

Reality Check: Some sink, others fall, a Kilcher baby is born

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Rudy rafting down a river in the Tordrillo Range

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It was a big week for Alaska reality TV: Baby Kilcher was born, "Hotel Impossible" was at the Alaskan Hotel & Bar in Juneau, and Rudy Reyes (Military Team) was forced to leave "Ultimate Survival Alaska" after he fell out of a tree and broke his ankle.

Though there was foreshadowing throughout the episode, I didn't see Reyes' departure coming and it

devastated me. Near the very end of the challenge, he climbed up a tree to scout the finish line through his sniper scope, and while he was rushing down the tree, a branch snapped and he fell directly onto his ankle. The Military Team still made it first to the extraction point to win the challenge, and since they still finished, the remaining two military guys will stay on the show.

At the beginning of this season, I thought that no one could possibly out-style Marty Raney's backcountry ensembles, and then we met Reyes. There was his never-ending rotation of fashionable rugged scarves, his epic sunglass-goggles, and in this week's episode he was sporting a tunic that not many men could pull off. A member of our Reality TV Book Club described his outfit as "what Luke Skywalker wore in 'Return of the Jedi'."

Between his fashion, his positive attitude and his brilliant arms, Reyes was one of the most entertaining cast members of "Survival." This is probably because he has more Hollywood experience than most others on the show. Reyes is a former recon Marine, who is best known for appearing in the HBO series "Generation Kill" (as himself) and starring in a short-lived History Channel show called "Apocalypse Man."

A couple of weeks ago, I actually got a chance to talk to Reyes on the phone about his experience on the show and he said the show reminded him of being "back in the Marine Corps" because of the rugged terrain and the tactical nature of their expeditions.

He also let me know that from time to time, the camera crews will ask them to do stuff again if they don't get the right shots. Reyes actually had to go through rapids on his packraft more than once during a recent episode, even after he fell into the river. "We had to do some of this bomb death-defying stuff multiple times... all it does is compound the danger," he said. I hope that no one made him climb that tree more than once, or he'd still be on the show.

It's ironic that when I asked Reyes which cast members he got along with the best, he said, "Mentally, spiritually, emotionally, I really vibed with The Woodsmen, because they were warm, warm people." And just like the beloved Woodsmen, fare thee well Reyes. Fare thee well.

"Hotel Impossible" is a show that I have zero experience with, but since they were in Alaska it seemed like my duty to watch it. The basic premise is that this really mean guy named Anthony goes to a hotel, yells at the hotel owner and staff and remodels a couple of rooms. What I found to be most fascinating was that The Alaskan even had hotel rooms. I've been to the Alaskan a handful of times over the past five years and I thought it was just a rowdy bar filled with legislative aides drinking away their Juneau blues. But apparently they have 45 rooms (the Internet could not confirm this number) and it is the oldest operating hotel in Alaska.

Once the rooms were remodeled and the seemingly staged family conflict between the owner and her son was resolved, it didn't look that bad. However, they decided to put this hideous fake glacier in the bar that tourists and locals could take their pictures with. And while they were trying to get it into the bar, it fell onto the interior designer, which should have been a sign that it was a terrible idea..

And finally, Findlay Farenorth Kilcher was born on the season finale of "Alaska: The Last Frontier" to Eivin and Eve. Discovery Channel didn't show the birth (which was a good call), but we got to see Otto and Charlotte Kilcher beaming upon meeting their grandson.

Both "Last Frontier" and "Ultimate Survival Alaska" featured "quicksand" prominently in their episodes this week. In "Last Frontier," the Kilchers' cows got briefly stuck in some quicksand by a river and in "Survival" Marty Raney and Tyler Johnson both had to be pulled out by a teammate. Are quicksand and mudflats geologically the same? (Yet another thing that is hard to confirm on the Internet.) It seemed strange because I've never heard anyone talk about "quicksand" in Alaska, but if you were to watch these shows, you'd think it is everywhere just waiting to kill you. I really just need to know if it should rise on my fears list, so let me know.

- Emily Fehrenbacher lives in Anchorage, where she reviews Alaska reality TV.

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