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

Tonight, it's the most notorious stretch of ocean on the planet.

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

Everyone knows about the Bermuda Triangle, but yet nobody knows what's going on over there.

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

A place where ships, planes, and unsuspecting travelers sometimes disappear.

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

An explosion or a freak wave or even just a crash would leave some debris behind.

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

So how come there isn't any?

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

Now, we explore the top theories surrounding this enduring mystery.

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00:00:34,000 --> 00:00:41,000

We have plenty of records of rogue waves outright destroying ocean-going vessels.

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00:00:41,000 --> 00:00:46,000

We know that Bermuda is teeming with volcanic rock that makes compasses go crazy.

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00:00:46,000 --> 00:00:52,000

These planes are flying at 4,000 feet. I don't care if it's the perfect storm, no wave can do that.

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

What could cause so many unexplained vanishings inside Bermuda's infamous triangle?

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00:01:14,000 --> 00:01:18,000

1881, Liverpool, England.

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00:01:18,000 --> 00:01:23,000

A passenger ship named the Ellen Austin set sail for New York City.

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00:01:23,000 --> 00:01:31,000

The Ellen Austin, helmed by Captain A.J. Griffin, has a full manifest of immigrants excited to start a life in the New World.

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00:01:31,000 --> 00:01:35,000

Back then, it was a long journey across the Atlantic, about six weeks time.

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00:01:35,000 --> 00:01:40,000

Now, halfway in, the captain decides to alter their route to the south.

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00:01:40,000 --> 00:01:44,000

We can't say for sure why this is, but turns out to be a bad idea.

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00:01:44,000 --> 00:01:51,000

Soon after, the ship is becalmed, and without wind, it simply drifts.

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00:01:51,000 --> 00:01:57,000

A few days later, another boat appears, moving erratically.

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00:01:57,000 --> 00:02:03,000

No one can be seen aboard this ship, nor is there a name or a flag that identifies the vessel.

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

It appears to be abandoned.

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00:02:05,000 --> 00:02:11,000

The captain pulls his ship alongside the strange vessel, and some of the sailors cautiously board it.

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00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:15,000

What they find, or rather don't find, is very strange.

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00:02:15,000 --> 00:02:22,000

It's an empty ship. There's no logbook, there's no sign of violence, nothing to explain the missing sailors.

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00:02:22,000 --> 00:02:29,000

Stranger still, the valuable cargo, a hold of mahogany wood, is all still perfectly intact.

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00:02:29,000 --> 00:02:35,000

Captain Griffin takes the schooner as salvage, and puts some of his best crewmen aboard.

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00:02:35,000 --> 00:02:40,000

The wind picks up, and these two ships now set sail together to New York.

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00:02:40,000 --> 00:02:45,000

But soon, they meet a turbulent storm that separates them.

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00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:50,000

When the weather clears, a few days later, Captain Griffin has to go searching for the other ship,

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

and when they finally spot it and pull up alongside, it's eerily quiet.

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

Shockingly, the ship is empty. Again, none of the new crew members can be found.

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

There's no bloodshed, no damage from the storm, nothing.

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

It's as if they all just disappeared into thin air.

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00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:13,000

Once? Okay, that's a little bit weird, I'll give you that, but twice? Now it's getting scary.

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00:03:13,000 --> 00:03:19,000

Afraid to lose any more of his crew, Captain Griffin leaves the mysterious ship behind.

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00:03:19,000 --> 00:03:27,000

According to records we have from Lloyds of London, the Ellen Austin finishes its voyage alone, docking in New York on February 11th, 1881.

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

I cannot imagine what the surviving crew must have been thinking.

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00:03:31,000 --> 00:03:36,000

Two crews on that boat, including some of their friends, just disappeared, seemingly into thin air.

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

What could explain the strange events witnessed by the crew of the Ellen Austin?

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00:03:44,000 --> 00:03:50,000

They don't know it at the time, but they've encountered this mysterious ship in an area of the Atlantic Ocean

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00:03:50,000 --> 00:03:59,000

that has been known to mariners for hundreds of years as a place to fear, a place they accidentally drifted into.

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00:03:59,000 --> 00:04:06,000

In this stretch of the ocean, there are countless stories of shipwrecks and lost boats.

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00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:13,000

In 1800, the USS Pickering disappears en route to Delaware, carrying 90 people.

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00:04:13,000 --> 00:04:20,000

In 1814, the USS Wasp vanishes, along with 140 passengers.

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00:04:20,000 --> 00:04:28,000

And in 1921, the Carroll A. Deering is lost and ultimately found abandoned near North Carolina.

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00:04:28,000 --> 00:04:36,000

But the actual location where the vessels go missing isn't defined until 1964.

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00:04:36,000 --> 00:04:45,000

Journalist Vincent Gattis catalogs some of the strange goings on in an article, and he finally comes up with a name for this mysterious area.

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00:04:45,000 --> 00:04:50,000

He calls it the Bermuda Triangle.

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00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:57,000

The Bermuda Triangle covers about 500,000 square miles of the Atlantic Ocean, between Florida, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico.

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00:04:57,000 --> 00:05:00,000

It has claimed numerous victims.

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

As recently as 2015, two boys disappeared in the Triangle during a fishing trip that left out of Tequesta, Florida.

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

As the losses have piled up, the area has become infamous, legendary worldwide even.

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00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:20,000

Everyone knows about the Bermuda Triangle, but yet nobody knows what's going on over there.

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00:05:20,000 --> 00:05:28,000

There have been a number of different theories. One of the earliest comes from Christopher Columbus.

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00:05:28,000 --> 00:05:38,000

Columbus is actually one of the first Europeans to cross through the Bermuda Triangle in 1492, and wouldn't you know it, he almost immediately encounters a problem.

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00:05:38,000 --> 00:05:46,000

The Santa Maria and her sister ships get stuck in an abundance of algae, which, in Columbus's diary, he refers to as weeds.

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00:05:46,000 --> 00:05:51,000

The ships are stuck for three days, and the sailors become paranoid and panicked.

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00:05:51,000 --> 00:05:56,000

They fear running aground or being tangled in the weeds and being dragged to the ocean floor.

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00:05:56,000 --> 00:06:06,000

The crew would eventually manage to cut their way out, but they remain convinced that this is a dangerous area, all thanks to highly unusual seaweed.

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

What Columbus and his men call weeds, scientists eventually name sargassum, from the Spanish word sargazo, meaning seaweed.

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00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:22,000

The area ultimately becomes known as the Sargasso Sea.

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00:06:22,000 --> 00:06:27,000

The Sargasso Sea measures about 700 miles wide and 2,000 miles long.

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00:06:27,000 --> 00:06:34,000

It takes up about two-thirds of the Bermuda Triangle and is full of these dense mats of sargassum.

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

Could seaweed explain the loss of so many vessels?

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00:06:38,000 --> 00:06:49,000

Sargasso is a seaweed. It's made of long, thin stalks, and then there are lots of leaves and air-filled sacks called pneumatocysts.

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00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:57,000

If you get stuck in it, the sargasso wraps around the rudder so you can't steer, and barnacles begin to grow on the ship, slowing it down.

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00:06:57,000 --> 00:07:02,000

But getting stuck is just one small part of the problem.

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00:07:02,000 --> 00:07:08,000

When sargassum groups together and begins to rot, as it decomposes, it produces hydrogen-sulfide gas.

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

This gas smells really awful, like rotten eggs and it's toxic.

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00:07:13,000 --> 00:07:19,000

If you breathe in this hydrogen-sulfide, it can irritate your eyes, your nose, and your throat,

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00:07:19,000 --> 00:07:26,000

but it can also cause some serious psychological issues if inhaled for an extended period of time, possibly even insanity.

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00:07:26,000 --> 00:07:32,000

A recent study in Nanchang, China in 2021 tested the effects of hydrogen-sulfide on rodents,

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00:07:32,000 --> 00:07:37,000

and they concluded, without a doubt, that it causes depression-like behavior.

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00:07:37,000 --> 00:07:44,000

Obviously, just getting tangled in the seaweed could explain a disappearing or wrecked ship if it's stuck out there for long enough.

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00:07:44,000 --> 00:07:52,000

But when you take into account this psychological effect, this might explain the wilder Bermuda Triangle stories.

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00:07:57,000 --> 00:08:04,000

Could this deadly gas explain the experience of ships like the Ellen Austin?

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

Remember, the mysterious ship that they find doesn't wreck or disappear.

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

It's the passengers that do, so could it have been those toxic brain-altering fumes from the sargassum that drove them to dive overboard?

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00:08:16,000 --> 00:08:18,000

It's possible.

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00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:23,000

An eerily similar incident appears to take place in 1968.

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00:08:23,000 --> 00:08:27,000

But this time, there's more evidence.

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00:08:27,000 --> 00:08:36,000

On October 31, 1968, British businessman and amateur sailor, Donald Crowhurst, sets off on the Sunday Times Golden Globe Race.

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00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:42,000

It's a competition to be the first man to single-handedly, non-stop sail around the world.

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00:08:42,000 --> 00:08:46,000

Unfortunately, he's ill-prepared, and his boat has been hastily constructed.

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00:08:46,000 --> 00:08:51,000

He barely makes it out to sea when he starts encountering problems with navigation and leaks.

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00:08:51,000 --> 00:08:58,000

But if he goes back home, he'll lose everything he's invested in this race and be a laughingstock. He'll be humiliated.

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00:08:58,000 --> 00:09:04,000

Instead, Crowhurst devises a plan. To cheat.

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

He decides to stay in the Atlantic and radio back false coordinates to make it seem as though he's traversing the globe.

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00:09:10,000 --> 00:09:19,000

Eventually, race organizers catch on that Crowhurst radio communications are not coming from the coordinates he's giving, so Crowhurst goes silent.

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00:09:19,000 --> 00:09:28,000

Sometime thereafter, he makes the mistake of drifting into the Bermuda Triangle. And that's it. He's never seen or heard from again.

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00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:35,000

Crowhurst's empty boat is eventually found in the Atlantic, along with a logbook.

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00:09:35,000 --> 00:09:42,000

The writings paint a clear picture of a descent into madness. They start off perfectly normal, but once he hits the Sargasso Sea,

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00:09:42,000 --> 00:09:48,000

Crowhurst starts writing mathematical formulas that he claims represent a universal truth.

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00:09:48,000 --> 00:09:58,000

He disputes Einstein's theory of relativity and his magnum opus, a rambling 25,000 word meditation on free will, perception, and the nature of God.

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

He wraps all of this up with his final words, quote, I have no need to prolong the game. It is finished. It is finished. It is the mercy.

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00:10:09,000 --> 00:10:19,000

This is someone who is experiencing some sort of mental instability, which may have led to his suicide. But was this due to prolonged exposure to rotting Sargassum?

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00:10:19,000 --> 00:10:28,000

Let's just assume that Sargassum is to blame for the Ellen Austin and the Crowhurst incidents along with other entanglements and shipwrecks.

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00:10:28,000 --> 00:10:33,000

The problem is this doesn't solve all the mysteries of what's been going on here.

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00:10:33,000 --> 00:10:45,000

While the Sargasso Sea is pretty sizable, it only takes up part of the Bermuda Triangle. There are many incidents on ships that didn't come anywhere close to the seaweed.

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00:10:45,000 --> 00:10:50,000

So we know for sure that it's not the whole answer. There must be something else going on.

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00:10:52,000 --> 00:10:59,000

From the time of Christopher Columbus, the dangers of the Bermuda Triangle are ascribed to deadly seaweed.

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00:10:59,000 --> 00:11:05,000

It's an interesting idea, but because seaweed only covers part of the triangle, it can't explain everything.

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00:11:05,000 --> 00:11:09,000

Could another sailor's tale offer a different explanation?

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00:11:09,000 --> 00:11:15,000

It starts off as something of a legend among weather-hardened sea-weary sailors.

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00:11:15,000 --> 00:11:27,000

As they share stories over a pint in the pub, you may hear a tale of some enormous wave as big as a mountain, capable of destroying a ship, sweeping away its crew, or just swallowing it whole.

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00:11:27,000 --> 00:11:35,000

And for most of the 500 or so year history of transatlantic shipping, these have been thought to be myths or exaggerations.

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00:11:35,000 --> 00:11:47,000

Then, in the 19th century, French explorer Jules Dumont-Derville reports seeing 100-foot waves in a different body of water, the Indian Ocean.

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00:11:47,000 --> 00:11:50,000

However, no one believes him.

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00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:58,000

During that time, the models that oceanographers use to predict wave height say that these random giant waves are an impossibility.

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00:11:58,000 --> 00:12:03,000

But a recent discovery shows, Derville might have been right.

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

These phenomena have been observed, measured, and proven, and we call them rogue waves.

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

The proof comes on New Year's Day, 1995.

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00:12:17,000 --> 00:12:23,000

About 100 miles off the coast of Norway, there's an oil drilling platform called the Dropner.

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00:12:23,000 --> 00:12:31,000

In addition to its main equipment, it contains a whole slew of instruments that can monitor wave height, slope, acceleration, etc.

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00:12:31,000 --> 00:12:43,000

On January 1st of 1995, a laser rangefinder on the bottom of this oil drilling platform measures a wave headed for the Dropner.

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00:12:43,000 --> 00:12:49,000

The Dropner wave, as it becomes known, seems to come out of nowhere and measures 85 feet high.

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00:12:49,000 --> 00:12:53,000

It has characteristics that don't fit any previous wave model.

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

These rogue waves, because they are so gigantic, so tall, so steep, and moving so quickly,

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00:13:20,000 --> 00:13:26,000

they can carry up to 16 times the amount of force than a regular wave.

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00:13:26,000 --> 00:13:34,000

And in fact, the bigger the ship, the worse you fare when it comes to rogue waves.

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00:13:34,000 --> 00:13:37,000

Because these rogue waves, they don't come on slowly.

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00:13:37,000 --> 00:13:40,000

They're not giant, wide things.

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00:13:40,000 --> 00:13:44,000

They're very sharp. They're like cliffs of water.

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00:13:44,000 --> 00:13:50,000

And so when a ship encounters a rogue wave, it gets sent straight up the side of the cliff.

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00:13:50,000 --> 00:13:56,000

And then when it reaches the top, it teeters over and slams back down into the water.

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00:13:56,000 --> 00:14:02,000

And the bigger the ship you have, the more force there is and the more damage that rogue wave can do.

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00:14:02,000 --> 00:14:09,000

That kind of massive force grossly exceeds the limit of what ocean vessels today can tolerate.

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00:14:09,000 --> 00:14:13,000

So you can only imagine what it would do to a wooden ship from hundreds of years ago.

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00:14:13,000 --> 00:14:17,000

It would decimate it in one fell swoop.

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00:14:17,000 --> 00:14:21,000

But scientists still aren't certain what causes them.

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

One idea is that they're caused by constructive interference.

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00:14:25,000 --> 00:14:30,000

This is when different waves travel different speeds and start to pile up on each other.

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00:14:30,000 --> 00:14:37,000

Now constructive interference can occur when huge storms converge from multiple directions at once.

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00:14:37,000 --> 00:14:41,000

The Bermuda Triangle is well known for such storms.

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00:14:41,000 --> 00:14:47,000

The triangle is right in the middle of Hurricane Alley, where storms from the north and the south can come together.

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

If there's a third storm that comes in from Florida, forget about it.

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00:14:50,000 --> 00:14:54,000

You've got the recipe for a deadly rogue wave.

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00:14:54,000 --> 00:14:59,000

This phenomenon might explain a series of mysterious shipwrecks.

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00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:04,000

One ship that may have been impacted by these rogue waves is the USS Cyclops.

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

Back in 1918, it was one of the largest ships in the U.S. Navy, measuring 550 feet long, with a crew of over 300 people.

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

On March 4th, after the ship is loaded up with over 11,000 tons of manganese ore, it embarks on a voyage from the West Indies to Baltimore.

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00:15:22,000 --> 00:15:30,000

After nine days at sea, the Cyclops sends a message that reads, quote, weather fair all well.

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00:15:30,000 --> 00:15:33,000

This is the last message it ever sent.

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

Every ship just seems to vanish, along with its crew, without even an SOS.

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00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:41,000

It's an absolute heartbreaking catastrophe.

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00:15:41,000 --> 00:15:49,000

To this day, aside from active combat, the USS Cyclops was the largest loss of life to the Navy.

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00:15:49,000 --> 00:15:55,000

In 1941, two more Navy ships meet a similar fate.

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00:15:55,000 --> 00:16:03,000

The USS Proteus, decommissioned after World War I, departs the Virgin Islands with 58 crew members and a cargo of Bauxite.

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00:16:03,000 --> 00:16:05,000

It never reaches its destination.

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00:16:05,000 --> 00:16:10,000

A month later, the USS Nereus leaves from the same place with the same type of cargo.

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00:16:10,000 --> 00:16:13,000

Sadly, it suffers the same tragedy.

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00:16:13,000 --> 00:16:17,000

The ship and the 61 people aboard are never seen again.

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00:16:17,000 --> 00:16:26,000

Both the Proteus and the Nereus are sister ships to the Cyclops, all three massive, strongly fortified vessels all gone.

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00:16:26,000 --> 00:16:31,000

How can an enormous ship just go, pfft, and just disappear?

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00:16:31,000 --> 00:16:37,000

Even if you destroy a big ship, there's going to be lots of bits and pieces floating around.

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00:16:37,000 --> 00:16:42,000

It is very odd for a giant ship to go missing without a trace.

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

But in these cases, there's nothing.

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00:16:44,000 --> 00:16:48,000

These certainly sound like candidates for rogue wave disasters.

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00:16:48,000 --> 00:16:55,000

In 2018, oceanographer Simon Boxall attempts to prove this theory.

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00:16:55,000 --> 00:17:05,000

But the University of Southampton, Oxl, conducts an experiment to investigate if rogue waves could destroy modern ocean-going vessels.

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00:17:05,000 --> 00:17:13,000

And specifically, Dr. Boxall was trying to explore whether the USS Cyclops was destroyed by a rogue wave.

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

And we can't recreate that exact scenario, so instead he built a scale model.

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00:17:19,000 --> 00:17:25,000

And once the simulators are turned on, enormous waves rise up and easily destroy the model.

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00:17:25,000 --> 00:17:30,000

Boxall's study demonstrates just how powerful these waves are.

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00:17:30,000 --> 00:17:31,000

They come out of nowhere.

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00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:33,000

You don't have a warning.

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00:17:33,000 --> 00:17:39,000

You may not even have time to send a distress signal before you're simply consumed by it.

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00:17:39,000 --> 00:17:44,000

For some, this experiment solves a long-standing mystery.

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00:17:44,000 --> 00:17:51,000

We've actually proven the existence of rogue waves, and we've proven that they can happen all over the Bermuda Triangle.

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00:17:51,000 --> 00:17:57,000

Some people would say that, yeah, rogue waves are likely responsible for the disappearance of the USS Cyclops,

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

as well as a number of other ships in the Bermuda Triangle.

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00:18:01,000 --> 00:18:04,000

And for the non-REC boats that have turned up with their crew missing,

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00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:09,000

perhaps a small rogue wave could have tipped the boat and everybody fell overboard.

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00:18:09,000 --> 00:18:13,000

But this still doesn't explain every incident.

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

Now, if you came to me with all of this information and told me that rogue waves are responsible for every single missing ship in the Bermuda Triangle,

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00:18:21,000 --> 00:18:28,000

I might have a difficult time arguing with you, but ships aren't the only things that have disappeared here.

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

What about all the airplanes?

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00:18:32,000 --> 00:18:39,000

For centuries, ships have gone missing in the notorious Bermuda Triangle.

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00:18:39,000 --> 00:18:46,000

But after airplanes are invented in 1903, some follow the same mysterious fate.

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00:18:46,000 --> 00:18:52,000

Perhaps the most famous incident occurs on December 5, 1945.

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00:18:52,000 --> 00:19:00,000

Around 2 p.m., five U.S. Navy torpedo bombers, collectively known as Flight 19,

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

take off from Fort Lauderdale, Florida on a routine training flight.

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00:19:05,000 --> 00:19:09,000

The 14 men on these planes are extremely competent soldiers.

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00:19:09,000 --> 00:19:12,000

They've logged over 300 hours in the air. They know what they're doing.

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00:19:12,000 --> 00:19:20,000

And the flight's leader, Lieutenant Charles Taylor, is an incredibly experienced pilot who successfully flew numerous combat missions in World War II.

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00:19:20,000 --> 00:19:25,000

So we're talking about the best of the best. These are top gun type of guys.

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00:19:25,000 --> 00:19:29,000

The exercise begins normally. Everything starts smoothly.

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00:19:29,000 --> 00:19:34,000

But soon after entering the Bermuda Triangle, something strange happens.

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00:19:34,000 --> 00:19:40,000

Lieutenant Taylor radios that his plane's compass is malfunctioning, and he believes that they're flying in the wrong direction.

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00:19:40,000 --> 00:19:48,000

But they're not. Something has caused the airmen, or their equipment, to become mysteriously disoriented.

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00:19:48,000 --> 00:19:53,000

The situation worsens when a heavy storm rolls in.

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00:19:53,000 --> 00:19:58,000

At this point, the pilots are very confused. They believe they've drifted hundreds of miles off course.

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

Somewhere near the Florida Keys.

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

As they get farther and farther away, their radio communications become increasingly faint.

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00:20:06,000 --> 00:20:10,000

And after hours of flying, they're running out of fuel.

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00:20:10,000 --> 00:20:17,000

Their last recorded communications discuss having to ditch the planes when they get below 10 gallons of fuel.

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

From that point on, their transmission cuts out. And the only thing the naval base hears is an eerie buzz.

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00:20:23,000 --> 00:20:29,000

It's the last time any of these men are seen or heard from.

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00:20:29,000 --> 00:20:37,000

Despite their high level skills and some of the day's most technologically advanced aircraft, all five planes and 14 crew members are lost.

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00:20:37,000 --> 00:20:41,000

The tragedy doesn't end there.

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00:20:41,000 --> 00:20:46,000

The Navy immediately releases two large sea planes to hunt for Flight 19.

201

00:20:46,000 --> 00:20:53,000

After 27 minutes, one of those sea planes radios back that they're approaching Flight 19's last location.

202

00:20:53,000 --> 00:21:02,000

But then this rescue plane is never heard from again. It vanishes off the radar. The blip just disappears.

203

00:21:02,000 --> 00:21:07,000

Shockingly, the remains of that plane and its 13 crewmen are never recovered either.

204

00:21:07,000 --> 00:21:13,000

The other plane keeps looking but finds nothing and ends up just returning to the base.

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

No bodies, no debris, no sign at all of these aircraft even ever existed.

206

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

Six planes and 27 men are gone. It's like they just vanished off the face of the Earth.

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00:21:24,000 --> 00:21:34,000

Now all of a sudden, the Sargassum and Rogue Wave theories, though they are scientifically credible, they seem a lot less likely as the root cause of the Triangle's problems.

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00:21:34,000 --> 00:21:42,000

Because they simply don't impact the air. The planes are flying at 4,000 feet. I don't care if it's the perfect storm. No wave can do that.

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00:21:42,000 --> 00:21:50,000

People have studied Flight 19 for almost 80 years now and nobody believes that they were brought down by waves or seaweed.

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00:21:50,000 --> 00:21:58,000

Then in 2015, Russian scientist Igor Yeltssof offers a possible explanation.

211

00:21:58,000 --> 00:22:11,000

While working at the Trophemic Institute of Petroleum Geology and Geophysics, Yeltssof proposes that the Bermuda Triangle's dangers are caused by an undersea buildup and subsequent explosion of methane gas.

212

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

Methane itself is a colorless, odorless gas you might be familiar with methane as natural gas to heat your home.

213

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

But in very special cases, especially at the bottom of the ocean, these pockets of natural gas can get so compressed that they turn essentially into an ice into a form of solid.

214

00:22:34,000 --> 00:22:41,000

If the seafloor cracks or that ice gets pushed up to touch the water, an exceptional amount of gas can be released.

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00:22:41,000 --> 00:22:46,000

You ever drop dry ice into water like for Halloween, you know, so you can make that fake fog?

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00:22:46,000 --> 00:22:53,000

Now imagine all that happened in the span of an instant with all that gas trapped in a bubble underwater.

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00:22:53,000 --> 00:22:59,000

The gas heats up the surrounding water and surges quickly to the surface.

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00:22:59,000 --> 00:23:08,000

Methane is highly flammable, so the intense heat from the plane's exhaust could cause a massive explosion, enough to blow the plane to smithereens.

219

00:23:09,000 --> 00:23:13,000

Could this also explain what happened to the missing rescue plane?

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

The night of the Flight 19 incident, a tanker ship, the SS Gaines Mills, reports seeing flames from an apparent explosion billowing 100 feet high.

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

Maybe the search and rescue seaplane flies through the same patch of methane gas, their engine exhaust ignites the methane and destroys the plane.

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00:23:31,000 --> 00:23:35,000

But let's say the plane doesn't explode and the pilot manages to keep it aloft.

223

00:23:36,000 --> 00:23:41,000

If an airplane were to hit this gas bubble, there's a few possible things that could go wrong.

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00:23:41,000 --> 00:23:47,000

For example, if a plane suddenly flies into a patch of methane gas, a pilot would quickly lose control.

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00:23:47,000 --> 00:23:58,000

His wings, his engines, his instruments are all calibrated to create lift in air, not in methane, which has a totally different density, so the plane would just drop.

226

00:23:58,000 --> 00:24:06,000

Well, methane affects the human brain too. If a pilot inhales the gas, it will reduce the amount of oxygen they draw in from the air.

227

00:24:09,000 --> 00:24:17,000

This can cause mood changes, slurred speech, vision problems, memory loss, and most notably, disorientation.

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00:24:17,000 --> 00:24:31,000

So if those 14 men that were a part of Flight 19 inhaled a significant amount of methane gas, it is possible that they would become so disoriented that they'd have trouble reading their compasses and discerning where they are.

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00:24:31,000 --> 00:24:41,000

In 2016, one year after Yeltsof publishes his theory, another team looks for further evidence to support it.

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00:24:41,000 --> 00:24:48,000

Researchers at Arctic University in Norway study multiple giant craters on the floor of the Barents Sea.

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00:24:48,000 --> 00:25:00,000

These massive craters on the sea floor were created thousands of years ago, and the best explanation for them is exploding methane deposits.

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

And these same craters are present in the Bermuda Triangle, so these methane gas explosions have almost certainly happened there.

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00:25:09,000 --> 00:25:15,000

If true, this story could also explain the Triangle's lost ships.

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00:25:16,000 --> 00:25:21,000

When the gas explodes underwater, it creates this giant sinkhole at the surface.

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00:25:21,000 --> 00:25:33,000

Think of a toilet flushing with extreme force. The suction created from the blast would suck any large object down below the surface, never to be seen again. Even something as large as a ship.

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00:25:33,000 --> 00:25:42,000

Just like in an airplane, methane offsets the oxygen which we need to breathe so it can easily confuse sailors that are in the ocean around it.

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00:25:42,000 --> 00:25:52,000

It checks most of the boxes of what we've seen in the Bermuda Triangle. Unfortunately, until we get some sort of eyewitness account, we won't know if it's the answer.

238

00:25:53,000 --> 00:26:04,000

Over the last 500 years, the Bermuda Triangle has claimed some 8,000 lives and hundreds of ships and airplanes, none with a definitive cause.

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00:26:04,000 --> 00:26:15,000

But in 2019, a shocking new theory emerges thanks to a scientist who experienced a surprising event in the area.

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00:26:16,000 --> 00:26:24,000

One of the top investigators studying shipwrecks in the Bermuda Triangle is Dr. Philippe Roushia.

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00:26:24,000 --> 00:26:31,000

He's the custodian of historic wrecks at Bermuda's Department of the Environment and Natural Resources.

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00:26:31,000 --> 00:26:39,000

It's his job to go in and out of the Triangle all the time and to investigate and keep tabs on the hundreds of shipwrecks surrounding Bermuda.

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00:26:39,000 --> 00:26:45,000

So far, Roushia has managed to defy the odds, despite some unusual incidents.

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00:26:45,000 --> 00:26:52,000

When he was out diving in the early 2000s, he encountered a strange phenomenon. None of his compasses were actually working.

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00:26:52,000 --> 00:26:59,000

He had multiple compasses on his dive gear and his boat, and they were all pointing in different ways, none of which were accurate.

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00:26:59,000 --> 00:27:05,000

And because he's a lifelong local and conditions were clear, he was able to find his way back to Bermuda by sight.

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00:27:06,000 --> 00:27:14,000

Roushia has since discovered several more of what he calls hotspots in the Triangle, places that make navigational tools useless.

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00:27:14,000 --> 00:27:21,000

Clearly, this could be the reason why some of the wrecks, both planes and boats, could have happened in the area.

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

But why is it happening?

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00:27:23,000 --> 00:27:28,000

After hearing many stories like Roushia's, scientists investigated.

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00:27:28,000 --> 00:27:36,000

In a 2019 study published in Nature, they might have found the cause, and it has to do with the makeup of Bermuda itself.

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00:27:36,000 --> 00:27:43,000

Bermuda is a volcanic island, like Hawaii and many others, but researchers have discovered that Bermuda has one major difference.

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00:27:43,000 --> 00:27:52,000

Most lava comes from about 20 miles deep, but the lava that formed Bermuda came from a whopping 400 miles below the surface of the Earth.

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00:27:52,000 --> 00:27:56,000

That's immensely deeper and obviously much closer to the Earth's core.

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00:27:56,000 --> 00:27:59,000

This is entirely unique to Bermuda.

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00:27:59,000 --> 00:28:04,000

This geologic feature turns out to have surprising consequences.

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00:28:04,000 --> 00:28:13,000

Because this volcanic rock in and around Bermuda originated so deep within the Earth, it has a heavy concentration of a mineral called magnetite.

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00:28:13,000 --> 00:28:19,000

In fact, Bermuda is 18 to 20 percent magnetite, nearly 20 times more than typical soil.

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00:28:19,000 --> 00:28:24,000

Magnetite is the most magnetic, naturally occurring mineral on the planet.

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00:28:24,000 --> 00:28:29,000

And this is what could be making so many ships and airplanes go haywire in the triangle.

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00:28:33,000 --> 00:28:39,000

In other words, Bermuda is basically a giant magnet.

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00:28:39,000 --> 00:28:42,000

This phenomenon can be pretty easily demonstrated.

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00:28:42,000 --> 00:28:49,000

If you pass a compass over a small amount of Bermuda's magnetite-rich limestone, it can throw it off by several degrees.

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00:28:49,000 --> 00:28:51,000

And that's just one little rock.

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00:28:51,000 --> 00:28:56,000

There's 500 billion tons of this stuff in the Bermuda triangle.

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00:28:56,000 --> 00:28:58,000

So just imagine what that could do.

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00:28:58,000 --> 00:29:03,000

Without a trustworthy compass, ships could easily veer off course and crash into the rocks.

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00:29:03,000 --> 00:29:05,000

But what about planes?

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00:29:05,000 --> 00:29:10,000

Planes would have problems with not only their compass, but also their altimeter readings.

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00:29:10,000 --> 00:29:14,000

A pilot could get quite disoriented and potentially make a fatal mistake.

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00:29:14,000 --> 00:29:23,000

According to one pilot, magnetite could also be powerful enough to generate a literal cloud of magnetism.

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

In 2017, Bruce Gernon publishes a book called Beyond the Bermuda Triangle.

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

In it, he recounts many pilot stories saying they've been in this electronic fog.

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00:29:36,000 --> 00:29:43,000

Until the modern advent of GPS navigation, the compass is the tool that enables travelers to accurately navigate the globe.

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00:29:43,000 --> 00:29:48,000

It does this by always pointing in a constant direction, magnetic north.

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00:29:48,000 --> 00:29:53,000

It can, however, be instantly rendered inaccurate by the presence of a strong magnet.

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00:29:53,000 --> 00:30:00,000

According to Gernon, electronic fog is like a grayish cloud of electromagnetic fields that form above the ocean.

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

It can appear out of nowhere and completely engulf an aircraft.

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00:30:04,000 --> 00:30:10,000

Gernon himself says he experiences this phenomenon while flying through the heart of the Bermuda Triangle.

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00:30:10,000 --> 00:30:15,000

His airplane is suddenly surrounded by a strange fog that he can't break through.

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00:30:15,000 --> 00:30:23,000

It seems to stick to his plane and he experiences the sensation of zero gravity as it propels his aircraft forward.

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00:30:24,000 --> 00:30:29,000

According to Gernon, once he's out of the triangle, the cloud disintegrates.

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00:30:29,000 --> 00:30:38,000

When his instruments work again, he realizes that he just traveled 100 miles in only 3 minutes and 20 seconds.

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00:30:38,000 --> 00:30:41,000

He landed 30 minutes ahead of time.

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00:30:41,000 --> 00:30:44,000

The fog practically teleported him.

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00:30:44,000 --> 00:30:54,000

Gernon and the others he cites in his book believe that the natural magnetism in the Bermuda Triangle may be giving the droplets within the fog an electromagnetic charge.

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00:30:54,000 --> 00:31:05,000

If this is true, then those droplets would naturally be attracted to anything they encounter and once they're attached, they're dense enough to carry a vessel right along with them.

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00:31:05,000 --> 00:31:12,000

It's kind of like a magical carpet ride where if you're lucky, it'll send you in the direction that you want to go.

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00:31:12,000 --> 00:31:15,000

But if you're unlucky, it might send you into a watery grave.

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00:31:15,000 --> 00:31:22,000

Despite Gernon's claims, mainstream science has yet to support the existence of electronic fog.

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00:31:22,000 --> 00:31:26,000

Gernon himself isn't a scientist.

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00:31:26,000 --> 00:31:30,000

He's an accomplished pilot and flight instructor, but not a physicist.

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00:31:30,000 --> 00:31:36,000

And based on a lot of his experience flying through the triangle, this is what he personally believes.

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00:31:36,000 --> 00:31:45,000

Now Gernon claims to have worked with numerous scientists who all believe that this phenomenon is plausible and maybe to him it is.

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00:31:45,000 --> 00:31:56,000

But until we have some hard data or visual evidence like a video recording, I think it's too early to blame the electronic fog for disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle.

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00:31:56,000 --> 00:32:06,000

Meanwhile, the magnetized around Bermuda is proven and we're still only beginning to uncover all the strange effects it might be causing.

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

In 2014's Malaysia Flight 370, one of the most mysterious plane crashes of all time.

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

We still don't know where it crashed, but a bunch of wreckage eventually washed up.

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00:32:37,000 --> 00:32:43,000

However, with the disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle, it's a different story.

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00:32:43,000 --> 00:32:49,000

These things just disappear like they never existed, not even a trace of an airframe or an anchor chain.

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00:32:49,000 --> 00:32:58,000

For a number of these disappearances, such as Flight 19 or the USS Cyclops, massive search efforts are undertaken, yet nothing is ever found.

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00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:06,000

But logically, an explosion or a freak wave or even just a crash would leave some debris behind. So how come there isn't any?

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00:33:06,000 --> 00:33:17,000

In 2014, physics and meteorology professor David Pears suggests a surprising new answer to that question.

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

He thinks that some of these vessels were never found because they were transported out of the Bermuda Triangle and into another place.

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00:33:23,000 --> 00:33:31,000

Not by magic, but a scientific phenomenon that he calls a space war, but you might know as a wormhole.

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00:33:35,000 --> 00:33:46,000

A wormhole is a tunnel or a passage through space and time. It's basically a shortcut created by gravity, which can take you from one part of the universe and place you in another.

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00:33:46,000 --> 00:33:52,000

Wormholes are strictly theoretical at this time. They've only been proven to be mathematically possible on paper.

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00:33:52,000 --> 00:34:00,000

They were discovered in 1935 by physicists Albert Einstein and Nathan Rosen, which is why they're also called Einstein-Rosenbridges.

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

And these are based on Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity, which tells us that space and time are interwoven.

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00:34:09,000 --> 00:34:16,000

We actually live in a four-dimensional universe, three dimensions of space and one dimension of time.

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00:34:16,000 --> 00:34:22,000

Is it possible that a wormhole could exist in the Bermuda Triangle?

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

If you take a look back at Christopher Columbus's accounts traveling through the Bermuda Triangle, he mentioned something incredibly strange.

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00:34:30,000 --> 00:34:35,000

He reports seeing a great flame of fire crashing into the sea one night.

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00:34:35,000 --> 00:34:41,000

Afterwards, he sees strange lights in the distance and his compass readings are erratic.

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00:34:41,000 --> 00:34:53,000

Today, experts believe Columbus was witnessing a meteor strike. And if that's true, there are those that believe it could cause enough of a gravitational anomaly to form a wormhole.

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00:34:53,000 --> 00:35:03,000

Today, many institutions and top physicists are delving into the complex science behind possible wormholes.

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00:35:03,000 --> 00:35:13,000

Quantum mechanics is the science of studying subatomic particles, the smallest building blocks of our universe, and how their motion and interaction relates to energy.

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00:35:13,000 --> 00:35:25,000

Within quantum mechanics, we understand we know that at the tiniest scales in nature, microscopic wormholes can naturally form and then just snap out of existence.

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00:35:25,000 --> 00:35:32,000

Now, we don't know how to scale wormholes up to fit a giant ship or aircraft, but anything can

happen.

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00:35:32,000 --> 00:35:49,000

Theoretically, wormholes allow you to travel not just through space, but also through time. It is actually possible, if wormholes do exist, for you to be able to travel through them and end up in your own past.

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

And when you start thinking about that possibility, there are some stories from the Bermuda Triangle that perfectly fit that description.

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00:35:57,000 --> 00:36:02,000

Including one that takes place on June 7th, 1964.

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00:36:02,000 --> 00:36:15,000

There's a veteran pilot who charters vacations in the Bahamas, and her name is Carolyn Cascio. She's flying through the triangle, and when she approaches Grand Turk Island, something odd happens.

324

00:36:15,000 --> 00:36:25,000

Cascio radios the tower and says that despite her instruments telling her that she's above the island, when she looks out her window, it appears to be uninhabited.

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

This doesn't make sense. Grand Turk has buildings, farms, houses, and a navy base. It has an airport and a population of nearly 5,000 people.

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

The tower assures Cascio that she is at the right place and clears her to land at any time.

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00:36:43,000 --> 00:36:53,000

She circles frantically over a dozen times, and all she sees are beaches and trees. There are no towns, no buildings, and definitely no airport.

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00:36:53,000 --> 00:37:04,000

Cascio finally decides to turn around and go back the way she came. Sadly, she is never seen again. Her last words are, quote, is there no way out of this.

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00:37:04,000 --> 00:37:14,000

Wormhole enthusiasts believe that this has proved that she actually traveled back in time, to a time before Grand Turk Island was developed.

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00:37:14,000 --> 00:37:30,000

Even if you accept the possibility of a wormhole large enough to transport a plane, based on our current understanding of science, it would be impossible for a person or object to even survive the trip due to the crushing gravity within.

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

Obviously, if we could prove the existence of wormholes, that would be one of the greatest scientific discoveries of all time.

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

But, until that day comes, researchers are going to have to stick to the science they know to solve the Bermuda Triangle mystery.

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00:38:07,000 --> 00:38:17,000

Okay, so then how about the rogue waves? They certainly happen in the triangle, but like Sargassum, they don't explain the disappearance of airplanes.

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00:38:17,000 --> 00:38:24,000

Well then how about a methane gas explosion? Maybe, but you'd think that a large explosion would leave debris behind.

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

What about magnetite, wormholes, or even electromagnetic fog? Honestly, any one of these could be attributed to the disappearances within the triangle.

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

Or perhaps, could all these theories be true?

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00:38:44,000 --> 00:38:56,000

We generally talk about the Bermuda Triangle like there's only one explanation for this mystery, but given the numerous disappearances across more than 500 years, there's absolutely no reason why it needs to be only one of these things.

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00:38:56,000 --> 00:39:00,000

There's a combination of deadly factors that are existing here.

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00:39:01,000 --> 00:39:13,000

Let's start with the methane gas theory. We know these things happen within the Bermuda Triangle based on evidence of craters on the ocean floor. So it's likely that some of these boat disappearances were caused by methane bubbles.

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00:39:13,000 --> 00:39:20,000

Other ships have almost certainly been hit with rogue waves. We now know that they've been scientifically proven to exist.

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00:39:20,000 --> 00:39:29,000

We have records, we even have photographs. And the Bermuda Triangle is in a location on the earth that is ripe for the formation of rogue waves.

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

So it's quite possible that a freak wave could rise out of nowhere and snap a vessel in two, causing it to quickly sink and essentially disappear.

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00:39:38,000 --> 00:39:42,000

There also may be a simple explanation for why no wreckage is found.

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00:39:42,000 --> 00:39:48,000

Within the Bermuda Triangle is an undersea trench called the Milwaukee Deep.

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00:39:48,000 --> 00:39:53,000

This is the deepest spot within the Atlantic, over 27,000 feet down.

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00:39:53,000 --> 00:40:02,000

The Milwaukee Deep is relatively unexplored. There have only been a couple expeditions to those depths in that location throughout all of history.

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00:40:02,000 --> 00:40:08,000

If your ship ends up sinking this deep, it's really unlikely anyone's going to be able to spot it.

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00:40:08,000 --> 00:40:12,000

What about the vessels that aren't destroyed?

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00:40:12,000 --> 00:40:19,000

Not every anomaly in the Bermuda Triangle involves destruction. Sometimes vessels just get hopelessly lost.

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00:40:19,000 --> 00:40:25,000

We know that Bermuda is teaming with volcanic rock called magnetite that makes compasses go crazy.

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00:40:25,000 --> 00:40:34,000

There are even warnings on British Admiralty charts near Bermuda, cautioning sailors that their compasses may be off by as much as 14 degrees.

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00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:38,000

I think the magnetic anomalies are the most likely culprit for the region's plane crashes as well.

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00:40:38,000 --> 00:40:44,000

While they used to be more common, we've seen very few casualties since the advent of GPS navigation.

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00:40:44,000 --> 00:40:53,000

One day we may finally get some substantial evidence or capture a video of a destructive rogue wave or of the mysterious electronic fog.

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00:40:53,000 --> 00:40:58,000

Or, I don't know, maybe a wormhole open up right over Bermuda for the whole world to see.

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00:40:58,000 --> 00:41:05,000

But until then, I think it's best not to limit our minds to what the Bermuda Triangle could or couldn't be.

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00:41:05,000 --> 00:41:08,000

Because there could be a new scientific explanation next year.

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00:41:08,000 --> 00:41:15,000

The possibilities are endless. And that's what's kept people fascinated by the Bermuda Triangle for so long.

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00:41:19,000 --> 00:41:27,000

In 2022, a particularly tragic discovery was made in the Bermuda Triangle by an underwater film crew.

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00:41:27,000 --> 00:41:34,000

Not the wreckage of a plane or boat, but of the destroyed 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger.

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00:41:34,000 --> 00:41:40,000

Another unexpected moment in the long saga of this mysterious area.

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00:41:40,000 --> 00:41:46,000

I'm Lawrence Fishburne. Thank you for watching History's Greatest Mysteries.