

1

00:00:00,595 --> 00:00:08,436

From the beginning of his time on earth, man has always been fascinated by monsters, real or imagined.

2

00:00:09,237 --> 00:00:15,798

One enduring modern legend tells of creatures similar to man, walking upright, covered with hair,

3

00:00:16,238 --> 00:00:18,238

beast-like in character.

4

00:00:18,718 --> 00:00:25,360

Many believe they are real and exist today in the remote corners of the world where they have been driven by encroaching

5

00:00:26,080 --> 00:00:28,080

civilization.

6

00:00:28,640 --> 00:00:31,861

They were first known as the Abominable Snowmen.

7

00:00:43,883 --> 00:00:51,244

He has spent the last 20 years of his life searching for a creature so elusive that few have ever seen its tracks and

8

00:00:51,644 --> 00:00:54,005

even fewer the creature itself.

9

00:00:58,086 --> 00:01:01,206

Don't waste your time, and move forward along the line.

10

00:01:01,206 --> 00:01:30,012

Peter Byrne believes he has come close to the creature on more than one occasion.

11

00:01:30,012 --> 00:01:38,413

He has never actually seen the sure-footed beast that has been glimpsed in primitive

12

00:01:38,413 --> 00:01:45,454

surroundings. But as civilization pushes deeper into the wilderness, Byrne believes a confrontation

13

00:01:45,454 --> 00:01:58,097

with man is inevitable. The civilized world first became aware of such creatures when stories

14

00:01:58,097 --> 00:02:06,178

began to drift back from travelers in the remote Himalayas. As early as 1857, giant footprints

15

00:02:06,178 --> 00:02:16,380

were spotted. In 1906, a man-like creature walking upright on two legs was seen in Sikkim by English

16

00:02:16,380 --> 00:02:23,941

explorer H.J. Ellwes. But the subject was not taken seriously until a group of British climbers

17

00:02:23,941 --> 00:02:29,302

attempted to be the first to reach the top of Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world.

18

00:02:33,463 --> 00:02:39,224

In 1953, Queen Elizabeth's coronation in London was matched by news that Edmund

19

00:02:39,224 --> 00:02:45,706

Hillary's expedition led by Colonel John Hunt had reached the summit of Mount Everest. Later,

20

00:02:46,266 --> 00:02:51,867

headlines stated that the expedition had cited footprints of some enormous two-footed creature

21

00:02:51,947 --> 00:02:58,428

and sent back photographs to prove it. The world was fascinated. The creature was dubbed the Abominable

22

00:02:58,428 --> 00:03:09,550

Snowman and he became a household word. In 1953, Peter Byrne was one of those who heard the stories

23

00:03:09,550 --> 00:03:14,591

and was attracted to the subject. He made his first trek into the Himalayas.

24

00:03:16,591 --> 00:03:21,472

To be involved in the hunt, he had to abandon one career to begin another.

25

00:03:22,432 --> 00:03:27,953

He left the Royal Air Force and worked in Darjeeling, Northern India.

26

00:03:28,994 --> 00:03:33,954

When I was there, I became interested in big-game hunting, tiger, leopard, buffalo.

27

00:03:35,635 --> 00:03:39,395

Then we hunted in the dense jungles that run along the edge of the Himalayan foothills.

28

00:03:40,196 --> 00:03:47,317

Then, in 1968, he stopped. He simply did not want to destroy beautiful animals

29

00:03:47,317 --> 00:03:53,478

just to put them on a wall as a trophy. I left hunting and went into conservation,

30

00:03:53,478 --> 00:03:57,559

wildlife conservation. I could never kill again.

31

00:04:00,919 --> 00:04:06,280

Because of his expertise in tracking animals, he was a natural choice to lead the first

32

00:04:06,280 --> 00:04:13,082

scientific search for the Abominable Snowman, an expedition financed by Texas oil millionaire

33

00:04:13,082 --> 00:04:20,603

Tom Slick. Slick was killed in a plane crash, but by that time, Byrne had caught the snowman

34

00:04:20,603 --> 00:04:29,885

fever and has devoted his life to the search. This is the greatest hunt that anyone could ever go on,

35

00:04:29,885 --> 00:04:37,966

a mysterious creature, elusive, shy, nocturnal, living in an enormous area of extremely difficult

36

00:04:37,966 --> 00:04:45,088

terrain. It's a near impossible dream to see one of these creatures who would be like

37

00:04:45,088 --> 00:04:51,249

meeting a man, stepping out of the primeval world, a prehistoric being. It would be like

38

00:04:51,249 --> 00:04:55,169

reaching back into the past. This is what keeps me going. This is the sparrow.

39

00:05:00,931 --> 00:05:05,651

The search has taken him into some of the most spectacular scenic areas of the world,

40

00:05:06,211 --> 00:05:11,813

to breathtaking vistas of natural beauty. They alone make the search worthwhile.

41

00:05:13,173 --> 00:05:20,454

It is here that Byrne believes the man beast will be found, here in the Himalayas, at the very roof

42

00:05:20,454 --> 00:05:35,577

of the world, Mount Everest itself. Many believe the Abominable Snowman originated in Nepal and

43

00:05:35,577 --> 00:05:42,938

Tibet, migrated northwest into China, and eventually crossed over the frozen Bering Straits into Alaska,

44

00:05:43,578 --> 00:05:50,620

continuing down into the Pacific Northwest. In the Museum of the University of British Columbia,

45

00:05:50,620 --> 00:05:56,141

Peter studies American Indian legends which tell of a similar creature the Indians call

46

00:05:56,141 --> 00:06:04,142

Sasquatch, the same man beast called Bigfoot today. The Indians had no doubt he existed,

47

00:06:04,222 --> 00:06:09,183

and as they did with all living things, they treated Sasquatch with respect.

48

00:06:11,664 --> 00:06:18,225

Prakritotum symbolized the Indians' deep reverence for nature. They accorded to all living things

49

00:06:18,225 --> 00:06:26,466

a divine spirit. There has always been a reverence for life. To them, the Sasquatch was no imagined

50

00:06:26,466 --> 00:06:32,627

demon. If we are to convince modern science that the man beast exists, we must learn how it lives

51

00:06:32,627 --> 00:06:39,749

and where it hides. Peter's search next takes him to London, which has always been a center for

52

00:06:39,749 --> 00:06:45,830

Abominable Snowman study because of England's close association with India and the Himalayas.

53

00:06:46,790 --> 00:06:52,151

He has come to hear first-hand stories from a group of highly respected scientists and mountain

54

00:06:52,151 --> 00:07:00,073

experts including John Hunt, now Lord Hunt, leader of the 1953 expedition, Dr. Michael Ward,

55

00:07:00,553 --> 00:07:06,234

physician to the original climb, and a world-leading mountain climber, Don Willings.

56

00:07:06,234 --> 00:07:13,835

A round robin of their stories is fascinating. First time I remember having seen the tracks of the

57

00:07:13,835 --> 00:07:19,516

80 was before the war, and this, Mike, I think you'd agree that at that time nobody was particularly

58

00:07:19,516 --> 00:07:27,838

interested commercially in the 30s. In 1937, when I was on a very small expedition up the Zemul

59

00:07:28,318 --> 00:07:32,399

under the east face of country Junger, it was interesting because these tracks were heading

60

00:07:32,399 --> 00:07:39,760

for a very high and quite difficult to reach, call the Zemulard, about 19,500 feet. And there were

61

00:07:39,760 --> 00:07:45,921

two tracks side by side. When we got to the top of the call, the extraordinary thing was, it was a

62

00:07:45,921 --> 00:07:52,402

knife edge of ice, quite reasonable slope on one side, but it was a nice cliff on the other,

63

00:07:52,402 --> 00:07:56,883

that the tracks were visible below us on the steep side, on the south side,

64

00:07:56,883 --> 00:08:03,364

and the creatures, whatever they were, had crossed the car. So that was the first time I had evidence

65

00:08:03,364 --> 00:08:08,645

of that, and the supporting evidence was that only a year later, Bill Tillman was in that area,

66

00:08:09,445 --> 00:08:15,927

not knowing about the evidence I'd produced or what I'd seen, he saw exactly the same thing,

67

00:08:15,927 --> 00:08:21,208

except that it was one single pair of tracks going on the same route in the same direction,

68

00:08:21,208 --> 00:08:28,889

and crossing the car. I spent nine months in the Himalaya from September to through to June

69

00:08:30,249 --> 00:08:36,650

at, in the Everest region at 19,000 feet, doing medical research, and during this period we came

70

00:08:36,650 --> 00:08:43,852

across two lots of tracks. In the center of the tracks, attributable to the Yeti, there were

71

00:08:43,852 --> 00:08:49,613

another series of footprints which are very much more obvious with my ice axe, beside my ice axe

72

00:08:49,613 --> 00:08:54,894

approximately 12 to 14 inches long, and you can see the footprints are very clearly etched in the

73

00:08:54,894 --> 00:08:59,935

snow. We followed these for about a hundred yards down the glacier, but we could see them

74

00:08:59,935 --> 00:09:07,456

continuing on into the distance. Lord Hunt will always remember another incident. In 1953,

75

00:09:07,456 --> 00:09:11,217

while we were training, before we went to the foot of Everest to climb the mountain,

76

00:09:11,217 --> 00:09:18,978

and this was a training camp at about 17,000 feet, heard a wailing cry across the glacier

77

00:09:19,058 --> 00:09:24,339

at half a mile away. In fact, a series of sort of yelping calls, long drawn out, wonder what

78

00:09:24,339 --> 00:09:32,501

on earth they were. There's a long wailing, long drawn out call, and it was repeated.

79

00:09:35,861 --> 00:09:37,622

Possibly something like a peacock.

80

00:09:41,302 --> 00:09:45,383

From all of his research, both in the Himalayas and the Pacific Northwest,

81

00:09:45,943 --> 00:09:51,624

Peter has gained a clear picture of the snowman, a composite of its appearance and habits.

82

00:09:53,145 --> 00:09:57,705

Imprints left on the ground give me a view of its stride, its enormous sloping gate.

83

00:09:58,826 --> 00:10:04,667

The stride averages from 40 to 50 inches. From the depth of the footprints, I know it's a heavy

84

00:10:04,667 --> 00:10:10,508

creature, more than 300 pounds, and it's extremely agile, jumping mountain cabrasses with ease.

85

00:10:10,908 --> 00:10:17,549

For all its great physical strength, it appears to be shy and docile, eating small rodents, roots,

86

00:10:17,549 --> 00:10:24,750

and berries. But there is no record that it has ever harmed a single man. In search of,

87

00:10:24,750 --> 00:10:31,232

we'll next go with Peter Byrne to Nepal, where he hopes to find absolute proof that the snowman

88

00:10:31,712 --> 00:10:39,153

exists. The people who live in the villages of the Himalaya Mountains are called Sherpa.

89

00:10:39,953 --> 00:10:45,714

Despite their shy, mild-mannered ways, these people are capable of rugged climbs with

90

00:10:45,714 --> 00:10:50,995

incredibly heavy pack loads. They form the backbone of any expedition,

91

00:10:50,995 --> 00:10:55,316

including the successful assault on Everest in 1953.

92

00:10:56,276 --> 00:11:02,837

The Sherpa are not the doubters and skeptics that western men are. Sherpa legends accept the fact

93

00:11:02,837 --> 00:11:11,479

that a huge, hairy creature lives among them. They call him the Yeti. To us, he is the abominable snowman.

94

00:11:17,080 --> 00:11:22,361

The melting snows of the Himalayas turn the rivers of Nepal into raging,

95

00:11:22,361 --> 00:11:29,402

torrents. Peter Byrne often takes advantage of their swift transportation in his search for the snowman.

96

00:11:31,403 --> 00:11:36,604

The quest has drawn me to perilous but exhilarating places, running the great rivers of the Nepal

97

00:11:36,604 --> 00:11:42,765

Himalaya, probably the most dangerous rivers in the world. I have been waiting for two weeks for a

98

00:11:42,765 --> 00:11:48,046

most important message, permission for an interview with the holy lama of Bodhna.

99

00:11:48,686 --> 00:11:53,407

As the messenger made his way to reach us in this incredible world of isolated and rugged beauty,

100

00:11:53,407 --> 00:12:00,208

I thought how lucky I was. Bigfoot, Sasquatch, the Yeti, or abominable snowman, call it what you may.

101

00:12:00,208 --> 00:12:04,849

It has given me times of sheer frustration, but there are also moments of hope.

102

00:12:19,012 --> 00:12:21,972

Right. Got a hold of that mill?

103

00:12:21,972 --> 00:12:28,773

The old lama, Rimbu Chichini Lama, high priest of the Buddhist temple at Bodhna, has granted me an audience.

104

00:12:39,975 --> 00:12:46,937

Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, is one of the few cities of the ancient world unspoiled by tourists.

105

00:12:47,817 --> 00:12:52,138

Off regular plane routes, it looks as if it has been frozen in time.

106

00:12:55,498 --> 00:12:59,659

But under its calm exterior, a world of intrigue flourishes.

107

00:13:00,459 --> 00:13:06,060

Sharing its high mountain borders with red china, it is one of the very few windows to that world.

108

00:13:06,620 --> 00:13:11,501

Agents and spies from many countries jostle each other in the marketplace,

109

00:13:11,501 --> 00:13:14,942

with more spies here than in most other cities in the world.

110

00:13:15,902 --> 00:13:18,462

Peter Byrne is not concerned with the present.

111

00:13:18,462 --> 00:13:24,224

Rather, he has come to Kathmandu seeking a dramatic link with man's distant past.

112

00:13:24,224 --> 00:13:29,585

I was looking for eye witness accounts of Yeti sightings. I hope the Rimbu Chichini could help.

113

00:13:31,505 --> 00:13:38,226

The holy lama I was told knew of the Yeti at first hand, and could provide new clues for me to follow in my search.

114

00:13:39,186 --> 00:13:41,187

And as you know, I have been looking for the Yeti.

115

00:13:41,987 --> 00:13:43,187

But could not get it now.

116

00:13:43,427 --> 00:13:44,387

Could not find.

117

00:13:44,387 --> 00:13:46,948

You think there might still be a Yeti there?

118

00:13:46,948 --> 00:13:54,789

Maybe possibly, yes. Sometimes they come down to destroy all the feel of God and feel,

119

00:13:55,429 --> 00:13:58,550

and feed feel, potatoes feel.

120

00:13:58,550 --> 00:13:59,590

They come down to destroy the entire...

121

00:13:59,590 --> 00:14:01,030

They come down and destroy.

122

00:14:01,030 --> 00:14:02,151

And frighten the villagers.

123

00:14:02,151 --> 00:14:03,031

Yes.

124

00:14:03,031 --> 00:14:09,432

This piece of bone that you showed me, this is a Yeti, a piece of Yeti bone.

125

00:14:09,432 --> 00:14:10,632

How old would you say this was?

126

00:14:11,192 --> 00:14:12,552

About 50 years back.

127

00:14:13,033 --> 00:14:14,153

50 years back, I see.

128

00:14:14,153 --> 00:14:18,714

It's very thick, and it has a peculiar ridge on the top here.

129

00:14:18,714 --> 00:14:20,794

I must admit, I've never seen anything like this before.

130

00:14:21,434 --> 00:14:23,515

And where did it come from? Which place?

131

00:14:24,075 --> 00:14:27,675

This is the come from Jarmu.

132

00:14:29,516 --> 00:14:33,516

Following the lead of the lama, Peter moves up into the Himalayas.

133

00:14:34,397 --> 00:14:36,477

His guides will be the loyal Sherpa.

134

00:14:37,517 --> 00:14:40,478

At these heights, the weather can close in for days,

135

00:14:40,478 --> 00:14:43,198

and the temperature dropped to sub-zero degrees.

136

00:14:44,078 --> 00:14:50,079

One feels cut off in an isolated world of beauty and danger, where time is meaningless,

137

00:14:50,720 --> 00:14:55,440

where it is easy to believe the incredible tales the Sherpa calmly tell.

138

00:14:57,601 --> 00:15:01,842

On my last Yeti expedition to Nepal, I had seen several sets of tracks

139

00:15:01,842 --> 00:15:03,762

and heard incredible stories of sightings.

140

00:15:05,202 --> 00:15:09,523

This year, I had set out with my Sherpa guides to investigate those stories

141

00:15:09,603 --> 00:15:14,724

and relive some of the experiences in the exact location where they said they had heard a Yeti.

142

00:15:15,764 --> 00:15:18,885

Peter's guides have not seen a Yeti themselves,

143

00:15:18,885 --> 00:15:22,165

but they feel they have been close to the creature many times.

144

00:15:23,446 --> 00:15:28,807

As he listens to their stories, Peter will have to differentiate between legend and fact

145

00:15:29,607 --> 00:15:33,687

to divine the line between imagination and reality.

146

00:15:35,208 --> 00:15:37,768

The oldest Sherpa told an eerie tale.

147

00:15:37,768 --> 00:15:40,649

It was a winter afternoon, he said.

148

00:15:41,449 --> 00:15:44,009

Two of us were returning from the Tibetan border,

149

00:15:45,450 --> 00:15:49,930

and on the last stage of our journey, a storm forced us to camp in a deserted cave.

150

00:15:50,571 --> 00:15:54,011

We made our way deep inside where it would be warmer.

151

00:15:54,011 --> 00:16:12,255

And we heard what we thought was someone calling out and coming in our direction.

152

00:16:24,817 --> 00:16:36,979

Peter's guides tell him they saw huge footprints around the mouth of their cave,

153

00:16:36,979 --> 00:16:39,620

but happily no sign of the creature itself.

154

00:16:42,980 --> 00:16:44,901

Peter continues his own search.

155

00:16:47,461 --> 00:16:51,142

The next morning in the fresh snow, we saw a set of newly made tracks

156

00:16:51,142 --> 00:16:52,822

of a creature walking on two legs.

157

00:16:54,102 --> 00:17:03,864

As Peter leaves the Himalayas and his Sherpa companions,

158

00:17:03,864 --> 00:17:07,545

he continues to believe more than ever that the snowman exists.

159

00:17:08,665 --> 00:17:12,026

His plane rises from the highest airstrip in the world.

160

00:17:13,066 --> 00:17:16,587

Peter looks down on a world so vast and so remote,

161

00:17:16,587 --> 00:17:21,707

that indeed it does seem possible for a rare species to remain hidden,

162

00:17:21,707 --> 00:17:24,268

unseen by man for centuries.

163

00:17:24,988 --> 00:17:26,348

I believe in the man beast.

164

00:17:26,908 --> 00:17:30,909

There's historical evidence, there's the enormous habitat that can feed,

165

00:17:30,909 --> 00:17:36,590

support, hide them, and there's the very, very good evidence of the continuing eye-witness reports.

166

00:17:40,751 --> 00:17:46,112

The most compelling evidence Peter has ever heard is from mountain climber Don Willens.

167

00:17:47,072 --> 00:17:52,113

Willens recounts what he saw in the Himalayas in 1968.

168

00:17:52,113 --> 00:17:56,594

During the night, I got to thinking about this creature because

169

00:17:57,954 --> 00:18:03,555

this seems to be some kind of an atmosphere. Certainly the Sherpas had gone very quiet.

170

00:18:07,236 --> 00:18:12,597

I say there was this feeling around that sort of feeling of being watched in some way.

171

00:18:16,518 --> 00:18:22,119

I had a feeling that whatever it was was still around. I felt that quite definitely.

172

00:18:26,679 --> 00:18:32,281

You get used to any climber lots. You get very used to trying to pick out small dots of people

173

00:18:32,281 --> 00:18:38,282

against the mountain side. And very often what you think is people are rocks and very often,

174

00:18:38,282 --> 00:18:43,803

you know, what you think is rocks because they don't move when you want them to, turn out to be people.

175

00:18:44,683 --> 00:18:51,564

And I thought, well, I'll just, I'll note the position of all the dark parts. It could be rocks.

176

00:18:51,564 --> 00:18:55,485

And I'll just see if any of them move no matter how slowly.

177

00:18:56,365 --> 00:19:00,846

Anyway, I was just beginning to get a little bit cold and I thought, oh, well, you've imagined it all.

178

00:19:02,206 --> 00:19:05,887

When suddenly I was sure the position of one of these rocks had moved.

179

00:19:06,847 --> 00:19:12,848

So I watched for a couple of minutes and then suddenly I saw they drop. Definitely

180

00:19:12,928 --> 00:19:14,688

moving. It started bounding up the slope.

181

00:19:19,489 --> 00:19:21,410

And that was the last I saw of it.

182

00:19:25,650 --> 00:19:30,371

Because people come up with all kinds of suggestions about why didn't you set up a camp and follow

183

00:19:30,371 --> 00:19:40,773

it. Absolutely ludicrous. And then they say, well, couldn't you take a gun up and shot it?

184

00:19:40,773 --> 00:19:45,334

My own personal feeling, which I'm sure wouldn't be shared by a gay

185

00:19:45,334 --> 00:19:51,575

month or a fellow that worked in an avatar is that if I did it, it would be murder.

186

00:19:53,416 --> 00:19:59,257

If this creature had survived for hundreds of thousands of years, it would not go around shooting it.

187

00:20:00,457 --> 00:20:04,218

My feeling was the best thought may view survived up here.

188

00:20:04,938 --> 00:20:08,378

And I've had the look to see perhaps something of you.

189

00:20:08,938 --> 00:20:16,380

I for one felt quite happy that it was Doff doing its own thing because this is something that's

190

00:20:16,380 --> 00:20:31,583

very difficult to do in this day and age. Just before completing this episode of In Search of,

191

00:20:31,583 --> 00:20:37,344

we spoke by telephone with Lord Hunt in London. He had just returned from the Himalayas,

192

00:20:37,344 --> 00:20:41,104

where a reunion was held of the original members of the Mount Everest climb.

193

00:20:42,225 --> 00:20:47,826

One night during that reunion, while camped near Mount Everest, each member of the group

194

00:20:47,826 --> 00:20:54,227

was awakened by cries outside their hut. This cover of the English Geographical

195

00:20:54,227 --> 00:21:00,308

Magazine shows us what they discovered in the morning. Clear tracks of some huge two-footed

196

00:21:00,308 --> 00:21:07,109

creature were found nearby. Lord Hunt photographed those tracks. And this is one of those photographs.

197

00:21:07,349 --> 00:21:13,750

After more than a quarter century, new evidence of the abominable snowman.