

[00:00:00] **Music:** “Oh No, Ross and Carrie! Theme Song” by Brian Keith Dalton. A jaunty, upbeat instrumental.

[00:00:08] **Carrie Poppy:** Hello, welcome to *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!*, the show where we don't just report on fringe science, spirituality, claims of the paranormal—no way! Go somewhere else for that. When they make the claims, we show up, so you don't have to. Oh, I'm Carrie Poppy as well.

[00:00:21] **Ross Blocher:** (*Chuckles.*) And I'm Ross Blocher. And this time we are traveling to bonnie Scotland. For the loch, Loch Ness!

[00:00:29] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, I should say from the outset, my Scottish accent is so bad that if I attempt to do it during this episode, it will become Jamaican, it will become East Coast, it will become Ireland, Australia, England. We're not going to be able to track it.

[00:00:44] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, I'm not even going to attempt that.

[00:00:48] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Struggling with an accent that leans cockney.*) I am! (*Laughs.*)

(*In her usual voice.*) I don't know! I can't do it.

[00:00:49] **Ross Blocher:** She's doing it anyway. You went straight to like Eliza Doolittle.

[00:00:53] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Is that an American doing a cockney accent?

(*Ross confirms.*)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Good, good, good. Well, I love Dick Van Dyke. Anyway, we're going to Scotland because—in our minds, because we're talking about the Loch Ness monster!

[00:01:07] **Ross Blocher:** Ooh, this is one of my favorites. I love talking about cryptids.

[00:01:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, I'm getting—I got more into it this time researching this one. Cryptids aren't usually my thing, but kind of realizing where this came from I found very funny. Which we'll get into, I assume.

[00:01:21] **Ross Blocher:** So, I was on an awesome trip last year at the end of 2022. My wife and son and our good friend, Charles, we went to London and then Edinburgh and then Inverness. And of course, we had to stop by Loch Ness. So, I've been eager to tell you the story about how I found the Loch Ness monster, and we played patty cake. But that'll come later.

(*Carrie affirms with a “woah”.*)

Yeah, I'm just burying the lede.

[00:01:46] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, well, I don't know too much about the Loch Ness monster. Of course, I know that she lives in a lake, because loch means lake. And I assume that lake is named Ness?

[00:01:58] **Ross Blocher:** We've just lessened the mystery around the Loch Ness monster, because yeah, that's exactly what

[00:02:05] **Carrie Poppy:** And she has been spotted many times sticking her head up above the water, and I'm saying she because—

[00:02:11] **Ross Blocher:** (*Chuckles.*) We know it's a she, at least.

[00:02:12] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, people call her Nessie, which sounds vaguely female, but—

[00:02:16] **Ross Blocher:** Narrowing the mystery further.

[00:02:17] **Carrie Poppy:** But I think—no one knows for sure. And in fact, she may not exist.

[00:02:21] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, getting her personal pronouns will be probably the last stage in the unraveling of the mystery.

(*They chuckle.*)

[00:02:27] **Carrie Poppy:** When we get to that interview. Oh my god! Nessie, if you're listening, we want you on the show! Please call.

[00:02:33] **Ross Blocher:** Well, and this is inviting the point that isn't brought up too often, which is that you need a breeding population if Nessie is to have lived into the present age from eons ago when Loch Ness was formed. We'll talk more about that. But either you have the last remaining creature that's going to die off at the end of whatever their lifespan is, or you have—hopefully—more than just a few individuals, because that doesn't create a lot of genetic diversity if you just have the same three or four individuals.

So, I don't know. We always just picture this one creature that lives forever. It's the little Babaji of the Scottish Highlands.

(*Carrie agrees.*)

So, yeah, you did a little bit of looking into this topic.

[00:03:12] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Let me tell you just about what I know about Nessie from the History Channel.

(*Ross agrees.*)

So, I imagine this is how—

[00:03:20] **Ross Blocher:** The History Channel, great source of information.

[00:03:22] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Laughs.*) Right. Yes. Notoriously unresearched operation.

[00:03:27] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. You were texting me as you were looking this up, and you're like, "Wow! History Channel's really bad!"

[00:03:34] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. I mean, I knew it was bad, but like—

[00:03:35] **Ross Blocher:** It's like the Nickelback of TV channels, where everybody kind of loves to rag on it. But I've never owned cable, so I've only seen History Channel when I've been like at somebody else's house.

[00:03:48] **Carrie Poppy:** The Raëlians showed us some History Channel, remember that?

[00:03:50] **Ross Blocher:** See?! I went to somebody else's house. I'm trying to remember her name, like Sophia or something. Anyways. The regional leader. And saw it that way.

[00:03:58] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, exactly. I haven't watched that much of it either. Yeah. Because it's (*chuckling*)—you have to—in order to know whether you're looking at good information, you have to stop every 10 seconds and look at what's on the screen, pause, go look that up—because they are not going to be fact checking this for you!

[00:04:12] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, the producers are about eyeballs and not about historical factualness. Yeah. I remember it being kind of like the World War II channel growing up.

[00:04:21] **Carrie Poppy:** Right, I think that's kind of evaporated.

[00:04:23] **Ross Blocher:** And now, it feels like they've sort of been taken over by—what?—ghost hunters and—well, like the *Ancient Aliens* stuff I think is the big deal.

[00:04:30] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, yeah. That sort of alternative history conspiracy lore, but I don't think they go like QAnon. I don't think they go that modern or that controversial, just that like Nessie exists. Bigfoot's real, sure! That stuff. But so, the clip that I was able to find from History Channel about Loch Ness stars William Shatner of *Star Trek* fame, and everyone knows I love *Star Trek*. I love it.

[00:04:55] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, your favorite.

[00:04:56] **Carrie Poppy:** It takes place in space. William Shatner is the caaaaptain? And they fight great battles.

(*Ross makes a skeptical sound and Carrie laughs.*)

They go to other planets? They—

[00:05:07] **Ross Blocher:** I'll say that's—yeah, that's not the focus. The focus is to find new, undiscovered life on other planets and then observe them. And if they're ready, invite them to the Galactic Federation.

[00:05:19] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh! Okay. Well, then maybe this makes sense. He—

[00:05:20] **Ross Blocher:** It's actually—it's very progressive. It is a cool series.

[00:05:24] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, I remember hearing someone who worked on it speak once, and it seems like that. Okay, well listen. William Shatner hosts a series called *The Unexplained* on History Channel. And apparently they find Loch Ness to be unexplained.

Now, I have to say—

[00:05:38] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, when your show is called *The Unexplained*, that tells me you don't really want to tie things up in a nice, neat ribbon.

[00:05:45] **Carrie Poppy:** Touche. Yeah, I'm just gonna make one called *EXPLAINED*. Carrie Poppy explains it. It's over!

[00:05:50] **Ross Blocher:** *The Explained*.

(They chuckle.)

[00:05:52] **Carrie Poppy:** So, here is how the segment on History Channel about the Loch Ness monster begins.

[00:05:59] **Clip:**

Music: Dramatic, orchestral music.

William Shatner: Loch Ness, Scotland, December 2018. On a blustery winter afternoon, military historian Ricky Phillips is walking his dogs along the misty shoreline of Loch Ness, when he spots a strange disturbance in the murky waters.

(The music turns ominous.)

Ricky Phillips: I was walking along the line of the River Oich. The River Oich runs down into Loch Ness, where it's absolutely lovely. And I went, and I stopped, and I took a photograph over it. So, I was sort of one eye on the phone, one eye on the dog. There was a strange noise. My dogs went crazy. As I looked down, there was something in the photograph.

(Photography shutter sound.)

William Shatner: The grainy image appears to show a sinuous figure rising from the dark gray waters of the loch. It's unclear what type of animal the photograph reveals, but many researchers analyzing the photo believed it could be the latest evidence that confirms the existence of an infamous creature from lore and legend that is known as: the Loch Ness monster.

[00:07:04] **Carrie Poppy:** So, first of all, William Shatner's voice—gorgeous.

[00:07:06] **Ross Blocher:** Oh yeah. That was beautiful narration. And he didn't have to say the word “sabotage”.

[00:07:12] **Carrie Poppy:** Is he bad at that?

[00:07:13] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, he says sabotage (*sab-o-taej*).

[00:07:14] **Carrie Poppy:** Whaaat? That's not okay.

[00:07:15] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, it's really fun. There's this clip online where you can hear him recording an audio book, and he gives a delivery and they say, “Oh, that, that was great, Bill. Can you go back and do—we heard sabotage (*sab-o-taej*). Can you say this as sabotage (*sab-uh-tahj*)?”

And he says, “You say sabotage (*sab-uh-tahj*), I say sabotage (*sab-o-taej*).”

(Carrie “wow”s.)

And he like—he sticks to his guns. And then, someone goes back and finds old episodes of *Star Trek* where, sure enough, Captain James T. Kirk is saying, “They're trying to sabotage (*sab-o-taej*) us, Spock.” *(Chuckles.)*

(Carrie “wow”s.)

Anyway, sorry. Beautiful narration. I didn't mean to sabotage your point.

[00:07:46] **Carrie Poppy:** Yes, indeed. But yeah, a little rigid of him. Okay. So, as you heard in that intro, he talks about someone named Ricky Phillips. Who saw maybe...

[00:07:57] **Ross Blocher:** Something.

[00:07:58] **Carrie Poppy:** The Loch Ness monster. Now, have you seen Ricky Phillips photo? I had to go look it up.

[00:08:01] **Ross Blocher:** I haven't. I don't think so. And I noticed that they were saying it wasn't in the loch itself. It was in a tributary, the River Oich?

[00:08:11] **Carrie Poppy:** Mm-hm. Oich. Yeah, which they were saying flows into Loch Ness. And—

[00:08:14] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, it's at the south end. Okay, okay, and it's deep. Yep, I saw this. I know what we're talking about.

[00:08:21] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. What's so interesting about this story is he didn't actually see this with his eyes, right? He took a picture while his dogs were distracting him, and then he looked back at his camera, and he saw this.

[00:08:31] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, that's always an interesting part of the storytelling. That seems to happen a lot with ghosts. “I didn't see it in the moment, but when I looked at the photo later...” Okay, and Carrie's showing me something that is vaguely reminiscent of the famous surgeon's photo that we all think of in relation to Loch Ness. You've got a long neck. Well, I'm—you know, I'm already labeling it. But you know, something that looks like a long neck with kind of a pointed bulbous head at the end of it, casting a shadow. And it's very zoomed in, we don't see all the context. Why would he take a picture of just that little piece of the lake? So, I imagine there's an original photo that's much larger.

[00:09:05] **Carrie Poppy:** Yes, good point. That will actually kind of come up.

[00:09:08] **Ross Blocher:** Okay, that's always—yeah, one of the first questions asked when you see a ghost photo is like, “Why was this person taking a photo in the first place?” Sometimes they'll be so like framed that you'll feel like, oh, there was intent in this. Like, you wouldn't—this photo would not be at all compelling unless you knew that figure was supposed to show up.

[00:09:24] **Carrie Poppy:** It's like those Instagram videos where they're like, “You won't believe what we caught on tape! It's like someone refusing a proposal.” And then, it feels like acting and I'm like but why were you taking this at this basketball game? Who are you? What's the story? I need more info to believe this.

[00:09:40] **Ross Blocher:** And I kind of worry even putting that out, like saying that that's something to watch for. Because that's just going to make for better fakes, but whatever. Get your—increase your game, fakers!

(Carrie giggles.)

But yeah, what did you find out?

[00:09:51] **Carrie Poppy:** So, Ricky Phillips, I had to go look him up. He is also a tour guide. Tour guides and innkeepers and members of the tourism industry seem to come up a lot in cryptozoology.

[00:10:05] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. If you're an innkeeper, you're trying to keep the inn.

[00:10:08] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly. By driving people to it. And one way is by convincing them (*chuckling*) that there's a monster in the lake next door. Which is interesting because the Hodag in Rhinelander, Wisconsin—where my mom and stepdad live—

[00:10:22] **Ross Blocher:** The famous Hodag. Yeah.

[00:10:23] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, was also created by someone in the tourism industry who was trying to fill his hotel. So, could be, could not be. So, Ricky also gave a written interview to a blogspot blog called Loch Ness Mystery. And so, he answered the FAQs he's getting all the time, because he's getting sick of these! So, one is “what did you take the picture on?”

And he said, “It was my Huawei mobile,” which is I guess a phone that's more popular in Europe. And then he said, “And before you ask, yes. It's old.”

[00:10:56] **Ross Blocher:** Okay. It's an old smartphone, we assume. Well, it's got a camera. And when you showed me that photo, it was pretty much monochromatic. It was just like blue and black rather than like a full color photo. There's no trees in the background or anything. It's reeally cropped in.

[00:11:12] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. And it's really grainy. Like, kind of remarkably grainy for a cell phone.

[00:11:17] **Ross Blocher:** Ah, yes. The low information zone.

[00:11:19] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, LIZ.

[00:11:21] **Ross Blocher:** (*Chuckling.*) That's right. Yeah. As Mick West calls it, LIZ.

[00:11:24] **Carrie Poppy:** So, okay. Next question he gets asked all the time. “Do you think it's Nessie?” ‘Cause I guess he had been kind of tight lipped. He was kind of playing that little mysterious like “who knows?”

(*Ross chuckles.*)

And so, he got sick of people saying like, “But come on.”

[00:11:35] **Ross Blocher:** That's a great straightforward question. Yeah.

[00:11:36] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Laughing.*) Yeah, do you think it's Nessie?

[00:11:38] **Ross Blocher:** What do you think you captured there? Now I'm thinking about lizards and the LIZ. I feel like there's a good article there somewhere.

[00:11:44] **Carrie Poppy:** Do you want me to give you a moment to think more about LIZ?

[00:11:46] **Ross Blocher:** Yes, please. (*Short beat.*) Okay, I'm good.

[00:11:50] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. (*Laughs.*) Okay, so do I think it was Nessie? So, he makes a very fair point that when the media covered this, especially *The Daily Mail*—these rags that are very famous for sort of up-ticking their stories. He said, “I never actually said Loch Ness monster to any of those reporters. I just said, ‘I saw this. Is it interesting?’” And yeah, I knew that I was sort of playing with this myth, but I wasn't saying it was Nessie outright.” Faaair. Buuut!

[00:12:16] **Ross Blocher:** That feels very indicative of how all these disparate stories come together, but okay. Buuut?

[00:12:22] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, buuut? Then later, way down in this Q&A, he says, “Now, if you ask me is there a Loch Ness monster, I'm going to tell you yes. But I'd be a fool to think there's been only one for all these years. Maybe a small colony of something we don't know about.”

[00:12:38] **Ross Blocher:** Now we're talking! Now we're thinking about how this could actually work zoologically.

[00:12:42] **Carrie Poppy:** Right, right. “Enough people have asked me this question that I stopped to think about it.” He also said that whatever it was, it sounded metallic, a bit like Darth Vader sneezing.

[00:12:53] **Ross Blocher:** Wait, wait, so he heard a sound, but he didn't realize he was taking a photo of an object? Or was there sound on the—like he recorded a video?

[00:13:03] **Carrie Poppy:** His dogs were reacting to something, and he kind of heard the noise kind of overlapping with the dogs.

[00:13:09] **Ross Blocher:** “And I'm just gonna—I'm just gonna snap some photos!”

[00:13:11] **Carrie Poppy:** And he was already taking a picture of the lake when the dogs kind of jostled him. (*Chuckles.*)

[00:13:15] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, I really want to see the photo's before and after on his photo reel.

[00:13:19] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, well, that's so interesting! Here's the next FAQ! “Where's the original photo?” Here's his reply.

“Well, here's your ‘hmm’ moment, doubters.”

[00:13:30] **Ross Blocher:** Okay, yeah, I'm already “hmm”-ing.

[00:13:32] **Carrie Poppy:** “That phone is so full of stuff that it doesn't store any more photos.”

[00:13:36] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, bring it to us. We'll grab what's on there.

[00:13:39] **Carrie Poppy:** We can get it! “Occasionally, one photo gets through for no reason I can understand. So, when I take a photo, if I like it, I have to immediately share it to my social media in real time or send it to myself. I'm only lucky I remembered after I had zoomed in and screenshotted it. Otherwise, there's a 99% chance it would have vanished. I can hear you all going ‘hmm’ from here.” That’s it.

[00:14:02] **Ross Blocher:** Yep. Okay. Wow. Yep. It’s not great!

[00:14:05] **Carrie Poppy:** You're right. We're going “hmm” from here. *(Laughs.)*

[00:14:07] **Ross Blocher:** It's not great. Sure, could that have happened? Maybe, but not great!

[00:14:12] **Carrie Poppy:** So, that's where we're starting. That's where Shatner wants us to start. This is his big case! Yep!

[00:14:17] **Ross Blocher:** And I got to say, I haven't stumbled across that particular image before. From the outset though, I'll say like it feels like there's a major new sighting photo/video kind of on a yearly drip. Feels like every year has its like sensational, “Wow, that's the best one we've seen!”

[00:14:32] **Carrie Poppy:** Interesting. I mean, that, I guess, makes sense as cameras get better. Well, no, I'd kind of expect that to go the other way, I guess.

[00:14:38] **Ross Blocher:** I've been looking up that phone model. That's a Chinese phone model, but that is neither here nor there. Just throwing that out.

[00:14:45] **Carrie Poppy:** So, next talking head we get is someone called Ken Gerhard.

[00:14:50] **Ross Blocher:** Good name.

[00:14:51] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah! His chyron says cryptozoologist. So, he says that the Loch Ness monster is, you know, the most famous monster reported. And then he says, “reported around the world”. I was thinking, well, no. Have to be in Loch Ness to be the Loch Ness monster, but sure.

[00:15:07] **Ross Blocher:** I would say if we're focusing on cryptozoological monsters, I would say, yeah, it's top tier. We're talking like Bigfoot, Nessie.

[00:15:16] **Carrie Poppy:** Yes. Oh, definitely. Definitely. And so, he says, “We have compelling photographic evidence.” So, I'm like, great. Okay. Can't wait. There's gonna be more photographic evidence.

So, the next thing we see is a picture of a newspaper. It's very brief, but all we see is the headline, which says, “Strange Spectacle on Loch Ness. What is It?” And the byline, as you'll see, is “from a correspondent”.

[00:15:42] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, and this is on a newspaper where it's clearly a black ink on newsprint paper, and this is in red. It looks like someone photoshopped out a headline and added there “Strange Spectacle on Loch Ness. What Was It?”. I think that is a modified newspaper headline.

[00:15:59] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. The headline is real, but you're right that the art is recreated, because it's from the *Inverness Courier*. And—

[00:16:06] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, is this the one from 1933?

[00:16:08] **Carrie Poppy:** Let's see. What year is it? Yes! Okay, yeah, and—

[00:16:11] **Ross Blocher:** Okay. That was the first time Loch Ness monster appeared in print. And 1933 happens to be the year that a movie came out about a very famous monster.

[00:16:23] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, which one?

[00:16:24] **Ross Blocher:** *King Kong*.

[00:16:25] **Carrie Poppy:** Ooooooh! So, everybody's already thinking about animals that aren't quite the animals we know.

(Ross confirms.)

Uh-huh. Interesting. So, yeah, the *Inverness Courier* article, perhaps you've seen it. It looks like this.

(Ross confirms.)

The only photos I could find were pretty grainy, so I don't really blame the History Channel for recreating it.

[00:16:43] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, I see. And they just colored the text red. Okay.

(Carrie confirms.)

Oh, okay. I'm a little less suspicious of that.

[00:16:49] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, that part I'll let go. But boy, is there some I won't. So again, the byline is attributed to a correspondent. That's it. No name. So, we can't go and ask the reporter, right? The sources named say they saw something many feet long rolling and plunging for fully a minute about three quarter miles from shore. In this case, the witnesses were driving along the north shore of the lake when this happened. And these sources are described as a well-known businessman, and his wife, a university graduate.

[00:17:24] **Ross Blocher:** Okay, well, let's make him a little better known. What's his name?

[00:17:28] **Carrie Poppy:** Can we talk to either of them? Can we find the correspondent? Could this all entirely be made up?

[00:17:36] **Ross Blocher:** (*Laughs.*) Indeed. Okay, yeah, all the flags are raised.

[00:17:38] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Okay, next we get Gary Campbell, the founder of the Loch Ness Monster Sightings Register.

[00:17:46] **Ross Blocher:** Oh yeah, he comes up in some stats I was looking for.

[00:17:48] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, nice. Okay. So, he tells us—and maybe you've heard this—that the Loch Ness monster is actually first recorded in 565 AD.

[00:17:55] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, we'll be talking about St. Columba again.

[00:17:59] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, good. This is just very brief in here, but I was already like there's no way that's true. And then he said, “There have been hundreds of sightings throughout the year and thousands of eyewitness accounts,” which kind of tripped me up until I texted you and asked you to kind of make sense of that for me.

And you were saying, “Okay, well maybe it's eyewitness accounts are per person, and sighting means an event.”

[00:18:19] **Ross Blocher:** So, an average of roughly 10 viewers per sighting.

[00:18:25] **Carrie Poppy:** Good point! That could cause a problem.

[00:18:26] **Ross Blocher:** It's an order of magnitude, but you know, it's an area where you can I guess kind of fudge on wording there.

[00:18:30] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, fudge the numbers a little.

[00:18:32] **Ross Blocher:** But I will say from multiple sources, I've been hearing thousands of witnesses. You know, like that gets thrown around a lot.

[00:18:41] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, so, his big example—and this is my favorite part. His big example is that on July 15th, 1965, nine eyewitnesses observed the animal moving around for

up to an hour. And the witnesses included a veteran Loch Ness investigator and a local police sergeant. And—

[00:19:06] **Ross Blocher:** We trust the police.

[00:19:06] **Carrie Poppy:** What?

[00:19:07] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, just you know, like name dropping a police officer without any name attached.

(Carrie agrees.)

Just feels like the imprimatur of a police officer. They wouldn't lie.

[00:19:16] **Carrie Poppy:** Right, right. And can't be wrong about what they see.

[00:19:18] **Ross Blocher:** They would, and they can.

[00:19:20] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. So, he says, “On July 15th, 1965, nine eyewitnesses observed the animal moving around for up to an hour.” So, there's the veteran investigator, the local police sergeant, the local county surveyor, and six other eyewitnesses.

[00:19:35] **Ross Blocher:** Mm, but none of them were university graduates? *(Sighs.)*

[00:19:38] **Carrie Poppy:** *(Laughs.)* That's not mentioned. And he says, “And what they all described was identical from different vantage points around the loch.” Okay.

[00:19:46] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. And how did you ask them and when? But okay. Interesting.

[00:19:50] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, tell me about that. Okay. So, as he's saying this, this image of a newspaper flashes on the screen. It's so brief. Like, I really had to fight for this screenshot. You'll see, it says—

[00:19:58] **Ross Blocher:** Freezeframe. Okay. That is not meant to be read by anyone.

[00:20:03] **Carrie Poppy:** Exactly. So, it says, “Loch Ness Monster Still ‘Alive’”. Alive is in quotation marks. Okay, so, I go to my Newspapers.com account. I find this article.

(Ross “wow”s.)

“Loch Ness Monster Still ‘Alive’”! It's from the *Sault Daily Star*, July 16th, 1965. A person named William Cameron is really the source of all this information. And he and his friend were standing on the edge of the lake when they saw whatever it is they saw. And they say they kind of saw this item flipping around in the water. And there were nine total

eyewitnesses, so—he's almost like, you know, defensively almost belligerent in these interviews.

He's like, “Yeah. Well, there are other people. Why don't you go ask them?” So, I was trying to figure out who these other people are, and finally found the source where he talks about it. It's a documentary, *The Secret of Loch Ness*. And there were seven strangers on the other side of the lake whose names he never got, and he never spoke to.

[00:21:06] **Ross Blocher:** So, he was there watching the creature flop around in the water, and then he spotted—across the lake!?

[00:21:13] **Carrie Poppy:** Across the lake.

[00:21:15] **Ross Blocher:** It's a big lake.

(Carrie laughs.)

I can—I'll show you some footage, but if I'm seeing that there are other people over there, they are tiny little dots. But he counted them, and he's like, “Well, they must see it too.”

[00:21:25] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, they're standing there looking at whatever it is he's seeing, and I believe he was seeing something flopping around. But they're standing there, possibly just going, “Huh. What's that? What's that about?” And then they moved on with their day.

[00:21:38] **Ross Blocher:** But they're getting invoked as simultaneous eyewitnesses.

[00:21:42] **Carrie Poppy:** Eyewitnesses. And remember that History Channel said that everyone's account was the same, that all nine people's accounts were the same. Seven people were not asked!

[00:21:49] **Ross Blocher:** We already know—yeah, we didn't hear anything from these people. And people standing on another shore, that's a less extraordinary claim than a sea monster, but still we're taking his word even on that.

[00:22:01] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, that's fair. Yeah, it's like Joseph Smith being like, “And there were many other witnesses!” You know?

[00:22:07] **Ross Blocher:** Right, yeah, or the Bible saying, “And 500 people saw Jesus after he came back from the dead.” Okay, who are they? Where?

[00:22:13] **Carrie Poppy:** Can we get like six names?

[00:22:14] **Ross Blocher:** ‘Cause all we know is that you wrote that 500 people were assembled.

[00:22:19] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Laughs.*) Right. I also learned in this article, this 1965 article, that the first recorded sighting was by a spinster innkeeper, named—

(*They laugh.*)

[00:22:32] **Ross Blocher:** Why include that detail? Alright.

[00:22:33] **Carrie Poppy:** I don't know. Innkeeper, though, I'm glad to know.

[00:22:37] **Ross Blocher:** It's a fun turn of phrase.

[00:22:39] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, it startled me when I read it! Like, oh my god! We don't talk like that now!

[00:22:42] **Ross Blocher:** It paints an image. Yeah, the '60s, okay.

[00:22:45] **Carrie Poppy:** By a spinster innkeeper, named Janet Fraser. So, I go looking for articles about Janet Fraser. And, boy, she was cleaning up on this shit! Yeah, yeah, I found an article from the *Herald Express*, September 18th, 1934, where the assessor's office is trying to chase her down about her property tax for the inn that she owns. Because all these people are coming into her inn to see the Loch Ness monster! And so, she's kind of gotten on the—you know, on the awareness list of the local authorities. So, I suspect that the spinster started all of this.

[00:23:30] **Ross Blocher:** She has all this free time, because she's not married.

(*They laugh.*)

[00:23:34] **Carrie Poppy:** Right, what do you even do then? What do you do with your day? There's nothing. You have to make up animals. Okay, so. So far, I'm not very convinced.

[00:23:43] **Ross Blocher:** William Shatner's gravelly voice and the History Channel logo in the lower left is not doing it for you?

[00:23:49] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Oh, well, it's the lower right, so at least there's that.

[00:23:50] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, that's less convincing.

[00:23:54] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Chuckles.*) Then they show this weird little clip. I don't know if this is truly original footage, because it really felt like a reenactment that had been turned grey and grainy for my benefit. But it was this video of these two men talking, saying they had seen Loch Ness. They're not identified. We never hear their names, but they're just saying, "I've seen a large unidentified object! I've fished here since I was a young boy. They come right out of the water in front of me."

And then the other guy's like, “Yeah, it's difficult to say, but I'd say it's 25 to 30 feet, 5 to 6 feet out of the water.” Okay, say these two men who know who they are. Gary Campbell, you said he comes up, right?

[00:24:35] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, just when I was looking up one particular stat, I saw his name.

[00:24:39] **Carrie Poppy:** So, Gary Campbell, the founder of the Loch Ness Monster Sightings Register, he notes that in 2021 we had six sightings by people who were actually beside the loch, and we had another ten that came from the Loch Ness webcam. He says, “The really important thing here is that the Loch Ness monster and images of the Loch Ness monster are not just grainy, old, black and white film. People are still seeing things and recording them today.” And then, these three photos flash up on the screen, and I did text you these, so they won't shock you. But look at this!

[00:25:19] **Ross Blocher:** So, Carrie's showing me footage from the Loch Ness webcam, which is looking at just one piece of the lake and is clearly set far back from the lake.

[00:25:28] **Carrie Poppy:** Too far away!

[00:25:30] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, get it closer, so that the loch takes up most of the frame, please.

[00:25:34] **Carrie Poppy:** There's like a million trees between you and there. Put it in a tree.

[00:25:37] **Ross Blocher:** (*Laughing.*) Yeah, there's—50% of the frame is grass and, you know, the sky and mountains beyond. Bad. But then, on those images from 2021, there's just a part of the water highlighted. And it's just like a slightly darker section of the lake than the rest of the lake around it. It's not a distinct shape at all.

[00:26:00] **Carrie Poppy:** I sincerely would not even notice.

[00:26:03] **Ross Blocher:** Those are doing nothing for me.

[00:26:06] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, if I saw this picture without the highlight, absolutely no way I would notice these shapes.

(*Ross agrees.*)

Okay, so—so far, I'm not that convinced. But next, we hear from Steve Feltham, who is a Loch Ness monster hunter. And he tells—

[00:26:20] **Ross Blocher:** Yeeeah! Crazy Steve!

[00:26:20] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh yeah, okay. He's got a great sweater vest.

(*Ross agrees.*)

Okay, so maybe you know this, but he shares what the best evidence he's ever gotten for Loch Ness is. And it is a sonar reading taken by Ronald Mackenzie, a... tour guide! Who was taking his ship over a certain area of the lake, sent sonar down. Which of course—

[00:26:45] **Ross Blocher:** This was 2019, right? I think we're talking about the exact same tour boat that I was on!

[00:26:51] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, no way! Did you meet Ron Mackenzie?

[00:26:53] **Ross Blocher:** No. It was a different guy there, but yeah, yeah. Okay, keep going.

[00:26:56] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, so sonar, of course, is like sound waves you send to figure out the size and depth of an object that's kind of far away.

[00:27:04] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, Sound Navigation and Ranging. That's what sonar stands for.

[00:27:06] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, it stands for something. That makes sense.

[00:27:08] **Ross Blocher:** If it doesn't stand for something, it'll fall for the Loch Ness monster.

[00:27:10] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Laughs.*) For anything else. Okay, so this sonar reading is the best evidence they've got. And what is it? It is a reading of an object that is 600 feet down, and they say it wasn't there earlier. And it wasn't there later. They only found it this one time.

[00:27:30] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, I have a photo I can show you later of this.

[00:27:33] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, great. And then, Steve Feltham—the one who's telling this story—he says photographic experts come back and said that it is probably—! Do you want to guess what the photographic experts said?

[00:27:45] **Ross Blocher:** Photographic experts? That's interesting, because it's not a photograph. But it's a sonograph, really. A sonogram?

(*Carrie affirms.*)

I'm going to say they said it was a giant eel.

[00:27:55] **Carrie Poppy:** So, I can't tell what he says here. He either says, “Photographic experts came back and said that it's probably an inanimate object.” Which would make sense to me, except that the sound goes (*shouting*) BUH-BUH-BUUUUH! But—

[00:28:11] **Ross Blocher:** (*Laughs.*) A lot rides on this being animate.

[00:28:14] **Carrie Poppy:** But! His accent and sort of the way he mashes his words, he may have said an animal object.

[00:28:23] **Ross Blocher:** Or said animate object. Something moving.

[00:28:24] **Carrie Poppy:** Or animate. Yep, it's so hard. Yeah. Do you want to try to guess which one you think it is?

[00:28:30] **Clip:**

Steve Feltham: Photographic experts came back and said that is probably an animate object.

(Dramatic musical flourish.)

[00:28:37] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, I feel quite convinced he's saying it's "an animate object". It's something that moves.

[00:28:42] **Carrie Poppy:** An animate object. Okay, okay, okay. I guess what surprised me about that is—I know animate is a word of course, but we mostly hear the word inanimate. So, I don't know. It seems possible to me he said either one. I guess my critique there is, producers, make him say that some other way. Okay. So, I go, and I look up Ronald Mackenzie. He's not interviewed in this, which I think is interesting if he's the best evidence. But here's how he described it to the *Northern Times UK*. He said, "We were at our halfway point off Invermoriston, where we turn around. The water is 189 meters"—620 feet—"deep. The passengers were quite excited, because we had just spotted a sea eagle. But then, I saw on the sonar something more eye catching. It was right bang smack in the middle of the loch. It was 558 feet down, and we were unable to detect if it was moving or stationary. But it was big, at least 33 feet." Okay.

[00:29:39] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. What's interesting to me about that—and that I didn't get any clarity on—but it seems like they were just kind of moving on. And then, they saw it in real time, but like didn't go back or stop? They're like, "Well, we gotta keep this shuttle on time! Let's get the boat back!"

[00:29:55] **Carrie Poppy:** Right. "We have suspicion, and we'd like to keep it that way."

[00:29:58] **Ross Blocher:** *(Laughs.)* Yeah. It just seems like you'd kind of stop and be like, "Well, now we're the tracking boat, and we—like, we're not going to let this thing out of our sight." I don't know. That part of the story just seems weird to me.

[00:30:07] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Also, like the bottom of a lake has stuff in it. Yeah. Mm-hm. I mean, I don't know, it could be a million things.

[00:30:14] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. I mean, I'll say it's compelling, 'cause they don't usually get stuff like that. But yeah, yeah. When what you have is what we've seen, that's about the best they've got.

[00:30:23] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. Wow. So, then they talk about how there are actually different lakes around the world that have Nessie-like creatures. They talk about Okanagan Lake, Lake Champlain, Lake Cuomo, and Loch Ness. And the argument they make is that these are all in roughly the same latitude, though they say 40 to 60 degrees latitude.

[00:30:42] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, that there's a certain latitude that these creatures might prefer in North America that extends over to Scotland.

[00:30:51] **Carrie Poppy:** Right. Warm—

[00:30:52] **Ross Blocher:** Which is at quite a different latitude. Interesting.

[00:30:55] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah! Yeah, exactly. So, they say 40 to 60 degrees latitude. That's quite a big chunk. (*Laughs.*)

[00:30:59] **Ross Blocher:** That's a huge range. But alright, I guess, you know, sometimes for an animal, you would define certain areas across the world where you'll find it. But yeah, that does seem pretty big.

[00:31:06] **Carrie Poppy:** But I'm also thinking like which countries in the world are more likely to have cell phones? And that kind of stuff. Okay, I'm starting to picture a lot of stuff in that bandwidth.

[00:31:18] **Ross Blocher:** Well, and then there's another Scottish one as well, a lake monster. And then you also have like Mokele-Mbembe mentioned in Africa. That doesn't fit with that particular brand. But you know. Okay.

[00:31:31] **Carrie Poppy:** There you go. And that's it. That was their whole argument. We've hit the end of the History Channel argument for the Loch Ness monster, and I must say... That's not an argument for the Loch Ness monster! None of that stood up!

[00:31:41] **Ross Blocher:** (*Laughs.*) Alright, well, I guess it remains unexplained.

(*Carrie agrees.*)

Well, thank you, Carrie, and thank you, William Shatner.

[00:31:49] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Gutturally.*) You're welcoome!

[00:31:50] **Ross Blocher:** That was great narration, I gotta say. He did what they paid him for.

[00:31:54] **Carrie Poppy:** Totally. I'm a little disappointed in him, because at one point he was willing to say like, "No, no, no, these things are bunk." And now he's like, "You're gonna pay me a lot? Okaaaay."

[00:32:03] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, really? Was he more skeptical on the record?

[00:32:06] **Carrie Poppy:** Well, there was that interview where—I forget what he was talking about, but I just remember the other person saying, "Well, some people think this is woo-woo."

And he said, "Well, it is. It is woo-woo." Yeah.

[00:32:18] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, okay!

Oh, we found it, and this is too good not to include. This is William Shatner talking face to face with psychic John Edward.

[00:32:28] **Clip:**

Music: Upbeat, playful music.

John Edward: And it's really funny. I think my whole goal in doing this work is to demystify it. Because I think that for so many centuries, it's always been looked at as being this woo-woo, mystical, ethereal type of thing.

William Shatner: John, John, it is woo-woo.

John Edward: (*Laughs.*) Not so much anymore, though. You gotta—you gotta—

William Shatner: (*Chuckling.*) No, no, John.

John Edward: No, it's not so much.

William Shatner: Woo-woo!

[00:32:46] **Carrie Poppy:** But maybe he changed his mind. People change their minds.

[00:32:49] **Ross Blocher:** You know, I can see it being easy to justify. Oh, you've got this script. And okay, I'm not saying it's outright true. I'm just saying this is interestinggg.

[00:32:57] **Carrie Poppy:** We're all having fun here. I think a lot of people who don't believe but find it fun—like you and I are—I think we are a little bit alone in still thinking the stakes matter. Some people are like, "Oh, sure, it's not real, but it's fun." And that's the end of the analysis. But I'm like, oh no! There's more stakes involved than that!

[00:33:16] **Ross Blocher:** Right, right. I think we see more ripple effects of this belief, whereas I think for a lot of other people it's just a stand-alone thing and like, "Well, who cares?"

[00:33:24] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. "This is silly fun! Of course, you're right. Who cares? Why are you saying it?"

[00:33:27] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, it's good for tourism. Well, let me tell you a bit more about my trip to this part of Scotland.

[00:33:31] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. So, you actually saw Nessie. You met her, you hung out with her. You're wearing a scarf right now. It's 93 degrees out.

[00:33:37] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. Yeah. This is my Burberry scarf that I got from Edinburgh. You know, when you're there, you got to get the cashmere scarves. You know.

[00:33:47] **Carrie Poppy:** And you gotta go to the big comedy festival.

[00:33:48] **Ross Blocher:** They're everywhere. Oh yeah! And which Natalie Palamides is always in.

(Carrie confirms.)

Yeah, I got to go to Edinburgh Castle, which is where that happens. Well, that's kind of a good lead in, because I'd love to tell you all about my trip and show you trip photos, but let's stick to Loch Ness. I came a little prepared, at least because about a year before we had done an episode on cryptids when I earned my cryptozoology diploma.

(Carrie confirms.)

So, that's episode 314 from December 12th, 2021. If you want to check that out, we do talk a little bit about the history of Loch Ness as I'm going through my curriculum from the school. But because I had done that, I at least knew about St. Columba. And so, I think my eyes were kind of attuned for that. For example, when we were in Edinburgh Castle, the oldest structure there, built in the 12th century.

(Carrie "wow"s.)

Which is just wild to me.

[00:34:38] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, we're American. We don't do this.

[00:34:40] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, nothing's that old. But there was this one chapel that's called St. Margaret's Chapel. When I was walking through—I'm showing Carrie a photo inside this arch-shaped building. In the inset windows, there were these stained-glass windows—quite lovely—of different figures.

(*Carrie agrees.*)

And so, I noticed that this one was labeled St. Columba, so I got all excited like, “Oh, that's the guy who is always labeled as the progenitor of the Loch Ness monster myth!” That's always the first example given. So, yeah—

[00:35:10] **Carrie Poppy:** I'm not convinced that he was talking about the Loch Ness monster, personally.

[00:35:14] **Ross Blocher:** That's a fair statement. But yeah, the stained-glass window has him like in purple robes. It's gorgeous.

[00:35:20] **Carrie Poppy:** It's beautiful! And he's in a ship. So, okay.

[00:35:21] **Ross Blocher:** I'll post a photo on our social media.

[00:35:23] **Carrie Poppy:** A ship is where you'd encounter the Loch Ness monster. I'm with you so far.

[00:35:27] **Ross Blocher:** And then, when we got to Inverness, we stayed at a hotel right on the river Ness. And it was right next to St. Columba Hotel. So, that was kind of fun.

[00:35:37] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, right. Okay, I didn't even register that when you showed me this photo earlier. Yeah, that's cool!

[00:35:42] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah! So, I was like, oh, hey! okay. He's popping up all over the place. And my first time actually seeing the lake was the night before we went on our tour. At the end of another tour, where we had seen the Battlefield at Culloden and the Clava cairn stones, we were on our way back. And at night we could see the moon on Ness. It was quite lovely. And so, already, you know, from the tour bus, I'm looking out going, “Okay, oh wow, this is my chance to like see if I see anything that looks weird on the water!”

So, I'm already like taking as many photos and videos as I can. But my first really good look at the loch was on December 5th, and we went to Urquhart (*erk-hart*) Castle—though a lot of the natives were saying something more like Urquhart (*erk-ert*). Something like that, but it's spelled U-R-Q-U-H-A-R-T. So, it looks like Urk-wu-hart.

[00:36:32] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, yeah, one of those that you simply won't guess.

[00:36:35] **Ross Blocher:** And another ancient structure, it was built between like the 13th and 16th centuries. But the site was active far earlier before that. And in fact, you have inside the visitor's center—you have this banner that I'm showing Carrie. And it says that in AD 850, St. Columba baptized a family of Picts here. So, they were the native people living in that land. And a certain old man he found there, Emchat—I'm sure I'm saying that wrong—was baptized. And that was from a story of his life written by Abbot Adamnan over 100 years

later. So, all the stories I think that we have of St. Columba and his life were written 100 years later, just keep that in mind.

[00:37:17] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, if the year is 2123, and you're going back through this audio because you want to write my biography, like, please use additional sources.

[00:37:26] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, though at least this is you contemporaneously talking, and it's a clear record of it. So that means a lot more.

[00:37:30] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, yeah, totally. But even then! Even then, you know, don't just use this podcast!

[00:37:37] **Ross Blocher:** I'm trying to think like when I'll still be alive. So, let's say you talk to me in 40 years, and you say, "Hey, remember that conversation you were having with Carrie about the Loch Ness monster?" Very little of what I'm going to tell you then is going to be useful. Yeah, go back to this audio if you can. That's what I'm saying.

Anyway, so he pops up all over the place. At another point—this was very close to one of the spots you mentioned on the side of Loch Ness. We stopped at Invermoriston to take a hike, and there was this St. Columba's Well.

[00:38:06] **Carrie Poppy:** Well, well, well.

[00:38:07] **Ross Blocher:** Or I don't know. You want to try to pronounce that?

[00:38:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Fuaran-Choluim-Chille.

[00:38:12] **Ross Blocher:** Okay, that's the Scottish word for it. So, we were told by our tour guide and the signage there that the water at this well was said to be poisonous up until the 6th century. But St. Columba drove out the evil spirits that were around the well.

(Carrie blows a raspberry and Ross laughs.)

Wait, hear me out, Carrie. Hear me out.

(She agrees with a laugh.)

And blessed for all time the water coming from it. Then, it became pure and clean and was said to have curative powers. And then our tour guide, Andy, he gave more specifics. He says it's supposed to help with rheumatism, fertility—so, it's supposed to give you a little extra oomph in the sack—and instantly cure hangovers. And he recommended that we did not drink it. And you'll see why in the next picture. I'm showing Carrie what this well looks like, and there's just a lot of things floating in it.

(Carrie "well, well, well"s again.)

It's kind of low. And anyways, he said he did take some water from it, and he is boiling it so he can try drinking it after some vodka to see if that works. The tour guide.

[00:39:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Boy, this is reminding me of when I went to Rome, and I stood in the cell that they claimed was where St. Paul was held.

(Ross affirms.)

And in that cell they were like, “And right here a spring of water sprung up just randomly, and he was able to drink this pure water.” And I'm looking at it, and it's like a hole with like metal around it. Like, they've made a spigot and I'm like, well, what do you—did this arrive?! *(Laughs.)* Like, you're saying the metal grate appeared? Is that what you're saying?

[00:39:43] **Ross Blocher:** I think I recall from that story that there was an earthquake and that the gates were open. I don't remember anything about a well. I could be forgetting that. Well.

[00:39:50] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Well, if it did, they've really altered it since.

[00:39:54] **Ross Blocher:** Interesting. So, more encounters with St. Columba. We also visited the Old High Church in Inverness.

[00:40:01] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, hi!

[00:40:02] **Ross Blocher:** And that's said to be the site where, in 565 AD, St. Columba introduced Christianity to Inverness.

[00:40:11] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. Interesting. Brings Christianity to the people. I'm sure they were thrilled.

[00:40:17] **Ross Blocher:** Okay, so let me bring up another thing I'll be mentioning occasionally. 'Cause I also watched last night—'cause it had been on my watch list for a while, and then I saw another mention of this—there is a 1996 Ted Danson film called *Loch Ness*.

[00:40:29] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. I love Ted Denson.

[00:40:32] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, well, you should see this then. Though you'll worry for him the whole way through how he survived the sun exposure required to get that tan. It's just—it's like an uncomfortably dark tan that he has for the whole film.

[00:40:41] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, really? Okay. Yeah, he's a fairly—he's a White guy! A white White guy. I saw him once in Ojai.

[00:40:48] **Ross Blocher:** Oh! And you said...

[00:40:50] **Carrie Poppy:** And he's ookay. I said, “Oh, hiii!”

(Ross laughs.)

I also saw him once on a plane and surreptitiously took a picture of him.

[00:40:55] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, that's right! You sent me that. I remember. Ted Danson. Okay. We've got eyes on you, Ted Danson!

[00:41:01] **Carrie Poppy:** *(Snickers.)* We know that you survived your tan!

(They laugh.)

[00:41:05] **Ross Blocher:** And Ian Holm is in the film as well. He plays like the water bailiff?! Apparently there's a designated water bailiff that watches over the loch and keeps outsiders away.

[00:41:15] **Carrie Poppy:** Great title.

[00:41:16] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, except I'm pretty sure that doesn't actually exist. Anyway, so Ted Danson plays this jaded, down on his luck zoologist from Los Angeles. And they show him in front of USC, so I assume that's where he teaches. And he's already—

[00:41:34] **Carrie Poppy:** Corey Laughlin got him in by pretending he was on the rowing team.

[00:41:35] **Ross Blocher:** *(Laughs.)* But she stopped providing funds, 'cause he's out of money, and he's lost his credibility, because he was a Bigfoot hunter in his youth.

[00:41:47] **Carrie Poppy:** Mm! Oh, isn't that interesting?

[00:41:47] **Ross Blocher:** And so, then they send him out on assignment to Loch Ness, and he's really grumbly about it, and he wants to disprove this. He's like, "I'm gonna show them!" And of course, you know how this plays out. And it plays out exactly how you might imagine, including the spinster innkeeper who he wins over. And—

[00:42:07] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay! Janet Fraser.

[00:42:09] **Ross Blocher:** *(Laughs.)* You know what? I'll say it's worth watching, but don't expect anything great.

[00:42:11] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, it sounds fun.

[00:42:12] **Ross Blocher:** But yeah, don't expect anything great. But yeah, it's fine. So anyways, of course they mentioned a lot of these talking points in the film. And actually, I thought they did a pretty good job of like getting a lot of the lore in, and there's some great shots of this very beautiful lake. But one thing that stood out to me was that that woman innkeeper is talking about her daughter's ability to see more than the average person.

(Carrie “uh-oh!”s.)

To have this clear sightedness that she inherited from the grandmother. And she says, “We call it St. Columba's Gift.”

(Carrie “uh-oh”s.)

And so, I tried to look this up, and I couldn't find a single reference—at least on the internet—to St. Columba's Gift outside of this film. So, I'm guessing that was just made up for the film.

[00:42:46] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh sure. Good phrase.

[00:42:51] **Ross Blocher:** So, there we go. We've talked about St. Columba. So, people keep mentioning 565 as being the first sighting of the Loch Ness monster, so let's just revisit that. Apparently St. Columbo was walking with his retinue of monks and whatnot.

[00:43:05] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh my god, I just realized I can just picture this being Columbo, and I'll be doing that from here out.

[00:43:10] **Ross Blocher:** That's funny, in that previous episode, you called him Columbo.

(Carrie affirms with a laugh.)

Alright, sure. Peter Falk with a glass eye. That works. So, this group finds another group that's burying a man by the river, and they're told that this man had died because of a water beast. It should be noted—because I've heard it told both ways, but I think the original count says that this is on the River Ness, which is the outlet from Loch Ness. So anyways, a lot of people try to say it was Loch Ness, but this was actually downstream. So, they heard that this guy had died of the water beast.

So, to test this, he makes one of his servants start swimming across the water, and then sure enough, this lures out the beast, and the guy's all freaked out. So, Columba raises his hand. He makes the sign of the cross. I don't know. Do you need two hands for that? I don't know.

(Carrie agrees.)

I'm not sure how he makes the sign of the cross, but he commands the monster to go back with all speed!

[00:44:00] **Carrie Poppy:** *(Quietly.)* Maybe like this?

[00:44:0002] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, maybe. Carrie's kind of like crossing her fingers.

[00:44:05] **Carrie Poppy:** Crossing my fingers in a more dramatic way.

[00:44:05] **Ross Blocher:** It's good enough for a vampire. It's good enough for a lake monster. So yeah, he commands loudly, "Go back with all speed!" And scared off the monster. But that is our first "sighting", quote/unquote.

[00:44:17] **Carrie Poppy:** It's so interesting, because I would assume that once Janet Fraser makes up the Loch Ness monster, everyone goes back in time and pulls that example and yanks it in. But what do you think?

[00:44:32] **Ross Blocher:** Well, I feel it's something akin to that, because indeed it goes silent for a looong time—more than 1000 years.

[00:44:40] **Carrie Poppy:** That's too long.

[00:44:41] **Ross Blocher:** There are a few accounts from like I want to say mid to late 1800s about a creature there, but those don't seem to catch any kind of like big, certainly not international audience until you have that 1933 sighting—the year of *King Kong*.

[00:44:57] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, so I'm realizing that I have a really big question. What else lives in the lake? Are there other creatures that are identified? It's a lake! Right?! Okay.

[00:45:06] **Ross Blocher:** Yes! Oh, yeah, we will get to that. So, I'll save that. Anyways. Yeah. I think if you talk to anyone in the 1800s and ask them about St. Columba, they'd be like, "Oh yeah, I've heard about that guy!" Would they know about the water beast? No, I'm guessing you're right, that they went back later, and they're like, "Ooh! Ooh! Here we go! Yes!"

[00:45:21] **Carrie Poppy:** "This is close enough!"

[00:45:22] **Ross Blocher:** "And this is rooted in our Christian history and, oh, this is great." But yeah, I should mention: it is said that he changed water to wine. That he can—

[00:45:29] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Interrupting.*) Wooah! Jesus stuff!

[00:45:31] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah! Right? Yeah, that's pretty big. Drove out demons from people.

[00:45:35] **Carrie Poppy:** Jesus stuff!

[00:45:36] **Ross Blocher:** Also, Jesus stuff. He consoled a weeping horse.

[00:45:39] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, (*laughs*) okay. Not Jesus. Consoled a weeping horse?

[00:45:43] **Ross Blocher:** He—oh, yeah, Jesus didn't do that.

[00:45:44] **Carrie Poppy:** I need to know a lot more about that.

[00:45:45] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, he calmed storms. That's another Jesus thing. Calming storms.

[00:45:49] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, he calmed storms and horses.

[00:45:51] **Ross Blocher:** He returned the dead to life. Also, a Jesus thing. Okay, that's all I've got in my list of St. Columba achievements, but there you go.

[00:45:58] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Sounds like he might as well have been Jesus.

[00:46:01] **Ross Blocher:** Well, you know, I think that was fairly common for stories of the saints, like they all did these things that Jesus did. Much like Bob Larson, who continues to do what Jesus did. So, we mentioned that sighting in the in 1933 and how it showed up in the newspaper. The famous surgeon's photo was taken the year after, 1934.

[00:46:18] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, so I don't think I actually know that photo. You said it's the one we'd all recognize, but—I'm sure I will, but I'm just not picturing anything. Ooooh, right!

Mm-hm. Yeah. Probably the most monster-like of the ones I've seen. It is an item of some kind coming out of the water, a few feet, bobbing. And it does look like a long neck.

[00:46:39] **Ross Blocher:** And usually cropped in real close to the creature and its shadow in the water. But when you do get the rare sight of the larger photo, you can see that this thing looks quite small in the loch. And it turns out it was. Because, as we mentioned in the cryptozoology episode, it was an admitted fake years later. They found out from the people who did it.

(Carrie “wow”s.)

It was called the surgeon's photo because they found kind of a reputable guy to submit it to the local newspaper, but it was actually masterminded by Marmaduke Wetherell, who is a British game hunter. He had been previously kind of shamed in some other news coverage when he—it's not worth getting into the story of; you can go back and listen to that episode—but he enlisted his son-in-law to make this little model. And it was a toy submarine that it was attached to, to make it look like kind of an aquatic reptile from an ancient era. But that's really what got the whole modern movement going.

[00:47:40] **Carrie Poppy:** That feels very Cottingley Fairies. Those young women who faked some photos to make it look like fairies were in their backyard.

[00:47:47] **Ross Blocher:** Right. And it was years later, someone on their deathbed admitted exactly who the person was who'd submitted it. But it was already known it was a fake at the time. Anyways!

[00:47:57] **Carrie Poppy:** Wow. People have so much to say on their deathbeds.

[00:47:59] **Ross Blocher:** Oh yeah, there was just that recent news story—not on his deathbed, but this guy who was a secret service agent who said that he had found an extra bullet in the back of JFK's motorcade vehicle. Yeah, let's not get distracted by—(*laughs*).

[00:48:10] **Carrie Poppy:** That's a whole other ball of wax! But yeah, yeah, yeah. No, for sure.

[00:48:13] **Ross Blocher:** And then after that, it's become like this worldwide thing, you know, Nessie.

[00:48:20] **Carrie Poppy:** And this is actually well after the Hodag in Wisconsin, which started in the late 1800s.

[00:48:24] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, interesting! Okay. But that also does show us that there was kind of this sort of thing in the air.

(*Carrie agrees.*)

Like, it was a thing that you do. You have a lake monster and, oh, look! People come to your lake to look for it.

[00:48:35] **Carrie Poppy:** Especially if you run a hotel. If you're a spinster. Unmarried women, you're all to blame!

[00:48:43] **Ross Blocher:** So, our bus driver and tour guide—who was great. It was really fun hearing his local stories and everything. Andy, he was telling us about a guy that had been on his tour, the same as we were riding around in his bus. And it was small; it was just us and maybe three or four other people. You know, we were like half the group. But he was saying that a previous person on his tour had gotten a film, and it hasn't been published yet, but it showed a long neck with a head in the water. And apparently, like everybody's saying it's good and worth considering. And Crazy Steve, which is that guy that you were referring to earlier.

[00:49:20] **Carrie Poppy:** Does he call himself that?

[00:49:21] **Ross Blocher:** Steve Feltham.

[00:49:22] **Carrie Poppy:** Feltham (*felt him*)?! I hardly knew him!

[00:49:23] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, I don't know if he calls himself Crazy Steve, but—and I've looked at his website. I didn't see him acknowledging that, but that seems to be the going name for him in town.

[00:49:32] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, wow! Okay. Oh, okay. I thought this was a eunuch?? name, but you're saying—

[00:49:36] **Ross Blocher:** That's actually how Andy told us the story.

(Carrie laughs and "oh no"s.)

Crazy Steve has assured us that it is not a boat. Okay! I wasn't worried that it was a boat, but alright, it's not. And now they have another guy analyzing the footage. So, this hasn't been released yet, essentially is what he was telling us. So, great!

[00:49:53] **Carrie Poppy:** So, you went a few months ago, have you checked to see if there's—if it's been released now?

[00:49:55] **Ross Blocher:** I don't think so. I was trying to look for what would match that description. But now there's another guy, Adrian Shine, who is analyzing the footage. So, he's going to be like the real expert to tell us what to think of this footage. But—

[00:50:10] **Carrie Poppy:** I remember that name. His name came up in my research too.

[00:50:12] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. And our tour guide was telling us, "Oh yeah, he looks like Gandalf." And sure enough, if you look up Adrian Shine, you'd be like, okay! Yeah, that's quite a beard you got there! Nicely done!

[00:50:19] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay! James Randi.

[00:50:20] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. Yeah. So, another thing we were told is that there's this monetary prize—speaking of James Randi—on the table, that you could win £1,000,000 if you get a clear, unambiguous photo of the monster. Yeah! Which is like how do you define that?

(Carrie agrees.)

But yeah, there's a lot of financial incentive for someone to snap that winning picture. This is apropos of nothing, but I'll just mention that both my tour guides—we also had a guy the day before named Willie, who is a real character, had a really thick brogue. Hard to understand, but super fun and loved to bag on the English. That became like a running thing, was like people in Scotland making jokes about hating the English. But both of them had mentioned to us that Aleister Crowley had a house right like near the lake.

[00:51:04] **Carrie Poppy:** Aleister Crowley, the occultist.

[00:51:06] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, if you remember our Ordo Templi Orientis investigation, he was the one who'd really taken over that group and fed it with his own kind of theology and magic. And boy, what a crazy figure.

[00:51:20] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh my lord, yeah. Read Martin Gardner's essay about him, if anyone's interested. It really paints a picture.

[00:51:26] **Ross Blocher:** There were all these rumors about like how he built a tunnel from his house to the local graveyard. And of course, he would do all this dark magic stuff, but there's no evidence of any of that. Just adding to the mystique and mystery of Loch Ness.

[00:51:35] **Carrie Poppy:** Just walk there. Why would you need a tunnel? Why? Walk on the ground.

(Ross agrees with a laugh.)

Cemeteries are notoriously open to the public at all times.

[00:51:50] **Ross Blocher:** That's a common thread with conspiracy theories, that if you just step back for a moment and think about—okay, let's say I'm diabolical and I'm trying to do these things. Is this a cost-effective way to go about it?

[00:52:00] **Carrie Poppy:** Is this the way I do it?

[00:52:02] **Ross Blocher:** Because usually it's really wasteful and dumb.

[00:52:04] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Let me put on my evil villain hat and think about how I'd do this.

[00:52:07] **Ross Blocher:** Like the McMartin Preschool. Underground tunnels are involved in that too. It's not easy to excavate an underground tunnel. Yeah, indeed.

[00:52:17] **Carrie Poppy:** And silly! Walk the children above the ground!

[00:52:21] **Ross Blocher:** *(Laughs.)* Right. Do it at the dead of night if you're worried about being seen.

[00:52:24] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. But you're a preschool. Everyone will just be like, “There goes the preschool!” Anyway.

[00:52:28] **Ross Blocher:** So, our tour guide took us to a few different vantage points where we could kind of see the lake. And of course, every time I was there, I was taking a bunch of photos and expectantly looking at it. And it's a weird phenomenon, because—you know, I think we've made it clear that we don't actually expect to see the monster. I know that there are people watching the lake all the time, every day. And yet when I have a chance and I have multiple cameras with me, every spare second I'm like photographing the lake and zooming in. I brought along my crazy Nikon P900 camera that I bought for the flat earth investigation specifically, which has this amazing optical range. It's insane.

[00:53:06] **Carrie Poppy:** That's why we liked it.

[00:53:07] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, yeah, exactly. ‘Cause you can recover objects “over the horizon”. I'm using little air quotes as I say this.

[00:53:14] **Carrie Poppy:** Also known as not seeing them at first.

[00:53:16] **Ross Blocher:** (*Laughs.*) Right. Yeah. But ignoring some very clear physics. Anyway, so I brought that along. Oh yeah. By the way, this picture I'm showing you is of the Loch Ness Center and Exhibition. Yeah. I'm sad. That's the one place like we didn't stop. They have a little museum dedicated to the monster and the legend.

(*Carrie reacts with disappointment.*)

I know, would have really loved to have seen that, but it just wasn't part of the itinerary. And apparently they just did a refurbishment of it a couple months ago.

[00:53:42] **Carrie Poppy:** Don't leave this photo! I have a huge question! Do you know what it's going to be? Do you know what I'm seeing in this photo? Do you see anything? Do you see anything abnormal about your photo? The huge ghost!

[00:53:51] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, oh, oh, you're looking at the blue floating light. Yeah. No, that's just a ghost.

[00:53:56] **Carrie Poppy:** You caught a UFO. You caught a ghost. You caught Nessie. You caught whatever it is that you feel like labeling this as!

[00:54:02] **Ross Blocher:** I feel like that is a good UFO image, because it's hovering above the castle.

[00:54:07] **Carrie Poppy:** And above the Nessie thing.

[00:54:08] **Ross Blocher:** Or yeah, sorry, I'm calling it a castle, because it's this like older architecture with turrets and stuff.

[00:54:14] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, if this were in America, we'd be like, "This is the most phenomenal house I've ever seen!"

[00:54:18] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, it kind of looks roughly like the Magic Castle, but it is not. Do you want me to ruin the mystery, or do you just want it to be a UFO?

[00:54:26] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, I want you to ruin the mystery. I always want to know.

[00:54:27] **Ross Blocher:** Okay. Yes. We're in a bus with blue LED panels, and that's a reflection on the window of the panel on the opposite side of the bus.

[00:54:35] **Carrie Poppy:** You should send it to MUFON as like a so-call test. See what happens.

[00:54:37] **Ross Blocher:** Okay. Yeah. Just see what they say about it. This will come up in one of our upcoming episodes, but I've got to say the person who evaluates stuff sent to

MUFON does a good job. I got to meet him, and he's got a level head. He wants to believe, but he rejects like 98% of what he receives.

[00:54:56] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay but test it.

[00:54:57] **Ross Blocher:** Okay, alright. Oh, this is just a screen grab showing how cold it was!

[00:55:00] **Carrie Poppy:** One degree. Wow!

[00:55:01] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. This was from the morning before, but yeah, it got really cold up there.

[00:55:04] **Carrie Poppy:** And is this still Fahrenheit?

[00:55:06] **Ross Blocher:** Uh, no, this is Celsius. So, about 40/41 degrees Fahrenheit, but it's cold! Anyway, so now I'm just showing Carrie some views of the lake. I counted through just to see how many photos I took of either Loch Ness or even sometimes the River Ness or even that little piece of river where—

[00:55:26] **Carrie Poppy:** Oich.

[00:55:27] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, Oich. I even got a few shots of that. So, anytime I took a picture of a body of water that could conceivably have a monster that would show up in it, I counted that, and I took 245 photos and videos that could have contained a monster. And I did go back through them and looked, and I'll show you later some of the things that I feel could be in some cases mistaken for that. But for the most part, I don't think I caught one.

(Carrie playfully “ooooor?”s.)

Alright. Let's maintain the mystery. So, now I'm showing Carrie Urquhart Castle. Oh, it's so beautiful. Yeah. So, it's these ruins of a castle right on the eastern edge of the lake. And, oh, it's just—it's gorgeous. Yeah.

(Carrie agrees emphatically.)

Like the grass is so green. Right. Yeah. And the lake is just—it is massive. So, okay. The loch is—and I would get slightly different numbers from different people. So, I had to kind of look this up and make sure I was getting kind of the latest, most accurate numbers. But the loch is about 23 miles long. And the most recent numbers on the depth seem to be 230 meters being the deepest point. So, 754 feet. Very deep. It's the largest body of water by volume in the UK. And in the film and from my tour guide and from the boat guide, I learned that you could combine all of the other lakes in England and Wales twice over, and they would fit inside this lake. It's a lot of water.

[00:56:54] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh my god! Well, that starts to make me like—I should see this thing all the time if it's there. It shouldn't be so rare to spot. If there's like a colony of these things and like the—

[00:57:05] **Ross Blocher:** But the point is that this is massive. It's so much bigger than all the other lakes combined. So, the point that they take from that is: good place to hide a monster.

[00:57:13] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, that's interesting. I get the totally opposite. I'm thinking like, wow, so many opportunities for people to be at different parts of this lake and see one thing and then another part and see another. It's like having a monster in the Pacific Ocean.

[00:57:27] **Ross Blocher:** I think one thing that really helps the logic behind the Loch Ness monster is the idea that, well, you can look here very thoroughly, but it could have been over there the whole time. And this happens in the film. You have Ted Danson go out, and he's all determined. Okay, I'm gonna prove this right now. Let's get this out of the way. And they do this kind of sweeping where this one single boat—and this seems a bit farfetched to me, that it could map the whole width of the loch as it goes from one end to the next. But it does, in the film at least. And by the time it gets to the end, they've done a thorough scan, and we would have picked up anything, even fish, and like we didn't see anything. So, there! Boom!

[00:58:05] **Carrie Poppy:** You didn't see any fish!?

[00:58:06] **Ross Blocher:** We didn't see any Loch Ness monster, anything that you would confuse as such, you know, that was big enough. And the guy who's accompanying him says, “Well, there are these little caves and stuff. It could have been on a little inlet or something like that.” But I feel like that logic helps Loch Ness a lot. Like, well, okay. Maybe you search really close by the castle. It could have been somewhere way down far somewhere else. You know?

[00:58:25] **Carrie Poppy:** Sure. Isn't that convenient.

[00:58:28] **Ross Blocher:** 23 miles long is very long.

[00:58:30] **Carrie Poppy:** It's like being like there's a monster in Van Nuys. It's just like I'm not going to comb that.

[00:58:35] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, right. Exactly. So, there's always—wherever you're doing the combing, there could be another location.

Oh, by the way, I'm forgetting that I brought some scotch for us to taste.

[00:58:44] **Carrie Poppy:** Nice. What've we got?

[00:58:46] **Ross Blocher:** So, this is Dalwhinnie. Single malt scotch whiskey from the Highlands.

[00:58:51] **Carrie Poppy:** Beautiful bottle.

[00:58:52] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. So, my wife—

(They both do the Borat “my wife”.)

Cara has become quite the collector. In fact, we just got like three new whiskies in the last week in our household.

(Carrie “woah”s.)

I got her one for our anniversary that she really likes.

[00:59:05] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh my god, is gonna make my Cara gifts so much easier. Thank you.

[00:59:07] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, she won't turn down more, especially scotch whiskey. So, she put a lot of thought into this. I said like, “Oh, well, what should I bring over? You know, I want something geographically close to Loch Ness.” So, we found one that's a little southeast of the loch, Dalwhinnie, that's also not too peaty or smoky. It's kind of a lighter whiskey. Anyways, yeah, we have a lot of whiskey now.

[00:59:31] **Carrie Poppy:** Well, maybe I'll just take a little like nip of yours.

[00:59:33] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, have a little sip. It's a very—for someone who's not into whiskey, this would be a good whiskey.

[00:59:40] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh yeah! Yeah. It's got a nice woody flavor.

[00:59:41] **Ross Blocher:** So, this is the 15-year. Anyways, yeah. Now we suddenly have—I blame Chris, my friend, Chris Kelly. He's gotten Cara and us now into drinking a lot more alcohol than we ever did before. And Chris is a listener to the podcast. Hi, Chris!

(Carrie says hi to Chris.)

The other option would have been the Benriach. I think that was also fairly close. Anyways, oh, I should also mention I'm wearing my Clan Ross shirt.

[01:00:02] **Carrie Poppy:** Yes, I noticed that. So, tell me about that. Is that a last name?

[01:00:05] **Ross Blocher:** Yes. And actually, I come by it honestly, because my name comes from my grandfather, Ross. But his mother, her maiden name was Ross. So, it hopped over, which I think is interesting, like giving your last name as a first name to your son.

[01:00:20] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. That's cool. Drew's brother's middle name is Ross. Ross Perot.

[01:00:23] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, that's right. At a party the other day, I met another Ross. It's rare.

(*Carrie agrees.*)

They're out there.

[01:00:28] **Carrie Poppy:** Everyone just thinks of Ross from *Friends*.

[01:00:30] **Ross Blocher:** Right. It's funny because I think both Cara and I have names that are like everybody knows them, and they've heard an example somewhere, but you don't meet them in real life too often. So, it's weird talking to another Ross.

[01:00:42] **Carrie Poppy:** I feel that way about Carrie too. At least, especially with my spelling. I meet very few Carries. And my spelling is the original spelling! And yet, very few of us.

[01:00:50] **Ross Blocher:** But you have the same one as the Brian De Palma film, which I have now seen.

[01:00:55] **Carrie Poppy:** That was great, right?

[01:00:56] **Ross Blocher:** That was the very top of my “what do you mean you haven't seen it” list for years. I'd watched every other film that people expect me to have seen, but not *Carrie*. You know, I'm not into gore, splatter film. I have to be in a certain mood. So, I finally did see it.

[01:01:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Did you like it?

[01:01:11] **Ross Blocher:** It's fine. That's the best it gets for me.

[01:01:14] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. And that's how I felt about *Cars*. It's fine. Just going to defend it for being fine.

[01:01:19] **Ross Blocher:** Young John Travolta. That's always fun.

[01:01:21] **Carrie Poppy:** Young John Travolta's in *Cars*? OH! In *Carrie*.

(*Ross snorts a laugh.*)

(*Laughs.*) I'm losing it. I didn't even remember he was in that.

[01:01:28] **Ross Blocher:** Anyways. Okay. So now I'm sipping the Dalwhinnie. Oh yeah. I've got my clan Ross shirt. So, clan Ross was a little North of the area we're talking about. North of Inverness. So. There we go. Alright. So, we spend time at Urquhart castle, take a lot of pictures.

[01:01:43] **Carrie Poppy:** You guys are going to see these photos and be like what kind of amazing camera is Ross using? And I just want you to know it's his iPhone.

[01:01:52] **Ross Blocher:** They take such amazing photos. It allows you to be lazy.

[01:01:54] **Carrie Poppy:** It's so incredible now.

[01:01:56] **Ross Blocher:** Sometimes like the lake can look just glassy smooth. Sometimes it's got a little bit of rippling to it, but yeah, gorgeous. I was also using that Nikon P900. I'll show you some footage here.

(Carrie stops him.)

Yeah, there's a little darker reflection spot on the water, right? That stands out from the rest of the smooth water.

(Carrie confirms.)

Yeah, sometimes there's little perturbations or even these kind of like standing waves.

[01:02:19] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, water does that.

[01:02:21] **Ross Blocher:** That form a little darker shape. So yeah, I feel like probably a majority of the sightings are that. Still hoping, just like the Clan Ross motto says: success breeds hope. Always hoping that I'm going to be the one to find the monster. But after we're done checking out the castle and the beautiful view that it has of the lake, then we proceed down the coast to where the loch meets up with one of the locks for a canal. So, there's this kind of diagonal slash that goes through Scotland that sort of cuts part of it off from the rest of the United Kingdom. And apparently this goes way back. So, it's a canal that they've sort of extended. There were already multiple lochs along this diagonal, this fault line. But then they—in the 1800s, they built measured locks in between them so that boats could travel from one side to the other without going all the way around. Kind of like Panama Canal, Erie Canal, Suez Canal, whatever canal you want to compare it to.

[01:03:24] **Carrie Poppy:** Nasal canal.

[01:03:25] **Ross Blocher:** *(Laughs.)* Oh yeah. there's this Fort Augustine area kind of at the south end where it connects to this canal. And this is where we boarded our boat. Oh yeah, I saved this video here to show you just because there's a bagpiper.

[01:03:39] **Clip:** Echoing, distant bagpipes.

[01:03:45] **Carrie Poppy:** Do you like bagpipes?

(Ross confirms.)

Yeah, me too. A lot of people find them like, you know, painful.

[01:03:50] **Ross Blocher:** Oh yeah. Really fun. There was a woman at work just this past Friday. All I knew is I heard from my desk bagpipes going off somewhere nearby. And I was like, okay, is this just a really good sound system or is someone playing bagpipes in the building?

[01:04:04] **Carrie Poppy:** Or is my death coming for me?

[01:04:04] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. And we had a modeler who used to practice his bagpipes at the animation studio. And the reason I know that the soundproofing is so good in our review rooms is that you could just barely hear him playing from outside, but—

[01:04:17] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh yeah, the bagpipes are powerful. Yeah.

[01:04:19] **Ross Blocher:** So, I guess he inspired Kathy Bailey, who's been an artist at the studio since at least the '90s as a cleanup artist. Now she works as a character TD. So, I go wandering out seeking the sound that's ricocheting down the hallways. And it is loud inside a building. It is loud.

[01:04:34] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, that sounds unpleasant actually.

[01:04:36] **Ross Blocher:** But as she was slowly pacing down the hallway, playing bagpipes, doing a great job of it, I was—

[01:04:40] **Carrie Poppy:** What?! At Disney Animation? *(Laughs.)*

[01:04:44] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah! And I was so proud of her because I had just been talking with some other people the other day about how like we don't goof off enough. There needs to be more like pranks and just silliness and people having chair races, you know. And then I hear this bagpipe and find her doing this and I loved it. I just thought it was fantastic.

So anyways, that's a long way of saying, yeah, I like bagpipes. So, this is where we boarded the Legend of Loch Ness Inverness, that's the name of the boat.

[01:05:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. And is this the one that I was talking about earlier?

[01:05:13] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. So, it's the same tour company. I'm not sure if it was this precise boat.

[01:05:16] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. 'Cause his was I think The Spirit of Loch Ness.

[01:05:19] **Ross Blocher:** Okay. But they're all owned by the same group. And I didn't see many others on the lake. So, it's not like there's 10 of these taking turns. There's maybe two or three active. So, this one is equipped with all the same type of equipment. So, we get on this boat, and I would say probably like three dozen people on the boat.

(Carrie “wow”s.)

So, yeah, this is a popular tourist thing to do. And we'd signed up for this whole package that included the bus tour and then this interlude where we'd get on the boat for 45 minutes and cruise around. And everybody here is talking about the monster, of course. Which is always weird, because there's legitimate reasons to be interested in Loch Ness without a monster.

[01:05:58] **Carrie Poppy:** I know, I was thinking of this poor lake.

[01:06:00] **Ross Blocher:** So, yeah, I feel bad because you know, they're talking about, “Oh, here's the goats on the side!” And I'm thinking I should be more interested in the goats that exist.

[01:06:06] **Carrie Poppy:** The actual animals!

[01:06:07] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. And I am in this monster that lives by reputation alone. But what can you do?

[01:06:14] **Carrie Poppy:** Drew would be excited about the goats. He loves goats.

[01:06:16] **Ross Blocher:** So, as you can see, lovely. The water's getting a little choppy here, but there's a young man who's kind of like our main tour guide. And he makes a joke at the beginning about how, “Yeah, yeah, I'm Scottish. So probably hard to hear me, but don't worry, I'm sober!”

(Carrie laughs.)

So, the best conditions. He gives us—

[01:06:32] **Carrie Poppy:** That's interesting. “I'm Scottish, so it'll be hard to hear me.” So, am I not the only person who finds like Scottish difficult to understand?

[01:06:38] **Ross Blocher:** No, I think that's a common thing. And they're used to people probably giving feedback like, “I'm sorry, I can't understand what you're saying.”

[01:06:46] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh good, that makes me feel better. I just always feel so—you know, it's always uncomfortable to like have to work past someone's accent. Yeah.

[01:06:52] **Ross Blocher:** Sure. And make that the issue of conversation rather than whatever they're saying. So, he mentions that they use sonar. They've got these kind of like active displays that I'll find later kind of downstairs when you walk under the main deck. And he

mentions that in 2019, we were part of a story that changed the history of Loch Ness, finding that image that you saw of the blip under the water. So, he says he'll talk more about that a little bit later. But then they have this narration prerecorded that they'll keep switching to. So, it's this woman's voice, and she tells us that there's more of interest than just the monster.

(They chuckle.)

The point we just made, which is great. You know, we're doing this for 45 minutes. Let's talk about other things. So, they talk a bit about the geology of the great glen of Scotland. So, that's the name of this long valley which rides along this fault line that creates that big diagonal that sort of cuts the island in twain.

[01:07:47] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, that fault line's going to matter quite a bit, isn't it? I saw that at least one professional was claiming that there's like a certain kind of current that is created in the lake that's a little bit unusual because of the fault line. And so, that could explain like unusual bobbing behaviors.

[01:08:03] **Ross Blocher:** I think I may know what's being referred to there. So, I looked up a little bit more about this. Because at one point later in the tour, the young man narrating says like, "Oh, on this side, that's the Eurasian plate. And on this other side, that's the North American plate." I was like, no, no, no, no. That's too far over. So, I double checked, because I remember seeing a place actually like that in Iceland. They have a big section of land where you can point to one side and say, yep, that's the Eurasian plate, on the other side that's North America. Yeah. It's all connected. So, not true for Loch Ness, but it goes even farther back in time. So, we're talking like 430,000,000 years ago, the fault line that created this particular geography combined a little piece of Laurentia and Gondwana. So, these are like ancient land masses that collided to create this particular fault line. The rocks themselves are older, like 500,000,000 years old.

Anyways, the whole canal that was built, that's called the Caledonian Canal. And there's like this cool valley that was further enhanced by the last ice age. You had all these retreating glaciers that scraped out this giant valley that the water is now in, which is relevant to the Loch Ness legend, because that's when it's assumed that this prehistoric creature that just managed to escape into modernity happened to like find itself isolated in the loch.

[01:09:25] **Carrie Poppy:** Mm! Oh right, prehistoric, okay.

[01:09:27] **Ross Blocher:** So, we're talking like, you know, at least 12,000 years. But of course, the creatures that we're generally talking about—Plesiosaurs, Mosasaurs—they went extinct waaay longer ago than 12,000 years.

[01:09:37] **Carrie Poppy:** Those are those big snakes?

[01:09:39] **Ross Blocher:** Giant marine reptiles. Yeah. So already kind of farfetched, but that's—you know, that's the theory that we're trying to hold on to. We're also told that the water is so dark because there's so much peat nearby. And like when rain replenishes the water, it interacts with the peat, and it's all kind of dyed water. That's why it's dark. And

apparently that makes it really hard to like search or send a submersible down. So, they're telling us stories of researchers trying to go under the water and look or turn on really bright lights and just finding the light reflected back at them and being kind of useless, because you can't see in the water. It's so dark.

[01:10:12] **Carrie Poppy:** People, don't get in a submersible if the regulatory bodies tell you that it's dangerous.

[01:10:17] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. Talking about the Titanic recent story.

[01:10:21] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, I get so much intrusive imagery of what happened to those people just all the time.

[01:10:27] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, like thinking about it, that your brain will—?

[01:10:30] **Carrie Poppy:** Just randomly. I'll just—

(Ross "oh no"s.)

It's been happening so much lately. Anyway, people, don't do this!

[01:10:35] **Ross Blocher:** Remember Jannicke Mikkelsen that we had on the podcast, we talked to?

(Carrie confirms.)

She was actually friends with one of the guys who was—well, she and Terry Virts, the astronaut that we talked to at the same time, both of them are friends with Hamish. I can't remember his full name. He was one of the guys on that submersible. Because he had set a record with them when they did that orbital pass over the poles and set a world record for going around the planet. He was on that with them. So yeah, sad to hear updates from her when we didn't know exactly what had happened.

They remind us to keep our camera at hand, because you never know what's gonna happen or when. And, you know, I gotta say—I'll just lay it out now, like this was pretty responsible narration. It was quite levelheaded. It wasn't sensationalist. Like, I thought they did a really good job putting this together. You can even see like the wake that the boat is leaving kind of creates patterns in the water that could very easily be, "Ooh, ooh, it's kind of twisty and turny! Is that something?!"

[01:11:37] **Carrie Poppy:** But you could do this in any lake.

[01:11:37] **Ross Blocher:** True. This one just has a particular story attached to it.

[01:11:41] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. So, it psychologically primes you to see it differently than you would have if you got the exact same photograph at like Lake Mead.

[01:11:49] **Ross Blocher:** 100%. Story is everything.

[01:11:51] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. And you know who did it? Spinster Janet Fraser!

[01:11:56] **Ross Blocher:** You're blaming her?

[01:11:57] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, I mean, she's the one who invented it. I really think.

[01:11:59] **Ross Blocher:** Her in league with St. Columba. Okay!

[01:12:01] **Carrie Poppy:** I mean, it's like Eugene Shepard, the guy who did it at in Rhineland, invented the Hodag.

[01:12:06] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, not Jean Shepherd!

[01:12:07] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, right. Eugene Shepard. Remind me who Jean Shepherd is.

[01:12:11] **Ross Blocher:** He wrote the Christmas storybook.

[01:12:12] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, okay. Eugene Shepard.

[01:12:14] **Ross Blocher:** In God we trust, all others pay cash.

[01:12:16] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. No, this guy was like a real weirdo, like he's famous for driving drunk around town. He divorced his wife for a much younger woman, and then he'd drive around her house and be like, "Hey, look what I got now!" out her window and stuff. Like a real weirdo. But anyway, he made up the Hodag.

[01:12:36] **Ross Blocher:** These are the people who change history, and we're all burdened with their imaginations.

[01:12:42] **Carrie Poppy:** And what did he work in? Tourism!

[01:12:42] **Ross Blocher:** Total aside, but like with Donald Trump, I feel like the nation suffers so much for this horribly damaged human being. And just because of his particular quirks and peccadilloes, we're all saddled with this, and it wastes so much of our thought process and threatens our government. Anyways.

[01:13:02] **Carrie Poppy:** Just this one problem individual.

[01:13:03] **Ross Blocher:** Your L. Ron Hubbards of the world.

[01:13:06] **Carrie Poppy:** Your Freud. Fuck that guy.

[01:13:07] **Ross Blocher:** Oh man. Mary Baker Eddy.

[01:13:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, yeah. At least possibly sincere, but yeah.

[01:13:13] **Ross Blocher:** Right. But even if sincere, just that one person's kind of makeup can really have so many downstream effects. And I feel like it's one of those situations where, yeah, maybe she was just kind of writing on a few local legends, but she amplified it and was at the right time and the right place and the right form of media for this all just to take off.

[01:13:32] **Carrie Poppy:** And maybe the right—yeah, mental phenotype.

[01:13:33] **Ross Blocher:** Well, and then the next year that photo, that really took it off too. So yeah, like I think a few people in concert really made this a thing. So, I was mentioning just that this is kind of responsible narration. Even at this point, they were saying, okay, we expect you to take photos. That's good. Do it. But all of the photos that we have at the surface are still debated. There are many theories. They said outright on this tour that the 1934 photo turned out to be a fake. So, they acknowledged that.

[01:14:01] **Clip:**

Speaker: (*Muffled.*) The most famous picture, that of a greasy neck protruding from the water, turned out to have been faked. But it will always remain the iconic image of the Loch Ness monster. (*Inaudible*) have shown that long necked animals could not live in the cold water, owing to its temperature and the lack of an adequate food supply. And may be mistakes, diving birds, and even deliberate inventions. The vast majority of sightings are of a single hump, and those could be large living creatures.

[01:14:34] **Ross Blocher:** They mentioned at this point, they'll get more into like other creatures than it might be, but they mentioned that sturgeon fish may have been introduced and that they can be incredibly enormous. The world record size is over eight meters long, which is a long fish. That's like 24 feet, 25 feet, and that they can live up to 240+ years old.

(*Carrie "wow"s.*)

That's pretty impressive. She said, "Not as romantic, but it is a real creature." So, then the young guy takes over and he starts telling us—(*laughs*) this was very strange. He said, "Scientists don't know where water came from, but evolution tells us we came from water."

(*Carrie reacts with confusion.*)

I'm only mentioning that line because it just gave me pause, like what is he actually saying here? Okay, I know there's various theories about how water got on the planet. Maybe a comet seeded it or something, but evolution tells us we came from water. Okay!

[01:15:23] **Carrie Poppy:** It gives me unnecessary rhetorical pause. (*Laughs.*) Yeah. I'm trying to catch up with you.

[01:15:27] **Ross Blocher:** Exactly. I posted recently on our Facebook page, and I said this to you. There's this meme that shows someone holding a glass of water, and it said, "There are more hydrogen atoms in a single molecule of water than there are stars in the entire solar system."

[01:15:45] **Carrie Poppy:** It's one of those things that gives you pause for a second. Woah! Such, wait—oh solar system. Oh, I see. Our solar system has one. Oh, H₂O, I see.

[01:15:55] **Ross Blocher:** (*Chuckling.*) Such great reactions, because it ends up being that two is larger than one.

[01:16:00] **Carrie Poppy:** Right, right. I showed that to Drew on our plane home. And yeah, he was similarly like, "Huh, is that true?"

And I was like, "Well, think about it for a sec."

(*They laugh.*)

[01:16:10] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. I think I've been so primed to break something like that down that I was able to do it in real time and be like, "Okay, clever, I like it." But I can totally see why it would give someone pause.

[01:16:20] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. My first reaction was like, "That can't be right!" (*Laughs.*) And then, oh, I see. I see.

[01:16:28] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, that's kind of how I felt about his comment. But anyways, he tells us that the temperature of the loch, the water itself stays pretty constant. It's about 5 degrees Celsius, give or take, all year long. It doesn't freeze over. And he said that if you dropped in there, you could swim for maybe five minutes.

[01:16:45] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh wow! Until what? It's too cold?

[01:16:48] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. I guess like if you ease yourself into it, you can swim for five minutes and then it'll be like too cold. But like he says, "If you dropped out of the boat right now, your body would go into shock. You wouldn't be able to breathe. You'd get a tight chest, and it's fresh water. So, you're not going to float easily. There's not salt content." And he said, "Your life expectancy is roughly two to four minutes if you can swim."

[01:17:07] **Carrie Poppy:** Are you all wearing life preservers?

[01:17:09] **Ross Blocher:** No. But he tells us, "Don't jump off."

(*Carrie laughs a confused "what?!"*)

There are life preservers on the boat, but yeah, you don't want anything to happen to this boat. Is this making you nervous? Carrie's like—

[01:17:19] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Laughing.*) I'm still going through my Titan submersible problems.

(*Ross "oh no"s.*)

And I'm just like—everyone's like unnecessary risk really like freaks me out right now!

[01:17:29] **Ross Blocher:** Carrie is actively waving air at her face to like increase evaporation.

[01:17:35] **Carrie Poppy:** Ross, I spent like 90 minutes last night doing exposure therapy on myself just watching coverage of the Titan submersible.

(*Ross "oh no"s.*)

And I got so nauseous and upset. Oh my goooood.

[01:17:45] **Ross Blocher:** Oh no! I had no idea. Oh my god, I knew you had a rough night, but oh. I thought it was unrelated.

[01:17:49] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Laughs.*) Yeah, I know, not even related to that. Yeah, you can ask Drew how much I talk about the Titan submersible. Babe, how much do I talk about the Titan submersible?

[01:17:57] **Drew Spears:** (*Off mic.*) Recently, it's been quite often.

[01:17:59] **Carrie Poppy:** Recently, it's been quite often.

[01:18:00] **Ross Blocher:** Says Drew. Okay! (*Laughs.*) Alright. Well, let's not talk about water then. So, apparently—

[01:18:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Well, wait, hang on. One question. You might be the one person who can make me feel a little better about one thing that plays through my head, which is would Ross and I have accidentally gotten on the Titan submersible, not knowing that the experts had said it was dangerous, because the company didn't disclose that to us?

[01:18:26] **Ross Blocher:** Oh! I'm feeling like my immediate response should just be the one that makes Carrie feel better.

(*Carrie laughs.*)

So, no way, no way we would do that. We're too smart for that.

[01:18:35] **Carrie Poppy:** I'm—Okay, this is what I really think.

[01:18:37] **Ross Blocher:** We would have talked to James Cameron; he would have told us. This is totally sus.

[01:18:41] **Carrie Poppy:** I read the waiver, and the waiver mentions death a lot, but also waivers mention death a lot in general.

[01:18:47] **Ross Blocher:** I never waiver. Yeah, that's true.

[01:18:49] **Carrie Poppy:** I feel 80% sure that you and I would have been like, "This is kind of weird, let's check outside sources on this."

[01:18:59] **Ross Blocher:** I would hope so.

[01:19:00] **Carrie Poppy:** I think so. But I'm only at like 80%, and I'm like, oh my god! 20% is so high! And I think that's why my brain is serving it up to me.

[01:19:06] **Ross Blocher:** Well, let me tell you, none of the—I don't know—three dozen or so people fell in the water. We're all good.

[01:19:13] **Carrie Poppy:** That's good. But do you think we'd get on the Titan submersible?

[01:19:16] **Ross Blocher:** Uuuh, that's a good question. I know a lot more about the subject now than I did then.

(Carrie agrees.)

So, it's hard for me to put my brain fully in previous Ross. *(Chuckles.)*

[01:19:26] **Carrie Poppy:** 80%, no?

[01:19:27] **Ross Blocher:** If I was told it was like a \$250,000 ticket and I was getting it somehow free, I would've been tempted.

[01:19:34] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh man. See, see, see!

(Ross apologizes, laughing.)

No, it's okay. I'm glad you told me the truth. I don't want you lie to me. Uh-uh-uh-uh-uh. I'll figure this out one day.

[01:19:44] **Ross Blocher:** Carrie's trying to increase air flow to her face. Okay. I didn't know this was an issue.

(Carrie laughs.)

Alright. Oh no. Some of this next information is not going to be helpful to you. Feel free to plug your ears.

[01:19:53] **Carrie Poppy:** It's okay! No, I gotta expose myself or it won't get better. Oh, it's okay.

[01:19:56] **Ross Blocher:** So, also our tour guide told us that it would take Niagara Falls 32 days to fill Loch Ness, just because I think everybody has kind of a mental image of just the sheer amount of water pouring over.

[01:20:08] **Carrie Poppy:** In Niagara Falls. Yeah. I've been there. You can't even talk to the person next to you. It's so loud.

[01:20:13] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, I haven't been there. My dad just recently went, very jealous. So, he said, "If you ever want to get rid of anything or anyone, just put it in the lake. No one will ever find it."

(Carrie laughs.)

Yeah. The clear takeaway was if you want to get rid of a body, throw it in Loch Ness. It's going to be gone. So, they talked about all the things that haven't worked, like sending down nets or dynamite or submersibles, but we use sonar cause that's the only thing that can really give you any indication. Then he talks about how we went viral in 2019 when a creature 10 meters long and one meter wide—and he used the word creature, which is already kind of loaded—was 153 meters down. When I went to look this story up, I saw like I think it was 170 meters. I don't know. So, however many meters down, it was far down. And he showed it on his phone. And you've already brought this up. This was in the documentary. But I love this picture of this young guy showing me the suspect creature under the water in sonar imagery. Pretty cool.

So, he says, we believe this is the monster that people are seeing. And I thought, oh, that's—

[01:21:17] **Carrie Poppy:** That's interesting phrasing.

[01:21:18] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, because so much of this is explainable by other things. So, exactly which siding are you saying this is? And generally, things that live that far down, if they breathe air, that's quite a transition to make. Like, to have a body plan that allows you to withstand the pressure of 153 meters down.

[01:21:41] **Carrie Poppy:** And at one point he said it was the size and shape of a bus. And I was like, well, did we rule out bus?

[01:21:47] **Ross Blocher:** Did anybody lose a bus in the loch?

[01:21:49] **Carrie Poppy:** I mean, just, I hear that and I'm like, well, maybe you need to go through the last like, you know, 60 years of records, right? Is anybody doing that?

[01:21:57] **Ross Blocher:** But anyways, he said that, “As the kids would say, this went viral all over the world.”

[01:22:04] **Carrie Poppy:** I’m sure that’s true. I’m laughing at us humans doing that, bothering.

[01:22:07] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. It may be taking advantage of a glitch in human thinking, but successful.

(Carrie agrees.)

And he was making very positive statements about how, you know, we think there are huge creatures down there, and we think we might know what Nessie might be. So, okay. We’re going to get to that in just a little bit.

[01:22:24] **Carrie Poppy:** A figment of our imaginations?

(Ross disagrees.)

Speaking of tourism, I wonder if Justin and Sophie are tour guides. Do you know about these two?

[01:22:31] **Ross Blocher:** Oh yeah, I know about them. I think they’ve got an anniversary happening right about now.

[01:22:37] **Carrie Poppy:** I think so too! And in fact—pulling something out of my pocket—look at this! This Jumbotron came in just today.

[01:22:42] **Ross Blocher:** Woah, where did you find this?

[01:22:45] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, a cryptozoological creature flew into my house and gave it to me.

[01:22:49] **Ross Blocher:** It looks like it was written by St. Columba himself, so this must be a vast future prediction. Another miracle.

[01:22:55] **Carrie Poppy:** I see why you’d think that, but it’s actually written by Sophie to Justin!

[01:22:59] **Ross Blocher:** Oh! I can see how I misread that. Okay. Well, what does it say here? “Justin, happy two-year anniversary and happy birthday.”

[01:23:07] **Carrie Poppy:** “I love you so much. And even though I tell you that every day, I thought you might like to hear me say it through our favorite podcast hosts.”

[01:23:14] **Ross Blocher:** Aw! “I'm looking forward to many more years of wonderful experiences with you.”

[01:23:18] **Carrie Poppy:** “Yours forever, Sophie.” Aww! Sophie seems cool.

[01:23:21] **Ross Blocher:** Aw! That's lovely! This just in (*Justin*).

[01:23:24] **Carrie Poppy:** Heey! (*Laughs.*) This So-phia.

(*They laugh.*)

Congrats, you guys. And congrats also to Squarespace!

[01:23:34] **Ross Blocher:** I know, right? Making websites?!

[01:23:36] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. They don't get enough credit.

[01:23:38] **Ross Blocher:** For helping so many websites, quality websites show up on the internets.

[01:23:44] **Carrie Poppy:** I bet Squarespace would marry Justin if he asked. Just ‘cause Squarespace is that kind of person.

[01:23:50] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, but Squarespace is respectful and wouldn't try to crowd in on Sophie's territory here.

[01:23:54] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh! Of course, of course, of course, of course, of cooourse! But in a different world, you know?

[01:23:57] **Ross Blocher:** But I would say that they are an all-in-one platform for building your brand and growing your business anywhere.

[01:24:04] **Carrie Poppy:** Yes, you can stand out with a beautiful website. You can engage with your audience like we're doing now, and you can sell anything you want—your products, maybe you make Nessie shirts, content you create, maybe you make a Nessie blog, and even your time—to Nessie!

[01:24:19] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, maybe you want to find a new lake that doesn't have a monster yet.

(*Carrie agrees.*)

Just set up a trailer on one of the beaches. And, um—

[01:24:27] **Carrie Poppy:** You will find this. If you really want to, you'll find a blob in your photo.

[01:24:31] **Ross Blocher:** And make a blog about your blob!

[01:24:32] **Carrie Poppy:** There we go! Oh my god! The Blob Blog!

[01:24:36] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. Like Bob Law Blog.

[01:24:39] **Carrie Poppy:** Bow Law's Law Blog.

(Ross wheezes a laugh.)

Totally.

[01:24:42] **Ross Blocher:** From *Arrested Development*. Oh, I need to watch that show again. Anyways. Yeah, that's right. Every Squarespace website and online store comes with all of these integrated features, and they've got useful guides, and they're going to maximize your search results!

[01:24:55] **Carrie Poppy:** That's right. And with Squarespace extensions, you can connect your store to vetted third party tools to extend the functionality of your website.

[01:25:04] **Ross Blocher:** They also have Fluid Engine. That's a next generation website design system from Squarespace. And it's never been easier for anyone—that means you—to unlock unbreakable creativity! It cannot be broken! It can't be broken!

[01:25:16] **Carrie Poppy:** Unbreakable. Start with a best-in-class website template and customize every design detail with reimaged drag and drop technology for desktop or mobile.

[01:25:26] **Ross Blocher:** And then you are the dragon that is doing the dropping. Yeah! And the like.

[01:25:30] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, yeah. Excellent. Oh, yeah! Someone should do DragonDrop.com. Oh, there's so many websites to make!

[01:25:37] **Ross Blocher:** *(Laughs.)* Well, I know you're ready to do that. Head to [Squarespace.com/ohno](https://www.squarespace.com/ohno) for your free trial. And then when you're ready to launch, what do you do?

[01:25:46] **Carrie Poppy:** You use the offer code “OHNO”, O-H-N-O, to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain.

[01:25:51] **Ross Blocher:** Squarespace. People can find your website even if you can't find the dragon.

(Carrie agrees.)

[01:25:58] **Promo:**

Music: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: The human mind can be tricky. Your mental health can be complex. Your emotional life can be complicated. So, it helps to talk about it. I'm John Moe. Join me each week on my show, *Depresh Mode with John Moe*. It's in-depth conversations about mental health with writers, musicians, comedians, doctors, and experts. Folks like Noah Kahan, Sasheer Zamata, and Surgeon General Vivek Murthy.

We talk about depression, anxiety, trauma, imposter syndrome, and perfectionism. We have the kind of conversations that a lot of folks are hesitant to have themselves. Listen and you won't feel as alone, and you'll have some laughs too.

Depresh Mode from Maximum Fun at MaximumFun.org or wherever you get your podcasts.

(Music ends.)

[01:26:45] **Ross Blocher:** Every now and then—every like decade or so—there's like some big event or search that gets a lot of attention. So, in 1985, there was a monster hunter who set out a cage and baited it. But he told us that the only monsters it captured were journalists.

(They laugh and Carrie “womp, womp, womp”s.)

Shoot forward to recent times. They had the University of Otago from New Zealand come visit and do a DNA sampling. So, they picked 250 different locations around the loch and pulled up all the DNA they could.

[01:27:18] **Carrie Poppy:** From the water?

(Ross confirms.)

I didn't know you could do that.

[01:27:21] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. And just started analyzing, okay, well, what have we found here? And—

[01:27:25] **Carrie Poppy:** In this huge lake.

[01:27:27] **Ross Blocher:** Right. So, apparently the results were released in 2019. There were over 4 million codes of DNA that they collected.

(Carrie affirms.)

And then they narrowed that down to 3,014 distinct codes—like from different creatures of whatever sort. So—

[01:27:42] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay, so like—sorry, just to break that down for a sec. So, the larger population, they're thinking, “Well, sure, but many of these species are the same. So, now we're trying to get down to a smaller grouping of individuals who are—”

[01:27:54] **Ross Blocher:** Represented species.

(Carrie affirms.)

Yeah. So, that was just over 3,000. And so, of course, there were birds, goats, humans, many other things. 50 species of fish.

[01:28:04] **Carrie Poppy:** Wow! It's amazing they can do this.

[01:28:06] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, absolutely. Yeah. And just like fast genome sequencing is such an amazing technical marvel that we can apply to conundrums like this, as silly or real as they may be.

Apparently then they narrowed down from there 340 codes that, as he said it, scientists have never seen before. 340.

(Carrie hums dramatic music.)

Right. And he even said, “Those could be microbial. Those could be bacterial.” And I feel like, looking at them, you probably get some kind of sense of roughly where they fall on the genetic tree. He said, “Or it could be a dinosaur playing bagpipes.”

(They chuckle.)

Very good.

[01:28:41] **Carrie Poppy:** And is there a control to compare that to? Did anyone sequence the same kind of things at a different lake?

[01:28:48] **Ross Blocher:** I think we just have libraries of everything that has been sequenced elsewhere. It's kind of like if—

[01:28:54] **Carrie Poppy:** I guess I'm just wondering is that unusual? Did I just hear anything unusual? I think not.

[01:28:56] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, nothing raises any flags for me in any of that. Yeah, that sounds about right for a gigantic lake, that there would be new strains of DNA that we don't immediately recognize. They don't register on the fingerprint registry, essentially.

[01:29:09] **Carrie Poppy:** This always stops me up though, when people don't reference the baseline so that I can process what you're telling me and whether it's unusual.

[01:29:15] **Ross Blocher:** Fair. What is the scale here? But he wasn't saying it like it was an unusual thing. Now, this did give me pause, because he said that they were able to rule out that it was a plesiosaur.

[01:29:27] **Carrie Poppy:** Okay. Which is that big snake.

[01:29:28] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. The giant marine reptile that everybody always kind of thinks of when they think of the Loch Ness monster. It's certainly been the operative, you know, species name that's been in my head since my high school years. Oh yeah, I'm checking here. "Plesiosaurs became extinct at the end of the Cretaceous", so 66 million years ago. That's why, you know, surviving to 12,000 years ago is already an extraordinary claim.

But what took me aback by that statement is that they could rule that out, and he seemed to be suggesting that from Plesiosaur bones we were able to get DNA. I just—I don't know if that's actually possible. I know occasionally you can get dinosaur DNA under very special circumstances.

[01:30:06] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Like, if it's stuck in amber, and then you make a whole park and then...

[01:30:10] **Ross Blocher:** (*Chuckling.*) Yeah. That's right. Yeah, sometimes soft tissue can magically stick around longer. But I don't know. I didn't look up that particular part of the story. But he said that was ruled out. So, we're not saying it's a plesiosaur anymore. Also, no sturgeon were found. So, that's been a popular theory, but that one also, he said, is ruled out. That giant fish. Apparently catfish can also get incredibly large. And he was referencing some ones in Russia. He said, if you are to believe Russia on anything—(*chuckles*) which is timely, but no.

[01:30:43] **Carrie Poppy:** Boy, these Scots really like to give their little jokes about different groups! I say about Scots. (*Laughs.*)

[01:30:47] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, they sure do. Earlier he was saying—when he was talking about the goats earlier, he was saying, "There's only one thing that the Scots hunt, and that's the English."

(*Carrie laughs.*)

Which got a good laugh line. He said, "No, actually the goats. We have a population problem."

Anyways, so, okay. We've ruled out a catfish as well, because that was not found in that DNA survey.

[01:31:06] **Carrie Poppy:** Also, not a very good show.

[01:31:08] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, I know what you're talking about—where people catfish each other online.

[01:31:12] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. And it's like very set up, but anyway.

[01:31:14] **Ross Blocher:** But salmon do come here to spawn, and they get up to like 56 pounds. So, there are some large salmon occasionally. I know, can you imagine?

[01:31:23] **Carrie Poppy:** 56 pounds! Lord, that's like—that's eight Ellas!

[01:31:27] **Ross Blocher:** That's a big fish. Yeah. Also, pike/barracuda were found in the survey. The Ferox trout is also very large. Arctic char is another fish. So, some very large fish, he mentions, that could fit the bill for some of the sightings. Also, he says that the lamprey—which is a, you know, kind of an ancient animal, you know, like one might call a living fossil—apparently they live in the water as well. The conger eel was mentioned, because they live in the loch, and also they can get up to eight meters long. At least one was caught that was 24 feet long.

(Carrie “woah”s.)

And he said, “We now believe Nessie is a giant conger eel, a European eel.” That seems to be there going—you know, if you ask them like, “What do you think most of the sightings are or like the thing that you detected underwater?” That's what they're saying.

[01:32:19] **Carrie Poppy:** Who's the we there, this company? Okay.

[01:32:20] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, yeah. Good to clarify. “But” he adds, “If we catch Nessie, then we don't have a job anymore! And we like our job!”

[01:32:28] **Carrie Poppy:** That's right. Okay. Very transparent.

[01:32:30] **Ross Blocher:** *(Laughs.)* Yeah! It's an interesting point. Resonates with what we were saying. And it's funny, 'cause it came across in that 1996 film as well, where that's a major plot point is that—sorry, spoiler alert. Of course, the hardened cynical scientist does actually find the monster. And then of course the challenge becomes will he subterfuge the results and sharing it with the scientific community to keep the secret hidden, because that's what the people of the loch demand. They want this to remain a mystery, and they felt really—

[01:33:01] **Carrie Poppy:** Mmm! Oh, that's kind of an interesting plot point.

[01:33:05] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, they felt betrayed by him that like they sort of brought him into the fold. They responded to his enthusiasm.

[01:33:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Even though he confirmed their lore. Huh!

[01:33:12] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, the existence. And he ends up getting a crystal-clear photograph, you know, for 1996 CGI standards. And yeah, sorry, total spoiler there.

[01:33:21] **Carrie Poppy:** I'm impressed by this plot turn. I wouldn't have expected it to go that way.

[01:33:25] **Ross Blocher:** Okay. You know what? Fair. So, definitely watch that. But I was taking note in the film of things that they mentioned that could be the monster. And there's a lot of overlap with the list you just heard, because they talked about like sturgeon. They talked about the eels, even Congar eel they mentioned by name in that film. Which is, you know, from 27 years ago. But also, they mentioned like submerged vegetable mats. I thought that's interesting. A log.

[01:33:51] **Carrie Poppy:** Huh, I don't know what that is. I think a log and driftwood are Ben Radford's theories.

[01:33:55] **Ross Blocher:** Okay. Yeah. And there was even a part in the film where they saw something, got all excited about it—or at least one guy did—and then it turned out to be, like he predicted, a log that had been propelled by trapped bacterial gas. Okay. Very specific.

[01:34:09] **Carrie Poppy:** Mmm! So, Drew was in the lake. That's interesting.

[01:34:10] **Ross Blocher:** (*Laughs.*) He said at one point—Ted Danson, I mean—said, “Not even a soliton.” And I had to look that up. And it's like a very particular kind of waveform that can be formed like in a narrow, enclosed canal where you have a boat moving through and it's kind of pushing forward water that crests and creates this kind of traveling wave.

[01:34:30] **Carrie Poppy:** That's like a little different from a wake?

[01:34:31] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, it's like it goes in front of the boat, and it's like really just curious physics that happen to create it. So, that was mentioned as well. Also in the movie, they mentioned a large pinniped, which means a seal essentially. Aquatic mustelids—in other words, otters, and you even see like some otter scamper around at one point. He keeps using the phrase Elasmosaur, like after he sees like a certain pattern on a photo of a fin, which is another marine reptile, and—

[01:34:59] **Carrie Poppy:** I'm curious about seal being on that list, because I think I read somewhere someone saying this would be very unusual for it to be a seal.

[01:35:04] **Ross Blocher:** A seal to be in that location.

[01:35:07] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. That sounds unlikely to me.

[01:35:07] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, I don't think that there are, but it was floated in the movie as like this is something it could be. So, in the film, they end up saying that we analyzed it, and it turns out it was a hybrid between an Elasmosaur and a Plesiosaur. That's the official answer for the film of what they saw. And it very much looks like one of those marine reptiles.

[01:35:27] **Carrie Poppy:** So, the film is really still thinking of just like one isolated individual, the final survivor of this species.

[01:35:34] **Ross Blocher:** No, they show a family. They show a mom, dad, and a baby Nessie. Sorry, I've spoiled everything. I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry.

[01:35:41] **Carrie Poppy:** Sorry, Ted. Ted Danson, if you're listening, you can come on the show. Bring Nessie.

[01:35:44] **Ross Blocher:** So glad you survived that tan. It looked so dangerous. And you know, we could toss out a bunch of other things. Like, I feel like I got footage that with maybe a lower resolution camera could have been two ducks near each other that could have looked very much like something in the water. And I remember that coming up in the book *Abominable Science*, that sometimes you just have two things near each other spinning about in the water, and that looks like two humps of the same creature.

(Carrie agrees.)

Also, I saw a lot of—you were looking at the same footage with me—waves that just ever so slightly stand up, stand out. Maybe they're wind-generated waves or something, but they just create a dark crease on the water. That can look very much like it.

[01:36:25] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Totally. That's what my eye tells me when I see that. That's why it doesn't even stand out to me. It's like, yeah, I've seen dark patches in water before.

[01:36:33] **Ross Blocher:** But when you're really hoping, your brain can do the rest and get you the rest of the way. So then, you know, the narration continued talking about some other real features of the lake. Boring. You know, we're just here for Nessie.

(Carrie giggles.)

But we get back to the shore. Here are the bagpipes again, and we're off. So, it was pretty fun. I had a great time. I felt like they were mostly responsible about this and not trying to sell—they were trying to please the people who are out to see Nessie, but also not trying to sell a lot of false information.

[01:37:04] **Carrie Poppy:** And I think even the people who were out to see Nessie, who are true blue believers, it sounds like they would have—there were pieces of information in there

that would make them go like, “Oh, huh, I guess I need to deal with that now.” Which is good!

(Ross agrees.)

It's reminding me of last weekend. I went to Las Vegas for the Society of Professional Journalists conference, and I got to see Banachek do his mentalism routine. And Banachek, we mentioned in our James Randi episode, and we'll talk about him again another time. But he takes so many opportunities that so many mentalists wouldn't take to stop and be like, “These aren't psychic powers. Look at what I'm doing. Learn something from this.” And in a—he does it a much better way than I'm saying it now, but yeah! I appreciate when people do this, when they say like, “Hey, yeah, we're down for the game of it. That's fine. But like, I'm also going to see this as a responsibility on my part to put context around what I'm doing.”

[01:38:00] **Ross Blocher:** And I think that's a really important point, that you can have the fun aspects of this while being honest. And with Banachek, to use that example, like he's so skilled at what he does that you can still just revel in the performance of it and how well he pulls it off that you're still impressed and amazed, even though you know he he's telling you he's not breaking the laws of physics.

[01:38:22] **Carrie Poppy:** Or maybe more amazed, in a way.

[01:38:24] **Ross Blocher:** Right! Right, right. Absolutely. Also, I should mention that the whole time while we're on the boat, they had these live displays of what's coming back from the sonar. So, you're kind of seeing scans going on as you're there of like the water temperature and the current depth. So, presumably if another one of these blobs shows up, we're all going to see it on screen together.

So, we're looking at that and also this like kind of pre-mapped, blue—I'm showing Carrie this diagram—of the whole loch and then our current location on it. So, we're this tiny little white boat over this crazy depth. I just like here right below; it says that the Wi-Fi password is: “let's find Nessie”.

(Carrie “aw”s.)

So, yeah, I feel like they put on a good show, but a responsible show. And I appreciated that. But of course, as you're leaving, you see they've got these display curios full of merchandise. These little plush Nessies that you can buy, little toys, key chains, a rubber duck. You know, I should have got that. I could have sent it to my friend Jacqueline. That is pretty good.

[01:39:23] **Carrie Poppy:** She likes rubber ducks?

[01:39:25] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, she has a collection. Pretty delightful designs. And then—

[01:39:28] **Carrie Poppy:** Oooh! I like those magnets! Cuuute!

[01:39:30] **Ross Blocher:** Oh, Carrie likes the fridge magnet. Shoot. I should've gotten one for you.

[01:39:33] **Carrie Poppy:** No, I love what you brought me too.

[01:39:34] **Ross Blocher:** A little snow globe. And then, yeah, there's this Nessie that's broken into little segments. And yeah, I got one of those for Carrie. I got one for me too. Ceramic.

[01:39:43] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, it's great. So, it's broken into segments so that as you lay it across a flat surface, it looks like it's—

[01:39:50] **Ross Blocher:** Submerged in that surface. Pretty clever.

[01:39:51] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, coming up and down through the surface. We've got it in our kitchen window. Sending you the picture.

[01:39:56] **Ross Blocher:** Nice. And I also got this little green Nessie. Little plush, yeah.

[01:39:59] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, it's so cute. Hi, buddy.

[01:40:03] **Ross Blocher:** Super cute. And I also got, from a local shop, they have—

[01:40:05] **Carrie Poppy:** Wait, show me that last one. (*Laughs.*)

[01:40:07] **Ross Blocher:** They have all these gift shops. Yeah, Carrie's laughing at the one that I also had to buy.

[01:40:11] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Laughing.*) I love it! It says, “Caledonian Canal”, and then there's a picture of Nessie looking very happy, and then at the bottom it says, “I completely failed to see the Loch Ness monster.”

(*They laugh.*)

I feel like you or I could have designed that.

[01:40:25] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, I love that one. Yeah! Yeah, I keep that on the fridge. Holds up a picture of my niece.

[01:40:32] **Carrie Poppy:** That's great. Your niece-y (*Nessie*)?

[01:40:33] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah! (*Chuckles.*) The Loch Neice. This was all in this little gift shop that sold ice cream and had these various plush things and the magnets and maps. And it was like a little mini museum. And this one sign really caught my eye. It said, “No luck

spotting Nessie? Try spotting—” And then it tells you about these real animals that you might look for, like a red squirrel.

[01:40:54] **Carrie Poppy:** One of which is a squirrel. (*Laughs.*) I mean, which, a red squirrel sounds cool and everything, but when you're looking for a monster everyone's been talking about for 100 years—(*chuckles*).

[01:41:03] **Ross Blocher:** I feel so bad for the real creatures of the region, that we're all obsessed. But I think it says something about humanity. That's what we do. And I'm there, and I'm into it, and I'm participating with all my cameras.

[01:41:16] **Carrie Poppy:** Because the real star of the story is the story. It's that we pass the story along, and that's where all the priming begins. And—

[01:41:24] **Ross Blocher:** We're storytelling creatures, and we want to keep that story. Absolutely.

[01:41:28] **Carrie Poppy:** What a gorgeous photo!

[01:41:30] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. Now I'm just showing Carrie this beautiful image. Just looking out the bus window at these sheep grazing on this beautiful green grass.

[01:41:39] **Carrie Poppy:** You guys would love it. If you could see what I'm seeing, you'd love it.

[01:41:41] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, podcasts are so great for visuals. And then, yeah, just this gorgeous road. But we kept driving around, and at night we came back to this beach, and this is where you find Crazy Steve!

[01:41:53] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, Steve! Okay, so who had called him Crazy Steve before this? Did you already know he was Crazy Steve?

[01:41:58] **Ross Blocher:** The guide referred to him as Crazy Steve and just said that all the locals call him Crazy Steve. But yeah, Steve Feltham, who in 1991 began his full-time hunt for Nessie. And he's parked himself here on Dores Beach, and he has this little trailer where he lives, and it's all decked out. It says NessieHunter.co.uk. That's his website. You can see some videos of him there. And I was busy like photographing the loch and like getting some late night, you know, I thought really pretty views. But Cara told me that at one point, Steve poked his head out of his trailer, kind of looked at all of us for a moment, and then went back in.

So, I totally missed that. At least Cara got to see him.

[01:42:42] **Carrie Poppy:** Oh, funny. Just to give an idea of how strong this kind of thing is, I just was about to be like, “Oh my god, look!” And then I realized it is a mark that's on your actual laptop screen.

[01:42:56] **Ross Blocher:** Oh!

(They laugh.)

On top of the glass of the screen. And you're seeing that. It's like, "Oooh! Ooh! Maybe it's a—"

[01:43:01] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, yeah. Well, maybe we can pretend that's the monster! And then my brain was like, no, you can't even pretend that's the monster. *(Laughs.)*

[01:43:07] **Ross Blocher:** Priming does so much. So—

[01:43:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Yep. Um, excuse me, go back! *(Laughs.)*

[01:43:12] **Ross Blocher:** Hold on! Oh, shoot, I went forward too far.

[01:43:14] **Carrie Poppy:** Uuum! I just saw the Loch Ness monster!

[01:43:17] **Ross Blocher:** Okay, so I accidentally went too far, but I'm showing—I'm showing Carrie right now something that I saw that, you know, looked like it could be mistaken as Nessie, and that's just like the dark patches on the water.

(Carrie confirms.)

There was one kind of—there it is, yeah, like over there.

[01:43:37] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, where just sort of like a slight wave or wake just breaks above the surface, and then it's a little darker because of how shadows are.

[01:43:46] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, and it's undulating and stuff, so it looks like the kind of thing that gets reported as Nessie. But here's the really hard to explain footage, Carrie. What do you make of this?

[01:43:57] **Carrie Poppy:** Here we go. Oh my god! You caught it! Well, okay, here's—

[01:44:01] **Ross Blocher:** Yep! There it is! It looks just like Nessie.

[01:44:02] **Carrie Poppy:** Yep. We have a Nessie—wait, we have two Nessies, identical, going the same way.

(Ross cackles.)

They don't appear to be swimming. They appear to be stationary as the water moves past them.

[01:44:15] **Ross Blocher:** (*Chuckling.*) They're going really fast!

[01:44:17] **Carrie Poppy:** And boy, yeah, head isn't moving, but it could not look more like Nessie of lore. How did this happen?

[01:44:25] **Ross Blocher:** So, on the boat, once you get on the interior portion, they have vinyl decals on the windows of the perfect Nessie outline. Oh, Carrie!

[01:44:34] **Carrie Poppy:** (*Genuinely incredulous.*) That's on the window?!

[01:44:35] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, that's on the window! I love that look. Carrie was so shocked.

[01:44:39] **Carrie Poppy:** Woooah! They did a really good job!

[01:44:40] **Ross Blocher:** They did a great job. So, you can angle a photo that shows the outline of a Nessie in your photos.

[01:44:47] **Carrie Poppy:** Woah! Yeah, I really thought you were just going to say like, “Oh yeah. So, such-and-such a company was able to build this thing that like kind of floats there but is—”

[01:44:54] **Ross Blocher:** Like an app or something.

[01:44:55] **Carrie Poppy:** No, I thought it was like a stationary object someone had built, you know, to—I mean, not like to actually fool anybody, but like to, you know, please the tourists.

[01:45:00] **Ross Blocher:** Out in the water. Well, there you go.

[01:45:06] **Carrie Poppy:** Wow, that's really impressive!

[01:45:09] **Ross Blocher:** This can plesiosaur (*please you sore*).

[01:45:10] **Carrie Poppy:** That's much better than that cigar on the car in *I Think You Should Leave*. 20 people are very pleased with this reference and the others don't know what's happening.

(*Ross affirms.*)

Yeah. Good, exactly. Yeah, that's really impressive. We gotta show that photo.

[01:45:23] **Ross Blocher:** It was super fun, and they joked about it. You know, it was all tongue in cheek and in good fun, but yeah, at least even if you're out there all day, you can get your footage of Nessie with the vinyl decal. Yeah. I love that. So, I'm going to post some

of these photos that we're talking about, just so you can see a bit of that. And sorry, it'll be on Facebook. 'Cause that's easy to do.

[01:45:43] **Carrie Poppy:** I'm curious. When I go whale watching and stuff, you know, sometimes you get sick, because the waves are so choppy. How did this compare to that kind of thing?

[01:45:50] **Ross Blocher:** It wasn't choppy. It was relatively smooth. I did not get seasick.

[01:45:53] **Carrie Poppy:** No one throwing up off the side of the boat?

[01:45:56] **Ross Blocher:** Nope, nope. Didn't see any of that going on. So, pretty smooth ride. And yeah, it's very rare for me to feel seasick. I think I've only done it once or twice in my life, but just to underline some of these other points that we were talking about—you mentioned there's a live webcam.

[01:46:09] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah. Too far away.

[01:46:11] **Ross Blocher:** LochNess.co.uk/livecam. So, anybody from anywhere across the world can keep an eye on Loch Ness at any point.

[01:46:19] **Carrie Poppy:** You know what? I gotta look at that. Oh, it's dark there right now.

[01:46:23] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. It's a 9:55 PM.

[01:46:25] **Carrie Poppy:** Well, here it is. Here's Loch Ness.

[01:46:27] **Ross Blocher:** Oh yeah. Yeah. I don't see... I don't see a creature. Huh.

[01:46:30] **Carrie Poppy:** We're just looking at a black screen.

[01:46:32] **Ross Blocher:** So, at least when it's daytime, people always can have eyes on Loch Ness. But also, just very recently, about a month ago, there was the largest organized Nessie hunt in 50 years. And everybody came from far and wide. And I remember getting a notification from my news app about this, because it was saying that there had been a group that heard these gloop sounds—which is just a great word—and that unfortunately their recording equipment wasn't plugged in when it happened. So. (*Clicks his teeth.*) Just don't have the sounds.

[01:47:00] **Carrie Poppy:** It's always such a shame.

[01:47:01] **Ross Blocher:** But okay. Gloop sound. Do they make a gloop sound?

[01:47:05] **Carrie Poppy:** Do they sound like Darth Vader coughing?

[01:47:08] **Ross Blocher:** (*Giggles.*) Yeah. You know, it's like with ghosts, you're like, okay, do they radiate on the electromagnetic spectrum in a way that we can't see but recording equipment can capture?

[01:47:17] **Carrie Poppy:** Right. And Ken the ghost hunter disagrees with Janine the ghost hunter. And what do I make of that?

[01:47:22] **Ross Blocher:** All of these underlying assumptions, but okay. They didn't capture their gloop sound during that massive weekend, but most people said, "Hey, we came, we saw. We didn't catch Nessie, but you know, we had fun."

And then, like I mentioned, there's kind of this like annual drip of like another major video that someone posts. And I looked into one that looked like, wow, okay, that that's something coming out of the water. And it looked like kind of a mix between a seal, pattern wise, and a whale, size wise. But it turns out the guy who had posted this, he discovered it in 2020, but it was from a photo he took in 2019. Turns out that on his LinkedIn, he is a professional 3D artist, and it looks CG. And apparently there was a discrepancy with the timestamps on his photos. So. But the underlying point there is that don't worry. If anything ever sticks its head above the water in Loch Ness, someone will be there to photograph it.

(*Carrie agrees.*)

Because there are these daily tours, there is the webcam, there's so much attention being paid to this thing. And I was thinking, as I was sitting right next to the trailer of Steve, Crazy Steve, that—you know, he's got all this optical equipment there, and you see pictures of him with this crazy telephoto lens and everything. If anyone's going to capture it, don't worry, Steve's on the job! He's been there for years. And if the monster shows up, don't worry, we'll hear about it. Also, we talked about the tourism angle of it. And Gary Campbell, who you mentioned earlier, keeper of the official Loch Ness Monster Register, estimated that the monster adds \$54,000,000 USD or £41,000,000 to the local economy every year. I saw another estimate—well, actually this was from a government site. They were looking at Inverness and Loch Ness visitors, saying that in 2019, there were 313,000 visitors who spent £89,000,000. So, that's over twice that previous estimate.

[01:49:14] **Carrie Poppy:** Wow! Scotland, you gotta thank Janet Fraser! RIP.

[01:49:18] **Ross Blocher:** Doing the Lord's work there. 2021, it went way down because of—because of lockdown, the loch was down. And so, that number went down to like 14,000 visitors spending only £11,000,000. So, I assume it's on the upswing again. And I got to be part of that showing up in late 2022! So, there you go. That's my report on the Loch Ness monster.

[01:49:41] **Carrie Poppy:** I have one more thing to say about Nessie. I found Janet Fraser's original description of Nessie. Let's see how it stacks up to what we usually hear now. Okay. This is from the *Sault Daily Star* in 1965. It says, "First sighted in 1933 by a spinster innkeeper named Janet Fraser, the monster was described by Miss Fraser as having a head shaped like a snake and as big as a horse's with a long neck."

[01:50:12] **Ross Blocher:** Okay, yeah. Yeah, we haven't even mentioned kind of the older name for this type of creature is a kelpie, a water horse. So, yeah, horse-like anatomy has always been kind of part of the legend.

[01:50:23] **Carrie Poppy:** “In the middle of which there were two flippers.” Are there flippers on the neck? She claims flippers on the neck.

[01:50:32] **Ross Blocher:** Flippers on the neck! Interesting. Yeah, it's not usually where you find flippers.

[01:50:36] **Carrie Poppy:** And this is my favorite detail. “And it had eyes like motor car lamps.”

(Ross repeats it thoughtfully.)

Which I think suggests glowing eyes.

[01:50:45] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, that it's like actually radiating light.

[01:50:50] **Carrie Poppy:** And that they're quite sizable and it's like a beam.

[01:50:52] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah, that feels like something different. Definitely wouldn't match the 1996 film's depiction of this creature. So, yeah, that feels like a standout feature.

[01:51:02] **Carrie Poppy:** I'm always interested in case zero. Because if you can't match case zero, then something different is going on in the storytelling.

[01:51:11] **Ross Blocher:** So, from my cryptozoology module, I will insert that there's a paragraph here. “Recorded monster sightings from the 1500s to the 1800s.” So, I forgot about this one. “In 1527, A man named Duncan Campbell recorded seeing a terrible beast on the shore near the loch. In 1871, a Mr. D. McKenzie reportedly saw an object resembling an upturned boat wriggling and churning up the water. Eight years later, in '79, a group of children claimed they spotted a small head on a—”

[01:51:38] **Carrie Poppy:** Could it just be an upturned boat?!

[01:51:40] **Ross Blocher:** “The group of children claimed they spotted a small head on a long neck on the North shore.” So, that could have added to the mystique. That's the first time I think we hear that detail. And then there we go. I think then the '30s becomes the next round.

[01:51:53] **Carrie Poppy:** It would be fun to collect like all the different accounts and make the Nessie—draw the Nessie that can hold all of them. That'd be cool.

[01:52:01] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. It's always fun to see those kinds of efforts with like aliens depicted on film. 'Cause you have your standard gray, but every now and then you see them trying to incorporate other elements of the mythos.

[01:52:10] **Carrie Poppy:** Or the biblically accurate angels.

[01:52:11] **Ross Blocher:** Yeah. The spinning wheels within wheels with eyes all along their rims.

[01:52:17] **Carrie Poppy:** And don't get me started on the full armor of God.

[01:52:19] **Ross Blocher:** Carrie, I'd like you to start on the full armor of God.

(They chuckle.)

[01:52:23] **Carrie Poppy:** It doesn't have pants, if I recall correctly.

[01:52:26] **Ross Blocher:** So, as my fridge magnet says: I completely failed to see the Loch Ness monster. I'm sorry.

[01:52:31] **Carrie Poppy:** Aw, yeah, but you know, I'll tell you part of why. You have a really good camera.

[01:52:36] **Ross Blocher:** *(Laughs.)* Yeah, it is fun to pull that thing out every now and then and get the crazy zoom footage. Oh, generally.

[01:52:41] **Carrie Poppy:** Yeah, but I mean, I think that's really partly why you can't see Nessie very well anymore. You have to be far away. You have to have the grainy photo. You gotta have your old whatever cell phone he had. That's the only way to make this happen very convincingly.

[01:52:56] **Ross Blocher:** They were talking on the boat about like the different depths of water and how you have the twilight zone or deeper down the midnight zone. But truly, I think Nessie lives in the low information zone.

[01:53:08] **Carrie Poppy:** *(Titters.)* In the LIZ and in the hearts of us all. And of course, in the mind of spinster Janet Fraser! Well, that's it for our show. Our theme music is by Brian Keith Dalton.

[01:53:23] **Ross Blocher:** Our administrative manager is Ian Kremer.

[01:53:25] **Carrie Poppy:** You can support this and all our European vacations by going to MaximumFun.org/join.

[01:53:31] **Ross Blocher:** And you can support us by telling a friend, by leaving a positive review. That really does help. And I see those on occasion, and they can make my day. And if you mention Carrie, I'll send her a screenshot.

[01:53:42] **Carrie Poppy:** *(Chuckles.)* If it's nice.

[01:53:43] **Ross Blocher:** If it's nice, that's right. I've only sent you nice ones!

[01:53:45] **Carrie Poppy:** No, I know. That's what I'm saying.

[01:53:46] **Ross Blocher:** Okay! And that's it. Yeah. Thanks to everybody who supports us and makes these investigations possible.

[01:53:52] **Carrie Poppy:** And remember!

[01:53:53] **Ross Blocher:** From Scottish comedian, Eleanor Morton.

[01:53:55] **Clip:**

Eleanor Morton: Welcome to this guided boat tour of Loch Ness. My name's Craig, and I'll be your guide as we sweep over the majestic waters of this iconic piece of scenery. There are several settlements around the loch, including the remains of Castle Urquhart, home of the Urquhart Clan, and run the docket. And no, you won't be able to say it right, so don't try.

Of course, the reason you've all come here and paid £40 today is that there are rumors of a monster in the loch, and there have been many sightings over the years—although, these are more likely to be a log, a wave, a swan, a bit of seaweed, some mud, a stone, a boat wake, or a wee boy that's fallen in. There are some that theorize that a plesiosaur, which is a type of dinosaur, has survived millions of years in the loch. And to that I would say: would you live here for millions of years? Do I believe there's a great, big, scary monster on the loch that people see sometimes but never when there's a film crew around? For the sake of this tour, yes.

One of the more notable residents of the area was black magician and satanist Aleister Crowley. I mean, he didn't do any spells but apparently being bald and mental is enough to qualify you as a magician. Now that everyone is intensely seasick, I'd like to invite you back to the hotel's whiskey and haggis tasting session.

[01:55:23] **Music:** “Oh No, Ross and Carrie! Theme Song” by Brian Keith Dalton. A jaunty, upbeat instrumental.

[01:55:36] **Promo:**

Music: Cheerful synth.

Daniel Baruela: Hey, this is Daniel Baruela, Technology and Data Specialist. I'm here with...

Kira Gowen: Kira Gowen, Ad Operations Specialist. And we are both worker-owners here at Maximum Fun.

Daniel: October is National Co-Op Month, so we're celebrating our brand-new co-op and others with an event called—

Daniel & Kira: Co-Optober!

Kira: We've got special events all month long, starting with a live Q&A on YouTube, where MaxFun worker-owners will answer your questions on Friday, October 6th. And much more to come!

Daniel: We also want to tell you about some incredible, limited-edition merch exclusively available to MaxFun members until the end of October.

Kira: If you're already a member of MaxFun, you've shown that you care about our shows and what we do.

Daniel: If you also want to help launch us into this new cooperative era and show off your support, go ahead and get yourself a hat, pin, or shirt. We worked with some of our favorite artists to make them really special.

Kira: For details on merch, all of our upcoming events—like Meetup Day and more—visit MaximumFun.org/cooptober.

Daniel: That's C-O-O-P-T-O-B-E-R.

Kira: Happy Co-Optober!

(Music ends.)

[01:56:40] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[01:56:41] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[01:56:42] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[01:56:44] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[01:56:45] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[01:56:46] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[01:56:47] **Speaker 6:** —by you!