



AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

Running Time: 90 minutes

Rating: PG

www.WhaleCampaign.com

or

www.AtTheEdgeOfTheWorld.com

Contact

WealthEffectMedia, Inc.

Dan Stone

P.O. Box 2

Centerport, NY 11721

(631) 757-6739

whalecampaign@gmail.com

SYNOPSIS

The 3rd Antarctic Campaign undertaken by the controversial Sea Shepherd Conservation Society was arguably “the perfect combination of imperfections” and the actions taken to stop a Japanese whaling fleet were astonishingly reckless and admirable.

The international volunteer crew, though under-trained and poorly equipped, has developed a combination of bizarre and brilliant tactics with which to stop the whalers.

But first they must find the Japanese ships, a far more difficult challenge than ever imagined – long-time activist Paul Watson and first-time captain Alex Cornelissen employ an array of strategies in the hopes of finding an elusive adversary in the 370,000 square miles of the Ross Sea.

With one ship (*The Farley Mowat*) too slow to chase down the whaling fleet, with their second ship (*The Robert Hunter*) unsuited for Antarctic ice conditions and with no country supporting their efforts, the situation becomes increasingly desperate in this real-life David-vs.-Goliath adventure.

FESTIVAL RECOGNITION

Environmental Film Audience Award, Vancouver International Film Festival

Jury Award for Best International Cinematography, Documentary Edge Festival

Audience Award for Best Documentary, Dances With Films

Jury Award for Best Conservation Film, Bend Film Festival

Special Jury Award for Best Cinematography, Atlanta International Film Festival

Greg Gund Memorial Screening, Cleveland International Film Festival

Elizabeth Taylor Environmental Award, Puerto Vallarta Film Festival

Angel Award for Best Documentary, Monaco International Film Festival

Haskell Wexler Award for Best Cinematography, Woodstock Film Festival

Official Selection, Toronto International Film Festival

DIRECTOR'S COMMENT

In an age when comic-book superheroes rule the screen, there is arguably something special about ordinary people willing to take extraordinary risks with no assurance of success or survival. The adventure which unfolded in the Ross Sea during the 3rd Antarctic Campaign highlighted the real-world tradeoffs between ends & means, injustice & vigilantism and risk & reward.

The captains and crews of the two Sea Shepherd ships found themselves in circumstances they couldn't have envisioned, having to decide in the moment whether the mission was more important than the immediate risk to lives. *At the Edge of the World* tries to provide a sense of the many elements which influenced those decisions.

One of these elements is uncertainty. From the first scene, in which the young cook is frustrated by “people assing around” on a huge iceberg, unaware that the ship has detoured to that iceberg for refuge from a nearby storm, incomplete information is inevitable.

The first scene also gives an impression that the crew members (flying through ice arches and jumping from ridiculous heights) are a bizarrely unusual group – and yet by the end of the film, viewers might come to the conclusion that these volunteers are not that different than them at all. They are people who just decided that at this particular time in their lives this was a journey they wanted to take, joining the campaign from 15 countries and a wide range of professions (one of the four volunteers against whom Japan subsequently issued an arrest warrant is an E.R. doctor).

The crew members shared a common motivation: to stop the Antarctic whale hunt, which occurs despite an international ban on commercial whaling. Some, such as the young captain, were initially influenced by what they had heard; some, such as the even-younger first mate, by the images they had seen in the media; and others, such as the campaign's leader, by what they had witnessed first-hand.

The focus of the film is on what the 46 volunteers endure and accomplish on this adventure – the story essentially begins when the viewer joins the journey. There is no narrator and the 4th wall is occasionally broken to possibly give the viewer a sense of being part of the filming team.

The journey, which seems dreamlike in the beginning and nightmarish by the middle, was a unique mix of errors and achievements. Among those achievements was staying alive in one of the most dangerous corners of the world, in part by adjusting to unexpected circumstances.

Early in the film, the captain of *The Farley Mowat* says with great passion, “It's been 20 years and 18,000 whales have been killed in a sanctuary. Something has to be done!”, but when given the opportunity to unleash his most-effective weapon, circumstances push him towards a different strategy.

Also early on, the young captain of *The Robert Hunter* states with certainty, “I do whatever it takes to stop them from killing whales”, but when a potential tragedy arises his overriding priority is the safety of the crew – even if it means sacrificing the mission.

FAQs

1. Are these people crazy?

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society is caught between two lousy options. Countries won't enforce international conservation laws and marine animals are being hunted to extinction. Beyond laws and morality, Capt. Paul Watson argues that if the whales die, the oceans die; if the oceans die, we all die. Sea Shepherd has few resources, however — the group raises approx. \$2½ million a year (by contrast, Greenpeace's fundraising is almost 100 times that amount). When minimal resources and ambitious goals are mixed together, the result can resemble insanity at times.

2. What exactly is the relationship between Sea Shepherd and Greenpeace?

Paul Watson was one of the original members of Greenpeace — he was there the day the name was coined and his membership number, not by coincidence, is 007. Watson left Greenpeace in 1977 (he has called them "the Avon ladies of the environmental movement") and is the founder & head of Sea Shepherd, which describes its Antarctic efforts as law enforcement — a campaign of intervention rather than protest.

3. If Sea Shepherd has been around for three decades, why do they sometimes seem so unprepared in "At the Edge of the World"?

Although the group has been operating for 30 years, this was only their third attempt to stop the fleet in the Antarctic Whale Sanctuary. Mounting a 50-day campaign with two ships is enormously expensive, particularly for a group which can't even afford its own fuel and food. Also, no matter how detailed the preparations, the Ross Sea is an exceptionally dangerous place even when you're not actually looking for confrontations. Compounding the risk was the fact that Sea Shepherd's new ship, the Robert Hunter, was not an ice-class vessel — it had the speed to outrun the whaling ships if they could be found but unlike the Farley Mowat, its sister ship on the campaign, the Robert Hunter could easily sink if hit by ice or by another vessel.

4. Why is the search for the whaling fleet such a long shot?

Without assistance from governments and their recon flights & satellite tracking, with the whaling fleet always on the move, the search is "needle-in-a-haystack" where the needle is trying to not be found. The two Sea Shepherd ships can each cover 300 miles a day but, to use a nautical expression, it's a big-ass ocean down there. The Ross Sea is 370,000 square miles and that's only one section of the search area.

5. Are the "prop fouler" and the "can opener" designed to sink ships?

No. The "prop fouler" is intended to entangle around and disable another ship's propeller. As for the "can opener", given its appearance (a hunk of steel hydraulically extended from the Farley Mowat's starboard side), it suggests the worst possible intentions but is positioned to rip a hole in the hull of a ship above the water line and fuel tanks — again, disabling but not sinking.

6. Are Sea Shepherd's efforts primarily focused against one country?

Antarctic whaling is done by a Japanese fleet, but Australia and New Zealand essentially turn a blind eye to what's occurring in their territorial waters. At other times of the year, Sea Shepherd fights various campaigns involving many countries. As helicopter pilot Chris Aultman explains in the film: "You have to pick your battles. Who knows, Iceland might be next."

7. Are the volunteers primarily adrenaline junkies or "die-hard activists"?

Actually, most of the 46 volunteers have mainstream jobs (for example, one of the most passionate crew members featured in *At the Edge of the World* is an E.R. physician) — these people just wanted to be involved in this particular campaign at this particular time in their lives, not knowing when they volunteered that it was going to become a documentary. And they are truly an international mix: nearly 80% of the crew members, including the two captains, are from countries outside the U.S.

8. What caused the fire on the Nisshin Maru?

No one knows for certain. Given that the ship is essentially a floating chemical factory (and that whale carcasses are flammable, as well) it's not surprising that this was the 2nd fire on the Nisshin Maru in the past 10 years. The real surprise was that luck intervened (the weather stayed calm for 8 days until the Nisshin could restart its engines) and Antarctica averted an environmental catastrophe.

9. Are the Sea Shepherd crew members in At the Edge of the World, in fact, pirates?

Yes. At the beginning of the campaign, the Farley Mowat lost its registry with Canada, then with Belize. Sea Shepherd was subsequently informed by the United Kingdom that its 2nd ship, the Robert Hunter, would soon lose its registry and would no longer be permitted to fly the Union Jack. Without a sovereign nation's flag, a vessel is officially a pirate ship — and, therefore, a target to be boarded & scuttled in any port or on the high seas. Whether motives are good or ill, it's tough being a pirate (particularly with an economic superpower as an adversary).

Before becoming pirates, the crew members had to deal with being pariahs. Prior to the campaign, South African authorities refused to permit the Farley Mowat to leave Cape Town. Capt. Alex Cornelissen & his crew snuck the ship out of harbor at 3am, lights off, following in the wake of a departing freighter and subsequently evading South Africa's navy. Watson, who'd just successfully negotiated an 11th-hour deal to acquire the faster ship, met the Farley Mowat in Melbourne. Cornelissen then flew to Scotland and with a skeleton crew sailed the newly purchased Robert Hunter, nicknamed "the Bob", across the Atlantic Ocean (through a hurricane early on) and eventually into Punta Arenas at the tip of South America. Before Japanese pressure could be brought to bear on the Chileans, the crew refitted the damaged engine and departed in the middle of the night through the Straits of Magellan heading for the Antarctic Ocean.

10. If the Japanese fleet arrived in the Whale Sanctuary in November 2006, why didn't the Sea Shepherd ships try to intervene for more than a month?

The Farley Mowat was set to depart in early December, on Pearl Harbor Day, but a potentially catastrophic crack was discovered in one of the helicopter blades. The replacement blade did not align correctly with the other two blades, which also had to be sent from the U.S. and replaced. The Farley, about to lose its registry, was forced to head to sea and the chopper, once repaired, flew from Australia over the Bass Strait and Tasmania to rendezvous with the ship in the Tasman Sea. The Robert Hunter's arrival was delayed by a difficult Atlantic crossing.

11. Why would a Zodiac launch without radio, flares or GPS?

In the heat of the moment under extreme pressure, s—t happens. And a storm descended unexpectedly and quickly. And the ships fell out of visual contact with each other and the Zodiac. And the chopper couldn't fly once the weather turned treacherous. And...

12. Why was the Mayday call issued not by The Farley Mowat (Capt. Watson's ship) from which the missing Zodiac was launched but rather by The Robert Hunter (Capt. Cornelissen's ship)?

The decision to issue a Mayday from any individual vessel rests with the captain — the final authority on that particular ship.

PRODUCTION NOTE

Requests to interview Japanese officials concerning Antarctic whaling were declined.

CINEMATOGRAPHERS

Daniel Fernandez
Tim Gorski
Simeon Houtman
James Joyner
Jonathan Kane
Mathieu Mauvernay
John — ~~R~~ Odebralski

BOAT CREW

The last names of the boat crews have been withheld to protect their anonymity

The Farley Mowat **(Sea Shepherd's flagship)**

Paul, Captain – Canada
Gunter, 1st officer – Brazil
Pedro, 2nd officer – Chile
Karl, Navigation – Australia
Trevor, Chief Engineer – Canada
William, Engineer – New Zealand
Dan, Engineer – USA
Rod, Bridge – Canada
Benjamin, Carpenter – Australia
Hester, Quartermaster – Holland
Laura, Chief Cook – Bermuda
Roberta, Galley – Brazil
Veronica, Galley – Hungary
Adam, Bosun – Scotland
Annette, Bosun Mate – Austria
John, Deck – USA
Thomas, Deck – Australia
Mandy, Deck – USA
Christian, Deck – Holland
Jamie, Deck – New Zealand
Darrick, Safety Officer – Canada
Gemma, Deck – South Africa

The Robert Hunter **(Sea Shepherd's new ship)**

Alex, Captain – Holland
Peter, 1st Officer – Sweden
Wilfred, 2nd Officer – Belgium
Jonny, Bridge – USA
Geert, Artist/Bridge – Holland
Gedden, Bridge – USA
Charles, Chief Engineer – Britain
Steve, Engineer – USA
Jon, Engineer – Britain
Duncan, Engine Room – Britain

Ralph, Doctor / Deck – USA
Darren, Quartermaster – Britain
Emily, Quartermaster – Canada
Shannon, Bridge / Deck – USA
Jennifer, Galley– Australia
Sarah, Galley – Britain
Simeon, Bosun Mate – New Zealand
Kevin, Deck – USA
Kylie, Deck – Australia
George, Engine Room / Deck – Holland
Inde, Galley / Deck – USA
Saskia, Galley / Deck – Holland
Daniel, Engine Room / Deck – Britain
Kristy, Nurse / Deck – Australia

The Kookaburra
(helicopter)

Chris, Pilot – USA

FIELD PRODUCERS

Jonny Vasic
Tim Gorski
Rip Odebralski

POST

Patrick Gambuti, Jr. (lead editor)
Jeff Gibbs (lead composer)
Pat Kelleher (HD conform)
Patrick Donahue (sound mixer)
Kurt Engfehr (editor)
Mathew Ein (asst. editor)
Gordy Haab (composer)
Tierro Lee (composer)
Andrey Netboy (sound editor)
Steve Hastings (sound editor)
Ken Rubenfeld (colorist)
Prudence Arndt (archival)
Lewanne Jones (archival)
Marjolijn de Jager (translator)
Hardy Jones (additional footage)
Paul Taggart (photography)



AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

directed by Dan Stone; edited by Patrick Gambuti Jr;
cinematography by Mathieu Mauvernay, Simeon Houtman, Tim Gorski,
James Joyner, Rip Odebralski, Daniel Fernandez and Jonathan Kane

"An intrepid record of modern-day piracy. Directed by Dan Stone to highlight moral as well as legal conflicts, this strikingly humane film may function as a prequel to Animal Planet's 'Whale Wars' but is light years ahead in visual clarity and narrative ambition."

Jeannette Catsoulis
(The New York Times)
NYT Critic's Pick

"A bizarre and breathtaking high-seas adventure set in the remote, spectacular Ross Sea off Antarctica, 'At the Edge of the World' is the summer season's most surprising and thought-provoking documentary."

Andrew O'Hehir
(Salon.com)



"It's a true David-and-Goliath story. For anyone interested in real environmental activism, this passionate film is a must-see. The best scenes run on sheer adrenaline. For a real thrill, be sure to keep an eye out for this one."

Michael Lee
(Film Forward)

"This real-life drama and its vast setting demand to be experienced on the big, instead of the little screen—men go overboard, skiffs go missing, and the long arm of the law threatens in this lean, sharply directed film."

Elena Oumano
(Village Voice)
"Highly recommended" Selection



"*At The Edge of the World* is a superb advocacy documentary and travelog that presents a compelling cause, fascinating cast of characters, eventful and dramatic story and artful cinematography. It takes you to a place you might not otherwise know and presents it in the genuine fullness of event and experience."

Jennifer Merin
(About.com)

"'At the Edge of the World' is one of those rare documentaries that could easily function as a compelling fiction thriller. Superbly shot from a wealth of angles and perspectives and edited to emphasize the tension in their quest, it's a grand entertainment that only offers time for reflection once the lights go up."

Robert Levin
(Critic's Notebook)



For further information:
www.AtTheEdgeOfTheWorld.com