

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:17,085

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:17,085 --> 00:00:21,612

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily

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00:00:21,612 --> 00:00:28,664

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

4

00:00:28,664 --> 00:00:35,675

Dogs inspire fear in many minds.

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00:00:35,675 --> 00:00:42,927

Dark and damp, they are full of mystery and creatures that slither in the mud.

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00:00:42,927 --> 00:00:49,257

An experienced guide entered Louisiana's Honey Island Swamp one fall day in 1973.

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00:00:49,257 --> 00:00:56,269

The outing would become the stuff nightmares are made of.

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00:00:56,269 --> 00:01:03,681

Normally, the trek held few terrors for the guide, even the lethal alligator was rarely

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00:01:03,681 --> 00:01:07,687

a problem for an experienced outdoorsman.

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00:01:07,687 --> 00:01:12,696

The guide would discover something else lurking in these quiet waters, something that struck

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00:01:12,696 --> 00:01:32,328

his boat.

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00:01:32,328 --> 00:01:37,015

There is a land of endless winter where the air is thin and clean, with peaks soaring

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00:01:37,015 --> 00:01:43,706

five miles high to form the icy roof of the world, the Himalayas.

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00:01:43,706 --> 00:01:48,274

The nomad sherpas who tend their flocks on harsh alpine meadows believe they are not

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00:01:48,274 --> 00:01:51,599

alone in the wilderness.

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00:01:51,599 --> 00:01:56,247

They know the mountains are gods and that the gods have sped good and evil spirits who

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00:01:56,247 --> 00:02:02,457

keep watch from the highest crags.

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00:02:02,457 --> 00:02:08,867

The most frightening of these spirits is the manned beast the sherpa call Yeti.

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00:02:08,867 --> 00:02:12,713

Western men call him the Abominable Snowman.

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00:02:12,713 --> 00:02:23,090

Abominable because legend says he kills those foolish enough to enter his frozen world.

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00:02:23,090 --> 00:02:29,300

Sir Edmund Hillary had heard of the Abominable Snowman, but along with Sherpa Tensing Norgay,

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00:02:29,300 --> 00:02:36,552

he challenged the elements and the unknown to scale Mount Everest in 1953.

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00:02:36,552 --> 00:02:44,926

Hillary would bravely return years later to search for the monster, but would find nothing.

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00:02:44,926 --> 00:02:49,574

Other places in the world have secrets to tell and there are other men fascinated by

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00:02:49,574 --> 00:02:51,096

mystery.

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00:02:51,096 --> 00:02:54,462

One such place is America's Pacific Northwest.

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00:02:54,462 --> 00:03:03,436

One such man is Peter Byrne.

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00:03:03,436 --> 00:03:08,765

Like the Himalayas, this is a high and lonely land as yet unvanquished by the steady surge

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00:03:08,765 --> 00:03:19,382

of humanity called progress.

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00:03:19,382 --> 00:03:23,990

Byrne once hunted game in the foothills of the Himalayas where he became fascinated with

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00:03:23,990 --> 00:03:25,993

accounts of the Yeti.

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00:03:25,993 --> 00:03:32,283

Now he roams the northwest substituting camera for gun in search of another man like beast,

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00:03:32,283 --> 00:03:37,211

Bigfoot.

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00:03:37,211 --> 00:03:41,017

Men of strong character have challenged this wilderness before.

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00:03:41,017 --> 00:03:48,149

In 1924 a group of rugged miners staked a claim near Mount St. Helens in Washington state.

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00:03:48,149 --> 00:03:53,277

They reported that early one morning they were attacked by giant rock throwing beasts.

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00:03:53,277 --> 00:04:13,110

The battle lasted hours.

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00:04:13,110 --> 00:04:18,839

The miners thought they had killed one of the creatures, but no trace was ever found.

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00:04:18,839 --> 00:04:22,685

Bigfoot and the abominable snowman have much in common.

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00:04:22,685 --> 00:04:29,376

Perhaps Bigfoot migrated here across the ancient land bridge that once joined Asia with North

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00:04:29,376 --> 00:04:30,378

America.

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00:04:30,378 --> 00:04:41,396

A world away from the mountains is the urbane and colorful city of New Orleans, yet less

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00:04:41,396 --> 00:04:51,372

than 40 miles from the Superdome concrete and steel give way again to wilderness.

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00:04:51,372 --> 00:04:58,023

Called Honey Island Swamp, 27,000 acres of sluggish streams, still ponds and dense subtropical

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00:04:58,023 --> 00:05:04,513

forest make up another of the world's great remaining primitive areas.

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00:05:04,513 --> 00:05:09,642

Life on the edge of this vast Mississippi Delta bayou seems prosaic enough with comfortable

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00:05:09,642 --> 00:05:12,446

old homes punctuating lush farmland.

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00:05:12,446 --> 00:05:18,015

In the little towns and farmhouses however, stories are exchanged about a creature said

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00:05:18,015 --> 00:05:20,740

to lurk deep within the swamp.

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00:05:20,740 --> 00:05:25,788

Few outsiders ever hear them, perhaps for good reason.

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00:05:25,788 --> 00:05:29,755

Ted Williams farms a small plot of land near Honey Island.

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00:05:29,755 --> 00:05:32,439

He also traps muskrat and mink.

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00:05:32,439 --> 00:05:34,883

One day it appeared he'd been trapped himself.

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00:05:34,883 --> 00:05:40,492

The first time I ever saw it was standing plumb steel, like a stump.

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00:05:40,492 --> 00:05:46,422

I went on a trap line and I stopped there until I realized it wasn't a stump.

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00:05:46,422 --> 00:05:48,625

I thought it wasn't supposed to be there.

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00:05:48,625 --> 00:05:49,627

And it runned.

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00:05:49,627 --> 00:05:59,122

When I stopped it runned, it was a dark, dark gray, about seven foot high.

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00:05:59,122 --> 00:06:02,728

They jumped about as the first sighting I ever saw.

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00:06:03,129 --> 00:06:06,775

The next time I seen them was swimming the river.

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00:06:06,775 --> 00:06:07,777

Two of them.

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00:06:07,777 --> 00:06:12,624

One of them was bigger than the other and one of them was faster than the other.

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00:06:12,624 --> 00:06:14,628

They swim just like a human.

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00:06:14,628 --> 00:06:17,633

They're long, overhand strokes.

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00:06:17,633 --> 00:06:21,639

I tried to get one of them to look at me and the other run off and got out of the way

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00:06:21,639 --> 00:06:23,642

and the other one there would look at me.

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00:06:23,642 --> 00:06:28,971

I could have shot him but I wouldn't do it on the count of the wood and look at me.

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00:06:28,971 --> 00:06:30,974

It looked too much like a human to me.

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00:06:30,974 --> 00:06:35,983

A broad shoulder with arms signed down below its knees.

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00:06:35,983 --> 00:06:38,987

Hands looked almost like a human.

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00:06:38,987 --> 00:06:43,996

I don't like to talk about it because people don't believe what you say, what you've seen

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00:06:43,996 --> 00:06:47,001

and I don't like to be called a liar.

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00:06:47,001 --> 00:06:49,004

Nobody do.

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00:06:52,009 --> 00:06:58,018

There are those who scoff at Ted Williams and say his story is beyond belief, beyond comprehension.

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00:07:00,022 --> 00:07:05,030

The swamp is undeniably vast however and still largely unexplored.

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00:07:09,036 --> 00:07:14,045

It could hide an incredible secret for a very long time.

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00:07:23,059 --> 00:07:28,067

Ted Williams is not the only one to confess seeing something frightening in the swamp.

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00:07:28,067 --> 00:07:33,076

While some still prefer to keep quiet, others have begun a systematic search for the creature.

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00:07:33,076 --> 00:07:38,084

At this time we're well within the interior of Honey Island Swamp

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00:07:38,084 --> 00:07:42,090

and you can tell by surroundings here it's a pretty desolate area.

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00:07:42,090 --> 00:07:46,097

This is one of the main spots here that we're at now.

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00:07:46,097 --> 00:07:53,108

When we came through going to the camp and we first encountered this creature was in this very area right here.

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00:07:53,108 --> 00:07:59,118

Holland Ford is a retired air traffic controller who has lived near the swamp for 20 years.

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00:07:59,118 --> 00:08:07,131

Going to the camp, pitching through this ravine right here is where we found where it had been leading off of this ridge

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00:08:07,131 --> 00:08:10,136

coming right through this little ravine bottom on this wet ground

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00:08:10,136 --> 00:08:17,147

and this is where we first found its tracks and it was watering about 50 yards over at this creek over here.

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00:08:17,147 --> 00:08:22,156

And at no time did we find any tracks where it had gone in the water.

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00:08:22,156 --> 00:08:27,164

But once we would get to this water's edge, just as a bear would do or something,

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00:08:27,164 --> 00:08:34,175

then I guess it would let down the drink and that's when we would find the heavy-clothed front feet of this creature.

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00:08:40,185 --> 00:08:47,196

One evening late, just about dusk dark, a friend of mine, we encountered eyes.

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00:08:48,198 --> 00:08:52,205

There were a yellow or an amberish color and real wide apart.

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00:08:52,205 --> 00:08:57,213

So, his friend of mine, Jim Hartzog, he took a gun and went into this area

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00:08:57,213 --> 00:09:01,219

and to try to kill whatever it was.

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00:09:01,219 --> 00:09:04,224

And he says that he came face to face with this thing.

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00:09:04,224 --> 00:09:11,236

It looked something like an 8'7 foot tall and he fired on it with using an inline.

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00:09:11,236 --> 00:09:15,242

He said when he did, the eyes went out.

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00:09:15,242 --> 00:09:21,252

Probably what happened, it turned and ran and he shot at it one more time.

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00:09:21,252 --> 00:09:27,262

But we went back the next day and checked for sign and blood, but we didn't find any.

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00:09:27,262 --> 00:09:30,267

So, we figured Jim missed it that night.

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00:09:30,267 --> 00:09:34,273

The last sign that we've had or anybody has had of this creature,

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00:09:34,273 --> 00:09:40,283

and this is within the last four months, was on the sandbar where the thing crossed the river,

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00:09:40,283 --> 00:09:45,291

crossed the sandbar and left footprints on it, and that was found by a member of the Louisiana Wildlife Fish Commission.

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00:09:45,291 --> 00:09:49,298

And that's been the very last contact we've had with it in this area.

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00:09:51,301 --> 00:09:53,304

Men are hunting the creature with guns.

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00:09:53,304 --> 00:09:57,311

It seems unlikely the next encounter will be a peaceful one.

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00:09:57,311 --> 00:10:01,317

If finally cornered, what will the creature do?

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00:10:11,334 --> 00:10:17,343

Honey Island Swamp has been largely ignored by men and seemingly forgotten by time.

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00:10:24,355 --> 00:10:32,368

Monster Hunter Harlan Ford is among those who believe a prehistoric relative of man may have been isolated here ages ago,

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00:10:32,368 --> 00:10:38,378

developing in its own way, unmolested by the winds of evolutionary change.

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00:10:40,381 --> 00:10:47,392

Ford is pressing his search deeper into the swamp, his walking where a few men before him have gone.

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00:10:47,392 --> 00:10:52,401

Traditional scientists have largely ignored the reports of monster sightings.

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00:10:52,401 --> 00:10:56,407

Ford hopes to come up with evidence that will change their minds.

113

00:10:59,412 --> 00:11:02,417

A track, obviously fresh.

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00:11:02,417 --> 00:11:06,423

It resembles nothing that is known to inhabit the swamp.

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00:11:07,425 --> 00:11:11,432

Clearly the track was not made by a man.

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00:11:18,443 --> 00:11:22,449

Ford believes he must move deeper still into the swamp.

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00:11:22,449 --> 00:11:27,458

Darkness is approaching, however, and Ford is a prudent man.

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00:11:28,459 --> 00:11:35,471

The tracks ascribed to the monster give Louisiana State naturalist George Stevens a clue to its size.

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00:11:36,472 --> 00:11:41,480

From what we can find out, from the tracks we've found in the woods,

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00:11:41,480 --> 00:11:47,490

I would say that he's about, well, from the young to the old.

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00:11:47,490 --> 00:11:54,502

It's hard to estimate how large the young are, but if something like this has a 10 or 12 inch track,

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00:11:54,502 --> 00:12:00,512

and if he puts enough weight on that track to bury in the sand or the mud so deep,

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00:12:00,512 --> 00:12:04,518

then you can estimate something about what he might weigh.

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00:12:04,518 --> 00:12:09,526

So I'd say a full grown male adult probably would weigh better than 400 pounds,

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00:12:09,526 --> 00:12:14,534

stand about 7, maybe 8 feet tall, and he almost completely covered with hair.

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00:12:14,534 --> 00:12:22,547

A frightening picture, but it will take more than plaster casts of three-toed webbed feet to convince the skeptical.

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00:12:22,547 --> 00:12:27,556

Michael Nehe has his own ideas of what the monster might look like.

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00:12:27,556 --> 00:12:30,560

Nehe is a professional makeup artist in New Orleans.

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00:12:30,560 --> 00:12:37,572

He was commissioned to study the available evidence on the creature and devise a model to match eyewitness accounts.

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00:12:39,575 --> 00:12:43,582

The feet were constructed to exactly match one recent set of tracks.

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00:12:52,596 --> 00:12:55,601

The face mask couldn't be as accurate.

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00:12:55,601 --> 00:12:59,608

It does, however, match the descriptions of several eyewitnesses.

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00:13:02,613 --> 00:13:08,623

We still don't know where the creature came from, how it has avoided man for so long,

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00:13:08,623 --> 00:13:12,629

or how it survives in the hostile world of Honey Island Swamp.

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00:13:12,629 --> 00:13:30,658

If a man can survive in the bayou without tools or fire, it follows that a man like creature can.

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00:13:30,658 --> 00:13:35,667

Major Gavin Storter is an army ranger and specialist in swamp survival.

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00:13:35,667 --> 00:13:41,676

We challenged him to spend some time in the bayou and evaluate his chances of lasting very long.

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00:13:42,678 --> 00:13:48,688

As long as you can overcome your fear of it and try to understand what's there,

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00:13:48,688 --> 00:13:57,703

usually have very little problems as far as the food sources go or negotiating, moving, or anything else.

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00:13:57,703 --> 00:14:03,712

The biggest thing I would be concerned with would be the plant life.

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00:14:04,714 --> 00:14:11,725

What plants could afford me an obstacle, or would afford me an obstacle,

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00:14:11,725 --> 00:14:16,734

should I have to move around or try to move around after dark.

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00:14:16,734 --> 00:14:26,750

I would also look for food sources, both animal and plant life, and the feasibility of catching animals.

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00:14:34,763 --> 00:14:42,776

To live and remain healthy, you would have to spend almost all waking hours just like an animal, gathering food.

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00:14:45,781 --> 00:14:51,791

Most of the plant life is edible if you can get it past your mouth.

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00:14:51,791 --> 00:14:55,797

There's palm hearts, which are very good, very tasty.

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00:14:55,797 --> 00:15:01,807

There's a lot of lily-tight plants that have large roots that are very edible.

148

00:15:01,807 --> 00:15:05,814

It tastes a lot like radishes or turnips.

149

00:15:08,818 --> 00:15:14,828

If the swamp monster does exist, it must have had a long time to adapt to its environment.

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00:15:14,828 --> 00:15:19,836

Major starter's experience suggests that the creature would be omnivorous,

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00:15:19,836 --> 00:15:24,845

including everything from ants to leaves to large animals in its diet.

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00:15:32,858 --> 00:15:39,869

It is clear that only with great cunning and strength could a large creature endure very long.

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00:15:39,869 --> 00:15:47,882

As far as the insect life goes, there would be a lot of insects that could be eaten.

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00:15:47,882 --> 00:15:59,902

And animals are in abundance, both turtles, snakes, possums, armadillas, that could be captured and eaten.

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00:15:59,902 --> 00:16:06,913

Major starter teaches that a man's inhibitions can be overcome,

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00:16:06,913 --> 00:16:12,923

that whatever he needs for basic survival is available to him in the swamp.

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00:16:30,952 --> 00:16:34,959

The monster would have no problem with squeamishness.

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00:16:34,959 --> 00:16:42,972

It would, however, have to roam the swamp almost constantly in search of its next meal and would be roaming even now.

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00:16:44,975 --> 00:16:50,985

The incessant need to hunt might explain the creature's apparently aggressive behavior.

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00:16:51,987 --> 00:16:56,995

There are other large predators with which the monster would have to compete for food.

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00:16:56,995 --> 00:17:02,003

It is difficult to imagine, however, that a creature supposedly eight feet tall

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00:17:02,003 --> 00:17:06,009

and cunning enough to outwit humans would have natural enemies.

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00:17:09,014 --> 00:17:17,027

Man alone seems capable of posing a serious threat to a creature as clever and aggressive as this one is supposed to be.

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00:17:17,027 --> 00:17:19,031

Men are clever and aggressive too.

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00:17:19,031 --> 00:17:24,039

The threat becomes more real as interest in the swamp mystery increases.

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00:17:28,045 --> 00:17:31,050

Nature's balance is delicate.

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00:17:31,050 --> 00:17:36,058

So far, however, only a few men have penetrated deeply into Honey Island's swamp.

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00:17:36,058 --> 00:17:40,065

Man and monster are not in direct competition for food.

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00:17:46,075 --> 00:17:53,086

It is possible to assume that as men slowly encroach on the swamp, these legendary creatures will be in retreat.

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00:17:58,094 --> 00:18:03,103

There are those who have reason to believe that someday someone will get hurt.

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00:18:04,104 --> 00:18:09,112

My wife and I were going on a fishing trip about four years ago.

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00:18:09,112 --> 00:18:20,130

At about nine o'clock that night, I heard this peculiar noise that screamed out down the river, I'd say, a half a mile away.

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00:18:21,132 --> 00:18:26,140

Perry Ford and his wife were about to spend the most terrifying night of their lives.

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00:18:26,140 --> 00:18:32,150

My wife wanted me to build a farm, so I was out gathering up wood to build a big farm.

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00:18:32,150 --> 00:18:36,156

And it screamed again. This time it was closer.

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00:18:36,156 --> 00:18:41,165

I'd say it was maybe 300 yards from us this time.

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00:18:41,165 --> 00:18:44,169

It's really, really scary.

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00:18:44,169 --> 00:18:53,184

It's really, really scary. It really scared me. I tried to let it know it scared me, you know, but so I went ahead and kept on building fires.

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00:18:53,184 --> 00:18:57,191

And less than ten minutes later it squalled again.

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00:18:57,191 --> 00:19:00,196

And this time it was right on top of us, you know.

181

00:19:06,205 --> 00:19:09,210

It almost shook the leaves off this reason.

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00:19:14,218 --> 00:19:17,223

It was a very scary moment.

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00:19:28,241 --> 00:19:34,251

Who or what was it that terrorized the Ford that night in the swamp? No one really knows.

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00:19:36,254 --> 00:19:41,262

If we are on a collision course, man and monster, then it will be tragic for both.

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00:19:41,262 --> 00:19:48,274

It would be a pity if it took such a tragedy to finally solve the mystery of the Honey Island monster.

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00:19:53,282 --> 00:20:00,294

Mankind may have evolved from a swamp like this eons ago. Perhaps we left the part of ourselves behind.

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00:20:00,294 --> 00:20:03,298

I know what I saw and I know what we got on.

188

00:20:03,298 --> 00:20:09,308

And since then we don't sleep in that camp without a nylon rope on the door without a loaded gun.

189

00:20:10,310 --> 00:20:17,321

From my standpoint, I'll relate it just like it is and if people believe it, they believe it. If they don't, they don't.

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00:20:17,321 --> 00:20:20,326

We can't control what people think.

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00:20:20,326 --> 00:20:23,331

But whatever it is, it's still in there.

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00:20:24,333 --> 00:20:34,349

You can take and walk in there today and where you walk at today and there I would say that there are spots in there and no man has ever walked on before.

193

00:20:34,349 --> 00:20:42,362

It's that remote. And therefore that whatever this is that exists, I don't say it's a monster. I don't know what it is.

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00:20:42,362 --> 00:20:54,382

But whatever this is, if it prowls and continues to prowl at night in a swamp area this huge, it could stay in there another 200 or 300 years and not be located.

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00:20:55,383 --> 00:21:06,401

It is easier to explain the existence of a hitherto unknown creature in Honey Island Swamp than to understand the apparent indifference of scientists to evidence and eyewitness accounts.

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00:21:07,403 --> 00:21:13,413

What is needed is a thorough, objective search for the man-like creature that has been reported here.

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00:21:13,413 --> 00:21:19,422

It will not further our progress to turn our backs on what may well be our past.

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00:21:19,422 --> 00:21:26,434

Up next, in Search of continues inside England's haunted castles.

199

00:21:26,434 --> 00:21:32,444

Then, pressure to be an instant hero takes a flyer towards a breakdown in the Black Sheep Squadron.

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00:21:32,444 --> 00:21:37,452

But stay tuned now for in Search of, here on the History Channel, where the past comes alive.