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

You know what, I've been around for a while.

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00:00:07,000 --> 00:00:10,000

I've traveled the world, met some interesting people,

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

done some crazy things.

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

So you might just think there's not much that could take me by surprise.

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

You'd be wrong.

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

The world is full of stories and science and things that amaze and confound me every single day.

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

Incredible mysteries that keep me awake at night.

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

Some I can answer.

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

Others justify logic.

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

Like from the depths of the Pacific Ocean, one of the loudest.

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00:00:44,000 --> 00:00:47,000

And most mysterious sounds ever heard.

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00:00:47,000 --> 00:00:49,000

What made it?

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

Or the residents of a Texas town who report mysterious lights in the night sky.

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00:00:55,000 --> 00:00:58,000

UFOs that have the US Air Force in hot pursuit.

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00:00:58,000 --> 00:01:01,000

What's going on?

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00:01:01,000 --> 00:01:07,000

And the fishing trawler that disappears only to be found undamaged at the bottom of the Pacific.

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00:01:07,000 --> 00:01:09,000

Why?

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00:01:09,000 --> 00:01:11,000

Yep.

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00:01:11,000 --> 00:01:14,000

It's a weird world.

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00:01:14,000 --> 00:01:16,000

And I love it.

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00:01:25,000 --> 00:01:30,000

The World

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00:01:34,000 --> 00:01:36,000

1997.

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00:01:36,000 --> 00:01:42,000

Something emerges from the deep that has confounded science ever since.

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00:01:42,000 --> 00:01:46,000

One of the loudest and scariest sounds ever recorded.

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00:01:46,000 --> 00:01:48,000

Weird.

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00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:51,000

Or what?

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00:01:51,000 --> 00:01:59,000

You know, in the 21st century, we might be forgiven for thinking that there's no mystery left on planet Earth.

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00:01:59,000 --> 00:02:03,000

If you didn't think that, you'd be wrong.

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00:02:03,000 --> 00:02:14,000

We may have Google mapped Facebooked and Twittered every square inch of land we walk on, but below sea level.

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00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:17,000

It's a very different story.

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00:02:17,000 --> 00:02:28,000

We know more about the depths of the cosmos than we do about the depths of the Pacific.

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00:02:28,000 --> 00:02:35,000

This story starts during the Cold War when the US Navy implemented a sophisticated underwater listening grid

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

to monitor Soviet submarine activity around the world.

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00:02:40,000 --> 00:02:44,000

But by 1991, the superpower standoff has ended.

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00:02:44,000 --> 00:02:54,000

They contact oceanographer Christopher Fox and offer him and his team the opportunity to use the system for environmental research.

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00:02:54,000 --> 00:03:01,000

There was an effort in the United States to see if we could take military systems and use them for environmental science.

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00:03:01,000 --> 00:03:12,000

Fox and his team would utilize the Navy's network of underwater microphones known as hydrophones that, over the years, were placed around the world's oceans in their hundreds.

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00:03:12,000 --> 00:03:20,000

For the first time, scientists had the means to listen in to massive areas of the deep sea.

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00:03:20,000 --> 00:03:25,000

They might wish they just left it alone.

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00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:30,000

We began hearing whales. Of course, we heard shipping and man-made sounds.

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00:03:30,000 --> 00:03:41,000

But there amongst the many sounds of the ocean was something he had never heard before.

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00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:45,000

Sound both mysterious and chilling.

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00:03:45,000 --> 00:03:52,000

And we heard it and then we probably played it back several times because it was very unusual.

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00:03:52,000 --> 00:03:58,000

Fox's colleague, geologist Robert Zeak, was also puzzled by what he heard.

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00:03:58,000 --> 00:04:04,000

To me, the most impressive part about the sound is how loud it was by human standards.

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

How loud?

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00:04:06,000 --> 00:04:14,000

It was about a whopping 180 decibels louder than a supertanker and one of the loudest sounds ever recorded.

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00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:20,000

So loud, it was picked up by two hydrophones over 3,000 miles apart.

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00:04:20,000 --> 00:04:30,000

Its location was determined to be 50 degrees south, 100 degrees west, just north of Antarctica.

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00:04:30,000 --> 00:04:37,000

This monstrous and thoroughly weird sound was nicknamed the Bloop.

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00:04:37,000 --> 00:04:42,000

Is that weird or what?

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00:04:42,000 --> 00:04:46,000

There's no denying that the Bloop is a very, very weird sound.

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00:04:46,000 --> 00:04:55,000

But the thing that is most perplexed scientists is that after that day in 1997, the sound was never heard again.

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00:04:55,000 --> 00:05:01,000

Ever since debate as to the origins of this mysterious emission has raged.

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00:05:01,000 --> 00:05:07,000

Was it geological, secret military test, or was it biological?

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

Some kind of very shy beast of the deep.

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00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:21,000

I think it's exciting to think that there are things going on in the ocean that we don't know what they are.

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00:05:21,000 --> 00:05:31,000

So if the sound is biological, it kind of begs the question, what on earth or underwater produces a sound this loud?

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00:05:31,000 --> 00:05:36,000

To produce a sound of this volume, the animal would have to be enormous.

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00:05:36,000 --> 00:05:47,000

Blue whales are the largest creatures that has ever existed on earth, reaching over 100 feet in length and weighing an estimated 400,000 pounds.

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00:05:47,000 --> 00:05:52,000

They communicate in volumes as loud as 185 decibels.

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00:05:52,000 --> 00:05:55,000

David Melinger is a marine biologist.

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00:05:55,000 --> 00:06:03,000

He has analyzed the one-time acoustic event to see if the Bloop matches with any known biological sound like a blue whale.

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

Blue whales are extremely loud. There's no doubt about that.

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00:06:06,000 --> 00:06:11,000

Something you can hear at tens of, maybe hundreds of miles away has got to be really loud.

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00:06:11,000 --> 00:06:15,000

See, I could put them side by side like, here's the blue whale sound.

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00:06:15,000 --> 00:06:30,000

Blue whales are the loudest animal we know in the ocean for a continuous sustained sound.

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00:06:30,000 --> 00:06:32,000

They're nowhere near as loud as the blue sound.

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00:06:32,000 --> 00:06:34,000

We can hear the blue sound for thousands of miles.

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00:06:34,000 --> 00:06:39,000

It means that the animal would have to be gargantuan if it were a biological sound.

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00:06:39,000 --> 00:06:56,000

To find out what produced the mysterious sound, scientists had to consider a seemingly impossible and ever so slightly scary prospect that blue whales are not the largest creatures in our oceans.

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00:06:56,000 --> 00:07:01,000

Could there be something else down there?

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00:07:01,000 --> 00:07:10,000

It would be something completely unknown and it would probably have to be huge and you'd have to say, well, how could something that huge be totally unknown on Earth?

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00:07:10,000 --> 00:07:14,000

It really is hard to say what kind of creature could it possibly be.

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00:07:14,000 --> 00:07:23,000

There's no question we don't know what's at the bottom of the ocean.

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00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:28,000

The Pacific Ocean is so vast it hurts my brain to even think about it.

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00:07:28,000 --> 00:07:34,000

Here's a body of water covering 30% of the Earth's surface reaching depths of over six miles.

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00:07:34,000 --> 00:07:37,000

Think about it, anything could be happening down there.

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00:07:37,000 --> 00:07:46,000

So if the blue wasn't created by a known marine animal, what about an unknown one?

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00:07:46,000 --> 00:07:49,000

Could we be dealing with some kind of sea monster?

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00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:51,000

A remnant of prehistory?

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00:07:51,000 --> 00:08:00,000

Is it a Kraken or a salt water cousin of the Loch Ness Monster?

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

Sounds crazy, right?

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00:08:02,000 --> 00:08:06,000

Actually, it's not as far-fetched as you think.

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00:08:06,000 --> 00:08:11,000

In 1938, a silica was caught off the coast of South Africa.

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00:08:11,000 --> 00:08:19,000

They were believed to have been extinct since the end of the Cretaceous period over 65 million years ago.

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00:08:19,000 --> 00:08:30,000

And in 2006, the remains of a previously unknown prehistoric marine creature was discovered, labeled Predator X.

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00:08:30,000 --> 00:08:37,000

The creature was 49 feet long and would have weighed 99,000 pounds.

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00:08:37,000 --> 00:08:38,000

Yikes!

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00:08:38,000 --> 00:08:45,000

So is it possible that one of these is still swimming around?

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00:08:45,000 --> 00:08:48,000

It's possible there's some creature out there that we haven't found yet.

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00:08:48,000 --> 00:08:54,000

I'm skeptical of that idea because I think we would have fished one up in a net by now.

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00:08:54,000 --> 00:09:02,000

What makes it questionable as to whether it's a biological sound was it was only recorded once.

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00:09:02,000 --> 00:09:07,000

Okay, if the bloop didn't come from a sea monster, then what else?

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00:09:07,000 --> 00:09:14,000

In their search for answers, the scientists have pondered another seemingly far-out possibility.

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00:09:14,000 --> 00:09:22,000

Could somehow the Earth itself have made this incredible sound?

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00:09:22,000 --> 00:09:25,000

So another theory emerges.

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00:09:25,000 --> 00:09:28,000

Could it have been produced by something geological?

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00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:34,000

After all, there's a lot of weird stuff going on out there.

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00:09:34,000 --> 00:09:39,000

The outermost layer of our planet, the lithosphere, is divided into tectonic plates.

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00:09:39,000 --> 00:09:46,000

Every year, massive underwater earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur along their boundaries beneath the oceans.

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00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:47,000

And guess what?

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00:09:47,000 --> 00:09:52,000

They produce massive sound waves.

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00:09:52,000 --> 00:09:57,000

This is the sound of resonating volcano and it's all very low energy here.

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00:09:57,000 --> 00:10:00,000

It's almost like a little white-yellow band there.

106

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

Again, here's an example of an earthquake and it's all low-frequency energy.

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00:10:05,000 --> 00:10:14,000

But when the sounds of an earthquake and a volcano are compared to the bloop, there's one important difference.

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00:10:14,000 --> 00:10:22,000

What's different about the bloop is that it's at a much higher frequency range, you know, much higher pitch than these natural sounds.

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00:10:22,000 --> 00:10:26,000

And typically earthquakes are really low-frequency rumbles sound like thunder.

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00:10:26,000 --> 00:10:32,000

And icebergs, they also kind of sound like thunder, but they have kind of harmonious tones.

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00:10:32,000 --> 00:10:36,000

This is a different pitch, higher pitch, like an animal, sort of like what an animal would make.

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00:10:36,000 --> 00:10:39,000

Could it be a more anomalous geological sound?

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00:10:39,000 --> 00:10:42,000

The bloop was recorded near Antarctica.

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00:10:42,000 --> 00:10:45,000

Perhaps that could be a clue to its origins.

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00:10:45,000 --> 00:10:52,000

After all, with global warming, incidents of ice have been increasing in the Antarctic region.

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00:10:52,000 --> 00:11:00,000

We see really bizarre sounds coming out of Antarctica that are caused by the interaction of these giant icebergs coming off of the mainland.

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

We see the sounds of ice cracking, we call them ice quakes, that's very distinctive too.

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

Icebergs breaking can be as loud as 193 decibels, as definitely as the bloop.

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00:11:11,000 --> 00:11:20,000

Icebergs can be as big as, you know, some big land mass, it can be 10 miles wide and they can make ice quakes that are comparable in size to earthquakes.

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00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:23,000

This one is the sound of an iceberg tremor.

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00:11:23,000 --> 00:11:31,000

Icebergs moving along the C4, scraping along the C4, cause the iceberg to resonate and makes a harmonic sound.

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00:11:31,000 --> 00:11:36,000

But so far, none of the recordings have captured a similar sound frequency to that of the bloop.

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00:11:42,000 --> 00:11:51,000

So, if the bloop isn't biological and it's not geological, could it be possible that the bloop is man-made?

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00:11:51,000 --> 00:11:54,000

That would explain why we only heard it once.

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00:11:54,000 --> 00:12:01,000

Now, who would have the resources to make such a loud sound in the middle of the ocean?

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00:12:01,000 --> 00:12:07,000

Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

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00:12:09,000 --> 00:12:17,000

In 2000, many believed that secret Navy sonar tests were responsible when dozens of whales beached themselves in the Bahamas.

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00:12:18,000 --> 00:12:27,000

It is estimated that the Navy's secret sonar transmitters can generate sound as loud as 215 decibels.

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00:12:27,000 --> 00:12:32,000

Could the bloop have been this or another secret military test?

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00:12:33,000 --> 00:12:43,000

They were putting devices and instruments in the water, testing underwater explosions, doing underwater experiments of various kinds.

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

I don't necessarily believe in conspiracy theories. I think there's probably a reasonable explanation for all the sounds we observe in the ocean.

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00:12:50,000 --> 00:12:57,000

Despite the numerous theories, no one has proven what caused this mysterious sound.

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00:12:58,000 --> 00:13:02,000

But scientists are still hoping it will be heard again.

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00:13:03,000 --> 00:13:09,000

Will we hear it again? Will this sound reveal some new mystery of the ocean?

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

Maybe, but for now, the bloop remains.

136

00:13:15,000 --> 00:13:18,000

Weird. Or what?

137

00:13:18,000 --> 00:13:41,000

I don't know what it is. I'm holding this camera as steady as I can. I'm not going to run and ball.

138

00:13:42,000 --> 00:13:46,000

It's a scene straight out of a Hollywood sci-fi blockbuster.

139

00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:58,000

The inhabitants of a Texas town witnessed the night sky set ablaze by colorful UFOs seemingly in a

dogfight with U.S. Air Force F-16s.

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00:13:59,000 --> 00:14:04,000

Was this mass sighting really as weird as an authentic alien visitation?

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00:14:05,000 --> 00:14:16,000

Right. Let's get to work. It's time to delve into the cutting edge of military tech and separate hard fact from science fiction.

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00:14:20,000 --> 00:14:25,000

We humans have always looked to the sky for either our salvation or our doom.

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00:14:26,000 --> 00:14:33,000

Whether looking for our great guardian angel or the terrifying invasion of a violent alien race, we look up for our end.

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00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:51,000

Well, this is the true story of what happened when one night the entire population of a small Texas town looked upward as one and were left thinking, ah, is that weird or what?

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00:14:52,000 --> 00:14:58,000

January 8th, 2008, the sleepy Derry town of Stephenville, Texas. Looks nice, doesn't it?

146

00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:03,000

Another peaceful evening for E.R.E.R.E. County police officer Lee Roy Gaten.

147

00:15:04,000 --> 00:15:11,000

An amateur pilot, Steve Allen, is suddenly destroyed by a close encounter of the first kind.

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00:15:12,000 --> 00:15:17,000

When I got out of my car, I saw this bright, bright light appear to be changing colors.

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00:15:18,000 --> 00:15:24,000

It was real close, like 1500 foot in the air and about 1500 foot over from us.

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00:15:25,000 --> 00:15:28,000

And whatever it was didn't make any noise at all. It was totally silent.

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00:15:29,000 --> 00:15:37,000

Everyone in the community has accepted that there was something strange happening the night of January the 8th, 2008 in E.R.E.R.E.R.E. County.

152

00:15:38,000 --> 00:15:48,000

The mysterious light show was witnessed by many others and by morning the whole county is reporting spooky UFO sightings.

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00:15:49,000 --> 00:15:58,000

You know, you'd always see the UFO shows on TV and I really didn't believe in UFOs. I mean, I always thought there was a legitimate explanation.

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00:15:59,000 --> 00:16:07,000

I feel like these are from somewhere besides Earth. I don't think they're from Earth. It was almost like a biblical event.

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00:16:07,000 --> 00:16:10,000

We couldn't come to a conclusion of what it was.

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00:16:11,000 --> 00:16:20,000

But for Steve Allen, the mysterious lights were just a half of it. He thinks the UFOs were joined in the sky that night by a far more familiar looking aircraft.

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00:16:21,000 --> 00:16:31,000

We went into the house to figure out what happened and somebody called and says they're coming back

and we ran outside and that's when we saw the two F-16s in pursuit.

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00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:41,000

And I thought, well, why is our government chasing something, you know, or what are we doing, you know, or we're at war with somebody or could be in times or a lot of things pass through my mind.

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00:16:41,000 --> 00:16:51,000

And, you know, I kind of made a beeline after that to my house because I thought if there was a problem or something happening, I wanted to be at my own home with my family.

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00:16:52,000 --> 00:16:55,000

So what are we dealing with here?

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00:16:57,000 --> 00:17:08,000

Well, this clearly isn't one of those stories we hear about all the time where some lone crank experiences an alien visitation, probably gets abducted at Yadda Yadda Yadda.

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00:17:08,000 --> 00:17:22,000

No, what we have here is just, it's much more interesting. A UFO sighting shared by dozens, if not hundreds of level headed Texans, you can find them.

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

So could so many people see something at the same time and all believe it to be a UFO and it not be the truth?

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00:17:34,000 --> 00:17:46,000

Cognitive neuroscientist Professor Allison Seculler specializes in researching how the human brain interprets everyday events.

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00:17:47,000 --> 00:17:53,000

She believes there may be a more down to earth explanation for the mystery of the Texas lights.

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00:17:53,000 --> 00:18:03,000

Officially, UFO stands for unidentified flying object. People don't like unidentified, the brain doesn't like unidentified, the brain's job is to make sense of the world.

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00:18:04,000 --> 00:18:13,000

And so when people see something that is officially an unidentified flying object because we don't know what it is, they do try to put it into some sort of sense. They try to make sense of it in some way.

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00:18:13,000 --> 00:18:23,000

You see, to Professor Seculler, eyewitness statements, especially those of mysterious and hard to explain phenomena, are often innocent, misinterpretations.

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00:18:24,000 --> 00:18:36,000

Different people can look at exactly the same thing out in the real world and see completely different things. Because the way that you see the world is not actually a reflection of what's physically out there, it's a reflection of how that information interacts with your brain.

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00:18:36,000 --> 00:18:48,000

And so, because my brain has different sorts of perspectives on the world and different experiences, I'll interpret something differently than someone standing next to me who's had a different sort of life experience and a different perspective on what they're looking at.

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00:18:49,000 --> 00:19:02,000

So apparently, when faced with something new, the brain will look for answers by trying to match what we're seeing with something similar from our previous experience, memory and cultural background.

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00:19:02,000 --> 00:19:09,000

And of course, in the United States, seeing strange lights in the sky can only mean one thing.

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00:19:10,000 --> 00:19:23,000

Movies can have a big impact on the way that we think about and see the world. So, if there hadn't been a whole flurry of UFO movies in recent history, it'd be less likely that all these people would have said, ah, it's a UFO.

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00:19:24,000 --> 00:19:30,000

I'm not saying I saw a UFO, but with all the reports from everybody else, apparently that's what I

saw.

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00:19:33,000 --> 00:19:46,000

Okay, so when it comes to finding a rational answer for something weird, we humans might just form a consensus that's based subconsciously on what we've seen in movies or read in comic books when we were kids.

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00:19:47,000 --> 00:20:01,000

So given the right light, angle and conditions, someone seeing an innocent frisbee flying through the air might process that as something altogether different.

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00:20:02,000 --> 00:20:17,000

So, whatever the people of Stephenville saw that night may not have been an alien spacecraft, but the fact remains, they saw something, something very weird. What was it?

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00:20:17,000 --> 00:20:31,000

There is no evidence that the Earth has been visited in the past or is being visited today by extraterrestrial aliens. No evidence whatsoever.

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00:20:32,000 --> 00:20:42,000

It would be very difficult to travel the vast distances between the stars. You would have to have tremendous amounts of energy, lots of time to do this.

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00:20:42,000 --> 00:20:49,000

It's not an easy proposition. It's not impossible, but it is very, very difficult.

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00:20:50,000 --> 00:20:57,000

James McGaugh is a retired Air Force pilot and a complete skeptic about alien visitation. It's not a spoil sport.

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00:20:58,000 --> 00:21:06,000

As far as he's concerned, he knows exactly how to explain the mysterious lights. They were military flares.

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

This is Stephenville right here. Here's where the aircraft were flying that night.

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00:21:14,000 --> 00:21:28,000

At the exact time they were saying they saw lights in the sky, there were eight F-16s in the area flying maneuvers, both with afterburners which produced lights with their formation lights on, and they were dropping flares.

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00:21:29,000 --> 00:21:34,000

Now you see, flares are used by the Air Force to solve two different yet equally important problems.

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00:21:35,000 --> 00:21:43,000

One, there are ground illumination flares. These flares are dropped from aircraft in order to light up an area on the ground several miles wide.

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00:21:44,000 --> 00:21:50,000

The flares are suspended in the air by a parachute. The heat from the flare helps to keep it aloft.

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00:21:51,000 --> 00:21:57,000

Two, there are countermeasure flares. This kind is used to confuse enemy missiles targeted onto aircraft.

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00:21:58,000 --> 00:22:09,000

The heat of these flares is hotter than the heat from the afterburner, causing heat-seeking missiles to lock onto and track the flare instead of the military jet.

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00:22:10,000 --> 00:22:12,000

Huh, interesting.

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00:22:13,000 --> 00:22:18,000

The aircraft were maneuvering all around. The flares were being dropped, so there was lights and everything.

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00:22:18,000 --> 00:22:26,000

It would be very difficult for someone, unless they knew exactly what the military maneuvers were, to actually understand who was chasing what.

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00:22:27,000 --> 00:22:37,000

Okay, so I gotta admit flares being dropped from F-16s in war game exercises seems like a plausible explanation for the Stephenville lights.

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00:22:37,000 --> 00:22:44,000

But for some, this theory just doesn't add up. Could the US government be covering up the truth?

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00:22:47,000 --> 00:22:49,000

What really happened?

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00:22:51,000 --> 00:22:59,000

Steve Allen is a private pilot. He saw the lights and isn't convinced they were simply military flares dropped by US fighter jets.

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00:23:00,000 --> 00:23:07,000

Lights we saw traveled at a high rate of speed all the way from the east to the west and come back by with jets chasing it.

198

00:23:08,000 --> 00:23:15,000

In only like 1500 feet off the ground, so what we saw was definitely not a flare. It was quite spectacular.

199

00:23:15,000 --> 00:23:21,000

They was on the same height than trajectory. They were following it or attempting to keep up with it.

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00:23:22,000 --> 00:23:32,000

You could see the full afterburner coming out the back of the F-16s probably, you know, I'd say they were running in the excess of five or six hundred miles an hour themselves.

201

00:23:32,000 --> 00:23:40,000

Whatever, somebody had to authorize some excessive speed to try to catch up with whatever it was.

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00:23:42,000 --> 00:23:50,000

Allen's belief that the lights were UFOs actually being chased by fighter jets is supported by one crucial piece of information.

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00:23:50,000 --> 00:23:54,000

If these were simply flares, why didn't the Air Force admit it?

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00:23:55,000 --> 00:24:04,000

The Carzill Air Force base in the military in Fort Worth originally denied anything out here and then they denied that F-16s was there.

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00:24:04,000 --> 00:24:10,000

And of course they was from here no further than two football fields away, so we know they was there.

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00:24:10,000 --> 00:24:21,000

Later on, as I discovered, there were indeed aircraft flying that night and the Air Force, the Public Affairs Office, put out a press release saying we made a mistake.

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00:24:21,000 --> 00:24:26,000

There was nothing more to it, nothing sinister at all to it, just a mistake.

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00:24:27,000 --> 00:24:36,000

Yeah, I think the military probably was trying to cover it up obviously after the story first broke they decided they had 10 F-16s in the area.

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00:24:36,000 --> 00:24:47,000

And we all kind of lost the credibility with the military that they didn't know that they had their military jets in this area, especially 10 F-16s.

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00:24:49,000 --> 00:25:02,000

Hmm, so US Air Force claims there was no military activity in the skies above Stephen Will on the night in question, but then mysteriously changed their minds a few days later?

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00:25:02,000 --> 00:25:04,000

Sounds suspicious, doesn't it?

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00:25:05,000 --> 00:25:18,000

Remember what happened at Roswell? After first saying they had captured an alien ship, the military then changed their tune, denied everything and the conspiracy theorists have reveled in it ever since.

213

00:25:19,000 --> 00:25:33,000

I'm getting paranoid here. Are you paranoid? Or is it just me? Why are you looking at me? Why are you looking at me?

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00:25:35,000 --> 00:25:58,000

This is military communications expert Steve Douglas. He believes the Stephenville lights were indeed Air Force flares, but they were being used as part of a military cover-up, not to hide the existence of aliens, but something far scarier to hide top secret black ops.

215

00:25:58,000 --> 00:26:00,000

Whoa.

216

00:26:01,000 --> 00:26:13,000

Well, as it goes with the Stephenville slidings, I think the truth is that a lot of people are seeing what they think are extraterrestrial spaceships. They're not. They're seeing military projects.

217

00:26:14,000 --> 00:26:33,000

I'm basically what you would call a black project researcher. I'm one of those guys who gets in a lawn chair and sits down on a mountaintop looking over a base that doesn't exist, hoping to see the odd secret spacecraft airplane, whatever new widgets the military is using.

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00:26:34,000 --> 00:26:45,000

One of these secret widgets currently flies over Afghanistan, the RQ-170 Sentinel, otherwise known as the Beast of Kandahar.

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00:26:47,000 --> 00:26:55,000

Because of guys sighting it and taking pictures of it, the Air Force came clean and said, yes, we have this thing flying and it's a surveillance platform.

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00:26:56,000 --> 00:27:11,000

A stealth drone with no metal parts, completely undetectable by enemy radar. That's entire existence was denied by the U.S. military until December 2009. Scary, but cool.

221

00:27:12,000 --> 00:27:32,000

Just this year alone, the new military budget is at \$108 billion, with \$44 billion of it earmarked for covert operations alone. That's \$44 billion that we have no idea what goes into it. And that's why there are guys like us.

222

00:27:33,000 --> 00:27:52,000

Douglas also believes the Air Force may have another still top secret piece of surveillance hardware cruising high in the skies, not over a far away combat theater, but right here, right now, over the United States.

223

00:27:53,000 --> 00:28:10,000

We call it the stealth blimp, and it flies at very high altitude, 200,000 to 300,000 feet. You don't know it's up there, and it can do everything from listen to look to see. It's the ultimate flying big brother, is what a stealth blimp could be.

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00:28:10,000 --> 00:28:13,000

You know, there could be one, you know, listening to us right now.

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00:28:14,000 --> 00:28:24,000

According to Douglas, it was a malfunctioning stealth blimp that was to blame for what happened in the skies above Stephenville on January 8th, 2008.

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00:28:24,000 --> 00:28:40,000

Well, as it goes with the Stephenville slidings, I think it was a combination of two events. I think it was some type of covert black projects operation, maybe like one of these stealth blimps was forced down an out of altitude.

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00:28:41,000 --> 00:28:58,000

Because of it happening, which I think was just a happenstance, the military put on what I call a dog and pony show, which means they threw a bunch of fighters in the area, dropped some flares, made some lights as you to kind of look over here, but not at that thing over there.

228

00:28:59,000 --> 00:29:21,000

So where are the mysterious lights over Stephenville that night? Simple flares used to distract attention from a black op gone wrong? Or were the flares being used in a routine exercise? Or were the good people of Erath County, like Steve Allen and the police officer, Lee Roy Gatlen, right all along?

229

00:29:22,000 --> 00:29:33,000

Could the origins of the Stephenville lights be from another world? Perhaps, but for now, the mystery remains weird or what?

230

00:29:34,000 --> 00:29:59,000

Northern California. The Coast Guard launches a desperate search for a fishing boat that has mysteriously vanished without a trace. They find nothing. It's the third unexplained disappearance on this stretch of coastline in less than a year.

231

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

Does America's Pacific Seaboard have a new Bermuda Triangle? It's time to uncover the truth.

232

00:30:10,000 --> 00:30:27,000

Old Mariners' tales of the perilous ocean, swallowing ships and whole crews are legend. But in the 21st century, when several vessels fitted with high-tech communication systems vanished without a trace on the same stretch of American coastline, is that just the beginning?

233

00:30:29,000 --> 00:30:31,000

Weird? What?

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00:30:33,000 --> 00:30:51,000

September 20, 2004. Humboldt Bay, California. Here, one of the main employers is commercial fishing, an industry that ranks among the U.S.'s deadliest professions with a fatality rate five times higher than that of police officers or firefighters.

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00:30:52,000 --> 00:31:06,000

A 46-foot fishing vessel called the Marianne Anne, crewed by Bill Burchell, John Mock and Maurice Alvarado, sets off on a routine three-day fishing trip.

236

00:31:07,000 --> 00:31:19,000

Their first stop is scheduled for Eureka, California the following morning, just a few miles up the coast. But the Marianne Anne never arrives.

237

00:31:20,000 --> 00:31:25,000

They were expected in to deliver a fish at six o'clock, September 21st in the morning.

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00:31:25,000 --> 00:31:32,000

I just showed up there and the boat wasn't there. They were never late, ever, ever, ever, ever. I instantly started freaking out.

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00:31:32,000 --> 00:31:36,000

It's pretty rare for a commercial fishing boat to be reported over the evening.

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00:31:38,000 --> 00:31:43,000

Fearing the worst, the Coast Guard, commanded by search and rescue controller Jim Egbert, springs into action.

241

00:31:44,000 --> 00:31:46,000

Coast Guard Group, Humboldt Bay, was your emergency?

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00:31:47,000 --> 00:31:53,000

We issued an urgent marine information broadcast, asking for information to see if anybody's seen them, heard from them.

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00:31:54,000 --> 00:31:55,000

But no one has.

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00:31:55,000 --> 00:32:03,000

Time, 6.30 a.m. local, the Coast Guard is to report a fishing vessel Marianne Anne, 40-foot fishing vessel overdoing a voyage from Eureka.

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00:32:03,000 --> 00:32:09,000

All vessels in the area are requested to keep a sharp lookout, assist if possible, report any sign of distress to the Coast Guard.

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00:32:09,000 --> 00:32:15,000

Puzzled by the mysterious fact, the crew of the Marianne Anne had not sent a distress signal.

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00:32:15,000 --> 00:32:19,000

The Coast Guard heads straight to the boat's last known location.

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00:32:19,000 --> 00:32:22,000

This is United States Coast Guard Humboldt Bay, California, Group Out.

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00:32:22,000 --> 00:32:31,000

Usually there's some kind of, you know, a call from the boat, an activation of a E-PURB, which is

an emergency position indicating radio beacon, satellite, tracked.

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00:32:31,000 --> 00:32:41,000

We went back and reviewed, had the Rescue Corps Nation Center went back and reviewed everything to make sure there was no signals received from the boat.

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00:32:41,000 --> 00:32:53,000

The boat carried a NOAA vessel monitoring system transponder and was able to find the last position where they had stopped transmitting.

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00:32:53,000 --> 00:33:00,000

The last time the boat logged its position was at 7.22 p.m., just 20 miles off the coast.

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00:33:00,000 --> 00:33:05,000

My level of apprehension was pretty high, so we went right to searching for them immediately.

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00:33:06,000 --> 00:33:16,000

And we were looking for survivors still at that point. There was a chance somebody might have been in a raft or holding onto another piece of debris.

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00:33:16,000 --> 00:33:21,000

But what they do find offers little hope of finding them alive.

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00:33:21,000 --> 00:33:27,000

They found the life raft and a couple of buoys and an ice chest.

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00:33:27,000 --> 00:33:40,000

The first initial search discovered a debris field in the general area where the last position was and they searched for a prolonged period of time, but unfortunately weren't able to find the vessel or any of the survivors or the crew members.

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00:33:40,000 --> 00:33:48,000

After two days the search is called off. The Marianne Anne and its crew have vanished seemingly to thin air.

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00:33:48,000 --> 00:33:57,000

Just weeks after one crew member, Maurice Alvarado, has told his mother it was time to leave his dangerous job behind.

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00:33:57,000 --> 00:34:07,000

He says, you know mom, I think it's time that I get off the boat. And I said, why? And he says, well I need to spend more time with my children.

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00:34:07,000 --> 00:34:12,000

And like three weeks later he was gone.

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00:34:12,000 --> 00:34:19,000

And Maurice has just no way to explain. He just can't believe that they're not coming home.

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00:34:19,000 --> 00:34:30,000

I talked to some fishermen and they said they just don't understand it. The Marianne Anne was one of the safest boats out there. They just didn't understand it. They don't know what happened.

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00:34:31,000 --> 00:34:45,000

So what could have caused the Marianne Anne a 46 foot boat to vanish in normal weather so quickly? The crew didn't have time to send a distress signal?

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00:34:45,000 --> 00:34:55,000

For San Francisco Coast Guard Senior Investigator Ross Wheatley, the disappearance of the Marianne Anne is the latest incident in a much bigger mystery.

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00:34:55,000 --> 00:35:02,000

There is more to the story in this particular case because this was a third vessel sinking in a relatively short period of time.

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00:35:05,000 --> 00:35:16,000

June 21st, 2004, the relentless 50 foot fishing trawler vanishes. With all hands, also in 2004, the gene Lisa went missing.

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00:35:16,000 --> 00:35:30,000

She was later found in 4,000 feet of water sitting upright at the bottom of the ocean. Like the Marianne Anne, both cases were off the California coast. The weather was fine. No distress signals were sent.

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00:35:30,000 --> 00:35:39,000

Something weird is happening on the coastline of Northern California. But what?

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00:35:40,000 --> 00:35:51,000

Here at the Stevens Institute, the Center for Maritime Systems in New Jersey, Dr. Alan Bloomberg and his team of researchers are looking for an explanation.

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00:35:51,000 --> 00:36:07,000

This facility tests marine hydrodynamic properties and boats using two large water tanks. Today they're going to test an incredible theory, a destructive phenomena long thought to be a Mariner's myth. Rogue waves.

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00:36:09,000 --> 00:36:26,000

A rogue wave typically would be characterized as an unusual wave of very large amplitude. For example, 100 feet high. They occur all the time in the ocean. In the past, people thought that they didn't occur very often because they weren't seen very often.

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00:36:26,000 --> 00:36:34,000

But using satellite technology, now you can see rogue waves all the time and they cause a lot of damage when they impact your vessel.

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00:36:35,000 --> 00:36:46,000

Rogue waves are thought to occur when fast currents and strong winds focus smaller waves together into one big devastating wall of water.

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00:36:46,000 --> 00:36:51,000

In the lab, the team has made a model to simulate the Marianne Anne.

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00:36:51,000 --> 00:36:59,000

We're going to put this model out in the tank and we're going to run some large waves at it.

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00:36:59,000 --> 00:37:07,000

Using a sophisticated wave making machine, they're attempting to simulate the conditions created by giant rogue waves.

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00:37:07,000 --> 00:37:14,000

Well, we're basically testing what would happen if a large rogue wave came up on this vessel.

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00:37:17,000 --> 00:37:26,000

The results are simple and dramatic. It takes only a few waves to overwhelm the model.

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00:37:26,000 --> 00:37:32,000

When you see it sinking, you see what that time scale is going to be. It's going to be pretty quick.

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

If surprised by a rogue wave, the Marianne Anne could have sunk in seconds with no time to send a distress signal. It seems a plausible theory.

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00:37:43,000 --> 00:37:47,000

But without finding the boat, it's impossible to prove.

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00:37:48,000 --> 00:37:54,000

But refusing to give up, the Coast Guard are about to make an astonishing discovery.

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00:37:54,000 --> 00:38:04,000

The Coast Guard contacted the Navy. They came up and conducted what they call a side scan sonar search of the bottom in the general area in which the fishing vessel was believed to have sank.

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00:38:04,000 --> 00:38:13,000

They developed basically a 20 square mile box in which they forecasted the vessel most likely would sink if it actually sank at the time that they stopped broadcasting.

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00:38:13,000 --> 00:38:17,000

They searched that 20 mile square box for basically three days.

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00:38:18,000 --> 00:38:24,000

After an exhausting sonar search, the boat is finally found, 2,100 feet underwater.

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00:38:25,000 --> 00:38:30,000

Equipped with an underwater camera, the Navy sends down the submersible.

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00:38:31,000 --> 00:38:40,000

And what they discover is shocking. The ship is perfectly intact with no signs of damage.

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00:38:40,000 --> 00:38:46,000

The vessel is sitting upright on the bottom. There's no clear indication of any type of acclation.

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00:38:46,000 --> 00:38:53,000

Unfortunately, after viewing the video, it basically didn't help us determine the actual cause of what's caused the vessel to sink.

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00:38:54,000 --> 00:38:58,000

This disturbing discovery creates more questions than answers.

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00:38:58,000 --> 00:39:06,000

What could be powerful enough to sink a ship in seconds yet leave no damage?

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00:39:07,000 --> 00:39:15,000

To solve this mystery, investigators need more clues. They go back to the video.

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00:39:15,000 --> 00:39:24,000

Upon closer examination, it is revealed that the Marion Anne's nets were almost fully retracted.

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00:39:24,000 --> 00:39:29,000

We were able to locate the fishing net. It's for the most part holed up on the wheel.

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00:39:30,000 --> 00:39:38,000

Investigators theorize that because the nets were up, the boat was loaded with fish and may have become unstable.

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

One of the issues we've seen in other vessels or other casualties is sometimes the question of whether or not the product on board,

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00:39:46,000 --> 00:39:53,000

if it's not properly segregated, can shift as the vessel deals with the weather and that can cause stability issues.

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00:39:54,000 --> 00:39:58,000

To keep a boat stable, distributing the catch evenly in the cargo hold is vital.

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00:39:58,000 --> 00:40:03,000

Unbalanced, a vessel can roll too far and rapidly take on water.

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00:40:03,000 --> 00:40:13,000

If this happened to the Marion Anne, it might explain why no distress signal was sent and why there was little visible damage to the ship.

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00:40:15,000 --> 00:40:21,000

Investigators closely examined the video to see if this was the reason why the boat sunk.

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00:40:22,000 --> 00:40:27,000

In this particular case, we weren't able to see inside the fish hole, so we couldn't make any type of determination.

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00:40:28,000 --> 00:40:36,000

Due to the extreme depth the divers are unable to examine the inside of the boat, the investigation hits another dead end.

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00:40:37,000 --> 00:40:49,000

But now a bizarre new theory has emerged. Could the Marion Anne been sunk by volatile, highly destructive methane gas bubbles?

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00:40:51,000 --> 00:41:02,000

In 1985, a cameraman captured extraordinary footage of a drilling platform in the North Sea being destabilized by methane gas bubbles from the ocean floor.

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00:41:05,000 --> 00:41:12,000

Dr. David Vicarri believes this could also have theoretically over-welded the Marion Anne.

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00:41:13,000 --> 00:41:17,000

Methane is formed in the sediments by biological processes.

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00:41:17,000 --> 00:41:24,000

A bacteria in the absence of oxygen will undergo a fermentation process and produce the methane.

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00:41:26,000 --> 00:41:29,000

Methane hydrates are found in oceans all over the world.

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00:41:29,000 --> 00:41:36,000

Buried beneath the ocean floor, they release methane bubbles when exposed to warming seas or underwater earthquakes.

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00:41:37,000 --> 00:41:44,000

If a swarm of small bubbles rose under the ship, it would decrease the density of the water the ship was floating in.

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00:41:45,000 --> 00:41:55,000

The ship would then settle down into the water, possibly enough to cause it to swamp by the water coming over the side of the ship directly.

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00:41:56,000 --> 00:42:02,000

To test this theory, researchers placed a boat in the water and laid a system of pipes on the seabed beneath it.

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00:42:03,000 --> 00:42:11,000

Air pumped through the pipes simulate methane gas, creating thousands of bubbles that float to the surface with dramatic results.

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00:42:11,000 --> 00:42:18,000

It's possible for bubbles to sink a ship. Is it likely that I would have to need more evidence to support the likelihood?

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00:42:19,000 --> 00:42:30,000

Despite six years of investigation, theories, and speculation, the definitive cause of the Marion Anne's tragic sinking has yet to be resolved.

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00:42:30,000 --> 00:42:41,000

With no answer in sight, the US Coast Guard has finally closed the case, saying the boat sank for causes unknown.

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00:42:44,000 --> 00:42:50,000

But in Humboldt Bay, the boat and its crew have not been forgotten.

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00:42:51,000 --> 00:42:53,000

It's not that distant. It's still very new and fresh.

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00:42:54,000 --> 00:43:02,000

And still a very big mystery. And no closure. Still have no idea what happened.

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00:43:06,000 --> 00:43:17,000

So for now, this is one mystery that cannot be explained. Boats are sinking and nobody knows why. Is that weird or what?

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00:43:23,000 --> 00:43:31,000

So there we have it. Three strange and mysterious stories. But each with many plausible theories to explain them.

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00:43:33,000 --> 00:43:38,000

What did the good people of Stephenville, Texas see in the skies that night?

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00:43:38,000 --> 00:43:47,000

Were the mysterious lights really military flares dropped from fighter jets? Or were they spacecraft from another world?

327

00:43:48,000 --> 00:43:58,000

Why did the Marion Anne end up at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean? Was it overwhelmed by a rogue wave? Was it sunk by methane bubbles?

328

00:43:59,000 --> 00:44:08,000

And what can explain the spooky and mysterious sound that rose from the depths of the Pacific Ocean? Was it an earthquake? A volcano?

329

00:44:08,000 --> 00:44:14,000

Was it mad made? Or do huge unseen creatures lurk in the deep?

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00:44:14,000 --> 00:44:25,000

Join me next time for three more stories that will undoubtedly be... weird or what?