

**WHITE SQUALL**

by

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**FADE IN:**

**SUPER: A TRUE STORY - MYSTIC HARBOR CONNECTICUT 1994**

**CREDITS OVER**

Wind on the water. Soaring gulls and sand pipers glide over the pilings and sagging bulkheads.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

Though I hadn't seen or spoken to Sheldrake in over thirty years, it seemed impossible that his heart was the thing that had finally failed him...

**INT. LATE MODEL CAR - SAME**

CHUCK GIEG, 49, thin, windswept and handsome, is behind the wheel. He pulls down a narrow cobble stone street that leads to the wharf.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

I never got close to him, nobody did. But by the time we made Tampa, I was sure I knew who he was, that I understood what he saw, what nourished his soul and tested his faith...

**EXT. WHARF - DAY**

Chuck stares out across the harbor. In the distance, the echoes of singing masts. Shrouds and canvas softly ping. The small boats of Mystic tug restlessly at their moorings.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

He had taken us to worship, where, what was for him, the holiest of holies. And, for us too by the end...

**EXT. DOCTORS OFFICE - LATER**

Chuck stands silently on the periphery of a gathering of people. They surround a small building, a neighborhood clinic. A worn gray stone, long in the earth, dedicates the structure.

**IN MEMORY OF NATALIE "ALICE" SHELDRAKE M.D.,  
CAPTAIN'S WIFE AND SHIP'S SURGEON OF THE  
BRIGANTINE ALBATROSS - MAY 2, 1961**

Next to the stone a funeral urn. A YOUNG MINISTER gropes for meaning.

**MINISTER**

I didn't know Richard Shel Drake personally, but his many friends who knew and worked with him, wanted to make sure that he was returned home, here, to be remembered with his beloved wife...

Chuck gazes out at the sleepy harbor, the minister's voice fading away. The afternoon wind is coming up with the tide. He quietly heads towards the water. Drifting, drawn, lost.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

Though he had moved on with his life, now even for the years, to hear him eulogized by strangers, seemed strange. He had been a hewner of stones, a pilot by the silent stars. Like me, alone among many. But most of all for us, the crew of the brigantine Albatross, he was always and would forever be... our Skipper.

A SHIP'S BELL turns him around. Ding ding. Ding ding. A beautiful three masted schooner steady on the water slips into port. A picture out of another time, another place. It takes him away...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. FOREST - WATER TOWER - DAY**

A towering monolith, surrounded by tall oaks and sycamores. The tower is immense. A single ladder runs up to the top.

**AT THE TOP**

Just above the tree tops, the view is spectacular. CHUCK GIEG, 16, sits thin and unsteady. Chuck's gaze is drawn upward -- to the building spring cumulus clouds. Chuck's older brother WILL, 18, stout, self assured, pulls himself to the top.

**WILL**

You gonna jump? Or are you just having a last look?

**CHUCK**

I was just thinking that I never had a new pair of shoes till I was twelve.

**WILL**

It's no my fault I was born first. Besides, nobody ever sent me on an eight month vacation, so ease up on

the sad sack stuff.

**CHUCK**

It's not a vacation, it's private school.

**WILL**

I thought this was your dream come true.

**CHUCK**

That's not why he's sending me.

**WILL**

Why then.

**CHUCK**

Because it looks good.

Chuck looks out, yearning. Will considers him, troubled.

**CHUCK**

I'm just not like you. Ya know?  
I'm never going to go to Yale. I'm never going to be "William".

**WILL**

Nobody says you have to be like me.

**CHUCK**

He does.

**WILL**

You don't give him enough credit  
Chas.

Chuck takes a last look at the building clouds. The sky rumbles. Distant thunder.

**WILL**

We better go.

**EXT. GIEG HOUSE - DAY**

Maple street, USA, tree lined and quaint. The Gieg home is a modest two story house with a covered porch. The family station wagon is poised for departure. CHARLES, 45, a generally serious man broods as MIDDY, their mother, 40, soft and thoughtful, exits the house. Chuck and Will appear from the woods.

**CHARLES**

(ticked)

You plan on making this plane or not?

**WILL**

Don't take any wooden nickels Kemosabe.

**CHUCK**

I won't.

Will shoves out a hand at Chuck.

**WILL**

And lighten up will ya.

Chuck hugs him anyway and walks to the passenger side. Charles tosses him the keys, like he's doing him a big favor.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

Chuck sits in the drivers seat. Middy is in the back. Charles slams the trunk and gets in. Before Chuck turns the ignition...

**CHARLES**

Now just take it easy. We're not going to a fire.

Chuck reacts.

**OUTSIDE**

Will watches as the car pulls away.

**CAR - MOVING**

The Giegs drive in silence. Middy reads from a brochure.

**MIDDY**

Honey, did you know that the Albatross was captured by the Germans during World War II?

**CHUCK**

No, I didn't.

**MIDDY**

It says she was originally Schooner

rigged, but Captain Sheldrake turned her into a brigantine. I think square rigs look so much more romantic.

**CHUCK**

Me too.

**CHARLES**

Appearances aren't everything. Keep your mind on the road.

Chuck pulls over to the side of the road.

**CHARLES**

What are you doing?

Chuck hands him the keys.

**CHUCK**

I don't feel like driving. Okay?

Charles regards him oddly.

**EXT. AIRPORT GATE - DAY**

The National Airlines Boeing 707 is bigger than anything Chuck has ever seen. Passengers begin boarding. Charles stands away, detached.

**MIDDY**

Do you have your ticket?

**CHUCK**

Yes.

**MIDDY**

Passport?

**CHUCK**

Look, I just better go.

Middy hugs her son.

**CHUCK**

Goodbye Mom. I'll be okay.

**MIDDY**

I know you will.

Chuck faces his dad.

**CHARLES**

Make us proud.

**CHUCK**

Yes sir.

Charles extends his hand. They shake. Then Chuck hurries away into the crowd. Charles and Middy watch until he is out of sight.

**INT. PLANE - DAY**

Chuck settles into his seat next to the window. He watches as the world slips away beneath the wings of the 707.

**EXT. AIRPORT CUSTOMS - BERMUDA - DAY**

Another world. Chuck stands in line at the customs booth. He cranes his neck to see the brilliant blue water and coral reefs beyond the runway.

Three other boys are ahead of him in line. The CUSTOMS AGENTS go through every piece of luggage. TOD JOHNSTONE, 16, thin and blonde, is in a heated argument with one of the agents about his spear gun.

RICK MARCH, 17, wise-cracking and confident, shakes his head, smiling. He spots Chuck, moves through the line and shoves out a hand.

**RICK**

Albatross?

**CHUCK**

Yeah.

**RICK**

Rick March. Who the hell are you?

**CHUCK**

Gieg, Chuck.

**RICK**

Look, meet us out front when you're through. If they try to take anything away from you like Johnny Quest up there, just make a list and we'll have 'em send it down to the

boat.

**CHUCK**

Whatever.

One of the agent starts pulling things out of Rick's duffel bag. He finds a dive knife.

**RICK**

Hey, hey!! That's my stuff!!

**EXT. AUSTIN CAB - MOVING - DAY**

The car whizzes through the narrow streets of Bermuda. CALYPSO MUSIC sings from the radio. The streets are lined with small coral houses and exotic palms.

**INT. CAR - SAME**

The boys are jammed inside with their things. In addition to Chuck, Rick and Tod, is CHARLIE STRATTON, also sixteen.

**TOD**

Well Ricky boy, spear gun or no,  
it's sweet to be back in the world  
of rum and honey.

**RICK**

I gotta admit I never thought you'd  
be back after the great "Bowsprit  
Affair".

**TOD**

Me and Skipper had a meeting of the  
minds.

**CHARLIE**

How's that?

**TOD**

I begged.

**CHUCK**

(warming a little)  
What the "Bowsprit Affair"?

**RICK**

Well, Romeo here was on harbor watch  
and managed to sweet talk one of the  
local girls to have a go in the

bowsprit.

**TOD**

Not just any 'local' girl.

**RICK**

The 'local' mayor's 'local' daughter.

Tod smiles, reminiscing.

**CHARLIE**

Thing is, the net in the basket isn't very comfortable, so Tod-o wraps them up in the jib. After the deed was done...

**RICK**

He says they did the deed...

**TOD**

Trust me, we did the deed.

**CHARLIE**

After the "alleged" deed was done, they fell asleep. Big Daddy Lawford comes on deck at four bells and hears Casanova sawing logs.

**TOD**

Believe me, I needed the rest...

**CHARLIE**

He gets the whole crew on deck, gets us on the halyard, and orders the old "heave ho...".

**RICK**

Up goes the jib and out roll Tod-o and the mayor's daughter, naked as pilot whales...

**CHARLIE**

(to Tod)

I don't know who was more surprised, you or Big Daddy.

**TOD**

To tell you the truth, I think it was her father.

At the top of a hill, the harbor comes into view.

**RICK**

Well gentlemen, there she is.

The cab stops. Besides many colorful fishing boats, is the ALBATROSS. At ninety-two feet, she dwarfs everything in the harbor. Her white hull glows like ivory and her twin masts and yard arms tower above her deck. Breathtaking.

**CHARLIE**

Home sweet hell on the water.

**EXT. DOCK - DAY**

The boys pile out of the taxi. What seemed like a pristine ship from the hill looks like a rust bucket up close. The white paint is streaked and barnacles cover the hull. Looks of disappointment.

**CHUCK**

What happened to it?

A voice from behind turns Chuck.

**BILL**

She cleans up. We'll have her ship shape before we shove off.

This is BILL BUTLER, 15, removed, the youngest of the crew and... first mate. Bill gives Chuck a friendly slap on the back and climbs aboard. He is greeted by a Viking giant of a man, LAWFORD, 37, and bearded, the ship's English professor.

Puffing on a huge Havana cigar, he stares coolly down at Tod and the others. He speaks with the voice of Moses.

**LAWFORD**

"That this same child of honor and renown, This gallant Hotspur, this all praised knight, And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet. For every honor sitting on his helm, Would they were multitudes, and on my head. My shames redoubled! For the time will come...

Chuck feels something and looks up where he meets the intense stare of a man standing between the deck cabins. Their eyes lock.

**LAWFORD**

... That I shall make this northern youth exchange, his glorious deeds for my indignities."

Then, the man is gone. Haunting. Only Chuck has seen him. Tod smiles back at Lawford impishly.

**TOD**

Would you be addressing me, sir?

**LAWFORD**

I would.

**RICK**

What's that supposed to mean?

**LAWFORD**

(beat)

Henry the IV part I Act I Scene ii.  
I suggest you read it.

Lawford sneers and walks away. It's all a show.

**CHARLIE**

It means Shakespeare. B-o-r-i-n-g.

**BILL**

It means if he catches anybody basket-napping on watch this passage, he's gonna use their lizard for 'cuda' bait.

**RICK**

(lightly)

Well that's a hell of a how-do-you-do.

**BILL**

Drop your gear, go below and pick yourself some bunks.

Chuck and the others climb aboard.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - DAY**

Chuck makes his way down the companionway into the main cabin. Other crew members are already unpacking.

The sleeping arrangement is Pullman-style with two rows of

bunks on each side of the cabin. In the middle of the room is a gimbaled table. This is where the crew will eat and study.

**RICK**

Listen up. This is Chuck Gieg.

Among the crew -- feature ROBIN WEATHERS, 16, a cherub with soft puffy cheeks and TERRY LAPCHICK, 17, skinny and rodent-like.

Robin approaches with a hand extended. He carries a 8x10 photo of a young man in a football uniform.

**ROBIN**

I'm Robin.

Chuck regards the photo.

**ROBIN**

(flat)

That's my brother. He's dead.

Apprehensively Chuck shakes and retreats to a lower bunk. Robin tacks up the picture above his bunk. Terry unpacks in front of one of the lower berths.

A loud "THUD!" turns everyone around. A duffel bag lies at the bottom of the companionway. A large imposing figure climbs into the cabin.

This is JOHN GOODALL, 17, over six feet, big and broad. His hair is slicked back "Dean" style and wears a full day's growth of bread on his face. Compared to the others, he looks all man. Everybody clears from his path. He stops in front of the lower, center bunk (Terry's bunk) and drops his bag.

**JOHN**

I'll take this one.

**TERRY**

You probably didn't notice, but this bunk has been taken.

John just glares at him, then dumps all of Terry's things onto the blanket on the bunk, gathers it up and tosses it into the remaining upper berth. Terry watches, intimidated.

**JOHN**

Anybody gotta problem with that?

**RICK**

(beat)  
Absolutely not.

John climbs into his bunk and closes his eyes. Bill enters, followed by several adults.

DR. ALICE SHELDRAKE, 30, smart, attractive and tough, is ship's surgeon and Skipper's wife. Lawford appears with GEORGE PASCAL, 30's from Brazil, dark, and fit.

**BILL**

Alright, listen up. This is Dr. Alice Sheldrake.

The guys stumble over only half listening.

**ALICE**

I'm ship's surgeon. I'm in charge of aches, pains, biology, math and science.

**BILL**

George Pascal here is ship's cook.

**GEORGE**

If you want to keep all your fingers, stay the hell out of my galley unless you're invited.

**BILL**

Some of you already know Mr. Lawford.

**LAWFORD**

I have been charged with the dubious task of insuring your literary education.

Lawford puts a hand on Bill's shoulder.

**LAWFORD**

Bill Butler is your first mate. But don't let his size fool you.

Bill gives a half reluctant wave.

**MIKE**

So when the hell do we get to meet El Capitan?

Snickering.

**TERRY**

(aside)

Maybe he's getting his wooden leg  
waxed.

Laughter. A sound stops the laughter. Almost on cue, the sound of slow methodical footsteps, pace the deck above them. Then a shadow falls across the skylight, blocking the light. Ominous. They all notice and look up.

**LAWFORD**

(mysterious)

You'll meet him. Soon enough.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - SUNRISE**

Dawn glows orange in the skylights above the cabin. The only sound is the heavy, even breathing of slumber. Suddenly, a booming voice rumbles down the companionway.

**LAWFORD (O.S.)**

Arise, Arise, Arise...

Chuck wakes, disoriented. Terry bolts upright and hits his head on the low ceiling. Ouch.

Tod, Rick and Charlie are up instantly. Lawford's voice echoes through the ship.

**LAWFORD (O.S.)**

Exultation is the going/ Of an  
inland soul to sea/ Past the houses/  
Past the headlands/ Into deep  
Eternity/ Bred as we, among the  
mountains/ Can the sailor  
understand/ the divine intoxication/  
of the first league out from land?

(pause)

But I suppose we'll answer that  
question soon enough gentlemen.  
Soon enough.

**TERRY**

What question?

Chuck tries to assimilate Lawford's words. Robin swings his feet over the side of his bunk with a tortured look. John rolls over and pulls his pillow over his head.

**ROBIN**

(foggy)

What the hell is going on?

**CHUCK**

Maybe it's an air raid.

In crisply pressed shorts and shirt, Bill Butler steps through the aft bulkhead. He raises a bowsman's whistle and blows. OOOWWEEEEEOOO!!!! Chuck and Robin grab their ears. It's a nightmare. Terry jumps and hits his head again.

**BILL**

Roll out sailors! All hands on deck! Sixty seconds. Sixty seconds.

He blows the whistle again. This time it brings even John to his feet, staring down at Bill in a blind rage. Bill looks up and casually notices him.

**BILL**

You gotta problem Goodall?

**JOHN**

You blow that thing again I'll shove it so far up your ass, you're gonna need dental floss to get it out.

**BILL**

Just get on deck.

Bill turns and disappears topside.

**EXT. DECK - DAWN**

The sun has barely cracked the horizon as the crew staggers onto the deck, shirtless and shivering.

**BILL**

Line up! Single file. Single file.

The crew lines up. John is the last one through the hatch and he lets us know his boundaries are being pressed.

**BILL**

Everybody swims.

The boys are aghast.

**LAWFORD**

Don't think people, just go! Go,  
Go, Go, Go, Go!!! Swim you win,  
stay you pay!!

Rick is the first one through the gunnel door, followed by Tod and Charlie. They howl and scream as they hit the water. The rest follow like lemmings. But John stands defiantly with his arms folded.

**BILL**

Now what's the problem, Goodall?  
Everybody swims.

The crew are piling back on deck. George stands in the open galley door. The smell of fresh bacon is intoxicating.

**JOHN**

I don't.

**LAWFORD**

You will if you wanna eat. Right  
George?

George nods, wielding a butchers knife. The crew stand shivering, waiting on John.

**JOHN**

(to Bill)

You gonna swim for your breakfast?

Bill gives John a long look then strips to his shorts, swings into the rigging and climbs up to the first yard arm. He looks down at the water some twenty-five feet below. It's a long way. Robin turns away.

Lawford booms in a voice that echoes across the harbor.

**LAWFORD**

"Down, down beneath the deep, That  
oft in triumph bore him, He sleeps a  
sound and peaceful sleep, With the  
salt waves dashing over him." --  
Lord Byron gentlemen.

With that Bill leaps and hits the water with a huge KERSPLASH! He swims to the boarding ladder, pulls himself up and gets in John's face.

**BILL**

Everybody swims. Now, I've been in

twice. So I guess I'll be eating  
your breakfast too.

John considers him, then strips off his shirt. But  
instead of walking over to the gunnel door, he jumps into  
the ratlines, climbs to the foretop and looks down.

He manages a thin smile then climbs to the second set of  
ratlines past the third yard and continues to the top yard  
arm -- the topgallant. It's a pissing contest and  
everybody knows it.

**MIKE**

I got five bucks says he doesn't.

**CHRIS**

I got five that says he doesn't  
live.

**TOD**

I'll take a dollar of that.

**ROBIN**

This is crazy!

Robin refuses to watch. The others share a look.

John makes his way along the foot ropes and stands at the  
end of the yard. He tosses a look towards Bill but with  
no way to back down, he launches into the air. Everyone  
gasps as he thunders through the air in a broad swan dive.  
Falling, falling, falling...

**CHUCK**

Jesus.

**ROBIN**

I can't watch this.

John hits the water like a bullet. The crew run to the  
side waiting for him to come up. Nothing. Finally, he  
breaks the surface. Easy. He climbs up waiting, somehow,  
to claim victory.

Suddenly, they all feel it. A presence. He has appeared  
silently on top of the Chart House, like a phantom gazing  
down at them, back lit by the sun the boys must squint to  
see him.

RICHARD SHELDRAKE, (SKIPPER), ageless and windswept,  
casually reaches up to a block and tackle with one arm and  
glides to the deck. He is powerfully built and bronzed

from the sea and sun. He carries the burden of command like a cross. Soft-spoken and remote, he is a man to be reckoned with. The crew know they are in the presence of someone larger than life.

**BILL**

Skipper on deck!

The crew line up clumsily. Skipper has a gaze that blazes right through them.

He looks out to sea. Searching, ominous. He waits until the silence is filled with everyone's attention.

**SKIPPER**

You know what's out there? Wind and wave and rain. Endless glassy pools that'll hold a sailing ship for weeks and then spit her out into the eye of the kind of hurricane. A blow that could knock the bridge off a battleship. Reefs and rocks and sandbars that'll tear the belly from her and enough fog and night to hide it all.

He spits into the water. The crew sheepishly throw glances to the horizon.

**SKIPPER**

So look out there... and explain to me why any man in possession of any sense at all, would take on the sea with sail?

Skipper turns his gaze back to the boys. There is a fire in his eyes. Nobody dare answers.

**SKIPPER**

Because there's something else out there. It beckons in the wind and sings in the shrouds. Voices. Whispering...

His ear to the wind.

**SKIPPER**

They're voices of men. Calling. Men you don't even know. Men you can't even imagine. It's a seed, a wish, that part of you and I that aches to be alive, that was banished by

everything we've ever been taught or told. It's a part of us that can only be found on mountain tops and deserts, in the deepest caverns, smoking battle fields and... across oceans.

He turns back to the sea, dark.

**SKIPPER**

Out there, is where it all waits.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

He was everything I had expected, part Ahab part Queeg and even Bligh. He spoke in whispers and answered all queries with efficiency and directness. He had gone to sea for the first time at fifteen, the same age as Bill Butler. And as he looked upon us that first day it must have been as though he were staring into a mirror.

Skipper manages a sobering look and climbs on top of the chart house. He pats a small brass sign that is welded to the main mast and reads the inscription.

**SKIPPER**

(reading)

"Where we go one, we go all."

With that, he disappears below. Nobody moves. This is exactly the kind of man you want around when the shit hits the fan.

**TERRY**

This -- is gonna be a long eight months.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - DAY**

The boys devour a hearty breakfast. Tod is the 'galley slave' and fills glasses with orange juice.

**TOD**

Chow down boys. The milk and eggs are the first things to go once we put out.

John enters balancing two plates heaped with food.

**RICK**

You know we gotta dumbwaiter for that.

John looks over to the dumbwaiter mounted in the wall.

**RICK**

Not that one. Tod-o here.

The guys groan.

**TOD**

Har, har, har...

John approaches the full table, glaring down at Terry who doesn't notice him. Finally he looks up, startled.

**TERRY**

I'm done. I'm finished...

He scrambles to get up and clear his plate. John sits down without a word. The others notice the two plates of food.

**RICK**

Hungry, Goodall?

He just grunts and starts eating. Robin watches him.

**JOHN**

What's your problem?

**ROBIN**

Why'd you jump?

**JOHN**

Because I felt like it.

(sharp)

What do you care?

**ROBIN**

(aside)

I couldn't do it.

**JOHN**

Well, as soon as you grow some balls, let me know.

Robin bristles.

**ROBIN**

Screw you!

**CHARLIE**

He's right. It was a stupid stunt.

**JOHN**

Excuse me?

**CHARLIE**

You heard me.

John grabs Charlie by his private parts and hoists him into the air. Charlie gasps, the air sucked from his lungs.

**JOHN**

Don't ever call me stupid.

**ROBIN**

Come on, he didn't mean anything.

John shoves Robin to the floor with his free arm.

**JOHN**

Let me tell you girls something. I do what I wanna do. When I wanna do it. And I don't give a shit what old Ahab up there thinks either. Any questions?

John releases Charlie who crumples to the floor. John resumes eating.

Bill enters and reads the duty roster.

**BILL**

Okay, here's the duty. Gieg, Weathers, Lapchick, Schucart: scrape and paint. Corry and Stricklin have the brass. Robinson, you're the Galley slave. March you're on chain gang with Barnes. Johnston, solo on bilge detail.

**TOD**

Butler, what'd I ever do to you?

**BILL**

You came back, Tod. You came back.

John continues to eat. When he realizes his name hasn't been called, he looks up to meet Bill's eyes.

**INT. HEAD**

Pissed, John tries to figure out the head. Pumps going in, pumps going out.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

We were all thirteen individuals.  
We'd arrived the sum total of our  
limited experiences and the result  
of our parents' best, if not narrow,  
expectations...

John pulls back on the lever, belching "water de le toilet" all over him.

**EXT. SHIP - DAY**

Chuck sits in a bowsman's chair over the side, with a paint roller in his hand. The rust-streaked hull is being transformed.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

... Some of us were there for  
discipline, some for escape. But I  
could see a small piece of myself in  
all of them and though I fought the  
notion, for me, I knew now, this  
would be home.

A RADIO crackles in the b.g.

**ANNOUNCER**

"President Eisenhower today  
acknowledged that a secret American  
spy plane was in fact shot down over  
the Soviet Union. The pilot has  
been confirmed as Francis Gary  
Powers..."

Robin, Terry and Mike, are on the deck within earshot of Chuck with chisels and wire brushes chipping away at the rust.

**TERRY**

Why couldn't it have been a wooden  
boat?

**MIKE**

Steel boats don't leak.

Mike lights up a cigarette. Robin notices. Marlboro's.

**ROBIN**

Hey, can I have one?

Mike sizes up Robin for a moment then tosses him the pack.

**ROBIN**

Thanks daddy-o.

Robin lights up, grimacing with the first drag.

**TERRY**

Well, don't brush too hard. Looks to me like the only thing holding this bucket together is the rust.

A voice booms up from the dock.

**FRANCIS (O.S.)**

Ahoy there.

They turn. Standing on the dock is FRANCIS BOUTILLIER, self important and overbearing, with his son, PHILIP, who looks as if this whole ordeal is some kind of punishment. Skipper appears.

**SKIPPER**

Good afternoon.

Francis boards without being invited. Philip follows in his shadow. He scrutinizes the condition of the boat.

**FRANCIS**

Albatross? Doesn't inspire a lot of confidence.

**SKIPPER**

Oh, on the contrary, the Albatross is considered a very good omen. It is said they embody the spirits of sailors passed on. It's very bad luck if you kill one. And dolphins too.

The boys chuckle.

**FRANCIS**

I'm Francis Boutillier. This is my son, Philip.

**SKIPPER**

I know.

Francis looks the Skipper over, reading him, smiling.

**SKIPPER**

You're a day late. We keep a schedule aboard ship. Lives depend on it.

(to Philip)

Hello, Philip.

**PHIL**

Sir.

Skipper's directness bugs Francis.

**FRANCIS**

Your cable said you wouldn't be putting out until mid-October.

**SKIPPER**

As you can see, there's a lot to do.

**FRANCIS**

Indentured servitude is not what my son had in mind.

**SKIPPER**

This is a working ship. Promptness is not a luxury, it's a necessity, as is the work to maintain her. Had we been ready, I can assure you we would have sailed.

Something in this exchange turns the tone of conversation.

**FRANCIS**

And I would have expected compensation for my time and expense coming all the way down here.

**SKIPPER**

Happily, it all worked out... This time.

(to Bill)

Bill, take Philip below and help him find a bunk.

Phil follows Bill down the companionway.

**FRANCIS**

I'll be frank with you. This was his mother's idea. A romp through the Caribbean on a sailboat sounds more like a vacation than an education if you ask me.

**SKIPPER**

It will be more than that, I can promise you.

**FRANCIS**

(cool)

Take good care of my son.

There is threat in his tone.

**SKIPPER**

We'll do our best. You're welcome to say goodbye.

**FRANCIS**

He's a big boy.

Francis leaves the boat. Skipper and the crew watch as he climbs into his waiting embassy limousine and drives off.

**LAWFORD**

Well, that was neighborly.

**SKIPPER**

He didn't get to be Under Secretary of the Air Force by being neighborly.

Lawford shakes his head. Bill comes up through the companionway.

**SKIPPER**

Everyone aboard young Bill?

**BILL**

Yes, Sir.

**SKIPPER**

Good.

(beat)

Let's go sailing.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - OPEN WATER - DAY**

The Albatross is under full power. There is a sense of

excitement and anticipation. Charlie, Rick, Robin, and Lawford are on the halyard for the mainsail. Skipper is at the helm with Alice and Bill nearby. Skipper calls over to Chuck who stands alone at the rail.

**SKIPPER**

Come over here and take the wheel.

Chuck's eyes light up as he walks over and takes the wheel.

**SKIPPER**

Hold her steady into the wind.  
Southwest by west.

**CHUCK**

Yes sir.

**SKIPPER**

(to all)  
Gentleman, when you hear an order,  
sing out. I want to know that  
you've heard and understand.  
(quietly to Bill)  
Raise the mainsail.

**BILL**

(calling out)  
Raise the main!

Lawford and his group bellow out.

**TOGETHER**

Raise the main!!

Lawford coaches the boys, sending two scurrying on top the chart house to loosen the stops which hold the heavy furled canvas to the main boom. He guides another to the midships pinrail where the main halyard, which raises the huge sail, is made fast to a belaying pin. He loosens the halyard and hands it to Robin.

**SKIPPER**

Take a turn under the pin and lead  
it out to the others. You guys in  
the rear take up the slack. Heave  
together now...

In a beautiful tenor voice, Bill begins to croon a sea chanty, an old whaling song with an Irish lilt.

**BILL**

(singing)  
"When the sun came up there was  
whisky in the cup..."

The more experienced boys echo the line and pull to the beat.

**BOYS**  
"When the sun came up there was  
whisky in the cup..."

**LAWFORD**  
Come on the rest of you, sing! Belt  
it out like men!!

The newer guys like Chuck, John, Robin and Terry look at each other like this is the queerest thing they have ever heard of.

**BILL**  
(singing)  
"Not one of us was a sober..."

The boys return the verse half heartedly. Lawford ties off his line and stares them down. Skipper notices that the work has stopped.

**SKIPPER**  
What's wrong Mr. Lawford.

**LAWFORD**  
It seems we're short on singers.

Skipper walks amid ship and addresses the crew.

**SKIPPER**  
Everyone sings aboard a wind jammer gentlemen. It lets everyone know you're in sync. It shows unity, that all thoughts are one. A crew that sings together stays together. Besides, I like it. So, pipe up and be sailors.

**JOHN**  
(in a whisper)  
Everybody swims, everybody sings...  
What's next? Tap dancing?

Lawford and Rick leap up onto the line pulling it down with their body weight. They sing out the chorus. The crew returns the song, somewhat reluctantly as the great

mainsail starts to rise.

**LAWFORD**

Tie it off!!

**SKIPPER**

(to Bill)

Outer.

**BILL**

Outer Jib!

**CHARLIE**

(confused)

Outta what?

Coached by Tod, another group in the bow, awkwardly hoist the jib.

**SKIPPER**

(to Bill)

We'll bear off to port and run down wind.

**BILL**

Mr. Lawford, stand by to ease the mainsheet. Rick, get on the jib sheet. George, John, Philip, Tim and Dick go aloft to unstop the forecourse. George will show you what to do. Tod, show your men the forward pinrail and stand ready on the buntlines and clewlines. Forecourse first... work upward.

The newcomers watch Bill with new-found respect. George, John and the others climb to the forecourse, and out onto the footropes. It's unsteady work and there's confusion everywhere. But through it all, they continue to sing.

Lawford moves to the mainsheet on the port side while the others move into their positions. When Bill sees the yardarm crew is in place...

**BILL**

Unstop the squares!

**YARDARM CREW**

Unstop the squares!!

**SKIPPER**

(to Chuck)

Fall off to port. Ease her around  
to a heading of northeast. Sing out  
when you're there.

As the tops are released, the giant forecourse drapes into  
a scalloped pattern. As the bow falls off the wind the  
snapping main and jib billow. Stiffening to the wind, the  
ship heels and surges forward.

Before her awakening power, everyone changes their stance  
and grabs for a handhold. Lawford slowly pays out the  
mainsheet while the forecourse crew move up the ratlines  
releasing the stops on the other squaresails.

**CHUCK**

(in a whisper)

Ah... Northeast... sir.

**SKIPPER**

(barking)

Speak up boy!

Chuck jumps, startled. He self-consciously calls out.

**CHUCK**

Northeast sir!

**SKIPPER**

Unfurl the squares!

Tod's group first uncleats the clewlines and buntlines and  
the great squaresail drops and billows to fullness sending  
a shudder through the rig. The bow's wake sizzles with  
the added surge. As each of the squares fall, Alice and  
Lawford move to their sheets, setting each sail's  
position.

Chuck looks up, amazed at the sheer magnitude and beauty  
of the canvas that the Albatross carries.

**BILL**

Raise the inner jib! Raise the  
forestaysail!

**SKIPPER**

Watch the tell-tales Chuck. If we  
jibe now we'll have a lot of people  
in the water.

**CHUCK**

Yes, sir.

**SKIPPER**

All stop on the engine.

**BILL**

All stop on the engine!

Bill rotates the telegraph handle back and forth and moves it to the stop position.

**SKIPPER**

Behold gentlemen. The power of the wind!

As the sails billow the Albatross seems transformed. Everyone stops and looks up. The vessel heels and with a powerful surge, launches into the waves. White foam splashes over the bowsprit as the hull thunders through the water. Chuck's face is full of wonder. It is a magical moment. Then the crew begins to cheer.

**SKIPPER**

Did we lose anybody?

**ALICE**

Not yet.

**LONG SHOT**

The Albatross under full sail is the handsome, powerful image of another time. And yet, here she is.

**ON DECK**

Each of the boys is awed by the majesty of this moment. Music builds.

**SKIPPER**

Chart us a course for the windward side.

Alice considers his request.

**ALICE**

That low passed through last night. May be a little bumpy out there.

**SKIPPER**

It's time these boys saw some real blue water.

**EXT. THE OPEN SEA - LATER**

The bow of the Albatross explodes through the top of a fifteen foot swell. The sky is clear but the wind is fierce. In spite of the seas the ship is trimmed and sailing well.

The crew has never seen mountains of water like this. Disaster seems imminent. Bill has assembled them in front of the wheel house. They are all holding on for dear life. Even John seems shaken. Skipper magically stands effortlessly before them on the rolling deck. He remains perfectly dry.

**SKIPPER**

Well... now that I have your undivided attention... I'd like to take this opportunity to make a few points...

**TERRY**

(aside)

This guy is certifiable...

**PHIL**

Suicidal...

**SKIPPER**

The first thing is I don't like people talking when I'm talking so the two of you, shut up.

Caught, Terry and Phil button up.

**SKIPPER**

Second, the next one of you who doesn't jump like a bunny when Mr. Butler gives an order is gonna spend the rest of this trip scrubbing bilges. He's a better sailor today than any ten of you will be when this is all over.

Skipper directs the next comment directly at John.

**SKIPPER**

And if I catch anybody, ever, jumping off a yard arm again I will personally break what bones are left and send you home in a wheel chair.

A wave explodes over the bow. A wall of water crashes over the deck knocking down several of the boys. Terry

can't take it anymore and explodes.

**TERRY**

We're gonna die!!! We're all gonna die!

He lunges at Skipper but Lawford one arms him.

**SKIPPER**

Excellent point. As you might have noticed, being out here pretty much puts you in the moment. If you panic, if you lose your head, you die. Maybe you take your mates with you. How'd you like to have to bet on Terry here getting us home today? Each one of you is responsible for the rest. "Where we go one, we go all". If your buddy is asleep at the switch we're all fish food.

He's making his point which is lost on no one.

**SKIPPER**

The ship beneath you is not a toy and sailing is not a game. The Albatross will take us far gentlemen, but she demands constant attention. Respect her, and we'll do fine. Oh, and one more thing. There is nothing that goes on, on this boat that I don't know about. She speaks to me in the night. So don't test me. Not even a little.

Skipper walks over and puts an arm around Terry who is fighting sobs.

**SKIPPER**

Nothing like experience to put things in perspective. Huh son?  
(to Bill)  
Alright. Let's go home.

**INT. CHART HOUSE - DAY**

Lawford addresses some of the crew. Chuck, Robin and John are among them. John glares at Lawford. The guys giggle.

**LAWFORD**

That's not a satisfactory answer.

**JOHN**

Look, save it for somebody else will ya. This ancient shit doesn't have anything to do with me.

Lawford pauses for a moment and then explodes theatrically.

**LAWFORD**

Shit?!!!

He slams a text book into John's hands.

**LAWFORD**

Read for me please the words of Mr. Keats at the bottom of the page.

John stares back, simmering. Robin interrupts the potential confrontation and reaches for the book.

**ROBIN**

I'll read it. I mean I don't mind.

**JOHN**

Shut up donut.

John pushes Robin's hands away and studies the page for a moment. He begins reading but struggles with the cadence.

**JOHN**

(reading)

Much have I traveled in realms of gold/  
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen/  
Round many western islands have I been/  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold/  
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told/  
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne.

**LAWFORD**

You know what he is talking about here?

Blank faces.

**LAWFORD**

(ranting)

Awe. Humility. He's telling you that he has traveled the seas as Homer did. As Ulysses had before

him as he tried to find his way home  
to Ithaca after the Trojan Wars.  
"That deep browed Homer"...

He points to his head.

**LAWFORD**

Brilliant, seasoned, wise, of the  
mind; "... ruled as his demesne."  
He commands the voyage of the  
imagination, like a god.

(pause)

That is what one of the greatest  
literary minds of modern times, Mr.  
Boutillier, has to say about Homer.

He snatches the book back.

**LAWFORD**

You think the Odyssey is dull? I'll  
tell you something, it's about each  
one of you -- right now. Doubt and  
expectation. Friendship, community,  
self sacrifice and accountability.

He holds up the text.

**LAWFORD**

This isn't just a story!! It's  
history made allegory. It is a  
philosophical handbook for life! It  
holds the secret of this very  
voyage.

**JOHN**

What is it... the secret?

Lawford breaks into a huge belly laugh.

**JOHN**

(confused)

What?

**LAWFORD**

If it were only that simple, my  
young friend. Read on, gentlemen.  
Read on.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - ESTABLISHING - DAY**

Aerial shot. The Albatross is under full sail leaving

Bermuda for the last time.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

And so it was the Albatross that took to the open sea with the wind in her snapping canvas and a bone of white foam in her teeth... In each of us were feelings of anticipation and hesitation for the man at the wheel and of the unfamiliar world he was leading us into.

She crashes through the surf -- driving, majestic music, building.

**DECK - DAY**

The crew hauls in the line, raising the mainsail. Chuck struggles to coil the rope as fast as it is coming in.

**ALOFT**

The crew take turns racing up the ratlines into the rigging.

**BOWSPRIT NET**

The crew pull down the jib trying to furl it. Most of the sail ends up dragging in the water.

**ABOVE**

The squaresails are dropped simultaneously.

**WIDE**

White foam boils from the bow of the Albatross as she crashes through the waves.

**AT THE WHEEL**

Alice smiles and puts her arms around Skipper's waist. It's coming together.

**FORETOP - SAME**

Skipper stands at the rail, looking out. The seas are up and the masts are pitching widely from side to side.

Chuck is high above the deck in the footropes, wrestling with one of the squaresails. The pitching mast catches him by surprise and he slips. He tumbles down, tangled in

the lines. A rope wraps around his neck, choking him. Robin looks up and sees him hanging helplessly.

**ROBIN**

Bill!! Skipper!!

Robin freezes. Skipper leaps into the rigging like a spider and, in a few seconds, wrestles Chuck free and carries him down to the deck. Chuck coughs, catching his breath. The color is gone from Skipper's face. This was a close call.

**SKIPPER**

You all right?

**CHUCK**

It was my fault. I slipped.

Alice examines Chuck, making sure he's okay. Skipper turns to Robin, who is shaken. He never raises his voice.

**SKIPPER**

Why didn't you go up there?

Robin stands silently.

**SKIPPER**

Speak up.

Still nothing from Robin.

**CHARLIE**

He's afraid to climb.

**SKIPPER**

What?

(to Robin)

Is that true?

Robin looks away.

**SKIPPER**

Why wasn't I made aware of this Bill?

**BILL**

I didn't know sir.

**SKIPPER**

It's your job to know. If something goes wrong up there, the other eighteen people aboard can't be

wondering if he's gonna do his job  
or not.

Skipper returns his gaze to Robin, measuring him.  
Finally.

**SKIPPER**

Swing up, son.

**ROBIN**

(trembling)

What?

**SKIPPER**

Up you go. Right now.

Robin reluctantly pulls himself up onto the first rung,  
then the second. He stops and steals a peek up. The mast  
is swaying. He freezes, his lip starts to tremble. All  
eyes are on him. Phil chuckles.

**SKIPPER**

Do you have something to say?

**PHIL**

(smug)

No.

**SKIPPER**

Then keep your mouth shut.

Phil backs off, stunned. Robin can't move.

**SKIPPER**

(to Robin)

What's it going to be?

**ROBIN**

I'm sorry...

**SKIPPER**

Sorry won't cut it.

Robin holds on frozen. Skipper turns to the crew.

**SKIPPER**

Survival means discipline and  
assimilation. There are no special  
cases here.

(to Robin)

Now, get going. Get up there.

Humiliated, a tear slips down his face. Excruciating.

**SKIPPER**

What are you blubbering about?

**ROBIN**

I don't know...

Skipper jumps onto the backside of the ratlines. His face is but inches from Robin's.

**SKIPPER**

One hand in front of the other son.  
We'll do it together.

Robin reaches for the next rung. He looks down. Skipper growls at him.

**SKIPPER**

Don't look down. Look in my eyes!  
Climb! We'll do it together.

**ROBIN**

(sobbing)

I can't.

**SKIPPER**

You climb damn it, or so help me  
I'll haul you to the foretop by your  
diaper and leave you there!

**ROBIN**

Aaauuuhhh!!!

Skipper gets right in his face and snarls.

**SKIPPER**

Are you hating this?! Are you!

**ROBIN**

I hate you, you son of a bitch!!!

**SKIPPER**

No. Hate the fear inside of you!  
Climb like a man mister! Hate it!  
Hate it away. Hate your way up one  
more rung!! Do it right now!!

With every ounce of strength, Robin reaches for one more rung screaming as he reaches. Skipper climbs and screams with him.

**TOGETHER**

Auuuggghhh!!!!

Robin clutches the rung with a death grip. Then, he looks down. His bladder releases. Hot urine runs down his legs and splashes, steaming, onto the deck. The crew is horrified. Robin weeps.

**ROBIN**

Oh, god...

Skipper backs off.

**SKIPPER**

Don't hate yourself. Hate your weakness. All right. Get down.

Robin climbs to the deck and falls in with the others, mortified.

**SKIPPER**

I'm only gonna say this one time.  
I'm not here to wipe noses and asses. I'm not your mother. Trust funds and blue blazers don't get you a thing out here. You wanna act like babies, then get off my boat.

Stunned, the crew is speechless. Chuck instinctively goes to help Robin. Skipper snaps like a turtle.

**SKIPPER**

(to Chuck)  
He can take care of himself.  
(to others)  
Any other 'phobias' I need to know about?

Skipper fires a look towards Phil.

**PHIL**

No, sir.

**SKIPPER**

Excellent. Bill, find Mr. Weathers a position to suit his condition.

Skipper turns and then stops.

**SKIPPER**

Remember something, sooner or later... we all have to face it.

**CHUCK**

(aside)

Face what?

The question hangs in the air like a cloud.

**INT. CHART HOUSE - DUSK**

The chart house is the communication and navigation center for the boat. It also serves as the officers dining room. Skipper, Alice, Lawford, George, and Bill Butler sit around the small table sipping coffee.

**SKIPPER**

We're awfully quiet tonight.

The group remains silent. Lawford and George exchange a glance. Skipper catches it.

**SKIPPER**

Something on your mind, George?

George looks up and wipes his mouth with a napkin.

**GEORGE**

I think you were too hard on Weathers.

**SKIPPER**

You do?

**GEORGE**

Yes. I do.

Skipper nods.

**SKIPPER**

I need to know what I'm working with; what their boundaries are. Their lives depend on it, and for that matter so does yours. We've got to bring them together. Make them a crew. We're as strong as our weakest link and I don't want to find that out the hard way. So, I will challenge them and they will come together.

**GEORGE**

(sarcastic)

Yes sir.

**SKIPPER**

You know the best thing about being a Skipper is the worst thing. It's all my responsibility. So I'll tell you what George, you stay off of my bridge, and I'll stay out of your galley. We'll get along that way.

Everyone's quiet, but clear. Skipper and Alice exit.

**GEORGE**

Fucking bastard.

Lawford lets out a belly laugh.

**LAWFORD**

I've seen him snatch the tail of the tempest and stuff it, screaming, into a bottle. The bilges are full of them.

**GEORGE**

What do you mean?

**LAWFORD**

He's been beyond the reach. To the edge of the abyss and back. He'll do well by us all George. He's a real salt. There's no malice in him and there's nothing more dear to him than his boys. So sleep well my friend.

Lawford seductively produces a pair of Havana cigars, passes one to George and winks.

**INT. GALLEY - DUSK**

Robin leans over the sink elbow deep in dishwater watching through the cabin window, as the sun slips below the horizon. Chuck stands in the doorway with a plate of food.

**CHUCK**

How ya doing?

**ROBIN**

(without turning)

Fine.

**CHUCK**

Good.

**ROBIN**

Look, I appreciate, you know, the concern and all, but like he said, I can take care of myself.

**CHUCK**

I just brought you something to eat.

Robin turns and notices the plate of food and nods. They stand silently. It's awkward.

**CHUCK**

I feel like I got you into this.

**ROBIN**

Forget it.

**CHUCK**

I'm used to spending a lot of time alone. I guess that's what I thought it would be out here. But, it's not is it?

**ROBIN**

(beat)

I'm sorry I left you hanging up there.

**CHUCK**

It doesn't matter. Really. I'm just sorry you got chewed out.

Robin nods. They both stare out at the rising moon.

**ROBIN**

My brother and I used to climb to the top of this old beech tree in the back yard and watch the moon come up just like this. My parents would fight all the time so we'd sneak out there where we couldn't hear 'em and recite scenes from our favorite movies.

Robin grows quiet.

**ROBIN**

Would you believe I miss it? The

middle of paradise and I'm homesick.

Chuck smiles and puts a hand on his back.

**CHUCK**

(ironic)

Well, I wouldn't worry. It'll all  
be there when we get back.

**EXT. DECK - DAY**

The sky is dark and a storm is building and the boat rolls  
and pitches. Chuck sees Terry heaving over the side.  
John and Tod hear the sound and turn.

**JOHN**

(disgusted)

Come on man. Show a little  
backbone!

(to Tod)

You believe that?!

Tod is fixated on Terry. Suddenly, without warning, he  
breaks for the rail and lets fly.

Phil and Charlie are next. Chris climbs through the  
companionway but doesn't make it to the side. Spontaneous  
regurgitation. Bill and Lawford jump up onto the wheel  
housing to avoid being sprayed. Suddenly everyone is  
heaving.

**CHRIS**

Sorry.

**LAWFORD**

(to Bill)

We're gonna have nobody left up here  
to crew. Better let Skipper know.

Bill nods and disappears. John joins Chuck watching the  
events around him.

**JOHN**

Well Gieg, I'm glad to see I'm not  
the only guy on this boat that can  
take a little rock'n roll. Bunch of  
wusses, I swear...!

Chuck watches each of his shipmates. Then, suddenly, out  
of nowhere -- Projectile vomit all over John. He looks at  
Chuck, horrified, then he too, cuts loose over the rail.

**JOHN**

Son of a bitch!!

Chuck looks at John, furious with himself, and begins to laugh. But after a moment he starts to laugh too. It's infectious, they crack each other up. Then, in the middle of belly laughing, they simultaneously retch again over the side.

**INT. SKIPPER'S CABIN - DAY**

Skipper sits at his desk with some charts spread out in front of him. There's a knock on the door.

**SKIPPER**

Come in.

**BILL**

Skipper, uh, the crew is pretty much doing group boot over the side.

**SKIPPER**

Well, that's all part of it.

**BILL**

We've got weather moving in from the west.

Skipper looks up.

**SKIPPER**

That's part of it, too.

**EXT. DECK - DUSK**

Skipper stands at the wheelhouse with Lawford, George and Bill, studying the horizon through binoculars. Dark clouds. Chuck watches Skipper. Everyone, looking for a cue.

**CHUCK**

That a... storm, Skipper?

Skipper stays glued to the binoculars.

**SKIPPER**

Uh, huh.

**CHUCK**

Would you, um, say it's a big storm?

**SKIPPER**

Sometimes it gets exciting out here.

**LAWFORD**

What do you think?

**SKIPPER**

Barometer's dropping. The first  
blow'll come from the south. Might  
get interesting.

**CHUCK**

Shouldn't we turn away?

**SKIPPER**

You can't run from the wind son.  
You trim your sails, face the music  
and let the chips fall. Bill, let's  
close her up, dog, tight.

Close on hatches and skylights slamming closed and cinched  
tight.

**BELOW DECKS**

Bulkhead doors are closed and cranked down tightly.

**IN THE GALLEY**

Pots and pans crash around.

**IN THE MAIN CABIN**

The cabin doors on the bookcase swing open and dump books  
on top of Alice. She turns and looks at the mess,  
annoyed.

**EXT. DECK - SAME**

**SKIPPER**

Furl the squares, reef the main, and  
bend on the storm jib, but keep it  
furled. Drop everything but the  
inner jib. I want everybody down  
before we get any lightning.

Bill bolts forward with Lawford barking orders. Most of  
the crew are still ill, but climb into the rigging and  
begin dropping sail.

**GEORGE**

Why's it always happen at night?

Skipper regards George, annoyed.

**SKIPPER**

George... I want hot food in everybody. Get to it.

George returns to the galley. Alice joins Skipper at the wheelhouse handing him foul-weather gear.

**ALICE**

Looks like weather.

**SKIPPER**

Yep.

He slips on a yellow slicker.

**SKIPPER**

Do me a favor and tell Bill once she's dogged down I want everyone to break out their slickers and make sure their gear is stowed or we'll spend the next week sorting underwear.

(to the others)

Lawford, Bill, Mike, John, and Phil will stand the watch. Everyone else hit the racks.

**PHIL**

(impulsively)

I'm not staying out here.

Skipper fires off a look that frightens even Phil.

**SKIPPER**

No. That's for sure. Charlie, take his place.

Phil goes below, a little ashamed. The crew scatters. Chuck, still at the wheel, pipes up.

**CHUCK**

If it's all the same, I'd like to stay on deck.

Skipper regards Chuck, who looks back with both fear and eagerness. Suddenly he sees something in this kid. Maybe

himself. He almost smiles. Almost.

**SKIPPER**

Take the wheel.

**EXT. FORETOP - SAME**

Dark clouds blot out the sky and stars. Thunder rumbles far away. The seas have built but there's no wind... yet. With no steerage, the ship is tossed.

Tod hangs high above the heaving deck continuing to furl. The mast swings from side to side, but the air has gone dead calm. Skipper looks up, anticipating.

**SKIPPER**

Everyone out of the rigging NOW!

**BILL**

Everybody down! ON THE DOUBLE!!

**TOD**

(shouting)

**HERE IT COMES!!**

**ON THE DECK**

The crew in the rigging scamper down to the safety of the deck.

**SKIPPER**

Bill, on the wheel with Chuck.

Bill joins Chuck and takes hold of the wheel. Then it hits.

A wall of torrential rain drums the deck amid a tympany of thunder and flashing lightning. The bow explodes through twelve foot swells. This is what the Albatross was born to do.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - SAME**

It's all the crew can do to stay in their bunks. Pots crash, books and personals go flying. The guys are scared.

**ON DECK**

The main and jib sheets tighten. Skipper looks at Chuck

and Bill. It all comes down to moments like these and he loves it.

Suddenly, there is a loud CRACK! A violent flapping noise. Skipper leaps to the port and looks forward. Tod comes running back.

**TOD**

We blew the inner!

**ALICE**

I'll go.

**SKIPPER**

Bring it down and run up the storm jib. We'll fix it later. Stay out of reach of the blocks!

Tod and Alice disappear.

**SKIPPER**

(with a twinkle)

Well, we're in it now.

Chuck studies him, frightened, but reassured.

**EXT. BOW - SAME**

The shredded jib and rigging whip violently in the wind. The block smashes into the gunnel rail, shattering it. No one dares go near it. For a moment, it seems to hang there seductively. John, naive of its power, leaps for the rail and grabs it.

**ALICE**

**NOOO!!!**

Suddenly, the wind cracks the sail instantly hurling John high off the deck and over the side. He holds on for dear life, screaming.

**AT THE WHEEL**

**SKIPPER**

(to Chuck)

Hold her steady.

Skipper bolts forward.

**AT THE BOW**

Alice uncleats the jib halyard, leaving one turn on the pin and shoves it into Tod's hands.

**ALICE**

Release this when I tell you!!

Skipper joins Tod as Alice scrambles along the deck and pulls herself into the bowsprit netting. When the block and jib swing inboard, she grabs for the leach of the sail yelling...

**ALICE**

**NOW!!!**

As John is snapped inboard Alice leaps up, grabbing the sail, leaning out over the open water. Waves explode through the netting. As Tod releases the halyard, John falls to the deck, bruised, humbled, but alive. Lawford and Skipper pull Alice from the bowsprit.

Skipper looks her over. Relieved. No broken bones. Good work. But then this is what he expects. He respects her and now, everyone can see why. He looks at John sprawled on the deck.

**SKIPPER**

Be careful will ya?

**JOHN**

What ever you say Cap...

**SKIPPER**

Let's get that storm jib up.

Skipper gives Alice a private look, then returns to the stern where Chuck holds tightly onto the wheel.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

The storm lasted sixteen hours and it set us all on equal footing. It was the first time that we shared an episode on an even plane. As we stood our watches we were equally out of control of our situation, regardless of our physical abilities or social backgrounds. And though our real feelings lay hidden beneath bravado and defiance, we were no longer strangers.

**EXT. DECK - DAY**

The crew is cleaning up. Alice supervises repairs to the jib while others stow line, scrub the deck and chip paint. Lawford paces.

**LAWFORD**

You know what they say in the Navy  
don't you?

**RICK**

What's that, Big Daddy?

The more experienced crew members have heard this all before.

**LAWFORD**

"If it moves, salute it. If it  
doesn't move, pick it up. If it's  
too big to pick up, paint it!"

The boys mockingly salute Lawford as he walks by. John stands before a porthole combing his Brylcreem hair into a "D.A."

Mike and Chris climb on deck with several large boxes.

**MIKE**

Ladies, gentlemen and  
hermaphrodites, Mr. Corry and I are  
happy to announce the grand opening  
of Trans-Border Enterprises.

They start opening the boxes. One is a case of Coca Cola, another is full of cigarettes and candy.

**CHRIS**

All of the creature comforts and  
vices you could possibly want, at  
home or abroad, available twenty-  
four hours a day.

**MIKE**

For a price, of course.

**ROBIN**

If you've got "a broad" available  
I'll take her.

**JOHN**

Like you'd know what to do with one.

The crew shakes their heads, mutter and check out the

goods.

**TERRY**

You got Marlboro's?

**CHRIS**

Absa-fuckin-lutely.

**CHUCK**

Toss me a Cola.

**CHRIS**

Fifty cents.

**CHUCK**

What?!!

**MIKE**

Contraband's hard to come by out here son.

John is still grooming at the window.

**PHIL**

Hey Goodall, you got a date or something?

John continues to comb.

**JOHN**

Yeah. With your mom.

**EVERYBODY**

Oooooooooo.

Phil slinks away.

**CHRIS**

We also have a few rental items...

Chris displays a Playboy magazine. Everybody clamors to get a look.

**MIKE**

There's a penalty for any material returned to the Trans-Border Library with sticky pages.

John walks by, snatches the magazine and heads for his bunk flipping through the pages.

**MIKE**



gets into it. He maneuvers the chair like a plane, forcing himself deep into the waves and then blasting back to the surface.

**OFF THE PORT SIDE**

Robin is trolling. The line takes a tremendous hit and Robin's reel screams. Tod is at the wheel and turns.

**TOD**

There she blows!!

Two hundred feet out something large and pissed has taken the bait. The crew turn and look. Skipper looks out at Terry still in the bowsman's chair.

**SKIPPER**

Get him in.

Bill waves at Terry to come on in.

**BILL**

Come on in!!!

Terry waves him off and disappears back under the waves. They can't pull him up while he's going under the water.

**SKIPPER**

Do it now Bill.

Terry pops up, pissed that they're reeling him back in.

Suddenly the animal on the other end of Robin's line explodes out of the sea. It's a six foot Thresher shark. Terry sees it too and freaks, suddenly thrashing and screaming.

**TERRY**

Get me out!!! Get me out!!!

**MIKE**

Oh my god!! It's a...

**SKIPPER**

(calmly)

Shark.

(to Robin)

Don't lose it son.

George grabs a gaffing hook while Robin fights the rod, trying to bring in the big fish.

**GEORGE**

Keep it coming.

Robin battles the fish. George clumsily tries to help. The crew make their way to the rear to watch.

**CHARLIE**

Whoops.

Charlie and Rick and the others heave to get Terry up. Finally he makes it. Sprawling onto the deck.

**TERRY**

Oh Jesus! Oh Jesus Christ!!

The crew turn and cheer Robin on as he brings the shark alongside.

**GEORGE**

He must be two hundred pounds!  
Bring him in close and try to hold  
him steady.

George leans out over the rail, trying to get the hook into a gill. Several of the boys hold onto him as the fish flops around violently.

**GEORGE**

Got him!

Skipper comes down to inspect the catch. The shark is longer than Terry is tall and thrashes in the the water, snapping and twisting. Terry stands shaking, freaked. All of them are.

**RICK**

Damn Terr, you're whiter than Sister  
Mary Anne's butt.

The guys laugh nervously. Terry just stares at the man eater, but it's infectious. After a moment he's laughing too. Skipper slaps him on the back with a wry smile.

**SKIPPER**

Well, now you have something to  
write home about.

More laughter. Suddenly, Tom, who is lookout on the foretop, cries out.

**TOM**

Land ho!!! Land ho!!!

Everyone turns around to look. The guys at the stern let go of George and he nearly tumbles overboard. In that instant, the shark slips off of the gaff, and disappears back into the sea. Robin and George share a stunned look.

**GEORGE**

Shit.

**ROBIN**

There's more where that came from.

Skipper returns to the wheelhouse with Alice. Together they scan the horizon. Clouds build over the land ahead.

**ALICE**

Cheated death again.

He slips an arm around her.

**SKIPPER**

Yep.

**EXT. ANTIGUA - HARBOR - DAY**

A group of islanders have assembled to watch the crew approach in the long boats.

**INT. LONG BOAT - SAME**

Chuck gazes across the strange landscape. As the boats dock, the crew pile out and scatter. Local children follow them wherever they go. Chuck, Robin and John find themselves alone. Most of the buildings are primitive. They wander over to a shop.

**ROBIN**

What do you say? Cokes? I'm buying.

**CHUCK & JOHN**

Sure.

**EXT. SHOP**

Chuck and Robin reappear, sipping cold Cokes. Mike and Chris walk by across the street. Robin speaks up loud enough for them to hear.

**ROBIN**

You're right Chuck. There's nothing quite as refreshing as a cold ten cent Coke that only costs ten cents!

The three clink their bottles. Mike and Chris slink away.

**EXT. COLONIAL FORT - DAY**

A crumbling fort overlooks the harbor. Below, the Albatross floats like a pearl on the azure blue water. Large bronze muzzle-loading cannons still lie in their gunports, aimed at the sea, waiting for pirate ships that will never come.

Each of the guys are sprawled on a cannon, taking in the Caribbean view.

**ROBIN**

You think Skipper and Alice do it?

**CHUCK**

Do what?

**ROBIN**

Ya know... "It".

**CHUCK**

That's like wondering if your mom and dad do it. Who wants to know?

**JOHN**

She isn't that old.

**CHUCK**

What do you mean?

**JOHN**

I mean she looks pretty damn good in her all-together for being thirty.

**ROBIN**

How would you know?

**JOHN**

Trust me donut. I know.

**ROBIN**

What? Come on...

**JOHN**

On the dog watch, night after the storm, I look down into the skylight above Skipper's cabin and there she was, peelin' down.

**CHUCK**

No way!

**ROBIN**

Come on man, what'd they look like?

**JOHN**

Damn, Porkchop, you sound just like a guy who ain't never seen a pair.

**ROBIN**

I've seen 'em. I've seen 'em.

They crack up.

**CHUCK**

I walked in on my parents one time. It was only like eight o'clock and they were in bed and I thought that was kinda weird so I just walked in.

**JOHN**

That's what they get for not locking the door.

**CHUCK**

So I'm standing there and you could hear a pin drop. No breathing or snoring... Suddenly it hits me that somethin' was goin' on that just stopped, really fast, like people are holding their breath.

**ROBIN**

So... What happened?

**CHUCK**

My mother says in this really low, but very awake kind of voice "What?"

John and Robin crack up.

**ROBIN**

What'd you do?

**CHUCK**

I said "Sorry, wrong room" and

walked away.

**JOHN**

Did you shut the door at least?

They bust up again. Chuck glares back.

**CHUCK**

I don't remember.

Robin sits up on his cannon and looks out, suddenly melancholy.

**ROBIN**

My parents don't do it anymore.

**CHUCK**

How do you know? They might.

**ROBIN**

'Cause they're getting a divorce.

(beat)

That's why they sent me here. My sister's at Tabor. They just wanted us out of the house so they could get down to business.

**JOHN**

They tell you that?

**ROBIN**

I figured it out.

**CHUCK**

Yeah.

**JOHN**

My old man split along time ago. It doesn't mean anything. You just take care of number one that's all that matters.

**ROBIN**

It matters to me.

**JOHN**

(kindly)

Okay donut. Whatever you say.

**CHUCK**

We better get back.

Robin looks up to John.

**ROBIN**

Did you really see 'em.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - HARBOR - NIGHT**

The boat moves off leaving the lights of Antigua behind. Chuck watches as the island disappears below the horizon.

**EXT. DECK - DAY**

The wind is up and the seas are high. The ship is under full sail driving at top speed. Foam sprays from the bow as it slices through the water -- what she was born to do. The crew line the starboard rail, thrilled to be part of the performance.

Tod is at the wheel with Chris nearby. The sails tower above him like a mountain of silk. He wrestles the wheel, careful to hold his course against the powerful trade winds.

Skipper, making his rounds inspects the heading on the compass and nods.

**SKIPPER**

It's a good sail boys.

Tod and Chris beam. Compliments are rare from this man.

**TOD**

Thank you, sir. Shall we trim the main Skipper? I think we could get another knot or two.

Skipper turns and looks at Tod, a twinkle in his eye.

**SKIPPER**

As you like.

Gravy. The two gloat as they lighten the mainsheet tackle. Phil joins them.

**PHIL**

What do you say I have a crack at the wheel?

**TOD**

I'd say, fuck off junior.

They laugh. Phil slinks behind the chart house, hurt, and angry. He spots a spear gun stowed against the chart house.

As Tod and Chris pull in the main, it strains and stretches against the powerful wind.

Phil aims the spear gun at the mainsail from behind the chart house and silently fires. There is a wicked POP as the spear punctures the sail, passing through it, followed by a loud shredding as the huge sail splits.

**TOD**

Jesus Christ!! Let it out. Let it out!!

The sound brings Skipper onto the deck like a shot.

**SKIPPER**

Hard to port! Hard to port!!

Calamity, as Tod cranks the ship into the wind. The canvas goes limp as the ship hauls to a dead stop. People dive everywhere to drop sail.

**SKIPPER**

Start the engine. All ahead full!!  
Scallop the Square and drop the rest!!

He shoots a glare at Tod and Chris.

**TOD**

(bewildered)

I don't know what happened Skipper.  
It just blew out.

Skipper turns to the task at hand without a word. What had been praise is now reduced to embarrassment and confusion.

Phil, still hidden behind the chart house returns the spear gun and smiles to himself at Tod's arrogance turned humility.

**EXT. DECK - TOBAGO CAYS - DAY**

The Albatross has dropped anchor along a remote group of flat, lush atolls. Tall palm trees grow almost to the waters edge. The crew have the mainsail down and Alice

supervises the repair of the sail. Phil sits above it all sunning himself in the bowsain's chair.

**ROBIN**

Where are you from any way?

**CHUCK**

Depths of hell... Ohio. How 'bout you?

**ROBIN**

Kennet Square, PA. 'Mushroom capital of the world'.

**TOD**

Sorry to here it.

**CHUCK**

Well, and it's pretty cool too, ya know? Bein' here together an all...

Phil reels himself down.

**PHIL**

Christ, I'm gonna choke on 'feel good'...

Robin looks up, taken back.

**TOD**

Why are you such a penis Phil. Do you do it on purpose or can't you help it.

**PHIL**

Tug my chain Johnstone.

Skipper comes on deck. Robin and Chuck flip Phil and Terry the finger.

**SKIPPER**

After midterms we'll finish our run down to Curacao.

The crew reacts, grumbling.

**SKIPPER**

I have arranged to host a good will cruise for the Dutch students of the local school there.

**PHIL**

(to Terry)  
Joy, rapture...

**SKIPPER**

Each one of you will be responsible for one student. I'll expect you to be courteous. You represent this school and your country. We'll sail in the morning.

George appears from the galley and rings the ships bell.

**GEORGE**

That's chow.

The crew drop what they're doing and stampede down into the cabin.

**INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Robin thrashes in his bunk calling out. Sweat glistens on his face. Chuck stumbles out to his bunk with Rick and some of the others.

**RICK**

Hey man, wake up. Wake up!

They shake him. Robin wakes, disoriented, eyes filled with tears.

**ROBIN**

I was falling...

Phil grumbles from his bunk.

**PHIL**

Hey, shut up will ya?

**CHUCK**

It was a bad dream...

**ROBIN**

It was so real...

**CHUCK**

Here's the thing; whenever you're having a nightmare, all you have to do is say 1-2-3 wake up! You'll be out of it. You'll wake up.

Phil rolls over in his bunk trying to go back to sleep.

**ROBIN**

Who told you that?

**CHUCK**

My dad.

**ROBIN**

It works?

**CHUCK**

Swear to God. Only good advice he ever gave me. Now, go back to sleep.

He pats Robin on the leg. The guys return to their bunks. Favor Phil, listening.

**CHUCK**

(lingering)

You okay now?

Robin stares at the photo of his brother.

**ROBIN**

That's how he died you know.

**CHUCK**

Who?

**ROBIN**

My brother. He fell out of the old beech tree. Broke his neck. I was on a camp out. They started going at it, throwin' things, a real knock down...

(beat)

They didn't find him 'till the next morning. They didn't even know why he was up there.

**CHUCK**

Jesus, you never told them?

**ROBIN**

I couldn't.

Phil stares at the ceiling, affected by what he has overheard. Someone creeps down the companionway and whispers.

**MIKE**

(hushed)  
Hey you guys, come on!

Shuffling in the darkness. Phil suddenly realizes, he's alone.

**EXT. DECK - NIGHT**

The dory hangs from her gallows. Some of the guys slowly lower her to the water.

**INT. GALLEY - SAME**

George is asleep with a book in his lap. Mike and Chris slip inside. The door squeaks, George stirs. Mike opens a cabinet and removes a fifth of rum.

Silently, Mike passes the bottle to Chris who passes it to Tod who passes it to Charlie who drops it down to Robin who stands in the lowered dory with Chuck.

**PHIL (O.S.)**

What do you think you're doing?

Startled, Mike and Rick share a look. Busted. Phil turns and runs into John, wearing a broad smile, who shakes his head. No way.

**PHIL**

Forget it. Count me out!

The crew descend and drag Phil, struggling, into the dory. They raise a crude sailing rig and silently move off.

A figure stands on top of the chart house, back lit by the moon. It's Skipper. Watching it all. Letting it unfold.

**INT. GALLEY - NIGHT**

Skipper hovers over George, sawing logs. He tosses a pot on the floor.

**GEORGE**

(bolting up)  
What?! What's happening?!!

**SKIPPER**

You're officer of the watch, George.

**GEORGE**

I'm sorry, Skip. It's this damned book. Lawford gave it to me.

The book is "Kafka". Skipper motions to the empty cabinet.

**GEORGE**

Son-of-a-bitch.

**SKIPPER**

We're short one long boat too. Come on.

**EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT**

The boys sit in a circle around a small fire passing the bottle. Rick strums his guitar and sings while the rest join in.

**RICK**

Oh I was walkin' down Lime street  
one day...

**ALL**

Hey! Weigh! Blow the man down...

**RICK**

A pretty young maiden she happened  
my way...

**ALL**

Give me some time to blow the man  
down...

Skipper and George crawl to the top of a sand dune and watch the boys. George starts to stand but Skipper puts a hand on his shoulder.

**SKIPPER**

I guess we know what the next  
acquisition for the galley is going  
to be...

**GEORGE**

What's that?

**SKIPPER**

A padlock.

On the boys. Phil is drunkest of them all and does a wild

jig as the rest of them sing.

**RICK**

So to all you sailors who've fought  
wind and whale...

**ALL**

Weight! Hey! Blow the man down...

**RICK**

She said "None the better, you all  
go to hell..."

**ALL**

Give me some time to Blow the man  
down!

They all crack up.

**CHRIS**

I only have one question.

**JOHN**

What's that, Canuck?

**CHRIS**

If we're not on the boat, how come  
the ground is moving?

**CHUCK**

You think George'll miss the bottle?

**TERRY**

We'll blame it on Big Daddy. He's a  
lush.

**MIKE**

All I know is if that Viking son of  
a bitch puts me on smegma duty one  
more time I'm gonna have to run him  
through.

**TERRY**

(mimicking)

The "Old Man" likes a tight ship!

**CHARLIE**

"If it moves, shoot it..."

The rest join in.

**CHUCK**

"If it doesn't move, throw it  
overboard. If it's too big to throw  
overboard, screw it!"

More laughing.

**RICK**

You think Old Thunder Nuts will  
figure out that we're A.W.O.L.

Bill drunkenly imitates the Skipper.

**PHIL**

"There is nothing that goes on, on  
this boat that I don't know about.  
She speaks to me in the night. So  
don't test me. Not even a  
little..."

The boys laugh. On the dune, George shakes his head.

**GEORGE**

Immortality.

**SKIPPER**

Spirits have a way of bringing that  
out.

**GEORGE**

And being sixteen.

**SKIPPER**

They're in a hurry to grow up. They  
don't know about consequences or  
responsibility. That's being  
sixteen too.

(beat)

I promise you one thing...

**GEORGE**

What's that?

**SKIPPER**

They'll know about it in the  
morning.

Skipper smiles.

**EXT. BEACH - NIGHT**

The drunken crew stumble out of the woods onto the beach.

As they ready the boat for the trip back Robin looks out to sea...

**ROBIN**

(alarmed)  
Jesus H. Christ.

Tod looks up.

**TERRY**

What now pork chop?

**ROBIN**

Look!

The guys turn their gaze to the ocean. The Albatross... is gone!

**TERRY**

Holy shit! Where'd she go?

The crew is suddenly stone sober. Stunned.

**CHARLIE**

What the hell is going on?

**MIKE**

She's gone! The boat's gone!!

Phil breaks into sort of a blind panic.

**PHIL**

Oh Jesus, oh Jesus. Man I knew we shouldn't have gone. I tried to tell you. I tried to tell you. You guys made me come! You made me come!!

**JOHN**

Will you shut up? You sound like my fucking sister.

**CHUCK**

Alright. Everybody just stay cool. We'll figure this out.

**MIKE**

Who the hell checked the mooring?

**ROBIN**

I did. Why?

**CHARLIE**

Maybe she pulled free...

**MIKE**

What if they don't know. If she's adrift, if they're asleep, she could run aground. She could break up on the reef.

**PHIL**

(to Robin)

Maybe you didn't check it good enough.

**ROBIN**

(defensive,  
frightened)

I did. I swear.

Oddly, it's Phil who stands up for Robin.

**PHIL**

Yeah, well you're really gonna have some bad dreams if we find out you didn't.

**JOHN**

That's enough.

**PHIL**

How the hell are we gonna get outta here?

**JOHN**

We'll think of something.

**PHIL**

Oh, praise the lord.

(announcing)

Relax everybody. Everything is under control. The jug head's going to think of something.

Without warning. John lunges at Phil. Phil screams, trying to defend himself. The guys all dive in. Suddenly it's an all out brawl.

John out of control pounding Phil's head against the seat of the boat.

Suddenly, from behind, comes a blistering "THWACK!!" as Chuck breaks an oar over the back of John's head.

Stunned, John lets go of Phil and turns, blood dripping from the back of his head.

**JOHN**

Nobody calls me an idiot.

He weaves, then passes out, falling face down in the sand. The guys stagger to their feet, trying to recover.

**PHIL**

God damn it man. I think he broke my nose!

**CHUCK**

Shut up, Phil.

Chuck tosses the broken oar handle, kneels over and vomits.

**TERRY**

Well that's just great. Now what are we supposed to do?

Chuck and Robin hoist John up and drag him under a palm tree, propping him up. The others huddle to stay warm.

**EXT. BEACH - MORNING**

The crew's asleep in the tropical heat of day. Bloodied and sun burned. A fly buzzes around Rick's face, waking him. He sits up sunburned and sore trying to focus. He gazes across the water, stupefied.

**RICK**

Oh-my-god...

The others stir and follow his gaze. The Albatross sits in exactly the spot where they left her.

**ROBIN**

I'm not sure if this is really good or really bad.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - DAY**

The sound of a rod and reel spinning wildly. George tries to maintain control as the rod nearly jumps out of his hands.

**GEORGE**

I got a live one!

Skipper, Alice and Bill watch the shoreline as the boys launch the long boat into the surf. George is struggling. A beautiful tarpon leaps out of the water, but Skipper never takes his eyes off of his boys.

**SKIPPER**

The thing about fishing George, is you need to let 'em run some. Give 'em just enough slack so they don't break the line. But at the same time you've gotta keep enough tension to wear 'em down, bring 'em in slowly so they don't really know they're hooked.

Suddenly George's line goes slack. He nearly falls over backwards.

**GEORGE**

I'll try and remember that.

**EXT. DECK - DAY**

Hound dog and hung over, bloodied and burned, the boys stand before Skipper and the others. Skipper looks dark and angry.

**SKIPPER**

You know what a loose cannon is? 'Bout the worst thing that could happen to a wooden ship. All it took was one, crashing around the deck in a storm... It'd smash everything in its way, maybe take out a mast or punch a hole right through the hull. Think about it, just one cannon not tied down, not anchored, could take a whole 'Man of War' straight to the bottom.

**MIKE**

(aside)

But we don't have any cannons?

Chris jabs him in the ribs.

**CHRIS**

(hushed)

Shut up!

Skipper turns and faces them.

**SKIPPER**

Now, if the Skipper were smart, if he could see a storm building, why he'd cut loose every gun on his boat. Even though it would leave him at a disadvantage in battle, he'd push 'em into the sea. Better chance running for port than risk the entire ship, his crew.

He takes a pause making sure he has their attention for this part.

**SKIPPER**

People are like that sometimes. They cut loose and before you know it, they're knocking holes in everything. So you gotta ask yourself if it might not be better to just put 'em off before they sink the whole thing. I mean after all, you can always get new cannons.

He walks back to his place at the rail.

**SKIPPER**

(beat)

I want a tight ship, everybody shaved and in clean clothes when we make Curacao. If it goes well, if your mid terms are acceptable, I may reconsider my decision about the rest of the trip. That's all.

Dejected, the crew goes below.

**EXT. DECK - DAY**

Under sail. Skipper stands at the wheel overseeing the crew taking exams. Each writes furiously as Alice scribbles problems on the blackboard which hangs from the chart house door.

As the boys scratch out the problems, John seems paralyzed. He looks over at Phil and copies down his answer. He checks crib notes hidden in his shorts. Chuck and Robin both see this and exchange looks.

**INT. AFT CABIN - DAY**

John makes his way down the narrow corridor towards the head. Robin follows. Chuck drops down the aft companionway, intercepting John.

**CHUCK**

Where you going?

**JOHN**

To take a piss.

**ROBIN**

Really?

John turns around, surprised, sandwiched.

**JOHN**

Yeah, that's right. You wanna come in and shake it for me?

**CHUCK**

If you're gonna cheat, you might as well copy off somebody who's gonna get the answer right.

**JOHN**

You've gotta be kidding. Get the fuck outta my way!

Chuck throws open the Engine Room door and they shove John inside.

**JOHN**

What the hell!!!

Chuck manages to pin John. Robin checks his pockets and comes up with the crib notes. Chuck lets go. John snatches them, ashamed.

**CHUCK**

Takin' a piss?

John turns away.

**ROBIN**

Why, man?

**JOHN**

I don't have to listen to this.

**CHUCK**

Yes you do, stupid. Because if you don't, I'm gonna go right up there and have a heart to heart with Skipper and you'll be on the first plane back to idiotville.

John lunges at Chuck, sending them both sprawling. Robin leaps on top of John.

**ROBIN**

Cut it out man!! Stop it!!! What's the matter with you? If Phil had caught you he'd have ratted you out in a second. You get caught cheating, you'll get kicked off the boat.

John explodes, tears flowing.

**JOHN**

I cheated to get on the boat!!! All right?!

**CHUCK**

What?

He lets go of Chuck and stands up trying to hide his emotions.

**JOHN**

I doctored my grades so I'd make the cut. I'm a moron, okay? You satisfied?!

**CHUCK**

You're not a moron.

**JOHN**

Wanna bet? Takes me half a day to get through one chapter of Lawford and I still don't have any idea what the hell he's talkin' about. You know why it takes me so long to write papers? because I can't spell. While everybody else is sleeping, I'm in the rack with a flashlight and a dictionary.

John chokes back a sob.

**JOHN**

Hell, they even kicked me outa vo-tech 'cause I couldn't read a slide rule.

**PHIL**

I can show you how to use a slide rule.

The three turn around, startled.

**ROBIN**

How long you been standing there?

**PHIL**

Long enough.

John looks down, resigned.

**JOHN**

They were gonna put me into special-ed this year. I stole a copy of my transcript, changed all the grades. Shit, who am I kidding. I'll never pass the boards.

**CHUCK**

Listen, you don't cheat, and we'll make sure you get the grades. We'll start a private study group. Nobody knows. You'll ace that test.

**ROBIN**

I'm in.

They turn and look to Phil, who still shows the tell-tail signs of their fight.

**PHIL**

Me, too.

**JOHN**

Why would you do that?

**CHUCK**

Because we believe in you.

(beat)

Because we're your friends.

**EXT. CURACAO - HARBOR - DUSK**

As a blazing sun sizzles into the western sea, the

Albatross rounds a point and heads towards the docks several hundred yards away. On the dock, the students of the school wait. As soon as the ship is in view, they start to cheer. Chuck squints.

**CHUCK**

What are they doing?

**ROBIN**

I can't make it out?

Robin calls up to Phil, who is at the wheelhouse.

**ROBIN**

Hey, Phil... Swing up the 'binocs' and tell us what you see.

Phil picks up the binoculars and focuses.

**PHIL**

(puzzled)

They're waving... handkerchiefs or something.

**RICK**

What?

**CHARLIE**

Maybe they're surrendering.

**PHIL**

Wait a second...

Phil lowers the binoculars and turns to Skipper.

**PHIL**

They're girls! They're all girls!

Skipper shares a knowing look with Alice.

**TOD**

Gimme those.

Tod snatches the binoculars.

**TOD**

**WHOOOOAAAAA!!!!!! WOMEN!!!**

Everyone on board rushes to the port side. Every single person on the dock is a young girl waving a white handkerchief. Spontaneous cheers from the boys.

As the 'Big A' pulls to the dock, John and Tod run for the gunnel door and swing it open. The girls flood the deck.

**BILL**

Good morning, ladies.

They chatter in Dutch and hurry aboard. Like wall flowers, Robin, Phil and Chuck stand on top of the chart house watching utopia unfold before them.

**ROBIN**

What are we supposed to talk about?

**PHIL**

You've gotta be kidding?

**ROBIN**

But, they don't speak English.

**PHIL**

There are some things that everybody does in the same language.

**CHUCK**

Yeah, but how are you supposed to make the first move?

**PHIL**

Like this!

Phil reaches up for a free line. With a running start he swings out over the water...

**PHIL**

Yeeee Haaaaa!!

He careens back onto the deck and lands in front of two startled, but impressed girls. Robin and Chuck applaud. Phil takes a bow. All hell is breaking loose.

Skipper and Alice welcome aboard the headmaster, MS. BOYDE, 50's, dumpy but tough.

**SKIPPER**

A very enthusiastic welcome.

**MS. BOYDE**

We don't often have guests. Our girls have been looking forward to your visit for some time. Welcome to Curacao.

**SKIPPER**

Thank you. You're all ready to sail then?

**MS. BOYDE**

I should think so.

**ALICE**

I'm sure they won't be disappointed.

A man's voice bellows up from the dock.

**FRANCIS (O.S.)**

Ahoy there!!

Everyone stops and freezes. Phil turns, disbelieving. It's his parents, Francis and PEGGY BOUTILLIER, standing next to a limousine dressed in brightly colored tourist garb.

**PEGGY**

Surprise!

**FRANCIS**

Well, well. What do we have here?  
A floating brothel?

**ALICE**

(cool)  
Hardly.

Francis comes aboard uninvited as usual.

**FRANCIS**

Well, we thought we'd drop in and see if you were all still in one piece.

**SKIPPER**

(pointed)  
And, of course, we are.

**FRANCIS**

Well, you never can tell these days, can you?

Skipper shoots a look over at Phil who is staring a hole in the deck.

**SKIPPER**

What is it we can do for you today?

**FRANCIS**

Well, we've come to give our boy a little break from the monotony.

**PHIL**

It's not monotonous.

Francis flushes red.

**FRANCIS**

Never the less...

He turns and joins Peggy on the dock. Phil is suddenly full of rage. This is an invasion of his privacy. Everyone feels it.

**FRANCIS**

Hop to boy. We haven't got all day.

Phil's anger turns to resigned humiliation. He stops, staring down at his parents. Skipper puts a hand on his shoulder.

**SKIPPER**

I didn't know, Phil.

Phil nods, head down and walks down the ramp. All watch him go, feeling for him.

**EXT. OPEN WATER - DAY**

The sails begin to rise but unlike earlier, the guys SING out like the Vienna Boys Choir and it's having the desired impressive effect on the women.

**CREW TOGETHER**

When the sun came up there was  
whisky in the cup/ and not one of us  
was sober/ Kerry thought she saw a  
picture, but it really was the sun/  
then we knew the party was over...

The weather was perfect, brisk and steady under the trade wind swells. The voices trail away as the ship moves off.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

Curacao seemed out of a dream,  
somehow make-believe. But, as Ohio  
drew further and further away, it  
was home that began to seem unreal,  
drifting somewhere in the foggy

reaches of our memories. And I knew that each of us was falling in love. But not only with these wonderful women or the swaying palms and porcelain beaches... We were falling in love with the experience we were sharing, and with who we were becoming.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - NIGHT**

The crew is getting ready for a farewell party. Each member is primping.

**CHUCK**

Bregitta. Do you believe it?

**JOHN**

Believe what?

**CHUCK**

Her name.

(savoring the sound)

Bregitta. It's poetry.

**TERRY**

Soon as we ship it'll be "forgetta".

**TOD**

Don't mind him, Chucky. You're talking to a guy whose idea of big romance is a palm full of Vaseline.

**TERRY**

Screw you, Valentino. I haven't seen you swapping spit with anybody.

Tod smiles as he slowly pulls something from his pocket. It's a pair of girls' cotton underwear.

**TOD**

That's because I'm discrete, moron.

The guys try to wrestle the underwear away from him. Just then Skipper descends the companionway.

**SKIPPER**

Alright, gentlemen, we sail with the tide. Twenty-three hundred. Sharp. I'm not waiting. Have a good time tonight but be back on time.

The crew cheer. This means the trip goes on.

**EXT. SCHOOL - GARDENS - NIGHT**

Decorated with colored paper lanterns and streamers, a STEEL DRUM BAND softly plays in the b.g. The crew slow-dance with their girls, dressed in cotton that seems to glow against their dark skin.

Ms. Boyde is scrutinizing the body contact between Chuck and BREGITTA. Their lips appear pasted together and she doesn't like it. Lawford sees what is about to happen and hands his slimy cigar to George who reacts.

**LAWFORD**

Hold this, will ya?

Lawford intercepts Ms. Boyde.

**LAWFORD**

Madam, I would consider it a privilege if you would allow me to take you on a tour of the dance floor.

Ms. Boyde is so flattered, it is all she can do to extend her hand. Lawford leads her away and glares at Rick.

**LAWFORD**

You're very light on your feet Ms. Boyde. Was it you who taught all of these young ladies the art of the dance?

Ms. Boyde giggles like a school girl.

**EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Phil and his parents sit outside at a ritzy restaurant. Phil stares towards the harbor.

**FRANCIS**

What's wrong, you don't like steak?

**PHIL**

I should be eating with the crew.

**FRANCIS**

Humor me. Eat it anyway.

**PHIL**

Why are you here?

**PEGGY**

We missed you. We wanted to check on you.

**PHIL**

I don't need you spying on me.

**FRANCIS**

Spying?!

**PHIL**

I can take care of myself.

**FRANCIS**

(sarcastic)

Oh, really?

**PHIL**

Look, you put me on this boat in the first place. I didn't want to come but I did. Why do you have to embarrass me. Why can't you just leave me alone?

Francis slaps Phil across the face nearly knocking him out of his chair. Everyone and everything. It's humiliating.

**PEGGY**

Francis!!

She cradles Phil's red face. He fights the tears.

**FRANCIS**

Listen to me, you thankless little prick. We're your parents, so don't you dare talk to me disrespectfully. What the hell is it, this captain? Because I'll see him in a rowboat...

**PHIL**

It has nothing to do with him.

**FRANCIS**

Well, what does it have to do with? Us?

**PHIL**

No. Look, it's me okay? Can't it

just be about me? For once?

Phil pulls free and exits. He can feel eyes all over him.

**EXT. SCHOOL - GARDENS - NIGHT**

Alice watches, swept up in the nostalgic romance of it all. Skipper joins her.

**SKIPPER**

He would have loved this.

**ALICE**

Your father?

**SKIPPER**

All his years at sea, he never stopped talking about these islands.

**ALICE**

You miss him.

Skipper manages a sad smile.

**SKIPPER**

Every hour. Every minute.

(pause)

I wish he was here. I wish he could have sailed our girl. Seen these boys...

She smiles warmly.

**SKIPPER**

I'd have liked to have said goodbye.

**ALICE**

He knows.

**SKIPPER**

You sound so sure.

**ALICE**

I am about this.

Skipper turns and stares at her deeply.

**ALICE**

What?

**SKIPPER**

He never would have believed a woman like you existed.

Alice smiles and turns back to the dancers.

**ALICE**

Do you remember the last time you and I danced under the stars?

**SKIPPER**

Guilty.

**ALICE**

On the deck of the Yankee, the night you asked me to marry you. We weren't much older than they are.

The music changes to a calypso waltz. Skipper takes Alice by the hand.

**SKIPPER**

Would you allow me?

She's sixteen again. There's something about him that still makes her blush.

Skipper leads her to the dance floor. He hesitates, looking deeply into her eyes. As they begin to dance, the boys notice and exchange looks.

Lawford and George sit across the quad, sipping punch and smoking cigars.

**GEORGE**

If I didn't know better I'd say the old man was acting almost halfway human.

**LAWFORD**

He is halfway human.

One by one the couples clear for the Skipper and his bride. They glide, lost in each others arms. They dance a dance for the ages. As if it might be for the last time. The music swells.

**EXT. PIER - NIGHT**

Chuck and Bregitta, are at the end of the pier, a full moon hangs above the horizon. Bregitta doesn't understand what Chuck is saying, but it's clear she's enjoying him.

**CHUCK**

I can't remember feeling like this about myself, a place, someone like you. We've come such a long way, seen so much. But nothing like this.

Bregitta smiles and takes Chuck's hand. He's nervous.

**CHUCK**

I'm not the best at expressing myself. Maybe the only reason I can now is because I know you don't understand me.

(beat)

I like you so much. Too much. But how could I? I mean, if we can't even communicate, how could I know you? It's confusing. We sail in an hour and I'll never see you again.

Bregitta takes Chuck's face gently and kisses him tenderly. Then, in perfect English...

**BREGITTA**

I like you, too.

Chuck's eyes widen, astonished. Bregitta smiles, takes Chuck by the hand, and leads him to a small covered boat moored to the pier.

**BREGITTA**

Come on. We don't have much time.

Blushing deeply, Chuck follows her into the boat.

**EXT. STREET - SAME**

Robin walks down the street hand in hand with one of the girls. A long string of colored lights illuminate the length of the street. Robin clumsily tries to kiss the girl. She laughs.

**ROBIN**

(defensive)

What?

Suddenly there's a flash and the sound of breaking glass. Robin looks up to see Phil staggering, down the street, smashing each of the colored light bulbs with a stick. He showers himself with broken glass and sparks.

**ROBIN**

(to girl)  
Wait for me okay. I'll be right  
back. I swear.

She smiles sadly and nods. Robin sprints down the pier  
and catches up with Phil. His feet are bleeding. He is  
completely smashed.

**ROBIN**

Phil. What are you doing?

**PHIL**

Fandango, Junior.  
(he holds up his  
stick)  
I'm gonna do some limbo baby!!

**ROBIN**

No way Phil. Not like this.

**PHIL**

Roger Meris, steps up, it's a corker  
down the pipe...

THWACK! He scores another bulb. Robin jumps out of the  
way.

**PHIL**

It's outta here!

**ROBIN**

Come on man. Let's just talk about  
it.

The music drifts from the gardens ahead. Phil bolts.  
Robin chases after him.

**ROBIN**

Phil! Wait man... Come on...

**EXT. SCHOOL - GARDENS - NIGHT**

John shares a joke with Lawford and George. The calypso  
is cranking, but only John hears Phil and Robin crash into  
the refreshment table. Robin struggles to stop Phil.

**JOHN**

(to Lawford)  
Be right back.

Lawford nods, oblivious.

**ON THE GUYS**

John tries to help Robin with Phil.

**JOHN**

Jesus! What the hell happened to him.

**PHIL**

Lemme go! Lemme go!!

**ROBIN**

I don't know. We gotta get 'im outta here before Skipper sees him like this.

**PHIL**

Son of a bitch!!

Phil kicks and struggles.

**JOHN**

Phil, if you don't calm down, I'm gonna hurt you. Got it?

They drag him into the darkness. From near the bandstand however, Skipper has seen it all.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - NIGHT**

The crew lean along the rail waving goodbye to the girls who wave back with their white handkerchiefs.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - SAME**

Chuck and John hold Phil still as Robin picks shards of glass out of his feet. Phil clenches his jaw, but his eyes are dry.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - DAY**

The ship is under full-sail driving before a brisk following wind. It takes two on the helm to keep her safely on course. Those not on watch are sprawled about the boat, scraping and 'red-leading' or reading. Chuck and Robin sit forward with John, studying. Lawford paces

the deck, chiding the crew.

**LAWFORD**

The rust won't wait for you to read  
Conrad, Goodall.

**JOHN**

Then he shouldn't have written such  
a long poem, Mr. Lawford.

**LAWFORD**

Read on, young John. Read on.  
College boards are coming.

John looks down, dejected. Suddenly Tod cries from the  
foretop.

**TOD**

There they blow!! There they blow!!  
Dolphins off the bow!!!

Everyone rushes to see. Dolphins leaping out of the  
water. It's a magnificent game they play with ships. The  
crew cheers as each one explodes out of the sea, close  
enough to touch.

Isolated, Phil watches. Angry, cut off. Chuck eyes him,  
worried.

Bill and Charlie rig the bowsman's chair and lower Rick  
into the water. Suddenly, the dolphins are everywhere.  
Rick pets them as they swim back and forth. Shear joy.

Phil reaches for the spear gun. Nobody notices as he  
loads and takes aim.

Suddenly... with a crack, everyone spins around. A large  
female dolphin leaps out of the water, bloody foam  
spraying from her blow hole. She lets out an agonizing  
scream. Phil holds her fast.

**CHRIS**

Jesus Christ!

The crew can only watch, stunned. Phil is suddenly,  
defensive as if waking from a dream.

**PHIL**

Fuck off man. It's just a fish.

**RICK**

No, Phil. It's a mammal.

Skipper steps on deck, sees the dolphin and Phil with the spear gun.

**SKIPPER**

(quietly)

Bill, lower a long boat. We'll  
bring her up with the davit.

A dory is lowered with John and Bill inside. Once near the water they maneuver the struggling dolphin into a canvas harness. The crew hoist her with the davit tackle, swing her inboard, and gently lower her to the deck.

They gather around the gasping animal. Alice checks the wound. Skipper kneels beside her.

**SKIPPER**

What do you think?

Alice shakes her head and gently strokes the dolphin.

**ALICE**

It's through her lung.

Skipper turns to Phil.

**SKIPPER**

(to Phil)

Nice shot.

Phil looks up at the crew but one by one they look away. Chuck finds this confusing and inexcusable but is the last to look away. Skipper grimly walks over to one of the deck lockers and pulls out a large wooden mallet and holds it out to Phil.

**SKIPPER**

Finish it.

Phil looks at the mallet, horrified.

**PHIL**

(stammering)

I'm not gonna kill it.

**SKIPPER**

You already have. Now go on. Do  
it.

Phil backs away. Skipper stares at him for a moment, then walks over to the dolphin. Robin looks away. The

sickening sound of the mallet crushing the skull of the animal seems to silence the world. There are one of two thumps of her tail and, it's over.

Skipper tosses the bloody mallet into the locker and approaches Phil, his face flushed with anger. He grabs the spear gun, and snaps it across his knee and throws the pieces into the sea.

**SKIPPER**

What the hell is wrong with you?!

Phil begins to shake with rage.

**SKIPPER**

Come on. You got so much fight in you; you wanna kill something? Take your best shot. The first one's free.

Robin holds his ears as if he can make it all go away. For a brief moment Phil looks as if he might take Skipper up on the challenge. Then the impulse passes.

**SKIPPER**

That's what I thought.  
(beat)

You're done. You're going home.

Skipper turns. The humiliation is more than Phil can take. He lunges after Skipper. Lawford grabs him. Phil swings wildly.

**PHIL**

You mean-assed bastard!! You son of a bitch!! You can't do this!!! You can't do this!!! God damn you!!  
God damn you!!

Lawford leads Phil, struggling, below. The crew surround the dead dolphin, stunned.

**EXT. ARUBA - ESTABLISHING - DAY**

The Albatross is at anchor in the center of the harbor.

**EXT. DECK - SAME**

Phil comes on deck from below with his duffel bag. Everyone feels bad but no one knows what to say. Phil

turns to get a second load.

**CHUCK**

Why'd you do it?

**PHIL**

(regretting it)  
What's the difference?

**CHUCK**

You only hurt yourself you know?

**PHIL**

Like you really care. Like any of  
you give a shit what happens to me.

**RICK**

You're the one who doesn't care,  
Phil.

**PHIL**

It hurts too much to care.

**RICK**

About yourself?

**PHIL**

About anything.

Phil turns and disappears down the companionway.

**ROBIN**

We shouldn't be putting him off the  
boat.

**CHRIS**

The guy's out of control.

**ROBIN**

Everybody's been outta control on  
this trip.

(beat)

Are we a crew or not? I mean, isn't  
that what this is supposed to be all  
about?

**MIKE**

You're the last person who should be  
whining about being a "crew".

**ROBIN**

How do you figure that?

**MIKE**

Well, I'd sure like to go into the subject of vertigo and all, but I wouldn't want you to piss yourself.

Robin flushes bright red. John fires a look at Mike.

**JOHN**

You're a regular prick you know that?

**MIKE**

Tell it to the dolphin, Goodall.

**JOHN**

Everybody deserves a second chance, ya know? We'd do the same for you Mike.

**ROBIN**

It's about family isn't it? I mean are we together on this or not?

There is a long pause. Mike and Chris cave.

**MIKE**

Hell, do what ever you want. It won't change anything anyway.

Robin exchanges a glance with Chuck and together, they climb up the companionway.

**EXT. CHART HOUSE - SAME**

Chuck and Robin stand before the door.

**ROBIN**

I can't go in there.

**CHUCK**

What are you talking about.

Robin turns away, ashamed.

**ROBIN**

The guys were right. It'll mean nothing coming from me. He'll listen to you Chuck. Everybody does.

**INT. CHART HOUSE - SAME**

Skipper and Alice have paperwork spread out in front of them. A knock.

**SKIPPER**

Come.

Chuck enters, awkward.

**SKIPPER**

What's on your mind?

**CHUCK**

I'm here on behalf of the crew, sir.

Skipper looks up.

**SKIPPER**

Well, spit it out.

**CHUCK**

The fact is... We'd like you to give Phil another chance.

Alice raises her eyebrows, surprised.

**SKIPPER**

Can't do it.

**CHUCK**

Sir...?

**SKIPPER**

Close the door. Sit down.

Chuck does as he is told.

**SKIPPER**

Why do you think I'm sending him home?

**CHUCK**

He killed the dolphin.

Skipper looks at Chuck for a moment.

**SKIPPER**

The Dolphin was a symptom.

**CHUCK**

Of what?

**SKIPPER**

Of a fight he can't win out here.

**CHUCK**

It's his father sir. He's suffocating him. We've all seen it...

Suddenly it's as if Chuck is talking about his own life.

**CHUCK**

I mean he has all these expectations and he doesn't even know who his own kid is. What right did then have to show up here?

**SKIPPER**

They have every right Chuck.

**CHUCK**

They send us because they want us to change, or grow up or something and then they try to keep us the same.

Skipper sits up and studies Chuck for a moment.

**SKIPPER**

Let me tell you something about Phil's father, and your's too. How do you think you got here? You think this is all free, that they owe you something? You think they enjoy riding subways and commuter trains, driving buses or pulling lobster traps? Work fifty weeks a year to keep you in tennis shoes and private school? Look around at how the rest of the world lives Chuck. We're the luckiest people alive, every one of us. They gave it up for you and Phil, and me too my friend.

Chuck chews on it.

**SKIPPER**

There are ground rules in families just like on this boat. If you and Phil don't like it, I'm sorry. Someday you'll understand that, and

if you're lucky, you'll come home  
and find your best friend has been  
there all along waiting for you to  
forgive him for being a father.  
It'll be the way it used to be,  
when you were ten and your dad was a  
giant.

Now it's Skipper who is talking about himself.

**SKIPPER**

Does Phil know how you guys feel?

**CHUCK**

I don't know.

**SKIPPER**

You should tell him. That's  
something he can take with him.

Chuck nods and leaves.

**EXT. CHART HOUSE - SAME**

As Chuck exits he meets Robin's eyes. He shakes his head.

**INT. CHART HOUSE - SAME**

Skipper returns to his paperwork but can feel Alice  
watching him. He senses it.

**SKIPPER**

I'm all ears.

Alice smiles.

**ALICE**

You may not like what you hear.

**SKIPPER**

I can take it.

**ALICE**

They've become what you wanted.  
They're a crew. That's why he came.

Skipper puts a loving hand on Alice's shoulder.

**SKIPPER**

Why did we begin this?

**ALICE**

We were idealists.

**SKIPPER**

Because we believed we could make an impact out here. Self reliance and community through the disciplines of sailing.

**ALICE**

I haven't forgotten.

**SKIPPER**

Phil, he's not looking inside. He's just striking out at the world.

**ALICE**

He has a lot of hurt inside him.

**SKIPPER**

Well, he better learn to own it. Actions have consequences.

(beat)

It's not what happens here Alice, it's what they take away with them.

Alice runs her hands across his face.

**ALICE**

You're still an idealist.

Skipper turns and slips into her arms.

**SKIPPER**

Oh hell...

**EXT. DECK - DAY**

Phil is in the long boat with Skipper, ready to shove off. Tension is high. It's as though they're all waiting for Skipper to give Phil a reprieve. But, it's not coming. They mumble goodbyes. Terry and Rick pass down Phil's bags.

**RICK**

Good luck.

Phil nods and turns to Skipper.

**PHIL**

I'm ready.

Skipper starts to pull the oars to make the crossing to the dock as the crew watches them go. Robin turns, staring at the ships bell.

**EXT. DOCK - SAME**

Skipper ties off the boat and Phil hands up his bags. A black limousine waits, brooding. Phil climbs up with Skipper and stands, stares at it. The back door opens, but nobody gets out.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - SAME**

The crew stand, watching.

**CHARLIE**

His ol' man's gonna eat him for lunch.

**JOHN**

I know what that's like.

**RICK**

Yeah.

Then, suddenly...

**CHUCK**

My god...

All stares aloft. In the rigging, climbing up the mast, is Robin. With the ships bell in his teeth, he is sweating every rung. Perspiration glistens on his brow. The crew watches, transfixed as he fights his way towards the foretop.

**EXT. DOCK - SAME**

Phil turns to Skipper. Working up some courage to say something, anything. But all that comes out is...

**PHIL**

I'm sorry.

A pause between them.

**SKIPPER**

I know, Phil.

Skipper extends a hand and they shake. Phil is about to turn, when a familiar sound draws their attention.

**EXT. FORETOP - SAME**

Robin, holding on for dear life at the top of the mast, rings the ship's bell triumphantly over his head, waving to Phil. Victorious. Ding ding! Ding ding! Ding ding! The crew begin to cheer.

**EXT. DOCK - SAME**

Phil stares back, fighting his emotions. Slowly he raises his hand in a single wave of acknowledgement. The ringing stops as his eyes meet Robin's. Waves back. Skipper turns.

**SKIPPER**

They never gave up on you, you know.

Phil chews on it. Then...

**PHIL**

Tell 'em I said... thanks.  
(beat)  
Goodbye Skipper.

**ROBIN'S POV**

Robin watches as the limo pulls away. He rings the bell wildly. The crew below wave in a show of silent protest.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

As Robin rang him out, we waved in silent protest against Skipper's decision. And in the days that followed the low morale was matched only by a sense of arrogance that perhaps the master should step down and let his students take over.

**AERIAL SHOT**

Robin, the Albatross and the drama unfolding below spin slowly away as we climb, turning, higher and higher.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - ESTABLISHING - DAY**

Foam sprays from her bow as the Albatross slices through the swells.

**INT. CABIN - SAME**

Tod exits the head with a worried look on his face. He grabs Chuck by the arm and pulls him aside. Morale is extremely low.

**TOD**

Listen man, I think I have a problem.

**CHUCK**

We all have problems.

**TOD**

I'm pissin' fire man.

Chuck reacts.

**INT. SKIPPER'S CABIN - DAY**

Tight on Alice. Pull back to reveal Tod standing in front of her with his shorts down around his ankles. Mortified.

**ALICE**

Have a nice time in Curacao, did you Tod?

Alice gets up and moves to her medicine chest. Tod starts to pull up his shorts.

**ALICE**

Not so fast.

She pulls out a menacingly large looking hypodermic needle. Tod's embarrassment turns to alarm.

**EXT. DECK - LATER**

The crew stand in line, pissed. Lawford and George man the deck with Skipper and exchange amused looks. The door opens and Chris exits, red faced, rubbing his backside. He glares at Tod who sits on the paint locker.

**CHRIS**

Way-ta-go Valentino. I never even

copped a feel in Curacao.

**TOD**

Yeah well, your sexual orientation  
is not my problem.

**RICK**

Man, is there a social disease you  
haven't had?

**CHARLIE**

So much for vestal virgins.

Lawford swings up a pair of binoculars. A vessel under  
power is coming up fast behind them. He holds the binocs  
out to Skipper.

**LAWFORD**

What do you make of that?

Skipper turns and looks.

**SKIPPER**

I don't know.

The ship pulls along the port side, keeping a couple  
hundred yards between them. The boys move to the rail.  
George sees them first.

**GEORGE**

Jesus. She's got guns.

**SKIPPER**

She's Cuban.

Everyone becomes alarmed. Even Alice looks concerned.  
Suddenly a puff of smoke discharges from the gun boat.

**SKIPPER**

(shouting)

**GET DOWN! EVERYBODY DOWN!!**

The entire crew hit the deck as a shell rockets across the  
bow exploding in the water.

**SKIPPER**

Jesus, we're Americans!!! We're  
Americans!!!

Skipper grabs the American flag and starts waving it.

**TERRY**

Jesus, they're gonna sink us!!

**SKIPPER**

Bill drop everything. Do it now!

The crew scrambles for the rigging, frantically dropping sail.

**SKIPPER**

(hitting each word)

Who the hell do they think they are?

As the sail comes down, the Albatross slows to a stop. The Cubans inch closer and begin speaking over a loud speaker in Spanish. The seas are high and the two ships rise and fall with the large swells between them.

**GEORGE**

They want us to identify ourselves.

Chuck returns with a bull horn.

**SKIPPER**

Tell them we're the American School Ship, Albatross.

George replies in Spanish over the bull horn. The Cubans answer.

**GEORGE**

They think we're carrying Cuban refugees.

(beat)

Skipper, they mean to board us.

**SKIPPER**

Not a chance. Remind them that according to the Geneva Convention, firing on a civilian vessel on the high sea is an act of war.

Another exchange between George and the Cubans. The crew lay flat on the deck, terrified.

**GEORGE**

They say they are acting on the direct authority of Fidel Castro.

Skipper defiantly swings up onto the gunnel rail. The Cuban Captain gives an order and one of his sailors jumps into the turret of the anti aircraft guns and swivels around pointing both barrels at the Albatross. Skipper

stands firm, between the shrouds. Silence. A standoff.

**SKIPPER**

Tell 'em to come aboard.

George sends the return message. There is a pause, then the murmurs of the relieved crew. Skipper swings down but never takes his eyes off the gunboat.

**SKIPPER**

(to crew)

We've come a long way gentlemen.  
But this is no time for heroes. I  
know you're much more, but I need you  
to be boys right now. That's an  
order. Now scatter and find your  
passports.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Laundry, books and mementos go flying as each boy scrambles to dig up his passport. Terry sits among his things, dazed. Bill notices.

**BILL**

What's wrong?

**EXT. DECK - DAY**

A small launch filled with Cuban soldiers approaches the Albatross. The crew climb on deck and line up along the Chart House with their passports. Lawford walks up to Skipper.

**LAWFORD**

We've got a problem.

**SKIPPER**

What's that?

**LAWFORD**

Terry left his passport in Curacao.  
We could hide him...

**SKIPPER**

No. Bring him on deck with the  
others.

The Cubans cast their lines up and climb aboard carrying side arms. Terry reluctantly joins his crew mates. The

COMMANDING OFFICER faces Skipper as his men go down the line checking the passports. Others search the ship.

**COMMANDER**

Chicken is a fool's game captain.

**SKIPPER**

So is violating international law.

**COMMANDER**

But you invited is aboard.

**SKIPPER**

Your cannons made a compelling argument.

One of the Cubans pulls Terry out of line and brings him forward. He alerts the Commander in Spanish.

**COMMANDER**

Stow away?

**SKIPPER**

He left his passport in Curacao.  
It's being mailed to Panama.

**COMMANDER**

That is unfortunate. We'll have to take him with us.

Terry is petrified.

**LAWFORD**

If he's a Cuban, Castro wears a dress.

**SKIPPER**

Nobody aboard my ship is going anywhere.

Skipper stares him down. The Commander signals to one of his men who disappears into the Chart House.

**COMMANDER**

Perhaps in appreciation for our country's pursuit of peace, you might offer us some, token of gratitude.

Skipper doesn't really have a choice.

**SKIPPER**

What do you want?

The Cuban returns from the Chart House with the Ships sextant and hands it to the Commander.

**COMMANDER**

This. And...

Pointing to the ships compass.

**COMMANDER**

... and that.

**GEORGE**

You've got to be kidding!!

**SKIPPER**

(cold)

Take it.

Without hesitation the Cubans pull the large brass compass from its base.

**SKIPPER**

Now, get the hell off my ship.

As they leave the ship, they pause. The Commander looks back at the Skipper, then deliberately drops both sextant and compass into the sea.

**COMMANDER**

You'll really have something to teach your students now.

Skipper stands towering above them. The Cuban captain smiles up at him. Amazingly, Skipper addresses him in perfect Spanish.

**SKIPPER**

Las estrellas es lo unico, que un marinero verdadero se mesesita para encontrarse. Verdade Patron?

The Cubans stare back, frowning, amazed as they motor away.

The crew are stunned by what they have just witnessed. Skipper turns and meets the eyes of admiration, humility and complete respect. He joins Alice at the helm. They linger for a moment.

**CHUCK**

What'd he say?

George smiles, impressed as well.

**GEORGE**

He told them real sailors need only  
the stars.

With a new attitude, they turn to Skipper.

**SKIPPER**

Alright then, let's get outta here.

The crew bolt to there positions.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

With staff and string he showed us  
how to build a sextant. As we rode  
the trades, he shared the ancient  
secrets of how to read the waves and  
follow stars. And some mornings  
later, bathed in the orange glow of  
a sunrise, Panama rose from the sea  
like a phoenix.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - PANAMA CANAL - DAY**

Panama appears on the horizon. The Albatross is dwarfed  
by the huge freighters moored around her, as she moves  
through the locks. The crew stand on deck in quiet  
reverence.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - NIGHT**

The sounds of slumber fill the cabin. All seems well with  
the world. Suddenly, silhouettes in the darkness. A huge  
bearded figure stands in the center of the cabin with a  
trident in his hand.

Chuck wakes with a start. He bolts upright to see the  
horrible figure of NEPTUNE himself (Lawford) towering  
before him. He tries to scream, but hands cover his  
mouth. He is dragged, struggling, up the companionway.

**EXT. DECK - NIGHT**

The Albatross has been transformed into a ghost ship.  
Where the sails once were, only shredded fabric. All of  
the crew have been brought on deck. Powdered faces glow,

surreal.

John's head has been shaved into a mohawk. Robin, Rick and Chris have been reduced to crew cuts. The shears start over Chuck's head. Neptune and his sidekick, DAVEY JONES (George) and two MERMAIDS (Bill and Alice) emerge with the rest of the crew.

**NEPTUNE**

Hold fast that polliwog and make him presentable.

Chuck struggles as his hair is shaved away and face powdered.

**NEPTUNE**

Let it be known that on this day in the year nineteen hundred and sixty-one there appeared within the limits of my royal kingdom, the sailing ship brigantine Albatross, bound for Galapagos. All vessels that sail my domain shall be subject to the scrutiny of the underworld...

Terry is brought topside kicking and screaming.

**NEPTUNE**

Silence!!!

Terry shuts up and succumbs to the same fate as the rest.

**NEPTUNE**

Tonight you shall all enter the Order of the Shellbacks. Only when you have been duly initiated shall you enjoy the mysteries and protection of the trident. So, let the festivities begin...

**EXT. HELM - NIGHT**

Neptune and his court sit smoking Havana cigars as each member of the crew present themselves. Robin dressed like a pig and crawls around snorting.

John's an Indian brave, whooping and hollering as he does a rain dance. Chuck, with flippers on his hands and feet, hops around like a frog. Rick is in 'drag' as Neptune's girlfriend and must sing everything he says. Charlie is dressed like a sloth and slithers along the deck.

Frenetic chaos.

**EXT. DECK - LATER**

Neptune and his court lead a procession around the perimeter of the deck. The crew follows. They stamp their feet and chant.

**ALL**

Hell is to drift, heaven to steer!  
Hell is to drift, heaven to steer!!  
Hell is to drift, heaven to steer!!

They move faster and faster around the boat. They shout louder and louder, faster and faster until they have all worked themselves into a frenzy.

**EXT. BOW - DAWN**

Davey Jones, holds a large turtle shell over the crews heads. As each one passes before him he pours blood from the turtle shell onto their heads. It runs down, streaking their floured faces and necks. As the ritual progresses, Neptune speaks.

**NEPTUNE**

By virtue of the power inherited by me, I do hereby command all of my subjects, such as mermaids, sea serpents, dolphins, whales, sharks and turtles, from eating, playing with, or otherwise molesting this vessel or her crew. Let it be remembered that on this, my Equatorial Domain on Longitude 88' 20' 13" on this 532nd in the year of the dolphin, you entered the Order of the Shellbacks!!

The crew cheer and embrace. Skipper calls from the wheel.

**SKIPPER**

Land ho!

**EXT. GALAPAGOS ISLANDS - DAY**

The crew stop their celebrating and gather at the port bow. Ahead, glowing orange with the dawn, the islands of Galapagos. It's desolate landscape of silent volcanoes

and ancient lava flows that spill into the sea.

The faces of the boys, still streaked with the indignities of the night's ordeal, stand silently before their final destination.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

We had journeyed over six thousand miles to the very edge of the earth. Like Darwin before us, we would witness the bliss of nature in the absence of man. And it was as if the Albatross had forded time, leaving it behind. In the heat of those equatorial days, on the virgin onyx beaches and shifting coral dunes, one could expect to find sunning iguanas, nesting frigates and perchance... the footprints of God.

**EXT. BEACH - SHIPWRECK BAY - DAY**

The Albatross rests at anchor. On the beach, the crew watch a huge group of penguins dive and frolic from the ancient guano cliffs. So unaccustomed are these creatures to man, that they have no fear.

**EXT. LAGOON - DAY**

Chuck, John and Rick snorkel among the playful SEA LIONS. They dart and swim like otters among their new human friends.

**EXT. LAVA OUTCROPPING - DAY**

Terry, Chris, Chuck and Mike stand taking notes on exotic birds. Frigates, hawks, flamingos, pelicans, boobies, and of course... albatrosses.

**EXT. ALBATROSS - DAY**

The crew are sprawled across the deck taking final exams. Alice walks among them. Chuck throws an anxious look towards John who is buried in his test.

**EXT. GRASSY LOWLANDS - DAY**

Boobies nest in the grass. Thousands of them and amazingly, the crew can walk among them without them batting an eye. Chuck and Robin watch as the iguanas sneak into unattended nests and steal eggs.

**EXT. DUNES - DAY**

Chuck is alone gazing over the shoreline. A huge flock of finches darken the sky, circling the black sand beach. Pure magic.

**EXT. BEACH - DAY**

Beyond, the anchored Albatross rocks and bounces in a blue-sky gale. Chuck, John, Robin, Rick, Chris and Tod stand by a dory watching the sea build. They wear only tattered shorts, their hair sun bleached and their skin dark.

**RICK**

We're here for the night.

**TOD**

Yeah.

**EXT. ROCKS - SAME**

Tight. The eyes of predators. Sharp, cunning, hungry.

**EXT. BLACK SAND BEACH - DAY**

A lone wild goat grazes on the beach. It looks up, sensing something, unfamiliar, then, returns to it's grazing.

Tight. Thundering bare feet on the black sand.

The goat looks up again, this time it sees five Homosapiens bearing down on him. They come naked, swinging their shredded clothing above their heads like lassos. Shouting, whooping, primal. The goat bolts for its life.

Pounding through the waterline like the wild horses of Sable, the hunters charge after the hunted, closing. The goat's eyes are full of a terror it has never known.

The beach is broad and long with no cover. The hunters are gaining on the goat. Splashing feet pound closer...

Suddenly they are upon the goat. But, instead of attacking it, they just run through it, passing it. The goat pulls up and stops, breathless, watching the naked humans run.

Close on the faces of brothers, matching each other, step for step. The music builds as we...

### **FREEZE FRAME**

#### **EXT. BEACH - NIGHT**

Wild eyes behind the charcoal painted masks of primal man. The rhythmic beat of sticks clacking and voices chanting. The heaping of driftwood into piles. Taught and powerful, the glistening bodies of young men.

Blue sparks leap from striking flint against stone. A flame is born. Voices howl in guttural triumph.

As the flames leap and singe the darkness, silhouettes of men pound the sand and cry out in a ritualistic dance.

The goat watches from the shadows, bemused, as the dance builds to a frenzy. The night sky is filled with the building sound of raging fire, pounding surf and chanting voices.

#### **EXT. ALBATROSS - SAME**

The wind carries the sounds of ceremony across the water. The flames from the beach reflect off of the water turning the white hull of the ship, a deep flickering orange. The word A-L-B-A-T-R-O-S-S has been spelled in huge flaming letters. Alice joins Skipper at his place by the rail watching.

#### **ALICE**

What are they doing?

#### **SKIPPER**

Claiming their place in the world.

#### **EXT. SHORELINE - DAWN**

The white surf hisses as it washes among the cinders of

the evenings ritual. The Galapagos have been returned, for now, to the frigates and the iguanas.

Across the water against the rising sun, the Albatross, under full sail, is bound for home.

**EXT. DECK - SAME**

The crew stand at their posts. The yards and foretop are trimmed with sailors, their faces taugth and their bodies hard. No one looks back.

**EXT. DECK - PANAMA CANAL - DAY**

Alice steps onto the deck from the chart house with papers in her hands.

**ALICE**

Well gentlemen, I have the results of your college board scores. I think most of you will be pleased.

The crew members collect their exams. Chuck notices John at the bow, alone, lost.

**CHUCK**

You okay?

**JOHN**

Yeah. How'd you do.

Chuck looks down at his exam apprehensively.

**CHUCK**

Ninety-six.

**JOHN**

Congratulations.

**CHUCK**

What about you?

John slowly passes his test to Chuck.

**CHUCK**

It's a ninety-one! It's an 'A'!

**JOHN**

I know.

**CHUCK**

(excited)

You know? Then why are you up here looking like you're about to jump overboard?!

**JOHN**

I just can't believe it.

**CHUCK**

This is your moment, don't you see? The instant when you know that your life is never going to be the same again. When you stand up and are counted.

John tries to choke back his emotions.

**JOHN**

I couldn't have done it without you.

**CHUCK**

Yes you could. You did.

(holding up the  
exam)

This is all you. Nobody else.

John looks out.

**JOHN**

Thank you.

Chuck smiles and joins John's gaze over the water.

**CHUCK**

Feels different doesn't it?

**JOHN**

What?

**CHUCK**

That we're going back. I don't want it to end. I don't want to be what I was when I left.

**JOHN**

What was that?

**CHUCK**

Anonymous.

Chuck looks at his test grimacing.

**CHUCK**

I've been getting ninety-sixes my whole life. It's what they expect. After all this, I still haven't figured it out.

**JOHN**

Figured what out?

**CHUCK**

Who I am, outside of this boat. What the hell I'm doing here.

**JOHN**

I'll tell you who you are. You're the glue. You're the thing that holds everybody around you together. You're strong, you listen and you see things in people the rest of us can't. It's a gift.

It's Chuck's turn to fight emotion.

**CHUCK**

You know, I never had friends like this.

**JOHN**

Me either.

**CHUCK**

I feel like... we can do anything.

John smiles, clutching his exam.

**JOHN**

We can.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

In the fading hours of that Pacific dusk, with nothing left to confess, for the first time we felt safe, capable, sure of who we were and where we were going.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - DAWN**

The crew sleep in their bunks. Lawford's voice rumbles down the companionway.

**LAWFORD**

A wet sheet and a flowing sea/ A  
wind that follows fast, And fills  
the white and rushing sail, And  
bends the gallant mast/ Arise, arise  
you salty dogs. The watch is on.

Chuck, Tom, John, Terry and Tod roll out. The dumb waiter  
clatters down from the galley with the morning's  
breakfast. Skipper and some of the crew are already  
eating.

**EXT. DECK - DAY**

The Albatross is under full sail trying to take advantage  
of what little wind there is. The skies are gray and  
dank. Tod and Terry are at the helm. Chuck and John are  
amid ship. John relieves Bill on the forward watch.

**CHUCK**

Looks like we're gonna get wet.

**BILL**

Well, we need it. I want to take a  
nice long bath and catch some water  
for my laundry.

**JOHN**

Save some for me will you?

**BILL**

You got it. I'm going below.

Suddenly, a huge lightning bolt explodes out of the sky  
and strikes the water a hundred feet off of the starboard  
beam. Everyone jumps.

**TOD**

Jesus!!

Skipper bolts onto the deck.

**SKIPPER**

Everybody okay?

The crew nod sheepishly. A very close call.

**SKIPPER**

All hands keep out of the rigging  
and stay clear of the masts.

The clouds grow dark but no more lighting. Tod laughs nervously. Everybody joins in. It's contagious. Even Skipper manages a smile.

**SKIPPER**

All right gentlemen. Thor's had his fun. Let's keep a keen eye.

Skipper starts back into the chart house when suddenly, a powerful gust of wind drives the ship hard to a 45 degree list to the starboard. Skipper stops and turns.

Instinctively, John and Chuck spring for the rigging to drop sail.

**SKIPPER**

(sharply)  
No! Stay down!!

Skipper stares at the sky with the intensity of a cobra. Waiting. The wind eases. It becomes eerily still. The ship slows and the sails go slack. Silence. Skipper maintains his vigil.

**CLOSE ON WATER**

Foam and spray appear off of the tops of the swells like the invisible footprint of a locomotive. John sees it first.

**JOHN**

(shouting)  
**HERE IT COMES!!!**

Everybody turns and looks. Skipper's eyes suddenly widen as he realizes...

**SKIPPER**

(in a whisper)  
White Squall!

The charging wall of wind slams into the topsails so hard it send a shudder throughout the ship. The wheel is nearly ripped out of Tod's hands. Instinctively, he tries to turn the ship into the wind.

**SKIPPER**

Hard to starboard!!! Hard to starboard!!!

Confused, panicked, Tod keeps turning to the left, into the wind. Skipper struggles to get to the wheel but when

the ship heels so badly he slides sideways across the deck.

**TOD**

No, hard to port!

**SKIPPER**

**TURN THE GOD DAMNED WHEEL TO THE  
RIGHT!!!**

Finally, Tod does as he is told. But as soon as the ship starts to come about, the vicious wind drives her further onto her side. As the deck becomes vertical Chuck half slips, half tumbles down to the starboard gunnel.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - SAME**

Robin, Chris, Bill, Mike and Rick are seated at the table finishing breakfast as the ship starts to go. They all share growing alarm as they watch the table reach it's maximum angle. Dishes start sliding off.

**BILL**

Get out!! Everybody out!!

**EXT. DECK - SAME**

Skipper manages to grab the ax mounted on the chart house and cuts the mainsheet with a single blow. But it's too late. The tall masts plunge into the ocean and the sails scoop tons of sea water, pinning the Albatross on her side.

**INT. SKIPPER'S CABIN - SAME**

Alice struggles towards the door. The book case tears out of the wall and strikes her. She drops to her knees. The door swings open in front of her. She reels for a moment and then loses consciousness.

**INT. FORWARD COMPARTMENT - SAME**

Lawford, Charlie and George are all hurled out of their bunks. The world is suddenly sideways. Lawford leaps up, pushing the others towards the companionway ladder.

**LAWFORD**

GO, GO, GO!!! TOPSIDE!!! Come on

Charlie! George, get them out!!

George disappears into the main cabin. Lawford manages to get Charlie out. As Lawford reaches the top of the ladder sea water explodes through the hatch and drives him back into the bowels of the ship.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - SAME**

Robin is through the companionway in the chart house with Mike right behind him. But instead of exiting, he holds the door open against the sea so that Mike can escape.

Mike gets through the door before the rushing sea slams it closed, pinning Robin's arm. He struggles to push through.

**EXT. DECK - SAME**

John slashes at the lines securing the starboard lifeboat with his knife and manages to free it before it is dragged to the bottom. He scrambles through the collapsed rigging tangled above him for the port lifeboat.

**AT THE STERN**

The Albatross is going down. Fast. Chuck and Tod stand on the after skylight. Chuck catches glimpses of the struggle going on below.

**CHUCK**

My God, they're drowning!

Skipper catches a glimpse of Alice through the skylight. Water washes over her but she doesn't move.

**SKIPPER**

Oh please, no. Not this woman.

**INT. SKIPPER'S CABIN - SAME**

Skipper's face is pressed hard against the skylight. His muffled voice penetrates the cabin. Alice stirs. She looks around, delirious.

**SKIPPER**

Alice, get up!! Come on girl!!

He pounds uselessly on the teak deck then tears at the

planks, fingers bleeding. Alice looks up confused but calm and finds Skipper's eyes.

**ON THE DECK**

Panicked for the first time in his life Slipper swings the ax wildly at the perpendicular deck sending a shower of splinters into the water.

**SKIPPER**

Get out!! Get out!! Jesus Christ,  
please God, Alice get out!!!

But after only two swings, the Albatross and Alice, slip beneath the sea.

**INT. MAIN CABIN - SAME**

Water thunders in from every possible exit. Chris and Rick push Bill towards the dumbwaiter.

**RICK**

Bill, you go. We'll be right behind  
you.

Before he can say no, Rick and Chris jam Bill into the tiny shaft. Suddenly, from below, a tremendous geyser smashes him to the top, knocking him unconscious. But the pressure is so great that the water sweeps him through the galley and out onto the deck.

**EXT. DECK - SAME**

Skipper struggles to reach John and the second life boat but sees that it is tangled in the rigging.

**SKIPPER**

Johnny, it's not good.

John defies him and keeps cutting. The ship is almost completely submerged.

**JOHN**

I can get it!

Suddenly one of the deck lockers breaks free and plunges into the water taking lines and rope with it. John becomes tangled and is dragged into the water. Only his superior strength allows him to hold onto the lifeboat and keep cutting.

The Albatross slips beneath the surface. Instead of trying to free himself John keeps slashing at the lifeboat lines as he disappears, swallowed by the sea.

**INT. FORWARD COMPARTMENT - SAME**

Eerie silence. Lawford is trapped in an tiny air pocket. Debris float around. He begins to panic as the water around him rises.

**LAWFORD**

My God!! Oh God I'm dying!!!

He takes a deep breath and the water consumes him. Then suddenly, the ceiling above him explodes from the pressure within.

**ON THE SURFACE**

Lawford is catapulted from the grip of death, to the surface.

**EXT. SURFACE - SAME**

Chuck continues to frantically dive on the chart house door as the ship takes the 'Deep Six'. Suddenly the ship rolls 180 degrees, her screws exposed and keel jutting up like a huge dorsal fin.

**EXT. UNDERWATER - SAME**

Chuck feels the ship coming down on top of him but still finds Robin's arm. They clasp tightly, but Chuck just can't budge the door. Then, strangely, Robin releases Chuck's arm and pulls it back through the door. Chuck looks up, startled. The small round window in the door is illuminated from the cabin lights on the inside.

Through the glass, Chuck meets Robin's frightened eyes. He fights to stay in a shrinking air pocket. Robin takes a last gulp of air then, a calm comes over him.

He meets Chuck's eyes again but this time with a strange acceptance. They both know what's happening. But Robin has refused to take his friend to the bottom with him. He presses his hand to the glass. Chuck does the same. Then with a smile, Robin pushes himself away from the door, disappearing into the darkness and eternity.

**EXT. SURFACE - SAME**

Chuck breaks the surface, gasping for air. He looks around, frantic. He sees nothing but the sea swells and debris. All that remains is the sound of the wind and rain on the water.

Suddenly, beneath him, a massive rumbling and explosion of foam. Then, the tops of twin masts rise out of the water like shattered lances as the ship rights herself underwater. She holds herself steady for a moment as if in a final attempt at resurrection, the Albatross begins to rise. Faster and faster, until her entire length explodes out of the water in a mountain of foam and wave.

**ON THE DECK**

Like Ahab before him, John appears, lashed in a web of tangled line still slashing to free the remaining long boat.

And for a moment, it looks as if she might stay there, as if this were just a final surreal lesson of the sea. Some of the boys begin to cheer prematurely. But Skipper knows better. She's filled to the gills with sea water.

She shutters. Then, like a stone, she just drops, sucked to the center of the earth, John's hands still slashing, as she finally goes.

**PULL BACK TO REVEAL**

Survivors hanging onto the debris that floats in the watery tempest. Strangely, the wind subsides. The sea becomes calm and a stunned silence falls over those in the water.

**CHUCK**

**OH GOD!!!!!**

His scream echoes, for the grief of all.

**ON THE SURFACE**

There is an explosion of bubbles, and then she slips beneath the waves like a stone. The stunned crew can only watch.

Then, as if by magic, the second life boat erupts to the surface.

Skipper fights off his emotions. He knows what it means. John died cutting it free.

Terry and Bill hang onto a life ring. Blood runs from Bill's head. Charlie, Mike and several others hold onto the side of the other freed life boat which has been swamped. Lawford floats on his back, unconscious, but alive. Several of the boys help pull him towards the boat.

Skipper swims to the second boat, desperately looking for those not accounted for. But, they are gone.

Among the wreckage, the roof of the chart house. The only sound left is the ominous tolling of the ship's bell, Robin's bell, still secure in it's fitting.

**EXT. LIFE BOAT - DAY**

The boats have been floated and tied together. Skipper is in one, Lawford in the other. One of the two boats has been rigged with sail. Skipper stands in the bow staring into the ink blue water.

**SKIPPER**

Raise your sail, Bill. North, north-east. Keep a sharp look out for Florida.

Bill studies him for a moment, then...

**BILL**

Maybe we could wait around a little longer, sir...

There is a long pause before Skipper answers.

**SKIPPER**

(quietly)  
She's gone... She's gone.

There is something remarkably touching about this young man trying to take care of him. He puts a hand on Skipper's shoulder. It almost makes him crack. He pats Bill's hand gently.

**SKIPPER**

Carry on.

**BILL**

Yes sir.

**SKIPPER**

North, north-east.

(beat)

And Dick, please make a note of our final position.

Lawford nods sullenly. Chuck looks out at the floating wreckage around them, silent, lost.

Suddenly, there is a 'thump' on the hull of the boat. The survivors share a confused look. Then it comes again.

Chuck looks out at the surface of the water. It's suddenly alive... With sharks.

**LAWFORD**

Hands and feet inside the boats.

They come by the dozens. Ramming the boats and rummaging through the debris. They swarm around the boats until it seems as if the water is boiling. Chuck picks up an oar and starts beating wildly at the sharks.

**CHUCK**

**AAAAHHHH!!!!**

The others take up the cause and in a moment they are all screaming and cursing the sharks. It's a frenzy of grief and anger.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

We slashed at the sharks as if striking out at the finger of God. And we all begged silently for the ability to understand what had happened. But, if there was a God that day, his answer came only in the moaning wind and our questions were left to drift unanswered, in the titanic ocean of our deepest grief.

Exhausted, Chuck stops slashing and stares out. lost.

**CHUCK**

(hushed)

Wake up. Wake up. 1-2-3 wake up.

Like Robin's nightmare of his brother, this is all too real.

**EXT. OCEAN - DAY**

The tramp freighter GRAN RIO steams toward the life boats. The crew stand silently, watching as the ship approaches.

**EXT. SHIP - DAY**

Chuck stands on the deck of the Gran Rio as the last of the crew scramble up cargo netting hung over the side. Chuck stares out numbly watching as the two deserted long boats drift away.

**EXT. DECK - GRAN RIO - DAY**

Chuck, now dressed, stands in the same spot at the rail, staring out. A muffled sound pulls Chuck into the present. He walks slowly down the after deck to a cabin door where sobbing escapes from the other side. Chuck turns the handle and cracks the door.

**INT. CABIN - SAME**

Curled up on the floor next to his bunk is Skipper. A look of shock comes over Chuck's face. Skipper has come completely unglued, sobbing deeply.

**CHUCK**

(tentative)

Skipper?

Skipper turns slowly, looking up. His eyes are red and his face streaked with tears. He looks at Chuck almost as if he doesn't know who he is. Lost.

**SKIPPER**

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

Chuck reels. It sounds more like a confession than an outpouring of sadness. Chuck closes the door.

**EXT. HARBOR - TAMPA FLORIDA - DAY**

Skipper, back in control, and the crew, stand along the port rail of the Gran Rio. A small flotilla of pleasure boats surround the ship and hundreds of people line the pier. It's an intimidating sight.

**ON THE PIER**

Pensive, worried, angry faces of parents and families.  
Chaos. Coast Guard Officials try to hold back the mob.

**MAN**

What about the manifest!! What  
about my son!!!

**WOMAN**

How many made it? Nobody will tell  
us anything!!

**OFFICER**

We don't have a list of survivors  
yet. Please stand back. Don't  
push!

Angry shouts drown him out.

**ON THE DECK**

The CAPTAIN of the Gran Rio comes down from the bridge  
with some of his officers and stand with Skipper and the  
others. Several COAST GUARD OFFICERS join them on the  
deck.

Skipper turns to the Captain and extends his hand.

**SKIPPER**

Thank you.

The Captain nods. Skipper turns to his crew, looking over  
them. A smile of deep pride passes his lips. They all  
see it. Then, between the Coast Guard Officers, he walks  
down the ramp. Lawford and the crew fall in behind.

**EXT. PIER - SAME**

A shouting mob waits for them. Reporters and spectators  
shout and call out questions. It reaches a fever pitch as  
the crew descend. Skipper reaches the bottom of the ramp,  
his eyes meet a cool, familiar face. Francis Boutillier.  
Phil stands next to him, staring at the ground.

**FRANCIS**

(above the shouting)  
Welcome home.

Skipper is shoved forward by the crowd pushing and

shoving. The crew follow but are swept away. Charlie stops in front of Phil.

**CHARLIE**

Phil?

Flash bulbs explode. Charlie and the others are descended upon as reporters bark out questions.

**REPORTER #1**

(shouting)

What the hell happened out there captain?

**REPORTER #2**

How many boys did you lose...? And how come you didn't go down with your ship?

Parents begin to realize who has been lost. Agonizing cries mix with jubilation. It's emotional chaos. The crew members are driven apart, they call to each other, suddenly aware of what's happening.

**TOD**

(panicked)

Charlie!! Bill!!

Terry suddenly finds himself smothered in the arms of his MOTHER. He strains to see what is happening to his shipmates.

**TERRY'S MOTHER**

Oh, sweetheart! Look at you...

**TERRY**

Skipper!!

Reporters corner them blocking his view. More reporters clamor after Skipper, who doesn't reply.

**REPORTER #3**

Captain, is it true that the ship was hit by a "White Squall"?

**REPORTER #2**

Is it true the first mate is only fifteen?

Bill steps in between them.

**BILL**

It wasn't his fault mister...

**REPORTER #4**

The National Weather Service says  
"White Squalls" are a meteorological  
phenomenon of the imagination.  
Would you care to comment of that?  
Don't you have anything to say to  
these parents?!!

The reporter pops a flash picture in Skipper's face.  
Skipper flies around and knocks the camera to the ground.  
The reporter jumps back, startled.

**SKIPPER**

Yes I do. And it's private. Very  
private.

Skipper is swept away towards the CUSTOMS BOOTH by COAST  
GUARD OFFICERS. Skipper surrenders the manifest and it is  
stapled to the outside of the door.

**INT. CUSTOMS HUT - SAME**

Skipper is whisked inside. The Coast Guard Officers lock  
the doors behind them.

**OFFICER**

Sit down Captain. We'll have a car  
here in a few minutes. Can I get  
you a cup of coffee?

**SKIPPER**

No, thank you.

Skipper sits. The wails of family members can be heard as  
they see the list outside. Flash bulbs and faces press  
against the windows shouting questions. He just stares at  
the floor.

**OUTSIDE**

From above we can see the group swarm around the the booth  
like angry hornets. The crew are fractured and pulled  
apart from each other. Charles, fights his way through  
the crowd.

**CHARLES**

Chuck! Chuck!!!

Chuck tries to get to him.

**CHUCK**

Dad!

They embrace. Flash bulbs explode all around them.

**CHUCK**

Where's Mom?

**CHARLES**

I couldn't bring her down here until  
I knew you were safe.

**A WOMAN**

Stands, staring at the empty ramp. Lost. A man comes up behind her and leads her away.

A reporter shoves a microphone in Chuck's face.

**REPORTER #5**

Was it the Skipper's fault? And is  
it true drinking was permitted on  
board? Why did the ship really go  
down?

Charles grabs the guy and shoves him back into the crowd.  
Chuck strains to see his crew mates but they have been  
swept away.

**CHARLES**

Come on.

Charles puts his arm around Chuck, still barefoot, and  
together, they walk away. Photographers trail after them,  
popping off a few last photos. Chuck turns and looks  
back.

**INT. CAR MOVING - DOWNTOWN - DAY**

A ride reminiscent of the one Chuck and his father took  
before the journey began. There is a gulf of silence  
between them. Charles breaks it.

**CHARLES**

I thought we'd find a store, get you  
fixed up and then get you some  
lunch. That sound good?

**CHUCK**

Yeah, sure.

Chuck stares out the window at the traffic and congestion. A car in front of them runs a red light. Charles slams on the brakes. Chuck is shaken up. Charles notices.

**CHARLES**

I'm sorry, son. Are you okay?

Chuck manages a nod.

**INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY**

Lavish and conspicuous by Chuck's recent standards, the store is crowded and jammed with merchandise. Claustrophobic. Cash registers ring and MUZAK drifts in from above. Chuck follows as Charles pulls things off of hangers and piles them into Chuck's arms.

**CHARLES**

Why don't you go and try some of that on?

**CHUCK**

Okay.

**EXT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY**

Charles peruses the racks. He calls to Chuck.

**CHARLES**

How're you doing in there?

Chuck calls from a dressing room.

**CHUCK (O.S.)**

Fine.

**CHARLES**

All right. I'm gonna wander over and look at some shoes...

**INT. DRESSING ROOM - SAME**

Chuck is curled up in the floor of the tiny booth. Still dressed in the clothes from the Gran Rio, perspiration beads on his skin.

**CHUCK**

(calling out)

Okay.

Tears stream down his face. He looks up and sees himself in the mirror. The eyes that look back are eyes of the ages. Involuntary sobs. He begins to shake. The tiny booth suddenly like a crypt. Tight, with no air. Chuck lets out a gasp.

**CHUCK**

Oh God...

Someone pulls open the curtain. A MAN, from the next booth, fat and middle aged stands before Chuck in a pair of pants still sporting the price tags. He looks down.

**MAN**

You okay, kid?

Chuck is suddenly in the throws of a full-on anxiety attack. He leaps up and pushes past the man.

**EXT. DRESSING ROOM - SAME**

Chuck explodes out of the dressing room. Running, almost blind, he crashes into a rack of clothes. Charles looks up as he scrambles to his feet and bolts for the doors.

**CHARLES**

Chuck!!

**EXT. STREET - SAME**

Charles bursts through the doors, looking up and down the street, but Chuck is... gone.

**EXT. BEACH - SAME**

The setting sun paints Chuck's face with golden light. He stares out across the water. Charles walks up behind him.

**CHUCK**

When we were growing up I always felt like you would take care of things, that everything would be okay.

(beat)

But you can't make this okay, can you?

**CHARLES**

No, I can't.

Charles puts his arm around his son. Together they turn and walk back towards the boardwalk, and the world.

**INT. COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT**

Skipper sits across from a Coast Guard Officer, TYLER, 60. Tyler pulls out a file and lays it on the table.

**TYLER**

There are allegations questioning your competence with regard to the command of the Albatross. I have been instructed to convene a formal tribunal to determine whether or not negligence played a part in the sinking.

**SKIPPER**

I understand.

**TYLER**

May I ask you something?

Skipper nods.

**TYLER**

How'd you manage to piss off a guy as powerful as Francis Boutillier?

**SKIPPER**

It wasn't hard.

**TYLER**

I used to helm a school ship. A long time ago.

**SKIPPER**

The Coast Guard 'Eagle'. She never lost a race while you were Skipper.

Tyler is taken aback by Skipper's knowledge.

**TYLER**

That's right, we didn't. I miss it sometimes. But, there are other things a Skipper can do.

Tyler removes his glasses and studies Skipper.

**TYLER**

The families... want your ticket.  
Turn it in, we forget the whole  
thing. Everybody goes home.

**SKIPPER**

... Absolutely not.

**TYLER**

The papers are going to eat you  
alive. Even if you beat it, you'll  
never get another commission.

(beat)

They want someone to be accountable.

**SKIPPER**

I am accountable.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Standard fare. Two beds and a T.V. Chuck's lacing a new  
pair of sneakers. Charles is in the shower. There is a  
knock at the door. Chuck cracks the door. It's Charlie.

**CHARLIE**

We gotta talk.

**INT. BOATHOUSE - NIGHT**

The crew stand by the bulkhead. Bill tosses down a  
newspaper. The headline reads: INVESTIGATION TO PROBE  
**SCHOOL SHIP TRAGEDY.**

**BILL**

We're all going to have to testify.  
They're going to try to take his  
license.

**TOM**

Why?

**CHUCK**

They need it to be simple. They  
need a reason.

**TOM**

Who?

**CHUCK**

All of them. Everybody waiting on that dock.

**TIM**

So what are we supposed to do?

**TOD**

Just tell 'em what we know and be done with it. That's what he'd want.

**TERRY**

Easy for you to say.

**TOD**

What's that supposed to mean?!

**TERRY**

Everybody knows why she went over Tod. You jibed the boat.

**TOD**

I was trying to get her up wind! That's what you do when you're hit a-beam. Or maybe you're too stupid to know that!

**TERRY**

That's not what Skipper thought. He was trying to spill air from the main!

**BILL**

It was coming four points off the bow, Terry. He never could have gotten her around.

**TERRY**

Were you on deck? I was standing right there and all I know is, he...  
(indicates Tod)  
... disobeyed an order, twice, and the boat went over.

**TOD**

It didn't go over 'til I turned her starboard!

**BILL**

It was an act of God for Christ's sake.

**TERRY**

It was an act of stupidity.

Tod lunges at Terry. Bill and Charlie pull them apart.

**TOD**

(screaming)

Was it my fault we were running all that sail?! Was it my fault she wasn't dogged down?! HUH?! I couldn't help that the ballast shifted...! You son of a bitch!! It wasn't my fault!! it wasn't.

Tod breaks down, sodding on his knees.

**BILL**

It's okay, Tod.

Terry drags on a cigarette, then grinds out the butt.

**TERRY**

Then whose?

Tod looks up along with Bill and Charlie, all confused.

**TERRY**

After the lightning strike, we tried to go aloft to drop sail. We'd done it a thousand times. We didn't have to wait for an order. But Skipper called us down.

**CHARLIE**

If the foremast had taken a strike, everyone in the rigging would've been fried. What would you have done?

**TERRY**

We would have scalloped the squares from the deck. Right Bill?

Bill turns and stares into the water, troubled.

**TOD**

That's right, that's right! Bleed the sails from the deck and she could've taken a hurricane!

It's a strong argument. Even Charlie is troubled by the implication. There is a long moment of silence between

them.

**CHUCK**

This is crazy. Nothing could have prevented what happened.

**MIKE**

You guys are missing the point. This is all because of Phil. Phil and his dear old dad.

**BILL**

What?

**MIKE**

How do you think they got this together so fast? He's been laying for Skipper since the first day.

**CHARLIE**

Come on. Like he's got a vendetta or some such shit?

**MIKE**

You got it.

(to Chuck)

I told you he was a turn coat the day we kicked him off the boat.

Chuck frowns, troubled.

**CHUCK**

No. You're wrong.

**MIKE**

I'm telling you, the only way to change this is to get Phil to call off his old man. And that ain't gonna happen. So the way I see it, it's Skipper or us.

The guys react. It's a no win situation.

**EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT**

Chuck knocks quietly on the door. Phil answers the door.

**CHUCK**

Can we talk?

**PHIL**

I guess.

**FRANCIS (O.S.)**

Who is it Philip?

**PHIL**

It's okay. I'll be in, in a minute.  
(to Chuck)  
Look, what do you want?

**CHUCK**

Everybody's saying this whole  
tribunal is happening because of  
your father. Because of you.

**PHIL**

Well that's just typical isn't it?

**CHUCK**

Is it true Phil?

**PHIL**

I gotta go.

**CHUCK**

You weren't there, you don't know  
what happened.

**PHIL**

(defensive)  
I know enough.

Chuck puts a hand out to stop him.

**CHUCK**

Phil, please. It won't change  
anything. Tell him to call it off.

**FRANCIS (O.S.)**

Who are you talking to out there  
Philip. Come back in here.

Phil meets Chuck's eyes, then looks away.

**PHIL**

I'm sorry.

He turns again and reaches for the door.

**CHUCK**

Wait.

Chuck hands him something. Phil looks down, disbelieving. It's the ship's bell. Robin's bell. Their symbol of unity, of putting loyalty above fear.

**CHUCK**

We figured he'd have wanted you to have it.

(beat)

You do what you've gotta do Phil.

He leaves Phil standing alone on the porch, full of emotion, trying to grasp it all.

**INT. HEARING ROOM - DAY**

A small courtroom. The room is filled with the crew members and their families, including the parents of the victims, as well as the media. Phil sits with his father and dodges Chuck's eyes. Coast Guard Officers Tyler, DOWNING and SANDERS head the proceedings.

**TYLER**

The United States Coast Guard has been asked to conduct this maritime hearing to consider the revocation of Captain Richard Sheldrake's U.S. Master Seaman's Certificate.

**INT. HEARING ROOM - LATER**

Bill sits at the table with his parents as questions are leveled at him. Chief petty officers Sanders and Downing ask most of the questions as Tyler oversees the proceedings.

**SANDERS**

Why didn't you drop any sail?

**BILL**

Skipper called us out of the rigging.

**SANDERS**

But your instinct was to lose sail?

**BILL**

My instinct was to not get electrocuted.

**SANDERS**

How old are you, son?

**BILL**

(hesitating)

Fifteen.

**SANDERS**

Thank you.

**LATER**

Phil is at the table with Francis. Sanders asks the questions.

**SANDERS**

Philip, why were you discharged from the Albatross?

Phil doesn't look up and speaks in whispers.

**PHIL**

Skipper thought I was a challenge to authority.

**SANDERS**

Were you?

**PHIL**

I don't know.

**LATER**

**FRANCIS**

Captain Sheldrake exhibited an arrogant, controlling attitude in my presence on more than one occasion. I believe he had a personality conflict with my son from the start.

**SANDERS**

Well, if you don't mind my asking, sir, why did you let your son stay?

Francis is stumped for a moment but recovers quickly.

**FRANCIS**

It was his dream to go. I could hardly stand in the way of that, could I?

Phil rubs his temples as if he is going to explode.

**INT. HEARING ROOM - LATER**

It is Skipper's turn at the table.

**SANDERS**

Is it true that you forced Robin Weathers to climb the mast when it was clear that he was acrophobic.

**SKIPPER**

He climbed when he was ready.

**SANDERS**

Were you aware that his brother was killed in a fall.

Chuck and the others look up astonished. Mike shoots a look towards Phil.

**MIKE**

He did it man. He sang like a bird.

Skipper hesitates.

**SKIPPER**

Yes, I was.

Whispers fill the room.

**SANDERS**

Sir, were you aware at any time of the use of alcohol among the crew.

**SKIPPER**

Yes, I was.

**TYLER**

And you didn't do anything about it?

**SKIPPER**

(beat)

No. I didn't.

Again the crew members are struck. Charlie turns to Chuck.

**CHARLIE**

They're twisting it all around. Why doesn't he say something?

**SANDERS**

Had you ever seen a "White Squall"  
before this incident?

**SKIPPER**

No.

**SANDERS**

What makes you so sure it was one?

**SKIPPER**

I can't be sure.

**SANDERS**

You really felt that your crew were  
up for the conditions.

**SKIPPER**

We'd come twelve thousand miles  
together, through every kind of seas  
imaginable...

**SANDERS**

Except, a "White Squall".

(beat)

With all due respect Captain  
Sheldrake, they're only boys...

**SKIPPER**

They are much more than that, sir.

**SANDERS**

Is it true that the reason you  
expelled Philip Boutillier...

**SKIPPER**

(cutting him off)

For killing a dolphin.

**SANDERS**

... and that you invited him to  
strike you? To fight it out on the  
deck of your ship?!

Skipper looks over at Francis. Phil stares at the floor.  
Skipper manages an ironic smile.

**SKIPPER**

Yes, that's true.

**SANDERS**

Do you think this is funny? Some  
kind of joke? You lost six people

out there.

**SKIPPER**

(white hot)

I don't think one second of this is funny, sir.

Skipper stares down Sanders. He turns to Tyler.

**SANDERS**

I have no more questions at this time.

He turns to sit down, then stops.

**SANDERS**

Oh, one last thing... Isn't true that your father was a sea Captain?

Skipper bristles.

**SKIPPER**

Yes.

**SANDERS**

Isn't also true that his vessel went down off of Nantucket? Lost everyone on board. In fair weather no less.

Skipper's silence is suddenly filled with rage. Tyler sees it and tries to intercept.

**TYLER**

What does this have to do with anything Mr. Sanders?

**SANDERS**

(smug)

Oh, nothing. I was just curious.

**SKIPPER**

My father, was more seaman, more of a man, than you might ever hope to be.

Sanders returns to his seat, rattled. Tyler pounds his gavel.

**TYLER**

We'll take a brief recess.

**EXT. BUILDING - DAY**

The crew huddle in the parking lot. Fractured, confused. Chuck, Tod, Charlie and Bill, stand off by themselves.

**TOD**

There's still a way.

**BILL**

What do you mean?

**TOD**

It's me, don't you see. Terry's right, I'm the escape hatch. I disobeyed order.

**CHUCK**

You taking the order wouldn't have changed anything.

**TOD**

They don't know that.

(beat)

We were the only one's on deck. Look, there's nothing they can do to me right? I'm a kid.

**CHUCK**

But that's not the point...

**TOD**

That is the point... And Skipper'll slip off the hook.

**LATER**

Tod is on the stand.

**DOWNING**

Why didn't you turn hard to port as the wind hit?

**TOD**

I thought we'd have a better chance if I headed into the wind so we could spill air from our sails.

Tyler removes his glasses.

**DOWNING**

But the Captain ordered you hard to

starboard.

**TOD**

Twice.

**DOWNING**

Is that what you were trained to do?

**TOD**

No.

**DOWNING**

Then what do you think he was trying to do.

**TOD**

Let the blow drive the boat down wind. Neutralize our canvas.

Skipper is becoming uneasy. He sees what is coming.

**DOWNING**

So when the captain gave you an order contrary to your training, you thought he was making a mistake?

**TOD**

No.

**TYLER**

Then why son, why didn't you follow his order?

Tod meets Skipper's eyes.

**TOD**

Because -- I panicked.

The room is suddenly buzzing. Tod's Father stands up.

**TOD'S FATHER**

That's not true Tod.

**TERRY**

(to Mike)

What the hell? What is he doing.

**MIKE**

Son of a gun. He just sent Skipper a life boat.

Tyler turns to Skipper.

**TYLER**

If this young man had responded instantly to your command, do you believe the ship might have been spared?

**SKIPPER**

I don't know that anything could have prevented what happened.

**TYLER**

Then what are you trying to say then?

Skipper stands.

**SKIPPER**

Maybe you can't see what's happening here, but it's clear to me.

(to Tod)

I appreciate what you're trying to do Tod. Maybe you could live with it, but I couldn't.

(to tribunal)

If you think I'm going to let a sixteen year old take responsibility, then you underestimate me. The Albatross was my ship. The Ocean Academy was my school. Her loss is mine and mine alone.

(to others)

I can't bring your sons back. If you want my ticket, if that will ease your loss, it's the least I can do. This...

Skipper pulls out his wallet and takes out his license.

**SKIPPER**

This is easy. Living with it, that'll be hard.

Skipper turns and lays his license down in front of Tyler. Then he turns and begins walking towards the back of the room.

The room erupts. Crew members and their families hurl accusations and blame. Cameras flash. Tyler tries to regain control. Suddenly Chuck stands, tall.

**CHUCK**

No!!! Don't you walk away! Not now. Not after all of this!!!!

Skipper keeps walking. His head slumps. Tyler pounds his gavel.

**TYLER**

That enough son!! Order!! Please!!

Tears begin to stream down Chuck's face. His father, Charles, slowly stands meeting his sons eyes. Go for it.

**CHUCK**

Tell me Skipper, was it all just a lie? "Where we go one, we go all". We listened to you. We believed it. And we're still here!!

Skipper keeps moving.

**CHUCK**

Shame on you then Skipper. Shame on you.

Skipper reaches for the door. Suddenly a sound stops him cold in his tracks. Phil slowly rises. Tears streaming down his face. Tightly in his hands he grips the ships bell. Ding ding. Ding ding. Ding ding. It is the ringing of the truth. The tolling of their unity.

**FRANCIS**

Sit down!

Phil ignores him. Skipper slowly walks over, his eyes never leaving Phil's. He stops, facing him. He gently takes his hands and silences the bell. Then he smiles and puts a hand on the back of Phil's head fighting his own emotions. He turns to Chuck.

**CHUCK**

Tell them the truth. Make them understand.

The room grows silent.

**SKIPPER**

(smiling)  
You tell them Chuck.

Chuck suddenly feels the eyes of the room.

**CHUCK**

It's simple. Bad things happen sometimes. It wasn't Skipper or Tod. It was all of us. Everyone in this room. Because we all knew the risks.

(to parents)

You sent us... You paid our tuition, you allowed us to go. So to invent a reason for why this happened, to pin it on one person, well that won't change anything. It'll just make our experience meaningless.

He turns to the tribunal.

**CHUCK**

If you want to judge this man, judge him by his crew. Judge him by Alice and George. Chris and John and Robin. In one way or another each one of them gave their lives saving one of us. This may sound crazy but the Albatross wasn't just a ship, or even a school. It was something that we made, that's inside us. That's who Skipper is. That's what he taught us. I guess what it really was about was... the privilege of sacrifice.

Chuck turns to Skipper.

**CHUCK**

Isn't that right?

Skipper nods.

**SKIPPER**

That's right.

The room is silent. Then, a voice. A golden tenor singing like the wind. Everyone turns. It's Bill.

**BILL**

When the sun came up, there was whisky in the cup, and not a one of us was sober...

One by one the crew members stand and begin to sing. Chuck turns, surprised to see his father rise and stand with him. Words or not.

**CREW TOGETHER**

Jenny thought she saw a picture when  
it really was the sun, then we knew  
the party was over.

They all stand facing Skipper and sing. The voices build,  
sweeping over everyone like a wave.

**CREW TOGETHER**

Oh my heart is sad, for leaving you  
today, but I know we'll meet again,  
when the moon is in the valley and  
the leafs are on the trees, We will  
come to clearly in the glen...

Skipper meets Chuck's eyes and those of his mates. Only  
now is his job finished. He beams back. The music swells  
like an anthem, building, like a swell lifting a small  
wooden boat over a jagged reef, until it rests safely in  
the calm waters beyond.

The crew come together around Skipper one last time. They  
embrace.

**EXT. MYSTIC SEAPORT - HARBOR - DAY**

Older Chuck has returned to the small building where the  
funeral services were held earlier. The people have gone  
but the funeral urn remains.

**EXT. PIER - DAY**

Chuck walks to the dock. He has the funeral urn in his  
hands. He steps aboard a small sailboat and begins  
untying her. The HARBOR MASTER notices and steps out of  
his office.

**HARBOR MASTER**

What do you think you're doing.

He walks over to the dock.

**HARBOR MASTER**

All right friend, out of the boat.

He tries to board the boat but Chuck greets him with the  
sharp end of a gaffing hook.

**OLDER CHUCK**

(softly)  
Stand away.

He looks into Chuck's eyes and sees that he means business. He backs off. Chucks pushes away and raises the sail. The harbor master watches, perplexed as the small boat moves off for open water.

**EXT. OPEN SEA - SUNSET**

Bathed in the orange glow of the sun, Chuck stands naked against the ivory sail.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

They didn't take his ticket that day. But why he never returned to the sea, I'd never know. Perhaps he hadn't been able to free himself from the anchor of grief that had driven him to his knees aboard the Gran Rio, or that he no longer cared for the solitude and isolation of command without his Alice. Or maybe it was just that the waves that had spoken to him for so long, had grown silent. Whatever it was, that thing, it had always troubled me. Because, fate offers up no reasons. And maybe that's what I have traveled these thirty four years to say. Maybe that is all I really know... And, that one man cared.

Chuck turns to the sea and speaks.

**OLDER CHUCK**

Rest easy old salt. For together again, we'll sail.

With a powerful heave, he hurls the Skipper's remains at the sinking sun and into the arms of Neptune.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. BEACH - SUNSET**

The same sunset, but from another time. Four young men walk along a deserted beach. A small boat has beached and rocks gently in the shallows. The boys run up and look at it. On the stern are painted the words: BRIGANTINE  
**ALBATROSS.**

SLOWLY PULL BACK to reveal endless white sand, blue water,  
the young men and the boat.

**OLDER CHUCK (V.O.)**

Some time later we learned that one  
of our long boats had been  
recovered. Several young men found  
it washed up on a nameless beach  
somewhere on the island of  
Hispaniola. No one seemed to know  
who they were or where they came  
from, but they seemed to know of the  
Albatross.

(pause)

Sometimes in my dreams those  
faceless young men reveal themselves  
as my lost companions, and on the  
twilight coral sands of forever,  
between my slumber and conscious  
state, we race naked again, so open  
and in love with those precious  
moments, running, ever laughing,  
ever young, ever free.

**SLAM CUT TO:**

**EXT. GALAPAGOS - DUSK**

Young again, their hair sun bleached and skins brown,  
Chuck, John, Robin, Rick, Chris and Tod, pound through the  
surf in a grinning footrace. Brothers all. Music builds.

**FREEZE FRAME**

**FADE OUT.**

**THE END**