

WHISKEY RUN

by Daryl Henry

EXT. STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA - DAY

Halfway between British Columbia and Washington State. On either side of the strait, purple rain forests beneath a blood red sun.

SUPERIMPOSE: 1932

EXT. FISHING BOAT - DAY

A purse seiner chugs toward Victoria on the Canadian side of the border. Faded lettering on her stern identifies her as the *Marguerite* out of Victoria. She is 55 feet long, high wheelhouse forward, long, low deck aft. On her poop, a huge seine net ringed with yellow floats. Above, angled aft of the mast, a tall boom. In need of paint, she has seen better days.

CLOSER

A crewman hangs laundry; this is KORBY JANTZ, 27, a city boy, short and stocky. A second crewman sunbathes; this is HILLYARD PITT, 24, a country boy, tall and wiry.

In a cage suspended from the boom is a MAGPIE, black and white, long-tailed; this is PITCAIRN, Korby's pet. He's managed to teach the bird two words only, which we'll hear presently.

CLOSER

At the wheel on the bridge is the third crewman; this is LAZARUS MCDADE, 25, son of a fisherman, lean and craggy.

Underneath the war-surplus blanket on which Hillyard lie, the twin, 3-cylinder 25 HP diesel engines GURGLE and CLANK. Now the noise is reduced by half as one of the engines stops dead.

KORBY

Aw, hell, we'll never get home on one engine.

LAZARUS

Be thankful we still got one that works.

Suddenly, there is a loud BANG from the engine room.

PITCAIRN

Holy shit!

(CONTINUED)

KORBY

Now we'll never get home, period.

In the pervasive silence, Hillyard begins to pull oil-stained dungarees over his hairless, white legs, reaches for his woolen shirt. Nothing is said as he lifts the hatch cover and starts down into the engine room.

INT. ENGINE ROOM - DAY

As he gets to work he quotes liberally from the *Ancient Mariner*:

HILLYARD

"At length did cross an Albatross,
through the fog it came; as if it
had been a Christian soul, we hailed
it in God's name.

(beat)

Then I had done a hellish thing, and
it would work 'em woe; for all
averred, I had killed the bird that
made the engine go.

From above comes the shout:

KORBY (O.S.)

Then make the other one go!

Finished tinkering, he calls up:

HILLYARD

Give the port engine a shot, Laz.

The port diesel shudders, blows smoke, starts up. Hillyard wipes his hands on a greasy rag and climbs the ladder.

EXT. MARGUERITE - DAY

Lazarus eases the throttle forward, apprehensive, but the engine catches.

HILLYARD

Nurse it, Laz.

LAZARUS

It needs a surgeon, not a nurse.

HILLYARD

What we need is, we need new
engines.

KORBY

First we need fish.

HILLYARD

They've all gone to Alaska.

(CONTINUED)

LAZARUS
So let's go to Alaska.

KORBY
Let's get to Victoria, first.

LAZARUS
(shouting)
Cutter, ho!

He points off; all look.

EXT. U.S. COAST GUARD CUTTER - DAY

This is CG-199, the *Burdeen*, known as a six-bitter for its length, 75 feet. Seaworthy but slow, its job is to discourage whiskey smuggling, employing its 6-pounder 57mm deck gun if necessary. Now clearly out of its jurisdiction on the Canadian side, it ostensibly offers aid, coming alongside the seiner.

The skipper is a resolute Ensign, 30, whose chin sticks out two inches; this is YANCY BUJAC.

ALTERNATING

BUJAC
Need any help?

HILLYARD
No, thanks.

BUJAC
See any funny business?

HILLYARD
"Day after day, day after day, we
stuck, nor breath nor motion; as
lonely as a painted ship upon a
painted ocean."

BUJAC
Yeah, what paint?

HILLYARD
One more good catch and you won't
recognize us.

BUJAC
Oh, I'll recognize you, all right.

The *Burdeen* speeds up, pulls away.