

04/24/2006 CBC.CS::As It Happens #
Sculptor reveals a typo in CIA puzzle Time: (8:07) #

URL:: http://www.cbc.ca/asithappens/media/2006/sculpture_code.ram #

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TIME STAMP: 0:00

HM: Hello Ms. Dunin!

Time Stamp 0:01

HM: Hello Helen Mann!

Time Stamp 0:02

HM: Hi, how are you today?

Time Stamp 0:05

ED: I ..t.. quite well and yourself?

Time Stamp 0:05

HM: Oh, I am very well and I am quite interested and intrigued in this whole thing. Um... tell us a bit more about this Kryptos sculpture...what it is .. where it is.

Time Stamp 0:15

ED: Okay...well, what it looks like is a...it is about twelve feet tall and about twenty feet long and picture like a..a petrified tree trunk with a large sheet of copper ..uh.. coming out of it, sort of like a flag. And it's got a couple thousand letters that are punched through it. And these letters are a..a code. The sculpture stands in the central courtyard of ..uh CIA. And it was installed in 1990, when the CIA commissioned the New Headquarters Building. They also commissioned some art to go along with it. And James Sanborn, a Washington, D.C. Artist, ..uh.. got the bid to do the art. And after he got the bid, he decided that he wanted to do something with the subject of cryptography. And he was teamed with the chairman of the CIA Cryptographic Center, who was in the process of retiring in that..that year. And the two of them got together for about four months and came up with the code systems that went on this sculpture.

Time Stamp 1:09

HM: Well, hav...have people been starrng at this thing, ever since, trying to solve what it means.

Time Stamp 1:15

ED: Pretty much. Pretty much. I mean it is in the center of CIA. So there aren't a who.. very many members of the public who have gotten in to have time to really stare at it. We have a few pictures that we are looking at. And I know that there're some people inside the intelligence agencies that are working on it as well. We know that there are four codes and the first three have been solved.

Time Stamp 1:33

HM: Uh huh..

Time Stamp 1:34

ED: We know what they say, or at least we thought we knew [laughs] exactly what they said, up until this week. And then the fourth part, down at the very bottom, we have ninety-seven or ninety-eight characters, that no one has been able to solve, inside or outside the Intelligence Agency.

Time Stamp 1:46

HM: Well, how complicated is..is the code or types of code are..are in..in this sculpture?

Time Stamp 1:54

ED: Well, it depends how you define complicated. The third section of the sculpture, is probably a type of code system that hobbyists could figure out, if they were like advanced hobbyists.

Time Stamp 2:07

HM: Mmm uh..

Time Stamp 2:08

ED: The ..uh.. the top two sections they used something called the poly-alphabetic system, which was devised a few hundred years ago. And for a long time it was considered the uncrackable cipher. Uh..these days it is possible to crack with pencil and paper though its..its really better if you have a computer to kind of work through all the various permutations.

Time Stamp 2:21

HM: Now, essentially that means multiple all..alphabets included in the same code.

Time Stamp 2:26

ED: Exactly. And..and the poly-alphabetic also means that each letter of a message is encrypted not only what it is, like a "B" or a "Q" or a "Z", but also, where it is in a message. So if anything is move left or right, even like a single spot that could totally ..uh.. mess up the code. And that's what happened in this case...[Inaudible few words]

Time Stamp 2:43

HM: [Talks over Elonka's last few words] Yeah. Well in fact, you said a few moments ago, that you thought three of the four parts had been solved, but now you find this isn't the case. Why? What's missing?

Time Stamp 2:53

ED: Well, the ..um.. the sculptor when he made part two, when he encrypted it, he ..uh.. ended up with some cipher text that was suppose to go on the sculpture. But what he did was he removed a letter and the analogy that I use for non-cryptographers is sort of like he gave us a recipe. And because he wanted to make it look pretty on the page he removed one of the elements. And wasn't [laughing] really paying attention to what he removed, and ended up removing something really important, like sugar. And..and so we had this recipe and we followed the recipe to crack this code, and came up with a message. And what should have happened, is at the very end, where he removed this letter, it should have came out as sheer garbled text. But, by sheer

coincidence it came out as something that looked like English. It came out to sa...what it looked like it said was "ID by rows". [Spelling Out] "IDBYROWS".

Time Stamp 3:39

HM: Identified by rows, essentially.

Time Stamp 3:41

ED: Right, and that's what we thought it said and that's the answer went out. And..and the artist had confirmed that was the correct answer. But, then this week he said, "Opps,"[Elonka and reporter laughs]..the.. that it wasn't the correct answer. That when he heard people in the late nineteen-nineties, such as Jim..Jim Gillogly, and David Stein reading off the answer they would read off the last sentence, which is ..uh..you know: ".. eight minutes forty four seconds west ID by rows". And the sculptor had thought when they were saying "ID by rows" that they were just saying, Oh, this is the technique that we used to solve it, [laughing] he didn't think they were actually saying this is the answer that is on the sculpture.

Time Stamp 4:13

HM: Okay.

Time Stamp 4:14

ED: So he called me up and he said, "ID by rows is NOT it". And he wouldn't tell me what it was, but he..he gave his theories as to why there was this problem. And so..

Time Stamp 4:22

HM: [Interjects] What is the plain text for part two?

Time Stamp 4:24

ED: It's a few sentences, and it says: "It was totally invisible How's that possible? They used the Earth's magnetic field X The information was gathered and transmitted undergruund to an unknown location X Does Langley know about this? They should Its buried out there somewhere X Who knows the exact location? Only WW This was his last message X Thirty eight degrees fifty seven minutes six point five seconds north Seventy seven degrees eight minutes forty four seconds west ID by rows"..so that's wha..that's what we thought the answer was. And now Sanborn has said that ..uh.. has told us now that the correct answer, at the end is: "..eight minutes forty four seconds west X Layer Two".

Time Stamp 5:08

HM: Hmmm. Sounds like you're going to have ..uh.. a continuing mystery once you solve it. You're going to have to figure out what's at that location.

Time Stamp 5:14

ED: Yes. Both Sanborn, and the man who taught him about codes, Ed Scheidt, have both said that it is a multi-layered puzzle and that even after we solve part four, there's going to be a further mystery to be solve.

Time Stamp 5:23

HM: Well, presuminably you're all hoping ..uh.., of course, that this is going to help you figure out what those last ninety-seven letters are saying.

Time Stamp 5:29

ED: Yes. That..that's our hope, that "Layer two" may give us a clue towards a key. For example, part one we knew that th..the keyword was the word palimpsest and part two the key was the word abscissa how ..er..someone was suppose to know that the key

was abscissa or palimpsest. So, those words: "layer two" may give us some clues towards that.

Time Stamp 5:49

HM: There seems to be so much renewed interest in the whole idea of codes, mysteries around code breaking, and ..um.. I guess a lot of people feel this is ..uh.. affiliated with the Divinci Code. The big phenomena. The book, also this movie coming out. Are you finding you're attracting new kinds of people to this?

Time Stamp 6:06

ED: Absolutely! With Dan Brown, the author of [The Da Vinci Code](#), placed a puzzle on his website at danbrown.com. And some of it is ..uh..trivia questions. And some of those trivia questions have to do with..with Kryptos. And in the American version of the book jacket, of [The Da Vinci Code](#), Dan Brown hids[sic] five puzzles within the artwork book jacket. And two of those puzzles refer to Kryptos.

Time Stamp 6:28

HM: Hmm.

Time Stamp 6:29

ED: So Brown has said that those things that he has hidden in the book jacket, give clues as to his [short break in tape] novel. And he's done this before. For example, in Deception Point, one of his previous novels, at the very end there is a encrypted message. And if you decrypt that, it comes out to the words: 'The Da Vinci Code Will Surface'.

Time Stamp 6:46

HM: Hum..

Time Stamp 6:47

ED: So, the speculation is that Kryptos may play a part in Brown's next book. And I also found..I kind of got a smile out of.. after we did our announcement last week. Two days later there was an announcement from Dan Brown's publisher, saying that his next book has been delayed. [Laughing] And we're wondering if that he means if he has to rewrite...

Time Stamp 7:03

HM: ..Ohhh..

Time Stamp 7:04

ED: ...the Kryptos section. We don't know. [Laughing].

Time Stamp 7:05

HM: Yeah, be..because of the..the missing "X" or "S". Whatever it might be.

Time Stamp 7:08

ED: Maybe. He may have,..You know, he may have had a whole chapter that had something to do with "ID by rows". [Laughing]

Time Stamp 7:13

HM: Well, as you said, You all are having a great deal of fun with this. Do you think there might be larger meaning to it? Or is it really just about having fun solving the puzzle?

Time Stamp 7:21

ED: The larger meaning, if I can be philosophical for a moment, has to do with everyone's quest for knowledge. It's often said that the journey is more important than the destination. And there're are some Aeosop fables, for example, there's a..a story about the ..uh.. the farmer and his vineyard. Who the farmer was dying and he was worried that his sons were not going to be prosperous after he died. So he told then that there was a treasure buried in the vineyard. And then after he died, his sons spent all their time digging in the vineyard. And there wasn't any treasure there, but because they were always digging there all the time, they always had a good crop. And so the family prospered. And so the moral was is that..is that...the..the process is often more important than what it is that your trying to find.

Time Stamp 7:59

HM: Well, I hope you enjoy the rest of your journey as much as you have you obviously enjoyed the first part. Thanks for talking to us.

Time Stamp 8:05

ED: Thank you for calling.

Time Stamp 8:06

HM: Good Luck.

Time Stamp 8:06

ED: Thank you very much.