



Press Release

SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL™ SECURES PROGRAM RIGHTS TO REMARKABLE STORY BEHIND THE DISCOVERY OF KING RICHARD III'S REMAINS

***THE KING'S SKELETON: RICHARD III REVEALED* TO PREMIERE ON SUNDAY, APRIL 21 at 9 PM ET/PT**

NEW YORK – April 2, 2013 – Smithsonian Channel has secured the exclusive North American program rights to tell the inside story of the astonishing discovery of Richard III's remains, recently found just a few feet under a parking lot in central England. Considered one of the great villains of history, the notorious king of England's gravesite was a mystery for more than 500 years, until the unearthing of his remains made international news when revealed last month.

THE KING'S SKELETON: RICHARD III REVEALED is produced by the only team allowed access to the scientists, the archaeological dig, and the scientific tests to determine the skeleton's identity, which were carried out in complete secrecy. The new two-hour special will premiere on Smithsonian Channel on Sunday, April 21, 2013 at 9 p.m. ET/PT.

Richard III was the last king of one of Europe's most powerful political dynasties. He was killed at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 and was vilified by the winning Tudor dynasty. Propagandists and Shakespeare portrayed him as the hunchback king with a withered arm, who murdered his nephews in the Tower of London to secure his place on the throne. The depiction of Richard as a consummate scoundrel has been immortalized by such great actors as Al Pacino, Kenneth Branagh, Kevin Spacey, Ian McKellen and Lawrence Olivier.

"We all love a villain in TV. Richard is the archetypal bad guy: The man who would murder his defenseless nephews in his pursuit of power," said David Royle, Executive Vice President for Programming and Production, Smithsonian Channel. "But maybe we got the story all wrong. DNA has rescued many convicts from the despair of prison. Now it may be rescuing an innocent king from the twisted annals of history."

THE KING'S SKELETON: RICHARD III REVEALED follows the entire investigation—from the search and discovery, to the secret tests conducted to confirm the body's identity and the creation of a facial reconstruction made from the skull, which unveils the true face of the lost king. Forensic examination of the skeleton also reveals the grisly details of Richard's final moments on the battlefield. When the program made its world debut on Channel 4 in the United Kingdom, nearly 5 million viewers tuned in to watch.

The documentary brings viewers along every step of the way on the journey to discover Richard III, an effort led by Philippa Langley, a screenwriter and member of the worldwide Richard III Society, who became convinced that the king's body was under the parking lot, which stood at the site of a former monastery not far from where Battle of Bosworth took place. While there were historical records indicating that they might have the right location for the monastery, archaeologists attached to the project believed that actually finding the remains of a king missing for over 500 years would be nearly impossible.

The camera crew is there to capture that remarkable moment. Subsequent skeletal analysis carried out by University of Leicester osteoarchaeologist Dr. Jo Appleby shows that the individual had a slender physique and severe scoliosis – a curvature of the spine – possibly with one shoulder visibly higher than the other. This is consistent with descriptions of Richard III's appearance from the time. Trauma to the skeleton indicates the individual died after one of two significant wounds to the back of the skull – possibly caused by a dagger and a halberd.

Tests confirm that DNA from the remains matches that of a Canadian furniture maker, Michael Ibsen, who is a descendent of Richard III's sister. Comparisons made with Mr. Ibsen and another individual, who remains anonymous, also reveal a successful match.

Dr. Appleby's analysis is backed up by radiological evidence carried out by University of Leicester forensic pathologists and forensic engineering experts. The conclusion also draws from circumstantial evidence at the dig site, radiocarbon dating, genealogical evidence and comparison with historical sources.

The University of Leicester, in association with Leicester City Council and the Richard III Society, led the search for Richard III.

THE KING'S SKELETON: RICHARD III REVEALED is produced by Darlow Smithson Productions for Channel 4 in association with Smithsonian Channel. Executive Producers for Smithsonian Channel are David Royle, Charles Poe and Joy Galane.

ABOUT SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL

Smithsonian Channel is owned by Smithsonian Networks, a joint venture between Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution. Its programs are largely inspired by the assets of the world's largest museum complex. Smithsonian Channel features award-winning original documentaries, series, and groundbreaking programs highlighting America's historical, cultural and scientific heritage. Smithsonian Channel brings the American experience home in high definition and Dolby Digital 5.1 and is available to customers of DirecTV, Comcast, Time Warner Cable, Charter Communications, Cablevision, Verizon, AT&T, and more. Learn more at www.smithsonianchannel.com.

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