

## JP and Lee

J.P. and Lee, two long time friends from high school, are on a weekend road trip along the Oregon coast. A few much needed days away from their jobs as house painter and fabricator.

“Shit Lee; you plannin’ on findin’ somethin’ to eat before we croak or what?”

“Mine’s grumblin’ too man. What sounds good?”

“Food.”

“Cool. Winchester Bay’s the next town. I know a grubbin’ spot for some crab.”

“Don’t you ever get tired of them crabs?”

“Hell yes! Keep your sister away from me, would ya’?! Ha ha!”

“Fuck you Lee.”

“Hee hee! Hey, here we are; Gulls Grill. Damn, that crab smells good from here!”

“*THAT’S* the place?! It looks sketchy as hell! We still got a lot of ground to cover yet; you sure you want to attempt it with gut rot?” J.P. says with a shit eaters’ grin.

“Very funny.”

At the table now, each with a pile of crab legs in front of them, the pair are quiet. Both are enjoying the same experience; gorging on fresh Dungeness crab while people watching and eaves dropping on the conversation of the locals.

Suddenly a woman’s voice rises above the music, conversations and even the ever present seagulls...”You arrogant son of a bitch! What makes you think you deserve those fish any more than the sea lions?!!!”

“Lady, you might wanna mind yur own fuckin’ bees wax! If I wanted yur stupid ass opinyun I’d give it to ya.”

“Fuck you, redneck!”

“Candace! Settle down for a minute! What are you yellin’ about?!”

“*Settle down*?!!! Jesus, Kristin! This ass-hole was just bragging about shooting a sea lion!”

“WHAT?!” screeches Kristin. “I’m calling the cops you bastards!”

The fishermen, five in all, began to rise. All were grisly at best. Each of them daunting a look of angry frustration.

“You nosy little shits. You’d best get them sweet little hippie asses outta here before ya end up in a mess.”

J.P., a scrapper by nature, jumps to his feet. Nearby chairs bang together and clammer to the floor.

“Hey mother-fuckers! Whatta ya say the five of you go for a walk outside with me and my buddy here?”

“Bit out numbered here ain’t ya, fellers?”

Lee stands, puts on his jacket.

“Sir; aside from being illegal, killing a sea lion is more than enough to earn yourself an ass-whippin.”

The girls grab their Greenpeace jackets and scowl at the fishermen as they join the travelers on the other side of the room.

“Fuck them sea lions. They’re eatin’ all the damn fish! Ain’t hardly no salmon or steelhead left ‘round here. You outta town sons-a-bitches think ya know everything!”

“How can you be so ignorant?” asks Kristin. “Has it ever occurred to you that it might not be the sea lions? That it might have something to do with all of you roughnecks pulling the fish in by the hundreds in your nets?! A sea lion doesn’t kill more fish than it’s going to eat at one time. Can you say that about yourselves?”

One of the fishermen steps forward, fists clenched, teeth grinding.  
“You folks are gettin’ on my god damned nerves!”

“Oh yeah fucker? Well guess what.....”

Lee, sensing J.P. is about to push the confrontation out of hand, breaks in.  
“J.P. Let’s get back on the road. We’re not going to change their minds by bustin’ up this place. What do you think girls? Ready to move on?”

“We’re still callin’ the cops you ass-holes!” Kristin yells.  
Candace pipes in too. “I hope a sea lion eats you, you prick!”

The newly founded foursome climb into Lee’s 1966 Ford Galaxie.  
“Where’d ya park?” asks J.P.  
“Didn’t. We came in on that.” Candace points to a big ship anchored off shore. “We’re with Greenpeace. We’ve been trying to stop whalers from...”  
J.P. interrupts “Whaling?”

A pair of equally sarcastic smirks are exchanged. “Anyway, we thought we’d spend a few days here. Relax, take a hot bath or two...” J.P. chimes in again “fuck with some locals...” The group laughs together.

“We’re on a weekend road trip” Lee says. “Care to tag along for a bit? We can drop you where ever you want.”

“Where are you headed?” asks Kristin.

“Planning on some diving in Florence. Do a bit of crabbing in the North Jetty. You girls dive?”

“Candace loves to dive. I got certified so we could dive together whenever we’re lucky enough to be in tropical water with Greenpeace.”

“Cool! Interested in a cold water excursion?”

“What’s the visibility here?” asks Candace.

“Average is three to five feet on a good day.”

“Damn!”

Lee chuckles. “Yep; not for the weak of heart. Sometimes makes for a really cool surprise though.”

“I bet. Count us in.”

A short while later the new friends are in Florence and have rented all the dive gear they will need for a weekend of diving the ice cold, dark as night waters of the Oregon coast. Average temperature is around 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

“Can’t dive today” J.P. offers, “but we might as well take a drive out to the jetty and see how she looks.”

“Agreed” says Lee.

Kristin, a bit puzzled, says “It’s early afternoon and it’s beautiful out here. Why can’t we dive?”

“Tide tables.”

“What?”

Candace joins in. “By the time we get out to the site and get geared up, we’ll be hitting the tidal exchange. Sometimes there are big surges.”

As they approach the jetty, Lee smirks. “You could say that. A buddy and I hit one out here last year; we were trying to get in one last, quick dive for the weekend. As soon as we cleared the channel and entered the jetty, we were caught up in an exchange that shifted us about twenty feet back and forth. Scary as hell with low visibility.”

“Why get the gear now then?” asks Kristin.

“Because we’ll get out here in the morning at the beginning of low tide. Dive shops won’t be open yet and...holy shit Lee! Look at that crowd!”

There must have been a hundred people standing at the bank of the jetty, including three Florence deputies and two Oregon State troopers.

“Jesus J.P.; what’d you do now?”

The girls laugh. J.P. rubs his eye with only his middle finger.

As they approach the crowd, many voices and conversations are mumbling together. Suddenly two words rang out above all others....”sea lions”.

All four felt a common numbness overtake them. Could it be? Can there really be such a battle raging between the men who make a living on these seas and these beautiful creatures who inhabit them?!

Candace overhears a trooper talking to his colleague. “That’s the eighth one those bastards have shot this month. I can’t wait to catch one of ‘em in the act.”

“Eight?!!!” Candace screams. “How many are you planning to let them butcher before you actually do something about it?!”

“Now ma’am” an officer replies, “we have to witness the act before we can make any arrests.”

“That kind of beauraucratic bullshit is exactly why organizations like Greenpeace are necessary! Law enforcement is too busy pussy footing around to actually get anything accomplished!”

“Ma’am” the officer repeats, “If you don’t quiet down I’ll place you under arrest for obstruction of justice.”

“JUSTICE?! Where in the hell are you seeing any kind of justice around here?!”

“Alright ma’am...”

Lee puts an arm around her waist. “Forget it officer; we’re leaving.”

“Leaving?! Don’t you care what’s going on here?!”

“Of course I do” Lee whispers “but Johnny Law doesn’t need to know how I feel about these things. Why should we incriminate ourselves?”

“Incriminate ourselves? What?”

“I won’t let this slide. A statement has to be made. These pricks think that every salmon alive belongs to them for the sole purpose of making some money. They need to be reminded that it doesn’t pay to be selfish.”

“What do you have in mind?”

“Not here.”

Back at the Sea Gypsy hotel, room 420, the four go over the details of the newly hatched plan of retaliation.

“O.k...” Lee says, “since Candace has wreck diving experience and I have the most time in these cold, dark conditions; we’ll be the ones under water. You too will be top-side squirting that 2 ton epoxy on as many spools of fishing net as you can manage.”

“Won’t there be a security guard at the docks, or a live aboard on one of the boats?” asks Kristin.

“Not likely” says Lee, “but if there is...”

“That’s what I’m here for.” J.P. says with a devilish grin. Not only was J.P. a state champion wrestler but he was also known as one hell of a bruiser.

“O.k. but how are you and Candace going to disable the boats underwater?”

“Depends on the boat.” Lee replies. “If it’s big enough to use stabilizing planes, we’ll use these here magnesium flares to either cut one of them off or heat it up enough to tweak it. Either way will cause the boat to lean enough to convince the captain to stay home until it’s fixed.”

Candace adds “And if it’s a smaller boat we’ll use the flares to melt a couple of holes in the hull and sink it right there at the dock.”

“Why not sink them big fuckers too?” J.P. asks.

“Heavier hulls means too much time with the flares trying to melt holes. And; the bigger boats will a lot more diesel fuel, oil, shit like that. We don’t want to risk too much of that getting dumped into the bay.”

“Good enough for me. Let’s do it!”

Two o’clock a.m. now. Lee and Candace have been dropped off with all the necessary equipment and supplies, including an extra tank of air for each of them. They’ll need these for the half mile swim back to their exit. Can’t risk surfacing anywhere near the scene of the attack; dive gear is too noisy. Besides, if anyone does happen to be walking

around by the docks it's going to be hard for them not to notice the bright white glow of the magnesium flares under the boats. Envisioning how that would look is enough to make Lee grin and giggle a bit.

Working quickly and diligently, J.P. and Kristin have managed to thoroughly wreak havoc on the nets of a dozen boats. While Kristin squirts the bi-mix epoxy deep into the spools, J.P. uses the skinning knife he wears like an appendage to cut nearly all the way through the ropes for the nets.

“Better do the same to anchor ropes” he thinks to himself.

Meanwhile; Lee and Candace have managed to make their way into the murky water of the docks, unnoticed. Though the cold Pacific water makes it take longer than expected, the flares are working their magic on the old, corroded steel of the boats. Two smaller boats are slowly working their way to the floor of the bay and three bigger, commercial boats are going to have a rough go on open water today.

All feel good about the work they've done and meet up at the rendezvous point, where Lee and Candace could get out of the water undetected. The divers get dried off and dressed while the other pair load the dive gear into the trunk of the Galaxie.

After a few quiet congratulatory cheers, hugs and pats on the back the foursome heads to the top of nearby viewpoint to watch the reaction.

“Now what?” all wonder to themselves.