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Johan Renck and Ken Girotti Set to Direct

New York, June 28, 2012 – HISTORY announced today additional casting for its new scripted series, **VIKINGS**, including **Travis Fimmel** (*The Beast, Baytown Outlaws*) as Ragnar, the first great Viking leader, a man of both history and myth; **Jessalyn Gilsig** (*Glee, Heroes, CSI: NY, Nip/Tuck, Friday Night Lights, Somewhere Slow*) as Siggy, Earl Haraldson's beautiful wife; **Gustaf Skarsgard** (*The Way Back*) as Floki, a close friend of Ragnar's who is an eccentric jokester yet an inventive, creative boat-builder; **Clive Standen** (*Camelot, Robin Hood*) as Rollo, Ragnar's excessive, cruel cousin; and **Katheryn Winnick** (*Stand Up Guys, A Glimpse Inside the Mind of Charles Swan III, Bones, Love and Other Drugs*) as Lagertha, Ragnar's first wife and famous shield maiden who often fights alongside him.

Johan Renck (*Breaking Bad, The Walking Dead*) and **Ken Girotti** (*Rescue Me, Law & Order: Criminal Intent*) are set to direct multiple episodes of the series. The announcement was made by Nancy Dubuc, President and General Manager, HISTORY and Lifetime Networks.

They join previously announced Golden Globe® Award winner and Emmy® Award nominated actor **Gabriel Byrne** (*In Treatment, Usual Suspects, Millers Crossing*) who will star as Earl Haraldson, the most important local ruler in Ragnar's district, and **George Blagden** (*Les Miserables, Wrath of the Titans*) who will play Athelstan, an Anglo-Saxon monk captured by Ragnar on his first raid on England.

VIKINGS will be a series high on adventure, exploration, conflict, warfare and bloodshed – for these were extreme times – but, at its heart, it will also be a family saga. It follows the adventures of Ragnar Lothbrok, a historical figure, and the greatest hero of his age – and the gripping sagas of Ragnar's band of Viking brothers and his family – as he rises to become King of the Viking tribes.

Ragnar Lothbrok (Fimmel) is based upon the real-life Viking leader who literally exploded out of Scandinavia and onto the world stage in the 8th Century. A young farmer with a wife and family, Ragnar is deeply frustrated by the unadventurous policies of his local chieftan, Earl Haraldson (*Byrne*), who continues to send his Vikings raiders east every summer, to the Baltic states and Russia, whose populations are as materially poor as themselves. **Lagertha (Winnick)** is the first wife of Ragnar's and their marriage is a love-match. Ragnar was first attracted to Lagertha when she came to fight for a local Norwegian ruler against an invading Sweden. **Floki (Skarsgard)**, based partly on the Norse god Loki, is an impish character and ship builder who designs and builds the prototype of the new generation of Viking ships which can sail across the open ocean but also up the shallowest of rivers. He is a design genius and he allows Ragnar to fulfill his dreams of sailing west and discovering new lands and new civilizations. **Siggy (Gilsig)** is Earl Haraldson's beautiful wife and an enigmatic character. She performs her duties impeccably and with style, but she may not be completely loyal to her husband. **Rollo (Standen)** is Ragnar's cousin and initially one of his closest friends, involved in his early raids. But soon becomes jealous of his fame and success.

Created and written by Michael Hirst – one of the premier historical story-tellers in the industry (Academy-Award winning film *Elizabeth*; and the Emmy and Golden Globe nominated series *The Tudors*), Michael serves as Executive Producer along with Morgan O'Sullivan of World 2000 (*The Count of Monte Cristo; The Tudors*), John Weber of Take 5 Productions (*The Tudors; The Borgias*), Sherry Marsh, Alan Gasmer, James Flynn (*The Tudors; The Borgias*) and Sheila Hockin (*The Tudors; The Borgias*).

VIKINGS is an international Irish/Canadian co-production being co-produced by World 2000 and Take 5 Productions. HISTORY will broadcast domestically. MGM Television will bring **VIKINGS** to the global audience, serving as the international distributor outside of Ireland and Canada. **VIKINGS** is produced in association with Shaw Media, and the series will air on History Television in Canada. Nancy Dubuc, Dirk Hoogstra, and Julian P. Hobbs will serve as the executives on behalf of HISTORY.

The series will be filmed at Ashford Studios, a newly built studio facility in Ireland. Ireland has been home not

only to such acclaimed recent TV dramas as *The Tudors* and *Camelot*, but also to treasured feature films such as *Braveheart*, *My Left Foot*, *Excalibur*, *Barry Lyndon* and *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*. All post production, visual effects, sound design and music composition will take place in Canada.

Travis Fimmel is managed by Management 360, agent is Paradigm and attorney is AJ Brandenstein from Sloan, Offer, Weber & Dern. Katheryn Winnick is repped by Gersh, Alchemy Entertainment and attorney Jeff Bernstein. Clive Standen is repped by Gersh and Independent Talent Group.

About HISTORY®

HISTORY® is the leading destination for factual entertainment, including award-winning original series and specials that connect viewers with history in an informative, immersive and entertaining manner across multiple platforms. The network's all-original programming slate, including scripted event programming, features a litany of hits including American Pickers®, American Restoration™, Ax Men™, Ice Road Truckers®, Pawn Stars®, Swamp People® and Top Shot® as well as epic mini-series and specials such as the Emmy® Award-winning Gettysburg, America The Story of Us, Hatfields & McCoys, Vietnam in HD and 102 Minutes That Changed America. The HISTORY website is the leading online resource for all things history, and in 2011, the United States Library of Congress selected HISTORY's Civil War 150 site for inclusion in the historic collection of Internet materials related to the American Civil War sesquicentennial.

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