

Canoe Cove

Greg sat on the deck, a warm coat around him to ward off the cooler evening air. He pulled out his cell phone and made his first call. It was to the number on the card he had been given by the leader of the boarding party.

"Hi. I was told to report to this number."

"Who are you?"

"I'm Greg Peckingham. I'm the guy who had the job of delivering the sailing vessel *Blue Moon* to Canoe Cove."

"I don't know anything about this."

"Yeah, that's okay. Just make a note of it and ... give me a moment, will you ... let Lieutenant Jackson know. He asked me to report in."

"He's not here now. He'll be back in the morning."

"That's okay, let him know in the morning. Okay?"

"I can get someone to go and fetch him."

"No, that would be unwise. Lieutenant Jackson will just be pissed with you. He just wanted to know I arrived safely."

"What did you say your name was again?"

"Just let him know that *Blue Moon* arrived safely at Canoe Cove."

"What's your name?"

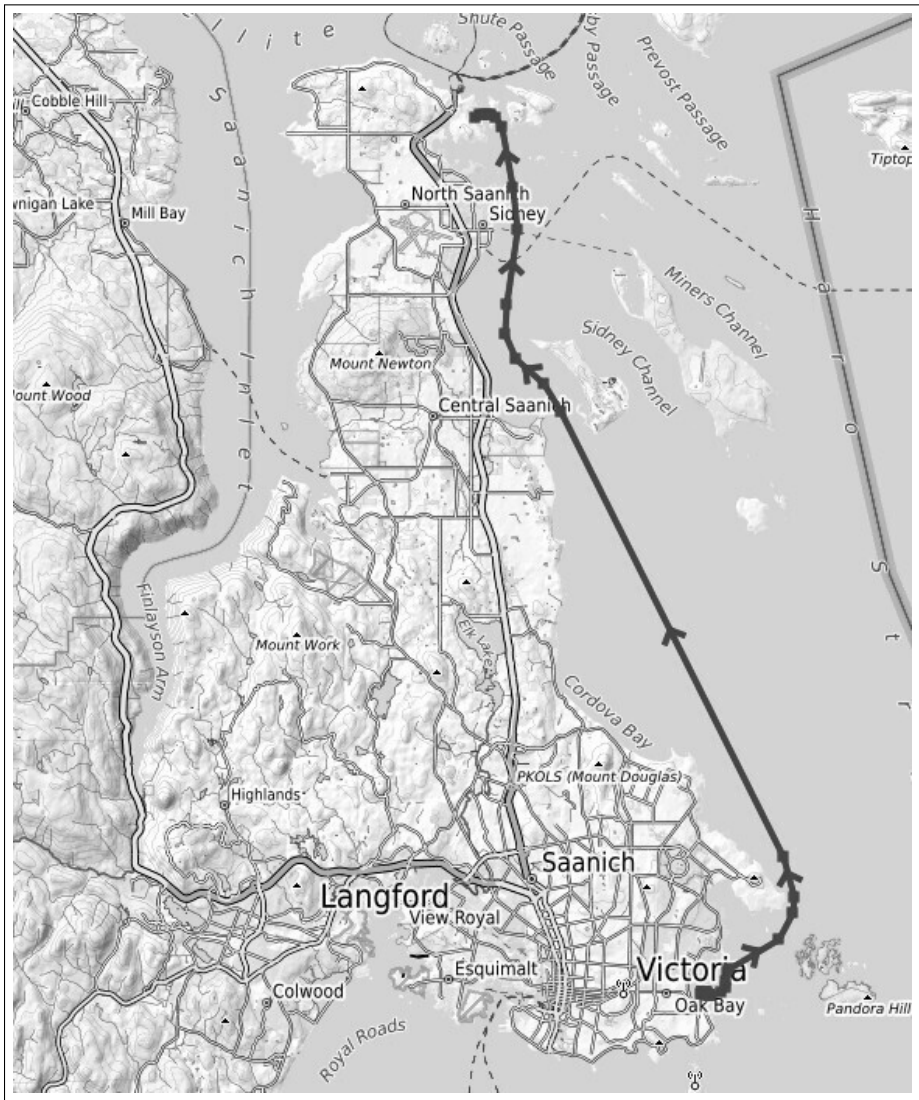
"Greg. He doesn't care about that. He just needs to know that the boat arrived safely. Keep it brief. *Blue Moon* arrived safely at Canoe Cove. Got it?"

"I think so. I'm writing it down. *Blue Moon* arrived safely at Canoe Cove. Is that all?"

"That's all he wants to know. Thanks. Bye for now."

Greg waited a while before he made his next call. He knew that all calls were being monitored, so he had to prepare for what to say and be careful about what he said.

Initially, he would just call Marcus, but after the boarding, he now thought it unwise. It was still possible to call Mike, though. He wouldn't be at the marina; he'd be home by now. He would get a message to Marcus through Mike. He had to be careful how he did it. He needed Marcus here to explain the next step of his barely formulated plan. He sat quietly for the



Route: Oak Bay to Canoe Cove

next fifteen minutes, thinking it through until he was sure it would work. He picked up his phone and called Mike.

“Hello?”

“Mike?”

“Who’s that?”

“It’s me, Greg. Listen, Mike, I’m worried about this boat swinging

around its anchor and hitting other boats. I want to set a second anchor, but there's only one on board. Well, there is a second anchor, but it's a bit light. With winter coming, I'd like to have the boat tied to something sturdy. Can you get the owner to bring another to the dock here?"

"But, Greg, why do you—"

"You know when you were working on your reports and asked me not to rush around. Safety first, you told me. Right? Well, I want it to be very safe. Get on the phone and ask the owner to bring me another anchor. There's a good forty-five pounder lying around that he can pick up, but ask him to check the equipment shed. He probably has his spare anchor stored there."

"His spare anchor? In the equipment shed? What the hell—"

"I gotta secure the boat. You call the owner and tell him to get his anchor out of the equipment shed and bring it to me. You got it, Mike? Don't worry; you'll figure it out. Bye."

Greg quickly killed the call and hoped Mike would understand. He was a sweet guy, but Greg worried he wouldn't fully clue in and put his foot in it somehow.

He went below to tidy up the cabin. The spinnaker had boot prints from the marines who had clomped around in the cabin. *Arrogant pricks!* Greg steamed. He carefully cleaned off the marks and packed the spinnaker back into its bag with its three corners exposed on the top. Now, it was ready to clip on the halyard, sheet, and guy the next time he would use it. The boarding party had left lockers open and strewn the gear about, leaving a mess to be put back again.

He began to tidy up when he realized this was a golden opportunity to inventory the gear. He would produce a list of equipment, ostensibly for the owner to ensure nothing had been taken during the boarding. He would make two copies, one for the owner and one for Mike, which was really for himself. If he was found with the two lists, he could easily argue their existence as his concern for the owner.

Foraging through the cabin, he found the oars for the dinghy mounted in clips under the cockpit sole. They were in good condition; the smoothly varnished looms met plastic oarlocks then extended to varnished shafts and bare wood handles for good grip. He noticed earlier that the dingy was fitted with bronze oarlocks held in place by stainless-steel snap pins. *This is good*, he thought.

About halfway through the inventory, Greg's phone rang. It was Mike.

"Hey, Greg. I got hold of the owner, as you asked. He can't get out to see you tonight. Curfew, you know. But he'll be there tomorrow. He told

me they impounded his car some weeks back, so he'll be coming on the bus. They should let him bring his anchor on the bus. That's all we have these days to transport gear."

"You're a sweetheart, Mike."

"Yeah, you can kiss me later. The owner said to say thanks for taking care of the boat, and he said he was sorry he forgot to have the anchor on board. Anything else you need?"

"No, I'm okay. I'll see you tomorrow. Thanks, Mike."

"Thank you for making sure his boat will be okay."

"It's my job, Mike. That's why you hired me."

Greg put away his phone, went to the navigation station, and turned on the radio. It was a multi-band receiver capable of picking up AM, FM, and—what Greg really needed—shortwave. It had been a while since Greg had listened to stations broadcasting from far away, and he had yet to learn which frequency would give him the information he needed. He was concerned that one of the men who had boarded *Blue Moon* had hidden a listening device in the cabin, so he plugged in headphones that came with the receiver. Greg switched to the first band and carefully tuned through the frequencies, stopping when he heard a voice. Some of the voices were in a language he assumed was one of the Asian dialects; some were in English. When he heard his mother tongue, he paused and listened to determine the nature of the transmission. One clear station was a broadcast espousing fundamentalist Christian religious doctrine. He paused at another station and listened to the voice, carefully using the fine-tuning dial to get the best reception.

Just starting up this here hockey news broadcast for my compatriots. This is your Canuck Goalie bringing you the score. I'm okay right now, but I don't know how long I can keep this up. Gotta keep moving and stay away from thin ice. Know what I mean? The game will always start on the top of the hour, but I dunno which hour. I gotta keep skating so the visiting team doesn't put me in the penalty box. Here's the news.

The home team scored big when they took out a bunch of the visiting team enforcers. For a while, it was a solid power play and the Canucks did well with their current lineup. Our team had some explosive moves that I'm sure will eventually get back the Stanley Cup one of these years. They had to head for the locker room when the buzzer sounded, but the home team will be back next period for some more action.