

MIKE WARD'S BIG STREAM

Daft raft show is a beach-fest



CASTAWAYS:
Richard Hammond and Tory Belleci



THE GREAT ESCAPISTS
(Amazon Prime Video from Friday) ★★★

THE way Richard Hammond sees it, there are worse experiences you could suffer than getting shipwrecked and stranded on a remote Pacific island. Maybe not in real life, but certainly in this new make-believe series of his, which makes out he's been washed up in the middle of nowhere with fellow pop-science telly host Tory Belleci, of MythBusters fame. Richard's take on their predic-

HAM'S ISLAND STRIFE

ament is not to sweat it, to find ways to make themselves as comfortable as they can for now and then just wait for help to arrive. Which it surely will, right? "People like us don't just disappear," he insists. "We won't just drop off the radar..." Tory, on the other hand, reckons they must channel all their ingenuity into getting themselves off the island ASAP, build-

ing some kind of raft-type contraption - a proposal Richard dismisses as "suicidal." What with all the sharks and that. It sets us up for a nicely daft (yet scientifically quite solid) six-parter, where these guys' engineering know-how and collective inventiveness - much of it relying on whatever they can salvage from the wreck - are put to the test with varying

degrees of success and often spectacular failure. Also tested, needless to say, is their tolerance of one another, which wears increasingly thin, to put it mildly, with each passing episode. It's that increasingly strained relationship which gives the series its narrative arc. Although, obviously, an actual ark might have proved more handy.



CULTURED: Tottenham striker Son

SONSATIONAL (Amazon Prime Video)

★★★ SPURS star Son Heung-min is a breathtakingly brilliant footballer. And, by all accounts, a lovely guy.

But this feature-length documentary does feel a tiny bit weird at times, as it talks us through the South Korean hero's formative years, documents his development as a player and ultimately takes us as far as 2019.

That's when South Korean telly ran a whole series about him, the highlights of which form the basis of this 90-minute film.

If you're a fan you'll no doubt enjoy it, but to the neutral it feels a bit dry and over-earnest.



HIP: Jenna Coleman in The Serpent

★ **FIGURES** just out show the BBC iPlayer enjoying a record-breaking start to the year, with 162million streams in the first full week.

Biggest hits were 1970s hippy killer drama *The Serpent*, *A Perfect Planet*, the forensic science thriller *Traces* and *EastEnders*.

★ **Also revealed** are iPlayer's top-rating boxsets for 2020. Sally Rooney's drama *Normal People* was way out in front, with more than 63 million streams, followed by series three of *Killing Eve*, clocking up nearly 40 million. *MasterChef* was third, on 22 million.

◆ WIN ◆◆ WIN ◆◆ WIN ◆

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STREAMING service Acorn TV is packed with top drama from Britain and beyond. Along with hit series such as *Keeping Faith*, *London Kills* and *Agatha Raisin*, plus one-offs such as *Agatha Christie's And Then There Were None* and *The ABC Murders*, it features a whole range of exclusive shows unavailable elsewhere. Favourites include *Kiwi* thriller *The Sounds and Irish* comic mystery *Dead Still*. New shows are added weekly. Acorn TV, which you can watch

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FAVOURITES: *Dead Still* and, left, *Agatha Raisin*

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THE WHITE TIGER (15) (Netflix from Friday) ★★★ BASED on a prize-winning novel, this is the darkly humorous tale of a young Indian guy who starts out as a chauffeur, gets treated like various kinds of garbage but ends up seizing the initiative in ways he could never have imagined. **FORTE (Amazon Prime)** ★★★ IN this Amazon Original comedy film (it's in French with subtitles, just so you know), an overweight gym receptionist decides to take up pole dancing.