



Blanchard Ryan

**Riding High On Movie Success,
She Confesses Her Fear**

BY SCOTT D. JONES

This summer, Blanchard Ryan became one of the most visible divers in the country with her role in the Lions Gate film *Open Water*. But it was a true acting job for Ryan, who admits she had a strong fear of sharks prior to becoming involved in the movie.

"I normally don't swim at the beach because of an 'irrational' fear of sharks. Everyone said I was crazy to do this movie, but I was interested in the role and the interaction between the two characters," Ryan recalls.

The "interaction" wasn't just between the two human characters, but also the many sharks that served as "extras" during the shoot in the Bahamas. It also meant a grueling shooting schedule of 32 days in the water, some days lasting as long as 14 hours. "Hey, at least I didn't have to worry about hair and make-up all the time," she says with a smile. "I'm also much more confident and comfortable as a diver now."



PHOTO COURTESY OF LIONS GATE FILMS

*"I never thought I'd swim with a bunch of sharks. I think they are beautiful
and it's something that I always wanted to do."*

For Blanchard, she didn't have to stretch her acting ability too far to look scared of the sharks. "I'm comfortable in the water, but for whatever reason, I have a fear of sharks. The producers (Chris Kentis and Laura Lau) wanted authenticity. They got it when I was around those sharks."

The role challenged the striking blonde actress. "I never thought I'd swim with a bunch of sharks. I think they are beautiful and it's something that I always wanted to do. I'm proud of myself for having done it."

Ryan was already a certified diver before signing on with *Open Water*, but went through a review course prior to filming. After all the time in the water, she may just qualify for a "shark diving" specialty.

Critics were kind to the movie, which told the story of two divers left behind by a dive boat. The film, which chronicles the experience of two divers left behind during a boat diving adventure, helped to focus the industry on improving safety and dive boat practices. This is exactly what Ryan and the film's producers hoped would happen.

"If the film makes the industry more safe, then we've accomplished something," she says. "These types of things are rare, but they do happen. So we'd be thrilled if the movies helps people be safer, more aware and responsible divers."

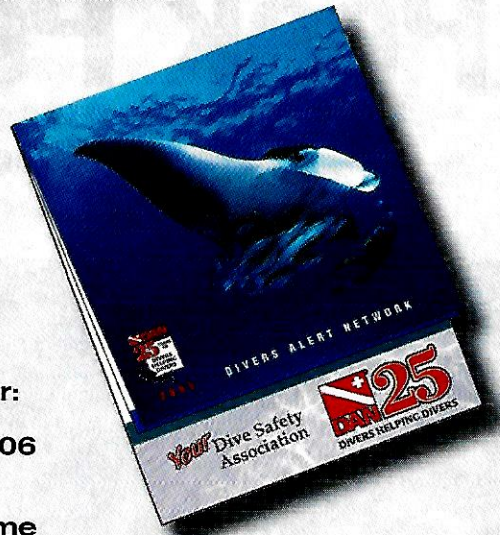
Open Water premiered with great fanfare in late August. The movie is scheduled for a DVD release early next year.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



DAN Member Scott Jones is a dive journalist who has been diving and writing about it for 20-plus years. He is currently editor of *Divenewswire*, a press release service with wide distribution in the dive industry.

DAN 25th Anniversary Commemorative Calendar



Get the calendar that promotes and celebrates diving, its history and 25 years of DAN.

• 14-month calendar: December 2004 through January 2006

• Outstanding photography by some of the world's best underwater photographers

• Contains key information and phone numbers for Diving/DAN

• Large format: 12" x 27"

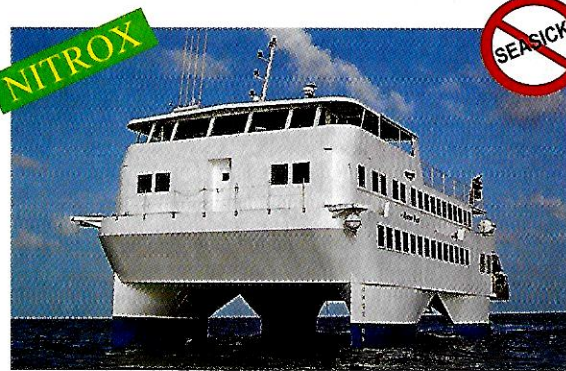
Member price: \$9.95



www.DiversAlertNetwork.org

NEKTON DIVING

SMOOTH SAILING • DIVERSE DIVING
7 WORLD - CLASS DESTINATIONS



Itineraries

Belize • Mona Island • Northwestern Bahamas
Southern Bahamas • Cay Lobos • Cay Sal Bank



(800) UW -WORLD

(800) 899-6753

(954) 463-9324

(954) 463-8938 Fax

www.nektoncruises.com