The Living Weapon
Monday, June 8, 2009 on PBS
pbs.org/americanexperience

You can't see it. You can't hear it. You can't smell it. Yet a biological weapon could decimate an entire city. On Monday, June 8, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE presents The Living Weapon, a harrowing tale of ambition, scientific discovery, and the lengths to which one man would go to protect his country.

From producer John Rubin, this one-hour documentary offers an unprecedented look at more than two decades of closed-door meetings, secret test sites, determined scientists, and human subjects that attempted to turn some of the world’s most potent germs into some of the world's most effective weapons.

In 1942, the United States government, sanctioned by President Franklin Roosevelt, began a highly classified program to research and develop bioweapons - the first in a series of steps, motivated by fear of powerful enemies that brought the United States to a point of no return.

"It was a turning point in the way America was willing to fight," says producer John Rubin. "Roosevelt's decision acknowledged the readiness to use a kind of weapon that military leaders had long shunned as dishonorable."

"Today, perhaps more than ever, people are aware of what a biological attack could do to a city or a nation," says AMERICAN EXPERIENCE executive producer Mark Samels. "The program was, in many ways, a consequence of the mindset that scientific and medical advances could be turned on their heads to create massive destruction."

CREDITS
A John Rubin Productions, Inc. film for AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

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AMERICAN EXPERIENCE is a production of WGBH Boston
Senior producer Sharon Grimberg
Executive producer Mark Samels

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ACCESSIBILITY

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE is closed captioned for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers, and described for people who are blind or visually impaired by the Media Access Group at WGBH. The descriptive narration is available on the SAP channel of stereo TVs and VCRs.

ABOUT AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Television's most-watched history series, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE has been hailed as "peerless" (Wall Street Journal), "the most consistently enriching program on television" (Chicago Tribune), and "a beacon of intelligence and purpose" (Houston Chronicle). On air and online, the series brings to life the incredible characters and epic stories that have shaped America's past and present. Acclaimed by viewers and critics alike, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE documentaries have been honored with every major broadcast award, including twenty-four Emmy Awards, four duPont-Columbia Awards, and fourteen George Foster Peabody Awards, one most recently for Two Days in October.

ABOUT WGBH BOSTON

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer. More than one-third of PBS's prime-time lineup and companion Web content as well as many public radio favorites are produced by WGBH. The station also is a pioneer in educational multimedia and in access technologies for people with disabilities. For more information visit wgbh.org.

For more information about AMERICAN EXPERIENCE and The Living Weapon, visit pbs.org/americanexperience

Promotional photography is available for download from pbs.org/pressroom and pressroom.wgbh.org.

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