


SCREENPLAY BY
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LOST WHALE



THE LEGEND
OF
HUMPHREY

LOST WHALE:
THE LEGEND OF HUMPHREY

Written
by
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Based on a True Story

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LOST WHALE: THE LEGEND OF HUMPHREY

FADE IN:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - SKY - DAY

A gray overcast sky. A TV NEWS HELICOPTER hovers. Over San Francisco Bay. Fog shrouds the tower-tops of the Golden Gate Bridge.

MALE REPORTER (V.O)
...I don't know how long we'll be able to report from up here. The fog is rolling in. We can feel the wind buffeting the Channel Eight "eye-in-the-sky"...

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Late-afternoon rush-hour traffic is snarled. On the inland side of the bridge, the right lane is stopped dead.

People get out of their cars and press as close to the bridge rail as possible. Looking out over the choppy gray water. Searching for...something.

MALE REPORTER (V.O.)
Bridge traffic is stopping. People are getting out to look for the rescue fleet...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

CROWDS of people gather at every vantage point along the waterfront. Home-bound office workers. Families with kids. Seems like the whole city is out here. Or on the way.

MALE REPORTER (V.O.)
Down on the Embarcadero, it looks like a July Fourth fireworks crowd. All because of the most famous whale since Moby Dick!

Amid the anticipation, SUPERIMPOSE:

FOUR WEEKS EARLIER...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BAY - UNDERWATER - DAY

The POV of an UNSEEN SWIMMER. Gliding through deep-water serenity -- DAPPLED LIGHT and MUFFLED SOUND. An approaching school of fish suddenly veers away.

BETSY (V.O.)

Once upon a time, a very big and unexpected explorer swam into San Francisco Bay. And then he kept on swimming...where none of his kind had ever gone before.

Still unseen, the Swimmer rises toward the surface. Brighter shafts of LIGHT pierce the water. The Swimmer's POV BREAKS THE SURFACE...

...and the NOISE of our world overwhelms the tranquility of his. A jet ROARS. Boat HORNS BLARE. Traffic CLATTERS on the bridge behind him -- The Golden Gate Bridge.

JAKE (V.O.)

Fact is, he swam right into a whole lotta trouble. And a whole lotta lives, well, they'd never be the same.

The unseen Swimmer makes a SPOUTING SOUND. Like a wet sigh. Then submerges, back into serenity. And swims on.

EXT. SACRAMENTO RIVER - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

JAKE FINNEGAN pilots his boat. He's burly, bearded, mid-40s. A guy who dominates any space he enters.

His 24-foot sport-fishing boat is named "JAKE'S JEWEL." It's old. It chugs a bit. But it's in tip-top shape. With a roof over the bridge/cockpit. A cabin down below.

Jake heads toward a public dock on the small-town waterfront of Rio Vista. Main Street runs past the waterfront, with an assortment of shops and businesses.

EXT. RIO VISTA WATERFRONT - DOCK - DAY

Jake edges his boat up to an empty space at the dock. The ATTENDANT, a weathered 60-year-old named SAM, catches Jake's line and secures the boat. Jake cuts his engine. As Jake hops off the boat, onto the dock:

SAM

Boat looks great, Jake.

JAKE

Thanks. Five minutes, Sam.
I swear to God.

SAM

I'm timing ya.

Jake hurries to the street. Dodges traffic. Crosses.
Rushes into the bank: SAILOR'S SAVINGS & LOAN.

INT. BANK - DAY

Jake hustles toward a loan officer's desk, occupied by
GEORGE TAKAMORI, a well-tailored Japanese man in his 50s.
George sees Jake coming. George is annoyed.

GEORGE

Jake, Jake, Jake. What am I
going to do with you?

Breathless Jake pulls an envelope out of his back pocket.
And offers it to George.

JAKE

I got the boat payment, George.

GEORGE

But it was due yesterday.

JAKE

Yesterday, today...

GEORGE

Just because we're friends doesn't
mean --

JAKE

Jeez, George, you've only been open
five minutes. This is the last
time -- I swear to God!

George considers for a long moment...before finally taking
the envelope from Jake.

GEORGE

The Almighty says I should cut you
some slack...and not only because
you take me fishing for free.

JAKE

How could I not? Your bank owns
my boat.

GEORGE

See you Saturday.

JAKE

Thanks, man.

EXT. RESCUE FOUNDATION BUILDING - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A small building. Overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge and the ocean. A well-worn pick-up truck and a couple of cars are parked in the lot. A sign says:

PACIFIC MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE FOUNDATION

Outside the building are two round pools. In-ground, fenced in. BETSY BERTOLINO -- 40-ish, fit, tan -- feeds fish from a pail to three young sea lions in one of the pools.

FRANKLIN MAST feeds a lone seal in the other pool. Franklin, a weathered black man in his 50s, carries himself like the retired Navy man he is.

An outdoor phone on a post RINGS. Franklin is closer to it.

BETSY

Franklin -- ?

FRANKLIN

Got it.

Betsy watches as Franklin picks up the phone.

FRANKLIN

Rescue Foundation...

(listens)

Holy cow! Thanks.

(he hangs up)

Hey, Betsy! Whale sighting...
in San Francisco Bay. Big one!

BETSY

Eat up, kids.

She dumps the rest of the fish, then drops the pail.

BETSY

Let's go!

Betsy and Franklin hurry to the old pick-up truck.

EXT. SAN PABLO BAY - CHOPPER - DAY

A COAST GUARD HELICOPTER skims across the bay.

INT./EXT. CHOPPER - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Coast Guard Lieutenant AL CONRAD pilots. He's lanky, 35, wholesome, with a honey-southern accent. Betsy rides shotgun, armed with camera and binoculars.

Franklin rides in back, a Bay-area map on his lap. They all scan the water for the whale.

AL

Whatever happened to those sea lions we helped you cut loose from those fishing nets?

BETSY

Almost all set free.

AL

The fishermen'll be thrilled.

BETSY

Sea lions have as much right to eat as we do.

AL

Why would a whale come this far inland?

BETSY

Could be hungry. Or sick. Or just curious.

Al flashes Betsy a skeptical look.

BETSY

Hey, Conrad, just because we don't understand whales doesn't mean they're not intelligent.

AL

Swimmin' away from salt water doesn't sound too smart to me.

Franklin points out the side window.

FRANKLIN

Down there!

EXT. BAY - AERIAL POV - THE WHALE

The whale swims at the surface, and lets out a steamy BLOW. Then he rolls on his side, lifts one long, slender white pectoral fin - and slaps the water, sending a plume of spray high in the air.

INT. CHOPPER

Betsy aims her camera and shoots one photo after another. The camera drive WHIRRS.

BETSY
It's a humpback!

INT./EXT. CHOPPER - WHALE - VARIOUS SHOTS

Al dips the chopper down. Betsy snaps more pictures. Franklin checks the map.

FRANKLIN
Holy cow. He's five miles further inland than the last sighting.

The whale swims. Unbothered by the chopper NOISE from above. Then he arches his back. Flips his tail high. And dives.

Betsy takes a final photo. Nods to Al. The chopper banks away from the whale.

FRANKLIN
If he keeps going the wrong way --

BETSY
-- he's heading for trouble.
He could beach in the shallows.

FRANKLIN
The fresh water could kill him.

AL
If a forty-ton, forty-foot wild whale's intent on doin' himself in, it's gonna be impossible to rescue him.

BETSY
Nothing's impossible.

EXT. UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

He swims and twirls. Astonishing. Majestic. Graceful.

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

SUNSET. Jake's boat is tied up at a "working-class" marina. Not a yacht club. Gravel parking lot, with cars parked right at the boat slips. Many of the boats are small and dowdy.

The vehicle parked at this slip is a fancy, nearly-new pickup truck. With all the bells and whistles. It sparkles in the golden light of the setting sun.

Jake works, wedged under the boat's cockpit control panel. He carefully extricates himself from the tight space. And bangs his head.

JAKE

Oww! Dammit.

He stands up, turns the ignition key. The ENGINE WHEEZES. Turns over. But does not start.

JAKE

C'mon, baby.

He clicks the ignition back to "off." Tries again. Same thing. Aggravation clouds his face. Tries yet again. This time, she starts. RUMBLING, but running. Jake is too weary to be elated.

JAKE

Thank you. Just do it again tomorrow.

BOBBY (O.S.)

These old girls can get temperamental, Cap'n Finnegan.

Jake turns. BOBBY LOPEZ grins from the dock. Bobby is 60, wiry, with gray hair and a gold tooth. He steps aboard.

JAKE

She made that clear, Cap'n Lopez. All day long.

BOBBY

She won't let you down when it counts.

Jake shuts the engine off.

Bobby opens a small refrigerator in a corner of the cockpit. He's surprised to find it packed with drink cans. As Bobby takes out a beer:

BOBBY

Whoa! You servin' the Pacific Fleet?

JAKE

Paying customers tomorrow, Bobby. Finally.

BOBBY

I told you things'd pick up.

JAKE

Gotta pick up a lot more before my wife stops telling me to rename this old tub.

Bobby pops the top on a second beer. Passes it to Jake.

BOBBY

Rename it what?

JAKE

"Finnegan's Folly." Maybe she's right. I don't know what made me think I could be a fishing guide.

Jake takes a long, thoughtful sip.

JAKE

Paid the bank late...again. Never missed a payment in my life, until I got this boat. Y'know, I used to be a bill collector?

BOBBY

You? Breaking knee-caps?

JAKE

My second -- no, third -- dead-end "career." Now I got something I wanna do. And I'm good at it. Just can't make a living at it.

BOBBY

Hey, man, be cool. It'll work out.

JAKE

Jeez, I don't know. Between the house, the truck, the boat...

BOBBY

The word's out about you.

JAKE

Yeah? What word?

BOBBY

They're sayin', "Jake Finnegan,
he thinks like a fish."

JAKE

As long as nobody says I stink
like a fish.

Both men laugh. Jake brightens.

JAKE

Hey, Roberto -- I got the flags.

Jake ducks into the cabin. Comes back up and unfurls a
5-foot flag with a striped-bass logo and print announcing:

CALIFORNIA BASS-FISHING ASSOCIATION

BOBBY

Cool.

EXT. DIANA'S PUB - NIGHT

A restaurant on Rio Vista's main street. The popular,
small-town hangout. A neon sign features a jumping marlin.

INT. DIANA'S PUB - BAR - NIGHT

DINNERTIME. Moderately crowded. A hunter's and fisherman's
delight. Macho decor includes stuffed heads and mounted
fish on all walls.

Jake and Bobby sit at the half-filled bar. Sipping beers.
Eating burgers. The TV mounted over the bar plays the local
evening news. Barely audible over the pleasant din.

BOBBY

Staying on the boat tonight?

JAKE

Yeah. Wife's not thrilled. But
I gotta be ready for tomorrow.

BOBBY

Y'know, you're obsessive-
compulsive about that boat.

JAKE

Who died and made you Sigmund
Freud?

The TV catches Bobby's eye: CALLIE NICHOLS reports from the river bank. There's a small Coast Guard boat behind her.

Callie is 28, pretty, dark-haired. She tries a little too hard to balance her youth and looks with smart intensity.

BOBBY

Hey, Mel... Did she say there's
a whale in the river?

Bartender MEL -- skinny, 50, with a graying ponytail -- turns up the TV volume. The BAR PATRONS listen:

CALLIE (on TV)

...and this Coast Guard vessel
behind me. But the day's efforts
failed to turn the wayward whale
back toward the ocean.

On TV, the report cuts to interview footage of Al Conrad. With SUPERIMPOSED I.D. title:

COAST GUARD LT. ALAN CONRAD

AL

What we did today didn't work. To
get this whale back where it belongs,
we're gonna need a better strategy.
And a lot more boats.

The report cuts to tape of Betsy, with SUPERIMPOSED I.D.:

DR. ELIZABETH BERTOLINO

DIRECTOR & FOUNDER, PACIFIC MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE FOUNDATION

BETSY

There used to be a quarter-million
humpback whales, in all the world's
oceans. Two centuries of whaling
nearly wiped 'em out. The
population's rebounded to ten or
twelve thousand. But they're still
endangered. So every individual whale
is precious -- including this one.

JAKE

A whale in the river...I'll be damned.

Callie is back on-screen.

CALLIE (on TV)
 Experts say the river's comparatively
 fresh water may already be damaging
 the whale's health...

INT. CHARLIE KRAFT'S CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Callie's report continues. On a big-screen TV:

CALLIE (on TV)
 If it doesn't make it back to the
 ocean soon, odds are it won't
 survive more than a week or two.
 Callie Nichols, Channel Eight
 Action News.

The conference room is plush. Set up for a cocktail/fund-raising party. Framed movie and TV-series posters indicate this is a producer's office. Almost all the posters feature animals: dolphins, otters, sea lions, dogs.

The one out-of-place decoration: A Rescue Foundation BANNER.

Betsy (unusually dressed-up) stands in the center of twenty Beautiful People (ACTORS, SHOW-BIZ HONCHOS). Franklin stands just behind her.

Next to Betsy: CHARLIE KRAFT, 50, barrel-chested. In charge. Kraft wears a few too many gold chains. Looks and sounds like a slightly-refined longshoreman.

KRAFT
 That whale's gonna be the best
 commercial this great organization
 ever had. And let's hear it for
 this gal right here -- the heart and
 soul of the Pacific Marine Mammal
 Rescue Foundation!

Kraft leads applause for Betsy. She basks. Kraft takes Betsy aside. He grabs her a drink from a passing WAITER. Franklin stays close, unobtrusive.

BETSY
 Just doing my job.

KRAFT
 Doing it on the evening news makes
 the Board of Directors very happy.

BETSY
 And a happy board renews contracts.

KRAFT

It's in the pipeline, Bets.

BETSY

Yeah?

KRAFT

You just worry about this whale. And keeping the Foundation center-stage.

BETSY

It's not show-biz, Charlie. It's a whale rescue.

KRAFT

Everything is show-biz. Why else would all these Hollywood goombahs pay big bucks for cocktail weenies?

Kraft snaps a salute at Franklin.

KRAFT

She's all yours, Admiral. I gotta go schmooze.

Kraft make a beeline for a big-wig. Betsy glances around.

BETSY

Can you believe who's here?

FRANKLIN

You shouldn't come to these things.

BETSY

Why not?

FRANKLIN

You get star-struck.

BETSY

I do not. It takes money to do what we do...and this is where the money is.

FRANKLIN

We used to get by without these phony fund-raisers.

BETSY

Yeah...back when we couldn't afford to pay the phone bill. And this sure beats smelling like fish at the end of the day.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Callie comes off the set after the show. She's intercepted by unhappy news director STAN MILES, 50, tall and bald.

STAN
Nice writing. Crappy pictures.

CALLIE
Whales don't pose, Stan.

STAN
This story's in our own goddam river! We can't let L.A. and 'Frisco stations get better pictures than us.

CALLIE
What do you want me to do?

STAN
Charter a boat. Get close...
And get me the goddam pictures.

INT. DIANA'S PUB - BAR - NIGHT

Jake and Bobby nurse post-dinner beers. PETE, 35, wearing a windbreaker and fishing cap, comes up behind them.

PETE
Uhh, Jake?

JAKE
Hey, Pete. Ready to catch a whole lotta fish tomorrow?

PETE
Umm...actually, uhh...I'm gonna have to cancel. Boss called... office emergency.

JAKE
Oh. Yeah. Hey, it happens.

Pete pays Jake some cash.

PETE
Here's the cancellation fee.
I'll call you to re-schedule.

JAKE
Yeah. Sure. The fish'll be there.

Pete walks away.

JAKE

Damn.

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

Jake works on the boat.

BOBBY

Like I said, obsessive-compulsive.

Jake looks up and sees Bobby on the dock -- with Callie.

BOBBY

Got a lady lookin' for a ride.

CALLIE

Callie Nichols, Channel Eight --

JAKE

I know.

CALLIE

Need a boat to take me and my camera guy out to that whale. Your friend says you're available.

JAKE

Yeah? Well, my friend's wrong. Sorry, darlin'.

CALLIE

Okay. I'll find somebody else.

BOBBY

Hey, uhh -- wait -- Jake -- Miss Nichols -- gimme a minute.

But Callie walks away. Bobby hops onto the boat for a private argument.

BOBBY

What the hell're you doing?

JAKE

I'm a fishing guide, not a damn chauffeur. And not a damn charity case!

BOBBY

No, you're an idiot! That's money walking away over there.

Jake and Bobby glare at each other.

EXT. MARINA - PARKING LOT - CALLIE'S CAR

Callie opens the car door. Bobby trots toward her.

BOBBY

Hey! Miss Nichols! He checked his calendar. Seems he is available, like I said.

CALLIE

Okay. Tell him I'll be back in two hours. And tell him...don't call me "darlin'."

EXT. COAST GUARD STATION - DOCK - DAY

Franklin approaches a small Coast Guard boat. Al Conrad is at the controls, checking things out. SUPERIMPOSE:

MONDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 14

Betsy works at the stern rail with WILLOW MITCHELL, who's 22, excited, and nervous. She wears a UC/SANTA CRUZ sweatshirt.

Betsy and Willow set up equipment to play tapes and broadcast the sounds underwater.

Franklin boards the boat. Exchanges nods with Al. And joins Betsy and Willow. Betsy keeps on working -- all business. Franklin extends a hand to Willow.

FRANKLIN

Franklin Mast. U-S Navy. Retired.

WILLOW

Willow Mitchell. U-C Santa Cruz. Grad student.

FRANKLIN

What's all this?

BETSY

In the wild, killer whales attack other whales. I thought, if we could get tapes of Orcas feeding, maybe we could scare this whale out. So I started calling around.

WILLOW

And she found me. Our lab had Orca tapes. I couldn't wait to come down and help.

FRANKLIN

Has this ever worked before?

WILLOW

Sometimes. I just hope the playback equipment's good enough. Best I could do on short notice.

Betsy puts on headphones. Nods at Willow. Willow turns the tape machine on. Betsy HEARS Orcas SQUEALING and CLICKING.

BETSY

Well, I can hear it. Let's hope the whale can, too.

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

Jake turns the key. The engine COUGHS. SPUTTERS. Dies. He tries again. Same thing. Jake shuts his eyes. Mutters for the thing to start.

Callie and BEAR SULLIVAN, her large cameraman, stand behind him. Jake tries a third time. Callie looks increasingly impatient. Fourth time, the engine starts.

EXT. RIVER - COAST GUARD BOAT & JACK'S BOAT - DAY

Al pilots the Coast Guard boat out into the river. Betsy, Willow, Franklin and Al search for the whale. An underwater speaker, connected by cables, trails the boat.

Jake's boat approaches. Flying his Bass Association flag. Jake pulls up, a couple of boat lengths away. Callie stands at the rail. And calls to the Coast Guard boat.

VARIOUS SHOTS - INTERCUT as needed.

CALLIE

Ahoy there.

(to Jake)

Do people still say that?

On the Coast Guard boat, Betsy looks angry.

BETSY

Conrad, get rid of 'em.

AL
Public waterway, Doc.

FRANKLIN
That's Jake Finnegan. Fished with him a couple of times. He's a good guy.

BETSY
I don't care if he's Saint Francis of Assisi. He better not mess this up.

Callie calls out again. Bear is up and shooting.

CALLIE
Have you spotted the whale today?

BETSY
No! And you'd better stay clear of this rescue operation.

CALLIE
Can you tell us what you're doing?

BETSY
Conrad -- do something.

Al sighs. And steps to the rail. Betsy stands at his shoulder. He's amiable. She's tense and terse.

AL
Folks, I'm gonna have to ask y'all to give us some space. We're doin' some delicate acoustic stuff --

CALLIE
Could you be more specific?

AL
No, ma'am. 'fraid I can't. Not in the middle of the river.

Betsy barks an order across the water.

BETSY
Stay clear. And stay quiet.

AL
Y'all may need the news people on your side at some point. Might want to toss 'em a bone.

Betsy considers. Then she calls over to Jake's boat.

BETSY

You cooperate out here, we'll
answer questions...ashore.

JAKE

How much space?

AL

Half a mile. And please keep
your engine at low speed, sir.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Now it's Callie's turn to look annoyed.

CALLIE

Half a mile? I'm paying you to
get us close.

JAKE

We don't have a choice, darlin'.

Callie glares at Jake as she backs off the rail.

CALLIE

Fine.

Jake engages his engines and moves off slowly.

ABOARD THE COAST GUARD BOAT

Willow spots the whale.

WILLOW

There he is!

The whale obliges with a lusty SPOUT not far off the bow.

Betsy, Willow and Franklin rush to the tape equipment.
Betsy puts on the headphones and turns the player on.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Barely moving. He HEARS the ORCA SOUNDS -- chirps, clicks
and whistles.

ABOARD THE COAST GUARD BOAT

Betsy makes a volume adjustment to the tape player. Al,
Willow and Franklin watch the whale for reactions.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Swimming aimlessly as he listens to the ORCA SOUNDS.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Bear and Callie perch on the front of the forward cabin.
The highest spot on the boat. Bear shoots. Callie watches.

CALLIE

What the hell are they doing?

ABOARD THE COAST GUARD BOAT

Al, Franklin, Willow and Betsy all watch the whale with
great concern. At the surface now, he swims idly.
SPOUTING. But not fleeing. Betsy and crew look grim.

FRANKLIN

Maybe if we get closer.

Al edges the boat closer to the whale. The whale BLOWS
again as he swims past the Coast Guard boat. And dives.

FRANKLIN

Damn. He's still heading upriver.

Betsy tears the headphones off. She's concerned. And
angry. She brushes past Willow without so much as a glance.

BETSY

With better equipment, this
might've worked.

Franklin gives Willow a comforting pat. Then he follows
Betsy to the bow, where she sits dejectedly on the deck.

FRANKLIN

It's not the kid's fault.

Betsy stares out over the water.

INT. DIANA'S PUB - BAR - NIGHT

Jake and Bobby sit at the bar. They and a few other PATRONS
watch the late news on the TV. Callie narrates daytime
footage of the failed whale-herding attempt.

CALLIE (V.O.; on TV)
 ...unfortunately, the whale paid
 little or no attention to the sounds
 of feasting killer whales.

The TV picture changes to Callie and ED the silver-haired
 anchorman at the studio news desk.

CALLIE (on TV)
 So it seems that whales can tell
 "live" from Memorex, Ed. Oh, one
 other development. Folks in the Rio
 Vista area have come up with a variety
 of names for the whale they've adopted
 as their own. But one name seems to
 have stuck: Humphrey the Humpback.

Jake scowls as he sips his beer.

JAKE
 I don't like 'em playing this
 for laughs.

BOBBY
 Huh?

JAKE
 The folks on that Coast Guard boat
 took this thing seriously.

BOBBY
 So don't rent yourself out to
 the news people again.

JAKE
 Like I got a choice? Money's
 money. And getting our flag on
 TV...free publicity can't hurt.

BOBBY
 Just don't get too involved in
 this thing. It's gonna turn
 into a circus.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

The news show is over. Callie walks off the set. Stan
 greets her there.

STAN
 Better.

CALLIE

But you still want to see the
whale's tonsils.

STAN

You did fine. But I've got another
assignment for you.

CALLIE

No way I'm giving up a story
that gets me air-time every night.
If this turns into a media circus,
I plan to be in the center ring.

EXT. RIO VISTA MAIN STREET - DAY

A VENDOR hawks a small number of "Humphrey the Whale"
T-shirts from the back of his old station wagon. The first
few PASSERS-BY do pass by. A YOUNG WOMAN stops to browse.

As she buys a shirt, the SOUND of a helicopter approaches.
Vendor and buyer both look up. A Coast Guard chopper flies
over. Headed over the river. SUPERIMPOSE:

TUESDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 15

INT./EXT. CHOPPER - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Al pilots. Betsy sits next to him, searching. They fly
over the river. The water below narrows. Al and Betsy
continue scanning all around. They see boats. Cars.
Buildings. Riverfront life.

BETSY

Dammit. He's beached, off
Decker Island.

Through the chopper canopy, they see the whale.

He's stuck in the muddy shallows off an island in mid-river.
Still mostly covered by water. But he's in big trouble.
Barely moving. He lets out a weak, labored BLOW.

Betsy can't take her eyes off the whale. Al notices.

BETSY

If he can't free himself, he's
gonna die right there.

Al banks the chopper sharply away from the island.

INT. COAST GUARD OFFICE - DAY

Betsy, Al and Franklin debate strategy.

AL

When the tide comes up, he might get out all by himself, the good Lord willing.

FRANKLIN

Yeah, but he might not.

AL

Maybe we should give him a chance to try.

FRANKLIN

And what if he can't? We've gotta be ready.

BETSY

Conrad, can you line up a tug? In case we need to tow him out?

AL

Sure.

BETSY

Franklin, round up at least twenty volunteers. If Humphrey looks like he's stuck, we'll have to be ready to protect his skin with wet sheets and zinc oxide.

EXT. RIVER - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT: Jake at the wheel. Callie at the rail. Bear perched with his camera. All watch the whale, 50 yards away, still beached in the muddy shallows.

The whale lets out a weak SPOUT. The water is a little higher now, covering more of his giant body.

Ten other PLEASURE BOATS with SPECTATORS have gathered to watch. Some people already wear "Humphrey" shirts and hats.

Callie's eyes widen with anticipation.

CALLIE

He's moving.

THE WHALE churns the water with his fins and body.

SPECTATORS on other boats: Quiet. Concerned for the whale.

Jake watches. And starts rooting.

JAKE

C'mon.

ABOARD THE COAST GUARD BOAT

Approaching Humphrey's location. Al pilots. Franklin and Betsy look anxiously ahead.

BETSY

What the hell are all those boats doing around him?

AL

Watchin'...Maybe prayin' a little.

VARIOUS SHOTS - THE WHALE AND THE BOATS

Jake, Callie and Bear, still watching. The whale THRASHES more vigorously. Jake roots, adds "body english." Callie stays detached. But her face reveals increasing wonder as the whale struggles to get free.

JAKE

C'mon...c'mon.

On the Coast Guard boat, Betsy looks increasingly concerned as Al continues to approach the whale's location.

Jake continues to root for Humphrey.

JAKE

Get going, ya big dope.

THE WHALE

Humphrey splashes and splashes. Heaving his huge body into deeper water.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake REACTS like a fan watching a touchdown.

JAKE

Yeah!

CHEERS go up from the other boats. Some boats BLARE their HORNS. Callie shakes her head in amazement. Bear shoots.

BEAR

Stan can't complain this time.

ABOARD THE COAST GUARD BOAT

Betsy, Franklin and Al react to the cheers and HORNS.

AL

I'd say we got an unbeached whale.

FRANKLIN

Headed where?

BETSY

He's stressed enough without
a lot of boats hounding him.

Al picks up his public-address microphone. For now, the other boats all stand still. Humphrey swims slowly. And SPOUTS now and then.

INTERCUT REACTIONS from people on other boats. Especially Jake's boat.

AL (on P.A. speaker)

Attention, all boats in the area.
Hold your positions. Please do not
attempt to get close to the whale,
or to follow him. Anybody disobeyin'
this order will be arrested by the
Coast Guard for endangerin' a
protected animal.

BETSY

He's still going the wrong way.
What is with that whale?!

THE WHALE

Swims at the surface. Flips his tail. And dives.

EXT. COAST GUARD STATION - DAY

Outside the building, on the front steps. Al and Betsy face a dozen print and TV REPORTERS, including Callie and Bear. Jake and Franklin listen from the sidelines.

CALLIE

You keep losing this forty-foot
whale, Lieutenant Conrad.

AL
Not by choice, ma'am.

CHUBBY MALE REPORTER
But he was heading further inland
last time you saw him, right?

A dusty unmarked government sedan pulls up. FRED STERN gets out. He's 45, paunchy, wearing a dull tie and short-sleeved white shirt -- a bureaucrat's uniform.

CALLIE
What about other government agencies?
Are any of them getting involved?

AL
We've been in touch with several
state and federal agencies. They've
taken our request under advisement --

BETSY
And we've gotten the royal
runaround from Sacramento to D.C.

Betsy edges in front of Al. Stern listens and scowls.

BETSY
The bureaucrats obviously don't
understand what's become crystal
clear to those of us on the scene:
this whale is not gonna find his
way back to the ocean without
our intervention. And if the
government won't do anything, then
it's gonna be up to volunteers.

CALLIE
Lieutenant, do you agree with
that assessment?

Al smiles nervously. He's on thin ice.

AL
Ummm...Which part?

Some of the reporters chuckle.

CALLIE
Do you have any idea how to get
this whale turned around -- assuming
you actually find him again?

AL
No, ma'am. We don't.

CALLIE

That sounds like a plan.

AL

Any new developments, we'll let
y'all know. Thank you.

The reporters begin to move off. Callie and Bear linger to
watch: grim-faced Stern approaches Al and Betsy.

STERN

That'll play real well on the news,
Doctor Bertolino -- if you're
trying to alienate any government
agency with the slightest
inclination to help this whale.

Callie moves closer in to question Stern.

CALLIE

Callie Nichols, Channel Eight
News. I didn't catch your name.

STERN

Fred Stern, Regional Director,
National Marine Fisheries Service.
(to Betsy)
Face facts. This whale's probably
done-for.

Jake drifts closer, along with some reporters.

BETSY

Look, if N.M.F.S. [pronounced
NIMFIS] isn't going help, the
least you could do is hold off
on hiring the butchers.

STERN

When this whale dies, the last
thing we need is a forty-ton corpse
stinking up a recreational waterway.

BETSY

Oh, please...

STERN

It's not like we can put him in a
freezer. We've already had calls
from marine biology labs all over
the country. Whale organs from
larger species aren't easy to come by.

CALLIE

Organs?

STERN

Heart. Lungs. Brain. There's a lot to be learned, even from a dead specimen.

A young female Coast Guard officer, ENSIGN DAY, bursts out of the building. [DIALOG NOTE: "slough" pronounced "slew"]

DAY

Lieutenant! The whale's been spotted, up around Three Mile Slough. Headed for Rio Vista Bridge.

JAKE

Jeez. That's fifty miles from the ocean.

BETSY

We've gotta get up there.

AL

Ensign Day, we need a boat.

DAY

Sorry, sir. Nothing available.

FRANKLIN

Jake, can you take us?

JAKE

I'm sorta spoken for. But...

CALLIE

As long as I can come along.

BETSY

As long as you stay out of the way.

CALLIE

As long as you let me do my job.

BETSY

As long as you don't endanger this whale.

EXT. JAKE'S BOAT - COCKPIT - DAY

This time, it takes five tries for Jake to start his engine.

EXT. RIVER - JAKE'S BOAT - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Jake motors upstream. Passengers on deck: Callie, Bear, Betsy, Al and Franklin. Betsy and Franklin chat. Callie listens, like a good reporter.

BETSY
Ever see a humpback under water?

FRANKLIN
Nope.

BETSY
I did, diving in Hawaii. They're the most majestic, beautiful, graceful creatures...like slow-motion ballet.

CALLIE
Weren't you afraid?

BETSY
No. They're also incredibly gentle -- as long as we respect 'em.

Jake's boat nears the ramshackle Rio Vista drawbridge. The old bridge RATTLES every time busy traffic crosses it. The center section, twenty feet above the water, can be raised.

A small Coast Guard boat with three young CREWMEN holds position just south -- this side -- of the bridge. Jake pulls his boat alongside. Al tosses a line over to ENSIGN YAKNOWITZ, buzz-cut, 25, who ties the boats up.

AL
What's goin' on, Yaknowitz?

YAKNOWITZ
We got here after the whale already swum under the bridge, sir. He just keeps doing laps over there.

JAKE
Like he's thinking of what to do next. Hell, if he sticks to the main channels, he could go all the way to Sacramento.

BETSY
Or he could get stuck in one of these sloughs. If he does, we might never get him out.

Humphrey BLOWS. He swims slowly toward the bridge.

Then he turns right. Circles away from the bridge. And BLOWS again.

BETSY
We can't let him go further north.
We turn that whale around here.

JAKE
How the hell're you gonna
do that?

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - DAY

SUNSET. Jake is alone on his boat. Checking things. Putting her to bed for the night.

BETSY (O.S.)
Mister Finnegan.

Jake looks up. Sees Betsy on the dock.

JAKE
Jake'll do.

BETSY
Franklin says you know the river.
We need to hire a local boat to be
operations flagship. Interested?

JAKE
For how long?

BETSY
As long as it takes. Or until
Foundation money runs out. I'll
need you every day. Even if that
means you have to turn down
fishing clients.

JAKE
No way to build a business, darlin'.

BETSY
You overbooked?

JAKE
Nope.

BETSY
So it's actual money versus
theoretical.

Jake mulls reality.

JAKE

You willing to outbid the TV station?

Betsy stares.

JAKE

Darlin', I got bills to pay.

BETSY

I'll pay you a buck a day more
than they're paying.

JAKE

Then you got a deal. You really
think this is do-able?

BETSY

If we don't get that whale back
to salt water soon, he's gonna die.
And I'm not gonna let that happen.

JAKE

You're one determined gal, darlin'.

BETSY

See you tomorrow morning at seven.
Make sure your boat starts. And,
honey -- don't call me darlin'.

EXT. RIO VISTA MAIN STREET - DAY

A half-dozen EAGER BUYERS buy Humphrey T-shirts from the
Vendor's tailgate. SUPERIMPOSE:

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16

UNDERWATER - DAY

The whale swims slowly. Enveloped in tranquility.

THE WHALE'S POV - UNDERWATER

Four small boats. In a loose side-by-side formation, moving
toward the whale. Even their motor NOISE is muffled.

EXT. RIVER/RIO VISTA BRIDGE - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Jake's boat, and three small Coast Guard craft, north of the
bridge. Moving toward it. Jake's boat leads. The bridge
RATTLES. Boat engines RUMBLE. It's obvious that the river
is too wide to be covered effectively by four boats.

On the same side of the bridge as the boats, Humphrey swims at the surface, 100 feet in front of them. He zig-zags vaguely toward the bridge.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake at the wheel. Betsy, Willow and Franklin watch the whale anxiously. Jake picks up his mike.

JAKE

This is Whale One. Third time's the charm. Let's try it again.

BETSY

Maintain course and speed.

Jake flashes her a look: he doesn't like taking orders.

JAKE

Maintain course and speed.

THE RIVER - THE WHALE - THE BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS

The boats continue guiding Humphrey toward the bridge. But before they get too close, the whale turns right. Broadside to the bridge. Then he submerges.

Betsy, Willow and Franklin look everywhere for him. Jake peers through his windshield. No whale.

BETSY

Stop.

JAKE (into mike)

Whale One. Stop, until somebody locates the friggin' whale.

AL'S VOICE (radio)

He's behind us.

Willow rushes to the back of Jake's boat. And sees Humphrey SPOUT behind the boats. Franklin and Betsy join her at the stern. All frustrated.

FRANKLIN

We've been doing this dance all day.

JAKE

He doesn't wanna go back under this bridge.

Betsy's patience is gone. Willow musters all her courage. And speaks up, cautiously.

WILLOW
 Doctor Bertolino?

BETSY
 What?

WILLOW
 Umm...I was thinking...

BETSY
What -- ?

WILLOW
 Umm... We...we could take
 acoustical readings on both sides
 of the bridge.

BETSY
 What for?

WILLOW
 Maybe it's noisier on the north
 side. If it is, that might be
 spooking him.

BETSY
 Keeping him from going back
 under. Okay. Do it.

Willow allows herself a tiny smile.

WILLOW
 We'll need better equipment.

BETSY
 Can you get it?

WILLOW
 Yep.

INT. DIANA'S PUB - BAR - NIGHT

Jake, Bobby and Franklin sip beers. And watch the TV, where
 Callie interviews Stern in the studio.

STERN (on TV)
 Anywhere you got farm animals,
 there's probably a rendering plant
 not far away. When horses or cows
 die, the plants take the carcasses
 and break 'em down into useable
 and non-useable components.

CALLIE (on TV)
Kind of like recycling?

STERN (on TV)
Yeah.

CALLIE (on TV)
But a whale is a different story.

STERN (on TV)
Can't exactly load a forty-foot
humpback into the back of a pick-up.

The TV picture cuts to STOCK FOOTAGE of hip-booted men stripping a huge whale carcass of skin and blubber. Right down to bones. A bloody business.

STERN (V.O., on TV)
This is from the fifties, before
whaling started fading out.

As Jake, Bobby, and Franklin watch, they're disgusted.

CALLIE (V.O., on TV)
Essentially, the idea was to
separate blubber from bone?

STERN (V.O., on TV)
Right. They'd boil the blubber
down into oil, which got used in
a variety of products, from
lubricants to cosmetics.

BOBBY
Ugghh. Knee-deep in whale guts.

FRANKLIN
They're still doing this in some
parts of the world. Japan...Russia...
Scandinavia...

BOBBY
I thought whales were protected.
Like eagles and whatnot.

FRANKLIN
Only the species that've already
been hunted near to extinction.
Like humpbacks.

BOBBY
So saving one is a big deal?

FRANKLIN
Yep.

Jake shakes his head and stares at the TV.

JAKE
They can't "render" this whale.
He's got a name, for crissakes.

EXT. RESCUE FOUNDATION - DAY

Betsy feeds some fish to a young sea lion in a pool. She frowns as Charlie Kraft rides up on a motorcycle. He wears a leather jacket and helmet.

KRAFT
Little guy looks like he's ready
to go.

BETSY
I just hope he doesn't end up as
shark food.

KRAFT
Sometimes nature takes its course.

BETSY
That's what you got up early
to tell me?

KRAFT
This guy Stern, all over the
news last night. Talking about
rendering?

BETSY
Freedom of speech, Charlie.

KRAFT
Negative images. Not good for
fund raising. Gotta tell you, the
Board's getting antsy. If you
don't actually rescue this whale,
it's gonna look real bad.

BETSY
He's not a trained dolphin. We're
doing the best we can.

EXT. RIO VISTA BRIDGE - DAY

Willow works at one end of the bridge with TED SANCHEZ, a cherubic man of 50. Ted has round glasses and a gray beard, and he uses a walking cane, thanks to a knee injury. He sits in a folding lawn chair.

Ted and Willow work with their sound equipment.
SUPERIMPOSE:

RIO VISTA BRIDGE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17

Betsy approaches. In a bad mood. Willow looks up.

WILLOW

Doctor B. Meet my favorite
professor, Ted Sanchez. Specialist
in underwater acoustics --

BETSY

-- and marine mammal communication.
I've read your journal pieces.
Betsy Bertolino.

Betsy extends her hand for a handshake.

TED

Pleasure, Doctor Bertolino.

Ted starts to get up and extend his own hand. Betsy sees
he's having trouble. She gestures for him to stay seated.
Ted shrugs apologetically.

TED

I'm usually more gallant. But
thanks to an overzealous tennis
game and an over-age knee... Well,
anyway, I've read about your exploits.

BETSY

You've done more than that. I've
seen your name on our donor lists.

TED

It's a good cause.

BETSY

Thanks. So, when do you get started?

TED

Actually, we just finished.

Willow hands Ted a sheaf of printouts. He opens them up in
his lap. Betsy looks as he points.

TED

South side. North side. North
side's a lot noisier.

BETSY
Enough to scare a whale?

TED
Only Humphrey knows for sure.

Willow moves off to gather up their equipment. Ted stands with the help of his cane. Betsy and Ted go to the bridge rail. Looking north.

TED
By the way, just so you know,
there wasn't anything wrong with
the playback set-up Willow
brought with the Orca tapes. She's
a smart kid.

BETSY
So far, nothing's worked. Not
the Orca sounds. Not the boats.

TED
Something else you might want to try.

BETSY
What?

TED
Oikomi.

Betsy gives him a quizzical look.

BETSY
What -- ?!

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - DAY

Waterside. Ted, Willow, Betsy, Franklin and Jake on the dock. Ted sits in his lawn chair. He holds a six-foot-long iron pipe with one end in the water.

In his other hand, he holds a steel bar. And he BANGS the pipe in a slow steady beat.

TED
Voila. Oikomi.

JAKE
Japanese fisherman use this...
oikomi...to herd dolphins?

TED

For ages. Sometimes it even works. Of course, you need at least a half-dozen pipes. Banging in unison sets up a kind of harmonic chiming underwater.

BETSY

Will this work with a humpback?

TED

I don't know. It's worth a try.

BETSY

We'll need pipes. Volunteers. And more boats.

JAKE

If you can scramble the personnel, I'll rustle up some boats.

INT. COAST GUARD STATION - AL'S OFFICE - DAY

Al greets CLARE and PAUL DEVONMILLE as Ensign Day ushers them in. Both are "New Age," middle-aged. Clare wears a simple airy frock. Paul wears a polo shirt and khaki shorts. Both wear sandals. And matching bead-and-crystal necklaces.

They look earnestly, pleasantly normal. Day lingers at the door to watch.

AL

I'm Lieutenant Al Conrad. Did my ensign say y'all are --

CLARE

Psychics.

PAUL

We knew you were going to say that.

(chuckles)

Sorry. A little psychic humor.

CLARE

He can't help it. I'm Clare Devonmille. This is my husband.

PAUL

Paul. We run the Nova Institute. And we may be able to help you communicate with this whale.

AL
Communicate? Just how would you --

CLARE
Telepathically.

PAUL
We know a lot of people think
psychics are, well, odd.

CLARE
And sometimes we are. But we've
worked with the Palo Alto police
on several occasions.

PAUL
Helped them locate a kidnapped child.

Clare hands a business card to Al.

CLARE
Feel free to call Detective Bailey.

PAUL
Somewhat reluctantly, he's agreed
to vouch for us. His number's on
the back of the card.

CLARE
The whale's aura is strong.

PAUL
But weakening.

EXT. COAST GUARD STATION/DOCK/BOAT - DAY

Al pilots a small Coast Guard launch out into the river.
Aboard with him: Paul and Clare Devonmille. They lean on a
railing. Enjoying the wind in their faces.

VARIOUS SHOTS as the boat heads upstream. They approach the
Rio Vista Bridge.

PAUL
Here would be good, Lieutenant.

Al stops the engines. He watches the Devonmilles go out to
the bow. They stand side by side. Feet spread apart.
Feeling the slight rocking of the boat.

AL
Doesn't the whale have to be
here?

CLARE

He's close enough to feel our thoughts.

Clare and Paul slowly stretch their hands out in front of them. And close their eyes. Al watches, curious. After a minute or so, Paul and Clare open their eyes. Lower their arms. Smile. And return to the main deck.

AL

That's it?

CLARE

That's it.

EXT. COAST GUARD STATION - DOCK - DAY

The Devonmilles exit Al's boat. Callie and Bear approach.

CALLIE

Callie Nichols, Channel Eight Action News.

CLARE

Sure. We met at the Symphony Hill murder.

Al and Ensign Day exchange "Uh-oh" glances.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Callie sits at the news desk. And delivers her story.

CALLIE

The story of Humphrey took a turn toward strange today, when a pair of psychics from the Nova Institute --

INT. AL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Al nibbles a snack as he watches a small black and white TV on his kitchen counter. Callie continues her story.

CALLIE (on TV)

-- took a New Age crack at communicating with the wayward whale, courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard...

Al sighs as he wonders how his superiors will react.

AL

Oh, Lordy.

INT. AL'S OFFICE - DAY

Ensign Day stands at ease as Al gets chewed out on the phone. Day winces in sympathy each time Al absorbs another verbal blow. SUPERIMPOSE:

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18

AL

...At the time, sir, there didn't seem to be any harm.

(listens)

Well, yessir, in retrospect I can see where it was a little embarrassing... Yessir, a lot.

(listens)

No, sir, I didn't mean to imply that the Coast Guard believes in psychic powers.

Al squints as he listens to a blistering tirade.

AL

No, sir, it won't happen again. But... No, sir, I'm not... It's just... Well, yessir, I understand. Yessir. Yessir. Yes, sir.

EXT. COAST GUARD STATION - DAY

Al watches Betsy's truck bounce into the lot, tires SQUEALING. Al meets the truck as Betsy parks. Betsy gets out and slams the door.

AL

You always drive like that?

BETSY

Only when I'm furious.

They walk toward the waterfront.

AL

I haven't even given you the bad news yet.

BETSY

I already got some. Stern called. Claims Washington told him to back off from "active participation" in the operation. Like NIMFIS was doing anything anyway.

AL

So they're just packin' up?

BETSY

Gone. So what's your bad news?

AL

We've been ordered to stand down from active rescue operations --

BETSY

Son of a --

AL

-- Quote -- "until and unless the situation changes significantly."

BETSY

At least the entire Federal government is singing the same stupid tune.

AL

I don't like it any more than y'all do.

BETSY

I'll be sure to tell the whale.

EXT. RIO VISTA MAIN STREET - DAY

The Vendor now works from a long table set up on the sidewalk. And his stock now includes several kinds of shirts. Hats. Bumper Stickers. BUYERS crowd around the table two-deep. Betsy's truck speeds past.

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - DAY

Betsy plows her truck into the parking lot. Franklin meets her as she gets out. His expression reads: "more bad news."

BETSY

Where's the whale?

FRANKLIN

Cache Slough.

BETSY

Oh, damn.

They both run for Jake's boat.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Jake's boat passes under the Rio Vista Bridge. As they continue on, the river narrows noticeably.

ABOARD THE BOAT

Jake drives. Betsy and Franklin are anxious passengers.

BETSY

How deep is Cache Slough?

JAKE

Twelve feet at the dead end.
Sure not deep enough for a whale.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Jake's boat reaches a branch off the main river channel. And enters Cache Slough, slowly. It's really just a creek and feels positively claustrophobic. Jake cuts the engine back to idle.

Betsy ventures out to the bow. Hunkers down. Looks for the whale. Then she spots movement on the water's surface up ahead. Humphrey's shiny black hump splits the water. He swims slowly toward one bank. Then he circles and repeats.

JAKE

What's he doing?

BETSY

Hard to say. Could be feeding.

Jake turns on his depth finder device.

JAKE

He's in a deep trough. That's where the fish'd be. It's good, that he's still got an appetite. Isn't it?

BETSY

Well, it's not bad. But he's gotta be stressed.

JAKE

He's not the only one, darlin'.

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - DAY

On the dock. Ted sits on a folding chair. Six VOLUNTEERS (various ages, men and women) hold six-foot-long Oikomi pipes, braced on the dock edge. One end in the water.

The Volunteers BANG on their pipes. Trying to match Ted's slow steady hand tempo. They make an out-of-synch racket.

Willow, in headphones, sits near Ted with electronic monitoring gear. An underwater mike trails in the water.

TED

No, no. Stop.

The clatter stops. Ted drinks in the silence.

TED

Does anyone here play an instrument?

The Volunteers look sheepish. Nobody raises a hand. Ted hobbles back and forth in front of the "band" like a general addressing the troops.

TED

Okay. It's no disgrace to be rhythm-impaired. Forget the pipes for a minute, folks. I'm going to count out loud. First time, just me. Second time, you count with me. Ready?

The Volunteers nod uncertainly.

TED

Okay. Here goes.

Ted counts. Slow and steady. And gestures on each number.

TED

One...two...three...

Then he points at the Volunteers. They join in -- on time!

ALL

One...two...three. One...
two...three. One...two...
three.

TED

That's great!

The Volunteers look pleasantly surprised.

TED
 You did it. Now, back to those
 pipes. I'll do the same count,
 out loud. Ready --

Ted counts. Complete with hand gestures.

TED
 -- set -- One...two...three.

Then Ted points. The Volunteers BANG on cue. In tempo!

TED
 One...two...three. One...
 two...three...

Willow listens on headphones. And HEARS the unison BANGING
 resolve into an eerie CHIMING from the underwater mike.

EXT. RIVER - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Jake's boat leads five other boats. Trawling slowly up the
 river. Searching for the elusive whale. SUPERIMPOSE:

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19

Bobby Lopez pilots his own boat as part of the growing
 fleet. The boats head upstream. The river narrows.
 Eventually they enter Cache Slough. No whale.

On Jake's boat, Jake, Willow and Al are glum.
 Betsy gazes grimly out on the calm waters ahead.

JAKE
 Where's the friggin' whale?

AL
 Maybe he turned around.

JAKE
 Maybe we should turn around.

BETSY
 No. Keep going.

JAKE
 Darlin', if he's gone up Shag
 Slough, he's as good as dead.

BETSY
 Keep going.

Jake's boat continues up the narrowing creek. The other
 boats fan out behind him.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Jake's boat cruises past 20-foot-high levees guarding the flank of a chunk of land called Liberty Island. Cows and crops coexist above the levees. Al gestures at the island.

AL
Liberty Island didn't even exist fifty years ago. They built it up during the delta reclamation projects.

Jake's boat approaches tiny Liberty Island Bridge.

JAKE
Man...that's one tiny bridge.

Jake throttles back. Almost to a standstill.

BETSY
Keep going.

Jake and Al trade glances. Jake picks up his radio mike.

JAKE
Whale One to fleet. Hold up south of the bridge. We're going under.

Very slowly, Jake guides his boat through the tightly spaced pilings. Tension mounts.

Jake, Al and Willow look for the whale. They see Shag Slough's dead end, a half-mile ahead.

JAKE
That's the end of the line.

All eyes scan the water. The boat moves ahead at drift-speed. Then the silence is broken by the SOUND of a BLOW.

It's Humphrey, swimming near the end of the slough. He circles. Toward Jake's boat. BLOWS again.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE'S POV

Swimming toward Jake's boat.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Swimming straight.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake, Willow, Al and Betsy watch Humphrey swim past the boat. Toward the bridge. As the whale nears the bridge, there's a moment of hope.

WILLOW

Get outta here, you big dummy.

Just before he reaches the bridge, Humphrey makes a slow right turn. He's not going through. Hope fades.

The whale circles. Headed for the dead end of the slough.

JAKE

What is with that whale..?

EXT. SHAG SLOUGH - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

The whale swims slowly around his prison. The bridge is the barrier he can't surmount. SUPERIMPOSE:

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20

On shore, Bear tapes Callie interviewing Betsy.

CALLIE

...so, unless the rescue team comes up with a way to convince him to swim out of Shag Slough, this could be Humphrey's last stand. Is that a fair assessment?

BETSY

His condition is deteriorating. His skin is discolored. Mostly because the salt content in the water up here is almost too low to measure.

CALLIE

It's been ten days now, Doctor Bertolino. Is Humphrey dying?

Betsy recoils at the question. She can't answer.

CALLIE

Is he dying?

Betsy walks away. Bear and Callie exchange looks.

Betsy walks past a small knot of SPECTATORS gathered on the shore. She looks around. And sees at least a hundred people watching the whale. Some have lawn chairs and blankets. Some take pictures.

More people arrive and come down for a closer look. Betsy continues up toward the road.

A young FATHER and MOTHER with two small KIDS approach her.

FATHER

Excuse me. We saw you on TV.
You're Doctor Bertolino, right?

BETSY

Yeah. Why are you down here?

MOTHER

We've never seen a whale before.
We wanted our kids to see.

BETSY

This isn't a zoo, y'know.

FATHER

We're hoping Humphrey gets out
of here. We just sorta wanted
to root for him is all.

Betsy watches them continue down toward the water.

EXT. FARM FIELD/LEVEE ROAD - DAY

Jake's truck is parked beside a dusty road. On one side of the road: Shag Slough. Other side: a farm field. Jake and Willow talk to a sunburned RANCHER.

RANCHER

That whale sure picked a lousy
time to swim up here. Pesticides
and fertilizer got flushed into
the water not three days ago. I
wouldn't wanna be swimming in it.

EXT. RESCUE FOUNDATION BUILDING - DAY

Betsy comes outside with a pail of fish for the sea-lions. Kraft roars up on his motorcycle. Pulls his helmet off.

KRAFT

I left you four messages.

BETSY

I didn't feel like a lecture.

KRAFT

I sign your paychecks.

BETSY

And I do the work. I built this organization from nothing --

KRAFT

But the Board calls the shots.

BETSY

What're you gonna do, cut off the money?

KRAFT

Yes.

Betsy is shocked. Speechless.

KRAFT

The Board voted not to waste any more resources on a lost cause.

BETSY

Charlie! If we won't spend money for this, then what the hell is all that fund raising for?!

KRAFT

Rescuing marine mammals. But we can't save 'em all.

Kraft puts his helmet on. Climbs on his bike.

KRAFT

Don't cut your own throat, Betsy. It's just one whale.

Kraft guns his engine and zooms off.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

A red-brick building. Assorted cars parked in front: Jake's and Betsy's trucks, Fred Stern's government sedan, a Coast Guard car. And a few others.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Jake, Betsy, Al, Willow, Ted, Franklin, Fred Stern and a half-dozen other VOLUNTEERS sit around a couple of tables.

BETSY

I know you'd like him to hurry up and die so you can get on with your paperwork.

STERN

He's stuck in a creek barely
bigger than a kiddie pool.

WILLOW

There's no salt in that water.
Just poison. I don't know how
he's gonna --

STERN

My point exactly. You're never
gonna get him out of there
unless he swims out himself.

BETSY

There are ways --

STERN

There's no way --

BETSY

If somebody in state or federal
government had the guts to --

STERN

The government's already spent --

BETSY

Oh, don't quote figures at me.

STERN

The government can't afford to --

BETSY

You haven't even tried to help!

As Stern gathers up his papers in a huff:

STERN

This isn't accomplishing anything.
My advice? Cut your losses.

Stern strides out. The group is drained of what little
spirit they had.

BETSY

Damn him.

JAKE

Now what?

BETSY

That's it. There's no more
money.

JAKE

What about your Foundation?

BETSY

The Board of Directors isn't willing to use up reserve funds on a...a lost cause.

JAKE

I don't get it. Aren't you in charge?

BETSY

The Foundation's a non-profit. That means I answer to a volunteer Board. They raise the funds. They approve policy. They hire staff.

JAKE

Let me get this straight. A bunch of no-nothing moneybags tell you how to do your job?

BETSY

Pretty much.

There's a long silence. Reality sinks in.

AL

Well... We did what we could. It's up to the good Lord now.

Jake shuffles toward the door.

BETSY

The next rat, deserting the sinking ship.

Jake turns and glares at her. Betsy glares back.

JAKE

Hey, I gotta make a living. I can't afford to do this for free.

Jake waits a second. Hoping for absolution? But he leaves without it.

EXT. JAKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A small tidy home. Jake's truck is parked in the driveway.

INT. JAKE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jake stirs a steaming mug of coffee. A small TV on the counter plays the evening news: Callie reports from the river bank.

CALLIE (on TV)
 Humphrey's fate may have been sealed today, when all funding for the rescue effort dried up. The whale spent the day swimming in circles in the shallow waters of Shag Slough. No expert believes he can survive long there. But nobody knows how to get him out.

Jake's frustration boils over. He shuts off the TV. Pours his coffee down the drain.

JAKE
 Awww, hell...

He picks up the phone. And starts to dial.

EXT. STATE CAPITAL BUILDING - DAY

A bright sunny morning. SUPERIMPOSE:

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22

Jake comes up the grand steps. Wearing a suit. Tugging at the tie noosed around his neck.

JAKE
 Damn whale better appreciate this.

INT. STATE CAPITAL - MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

State Senator MIKE KRIKORIAN works at his desk. He's a trim man in his forties, with thinning hair. There's a KNOCK on his door. Mike looks up to see Jake waiting.

MIKE
 Jake -- come on in.

JAKE
 Thanks for seeing me, Senator.

MIKE
 Nah, it's okay. I really want to do another fishing trip. It's just been crazy up here.

JAKE
Our tax dollars at work.

MIKE
Yeah.

Mike waves toward a chair. Jake tugs at his tie. And sits.

MIKE
Y'know, last night, my kid -- he's six -- he's helping me make salad... wife's taking a class, so dinner's my job. And I'm under orders not to get pizza every Monday.

JAKE
Nah, that'd be too easy.

MIKE
So, the macaroni and cheese is boiling over --

JAKE
Chaos.

MIKE
Yeah. So we see the news report on the whale. And Brandon says, why can't we pass a law making Humphrey go home. And then you call me. So I made some calls.

JAKE
And -- ?

MIKE
I found some money. So, you up for a press conference?

EXT. CAPITAL - FRONT STEPS - DAY

Mike stands at a portable podium. Callie and a dozen reporters are gathered. Jake watches from the sidelines, along with several state government STAFFERS (mixed ages, race, gender).

MIKE
I'm happy to say that Operation Whale Rescue will be able to resume.

CALLIE
Senator Krikorian, who's going to pay for it?

MIKE

The State of California, using
twenty-five-thousand dollars from
a contingency fund --

CALLIE

What kind of contingency fund?

MIKE

To protect endangered animals.
If this whale's not endangered,
I don't know what is.

CALLIE

Nobody else seemed able to come up
with any state money.

MIKE

Nobody else has my staff. Now, we're
not promising to get Humphrey all
the way to the ocean in a day. We'll
just take it one bridge at a time.

As Mike continues to field questions, RALPH ROMANO sidles up to Jake. Ralph is portly, balding, 55. Half-eye glasses, white shirt-sleeves rolled up. Pens in his shirt pocket. Brooklyn accent.

ROMANO

That twenty-five grand? Don't hold
your breath.

JAKE

Why the hell not?

ROMANO

'Cause too many guys gotta sign off
on it. Too many cracks to fall
through.

JAKE

Who the hell're you?

ROMANO

Ralph Romano, Office of Emergency
Services.

JAKE

How do you know --

ROMANO

I've been a bureaucrat for thirty
years. It's my job to know.

JAKE

So what you're saying is, Mike Krikorian's gonna look like an idiot.

ROMANO

Not if we can pry a few bucks outta the tight fists in Washington.

JAKE

Washington? Everybody's already tried --

ROMANO

I haven't.

JAKE

What're you gonna do different?

ROMANO

Convince 'em Humphrey's Federal property.

EXT. RIO VISTA MAIN STREET - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

The original Vendor now has two tables set up. With lots of Humphrey merchandise. And he's got competitors.

At least three other VENDORS sell from sidewalk tables. The street looks like a Humphrey mini-mall. SUPERIMPOSE:

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23

There's a pushcart selling hot dogs, drinks and ice cream. One STROLLING VENDOR at the curb pitches shirts, maps and caps to passing cars.

Traffic is heavy. Lots of NOISE. Lots of cars filled with kids and families. A lone COP tries to direct traffic.

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

Jake cranks his reluctant engine. Eyes shut. Muttering encouragement. Three, four, five tries. Then it RUMBLES to life.

INT. AL'S OFFICE - DAY

Al sits at his desk. Folding chairs have been set up.

Seated: Betsy, Franklin, Ted, Willow, Ralph Romano, and Ensign Day. Jake is notably absent.

A new face in the crowd: construction company exec WALT BARBER, a stocky tanned man in his late fifties.

Everybody's got a can of soda.

RALPH

Meet the new guy on our side:
Walt Barber, owner of Barber
Marine Construction.

BARBER

We've been doing delta excavation
and land reclamation for years.
Depending on what you need, we got
men and equipment ready to help.

RALPH

Thanks, Walt. Okay. How's the
whale doing?

BETSY

Not good. He's stopped feeding.
And the toxic water's taking a
toll. He's gotta be moved. Soon.

EXT. SHAG SLOUGH - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

Jake is on his boat. South side of the NOISY Liberty Island Bridge. Over on the north side, Humphrey BLOWS. Jake looks up from his depth-scanner device.

JAKE

I hear you, pal. You wanna know
what I'm doing? Why don't you
come under that bridge and see.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Swimming in his quiet world.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE'S POV

The narrowly-spaced pilings supporting the bridge. In the murky water, it's hard to see. The whale makes a pass by the bridge -- there's DEBRIS between the pilings: rotting wood, 55-gallon drums, an old washing machine. Junk.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake checks the depth-scanner. Something catches his eye.

JAKE
Bingo. Maybe.

INT. AL'S OFFICE - DAY

The meeting continues. Fred Stern enters, looking angry. But doesn't join the group. He hangs near the door. Betsy glares at him.

BETSY
How's the deathwatch, Stern?

STERN
I don't know what Romano said or who he said it to. But I just got word from Washington. NIMFIS is going to pay the tab.

There's a moment of stunned silence. Then CHEERS erupt. Except Betsy. She waves to halt the celebration.

BETSY
And the catch is -- ?

STERN
No catch. Requests for payment or reimbursement go through me. This rescue operation is fully funded... for now.

JAKE (O.S.)
Then I'm back in.

Jake enters.

JAKE
And I think I got something we can use.

Jake grabs six soda cans. Lines them up on Al's desk. Then he grabs a couple of books and lays them flat atop the cans. The others watch.

FRANKLIN
What's that supposed to be?

WILLOW
Liberty Island Bridge?

JAKE
Bingo.

Everyone gathers around the desk for Jake's demonstration.

JAKE

Support pilings. Twelve, maybe fifteen feet apart. Tight squeeze for a whale. Right?

STERN

Yeah, but he obviously went through 'em once.

JAKE

So why won't he go back the way he came?

STERN

Who knows? Maybe you're looking for a reason that isn't there.

JAKE

Bull. Whales think, don't they?

TED

Well, we think they do. We may not understand 'em. But they do seem to behave rationally, within the context of their existence and environment.

JAKE

I'll take that as a yes. So we gotta think like a whale. If I'm Humphrey, what's stopping me?

WILLOW

Maybe he got hurt going through the first time?

BETSY

Hurt by what?

JAKE

Underwater debris. Not to mention some of the old wooden pilings. They're broken off, sticking up like booby traps.

BARBER

I can get a crew out there at dawn. We'll give Humphrey a clear path.

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - JAKE'S BOAT - NIGHT

Jake sits in a deck chair. Feet up. Beer in hand. Puffing a cigar. Bobby approaches on the dock, comes aboard. Gets a beer, and takes a seat.

BOBBY

Hey, man. You sure look relaxed for the "admiral of the fleet."

JAKE

Don't believe everything you see. I haven't felt this wound-up since Vietnam. Crazy place. Never knew who's gonna shoot at you. Or from where. If you thought about it too much...

BOBBY

How could you not think about it?

JAKE

Maybe that's why so many vets ended up on booze. Or drugs.

BOBBY

Or cigars?

JAKE

That's where I smoked my first Cuban.

Jake offers a cigar. Bobby makes a face.

BOBBY

Ugh. No thanks. My dad smoked cigars. Stunk up the house real good.

JAKE

Great way to relax. And contemplate the way of the world. Especially when you're about to be up to your ass in alligators.

BOBBY

You didn't have to go back to this whale thing.

JAKE

I don't know. Kind of felt like I did.

BOBBY

I told ya you'd get caught up in it.

JAKE

Maybe it's karma.

BOBBY

Huh?

JAKE

I've drifted up a few dead-end channels in my time. Something always came along to get me going again. I figure Humphrey deserves the same chance.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND BRIDGE - NIGHT

Betsy at her night-watch station on the north walkway of the bridge. She's got a lawn chair with a sleeping bag. A cooler and a thermos within easy reach.

Betsy leans on the rail. And sips a cup of hot coffee. She watches Humphrey swimming in lazy circles. He PUFFS out an occasional breath.

BETSY

Just you and me tonight, buddy. I'll bet neither one of us gets any sleep. You didn't seem to mind that dredging crew cleaning out all that trash today. Is that what you've been waiting for -- maid service?

The whale lets out an angry BELLOW.

BETSY

Hey, don't yell at me. I'm not the one who swam where he doesn't belong. You got any idea how many people are trying to help you?

Humphrey makes a QUIET NOISE. A soulful, plaintive CRY.

BETSY

I wish we understood each other.

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - DOCK - DAY

Near Jake's boat. Bobby and a dozen other SAILORS of various ages and descriptions have gathered. Jake and Al brief them.

AL

Top priority -- safety.

JAKE

Humphrey's one thing when you see him from shore. But in the water, up close, you're gonna think you're looking at a nuclear sub. He's capable of smashing any of us into driftwood, if he had a mind to. But I don't think he does, not on purpose anyway. So let's make sure nothing happens by accident. Okay. That's it. Good luck. And let's sail.

The group breaks up. The sailors head for their boats.

EXT. MARINA - HARBOR - DAY

Jake's boat leads Bobby and six other boats into the main river channel.

Jake and Bobby fly their Bass Association flags. Each boat also carries a couple of VOLUNTEERS, armed with Oikomi pipes.

EXT. RIVER/SHAG SLOUGH - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

In the water, Humphrey circles, BLOWS.

WHALE POV underwater.

Hundreds of SPECTATORS watch from both shores. NEWS CREWS stake out good locations. Broadcast-news mobile-remote vans are parked on both sides of the waterway.

STATE TROOPERS (with cop cars) do traffic and crowd control.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND BRIDGE/WATER - DAY

Callie walks up one end of the bridge with Ralph Romano. Bear and his camera track with them, taping. AMBIENT NOISE all around.

ROMANO

The Rescue Foundation came up with the idea. If they get Humphrey to swim outta here, they wanted something to discourage him from swimming back in again.

Twenty TEENAGED KIDS stand at the railing along the south side of the bridge. All wear T-shirts emblazoned with the words CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORPS. Rolls of heavy clear-plastic sheeting have been fixed to the railing.

CALLIE

So that's where this comes in?
You've got rolls of plastic
sheeting rigged to the rail?

ROMANO

Yep. Once the whale comes under
the bridge, these volunteers from the
California Conservation Corps are
gonna drop the plastic over the side,
like a humongous shower curtain.

The rescue fleet approaches the bridge from the south.

CALLIE

Thank you, Ralph Romano, State
Office of Emergency Services. Now
the boats are arriving at the bridge.

Jake's boat leads five boats to the bridge. Two others wait
south of the bridge.

Jake eases very slowly through the tight space between
bridge pilings. His boat SCRAPES a piling. He winces at
the SOUND.

UNDERWATER - WHALE'S POV

Boats slip between the pilings, into Humphrey's part of Shag
Slough.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake at the wheel. Al stands next to him. Willow sits at
the stern, with an Oikomi pipe. Betsy flits, trying to keep
the best view of the whale.

JAKE

Even if Humphrey folds those wings
of his, he's still gonna scrape
the bridge.

EXT. WATER/SHORE - VARIOUS SHOTS

Choreography. The whale swims slowly before the boats. The
boats pass the whale. The boats form a shore-to-shore semi-
circle at the north end of Shag Slough. They've got the
whale between boats and bridge.

Humphrey doesn't challenge the boats. He swims back and
forth, giving an occasional HUFF and SPOUT.

Every time Humphrey makes a noise, SPECTATORS CHEER.
 Jake's boat leaves the formation. And edges slowly toward
 the whale.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake picks up his radio mike.

JAKE
 Whale One to Bandleader. You
 ready?

BOBBY'S BOAT/OTHER BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS

Bobby at the wheel. Radio mike in hand. He glances back at
 Ted holding his Oikomi pipe. Ted wears headphones to
 monitor underwater sound equipment at the back of the boat.

BOBBY
 Maestro?

TED
 Ready.

Ted holds his pipe overboard. Partially submerged. He
 holds his hammer high. Poised for the downbeat.

Aboard the other boats, VOLUNTEERS stand ready with their
 pipes and hammers.

Aboard Bobby's boat, Ted brings the hammer down. The pipe
 CLANGS. He begins a slow one-two-three cadence.

One by one, the other Oikomi-bangers join in. It takes a
 few cycles, but they soon match Ted's beat.

UNDERWATER - WHALE'S POV

The harsh PIPE-CLANGING resolves into an other-worldly,
 unison CHIMING that RINGS through the water.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Humphrey reacts to the continuous CHIMING. He does a slow
 one-eighty and swims away from the Oikomi boats.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake, Al and Betsy all see Humphrey swimming away from the
 semi-circle of boats at the north end of the slough.

AL
Well, I'll be. He's headin'
for the bridge.

JAKE
Time to give him a little push.

BETSY
Not too close, Finnegan.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Jake's boat angles toward the whale like a cautious tugboat. Humphrey continues toward the bridge...away from the CHIMING behind him.

Jake, Betsy and Al watch the whale.

AL
This is actually working.

JAKE
Don't pop any corks yet.

AERIAL POV

As Jake's boat herds the whale. The whale continues toward the bridge. And the semi-circle of back-up boats moves in slow formation behind Jake's boat.

EXT. SHORE/SHAG SLOUGH/JAKE'S BOAT - VARIOUS SHOTS

Among the SPECTATORS are a pair of RANCH-HANDS: MARIANO, grizzled, with an old straw cowboy hat; and FLOYD, 25, wearing a heavy-metal-band T-shirt and camouflage hat.

Mariano watches with interest. Floyd squints. Callie and Bear observe and tape from the bridge.

CALLIE
C'mon, baby. Go. Go.

The bridge looms. Humphrey swims. And just a few yards from the bridge, Humphrey makes a sharp right turn.

Callie groans in disappointment. So does the crowd.

Jake swears under his breath.

JAKE (into mike)
Whale One to all boats. Regroup.
Let's try it again.

VARIOUS SHOTS

The boats try the same strategy. Four more times. Jake's boat nudges the whale toward the bridge. The whale makes a sharp right turn every time he gets to the bridge.

Jake and Betsy ARGUE about tightening the formation and putting extra pressure on Humphrey. REACTIONS: frustration from Jake, Betsy, Ted and others.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake, on his radio.

JAKE

Whale One to all boats. We're running out of daylight. Let's try one for the road.

As the boats jockey into formation, Jake looks at Al.

JAKE

Have you noticed every time Humphrey gets close to the bridge, he hangs a sharp right?

AL

Yeah. But does it mean anything?

Jake shrugs.

VARIOUS SHOTS

The boats repeat their dance. Humphrey does his part. He gets up to the bridge. And turns right.

JAKE

Hold the phone. He's not circling around.

Betsy looks alarmed.

BETSY

Oh no.

Humphrey swims -- straight for shore at the west end of the bridge.

Callie and Bear watch from their vantage point. Bear shoots.

CALLIE

Jeez. What's he doing?

THE WHALE

Plows into a sandbar. And beaches himself. His massive body is half out of the water.

VARIOUS SHOTS

The CROWD hushes in horror. Mariano and Floyd watch.

Jake, Betsy and others realize what's happened. After a moment, Jake grabs his radio mike:

JAKE

Pull back! Give him some room.

THE WHALE

Breathing heavily. He rests on the sandbar. And makes no move to free himself.

VARIOUS SHOTS

The boats wait. Still blocking Humphrey's path to the north. Everybody watches. Silence, except for Humphrey's BREATHING. Callie and Bear move for a better angle.

CALLIE

What is with that whale?

BEAR'S CAMERA POV

On the beached whale. ZOOMING progressively closer. Right in on Humphrey's eye, now above the water.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Finally, Humphrey stirs. His fins and tail churn the water. Jake, Betsy and others watch. REACTIONS: mixed dread and hope.

Humphrey slides back into deeper water. The CROWD CHEERS!

Mariano waves his hat over his head. But Floyd points his finger at the whale, like a gun. He squints. Aims. Squeezes off a "shot." And mouths a silent "bang."

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - NIGHT

At the dock. Jake, Betsy, Ted, Willow, Al, Mike Krikorian and Fred Stern gathered on Jake's boat. Arguing about the day's near-disaster.

BETSY
I told you! You were too close
to him!

JAKE
Too close?! If we gave him any
more leeway --

BETSY
Anybody could see he was stressed
to the breaking point!

AL
Speaking of stressed, maybe we --

JAKE
Hey, I got one. Where does a
forty-ton humpback take a break?

TED
Anywhere he wants.

BETSY
This is not a joke.

JAKE
What if maybe Humphrey knew
exactly what he was doing?

BETSY
What's that supposed to mean?

JAKE
Maybe he was trying to scare us
away. Maybe he just wanted a rest.

TED
The whale's calling the shots.

JAKE
For now.

MIKE
I know I wasn't there. So I
don't know what happened. But
just in case the whale didn't
respond the way we'd hoped, I
had my staff do some checking.

TED

On what?

MIKE

Removing the bridge.

Everyone stares at Mike. Stunned.

JAKE

With all due respect, Mike,
are you nuts?

TED

That does sound kind of extreme.

BETSY

Maybe not.

MIKE

Transportation Department says the
bridge is due for replacement in a
year anyway. They could move that
up. Demolition would take two days.

WILLOW

And make a lot of noise. Humphrey
could totally freak.

MIKE

I'm just saying it's an option.

STERN

And who's gonna pay the tab?

BETSY

Don't start that again.

STERN

Dr. Bertolino, NIMFIS is not
a perpetual cash fountain.

JAKE

Hey, folks. We still got a whale
where he shouldn't be. What we
did today worked, up to a point.

AL

So what do we do tomorrow?

JAKE

We push Humphrey toward the west
end. That's where the bridge is
highest, and the water's deepest.
And we tighten the formation.

BETSY
 Fine. But I'm not responsible
 for what happens.

JAKE
 Nobody says you are, darlin'.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHAG SLOUGH/BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Humphrey surfaces and BLOWS. Like a signal that he's ready.
 He swims a lazy circle between the boats in formation and
 the bridge. SUPERIMPOSE:

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25

On Jake's boat, Jake, Al and Betsy crowd the cockpit.

JAKE (into mike)
 Whale One to fleet. Commence
 operation.

The PIPE-BANGING starts. Jake's boat herds Humphrey toward
 the west end of the bridge.

For a few moments, the whale cooperates. Then he starts his
 right turn early. Heading for the shore.

JAKE
 Not this time, pal.

Jake gooses his engine slightly.

BETSY
 What're you doing?

AL
 Cuttin' him off at the pass?

Jake maneuvers his boat between Humphrey and the sandbar/
 shallows where he beached himself yesterday.

JAKE
 I'll be damned if he's gonna
 pull that beaching stunt again.

BETSY
 He can go right through us.

JAKE
 If he wants.

BETSY

You have a death wish?!

JAKE

He's gotta learn we're not gonna be pushovers.

BETSY

If we live through this, you're fired.

Jake ignores her. He angles right into Humphrey's path. Humphrey continues slowly toward the shallows. Jake jockeys the boat to stay in the way.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE'S POV

The bottom and flank of Jake's boat. Dead ahead.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Swimming head-on.

VARIOUS SHOTS

On Jake's boat: Jake, Willow and Al in the cockpit. Betsy at the rail. The boat jockeys. The whale swims. Collision course. Ten feet from the inevitable, Humphrey veers to his right and swims away from the bridge.

On Jake's boat, people breathe again.

BETSY

Don't get too relaxed. He's coming around again.

The confrontation repeats. Jake keeps his boat in Humphrey's way. Again, at the last moment, the whale veers off.

But this time, he gives the water a BOOMING SLAP with his long pectoral fin. And sends up a huge plume of water.

JAKE

What does that mean?

BETSY

He's getting mad.

Humphrey swims around for yet another confrontation. Neither Jake nor the whale will yield. Humphrey stays his course.

INTERCUT as needed.

JAKE

Uh-ohh.

Humphrey submerges. And keeps going.

On JAKE'S BOAT, Jake knows what's coming.

JAKE

Everybody hit the deck. Brace
for collision.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE'S POV

At the final instant, veering away from direct collision.
Humphrey sideswipes the boat.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

As they get BUMPED. The boat rocks. Quickly and violently.
Everybody REACTS and grabs onto something.

They see Humphrey surface. Swimming away from Jake's boat.

BETSY

That was a warning.

JAKE

Or a signal.

BETSY

Of what?

JAKE

That he's not in a fighting mood.
He made a choice. He could've
rammed us. But he didn't.

WILLOW

Maybe he knows we're trying to
help him.

JAKE (into mike)

Whale One to Whale Six -- Hector,
you mind moving to the west bank
to block that sandbar?

HECTOR'S VOICE (radio)

Affirmative, Whale One.

MONTAGE

VARIOUS SHOTS as the boats, in slightly tighter formation, try herding the whale to the bridge.

The results, through four attempts, are the same: Complete frustration.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake and Betsy. Nerves frayed.

JAKE (into mike)
Whale One to all boats. Take it from the top. But we're gonna tighten the noose another ten yards.

BETSY
You're already too close.

JAKE
We got no choice.

EXT. SHAG SLOUGH - THE BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS

The boats tighten the formation. Jake's boat moves closer to the whale. The whale veers away from the boat.

Jake pursues him. Betsy watches the whale's every move. She doesn't like what she sees. She confronts Jake.

BETSY
You're hounding him.

JAKE
I don't care.

BETSY
You do not wanna get him mad.

Jake opens his mouth to argue back. At that moment, Willow SHRIEKS O.S. All eyes turn to see --

-- WAY too close to Jake's boat, Humphrey rears up out of the water. BREACHING! Humphrey spins in mid-air. And CRASHES back into the water with a THUNDERING SOUND.

A mini-tidal wave SPLASHES over Jake's boat. The boat rocks violently. Jake recovers quickly:

JAKE (into mike)
Everybody! Back two hundred yards! Now!

THE BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS

The boats retreat northward. Leaving Humphrey plenty of space to swim between the boats and the bridge.

Jake pulls alongside Bobby's boat.

Bobby's crew includes Franklin, Mike and Ted. Franklin tosses a line to Al. They tie the boats together. The two crews confer across the railings. Betsy whacks Jake's shoulder.

BETSY

That stunt could've got people killed!

TED

Maybe that's what Humphrey wants us to think. He's conditioning us. And we're letting him.

BETSY

What are you talking about?

TED

If he thinks we'll back off every time he raises a ruckus, this operation's as dead as that whale's going to be if we don't alter this equation.

Jake watches as the discussion degenerates into argument.

MIKE

How do we do that?

FRANKLIN

By being firm with him.

BETSY

You mean harassing him.

TED

Would you rather see him die stuck right here?

BETSY

We don't know his health status. What if pressuring him kills him while we're trying to save him?

Jake stops the talk with a short BLAAAAT from a hand-held air-horn. Everyone turns to stare at him.

JAKE

We've gotta move this whale.
And we gotta move him now.

BETSY

How, "Admiral"?

JAKE

By letting him know he's not
intimidating us.

MIKE

But he is intimidating us.

JAKE

That's why, from here on, this
operation is totally voluntary.
We keep the tight formation --
with one difference. Me and one
other boat'll be nipping at his
heels like a couple of sheepdogs.

BOBBY

Who's the other sheepdog?

JAKE

You, if you wanna be.

Bobby thinks for a couple of beats.

BOBBY

Cool. I'm in.

Jake addresses the people on both boats.

JAKE

We all saw what Humphrey can do.
We'll be risking our lives, folks.
So if anybody wants out, speak up.
Nobody'll think any less of you.

The crews on both boats glance at each other. No false
bravado here. They're nervous. But they're staying.

JAKE

Okay. Everybody but me and Bobby,
stay down. And grab something
solid. Bobby, you take his
starboard side. I'll take port.

THE BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS

The back-up boats tighten their semi-circle formation. The
PIPE-BANGING starts again.

Jake and Bobby edge their boats into position. Side by side. 30 yards apart.

Humphrey swims in a tight circle between the bridge and Jake and Bobby's boats.

JAKE (into mike)
Hang loose, Bobby. Let him get used to hearing two engines off his stern.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Humphrey swims slowly. And listens to the THRUMMING of two engines behind him.

THE BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS

Jake and Bobby jockey their boats closer together. And closer to the whale. Nudging him toward the right/west end of the bridge.

SPECTATORS onshore watch in silence. So do REPORTERS.

JAKE (into mike)
Keep closing, Roberto. I want us about ten yards apart.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Moving slowly. Watching the boats.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Betsy hunkers in the cabin near Jake. She keeps peeking over the side to keep an eye on the whale.

BETSY
You're getting him angled toward the bridge.

JAKE
That's the idea.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Jake and Bobby have their boats 10 yards apart. Facing the bridge, now about 100 feet ahead of them. Humphrey surfaces between the boats. His front half is ahead of them. He floats there. And lets out a BLOW.

JAKE (into mike)
Looks like we got ourselves a
whale sandwich, Bobby.

Ever so gently, Humphrey drifts to one side. And BUMPS Bobby's boat. Then he drifts the other way. And bumps Jake's boat.

JAKE
Okay, Humphrey, old pal. You
don't seem to mind us here.

HECTOR'S VOICE (radio)
Uhh, Whale Six to Whale One. You
know you got a whale under you?

Jake and Betsy share a momentary grin.

BETSY
No kidding.

JAKE (into mike)
Roger that, Whale Six. No
problem...so far.

The boats idle less than 20 feet apart. Humphrey floats just ahead of them. Barely 30 feet from the bridge.

JAKE (into mike)
Okay, Cap'n Lopez. He's aimed right
where we want him. You in neutral?

BOBBY (radio)
Roger, Cap'n Finnegan.

ON THE BRIDGE

Ralph Romano and his teenage volunteers crouch at the south railing. Ready to unfurl the plastic curtain.

ROMANO
Everybody -- ready!

VARIOUS SHOTS

With one hand, Jake caresses his throttle.

JAKE (into mike)
On my mark. Five, four, three,
two, one -- goose 'im.

Jake pushes his throttle. So does Bobby. Their engines REV. But the boats, in neutral, hold position.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Humphrey HEARS the sudden VROOOM of the engines. With a powerful stroke of his tail, he darts ahead. Toward the opening between bridge pilings.

VARIOUS SHOTS

As Jake and Betsy react with anxious hope. So do spectators and Callie onshore. The Oikomi volunteers stop pipe-banging.

In the water, between the pilings, Humphrey suddenly rolls on his side. His giant pectoral fin waves in the air. Then he twists frantically. Water SPLASHES everywhere.

Betsy's expression turns to horror.

BETSY

Oh my God. He's stuck.

BOBBY'S VOICE (radio)

Whale One -- should we pull back?

JAKE (into mike)

Negative. He can make it through.
He's gotta go through.

EXT. THE BRIDGE - VARIOUS SHOTS

The bridge SHAKES. The kids and Ralph Romano panic! Not sure whether to hit the deck or run. Instead, they freeze.

THE WHALE

Thrashing. Almost lost in the wild water.

VARIOUS SHOTS

The bridge: still shaking. Romano and the kids: some lie on their bellies. Others clutch each other. Or the railing. Like an earthquake, the shaking only lasts a few seconds.

As suddenly as it began, it stops. The bridge is still. The water between the pilings settles. But --
Where's Humphrey!?!?!?

Romano on the bridge peers over the south railing. So do some of the bridge kids.

For several long beats, there's barely a sound from land or water. Then comes a familiar NOISE: a loud WHALE BLOW. All eyes whip toward the source of the sound -- and find Humphrey swimming...SOUTH OF THE BRIDGE!

ROMANO

There he is! He made it!

Jake, Betsy, Bobby and their boat crews react with CHEERS and hugs. Shoreline spectators CHEER. It sounds like Humphrey just won the World Series!

Callie and all the news people CHEER as they run to get better views of the whale.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake and Betsy grin as they listen to the other boats BLOW their HORNS. Jake grabs his mike.

JAKE

Whale One to all boats. Follow us.
Get those pipes going again. It's
still a long way to Tipperary.

VARIOUS SHOTS

As the boats pass under the bridge. Humphrey swims ahead of them. Finally headed in the right direction.

Romano rushes to the south rail. The kids stand ready. The last boat emerges from under the bridge.

The kids do their job. The plastic rolls unfurl perfectly. Their bottom edges hit the water. The kids CHEER.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake and Betsy stand side by side. Watching Humphrey swim ahead. The whale BLOWS. Jake grins. Betsy's grim.

JAKE

Man, look at him go!

BETSY

That's only the first bridge.

JAKE

Thank you, Voice of Doom.

EXT. SHORE ROAD - DAY

Cars head down the narrow road to follow the action. HORNS HONK. Like New Year's and July Fourth all in one.

One lone COP tries to direct traffic. A pointless exercise. The cop laughs. Throws his hands up. And waves everybody on with a grand gesture of defeat.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Humphrey leads the boats downstream. Past crowds of CHEERING SPECTATORS. The river widens out. As these SHOTS DISSOLVE one into the next, they become VIDEO FOOTAGE --

INT. DIANA'S PUB - BAR - NIGHT

-- viewed on the TV set over the bar in Diana's Pub. Jake, Bobby, Al, Ted and Betsy sit at the bar. Surrounded by a throng of WELL-WISHERS.

On TV, the images of the whale, boats and crowds are replaced by Callie's flood-lit image. She does a live stand-up with the Rio Vista Bridge as her backdrop.

CALLIE (on TV)

That's what it looked like this afternoon. All for one whale -- and the dedicated people working their hearts out to save him. They stopped at nightfall, just short of this bridge at Rio Vista. Still some fifty-five miles from the ocean. Today was a breakthrough. But Operation Whale Rescue still has a long way to go.

EXT. SHORE ROAD - LIBERTY ISLAND - DAY

EARLY MORNING. The infamous Liberty Island Bridge is visible in the distance. A battered pick-up truck idles just off the narrow road running along Cache Slough. Engine running. Driver's door open. SUPERIMPOSE:

SATURDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 26

Mariano the grizzled ranch-hand stands a couple of yards away. His back to the truck. Peeing into the brush. Mariano zips up, ambles back toward the truck, mumbling:

MARIANO

Shoulda gone before I left.

As he gets into the truck, he HEARS a strange SOUND from the waterway. The sound of a whale BLOW.

Mariano scuttles to the water. And sees Humphrey swimming sedately -- upstream...TOWARD THE BRIDGE. Humphrey BLOWS again. As if to say howdy. Mariano reacts with alarm.

MARIANO
Jesus Christ! You're going the
wrong way, you crazy whale!

Humphrey SNORTS. Mariano rushes back to the truck. Grabs a rusty metal tool box from the bed. Opens it and dumps out the tools. He grabs a hammer and the empty toolbox. And runs back to the water's edge, just ahead of the whale.

He BANGS on the toolbox. Yelling like a madman.

MARIANO
Turn around, you moron! You been
here already! There's nothin'
worth seein' twice! What is with
you, you stupid --

Mariano suddenly stops. And gapes in astonishment.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Humphrey makes a stately u-turn. AWAY from the dreaded bridge.

EXT. SHORE - MARIANO AND THE WHALE

Mariano cackles joyfully. Humphrey heads back downstream, Mariano chases along the shore after him. Still BANGING.

MARIANO
Go home, Humphrey! Go home!

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

At the dock. Jake, Betsy and Willow take care of last-minute preparations. They hear a KNOCK on the side of the boat. They see grim-faced Fred Stern standing on the dock.

STERN
He almost got all the way back
to Liberty Island Bridge.

JAKE
Yeah. But he didn't.

STERN

Thanks to some ranch-hand.

JAKE

You got a point, Fred?

Stern steps aboard the boat.

STERN

We can't afford the luxury of
one step forward, two back.

Betsy opens her mouth to argue. But Jake jumps in:

JAKE

Fine. You riding with us today?

STERN

If you don't mind.

Betsy glares at Stern. Stern glares back.

JAKE

This should be fun. Make yourself
useful, Fred. Untie us.

EXT. RIVER/JAKE'S BOAT - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Jake's boat motors upriver. The waterway is much wider here.

Then Jake and his crew get their first glimpse of an 80-foot-long Coast Guard cutter. Jake grins.

JAKE

Hey. Al Conrad finally got us
a boat bigger than Humphrey.

The small back-up boats slip into semi-circle formation. Humphrey swims peacefully. Lets out an occasional HUFF.

Jake and Bobby edge their boats in just behind the whale.

On Bobby's boat, Ted starts BANGING his pipe. The other PIPE-BANGERS join in. And the operation herds cooperative Humphrey toward the Rio Vista Bridge.

Lots of spectators CHEER from shore. Today, the vehicles parked near the river include big yellow school busses. The weekend CROWD includes a lot more kids.

Suddenly, an EXPLOSIVE BOOM shatters the festive morning. Like a cannon BLAST.

Spectators duck. Startled boat crews stop pipe-banging. Seconds later, there's a second BOOM.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake, Betsy and Willow search for the source.

JAKE
What the hell was that?

Only Fred Stern seems unperturbed. Even a little furtive. Jake notices. And he glares. Stern glares right back.

STERN
They're cracker shells. Just noisemakers.

BETSY
Who fired 'em?

STERN
One of my agents. We got jurisdiction --

BETSY
You son of a bitch! Who the hell said you could fire explosives at the whale!?

STERN
They're harmless. Experts told me --

BETSY
Experts?!

STERN
-- told me the noise might push the whale along.

BETSY
Experts!? Try morons! What if the whale spooked and crashed a boat?!

STERN
Maybe you forgot who's paying for this operation. If our people say this might work --

Jake gets in Stern's face.

JAKE

I don't give a hoot who's paying the bills. If you do anything without consulting the rest of us again, me and all these boats'll pull out so fast it'll make your head spin.

BOBBY'S VOICE (radio)

Whale Two to Whale One. We got a problem, man.

Jake grabs his mike.

JAKE

What?

BOBBY'S VOICE (radio)

Humphrey's just run aground. A shoal off the east shore.

Jake wants to kill Stern. Betsy looks like she will.

BETSY

Thanks to your harmless noisemakers.

STERN

You don't know what caused --

BETSY

I can take a pretty good guess! Your explosions disoriented him!

JAKE

Don't make it worse than it is.

Betsy whacks Stern across the shoulder.

BETSY

No, that's his job!

JAKE

Humphrey's beached before. We have no idea what makes him --

BETSY

Are you defending this guy?

JAKE

I'm not defending anybody --

Betsy jabs Jake's chest with her finger.

BETSY

'Cause if you are, you can get
out of this operation right now!

JAKE

Calm down.

BETSY

I don't want to calm down!

JAKE

Fine.

With no warning, Jake slings a startled Betsy over his shoulder in a fireman's carry. Before she can react, he squeezes her through the hatch and down into the cabin. Then he dumps her on one of the sleeping berths.

BETSY

Who the hell do you think -- ?!

JAKE

On this boat, I'm the law.
What Stern did was idiotic --

BETSY

This isn't over.

JAKE

On dry land, you and Stern can do
pistols at ten paces. On my boat,
there'll be order. If you can't
abide by that, I'll confine you to
this cabin.

BETSY

You and what army?

Suddenly, they HEAR CHEERS from on deck. And onshore.
Willow appears in the cabin hatchway.

WILLOW

He's swimming again!

Jake and Betsy rush up on deck. They see Humphrey swimming
a "victory lap." The whale lets out a lusty BLOW.

JAKE

What a ham.

(into mike)

Whale One to all boats. Let's
get this show on the road.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Humphrey swims strongly. Closely followed by Jake and Bobby's boats. And the CHIMING of the Oikomi pipes behind.

EXT. RIO VISTA BRIDGE - THE BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

As the draw-bridge's gates come down. The center section raises. Up. Up. Way up. Nearly a hundred feet up.

INTERCUT with the boats and Humphrey closing on the bridge. The ends of the bridge are crowded with SPECTATORS. Police cars block both ends of the bridge.

The boats are REALLY CLOSE to Humphrey's flanks. He slaps his tail on the water -- and he passes under the bridge.

The CROWD CHEERS. The boats BLOW their HORNS in response. And Humphrey keeps swimming.

Jake flashes "thumbs-up" to Bobby.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Near Decker Island. Jake's boat and three others are anchored nearby. The SOUND of four PIPE-BANGERS ECHOES eerily across the water.

EXT. SHORE - NIGHT

Callie does a live stand-up with the river behind her.

CALLIE

...so tonight's rest stop is just off Decker Island. Ironically, this is the first place Humphrey beached himself, eleven days ago. In hopes of keeping the whale from doubling back upriver during the night, four rescue boats are on nightwatch...

EXT. RIVER - UNDERWATER - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Humphrey hangs lazily in his QUIET WATER. Boat-bottoms -- in formation -- approach from his rear. Two of the boats -- Jake's and Bobby's -- close in on the whale.

OIKOMI PIPES lower into the water. The BANGING starts. It quickly resolves into the eerie and beautiful CHIMING.

MONTAGE-IMAGES of BOATS, CREWS, WHALE AND SPECTATORS show the day's work. In synch now, Humphrey and his escorts head steadily downstream.

Shoreline CROWDS along the route are even bigger. There's a parade atmosphere as they CHEER the passing rescue fleet.

INTERCUT with a MAP of the region. And a MOVING LINE showing the day's progress from the north end of Decker Island down to a town called PITTSBURG.

As this sequence ends, Jake's boat rests at anchor. Jake and Betsy sit near the stern and gaze at a FIERY SUNSET.

JAKE

Good day's work.

Betsy doesn't say anything. She doesn't have to. She looks happy. Like she truly believes -- maybe for the first time -- that this crazy rescue is about to succeed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

Anchored. Jake, Betsy and Willow wait. Grim as can be. Al approaches on a small Coast Guard launch. Pulls alongside Jake's boat. Al's face hints at bad news. SUPERIMPOSE:

MONDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 28

AL

We found him.

JAKE

How bad?

AL

Fourteen miles -- all the way back to Decker Island.

JAKE

Jeez. Every inch of what we covered yesterday.

Betsy and Willow look crushed.

EXT. COAST GUARD STATION - DAY

On the front steps. Al, Betsy, Ted and Jake stand at a makeshift podium. At least twenty REPORTERS (print, radio, TV) surround them.

Callie and Bear stand at the front of the press gang. And the reporters seem as subdued as the rescuers.

BETSY
Obviously, this is a setback.

CALLIE
How many weekend boats and volunteers have you lost?

BETSY
How many? Well... there're private boats. Boats from various government agencies. So...it's hard to say.

Jake can't stand it any more. He leans into the mikes.

JAKE
We lost all but two. Maybe three.

Betsy is stunned by Jake's bluntness. He shrugs.

JAKE
No point in sugarcoating it.

CALLIE
So where does that leave the rescue operation?

Before anyone can answer, Fred Stern elbows through the crowd of reporters. And takes his place at the mikes.

STERN
I'm Fred Stern. National Marine Fisheries Service. I've got an announcement. Due to the...uhh... eccentric nature of this whale, and the fact that there's no way to control where he goes at night, Federal government involvement in this rescue is being suspended.

Betsy, Al, Ted and Jake look stunned. So do the reporters. Then the reporters CLAMOR for answers.

CALLIE
You mean terminated?

STERN
Don't put words in my mouth.

CALLIE
Does that mean NIMFIS might get back into this thing?

Stern strides away from the podium. Reporters pursue him toward his car. He refuses comment. Others clamor for reaction from Jake and Betsy, who trail Stern.

CHUBBY MALE REPORTER
Did the rest of you know about this?

JAKE
Hell, no!

BETSY
How can you do this!? We're finally getting somewhere!

STERN
You're never gonna be able to save that whale.

BETSY
How can you stop it now?!?

Stern gets to his car. Instead of diving in, he turns back to face Betsy and the press.

STERN
I'm just --

BETSY
-- doing your job, right?

Stern gets into the car. Starts it. Betsy kicks the car's rear fender as Stern pulls away.

EXT. CHARLIE KRAFT'S OFFICE TOWER - DAY

High-rent, high-rise.

INT. CHARLIE KRAFT'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Betsy confronts Kraft.

BETSY
We're the last hope that whale's got. Authorize the money, Charlie!

KRAFT
For what -- the same dance you've been doing for weeks?

BETSY
There's no instruction manual for saving a humpback whale. But we finally know what works.

KRAFT

"One step forward, ten back" isn't working, Bets.

BETSY

We just need time --

KRAFT

Time you got. Money, you don't.

BETSY

Saving animals is what we do.

KRAFT

Animals -- plural. You're not seeing the big picture.

BETSY

Yes, I am. And there's a whale in it. A really big whale.

KRAFT

And nobody was rooting for that whale more than me --

BETSY

Call a meeting. Let me talk to the Board.

KRAFT

The Board's decision is final.

BETSY

So what am I supposed to say to reporters? Or a bunch of first-graders tomorrow, when they ask why we gave up on Humphrey?

KRAFT

Don't say anything. In fact, I want you to lay low for a while. 'Til this thing is done.

BETSY

You mean, 'til the whale's dead.

KRAFT

And cancel that school visit.

BETSY

What?! Are you trying to gag me?!

KRAFT

I'm just trying to save the
Foundation -- and you -- from
any more public embarrassment.

BETSY

I have every right to say anything
I want to whoever I want --

KRAFT

As an American citizen, you sure
do. As an employee of this
Foundation, you don't.

BETSY

What if I don't agree? You gonna
fire me?

Kraft just looks at her. His silence speaks volumes.

BETSY

You wouldn't dare.

Kraft remains silent.

BETSY

You bastard.

Betsy storms out.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Callie, in wet-suit and scuba gear, perches at the side of a
small motorboat. She holds an underwater video camera. And
she flops over and into the water.

EXT. UNDERWATER - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Callie swims cautiously. Air bubbles rise through filtered
sunlight. Then, out of the darkness below, the WHALE looms
up. He swims toward her -- and sweeps by, with a leisurely
majesty.

As Humphrey passes, Callie's eyes widen with amazement.
And they stay that way, as she and the whale swim a
deliberate pas de deux. Callie records what she sees.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

School is in session.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Betsy talks to a large group of FIRST-GRADERS. A ten-foot-long, kid-painted banner of Humphrey hangs from a rolling bulletin board on the low stage.

Two TEACHERS stand to one side of the room -- MRS. DIAZ is a plump woman of 60. MISS FALLON is 25. Betsy addresses MARCIE, a cute Latino girl.

BETSY

Well, we think singing is one of the ways whales talk to each other.

MARCIE

Can Humphrey hear his friends singing so far from home?

Unknown to Betsy, Charlie Kraft watches from the shadows at the back of the auditorium. He's not happy.

BETSY

We don't really know.

GILLIAN, a blonde girl, waves her hand. Betsy calls on her.

GILLIAN

Are you really going to be able to help Humphrey get home?

BETSY

We're trying our best.

MRS. DIAZ

That's all the time we have, children.

The kids GROAN in disappointment. Mrs. Diaz and Miss Fallon come to the front of the room.

MISS FALLON

Mrs. Diaz is right. Doctor Bertolino has to go back to help Humphrey.

MRS. DIAZ

Now, what do we say to guests?

KIDS

Thank you, Doctor Bertolino!

MISS FALLON

And -- ?

KIDS

Humphrey go home! Humphrey go home! Humphrey go home!!

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Betsy comes out. Kraft intercepts her.

KRAFT
You shoulda told 'em the truth.

BETSY
What -- that you've given up?

KRAFT
That there isn't always a happy ending. Sorry, Bets. As of now, you no longer speak for the Foundation. You got two weeks to clean out your office.

Betsy is too numb to react. Kraft walks away.

INT. JAKE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The doorbell RINGS. Jake opens the door to reveal four CHILDREN, aged 7 or 8, in Halloween costumes. A COWBOY. A BALLERINA. And boy-and-girl siblings are...WHALES.

Their homemade costumes combine black and white cloth. Their faces peek out where the whale mouth would be. And they flap their white "fins."

KIDS
Trick or treat!

The whales make Jake smile, despite his mood.

JAKE
Well, I'll be. One of you wouldn't be Humphrey, would ya?

BOY WHALE
Me! I am!

GIRL WHALE
I'm Humphrey's sister Jenny!

The kids hold their bags out. Jake drops candy in each bag.

BOTH WHALES
Thank you!

The kids run off to the next house. Jake shuts the door. And returns to the kitchen...

INT. JAKE'S KITCHEN

Jake watches the evening news on a small TV. Callie reports from the news desk. A Humphrey/map graphic is seen over her shoulder. Callie is subdued.

CALLIE (on TV)
 ...for the past four days, Humphrey
 has been spotted swimming aimlessly...

The TV picture changes to video of the river.

CALLIE (V.O.)
 ...along this stretch of river he
 seems to know well enough to avoid
 immediate trouble. Today, I swam
 with Humphrey. Why?

The picture changes again: Callie's underwater footage of the whale.

Jake watches with great interest.

CALLIE (continues)
 Because I overheard Dr. Betsy
 Bertolino talk about the majesty
 and grace of these whales. I wanted
 to see what she saw. And I wanted
 you to see it, too. For three weeks,
 this odd whale has beaten the odds.
 But great whales can't survive
 forever in small rivers. Humphrey
 and his ultimate fate seem to be
 in the same limbo as the suspended
 rescue operation.

INT. DIANA'S PUB - BAR - NIGHT

A quiet night. In a back corner, Jake shoots pool by himself and nurses a beer. Trophy animal heads and stuffed fish hang around the billiards table.

CALLIE (O.S.)
 Whoever she is, Diana has a strange
 notion of interior design.

Jake turns. Callie stands behind him, holding a beer. But she's not sure she's welcome. He gestures at the heads.

JAKE
 Goddess of the hunt.

CALLIE
 What?

JAKE

Diana. Goddess of the hunt. Not up on your Roman mythology?

CALLIE

And you are?

JAKE

Loved it when I was a kid. Came from looking at the stars. And learning about the constellations.

CALLIE

And you're thinking a reporter should know this stuff.

JAKE

No, ma'am.

Jake picks a ball. Sets. Shoots. Misses. Callie chalks up a spare cue. Jake invites her to take a turn. She picks a tough shot. And makes it. As they continue talking, Callie sinks shot after shot.

JAKE

So...was he really "swimming aimlessly?"

CALLIE

Or -- what? Was I lying?

JAKE

It's been known to happen.

CALLIE

You don't like the way I've covered this story?

JAKE

I didn't. But it's more than just a story to you now.

CALLIE

So what? Maybe it is. How about you? You start out a mercenary and turn into a reverse Captain Ahab.

JAKE

Yep. Both failures. He didn't kill his whale. And I didn't save mine.

Callie sinks the final tough shot. Jake looks impressed.

CALLIE

I have a good eye for angles.
Speaking of which...I heard Betsy
Bertolino got fired.

Jake REACTS: Speechless SHOCK.

EXT. RESCUE FOUNDATION BUILDING - NIGHT

Betsy's truck out front. Her office light on. Jake's truck
pulls up and parks.

INT. BETSY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A small, cluttered room with large windows. Piles of paper
everywhere. Shelves filled with binders, and books about
marine mammals.

On the wall: large framed photos of Betsy and others in
various rescue situations -- saving oil-coated otters, seals
and seabirds...

...in a motorized inflatable with other wet-suit clad
rescuers trying to cut a whale free of a fishing net...

...applying sunscreen salve to a beached pilot whale.

Betsy takes down the photos and adds them to a carton with
other belongings. Then she looks up. And sees Jake
standing in the doorway. Betsy keeps packing her stuff.

JAKE

How're you doing?

BETSY

Great. What do you want?

JAKE

I just thought you might --

BETSY

I wouldn't follow orders. They
had every right to fire me.

JAKE

This stinks, y'know.

BETSY

When I was a kid, I found this
baby bird that fell out of a nest.

JAKE

Let me guess: you saved it.

BETSY

No. But I tried. I guess it's taken me this long to learn that some lost causes really are lost. And that's what really stinks.

JAKE

Last time I looked, Humphrey was still swimming. Now, I don't know if we -- or anybody -- can save him. But I do know this: I never did anything by saying I couldn't.

BETSY

Great speech. But there's no money. And you're the guy who said you can't work for free.

JAKE

I got bills to pay.

BETSY

Tough. This job was my life -- y'know?

JAKE

Two weeks ago? I'm just another schmuck with a fishing boat.

BETSY

That's what I thought.

JAKE

Yeah. And then you and your whale come along...and suddenly I'm on the friggin' news every night --

BETSY

Fifteen minutes of fame.

JAKE

-- and other than raising my kids, I'm doing maybe the best thing I ever tried to do --

BETSY

I'm happy for you.

JAKE

-- and sometimes you gotta do something just because it's right --

BETSY

And sometimes you can't.

JAKE

-- so I'm ready to trade my truck
for a junker to raise enough to
pay those bills, if I gotta work
for free and that's what it takes
to save your damned whale.

Betsy does a double-take.

JAKE

I'm not ready to go back to being
just another schmuck with a fishing
boat. Not 'til the job's done.

BETSY

Yeah...well...this one's done.

EXT. RIVER - FISHING PIER - NIGHT

Betsy leans on the end rail of a pier jutting out into the
river. Very much alone. Except for her whale. Humphrey
swims, not too far away. Betsy listens to a soft SPOUT.
Tonight, her world is almost as quiet as Humphrey's.

BETSY

Why won't you go home?

STERN (O.S.)

He could ask you the same question.

Betsy turns. Surprised to see Fred Stern. She gives him a
brief but contemptuous glare. Then she turns back to the
dark river. Stern joins her at the rail.

STERN

Heard the whale was out here.
Thought I'd see how he was doing.

BETSY

Like you care...

They gaze into the darkness, following Humphrey's SOUNDS.

BETSY

You probably cost me my job, y'know.

STERN

What?

BETSY

I had a terminal disagreement with
my Board of Directors over funding.
I didn't have much choice after
you bailed.

STERN

It wasn't my personal decision.

BETSY

At least now I don't have to listen to all the calls from people complaining about us "abandoning" the whale.

STERN

Public opinion... It can turn on you in a second.

BETSY

I guess that's part of the turf when you're a Fed.

STERN

Hey, y'know, there're lots of government workers who don't deserve to be whacked over the head with a baseball bat by people like you.

BETSY

You're just not one of 'em.

The BOOM of a nearby RIFLE SHOT shatters the quiet night.

STERN

Jesus!

They both look around. Trying to locate the source. A second SHOT fires. And hits the water.

BETSY

Somebody's shooting at Humphrey!?

Stern scans the dark shoreline. A third SHOT fires a moment later. Stern sees the rifle FLASH. And runs toward it.

Betsy hesitates: is running toward a nut firing a rifle a good idea? Then she takes off after Stern.

They run along the shore. And see the SHOOTER: Floyd the ranch-hand. He sits splay-legged on a slope. His hunting rifle braced alongside his belly.

Floyd has already downed half a 12-pack of beer. Crushed cans litter the grass. He's ready to fire another shot. Stern tackles him from behind. The rifle goes flying.

Stern scrambles up. Grabs the rifle. He glares at terrified Floyd -- and points the rifle vaguely at him. Floyd cowers. Stern growls.

FLOYD

Jeez! You're crazy, man!

STERN

Worse. I'm a Federal agent, pal.

FLOYD

Eh-eh-eh-F-B-I?!

STERN

You shooting at the whale, son?

FLOYD

I'm way too drunk to hit nothin' -- even if it swum right up.

STERN

That whale's under Federal protection. You feel like spending the next ten years in prison?

FLOYD

Nossir. I didn't mean nothin'.

STERN

Get the hell outta here.

Floyd stumbles off at a drunken run. Stern looks at the rifle in his hands. Then he hurls it into the river with a loud SPLASH. Betsy stares at him.

STERN

Just doing my job.

BETSY

This time, it was a drunk idiot taking pot-shots at a black whale on a dark night. Next time, we may not be so lucky.

STERN

Next time...

BETSY

It's bad enough if the whale dies on his own. How's it gonna look if you...we...let somebody kill him?

Stern agonizes.

BETSY

The way I see it, Rambo, you can disarm one creep at a time. Or you can help us get the goddam whale back where he belongs.

STERN

Okay. Okay. Find a way that works. And...God help me...I'll find you the money.

INT. JAKE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The DOORBELL rings. Jake pads over, candy bowl in hand. He opens the door. Betsy stands outside.

JAKE

Kinda late for trick or treat.
Not much of a costume.

BETSY

You still want to save Humphrey?

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - DAY

Al waits on the dock as Jake's boat returns. Jake has one passenger: veterinarian EMILY REED, 35, outdoorsy, with short carefree hair. SUPERIMPOSE:

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

Emily tosses a line to Al. Al ties the boat up. Emily gets her gear together.

AL

How's he doing, Doc?

EMILY

From a medical point of view, not great. He's still swimming okay, but the clock's ticking.

AL

Y'all up for a chopper ride?

JAKE

Where to?

AL

Sacramento.

JAKE

What's going on?

AL

Betsy and Senator Krikorian put together a phone conference. Whale experts from all over. Lookin' for new ideas. They want you there.

EXT. SKY - CHOPPER - DAY

Al's Coast Guard chopper ZOOMS past.

INT. CAPITAL - OFFICE CORRIDOR

Al, Jake and Emily hurry along. When they reach Mike's office, the door opens. Betsy bursts out.

BETSY
We got something!

Betsy marches. Jake, Al and Emily try to keep up.

BETSY
Come on! We got a lot of work to do if we're gonna get back up to speed by tomorrow.

JAKE
Tomorrow?!

AL
What happened?

BETSY
Lou Herman -- ? University of Hawaii -- ? Instead of making noise to scare Humphrey, he says play something to attract him.

JAKE
Like what?

BETSY
He's sending us tapes of humpbacks singing and feeding.

JAKE
Throw in some beer, you got a humpback Oktoberfest.

BETSY
We're gonna need boats again.

JAKE
Don't worry. I'll get you boats.

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

A FedEx CARGO JET takes off and ROARS into the sky.

EXT. RIO VISTA MARINA - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

Jake and Bobby. As Bobby leaves the boat:

JAKE

Hey. We get this whale back to the ocean? You, me and him're gonna go through the Golden Gate, side by side.

BOBBY

Cool.

Bobby heads for his own boat. Betsy rushes up. A FedEx box in her hand.

BETSY

We got the tapes. Let's go!

Jake cranks the engine. It sounds worse than ever. Finally starts on the fifth or sixth attempt.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Nearly FIFTY small boats cast off. They form a "reverse-wedge" with the point of the "V" at the rear. Several larger military vessels have joined the fleet. Jake leads.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake at the controls. Betsy at his side.

AL'S VOICE (radio)

Coast Guard One to Whale One.

JAKE (into mike)

Whale One here, Al. You found Humphrey yet?

ABOARD THE COAST GUARD SHIP

The 80-foot-long cutter. Al, on the bridge: looking grim.

AL

Affirmative. We got a problem.

EXT. DECKER ISLAND - SANDBAR - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Humphrey is stuck on the sandbar. Motionless, but for labored BREATHING. This is one tired whale.

One boat -- Jake's -- approaches slowly. Aboard the boat, Betsy, Jake, Franklin, Ted and Willow REACT with numb sorrow. Concern. Even tears.

WILLOW
He's barely moving.

TED
Maybe he's finally given up.

BETSY
We're not letting him.

FRANKLIN
Betsy, maybe he's just too tired.

BETSY
No -- dammit -- we are getting him out of here.

JAKE
Maybe we should let him be for a while. Give him a chance to --

BETSY
What -- die on this sandbar? No way. You're the guy who insisted on pushing him, pushing him, pushing him.

JAKE
Maybe this isn't the time to push him.

BETSY
No, you were right -- before.

Betsy turns to Ted and Willow.

BETSY
Are you guys ready?

TED
Yeah. I guess.

BETSY
Then play those tapes.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Just at the surface. Humphrey HEARS the EERIE SOUNDS of whales playing. Singing. Eating. He MOANS softly. Is it a response? Or surrender?

EXT. WATER/JAKE'S BOAT - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Jake keeps the boat near Humphrey. At the rear, Ted and Willow handle the tape-playback system. They both monitor on headphones. Underwater speaker cable trails over the rail.

They watch the whale for movement. Nothing. Except another SPOUT-SIGH. And a GROAN.

Then Humphrey's tail twitches. The RECORDED SOUNDS continue. He lifts a pectoral fin and ruffles the water. With the energy of a sick guppy. Then his whole body SHIVERS. Breathes one great SIGH. And goes limp.

REACTIONS on Jake's boat: did they witness a last gasp?

WILLOW
OhmyGod. Is he dead?

After a long, agonizing moment, Humphrey SLAPS the water with his tail. Then he shifts his massive body.

BETSY
He's listening.

FRANKLIN
But does he have enough strength left to follow...

BETSY
Let's find out. Jake -- move away. Real slow.

JAKE
Yes, Ma'am.

Jake gently edges the boat away from the whale.

UNDERWATER - HUMPHREY

Heaving himself out of the muck. Stirring up silt. He HEARS the SONGS and SOUNDS of distant whales. And MOANS in reply.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake, Betsy and the others watch Humphrey struggle.

JAKE
C'mon. C'mon...

THE WHALE

Finally, Humphrey slides off the sandbar. Into deeper water.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake, Betsy and the others REACT with great relief. But their happiness is contained. They know what lies ahead.

JAKE (into mike)
Whale One to fleet. Humphrey's
loose. We're gonna take it slow
'til we see what he's got.

Jake moves his boat away from Humphrey. For a moment, the whale seems disoriented. He submerges. Jake, Betsy and crew watch with concern.

BETSY
Keep going.

Jake steers a slow weaving course away from the sandbar. Downriver. But there's no whale to be seen.

UNDERWATER

No whale. The taped WHALE SOUNDS continue. Humphrey suddenly rises from the murky bottom.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake, Betsy and crew see Humphrey break the surface. The whale lets out a LUSTY SPOUT.

JAKE
This time, I think we got him.
(into his mike)
Whale One to fleet. Let's roll.

EXT. RIVER/BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

The other boats fall into formation behind Jake and the whale. Bobby's boat comes up behind Humphrey.

On all boats, VOLUNTEERS lower their Oikomi pipes into the water. And start BANGING.

Jake's boat leads whale and fleet. Jake and Betsy are amazed at the CHEERING CROWDS on shore.

JAKE

You think he hears all that?

BETSY

I don't know. They hear whalesongs through hundreds of miles of water.

JAKE

Well, if he can hear it, I bet he's eating it up.

EXT. SHORE - NIGHT

Callie does her nightly live report. With the much larger San Rafael-Richmond Bridge behind her.

CALLIE

The wrong-way whale finally seems headed in the right direction.

INT. TELEVISION STATION - CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Callie's image on one monitor. On another monitor, VIDEO IMAGES of the day's rescue operation. INTERCUT as needed.

CALLIE (continues)

With Humphrey following taped humpback sounds, the rescue fleet covered an amazing forty miles, stopping for the night just past the Richmond Bridge behind me. This means Humphrey is back in San Francisco Bay for the first time in four weeks. When the sun rises tomorrow, Monday morning, the rescue fleet will put in one more day's work...hoping to take the wayward whale all the way to the Pacific.

EXT. SAN PABLO BAY - DOCK - JAKE'S BOAT - DAY

Morning. Blue skies. Calm waters. Jake cranks the engine. Sounds horrible. Each time he tries again, it sounds worse. Fifth time -- CLICK. Nothing. Dead in the water.

JAKE

Awww, hell...

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT - LATER

Jake and Bobby watch a repair guy named GREG working on the boat's engine.

GREG
Got a bad alternator, pal. I
can have 'er fixed in two hours.

JAKE
There goes our early start.

BOBBY
At least the whale stayed put
last night.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - LATER

The famous fog-shrouded spires against a gray sky.

EXT. RICHMOND BRIDGE - DAY

Betsy, Ted and Jake stand on the walkway. They lean over the railing. And watch Humphrey floating just at the surface.

BETSY
He's resting.

JAKE
And we gotta wait till he's
done with naptime?

BETSY
Bingo.

JAKE
There goes the whole damn morning.

INT. BOAT-YARD - REPAIR GARAGE - DAY

A hangar-like building. A few boats and engines under repair. Jake paces in front of a big map of San Francisco Bay taped to the wall behind him.

He holds a pointer tucked under his arm, like a swagger stick. He faces Bobby and a dozen other BOAT CAPTAINS. Like he's briefing a World War II bomber squadron.

JAKE

We got winds picking up, fog rolling in, a three-foot-chop. And maybe a storm brewing. So we can't wait. Here's the plan: take the most direct route to Golden Gate...

Jake points at the map.

JAKE (continues)

...Hug the western shore. Drive Humphrey through Raccoon Strait. Under the bridge. And into the ocean. The main thing we gotta look out for is Humphrey heading southeast, between Angel Island and Treasure Island. If he sneaks under the Bay Bridge instead... Hell, there's shallows and mud flats all through here. He'll get stuck for sure. Out where a million people can come and watch him die.

Jake lets the nightmare scenario sink in.

BOBBY

If he goes that way, do we have enough boats to stop him?

JAKE

Nope.

EXT. BOAT-YARD DOCK - JAKE'S BOAT

Even tied up, Jake's boat bobs in the choppy water. Jake surveys the gray sky and sea. Betsy and Al stand with him. Willow and Ted ready the tapes. Distant mournful FOG HORNS sound in the B.G.

JAKE

I just hope the weather holds.

CALLIE (O.S.)

Ahoy there.

Jake and Betsy turn to see Callie and Bear on the dock. Betsy doesn't look thrilled.

JAKE

Ahoy yourself.

CALLIE

Our boat broke down. Can we hitch a ride with you?

BETSY

Do we have room?

JAKE

I guess you deserve to be there
for the big finish.

CALLIE

Thanks.

Callie and Bear climb aboard. The lines are cast off. Jake pulls his boat away from the dock.

EXT. BAY/BOATS - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

18 boats, in formation. Pipe-bangers aboard each of them. Jake's boat leads the pack.

Bobby (with Franklin aboard) slips into position trailing Jake.

Humphrey swims at the surface. Between the boats. 100 feet from each of them.

Aboard Jake's boat. Pitching in the choppy bay. Ted and Willow hold on at the stern. Ready for playback. Callie and Bear unobtrusively tape everything.

BETSY

Start the music.

Ted presses the button. He and Willow HEAR the HUMPBACK SOUNDS in their headphones.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

To Humphrey, the SOUNDS are different today. Faint. Muffled. Instead of responding, he swims slowly. Uncertainly. Then he heads deeper.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake and Betsy scan the water. No sign of Humphrey. They look worried. Jake calls back to Ted.

JAKE

What's wrong?

TED

Maybe the water's too rough. Could be interfering with the sound.

JAKE

Great. Static.

(into mike)

Whale One to fleet. Tighten up formation. Hit those pipes.

The boats move closer. The pipe-bangers start BANGING.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Down deep. Humphrey HEARS the PIPE-CHIMING. He responds. And swims up toward the surface.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Humphrey BREAKS THE SURFACE. And lets out a strong SPOUT.

BETSY

There he is!

Jake's boat leads. Bobby's boat prods. The whale swims between them.

Bear scrambles for the best camera-vantage point.

The PIPE-BANGERS and various boats do their thing.

UNDERWATER, Humphrey swims strongly, near the surface.

Jake's boat SLICES through the increasingly-choppy water.

Callie sits on deck near the stern. Nauseous. Moaning.

CALLIE

OoohhGod...why didn't we pick up some Dramamine?

BEAR

Cal. Get up.

CALLIE

Let me puke in peace.

BEAR

Something's wrong.

Callie gets unsteadily to her feet. And joins Bear just behind Jake and Betsy in the cockpit.

CALLIE

What's going on?

JAKE

He doesn't wanna go through
Raccoon Strait. He's making a
bee-line for the northwest side
of Treasure Island.

EXT. BAY/BOATS - DAY

Jake's boat and Bobby's boat are back in their "two-dog"
combination. Nipping at Humphrey's heels.

But Humphrey leads them his way.

They cruise past an outcropping of Treasure Island. And on
the other side, they see the San Francisco-Oakland Bay
Bridge. The wrong bridge. Looming high, just ahead.

JAKE'S BOAT - VARIOUS SHOTS

Jake and Betsy. Alarmed.

BETSY

Finnegan, he's heading for the
wrong bridge. Do something.

JAKE

I'm trying, darlin'.

Jake's boat speeds up, along Humphrey's left flank. Between
Humphrey and the island. The whale swims near the surface.

Jake edges over.

Tries to nudge him away from the island and the bridge. And
back out into the bay.

Humphrey arches his back. Flips his tail. And dives.

UNDERWATER

Humphrey swims down to deeper water. And leaves Jake's boat
up above.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake and Betsy look everywhere. Humphrey is nowhere to be
seen. Callie peers over their shoulders.

CALLIE

What happened?

JAKE

Once he's down there... well...
it's all up to Humphrey now.

Jake glances off his right flank, toward Bobby's boat 50 feet away. Then Jake remembers something.

JAKE (into mike)

Bobby, remember what Humphrey did
almost every time he got to a bridge?

BOBBY'S VOICE (radio)

Yeah, man. He turned right.

JAKE

Pray for one more right turn.

Jake eases his throttle ahead. And turns his boat right.

AL

What're you doin'?

JAKE

Betting that I've learned to think
like a whale. This whale, anyway.

VARIOUS SHOTS

Jake's boat turns right. Bobby's boat follows. They slow, and run parallel to the big Bay Bridge. On both boats, captains and crews search for their whale.

UNDERWATER - THE WHALE

Humphrey swims toward a set of massive bridge supports.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

Jake, Betsy and Callie watch the water anxiously. It seems like forever. Then Humphrey breaks the surface. Just off the boat's starboard (right) bow. And headed in the same direction as the boat.

Callie WHOOPS for joy. And forgets her seasickness.

CALLIE

Bear -- !

Bear is braced at the rail. Shooting video.

BEAR

I got him!

Betsy and Jake share a moment of speechless elation.

JAKE (into mike)
Whale One to fleet. Looks like
Humphrey's ready to go home.

Callie looks at her watch.

CALLIE
Hey! We've got a shot at
making the evening news!

SAN FRANCISCO BAY - VARIOUS SHOTS

Some SHOTS are "live." Others appear on TV STATION
CONTROL-ROOM MONITORS. INTERCUT as needed.

News helicopters circle overhead. Boats small and large
fill the bay.

ONSHORE: THOUSANDS of PEOPLE throng the San Francisco
waterfront.

ON THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE: rush-hour traffic slows. Stops.
SPECTATORS watch from the railing.

All have one thing in common: they're searching for the
rescue fleet and Humphrey. Then --

EMERGING FROM THE MIST -- Humphrey's great back breaks the
surface and he SPOUTS a steamy breath into the air.

Just behind him: Jake's boat on one side, Bobby on the
other. All headed for the fog-crowned Golden Gate Bridge.

Crowds on the shore and bridge CHEER. Boat-horns TOOT in
salute as Operation Whale Rescue nears the bridge.

Jake and Bobby drive Humphrey toward the bridge's south
tower. To the music of FOG HORNS, the two boats and
Humphrey go under the bridge.

ABOARD JAKE'S BOAT

The moment Jake sees Humphrey's tail outside the bridge:

JAKE
He's through!

Ted and Willow hug. Al and Betsy hug; Al checks his watch.

AL

At four-thirty-one, Elvis has left
the building!

On Jake's boat, everyone WHOOPS for joy. All but Jake. He grips the wheel. Cruises on. And beams like a new dad as he watches Humphrey LEAP out of the water and belly-flop.

Betsy joins Jake. Tears stream down her face. She gives Jake a friendly bump with her shoulder.

BETSY

Job's done..."Admiral."

Jake continues looking straight ahead. He doesn't speak for a long moment. He's too choked up. And tries to hide it.

JAKE

A little further. Just to make
sure he doesn't turn around.

Betsy looks up at Jake's face. With amazement. Tears well up in his eyes. She laughs.

BETSY

Are you crying, tough guy?

Jake wraps his arm around Betsy's shoulders.

JAKE

Salt spray in my eyes, darlin'.
And don't you forget it.

VARIOUS SHOTS - BOAT AND WHALE

Jake's boat follows frolicking Humphrey into the fog.

JAKE (V.O.)

So...once upon a time, we saved
this whale named Humphrey. The
Foundation Board begged Betsy to
take her job back. She did.

BETSY (V.O.)

He'd never admit it, but all that
publicity probably saved Finnegan's
fishing-guide business. Five years
later, Humphrey came back to San
Francisco Bay.

JAKE (V.O.)

The big dummy even beached himself...
For auld lang syne, I guess. Since
we were old pals, that time it didn't
take long to get him going again.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ALASKAN COAST - DAY

Glorious cliffs and glaciers. And fishing boats in a bay.

JAKE (V.O.)

These days, I fish in Alaska most
summers. I see the humpbacks, and
I wonder if Humphrey's out there.

EXT. OCEAN - HUMPBACK WHALES - DAY

VARIOUS SHOTS. Swimming. Playing. Feeding. Breaching.

JAKE (V.O.)

I wonder if he's got kids of his
own by now...and if he ever told
'em about his little trip up the
Sacramento River. I wonder if he'd
remember me...

BETSY (V.O.)

Remember us. I'd like to think so.
'Cause we sure remember him.

FADE OUT.

THE END

PRODUCTION NOTES

LOST WHALE: THE LEGEND OF HUMPHREY is based on actual events of October 1985 (as reported in contemporary news accounts and the published non-fiction hardcover book **THE GREAT WHALE RESCUE**, by Tom Tiede and Jack Findleton).

Characters depicted here may be fictional or composites based on real people.

The efforts to rescue Humphrey the humpback whale were widely covered by television news.

The script has been written to take advantage of existing news footage, stock footage, and computer-graphics imaging (CGI).

No trained animals need be used in the production of this story. (A good thing -- considering there are no trained humpback whales!)

Exclusive rights to **THE GREAT WHALE RESCUE** have already been obtained.

