

NEW ORLEANS COUPLE TO BE FEATURED IN NEW REALITY SERIES Hurricane Katrina Cat Stars in “Housecat Housecall”

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New Orleans couple, Gary Michael Smith and Brenda Floyd—along with their cat named Emory—are the stars of the premiere episode of “Housecat Housecall,” airing on Discovery Channel’s “Animal Planet” Saturday, June 7. The fascinating story telling how they discovered and adopted the abandoned mackerel tabby immediately after Hurricane Katrina will air at 9 a.m. E/P.

His name is Emory because Smith noticed he was living on MREs—the military Meals Ready to Eat—as evidenced by his large girth, and the fact that in the days following Hurricane Katrina, he trod behind National Guard troops on the streets of New Orleans. Smith wrote about the experience of finding the hurricane-traumatized feline, which he initially thought was a pregnant female, in an online cat magazine called crazyforkitties.com. It was from this article that Emory’s story was picked up by a casting director for the Los Angeles-based production company Black & White TV. Black & White had been hired by Purina to produce a 6-episode reality show.

The theme behind this cat whisperer series is that a celebrity veterinarian consults with pet owners who have cats with issues. Former model-turned-veterinarian Katrina Warren visits the home, listens as the owners describe their pets’ problems, and consults with a number of veterinarian behaviorists to help find solutions. In the case of Emory, Smith and Floyd discovered their abandoned cat had a number of quirks such as only drinking out of a running faucet and a strange propensity for hopping in the shower with them. Once contacted by the production company, the New Orleans couple agreed to let a full camera crew, talent, hair and makeup, video assist, audio, producers, directors, production assistant, and even craft services film in their home to capture this portion of Episode 1 of Housecat Housecall.

One stipulation was that the production company guarantees no damages to Smith and Floyd’s turn-of-the-century New Orleans home nestled near the renowned Maple Leaf bar and famous Jacques-Imo’s restaurant in the Riverbend area of New Orleans, a home that was spared wind and flood damage. The other condition was that they not have to use the veterinarian’s first name—for obvious reasons. Another recommendation was that the film crew takes a brief devastation tour to a “feeding station” in the devastated Lower Ninth Ward where Smith volunteers for a local no-kill animal shelter called Animal Rescue New Orleans. A field crew accompanied Smith, Floyd, Dr. Warren, and shelter director Robin Beaulieu to a flooded and abandoned house where casserole pans filled with dry cat food and water were placed to feed a waiting tortoise shell mother cat and her kittens.

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