

The Bering Strait Odyssey

adrift between Alaska and Siberia



The Bering Strait Odyssey



“Swept away”

The documentary movie touches the mysticism of the Bering Strait and has Mother Nature in the leading role. In a very unique way, Dixie Dansercoer and Troy Henkels are presented as her subjects when they are taken along on a real odyssey full of adventures.

www.ijsbreker.be

“Swept away”-DVD

Duration Full version: 52'
Duration short version: 27'
Produced by: Media Circus – Media Facilities
Cameramen: Johnny Steenbeke, Filip De Rycke,
Dixie Dansercoer
Scenario: Filip De Rycke

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Informative website on the Bering Strait Odyssey:

www.beringodyssey.com



Troy Henkels



Dixie Dansercoer



Their odyssey full of adventures





“The lure of the unknown knows no boundaries”.

Dixie Dansercoer and Troy Henkels – both true adventurers at heart – became intrigued by the symbolism of the Bering Strait three years before their Odyssey began. Together they conceived a plan which would allow them to immerse themselves in a unique adventure: they envisioned a round-trip trek from the American continent to Russia across the Bering Strait.

True adventure:
the heart of the Bering Strait Odyssey.

This open challenge to cross this hugely dynamic stretch of barely frozen water represented a step into the unknown. While in centuries past, the intercontinental wanderings by the Inuit people took place upon stable frozen ice (and often assisted by dog teams), such travel has been in recent times considered too dangerous. No human being had ever before accomplished this goal, surely not in wintertime.

Why? The Bering Strait seems to guard its secrets very well. Nature plays games with people trying to cross this intriguing division of continents and the cards are shuffled continuously... Strong ocean currents carry the ice pack away. Violent winds break up the newly formed ice in all directions. From thin layers of newly formed ice to aged Icebergs, from **Converging ice zones** little islands of ice to broken up slush, from open water to compression zones, the ice is always on the move. Always. The grinding sounds of colliding ice, blocks of ice tumbling down, the sound of gurgling water underneath the ice, ... it makes for a very frightening experience.

According to some legends, the Bering Strait was first water, according to others land came first. Both versions are true. In this place of the world, water and land replaced each other no less than a dozen times: ice streams slipping down into the sea absorbed water, and then gave it back again when it grew warmer.

By sea and by land, life migrated in all directions and forms: shellfish and whales, mammoths, birds and people. According to scientific studie, it was about 14000 years ago that the first human migrations took place. Today, this remote part of our globe is a very busy cross point for many birds and marine mammals, while the polar bear, king of the Arctic, wanders endlessly to hunt for survival.

The true survivors around the Bering Strait are the Inuit people. Yupik, Eskimo, Naukan, a variety of Inuit tribes, Chaplino, Koryak, they are all part of the same family, but their customs differ quite widely. Like any Indian people, they struggle with an identity crisis. The combination of keeping their strong culture and the integration in the modern world seems to put them in a precarious situation. Traditional hunting still forms a very important part of their activities, but one wonders if the next generation of Inuit will still understand the wise words spoken by their elders.

Pioneering new techniques to cope with the multitude of problematic conditions. The challenge was there. Three years of arduous preparations had been accomplished with success.

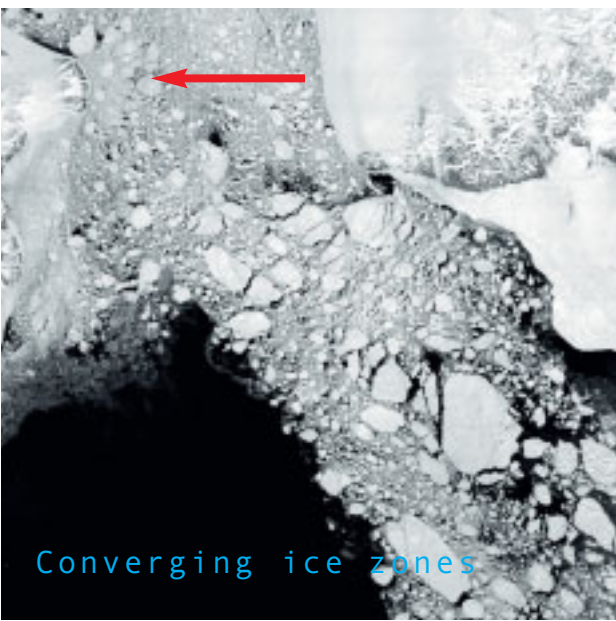
Newly designed equipment opened new doors for travel over ice. A motivated team of collaborators was in place. The adventure could start. Logistical matters were cleared in Anchorage and all of the expedition equipment was shipped to Nome where Julie Brown would run the communications. Three year old daughter Robin would keep her company and be part of the Inuit community, soaking up a strong Arctic experience. In the footsteps of her adventurous father already?

The last leg of their approach to the departure point of the expeditions was **Proximity of two continents** the flight to Wales. **Distance between two cultures.** Almost totally isolated from the world, the ‘windy city’ lays dormant on the westernmost tip of the North American continent. On the rare clear days one can see across the Bering Strait and get a glimpse of Russia. So close, yet so far away.

Nineteen days of careful planning, waiting and sorting out logistical problems kept the team busy until the day of departure. Then, an eerie silence filled the windless morning by temperatures of minus 32°C. The otherwise wildly flowing ice masses on the Bering Strait had almost come to a standstill and offered open water. Dixie and Troy put their “sledcat” together and before too long, they were sailing of into the mysterious mist that opened the door to their long awaited Odyssey.

about one hour later,
the True Supremacy
of Mother Nature made it
clear to us:

- > we were adrift & swept away
- > encountering freight trains of ice
- > Out of control
- > on the edge - animalistic survival
- > constant awareness for permanent danger
- > beyond ambition
- > admitting Impotence



Walking the bear's trail

Converging ice zones