

A photograph of Bear Grylls, a survival expert, crouching inside a white and blue tent. He is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and black pants. Behind him, a poster of a snow-capped mountain peak is mounted on a wall covered in graffiti. The setting appears to be an urban environment, possibly a construction site or a derelict building. The lighting is bright, suggesting an outdoor or well-lit indoor space.

Grylls, photographed in the wilds of Los Angeles on Nov. 9.

MAN VS. WILD'S BEAR GRYLLS

FORCE OF NATURE

TV's go-to survival guy climbs cliffs, eats snakes, fends off controversy—and tackles our urban survival quiz BY JOHNNY DODD

He's paraglided over the Himalayas, escaped from quicksand and snacked on a still-wriggling snake. But a few months ago, Bear Grylls finally met up with a challenge he couldn't handle. "This nomadic tribe in the Sahara offered me raw

goat testicles," says Grylls, 33, the star of the Discovery Channel's survival series *Man vs. Wild*. "As an honored guest, I ate one. It's just everything you'd imagine. It was the first time I've vomited on the series."

Just another hazard of Grylls' gig

as the MacGyver of the wild. In the series, whose third season premiered Nov. 9, he hurls himself (often by parachute) into inhospitable locales, then shows his audience how to survive using skills he honed in the British army's Special Air Service, an elite



Grylls paddles in Wales with wife Shara and sons Jesse (left) and Marmaduke. Jesse has already gone paragliding with Dad: “My wife got a little mad over that.”

unit trained in parachute jumping and desert and winter warfare. An enthusiastic showman, Grylls (actual first name: Edward) climbs cliffs, swims rapids, eats any critter he can catch and, when the going gets hot, wraps a urine-soaked T-shirt around his head to prevent heatstroke. “I spend a lot of time thinking, ‘I’ve got to get a proper job. This is mad. I’m miserable,’” he says with a laugh, sipping peppermint tea (when not in survival mode, he’s a vegan). “But at the same time, I realize that all this is such a privilege.”

He has been accused of being too privileged: This summer, news broke that he had sometimes bunked in comfy hotels instead of roughing it in the wild during taping. Episodes

take about 10 days to make, explains Grylls: “The night stuff [shown on-camera] is all done for real. But when I’m not filming, I stay with the crew in some sort of a base camp.” Episodes now clarify when Grylls gets support from his crew and when situations are staged. “We should have done that from the start,” he says. “The more you see, the more real it feels.”

Grylls’ career in derring-do began in 1994, when he entered the British special forces. That came to an end in 1996 when his parachute tore during a routine training jump 16,000 feet above southern Africa. He landed on his back, breaking it in three places. “No one knew if I’d ever walk again,” he says. It took him a year to recover.



And two years after the accident, he climbed Mount Everest—his dream ever since he taped a photo of the peak to his bedroom wall while growing up on Britain’s Isle of Wight. After returning home, he married Shara Cannings-Knight, 33, a climber he met in Scotland, and the two—along with sons Jesse, 4, and Marmaduke, 19 months—live in a converted barge on the banks of the Thames in London. “It leaks, it’s rusty and it’s cold in the winter, hot in the summer, but I can’t think of a better place to live,” he says. Spending so much time taping his series—and taking risks—away from his family is increasingly tough. “Being a real dad involves me not being dead,” he says. “I don’t tell them a lot about what I do. I just return home with a bag full of bloody, muddy clothes and life returns to normal.” But he never stops thinking about his next adventure. “My mind’s full of things,” he says. “My problem is that I need 10 lifetimes to do it all.” ●

CAN BEAR HANDLE . . . URBAN SURVIVAL?

You’re walking to a shrink appointment. Suddenly, a pack of crazed poodles comes charging down the street. How do you keep from getting nipped?

“Take off your T-shirt, wrap it around your arm, then offer it to the most aggressive dog. When he bites down,

take two fingers and ram them into his eye sockets. That should take care of him.”

You’re desperate to get on *American Idol*, so you’ve lined up for tryouts two days early. But a nasty rainstorm hits. How do you stick it out without catching a voice-killing cold?

“Lift up a manhole cover and climb inside. It’s nice and dry down there. I used to do that as a kid.”

Just out of the shower, you manage to lock yourself out of your house naked—in a blizzard. Your wife will be home in an hour. How do you survive?

“Well, if it’s just an hour, go for a good run. You’ll be fine.”