HNTS005: Jacie Sails

2,399 words (total compilation)

V.O.: How Not To Sail. Sponsored by...Latitudes & Attitudes. They ruined my life. So why not let 'em ruin *yours* today...at LATS ATTS DOT COM.

SFX: BOSUN'S WHISTLE

V.O: So, I'm headed south in my boat *Jacie Sails* after stopping at Cabbage Key. I'm making for Marco Island, to anchor overnight before making the long leap to Marathon in the Florida Keys.

As always, if you haven't heard the previous episodes, I encourage you to start with Episode One. A lot has gone on before now...

But the short story is, I have about 6 days left to make it 250 nautical miles to Miami to meet "The Admiral," and to meet Bob Bitchin at the Miami Boat show, to launch *this podcast.* If you don't know who Bob Bitchin is...or even if you do...well, that's another reason to start with Episode One.

But if you're the stubborn type, feel free to carry on.

TANYA [PHONE]: Remind me why you're doing this again?

BRADFORD: Because otherwise there's no story...[ducks under next]

V.O: That's Tanya. But we call her "The Admiral." She was initially skeptical of my idea to make this trip.

But I figure what better way to launch the podcast than to sail alone from St. Pete around Florida to the Miami Boat Show.

The Spring issue of Bob Bitchin's magazine Cruising Outpost will be available at the boat show...and my ad for the How Not To Sail podcast is scheduled to be in it. I've also had a thousand postcards for the How Not To Sail launch printed up, and I'm handing them out on the way.

It seems like a *great* plan to *me.* All I need to do is avoid any more propulsion problems--or any other surprises--and get me and my sailboat over to Miami in time to meet Tanya's flight, make it to the boat show, and have all of my plans come together.

What could possibly go wrong?

Slightly Louder?

MUSIC: DRUNKEN SAILOR THEME

A Floating Temple

V.O: So...I mentioned my sailboat *Jacie Sails.* And I think it's about time we met 'er.

Jacie Sails--technically speaking--is a thirty-seven foot, cutter-rigged sailboat, weighing eighteen thousand pounds.

Jacie Sails--in reality--is a floating temple. My fortress of solitude.

V.O: Her main purpose, her *prime directive*...is to make me happy.

Not everybody I've had aboard gets that.

SFX: SAILBOAT

There are folks that, like me, appreciate the natural beauty around us, or the sounds of the sea that you hear when you turn off the engine.

Then there are the folks who want to get drunk and chatter about nothing.

You can guess which group I prefer to have aboard.

V.O: I've starting using the word "crew" instead of the word "guests." Maybe that will help.

V.O: Now, I wasn't *always* this grumpy. About boats, anyway.

In fact, even though I'd gotten hooked on the *idea* of sailing, it took about twenty years--and a bit of random luck--before I ran across my floating temple.

A Boat Comes To Me

MUSIC: COOL GROOVE

V.O: I have a certain friend, who shall remain nameless (Todd, you know who you are), who...shall we say...has a lot more *capacity for detail* than I do.

Todd was interested in buying a sailboat...and to that end, he created a spreadsheet comparing various boats, in terms of fuel and water capacity, seakindliness, and all manner of other things. It was quite impressive.

Todd eventually decided to purchase a motorcycle.

MUSIC OUT

V.O: I arrived at my boat purchase via a slightly different methodology: I dressed up as Blackbeard for Halloween, and a boat fell into my lap just a couple of days later. (add a ~~beat~~ pause)

CAP'N ELMORE: Hey Tanya, it's Jay. I was just calling about the boat...

V.O: Our friend Cap'n Elmore had looked at a 1983 Hunter Cherubini sailboat on Lake Lanier, near Atlanta. He swore Tanya to secrecy until he had a chance to decide if he wanted to buy the boat, which at the time was named *Bond's Voyage*.

CAP'N ELMORE: I decided I'm not gonna buy it. Do you want me to let

Bradford know about it?

V.O: Fortunately for me, Cap'n Elmore's wife Susan didn't enjoy the breezy test drive, so he gave Tanya the go-ahead to clue me in.

At first, I wasn't as interested in the opportunity as Tanya was. I had my eye set on an *ocean* boat, not a *lake* boat.

And it seemed like a major operation to move a cruising sailboat to the ocean.

But Jay's recommendation and Tanya's enthusiasm were enough to get me up to the lake on a Saturday to take a look.

SFX: PARKING, WALKING DOWN RAMP, ETC

V.O: I didn't know that to expect when we parked on the hilltop at Sunrise Cove marina and walked down the hillside to the docks. But there in slip J28 was a clean, well-kept white boat with blue trim.

(SFX OUT)

Well, okay, like ninety percent of fiberglass boats are white with blue trim. But that's another story.

[SFX: Companionway?]Etc?

The inside was neat and tidy. Thomas and Lisa had been meticulous in their upkeep. And since the boat had been in

fresh, temperate Georgia waters for years, corrosion and rust were about zero.

V.O: I have to admit to you here, I have this "ability" to zone out on details and information when it suits me. Honestly, my assessment of the boat was, "Yep, neat, tidy. Looks good to me."

So we took 'er out for a spin.

SFX: START UP AND MOTORING

I'm sure I managed to sound like I was having a conversation, but my mind was far away in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. I'm not sure if I'd decided to buy her yet, but the fat lady was warming up in the green room, as they say.

SFX: MEZZO SOPRANO WARMING UP

We brought her back to the dock and chatted a little more about something or other.

I had no idea what to look for as far as issues, so my "survey" consisted of lifting up the cabin sole, snapping a smartphone picture of the keel bolts

SFX: CAMERA SHUTTER

and sending them to Cap'n Elmore and also Cap'n Kernodle, who saw nothing amiss with the keel bolts.

It was up to me now. Thomas and Lisa had another appointment the next day with a potential buyer.

V.O: I weighed my decision carefully.

SFX: RECORD SCRATCH

V.O: (Okay, i didn't really. I talked to Cap'n Elmore and Cap'n Kernodle, who both thought that for the asking price, I should have a nice boat to meet my needs; and that I could make all manner of modifications and still be way under the cost of a new boat.)

I showed up the next day, checkbook in hand, like a damned idiot.

L&A AD

BOSSA ELEVATOR MUSIC

V.O: And speaking of checkbooks, it's time to pay the bills for thirty seconds...and I'll be right back.

LATS & ATTS COMMERCIAL

V.O.: Yeah. So that's pretty much the story. The cruising magazine that I got into cruising with, Latitudes & Attitudes, transformed into Cruising Outpost after Bob Bitchin got screwed over by a very unscrupulous fellow who shut down their offices and moved to South America. Or something like that.

But now they're back as Latitudes & Attitudes, and we are super happy about that.

SFX; APPLAUSE

V.O: But meanwhile, I'm standing on J-Dock at Lake Lanier with a checkbook in my hand, like a damned idiot.

GROOVE-BASS AND DRUM

Thomas and Lisa were asking $25,000 for their boat *Bond's Voyage*. I knew my dad wouldn't be proud unless I haggled a little, so I offered $24,000 on the spot.

They accepted.

I was now the proud owner of a nine ton, thirty-seven foot boat. A boat whose name held meaning only for the current owners.

(MUSIC OUT)

But I already had a name in mind. A name I'd been saving for years. And it goes back to when I met The Admiral.

Meeting Jacie

SFX: JACIE BARK

When I first called upon Tanya at her home, she had a dog. And I was worried.

Not because I don't like dogs. I do. But I have certain *criteria*. They must be of a certain size--no smaller than a beagle, generally. They must be short-to-medium haired, and the hair must be straight--no curly-haired dogs. And they must not yap.

Jacie met the minimum size requirement.

TANYA: White, long white hair... Medium-sized dog.

V.O: ...and I'd call it medium-length hair, when she'd had a trim. Just at the outer end of the hair length requirement.

But the tail worried me.

Jacie's white tail curled around in a plume reminiscent of something on a roman centurion's helmet. The tail didn't seem to belong on what otherwise seemed to be a plump, short-legged Spitz mix.

This, I thought, could be...a *froufrou* dog.

MUSIC (FRUMPY CLARINET?)

V.O: As it turns out, though, Jacie was amazing. She was super-chill and lovable. Tanya could let her out the back door and she would stay in the yard and do her thing, eventually inchworming back up the steps like a seal.

(MUSIC STOPS)

You see, Jacie had some "physical challenges."

TANYA: She had a perfect first position.

BRADFORD: What's first position?

TANYA: Hyperextended for a dog...pushed out to the right and the left. It was a little daunting for her, for sure.

V.O: Jacie's poor feet were so arthritic that when she laid down it looked like her forelegs were crossed. They were not.

TANYA: She tend(ed) to look like a penguin, periodically. (chuckles)

V.O: But Jacie was a gamer. And she took to me right away.

One night after I moved in with Tanya, I was out playing a gig, and Tanya couldn't find Jacie.

TANYA: I was home, and generally she would watch TV with me, or stay with me most of the time. And there was this one evening when I could not locate her...which was bizarre. She was always on my heels.

I eventually found her in the guest bedroom where your desk was set up, and she was laying underneath it. Obviously missing you.

V.O: Well, who could blame her? (PAUSE FOR A BEAT)

Anyway, since I worked at home during the day, Jacie became my constant companion.

Unfortunately, she was already pretty old when I came along, and our time together wasn't nearly long enough.

Besides the severe arthritis, she had pancreatic cancer. Then she developed glaucoma...so The Admiral and I get her a prosthetic eye. But her time with us was running out. She began to have a terrible cough, that turned out to be congestive heart failure.

Finally one day we had to make that last visit to the vet.

POIGNANT MUSIC

V.O: As Tanya and I said our goodbyes, I made a promise to Jacie. "I don't know what happens after this," I said, "but I'll never forget you."

Those words still haunt me.

Because just like Daisy and Ginger who passed away only last year...Jacie immediately began to fade from my mind. It wasn't long before I started to forget her.

I didn't want to forget Jacie. I cried as they put her to sleep, and I cried on the way home.

(MUSIC/SFX STOPS?)

But then I stopped. And all the vivid details about Jacie began to fade. I don't know why...and I don't think it bodes well for my golden years--if I ever see 'em.

I wish I could hold everything about Jacie--and Daisy and Ginger--in my mind...even if it makes losing them that much more painful. But I just can't.

I *did* do something to honor Jacie, though...and as best I remember, I already had it in mind when we took her in for the last time.

Don't ~~Signpost this~~ Save the "surprise"

~~I named my first and only boat after her.~~

SFX: BOAT

A New Name for a New Boat

V.O: A lot of boats have names having to do with the wind, stars, islands, relaxation--and, let's face it...women.

Far too many, in my opinion, involve some play on the word "naughty" or "knot."

V.O: My boat may not be the easiest name to understand over the VHF radio, or to folks from other countries. But one thing I'm sure of: It's unique.

V.O: Our dog Jacie never got to go sailing. I took me another decade to get my sailboat.

But I remembered my promise.

After getting five months of sailing practice in on Lake Lanier, and meeting some great folks, I had the boat hauled out, put on a semi with her mast removed, and trucked down to St. Pete...

YEAR???

...where, on June twenty-second, after a substantial refit, Jack Coletti from Midnight Oil Workshop pulled the transfer paper off her transom to reveal her new name.

Jacie Sails.

SFX: BOAT

As I make my way south out of Fort Meyers Beach toward Marco Island, I walk along the cabin top and stand next to the mast. I can feel the *solidity* of *Jacie Sails* under me, and I'm thinking back to the christening of my floating temple.

SFX FROM VIDEO OF CHRISTENING

V.O: After we installed her in her new home in Gulfport, Florida, Tanya and I took *Jacie Sails* about ten miles off St. Pete Beach, where, in forty feet of water, we broke a bottle of champagne over the bow...and consigned Jacie's ashes to the sea.

MORE SFX? →

Maybe Jacie did get to go sailing after all.

Outro

MUSIC: DRUNKEN SAILOR THEME

V.O.: Be sure to join us next episode as I make the leap south toward Marathon Key...and the Miami boat show. What could possibly go wrong?

Big thanks to everyone who's left the nice 5-star reviews on Apple Podcasts and elsewhere, and everybody who's jumped on the email list.

I couldn't possibly be more grateful...

Well, I could be even *more* grateful if you could just share How Not To Sail with *one* other person. You could actually help this little flotilla [armada?] *double* overnight...and how cool would *that* be?

...and feel free to crow about it a little in the episode comments!

You can also get in on the Facebook group by just going to HowNotToSail dot com...slash...community.

SFX: JACIE BARK