

ACCEPTABLE LOSS

LOGLINE: As co-owner of F1H2O JJ-RACING, playing high stakes comes naturally to Jim Connor, but failure with his latest escapade could be costly.

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EXT. ONBOARD DOCKED MERCHANT VESSEL 'CS DSTAR' - MORNING.

JIM CONNOR (EARLY 50'S, CO-OWNER OF THE F1H20 BOAT-SERIES JJ-RACING TEAM) is pacing up and down in front of a CUSTOMS OFFICER MIKE RIGBY (EARLY 30's, EXTRA-OFFICIOUS). The customs officer is flicking through his pages of notes.

OFFICER RIGBY
So let me get this straight, Mr Connor. You're telling me that these gentlemen ...

The customs officer points at two unconscious men, wearing ill-fitting clothes, tied back-to-back on the ship's deck.

OFFICER RIGBY (CONT'D)
... not only managed to get into your container unseen, but that they secreted this large bundle of cocaine, ...

The customs officer flicks through his notes once more before pointing at the large white bundle at his feet, secured with duct tape.

OFFICER RIGBY (CONT'D)
... and they also came at you with machete's but that miraculously ... you fought them off. And somehow, the weapons you speak of went overboard.

JIM
(Sighing heavily)
Yes.

OFFICER RIGBY
And why exactly are they unconscious?

JIM
I told you. Once they'd been disarmed, the ship's doctor gave them a sedative.

OFFICER RIGBY
Oh yes. To make sure they gave you no more trouble. Is that correct?

JIM
(shouting)

YES!

OFFICER RIGBY
Mr Connor. May I remind you I will not tolerate that tone!

JIM

I-I'm sorry. It's just ... We have to get to our next dock for the race and now we're at risk of their friends showing up to take delivery of a package I want nothing to do with.

OFFICER RIGBY

I understand Mr Connor. We won't keep you a moment longer than I have to. We just need to make sure that's everything. I'm sure you understand.

Officer Rigby smiles that 'Of course you agree' smile. Jim relents and waves towards the large F1 GP boat waiting to be lifted over the side onto a waiting truck. The officers walk around the back, past its twin 600 horsepower outboard motors. Officer Rigby whistles with appreciation.

OFFICER RIGBY (CONT'D)

I bet this shifts. Those Mexican cartel kingpins would kill for something like this.

JIM

You have no idea.

OFFICER RIGBY

Just these two engines?

JIM

Trust me. It doesn't need any more, though we have some spares just in case.

Officer Rigby nods again in appreciation. He climbs the steps at the side of the boat and into the cockpit. He's followed up the steps by a sniffer dog which dives into the engine space near Officer Rigby's feet. Jim twitches, which doesn't go un-noticed by Officer Rigby.

OFFICER RIGBY

Problem Mr Connor?

JIM

Not at all, officer. Just ... keen to get going ... and a little worried your dog there might get tangled in the wiring.

OFFICER RIGBY

I'm sure he'll be fine, Mr Connor. Won't be a moment.

Officer Rigby disappears under the console. Jim can hear the dog being directed into various crevices.

Jim looks across at his chief engineer, who gives him a steely nod of affirmation. Officer Rigby's head appears over the side of the boat.

OFFICER RIGBY (CONT'D)
Would you mind coming up here
please, Mr Connor?

Jim glances at his chief engineer with suspicion, but his engineer's gaze doesn't falter.

JIM
Of course, officer.

Jim climbs the steps and enters the cockpit. He takes a seat in the driver's position indicated by Officer Rigby. Jim looks up at Officer Rigby, confused.

OFFICER RIGBY
If you wouldn't mind starting the
engine, please.

Jim blinked rapidly in surprise.

JIM
I'm sorry?

OFFICER RIGBY
Just making sure everything is in
working order. I'm sure you
understand.

JIM
O-Of course.

Jim reaches over to his left and releases a safety catch before leaning over the side.

JIM (CONT'D)
(shouts)
All clear at the back.

Once Jim is sure no one is near the engines, he places the key into the ignition and turns it clockwise. The engine's growl, then roars into life. He pushes the throttle forward a notch and the engines respond with a sound which vibrates the teeth in every man on the deck. He turns the key to its off position, and the noise dies down to a purr, then ceases. Jim grins the grin of a proud father at Officer Rigby.

OFFICER RIGBY
Nice. Well. Everything seems to be
in order here, Mr Connor. We'll let
you be on your way.

Jim looks at his watch and shakes his head and chunters.

JIM
Yeah. Thanks for nothing.

OFFICER RIGBY
Problem Mr Connor?

Seeing his chance, Jim looks Officer Rigby dead in the eyes.

JIM
Well. Now you come to ask Officer ...
Yes! I've got two problems! First,
we've been here so long that I'm
not sure we can get through the
traffic in time for the race. And
two, I'm sure those bastards down
there won't be on their own. I'm
worried I'm going to get stopped
for good by their pals.

Officer Rigby looked down at the men who had remained unconscious throughout and nodded.

OFFICER RIGBY
I tell you what Mr Connor. Why
don't we give you a police escort?

Jim smiled to himself.

JIM
Are you sure? ... That would be
perfect.

OFFICER RIGBY
The least we could do.

Jim and Officer Rigby descend the steps, quickly followed by the dog. The team secure the boat for transport and use the crane to lift it onto the waiting truck. The two unconscious men are placed into the back of a waiting ambulance. Jim nods and winks at his chief engineer as they're taken away.

EXT. DOCK 42 - AFTERNOON.

Jim waves goodbye to the police officers as they drive away. As they turn the corner, he waits a beat to make sure they've gone. He whistles two high notes toward the nearby warehouse. The large doors slide open and allow the truck to finish its journey. Once inside the warehouse, doors secured, Jim turns to a large man in a black suit standing holding a phone. Jim lifts the phone to his ear.

JIM
It's done. We're here and the main
cargo is safe.

Jim listens to a voice on the other end.

JIM (CONT'D)
Yes. The medics were there as arranged. They've taken the officers away. Their uniforms are being disposed of as we speak.

Jim watches as a warehouseman, place two Mexican coast guard uniforms into a barrel, soak them in fuel and set them alight. He listens to the voice again.

JIM (CONT'D)
Your men tell me they've sunk the coast guard vessel. They say no one will ever know.

Jim listens once more. He burst out laughing.

JIM (CONT'D)
I-I'm sorry. I'm not laughing at you, Don Giovani. I'm laughing at the officers down here. You know, they hinted that the drug cartels might want boats like ours to shift drugs, but they have no idea how close they were to the truth ... and the largest haul in history. Oh ... and the home-grown chillies mixed with the outboard gasoline as the disguise from the sniffer dogs worked perfectly again.

Jim watched as bundle-upon-bundle of cocaine is removed from the trailer under the boat, from within the shell and from the spare outboard motors. Jim thanked whatever god was looking down on him, that they didn't ask for those to be shown working.

JIM (CONT'D)
Yes. See you soon, my friend.

Jim pressed the red button and handed the phone back to the man in black.

JIM (CONT'D)
Well, Carl. This is going to be a prosperous year. I'm sure Officer Rigby is rubbing his hands together at the large bundle he recovered earlier. But at a couple of hundred thousand dollars, that's definitely an acceptable loss. And chicken feed compared to this lot, which is easily worth five billion dollars.

Jim laughed out loud.

END.