

HELL IS COLD AND WET

This week I'd like to share a page or two from my past. Below you will find passages taken from my log of a North Atlantic Ocean crossing I undertook at the tender age of 24. The majority of the trip was done with tow men. Myself and Willie Marder. We left Fort Lauderdale with eight men, four of whom while in Bermuda, decided not to continue the journey. The trip was a delivery of a 68-foot sailing ketch named Kopiana. We started in Fort Lauderdale on April 4, 1993 with the final destination of Barcelona Spain as our finish line. Along the way we encountered pirates and near hurricanes, drug smugglers and some of the most honest joyful people I ever hope to meet again.

I hope this missive entertains you. When I read it I still laugh and cry and wonder why I'm still alive. This delivery is a big part of who I am today. I think perhaps that I started to grow up on this trip and I certainly learned a lot about what to do and what not to do at sea.

There will be references to people you don't know and plenty of typos and that's OK. What you will read is a first hand account of what challenges await those who brave ocean crossings. The ocean bares the soul they say. Whoever "they" are have no idea.

And so it begins:

18/4/93 0700 70f n/e@10

The final members of the charter arrived late last night. Not exactly heavy in boating experience, tripping over things, banging (suitcases) into bulkheads, and running the heads & water pumps ever. But hey who cares! I'm just along for the ride (my new attitude).

The weather today is a lot nicer than it was yesterday. Today would be a great day to leave, even with the wind on our nose. The skipper has been here two days and we still haven't provisioned. I really want to get moving.

But it looks like tomorrow before we leave. No one speaks English and I am beginning to pick up a little Swiss (mostly curses).

I miss Key West and all my friends.

A lot happened today. It was very emotional. The details don't belong in this log.

Rain X'd the clear canvass. Built storm covers for windows.

19/4/93 0830 75f n/e@12

Provisioned the boat.

45 litters of coke

27 cases of bud

sausage and potatoes

Fixed the sideband radio (high impedance cable, no RF)

fill water, finish stowing gear and food and leave

Last night I did a rough course plot to feel out the G P S

877 miles at 66 degrees

19/4/93 1200

Skipper says we leave tomorrow at 0800

radio weather has good news for once, gulf stream winds for late Tue.
wed sat moving from n/e@10 toe\s\@15-18

19/4/93 1415

More info: our first stop is the grandee Bahamas Channel for experiments.

I guess I'll have to re think my navigation.

One of our charter is doing the whole thing celestial. He agreed to teach me a little about it.

Word for today: Pausen, relax

150 lbs potatoes

18 doz eggs

trying like hell not to smoke

excited, anxious, lonely, busy

Met two girls on a boat, had some drinks. Nothing great.

20/4/93 0800 ese@15

Made my phone calls, getting ready to leave, it seems like every one is relaxed but me.

0930

Topped off fuel and water, leaving channel saw a submarine in the harbor.

Raised a secretary 16 off shore and said good by America, going transatlantic, received a terrific response.

Cried a little

1130 se@18 5-6

Ft. Lauderdale and Miami skyline impressive.

1230

Got a little sick, put on sea bands, they helped a little bit.

1300

Oh shit! I left my port hole open. My bunk is soaked, but is sunny out so a quick rinse and they were dry in an hour on deck.

Sun burn on face, look like a raccoon.

1430 very rough 6-9

Raised mizzen and mellowed out some, center board is stuck, won't drop.

1500

Full sail up 9.5 kits smoothing out water is purple.

2100

Grande Bahamas channel: the stars are incredible, close call unlit freighter. Willi and I got the best watch 00-0400, sickness gone.

21/4/93 0900 ese@5 mill pond flat calm

New providence channel making for rock point to anchor and run tests.

Have a lure on wire and bungee cord, lunch?

Must go up rig today and check repaired spreader. Also must dive on center board, bread, cheese, and coffee yummy.

Suzzane has test today, hope she does well.

1300

A pod of seven porpoises endowed upon us an hour of their company.

Dead calm, no wind, no waves, 100 plus feet of vis.

Lost three of five bolts from shaft coupling.

Oil sender went out, went up rig to check spreader.

Dove at rock point on center board.

Splashed around for two hours.

Back under way at 1500.

22/4/93 sw @10 6-8 following 1100

0730s/w @ 10-15

Had to jibe. Got her working well, making 8.5 following sea big rollers.

Got to brew some java.

1300sw@20 6-8 following

Feeling ill, sea bands suck

2100 1/2 genoa only, 10.2 knots

More porpoises, big breaking waves, sick as a dog

23/4/93 0800 sw@30 12-15 quartering

1/2 genoa (no staysail) making 8.5 knots

1700 sw@20 gusty puffs and lifts big swells, still quartering, yawing 20 degrees.

24/4/93 0800 wsw@10-15 8-10 very sleepy

1700 house batteries dead, blew isolation diode upside down in bilge. Fixed in ten minutes. Genius or just desperate. Sick as a dog. Sea bands suck.

2100 on watch, seas are down to 5, feel better, haven't shaved since Tuesday, need some pasta.

Glad she isn't here, ego couldn't take it.

25/4/93 700 ese@10 3-5 nice day, hungry

Everyone has gas, it all smells the same, bad. Don't even want a cigarette.

Making six with every thing reefed, taking it easy, found tear in genoa, center board making noise for three days. Had some rain, f/w gear works well *Mrs. Paul's fish sticks hat is excellent. Need a bath and shave*

I wonder what the working stiffs are doing?

Water maker 101 class in session.

26/4/93 e@5-8 breaking 6-8

Been on starboard tack forever "life at fifteen degrees"

Fresh water pressure switch stuck wide open, pushed house water passed 90 psi, blew hoses every where at 4 a.m. pumped stbd tank dry, fixed the hoses, fixed the switch, switched tanks, fired up water maker and threw up.

27/4/93 0800 e 0-5 8-12 rolling 90 degrees

Somebody didn't listen in school, they turned on the water maker with the reeds loaded up and smoked the drive belt, can't find one, stole the belt off the washing machine, too big, had to monkey the adjustment.

Total nig-rig, but it works, of course. Got sick, it has to be that head below the feet thing.

Hans is sucking his teeth again. gross!

The guy chain smokes four packs A day.

28/04/93 e0-5 6-8 rolling

0700 showered and shaved.

Getting real tired of hearing that turbo whine, running that iron genni.

Wind, what little there is, on the nose.

Making five knots for three days.

Thirty-five miles to Bermuda!
Cabin smells of rotten fruit.

1630

BERMUDA OFF STRBD

Just passed over the most incredible wall, 3,000 to 65 feet in the blink of an eye. All the guides say to approach in daylight only.

The charts also are quite adamant about approaching from the south east because of numerous shoals and fish traps on the north west side of the island. We are now driving by sight on the n/w side. The water goes from 60-15' in a matter of meters. OOOOHHH! we just missed a nasty one. Willi and I are both on the pulpit screaming in four dialects. All I need now is rope and a rock.

I will not condemn the skipper until we bang up on the rocks.

These guys are lost, driving around the flats like hes looking for a parking slot at K Mart on Saturday.

Time to mix a drink shaken not stirred.

This is nuts.

30/04/93 ST. GEORGES

missed the rocks. Bermuda radio was extremely helpful and professional

Customs (open 24 hours) were friendly and efficient.

Headed for the nearest bar and drank like Vikings.

Morning of the twenty ninth I called home, the skipper called the owner.

Both communique were on par, big fight with owner, skipper is pissed.

Charger left, three of six remain.

OK, today we got the sail back. I had a steering sheave pin machined and the skipper jumped ship, two left. So it looks like me and Willi for the Azores. A crew of two, that's fine by me. The only problem is Willi speaks about five words of English. I am trying to pick up some Swiss but the going is slow. I must go and buy a German English dictionary.

Almost called Key West for crew but decided to stick it out.

Willi and I are damned good, we can hand.

Feeling ten feet tall and bullet proof.

If you would like more it's a simple thing. Email the Eagle ask for more submissions. Its no work for me as I'm cutting and pasting from a dusty old floppy. .