

That Summer On
The Vineyard

An Original Screenplay

By

Dana L Goudreault

Contact Writer at:
agfs@comcast.net

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FADE IN:

EXT. KING KONE ICE CREAM STAND - DAY

INSERT: NEW HAMPSHIRE, OCTOBER 2004

A 2004 SILVER SATURN VUE abruptly pulls to the side of a RURAL ROAD across from a BOARDED UP ICE CREAM STAND.

RADIO (O.S.)

Hundreds of people carrying signs and cameras cheered on the large shark as marine biologists in two boats ultimately ushered the reluctant fish to freedom today.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

ALAN(39), a freelance writer, pumps his fist and bangs the steering wheel.

ALAN

Yes! Way to go, Greg!

As Alan reaches to TURN UP the VOLUME, we see on the passenger seat sits a MANUSCRIPT titled: **A GIANT FISH STORY (A MEMOIR)** and a THICK ENVELOPE, YELLOWED BY AGE, MARKED: **MARDIE'S PHOTOS FROM MARTHA'S VINEYARD-SUMMER 1975**

RADIO

It's been nearly two weeks since the seventeen-hundred pound shark entered the tiny salt pond located smack-dab in the shadow of Martha's Vineyard, ironically enough, the setting for the blockbuster movie Jaws. And, as the crowd cheered on the shark, a thought occurred to me and I said to my husband, can you imagine what the reaction would've been thirty years ago, when the only good shark was a dead shark?

Alan snorts, looks to the ice cream stand and, after rubbing his goatee, TURNS OFF the radio and picks up the YELLOWED ENVELOPE, gently swiping his fingers across the name MARDIE.

NARRATOR

(adult voice of Alan)

Only a precious few could honestly answer that. My sister Mardie and I for starters. But over the years, snippets of our adventure have escaped the island, and nowadays, our experience that summer is often shared as kind of...a giant fish story.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KING KONE ICE CREAM STAND - DAY

A 1971 COUNTRY SQUIRE STATION WAGON backs out of the parking lot onto the two-lane road, then drives off.

INSERT: NEW HAMPSHIRE, JULY 1975

The car drives past a BILLBOARD for BEDFORD MALL CINEMA I and II. The marquee shows the title JAWS in big, red letters along with "3RD SMASH WEEK!", "See it BEFORE you go SWIMMING!" And "May be TOO intense for YOUNGER children."

NARRATOR

I remember that summer in two parts. One very clearly and at a pace that always seems as dreamlike as it actually was. The other part, not so much. My Dad once said, nothing in life moves faster than a perfect summer. How right he was.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

NELSON(47) is driving. His niece MARDIE(12) and nephew ALAN(9) are licking away at their ICE CREAM CONES in the front seat.

ALAN

Mom says I'll see Jaws over her dead body. But Dad's working on her.

MARDIE

Two days? You need a miracle.

NELSON

Yeah, I don't like the odds, kiddo.

ALAN

She has to let me see it! That would be so bogus! I've seen zillions more scary movies than Mardie!

MARDIE

And you've run into their bedroom crying zillions of times too.

NELSON

Ha!

ALAN

Not funny, Uncle Nel.

Mardie playfully punches him in the arm.

MARDIE
I'm pulling for ya.

The car hits a pot hole and Alan's Ice Cream pops out of his cone and onto his lap. Nelson and Mardie laugh.

ALAN
Really not funny guys!

NARRATOR
The thing about miracles that parents neglect to tell kids is, they are mostly born from moments of despair.

A giant ROTTWEILER comes running out of a yard and into the street. Nelson slams the brakes.

MARDIE AND ALAN
Thor!

The dog bolts passed the station wagon and into the path of an oncoming PICKUP that slams into the dog, sending it twenty yards up the road.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

After a brief stop, the truck continues on and the mortally injured dog lays TWITCHING in the road.

Everyone exits the station wagon and RUNS toward the dog.

The mighty dog is struggling to breathe, a growing stream of BLOOD escaping from under its crumpled body as Nelson and the kids come running up to it before slowing at the sight.

Mardie kneels beside the dog's massive head, his bloody mouth rhythmically gasping for air. Nelson pulls Mardie back.

NELSON
Careful, Mardie. He could bite.

MARDIE
Thor would never hurt us, Uncle Nel.

NELSON
You know this dog?

FLASHBACK

Mardie and Alan are walking along a SIDEWALK. They stop in front of a driveway when they hear GROWLING and BARKING.

NARRATOR

Growing up, curiosity always won out over fear for my sister and I, though admittedly, I rarely took the lead. Mardie was the bravest kid ever and following her always made me feel so much braver than I actually was.

ALAN

Is that growling or the killer truck from Duel?

Mardie, staring up the LONG driveway, gives Alan the SHHH SIGNAL.

The barking grows louder, intermixed with the SOUND of a HEAVY CHAIN being DRAGGED.

They walk up the driveway toward a DILAPIDATED GARAGE. The door is wide open and the BARKING grows louder and fiercer from within the darkness of the garage. The kids stop.

ALAN

Mardie, this isn't such...

An escalation of the CHAIN NOISE fills the air and suddenly a massive ROTTWEILER is nearly upon the kids who SCREAM!

Just as the dog reaches the kids, the chain pulls taught and the dog falls to the ground hard.

The kids turn to run, but Alan is so petrified, his legs won't move.

MARDIE

Alan! C'mon!

Mardie pulls her brother along just as the dog rises and lunges toward them yet again, this time SNAPPING THE CHAIN.

Alan screams as Mardie puts herself between Alan and the charging dog, waving her fist.

MARDIE

Stop! Stop! Don't you dare!

The massive dog skids to a stop in front of Mardie, and even on his haunches, he towers over the two frightened kids.

Slowly, Mardie reaches up with her hand. The dog growls. Mardie hesitates, then pets the dog's head. He growls again, clears his throat with a mighty shake of his head, then licks Mardie across the face.

Alan grabs Mardie by the shoulders.

ALAN
He's gonna eat us!

The dog licks Alan's face.

ALAN
AAHHH!!

Mardie laughs and takes hold of the dog's collar, reading his bright RED NAME TAG.

MARDIE
Thor? What a cool name, boy.

NARRATOR
That was my sister. Had we been raised in Montana, I have little doubt she'd have tried staring down a Grizzly bear one day, and I would've grown up an only child.

Alan reaches out and nervously pats the drooling beast.

ALAN
Good doggie, Thor.

BACK TO SCENE

Mardie and Alan sob as they pat Thor's head.

MARDIE
I'm so sorry, boy.

The dog's breathing speeds up and his eyes open wide. Alan kisses the dog's head.

ALAN
You're the best dog ever, Thor.

Nelson comforts both kids as the dog's breathing escalates for a moment and then suddenly stops.

Nelson pulls Mardie and Alan into his arms as they both cry.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Nelson is on a couch and his brother-in-law, DOUG(35) is across from him in a chair. On a LARGE CONSOLE TV, a commercial for a WEEBLES PLAYSET shows SEVERAL WEEBLES ON A FISHING BOAT wobbling back and forth as CHILDREN sing **"Weebles wobble but they don't fall down!"**

On a BOOKSHELF, several NATURE REFERENCE BOOKS fill the TOP SHELVES along with a collection of JAMES HERRIOT BOOKS including ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL.

From another room, SOBBING can be heard.

DOUG
 Those poor kids. I knew something
 like this was bound to happen someday.
 That dog broke his chain twice a
 week! Bolt right out of the yard
 and there he was, gone!

Tears well-up in Doug's eyes.

NELSON
 I am truly sorry, Doug.

DOUG
 Mardie and Alan were always fetching
 that dog and bringing him back.

NELSON
 What about the owner? Jesus, man.

DOUG
 Mrs Wallace? Well, she's 86 for
 one. And two, she's only watching
 the dog until her daughter gets back.

NELSON
 How long she...

DOUG
 Three years! Three damn years.

The sobbing in the other room has stopped and a door opens
 then closes. Doug's wife, SARAH(35) enters the room, lowering
 the volume on the TV as she passes by it.

DOUG
 How are they, Hun?

Sarah wipes her eyes and drops A SET OF FOUR PAPERBACK BOOKS
 from the tv series KUNG FU onto the coffee table.

SARAH
 She barely even acknowledged them.

FLASHBACK

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Mardie sits transfixed in front of the TV SET as she watches
 CAIN lift a SMOLDERING CAULDRON, with a DRAGON on one side
 and a TIGER on the other, by his forearms, during the opening
 credits of KUNG FU.

NARRATOR

Mardie's love for Cain, the hero of Kung Fu, was so intense, she would emulate him at every opportunity, for better or worse.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Standing at the STOVE, a large POT of water is BOILING OVER as Mardie peels off the backing of a RUB-ON DRAGON TATTOO.

NARRATOR

I saved her from doing something really stupid one day.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Doug's doing a puzzle and Sarah's reading as Alan enters.

ALAN

Mom? Dad? Mardie's doing something really stupid.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

As Mardie is about to bring her newly TATTOOED FOREARMS down upon the boiling pot, Alan and her parents walk in.

SARAH

Mardie!

DOUG

What the hell are you doing!

Spooked, Mardie shrieks, knocking the pot of boiling water off the stove and scattering her parents and little brother.

NARRATOR

Clearly not her finest moment.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

SARAH

We'll probably regret this, but...

Nelson looks on as Sarah and Doug share a look of desperation.

SARAH

Maybe we let Alan tag along to Jaws?

She covers her mouth to stifle a cry. Nelson comforts her.

DOUG
I think that just might work.

NARRATOR
It did help, for sure. But the memory
of losing Thor that day would haunt
Mardie and I for a long time to come.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Mardie and Alan are sharing a popcorn, shocked looks on their
faces, tears welling up in their eyes.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Pipit? Pipit?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

While sorting LAUNDRY, Sarah and Doug are in a heated
discussion with the kids.

MARDIE
Mom, we don't want to go!

Sarah holds up a WINTER PAJAMA TOP with the FACE of DONNY
OSMOND.

SARAH
Honey, it's July. Can we please say
goodbye to Donny for a couple months?

MARDIE
No. And you're not listening to us!

DOUG
You know how heartbroken your Aunt
and Uncle were when plans fell through
last year? C'mon guys. They really
want to go and enjoy it with you.

Sarah picks up the LAUNDRY BASKET.

SARAH
Besides, what's there to do here?

MARDIE
Hang out with our friends?

ALAN
Go to the movies.

Sarah looks directly at Doug.

SARAH
This is all your fault.

Sarah STEALTHILY hands Doug a SMALL WRAPPED PACKAGE from within the LAUNDRY BASKET as she exits the room.

DOUG
Alright guys, listen up.

MARDIE
What did she just hand you?

Mardie reaches for it, but Doug pulls it away.

DOUG
Hey! Alright, it's for both of you.
But not until you're on the island.

ALAN
Big whip, Dad, a thesaurus.

DOUG
It is not a thesaurus, smart-guy.

MARDIE
Why are you forcing us?

ALAN
Seriously, you live to torture us!

SARAH (O.S.)
Oh, says the boy who just saw Jaws?!

Alan lowers his head and exits the room.

MARDIE
Is it really a cabin? I hate cabins.

DOUG
It's not like Bear Hill camp, trust
me. Uncle Nel says it even has a
loft bedroom with its very own tub!

A slight change in Mardie's look and attitude.

MARDIE
That's cool. Okay, I call that room.

DOUG
Excellent! Your great escape awaits!

Alan walks back into the room just then.

ALAN
Yeah, escape to the Island of boredom.

SARAH (O.S.)
I heard that!

EXT. BUS STATION - EVENING

Mardie and Alan are boarding a CONCORD TRAILWAYS BUS and getting hugs from Doug and Sarah. The kids are less than enthusiastic.

SARAH

C'mon guys, cheer up! It'll be fun!

MARDIE

If you say so, Mom.

Sarah hands Mardie an INSTAMATIC CAMERA just as Doug hands Alan a MAGAZINE.

DOUG

Here, I grabbed this at the barbershop last week, kiddo.

It's a TIME MAGAZINE with a GIANT SHARK ON THE COVER and the words SUPER SHARK. Alan's jaw literally drops.

ALAN

What?! Are you kidding me?!

MARDIE

What is it, let me see.

Alan shows her the cover. Another jaw drops.

NARRATOR

It was the most amazing magazine cover we had ever seen.

Mardie snatches it and runs up the steps of the bus.

MARDIE

Bye Mom, bye Dad! Thank you!

Alan quickly hugs his parents and then runs onto the bus.

ALAN

Love you guys! Bye!

DOUG AND SARAH

Call us!

NARRATOR

And on our 3 hour journey south, we devoured that magazine and came to realize we couldn't have been more wrong about Martha's Vineyard. We could hardly contain ourselves.