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Voodoo is the compromise between African Udon and Catholicism.

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That's what voodoo is.

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Somehow we're connected to this experience beyond just being taken casually.

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This is made with love for us by a non-physical, very high order intelligence.

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From the boundaries of the universe to the depth of your soul,

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embark on a journey through the unknown and unexplained as we explore mysteries, magic and miracles.

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Hello and welcome. I'm Patrick McNeigh.

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It's a day for unique arts.

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Artwork influenced by alien encounters,

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designs that magically appear in fields of grain

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and the mystical art of an ancient religion.

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Voodoo is generally perceived as tribal black magic practiced in primitive cultures.

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Images of pinstruck dolls and zombie creatures pervade our thinking.

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Today, 50 million worshippers of voodoo claim it is a religion with reverence and prayer.

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Is voodoo a dark mysterious magic or just another path leading to God?

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Worshippers of voodoo believe that the work of their gods appears in every facet of daily life

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and the pleasing the gods will gain them health, wealth and spiritual contentment.

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Brandy Kelly, director of the voodoo museum in New Orleans, has studied this religion intensively.

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Voodoo is the compromise between African Udon and Catholicism. That's what voodoo is.

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When African people were brought over as slaves, they took their religion called Udon with them.

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Although the slaves were forced by Catholic missionaries to adopt Catholicism as their new religion,

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they still prayed to their ancient spirits behind closed doors.

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The slaves did, however, use the Catholic saints as a cover-up for their own Udon gods

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and in time the two religions merged into what we know today as voodoo.

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Catholicism, voodooism, all religions have rules.

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Voodoo has rules and the rules are harm no one.

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Protect yourself, but don't harm people in achieving what you want.

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Voodoo is centered on ceremonies in which the worshippers are ridden or taken possession of by gods and spirits.

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It's not an evil religion. There's no Satan in voodoo.

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A lot of things in this religion might look spooky or strange to someone that didn't understand them,

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but they are here for more than spooky effect. They symbolize things.

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In voodoo rituals, a priest or priestess acts as a medium between the gods and worshippers.

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When the gods are summoned, they enter a worshippers mind and body.

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The possessed worshipper loses all consciousness, totally becoming the possessing god.

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The ritual comes to a conclusion when the snake dance is performed.

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It's a very significant part of the ritual. It's not just done to look scary.

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The snake symbolizes Dambala, who is the most worshipped and sacred symbol in voodoo.

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Eshu is the guardian of the crossroads and the more childlike spirit of the gods.

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He accepts offers like cigars, candy, pennies and rum.

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If you cross Eshu, he can throw stones in your face.

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If you cross Eshu, he can throw stones in your path, so to speak.

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Things like losing your car keys, people here say that's Eshu, but if you offer him what he likes,

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then he can clear your path of obstructions and make you have a much better time at what you're trying to achieve.

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The god of the cemeteries is Baron Cimetie, who represents the ancestors.

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Without your ancestors, you would not be here today.

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Without their sacrifices, you would not be here today.

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To honor them, you teach your children to honor them.

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A part of the voodoo tradition in New Orleans is gregory bags.

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They are commonly kept for good luck or to ward off evil.

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They are made with small cloth bags which are filled with herbs and oils and blessed by a voodoo priest.

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They are used to attract money, protect the home and even to find you love.

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Men and women both come in to get gregory bags from us.

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The men wear them on their right side and the ladies wear them on their left side.

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Those are the power sides for the two sexes.

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Gregory bags can also be used to cause someone else bad luck, known as putting a gregory on a person.

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Magic for both good and evil purposes is an integral part of voodoo.

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Evil in voodoo is merely the mirror image of good. The magic of the spirits is there to be used.

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Dolls aren't used for what people think they're used for.

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From Hollywood, we get the image that people are sticking pins and dolls to inflict harm or cause evil things to happen.

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There's the belief in karma that the voodooists adheres to.

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And if they inflict harm on someone else, it will come back on them.

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So there's absolutely no reason why someone would want to stick a pin in a doll to give someone a heart attack.

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It would make sense. It would come right back on them.

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Dolls are also for many different purposes. You can have a doll for love, which would normally be a red doll, a doll for fertility.

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If it's green, it's for money.

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Color significance is very important in voodoo as well as the use of herbs.

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And all these things are used primarily for healing purposes.

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Different colored candles can also be used in conjunction with the dolls and other tools for magical purposes.

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And they really do help you bring things to you that you want in your life. It does work.

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Certain aspects of voodoo worship appear fairly ordinary.

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The altar is covered with candles and ritual rattles, charms and sacred stones.

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Even the Catholic saints have their place.

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Voodoo and Catholic ethos are so intertwined. You can't separate them. They're inseparable.

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Buried in the St. Louis Cemetery is Marie Laveaux, the powerful New Orleans voodoo queen of the 18th century.

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Today, voodoo worshipers still leave offerings of food, money and flowers at her grave.

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The cemetery is quite small, but even so, the tomb seems to appear out of nowhere when walking among the crypts.

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According to legend, Marie still makes personal appearances,

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frequenting the areas around the cemetery, the old French Quarter and her voodoo haunts.

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When people ask me, does voodoo work, it's like asking me if Catholicism works.

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It's a religion. It's not just the magical practices associated with the religion.

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Voodoo is not a gree-gree bag. It's not a voodoo doll.

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It's a religion and all those things are just tools and they're just part of a religion.

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Instead of trying to insult the people who practice this religion, just try to understand what they're doing and let them go their own way.

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Because I don't think God is going to say, okay, only Catholics are making it into heaven.

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Close encounters of the fifth kind is a subject more people are talking about.

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But not everyone believes stories of contact or abduction by extraterrestrials.

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Are they made up or are some people really communicating with beings from another dimension?

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Not shaken by such experiences, two men have turned theirs into careers.

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Artists from different eras have depicted images from people to impressions to dream-like visions.

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Modern-day artists are filling a void in the art world. They're creating what extraterrestrials look like.

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While some use their imagination, others apply their talisman to record what they see.

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Carlos Macias from Mount Washington, a suburb of Los Angeles, paints beings he's met on the planet Zachar.

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Tell us exactly what sort of paintings you do.

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Basically I paint extraterrestrials. Those are figurative paintings.

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I paint energies, you know, energies that are conveyed to me in the form of the shapes that I

paint.

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When did you first start having these visionary experiences? How long ago?

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My first experience was in 1972. I was in Nicaragua during the earthquake.

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I started to see all kind of flying saucers around Manawa.

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And I started to get more intrigued by it. And as I did more and more, I started to feel messages, extraterrestrial messages.

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When you experience these things, how do you know what happens?

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Well, I start feeling the telepathic energies, you know, I start to feel the radiation.

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Carlos' paintings blend movement with shapes that seem to vibrate on the canvas.

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He aims to create visual music, a new language.

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This musician, Zachar, as you can see, is transforming some waves into radiation.

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People from Zachar probably come from the same fire than we did, you know, from the same energy, creative energy than we did.

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And obviously they're trying to help this world, you know, to continue to be, to exist.

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I only had good experiences, Zachar. I never had nothing but a run happen to me.

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While Carlos took journeys to another planet, almost like a sightseer, another artist, Steve Neal, experienced a more dramatic phenomenon, abduction.

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Since he was a child, he remembers beings testing him and believes his profession was brought about by a lifetime of extraterrestrial encounters.

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You've got quite a collection here. Tell me a little bit about what you do for a living.

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What I do for a living is I make aliens and monsters and props and stuff for science fiction movies.

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I feel that this experience with this other intelligence has definitely influenced my interest in things like Star Trek and astronomy and science fiction greatly.

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I had a connection with the sky, with the stars. It was the thing that I felt most comfortable with was aviation, the stars, primarily.

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When I was a little kid, I didn't even feel right about my physical form. That felt odd to me and my surroundings felt odd and my parents didn't seem like my parents to me.

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These are very, very crazy things.

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A lot of times, how it works is that you'll remember a dream. I remember dreams going all the way back into childhood, just like they happened yesterday,

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because they were so traumatic and they were so vivid that I now believe that they were actual conscious memories and that's why I remember them so well.

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Why do you think you were abducted?

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Well, that's always a difficult question to answer. My answer is very, very crazy, you know, as well as a lot of other people feel that somehow we're connected to this experience beyond just

being taken casually from our bedrooms or our cars to see,

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what a human being is like, an actuality that somehow we're part of their culture and that we're here in this form to basically influence the culture from within the inside and to watch it.

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Do you feel you belong more with them than you do with us?

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I have to admit that I do, actually, yeah.

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They tell me that when this is done, whatever it is I'm doing down here, whatever it is we're all doing down here, all the millions of people who claim this, is that we get to go home after this.

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What do these beings look like?

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Well, they're quite classic as far as a classic description is concerned, the large-headed,

black-eyed, very much kind of like the close-encounters type image.

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Are they all similar? Are there different races?

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They seem to be similar within the black-eyed ones, which some people refer to as grays, I don't, but for that type, there's a very large one, usually about five foot tall, that one has the most intimate dealings with the person involved, with the individual who's having this experience.

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The smaller ones, which resemble the larger one, were about three and a half foot to four foot, and they generally seem to be more like drones.

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The other types that are seen are sort of a Eurasian type, which are very human looking, and then there's another type, which I've only been privy to a couple of times, one time real, clearly, and that was the famous reptile type being.

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As in the film 2001, they have been here since the very beginning, influencing our evolution.

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In fact, they have gone as far as to say, like in 2001, before that, that they actually created the life on this world, that they seeded this world.

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The World of Eurasian Art

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Mysterious formations in the crops have baffled people for years. It seems that the more we learn about cropped circles, the more questions arise about them.

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Crop circles have been cited in various fields around the world since at least the 1960s. To find out more about these strange patterns, I spoke with Iles, the national coordinator for the Center for Crop Circle Studies.

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First of all, can you tell me, define for me, what is a crop circle?

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A crop circle basically is crop or vegetation that is bent over unnaturally. It's basically laid vegetation, swirled into a pattern, which on the ground is not visible, but it is visible from the air.

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As a member of the research team, Peter Sorensen videotapes crop circles in England. He described what some of the patterns look like.

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This is very typical of some of the early crop circle designs that we had. For the first ten years or so, there was nothing but just circles.

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And then there began to be patterns of circles, and then there were circles with rings around them. And up until this time, some of the scientists were arguing that it was a form of electrified whirlwind,

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that the spinning wind was making the circles and the electricity, the electrical charge, and it was what was softening the stalks that they could bend in this magical way.

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But it wasn't too long after the circles began to appear that straight lines began to appear. Obviously, these straight lines are not made by a storm.

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It's also important to know that the crop circles appear overnight.

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Some people are skeptical and think crop circles are man-made, just as a hoax. So how can you tell if a crop circle is real?

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My first criterion for determining when I walk into a formation is by dousing.

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In the three years that I've been exploring formations, both in England and in the United States here now, for two years,

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what I've learned is that the dousing rods do not respond to anything in a man-made formation.

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Otherwise, the dousing rods respond immediately as soon as you cross the perimeter of the formation from the field.

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There is an energy there at the perimeter. Additionally, we do crop sampling. We get the numbers.

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There are certain numbers and ratios of numbers that indicate genuineness.

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There are soil changes in the formations. There are photographic anomalies that, as we're shooting with video cameras or even regular cameras,

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films come out different.

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So after the evolution of crop circles, they began to get lines in them. They began to be very complex like this.

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This one is huge, probably nearly 400 feet long. Circles and rings and lines and arcs.

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And these tremendous formations began to get great attention to the world, finally.

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Because up to that point, people could dismiss crop circles, not when they're like this.

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So in recent years, the crop circles have begun to take on recognizable shapes.

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And they're no longer looking like abstract code. They're getting to be much more literal.

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So here on my first flight in 1994 was this incredible insect shape.

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Now I'm on a flight with another very good friend of mine, the pilot, Steve Patterson.

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And we found this king scorpion up there. Tremendous scorpion formation.

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Notice the spacing between these tractor lines is about 50 or 60 feet.

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At the end of each year, there is what we call the grand finale.

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Because the crop circles seem to go through an evolution.

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There is simple circles in the springtime and then more complicated ones as the season gets along.

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The end of 1993, there was this incredible formation that was like a mandala.

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There was a series of lotus petals around the outside and a big five-pointed star in the middle of this crop circle.

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It was astounding to see.

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And one of the interesting features about this is that it wasn't perfectly round.

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It was sort of oval, but it was on a steep slope.

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And with a perfectly circular beam of energy, it had come down from above that would have created exactly that oval.

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The crop circles seem to cluster around sacred sites in England, especially an ancient stone circle called Avebury.

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It's like Stonehenge, only it's older and it's much, much larger.

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So here is the Avebury stone circle area.

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And this was our grand finale in 1994.

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The rings with their beautiful proportions and the web formation around the outside occurred in two different nights.

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And that's actually a good sign because Avebury is such a populated area that if you were a hoaxer,

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you wouldn't start something in a crowded place and then come back the next night.

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Crop circles have appeared in countries all around the world, in grain, sand, even ice.

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I asked Islas who investigates them and how they're funded.

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All of the researchers are volunteers. We have no funding, no grant monies coming together for this.

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I make any photos that I have, provided I have permission to release them, available to anybody who wants to purchase them.

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We have a video which includes aerial, ground and pull shots of the 92, 3 and 4 formations.

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And now this year we have a 1995 calendar that England put out.

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What is the purpose of a crop circle?

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This is made, I believe wholeheartedly, this is made with love for us by a non-physical, very high order intelligence.

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It's a gift. They're trying to wake us up to this fact that we are living amongst other intelligences and other beings.

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And they're trying to do it as unobtrusively, as gently as they can, but as very definitely and as urgently as they can because our time is short.

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It changes you. It's changing the world. Whatever is the cause of this, the world is not going to be the same because of this beauty.

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Beauty. Great, great beauty.

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You just never know when or where the next mystery will crop up.

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I'm Patrick McNeigh. Join me next time for more mysteries, magic and miracles.