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#      08/26/1999 NPR's All Things Considered::Kryptos Sculpture Mystery (8:02) #
#
#      URL:: http://www.npr.org/ramfiles/atc/19990826.atc.17.ram #
#
#      NA - Noah Addams #
#      LW - Linda Worthheimer #
#      DS - David Stein #
#      JS - James Sanborn #
#
#                               Transcribed By: Jew-Lee Irena Lann #
#
#      Please report any boo boo's to jew\_lee@hotmail.com #
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**Time Stamp: 0:00**

NA: This is NPR's All Things Considered. I am Noah Addams..

LW: and I am Linda Worthheimer. In a pleasant courtyard, inside the Central Intelligence Agency Headquarters, in Langley Virginia, there is a sculptured fountain. Since there are no public spaces of Langley, you have to be brought onto CIA grounds to see it. A large log of petrified wood stands upright in one side, and unfurled from that log is a curved page, covered with letters. The scroll-like page is made of copper, and the letters are cut right through it. The sculpture is called Kryptos, the letters, are a coded message. For eight years, it stood in the courtyard, keeping its secret.

**Time Stamp: 0:46**

DS: I actually became gradually aware of it. I saw it in the courtyard, and every time I passed it, I took sort of increasingly long looks at it. I don't know remember the exact date that I began trying to decipher it, uh... but I've always been interested in codes, and different types of puzzles, since I was a child.

**Time Stamp: 1:04**

LW: David Stein was trained as a physicist. he's worked with the VIS for 14 years. He's a Senior Analyst. James Sanborn is the sculpture who created Kryptos. And with the help of a former CIA Cryptographer, devised its encoded messages.

**Time Stamp: 1:20**

JS: Something hidden, something secret was the distilled CIA and the thing that struck me the most significant with these people. ..tremendous number of people, at the agency, lived their whole lives with a secret...that they could never tell anyone. I was never able to keep a secret, very well at all. [Woman laughs] So I sa..So I figured the best way for me to do a project for the CIA was perhaps to become privy to information which I then had to keep secret for the rest of my life, and that's what I did.

**Time Stamp: 1:52**

LW: James Sanborn has been freed from some of that of that obligation, because part of the code of Kryptos has been cracked. David Stein is the only person, inside the CIA, whose deciphered part of the message. He did it with pencil and paper, using the alphabet table which are part of the curled page of the sculpture. A key,.. a hint, included in the piece.

Stein knew that alphabet codes are almost always a substitution of one letter for another, or a transposition, using a letter several spaces down the alphabet. The

first part of the message appeared to be a substitution code. In the fourth line, he noticed the letters "DQM" five characters later, the same combination. He began there.

"Kryptos became", he said, "a hobby". He spent a more and more of his free time on the code...for several years.

**Time Stamp: 2:44**

DS: I don't consider it obsessed, but I think to do a project like this you have to kind of steep yourself in the problem. You can't look at it ..at least I can't look at it casually. I have to look at it to the point, where my subconscious kind of takes over the problem and then you do find yourself thinking about it sometimes at night, or when your laying in bed, or...or even when you are talking with somebody. I don't consider that being obsessed necessarily, that's just like a methodology to me.

**Time Stamp: 3:12**

LW: Stein could see there were several sections to Kryptos and more than one code. He broke the substitution code first, looking for the relationship between letters. And then he realized the first three lines, of the message, were of different substitution code, but breaking that one went quickly.

The first letters incised in the copper sheet are "EMUFPHZLRFAX"... and so on. Stein determined that the message begins: Between subtle shading and the absence of light lies the nuance of illusion\*.

**Time Stamp: 3:49**

DS: It was February 1998, it was a..a date that ..uh.. will always be in-ingrained on my memory. And I remember, very clearly, sitting at my desk at home and ..uh my wife was..was out, I believe, shopping. And ..uh.. I had a ..uh.. I can only describe it as a mom-moment of clarity or a religious-type inspiration when ..uh.. suddenly everything just fell into place ..uh.. with almost an audible click. And I..I had no doubt whatsoever as to..as to how to proceed.

**Time Stamp: 4:20**

LW: So, once you got the ..uh.. first chunk, then how long did it take you to ..uh.. to get to the second keyword and the second part.

**Time Stamp: 4:29**

DS: It was..it was pretty much the same day or maybe the next day.

**Time Stamp: 4:32**

LW: So it went very fast after that?

**Time Stamp: 4:33**

DS: Yeah, the hardest part was getting my..my heart rate to decrease. I..I was very very excited. The feeling when you get when you get a breakthrough like that is..is difficult to explain. It seems to me it's like it's a high. Yo..your pulse is racing, yo-your sweating, and..and you just have to stand up for a while [DS Laughs] before you can get yourself seated down again. I remember my..my wife came home and I am trying to explain to her ..and well .."that's nice".. [DS Laughs] it hard to convey the excitement[LW Laughs].

**Time Stamp: 5:00**

LW: The middle of the message, once decoded, sounds like a secret dispatch. Giving map coordinates, locating CIA headquarters, but the last part, another code a

transposition code, is a quote. It is Howard Carter's account of the opening of King Tut's Tomb. It begins "Slowly, desparatly slowly, the remains of passage debris that encumbered the lower part of the doorway was removed. With trembling hands I made a tiny breach in the upper left-hand corner. And then, widening the hole a little, I inserted the candle and peered in..."\*\* The sculpture, James Sanborn:

**Time Stamp: 5:38**

JS: It was probably the most exciting thing I ever read as a child. I started out life as an Archeologist. Thought that's what I wanted to be. Found it very exciting to discover things, whether it's an arrowhead or a shark's tooth, on a beach, or a dinosaur's bone or ..An artifact. And..and that moment of discovery was very exciting. And think that same moment of discovery is what a cryptographer feels when they decode a message that's been hidden for years. And so a I choose that statement as a..to demonstrate or to really give the essence of the feeling of discovery.

**Time Stamp: 6:13**

LW: There are still 97 characters left of the last message. The last code is different, and so far no one has broken it. David Stein has glanced at it, but he's a new father now, and has other things to do, and no one else has stepped forward with a solution. Sculpturer James Sanborn speaks guardedly about it, not wishing to give any clues. Except to hint of the possibility that there is more than the solution than the last 97 letters, carved into Kryptos.

**Time Stamp: 6:45**

DS: There are encoding systems which use pattern: light and shadow. And it's those kinds of systems that I was most interested in using, because I am an artist. And I chose not to use...in..in , at least what's be deciphered already, perhaps what has not been deciphered ..um.. I like to use spacial systems of encoding and decoding.

**Time Stamp: 7:06**

LW: So are you saying is that "... subtle shading and the absence of light .. the nuance of illusion"\* is..is telling us that this plain text is a code too?

**Time Stamp: 7:16**

JS: It's possible.

**Time Stamp: 7:17**

LW: [Laughs]

**Time Stamp: 7:18**

JS: Anything's possible.

**Time Stamp: 7:19**

LW: James Sanborn, the creator of the Kryptos sculpture. The work was commissioned for the Central Intelligence Agency, and stands in the central courtyard of the headquarter's building, in Langley Virginia.

Credits are read for production. [omitted]

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\*the reporter does say "illusion" but the code actually reads "Iqlusion".

\*\*the reporter only quotes part of K3 here is the rest....The hot air escaping from the chamber caused the flame to flicker, but presently details of the room within emerged from the mist. x  
Can you see anything? q