

MAYDAY 109

by

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"The man that said the cream of a nation is lost in war can never be accused of making an overstatement of this very cruel fact."

- *Letter from Lt. Paul "Red" Fay, August, 1943*

The following is based on actual events.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN -- NIGHT

Dark. FREEZING, CHURNING WATER - strewn with splintered WOOD, DEBRIS. FLAMES thundering from SHATTERED WRECKAGE, the surface of the water itself ON FIRE as -

GASPING for BREATH - handsome, fair-haired **JACK**, 26 - SCRATCHED-UP, BLEEDING, Navy UNIFORM soaked and torn - SWIPES wildly at the WATER - shock, confusion all over his face.

Something terrible has happened. Jack's eyes registering the - NIGHTMARISH SCENE

- all around him. SCREAMS wrenching through the CHURNING DARKNESS of the OCEAN. Shattered glass, twisted metal -

BLASTING across Jack from a secondary EXPLOSION somewhere out on the WATER. More SCREAMING -

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
HELP! SOMEONE HELP!

A WRITHING SHAPE - hellishly ON FIRE, thrashing in the WATER.

Jack - twisting in the water toward the SCREAMING, TORTURED VOICE - heaves himself forward, SWIMMING toward it when -

- he is suddenly SLAMMED by a THUNDERING WAVE. A SHORN WOODEN BEAM smashing Jack -

UNDERWATER

- into a dark, roiling MURK of twisted metal, snarled papers, *the remnants of what must have been a BOAT, blown to pieces.*

Jack swipes frantically at the CHAOS of the water - the WOODEN BEAM weighing him down - FORCING him DEEPER - his panicked EYES catching on the PALE FACE of a DEAD SEAMAN, adrift.

Firelight flickering from the surface. MUFFLED SHOUTS filtering dimly from ABOVE.

All of it playing over Jack - as, flailing, helpless, he SINKS inexorably into the MURKY DARK BELOW.

CUT TO:

INT. BULLPEN, WAR DEPARTMENT BLDG. -- DAY

A CARD is jammed into the retainer of an Underwood. Clamped down. CLACK. CLACK-CLACKITY-CLACK-CLACK - hammering out TEXT -

"THE NAVY DEPT. DEEPLY REGRETS TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON..."

- A **NAVY ENSIGN** - 26, back rigid, perfect posture, buzzed blond hair, TYPING like a machine.

A pool of other ENSIGNS hammering at typewriters. Muggy summer air, soupy with cigarette smoke, lazily stirred by fans.

The Ensign SNAPS the last key, finishes the TELEGRAM CARD. Drags it out of his Underwood, flips it into an OUTBOX PILED HIGH with other identical telegram CARDS. Reaches -

- picks up a half-smoked CIGARETTE propped in the ASHTRAY on the edge of his desk. Takes a quick pull. Fast. Mechanical. A little reward at the end of each card.

Already reaching for the NEXT CARD. Jams it into his Underwood. CLACK-CLACK-CLACK-CLACKITY-CLACK -

"AUGUST 3 1943 THE NAVY DEPT. DEEPLY REGRETS TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON..."

STOPPING SHORT - the Ensign's eyes fix on the NAME he is about to type. Blinks. Stares at it.

Swivels in his chair, raises a hand to flag down the **SUPERVISING LIEUTENANT**, 28, crisply patrolling the aisles -

ENSIGN TYPIST
Lieutenant?

INT. HALLWAY, WAR DEPARTMENT BLDG. -- DAY

CLACKING down the polished tile floor - putty-colored walls, sallow overhead fluorescent - the Supervising Lieutenant -

- veers toward an OFFICE DOOR. RAPS on it twice. Twists the knob, pushing in without waiting for an answer -

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE, WAR DEPARTMENT BLDG. -- CONTINUOUS

Fluorescent lights, plain gray carpeting, a framed American flag. At a square DESK with a TELEPHONE, stacks of FOLDERS -

- a **YOUNG ENSIGN**, 23, square-jawed, efficient - looks up as the Lieutenant steps in, nods to the CLOSED INNER DOOR -

SUPERVSIING LIEUTENANT
He in there?

YOUNG ENSIGN
He, uh - has the Major on the line.

SUPERVSIING LIEUTENANT
I need him. For a house call. A KIA.

YOUNG ENSIGN
He doesn't typically do that.

SUPERVSIING LIEUTENANT
He's going to want to do this one.

INT. '41 FORD SUPER DELUXE [DRIVING] -- AFTERNOON

Hot. Windows cracked open. Sweating through his DRESS UNIFORM, PRIEST'S COLLAR - the **NAVY CHAPLAIN**, 52, soft-edged, glasses - - peers out at the passing white-washed MANSIONS, driveways, immaculate lawns. Pristine water of Lewis Bay. Glances at -

CAPTAIN

Their driveway's longer than my whole street.

The **CAPTAIN** - 31, tired, sweaty - beside him. Hunches forward to squint over the shoulder of the Young Ensign driving -

A WHITE-WASHED ESTATE - perched at the end of the road - fills the grubby windshield. Jutting decks and balconies.

INT. DRAWING ROOM, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

FINGERS dancing over the keys of a BABY GRAND PIANO - a regal, effortlessly **ELEGANT WOMAN** (53) plays, lost in the MUSIC.

LAUGHTER from outside - CHILDREN DASHING past in the front yard, streaks of white shorts, polo shirts. The Woman glances over - FINGERS, MUSIC HALTING at the sight of -

The BLACK '41 FORD SUPER DELUXE drawing up into the driveway.

EXT. FRONT LAWN, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The Captain climbs out into the steamy August heat. Chaplain climbing out beside him, eyes falling on the -

BOYS tossing a FOOTBALL on the grassy front lawn.

The Captain grimaces - not relishing this job. Glances at the Chaplain - starts up toward the sweeping VERANDA.

The OLDEST BOY - a lanky 17 - catches the FOOTBALL. Draws up short, eyes fixing on the Captain and the Chaplain.

Mounting the stairs - the Captain slows. FRONT DOOR coming open. The Elegant Woman stepping out - dread on her face.

CAPTAIN

Ma'am. Is your husband home?

Her HUSBAND, a gruff OX OF A MAN, 55, round glasses - stumping out of his STUDY. Drawing up beside her -

THE MAN

What is this about?

CAPTAIN

Mr. Kennedy. I'm afraid it's your son, sir. John.

ELEGANT WOMAN [ROSE KENNEDY]

NO!

The Man - **JOSEPH KENNEDY, SR.** - turns to CATCH **ROSE KENNEDY** as she crumples, COLLAPSES in GRIEF.

SMASH CUT TO:

UNDERWATER

Swirling blues, murky WATER - CHURNED as a PALE ARM SWIPES through it. Shoulders, hips, legs KICKING. A mop of brown hair around a lanky body as -

JACK - **a.k.a. JOHN F. KENNEDY** - younger, 22, swim shorts - CLAWS at the water. Fierce. Winces, fights his way to the -

INT. POOL, HARVARD INDOOR ATHLETIC CENTER -- AFTERNOON

- SURFACE - into the fluorescent light. Jack - handsome, pale, skinny - WATER churning around him - COUGHS.

Tiled walls echoing back a BUZZER as several OTHER SWIMMERS reach the ends of their LAPS in the Olympic-sized POOL.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
That's Kennedy in first for trials.

SUPER: "Harvard University. Three Years Earlier. June, 1940."

Jack - shivering, CHOKING, HAULS himself up onto the tiled edge. His whole body SHAKING. *Something not right.*

Spotting him from the BLEACHERS, surging to his feet - **LEM BILLINGS** - 23, athletic, handsome -

LEM BILLINGS
Jack?

Jack - clutching his stomach turns - heaves, VOMITS UP a murk of chlorine and bile across the slippery pool tile.

LEM BILLINGS (CONT'D)
Jesus - Jack!

Jack curls around his CRAMPING STOMACH, shivering.

Lem dashes to the edge of the wet tile. Heaving Jack up. Twists back to the gaping HARVARD SWIM TEAMMATES -

LEM BILLINGS (CONT'D)
Call a doctor.

INT. CORRIDOR, MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL -- LATER

Crisp white walls, sea-green doors. Pushing past scuffling ORDERLIES, DOCTORS in lab coats, the DRONE of the P.A. -

JOE KENNEDY, JR. - 24, tall, handsome, well-built - veers toward a DOORWAY - ducks his head in on -

A ROOM - BED in the center, an old WOMAN in her 80s, papery skin, swathed in starched hospital bed sheets.

Joe Jr. grimaces - pushes back out, nearly wheeling into -

NURSE
Excuse me, can I help you?

- a TIRED, overworked female NURSE, papery white UNIFORM.

JOE JR.
I'm looking for Jack Kennedy.

INT. ROOM 244, MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL -- AFTERNOON

Joyless little box of a room. Plain white walls. Metal trays, medical equipment surrounding - Jack - sick, miserable -

Sprawled under bleached hospital sheets. Almost as PALE as the bowl of TAPIOCA he's idly toying with.

Lem Billings - slouched against the WINDOW SILL - glances over as - Joe Jr. ducks into the doorway. Drawing up short -

JOE JR.
There you are. They had some shriveled old prune in your usual room. This one's like a closet.

JACK
It's got a view of the women's floor, though.

Lem tosses a glance out the window, hadn't noticed. Joe Jr. smirks. Approaches the bed, regards his brother -

JOE JR.
So what, you missed the tapioca?

JACK
I missed that Nurse Elaine, is what I missed.

LEM BILLINGS
He's got a temperature of 101. I had to drag him from the pool.

JACK
Goddamn flu.

Joe Jr. shakes his head - sympathetic, but used to this -

JOE JR.

(to Lem)

Kid gets sick more than anyone else
I know.

Jack, frustrated with his own body. Avoids Joe's eyes.

JOE JR. (CONT'D)

Dad got Kick and Bobby all worked up
about seeing a Kennedy trounce those
Princeton pricks. Too bad. He'll be
disappointed.

Jack looks sharply over. Meets Joe's eye. That hits a nerve.

JACK

You tell Dad to have 'em there in
those bleachers.

LEM BILLINGS

You can't swim tonight. You nearly
fainted out there.

Jack ignores Lem. Still holding Joe's gaze. Eyes burning -

JACK

Just tell him to be there.

INT. CORRIDOR, MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL -- EVENING

Heels CLACKING as she shuffles papers on a metal clipboard,
the tired, overworked NURSE ducks past a couple of orderlies -

Draws up in the DOORWAY of Jack's room - the amber late-August
SUN SETTING through the window -

NURSE

Okay, Mr. Kennedy, let's -

- stops short. Jack's bed - EMPTY.

CUT TO:

INT. POOL, HARVARD INDOOR ATHLETIC CENTER -- EVENING

A tumult of CHEERING as BARE FEET slap across the tile.
Mounting the DIVING BOARD - Jack, in an old-fashioned red
Harvard one-piece swimsuit -

- pasty, sweating and shivering at the same time. Looks like
death warmed over. Tosses a glance toward the -

BLEACHERS - jammed with Harvard fans. Among them - THE KENNEDY
CLAN, including Joe Jr., Joseph Kennedy, Sr. (52), stern.

Jack turns his foggy, feverish eyes to the rippling water.
Shuts them. Trying to focus as -

THE BUZZER SOUNDS.

Jack - eyes snapping open - LEAPS at the same time as Lem Billings, on the next diving board over -

UNDERWATER

- PLUNGING under, Jack claws at the water. Feet kicking in a flurry. Reaches the end of the lane -

Flipping over, starting back a SPLIT-SECOND BEHIND Lem and the OTHER SWIMMERS through the chlorinated murk.

INT. BLEACHERS, HARVARD INDOOR ATHLETIC CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

On his feet in the stands - Joe Jr., surrounded by ELBOWING FANS, lanky **BOBBY KENNEDY** (14) tensely at his side -

Glances down at Joseph Kennedy, regally seated. Watching the SWIMMERS in the water, hands folded in his lap.

INT. POOL, HARVARD INDOOR ATHLETIC CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

Lem Billings reaches the lip of the POOL, turning back for another lap. Tosses a worried glance over as -

Jack THRASHES through the turnaround, COUGHING. A lungful of CHLORINE. Swallows it down. SWIMS for all he's goddamn worth.

Pushing himself - pushing - pushing - Jack REACHES the OTHER SIDE. The BUZZER sounding a moment TOO LATE. Lem, another PRINCETON SWIMMER already clinging to the edge.

Jack grasps the tile lip. Hauling himself halfway out of the water. Angry frustration in his CLUTCHED FISTS as he COUGHS.

His determined EYES drag to the HARVARD SCOREBOARD. Trailing Princeton. Jack, jaw clamped -

INT. 1940 CADILLAC 72 LIMOUSINE -- LATER / NIGHT

- staring dolefully out of the back of the family limousine. Crammed into the leather back seat alongside Joe Jr., Bobby, **KATHLEEN "KICK" KENNEDY** (20) - Jack feels like shit.

Up front, Joseph Kennedy brooding behind the wheel. Rose in the passenger seat, muffled Nat King Cole on the RADIO.

Joe Jr. tosses a glance at Jack's trembling hands. Showered, wrapped in a Harvard letterman jacket - sick and freezing.

JOE JR.

Coach Lamar said he's never seen anyone place with a 101 fever.

JACK

They still beat us.

JOE JR.
Third's not bad.

JACK
Third's not winning.

Joe Jr. tosses a glance toward their father up front.

JOE JR.
Dad?

JOSEPH KENNEDY
Third's not winning.

Joe Jr. sighs. Not surprised, but even so. Jack, headache, fever, grimaces, stares miserably out at the passing night.

Joseph Kennedy regards him in the REARVIEW MIRROR -

JOSEPH KENNEDY (CONT'D)
You go out there like that, you expect to win? No. You didn't. You knew you wouldn't. So why'd you go out there, put a Kennedy in third place, drag your whole team down?

JACK
It seemed better than quitting.

JOSEPH KENNEDY
Only thing worse than quitting is losing.

ROSE KENNEDY
Shush.

Rose - cranks up the RADIO, no longer jazz. Now FUZZY VOICES -

CBS RADIO ANCHOR (V.O.)
...last night and heavy bombing throughout the morning, we now confirm Paris has surrendered to the German invaders. The occupied capital...

Jack, eyes suddenly glued to the RADIO. Joe Jr., the same. Between them, Bobby, the youngest, sensing the gravity of the sudden SILENCE in the car.

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- LATE NIGHT

Wrapped in a BATHROBE, still sweaty, pasty, feeling like shit, Jack pads past clusters of hanging -

FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS - Joseph Kennedy stooping beside Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Kennedy clan in front of the Eiffel Tower.

Drawn to muffled VOICES, dim light from the sitting room -

CBS RADIO ANCHOR (V.O.)
...French troops withdrew to avoid a violent battle and total destruction of the city. Shortly afterward, German tanks rumbled down the Champs Elysees.

INT. DRAWING ROOM, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Emerging from the mouth of the hallway into the wallpapered drawing room, Jack draws up short.

Tensely seated beside the cabinet-sized wood Truetone RADIO - Kathleen, listening less to the BROADCAST than to -

Joseph Kennedy and Joe Jr. - pacing the pastel carpet -

JOSEPH KENNEDY
 I'm not losing a son to this senseless war.

JOE JR.
 We're not even in this war.

JOSEPH KENNEDY
 And we're not going to be.

JOE JR.
 It'll look good on a ballot, and you know it.

Joseph Kennedy scowls - but in spite of himself, a tempting prospect. Jack, shivering, head in a fog -

JACK
 What's going on?

The others turn. Kathleen, concerned -

KATHLEEN
 Joe's going to enlist.

JOSEPH KENNEDY
 That remains to be seen.

JACK
 If he's enlisting, I'm enlisting.

Joseph Kennedy, a derisive glance at Jack, snorts, waves him away, not even considering it -

JOSEPH KENNEDY
 Go back to bed.

JACK
 I'm serious.

JOSEPH KENNEDY

You're not a soldier, Jack. Besides,
you have to finish school.

JACK

I don't care about school.

JOSEPH KENNEDY

The answer is no.

Jack, frustrated at being dismissed, is suddenly overtaken
by a hacking COUGH that wracks his body. His father blanches -

JOSEPH KENNEDY (CONT'D)

For Christ's sake, go to bed.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- LATER

Slatted window blinds drawn fast. A desk, scattered MODELS
of SAILBOATS. A dresser, BOOKS in sloppy stacks on the floor.

The SOFT MURMUR of the Philco RADIO on the bedstand. Jack -
nose plugged up, feverish. Wrapped in sweaty sheets. Listening -

CBS RADIO ANCHOR (V.O.)

*...British troops are retreating
across the Channel as Hitler's control
of France now seems absolute.*

Jack - aware the world is changing around him. Eyes falling -

ON A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH - *Joe Jr., 20, in his Harvard Football
uniform, a grinning champion. Their father beaming, arm around
his shoulders. Jack - in back, small, pale, skinny. Forgotten.*

CUT TO:

INT. FITNESS ROOM, NAVY RECRUITMENT OFFICE -- MORNING

Jack, jaw set, determination on his sweaty face, drops a
PUSH-UP. ANOTHER. ANOTHER. Falters - CRUMPLES. Tapped out.

Straining under the pale fluorescent of a tiny, windowless
EXAM ROOM. Art-Deco "Man the Guns, Join the Navy" POSTER -

- Jack HEAVES himself up onto a PULL-UP BAR. Lifts his meager
weight off the ground. AGAIN. AGAIN. Shivering now. Still
sick as a dog. Drenched in his own sweat. Aware of the -

RECRUITER LIEUTENANT, 29, stiff, watching, with a clipboard.

Jack GRUNTS. Cramping, feeling like shit. DROPS from the
bar. Shivering and pale and furious with himself.

INT. EXAM ROOM, NAVY RECRUITMENT OFFICE -- LATER

Buzzing fluorescent. Seated on the edge of the EXAM TABLE - Jack, stripped to the waist. Skinny, ribcage nearly pushing through his underweight flanks. Sweating. RUSTLING PAPER -

- as the **NAVY DOCTOR** - balding 52, glasses, white labcoat and tie - FLIPS A PAGE on the METAL CLIPBOARD. Eyeballs Jack -

NAVY DOCTOR

You've always had this difficulty
with your back?

JACK

I've learned to live with it.

NAVY DOCTOR

Your file shows you had leukemia?

Jack snuffles back his runny nose, sick as a dog -

JACK

It wasn't leukemia. They thought it
was, but it was something else.

NAVY DOCTOR

I see here treatments for
hyperthyroidism. Steroids, ulcers -

JACK

So what.

NAVY DOCTOR

You scored forty-four on your curls,
thirty-six on push-ups.

JACK

I've got the flu. It's going away.

The Navy Doctor peels off his glasses, studies Jack.

NAVY DOCTOR

Why is it you want to join the Navy?

Jack meets his eye, feeling this slipping out of his grasp -

JACK

The wrong guys are winning over there.
I want to do something about it.

NAVY DOCTOR

These aren't passing scores.

INT. '37 FORD MODEL 74 SEDAN -- DAY

Dropping angrily into the chewed-up passenger seat - Jack LUGS the dented old DOOR SHUT with a CLUNK. Fuming.Flushed.

Behind the wheel - Lem Billings glances over. Jack, disheveled, sweaty. Furious. Lem, sympathetic -

LEM BILLINGS
If it helps at all, they told me my
eyes were shit before they'd even
let me do a curl.

JACK
It doesn't help.

Lem nods. Didn't think it would. Still feels bad.

LEM BILLINGS
How about we grab a drink. See if
Alice is around.

JACK
I'm sick as a dog.

LEM BILLINGS
Better to be sick and drunk than
sick and sober. Right?

Lem grins, infectious. Starts the engine. Jack sighs.

INT. PANAMA CLUB JAZZ BAR -- EVENING

A bleary hubbub of CONVERSATIONS, clinking glasses, LAUGHTER. JAZZ MUSIC tumbling from an amateur but spirited BAND onstage. Saturday night. The place is hopping.

Hunched at a dim back table, buzzed and still feeling like shit, Jack, eyes shadowed, watches the crowd. JOLTING as -

ALICE (O.S.)
Hey. Dream boy.

ALICE - 19, gorgeous, curly brown hair, ruby lips - FLICKS Jack's ear. Face flushed from the MARTINI she just drained.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Did I come here with a date or am I
just drinking by myself?

Jack forces a smile at her. Lifts his own FULL MARTINI, takes a sip. Winces as the vodka eats at his sore throat.

JACK
Sorry, sweetheart. Hell of a day.

Alice glances, sees where Jack is looking - at the bar, two well-built MARINES IN UNIFORM. A flock of admiring GIRLS.

ALICE
You know, you don't need a uniform
to impress me.

Jack winces - the pity stings worse than the failure. Alice sighs. Sensing this is a bad angle to take -

ALICE (CONT'D)

I'm going to the powder room. When I get back, you and I are dancing or I'm dancing with Lem.

JACK

Yeah, good luck with that.

Alice smirks as - pushing out of the booth - Jack catches her hand, gives it a peck of a kiss. She stands. Ducks past -

Lem Billings - hammered and going wild by himself on the dance floor. A few amused looks from other dancing COUPLES.

Jack's eyes slip back to the bar, the Uniformed Marines. Draws a breath, pushes it out. Takes a drink. Winces.

INT. FOYER, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- NIGHT

Dark. With a CLACK, the front door swings open. Snuffling, a runny nose still, Jack steps in. Jams his keys in his pocket.

Nudges the door shut. Squelching toward the stairs when -

JOSEPH KENNEDY (O.S.)

I thought you were going to spend the day in bed. Recuperating.

Jack JUMPS. Turns to find - Joseph Kennedy in an easy chair by the bay window. A dim Tiffany lamp, newspaper in his lap.

JACK

Alice wanted to grab a drink before I head back to campus on Monday.

JOSEPH KENNEDY

I'm not talking about Alice.

Jack - shucking out of his jacket - pauses. Glances at his father as Joseph closes the crackling newspaper. Stands.

JOSEPH KENNEDY (CONT'D)

You didn't think I would find out? That a Kennedy would fail a physical?

JACK

It's not like that -

JOSEPH KENNEDY

It's a disgrace, is what it is. I told you no, but you went out there, you weren't ready, just like last night.

(MORE)

JOSEPH KENNEDY (CONT'D)
And now you've tarnished our name -
you've embarrassed me - twice in as
many days.

Jack, too tired and feeling too shitty to let it go -

JACK
I am ready. I could out-sail that
prick doctor with half a boat and my
hands tied behind my back.

JOSEPH KENNEDY
Obviously there's more to it than
that. Ask your brother. He passed
his this afternoon.

Jack, stung, frustration boiling over -

JACK
I could beat Joe on a boat any day
of the week.

JOE JR. (O.S.)
Prove it.

Jack and his father both turn - not having heard Joe Jr.
reach the bottom of the stairs, sock-footed, slacks, t-shirt -

JOE JR. (CONT'D)
Or does "any day of the week" mean
"any other day?"

Jack turns back to their father, eyes flashing, hungry -

JACK
I beat him out there, you get 'em to
give me another shot at a commission.

JOSEPH KENNEDY
(scoffs)
That's not going to happen.

JOE JR.
Don't worry, Dad. He won't beat me.

Jack turns back to his brother. Fire burning in his eyes -

JACK
Prove it.

EXT. BAY, HYANNIS PORT -- THE NEXT DAY

Rushing out over the sparkling water - radiant sun beating
down from crisp, clear blue skies - the 26ft. gaff-rigged
sloop SAILBOAT *Victura* - Jack at the tiller -

- RACING ahead of a SECOND SAILBOAT, the *Laureola* - Joe Jr. squinting into the sun fifteen feet BEHIND HIM.

EXT. VICTURA, JACK'S SAILBOAT -- CONTINUOUS

Grasping the tiller - Jack, wind rushing at him. Finally, out here, more alive, feeding off the race, sickness waning.

Jack SHUTS HIS EYES - "feeling" the ocean through the tiller.

Ducks instinctively as he tacks the boat, the BOOM swinging over his head. Weaving to keep the MAINSAIL in the wind -

A sly grin over his shoulder at Joe Jr. behind him.

EXT. LAWN, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Barefoot, white shorts, striped tee-shirt, a ball of energy - **TED KENNEDY** - 8, blond-haired - dashes through the grass, riveted to the TWO BOATS on the WATER -

TED
Jack-Jack-Jack-Jack!

Drawing up beside lanky 14-year-old Bobby, hands in his pockets - squinting across the water. Bobby shakes his head -

BOBBY
He'll never beat him. Joe always has
him at the turn.

EXT. VICTURA, JACK'S SAILBOAT -- CONTINUOUS

Jack - triumph swelling, beginning to feel like he has this - grabs at the RIGGING. Hanging off the tiller, bare feet braced. The boy is a natural, a strong sailor -

- but as the *Victura* starts to arc around a bobbing BUOY - Joe Jr.'s SAILBOAT EDGES AHEAD, water spraying from the bow.

Jack sees it - grits his teeth. Grabs for the JIB SHEET, struggling to stay in the LEAD.

Joe Jr. grins, waves smugly at Jack as Joe's BOAT CUTS IN - DASHING AHEAD of Jack's boat as they ARC around the BUOY.

EXT. DOCK, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Stooped on the dock, a newspaper tucked under his arm, idly watching the RACE - Joseph Kennedy shakes his head. Turns.

Starts back up the dock toward the giant white Kennedy house.

EXT. VICTURA, JACK'S SAILBOAT -- CONTINUOUS

Jack - bounding across the water - desperate now, grasping at rigging lines - WHIPS the *Victura* to the left.

Trying to outpace Joe Jr. but -

Joe Jr. sees it - whips left, cutting him off. Jack CUTS right. Blasting into the wind, losing momentum.

EXT. LAUREOLA, JOE JR.'S SAILBOAT -- CONTINUOUS

Joe Jr. smoothly transitions from line to line. Looks back -

- his smug smile slipping slightly as he glimpses Jack's FACE between the his sails - desperate, yearning. Heart breaking as he starts to LOSE.

Joe Jr. looks forward. The shoreline, dock, the tiny shape of their FATHER - already starting up the grassy lawn.

Understanding what this means to Jack, Joe Jr. reaches - grabs a line. Noses the *Laureola* slightly INTO THE WIND.

A LURCH as it SLOWS.

EXT. VICTURA, JACK'S SAILBOAT -- CONTINUOUS

Jack - close behind Joe Jr. - reacts to Joe's SLOWING in a heartbeat. Grabs a line, BOOM WHIPPING by over his head and -

VEERS to the LEFT - drawing up ALONGSIDE Joe Jr. Cutting through the water, starting to OVERTAKE him.

EXT. LAWN, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Bobby - Ted tugging at his wrist, wanting to play - suddenly steps forward, hawk-eyes riveted to the BOATS -

BOBBY
Whoa - whoa, whoa.

Joseph Kennedy - ambling past, slows, turns back to watch as -

EXT. VICTURA, JACK'S SAILBOAT -- CONTINUOUS

Jack - can't believe it himself - SKIMS AHEAD of Joe Jr. Both of them BARRELING toward the DOCKS now. Glances back as -

EXT. LAUREOLA, JOE JR.'S SAILBOAT -- CONTINUOUS

- Joe Jr. lets a little more ROPE slip through his hands. Feigns frustration. Blue eyes warmly settling on Jack's boat as it cuts ahead. A silent gift to his brother.

EXT. LAWN, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Jack's SAILBOAT buzzes by the dock. Clearly in FIRST PLACE. Ted jumping up and down. Bobby - bright-eyed disbelief -

BOBBY
He beat him. He actually beat him.

EXT. VERANDA, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- SHORTLY LATER

Hunched in a shaded wicker chair - Joseph Kennedy, stewing as Jack, Joe Jr. bound up the steps -

Jack - aglow, energized, triumphant. Draws up at the top of the stairs. Defiant as Bobby and Ted scrabble up after him -

JACK

How'd that look? Look like I "wasn't ready?" 'Cause from where I'm standing it looks like I just earned a uniform.

JOSEPH KENNEDY

I never agreed to that.

JACK

Come on, Dad. What you just saw out there - was that winning or was that losing?

Joseph Kennedy sets his jaw, looks to Joe Jr. Joe Jr. gives a SHRUG - *Jack's got a point.* Joseph Kennedy stews -

JOSEPH KENNEDY

I'll get them to toss your file. But you still have to go back and pass the physical.

Jack, a triumphant smile spreading. Rising energy, strength -

OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS:

INT. HARVARD HEMENWAY GYMNASIUM -- DAY

Determination now fixed on Jack's face as he PUSHES UP a loaded-down BARBELL. Pumping out set after set.

Clattering weights, rowing machines, other HARVARD ATHLETES training around him. Jack - straining. Pushing himself.

EXT. HARVARD RUNNING TRACK -- ANOTHER DAY

Jack - shorts, a sweat-soaked t-shirt, SHOES POUNDING on the TRACK under a crisp sunny day. Resolve driving him.

RUNNING beside him - Lem Billings, winded, legs pumping. Still faster, but becoming harder to edge out Jack.

INT. POOL, HARVARD INDOOR ATHLETIC CENTER -- ANOTHER DAY

Thickening arms, increasingly muscular shoulders, clawing at the water - Jack SHOOTS down his lane. Lem Billings now falling behind him.

Jack reaches the opposite end of the pool, hauls himself out of the chlorinated water. Hunches, dripping on the edge.

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER:

INT. FITNESS ROOM, NAVY RECRUITMENT OFFICE -- DAY

Those same THICKER ARMS now lifting Jack. His chin topping the BAR once, twice, three times, four - as he does CURLS for the same WATCHING Recruiter Lieutenant.

Jack sweating - one - more - curl. DROPS from the bar. Rounds on the Lieutenant as he scribbles on his CLIPBOARD.

JACK
Seventy-six?

RECRUITER LIEUTENANT
I counted seventy-seven.

Jack - burning, flickering, triumph in his eyes.

INT. EXAM ROOM, NAVY RECRUITMENT OFFICE -- LATER

The same Navy Doctor, clipboard in hand, arms crossed, looks Jack over, once more stripped to the waist on the EXAM TABLE.

The Navy Doctor - a sharp enough tack and not fond of having strings pulled behind his back -

NAVY DOCTOR
A remarkable improvement. And interestingly enough, I can't seem to locate your medical history.

JACK
Well I'd like to think my performance speaks for itself.

NAVY DOCTOR
Indeed.

The Navy Doctor sighs. Steps to the COUNTER along the wall of the room. Flips Jack's file back to the cover page, reaches -

STAMPS it - "APPROVED" - clicks his pen, SIGNS IT.

Jack, eyes on every tiny moment - beside himself with pride as the sour-faced Navy Doctor turns, hands Jack his file -

NAVY DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Congratulations, Mr. Kennedy. Tell me, where do you see yourself in the Navy?

JACK

Well my brother's gonna be flying planes out there over Europe. But I've always been more a man of the sea, myself. Maybe captain a PT boat.

NAVY DOCTOR

Yes. Well. Good luck to you wherever you end up.

CUT TO:

The prow of a PT BOAT - the RATTLE OF GUNFIRE, howling ENGINES -

INT. JACK'S OFFICE, NAVAL INTELLIGENCE -- AFTERNOON

- blasting fuzzily from a clattering PROJECTOR. Bleary black-and-white NEWSREEL playing across a pull-down screen. The PT BOAT - a chiseled PLASTIC MODEL perched on -

A desk overrun with PAPERWORK. Open manila files. An Underwood typewriter. Sun lancing in through the Venetian blinds across -

SUPER: "Office of Naval Intelligence, Maryland. 1941."

Jack - tan Navy Uniform of a LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE, a bored deadness to his eyes. Hunched, on the PHONE -

JACK

(into the phone)

Yes, those were both requisitioned. Form R-32. I'm looking at the carbons right now. Yeah, I'll hold.

Jack's eyes drag back to the NEWSREEL - CORSAIR FIGHTER PLANES, A-20s pin-wheeling through the sky. Rakish PILOTS.

LT. NASH (O.S.)

Kennedy.

Jack looks up at the OPEN OFFICE DOOR -

LT. NASH - red-haired, 24, a little pudgy. An opened CARDBOARD BOX under his arm. Smirks. Ducking in -

- to THUMP the box on the corner of Jack's desk. Open cardboard flaps permitting a view of -

STACKED BOOKS inside. All the same - plain white PROOFING GALLEY covers - "Why England Slept" by John F. Kennedy.

LT. NASH (CONT'D)

What, were you going to make me wait in line for an autograph?

Jack, a slight smile, leans forward - lifts out one of the BOOKS. Thumbs it open, fans the pages. Freshly-printed.

JACK
 (into the phone)
 Fine, but we need 'em by thirteen-hundred. Okay. Thank you.

Jack CLAPS the receiver back into its cradle. Lt. Nash's attention has now drifted to the bleary NEWSREEL -

LT. NASH
 That your brother's squadron?

JACK
 (nods)
 They're going to do a feature on him at Movietone.

LT. NASH
 Goddamn daredevils.

Jack and Lt. Nash watch as a *SOARING PLANE* fills the *SCREEN*. A line of *GRINNING PILOTS* in dashing uniforms.

JACK
 He's tearing up the skies, I'm sitting here behind a desk. What kind of a campaign is that gonna make?

Lt. Nash regards Jack, amused by the presumption -

LT. NASH
 Since when was there a campaign?

JACK
 I'm a Kennedy. There's been a campaign since I was born.

Lt. Nash smirks. Knows the Kennedys enough to know the truth in that. Glancing sharply over as -

Through the OPEN DOORWAY - a uniformed ENSIGN DASHES PAST - shoes SLAPPING. VOICES. TWO MORE ENSIGNS RUSH by - urgent.

Jack and Lt. Nash look at each other. Jack SHOVES BACK from his desk. Both surging toward the DOORWAY -

INT. BULLPEN, NAVAL INTELLIGENCE -- CONTINUOUS

A sea of desks, stacked paperwork, typewriters. Desk chairs all EMPTY. A DOZEN UNIFORMED ENSIGNS, typists, secretaries -

- huddled around a cabinet-sized ZENITH RADIO, wood-sided, VOLUME TURNED UP. Jack and Lt. Nash draw up -

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (V.O.)
 (over the radio)
 ...December 7th, 1941.
 (MORE)

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*A date which will live in infamy.
 The United States of America was
 suddenly and deliberately attacked
 by naval and air forces of the Empire
 of Japan...*

Piercing through the ANXIOUS MURMURING of the MEN - PHONES start RINGING throughout the bullpen. Jack's eyes shift to -

A small desk-model PHILCO RADIO, unattended, tuned to CBS -

CBS RADIO ANCHOR (V.O.)
*Our prayers are with all of the men
 in the services, on the land, in the
 air, and out to sea. God bless you.*

Jack stares at the radio. Turns. Lt. Nash watching the other men, glances back. Jack weaving away through the desks.

INT. MATTHESON'S OFFICE, NAVAL INTELLIGENCE -- AFTERNOON

Fingers drilling an Underwood typewriter - hard-edged **CAPT. MATTHESON**, 36, lost in an ocean of paperwork, glances up as -

- with a RAP on the frame of the open door - Jack steps in, halting Capt. Mattheson in the midst of the cable he is typing -

CAPT. MATTHESON
 What is it, Lieutenant.

Mattheson, fingers hovering over the typewriter - annoyed.

JACK
 You've been listening to the news?

CAPT. MATTHESON
 What kind of a question is that.

JACK
 I'd like to get out there.

Capt. Mattheson scowls, resumes TYPING his cable -

CAPT. MATTHESON
 Go back to your office, Lieutenant.

JACK
 With respect, sir, I'm ready for this. I've trained for this.

CAPT. MATTHESON
 You're a Harvard man, Kennedy, you want to tell me your strength isn't Intelligence?

JACK

I'm a sailor, sir. I belong at sea.

CAPT. MATTHESON

The answer is no.

Jack - heard those words too many times before. Hardens -

JACK

I can't just sit behind a desk while my country is invaded. My brother's out there fighting these guys. I should be out there, too.

CAPT. MATTHESON

Your father wants you here.

JACK

Since when do you report to the Ambassador to Britain?

Capt. Mattheson SLAMS the typewriter. Skewers Jack with a burning stare. Jack, realizing he may have overstepped -

JACK (CONT'D)

...Sir. Let me worry about my father. Please. Let me get out there on a boat.

CAPT. MATTHESON

Go back to your office, Lieutenant.

Jack, starting to turn away, frustration boiling over -

JACK

He opposed this. From the start. Did you know that? He thought we should've given Hitler whatever he wanted. He said as much. I want to do something about this. I'm asking you to put me where I can do something. Not where he asked you to put me.

CAPT. MATTHESON

Get out of my office, Lieutenant.

Jack, furious, wheels away. CLACKS his way out of the office. Capt. Mattheson sits, eyes on the door where Jack stood.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT, BASE HOUSING -- NIGHT

Bare brick walls under a white coat of paint. Plain furniture, a simple desk. On his side, wrapped in heavy winter blankets -

Jack lies awake. Stewing. Little Zenith RADIO on the desk turned ON, softly murmuring.

A SHUFFLE OF PAPER from the DOOR.

Jack sits up. Squints. Dim light under the door washing over -
AN ENVELOPE on the hardwood floor. Jack stares at it. Peels back the sheets and blankets. Rises. Crosses to the door.

Stoops. Picks up the ENVELOPE. The Seal of the Office of Naval Intelligence. Jack TEARS it open. Pries out a typewritten LETTER. SIGNED, "Capt. W. Mattheson."

Jack switches on the light. Squinting, eyes darting over the page. Rereads. A flicker of TRIUMPH in his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. PACKARD CUSTOM SUPER 180 -- AFTERNOON

Muggy summer light through the Packard's crisp windshield. Warm air wafting in through the open windows across -

- Jack, sunglasses, tan Navy uniform, sleeves rolled up. White cottages slip by outside. Glenn Miller on the RADIO.

SUPER: "Six months later."

STACKED CARDBOARD MOVING BOXES filling the Packard's back seat. Taped shut, jammed and bulging.

Jack knobs down the volume on the radio. Steers the Packard into the mouth of the Kennedy driveway.

A hint of trepidation as his eyes fall on the KENNEDY HOUSE.

INT. FOYER, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

With a soft squeal of hinges - Jack pushes into the foyer. Duffel bag slung over his shoulder, sweating in his uniform.

Peeling off his sunglasses, his eyes fall on the table in the entry hall - stacked COPIES of HIS BOOK,

"*Why England Slept* by John F. Kennedy" - now with its official cover, the BRITISH FLAG, a napping LION.

Jack steps forward. Picks up a copy. Glances up at -

MUFFLED VOICES - two SHAPES on the VERANDA through the lacy curtains. Jack sets the book down, ducks toward them.

EXT. VERANDA, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Sprawled in white shorts, a polo shirt, Joe Jr. slouches on a wicker bench. Shakes his head as -

Bobby - 15 now, Portsmouth Priory School sweatshirt, hands wrapped around a FOOTBALL - tries to model a spiral throw -

JOE JR.
Toss it. Toss it here, that's not it
at all. Your hands are all wrong.

Bobby grimaces, frustrated. Tosses the ball to Joe Jr. -

JACK (O.S.)
Says the guy who didn't even letter
at Choate.

Jack steps out onto the veranda. Joe Jr. smirks. Abruptly
WINGS the football at Jack, who barely catches it -

JOE JR.
Good reflexes, JV. Too bad we ran
out of space on Harvard Varsity.

JACK
Aren't you s'posed to be off over
Europe? Or did you read the map wrong?

JOE JR.
They gave me a couple days off, I
figured I'd get a load of this book
my brother's puttin' out.

Jack smirks, tosses the FOOTBALL back to Bobby.

JACK
Supposed to be a real nail-biter.

JOE JR.
Glad you found something to keep
yourself busy with behind that desk.

Jack steps to the rail. Ocean air. A smile he cannot repress -

JACK
Yeah the desk was nice. I got tired
of it, though. So I got myself a
boat.

JOE JR.
You did not.

Jack grins. Joe stands, joins Jack at the rail, impressed -

JACK
Just got my orders. Four months
training, then I get my command.

JOE JR.
(to Bobby)
Lord help us, they've made the boy a
sailor.

Joe Jr. gives Jack's shoulder a squeeze. Bobby, envious admiration - his two dashing officer brothers.

Joe Jr. squints out at the sun across the water. Their two SAILBOATS tied up down at the dock -

JOE JR. (CONT'D)

Guess it's gonna be a while before either of us is home again then.

JACK

Yeah, looks like.

Joe Jr. glances back at Bobby - toying with the FOOTBALL -

JOE JR.

How about I teach you and Bobby how to throw that thing before we go.

JACK

How about you try to score a single touchdown.

EXT. LAWN, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- EVENING

Dashing across the grass through evening light - Jack SPRINGS, catches the FOOTBALL winged to him by a panting Bobby.

Pivoting to DUCK Joe Jr. - Jack - sidesteps little Edward barreling at him. RUNS as Joe Jr. POUNDS after him.

Jack twists back as Joe Jr. BEARS DOWN on him. Twists forward - getting ready to sling the football back to Bobby when -

Joe Jr. TACKLES Jack. The brothers SLAM to the ground, Jack FUMBLING the football as it wheels away into the grass.

Jack fights - tries to get free of Joe Jr. as little Edward GRABS up the FOOTBALL - elated to finally be holding it.

Jack - wriggling, writhing under the LAUGHING Joe Jr. -

JACK

Let go already.

JOE JR.

Are those grass stains on your uniform, Lieutenant Kennedy?

Bobby scrambling after Edward, easily outpacing him - until Kathleen SWOOPS in - HOOKING Bobby around his waist, LAUGHING.

Edward - cannot believe it as he CROSSES the TOUCHDOWN LINE. Flings his hands up in astonished VICTORY.

Joe Jr. gleeful as he finally lets Jack up. Both panting. Joe Jr. ruffles Jack's hair -

JOE JR. (CONT'D)
You got dirt in your hair, skipper.

Jack swats him away, smirking in spite of himself. Kathleen, Bobby, Edward jeering at each other. A *perfect moment* -

JARRED as with a ROAR - A SQUADRON of AMERICAN WILDCAT AIRPLANES cuts across the sky overhead, ENGINES DRONING.

Joe Jr. watches them. Glances over, meets Jack's eye. Seems to feel it too. The fragileness of all of this.

The looming shadow of the war.

Jack's eyes falling to - the Cadillac limousine crawling to a halt in the driveway. Their FATHER. Joseph Kennedy's hard, bespectacled gaze fixing through the windshield on -

Jack - who looks self-consciously down at his uniform. Awareness, dread on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- EVENING

A SLAMMING DOOR - JOLTS Kathleen, at the piano. She jumps, stops PLAYING as Joseph Kennedy STAMPS in. Wheels back on -

- Jack - chastened, wind-blown, stumbling in after him.

JOSEPH KENNEDY
I told you no then, I'm telling you
no now.

JACK
It's done.

JOSEPH KENNEDY
I'll have it undone.

JACK
I already have my orders.

JOSEPH KENNEDY
Who do you think you're talking to?

JACK
You have to let me do this.

Joseph Kennedy rounds on him, temper flaring. Eyes meeting Joe Jr.'s as he steps in after them, draws up short -

JACK (CONT'D)
Just once believe in me the way you
believe in Joe.

Joseph Kennedy SLAMS his fist to the top of the piano.

JOSEPH KENNEDY

Those boats are wooden coffins. If you go out there, you're going to get yourself killed.

Joseph Kennedy wheels away. WRENCHES open the DOOR to his study. Ducks through. SLAMS IT SHUT behind him.

Jack stares after him. His words hanging in the air.

INT. PACKARD CUSTOM SUPER 180 -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Sprinkling rain. Jack - oxford shirt, jacket, broods behind the wheel. Steeling himself as - the passenger door OPENS.

Alice, holding a newspaper over her head against the rain, climbs in -

ALICE

No one predicted rain tonight. I had to search my whole closet for this jacket.

Alice pulls the door shut. Turns in her seat. Looks Jack over. A smile tugging at her lips, warmth in her eyes -

ALICE (CONT'D)

Let me look at you. Yep. Famous author suits you just fine. C'mere, I've missed that face of yours.

Jack tries to force a smile. Alice leans, kisses him. Draws back, sensing something amiss -

ALICE (CONT'D)

What.

JACK

Let's get a drink. Then I need to tell you something.

EXT. PATIO, PANAMA CLUB JAZZ BAR -- LATER

Cafe lights strung up across the weathered brick patio. Rain sprinkling the canvas awning tented over it. Music blasting from inside, warm, steamed-over windows. No one else outside -

- except Alice, tears now STREAKING her MAKEUP. Evening dress wrapped around her. Eyes burning at Jack -

ALICE

You just decided this. You didn't even think about me. About us.

JACK

I can't sit in some office while our guys out there are getting shot at.

ALICE
You'd rather they shoot at you?

JACK
They're gonna shoot at my brother,
they're gonna have to get through
me.

Alice shakes her head bitterly, wipes at her eyes.

ALICE
I can't do this. I can't be one of
those girls glued to the window
waiting for the day those two officers
come up my driveway with a chaplain.

JACK
That's not gonna happen.

ALICE
You can't promise that.

JACK
I promise.

ALICE
(a ragged breath)
This isn't going to work.

Jack - sucker-punched by her words, stares at her, reeling -

JACK
This isn't supposed to be the end of
us.

ALICE
But it is. You made your decision.
Without me.

Alice wheels away. Sidestepping patio tables. Pushes back
through the DOOR inside, a blast of MUSIC, rabbling VOICES.

Jack - left out in the cold on the patio. Alone.

INT. FOYER, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- NIGHT

Dark. The grunt of keys in the lock. The door swinging open,
a dash of sprinkling rain as Jack pushes in. Shoes SQUELCHING.

Nudges the door shut. Stands. Gaze fixed on the CLOSED DOOR
of his father's study. A slit of light beneath it.

ROSE KENNEDY (O.S.)
You know, I made your father promise
never to send you out there.

Jack JUMPS. Rose, in an evening dress, descending the stairs.

ROSE KENNEDY (CONT'D)

You were so small when you were born,
they told us there was a good chance
you weren't going to survive. They
had a minister give you your last
rites right there in the hospital.

Rose approaches. Looks him up and down, straightens his jacket -

ROSE KENNEDY (CONT'D)

I worry about you. To think of you
out there. Joe, too. It scares me to
death. When I look at you, you're
still just my little boys.

She takes a step back. Looks him over again. Jack - not sure
what to say. Not used to this kind of talk from his mother.

ROSE KENNEDY (CONT'D)

I know I can't stop you. But be
careful out there.

JACK

I will. I promise.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- NIGHT

Stepping into his room, Jack draws up short. His UNIFORM
laid out across the bed. A FOOTBALL nestled beside it.

Jack picks up the NOTE taped to the FOOTBALL. From Joe Jr. -
"Try to work on maintaining possession of the ball."

Jack, smirking, shakes his head. Smile slowly falling from
his lips as his eyes shift back to the UNIFORM.

All at once feeling the looming reality of it all. His life
about to change forever. The quiet of the room -

- A STARK CONTRAST TO THE -

INT. DOUGLAS C-47 SKYTRAIN AIRPLANE -- DAY

- THUNDERING engines. RATTLING metal hull. Jouncing, pitching
through the air. Smashed along the curving fuselage on a
hard bench -

Jack, just turned 26, satchels CRAMMED around him, knee-to-
knee with 28 NAVY SAILORS. Sweating in the unbearable heat
of the aircraft. Papers spread all over his lap.

As the AIRCRAFT SHUDDERS, Jack turns in his seat. Face pasty.
Squints out the smeary WINDOW over his shoulder at the
glittering ocean, lumps of islands through the clouds.

SUPER: "Approaching Rendova, Solomon Islands. July, 1943."

A **JUNIOR LIEUTENANT** - 25, ruddy-faced, jovial - smashed in beside him, jostled by Jack, glances over at him -

JUNIOR LIEUTENANT
A little green around the gills?

JACK
Not particularly fond of airplanes.

The Junior Lieutenant nods at the PATROL TORPEDO (PT) BOAT SCHEMATICS laid out across Jack's lap -

JUNIOR LIEUTENANT
I'd take 'em over those PTs any day.
Goddamn death traps.

JACK
You've been on one?

JUNIOR LIEUTENANT
Was the Crew Chief on the 101. One of the old Elcos. Side planks kept cracking, forward chine guards ripped away. The bottom framing underbows would break if you looked at 'em funny and the steering locked up every hour on the hour.

Jack glances back to the SCHEMATICS in his lap - *ELCO 77' MOTOR TORPEDO BOAT*. The Junior Lieutenant shakes his head -

JUNIOR LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
Those things are floating coffins. I was lucky to get off with my life.

Jack, digesting as the PLANE PITCHES, starts a shuddering descent. His eye catching -

OUT THE WINDOW - the RAMSHACKLE NAVY BASE through the clouds, a scattering of tin-roofed shacks among the palm trees. BLACK SMOKE GUSHING from the DOCKS. DEBRIS scattering the water.

The Junior Lieutenant twists to stare at the WRECKAGE -

JUNIOR LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILLYS JEEP [DRIVING] -- DAY

Mud spattering up into the open-top WILLYS JEEP. A **SECOND-CLASS PETTY OFFICER**, 19 - downshifting behind the wheel as -

Jack - freshly-arrived in the PASSENGER SEAT - twists to gape through the passing PALM TREES, rutted mud roads at the -

BOMBED-OUT, GUTTED SHELLS of PT-117 and PT-164 - still belching black smoke, HALF-SUNK in the harbor.

Jack - sweaty, tired, now ashen-faced.

CMDR. BYRON WHITE (PRE-LAP)

Last night at approximately oh-one-thirty hours, 18 Japanese bombers struck our harbor in a surprise attack that completely destroyed the PT-117 and PT-164.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM, RENDOVA NAVY BASE -- AFTERNOON

Dim lights strung up on dangling wires. Plywood walls crammed with hanging jackets, coats, a rattling stand fan. Cramming the room - YOUNG OFFICERS in cramped, one-piece chairs -

Binders in their laps, scattered papers. The MEN CHATTERING to each other - a chaotic hubbub. Jack - among them, flipping nervously through his pages. Trying to see -

CMDR. BYRON WHITE

Our intelligence indicates they are preparing an imminent second assault by sea, consisting of five *Fubuki*-class Japanese destroyers.

On a whirring OVERHEAD PROJECTOR - *the bleary image of a looming JAPANESE DESTROYER* - washing over **CMDR. BYRON WHITE** - 26, glasses, friendly but no-nonsense manner -

CMDR. BYRON WHITE (CONT'D)

They have a range of 5,000 nautical miles, a top speed of 38 knots, and they are armed to the goddamn teeth with 127mm, 25mm, and 13mm naval and AT/AA guns. That's in addition to at least 9 torpedoes and 36 depth charges. They can easily outrun, outgun, and outmaneuver your PT boats.

Among the crowd of MURMURING MEN - **ENSIGN THOM**, also 26, firm-faced, been around the block - glances over at the SNORT of a SNIDE ENSIGN -

SNIDE ENSIGN

So what are we then, ducks at an arcade?

CMDR. BYRON WHITE

Our advantage is our intelligence.

SNIDE ENSIGN'S BUDDY

(to the Snide Ensign)

Guess you're fucked then, Snyder.

White ignores them. A CLACK from the SLIDE PROJECTOR as he punches the corded button to switch SLIDES to a MAP -

CMDR. BYRON WHITE
This is the Blackett Strait. This is the route we know they will be traveling through both to reach us and to resupply their Munda Base on New Georgia Island tomorrow night. Fifteen PT boats will deploy to intercept these destroyers and buy us time to launch a full-scale assault at Munda. Your egress will be back through Ferguson Passage.

The Snide Ensign shakes his head - goddamn suicide mission.

CMDR. BYRON WHITE (CONT'D)
Make no mistake: if we do not succeed, there is a high likelihood we could lose the Solomon Islands altogether, leaving the door wide open for another Pearl Harbor on the American mainland.

A NERVOUS QUIET settles across the room. That got their attention. White flips through the pages on his clipboard -

CMDR. BYRON WHITE (CONT'D)
Where's Lieutenant Kennedy?

Jack, eyes on the projected map - snaps to attention -

JACK
Here, sir.

A few of the OTHER MEN look - recognizing the Kennedy name.

CMDR. BYRON WHITE
We have you skippering PT-166.

JACK
Yes, sir.

CMDR. BYRON WHITE
Now you're on the 109. Ensign Thom's boat. He'll be your XO.

Ensign Thom abruptly looks up - news to him.

JACK
Sir. May I ask - why not the 166?

CMDR. BYRON WHITE
It sank.

The RUSTLING PAPERWORK, resuming CHATTER of the MEN - CEASES again. Quiet across the room.

White, immune to it, business as usual, already flipping his clipboard shut -

ENS. THOM
Sir. What about the crew?

CMDR. BYRON WHITE
You'll integrate the crews. The 109 dropped a few men who couldn't make it on the transport. Check your manifests. That's it, people - report to your stations. Dismissed.

White CLAPS his binder shut. RUSTLING, MUTTERING, uneasy CHATTER already filling in as - Thom gazes through the other MEN getting to their feet. Locks eyes with -

Jack - equally thrown. The man who just stole his command - looking nervous, young, and inexperienced. Thom bristles.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILLYS JEEP [DRIVING] -- AFTERNOON

In the PASSENGER SEAT, Jack grips the metal frame of the THRASHING OPEN-TOPPED JEEP. Behind the wheel -

The Second-Class Petty Officer downshifts, swerves to avoid a POTHOLE in the shitty MUD ROAD as it spills out of the dense PALM TREES and TROPICAL VEGETATION into -

- DIRT-AND-GRAVEL. Rambling cluster of corrugated-metal SHACKS and HANGARS overhung by nets, foliage, makeshift CAMOUFLAGE.

WOODEN PIERS jutting out into the murky green cove. P.T. BOATS roped to the leaning WOOD PILINGS, paint chipped.

The whole dock looks more like a bush MARINE GRAVEYARD.

Jack's eyes settle on the PROW of a PT BOAT up ahead - stenciled lettering - "PT-109."

ANOTHER JEEP nosed up at the dock. Already standing on the DECK of the boat - Ensign Thom's eyes lock onto Jack.

An OLDER OFFICER - **MOTOR MACHINIST MCMAHON** - 37, grizzled, weathered, flecks of gray in his hair, five o'clock shadow -

- conferring with Thom. Turns, casts baleful eyes on Jack as his JEEP judders up to a halt in the mud beside Thom's.

Jack, self-conscious, grips the Jeep's frame, CLIMBS OUT. Stopping Joe Jr.'s FOOTBALL from rolling out with him.

EXT. PIER, RENDOVA NAVAL DOCKS -- CONTINUOUS

Polished SHOES SQUELCHING into the MUD, Jack draws up on the half-rotted wooden PIER to the GANGPLANK of PT-109 -

- Thom and McMahon staring down over the rusted rail at him -

JACK

Afternoon, gentlemen. Permission to come aboard?

INT. ENGINE ROOM, PT-109 -- MOMENTS LATER

CHUGGING, CHURNING ENGINES at idle. Weeping DIESEL FUEL, OIL. Rickety, shuddering as young **MOTOR MECHANIC ZINSER** - 25, boyish - struggles to tighten a joint with a WRENCH -

MM. MCMAHON (O.S.)

Zinser. For God's sake...

Zinser glances over his shoulder as - McMahon pushes past - Jack - just ducking into the doorway, his SHOES SPLASHING into two inches of murky brine and DIESEL -

MM. MCMAHON (CONT'D)

You take her over sixty, we're all going to be swimming in engine oil.

McMahon GRABS the WRENCH out of Zinser's hands. Hurriedly ratcheting down a valve, a second one. The engines WHINING.

JACK

What are these tanks doing over here?

Jack - ducking his head through the narrow doorway - cramped CREW QUARTERS, bunks - nods at a PAIR OF GIANT FUEL TANKS -

MM. MCMAHON

Had to get 'em closer to the engines.
The lines weren't holding any pressure.

JACK

They shouldn't be so close to the bunks.

McMahon snorts - WHACKS the SHUDDERING ENGINES with his wrench. A CLANG that makes Zinser jump -

MM. MCMAHON

You'll get used to the smell.

INT. CREW QUARTERS, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

Elbows brushing the cramped bunks on either side - one of them held up by a tied rope, wooden beams splitting -

Jack - shimmies his way through duffel bags, life jackets jamming the claustrophobic space. Ensign Thom behind him -

ENS. THOM
Captain's cabin's this way, sir.

Jack nearly hits his head on the chewed-up wooden hull -

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

- as he ducks his head into the CRAMPED cabin. Tiny bed jammed like a bathtub under the curving hull. A half-sized desk. An INCH OF WATER on the FLOOR.

Stacked papers on the desk, a bundle of clothes, an old cookie tin jammed with PHOTOS, PENS - *Thom's things*.

JACK
What's with all the water everywhere?

Thom - squeezing past him - SHOES SPLASHING as he reaches to gather up his things, *moving out for Jack to move in* -

ENS. THOM
She leaks.

JACK
She's not supposed to leak.

ENS. THOM
No, sir. But she does.

INT. RADIO ROOM, PT-109 -- MOMENTS LATER

Ducking through CRAMPED, JUMBLED INSTRUMENTS - dials, switches, lights, tangled wires - Jack, paging through SCHEMATICS - casts around as Thom draws up behind him -

Jack's eyes catch on an Elco INSTRUMENT PANEL - *duct-taped together*, spilling wires. Turning at a CLANK from -

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

GUNNER'S MATE CHARLES HARRIS - 20, skinny, boyish, sandy-haired, sleeves rolled up - on his knees beneath one of the twin .50 CALIBER BROWNING MACHINE GUN emplacements -

- ratcheting back the LOWER AMMUNITION GUIDE that has just fallen off as - Jack ducks out onto the OPEN-AIR bridge deck. Regards Harris, squints at the rumpled SCHEMATICS -

JACK
These emplacements aren't even bolted down.

GM. HARRIS
Sorry, sir, didn't see that.

Jack grabs up a WRENCH, TIGHTENS the bolts himself as Thom draws up behind him - losing patience -

JACK

Nothing on this boat is up to spec.

ENS. THOM

With respect, sir, we don't have time or equipment to match the specs.

JACK

We ship out at oh-seven-hundred tomorrow, and we're not ready. This is important.

Thom - bristling, bites his tongue. Locks gazes with McMahon just emerging from the Boridge. McMahon rolls his eyes -

ENS. THOM

Aye, sir.

INT. MESS HALL, RENDOVA NAVY BASE -- NIGHT

A BABBLE of VOICES - CLACKING plates, CLATTERING silverware - dim BULBS strung up across the curving, corrugated metal ceiling spilling weak light over - THREE DOZEN MEN -

- elbow to elbow at long tables. Plates smeared with instant mashed potatoes, canned Spam. Chattering, laughing.

Wedged into the corner - Jack, beans and potatoes untouched, leafs through a stuffed MANILA FOLDER - maps, diagrams.

Glances up through the sweaty heat, the DIN of CONVERSATIONS - catching the eye of - Thom, hunched together with McMahon, Zinser, a couple of other ENSIGNS - *laughing like old friends*.

An OLDER LONER at the opposite end. Jack watches him for a moment. Turns his attention back to the manila folder.

A CLATTER as someone DROPS a PLATE. The Snide Ensign from the briefing laughing.

Jack grimaces, grabs up his files. Pushing to his feet.

INT. JACK'S ROOM, RENDOVA NAVY BARRACKS -- LATE NIGHT

A cramped corner of the rickety barracks cordoned off with strung-up sheets. Dim desk lamp. Jack hunches awake at the desk - FILE flipped open, diagrams of JAPANESE DESTROYERS.

Joe Jr.'s FOOTBALL wedged on the desk like a companion.

Jack peels back another PAGE. Sleepless eyes landing on the OPERATIONAL WEATHER REPORT - "SEVERE STORM WARNING" - a series of smeary mimeographed MAPS.

Glances up as - from the WINDOW, a PEAL OF THUNDER RUMBLES outside. Jack - eyes haunted, nervous - trepidation mounting.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILLYS JEEP [DRIVING] -- MORNING

TORRENTING RAIN hammers the canvas soft-top. Windshield wipers slashing as fast as they can as -

Jack - fresh starched uniform already spattered with mud, grabs the gearshift. Thrashing through a MUDDY POTHOLE.

BRAKES, shudders to a HALT. Through the smeary windshield - the docks - WAVES CRASHING against the PT-109.

WHITECAPS roiling under a MURKY GRAY SKY.

INT. CREW QUARTERS, PT-109 -- MORNING

Deck PITCHING - GROANING. Rain drumming on the hull. Jack, rumpled, bedraggled, stumbles against the hanging bunks -

Catches himself as the DECK TILTS again, struck by another wave. Jack, a miserable, soggy SNEEZE - peers down the HALLWAY -

THROUGH the OPEN HATCHWAY to the Engine Room - Zinser, McMahon HAMMERING at the ENGINES. A CLATTER as Zinser drops a WRENCH.

Jack stumbles to the doorway to HIS CABIN - floor still drowning in an INCH OF WATER. The BACK WALL above the bunk -

- now PAPERED OVER with British flags, sleeping lions - DUST JACKETS from HIS BOOK, "Why England Slept."

Glancing down the hall from the Engine Room - McMahon SNORTS -

MM. MCMAHON
A little bedtime reading for you,
skipper.

MM. ZINSER
Hear it puts you right to sleep.

They both CRACK UP. Jack grimaces, hauls his SOPPING DUFFEL BAG onto the bed. Spilling Joe Jr.'s FOOTBALL. Jack narrowly SAVES it from tumbling onto the floor.

INT. RADIO ROOM, PT-109 -- MOMENTS LATER

Heaving himself up the narrow LADDER from below-deck - Jack nearly RUNS INTO **ENS. GEORGE "BARNEY" ROSS** - 34, salty, five o'clock shadow - half a generation older than Jack - the OLDER LONER from the Mess Hall the night before.

- Ross - head jammed up beneath the loose, duct-taped Elco instrument panel, splicing wires, glances up at -

Jack - as he draws up short, reads Ross's name tag -

JACK
Ensign Ross. Lieutenant Kennedy.

ENS. ROSS
I know who you are. Bet this'll all
sound real heroic in your next book.

Ross jams his head back under the panel. Tightens a vacuum
tube that SPARKS in his face. Winces, glowers out -

THROUGH THE DOOR to the Command Deck as a SKINNY ENSIGN dashes
by, barefoot, LEAPS - SPLASHES into the water LAUGHING -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ, are we at war or grammar
school?

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

Flinching in a blast of WIND, sprinkling raindrops - Jack
ducks out, squints down at -

TORPEDOMAN ANDREW KIRKSEY - 18, ashen-faced, leaning out
over the main deck rail. Trying to snare a MOORING ROPE that -

TM. KIRKSEY
Give it. Hand it up.

- skinny **GUNNER HAROLD MARNEY** - 19, a boyish jackass,
shirtless, in the WATER - is using to toy with Kirksey -

GM. MARNEY
Lean a little farther, Kirksey -
just a little farther out.

Jack - annoyed, rounds on Ens. Thom as he emerges onto the
Command Deck with a BUCKET of RUSTY WATER and DIESEL -

JACK
Ensign Thom. Get that boy out of the
water. Assemble the crew on deck.

EXT. MAIN DECK, PT-109 -- MOMENTS LATER

Snickering, shivering - Marney, shirt clinging to his soaked
shoulders, squares up alongside Kirksey, hair dripping as -

Jack flinches at a blast of WIND. Steps down the LINE OF
MEN, his CREW. Thom at his back -

JACK
Good morning, gentlemen. Welcome
aboard the 109. As many of you know,
this is my first active-duty command.
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
 I suspect the same is true of some
 of you.

Jack's eyes raking across young Kirksey, still gripping the
 RAIL behind him with white knuckles.

JACK (CONT'D)
 I'll admit the boat isn't quite what
 I expected.

MM. MCMAHON
 (under his breath)
 Not enough leather and lacquer for
 you, sir?

Beside him in the sprinkling rain - Zinser gives a SNORT.
 Ross sneers. Scorn in the gaze he casts upon Jack.

ENS. THOM
 Lock it down, McMahon

Jack, trying to ignore it, sensing he is falling flat - begins
 to stumble through a speech rehearsed in his head -

JACK
 There are times when a man does not
 choose his circumstances, but his
 circumstances choose him. And he...
 He must rise to the occasion and
 become someone different.

A few MEN SNICKER. Jack turns back. All of them watching him -
 drenched, freezing, tired - barely hiding their smirks.

Flustered, a little ruffled, Jack grimaces - abruptly wheels
 away. Heading for the BRIDGE, passing Ensign Thom -

JACK (CONT'D)
 To hell with it. Have 'em start the
 engines.

Thom draws up at the end of the line, caught off-guard -

ENS. THOM
 Sir?

JACK
 Start the engines. We push off at oh-
 seven-hundred. Sharp.

As Jack climbs up to the Bridge, Thom rounds on the men.
 Zinser sneering after their new skipper -

MM. ZINSER
 He gonna give a speech every time we
 start the engines?

MM. MCMAHON
 Maybe the plan is to talk the Japs
 to death.

The OTHER MEN SNICKER. Thom, troubled, apprehensive - this untried Harvard boy at their helm.

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- MOMENTS LATER

Climbing up onto the Bridge Deck, shoes squelching, uniform already clinging to him - Jack, frustrated with himself. SLAMS the BULKHEAD with his FIST. JUMPS as -

ENS. ROSS (O.S.)
 Word to the wise, Lieutenant.

- Ross - salt-and-pepper hair coated in dewy raindrops, leans in over the threshold to the Main Deck -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
 You want their respect, maybe don't
 lead off with how you've never done
 this before in your life.

Jack turns away, frustration deepening. Knows he just fucked up. A JOLT as the ENGINES GRIND TO LIFE below.

CUT TO:

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN -- AFTERNOON

Thrashed by roiling waves against a deepening gray sky - the PT-109 - tips, PITCHES. Cutting through the open ocean. The mounting STORM filling the HORIZON ahead of them.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- LATER / NIGHT

Rain sprinkling the smeary windshield. Wrapped in a PARKA, gripping the WHEEL - Jack blanches as the ship crests a wave, DROPS sharply. Jack squints out against the misery of RAIN.

THROUGH THE OPEN RADIO ROOM DOORWAY AT HIS KNEES -

Hunched at the cramped NAVIGATIONAL DESK - maps crowding the surface - Ens. Thom - RADIO HEADPHONE pressed to one EAR -

ENS. THOM
 Radar report from PT-157: Division 1
 has possible enemy contact, 30km
 S/SE. Unconfirmed.

ON THE BRIDGE DECK -

Jack, alarmed, glances at Ensign Ross as he lifts BINOCULARS to his eyes. Peers out through the rain-streaked WINDSHIELD.

INT. ENGINE ROOM, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

ENGINES ROARING, a deafening grind of churning machinery, grubby gauges, shuddering pipes. The WHOLE SHIP LURCHES - struck by another wave -

Zinser - PITCHES, stumbling. FALLS INTO McMahon, working to pump saltwater out of the gurgling pressure oil strainer -

MM. ZINSER

Jesus. Skipper's gonna roll us before we ever see a Jap.

Staggering through the doorway to the Crew Quarters - young Marney flashes Zinser a goofy grin -

GM. MARNEY

What's the matter, Zinser, you afraid of a little swim?

Zinser scowls, hauling himself back to his feet -

MM. ZINSER

You should be. See the handsome fellow above McMahon's bunk?

INT. CREW QUARTERS, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

Braced in the doorway, Marney - smirking - tosses a glance toward the stacked CREW BUNKS - jammed with duffel bags, equipment lashed down with ropes, nets. Above McMahon's BUNK -

- the HORRIFIC, SHARP, jutting TOOTHY SKELETON of a BARRACUDA. Through the doorway, Zinser catches Marney's eye -

MM. ZINSER

Water's swarming with 'em in the Strait.

Marney lets out a boyish laugh -

GM. MARNEY

Bullshit.

MM. ZINSER

Ask McMahon.

INT. ENGINE ROOM, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

Struggling to tighten a valve, McMahon, tree-trunk arms straining, jaw clenched, IGNORES them. Zinser, glancing to him, shrugs it off - swings back to Marney in the DOORWAY -

MM. ZINSER

They like to come up from below, nip your balls right off.

GM. MARNEY
Bullshit.

A CRACK - as McMahon's PIPE SNAPS LOOSE. SPEWING DIESEL in a GUSHING PETROLEUM FOUNTAIN, coating his arms, legs -

MM. MCMAHON
Shit - SHIT. Zinser, get over here!

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

A LURCH, the BOAT SHUDDERING - as Jack GRIPS the WHEEL. Throws an urgent glance over at Ens. Ross - as he catches himself, drags the BINOCULARS away from his eyes -

JACK
What the hell was that?

A CLANGING BELL from down BELOW. The DECK SHUDDERS again -

ENS. ROSS
Lost an engine, feels like.

Jack - alarmed. Ross calmly meets his gaze -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
Happens on these boats. All the time.

Jack looks forward. A THUNDERING WAVE RUSHING at them. Jack spins the WHEEL instinctively -

- maneuvering the PROW into the WAVE just as it HITS. WATER GUSHING over the DECK. The WHOLE SHIP SHAKING.

IN THE RADIO ROOM -

Straining to HEAR through the RADIO HEADPHONE clamped to his EAR - Thom looks up sharply -

ENS. THOM
Enemy contact confirmed, PT-157, PT-101, Blackett Strait, torpedoes in the water. 25km and closing.

INT. GALLEY, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

Whisking in a steel bowl - cramped counters jammed with cans, a simmering pot on the tiny stove - **COOK EDGAR MAUER**, 28, stocky, salty - unfazed by the PITCHING DECK, chewing GUM -

COOK MAUER
They bombed the shit out of us on the Niagra last year, and Ross - his boat, the 166, they got taken out by our own B-25s.
(licks the whisk)
Mmm. Just like my girl makes it.

- oblivious to the FEAR of trembling, terrified young Torpedoman Kirksey - gripping the doorway. JUMPS at -

A CRACKLE from the SHIPBOARD P.A. -

ENS. THOM (P.A.)
Battle stations. All crew to battle stations. We are on high alert.

Mauer, lifting a steaming skillet off the stove, locks eyes with Kirksey - rigid, unmoving in the doorway.

COOK MAUER
 That'd be you, kid.

INT. ENGINE ROOM, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

DIESEL petroleum now GUSHING from two PIPES as Zinser, McMahon, SOAKED in it, FIGHT to stanch the FLOW.

A LURCH as a SECOND ENGINE GIVES OUT. Chunks of METAL SHRAPNEL CLANGING inside. McMahon grimaces -

MM. MCMAHON
Zinser.

- gestures to a FRESH RUPTURE in the THIRD ENGINE'S FUEL LINE. SPITTING more HOT DIESEL, a brown geyser of it.

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

The LURCH SHUDDERING up through the WHEEL as Jack GRIPS IT. Ross, binoculars jammed to his eyes, braces himself -

ENS. ROSS
 Lost a second one.
 (lowers the binoculars)
 This rate we're not even gonna make
 it to the battlefield.

Jack - *maybe not a bad thing* - squints forward. The OCEAN dark, murky.

IN THE RADIO ROOM -

Thom scrabbles through maps, charts. The DECK PITCHING. RADIO HEADPHONE pressed to his EAR -

ENS. THOM
 PT-101 has expended all torpedoes
 and is returning to base. No hits.

ON THE BRIDGE DECK -

Jack, his focus on the STORM - shuts his eyes - FEELING the OCEAN THROUGH THE WHEEL - *just like he did back at home* -

JACK
 Cut Engine Number Three and reduce
 Four to half power.

Ross glances over. Thom looks sharply up, alarmed -

ENS. THOM
 Sir - we'd be dead in the water.

JACK
 We're gonna burn 'em all out if we
 keep up like this.

Jack squints through the smeary windshield -

JACK (CONT'D)
 The eye of the storm is right over
 the next swell.

ENS. ROSS
 I'm not seeing that.

JACK
 (re: the wheel)
 I know what she's telling me.

A WHINE from the ENGINES, the BOAT SHAKING -

JACK (CONT'D)
 Give the order, Ensign.

Thom gulps, grabs up the RADIO -

INT. ENGINE ROOM, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

MURKY WATER BELCHING from the FLOODED salt water pump - as
 Zinser struggles to STANCH the FLOW on ENGINE NUMBER THREE -

ENS. THOM (P.A.)
*Engine room, cut Engine Three, take
 Four to half power.*

Zinser whips his head back, looking, alarmed to McMahon -
 WORKING fast, URGENTLY wrapping a RUPTURED FUEL LINE in TAPE -

MM. ZINSER
 We cut Three, she's gonna stop
 irrigating out.

McMahon grimaces, keeps wrapping the fuel line -

MM. MCMAHON
 You heard the order, Zinser.

MM. ZINSER
 It's a goddamn idiot order!

EXT. FORWARD DECK, PT-109 -- NIGHT / SAME TIME

DRENCHED as a WAVE douses him - Gunner Harris, gripping the .37MM forward turret, shields his face. Through the bleary, inky darkness -

A GLIMMER of LIGHT - somewhere up ahead. Harris wipes at his eyes. The LIGHT GONE as the deck PITCHES, slows. Harris turns to SHOUT back toward the Bridge -

GM. HARRIS
POSSIBLE CONTACT. DEAD AHEAD.

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

Jack - latched to the wheel as the boat SHUDDERS, slows. The engine WHINE dying. One last swell of the ocean JARRING them -

JACK
Hold on!

IN THE RADIO ROOM -

Thom's maps TUMBLE to the floor. A CLATTER of compasses, pencils. *It feels like the whole boat is going to tip over.*

Then - the deck PITCHES back. SLAMMING DOWN. Thom grunts. SLAMMED against his desk. Ross gripping the hull as -

The boat LEVELS OUT. Rain dissipating. A sudden CALM sweeping over the whole OCEAN. *The eye of the storm.*

ON THE BRIDGE DECK -

Sweating, rigid - Jack finally eases his grip on the wheel. Pushes out a ragged breath. A defiant glance over at Ross.

EXT. MAIN DECK, PT-109 -- NIGHT / SAME TIME

DRENCHED to the bone - young Torpedoman Kirksey, gripping the TORPEDO CONTROLS. Petrified in the sudden stillness as -

GM. HARRIS (O.S.)
POSSIBLE CONTACT AHEAD.

Kirksey - JOLTS - not sure where to aim, what to do.

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

Ross presses the BINOCULARS to his eyes. Jack watching him -

ENS. ROSS
I don't see anything.

Jack pivots back to Thom, RADIO SQUAWKING in his EAR -

ENS. THOM

The 157 has the radar unit but they ran dry. They're returning to port. We're blind out here.

JACK

Who the hell are they all firing at?

INT. GALLEY, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

Mauer, chewing gum, clacks out a stack of bowls, plates on the narrow counter. Turns to the simmering pot -

Reaches - CLANGS a BELL above the stove -

COOK MAUER

Soup's up, boys! We've made it through the worst of it.

EXT. FORWARD DECK, PT-109 -- NIGHT / SAME TIME

Harris - tense in the abrupt quiet, jams trembling hands into his pockets. Wrestles out a water-logged package of MARLBOROS, a SOGGY MATCHBOOK.

Grimaces, pries at A SOAKED MATCH. It comes apart. Harris sighs, crumples both packages into a ball. Turning to CHUCK them OFF THE SIDE OF THE BOAT - when he FREEZES -

RUSHING OUT OF THE DARKNESS - BARRELING AT THEM AT 40 KNOTS -

- THE LOOMING PROW OF A JAPANESE DESTROYER BOAT.

Harris - MOUTH falling OPEN. DROPS the CIGARETTES -

GM. HARRIS

SHIP! SHIP AT TWO O'CLOCK!

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

Jack - JUMPS. SCRAMBLES to GRAB the WHEEL. Ross WHIPPING the BINOCULARS to his EYES.

ENS. ROSS

Oh Jesus.

EXT. MAIN DECK, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

LEAPING to his feet, young Kirksey GAPES up at THE DESTROYER - right on top of them.

Harris - FRANTIC - JAMS .37MM SHELLS into the GUN - racing to WHIP the BARREL toward the DESTROYER as -

TM. KIRKSEY (O.S.)

JUMP SHIP! JUMP SHIP!

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

Jack - GRAPPLING with the WHEEL, YANKS IT as it STICKS. LOCKED UP. Ross DROPS the BINOCULARS from his eyes, looking to -

Jack - PULLING AT the UNRESPONSIVE WHEEL with ALL OF HIS STRENGTH - every OUNCE OF ENERGY -

ENS. ROSS
This is it.

I M P A C T -

INT. GALLEY, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

- as the HULL of the Japanese Destroyer SLICES STRAIGHT THROUGH the PT-109 in a CHAOS of splintered wood.

FLINGING young Marney, tumbling like a rag doll in the EXPLOSIVE shattering of buckled hull.

CUTTING THROUGH the Galley - pots, pans, hot soup SEARING over Cook Mauer as he is BLASTED backward. A FLASH RIPS THROUGH -

THE CREW QUARTERS

- as the giant FUEL TANKS RUPTURE and EXPLODE. Flames licking the bunks. In -

THE ENGINE ROOM

- FIRE BLASTS through the doorway - INSTANTLY IGNITING the DIESEL. McMahon, Zinser TORCHED - SCREAMING.

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

DECK JARRING, LURCHING - RIPPING Jack off the WHEEL. Jack TUMBLES -

IN THROUGH THE RADIO ROOM DOOR -

SLAMS against Ensign Thom's DESK - SLAMMING his BACK. CRUSHING the AIR out of him.

Papers, pens, pencils, compasses CLATTERING - SHATTERED GLASS RAINING down across Jack from the BROKEN WINDOWS.

OUT ON THE WATER:

GASPING - PANICKING - FIGHTING in the TUMULTUOUS BLACK WATER - Harris - FACE speckled in SPLINTERS - COUGHING up SEA-WATER -

FLAMES playing over his face from THE 109 - SHORN INTO TWO HALVES - Harris PAWS his way THROUGH DEBRIS -

- GRASPS onto an ORANGE LIFE JACKET. PALE SHOULDERS, a SOPPING UNIFORM, the messy brown hair of -

GM. HARRIS
Kirksey. KIRKSEY.

- young Kirksey. Harris yanks at him, turning him over - his pale face, MILKY LIFELESS EYES - raking across Harris -

A PLYWOOD BEAM JUTTING THROUGH Kirksey - DEAD.

Harris HEAVES, chokes back a RUSH of VOMIT - another WAVE SPLASHING OVER HIM - DUNKING him UNDER.

INT. RADIO ROOM, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

HALF-DAZED - Jack WINCES at SHARP PAIN as he tries to haul himself upright on the TILTED DECK. Gazes around - a FOG of HORROR and CHAOS. Flickering FLAMES. SCREAMING outside.

OUT ON the BRIDGE DECK, Ross - MOANING, moving feebly. Jack - STUNNED - shakes himself at another SCREAM from OUTSIDE.

Hauls himself - WINCING at the PAIN - to his FEET. Heaves his way up the TILTED DECK. Crunching through BROKEN GLASS.

Stepping out through the DOORWAY to the BRIDGE -

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

- Jack braces himself against the DOOR FRAME - squints across the SMASHED DECK - across the PITCH BLACK WATER at -

FLAMES ROARING - a PUDDLE OF FIRE - BLINDINGLY BRIGHT from the AFT SECTION of the 109 - IMPOSSIBLE to SEE ANYTHING -

MM. ZINSER (O.S.)
HELP! SOMEONE HELP!

MORE SCREAMING from the FIERCE, ROARING GLARE of FIRE.

Jack RIPS at the BUTTONS of his OFFICER'S SHIRT. TEARS them open. Drops it on the deck and - RUNNING - LEAPS -

INTO THE OCEAN:

- PLUNGING into the FREEZING WATER. CHURNING all around Jack. PITCH BLACK - BROKEN by the SEARING, BLINDING FLAMES up ahead.

SPLASHING into the WATER - Jack SWIMS TOWARD the BURNING AFT SECTION of the PT-109. PLUNGING -

UNDERWATER

Swirling blackness, murky darkness lit by the FIRE as it streams through the WATER up ahead.

Jack - SWIPES, CLAWS - SWIMS DESPERATELY - LEGS KICKING - one SHOE TUMBLING OFF - spinning away.

EERIE SCREAMS warbling through the water. THROUGH THE MURK - the FRANTIC KICKING SHAPE of A MAN - HALF UNDERWATER. Jack -

SURFACES

- FACE INSTANTLY SEARED - by ROARING FLAMES - a HELLISH SCENE - *the SURFACE OF THE OCEAN ON FIRE* from the PUDDLE of SPILLED DIESEL GUSHING OUT of the AFT SECTION of the PT-109 -

Washing over McMahon - WRITHING, ON FIRE in the MIDDLE of the FLAMES. SCREAMING as his FLESH BUBBLES and BURNS.

MM. ZINSER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
HELP HIM! SOMEONE HELP HIM.

CLINGING to the SPLINTERED EDGE of the GAPING, SHEARED HULL of the ENGINE ROOM DECK - Zinser - face BLACKENED.

Jack GULPS in a BREATH of AIR - plunges -

UNDERWATER

- into the ROILING MURK. SWIMS into the drifting SHRAPNEL, DEBRIS CHURNED by the STILL-TURNING ENGINE PROPELLERS -

Jack - CLAWING TOWARD McMahon, GRABS his BELT - YANKS. McMahon PANICS - KICKS JACK IN THE FACE -

Jack - SPEWING BUBBLES - A PLUME of BLOOD from his NOSE - GRABS McMahon HARDER - YANKS HIM down UNDERWATER - as McMahon WRITHES, STRUGGLES -

FLAMES DOUSED - as he SUBMERGES. His frantic eyes finding Jack's - calm, forceful, an IRON GRIP on McMahon's BELT -

Jack SWIMS, SWIMS - KICKING - PULLING McMahon AWAY from the SURFACE POOL of DIESEL. McMahon - CHOKING - losing consciousness as Jack HAULS HIM UP, BURSTING through THE -

SURFACE

GASPING - SPUTTERING - Jack - KICKING to TREAD WATER as Zinser dimly SHOUTS at him. Jack wraps his arms around McMahon - SQUEEZING the WATER up out of his LUNGS.

McMahon COUGHS - HEAVES up SEAWATER - burnt, disoriented. Slips OUT of Jack's GRASP - SINKING.

JACK
SWIM, HENRY.

MM. MCMAHON
I - CAN'T -

McMahon GOES UNDER. Jack CATCHES him - DRAGGED -

UNDERWATER

- hands fumbling with HIS OWN BELT - Jack - manages to unhook it, wriggle it off while KICKING to keep McMahon ABOVE the SURFACE. PUSHING BACK UP THROUGH to the -

SURFACE

- himself, Jack - loops the BELT around McMahon's RIGHT ARM. Glances back through the ROARING FLAMES as -

STEAM GUSHES UP - out of the AFT PORTION of the PT-109 - SEAWATER RUSHING IN - HITTING the BURNING ENGINES -

JACK

Zinser, get the hell out of there!

MM. ZINSER

I can't see a goddamn thing!

The DECK STARTING TO SINK beneath him - Zinser - POISED on the RAGGED, TILTED EDGE - SLIPS - SLAMS hard - starts to -

SLIDE - down toward the raging FLAMES and STEAM - CATCHES the EDGE of the DECK - GRIPS IT - HAULS HIMSELF UP -

JACK

JUMP, ZINSER. NOW!

Zinser squints through the FLAMES - glances over his SHOULDER at the SINKING BOAT. Tenses - SPRINGS -

SPLASHING into the WATER - FLAMES licking at his LEGS. Zinser YELPS - plunges his LEGS UNDERWATER. Jack catches him -

JACK (CONT'D)

SWIM.

A SECONDARY BLAST from the AFT PORTION of the PT-109 as - Jack JAMS the BELT into HIS MOUTH - CLAMPING DOWN -

- SWIMS forward in STRONG, HEAVING STROKES - TUGGING McMahon BEHIND HIM. Zinser - KICKING, SPLASHING - SWIMS after them.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLEY, PT-109 [FORWARD SECTION] -- SAME TIME

BLOOD SHEETING from the side of his HEAD - Cook Mauer - JOLTS AWAKE as FREEZING SEAWATER gushes ACROSS him.

PANIC flashing in his eyes, Mauer strains to sit up - CAUGHT, TANGLED in a JUMBLE of NETTING and DEBRIS. Gaze falling on -

COOK MAUER

Marney.

- young Marney, HUNKERED in the WRECKAGE of the BUNKS, hugging himself. All earlier swagger gone. PARALYZED with TERROR.

Mauer - WATER RISING to his CHEST, STREAMING IN to FILL the TILTING - SINKING - Crew Quarters.

COOK MAUER (CONT'D)

MARNEY. I'm stuck. You have to -

Mauer - CHOKES as the WATER laps up into his MOUTH. Tips his head back, GASPING, COUGHING -

COOK MAUER (CONT'D)

GET OVER HERE, MARNEY.

Marney - JOLTED - SHOVES to his FEET. SLIDING on the slippery DECK. Trembling, STUMBLES his way toward -

Mauer - head tipped back, WATER SURGING above his SHOULDERS. Marney SPLASHES into it, WINCING at the COLD -

COOK MAUER (CONT'D)

THE NET. I'M TANGLED IN THE NET.

Marney reaches, FUMBLING UNDERWATER. Trying to UNTANGLE Mauer as the WATER SLOPS over Mauer's FACE -

RUSHING in FAST now - RISING over Marney's skinny SHOULDERS.

COOK MAUER (CONT'D)

USE A KNIFE.

Marney stares at him. TURNS - a RACK of KITCHEN KNIVES on the galley counter about to be SWALLOWED by the WATER.

Marney LUNGES, GRABS a SERRATED KNIFE. WHEELS BACK, SPLASHING into the water. Mauer, SPLUTTERING - HEAD PLUNGING -

UNDERWATER

Mauer's WILD EYES ROVING across the murk of broken dishes, pots, pans, papers, clothes. Marney's HANDS - SAWING sloppily at the NETTING with the KNIFE -

Hazy UNCONSCIOUSNESS starting to OVERTAKE Cook Mauer.

ABOVE THE SURFACE

Marney, frantic, terrified - WATER BUBBLING up to his CHIN - SAWs THROUGH the NET. HAULS Mauer UP -

Mauer, UNCONSCIOUS - LOLLING forward in the WATER as it RISES - FILLING the Crew Cabin. Marney twists back -

THE DOORWAY HATCH - *escape* - eight feet away.

GM. MARNEY
Mauer. MAUER, WAKE UP.

Mauer - still OUT COLD. Marney, shivering, terrified - HEAVES Mauer with him. SHOVING him through the RISING WATER toward the HATCH when -

UNDERWATER

- a SNARLED TENDRIL of NETTING catches Marney's ANKLE. COILING around it, SNARING him.

ABOVE THE SURFACE

Marney - TRIPS - SPLASHES into the WATER as - Mauer - STIRRING, half-conscious - GOES UNDER again.

Marney - trying to WRESTLE FREE - sees Mauer. Marney LUNGES forward - JOLTED, REINED BACK by the NETTING. PUSHES Mauer up through the RISING WATER -

THROUGH the DOORWAY HATCH - into the HALLWAY. SAFE. WATER gushing up OVER Marney's HEAD - plunging him -

UNDERWATER

Marney, FRANTIC, can't REACH the KNIFE - LEGS still ENTANGLED - WORSE than EVER in the NETTING -

The WATER starting to SLOP UP, OUT of the Crew Quarters - into the HALL.

A resolve, understanding washes over Marney. He PUSHES OFF the deck, underwater. SHOVES the HATCH of the DOORWAY -

TO THE HALL

- SHUT with a CLANG. JOLTING Mauer awake. On the other side of the hatch, still trapped in the FLOODED Crew Quarters - Marney WHEELS the LOCK SHUT.

Mauer, COUGHING, scrabbles to his feet. Grasping at the DOOR - trying to WHEEL it OPEN -

COOK MAUER
Marney. MARNEY - NO.

Through the hazy WINDOW - Marney BRACES the DOOR SHUT. Sealing off the compartment. Stopping the FLOOD with his LIFE.

Mauer, fumbling, trying to open the door - LOCKS EYES with Marney through the GLASS as a PEACE WASHES OVER HIM. Going inert, gaze turning glassy - lost - DEAD.

Mauer CLAPS a DRIPPING HAND to his OWN MOUTH.

INT. RADIO ROOM, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

WATER starting to SLOP IN from the Command Deck. Ensign Thom, hands TREMBLING, clutching the RADIO TRANSCEIVER -

ENS. THOM
(into the radio)
MAYDAY, MAYDAY - this is PT-109 -

SPARKS spitting from the SMASHED MACHINERY. Thom flinches. At the COMMAND DECK DOORWAY - Ross - BINOCULARS to his EYES -

ENS. ROSS
I got lights but they're all moving
away from us.

EXT. OCEAN/PT-109 [FORWARD SECTION] -- SAME TIME

GAGGING - GASPING for breath - SALTWATER HALF-DROWNING him - jaws clamped down on the BELT wrapped around McMahon -

- Jack takes a FRIGID WAVE to the FACE. GOES UNDER. BURSTS BACK above the surface - HACKING, COUGHING. Gropes feebly for the TILTED, SPLINTERED DECK of the PT-109's PROW.

His HAND GRIPS the RAIL - SLIPS - LOSES IT. Jack PLUNGES -
UNDERWATER

- WEIGHED down by the drag of McMahon's SINGED BODY. Jack, SWIPING, HEAVING at the water - PUSHES HIMSELF back -

ABOVE THE SURFACE

LUNGES - GRIPS the bent HANDRAIL again. Knuckles white, barely holding on. Jack PULLS UP with ALL HIS STRENGTH.

Zinser - GASPING, FLAILING behind him - his own LEGS BURNT, feeble in the churning water. McMahon UNCONSCIOUS.

Jack's FINGERS STARTING TO SLIP - about to FALL BACK when -

A HAND GRABS his WRIST. Cook Mauer, smeared in his OWN BLOOD, SOAKED through, grits his teeth - HAULS Jack and McMahon, bound to him by the BELT -

- ONTO THE MAIN DECK OF THE PT-109.

Jack - HEAVING McMahon up behind him - hoarse, breathless, spluttering. Half-choking on seawater -

JACK
ZINSER - Get Zinser up here!

Mauer, already reaching back, HAULS Zinser up behind him. Jack DROPS to his KNEES, checking McMahon's BREATHING. HAMMERS his CHEST until -

- McMahon - COUGHING - SPEWS up SEAWATER. Alive.

Mauer eyes raking across Zinser's BURNED LEGS, SCORCHED FLESH. Zinser, also COUGHING, GASPING for breath.

JACK (CONT'D)
Who do we have? Who's here?

COOK MAUER
We lost the kid. We lost Marney.

Stumbling from the SMASHED PORT SIDE of the deck - Harris - soaked, SHIVERING, ashen-faced -

GM. HARRIS
Kirksey too.

Jack stares at Harris - numb horror setting in. *Those boys, barely older than his brother, Bobby.* Turns, takes in -

- the RAVAGED SHIP, *his command.* The HELLISH FIRE now CONSUMING the AFT SECTION. Oil slicks smearing the water - FLAMES licking at the BLACK NIGHT.

The OTHER MEN - BLOODY, drenched - TERRIFIED. Jack pushes to his feet. Stumbling toward the Command Deck.

INT. RADIO ROOM, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

Ensign Thom, growing FRANTIC, SLAMS the RADIO with his fist -

ENS. THOM
(into the radio)
This is the 109 - This is PT-109...
Where the hell is everyone?!

Ross peels the BINOCULARS from his eyes, turning as Jack staggers into the doorway. Taking in Ross, Thom.

ENS. ROSS
Captain.

JACK
What are we looking at?

ENS. THOM
No one's coming for us! No one's
coming for us!

Thom, PANICKING, cannot comprehend it. Jack meets Ross's eyes. Turns, taking in the -

- RADIO, SMASHED equipment. SHATTERED windows. TILTING deck. The whole FORWARD SECTION of the boat SHUDDERING.

JACK
We're sinking.

Glances back to Ross. Ross, a CURT NOD. *They are sinking.*

EXT. MAIN DECK, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

Gripping the door frame, Jack stumbles back out onto the splintered, slippery deck. Shielding his eyes through a fresh speckling of RAINDROPS to squint at the -

INKY BLACKNESS - churning WAVES surrounding the RAVAGED 109. Mauer, McMahon, Zinser, Harris, a FEW OTHER OFFICERS CLINGING to the TILTING DECK like a life raft.

Water SLOPPING UP over the deck. SPLASHING against the HALF-CONSCIOUS McMahon. Ross draws up beside Jack -

JACK

Japs come back, we'll have to be ready to fight.

GM. HARRIS

Fight with what?

ENS. ROSS

We have to abandon ship.

Jack looks sharply over to Ross -

JACK

We're not giving up.

ENS. ROSS

We're going down. There's not gonna be anything to give up on.

Jack looks to McMahon, the others. WATER now CONSUMING HALF the FORWARD DECK. SPLASHING at their ankles.

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)

We stay, you're gonna drown us all.

Zinser, Harris, Mauer all LOOKING TO Jack now. Jack, rocked to the core by his words. Disbelief, defeat gnawing. Accedes -

JACK

Everyone gather what equipment you can carry. Prepare to abandon ship.

MM. ZINSER

Abandon her for what? There's nothing out there.

COOK MAUER

Someone'll come for us. Someone'll come. We should stay here.

Ross presses the BINOCULARS to his eyes, then meets Jack's gaze. The grim truth on his face. BLACKNESS all around them -

JACK
No one's coming for us.

SHUDDERING RIPPING through the DECK. WATER SURGING over the EDGES. STARTING to FLOOD -

GM. HARRIS
She's starting to turn!

JACK
You want to stay onboard, you can go down with her!

INT. RADIO ROOM, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

SPARKS spitting from the INSTRUMENTS. Ensign Thom, still FRANTICALLY trying to REWIRE the RADIO, fingers trembling.

STAGGERING into the doorway, the DARK of the NIGHT at his back, Jack catches himself against the bulkhead -

JACK
Gather the maps, whatever you can carry.

ENS. THOM
I've almost got the radio -

The DECK PITCHES. Jack's FEET SLIDING on the slippery wood -

JACK
Get out of here!

His EYES falling on the YAWNING BLACKNESS of the DOORWAY down to the CREW QUARTERS. The other men SHOUTING outside.

INT. CORRIDOR, PT-109 -- SAME TIME

PITCH BLACKNESS. Breathing shallowly, scared for his life, Jack SPLASHES through the TWO FEET of RISING WATER. The stressed wooden hull GROANING all around him.

Jack SLIPS - CATCHES himself. Wood beams CRACKING -

JACK
Anyone down here?

Jack throws a glance over his shoulder. Rain sprinkling down from the Bridge, Command Deck above.

Ahead - only DARKNESS. A ripped MATTRESS - a JUMBLE of magazines, clothes, splintered wood slopping in the WATER.

At the END of the HALL - the HATCH that Marney SEALED. MURKY WATER filling the WINDOW. Jack squints. Advancing when -

WITH a CRACK - THE HATCH suddenly RUPTURES - BLASTING OPEN.

TRAPPED WATER GUSHING OUT - SWEEPING Jack's LEGS out from under him. Jack HITS the deck HARD. PLUNGING UNDERWATER.

The RUSHING TIDE SMASHING him AGAINST the BULKHEAD. Jack - clamors, GASPING. Grasps the LADDER to the Bridge. WATER -

INT. RADIO ROOM, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

- SURGING UP into the Radio Room, SWEEPING ACROSS Thom, who scrabbles, GRABBING UP the MAPS, RADIO.

Jack, PUSHED by the WATER, GRABS Thom. YANKS him, DASHING for the DOORWAY to the Command Deck.

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-109 -- CONTINUOUS

Jack and Thom BURST from the Radio Room as WATER RUSHES UP. SLOPPING across the deck from ALL SIDES. The OTHER MEN - SHOUTING - JUMPING SHIP -

Jack rounds on a terrified Thom, who GRIPS the HANDRAIL -

JACK
Thom. This is it. Let go!

Thom stares at Jack with TERRIFIED EYES -

JACK (CONT'D)
LET GO!

Thom LETS GO. Jack HEAVES him OVERBOARD - JUMPING TOGETHER -
UNDERWATER

Murky roiling darkness. Through the shards of splintered wood, glass, debris - Jack and Thom PLUNGE into the WATER -

Jack lets go of Thom. Kicking, swiping at the freezing ocean. Fighting his way toward the surface - Jack goes still for a moment eyes falling across -

A flurry of SOAKED PAPERS swirling by - the BOOK JACKETS from his OWN BOOK. Joe Jr.'s FOOTBALL spiraling away as -

The WRECKED HULL of the PT-109 SLIDES UNDERWATER. Almost peaceful in its surrender. The last FLICKERING LIGHTS from the Bridge WINKING OUT, becoming -

A dark ghost, melting into the infinite BLACK of the OCEAN.

BURSTING ABOVE THE SURFACE -

Jack, GASPING. Back in the CHURNING TUMULT of the OCEAN. The OTHER MEN'S VOICES hoarsely SHOUTING over the GUSHING waves -

COOK MAUER (O.S.)
...STILL GET BACK ABOARD THE AFT -

MM. ZINSER (O.S.)
NO, SHE'S ON FIRE.

COOK MAUER (O.S.)
THEY'LL LOOK FOR US - THEY'LL COME -

Fighting to stay above water, Jack squints across at the FLAMES ROARING from the AFT SECTION of THE PT-109.

Jack, turning - *the OPEN OCEAN all around them. THE INFINITE BLACKNESS of the NIGHT SKY overhead.*

ENS. ROSS (O.S.)
SKIPPER.

Ross, huffing, FIGHTING to stay ABOVE the SURFACE -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
WE CAN'T STAY OUT HERE.

Jack, another WAVE BREAKING OVER him, COUGHS, spluttering -

JACK
THERE WAS AN ISLAND ON THE CHARTS.
EAST OF HERE. ABOUT TWO MILES.

ENS. ROSS
MCMAHON CAN'T SWIM.

Jack SQUINTS toward Zinser, Harris, KICKING and THRASHING to support the HALF-CONSCIOUS McMahon.

JACK
I'LL PULL HIM.

Zinser, exhausted, haggard - HALF-DROWNED himself -

MM. ZINSER
YOU CAN'T PULL HIM TWO MILES.

Jack meets Ross's gaze, the EYES of the CREW on HIM. FIGHTING the STORMY OCEAN - their hopelessness rising -

JACK
WE'RE NOT GIVING UP. WE'RE GONNA
MAKE IT.

FIGHTING his way through the CRASHING WAVES over to the OTHERS, Jack GRASPS the same leather BELT still lashed around McMahon. Jams it BETWEEN his TEETH -

JACK (CONT'D)
SWIM.

- KICKING against the CURRENT, a HERCULEAN EFFORT - Jack SWIMS into the churning WAVES, PULLING McMahon.

Harris, Zinser - exchanging glances. Cook Mauer still staring after the AFT SECTION of the PT-109 as it GOES DOWN.

Thom looks to Ross. Jack already SPLASHING AWAY from THEM -

ENS. ROSS
YOU HEARD THE CAPTAIN. SWIM.

Ross PLUNGES FORWARD, splashing after Jack. THE OTHERS have NO CHOICE but to FOLLOW.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN -- NIGHT

HEAVING his way through the DARK - Jack, SEAWATER CHURNING through his CLAMPED TEETH -

- COUGHS - STRUGGLES - FIGHTS against the SWELLING and CRASHING black ocean WATER. SWALLOWED by another WAVE -

UNDERWATER

Jack KICKS, FIGHTS to stay AFLOAT. GULPS DOWN SEAWATER by accident, McMahon's DEAD WEIGHT DRAGGING behind him.

Inky blackness on all sides, murky shadows, undulating shapes.

BREACHING THE SURFACE

- WHEEZING, CHOKING, Jack FIGHTS forward, HEART HAMMERING in his EARS.

FROM AFAR -

Jack, McMahon, Ross, Thom, Harris, Zinser, the OTHER MEN - tiny black SPECKS in an INFINITE black ocean.

WAVES sweeping over them. Whitecaps FOAMING in the DARK.

PULLING FARTHER BACK -

The SMOLDERING DEBRIS of the PT-109 scattering the SURFACE of the OCEAN. *Jack and the OTHER MEN look even tinier as fresh HAMMERING RAINDROPS begin to fall.*

No sign of ANYTHING near them. Anywhere.

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN OCEAN -- LATER / NIGHT

Rain pelting Ensign Thom's FACE as he GASPS, STRUGGLES through the water, WAVES slopping over his HEAD.

Zinser, WEIGHED DOWN by a SATCHEL full of CLANKING equipment, scours the BLACKNESS, the sheeting RAIN. *Infinite.*

COOK MAUER (O.S.)
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

PITCHING in the WATER, Ross turns back, SQUINTING through the drilling RAIN -

COOK MAUER (CONT'D)
SOMETHING TOUCHED ME. SOMETHING IN
THE WATER - There's SOMETHING -

ENS. THOM
SHARKS. THERE ARE SHARKS!

HORROR, PANIC in Harris's eyes as he FIGHTS to PUSH HIMSELF up out of the WATER, strains to see through -

- the FROTHING, rain-churned black of the WATER. IMPOSSIBLE to make out ANYTHING.

The SHOUTS of the OTHER MEN reaching Jack. His swimming FALTERS. Alarm flickering in his eyes as he GRABS the leather BELT from between his TEETH - twisting back, VOICE hoarse -

JACK
KEEP SWIMMING.

COOK MAUER
THE SHARKS ARE GONNA GET US.

JACK
KEEP SWIMMING -

Jack suddenly SLAMS against -

UNDERWATER

- hulking, jagged, razor-SHARP REEFS. TRIPPING him up. Jack FALLS HARD, instantly STRIPPING the FLESH from his SHINS. SLAMMING his CHEST. His OTHER SHOE TUMBLING AWAY.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN / REEF -- CONTINUOUS

PAIN CLENCHING his FACE as Jack is DRAGGED by the CURRENT. RAKING him across the REEF -

Jack LETS GO of McMahon - who TUMBLES against the reef, SLAMMING awake. Coughing, spluttering.

JACK
IT'S A REEF. WE'VE HIT A REEF.

Jack, FIGHTING to push to his feet. WAVES SLAMMING him back to his KNEES. SCOURING off more FLESH. Jack SQUINTS ahead -

A rough, jumbled SHADOW now BARELY visible against the SKY -

JACK (CONT'D)
WE MADE IT. WE'RE AT THE ISLAND.

STUMBLING, Jack GROPES in the frothing foam, HAULS McMahon up. Dragging him, on his FEET now up into -

EXT. MARSHY BEACH, SMALL ISLAND -- CONTINUOUS

- soft, sandy MUCK. Jack's body GIVES OUT, collapses HARD into the MURK. BREATH SMASHED out of him. Jack turns back -

Ross, HAULING himself out of the FROTHING WAVES. Mauer, Harris, Zinser, the OTHER MEN behind him.

JACK
WHERE'S THOM?

His hoarse VOICE consumed in the THUNDERING WAVES. Rain SHEETING across Jack as he DASHES back into the WATER.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN / REEF -- NIGHT

The WAVES YANKING at him, Jack SWIMS against his own exhaustion. GRUNTS as he HITS the RAZOR-SHARP REEF again.

JACK
THOM. THOM!

- Jack SLAMS into Thom - GROPING AROUND in the DARK - SPLASHING frantically -

ENS. THOM
THE RADIO. I LOST THE RADIO.

JACK
IT'S GONE.

ENS. THOM
IT'S THE ONLY WAY THEY'LL FIND US.

JACK
Thom. *It's gone.*

Thom meets Jack's eyes, frenzied. A WAVE CRASHING across him, sending him STUMBLING. Jack CATCHES him. HEAVES him toward SHORE.

EXT. MARSHY BEACH, SMALL ISLAND -- NIGHT

SCREAMING - McMahon, head pitched back, sprawled in the sandy muck, WRITHES as Ross and Zinser try to PEEL his SINGED SHIRT away from his BAKED FLESH -

MM. ZINSER
Jesus, it's melted right onto him!

ENS. ROSS
Hold him! For Christ's sake -

McMahon ROARS in AGONY as Ross tries to re-wrap a SOAKED BLANKET around his SHOULDERS. Grimacing -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
We need to get him onto dry land.

Harris, the OTHER MEN SHIVERING, HUNKERED in the BLACKNESS of the MARSH - twisting to scan the DARKNESS -

GM. HARRIS
There isn't any dry goddamn land.

A half-dozen clustered PALM TREES jutting out of the SANDY MUCK. Soggy REEDS spreading off into the DARK.

The "ISLAND" is not much more than a MARSHY SAND BAR.

Gasp ing, panting, utterly SPENT, Jack HAULS himself and Thom out of the WAVES. Coughing up SEAWATER. Hunches over - shivering, miserable. Takes in -

The SCATTERED MEN, strewn debris. RAIN pelting across them. The empty blackness of the marshy beach. Palm trees THRASHING in the STORM. *This is all that remains of his command.*

Teeth CHATTERING, WHEEZING - Thom draws up beside Jack. McMahon SCREAMING through the DARKNESS.

ENS. THOM
What do we do now?

The OTHER MEN, soaked, weary YOUNG FACES smeared with oil, ash, BLOOD, caked with sand, LOOKING to him - and Jack has no answer. Does not know.

Jack turns, squints out at the roiling blackness of the OCEAN. Harris, knee-deep in the MARSH, also turning at -

An ENGINE DRONE from SOMEWHERE off in the DARK. Cook Mauer shoves to his feet beside Harris. Squinting.

COOK MAUER
A boat?

Harris, scouring the darkness, glimpses a FLICKER of LIGHT through the rain, in the CLOUDS. Points to it -

GM. HARRIS
Planes.

COOK MAUER
They're looking for us!

Jack sees them. Watches the COLUMN of LIGHTS in the SKY. Moving RIGIDLY. Coming TOWARD the ISLAND in a line.

JACK
Those are Japs. Zeroes.

Jack wheels back. Meets Ross's eye as he looks sharply up from the moaning, writhing McMahon.

JACK (CONT'D)
We've gotta get off this beach.

EXT. SWAMPY PALM GROVE, SMALL ISLAND -- NIGHT

Thrashing through half-flooded reeds, Jack, Ross, Harris, HAULING McMahon between them.

Zinser HOBBLING after them on his burnt legs. Thom, Mauer swatting at low palm tree fronds. STUMBLING to a HALT as -

ROARING ENGINES - FILL the SKY OVERHEAD. Jack tips his head back, staring up through the sparse palm trees as -

TWO, THREE, FOUR JAPANESE "ZERO" FIGHTER PLANES - THUNDER BY -

Panting, soaked through his filthy clothes, Jack tracks the PLANES off through the tips of the reeds -

BARRELING into the NIGHT - ENGINES RECEDING.

Jack looks back down at McMahon - WRITHING, COUGHING. Ross, Harris lowering him to the soggy, muddy GROUND. Rain hammers the brown puddles all around them. Everyone SOAKED.

MM. ZINSER
The hell kind of an island is this?

Jack, desolate, wipes at his brow. Twists back to the others as McMahon HACKS, COUGHS, unable to stop -

JACK
Someone get him some water.

Thom turns to Zinser. Zinser, panting, shivering, soaked DUFFEL BAG slung over his shoulder - shakes his head.

JACK (CONT'D)
Who has the water?

Zinser turns to Cook Mauer, back among the OTHER MEN.

COOK MAUER
We don't have any.

Ross, Harris, the OTHERS all LOOKING UP now -

JACK
No one brought any water?!

COOK MAUER
There wasn't any time. The compartment flooded. I was trying to save Marney.

MM. ZINSER
Yeah? How did that work out?

Mauer WHIRLS - EYES FLASHING. Letting his own ragged DUFFEL BAG SLIP. SPLASHING into the MUD to LUNGE at Zinser -

JACK
Lay off. God damn it -

Jack GRABS Mauer, SEIZING his SHOULDER. WRENCHES him back. Mauer spins, FIST cocked. On the BRINK of HITTING Jack.

Jack STARES him in the eye, unflinching. Mauer, a flicker of emotion - *Marney, the ship, everything.* Backs down.

McMahon, HEAVING, HACKING - finally SETTLES. Slumps into the misery of wet mud and spattering rain.

Jack lets go of Mauer. Turns back, soaked, exhausted. Trying to think. The first moment to catch his breath -

JACK (CONT'D)
Who has the maps?

ACROSS A CLUMP OF SLIPPERY ROCKS -

Ross spreads out a WAD of SOGGY MAPS. Half-disintegrating in the rain. Smeared with mud.

Jack tries to wipe them clean. The colors, lines, demarcations bleeding together. Flicking flecks of mud from his EYES -

JACK (CONT'D)
Okay. Here's where we were when we were hit - Right?

Jack turns back to Thom, standing brittle, glassy-eyed.

JACK (CONT'D)
Right, Ensign? Thom.

Thom shakes himself, snaps out of it. Squints at the maps. The OTHERS huddling in the rain behind him. Thom nods -

ENS. THOM
That's about right. Yes. I think.

Jack traces his FINGER across the MAP to a scattering of TINY ISLANDS, even SMALLER SPECKS -

JACK

One of these must be where we are...
 (tracing past them)
 ...and this here is Ferguson Passage.
 The egress route the other PTs will
 be taking back to Rendova.

Jack, a flicker of excitement, hope -

JACK (CONT'D)

So all we gotta do is swim out there
 and flag one of 'em down.

COOK MAUER

'Hell with that. I've swum enough
 for a goddamn year.

ENS. ROSS

Check yourself, Seaman.

Mauer locks eyes with Ross, SPITS into the rainy mud. Harris timidly rises from McMahon's side, sprawled in the muck -

GM. HARRIS

What about McMahon? We can't move
 him again. Not right now.

Jack looks back at him, down at McMahon - half-conscious, wrapped in soggy blankets, shivering. Knows he's right.

Turns back, eyes returning to the sodden maps -

JACK

I'll go myself then.

ENS. THOM

You can't make that. It's another
 two miles. At least.

JACK

Someone's got to.

MM. ZINSER

So you're just gonna leave us?

Jack rounds on Zinser, the OTHER MEN - all of their eyes on him. Weariness dragging, yet -

JACK

We're not giving up. We give up,
 we've lost. We're gonna get home. I
 swear to you. All of us.

EXT. MARSHY BEACH, SMALL ISLAND -- NIGHT

SLOSHING back out into the murky BOG of the beach, Jack draws up in the foaming WAVES.

The cold black expanse of the OCEAN CHURNING, spreading off to ETERNITY.

Jack, SHIVERING ALREADY, a flicker of momentary dread - steels himself, unzipping his pants, stripping down to his SHORTS.

Ross SLOSHES up beside him. Squints out through the driving RAIN at the OCEAN. Jack bundling his clothes.

ENS. ROSS

Boys're saying fifty-fifty you're
not ever coming back.

JACK

They want to live out their lives on
a sandbar?

ENS. ROSS

They want to know who's in charge.

JACK

Tell 'em I said you are.

Ross catches Jack - hands him a battered WATERPROOF FLASHLIGHT. An M1911 .45 CALIBER PISTOL on a LANYARD.

ENS. ROSS

To signal our boys. Or take out a
few of theirs.

Jack eyes them soberly. Takes them, looping the LANYARD and the PISTOL around his NECK. CLICKS ON the FLASHLIGHT -

The LIGHT SPUTTERS, FLICKERS. Jack SNAPS it OFF, looks from Ross through the rain to the OTHER MEN among the foliage.

JACK

I do find a boat, I'll flash it twice.
Password will be "Roger," answer
"Wilco."

ENS. ROSS

You know where to find us.

Jack turns, the crashing WAVES ahead of him. Bloody bare FEET slapping the SAND as he SLOGS back out into the OCEAN.

EXT. OCEAN, SMALL ISLAND -- MOMENTS LATER

HEART POUNDING in his EARS - Jack SWIMS against the CHURNING WAVES. Exhaustion beginning to drag at his swimming strokes.

Behind him, THE ISLAND - a dim, faint shape in the blackness - SLIPS AWAY into the NIGHT.

HOURS PASSING AS JACK SWIMS INTO THE OPEN OCEAN -

Jack SWIMMING, rhythmic, methodical - FIXES his EYES on the rolling WAVES ahead. Limitless. His arms, legs, beginning to turn rubbery with fatigue.

His strokes SLOWING as a WAVE sweeps over him. Jack reemerges, struggles to regain his stride. Fighting forward when -

A GLINT -

- up ahead WINKS. DIPS behind another WAVE. Jack, sluggish, weary, half-conscious, WIPES at his EYES. Squinting -

ANOTHER FLASH -

- up ahead, near the SAME PLACE. Jack FIXES on it. MUSTERS his ENERGY, SWIMS HARDER. Tries to make out -

THE LIGHT -

As it FLICKERS FARTHER - *seeming to REcede*. Jack HEAVES himself forward, SWIMMING as hard as he can.

BLACK WAVES - ROILING AROUND HIM -

Jack FALTERS. Another WAVE SWALLOWING HIM, CRASHING on as he REEMERGES, COUGHING. Squints blearily toward -

THE LIGHT - A GLIMMER across CURLING WAVES.

Not a boat. Just a reflection of the MOON - now burning, cold and pale through the clouds.

Jack STOPS SWIMMING. Spent. Ocean churning around him. He swats feebly at the waves as they SLAP at his FACE.

Kicking sluggishly, a strain to stay above the surface. Jack CLICKS the FLASHLIGHT ON. SHINES it in a slow circle.

ENDLESS, FEATURELESS BLACKNESS -

- all around him. The ISLAND GONE. The LIGHT GONE. Only sweeping and swirling ocean waves.

Breaths coming in ragged gasps, Jack, struggling in the FREEZING WATER, SHUTS HIS EYES. Letting the ocean carry him.

FLASHING TO:

Crammed in the Harvard Athletic Pool bleachers - Bobby jammed in beside Joseph Kennedy. Joe Jr. on his feet, hands cupping his mouth, shouting, cheering Jack on.

His father's fixed gaze through his glasses, eyes judging.

SNAPPING BACK:

PLUNGED UNDERWATER -

Jack, PITCHED, THRASHED by the WAVES - momentarily at peace. DEFEAT starting to GLAZE OVER HIM -

FLASHING TO:

Joe Jr.'s grinning face as he tousles the dirt from Jack's hair. Jack looking up at his father's Cadillac as it noses into the driveway. Joseph Kennedy's disapproving gaze.

SNAPPING BACK:

A flicker of determination re-igniting in his eyes, Jack HEAVES another SWIPE at the WATER. ANOTHER. KICKING, HAULING -

TO THE SURFACE -

Jack, spluttering, strains to catch his breath, stay afloat.

Twists in a circle. The darkness all around him. Accepting:

Wherever they are, there are no boats out here.

TURNING BACK in the direction he came, Jack, fighting exhaustion, HAULS himself forward. Kicking at the water.

The tide coursing against him as he starts the SWIM BACK.

THE BEGINNING OF DAWN OVER THE OCEAN -- LATER

DELIRIOUS with EXHAUSTION, Jack swims feebly. Rhythmic, mechanical. DASHED AROUND by the roiling ocean TIDE.

His BLEARY EYES fix hazily on the dim SILHOUETTE of the ISLAND. Far off still, a DARK LUMP against the MURK of the PRE-DAWN SKY. The faintest dim glow of the sun to the East.

Jack DUNKS UNDER, comes up COUGHING. His gaze, hazy, dreamlike, catching a GLINT off the WAVE ahead of him.

Jack swings blearily BACK. SQUINTS through the early dawn at -
A CLUSTER OF LIGHTS

- a MILE OFF behind him. Jack STOPS SWIMMING. Carried by the OCEAN CURRENT. Stares. Squeezes his eyes shut, opens them. The CLUSTERED LIGHTS still there:

A BOAT.

Jack, DUNKED by another WAVE. Treading WATER as he fumbles with the FLASHLIGHT. Hands trembling, DELIRIOUS with EXHAUSTION - Jack - CLICKS it ON - OFF - ON - OFF - SIGNALING.

Fighting against another WAVE - struggling to stay afloat, he SQUINTS. The CLUSTERED LIGHTS SHIMMERING. NO RETURN SIGNAL.

Jack wipes at his eyes. Trying to make out the BOAT'S SILHOUETTE against the pre-dawn SKY. The FAINT OUTLINE of RIGGING. Smoke stacks. Far TOO LARGE to be a PT BOAT.

JACK
Shit - SHIT!

Jack HEAVES back, twisting toward the ISLAND. A frantic GLANCE over his shoulder. The APPROACHING SHIMMERING LIGHTS - a JAPANESE DESTROYER BOAT - CLOSING IN as -

Jack PLUNGES THROUGH the NEXT WAVE - KICKING, SWIMMING frantically with EVERY OUNCE of ENERGY he has left.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN / REEF -- DAWN

SPLASHING through the foamy breakers, Jack THROWS another glance over his shoulder - the DESTROYER'S LIGHTS MUCH CLOSER.

Jack SLAMS UP against the REEF, SWIPING him OFF his FEET. TUMBLING to his KNEES Jack DROPS the FLASHLIGHT with a SPLASH.

The TIDE DRAGGING him ACROSS the jagged REEF.

Frantically struggling to PUSH to his FEET, getting as SLICED UP as his RAGGED, TORN SHIRT, Jack, HACKS up SEAWATER -

JACK
ROGER. ROGER!

ON THE MARSHY BEACH -

- staggering into the sandy muck, stinging at his RIPPED-UP FEET, Jack scours the dark. Whips back toward the WATER -

The JAPANESE DESTROYER INCOMING. Jack SLOSHES forward -

JACK
ROGER.

ENS. ROSS (O.S.)
WILCO. Lieutenant?

Jack, relieved, no time for the exhaustion threatening to drag him down as - Ross SPLASHES out of the MARSHY REEDS.

CATCHES the dripping, bleeding Jack, about to collapse. Eyes raking to the LIGHTS only A FEW HUNDRED METERS OUT -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
I thought you were gonna signal.

JACK
Those aren't us. Those're Japs. They saw my light.

ENS. ROSS
Jesus Christ.

JACK
We've gotta get out of here!

EXT. SWAMPY PALM GROVE, SMALL ISLAND -- MOMENTS LATER

SCRAMBLING through the reeds, Jack, drenched - Ross PANTING, STUMBLING at his HEELS -

- BURSTING into the muddy, trampled-down CLEARING. McMahon again UNCONSCIOUS, wrapped in BLANKETS. A few of the OTHER MEN shivering, TRYING to SLEEP among the MUDDY PALMS.

JACK
EVERYONE UP. WE'VE GOT TO MOVE.

DEEPER AMONG THE REEDS -

BOOTS SPLASHING through mud - Jack HERDS the SLOSHING MEN from behind. Jack HAULING McMahon by the shoulders, Ross HEAVING McMahon's FEET.

SEARCHLIGHTS - CUT THROUGH the forested reeds.

Jack - eyes frantically RAKING across the palm trees -

ENS. ROSS
Skipper! Over there.

Jack spins back. Ross, chest heaving, GESTURES toward an OVERHANG of CLUMPED REEDS around a FALLEN PALM TREE - a MAKESHIFT CAVE.

Jack twists forward - calling after the OTHERS -

JACK
BOYS. BACK HERE.

BENEATH THE CLUMPED, REEDY OVERHANG -

Rain sprinkling through the reeds. Dim dawn light falling across soaked, fallen palm branches. ANXIOUS BREATHING -

FILLING the SPACE. Hunkering in TWO INCHES of MUDDY WATER, the MEN STRAIN to LISTEN for Japanese troops.

A GROAN from McMahon CUTTING through the QUIET.

Jack, crouched at the mouth of the OVERHANG, .45 PISTOL DRAWN, JERKS at the SOUND. Ross, Zinser fumble to SILENCE McMahon. Mauer, trembling, on edge -

COOK MAUER
(panicked whisper)
*Shut him up. They find us, they'll
flay us alive.*

Jack turns back, listening to the RAIN drumming through the reeds. QUIET outside - broken by a SPLASH. A CRACKLE.

SOMETHING MOVING through the REEDS.

Jack - frozen. Holding his breath. Fear alive in his EYES. Knuckles white around the PISTOL. Another CRACKLE outside -

- and then A SHUDDER through the TALL GRASS as a BIRD FLAPS away, CAWING.

Jack JOLTS - STARTLED. PISTOL TREMBLING. Slowly lowers it. A shaky breath. Glances back at ANOTHER MOAN from McMahon. Hunched in the dark, Harris blanches at the NOISE -

GM. HARRIS
(whispering)
Got anything to keep him quiet?

MM. ZINSER
(whispering)
We just left behind everything we
had.

Jack looks from them to Ensign Thom - crouched, trembling in the dark. Numb, glassy-eyed -

ENS. THOM
We're fucked. We're fucked.

JACK
(whispering)
Hey. We're okay here. We're okay.

Thom flicks a glance to Jack. Still shaking his head. Hands clasped tight between his knees. Not quite all there -

ENS. THOM
I was supposed to call my daughter
today. It's her birthday.

Jack slides down, sits in the MUD back against the fallen palm tree. The utter EXHAUSTION of the night settling in.

ENS. ROSS
Lieutenant.

JACK
Jack.

ENS. ROSS

Jack. You see any of our boys looking for us while you were out there?

Jack drags weary eyes to Ross. Shakes his head.

JACK

No. There was no one out there at all. They must've run into those Japs, went back another way.

Ross - nothing really to say to that. The OTHER MEN exchange grim glances. Jack tips his head back against the palm trunk.

Zinser looks to Harris. To McMahon, wrapped in bloody blankets -

MM. ZINSER

So what do we do?

Jack, too tired to answer. Shuts his eyes.

ENS. ROSS

(to Zinser)

Take a breath, Gerry.

STILL HIDING BENEATH THE CLUMPED REEDS, HOURS LATER -

PLANES THUNDERING BY overhead - JARRING Jack awake. Eyes snapping open, he LURCHES forward.

Meets the alarmed gaze of Ross, Thom - the OTHER MEN hunkered in the mud and murk. The ENGINE NOISE HOWLING BY outside.

Jack bucks away from the fallen palm trunk - wincing - his shirt speckled in smears of dried blood, feet sliced up. Jack stumbles his way into the mud OUTSIDE.

EXT. SWAMPY PALM GROVE, SMALL ISLAND -- EVENING

Squinting up through the sparse palm trees, Jack shields his eyes against amber shafts of the SETTING SUN as the string of JAPANESE ZEROES SHOOTS AWAY in the SKY.

Ross, Harris, the OTHERS picking their way behind Jack. Drawing up short at the trampled edges of their previous campsite among the reeds. NO SIGN of their EQUIPMENT.

COOK MAUER

Where's all our goddamn gear?

Jack, circling back, meets Ross's grim gaze -

ENS. ROSS

Either it washed away or someone found it. Japs found it, you better believe they'll be back.

JACK

We can't stay here anyway. It's a goddamn marsh and there's nothing to eat or drink.

(turning to Thom)

There was another island on the map - about a mile south of here?

MM. ZINSER

We move McMahon again, we might lose him.

Jack throws a glance to Zinser, Harris, their haggard faces, desperate, exhausted. Jack wipes at his own tired eyes -

JACK

So what do you suggest?

The other men exchange glances. Unaccustomed to being asked. Ross blanches - not a good move.

GM. HARRIS

I say we stay here. Chance it with the Japs 'til someone finds us.

COOK MAUER

No one's looking for us here. We should've stayed back with the 109.

MM. ZINSER

We made it to dry land, I say to hell with going anywhere else.

COOK MAUER

You call this dry land?

ENS. THOM

There's nothing to eat here. We're going to starve ourselves.

THE OTHER MEN erupt into ARGUING. Jack, head pounding, steamy afternoon humidity soaking him, SWATS at a MOSQUITO -

JACK

All right, enough. ENOUGH.

The MEN go QUIET. Angry, exhausted. Skeptical eyes on Jack -

JACK (CONT'D)

We're going to the other island.

Cook Mauer SPITS into the MUD at Jack's feet -

COOK MAUER

To hell with that. I'm staying here.

Jack, aware of the OTHER MEN'S EYES on him - been through too goddamn much to take it from Mauer -

JACK

You stay here and the Japs don't get you, I'll have a court martial waiting for you back at home. I am your captain. We're leaving. All of us. That's an order.

As Jack stamps past him through the mud, SPLASHING into the shoulder-high reeds. Ross gazes after him.

EXT. MARSHY BEACH, SMALL ISLAND -- EVENING

Waves CRASHING across the ROCKS and razor-sharp REEFS as - Jack SLOSHES out - squints across the churning OCEAN. Sky already slate-gray, TWILIGHT.

Trying to work up the energy for another swim, Jack turns as Ross SPLASHES up through the MURK beside him, draws up, wincing - presses a hand to his chest.

ENS. ROSS

'Nother storm on the way.

JACK

Yeah, looks like it.

Ross gazes out at the WHITECAPS, WAVES, hand on his CHEST -

JACK (CONT'D)

What.

ENS. ROSS

That's a strong current out there.
Boys are starving. No one's slept.
Might not all make it.

JACK

The longer we wait, the more danger we're in.

ENS. ROSS

Might be risking more lives.

Jack, stung, *the loss of Marney and Kirksey*, the pressure of it all, beginning to weigh on him -

JACK

I'm doing my best here.

ENS. ROSS

Yeah. I can see that.

Jack scowls, temper flaring -

JACK

Something you want to say me, Ensign?

ENS. ROSS

Just reminding the Lieutenant to
consider all angles of the situation.

JACK

We're going. That's the order.

ENS. ROSS

Yes, sir.

Ross cuts a terse salute. Peels away as the OTHER MEN come
wearily SLOSHING out of the reeds, Harris and Zinser carrying
McMahon between them.

Jack watches Ross splash back to rejoin them. Grimly preparing
themselves for another swim. Jack turns back toward the water.

EXT. OPEN OCEAN -- NIGHT

Waves TORRENTING around - Jack as he KICKS, PLUNGES through
another rolling SWELL of WATER. Numb with EXHAUSTION now.

Another wave SWEEPING OVER him. Jack, SPLUTTERING, helping
to drag McMahon - looks back at the OTHER MEN - strung out -

JACK

STAY CLOSE.

Behind him, Harris blanches through a BLAST of wind-swept
FOAM. Takes A MOUTHFUL of WATER that leaves him CHOKING.

Beyond them - the Small Island MELTING AWAY into the inky
darkness of the NIGHT.

IN THE BLACKNESS -

Ross - HACKING, GASPING - straining to keep up. Heart pounding
in his chest. *Among the oldest of the crew.* The OTHER MEN
splashing LUMPS in the WATER ahead of him.

Glances back at - Cook Mauer, also falling behind - when
Mauer suddenly SCREAMS - PIERCING through the NIGHT -

Choppy WAVES suddenly SWALLOW Mauer -

ENS. ROSS

MAUER. MAUER!

UP AHEAD -

Ross's SHOUT nearly DROWNED OUT by the thundering WAVES.
Jack twists back, squinting through the darkness -

Straining to make out ANYTHING beyond Harris, Thom - the dim SHAPES of the OTHER MEN.

Jack circles BACK, SPLASHING past Harris, HEAVING his way through the water as he -

PLUNGES UNDER -

- into the DIM MURKY DARKNESS below. Through the swirling clouds of kicked-up sand and silt, the SHAPE of Ross - FIGHTING his way toward -

A dark CLOUD of BLOOD in the WATER around the WRITHING SHAPE of Mauer - BLEEDING, in PAIN.

Jack, FLUTTER-KICKING as fast as he can TOWARD him.

Ross CATCHES Mauer. Starts to DRAG downward with him into the foggy plume of BLOOD.

Jack draws up alongside Ross. HOOKS him under the ARM. Ross JOLTS, looks up. Meets Jack's eye. The TWO of them SWIMMING TOGETHER - KICKING as hard as they can to HAUL Mauer -

ABOVE THE SURFACE.

Gasping, SPUTTERING - Ross works to tread water. Supports Mauer as he SCREAMS, CHOKING - SLIPS - SLIDES BACK -

UNDERWATER -

- DRAGGING Jack down with him. Jack - BREATH SQUEEZED out of him - THRASHES - SHOVES at Mauer. BLOOD GUSHING from Mauer's LEG. Jack works to PUSH him ABOVE when he GLIMPSES -

A SHAPE - NOSING THROUGH THE MURK TOWARD THEM.

Jack - eyes going wide. *The cause of Mauer's WOUND* - a shadowy BARRACUDA - SLIPPING OUT of VIEW - as Jack HEAVES HIMSELF -

ABOVE THE SURFACE

- HACKING and COUGHING. Jack twists. Straining to make out the DARK SILHOUETTE of a LARGER ISLAND now looming ahead. Turns to Ross, wheezing, struggling to HAUL Mauer -

JACK
SWIM.

ENS. ROSS
I'M..FUCKING..SWIMMING.

JACK
FASTER. THERE'S BARRACUDA DOWN THERE.

ALARM registering with Ross. Jack PLUNGES forward, HAULING Mauer. Ross HEAVES after him. Mauer half-conscious, COUGHING -

COOK MAUER
DON'T FUCKING LET GO OF ME.

Jack grits his teeth, JERKS as -

UNDERWATER -

- the BARRACUDA noses up against Jack's SPINE. TOOTHY, hard-pointed nose JABBING him. The BARRACUDA SLAPS its scaly flesh along Jack's torn-up LEGS. SMELLING Mauer's BLOOD.

ABOVE THE SURFACE -

Rain now hammering Jack in the face as he FRANTICALLY KICKS, thrashes, STRUGGLES to get AWAY from the BARRACUDA.

Cook Mauer, still SCREAMING - JERKS - YELPS LOUDER.

UNDERWATER -

The BARRACUDA - SNAPS at Mauer's trailing FEET. A fresh PLUME of BLOOD BURSTING into the murky dark water.

Jack SLAMS against a ROCK. The edges of SHORE TRIPPING him as he FALLS HEAVILY to his KNEES.

ABOVE THE SURFACE -

Jack HEAVES himself back to his FEET. Able to TOUCH bottom. Waves crashing around him, the BEACH of the LARGER ISLAND -

JACK
GET HIM UP. GET HIM OUT OF THE WATER.

ON THE BEACH -

Zinser, Thom circle back. Squinting through the blackness, the tumbling foamy breakers as -

Jack and Ross HAUL Mauer OUT of the WATER. TRIPPING, FUMBLING - BLOOD sheeting down Mauer's LEFT CALF.

A SPLASH - right BEHIND Jack as the BARRACUDA BREACHES - SNAPPING at them before CLAPPING back DOWN into the WATER.

Harris DASHES OUT through the sand. STUMBLING into the SHARP ROCKS to GRAB Mauer. Helping Jack and Ross HAUL him up -

EXT. BEACH, LARGER ISLAND -- CONTINUOUS

- onto ACTUAL LAND. Rain pelting down around them. Mauer MOANING between them - Jack, Ross, and Harris DRAG him up through the sand, panting and gasping for breath. Thom GAPES -

ENS. THOM
He's bleeding. He's covered in blood.
Where's the blood coming from?

Stumbling, DROPPING to the sand - Jack HEFTS Mauer's MAULED LEG. The FLESH raggedly TORN.

MM. ZINSER
Jesus.

JACK
(gasping)
Get him...up..out of the rain..Get
him under shelter...

COOK MAUER
Tell my - wife...You've gotta tell
my wife -

ENS. ROSS
Keep his leg up.

Ross, Harris HEFTING Mauer out of Jack's ARMS. Ross gasping, wheezing, clutching his chest - grits his teeth through it.

Jack stumbles forward, catches himself. Stares blearily after them as they HAUL Mauer toward the PALM TREES, THICK JUNGLE beyond. Spent, barely able to move -

Jack forces himself back to HIS FEET. Legs like rubber as he STAGGERS after them.

EXT. JUNGLE, LARGER ISLAND -- NIGHT

THUNDER rumbling through the sky, rain hammering down through the broad PALM LEAVES and darkness. Hunkered in the mud, SHIVERING - Ross unbuckles his own BELT -

Working fast, urgently to WRAP it around Mauer's thigh. CINCHING it down hard as BLOOD GUSHES from his WOUND. Mauer YELPS at the PAIN. Ross grimaces, looks up -

ENS. ROSS
Someone get me some water.

Jack, watching, guilty - meets his eye, nods. Peels back, casting around among the wide PALM LEAVES. GRABS one, curling it like a FUNNEL to gather the sluicing RAINWATER.

Jack TEARS it off, STUMPLES over to Ross, who directs him to POUR it across the WOUND. Mauer SCREAMS.

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
More. Get him more.

GM. HARRIS
Here - I've got some.

Harris jostles past Jack, cupping a curled PALM LEAF. Sloshing rainwater over to Ross and the writhing Mauer.

Jack takes a stumbling step back, boots SLIPPING in the mud and rain. Gaze fixed on Mauer's PAINED FACE. The BLOOD soaking through the LEGS of HIS PANTS.

Jack watches helplessly. Rain sheeting down around him.

EXT. BEACH, LARGER ISLAND -- LATER

HUFFING, PANTING - sweat mixing with rain to soak his already-filthy, blood-stained shirt - Jack STRIPS the BARK from a felled PALM TRUNK. Heaving from the effort, tosses it aside.

Plunges down to snag another STRIP. Half-delirious with exhaustion, working himself ragged as he HAULS the TRUNK over beside a SECOND FELLED PALM TREE, not yet stripped.

Ross draws up among the slippery, wet PALM GLADES. Stands, watches Jack work. SWISHING his way through the vegetation -

- passing Jack, Ross ducks into the sprinkling rain. Squats over a clear TIDE POOL among the slick rocks and sand. Hands smeared, sticky with Mauer's BLOOD.

Ross fumbles with the CATCH on his scratched-up WRISTWATCH. Tugs it free, jams it into his filthy pants pocket. Leans, plunges his hands UNDERWATER. WASHING the BLOOD.

Jack - panting, filthy - watches Ross. Ross, without looking back or meeting his gaze, keeps WASHING his hands -

ENS. ROSS

Harris and Zinser found a few trees with coconuts.

JACK

Not hungry.

ENS. ROSS

You should eat something.

Jack DRAGS a SPINDLE of BARK and LEAVES he has wound together into a makeshift ROPE around the TWO palm tree TRUNKS. LASHING them TOGETHER.

Ross lifts his hands from the water. Flapping saltwater droplets off of them. Eyes Jack's work -

The rope not quite meeting, too SHORT. Jack, frustrated, lets it come apart. Hands, whole body SHAKING.

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)

You're starving and you're dehydrated.

JACK

The leaves with the water all have birdshit on 'em.

Ross rises, the TIDEPOOL at his feet now MURKY with BLOOD. Ross drags his WRISTWATCH back out, re-fastening it -

The HANDS of the CLOCK now STOPPED, glass fogged over. Ross shakes it, trying to restart it. Gives up.

ENS. ROSS

(re: the watch)

My father's. Brought it back from
the trenches in Ypres in 1915.
Supposed to be good luck.

Ross gives a bitter SNORT. Eyes Jack's felled LOGS again. Jack sees where he is looking -

JACK

Figure with McMahon, now Mauer, our
best bet outta here's a raft.

ENS. ROSS

You'll never get anywhere in the
open ocean on that.

Jack sighs, looks down at his work - ramshackle stripped
wood and makeshift twine. Half-falling apart on its own.

JACK

How is he?

ENS. ROSS

He's not good. He lost a lot of blood,
and he's still losing more.
Infection's inevitable. I'd give him
a day or two, week at most.

Jack - exhaustion, defeat weighing on his shoulders. Regards
the hopeless scattering of stripped bark -

DAWN beginning to tint the sky a deep, pale blue. Falling
softly across the PALM FRONDS - SMEARED with BIRD SHIT.

JACK

I should've listened to you.

Jack flicks a glance at Ross - contrite -

JACK (CONT'D)

We should've waited.

Ross does not answer at first. Still fiddling with the CATCH
on his father's WATCH. Glances out toward the OCEAN -

ENS. ROSS

You know, I didn't like you much at
first.

Jack, taken aback by his bluntness -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)

Rich Harvard boy, son of an Ambassador, pulled every string you had to just to play dress-up in a skipper's uniform.

Jack, no answer. Accepts it, not disagreeing.

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)

The man you were supposed to replace on the 166..before we lost it - he was a good man. We grew up together.

JACK

I'm sorry.

ENS. ROSS

I've been bombed and shot at since you were in diapers. But I ain't seen nothin' like that ship, came outta nowhere and sliced us in two. Nobody coulda salvaged that.

Ross finally turns, meets Jack's eye -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)

You did a brave thing, saving McMahon. He'd've burned alive back there. Mauer, he was gonna drown. 'Cept you were there. You saw the Japs were comin', and you got us outta there, and it was the right call.

JACK

He still might not make it.

ENS. ROSS

But he and ten other guys are glad as hell they're here and not in some Jap prison. You bought us a chance.

JACK

A chance at what?

Crashing through the underbrush, filthy, mud-spattered, panting hard - Harris fights his way out of the VEGETATION -

GM. HARRIS

Sir. There's a light.

Jack meets Ross's gaze. A spark in his eyes. Peels away to follow Harris.

EXT. ROCKY OUTCROPPING, LARGER ISLAND -- DAWN

Panting, breathing hard, a speckling of morning dew across his mud-smeared face - Harris draws up through the VEGETATION, opening out atop SLICK ROCKS. Turns back as -

GM. HARRIS
Thought I was imagining it at first.

Jack, Ross squelching out at his heels, drawing up alongside Harris. Waves CRASHING across the ROCKS beneath them -

Across the WATER, far off amid the tender dawn MIST-
A FAINT, GLIMMERING LIGHT.

JACK
(to Ross)
You still got those binoculars?

Ross, still trying to catch his breath, pats down his soaked, filthy SHIRT. Fumbles the BINOCULARS out, lashed to a strap around his neck. Hands them to Jack.

Jack lifts them to his eyes - peers -

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS - a foggy haze, the lenses scratched-up, speckled with saltwater. The LIGHT - distant, smeary.

Jack wipes at the LENSES with his grimy SHIRT. Tries again -

JACK (CONT'D)
These are worse than nothing at all.

Ross takes them back, tries them himself. Jack hunches forward onto the ROCKS, squinting. Impossible to see anything.

GM. HARRIS
Could be our boys looking for us.

ENS. ROSS
Could be more Japs, too.

Jack, frustrated, gazes down to the JAGGED ROCKS, crashing foamy WAVES below. Weary resignation at the inevitable -

JACK
Someone's gonna have to go over there.

EXT. SOUTHERN BEACH, LARGER ISLAND -- DAWN

Ripped-up feet slushing through the sand - Jack SPLASHES to a halt among the foamy breakers. Peering out across the WAVES at the SHIMMERING LIGHT. Twists back as -

Ross SLOSHES out beside him. Up to their KNEES in the OCEAN FROTH. Ross, already unbuttoning his shirt.

JACK
You should stay with the others.

ENS. ROSS
You should stay with the others.

Jack SNORTS, not even a possibility. Rolls his shoulders - trying to limber up WEARY ARMS, LEGS for another swim -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
What's the matter, two hours on dry land and you get stir-crazy?

JACK
Felt like I was starting to get outta shape.

Ross SNORTS back at him. Two EXHAUSTED brothers facing another long, cold swim. Ross winces at a twinge of pain in his chest -

JACK (CONT'D)
You should stay. We don't know what's out there.

ENS. ROSS
Japs pick you up, you're gonna need another hand. I'm coming.

Jack gives Ross a nod. Appreciates it. Both glancing back as - Harris tramps out of the FOLIAGE. Thom beside him -

ENS. THOM
When Harris told me what you're doing, I thought he was out of his mind.

JACK
We're not having this discussion.

ENS. THOM
Of course we're not.

Jack looks from Thom to the OTHER MEN at the fringe of the JUNGLE. Ragged, exhausted, their hope, energy all but gone -

JACK
It's a goddamn miracle we've made it this far, is that right?
(squaring his shoulders)
I wasn't supposed to live past the age of two. Then it was ten. Then fifteen. I wasn't supposed to be able to pass a basic physical, but I decided I was going to and so I did.

The MEN paying attention now, something different in Jack -

JACK (CONT'D)

No miracle is gonna save us. It's our choice whether or not we make it home. I don't know about you boys, but I'm already sick and tired of bird shit and coconuts.

Ross, tossing his shirt onto the beach. Jack turning to him -

JACK (CONT'D)

You ready to do this?

ENS. ROSS

I don't know, you done talking yet?

Jack, a wry smirk, perhaps he deserved that - turns to Thom -

JACK

It's your command 'til we get back.

ENS. THOM

Yeah, when will that be?

JACK

The next time you see a boat flyin'
the stars and stripes.

Jack SPLASHES into the tumbling WAVES. Ross, summoning what strength he has left, DIVES after him.

Harris tramps to the edge of the WATER. Stares after them. Thom, the OTHER MEN drawing up at his side to watch.

THE SHIMMERING LIGHT - looking impossibly FAR OFF.

EXT. OCEAN, LARGER ISLAND -- DAWN

Plunging through the WATER - Jack, WAVES slopping over his head, COUGHING - tosses a GLANCE over his shoulder at -

Ross, thrashing through the churning waves behind him. Exhaustion dragging on him as Ross looks back -

The OTHER MEN on the BEACH, the whole crew like GHOSTS, disappearing away into the morning mist.

Perhaps the last Ross and Jack will ever see of them.

IN THE OPEN OCEAN -

Plunging through the dim, early-morning dawn - Jack, roiled by a wave, CLAWS his way to the top of another OCEAN SWELL -

- his bleary eyes fixed on the LIGHT up AHEAD - now a VISIBLE SHADOW of an ISLAND beyond it, the SHAPE of a SMALL BOAT.

Jack TUMBLES down the next wave. Twists back. Scans the WATER -

JACK
ROSS?

Waves CHURNING, whitecaps spitting ocean foam. The vast, pale blue VACANT SKY overhead.

Jack, slows - SLAPPED by a wave as he SCOURS the EMPTY OCEAN -

JACK (CONT'D)
ROSS!

UNDERWATER -

CURLED forward, CLUTCHING his CHEST - Ross, face contorted in AGONY, COUGHS. Bubbles escaping in a burst from his nose, mouth. Dragging downward in the MURKY WATER as he -

TWISTS, THRASHES in the THROES of a HEART ATTACK.

ABOVE THE SURFACE -

Jack, SWIMMING BACK the way HE CAME. Glances over his shoulder at the LIGHT. Frantic now, draws in a deep breath, PLUNGES -

UNDERWATER

- scouring the MURKY BLUE DARKNESS - Jack, eyes burning from the salt, silt, grit. Fixes on -

Ross's TWISTING, heaving shadowy shape SINKING deeper. Ross, going limp, DROPPING like a STONE -

Before he is GRABBED by Jack - who HAULS Ross UPWARD. BURSTING -

ABOVE THE SURFACE

- Jack, HACKING, COUGHING up seawater, SWIMMING as hard as he can to DRAG Ross up with him -

JACK (CONT'D)
ROSS. CAN YOU HEAR ME?

Ross - PALE as a sheet, DRAGGING at Jack. Jack twists back, catching a WAVE in the FACE. PLOWING through it, squinting -

AHEAD - the shape of the SMALL BOAT, flickering LIGHT behind it, the shadow of the NARROW ISLAND.

Jack, WEIGHED DOWN by Ross, his ENERGY EBBING. The impossible distance still to swim. The thrashing, roiling ocean.

Seeing everything through a weary, hazy fog - Jack - for a moment glimpses the white columns, balconies of the KENNEDY HOUSE flickering into view -

Dashed away by the WAVES - flickering back - the far-off shapes of Joe Jr., Bobby, Edward horsing around on the grass.

Dashed away again by the OCEAN as it SLOPS over Jack. Jack feebly fights the churning current - feebly swims toward the island, the wavering *vision of the HOUSE*.

HAULING Ross behind him. Slipping in and out of foggy-half-consciousness. The ocean seemingly eternal on all sides. Almost peaceful in its own ebb and flow.

Rubbery limbs barely responding now - Jack -

RUNS AGROUND

- STUMBLING. SLAMMING into ROCKS. Ross CRASHES into him from behind. Jack GROWLS in PAIN - SLICING his FOOT OPEN on a SHARP ROCK that DIGS in DEEP. CUTTING to the BONE.

Shuddering from the pain, exhaustion, exertion -

Jack HAULS himself to his FEET. STUMBLES in AGONY. FALLS. One hand still latched to Ross's arm. Jack HEAVES both of them onto the slippery ROCKS.

Another heaving STEP. Another. LIMPING. Foamy WAVES CHURNING around them. Jack, GASPING - DRAGS Ross -

EXT. BEACH, NARROW ISLAND -- CONTINUOUS

- into the SAND. Falls to his KNEES, hunching over Ross. Jack's FOOT GUSHING BLOOD. Ignoring it, his attention on -

Ross, face DEATHLY PALE. Weak. WHEEZING BREATH gasping through his lips. Jack rasping for breath himself -

JACK
Breathe. Breathe.

Jack PLANTS his hands on Ross's CHEST - COMPRESSES. Another compression as Ross VOMITS up SEAWATER. Gasp. Choking -

His bleary eyes straining to focus on Jack.

Jack turns back, eyes raking across the tumbling, foamy WAVES, ROCKS. The hulking shape of -

The SMALL BOAT - TILTED ON ITS SIDE - RUN AGROUND -

On the JUTTING ROCKS a few HUNDRED FEET down the beach. NO SIGN of the LIGHT from before.

Jack, SHIVERING, straining to catch his BREATH, turns back to Ross - sprawled in the sand, WHITE as a SHEET.

Jack pushes to his feet. Stifles a CRY at the INTENSE PAIN from the RAGGED GOUGE in his RIGHT FOOT. Ross grunts, WHEEZING -

JACK (CONT'D)
I'm gonna be right back. I promise.

Jack swings back toward the HULK of the BOAT.

EXT. SHIPWRECKED TUGBOAT -- MOMENTS LATER

Groaning as foamy WAVES crash up around its AFT - the rusted, smashed HULL - a TUGBOAT - SHUDDERS against the ROCKS.

Jack stares up at it. Eyes tracing the faded JAPANESE CHARACTERS painted along the prow. HOLES worn through.

INT. SHIPWRECKED TUGBOAT, BRIDGE -- MOMENTS LATER

DAWN LIGHT shafting in through the foggy windows, glass speckled in salty air. Cracked. A few panes smashed out.

Bare feet catching on flecks of jagged rust - smearing BLOOD from his GOUGED FOOT - Jack - WINCES. Stumbles, slipping his way inside as the HULL GROANS around him.

Jack's eyes trace across the RUSTED-OUT INSTRUMENTS. Cracked gauges, faded switches. A mildewed BUNK melting away.

Jack soaks it in. Beginning to sag with despair.

Whatever this boat was - it hasn't been seaworthy in years.

Through the forward WINDOWS - Jack's eyes catch on the smoldering REMNANTS of a CAMPFIRE on the BEACH.

EXT. BEACH CAMPFIRE, NARROW ISLAND -- DAWN

Sputtering in the misting DRIZZLE - the CHARRED CAMPFIRE - scattered with ash. A few strips of bark flecked with RICE, singed BANANA LEAVES.

Jack crouches over them, rises. Eyes following a scattering of FOOTPRINTS toward -

A rusted-out CARGO CONTAINER among the overhanging VEGETATION.

INT. CARGO CONTAINER, BEACH -- MOMENTS LATER

Rain drumming on the metal ceiling as Jack ducks into the OPEN MOUTH of the container, HOBBLING on his GOUGED FOOT -

Draws up short, breathing raggedly. Eyes adjusting to the blackness inside. Two METAL DRUMS stacked atop each other, a chewed-up old WOODEN CRATE.

Jack glances back out at the crashing WAVES, rain spattering the white-capped ocean. Takes a faltering step INSIDE.

Draws up to the METAL DRUMS - faded JAPANESE CHARACTERS down the sides. SPIGOTS jutting from the fronts.

Jack cups one hand. Twists the SPIGOT. A spatter of WATER spitting out, rusty BROWN.

Jack blanches, brings his CUPPED HAND to his mouth - sniffs. TASTES it.

Drops to his KNEES, SLURPS, pushing his head into the STREAM to drink directly from the spigot. Parched with thirst.

Jack COUGHS, pushes to his feet. WATER still SPATTERING from the METAL DRUM. Casts around, eyes falling on the -

OPEN WOODEN CRATE -

A lump suddenly in his throat. Nearly brought to TEARS by the stacked cellophane-packaged RICE CRACKERS, CANDIES.

The first actual food and water he has seen in days.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH, NARROW ISLAND -- MOMENTS LATER

Hobbling through the sand and rain, HAULING a slopping metal CANTEEN, arms filled with CRACKERS, CANDIES -

- Jack, haggard, exhausted, falls to his scraped-up KNEES beside Ross - sprawled, pale and COMPLETELY STILL. Jack leans in over him. SLAPS at Ross's CHEEKS -

JACK

Ross. Ross.

Ross, eyes murky, stares blearily up at Jack as Jack hefts the metal CANTEEN of WATER SLOPS it onto Ross's LIPS.

Streaming down his chin, his sand-caked cheeks. Ross COUGHS, feebly GULPS, parched. GRUNTS, weakly trying to lift an arm -

JACK (CONT'D)

Just drink. Don't try to move.

ENS. ROSS

(gasping hoarsely)

Boat...

Jack tosses a glance over his shoulder - the RUINED TUGBOAT smashed aground among the rocks.

JACK

It was nothing - just an old Jap tugboat.

ENS. ROSS

No...

JACK

Don't try to talk.

Ross, frustrated, reaches, feebly GRABS Jack's arm. POINTS with a shaky finger - the OTHER DIRECTION down the beach -

ENS. ROSS
Boat.

Jack follows his gaze through the mist, the frothing WAVES - OUT ON THE WATER - the shape of a SMALL CANOE dips out of sight, down the back end of another swelling WAVE.

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
Think they...saw you..Might be going to...warn the Japs...

Jack stares. Brief victory - *food, water* - turning hollow.

DOWN THE BEACH -

BLOODY FEET THUDDING through the sand - Jack, huffing, limping, SPLASHES into the edge of the WATER. Winces as the saltwater touches the OPEN GOUGE in his FOOT.

Drawing up short among the foaming breakers - HEAVING for breath -

Jack stares out across the roiling OCEAN. The CANOE already just a BOBBING SPECK far off on the silvery-gray WATER.

A CLUNK - from among the ROCKS behind him. Jack twists back - shielding his face from the spattering, salty spray of the ocean. Driven up into a trough among the SAND -

- A SECOND CANOE.

UP THE BEACH:

Ross WINCES, feebly resisting as Jack strains to HAUL him up. Wraps his arms under Ross's. HEAVES. Too HEAVY.

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
Stop -

Jack HEAVES again. Smaller than Ross, too hungry, weak, exhausted. Jack STUMBLES BACK. Ross SLAMMING back down.

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)
Go.

JACK
I'm not leaving you here.

ENS. ROSS
You have to. I can't..make it.

JACK

It's just you and me. It's just you
and me now. We're not giving up.

ENS. ROSS

You're not. You have to..leave me.

JACK

No.

ENS. ROSS

Jack.

Ross catches Jack by the arm as Jack tries to HEAVE him up again. Trembling from the exertion -

ENS. ROSS (CONT'D)

You have to go. Stop them from..
finding the others..

Jack meets Ross's watery eyes. Anguished. The whole situation slipping out of his control. Jack glances over his shoulder -

The silver-gray of the OCEAN tumbling away. No sign of the CANOE anymore. *They're GETTING AWAY.*

Jack turns back to Ross. For maybe the first time in his young life understanding *loss, sacrifice, a part of duty.*

JACK

I'm coming back for you. I'm not
gonna leave you here. I swear.

Ross, too WEAK to answer, LETS GO of Jack's arm. Slumping back into the sand. His breathing ragged. Shallow.

Jack, torn, anguished. FORCES himself to his FEET. Chest heaving. One last look down at Ross - and then he PEELS AWAY.

DOWN THE BEACH -

WOOD GRINDING on ROCK - as Jack HAULS the SECOND CANOE down from its trough in the sand. Dragging it to the WATER.

A SPLASH as the prow noses into the SURF. Jack HEAVES it out deeper into the WATER -

HAULS himself up over the side, tumbling into the narrow, hollowed-out WOOD CANOE. Briny water slopping around him.

Jack twists back, squints up the beach. The ragged, collapsed shape of Ross a bundle of pale flesh and filthy clothing.

Jack turns back. GRABS up the WOODEN OARS laid out in the bottom of the BOAT. Jams them into the WATER.

ROWS forward - ROWS - the CANOE SMASHING through an incoming wave as Jack HAULS himself, one ROW at a time OUT TO SEA.

ON THE BEACH -

Pale, trembling, spent - Ross squints after Jack with foggy eyes. The tiny shape of Jack's canoe DIPPING OFF into a WAVE.

Ross SLUMPS BACK. Glassy eyes turning upward to the pale expanse of the morning sky. *Gray-white and infinite.*

EXT. CANOE, ON THE OPEN OCEAN -- MORNING

Jack, HEART POUNDING in his chest, his WHOLE BODY SHAKING from days without food, only a mouthful of water -

- squints toward the horizon, scouring the OCEAN for the OTHER CANOE. Jack blanches as -

A WAVE STRIKES the CANOE from the side. Almost CAPSIZING IT. Jack LEANS HARD - straining to stay upright. Does not see -

A SECOND WAVE - until it CRASHES ACROSS the canoe from the left. The GUSHING FORCE of it SMASHING ONE OF The OARS out of Jack's HANDS.

Jack - SLAMMED in the FACE, CHEST by the FORCE of the WAVE - HITS the inside of the CANOE'S HULL HARD.

COUGHING up SEAWATER, Jack fumbles, HEAVES himself up. Gropes around, eyes clouded with salt. Finds ONE OAR.

THE OTHER OAR - a GLIMPSE of WOOD among the WATER - 10ft. *out from the CANOE* - SLOPPED AWAY by the OCEAN.

UP AHEAD - over the NEXT FEW SWELLS - a GLIMPSE of the OTHER CANOE. *Not as far off as it appeared.*

Jack GRABS up the SECOND OAR. PLUNGES it into the WATER.

LEFT side - RIGHT side - ALTERNATING - Jack HEAVES the CANOE bodily FORWARD -

A PUNISHING PHYSICAL STRAIN.

Lungs burning, a ragged machine of a man, Jack stares as -

- the STERN of the OTHER CANOE - rises before him. The SHAPES of **TWO SOAKED MEN** ABOARD it, bare dark backs. ROWING.

Jack - ROWING HARDER - suddenly OVERTAKEN by a WAVE from BEHIND that SHOOTS his CANOE toward the OTHER CANOE -

SMASHING

- INTO the STERN of the OTHER CANOE - a SPLINTER of BUCKLING WOOD. Jack - INSTANTLY PITCHED FORWARD -

Stomach SLAMMING against the SIDE of his CANOE as it SMASHES to PIECES. UPENDING - PLUNGING Jack -

UNDERWATER

HIS MOUTH OPEN in a SILENT SURPRISED SHOUT - Jack - INHALES SEAWATER. Rushing into him - CHOKING HIM - DROWNING HIM -

As the force of the IMPACT PLUNGES him DEEPER - Jack, suspended in a swirl of pale blue-green salt and silt -

- SINKS. His whole body going still. Falling peacefully. Lips feebly trying to move. Lungs filling with water.

Paralyzed, no longer any energy left to swim for the surface - Jack gazes glassily upward.

The dreamy, swirling MORNING SKY washing hazily overhead.

A certain peace crests gently over Jack. Understanding. This is it. All the fighting, straining, suffering. Now peace.

This is how it ends for John F. Kennedy.

REFLECTED BACK IN HIS FADING EYES -

SILENT. The living room at Hyannis Port. Jack, 5 years old, starched flannel pajamas, laughing, pink in the face. Joe Jr., 8, joining him in pinning down -

- their father, Joseph Kennedy, on the couch. Wrestling with them. Laughing as they force him down. A rare moment of real warmth in his eyes as Jack meets them.

JACK STARING, UTTERLY STILL -

At the helm of his sailboat, The Laureola. Joe Jr., leaning over the rail, twists back, tips his head toward -

Shore - the Kennedy house - Joseph, Rose, Bobby, little Edward, Kick - the whole Kennedy clan lined up on the grassy lawn. Waiting for them.

JACK - ADRIFT - LIFELESS NOW -

- SUDDENLY JOLTS - a SPLASH beside him in the water. The brown shape of a MAN - rugged arms GRABBING him.

Jack - more dead than alive - feeble, limp as the MAN hooks an ARM AROUND him - SWIMS - DRAGGING Jack UPWARD.

CUT TO:

EXT. SECOND CANOE, ON THE OPEN OCEAN -- MORNING

Hazy, DELIRIOUS - Jack - drags awake - in the bottom of the SECOND CANOE. Briny BILGE WATER washing over him -

Jack heaves. Tries to sit up. The MAN ROWING at the AFT of the CANOE SHOVES him back DOWN.

Jack squints blearily up at him -

GASA - MELANESIAN NATIVE - dark-skinned, 20, body built of sinew and muscle. JABBERS SOMETHING in a LANGUAGE Jack does NOT RECOGNIZE.

Jack, in a haze, tries to SIT UP again. Gasa SHOVES him back down again, SPLASHING into the BILGE.

ERONI - 26, the MELANESIAN NATIVE, rowing at the BOW of the CANOE - throws a glance over his shoulder - cold, unreadable.

Grimy SEAWATER washing over him, Jack - ragged, half-conscious - PITCHES with the CANOE. Tries one last time to SIT UP.

Gasa - PINS him DOWN with a bare foot. HOLDING him in place. Jack, exhausted, relents. No more struggle left in him.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH / JUNGLE -- MORNING

JARRED AWAKE - Jack finds himself BEING CARRIED by Gasa and Eroni. The CANOE nosed into the SAND. Jack twists -

- bleary eyes dragging across rocks, overhanging PALM TREES. A familiar rocky outcropping.

The two NATIVES CALLING OUT something toward the JUNGLE as they carry Jack. Shade from the PALM TREES falling across him. Jack, JOLTED as he is set down in mud -

A scattering of PALM FRONDS almost like a cradle. Smeared in BIRD SHIT. Jack, eyes unfocusing, then focusing on them.

The FUZZY, FAR-OFF FISHBOWL VOICE of -

ENS. THOM (O.S.)
Lieutenant - Lieutenant!

Thom - suddenly LEANING IN over the DELIRIOUS Jack. Jack, not certain if this is real - stares foggily up at him.

Harris, Zinser, several of the OTHER MEN CROWDING up around Jack. Gasa pressing a BATSKIN GOURD to his lips. WATER SPILLING into Jack's mouth.

Jack twists in the mud. Coughs, sitting forward. Straining to SPEAK. His THROAT still PARCHED, hoarse.

The NATIVES JABBERING to each other. GESTURING. Jack squints at them. Eyes dragging to their CANOE.

ENS. THOM (CONT'D)
Who are they? What happened to Ross?

Gasa makes a GRAB for a COCONUT in Harris's arms. Harris WRENCHES it away. SWIPES at Gasa - who SNARLS at him.

From the prow of the CANOE - Eroni GRABS UP an M1 THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN - SHOUTING as he POINTS it at Harris.

Harris - caught off-guard, RAISES his HANDS. DROPS the COCONUT into the sand. Jack heaves himself up, COUGHING -

JACK
Stop. *STOP.*

Harris, Zinser, Thom - the OTHERS - TENSE - as Eroni SWEEPS the BARREL of the M1 MACHINE GUN from ONE to the OTHER of them. Jack, gasping for breath -

JACK (CONT'D)
That's an...American gun.
(to the NATIVES)
Friendly - American.

Recognizing the word, Eroni RIVETS WILD EYES on Jack. Gasa, beside him, reaches out. Gestures for Eroni to hold his fire -

GASA
American?

JACK
American. Kennedy. Lieutenant John Kennedy. PT-109.

No recognition from the NATIVES. Thom, Harris, Zinser - still not sure who to trust.

Gasa LUNGES forward - STARTLING Harris, Thom. Scoops up the COCONUT. Turns to Jack. Produces a crudely-fashioned KNIFE.

Harris STUMBLES - GRABBING for it. Jack WAVES him off as Gasa OFFERS the KNIFE out to Jack with the COCONUT -

Jack regards it. Looks at Gasa - waiting, expectant. Gasa GESTURES. Makes a small SCRATCH in the COCONUT with the KNIFE.

GASA
For American.

Jack swallows. Nods, getting it. Takes the COCONUT and the KNIFE from him. Cradling them - uses the KNIFE to ETCH OUT a WORD into the SKIN of the COCONUT - "commander..."

Keeps ETCHING as the OTHER MEN WATCH - "native knows posit / he can pilot / 11 alive need small boat / Kennedy"

Jack glances up to the NATIVES - their RIVETED to what he is writing -

JACK
Where are we? Where? This island?

Jack gestures to the ground, then the TREES around them -

JACK (CONT'D)
Island?

GASA
Island? Nauru.

JACK
Nauru.

Gasa NODS. Jack glances at his MEN, who shrug. No idea where they are. Jack ETCHEs it out on the COCONUT - "Nauru"

With a heaving strain, Jack struggles to push to his FEET. BUCKLING from the PAIN of his ragged, GOUGED FOOT.

Eroni LOWERS his M1 MACHINE GUN. Reaches into the CANOE. Drags out an OAR. Plants it to the sand demonstrating - a WALKING STICK - then LIFTS IT - OFFERING IT to Jack.

Jack, genuinely touched - nods in gratitude. Takes it. WINCES as he PLANTS it in the SAND and HAULS to his FEET.

Jack hands the COCONUT across to Gasa, who NODS - SAYS SOMETHING to Eroni. Both of them TURNING back to the CANOE -

JACK (CONT'D)
Wait -

Jack hobbles after them, GESTURES toward the OTHER ISLAND -

JACK (CONT'D)
Ross - American - American still on
that island. He's sick.

Gasa and Eroni exchange a glance. Not understanding.

JACK (CONT'D)
I have to go back for Ross.

Using the OAR as a CRUTCH, Jack starts to CLIMB INTO the CANOE with them. They shake their heads, pushing him back.

Jack again points toward the OTHER ISLAND -

JACK (CONT'D)
American. Over there. I have to go
back.

Gasa and Eroni shake their heads. SPLASHING out into the churning WAVES as they HAUL the CANOE with them.

Jack, frustration mounting - powerless to stop them - swings back toward the beach. Eyes falling on FALLEN PALM FRONDS scattering the sand at the edge of the jungle.

EXT. BEACH, LARGER ISLAND -- MORNING

Planting the OAR like a cane into the sand - Jack HAULS a third STRIPPED TREE TRUNK - lining it up alongside the other two SMALL TRUNKS already stripped from before.

Sweating through his filthy shirt as he drags the MAKESHIFT ROPE around them - binding the TRUNKS together into a RAFT.

ENS. THOM (O.S.)

I'll go.

Jack, already lashing a second rope around the opposite end of the RAFT, turns back. Thom, Harris, Zinser drawing up behind him among the palms -

Jack shakes his head, panting - too exhausted for this fight. Ties off the second rope, yanking it tight. Keeps working.

JACK

You don't know where he is.

ENS. THOM

I'll come with you then.

Jack scowls, tests the raft with his feet. Watching the trunks BUCKLE dangerously under his weight -

JACK

It's barely gonna hold me. Let alone
me and Ross.

Jack strips another spindle of BARK, winding it into a third ROPE. His cut-up hands bleeding, stinging as he works fast.

ENS. THOM

None of us blames you for this, sir.

Jack draws up short, meeting Thom's eye - the eyes of Harris, Zinser - respectful, sincere. Truth in what Thom is saying -

ENS. THOM (CONT'D)

There's not a man on this crew,
could've done better than you have.

JACK

We're not home yet.

HEFTING the RAFT with all the strength he has left - Jack heaves it forward, limping as he DRAGS it into the sand, toward the crashing waves, churning OCEAN beyond.

EXT. RAFT, OCEAN -- MORNING

Wind sweeping spray across Jack as he JAMS the OAR into the water, ROWING, fighting the WAVES -

- that CRASH against the tiny RAFT. Ropes straining, threatening to rip apart as the RAFT noses into a WAVE.

Water THUNDERING across Jack. Jack, slipping, SLAMS to the deck of the raft. Lunges, GRABS the OAR before it can tumble away. Clings to the slick, wet, uneven wood -

- as he CLAWS his way back to the center of the raft. ROWING for all he is worth.

EXT. BEACH, NARROW ISLAND -- MORNING

Shuddering as the raft SLAMS up against the ROCKS - Jack STUMBLES. Plants the OAR in the sand, HAULING himself off of the raft as its plants JOSTLE. Threatening to come apart.

Jack HEAVES it up behind him as hungry waves SURGE, foaming, in around it, lapping at the RAFT - trying to PULL it out to SEA. Jack fights them, heaves it up across the ROCKS.

Limping forward, using the oar as a crutch, Jack shades his face from the morning sun. Squints -

UP and DOWN the beach - the grounded TUGBOAT. TROUGHS in the sand from where Ross lay, but - no sign of Ross.

JACK
ROSS.

Jack hobbles his way up to the scarred PATCH of sand where Ross LAY before. Follows the faint TROUGHS with his eyes toward the thick ferns, PALM TREES overhanging the BEACH.

EXT. JUNGLE, NARROW ISLAND -- MORNING

Gasping for breath, Jack comes to a halt among the banana plant leaves, overhanging VINES. Cups his hands to SHOUT -

JACK
ROSS.

A CRACKLE from among a dense thicket of WAIST-HIGH GRASS. Jack turns, tramps toward it, stumbling -

Draws up short again. Listening. His own rasping, shallow breathing. The crashing waves through the trees, a bird chirping somewhere. Jack turns, scouring the JUNGLE when -

A HAND SEIZES his arm. Jack JOLTS. WHIRLS. Ross - hunkering among the grass, still pale, weak, sweaty.

JACK (CONT'D)
Ross - thank God...

Ross PULLS Jack DOWN into the smeared mud and grass.

ENS. ROSS
Japs.

JACK
Shh. Don't try to talk. I'm gonna get you out of here.

ENS. ROSS
...Japs.

JACK
They weren't Japs. They were natives.
They've gone for help, they're gonna get us out of here. Can you move?

Ross, frustration swelling, PAIN still sorely gripping his CHEST, SQUEEZES Jack's arm - RASPING -

ENS. ROSS
JAPS. HERE.

VOICES from the BEACH - STOP Jack short. Ross, eyes burning. Jack releases him, turns back -

Tramping through the mud and grass - swiping VINES out of the way to PEER OUT -

ON THE BEACH -

- where **TWO JAPANESE NAVY SAILORS** - 20s, olive-green khaki fatigues, hard helmets, Browning 1910 Nambu Arisaka PISTOLS DRAWN. Inspecting the RAFT. Peering around the beach -

Toward the TROUGH of FOOTPRINTS leading straight to Jack.

HUNCHED AMONG THE VINES -

Jack draws back, alarmed -

JACK
Shit.

Jack turns, hobbling his way back to - Ross, knuckles planted in the mud, trying to PUSH himself to his feet. Ross clutches his chest, STUMBLES.

Jack hooks Ross under his arms, HAULING him up. His dead WEIGHT almost pulling Jack down with him -

JACK (CONT'D)
Ross - we've gotta get out of here.

ENS. ROSS
Go...I'll only..drag you down..

JACK
You're not quitting on me.

Jack HAULS Ross up, clamping Ross's arms over Jack's shoulders. HEAVING him partially onto Jack's back -

- which BUCKLES. Jack in excruciating PAIN. Grits his teeth, forcing back a gurgle in his throat as he HAULS Ross forward.

SHOUTS. CRASHING foliage, the JAPANESE MEN in pursuit as -

Jack - HEAVES Ross forward. Panting, an all-out BLIND STAGGER with what energy he has left.

THROUGH THE JUNGLE -

Vines, branches WHIPPING at Jack - scratching his arms, face, legs. His torn-up feet SLIPPING through mud, splashing through a murky puddle. From BEHIND, the -

POP of a GUNSHOT - as Jack DIVES right, HAULING Ross. SHOUTING in JAPANESE behind him. The crashing of boots through foliage. BURSTING onto the -

BEACH

- Jack stumbles, FALLS hard - SLAMMING to the ground. Ross tumbles off of him. Jack whirls, SCOOPING up a JAGGED ROCK -

Jack SLINGS IT at the JAPANESE SOLDIER - as he BURSTS out of the jungle. The ROCK CRACKING against the SOLDIER'S FOREHEAD.

The SOLDIER lets out a SURPRISED GRUNT, stumbling. His GUN tumbling to the SAND.

More SHOUTS - crashing FOOTSTEPS from the JUNGLE.

Jack GRABS UP the GUN. Wheels, STUMBLING FORWARD, kicking through the sand. Grabs Ross, DRAGGING him toward the -

RAFT

- jammed up among the ROCKS. Jack hobbles to it, YANKING Ross with him. Hauls Ross up ONTO the RAFT as -

Behind him - the SECOND JAPANESE SOLDIER BURSTS OUT. The FIRST SOLDIER scrambling to his feet. A POP as the SECOND SOLDIER SHOOTS at Jack.

Jack BLINDLY SHOOTS back - scrambling ABOARD the RAFT - KICKING at the SHARP ROCKS to SHOVE it into the -

FROTHING WATER.

The JAPANESE SOLDIERS TEAR ACROSS the sand, RACING toward the water's edge as - Jack GRABS up the OAR, HEAVES - PLUNGING the RAFT into the tumbling WAVES.

The SECOND SOLDIER - on the BEACH - plants his feet - SHOOTS.

BULLET NICKING the RAFT - SPITTING splinters of WOOD - as Jack ducks - SHIELDING Ross's body with his own. ROWING feverishly with the single OAR.

The FIRST SOLDIER dives into the WATER, SPLASHING after them.

Ross GRABS up the stolen PISTOL - AIMS at the SOLDIER when - A WAVE - SWEEPS OVER the RAFT.

SWIPING the PISTOL out of Ross's HANDS as it SMASHES Ross against Jack.

The force of the wave BUCKLES the RAFT. A rope SNAPS. ONE of the THREE tied-together palm trunks RIPPING AWAY.

Jack ROWS as hard as he can. Ross CLINGING to one handful of his shirt to stay aboard. Jack looks back as -

The FIRST SOLDIER turns BACK toward SHORE. Jack, momentary flicker of relief turning to ANXIETY as he sees -

THE SECOND SOLDIER - on the BEACH - already dragging a ROWBOAT of their own toward the WATER.

Jack swings forward - ROWS FURIOUSLY.

Ross - pale, half-unconscious - freezing ocean WATER washing over him, barely clinging to the raft, to life.

Jack looks back, now -

OUT TO SEA

The JAPANESE ROWBOAT - plunging through the WAVES. Veering OFF to follow the curving COAST. Jack keeps ROWING - a fresh flicker of triumph, relief, gasping for breath -

JACK (CONT'D)
I think..we might've lost 'em..

Ross strains to fix his bleary eyes on the JAPANESE RAFT - the ISLAND. Coming into VIEW around the EDGE of the COAST -

A *Fubuku-class* JAPANESE DESTROYER

- *the same class of HULKING SHIP that BLEW APART the PT-109.* BRISTLING with GUNS.

The ROWBOAT - PADDLING as fast as it can toward the DESTROYER.

Jack looks back - sees it. Swings forward - channeling fear and adrenaline into sheer DETERMINATION.

CROSSING THE WATER -

Clinging to the slippery RAFT - Ross strains to HOLD the PLANKS together, gasping and wheezing as -

Jack PADDLES hard with the OAR. Foamy spray splashing his face. FIGHTING the ocean CURRENT as it SLOPS up across the RAFT. HAMMERING Jack and Ross.

Twisting BACK - Jack's eyes fall on the -

JAPANESE DESTROYER

- CUTTING through the WAVES - a DIRECT COURSE for them. Jack turns forward, LURCHES as -

THE RAFT SLAMS

- against a CLUMP of ROCKS. The Larger Island DEAD AHEAD. WOOD SPLINTERING - the TWO remaining palm trunk BEAMS SPLITTING APART.

Jack is THROWN - tumbles forward, SLAMMED in the FACE by the first palm TRUNK. FLUNG OVERBOARD as Ross is THROWN off of the second palm TRUNK. The RAFT SMASHING to PIECES.

UNDERWATER

Jack - GASPING, WRITHING - taken by surprise by the sudden CRASH - FIGHTS to CLAW his way back to -

THE SURFACE

Hacking, coughing - Jack - BATTLES to stay ABOVE the WATER. Casts around. LUNGES - GRABS Ross as the roiling WAVES slop over his head.

Jack - GRIPPING Ross by the collar of his shirt - HEAVES both of them forward - a desperate crawling SWIM. Twists back, staring through the churning WAVES at -

THE JAPANESE DESTROYER -

- BEARING DOWN on them. WAVES splitting around its MASSIVE HULL. JAPANESE SOLDIERS on the decks, BRISTLING MACHINE GUNS.

No way in heaven or hell they are going to make it. This is finally it for Jack Kennedy and George Henry Ross.

The Larger Island still several HUNDRED FEET ahead - the DESTROYER thundering TOWARD them when -

A HOWLING KLAXON -

- cuts through the air. The JAPANESE SOLDIERS on the DESTROYER'S deck SCRAMBLING as -

Off the PORT BOW - BARRELING toward the JAPANESE DESTROYER -

A Fairmile B-CLASS SCOUT BOAT - half the size of the Japanese destroyer but BRISTLING with GUNS -

NEW ZEALAND FLAG flapping from the mast -

- thunders toward the JAPANESE BOAT as it WHOOPS a second warning with its SIREN.

Behind it - a SECOND New Zealand SCOUT BOAT coming to bear on the JAPANESE DESTROYER -

- still RACING TOWARD Jack and Ross, loose in the water -

A PATTER of GUNFIRE from the NEW ZEALANDERS - WARNING SHOTS FLICKERING into the air -

Jack, FIGHTING to stay above the surface of the water, latched onto Ross, stares as -

THE JAPANESE DESTROYER - abruptly VEERS hard to STARBOARD - nosing AWAY from Jack and Ross.

The TWO NEW ZEALANDERS CLOSING IN - the FIRST breaking off - FOLLOWING the JAPANESE DESTROYER -

As the SECOND New Zealand SCOUT - holding back, turns to PORT, cutting toward Jack and Ross.

Jack - exhaustion, disbelief, relief taking over - stares numbly, allowing the WATER to carry him, Ross beside him.

The INCOMING New Zealand SCOUT - ML-406 - BOW beginning to spatter Jack with spray. ENGINES CUTTING DOWN.

THE ML-406 SCOUT -

WASHES CLOSER. Jack, Ross bobbing in its kicked-up waves. TWO MEN duck out onto the deck of the ML-406. Scrambling for a coil of ROPE. TOSSING it -

- to SPLASH into the water beside Jack. Jack reaches, GRASPS it. HAULS himself and Ross abreast of the chipped-up HULL.

Jack loops the ROPE beneath Ross's arms, ties it off -

JACK (CONT'D)
PULL HIM UP.

The MEN on DECK - HEAVE Ross - dripping, bleary - up out of the water.

Jack - for a moment left alone in the water, half-unconscious, panting and exhausted - shakes himself as -

The ROPE SPLASHES back into the WATER beside him. Jack regards it. An act of sheer willpower to GRAB IT.

Planting his FEET on the side of the HULL as he HEAVES his haggard body OUT of the WATER.

Using the salvaged OAR - offering it up for the MEN on deck to GRAB, HAUL him up aboard.

EXT. DECK, ML-406 SCOUT -- DAY

Spattering droplets, tumbling onto the rusty metal DECK, Jack, SCRATCHED-UP, BLOODY - turns delirious eyes up on -

LT. WINCOTE (O.S.)
How do you do. Lieutenant Wincote,
Royal New Zealand Navy.

LT. WINCOTE - affable, 26, New Zealander, brown-haired, dapper, tan uniform spotless, impeccable. Offers Jack a hand -

LT. WINCOTE (CONT'D)
Won't you come in and have a cup of tea?

Jack eyes the outstretched hand - the crisp, CLEAN UNIFORM. The warm, well-lit BRIDGE beyond. A lump in his throat as he -

Takes Wincote's hand. Climbs shakily to his FEET.

INT. BRIDGE, ML-406 SCOUT -- DAY

Steam curling from a dented metal teacup - Jack, wrapped in a blanket, mud-incrusted, traumatized. Eyes on -

- Ross, through the OPEN HATCHWAY as he is tended to on DECK by TWO NEW ZEALAND SEAMEN. Not listening to -

LT. WINCOTE (O.S.)
Two natives had the message with them. Yes - he's right here now...

Wincote - suddenly standing over Jack, carved COCONUT in hand, offering him a RADIO RECEIVER on a cord -

LT. WINCOTE (CONT'D)
Lieutenant Kennedy. Your commander wants to speak with you.

Numbly, Jack takes the RADIO from Wincote -

CMDR. BYRON WHITE (RADIO)
Jack? Is that you?

The familiarity of the voice, the sound of a radio all catching up with Jack. A lump in his throat -

JACK
(into the radio)
Commander?

CMDR. BYRON WHITE (RADIO)
Christ almighty, I'm talking to a ghost. Jack Kennedy. You sound pretty good for a guy officially declared killed in action three days ago.

Jack, numb. Crusted in mud, blood. Might as well be dead -

CMDR. BYRON WHITE (RADIO) (CONT'D)
What's say we send someone out there, pick you up. How does that sound?

JACK
That sounds good, sir. That sounds real good.

Exhaustion finally sweeping over him. Jack lets the RADIO drop. Wincote grabs it back as -

Jack SLUMPS back in his chair. Finally a glimmer of hope, an end in sight. Too tired to fully grasp it.

Jack's weary eyes falling upon TWO of WINCOTE'S SAILORS as they HAUL Ross up between them.

INT. CREW QUARTERS, ML-406 SCOUT -- DAY

Engines thrumming to LIFE through the metal walls. The low ceilings, cramped bunks not much larger than the PT-109's.

Jack, towel wrapped around his filthy shoulders - hunkers in the HATCHWAY - watching the TWO SAILORS lift Ross into one of the BUNKS. Clearing away tangled clothes, magazines.

JACK
How is he?

The **YOUNGER MIDSHIPMAN** lifts Ross's FEET into the BUNK. The older **PETTY OFFICER** turning back -

NZ. PETTY OFFICER
Needs a little rest, is all.

Jack turns as Wincote draws up behind him. The hull thrumming beneath them now, in MOTION -

LT. WINCOTE
We'll drop the two of you back at Rendova. They're sending two Yank PTs to pick up your boys.

JACK

I can't leave my men out there.

LT. WINCOTE

They'll be picked up tonight.

JACK

They're my crew. I'm not leaving
'em.

Wincote sighs - respects Jack's honor, but this is a pain in the ass he does not need.

LT. WINCOTE

We're already underway. And we're needed urgently at New Georgia. The fighting's getting pretty bad over there.

Jack looks from Wincote to Ross - his tattered clothes, ragged, sliced-up legs and feet. Grimaces -

JACK

How close will our course take us to those PTs, then?

EXT. DECK, ML-406 SCOUT -- DAY

Spray spattering Jack's face as he leans out over the rail. The afternoon sun already beginning to fall. Wincote's SAILORS -

- lowering an INFLATABLE RAFT into the churning FROTH behind the ML-406. Tethered by ropes.

Jack draws back as Wincote, braving the thundering WIND, staggers up behind him, gripping the handrails.

LT. WINCOTE

PT-157 estimates they won't be here until 22:30 tonight.

Jack glances back to the INFLATABLE RAFT - rocking and splashing through the churning waves.

LT. WINCOTE (CONT'D)

I don't suppose there's any talking you out of this...?

Jack stoops to scoop up the wooden OAR the NATIVES gave him -

JACK

'Was getting tired of being warm and dry anyway.

Wincote, a slight smirk. SALUTES Jack. Jack salutes him back. Then, less formally, Wincote offers a HANDSHAKE.

LT. WINCOTE

I'll have one of my men accompany you with a radio and some food. Good luck, Lieutenant.

JACK

And to you, Lieutenant.

Jack peels away, turning back toward the inflatable raft - the OCEAN beyond it.

EXT. INFLATABLE RAFT -- MOMENTS LATER

With a SPLASH - Jack - plunges the RAFT out into the frothy, foaming WAKE of the ML-406. A YOUNG NEW ZEALAND ENSIGN steadyng the raft against the surf with the OARS lashed to its side. Jack looks back at -

The STERN of the ML-406 - TWO of WINCOTE'S SAILORS watching Jack and the Ensign as they cut AWAY. A parting WAVE. Jack turns forward toward the broad, OPEN OCEAN ahead.

CUT TO:

EXT. INFLATABLE RAFT -- LATER / NIGHT

Dark. Sloshing waves spattering over the edges of the INFLATABLE RAFT as - Jack PITCHES, works to steady the tiny boat in the churning OCEAN BLACKNESS.

The New Zealand ENSIGN straining to keep the RADIO onboard.

Stars clustering the NIGHT SKY overhead. A cold wind sweeping SPRAY across Jack. Borrowed clothes already SOAKED through.

Scanning the roiling black of the WAVES - Jack sees NOTHING. Empty darkness. An almost zenlike CALM settling over him.

If this is it, this is it.

He sits back. About to shut his eyes when, FAR OFF -

A FLICKER OF A LIGHT APPEARS -

- cresting a wave - disappearing - winking back. Jack stares at it. Watches. Not sure if it is real.

The LIGHT ENDURES - gradually APPROACHING. The distant DRONE of a MOTOR cutting through the thundering WAVES.

Jack GRABS up a pair of BINOCULARS from the New Zealand Ensign. Presses them to his eyes. Squinting -

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS - the bleary SHAPE of the approaching BOAT. Narrow hull, stenciled LETTERING - "PT-157." Fluttering from its aft - an AMERICAN FLAG.

Jack - lowering the BINOCULARS - a flicker of the first real SMILE on his lips in days. Turning to the Ensign -

JACK

That's them! Hand me the gun.

The Ensign fumbles among the BILGE WATER - hands Jack a M1911 .45 CALIBER PISTOL. Raising it over his head Jack FIRES off THREE SHOTS into the NIGHT. *Signaling the PT-157.*

RHYTHMIC FLASHING from the prow of PT-157 - *signaling back.* Contact made. Jack slumps back in the raft as -

THE PT-157

- rumbles its way up in a sloshing berm of foam. Almost CAPSIZING Jack's INFLATABLE RAFT with its wake.

Already climbing down from the Command Deck, steadying himself against the PITCHING HULL - **LT. WILLIAM "BUD" LIEBENOW** - 28, tall, fit, slightly amused -

LT. LIEBENOW

(re: the raft)

That all that's left of the 109?

JACK

Where the hell have you been?

Liebenow tosses Jack a mooring ROPE, which Jack uses to HAUL the raft FLUSH - GRINDING UP against the PT-157.

Liebenow, directing a FLASHLIGHT down on Jack, the Ensign, as he ties up the RAFT - getting his first look at Jack's RAGGED, EMACIATED body. Liebenow's slight SMIRK falling -

LT. LIEBENOW

What happened to you out there?

Jack GRABS a HOLD of the HANDRAILS - the splintery wooden PT BOAT HULL biting into him as he SCRABBLES his way up, ABOARD.

JACK

Permission to come aboard.

LT. LIEBENOW

Granted. We have some food for you.

Jack pushes to his feet as the New Zealand Ensign climbs aboard behind him. Using the OAR as a crutch. Still limping. Draws up to Liebenow, a weary salute -

JACK

All due respect, Lieutenant, I'd like to get to my crew.

Liebenow, blanching in the glare of the DECK LIGHTS, squints at Jack - appraising him. A curt nod, still holding his gaze -

LT. LIEBENOW
(calling out)
ROBINSON.

ENSIGN TED ROBINSON - 24, tall, gaunt, sleepless, tired, but alert - comes to attention aboard the Command Deck.

LT. LIEBENOW (CONT'D)
Fire up the engines.

ENS. ROBINSON
Aye, sir.

Jack, an exhausted nod to Liebelow - turns toward the OCEAN.

CUT TO:

EXT. FORWARD DECK, PT-157 -- NIGHT

Wind blasting his face - Jack, spattered by kicked-up ocean droplets, hands latched to the rail at the PROW of the BOAT -

The black OCEAN churning away ahead, foaming with WHITECAPS. Beyond the roiling waves, rearing up against the dark night sky, the dim SILHOUETTE of the LARGER ISLAND.

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-157 -- SAME TIME

Engine ROARING through the plywood bulkheads as - Liebenow holds the WHEEL steady. Squints at the haggard figure of Jack at the PROW of the deck.

Hunched at the cramped navigational desk in the RADIO ROOM - Robinson, plotting their course with grease pencils - the ARCHIPELAGO of ISLANDS dead ahead when -

The HULL JOLTS. The DECK SHUDDERS, JARRING HARD to STARBOARD - THROWING Robinson out of his CHAIR. The BOAT SHAKING -

EXT. FORWARD DECK, PT-157 -- CONTINUOUS

Jack - DASHED off his FEET, CLAMPS onto the HANDRAIL. Clambering UPRIGHT as WATER WASHES OVER the deck. GUSHING across Jack - *who can't fucking believe it - not again.*

INT. BRIDGE, PT-157 -- CONTINUOUS

Liebenow SWINGING the WHEEL, JAMS the ENGINE THROTTLE all the way in REVERSE. The DECK GRINDING beneath him as -

Jack HAULS himself in, stumbling, SLAMMING into the WALL -

JACK
What the hell's going on?!

Robinson - FIGHTING to HAUL himself back into the chair bolted to the navigational desk - grabbing up maps, instruments -

ENS. ROBINSON
 We've hit the reefs. We're too close!

EXT. MAIN DECK, PT-157 -- CONTINUOUS

Peeling away, Jack squints out across the frothing ocean. The REEFS and ROCKS among the BREAKERS.

ON THE BEACH - the SHAPES of MEN emerging from the jungle. A few limping. Jack strains to make out - Thom, Harris -

EXT. BRIDGE COMMAND DECK, PT-157 -- CONTINUOUS

Turning back as the deck PITCHES, Jack BRACES himself to stay on his feet. Liebenow FIGHTING with the WHEEL -

JACK
 We have to get closer!

ENS. ROBINSON
 We get any closer, we're going to run her aground.

JACK
 Two of my men can't swim.

Liebenow, still grappling with the WHEEL -

LT. LIEBENOW
 What do you want me to do, shipwreck us?

Jack grits his teeth - peeling away -

JACK
The raft.

LT. LIEBENOW
 Jack - God damn it, wait -

EXT. MAIN DECK, PT-157 -- NIGHT

SLIPPING and SLIDING across the SOAKED deck, Jack GRABS up the ROPE that lashes the INFLATABLE RAFT down as -

Liebenow stumbles out of the Bridge, clamors after him -

LT. LIEBENOW
 Let Robinson go.

JACK
These are my boys.

LT. LIEBENOW
You can barely walk. You're going to
get yourself killed.

Jack - HEAVING the RAFT up onto the RAILS, dragging it toward
the stern of the PT-157, a ragged glance back at Liebenow -

LT. LIEBENOW (CONT'D)
You came through for them. We're
here.

JACK
Not until we're home.

With a monumental strain, Jack HEAVES the RAFT over the edge.
SPLASHING down into the WATER.

Jack climbs up, over the RAIL, his soggy, bandaged FEET
SLIPPING on the wet wood as he LEAPS down to the RAFT.

EXT. INFLATABLE RAFT -- NIGHT

DIGGING at the OCEAN with the OARS - Jack SMASHES his way
through a crashing WAVE. The RAFT DRAGGING over JUTTING ROCKS -

DASHING Jack, almost throwing him over. Jack FIGHTS his way
upright, pitching with the WAVES.

GM. HARRIS (O.S.)
KENNEDY.

Squinting through the spattering FROTH - Jack blanches, swipes
away another SPRAY of SEAWATER - sees -

Harris - WAIST-DEEP already - slogging his way out through
the waves. The BEACH, Zinser, Thom behind him. Waving,
CHEERING - their VOICES almost LOST in the thundering WAVES.

Harris SPLASHES, SWIMS OUT - latches onto the RAFT. COUGHING
up SEAWATER. All at once LAUGHING -

- as he HEAVES the RAFT forward with him - touching GROUND -
hauling it up after him onto -

THE BEACH

Thom - Zinser rushing forward. Scrambling, out of breath, to
help HAUL Jack and the RAFT UP out of the FROTHING SURF -

ENS. THOM
Jack Kennedy, you crazy son-of-a-
bitch, you came back.

The RAFT GRINDS into the SAND as - Jack, utterly exhausted, allows Harris and Zinser to heave him OUT of the RAFT -

JACK

How are...Mauer and..McMahon?

MM. ZINSER

They're fine - they're just under the trees.

ENS. THOM

How's Ross?

JACK

On his way back to Rendova.

Jack staggers after the MEN. Leading them toward the trees, the JUNGLE - McMahon and Mauer -

JACK (CONT'D)

What do you say, boys, you ready to go home?

Thom, Harris, Zinser - unable to contain BROAD SMILES -

GM. HARRIS

Try and stop us.

EXT. JUNGLE, LARGER ISLAND -- NIGHT

Wrapped in fetid filthy BLANKETS - his SINGED SKIN starting to stink - McMahon - stirs, JOSTLED - eyes dragging up on -

Jack - Harris, Thom - as they HEAVE him up between them. McMahon COUGHS - squinting. Unsure if he is hallucinating.

They HOBBLE through the FOLIAGE with him, the OTHER MEN carrying Mauer. EMERGING through the vegetation onto -

THE BEACH -

McMahon, bleary eyes falling on the RAFT as Jack, Harris, Thom HAUL him toward it. HEAVING him up -

Over the LIP of the RAFT - slipping and sliding on the sick, grimy RUBBER. SPLASHING into the SEAWATER BILGE at the bottom.

Jack reaches to GRAB Cook Mauer - his LEG still WRAPPED in filthy, BLOODY CLOTH, as he nearly slips into the WATER.

Jack, the OTHER MEN, HEAVE Mauer into the RAFT beside McMahon.

Jack STUMBLES - CATCHES himself against the BOBBING RAFT. His strength now truly starting to fail him.

Dimly aware of the OTHER MEN - LAUGHING, SHOUTING to each other as Harris CLAMBERS INTO the RAFT. Grabbing up the OARS -

Jack - HAULED to his feet by Thom - STUMBLING after the OTHER MEN as they begin PUSHING the RAFT back into the WATER.

The churning OCEAN, the MEN'S VOICES becoming a hazy, delirious SMEAR for Jack.

EXT. INFLATABLE RAFT -- CONTINUOUS

Lolling back, weak, half-unconscious - McMahon's bleary gaze falls on - the PT-157 - dead ahead in the water. AMERICAN FLAG rippling from its stern.

At the sight of the FLAG - the BOAT - SALVATION - McMahon's FACE PINCHES - his EYES STINGING, a lump in his throat.

Never believed until now that they would make it home alive.

EXT. OCEAN / INFLATABLE RAFT -- CONTINUOUS

Jack - the MEN, his CREW, his BROTHERHOOD - all working TOGETHER to guide the raft HOME.

EXT. MAIN DECK, PT-157 -- NIGHT

Seawater SPATTERING across the deck as - Harris, McMahon, and Mauer - still in the RAFT, are HOISTED, PUSHED up over the rail, onto the PT-157 by -

Zinser, Thom - the OTHER MEN. Finally - Jack, ragged, spent, pale as a ghost, HEAVES himself up over the rail.

As Robinson, Lt. Liebenow, THEIR CREW rush in to HELP Harris and the OTHERS, lifting McMahon out of the RAFT -

Jack TUMBLES to the deck. Bleary, hazy eyes half-focused on HIS MEN as they UNLOAD McMahon, Mauer.

No longer HEARING their FUZZY VOICES - Jack Kennedy - completely spent - at last lets go. EYES going GLASSY.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. FOYER, CHELSEA NAVAL HOSPITAL, MASSACHUSETTS -- DAY

BURSTING through polished wooden double-doors - Joseph Kennedy - blasts past a young **UNIFORMED NAVY ENSIGN** - who shoots up from his desk, scattered with neat stacks of paperwork.

His stamping FOOTSTEPS CLAPPING down the short, narrow hall - toward the WIDE WHITE DOOR to the CENTRAL PATIENT ROOM.

TWO CRISPLY UNIFORMED NAVY NURSES turn, STARTLED, as Joseph BARRELS toward them and the DOOR beyond -

NAVY NURSE
Excuse me, sir, you can't be in here.

JOSEPH KENNEDY
Where is he? You have him in there?

NAVY NURSE 2
Where's who?

JOSEPH KENNEDY
John Kennedy, the hero. My son.

INT. PATIENT ROOM, CHELSEA NAVAL HOSPITAL -- DAY

Swathed in white SHEETS and BANDAGES - one leg strung up in traction, surrounded by medical trays, instruments -

Jack - pale as a ghost - sunlight streaming in around him from the WINDOW over his bed - stirs. Draws a long, tired breath. Bleary eyes opening on -

JOSEPH KENNEDY
Jesus Christ. You look like a cadaver.

- his father, standing at the foot of his bed. Stiff, uncomfortable. Not sure where to land his eyes.

Jack, throat parched, weak - struggles to speak -

JACK
Ross... McMahon, the..others?

JOSEPH KENNEDY
Yes. All recovering. They're giving you the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. And the Purple Heart of course. I'm having the *Globe* come in to cover it this afternoon. You'll be up for it.

A command, more than a question. Yet in it - something Jack has seldom heard from his father before: *pride*.

Joseph Kennedy, also not accustomed to it, fiddles with his HAT. Burningly aware all at once of Jack's eyes on him.

JACK
Where's Joe?

JOSEPH KENNEDY
Joe heard what a hero his little brother had become and he re-enlisted on the spot. They've sent him to East Suffolk.

Jack digests that, not sure how to take it. Partly proud, partly bittersweet. Joseph clears his throat, uncomfortable -

JOSEPH KENNEDY (CONT'D)
Anyhow. The medal ceremony will be at two. I'll leave you to rest.

Turning away, Joseph hesitates again - glances back at his son - ensconced in a chrysalis of sheets and bandages -

JOSEPH KENNEDY (CONT'D)
You did a good thing out there. As a
Kennedy. You did us proud.

Joseph lingers a moment longer - then turns away. His CLAPPING footsteps receding. Jack stares after him. Eyes stinging.

INT. FOYER, CHELSEA NAVAL HOSPITAL -- LATER

Peering through the window in the large white DOOR, standing rigid, hands clasped - Rose Kennedy watches as -

Joseph Kennedy arranges TWO PHOTOGRAPHERS, a YOUNG JOURNALIST in a beige suit around Jack's BED. A gray-haired ADMIRAL in a DRESS UNIFORM leaning in to PIN a MEDAL on Jack -

- as the PHOTOGRAPHER'S FLASHBULB POPS. Jack puts on a wan smile for the CAMERA - not interested in the pomp and circumstance that so delights his father.

Rose, watching, dabs at her eyes. Happy to have her son home.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- EVENING

CLATTERING plates and clanking silverware filling the warm room. Windows steamed over. Young Edward giggling, dashing around the dining room table as -

Bobby, 18 now, nearly trips on him - laying out plates, napkins, glasses for dinner. Simmering pots in the kitchen. The TINKLE of Kathleen's PIANO from the drawing room.

SUPER: "One month later."

Leaning against the door - Jack, a BRACE around his NECK, BANDAGES wrapped around his legs, arms - watches his FAMILY.

Something different in his gaze. Bobby and Edward are still boys, Jack now a man.

Turning, still using the OAR the NATIVES gave him as a CRUTCH, Jack quietly opens the VERANDA DOOR. Stepping out -

EXT. VERANDA, HYANNIS PORT HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

- into the warm late-summer breeze. Jack, limping, hobbles to the same wicker bench where once Joe slouched.

Lowers himself into it, wincing at the pain from his back. Gazes back in -

THROUGH THE STEAMED WINDOWS - for a moment, young Kirksey and Marney sit at the table - boyish faces aglow, laughing with Bobby - three teenagers horsing around. Then -

Bobby steps past the WINDOW with an armful of plates - as he passes the table - Kirksey and Marney no longer there.

Jack swallows back the lump in his throat. Looks AWAY. Eyes falling on a FOOTBALL in the bench beside him - Bobby's.

His gaze drifts outward - the orange SUNSET shimmering over the bay. His SAILBOAT, the Victura, Joe's, the Laureola, moored beside it.

OUTWARD - like a mirror to the perfectly-flat OCEAN, a radiant sky - and the future - spreading away to infinity.

Reflected back in Jack's eyes - the orange fire, aglow. No longer really "Jack" at all, he has become John F. Kennedy.

CUT TO BLACK.

POSTSCRIPT: One year and ten days after the disaster aboard the PT-109, John F. Kennedy's older brother, Joseph Kennedy Jr., was killed in action while flying a top-secret air mission for the United States Navy over Sufolk, England. He was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.

*

POSTSCRIPT: Of the 13 members of the crew of the PT-109, 11 survived nearly impossible odds, largely due to the heroic acts of Lieutenant John F. Kennedy. The survivors remained close friends for the rest of their lives.

*

POSTSCRIPT: Kennedy would return to the water to command the PT-59, which took part in the heroic rescue of more than forty US Marines who had been trapped during a raid on Choiseul Island.

*

POSTSCRIPT: During the thirty-six months that John F. Kennedy served as President of the United States, the carved coconut that saved his life never left his desk in the Oval Office.

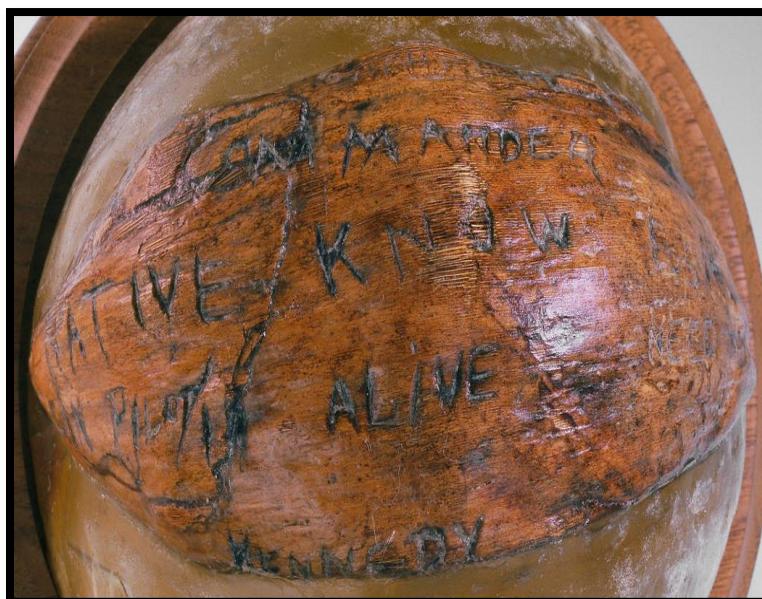
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POSTSCRIPT: His experiences aboard the PT-109 reshaped a physically slight Harvard graduate into a hero, a leader, and an iconic American President who would change the world.

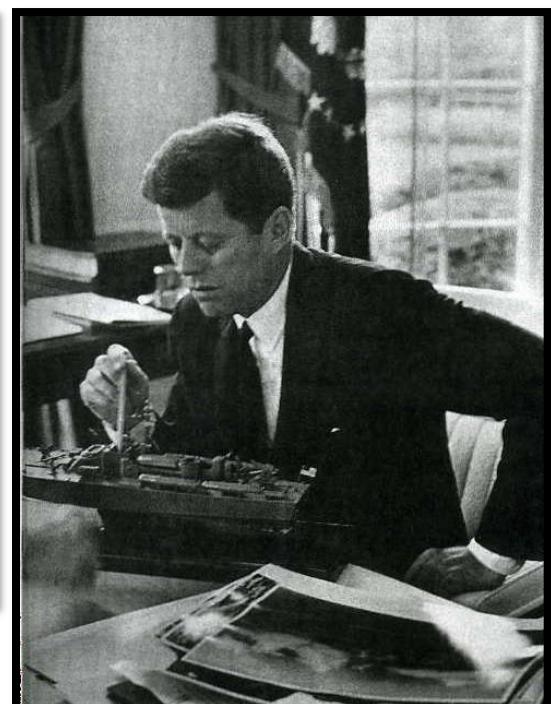


The Crew of PT-109 prior to their fateful mission.

John F. Kennedy is on the far right.



The Coconut Inscribed by
John F. Kennedy.



President Kennedy
in the Oval Office with a
model of PT-109.