

BEHIND HOLLYWOOD'S BIGGEST BLOCKBUSTERS THERE IS ALWAYS...

## THE REAL STORY

SEASON FOUR PREMIERES SUNDAY, JULY 29 AT 9 PM ET/PT

Find Out True-Life Inspirations Behind Classic Films *Saving Private Ryan*, *True Grit*, *Apollo 13*, *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, *Braveheart* and *Master and Commander: The Far Side Of The World*

**New York, NY – July 23, 2012** – Brutal medieval warfare of epic proportion, a failed mission to the moon, an invincible warship, Omaha Beach on D-Day, UFO sightings, the real Wild West. These historic events have all inspired successful Hollywood hits but the facts didn't always make it to the silver screen. The Smithsonian Channel original series, **THE REAL STORY**, which debuts its fourth season on Sunday, July 29 at 9 p.m. ET/PT, separates fact from fiction and real life from reel life.

Kicking off the season is **THE REAL STORY: SAVING PRIVATE RYAN**. In 1998, "Saving Private Ryan" captured audiences with its violent depiction of the horror that American troops faced on Omaha Beach. Under the direction of Steven Spielberg, the film's realistic portrayal of D-Day earned an Oscar for Best Picture. **THE REAL STORY** puts those action scenes to the test with experiments to see how accurate they really were. It also explores two family tragedies that inspired the movie: the Sullivans, who lost five brothers and led the military to create the Sole Survivor Rule; and the Nilands, whose four brothers from Tonawanda, New York inspired the fictional Ryan family.

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

### **THE REAL STORY: TRUE GRIT—Premieres Sunday, August 5 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

"True Grit" has the foundation of a typical Western – revenge, retribution and redemption. The story centers on the unlikely partnership between a 14 year-old girl and a one-eyed Deputy Marshal, who join forces to avenge her father's death. "True Grit" may be fiction but it's closer to truth than many imagine. **THE REAL STORY** shows how the character of Rooster was inspired by a gun-toting Deputy Marshal; introduces "Hanging Judge" Parker, who delighted in sending legions of men to the gallows; and leaves the viewer with no illusions about what really happened in the Wild West.

### **THE REAL STORY: APOLLO 13 – Premieres Sunday, August 12 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

It was nominated for nine academy awards and grossed 62 million dollars at the box office. Directed by Ron Howard and starring Tom Hanks, "Apollo 13" told the story of America's ill-fated third mission to the moon in the summer of 1970. The film forever changed the way people relate to what has been called the most successful failure in the history of space exploration. Now, THE REAL STORY will reveal how closely Hollywood portrayed the extraordinary events that ensured the miraculous survival of the astronauts on Apollo 13.

**THE REAL STORY: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND – Premieres Sunday, August 19 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

The worldwide phenomenon, "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," landed in our cinemas over thirty years ago, lifting the lid on UFO sightings. As the biggest box office smash of 1977, it took a stab at answering the eternal question – are we alone in the universe? "Close Encounters" was a work of fiction, but the story was inspired by real people, real science and real-life witness testimonies. THE REAL STORY investigates the original cases that inspired the film, from the Michigan UFO chase to the first and most famous case of alien abduction in the US – the Betty and Barney Hill abduction.

**THE REAL STORY: BRAVEHEART – Premieres Sunday, August 26 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

Mel Gibson's Oscar-winning box office smash "Braveheart" tells the story of real-life Scottish rebel and freedom fighter William Wallace. The savage battle scenes and cast of thousands created a film of epic proportion, but ever since it was first shown historians have challenged the accuracy of the movie. Did William Wallace really live the life that "Braveheart" depicts? THE REAL STORY draws on medieval accounts and uses forensic evidence and weapons testing to build a picture of the real man and his times.

**THE REAL STORY: MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD – Premieres Sunday, September 2 at 9 p.m. ET/PT**

Receiving 10 Oscar nominations, Master and Commander follows the exploits of Captain Jack Aubrey and his close friend, surgeon Stephen Maturin — two characters based on the 20-volume series of seafaring novels by Patrick O'Brian. Although these novels were supported by fact and meticulously researched, this \$150 million film had to bend the historical framework for creative effect. THE REAL STORY reveals the extraordinary real-life story of Admiral Lord Cochran, the swashbuckling nobleman who inspired the classic movie of combat on the high seas.

**ABOUT SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL**

Smithsonian Channel is owned by Smithsonian Networks, a joint venture between Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution. Its programs are 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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