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MEDIA RELEASE

ANIMAL PLANET DECEIVES ITS AUDIENCE WITH WHALE WARS

Washington, DC, 6 November 2008. The Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR), a Japanese scientific body that studies whales, today accused *Animal Planet* and *Discovery Communications* of deceiving their viewers in a new television series “Whale Wars”, due to be broadcast in the United States starting tomorrow.

Whale Wars purports to be a reality TV program, but instead it shows staged events directed by the Animal Planet filmmakers themselves, in a “tail wagging the dog” format.

The highlight of the series is an elaborate fake incident in which Animal Planet choreographed a supposed shooting of the leader of the ecoterrorist group Sea Shepherd. This can be viewed on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJ7TXcuuAmk&feature=related>

The Institute made clear at the time that no shots were fired from any of its vessels. A layman can easily discern this from the footage:

- It would be extraordinarily difficult for one party to shoot accurately at another from a range of approximately 150 yards when both are on moving platforms, there are difficult weather conditions (wind and sea spray) and the target is positioned on a crowded bridge. Watson pretends in the footage that a bullet not only hit his Kevlar vest, but that it hit him in the heart area.
- If any shots really had been fired, the Sea Shepherd vessel would have quickly navigated away from the ship it was attacking to maintain a safe distance and evaluate any damage. It maintained its course as if nothing had happened.
- No gunshot can be heard on the footage.
- A photograph that Sea Shepherd claimed was the muzzle flash of a rifle was in fact the illuminated face of the ship’s clock.
- A shooting in a crowded and confined area such as a ship’s bridge would create massive panic and confusion, with people screaming and diving for cover. The video shows a casual and unconcerned reaction to the supposed shooting.
- Even with the protection of a Kevlar vest, a real shot will knock a victim backwards and cause bruising. Watson makes no involuntary movements and

claims he was scratched by a pin badge he was wearing under the Kevlar vest. As in western movies, the claim is that he was miraculously saved by a badge.

This staged event involved Sea Shepherd and Animal Planet's production crew, who were in position to film the incident as it supposedly happened. Shortly afterwards, Animal Planet's headquarters in New York issued a press release promoting the incident and the series.

The Institute's offer to organize ballistics testing of the slug to establish when and how it really came to be in a Kevlar vest were ignored by Animal Planet and Sea Shepherd.

For episode three of the series, Animal Planet characterizes two Sea Shepherd activists as being held "hostage" by the Institute. In fact, the two militants illegally boarded one of the Institute's vessels, carrying toothbrushes and a change of clothes and with a clear intention of remaining on board for as long as possible. Sea Shepherd refused to take them back for three days.

Mr. Minoru Morimoto, Director General of the Institute of Cetacean Research, said: "Animal Planet is treating its viewers, advertisers and financial backers like fools. This is scripted, plot-driven television motivated by a scramble to reverse sinking ratings. Animal Planet has co-opted ecoterrorists into staging violent incidents for its TV cameras. Discovery can no longer be taken seriously as a leading broadcaster of 'non-fiction' or quality documentaries."