

**THE
DAWNSAYER**

A DOCUMENTARY BY PAUL MARC KELL



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

SYNOPSIS

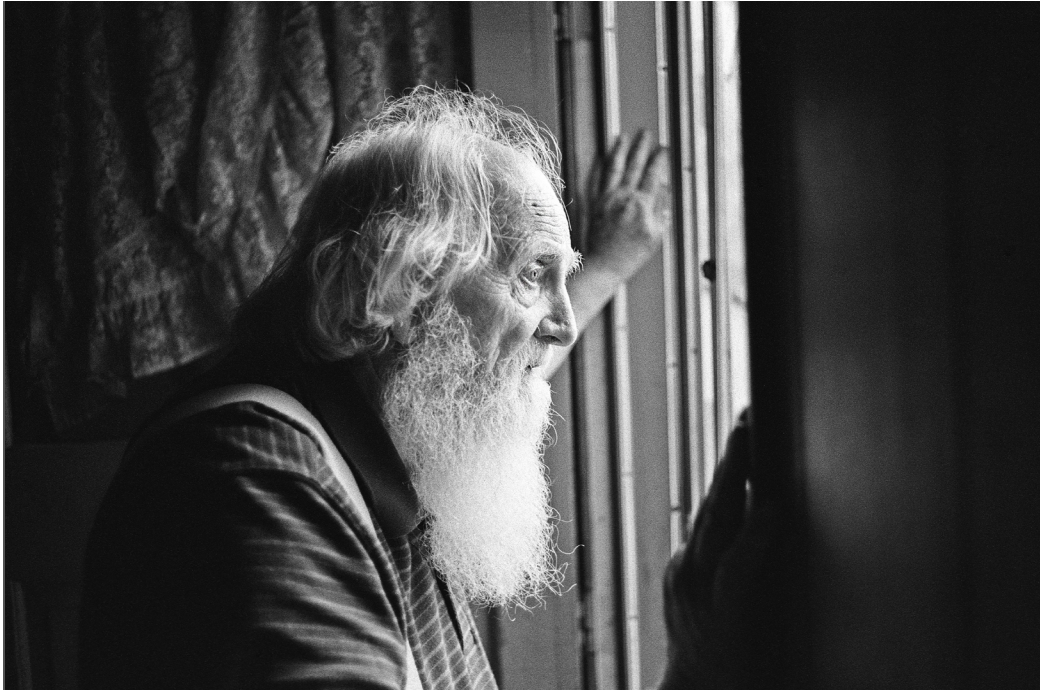
As the world teeters on the brink of collapse, an unlikely hero is ready to put his plan for reconstruction into action.

THE DAWNSAYER is the unbelievable life story of Bruce Beach -- the man infamous for Ark Two (the world's largest privately built bomb shelter) -- who has devoted his life to crafting an elaborate blueprint to save the world from its imminent demise.

Buried beneath an unassuming empty plot in the middle of nowhere is a sprawling underground refuge awaiting an impending global catastrophe that may never come. Completed in 1985, Ark Two was once recognized as the world's largest privately constructed bomb shelter. Today, Ark Two is aging and in near ruin. A similar fate has befallen the man who built it, the notorious Bruce Beach.

Dismissed as “the crazy old man with a bomb shelter,” Bruce’s untold story is as sprawling and unbelievable as his 10,000 square foot shelter. THE DAWNSAYER is an intimate portrait of the man behind Ark Two, his impressive legacy, and a testament to how far this man is willing to go to save a world that has no interest in being saved...particularly by him.





DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I first met Bruce Beach, I didn't know what to believe. I was hired to lens an ill-fated TV series about Preppers and Bruce was one of the subjects. The relationship quickly soured between Bruce and the Producer so the production ground to a halt. Before we packed up, I was left alone with Bruce to listen to a handful of his stories. In that time, the bearded old man with a maniacal laugh had my head spinning with elaborate tales of deep sea exploration, sunken treasure, inventions decades ahead of their time, and how he rubbed elbows with some of the past century's most renowned figures. I wanted to hear more so I asked Bruce if I could come back on my own. He agreed, and one year later I returned on the date many believed the world would end: December 21, 2012. Fitting, I thought.

Over the next seven years I made many trips to Hornings Mills, to stay for days and even weeks at

a time. As the camera-toting guest living in Bruce and Jean's spare room, I earned my keep cooking, cleaning, collecting wood, and taking their dog Jemma for long walks in the freezing cold. This was the quid pro quo Bruce referred to as "sweat equity" and I was more than happy to oblige in exchange for unlimited access to their lives. Over time, I became part of the Beach's extended family and the relationship between filmmaker and subject blurred to a point where I was unsure if I was returning to make a film or simply because I had found a new home.

It took me years to make sense of how Bruce's epic past converged with a present-day reality most people could only see as the crushing sum of a lifetime of failed dreams. Others with cameras before me had only ever bothered to portray Bruce as the crazy old man who built a bomb shelter that had to be seen to be believed. What I saw the first time we

met was so much more, and the mystery of who Bruce really was would keep bringing me back for years to come.

In the end, I got to know a man who could not be defeated; not by naysayers, government officials, the media, tragic loss, or even a lifetime of failure. I concluded Bruce was invincible simply because he embraced a life lesson few ever grasp: the purpose of life isn't determined by what we accomplish, or what we leave behind...it's about doing what inspires you.

Life is about the journey and few people who've ever lived have had a journey as incredible as Bruce Beach's. THE DAWNSAYER is a testament to Bruce and his incredible journey.

- Paul Marc Kell, February 2020

DIRECTOR'S TECHNICAL NOTES

The bulk of THE DAWNSAYER was shot on a Panasonic GH5 in 4K resolution using very fast (f/0.95) prime lenses with a wide open aperture. This setup was chosen for two specific reasons: 1) to be small and unobtrusive allowing me to operate as a one-person crew, and 2) to be able to capture what little light there was within a very dark environment.

It was necessary to be a one-person crew because I could not have built close personal relationships with Bruce and Jean had there been the interference of a large crew and bulky equipment. A one-person crew is also affordable, particularly when the 'one-person' is you and your shooting schedule consists of days and weeks of work spread out over a seven-year period.

Shooting in dark environments was not simply the hand I was dealt, it was desired. Like Film Noir, THE DAWNSAYER uses darkness and shadow as a recurring motif: literally, figuratively, and visually.

With the exception of one brightly colored dream sequence/flashback,

the entire film is set in the dark days of winter. It was my intention from the beginning to keep the mystery of who Bruce is in the dark – to the point of misleading viewers – until slowly, over the course of the film, viewers discover there's so much more to Bruce than first impressions.

The opening title sequence establishes this motif as we see Bruce walk out from darkness into the light. Is this an overused metaphor, or is it a premonition of his ultimate demise, and/or the end of the world consumed within the blinding glow of a nuclear blast?

The narrative arc in THE DAWNSAYER is also structured around the struggle between darkness and light. At the beginning of the film, it is revealed Ark Two has no power and thus, no light. From this moment forward, Ark Two is in darkness and it isn't until the final act when the generator is replaced when light is restored.

"In order for the light to shine so brightly, the darkness must be present." - Francis Bacon



CREATIVE TEAM

PAUL MARC KELL **Writer / Producer / Director:**

A graduate of Concordia University's Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema, Paul Marc Kell is a Writer, Producer, Director & Cinematographer with nearly twenty years of broadcast & theatrical credits from around the world.

Kell's filmmaking career was launched with the award-winning feature-length film *5 SIDES OF A COIN* (7th Art Releasing/Lakeshore Entertainment/Starz). In 2015-16 Kell was the Showrunner (Writer/Director/ Series Producer) of the first 11 episodes of *Viceland's DEAD SET ON LIFE* with Matty Matheson.

Kell's work has screened at film festivals worldwide, notably Cannes, SXSW, and AFI Fest. Over the past 15 years, Kell has worked on commercials, shorts, features, TV shows and one-offs that have been broadcast on the CBC, Discovery Channel, Food Network, Cooking Channel, Planet Green, History Channel, MTV, Starz, Showcase, TVO, Knowledge, Canal D, Superchannel, The Documentary Channel, IFC, ABC (Australia), MuchMusic (Canada), and many more.

JUSTIN SMALL & OHAD BENCHETRIT **Composers:**

Founding members of the Juno award-winning band *DO MAKE SAY THINK*, Justin Small and Ohad Benchetrit have also composed music and soundtracks for blockbuster films such as *THE CORPORATION* (dir. Mark Achbar/ Jennifer Abbott) and *SYRIANA* (dir. Stephen Gaghan). Independently, Ohad composed music for *SCOTT PILGRIM vs. THE WORLD* (dir. Edgar Wright), *DAYDREAM NATION* (dir. Michael Goldbach) and *LOVE CRIMES OF GILLIAN GUESS* (dir. Bruce McDonald). As partners, Justin and Ohad composed and scored *HARD CORE LOGO 2* (dir. Bruce McDonald), *HURT, HOPE* (dir. Alan Zweig), *BEAUTY DAY* (dir. Jay Cheel) and multiple TV series, Commercials, Documentary & scripted feature films.

CREDITS:

Writer, Producer and Director: Paul Marc Kell

Cinematographer: Paul Marc Kell

Location Sound: Paul Marc Kell

Editors: Paul Marc Kell, Faisal Lutchmedial and Tamara Scherbak

Music Composers: Justin Small and Ohad Benchetrit

Colourist: David Tomiak

Post Production Sound: TBD

Research: Alex Heck

Graphics: Christine Thornton

Consultant: Sean Farnel

MEDIA INQUIRIES:

Paul Marc Kell:

email: Info@paulkell.com

ph: 604 600 4360



WWW.DAWNSAYER.COM