



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS GEMSTONE GETS A  
NEW SETTING – AND GOES UNDER THE DRILL...**

# **MYSTERY OF THE HOPE DIAMOND**

**SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL™ SPECIAL NARRATED BY  
ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER KIM BASINGER  
PREMIERES SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup> AT 8PM ET/PT**

**Television Event Coincides With 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Celebration Of Harry Winston's Donation Of The  
45-Carat Gem To National Museum Of Natural History**

**New York – October 25, 2010** – To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the donation of the world's most famous diamond to the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Channel will premiere a one-hour special, **MYSTERY OF THE HOPE DIAMOND** on Sunday, November 21 at 8 p.m. ET/PT. Academy Award® and Golden Globe®-winning actress Kim Basinger will narrate the special. The film tells the definitive story of the gem, mixing history, science and legend. It features two exclusive events: the creation of new 21<sup>st</sup> century setting selected by the American people and an audacious experiment to reveal the inner secrets of the diamond. For more information and video clips of MYSTERY OF THE HOPE DIAMOND, go to [www.smithsonianchannel.com/hope](http://www.smithsonianchannel.com/hope).

The Hope Diamond has been on display since September of 2009 with no setting. To coincide with the premiere of the **MYSTERY OF THE HOPE DIAMOND**, The Hope will be placed into a spectacular new setting, created by the Harry Winston design team, handcrafted at Harry Winston's workshop, and worn by supermodel Hilary Rhoda. The "Embracing Hope" setting was chosen in an online vote last year on [smithsonianchannel.com](http://smithsonianchannel.com), where over 100,000 votes were cast. The diamond will remain on display in the temporary setting in the Smithsonian Museum's Winston Gallery in the Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals for an undetermined amount of time.

The Hope is the world's most valuable diamond. In the Smithsonian's world-class gem collection – which includes diamond earrings worn by Marie Antoinette, a diamond necklace owned by Napoleon's wife, an immense emerald owned by the Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and some of the world's largest rubies and sapphires – The Hope has the highest price tag by a huge margin. The Smithsonian places no valuation on the diamond, but outside estimates today put The Hope's value into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

The stone has many unique properties which have puzzled experts since its discovery and have given birth to the alleged curse surrounding the one-of-a-kind wonder. It is claimed that throughout its long history, all who have owned it – or even touched it – have met great tragedy. Indeed, the diamond has mysterious properties that have long puzzled scientists.

Under ultra-violet light, The Hope glows a fiery red – which has fueled its reputation as cursed. The documentary follows gem experts who hope to answer questions about its unique properties by carefully drilling into The Hope with a Time of Flight Secondary Ion Mass Spectrometer. Magnifying the image over 1000 times, which is similar to unraveling the diamond's DNA, the spectrometer will split apart the diamond sample into its constituent atoms, sorting them by weight. What results is an exact atomic 'fingerprint' of The Hope.

The Hope Diamond is renowned for its nearly flawless clarity, rare deep-blue color and eventful history. It was formed more than a billion years ago, 90 miles below the Earth's surface. The diamond was brought to the surface by a volcanic eruption and was discovered in the 17th century in a mine in Golconda, India. The rare blue color of the jewel is attributed to light interaction with a trace impurity of the element boron in the diamond's internal atomic structure.

In 1668, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, a French gem merchant, sold the diamond to King Louis XIV of France. During the French Revolution it was stolen and subsequently had many owners, including Henry Philip Hope, whose name it bears today, and possibly King George IV of England. In 1949, its last private owner, the famed jeweler Harry Winston, purchased the diamond from the estate of the American Socialite Evalyn Walsh McLean and donated the diamond to the Smithsonian in 1958. Its gift to the Smithsonian and the nation was one of the greatest acts of American philanthropy, and it has been on view in the National Museum of Natural History for the past 50 years.

MYSTERY OF THE HOPE DIAMOND is a Blink Films Production for Smithsonian Channel in association with Channel 4, National Geographic Channel International, ARTE and NHK.

## **ABOUT SMITHSONIAN NETWORKS**

Smithsonian Networks (SNI/SI Networks L.L.C.) is a joint venture between Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution, formed to create channels featuring programs largely inspired by the assets of the Smithsonian Institution, 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](http://www.smithsonianchannel.com).

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