

# 'Sharknado' Hits California Hard, Internet Even Harder

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If something could actually break the social Web because of extreme overexposure -- as the Harlem Shake taught us, it can't -- the "Sharknado" rage of the moment would be a candidate to do it.

The [Syfy original movie](#), which aired Thursday night, became a dominant force on the Internet during its airing and afterward, with Twitter and search traffic levels suggesting cancer had been cured or an intelligent alien species found.



*Image from Sharknado*

On Twitter itself, there was no escaping #sharknado. According to one report, the peak activity was about [5,000 tweets a minute](#) right before 11 p.m. E.T., when "Sharknado" was concluding. Google Trends also showed quite an interest, with "Sharknado" collecting more than [500,000 searches July 11](#).

Starring Ian Ziering, best known for his 1990s work on "Beverly Hills, 90210," and [Tara Reid](#), of "American Pie" fame, "Sharknado" is the story of a terrible and powerful Pacific Ocean hurricane, one spawning tornadic winds that scooped up sharks by the hundreds and deposited them along the California coast, where naturally they feasted on the residents of greater Los Angeles. The still image from a Syfy clip here shows how serious the matter was.

**[Related: [See the 'Sharknado' Storify experience](#)]**

Many people were consumed. A Ferris wheel broke loose. Explosives were dropped into the storms to show them who's boss. Ziering used a chainsaw. He later [told CBSNews](#): "When I read the scene where I'm actually chainsawing my way out of the belly of a shark, how could a guy turn that down when that's in the job description?" He couldn't.

## Look at you, getting involved

But it was the power of the [social-verse](#) that was a story in its own right. Before the first commercial break, it was obvious what was happening: "Sharknado" had become the meme of the moment. People who clearly have never seen Syfy originals were convinced they had discovered something precious to share with the world. You know the drill. It's not unlike a Metallica fan from say, 1983, getting along just fine until suddenly one day someone with no right to do so blasts "Enter Sandman" from his car.

Everyone, it seemed, wanted to weigh in on the storm-and-ocean-predators saga. Actress [Mia Farrow](#) apparently. U.S. Sen. [Chris Murphy](#) of Connecticut mentioned it. Traders in the Yahoo! Finance sphere forgot about Ben Bernanke and stock index levels. [Political angles](#) were explored, and what of the [science at work](#)? (Indeed, a side note that surely cheered the left and irked the right came early in the movie, when a "newscaster" covering the storm's progress said experts were blaming global warming for its intensity.)

Interestingly, it might have been a bigger deal socially than it was on the tube. Brian Stelter, media reporter for The New York Times, put the viewer count between [1 million and 2 million](#), which in his words was "not as high as Twitter traffic suggested." Syfy, part of media giant Comcast ([CMCSA](#)), had about [98 million U.S. subscribers](#) at the end of 2012.

## Do you know Mansquito?

Either way, "Sharknado" was good fun. That said, your regular Syfy watcher wouldn't be remotely surprised by the camp, the C-list celebrity cast, the mayhem or the concept of sharks being flung through the air in great number.

Same for the portmanteau name. This is the network, after all, that has given us "Mansquito," "Arachnoquake" and "Piranhaconda." And that's to say nothing of such fare as "Kaw," "Bone Eater" or "Chupacabra vs. The Alamo" -- the last title featuring Erik Estrada.

Production company [The Asylum](#), the maker of "Sharknado," has been behind many other films of a certain ilk, from "Dragon Crusaders" to "Nazis at the Center of the Earth" to "2-Headed Shark Attack." It's not uncommon for Asylum movies to sound like other movies, in particular blockbusters: "The Amityville Haunting," "Titanic II," "Sunday School Musical," "Snakes on a Train" and "The Da Vinci Treasure," to name a few.

## [From Yahoo! TV: 'Sharknado': The Entire Movie Told in Tweets and GIFs]

Syfy, which also has original series programming such as "Warehouse 13" and "Defiance," recently made a considerable change with its movie roll-outs, offering Thursday debuts. Previously, Saturday nights were when you expected the in-house features to appear. Since presumably people are more likely to be home flipping through the channels on a Thursday instead of a Saturday, there's some merit to it. Unfortunately, fans of the weekend unveiling -- the proud, pre-Sharknado crowd -- have generally been getting theater-released films or reruns in the Saturday night slots.

An emailed request for comment has been sent to Syfy, but thus far there's been no response. However, the channel's website does feature an item titled "Sharknado Takes Over The Internet," with a link to [this](#).

If you missed it, don't worry. "Sharknado" [will be back](#). And next month, you can get your [Great Whites](#) in a different manner, when "Shark Week" arrives. No Ian Ziering, though.

ORIGINAL LINK: <https://finance.yahoo.com/blogs/the-exchange/sharknado-hits-california-hard-internet-even-harder-172325159.html>