

EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY, JULY 3 AT 8AM PT / 11AM ET

NEWS



**NAT GEO'S NINE-TIME EMMY® AWARD-WINNING SERIES
TRAFFICKED WITH MARIANA VAN ZELLER
RETURNS WITH POWERFUL NEW SEASON EXPLORING THE
WORLD'S DEADLIEST UNDERGROUND MARKETS**

**From Emmy Award-Winning Muck Media, New Season Dives Deep Into the
Worlds of Cartels, Scams, Militias, Heists, Bride Trafficking, Street Racing and
More**

**Now Streaming on Hulu, Season Four of Trafficked Is the Most Nominated
Unscripted Series Ever With 29 Nominations for the 2025 News & Documentary
Emmy Awards**

**Season Five of TRAFFICKED WITH MARIANA VAN ZELLER Premieres July 19 at
9/8c on National Geographic and Streams Next Day on Hulu**

**Watch Trailer [HERE](#)
Download Key Art [HERE](#)**

(Washington, D.C. – July 3, 2025) National Geographic announced today that nine-time Emmy Award-winning investigative series **TRAFFICKED WITH MARIANA VAN ZELLER** will return for its highly anticipated new season on **Saturday, July 19, at 9/8c**. Known for her fearless reporting and unparalleled contacts with the world's most dangerous black markets, Emmy, Peabody and duPont Award-winning journalist **Mariana van Zeller** pulls back the curtain on global criminal enterprises—from cartels and scammers to militant extremists and underground drug labs.

In the wake of four News and Documentary Emmys wins last week (adding to the five from the year before) and scoring a record 29 nominations this year alone, the new season of **TRAFFICKED** continues van Zeller's immersive, on-the-ground reporting in some of the world's most secretive underground markets. The new season kicks off with a groundbreaking look into the operations of Mexican cartels inside the United States. The results are shocking. From small-town drug cells, van Zeller explores how these criminal groups move drugs, launder billions, and even infiltrate law enforcement. It's a growing influence that's fueling violence and addiction across the country.

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Armed with National Geographic's trademark inside access, each episode follows van Zeller as she connects with traffickers, militias, scammers, smugglers, and law enforcement across the globe to investigate the inner workings of a multi-trillion-dollar shadow economy. From high-level criminals to frontline victims and government insiders, van Zeller's reporting offers a 360-degree view of the forces shaping our increasingly interconnected, and blurred, legal and illegal economies. Premiering weekly, the series exposes the human cost of these hidden worlds and why they matter more than ever.

"This season mirrors the times we're living in," says van Zeller. "The issues we investigate—from the growing reach of cartels in the United States to the expanding world of scams—don't happen in isolation. These are societal stories, rooted in desperation, exploitation, and the global forces shaping our future. Hidden stories that ultimately affect us all."

Episodes include the following:

"Cartel USA" – Premieres July 19 at 9/8c

Mariana explores the growing influence of Mexican cartels in the U.S.

"Scam City" – Premieres July 26 at 9/8c

Mariana travels to Southeast Asia's epicenter of romance and investment scams, known as "pig butchering."

"The Tranq Dope Underground" – Premieres August 2 at 9/8c

Mariana investigates the mysterious next wave of America's opioid crisis.

"Brides for Sale" – Premieres August 9 at 9/8c

Mariana investigates the black-market trade in trafficked brides destined for China.

"Million Dollar Highway Heists" – Premieres August 16 at 9/8c

Mariana investigates the explosive world of heists.

"Inside America's Militias" – Premieres August 23 at 9/8c

Mariana investigates the growing influence of heavily armed militias.

"The Great American Rehab Scam" – Premieres August 30 at 9/8c

Mariana investigates the dark underworld of fraudulent addiction treatment programs.

"Black Market Love" – Premieres September 6 at 9/8c

Mariana investigates the global surge in anti-LGBTQ+ violence.

"Underground Street Racing" – Premieres September 13 at 9/8c

Mariana investigates the deadly world of illegal street racing.

"Shark Hunters" – Premieres September 20 at 9/8c

Mariana investigates the underground market for shark fins.

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TRAFFICKED: UNDERWORLDS WITH MARIANA VAN ZELLER was nominated for 29 News and Documentary Emmys, the most nominations for an unscripted series in a single year in the history of television. The series won four Emmys, including Outstanding Health or Medical Coverage for “Body Parts,” Outstanding Arts, Culture or Entertainment Coverage for “Illegal Gambling,” Outstanding Crime and Justice Coverage for “Hash Smugglers,” and Outstanding Lighting Direction – News for “Illegal Gambling.” The series won five News & Documentary Emmys in 2024, including Outstanding Science and Technology Coverage for “Cyber Pirates,” Outstanding Business, Consumer, or Economic Coverage for “Black Market Babies,” Outstanding Video Journalism: News for “Terrorist Oil,” Outstanding Editing: News for “Ghost Guns,” and Outstanding Lighting Direction: News for “MDMA” The series received a Critics Choice Real TV Award nomination for Best Crime/Justice Show for two consecutive years in 2021 and 2022 and a Critics Choice Documentary Award nomination for Best Ongoing Documentary Series in 2023. The series was a Gracie Award winner in 2024 for Documentary Series.

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TRAFFICKED: UNDERWORLDS WITH MARIANA VAN ZELLER is produced for National Geographic by Muck Media. For Muck Media, executive producers are Mariana van Zeller, Darren Foster, Jeff Plunkett and Jeff Allen. For National Geographic, Sean David Johnson and Chad Cohen are executive producers, Bengt Anderson is senior vice president of Unscripted Content, and Tom McDonald is the executive vice president of Global Factual and Unscripted Content.

About Muck Media

Muck Media is an Emmy, Peabody and duPont Award-winning production company founded by five filmmaker best friends. Curious about the world, Muck tells entertaining, diverse stories about real people doing extraordinary things. Muck approaches their character-driven storytelling with a journalistic background, spotlighting underdog narratives that resonate with powerful, universal insights sure to inspire audiences.

Nominated for 29 Emmys in 2025 (following 24 noms in 2024), Muck’s recent projects include the Emmy Award-winning “Science Fair: The Series” (Disney+/National Geographic), inspired by the Sundance Festival Favorite and Emmy Award-winning feature documentary of the same name; the nine-time Emmy Award-winning series “Trafficked with Mariana van Zeller” (National Geographic), about global black markets and underworlds; the critically acclaimed feature “American Pain” (CNN Films/Max), about the rise and fall of twin brothers from Florida who ran the biggest prescription opioid trafficking network in U.S. history; and the Sundance documentary “Mucho Mucho Amor” (Netflix), about the beloved Puerto Rican astrologer Walter Mercado.

About National Geographic Content

Representing the largest brand on social media with over 780 million followers and 1.1 billion impressions each month, National Geographic Content's award-winning and critically acclaimed storytelling inspires fans of all ages to connect with, explore and care about the world through factual storytelling. National Geographic Content, part of a joint venture between The Walt Disney Company and the National Geographic Society, reaches over 532 million people worldwide in 172 countries and 33 languages as a digital, social and print publisher and across the global National Geographic channels (National Geographic Channel, Nat Geo WILD, Nat Geo MUNDO), National Geographic Documentary Films, and direct-to-consumer platforms Disney+ and Hulu. Its diverse content includes Oscar®- and BAFTA award-winning film *Free Solo*, Oscar-nominated films *Sugarcane*, *Fire of Love* and *Bobi Wine: The People's President*, Emmy® Award-winning franchise *9/11: One Day in America* and *JFK: One Day in America*, Emmy® Award-winning series *Animals Up Close*, series *Trafficked with Mariana van Zeller*, *Life Below Zero*, and *Secrets*

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of the Whales, in addition to multiple National Magazine Awards, Pulitzer Prize Finalists and Webby wins. Visit nationalgeographic.com and natgeotv.com or explore [Instagram](#), [Threads](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), and [Reddit](#).

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