 00:27:38,000

Oh, f***.

464

00:27:38,000 --> 00:27:39,000

What was that?

465

00:27:39,000 --> 00:27:41,000

Were you a bear spray?

466

00:27:49,000 --> 00:27:50,000

Oh, f***.

467

00:27:50,000 --> 00:27:51,000

What is it?

468

00:27:51,000 --> 00:27:52,000

Oh, f***.

469

00:27:52,000 --> 00:27:53,000

What was that?

470

00:27:53,000 --> 00:27:54,000

Were you a bear spray?

471

00:27:54,000 --> 00:27:55,000

Yeah, I've got it.

472

00:27:56,000 --> 00:28:01,000

When the biologist asks for bear spray, it's really time to worry.

473

00:28:01,000 --> 00:28:02,000

Sh, sh, sh.

474

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

We're at a serious disadvantage in these woods.

475

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

I don't know what I'm doing.

476

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

I'm just trying to get to the right place.

477

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

We're at a serious disadvantage in these woods.

478

00:28:31,000 --> 00:28:34,000

There are plenty of large and dangerous animals out here,

479

00:28:34,000 --> 00:28:37,000

including bears and maybe mountain lions,

480

00:28:37,000 --> 00:28:40,000

which have much better night vision than we humans do.

481

00:28:44,000 --> 00:28:46,000

Bears tend to attack head-on,

482

00:28:46,000 --> 00:28:48,000

but large cats are ambush predators,

483

00:28:48,000 --> 00:28:51,000

striking from behind or above.

484

00:28:51,000 --> 00:28:55,000

Victims seldom know what hits them until it's too late,

485

00:28:55,000 --> 00:28:58,000

and the large animal Stephanie spotted, it was up in a tree.

486

00:28:58,000 --> 00:29:00,000

So while we scan the forest floor for print,

487

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

scat or other evidence,

488

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

we need to remember to look up as well.

489

00:29:07,000 --> 00:29:08,000

Wait, sh, sh.

490

00:29:12,000 --> 00:29:13,000

That sounds like the hell.

491

00:29:18,000 --> 00:29:20,000

Let's set up that camera trap.

492

00:29:20,000 --> 00:29:21,000

Yeah.

493

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

So, check out what I got.

494

00:29:30,000 --> 00:29:32,000

Did you bring pot out to the woods?

495

00:29:32,000 --> 00:29:33,000

No, I'm not.

496

00:29:33,000 --> 00:29:34,000

What did you bring?

497

00:29:34,000 --> 00:29:35,000

Oh, is that...

498

00:29:35,000 --> 00:29:37,000

Did you bring catnip?

499

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

I brought catnip.

500

00:29:38,000 --> 00:29:39,000

No way.

501

00:29:39,000 --> 00:29:42,000

Catnip is an herb in the mint family.

502

00:29:42,000 --> 00:29:43,000

Cats roll around in it,

503

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

releasing the oil from the leaves,

504

00:29:45,000 --> 00:29:47,000

and then they're taken out of the pot.

505

00:29:47,000 --> 00:29:49,000

They're taken out of the pot.

506

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

They're taken out of the pot.

507

00:29:51,000 --> 00:29:53,000

They're taken out of the pot.

508

00:29:53,000 --> 00:29:55,000

They're all gathered in the pot.

509

00:29:55,000 --> 00:29:57,000

They're wrapped around in it,

510

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

releasing the oil from the leaves.

511

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

As they inhale it,

512

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

they essentially get a high.

513

00:30:02,000 --> 00:30:03,000

You got a cat at home,

514

00:30:03,000 --> 00:30:05,000

what happens when you put out catnip?

515

00:30:05,000 --> 00:30:06,000

Make it all rubby and weird

516

00:30:06,000 --> 00:30:08,000

and little squirrely and...

517

00:30:08,000 --> 00:30:09,000

Oh, right.

518

00:30:09,000 --> 00:30:11,000

Yeah, the same thing happens with big cats.

519

00:30:11,000 --> 00:30:12,000

Really?

520

00:30:12,000 --> 00:30:13,000

And the rubby part.

521

00:30:13,000 --> 00:30:14,000

That's what you could take an edge of.

522

00:30:14,000 --> 00:30:16,000

We got some tape, so...

523

00:30:16,000 --> 00:30:18,000

What I'm going to do is put the sticky side out,

524

00:30:18,000 --> 00:30:20,000

and wrap it around this tree,

525

00:30:20,000 --> 00:30:21,000

with the hopes that...

526

00:30:21,000 --> 00:30:23,240

And it leaves behind some of its hairs

527

00:30:23,240 --> 00:30:26,440

so we can analyze the DNA, figure out who this thing is.

528

00:30:26,440 --> 00:30:30,440

That is a great trap, per se.

529

00:30:30,440 --> 00:30:32,720

I'm going to give it a go, spread.

530

00:30:32,720 --> 00:30:35,760

And now, what we need is some tape.

531

00:30:38,640 --> 00:30:40,800

So I think if we use the fox bro

532

00:30:40,800 --> 00:30:44,400

and send out some animal distress sound,

533

00:30:44,400 --> 00:30:49,000

maybe there's a chance it'll be curious enough to come take a look.

534

00:30:51,200 --> 00:30:53,400

The Fox Pro can mimic the cries of animals

535

00:30:53,400 --> 00:30:57,320

and it features some selections we suspect are on the Howler's dinner menu.

536

00:30:59,320 --> 00:31:02,560

I'll have my FLIR cam ready to detect any incoming creatures.

537

00:31:02,560 --> 00:31:04,760

We got some options here.

538

00:31:04,760 --> 00:31:07,560

One option is lost sheep.

539

00:31:08,560 --> 00:31:11,080

A bit of giant chunk out of one of their sheep.

540

00:31:11,080 --> 00:31:12,200

Totally do it.

541

00:31:12,200 --> 00:31:13,200

Ready?

542

00:31:21,000 --> 00:31:28,720

I'm not picking anything up on the FLIR.

543

00:31:28,720 --> 00:31:30,600

With no reaction to the prey animal,

544

00:31:30,600 --> 00:31:34,320

we cue up the sound that did seem to stir something up last night.

545

00:31:34,320 --> 00:31:35,600

The Howler recording.

546

00:31:47,600 --> 00:31:49,000

Shit, near that cave.

547

00:31:49,000 --> 00:31:50,000

Was that coyotes?

548

00:31:52,000 --> 00:31:53,000

Yeah, they're moving.

549

00:32:09,000 --> 00:32:11,000

That sound was coming from over there.

550

00:32:11,000 --> 00:32:12,000

Let's head that way.

551

00:32:15,000 --> 00:32:16,000

Ready?

552

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

Yeah.

553

00:32:22,000 --> 00:32:24,000

Holy s***, check this out.

554

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

I mean, that's s*** fresh too.

555

00:32:28,000 --> 00:32:29,000

That is so fresh.

556

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

You can see it's dislocated right out of there.

557

00:32:31,000 --> 00:32:33,000

This is something big, like a deer or a hog.

558

00:32:33,000 --> 00:32:34,000

Where's sheep?

559

00:32:34,000 --> 00:32:37,000

Also look at the, look where the flies are.

560

00:32:37,000 --> 00:32:38,000

Yeah.

561

00:32:38,000 --> 00:32:40,000

Spread all over it so this is really fresh.

562

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

Let's also look up in the trees right now

563

00:32:44,000 --> 00:32:47,000

because lots of times when big cats hunt prey,

564

00:32:47,000 --> 00:32:49,000

they will drag them up.

565

00:32:49,000 --> 00:32:51,000

This could even fall from a tree branch.

566

00:32:54,000 --> 00:32:55,000

Look at that this side.

567

00:32:56,000 --> 00:32:58,000

There's some scratch marks that could be from teeth.

568

00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:00,000

Which could have saliva, which could have DNA.

569

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

A little swab here.

570

00:33:04,000 --> 00:33:06,000

Oh yeah, those are definitely teeth marks.

571

00:33:07,000 --> 00:33:10,000

I mean, here's the thought that would a bear have killed this?

572

00:33:10,000 --> 00:33:13,000

Well, a bear, I can see coming back to the rest of its food.

573

00:33:13,000 --> 00:33:14,000

A big cat too.

574

00:33:14,000 --> 00:33:16,000

Lots of times they drag piece by piece.

575

00:33:16,000 --> 00:33:20,000

I think we should go because I'm not feeling terribly safe right here.

576

00:33:22,000 --> 00:33:23,000

I got the bear spray.

577

00:33:25,000 --> 00:33:27,000

So what, leave the camera traps up tonight?

578

00:33:27,000 --> 00:33:31,000

Oh yeah, between the catnip, fresh berries and that giant chunk of meat.

579

00:33:31,000 --> 00:33:32,000

Yeah.

580

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

There's gonna be some activity.

581

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

Oh yeah.

582

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

Based on the paw print, the descriptions from eye witnesses

583

00:33:42,000 --> 00:33:44,000

and the sounds we captured,

584

00:33:44,000 --> 00:33:48,000

I'm thinking what people are calling the howler is some kind of big cat.

585

00:33:48,000 --> 00:33:50,000

I've contacted Stephanie Schuttler,

586

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

a fellow biologist who's doing research on big cat populations in the eastern US.

587

00:33:55,000 --> 00:33:56,000

Who is this?

588

00:33:56,000 --> 00:33:57,000

This is trained.

589

00:33:57,000 --> 00:34:00,000

He is our detector dog.

590

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

He's trained, like his name says, trained to look for mountain lion scouts.

591

00:34:07,000 --> 00:34:11,000

Well, that's perfect because we are after, we don't really know who we're after.

592

00:34:11,000 --> 00:34:13,000

I'm after the Ozark howler.

593

00:34:13,000 --> 00:34:15,000

I don't know who you're after, but...

594

00:34:15,000 --> 00:34:16,000

Let's just show her what we got.

595

00:34:16,000 --> 00:34:17,000

All right.

596

00:34:18,000 --> 00:34:20,000

We play the howls, Steve recorded.

597

00:34:24,000 --> 00:34:26,000

Have you heard a noise like that before out here?

598

00:34:26,000 --> 00:34:28,000

No, I haven't.

599

00:34:28,000 --> 00:34:31,000

My expertise is not in vocalizations,

600

00:34:31,000 --> 00:34:33,000

but that doesn't sound as screechy to me as a fox,

601

00:34:33,000 --> 00:34:37,000

but I've heard coyotes, but not like that.

602

00:34:37,000 --> 00:34:39,000

Okay, that's interesting.

603

00:34:39,000 --> 00:34:42,000

There's something else though, a photo from a witness.

604

00:34:42,000 --> 00:34:45,000

This is the best image that they have.

605

00:34:45,000 --> 00:34:47,000

What do you think of this one?

606

00:34:47,000 --> 00:34:48,000

I mean, it's definitely a cat.

607

00:34:48,000 --> 00:34:52,000

It's pretty long, which is usually indicative of larger cats.

608

00:34:52,000 --> 00:34:54,000

It can't be a black mountain lion.

609

00:34:54,000 --> 00:34:59,000

There has never been a documented case of melanistic mountain lions.

610

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

It is caused by a gene.

611

00:35:02,000 --> 00:35:04,000

It's when the coat becomes all black.

612

00:35:04,000 --> 00:35:06,000

So that's what a black panther is.

613

00:35:06,000 --> 00:35:08,000

And if you see it in good light,

614

00:35:08,000 --> 00:35:11,000

you'll actually see the spots underneath.

615

00:35:11,000 --> 00:35:14,000

But it's just, its legs are way too short.

616

00:35:14,000 --> 00:35:16,000

It's just too low to the ground.

617

00:35:16,000 --> 00:35:19,000

If it's what we call a black panther, which is a melanistic jaguar,

618

00:35:19,000 --> 00:35:22,000

its shoulders would be much higher.

619

00:35:22,000 --> 00:35:23,000

So that's the thing.

620

00:35:23,000 --> 00:35:25,000

If there were a melanistic big cat out here,

621

00:35:25,000 --> 00:35:28,000

it would have to either be a jaguar or a leopard,

622

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

which definitely has never lived here.

623

00:35:30,000 --> 00:35:31,000

Yeah.

624

00:35:31,000 --> 00:35:34,000

If there were, it would definitely be an escapee bee.

625

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

So why would you use a dog like this to try and find scat?

626

00:35:39,000 --> 00:35:42,000

Dogs obviously have a good sense of smell,

627

00:35:42,000 --> 00:35:44,000

and they're able to smell it out.

628

00:35:44,000 --> 00:35:47,000

That's critical data to have those scat samples, right?

629

00:35:47,000 --> 00:35:48,000

Yeah, absolutely.

630

00:35:48,000 --> 00:35:51,000

Like what it's eating, what it's interacting with.

631

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

Yeah, and the genetics, so we can tell if individuals

632

00:35:54,000 --> 00:35:57,000

are related to each other, where they come from.

633

00:35:57,000 --> 00:35:59,000

I think he's ready to go.

634

00:35:59,000 --> 00:36:01,000

Let's see what you can do, Trayne.

635

00:36:01,000 --> 00:36:03,000

Okay, Trayne. Go find it.

636

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

Oh, and he's off?

637

00:36:12,000 --> 00:36:14,000

Look at him go.

638

00:36:15,000 --> 00:36:17,000

He's got a scent trail.

639

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

Did he just find something?

640

00:36:27,000 --> 00:36:30,000

It is said that famous frontiersman Daniel Boone

641

00:36:30,000 --> 00:36:32,000

wrote a letter to his sister-in-law

642

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

in which he claimed to have encountered a, quote,

643

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

black and swarthy creature.

644

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

But did he really see a howler?

645

00:36:38,000 --> 00:36:42,000

Here to help us unpack this story is historian John Mac Farragher.

646

00:36:42,000 --> 00:36:44,000

It's not beyond speculation.

647

00:36:44,000 --> 00:36:46,000

He saw whatever was out there.

648

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

What is beyond speculation is whether he wrote about it or not.

649

00:36:49,000 --> 00:36:52,000

And why is that? What makes the letter suspect?

650

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

The letter purports to end with the phrase,

651

00:36:55,000 --> 00:36:57,000

your humble servant.

652

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

Boone used that phrase in his business correspondence.

653

00:37:01,000 --> 00:37:04,000

We have, in fact, only one existing personal letter

654

00:37:04,000 --> 00:37:07,000

that Boone wrote, and that was to his sister-in-law.

655

00:37:07,000 --> 00:37:10,000

And it ends farewell, dear sister.

656

00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:13,000

So no good evidence that he wrote about the howler.

657

00:37:13,000 --> 00:37:15,000

If there was such a letter, we would know about it.

658

00:37:15,000 --> 00:37:17,000

So there you have it.

659

00:37:17,000 --> 00:37:19,000

No real proof that this letter exists,

660

00:37:19,000 --> 00:37:21,000

which is too bad because it would have been a real Boone

661

00:37:21,000 --> 00:37:23,000

to the howler legend.

662

00:37:28,000 --> 00:37:30,000

Did he just find something?

663

00:37:30,000 --> 00:37:32,000

Show me.

664

00:37:34,000 --> 00:37:36,000

It looks like there's something right here.

665

00:37:36,000 --> 00:37:38,000

Oh, we got scat.

666

00:37:38,000 --> 00:37:39,000

There it is.

667

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

Oh, wow.

668

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

What do you think, just looking at it?

669

00:37:43,000 --> 00:37:45,000

It's carnivorous, some kind.

670

00:37:48,000 --> 00:37:50,000

I mean, this is definitely carnivorous scat.

671

00:37:50,000 --> 00:37:53,000

This definitely ate another animal.

672

00:37:53,000 --> 00:37:56,000

Because we are seeing fur in there, bones in there.

673

00:37:58,000 --> 00:37:59,000

It's evidence.

674

00:37:59,000 --> 00:38:01,000

We know something is wandering around here,

675

00:38:01,000 --> 00:38:03,000

eating people's farm animals.

676

00:38:03,000 --> 00:38:05,000

So we've got our specimen.

677

00:38:05,000 --> 00:38:07,000

We shouldn't be able to get some DNA from it.

678

00:38:07,000 --> 00:38:09,000

Yeah, we'll send it to the lab for a DNA test.

679

00:38:09,000 --> 00:38:10,000

Awesome.

680

00:38:10,000 --> 00:38:12,000

Well done.

681

00:38:13,000 --> 00:38:17,000

If we're to believe the various witnesses over the centuries,

682

00:38:17,000 --> 00:38:20,000

a mystery beast is prowling and howling

683

00:38:20,000 --> 00:38:22,000

deep in the forests of the Ozarks.

684

00:38:25,000 --> 00:38:27,000

So when we analyze the volume of evidence

685

00:38:27,000 --> 00:38:29,000

that Phil and Jess gathered,

686

00:38:29,000 --> 00:38:34,000

is there enough to positively ID the so-called Ozark howler?

687

00:38:35,000 --> 00:38:37,000

The Gamecam photo is compelling,

688

00:38:37,000 --> 00:38:39,000

but with the animal's head obscured

689

00:38:39,000 --> 00:38:41,000

and nothing to indicate scale,

690

00:38:41,000 --> 00:38:44,000

it's impossible to determine whether it's something large,

691

00:38:44,000 --> 00:38:46,000

like an escaped jaguar,

692

00:38:46,000 --> 00:38:49,000

or as small as a common house cat.

693

00:38:50,000 --> 00:38:53,000

DNA testing on the single hair that Phil gathered

694

00:38:53,000 --> 00:38:58,000

from a log on the game trail came back as a bear.

695

00:38:59,000 --> 00:39:02,000

However, there's the partial print Phil captured

696

00:39:02,000 --> 00:39:04,000

with the 3D scanner.

697

00:39:05,000 --> 00:39:08,000

Closer inspection confirms there are no claw marks

698

00:39:08,000 --> 00:39:10,000

around the paw pads.

699

00:39:10,000 --> 00:39:15,000

Retractive claws are a trait that is almost exclusively feline.

700

00:39:16,000 --> 00:39:18,000

There are only two types of wild cats

701

00:39:18,000 --> 00:39:20,000

that are known to prowl the Ozarks.

702

00:39:20,000 --> 00:39:23,000

Mountain lions, which are extremely rare

703

00:39:23,000 --> 00:39:25,000

and definitely not black,

704

00:39:26,000 --> 00:39:28,000

and the bobcat.

705

00:39:29,000 --> 00:39:31,000

Bobcats can be melanistic,

706

00:39:31,000 --> 00:39:33,000

meaning on extremely rare occasions,

707

00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:35,000

they do have black fur.

708

00:39:35,000 --> 00:39:38,000

There have been fewer than 20 documented sightings

709

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

of a melanistic bobcat.

710

00:39:40,000 --> 00:39:43,000

One was captured on video recently in Vermont.

711

00:39:44,000 --> 00:39:47,000

Is it possible the witnesses have been seeing and hearing

712

00:39:47,000 --> 00:39:50,000

not a mysterious hellhound beast,

713

00:39:50,000 --> 00:39:52,000

but a bobcat?

714

00:39:55,000 --> 00:39:58,000

We analyze the DNA from the saliva sample

715

00:39:58,000 --> 00:40:00,000

from the partially consumed deer.

716

00:40:00,000 --> 00:40:03,000

The culprit? Bobcat.

717

00:40:03,000 --> 00:40:07,000

And the scat sample found by an elite canine?

718

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

DNA analysis reveals that it is...

719

00:40:10,000 --> 00:40:12,000

bobcat.

720

00:40:12,000 --> 00:40:15,000

And Phil had several colleagues listen to the recordings

721

00:40:15,000 --> 00:40:17,000

he and Jess captured,

722

00:40:18,000 --> 00:40:21,000

as well as the ones recorded by our witnesses.

723

00:40:24,000 --> 00:40:26,000

While the identity of the animal is uncertain,

724

00:40:26,000 --> 00:40:29,000

most said that if they had to take a guess,

725

00:40:29,000 --> 00:40:31,000

bobcat.

726

00:40:31,000 --> 00:40:33,000

If you're still not convinced,

727

00:40:33,000 --> 00:40:35,000

remember the catnip lure the team placed

728

00:40:35,000 --> 00:40:37,000

on our witnesses' property?

729

00:40:37,000 --> 00:40:39,000

While the sticky tape traps my team deployed

730

00:40:39,000 --> 00:40:42,000

didn't collect any fur samples,

731

00:40:42,000 --> 00:40:45,000

take a close look at the photo the camera snapped.

732

00:40:45,000 --> 00:40:48,000

It may be difficult to see because of its signature

733

00:40:48,000 --> 00:40:50,000

spotted coat,

734

00:40:50,000 --> 00:40:53,000

but it appears to be a bobcat.

735

00:40:54,000 --> 00:40:57,000

Though they might seem a bit smaller than the huge

736

00:40:57,000 --> 00:41:00,000

beast that supposedly is the Ozark howler.

737

00:41:01,000 --> 00:41:05,000

Amazingly, bobcats can jump as high as 12 feet

738

00:41:05,000 --> 00:41:09,000

and take down prey as big as an adult deer.

739

00:41:10,000 --> 00:41:13,000

Coming across this large, agile cat in the shadows

740

00:41:13,000 --> 00:41:16,000

of the dark woods would startle anyone.

741

00:41:16,000 --> 00:41:19,000

And it might even seem almost like a monster

742

00:41:19,000 --> 00:41:21,000

from the old folktales.

743

00:41:21,000 --> 00:41:24,000

A nightmare come to life.