



Surprisingly Human

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CONTACT: Brian Eley, (212) 548-5153  
[Brian\\_Eley@discovery.com](mailto:Brian_Eley@discovery.com)

**AWARDING-WINNING LEGENDARY ACTOR MARTIN SHEEN TO  
STAR IN BBC/ANIMAL PLANET TELEVISION FILM "THE WHALE"**

-- Two-Hour Film to Premiere on BBC One in December and Animal Planet in Summer 2014 --  
-- Sheen to Headline Epic Tale of Survival at Sea --

(London, United Kingdom and New York, New York, November 25, 2013) – Multiple award-winner Martin Sheen (*The West Wing*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Apocalypse Now*) will star in **THE WHALE**, a two-hour film from BBC Factual Productions and Animal Planet. Based on true events, the film tells one of history's greatest stories of survival at sea as Martin Sheen portrays Old Thomas Nickerson, who tells a story of his life as a cabin boy on the ill-fated voyage of the whaling ship the *Essex*. **THE WHALE** is written by Terry Cafolla (*Holy Cross*, *Messiah*). Filming took place on location in Malta this past spring and wrapped up outside of London last summer.

Martin Sheen leads the cast as the elder Nickerson with Jonas Armstrong (*Robin Hood*, *The Street*) as First Mate Owen Chase; Adam Rayner (*The Hunted*) as Captain Pollard; Paul Kaye (*Game of Thrones*, *Stella*) as Joy; David Gyasi (*Cloud Atlas*, *War Horse*) as Peterson; and Jolyon Coy (*The Hollow Crown*) as Lawrence. It also stars Jassa Ahluwalisa, John Boyega and Ferdinand Kingsley and introduces Charles Furness as the young Tom Nickerson. The BBC Factual Productions and Animal Planet drama is inspired by Chase and Pollard's real-life accounts of the ship's sinking. These accounts are said to have inspired Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*.

The action-packed narrative follows Nickerson as, against all odds, he comes through the worst that nature throws at him while growing up fast in the process. He faces the destructive force of sea storms, the power of whales, the brutal desolation of the sun and sea after the shipwreck and, finally, the grim realities of dark deeds as his only means of survival.

With breath-taking underwater footage and cutting-edge equipment and technology used to create storm scenes, **THE WHALE** beautifully captures the *Essex* caught in the treacherous sea storm.

**THE WHALE** is a production of BBC Factual Productions with Animal Planet and is executive produced by Eamon Hardy and Ruth Caleb with Mike Dormer as the producer. For Animal Planet, Mick Kaczorowski is the executive producer.

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](http://www.animalplanet.com), the ultimate online destination for all things animal; the 24/7 broadband channel, Animal Planet Beyond; and other media platforms including a robust Video-on-Demand (VOD) service; mobile content; and merchandising extensions.

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