



Bait and switch

Mike Rowe, of 'Dirty Jobs' gets chummy with 'Shark Week'

By RITA SHERROW

World Television editor

"Bite me. Really."

That's the challenge "Dirty Jobs" host Mike Rowe throws down to a swirling mass of hungry sharks.

See, Rowe is switching his focus from dirty jobs to jobs that, er, bite.

It's all part of the Discovery Channel's annual "Shark Week," which kicks off at 8 p.m. Sunday on cable channel 30.

Mind you, when Rowe double-dares the Caribbean reef sharks, he's wearing a suit of chain-mail armor designed (he hopes) to prevent the sharks from putting their teeth deep into his flesh.

It's just another day at work for this former opera singer who, as the engaging host of the Discovery's "Dirty Jobs," has both entertained and amused viewers as he tries his hand at some of the most gross jobs on the planet.

"Cursed with a curiosity that might be a little unusual," Rowe has provided a lighthearted but insightful look at such vital vocations as sexing chickens, cleaning sludge, removing road kill, collecting owl vomit, shucking oysters and cleaning skulls (don't ask).

Despite the dramatic 'eeeyew' factor, all those things were a lot less dangerous than the tasks he tackles in "Jobs That Bite" airing at 8 p.m. Sunday and "Jobs That Bite Harder" at 8 p.m. Friday.

For both shows, the "Shark Week" host traveled the world to toil alongside men and women who work with sharks every day.

In "Jobs That Bite," he helps prepare a mixture of fish guts, flies and blood to create shark-attracting chum and dives inside a cage to say hello to a great white shark. He also dissects a tiger shark and acts as a guinea pig to test shark repellent.

In the second show, he learns how to make fiberglass casts of captured sharks and tries out the chain-mail suit designed to protect divers.

Rowe also gets in the middle of a shark feeding frenzy.

In a phone interview from New York City where he is doing voiceover for a Hurricane Katrina special and Discovery's "American Chopper" series, Rowe said he was surprised to be asked to host "Shark Week."

"'Shark Week' is this big, huge brand. Mainly I was flattered they would allow me to have a point of view in a brand that big," he said. "Of course, right on the heels of that flattery was dread."

Being "committed to continuing his streak of not being bitten by a shark," Rowe dove into the work, despite his mother's misgivings.

"Allowing myself to be bitten by sharks is basically penance," said Rowe, who also has served as host of Discovery's "Egypt Week Live," and traveled to the Bering Sea to narrate "Deadliest Catch."

"I can't explain it but I have had this



Mike Rowe of Discovery channel's "Dirty Jobs" and "Deadliest Catch" series, is host of "Shark Week," featuring new specials at 8 p.m. Sunday through Friday, on cable channel 30.

CLAUDIA PELLARINI/Discovery Channel

weird, quiet, quirky career," said Rowe, who at one point in his career sold more than \$100 million worth of fake diamonds on QVC.

"I sold a lot of Tylenol in commercials and did lots of voiceover and writing. Now I have ostriches kicking me, hippos and catfish biting me and dogs doing rude, unexplainable things with inappropriate parts of my body . . . For the past six years, it's been like this crazy summer vacation from hell.

"I think my mother believes I have annoyed someone at the highest possible levels of television," he said.

When he took the "Shark Week" assignment, he was given a crew, plane vouchers and instructions to head wherever people were doing dirty jobs

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Duh-dum ... duh-dum

Discovery channel's annual "Shark Week" features seven new specials, airing at 8 p.m. Sunday through Friday on cable channel 30. They include:

- "Dirty Jobs: Jobs That Bite" featuring "Shark Week" host Mike Rowe traveling the world to meet the men and women who work with sharks. Sunday.

- "Shark Attack Survivors" examines shark attack case studies and first-hand accounts of those who escaped plus how to survive an encounter with a shark. Monday.

- "Perfect Shark." Host Mike deGruy uses a virtual aquarium to conjure up and interact with the images of any shark that ever lived. Tuesday.

- "Sharks: Are They Hunting Us?" features animal behaviorist Dave Salmooni looking at the truth about so-called "man-eating" sharks. Wednesday.

- "Shark Rebellion." Swimmers in the port of Brazil's Recife have experienced 45 attacks with 16 fatalities since 1992 in what once was considered a safe place to swim. Is it the sharks, the humans or the reef that changed? Thursday.

- "Dirty Jobs: Jobs That Bite Harder." Mike Rowe tests a chain-mail suit designed to protect divers from attacks. At 9 p.m., "Science of Shark Sex" takes viewers to French Polynesia to study the mating habits of grey reef sharks. Friday.

television

SHARK WEEK

When: "Jobs That Bite," 8 p.m. Sunday; "Jobs That Bite Harder," 8 p.m. Friday
Where: Discovery Channel, cable channel 30

A 'Beauty' of a facility

Claremore arts center raises curtains on Disney's 'Beauty and the Beast'

By JAMES D. WATTS JR.

World Scene Writer

Normally, the "beauty" in a production of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" is the female lead in this musical.

This coming weekend, however, the character of Belle might have some competition from the place in which she will perform.

The Robson Performing Arts Center in Claremore — a state-of-the-art facility that will serve the city and its public school's fine arts programs — will have its grand opening this weekend.

The first performances in the new theater space will be the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival's professional touring production of the Disney musical, "Beauty and the Beast."

But the true star of the weekend will be the 72,000-square-foot facility, designed by Wozencraft Mowery and Associates.

The facility is the dream of Claremore residents Frank and Ludmilla Robson, who are the primary benefactors and namesakes of the \$16 million center.

The Robsons gave the initial \$8 million to begin construction of the center, and contributed another \$3 million toward the establishment of an endowment fund

for the center's operating costs.

The Walton Family Foundation contributed another \$3 million to the project.

"This has been something the Robsons have talked about for several years," said Ruby Quinn, the center's executive director. "They thought a performing arts center of this quality was necessary — not just for the schools and education, but for the entire community. And they went above and beyond the call to make sure it came to be."

Friday's gala opening will feature the unveiling of four works by Claremore native and nationally known artist Patrick Gordon. The works will be on permanent display in the center. Gordon, who now makes his home in New York City, will be in Claremore for the weekend.

Proceeds from all ticket sales of the four performances of "Beauty and the Beast" will go to the Claremore Public Schools Foundation, which provides educational materials, programs and equipment for schools that cannot be provided through regular school funding.

In one sense, the Robson Performing Arts Center is two facilities in one. Besides the public performance spaces, the center includes classroom areas that will house Claremore Public Schools'

junior high and high school theater and music programs.

It had been hoped that the high school's annual musical, which this year was "Oklahoma!," would serve as the inaugural performance in the new 1,018-seat theater. However, some construction delays pushed the opening from June to August.

"I've worked with the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival in the past," said Quinn, a Tulsa native whose career in education and theater includes stints at Texas Tech University, Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton and as director of the children and teen theater programs with the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival.

"So I knew the quality of their productions, and that a goal of the company is to bring together theater professionals to work and perform with students," she said. "That fits perfectly with some of the goals the Robsons had for this center." Quinn said she also attended performances of the festival's version of "Beauty and the Beast" in July, to make sure it was true to the look and spirit of the Disney original.



STEPHEN PINGRY/Tulsa World

Executive Director Ruby Quinn with workers putting the finishing touches on Claremore's Robson Performing Arts Center.

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