



Junto Productions

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Series Proposal

Earth's climate has shaped life on this planet in every way: from the creation of life, the evolution of life and then, of course, the extinction of it. Over millions of years, climate's affects have been gentle as well as merciless. In a very real sense, climate has been the agent of change behind historical events big and small. And yet, the study of climate is a "baby science" compared to physics, biology, chemistry etc. For only about 150 years have we studied the "mother" of all planetary factors. For this reason, imbedded in the study of climate are thousands of profound mysteries about the history of the planet and human civilization.

Why did the T.rex become extinct? What caused the near total extinction of early humanity? How did hippos once thrive among men in the Saharan desert? If the ancient Israelites did cross the Red Sea, how did it part? What caused the rise and fall of the famous city of Petra? Why did the Mayan civilization disappear?

These and other major historical mysteries are the subject of Dr. Randall Cerveny's incisive book Weather's Greatest Mysteries Solved! In it he takes us on an adventure through history and around the globe. Geographically, the mysteries he unravels transport us to such exotic locations as a remote Indonesian volcano that almost wiped humanity off the earth; to southern Argentina, where Charles Darwin witnessed a type of storm system that revolutionized our ideas of climate change; and to the mountainous region of Tibet, where "climate spies" for Russia and Britain conducted covert missions to wrestle control of that vital corner of the globe.

In our documentary series for television, we will take you on the same amazing adventures where these incredible historical mysteries are solved for the first time. And what makes the unraveling of these mysteries so compelling is the fact that they are amazingly complex. To solve any one of them requires the coordination of scientists and specialists from many fields who must employ various different analytical techniques. Each mystery is a unique and exciting kind of puzzle. Each episode will thus be the solution of an historical mystery.

Sample Episode Summaries

The Mystery of Humanity's Near-Extinction

Although humanity developed 2 million years ago and spread throughout the eastern hemisphere, our DNA says that we are still essentially African. That is because a major catastrophe occurred 73,000 years ago—the eruption of a “supervolcano” named Toba that left living just a few hundred individuals. Should we be concerned for another such event? Yes, Yellowstone’s supervolcano could erupt at any time and could have similar results.

The Mystery of the Saharan Hippos

Rock art in the Sahara Desert shows giraffes and hippopotamuses. How can that be? 8,000 years ago the Sahara was a much wetter place than it is today. But why is it now one of the biggest deserts on earth?

The Mystery of the Red Sea and the Exodus

Could the Red Sea have parted as told in the Bible? Was it by the hand of God or nature?

The Mystery of Petra, the Rose City

During the Roman Empire, a huge desert city arose in the central Jordan desert. How did they do it and why did the Rose city finally die?

The Mystery of Black Death and The Vanishing Sun

536 AD was the first year that the Black Death invaded Europe. Did a “missing” sun cause this? If so, what made the sun “disappear” and what role did it play in the Black Death’s invasion?

The Mystery of Mayan Megadrought

Did a “megadrought” and a drought related plague cause the collapse of the extremely sophisticated Mayan civilization?

The Mystery of the Pacific Hot Tub

What really is the El Niño effect and how can a change in sea-surface temperatures in the central Pacific cause massive changes in weather patterns around the world?

The Mystery of Tibet's Weather Spies

During the “Great Game” of the 1900s between Russia and Great Britain, Britain employed Indian climate spies using a variety of bizarre methods and equipment to wrestle control of Tibet.

The Mystery of the Crashing Airplane and the A-Bomb

When Eastern Flight 66 with 146 people onboard crashed near the runway of JFK airport in New York in 1976, Dr. Ted Fujita was brought in to determine what caused the terrible crash. What Fujita uncovered was an entirely new weather phenomenon called a “microburst.” What is a “microburst” and why is it potentially as powerful as a nuclear detonation?