

OAK ISLAND EXCLUSIVE Behind the scenes with CBC's Land & Sea

We go behind the scenes with new CBC documentary on Oak Island

We are very excited to bring you a sneak preview into a forthcoming CBC documentary based on the Oak Island treasure hunt. The show features an exclusive interview with treasure hunter Dan Blankenship - his first interview in over 30 years. We are looking forward to hearing what Dan has to say about his decades of treasure hunting and why he remains determined as ever to continue with the treasure hunt.

Oak Island Treasure was able to provide an overview of the mystery which 'really helped research wise to get a handle on the whole story of the island'. It's with great pleasure that we bring you behind the scenes photos and an exclusive interview with the show's producer, Jessica Brown.

When did you first hear about the Oak Island mystery?

I first heard of Oak Island when I moved to Nova Scotia in 1997. Of course any mystery surrounding pirate treasure is fascinating, but what intrigued me the most was the fact that the search has been going on for such a long time, arguably with very little evidence to keep the search alive. But in producing and directing this documentary I was very fortunate to meet a number of people who are so passionate about the story, that I believe the real treasure lies in them.

Why did you decide to make a documentary about the Oak Island treasure hunt?

CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), another one of our national treasures, was looking for an update on the Oak Island story. John Wesley Chisholm, the president of Arcadia Entertainment Inc. had been following the story for a long while, and thought it would be a great opportunity to let everyone know that the search is still on, and include the possibility of new engineering techniques from the McGill Engineering students in Montreal, Quebec. I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to take the idea into fruition.

We understand that in the documentary, you have been the first person to interview Dan Blankenship on camera in over 30 years. What can we look forward to hearing?

D'Arcy O'Connor really needs to be thanked for this, because it was through D'Arcy that I was able to get in touch with Dan Blankenship, and luckily Dan was kind enough to give us the better part of a day with him to tour around the island and chat! I feel very fortunate that Dan agreed to speak with us about his time on Oak Island, and his personal beliefs of the true history of Oak Island. I think what viewers can look forward to really is meeting Dan. He has kept Oak Island very close to his heart, and his passion for it really comes across in his interview.

Did your opinions of the Oak Island treasure hunt change as a result of speaking to Dan?

My opinion of the Oak Island treasure hunt did change in meeting Dan, and everyone else who is passionate about the story. From the historians to the engineers. At first I really questioned why people would spend so much time and money, not to mention the loss of lives, in order to get to the bottom of the mystery, but in meeting those involved, I feel that I have a new understanding to the why it remains such a huge topic of interest.

After producing the documentary, seeing Oak Island and speaking with Dan, do you think there is anything buried on Oak Island? If so what?

I am not sure if there is treasure to be found, and of course I am by no means an expert, but certainly the people who we met along the way and their desire to find out the truth is something that I think should be respected, and hopefully sometime soon they will be able to tell us what is really going on there!

What were your expectations before visiting Oak Island?

Truthfully I am not really sure what my expectations were before visiting Oak Island. I had heard that there were a lot of drilling sites and holes dug to try to get to the bottom of it, so I really wasn't sure what I would see. Dan Blankenship gave us a really great tour of all of that.

Did you face any challenges producing the show? If so, what were these?

The only challenge that we faced in making the show was really to get on the island and get a first hand account from Dan. Everyone loves a mystery, and I think everyone loves to talk about it. So it wasn't hard to get people interested in meeting with us and I would like to thank everyone of them for doing so.

Do you get a sense there is a growing appetite for documentaries on unsolved mysteries? If so, why do you think this may be?

I definitely think there is a growing appetite for documentaries on unsolved mysteries. I think we all have a tendency to want to get to the bottom of things that we might not understand right away. Luckily television is a great way to document this, although sometimes, such as with this show, at this time the mystery is left to the viewers to come up with their own conclusions.

What other shows have you worked on?

I have been very fortunate in having had the opportunity to work on a number of different shows- from shipwreck treasure shows, to occult mysteries, to futuristic theories, to a documentary on another not so accessible island, Sable Island in Nova Scotia, where wild horses roam! If anyone is interested they can check out Arcadia Entertainment Inc.'s website for a list of documentaries we have produced - www.arcadiatv.com. Broadcast date: February 28th, 2010 at Noon EST on CBC

<http://www.cbc.ca/landandsea/>