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IF I SHOULD FALL FROM GRACE: THE SHANE MACGOWAN STORY

CHANNEL SURFING



"If I Should Fall From Grace: The Shane MacGowan Story" airs Monday on the Sundance Channel.

2 documentaries on 2 very different people

By Allan Johnson
Tribune television reporter

It takes all kinds to make a documentary work, as two on Monday demonstrate:

The hypnotic "If I Should Fall From Grace: The Shane MacGowan Story" (8 p.m. Monday, Sundance Channel) is as gritty as MacGowan, the rough-edged former lead singer of punk Irish band the Pogues. Meanwhile, "Intimate Portrait's" biography of the glamorous Audrey Hepburn (6 p.m. Monday, Lifetime) is a glossy reflection of the graceful Oscar winner for 1953's "Roman Holiday."

Fans of raw, uncompromising features will dig "Grace," which doesn't shy away from a man who is a shambles — barely comprehensible speech, a tangled nest of hair and scraggly beard, and maybe five teeth in his mouth, if he's lucky.

But despite being addle-brained from years of substance abuse, MacGowan is one of the most inspired and ultimately beautiful singer-songwriters to come from the punk movement. His hardcore twist

to the Irish ballad through edgy singing and simple, poetic writing is a revelation.

"Audrey Hepburn" is a wet kiss to the screen great who host Meredith Vieira describes as a "bona fide 20th Century icon and a national treasure."

We get to see many touchstones of Hepburn's life: humble beginnings in Belgium; struggles through World War II; torment over two miscarriages before son Sean was born in 1960; two failed marriages — including her first to actor Mel Ferrer; bypassing films to raise her children, and extensive work with kids aided by UNICEF until her death in 1993.

There isn't much dirt to Hepburn's life, not that it's needed to enliven a biography. But the lack of objectivity blurs the perspective.

■ Here's a shout-out to ABC's "Miracles" (9 p.m. Monday, WLS-Ch. 7). The moody series is lost in the ratings, despite an undeniable attraction. Monday's show delves more into investigator Paul Callan's (Skeet Ulrich) role in an upcoming battle between good and evil.