

# NEWS RELEASE

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## JOAQUIN PHOENIX, CAMERON DIAZ, EVA MENDES, M.I.A AND MOS DEF TRAVEL AROUND THE WORLD WITH NAT GEO ADVENTURE

*From Africa to the Andes, 4REAL Connects Celebrities  
with Young Leaders Making a Difference*

Spring 2008 – All Regions - Take one Academy award-nominated actor and add in seven flights, two days in aluminium boats and a long, treacherous drive into one of the most remote areas in the Brazilian Amazon to meet with an indigenous tribe. What you get is an unforgettable experience and just one of the episodes from *4REAL* – a hip, socially-conscious new series on Nat Geo Adventure.

Premiering in Spring 2008, the eight-part *4REAL* series brings together internationally-acclaimed music producer Sol Guy and superstars such as Joaquin Phoenix, Eva Mendes, M.I.A. and Mos Def, to increase awareness about some of the most pressing issues of our time. Travelling through jungles, over mountains and into some of the most notorious slums in the world, Sol introduces these celebrities to people who have devoted their lives to helping others in their community overcome obstacles and live a better life.

Along the way, Sol and the celebrities experience some unique, inspiring and entertaining encounters from impromptu dance-offs in Liberia to 'hip-hop' buses in Nairobi. They are also exposed to the harsh realities of living in one of the largest slums in Africa or in a Brazilian *favela* where drug traffickers reign supreme. But, most importantly, they have the opportunity to connect with and highlight the spirit of people who are succeeding in the face of adversity.

Episodes include:

### **4REAL: Kenya**

Growing up in the 'River of Blood' – one of the most dangerous neighbourhoods in Mogadishu, Somalia, breakout rap sensation K'Naan is no stranger to the plight of East African poverty. Going to the Kibera slum in Nairobi – home to nearly one million people crammed together on 250 hectares of land – is K'Naan's way to connect with the global hip-hop culture and showcase the vibrant East African scene. Hip-hop is has invaded this culture – even public transportation gets into the mix. Local buses are covered in graffiti art and feature booming sound systems and a hip-hop only music policy. While on location, music producer Sol Guy introduces K'Naan to Salim Mohamed. Growing up in an orphanage after being found in a box on the steps, Salim feels an innate responsibility to give back to his community. Setting up youth soccer leagues, Salim works hard to keep these kids away from the violence and that plagues the area, and gives them a sense of purpose. Although life in this Nairobi slum is hard with no sewers and limited access to clean water, Sol and K'Naan find there is also dignity and love here, along with joy and relentless determination.

### **4REAL: Yawanawa**

After seven flights, two days in aluminium boats and a long, treacherous drive, music producer Sol Guy and Academy award-nominated actor Joaquin Phoenix finally arrive

deep in the Brazilian Amazon to meet chief Tashka and the Yawanawa tribe. Becoming the youngest chief of his tribe, Tashka is now responsible for more than 600 people and 200,000 hectares of rainforest. He must combine tradition with new thinking, preserving his culture's rich heritage while acclimating to a modern world through technologies like internet, satellite and a phone booth. Showcasing his tribe's rich traditions, Tashka invites Sol and Joaquin to participate in a tobacco ceremony. The ceremony is powerful for the Yawanawa, and even more powerful for Joaquin and Sol, who can barely contain their tears after ground tobacco is blown up their noses. An emotional Joaquin embraces the cultural customs – donning traditional Yawanawa clothing and painting, and participating in sacred warrior ceremonies. Originally fearful of travelling to the area, Joaquin leaves the Yawanawa with a true sense of contentment.

#### **4REAL: City of God**

Arriving in the 'City of God' where guns and drugs rule, Sol Guy and American international rap superstar Mos Def meet up with MV Bill, a Brazilian hip-hop icon who uses his music and fame to give voice to Brazil's poorest neighbourhoods. Touring the 'City of God' slum, Sol and Mos Def become acutely aware of the hold drug trafficking has on the area after a drug dealer demands their walk be cut short so he can pass down the street. But people like MV Bill are having a positive impact. MV Bill has opened community centres, written two books and co-produced a documentary – all with the hopes of drawing attention to this underserved community. Through his community centres – a haven for youth – MV Bill uses hip-hop to empower kids. While Mos Def and MV Bill may not speak the same language, they understand hip-hop's transformative energy and connect through music – and their performance in front of thousands of fans in Rio is an intense fusion of cultural hip-hop styles.

#### **4REAL: Liberia**

As children of war, Sri Lankan rap maven M.I.A. and Liberian child advocate Kimmie Winks know much about the devastation of civil war on countries, families and neighbours. Bringing M.I.A. to post-war Liberia, Sol introduces M.I.A. to Kimmie, showcasing his work to help young people rebuild their lives and their country. Forced into a refugee camp, Kimmie formed his first NGO at a young age and became one of the most wanted men in Liberia. But Kimmie's reputation for helping others, now earns him an invite to meet with Liberia's first female president, and he brings M.I.A. and Sol along for the gathering. Afterwards, Kimmie enlists Sol and M.I.A.'s help to repair the first playground in post-war Liberia – a symbolic example of the healing process. Mobbed at the marketplace, Sol and M.I.A. head back to the block for a party where she performs 'World Town' – inspired by her visit to Liberia. An impromptu dance-off shows off the spirit of a people working towards a better life and brighter future.

4 REAL is produced for the National Geographic Channels International by Direct Current Media. Chris Haddock and Laura Lightbown are the Executive Producers for Direct Current Media. Sydney Suissa is the Executive Vice President of Content for National Geographic Channels International.

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Group, NGCI contributes to the National Geographic Society's commitment to exploration, conservation and education.

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