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THE BRUTAL WORLD OF DOG FIGHTING IS UNCOVERED
IN PREMIERE OF ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES

- Dog Fighting Rings are Exposed in new Tell-All Documentary on January 25 -

(Silver Spring, MD, January 6, 2009)— Cruel and inhumane “sports” involving animals for human spectacle and entertainment have been part of underground culture for decades, but the Michael Vick case truly opened up America’s eyes to the vicious world of dog fighting. **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: DOG FIGHTING EXPOSED** shows that his case was only the tip of the iceberg. Kicking off Animal Planet’s new **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES** anthology strand, this special investigation features unparalleled commentary and shocking, never-before-seen footage in a rare look into the secretive world of organized dog fighting. This hour, which premieres **Monday, January 25, at 10 PM (ET/PT)**, is the first in a line of quarterly **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES** specials that will take a comprehensive, investigative look at timely issues that impact both humans and animals.

With the help of law enforcement officers who between them spent years as undercover dog fighters, **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: DOG FIGHTING EXPOSED** delves into the minds of those who breed dogs and raise them to fight. These officers share their experiences of dealing with criminals, high-stakes gambling and uncontrolled brutality while infiltrating top dog fighting rings. A female ex-dog fighter gives a glimpse into the mindset of those who exploit their dogs in this lucrative business, and interviews with local citizens show what happens when easy money attracts youth to the brutal practice. The special examines cases across the United States, including Ohio, Texas, Georgia, Michigan and New York, to show the scale and complexity of the problem, while also offering glimmers of hope.

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“By bringing viewers the true and uncensored reality behind dog fighting, we intend to raise public awareness about this cruel and inhumane practice,” says Marjorie Kaplan, president and general manager of Animal Planet. “The brave men and women working tirelessly to expose and dismantle these fighting rings are using daring tactics and thanks in large part to their efforts we were able to share this powerful story with our viewers in an in-depth and unprecedented way. Some of the images might be tough to take, but it’s vitally important that these stories are told.”

A problem commonly found in urban areas, **ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: DOG FIGHTING EXPOSED** shows that dog fighting has tentacles that reach beyond the dark basements and garages to seemingly respectable homes and businesses where the fights take place. Gang activity and crime are often associated with these dog fighting rings, and the culture of abuse encompasses much more than just the dogs. Because of the large amounts of cash passed around at these fights, dog fighters invest a lot time and money into breeding and training a champion. The sad reality, however, is that a champion often earns its title at the expense of its adversary’s life – and often its own. Losing dogs rarely die in the ring, but they are routinely and brutally killed by their owners.

While breaking up these rings is still a battle, the special highlights some of the great strides that have been made. There are now harsher punishments for dog fighters, and what was once considered “sport” has now been labeled a felony in all 50 states.

ANIMAL PLANET INVESTIGATES: DOG FIGHTING EXPOSED is produced for Animal Planet by Anglia, a division of ITV Studios Ltd. Tessa O’Neil is the producer for Anglia, and Dawn Sinsel is the executive producer for Animal Planet. The show was developed by Marc Etkind, vice president of development for Animal Planet.

Animal Planet Media (APM), a multi-media business unit of Discovery Communications, is the world's only entertainment brand that immerses viewers in the full range of life in the animal kingdom with rich, deep content via multiple platforms and offers animal lovers and pet owners access to a centralized online, television and mobile community for immersive, engaging, high-quality entertainment, information and enrichment. APM consists of the Animal Planet television network, available in more than 96 million homes in the US; online assets www.animalplanet.com, the ultimate online destination for all things animal; the 24/7 broadband channel, Animal Planet Beyond; Petfinder.com, the #1 pet-related Web property globally that facilitates pet adoption; and other media platforms including a robust Video-on-Demand (VOD) service; mobile content; and merchandising extensions.

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