NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL
CELEBRATE THE INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE AND MEDICINE,
TAKING VIEWERS INTO A CUTTING-EDGE OPERATING ROOM TO PERFORM
BRAIN SURGERY LIVE

Brain Surgery Live Premieres
LIVE Monday 26 October at 12.00pm
on National Geographic Channel Australia

National Geographic Channel, in a partnership with Mental Floss, will capture the drama of an awake deep brain stimulation (DBS) surgery, a modern-day medical marvel, to celebrate our most complex machine, the human brain. Produced by Leftfield Pictures, Brain Surgery Live (#BrainSurgeryLive) will blend live coverage from the operating room at University Hospitals (UH) Case Medical Centre in Cleveland, Ohio – a first on Australian television – with pre-produced features that chronicle what science and medicine have historically taught us about the brain, and what is yet to be discovered.

The LIVE two-hour special premieres Monday 26 October at 12.00pm AEDT on National Geographic Channel Australia, and globally in 171 countries and 45 languages (live in some countries, live to tape in others).

DBS surgery was approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration to treat essential tremor in 1997 and Parkinson’s disease in 2002. While it has become more readily available, this delicate procedure is performed only at select medical centres that have the trained physicians, nurses and technicians, and specialised equipment it requires.

“From our Emmy-nominated series Brain Games to Brain Surgery Live, we continue to celebrate the brain, inspiring and feeding viewers’ wonder and curiosity about the most complex and mysterious organ in the human body,” said Tim Pastore, president, original programming & production, National Geographic Channels U.S. “We’re offering a real-time look into the centre of a living brain that we hope will illuminate and teach, as well as tell a story that is unforgettable.”

Executive Producer and Leftfield Entertainment President David George added, “It is extremely gratifying to offer National Geographic Channel viewers around the world the chance to share in a life-changing medical experience, as it is happening, to highlight the extraordinary talent and commitment of a renowned medical team and institution, and to illuminate the wonders and complexities of the human brain.”

Brain Surgery Live will take viewers into a cutting-edge operating room during a DBS surgery, an elective procedure in which an opening is made in the skull to access the brain. The brain is operated on while the patient is fully awake and able to speak with the neurosurgeons and neurologists. Because the patient is awake, the neurologists know where to target electrodes and then put the patient through a series of tests to determine whether or not they’ve pinpointed the affected area of the brain. The patient will be identified closer to the live taping after undergoing a wide range of screening and testing.

In the high-tech operating room at UH Case Medical Centre in Cleveland, production will furnish two manned, handheld cameras in the high-tech operating room, as well as several robotic cameras with inputs directly into the doctors’ surgical equipment. As a result, throughout the live broadcast, viewers will see EXACTLY what the neurosurgery team is seeing: up-close, live images of the brain as it is being operated on in real time.

In addition, Brain Surgery Live will utilise the hospital’s cutting-edge Surgical Theatre 3D surgical simulator. Developed in part at UH Case Medical Centre, the simulator is the only patented and FDA-cleared platform for
neurosurgical preoperative planning, currently available in only five hospitals in the United States. With the use of 3D imaging, the Surgical Theatre is used to “game plan” or map out the surgery, improving the visualisation prior to entering the operating room.

Viewers will learn a great deal about the brain, including cutting-edge technologies used in surgery, how virtual reality is changing medicine, what science can glean from the study of famous brains, how male and female brains compare, how the brain influences creativity and how the brain interacts with the rest of the human body.

Host Bryant Gumbel will guide viewers through the live surgery and the journey of twists and turns of human grey matter. Joining him through the live coverage of the procedure is expert commentator and neurosurgeon Dr. Rahul Jandial, who provides insight into the hard science behind this operation; co-host neuroscientist and host of the podcast “Talk Nerdy” Cara Santa Maria also lends her expertise and provides social commentary.

**Brain Surgery Live** premieres Monday 26 October at 12.00pm with an encore screening at 8.30pm AEDT on National Geographic Channel

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**About the Neurosurgical Team**

Originally founded nearly 150 years ago, UH Case Medical Centre is the primary affiliate of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, and is nationally ranked by US News & World Report in nine adult specialties, including neurology and neurosurgery. UH Case Medical Centre is a pioneering institution in the field of DBS and also helped develop the Surgical Theatre 3D surgical simulator that will be seen in the National Geographic Channel broadcast.

**Dr. Jonathan Miller** is director, Centre for Functional and Restorative Neurosurgery, UH Case Medical Centre. He is also associate professor and vice chair for educational affairs, Department of Neurosurgery, Case Western Reserve University. Miller is board certified in neurologic surgery, and his special interests include neuromodulation, epilepsy surgery, DBS, movement disorders, neuropathic pain, cognitive/mood disorders, drug delivery, peripheral nerve surgery and traumatic brain injury.

**Dr. Jennifer Sweet** is assistant professor, neurosurgery, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and is a neurosurgeon who works with Dr. Miller at UH Case Medical Centre in the functional and restorative neurosurgical area. Her other special interests include neuromodulation, DBS for movement disorders and psychiatric disorders, pain stimulation, drug delivery, traumatic brain injury and peripheral nerve disorders.

**Dr. Benjamin Walter** is director, Parkinson’s & Movement Disorders Centre, and medical director of the Deep Brain Stimulation Program at UH Case Medical Centre. He is an associate professor of neurology at Case Western Reserve University and is board certified in neurology. His special interests include DBS, dystonia, functional MRI, movement disorders, Parkinson’s disease and tremors.

**About Host Bryant Gumbel**

One of television’s most accomplished broadcasters, Bryant Gumbel was with NBC for over 20 years where he hosted the TODAY program for 15 years, longer than anyone in that show’s history. In April 1995, Gumbel began hosting “Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel.” Already honoured with 26 Emmys, two Columbia DuPont awards, and a Peabody, HBO Sports’ distinguished magazine-style program explores the issues, controversies and personalities that are prevalent in the world of sports. He has compiled a remarkably diverse array of credits. He has interviewed superpower leaders and Super Bowl heroes and has covered foreign wars, elections, international summits and Presidential inaugurations. Besides his numerous Emmy awards, Gumbel has received the United Negro College Fund’s highest honour, the Frederick D. Patterson Award, as well as the Martin Luther King Award from the Congress of Racial Equality and three NAACP Image Awards.
About Co-Host Dr. Rahul Jandial
Rahul Jandial, M.D., Ph.D., is a City of Hope neurosurgeon and scientist with expertise in medical and surgical treatment of cancer that affects the brain, spine and spinal cord. As part of his dedication to patients, Dr. Jandial is intensively working on pioneering new surgical techniques to improve outcomes after surgery. Similarly, his active laboratory investigates the biology of cancer to discover future therapies. Dr. Jandial is also active in the service of the larger community through his teaching, media outreach and humanitarian efforts.

About Co-Host Cara Santa Maria
Cara Santa Maria is an American neuroscientist, science communicator, journalist and podcaster. She has written for the Huffington Post and was its founding science correspondent and host of the “Talk Nerdy to Me” web series. She currently hosts the podcast “Talk Nerdy,” and is a co-host of “TechKnow” on Al Jazeera America and “The Skeptics” Guide to the Universe” podcast. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from the University of North Texas in 2004, before graduating with her Master of Science in biological science with a concentration in neuroscience from her alma mater in 2007.

About the Production Team
Brain Surgery Live is produced by Leftfield Pictures for National Geographic Channels, with Brent Montgomery, David George, Shawn Witt, Gretchen Palek, Robert Wheelock and Scott Miller serving as executive producers. Joe Michaels is director. For Mental Floss, Will Pearson and Mangesh Hattikudur serve as executive producers. For National Geographic Channels International, Hamish Mykura is Executive Vice President and Head of International Content.

Live broadcast producer Wheelock is a highly accomplished newsroom leader with an extensive background in breaking news and political coverage. Production credits include Al Jazeera America, ABC News Special Events, “Good Morning America” and the “TODAY Show.”

An eight-time Emmy award-winning director and two-time Director’s Guild of America honoree, Michaels is an industry innovator in studio and live event television directing. Production credits include the Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony in Sochi, Russia; the World Series; the Super Bowl; Wimbledon Tennis; NBC “Game of the Week;” the Orange Bowl; the Hula Bowl and NBC “SportsWorld.” Michaels has also directed commercials, stage productions and special events.

About National Geographic Channels International
National Geographic Channels International (NGCI) inspires viewers through its smart, innovative programming that questions what we know, how we view the world and what drives us forward. A business enterprise owned by National Geographic Ventures and FOX Entertainment Group, NGCI contributes to the National Geographic Society’s commitment to exploration, conservation and education through its various channels: National Geographic Channel, National Geographic Channel HD, Nat Geo Wild, Nat Geo Wild HD, Nat Geo People and Nat Geo Mundo. Globally, National Geographic Channel (including NGC U.S., which is a joint venture of NGV and Fox Cable Networks Group) is available in more than 440 million homes in 171 countries and 45 languages. For more information, please visit www.natgeotv.com.

About Leftfield Pictures
Leftfield Pictures, best known for producing breakout hit “Pawn Stars” for History and spawning the “hidden treasures” genre of programming, produces an array of projects across the broadcast, cable and digital landscape, including: “Counting Cars” (History), “Blood, Sweat and Heels” (Bravo), “Alone” (History), “Cutting It: In the ATL” (WE tv) and “Football Town: Barrow Alaska” (NFL Network). Upcoming series include “Lost and Found” (Discovery Family) and the NatGeo special Billy the Kid: New Evidence with Kevin Costner. Leftfield has additional series in production and development with networks including Bravo, History, Lifetime, Discovery, VH1, FYI, E!, Animal Planet, HGTV and more. Leftfield Pictures is part of Leftfield Entertainment, an ITV Studios company. Other Leftfield Entertainment companies include Sirens Media (“Real Housewives of New Jersey”), Loud TV (“Tiny House Nation”), Outpost Entertainment (“Forged in Fire”) and Riot Creative.