

# ARCTIC DEFENDERS

feature length documentary written and directed by John Walker

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## LOGLINE

A story of visionary Inuit with a dream - the creation of Nunavut.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

Set in the dramatic and alluring landscape of the north, *Arctic Defenders* tells the remarkable story that began in 1968 with a radical Inuit movement that changed the political landscape forever. It led to the largest land claim in western civilization, orchestrated by young visionary Inuit with a dream - the governance of their territory - the creation of Nunavut. The story reveals Canada's misguided attempts at sovereignty in the north and finds hope and inspiration from determined people who changed the rules of the game.

## STORYLINE

In 1968, a sixteen year old John Walker, 35mm camera in hand, boards a ship in Montreal on its way to Resolute Bay, in the High Arctic. It has been his childhood dream to visit the north - his imagination inspired by films and "Eskimo" art. What he doesn't realize is that the global radicalism of 1960's was also the beginning of a re-imagining of the Arctic by a group of visionary "Eskimos".

They began their political movement by challenging the use of the word Eskimo. They were Inuit and they had a dream - the governance of their territory, the creation of Nunavut within Canada.

We join Oo Aqqik, a modern Inuk, and John Walker, a filmmaker, on a ship heading to Resolute Bay where Inuit were shipped by the Canadian government in the 1950's to act as human flagpoles for Canadian sovereignty. We are introduced to some of the visionary "Defenders" of Inuit culture who opposed the Canadian government's imperialist plans. The film documents the monumental achievements of determined people to have a say in their future. It is a story of a culture that defines a nation.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As Canada takes the helm of the Arctic Council this year amid media attention and rhetoric from our Prime Minister about threats to Canadian sovereignty, we thought it was time, to hear what Inuit have to say about their political culture and meaning of sovereignty.

It was many years after my enlightening journey north as a teenager that I learned a horrible truth about the history of the Inuit I had visited in Resolute Bay. Just eleven years before my visit, our government had transplanted them to populate the High Arctic, in the name of Canada's

sovereignty. The Inuit in Resolute Bay had been moved over two thousand kilometers north from their home in Inukjuak (Port Harrison), Quebec, on the shores of Hudson Bay. They were dropped off by ship and left to fend for themselves without any supplies or shelter from the government. Separated from their families back home, they had never before experienced such cold and twenty-four hour winter darkness.

When I asked John Amagoalik, one of the radical Inuit leaders, if he was bitter about the experience he simply said "no, I'm disappointed, I wish they had told us the truth. Inuit would have probably gone up and worked with the government, better prepared with proper essentials, but they chose to lie to us".

What I didn't realize at the time, as I was steaming north on a ship in 1968 to see the "Eskimos" of my childhood dreams, was that a group of radicals were envisioning a political movement for change. One of their first acts was to protest the use of the word Eskimo. This was not a word they used in their language. They called themselves Inuit. With our previous film **Passage** I got to know Tagak Curley who played a profound role in that film and he told me the story of how he and others like John had accomplished this incredible political transformation with land claims and the creation of the Nunavut government. Given all the global attention to Arctic matters we felt it was the right time to tell this story from an Inuit point of view.

We were very privileged to make this film with the radical "Defenders" of Nunavut, Tagak Curley, John Amagoalik and others. This film could not have been made without the support and guidance of co-producer Alethea Arnaquq - Baril, and Oo Aqpik, researcher, interviewer and translator. In the 1990's, Oo was an observer of the political process and the creation of Nunavut when she was just sixteen. We travelled north to research the film over a period of two years. This is the story of the "Arctic Defenders" – the ones willing to dream and to fight for the survival of an independent and unique culture within Canada.

#### **QUOTES FROM THE FILM:**

**TAGAK CURLEY:** *We needed a movement. It was in my heart. If I stick too long, the movement that we are trying to create is going to get harder and harder. If I didn't start now to get the discussion going, so as a young person these were all in my mind. Now or never was the question to me.*

**TAGAK CURLEY:** *Never in my wildest imagination, when I was a youngster I ever thought that Nunavut legislature would become a reality. But it is kind of hard to believe that it is now real, and you know, when I was a youngster and I was out on the land, I would see a mirage, and you sort of hope for it, but is it real? I think it is real now.*

**JOHN AMAGOALIK:** *I suppose there is some purpose in bringing all this military people and the apparatus up there to show their presence but as far as I am concerned the people living there are the biggest guarantors of Canadian sovereignty.*

**JOHN AMAGOALIK:** *The Government of Canada is still the biggest liar in our lives you know. I don't know how many articles in the land claim agreement they haven't lived up to, but it's a long list. They have been lying to us for ages, and they are still lying to us today*

**BRUCE UVILUQ:** *Our land claim agreement, signed in 1993, said how government and Inuit would interact and how Inuit would be involved in the policy and planning of all the environment, wildlife,*

*these kinds of things, and we tried to do that with the Federal Government, it is not happening, so we are suing them.*

**AAJU PETER:** *We have functioned for hundreds and thousands of years peacefully and that maybe this is an area in the world that should be adapting the indigenous approach to occupying this place. Maybe this place demands that. That we do not endanger it, we do not endanger the animals, the environment, and then we adapt the Inuit way of living together. Peacefully. Without building up arms.*

**JOHN WALKER:** *The myth of Canada as a northern nation is embedded within us. From childhood we sing the romantic lines of the national anthem “With glowing hearts we see thee rise, The True North, Strong and Free!” And yet the North remains a mystery to most of us.*

*Around the globe the Arctic is front-page news. Polar bears stand as the iconic image of global warming. We hear about sovereignty and resource exploitation but rarely do we hear about the people who live there – the Inuit. In the south most of us remain unaware, of the largest land claim in western civilization - orchestrated by young visionary Inuit with a dream - the governance of their territory - the creation of Nunavut*

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

### **JOHN WALKER**

Writer, Director, Co-Producer

John Walker is one of the most prestigious Canadian directors working in the documentary genre. His films are personal, lyrical and express a deep understanding of the human condition. They have been widely broadcast and have appeared at the major international film festivals in Toronto, Vancouver, New York, Los Angeles, Berlin, London and Tokyo. He has received seventeen nominations and awards from the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television including the coveted **DONALD BRITAIN AWARD - BEST SOCIAL/POLITICAL DOCUMENTARY**.

Walker wrote, directed and co-produced the provocative feature film **PASSAGE**, a fiction/documentary co-produced with the National Film Board of Canada and broadcast on BBC and History Television. This tale of Sir John Franklin’s failed Arctic expedition and the maligned Inuit portrayed as cannibals by Charles Dickens was hailed as “one of the great triumphs in Canadian documentary film history”. It won numerous national and international awards including the coveted 2010 **ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN HISTORIANS - ERIC BARNOW AWARD**.

His documentary **A DRUMMER’S DREAM**, featuring some of the best drummers on the planet took audiences to another dimension of pure joy and exhilaration. The film was awarded the **Hot DOCS TOP TEN AUDIENCE FAVOURITE AWARD** and the **FIPA D’OR - BEST PERFORMING ARTS** In France.

His film **PLAYING A DANGEROUS GAME** has recently been nominated by the Directors Guild of Canada for the **ALLAN KING AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DOCUMENTARY**.

## **ALETHEA ARNAQUQ-BARIL**

Co-Producer

My company is Unikkaat Studios Inc. I'm based in Iqaluit, the capital of the Nunavut Territory in the arctic of Canada, where I was born and raised. Since graduating from Sheridan Institute in Ontario, I've focused on producing Inuit cultural documentaries and Inuktitut language productions.

People often ask me how I got into filmmaking. Here is my answer: Inuit didn't have a writing system before European contact, and to this day, there is a serious lack of Inuktitut reading materials. We are an oral culture, and so that means our culture and history, up until recently, has mostly been undocumented, or documented by outsiders. This is changing slowly, but there is an enormous amount of knowledge and history that needs to be documented in a short period of time, while the last elders that lived traditionally out on the land are still alive. Filmmaking is such a natural and easy way for Inuit to do this important work.

Documentary filmmaking is also a powerful tool for communicating with the outside world. The Arctic is a part of the world that is under attack in so many ways (western cultural domination, international disputes over arctic sovereignty for access to subsurface riches, and the effects of climate change on Inuit and our wildlife, etc). Probably the most powerful thing I could do for myself and my fellow Inuit is to be a documentary filmmaker, because I don't know how else I can contribute to helping our voices be heard on the world stage, on issues that are critical to us.

## **CHARLES KONOWAL**

Co-Producer & Cinematographer

Charles Konowal is best known as an award winning cinematographer with years of experience in both drama and documentary production. But he also directed and produced numerous documentary films over the years. His first independent producer credit was with the NFB on the award winning production *The Defender*, directed by Stephen Low. He also produced and photographed the NFB Prairie Studio's first feature length documentary *Fat Chance*, which went on to win a *Peabody Award*. He produced, directed and photographed *A Glimmer of Hope* on alternative justice for TVO and the NFB.

He recently produced two documentaries about the Winnipeg music scene, *This is a Riot*, an intimate portrait of the Rockabilly duo The Farrell Bros and *Happily Disfunctional* the story of Transistor 66 an independent record label. A third film, *Chasing a Song*, is in production with singer/songwriter Scott Nolan.

## **JEFF WARREN**

Picture Editor

Jeff Warren is a freelance film editor working in Canada for over 30 years. He freely moves between feature films, television drama and documentaries. Some notable titles are *Such A Long Journey*, *The Diary of Evelyn Lau*, *Rare Birds*, *Love, Sex & Eating The Bones*, *Beowulf & Grendel*, *GUNS*, *Passage*, *The Bridge*, *High Life* and *A Drummer's Dream*. His most recent feature film *Home Again*, premiered at TIFF in 2012.

***Arctic Defenders*** is Warren's fourth documentary feature with John Walker. Previous collaborations were ***Tough Assignment*** 1995, ***Passage*** 2007 and ***A Drummer's Dream*** 2010. In

addition to editing, Jeff is a continuing mentor at The Canadian Film Centre, has given talks and workshops at York University, Ryerson Polytechnical University and Confederation College.

He has won two Hot Docs Awards, three Gemini Awards, four Directors Guild Awards and a Genie Award, all for editing. He has been nominated many more times, including an Emmy nomination in the U.S.

## **ALEX SALTER**

Sound Designer & Recording

Alex Salter has been working with sound for picture, for over 25 years. His experience as both location sound recordist and sound designer has enabled him to produce motion picture soundtracks with amazing detail and depth. Alex has worked on over 50 National Film Board of Canada productions, and has received numerous awards and nominations, including four Gemini nominations and a Gemini win for John Walker's, *Men of the Deeps*.

## **SANDY MOORE**

Composer

Sandy Moore is an award-winning composer and sound designer for theatre, dance, concert, site-specific and film music, based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Most recently, *Escape to Freedom*, a solo mini-opera for Mezzo Soprano and Piano, *Opera From Scratch*, Halifax; *The Censor That is Time*, *Art Song for Baritone and Piano*, *Art Song Lab*, Vancouver, and *Communion*, original music and sound design, Neptune Theatre, Halifax, National Arts Centre, Ottawa.

For the film and TV industry Sandy has created scores for: *Grande Dame* (Bravo); *Where Do I Start?* (NFB, Cultural Olympiad, Vancouver); *Dinner For One* (Bravo), Best Original Score, Atlantic Film Festival; *The Wild Dogs* (imX Communication, Chum, Mongrel Media) Genie Nomination; the first *Trudeau* Mini-Series (Big Motion Pictures, CBC).

## **CREDITS**

Written, Directed and Narrated by  
JOHN WALKER

Produced by  
ALETHEA ARNAQUQ-BARIL  
CHARLES KONOWAL  
JOHN WALKER

Cinematography  
CHARLES KONOWAL, csc  
JOHN WALKER, csc

Editor  
JEFF WARREN

Sound Designer  
ALEX SALTER

Composer  
SANDY MOORE

Researcher, Interviewer and Inuktitut Translator  
OO AQPIK

In order of appearance  
JOHN AMAGOALIK  
OO AQPIK  
AAJU PETER  
SUZANNA SINGOORIE  
TAGAK CURLEY  
SIMEONIE AQPIK  
LARRY AUDLALUK  
BEFÄLHAVARE KENTH GRANKVIST  
SIMEONEE KEENAINAK  
HEZAKIAH OSHUTAPIK  
CHRIS ANIINGMIUQ  
SOLAMON ROSS  
ANNA NUNGAQ  
LUDY PUDLUK  
JOADAMEE AMAGOALIK  
MARIE BELLEAU  
BRUCE UVILUQ  
RICHMOND GREEN  
PETER AMARUALIK

Canadian Rangers in Pangnirtung  
AIMO PAUL ALIVAKTUK  
ROGERALIVAK  
KEITH ANGNAKAK  
CHRIS ANIINGMIUQ  
JOSEPH DIALLA  
TIMIUSIE DIALLA  
DAYTOOMIE ETUANGAT  
JACO ISULUTAK  
SIMEONEE KEENAINAK  
CHITEE KILABUK  
PATRICK KILABUK  
PETER KILABUK  
RICKY KILABUK  
JACKIE MANIAPIK  
MATHEWSIE MANIAPIK  
ANUGA MICHAEL  
NOAH MOSESEE  
LIMEE NAKASHUK  
DAVIDEE NAUYUK  
MOSESEE NOWDLAK  
TOMMY NOWDLAK  
HEZAKIAH OSHUTAPIK

BILLY QAQASIQ  
ADAMIE VEEJEE

Historical Advisor - Sovereignty and Security  
WHITNEY LACKENBAUER

1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group  
Unit Public Affairs Officer, CAPTAIN STEPHEN WATTON  
Senior Ranger Instructor, WARRANT OFFICER SOLAMON ROSS

Line Producer	ANN BERNIER
Camera Assistants / Operators	BECKY PARSONS DARCY FRASER
Additional Sound Recording	ZANDER ROSBOROUGH
Research Interviews	PAUL AMAGOALIK JAYPEETEE ARNAKAK FRANCO BUSCEMI ARMAND L.C. DE MESTRAL, CM BRUCE DUNN REEPA EVIC TERRY FORTH CATHERINE FRANCIS MORLEY HANSON ALEXINA KUBLU JONAH KELLY JOSHUA QAUMARIAQ LEVI PALITUQ CAPTAIN CONRAD SCHUBERT CHRIS WINDEYER INA ZAKAL
Visual Researcher	ELIZABETH KLINCK
Production Manager	ANN BERNIER
Production Coordinator	SILOËN DALEY
Production Accountant	ANGIE KOKIC
Production Assistants	NICOLE FERIANCEK, JOHN DAVIE
Transcriptions	JESSICA BROWN
Score Conducted by	DENISE GRANT
Score Recording and Mix	THE SONIC TEMPLE
Audio Engineer	DARREN VAN NIEKIRK
Recording Assisted by	MIKE HASTINGS
Score Copyist and Arranger	PAT CAMERON
Music Editor	ALEX FORD
Arranger	DONNY WALLS
Administration	BARBARA SCHEED
Musicians	

Oboe	SUZANNE LEMIEUX
Horn	DAVID PARKER
Voice	EVAN WEST
Violin	GINA BURGESS – Soloist
	ISABELLE FOURNIER – Soloist
	CELESTE JANKOWSKI
	JENNIFER JONES
	ANNE SIMONS
	CHRIS WILKINSON
Viola	KERRY KAVALO – Soloist
	BENNIE BRENNAN
	YVONNE DEROLLER
Cello	CHRISTOPH BOTH – Soloist
	SHIMON WALT – Soloist
	HILARY BROWN
Double Bass	CHRIS CHURCHILL
	JAMIE GATTIE
Sound Editors	ALEX SALTER
	BOB MELANSON
Map Design	IAN DUNBAR
Assistant Editors	JEFF COLLINS
	KEVIN RILEY
Visual Post-Production Facilities	902 POST INC
On Line Editor / Colourist	DOUG WOODS
Assistant Online Editor	KEVIN RILEY
Audio Post-Production Facilities	THE POSTMAN
Re-Recording Mixer	ALLAN SCARTH
Post Coordinator	SARAH BOWLES
Inukjuak Carving	ISA SMILER
Special thanks for permission to photograph carving from	DANIEL SMILER, SIASI SMILER
Website Design	MEDIA MECHANICS

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 THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

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 Illulissat, GREENLAND

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Beechey Island, NUNAVUT  
Dundas Harbour, NUNAVUT  
Resolute Bay, NUNAVUT  
Iqaluit, NUNAVUT  
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[www.arcticdefenders.com](http://www.arcticdefenders.com)

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## **TECHNICAL DETAILS**

HD Frame Rate	1080/23.98p
Runtime	90 mins
Print Details	Color + B/W, DCP
Film Sound	5.1 Surround Dolby Digital
Aspect Ratios	1.78 (16x9 VIDEO)