



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BEHIND HOLLYWOOD'S BIGGEST MOVIES THERE IS...  
**THE REAL STORY**  
SEASON PREMIERE SUNDAY, MAY 15 AT 8 PM ET/PT

Find Out The True Inspiration Behind *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Jaws*,  
*Jurassic Park*, *Gladiator* And *Titanic*

**New York, NY – April 21, 2011** – Hollywood often turns to history for its greatest stories. The prehistoric era gave us “Jurassic Park.” The first century gave us “Gladiator.” The 1700’s gave us the swashbuckling “Pirates of the Caribbean.” The 20<sup>th</sup> century gave us terror at sea in the form of the sinking “Titanic” and a killer shark that terrorized the northeast in “Jaws.” These films achieved enormous success, but in bringing them to the screen, the truth was often left on the cutting room floor. Now, **THE REAL STORY**, which debuts on **Sunday, May 15 at 8 p.m. ET/PT** on Smithsonian Channel, separates fact from fiction and real life from reel life.

Kicking off the season is **THE REAL STORY: PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN**. In 2003, “Pirates of the Caribbean” took to the high seas and was a major box-office hit. This first film in the series, about a buccaneering rogue battling a band of undead crewmates, is obviously a work of fiction, but according to its screenwriter, it was heavily inspired by the sea-faring legends and villains of the early 1700s. **THE REAL STORY** explores the Golden Age of pirates, their weapons of choice, and the scene-stealer of his day, Captain Blackbeard.

Other **THE REAL STORY** episodes this season include:

**THE REAL STORY: TITANIC – Premieres Sunday, May 22 at 8 p.m. ET/PT**

It won 11 Oscars<sup>®</sup>, and over 70 other film awards. It grossed nearly two billion dollars worldwide. Of the hundreds of books and seven other feature films about Titanic’s catastrophic voyage, James Cameron’s blockbuster is the flagship version, but how close was it to the actual events of April 14, 1912? **THE REAL STORY** compares the actual events of that fateful day with the film’s version. “Titanic” was a film of high drama, but the real story is even more remarkable and more tragic.

**THE REAL STORY: JAWS – Premieres Sunday, May 29 at 8 p.m. ET/PT**

In the summer of 1975, millions fled from beaches and flocked to movie theaters, thanks to Steven Spielberg’s monster hit “Jaws.” The story of a killer Great White Shark single-handedly created the genre of the summer blockbuster, but few know that its inspiration came from an actual string of shark attacks. **THE REAL STORY** investigates the Jersey Shore rampage that terrorized a nation in the summer of 1916. Could one shark be

responsible for all the killings? And was the carnage an act of malice or simply a case of mistaken identity?

**THE REAL STORY: GLADIATOR – Premieres Sunday, June 5 at 8 p.m. ET/PT**

Ridley Scott's Oscar-winning film "Gladiator" is the story of Maximus; a general who became a slave who then became a gladiator. He is a work of fiction, but the world in which slaves battled for their lives in front of thousands of bloodthirsty fans, was very real. So too was Commodus, the emperor of Rome, a man even more insane than the film's villain. THE REAL STORY interviews historians, archaeologists and screenwriter David Franzoni to reveal the history of Roman gladiators, a remarkable and violent tale that needs no Hollywood embellishment.

**THE REAL STORY: JURASSIC PARK – Premieres Sunday, June 12 at 8 p.m. ET/PT**

When "Jurassic Park" hit theaters in 1993, it was heralded as a technological wonder. Steven Spielberg's use of cutting edge CGI effects astounded audiences and made the story of genetically engineered dinosaurs seem completely plausible. But is it? Will we one day be able to clone prehistoric animals? THE REAL STORY looks beyond the Hollywood magic and into the scientific facts, with expert insights from research scientists, fossil hunters and paleontologist Jack Horner, the inspiration for Dr. Grant, the main character in "Jurassic Park."

**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).

###

**Contact:**

Josh Gross

212-708-1578

[j.gross@smithsoniannetworks.com](mailto:j.gross@smithsoniannetworks.com)