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SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL™ AND ITN PRODUCTIONS COMMEMORATE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI WITH ONE-HOUR SPECIAL ASIAN TSUNAMI: THE DEADLIEST WAVE PREMIERING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21 AT 8PM ET/PT

New York, December 8, 2014 – The Indian Ocean tsunami was one of the deadliest natural disasters in recent history. Now, ten years later, Smithsonian Channel and ITN Productions will tell its definitive story and look at what scientific advancements have been developed since then to save lives. The one-hour special, *ASIAN TSUNAMI: THE DEADLIEST WAVE*, premieres Sunday, December 21st at 8 p.m. ET/PT on Smithsonian Channel.

The Indian Ocean tsunami, which occurred on December 26, 2004, remains the deadliest in recorded history. A massive undersea earthquake off the coast of Indonesia produced waves up to 100 feet high that surged over the low-lying coastal regions of Southeast Asia. At least 230,000 people lost their lives, and 1.7 million were left homeless. Communities were devastated, farmland left barren, whole ecosystems polluted and destroyed. The earthquake that triggered the tsunami measured 9.2 on the Richter scale, the 3rd most powerful ever recorded. The waves radiated out from the entire length of the 1,000 mile long rupture created by the quake, forming deadly walls of water.

Jai Breisch of San Diego was just 16 years old and vacationing with his family in the Khao Lak resort in Thailand when the tsunami struck. “When the wave came it just took me away,” Jai recalls in the film. “I breathed water, and I thought that was it. Everywhere there was white. It felt like being in a washing machine with bricks, pool balls, razor blades and glass. But I came up, somehow. It had carried me a mile inland.” Jai’s parents survived, but his 15-year-old sister Kali died in the disaster.

As one of the first major natural disasters of the digital age, the tsunami was captured on video by locals and vacationers with handheld cameras. These unique images tell amazing stories of escape and survival as well as poignant reflections about those less fortunate.

ASIAN TSUNAMI: THE DEADLIEST WAVE weaves together archive footage, CGI, and interviews with experts and eyewitnesses. It also looks at scientific advancements made over the last decade and the monitoring systems now in place at sea —systems that proved invaluable when another deadly tsunami struck the coast of Japan in March 2011.

The world's leading tsunami experts discuss the latest early warning systems, which are the best chance of reducing the death tolls of any tsunami. These systems provide the projected size of incoming waves before they strike land.

Some scientists predict that a massive tsunami has a one in three chance of hitting North America within the next 50 years. The greatest threat comes from the Cascadia Fault, 50 miles off the coastline of the Pacific Northwest. Experts believe its human impact could be comparable to Hurricane Katrina. "It will happen to us. It's just a matter of when," says Dr. Eddie Bernard of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

ASIAN TSUNAMI: THE DEADLIEST WAVE is produced by ITN Productions for Smithsonian Channel. Ian Russell is the executive producer for ITN Productions. David Royle and Charles Poe serve as executive producers for Smithsonian Channel.

Smithsonian Channel™, owned by Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution, is where curiosity lives, inspiration strikes and wonders never cease. This is the place for awe-inspiring stories, powerful documentaries and amazing entertainment across multiple platforms. Smithsonian Channel combines the storytelling prowess of SHOWTIME® with the unmatched resources and rich traditions of the Smithsonian, to create award-winning programming that shines new light on popular genres such as air and space, history, science, nature, and pop culture. Among the network's offerings are series including *Aerial America*, *L.A. Frock Stars*, *Secrets*, *Mighty Ships*, *Mighty Planes* and *Air Disasters*, as well as critically-acclaimed specials that include *Civil War 360*, *9/11: The Heartland Tapes*; *MLK: The Assassination Tapes* and *The Day Kennedy Died*. Find out more at www.smithsonianchannel.com.

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