

1

00:00:00,579 --> 00:00:16,863

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

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00:00:16,863 --> 00:00:21,384

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

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00:00:21,384 --> 00:00:26,385

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

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00:00:38,628 --> 00:00:49,310

These dances, these masks, these strange rituals have meaning. They describe

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00:00:49,310 --> 00:00:54,312

precisely the relationship between a remote African tribe and the heavens.

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00:00:54,312 --> 00:01:02,313

This tribe believes all life comes from a distant dark star invisible to the naked eye.

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00:01:02,313 --> 00:01:09,315

Recently, modern science was able to find this star and confirm its existence.

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00:01:09,315 --> 00:01:15,316

Now we must ask, how did a primitive people, lacking instruments of any kind,

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00:01:15,316 --> 00:01:19,317

discover a dark star hidden deep in space?

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00:01:28,319 --> 00:01:33,321

In Central Africa, among fortress-like cliffs on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert,

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00:01:33,321 --> 00:01:35,321

live a people called the Dogon.

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00:01:37,322 --> 00:01:43,323

A thousand years ago, fleeing from warring tribes, the Dogon found refuge here.

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00:01:43,323 --> 00:01:48,324

The Dogon have endured and preserved mysterious ancient knowledge,

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00:01:48,324 --> 00:01:53,325

knowledge of an invisible star and its movements through the heavens.

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00:02:01,327 --> 00:02:06,328

The hum of the bull roar is believed to be the voice of the sacred star.

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00:02:07,329 --> 00:02:14,330

It calls initiates to a ceremony high in the cliffs.

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00:02:25,333 --> 00:02:29,334

Dating back to a time when the Western world was locked in the dark ages,

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00:02:29,334 --> 00:02:33,335

this ritual has taken place year after year.

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00:02:36,335 --> 00:02:41,336

During the ceremony, the full spectrum of Dogon knowledge is revealed

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00:02:41,336 --> 00:02:44,337

and passes from generation to generation.

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00:02:54,340 --> 00:02:58,340

A circle within a circle depicts Saturn and its rings,

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00:02:58,340 --> 00:03:01,341

which can only be seen with a telescope.

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00:03:07,343 --> 00:03:20,346

A large circle and four satellites, the planet Jupiter and its moons.

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00:03:26,347 --> 00:03:29,348

Most remarkable is this symbol.

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00:03:29,348 --> 00:03:35,349

It represents the orbit of the Dogon star, a phenomenon deep in stellar space.

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00:03:36,349 --> 00:03:40,350

Yet, no such orbiting star is visible from the Earth.

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00:03:40,350 --> 00:03:46,352

It was not until this century that Western astronomers began to suspect its existence.

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00:03:48,352 --> 00:03:51,353

A desert tribe called the Dogon, isolated in the African wilderness,

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00:03:51,353 --> 00:03:55,354

may have identified a star invisible to the unaided eye.

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00:03:55,354 --> 00:03:57,354

How is this possible?

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00:03:57,354 --> 00:04:02,355

How could the Dogon possess this sophisticated astronomical information?

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00:04:06,356 --> 00:04:12,358

Approximately 200,000 Dogon live in 300 villages scattered through their land.

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00:04:15,358 --> 00:04:19,359

Throughout most of Africa, the simple melodies of the shepherd's flutes

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00:04:19,359 --> 00:04:22,360

reflect the unchanging pattern of village life.

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00:04:30,362 --> 00:04:35,363

On the surface, there is little to separate the Dogon from countless other tribes.

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00:04:36,363 --> 00:04:42,365

What makes the Dogon different is a unique social harmony maintained by strong tradition.

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00:04:43,365 --> 00:04:48,366

Among these people, murder, theft and suicide is all but unknown.

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00:04:50,367 --> 00:04:52,367

Greed is rare.

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00:04:53,367 --> 00:04:57,368

Discutes are settled by debate in open forum.

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00:04:58,368 --> 00:05:02,369

A goat has broken down a neighbor's wall and damaged his crops.

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00:05:03,370 --> 00:05:05,370

The farmer demands repayment.

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00:05:06,370 --> 00:05:11,371

The goat's owner insists it is the farmer's fault he should have built a better wall.

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00:05:13,372 --> 00:05:17,373

The elders decide that indeed the wall should be stronger,

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00:05:17,373 --> 00:05:21,374

that both men should rebuild it and replant the crop.

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00:05:27,375 --> 00:05:29,376

Millet beer marks the settlement.

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00:05:33,377 --> 00:05:37,378

The Dogon believes in a perfectly ordered existence.

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00:05:38,378 --> 00:05:41,378

They believe they are a part of something much greater than themselves.

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00:05:42,379 --> 00:05:48,380

That each task, however menial, reaffirms their integral connection with the rhythm of the universe.

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00:05:50,381 --> 00:05:55,382

In myths and symbols, the Dogon linked the lowly with the lofty, the known with the unknown.

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00:05:56,382 --> 00:06:01,383

All human activity is inscribed from the human body.

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00:06:02,383 --> 00:06:05,384

From the origin of man to the mystery of death.

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00:06:06,384 --> 00:06:10,385

The spinning and weaving of cotton describes the Dogon myth of creation.

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00:06:14,386 --> 00:06:17,387

Each strand by itself is of little importance.

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00:06:18,387 --> 00:06:22,388

But united by a guiding intelligence, they become an ordered fabric.

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00:06:33,391 --> 00:06:37,392

Planting, harvesting, the winnowing of grain from chaff,

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00:06:37,392 --> 00:06:42,393

each act of Dogon life has a practical and a spiritual value.

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00:06:49,394 --> 00:06:53,395

The study of the Dogon has lured men like Dr. Hans Guggenheim,

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00:06:53,395 --> 00:06:56,396

an anthropologist from Harvard University.

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00:06:57,396 --> 00:07:02,397

He has probed the relationship between the Dogon and their mysterious dark stars.

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00:07:03,398 --> 00:07:09,399

In order to discover this mystery, the mystery of Dogon knowledge about the stars,

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00:07:09,399 --> 00:07:13,400

we have to begin by looking at the inside of their granaries.

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00:07:14,400 --> 00:07:19,401

Because the Dogon linked in their knowledge the science of growing grain

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00:07:19,401 --> 00:07:22,402

and the understanding of the stars.

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00:07:26,403 --> 00:07:31,404

All ancient civilizations have needed knowledge of the heavens for the growing of grain.

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00:07:34,405 --> 00:07:39,406

Just as ancient astronomers studied the positions of the sun, moon and stars,

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00:07:39,406 --> 00:07:47,408

Amandinghi, the elder, climbs to a place among the rocks to observe the sun as it moves along a heel stone.

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00:07:49,408 --> 00:07:55,410

He will determine the exact time when his people must sow the seed that will ensure their survival.

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00:07:56,410 --> 00:08:01,411

The Land of Dogon

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00:08:02,411 --> 00:08:05,412

This land is normally a desert.

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00:08:05,412 --> 00:08:08,413

The rainy season is short.

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00:08:08,413 --> 00:08:12,414

Planting must begin at precisely the right moment.

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00:08:12,414 --> 00:08:18,415

The harvest which follows must last through the harsh months of drought.

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00:08:19,415 --> 00:08:25,417

Life or death of the tribe depends on the accuracy of observation by men like Amandinghi,

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00:08:25,417 --> 00:08:27,417

the Dogon astronomer.

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00:08:30,418 --> 00:08:36,419

As Amandinghi studies the heavens, is it possible that he can reach beyond the visible universe?

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00:08:36,419 --> 00:08:41,420

Is it possible that he can sense phenomena deep in space?

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00:08:48,422 --> 00:08:53,423

The Hogan, the high priest of Eru, is the chief of Dogon religious knowledge.

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00:08:54,424 --> 00:09:01,425

Selected more than 30 years ago by signs and prophecies, he lives a prisoner in a small temple compound.

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00:09:05,426 --> 00:09:11,427

The Hogan is adored and provided for by his people, but cannot be touched by man or woman.

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00:09:12,428 --> 00:09:16,429

He is the living repository of all that is known.

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00:09:16,429 --> 00:09:25,431

His isolation from worldly needs and worldly concerns ensures that the sacred knowledge he keeps will remain pure.

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00:09:25,431 --> 00:09:31,432

Should the Hogan be contaminated by human contact, he must be killed.

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00:09:36,433 --> 00:09:43,435

Away from the clamor of village life in caves and rock shelters, the teachings of the Hogan are renewed.

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00:09:47,436 --> 00:09:58,438

Tribal legend tells us that beings called Numo descended from the sacred star and appeared before the Dogon ancestors.

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00:09:58,438 --> 00:10:06,440

The Dogon were entrusted by the Numo with 366 symbols, given without meaning.

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00:10:07,441 --> 00:10:13,442

The Dogon were charged with interpreting them and preserving the information for future generations.

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00:10:14,442 --> 00:10:23,444

The symbols reveal an astonishing scope of astronomical knowledge, an infinite number of stars and spiraling worlds.

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00:10:30,446 --> 00:10:37,448

After more than five years among the Dogon people, Dr. Guggenheim has gradually gained the confidence of the Dogon elders

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00:10:38,448 --> 00:10:43,449

and acceptance into the inner circle of secret knowledge.

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00:10:53,451 --> 00:10:59,453

The Dogon belief, the universe was born in a vast explosion and as it opened up,

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00:10:59,453 --> 00:11:05,454

everything that we know about and everything that the Dogon know about in the world came pouring out

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00:11:05,454 --> 00:11:08,455

and nothing was left except a shell.

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00:11:08,455 --> 00:11:17,457

This empty shell became the star that they called the Pontolou and that we call Sirius B.

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00:11:20,458 --> 00:11:25,459

In 1950, astronomers confirmed the existence of the Dogon star.

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00:11:26,459 --> 00:11:32,460

At the United States Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C.,

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00:11:32,460 --> 00:11:38,462

Chief Astronomer Dr. Irving Lindenblad devoted years to the search for the Dogon star.

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00:11:38,462 --> 00:11:43,463

The Sirius system is a very interesting challenge, observationally,

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00:11:43,463 --> 00:11:50,465

because it is very difficult to observe a star 10 seconds from such a bright object as Sirius A.

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00:11:50,465 --> 00:11:58,466

After the years of effort, Dr. Lindenblad finally succeeded in taking this photograph of Sirius B and its giant companion.

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00:12:02,467 --> 00:12:07,469

The Dogon possess even more startling information about the star they hold sacred.

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00:12:07,469 --> 00:12:11,469

They say that when it gave forth all the information,

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00:12:11,469 --> 00:12:18,471

it collapsed in upon itself, becoming incredibly dense and so heavy that all the earthly beings combined cannot lift it.

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00:12:21,472 --> 00:12:25,473

The San Fernando Observatory, Silmar, California.

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00:12:27,473 --> 00:12:32,474

Dr. Gary Chapman is an astronomer specializing in the field of astronomy.

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00:12:32,474 --> 00:12:36,475

He is a very famous astronomer and he is a very famous astronomer.

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00:12:37,476 --> 00:12:43,477

Dr. Gary Chapman is an astronomer specializing in the physical characteristics of stars.

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00:12:44,477 --> 00:12:52,479

By splitting the light collected from a distant star into colored bands, its physical characteristics can be analyzed.

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00:12:52,479 --> 00:13:01,481

Sirius B is fairly normal in surface layers, but we do rely on the calculation to tell us that the interior is essentially out of nuclear fuel.

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00:13:01,481 --> 00:13:06,482

It's a dead star. We know from modern calculations that it has a very, very high density.

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00:13:06,482 --> 00:13:20,486

It has a density about 5 million times that of water and if you were to be on the surface of Sirius B right now, you'd be crushed very, very flat because the surface gravity is about 100 million times that of the Earth.

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00:13:21,486 --> 00:13:27,487

The symbol is explained. The knowledge preserved in rituals through the centuries has been confirmed.

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00:13:27,487 --> 00:13:34,489

Beyond the doggone knowledge of the dark star, the symbols reveal more information about the celestial universe.

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00:13:34,489 --> 00:13:43,491

They correctly place the Earth and our solar system within the Milky Way and state correctly that the massive cluster of stars is the source of the universe.

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00:13:43,491 --> 00:13:53,493

They correctly place the Earth and our solar system within the Milky Way and state correctly that the massive cluster of stars is far more distant than the planets.

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00:13:54,494 --> 00:14:00,495

The understanding of astronomical movements led the doggone to investigate the human anatomy.

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00:14:00,495 --> 00:14:09,497

They discovered the circulation of blood in the body long before it was discovered by the English physician William Harvey in the 17th century.

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00:14:10,497 --> 00:14:18,499

These symbols and the knowledge they hold are the legacy of the mysterious pneumoes, the messengers from the dark star.

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00:14:20,500 --> 00:14:32,502

Many cultures claim their knowledge was given them by God-like beings descended from the heavens, but the doggones insist their gods descended from one star in particular, which they're able to identify and describe in detail.

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00:14:33,503 --> 00:14:37,504

Does other evidence exist of this encounter between gods and men?

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00:14:40,504 --> 00:14:46,506

In 1937, French anthropologists shot this rare film of the doggone.

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00:14:46,506 --> 00:14:51,507

They found the people in a frenzy of preparation for a huge ceremony.

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00:14:56,508 --> 00:15:01,509

The scientists were told the funeral of an important man would soon take place.

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00:15:01,509 --> 00:15:13,512

But all this was an elaborate deception designed to protect their secret knowledge.

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00:15:19,513 --> 00:15:28,515

The anthropologists counted themselves fortunate to have the opportunity to observe the making of ritual masks representing the panoply of doggone spirits.

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00:15:28,515 --> 00:15:34,517

It would be years before the scientists would understand their true meaning.

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00:15:59,523 --> 00:16:06,524

The giant ritual which the anthropologists witnessed was not a funeral at all. It was the SIGI.

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00:16:07,525 --> 00:16:13,526

Occuring every 60 years, the SIGI is the most important ceremony in doggone life.

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00:16:13,526 --> 00:16:17,527

The SIGI is an event relating directly to the sacred star.

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00:16:18,527 --> 00:16:27,529

The SIGI marks the completion of an orbit, the time when Earth, the giant Sirius, and the SIGI are the most important ceremony in doggone life.

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00:16:28,529 --> 00:16:35,531

The sacred star are directly aligned, the moment when the doggone and their star are closest.

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00:16:37,532 --> 00:16:45,533

For western science to determine the orbit of the doggone star required calculations based on decades of astronomical observations.

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00:16:46,534 --> 00:16:54,535

Minute shifts in the position of the giant Sirius led astronomers to suspect the gravitational influence of an unseen companion.

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00:16:55,536 --> 00:17:05,538

When computer studies of the data were complete, they verified that a small star orbited Sirius every 60 years, exactly as the doggone claimed.

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00:17:06,538 --> 00:17:21,542

The interesting thing is that in the vision of the stellar universe, they arrived at the conclusion that it was the smallest invisible star that was at the center of the universe.

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00:17:21,542 --> 00:17:45,547

That moved the universe and that held Sirius, the SIGI, to low in place and determined its cause in an elliptical way which they have painted and grafted on the walls of their caves, an ellipse which has been borne out by western observations.

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00:17:46,548 --> 00:17:57,550

More than four decades have passed since the last SIGI, only the oldest among the doggone recall it, the greatest experience of their lives.

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00:18:01,551 --> 00:18:07,553

It is from the Citadel shrine of Yuga-Dugaru that the order to commence the next SIGI will come.

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00:18:08,553 --> 00:18:15,554

Here live the only men who claim they have actually seen the alignment between the Earth and the distant star.

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00:18:18,555 --> 00:18:28,557

Elders of a secret society, they are the venerated guardians of the shrine where they say a place in the cliff begins to glow when it is time for the SIGI ritual.

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00:18:29,558 --> 00:18:41,560

What mysteries inspire these people to devote their lives to the keeping of a shrine, to the knotting of a rope measuring the time until a ceremony they will not live to see?

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00:18:42,561 --> 00:18:48,562

In sanctuaries hidden among the cliffs, there is evidence of the antiquity of the SIGI ritual.

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00:18:49,562 --> 00:18:58,564

The mask called Na dates from an early observation of the dark star. It is believed by scientists to be more than 300 years old.

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00:18:59,565 --> 00:19:03,566

Masks for future rituals will be modeled on this example.

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00:19:04,566 --> 00:19:09,567

So what conclusion does one come to from the doggone knowledge of the star Sirius?

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00:19:10,567 --> 00:19:11,567

I feel there are one of three possibilities.

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00:19:12,568 --> 00:19:16,569

A, that they have supernatural knowledge or extrasensory perception.

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00:19:16,569 --> 00:19:20,570

B, perhaps they have been visited by creatures from outer space.

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00:19:21,570 --> 00:19:23,570

Or C, that the whole thing is coincidence.

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00:19:24,570 --> 00:19:29,572

And I must say as a professional astronomer, I strongly side with item C, that it is coincidence.

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00:19:30,572 --> 00:19:32,572

How they managed to calculate this?

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00:19:33,573 --> 00:19:43,575

We don't know. It is a mystery that we have been unable to solve up to now and that the doggone are not going to tell us.

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00:19:46,576 --> 00:20:04,580

The average lifespan among the doggone is 38 years. The SIGI ritual is held every 60 years.

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00:20:05,580 --> 00:20:13,582

Yet every doggone youth learns the complicated movements of the dance, hoping he might someday participate in the ceremony.

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00:20:16,583 --> 00:20:27,585

Each hopes that he will be the one to wear the grand mask.

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00:20:28,585 --> 00:20:37,588

The grand mask, the symbol of the sacred star, turning in endless orbit around the giant Sirius.

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00:20:47,590 --> 00:20:49,590

Hello, my dear!

157

00:20:49,590 --> 00:20:52,591

Hello!

158

00:20:52,591 --> 00:20:54,591

Hello!

159

00:20:58,592 --> 00:21:00,593

Hello!

160

00:21:02,593 --> 00:21:04,594

Hello!

161

00:21:10,595 --> 00:21:12,596

Hello!

162

00:21:15,596 --> 00:21:18,597

Today the modern world surrounds the doggone.

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00:21:18,597 --> 00:21:23,598

Their children will attend schools. Roads will connect them to major cities.

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00:21:24,598 --> 00:21:27,599

Western goods and technology will soon become in place.

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00:21:28,599 --> 00:21:32,600

As they gain new knowledge, will they lose this ancient wisdom?

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00:21:33,601 --> 00:21:38,602

Can they travel into the future guided by tradition and social harmony?

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00:21:39,602 --> 00:21:44,603

Will they retain the guiding wisdom of the dark star?

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00:21:45,603 --> 00:21:52,605

Coming up next, 20th century with Mike Wallace reports on gang violence in America.

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00:21:53,605 --> 00:21:57,606

Then, Weapons at War takes you aboard for a history of aircraft carriers.

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00:21:58,606 --> 00:22:02,607

And log on at veterans.com, a new website brought to you by the History Channel.

171

00:22:03,608 --> 00:22:11,609

Veterans.com, a place where veterans, their families and others can connect, share stories and pass on the legacies of all American veterans.