

Chevy Chase's stunt double no dam fool

Dangling high over Colorado River a very hot scene in 'Vegas Vacation'

By Robert Macy

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How hot was it? If you were California stuntman John Robothan, strapped on the sun-baked face of Hoover Dam, it was nearly 135 degrees hot.

Robothan, 39, of Santa Barbara, lay flat against the giant wall for 30 minutes Tuesday afternoon, filming a stunt for the new Chevy Chase movie, "Vegas Vacation."

Robothan, who has been a stunt double for Chase for 10 years, was attached to a series of ropes and bolts 90 feet down the face of the dam and 637 feet above the dam's power plant. He gave the appearance of having no support, but actually was secured by a harness under his clothing that was connected to three bolts.

"You only need one (bolt), but we take all precautions," Robothan said. "We're not daredevils."

Film crews with Warner Bros. did several takes of a scene in which Chase swings on a rope from the Arizona side of Lake Mead, slams into the face of the mammoth structure and then turns to wave at his family who watches horrified from the nearby visitor's center.

Hundreds of people gathered to watch the filming and express amazement at Robothan's gritty stunt.

After climbing back up on a rope to the top of the dam, Robothan said the stunt was about as tough as any he had ever done, but he had full confidence in the riggers who set up the shot.

"I was never in any trouble," said Robothan, perspiring profusely. "You are just as good as your riggers."

Was he even a little frightened?

"I have to admit, it was definitely an eye opener when you look down there," said Robothan, a 20-year stunt veteran.

The show, which also features Beverly D'Angelo and Randy Quaid, will be filming in Las Vegas for several more weeks.



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JOHN ROBOTHAN, a stunt double for Chevy Chase, dangles on the face of Hoover Dam during a scene in an upcoming movie.