



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 21, 2011

Melissa Berry, 240-662-2946
Melissa_Berry@discovery.com

**STORIES OF DEVASTATION, FRUSTRATION AND SURVIVAL
ARE REVEALED IN ANIMAL PLANET'S – *BLACK TIDE: VOICES FROM THE GULF***

*-- On July 28, New Two-Hour Special Shines a Spotlight on the Hardships
and Environmental Damage Caused by the Gulf Oil Spill --*

(Silver Spring, MD) – On April 20, 2010, the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig left a tragic loss of life in its wake and devastated the culture and spirit of Gulf Coast businesses and residents. Together Animal Planet and Emmy award-winning filmmaker Joe Berlinger track the lives of Louisianans living in the aftermath of the largest offshore oil spill in American history in **BLACK TIDE: VOICES FROM THE GULF**. On **July 28, from 9-11 PM (ET/PT)**, this two-hour special explores how 200 million gallons of oil forever changed a way of life and how the region is rebuilding and finding new ways to survive. Over the course of the year following the spill, Berlinger and his crew embedded themselves with people from all walks of life in the region including commercial fisherman, an individual on the Deepwater Horizon rig, scientific experts and representatives from BP and the U.S. government to gain intimate access to their stories, in particular BP's clean-up operation. Through these first-hand accounts, **BLACK TIDE** paints a picture of the short and potential long-term effects on the people and animals that call the rich Gulf waters home.

For decades the oil and fishing industries have co-existed along Louisiana's Gulf coast, and locals have relied upon them for generations. For a region that provides 30 percent of the nation's seafood and oil supply, having these industries grind to a halt compounds an already dire economic situation. The ripple effect of the moratorium on drilling and people's reluctance to eat Gulf seafood over safety concerns permeates all facets of life on the Gulf coast. Through this lens, **BLACK TIDE: VOICES FROM THE GULF** delves into the disaster's impact on local businesses, the environment and on the health of residents and wildlife. To convey the toll the spill has taken on communities and animals, viewers will hear stories from:

- Al and Sal Sunseri, fifth-generation oystermen who have not shucked a single oyster since the spill and face the reality of shutting down their 134-year-old family business.
- Mike Utsler, the chief operating officer for the BP Gulf Coast Restoration Organization. He manages BP's ongoing response and restoration activities.

-more-

2-2-2

- James Carville, Louisiana native and political consultant.
- Floyd Lasseigne, a fourth-generation commercial fisherman who can no longer fish the tainted gulf waters; his illiteracy leaves him few other options for employment.
- Dr. Samantha Joye, a professor of marine sciences for the University of Georgia. She has been studying the impact of oil seep in the Gulf for 20 years and is shocked at her discovery when she travels to its depths after the obvious signs of the spill have faded.
- Dr. Susan Shaw, an environmental toxicologist exploring the impact of dispersants on people and the environment.
- Dr. Moby Solangi from the Institute for Marine Mammal Studies, the leading organization rescuing and rehabilitating the affected animals such as dolphins, pelicans and turtles. By documenting the changes taking place in animals, Dr. Solangi and his team can determine what's going on in the ecosystem and the possible ramifications for humans.
- Ken Feinberg, the U.S. government's point person for the Gulf Coast Claims Facility, which manages the distribution of funds to victims.

This special illustrates that it's not just about a livelihood for residents; the oil and fishing industries help define their identity.

"We wanted to move beyond the finger pointing and policy debates and put a human face on the plight of the residents of this vital region of America," says Joe Berlinger, (Crude, Metallica: Some Kind of Monster), director and co-executive producer of the special. "When the mainstream media packed up and moved to the next disaster, it gave the world the false impression that everything was back to normal. As this special shows, the people of the Gulf still face enormous consequences from the spill."

BLACK TIDE: VOICES FROM THE GULF is produced for Animal Planet by @radical.media. For @radical.media, Jon Kamen, Robert Friedman and Justin Wilkes are executive producers. The program is directed and co-executive produced by Joe Berlinger and produced by Jay Heyman. Lisa Lucas is the executive producer for Animal Planet. Marc Etkind is the vice president for 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 97 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.

###