

# T H E   W R E C K

by

Daryl Henry

FADE IN:

EXT. BIG SUR COAST - DAWN

OPENING CREDITS BEGIN over a continuous AERIAL SHOT as we fly at saltspray height above the Pacific toward shore, the sound of the surf blending with an unusual, elegaic FLUTE SONATA.

Ahead, moist-green headlands bury their feet in the sea, lapped with halfmoons of white sand, crowned with gnarled cypresses that guard the misted redwood peaks beyond.

At the shoreline the helicopter banks left, sweeps north up the coast toward Monterey. Off to the right, an imposing stone, glass and redwood house built into the rocks, dominating a desolate cove. We circle the cove.

THE VIEW BELOW

On a spur of granite, the ruins of a lighthouse accessible by wooden steps angling down the cliff-face; on shore, a black rubber Zodiac pulled up on the beach; a giant swarthy MAN repairs its outboard motor; around a point of land a tall pale GIRL sunbathes nude; on the broad terrace of the stone house, a flaxen-haired older WOMAN tends a muffled MAN in a wheelchair. All stare up at the circling helicopter.

NORTHBOUND AGAIN

Finally the helicopter rolls level and continues up the rugged coast to the outskirts of Monterey.

EXT. MONTEREY HARBOR - DAWN

CREDITS CONCLUDE as the HELICOPTER-- a black Hughes 500 with a scarlet "W" emblazoned on both doors-- approaches Cannery Row.

EXT. SALVAGE YARD - DAWN

The helicopter touches down in a parking lot opposite a sign:

*GREAT ATLANTIC & PACIFIC SALVAGE COMPANY*

CLOSE ON HELICOPTER

As a corpulent MAN in a rumpled black suit climbs out. He is Chinese, age 50, looks perplexed but isn't.

(CONTINUED)

We follow him through a maze of rusting pumps, cable drums and scrap metal to the edge of a pier where he stops, peers down.

HIS POV BELOW

The ramshackle tug called the *KATHLEEN* is being made fast. She is 55 feet long, displacing as many tons. Her diesel engine on good days can turn 300 horsepower. Her stem and stern are hung with old truck tires. Her hull is dirty black, her superstructure rusty red. A string of drying laundry is stretched across her poop.

On her stern, a gangly YOUTH with curly yellow hair listens to a Walkman as he works. On the bow, a gaunt, bare-chested MAN coils a hawser; sunburned, red hair, age 35. He glances warily up.

INCLUDE THE CHINESE

The portly oriental settles his gaze on the red-headed crewman.

CHINESE

Would you be interested in finding your father, Mr. Quinault?

The man called Quinault is startled by the mention of his father. A flash of pain crosses his angular face. But the sentiment is concealed behind a taciturn voice.

QUINAULT

My father's dead.

CHINESE

Have you seen his body?

QUINAULT

Hardly. He went down with his ship two hundred miles off the coast.

CHINESE

More precisely, he went down with his ship on the rocks at Big Sur.

Quinault squints up. The Chinese waits.

QUINAULT

Who are you?

CHINESE

My name is Wah Ling. I know where the Molly Q sank. I can lead you to her.

QUINAULT

(guarded)

Why? She's of no value. She was on her way to the scrapyard.

(CONTINUED)

WAH LING  
I know where she was bound. I chartered  
her.

QUINAULT  
She was empty.

WAH LING  
Not entirely.

Quinault studies Wah Ling through narrow jade eyes, then turns to watch a stooped, bearded MAN exit the wheelhouse, ask in a booming voice:

BEARDED MAN  
Everythin' all right, Quinault?

QUINAULT  
Personal matter, Farley.

Captain Farley Vogel is a sea dog, wrinkled and threadbare, like his tug. He starts to say something, fights the impulse, climbs the ladder to the pier. Quinault waits till he's gone.

QUINAULT (CONT'D)  
What's your interest in the Molly Q?

WAH LING  
I have a... sentimental attachment to  
her cargo.

QUINAULT  
I told you, she had none.

Wah Ling smiles for the first time, as though to a child.

WAH LING  
If the ghost of your honorable father  
does not cry out to you, sir, perhaps  
money will.

QUINAULT  
(tight)  
If you want a professional salvage job,  
talk to my boss.

WAH LING  
I don't think we should involve your  
boss just yet, Mr. Quinault.

QUINAULT  
Thanks, but I'm not interested.

Quinault grabs his shirt from a stanchion, climbs the ladder to the pier. Behind him, the kid with the Walkman battens down the Kathleen's hatches, staring all the while at the moon-faced Chinese.