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**DEADLY PARASITES HIJACK UNSUSPECTING HOSTS
IN ANIMAL PLANET'S NEW SERIES *MONSTERS INSIDE ME***

--Hidden Enemies Lurk Among Us, Wednesday, July 1, at 9 PM (ET/PT)--

(Silver Spring, MD, May 29, 2009) Not all monsters are big. In fact, some of the most deadly organisms in the world are invisible to the human eye. Using size to their advantage, microscopic parasites quietly invade their hosts without fear of inhibition or detection. Once inside, these creatures wait in concealment for months, or sometimes years, before striking—all the while, silently feeding off their victims.

Premiering **Wednesday, July 1, at 9 PM (ET/PT)**, Animal Planet's new series, **MONSTERS INSIDE ME**, shows what happens when humans fall prey to parasitic activity. Revealing the dramatic stories of people whose lives were forever altered by an encounter with a parasite, this six-part series explores the shocking, gruesome and sometimes deadly details of a parasitic infection. Every episode is a constant battle for life as doctors and scientists attempt to unravel each case...before it's too late.

"**MONSTERS INSIDE ME** is part horror movie, part medical detective story," says Marjorie Kaplan, president and general manager of Animal Planet. "Parasites live everywhere—our water, soil and even in the air we breath. When it comes to these stealth creatures, there's no where to hide."

Throughout **MONSTERS INSIDE ME**, viewers watch as victims are afflicted with parasites as exotic as malaria, to as common as raccoon roundworm, which is found in many parts of the U.S. No matter what the assailant, each parasite proves a formidable opponent as doctors are puzzled, and victims are frequently misdiagnosed before the real culprit is unveiled.

Doctors think John Figge's stifling headaches are the result of a brain tumor until surgery reveals *Schistosoma mansoni* worms attacking his brain; Vietnam vet, Tim Carmack is suffering from swollen legs that are oozing lymph fluid. He visits multiple specialists—none of which have any answers—until a urologist finally realizes Carmack is suffering from the parasite *Wuchereria bancrofti*, which he contracted 40 years earlier; And teenager Mallory Greiner contracts *Acanthamoeba keratitis*, a parasite that's intent on eating her cornea, but doctors believe she is suffering from herpes. By the time each

organism is discovered, doctors must rush to reverse the damage left in the wake of these parasitic nightmares.

Biologist Dan Riskin, with help from doctors and experts who witnessed each case, leads the scientific discussion about each parasite. Riskin, currently a researcher at Brown University, completed his doctoral work at Cornell University, specializing in the only mammalian parasite in the world—the vampire bat.

“Parasites are tremendously advanced creatures that have had millions of years to learn and combat the behaviors of their hosts,” says Riskin. “Having had a few myself, I can tell you, it’s not an experience to look forward to, or one you can easily forget.”

MONSTERS INSIDE ME is produced for Animal Planet by Optomen Productions. Beth Hoppe is the executive producers for Optomen, and Martha Ripp is the executive producer for Animal Planet. Dr. Dickson Despommier, one of the world’s leading parasitologists and renowned co-author of the reference book *Parasitic Diseases*, serves as the science advisor on the series.

For more information on parasites and their stomach-churning habits visit www.animalplanet.com where you can find profiles on the parasites from **MONSTERS INSIDE ME.

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 95 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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