

The Magnificent Mermaid Hunters of the West Indies or How  
Roy Flennigan Learned to Stop Loving Fame More than Mermaids

By Sidney Butler

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EXT. ROY FLENNIGANS PORCH - MORNING

ROY FLENNIGAN (47) is a veteran marine biologist and has a mustache resembling that of Friedrich Nietzsche. Over the past five years his expeditions into the heart of the Atlantic Ocean have not gone well.

Roy is shaving on his porch with a straight razor.

ROY (V.O)

I was shaving, like I always do, I shave every morning on my porch because I like to do that, it keeps my skin smooth-and I like to watch the sunrise-but this is all besides the point. The point is, that at 6:32am last Thursday morning I saw something.

DOCUMENTARIAN (V.O)

What'd you see?

Roy Flennigan shaves his beard, and in the distance an outline of a woman is seen. Roy cuts his chin mid-shave as he processes what he sees in the distance.

ROY (V.O)

A mermaid.

CUT TO:

TITLE SEQUENCE

"Unbelievers" by Vampire Weekend plays.

EXT. GUADELOUPE DOCK - AFTERNOON

Roy Flennigan, stands upon a pristine white saltwater fishing boat, talking to the DOCUMENTARIAN in his scuba attire. MARIE ANN (34), a short, petite woman who wears black wide rimmed glasses sits on the side of the boat and types up an itinerary for the expedition. WHELDON (22) a scrawny guy, wears tan shorts and a shirt that reads "Free Willy," he puts some nets and ropes in the corner of the fishing boat.

ROY TALKING HEAD

ROY

Are you rolling that thing yet?

The Documentarian nods as the frame shakes.

(CONTINUED)

ROY

Good. Now don't stop rolling that thing until this mermaid is caught. If we find her, I'll be more famous than I ever was back when Bush was president.

EXT. ROY'S EXPEDITION BOAT - AFTERNOON

Wheldon, discretely sticks a hand full of mangos into his little backpack. The sun is beaming overhead and he shields his eyes as he talks to the camera.

WHELDON TALKING HEAD

WHELDON

(whispers)

Okay, Don't tell Roy...but...When I went to Whale camp in like 10th grade one of my counselors told me-this was confidence so don't go telling everyone-but-this is what he said..."Mermaids, love mangos."

DOCUMENTARIAN

Really...

WHELDON

Yea-I know it sounds crazy...but they love what they love, ya know.

ROY

Wheldon! What are you doing? Don't talk to him! Finish untying the rope for the mermaid!

WHELDON

Uh-well Roy I read in my book "453 Things You And Everyone You Know Should Know About Mermaids" that normal ropes don't technically work for mermaids it's a logic thing-

ROY

Goddamnit. Just untie the ropes!

INT. COCKPIT OF THE BOAT - AFTERNOON

Marie Ann chews bubble gum, and flips through the fishing boat instruction manual. She looks out the window of the cockpit to see Roy screaming at Wheldon.

MARIE ANN TALKING HEAD

(CONTINUED)

MARIE ANN

(sighs) Roy's been under a lot of stress lately...He thinks this expedition could be his big break. He even bought this new boat-for the documentary I guess.(whispers) The thing is none of us know what we're doing. Roy hasn't been on the water in over 5 years. Not after that huge misconception of the Megalodon living in the Bermuda Triangle. (returns to normal volume) Anyways, this mermaid would be the discovery of our lifetime. Finding some cross-breed love child between man and fish. Imagine it.

EXT. ROY'S EXPEDITION BOAT - AFTERNOON

Roy checks off of a notepad making sure all of the materials are aboard the boat. He makes one final check, summing up that they are prepared to set sail.

ROY

Alright boy...and woman. The Ariel is officially ready to set sail!

MARIE ANN

Did you just name this boat after Ariel the mermaid?

ROY

I most certainly did not. I named it after...my niece who lives in Papua New Guinea.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. COCKPIT OF THE BOAT - AFTERNOON

Roy writes down potential names for his new fishing boat. The names on the note pad read, "The Sebastian, The Grand Fishing Boat that I Just Bought, The White Pearl, Captain R for Roy and The Ariel." Roy crosses off all of the other names besides "The Ariel"

CUT TO:

EXT. ROY'S EXPEDITION BOAT - AFTERNOON

Wheldon looks up from his book "453 Things You And Everyone You Know Should Know About Mermaids."

WHELDON

Uh. Roy. We can't leave yet! You see I haven't finished packing all the mangos-

ROY

Hush boy! We're about to set sail on the greatest expedition to date! Marie Ann! Take her away!

The Ariel starts up her motors and heads towards the sky line fading into the distance.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. ROY'S EXPEDITION BOAT - SUNSET

Roy uses his binoculars to gaze at the sunset, while Marie Ann steers the boat from inside of the cockpit. On the side of the fishing boat, Wheldon throws mangos one at a time into the water.

WHELDON TALKING HEAD

WHELDON

Well Roy doesn't like for me to tell people this, (whispers) but he's my uncle. I mean kind of my uncle, his brother got remarried to my mom. So yea- I guess he is my uncle. Yea, he's my uncle.

Roy looks away abruptly from the sunset.

ROY

Wheldon! I can hear you! This boat is only the size of an oversized bathtub!

Marie Ann pokes her head from out of the cockpit.

MARIE ANN

Roy! I think we're coming up on something big! The radar is picking up a strange signal ahead.

INT. COCKPIT OF THE BOAT - SUNSET

Roy rushes into the cockpit. Grabs the radar and stares at it closely.

ROY  
Well. What do you think it means?

MARIE ANN  
I think it means our mermaid is close! Look it's headed Northwest!

WHELDON (O.S)  
Guys!

From outside the cockpit Wheldon yells to Roy and Marie Ann. They ignore him.

ROY  
Marie Ann! This could be the greatest discovery of man! I'm so happy I could kiss you-

Roy notices the camera man is still filming.

ROY (CONT.)  
...but I won't because that would be extremely inappropriate.

WHELDON (O.S)  
Guys!

Marie Ann appears flustered and gathers together her instruction manual and the radar.

MARIE ANN  
No-No- yes of course, completely inappropriate.

They both look at the camera slightly embarrassed. Wheldon enters, a little disheveled.

WHELDON  
Guys! Come out here!

EXT. ROY'S EXPEDITION BOAT - SUNSET

Roy and Marie Ann emerge from the cockpit, with Wheldon leading them to the side of the boat.

WHELDON  
Okay! Listen. I packed mangos because that's what Auggie my  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WHELDON (cont'd)  
counselor at whale camp said  
mermaids like to eat-so I packed  
them and I ate one but-

ROY  
Just spit it out boy!

WHELDON  
Well...they're gone! Like I just  
threw one over board and- IT'S  
ALREADY GONE.

ROY  
What- does that even mean?

MARIE ANN  
I think what Wheldon is trying to  
say is...he thinks the mermaid took  
the bait.

Roy paces back and forth, collecting everything he had just heard. Marie Ann's radar beeps sporadically. Roy, Marie Ann and Wheldon look at the radar and then at one another.

ROY  
Marie Ann! Steer this boat into the  
direction of Northwest! We have a  
mermaid to catch!

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. ROY'S EXPEDITION BOAT - MIDNIGHT

The full moon reflects off of the still water illuminating the frustrated faces of Roy, Marie Ann and Wheldon as they sit across from each other on the deck of the saltwater boat. Roy stands up in defeat.

ROY  
Welp. This is the end loyal crewman  
and crew woman. We have no mermaid,  
no beep on the radar, and we're in  
the middle of the Atlantic.

Marie Ann taps the radar vigorously.

MARIE ANN TALKNG HEAD

(CONTINUED)

MARIE ANN

I messed up. I thought- nevermind.  
Once I followed Roy's orders and  
headed Northwest, the radar just  
stopped! I think it's broken...

Wheldon peels a mango with his pocket knife. He starts to eat it when a piece falls overboard into the water.

WHELDON

Dammit!

Marie Ann reads her instruction manual as Roy continues to pace back and forth, talking to himself.

ROY

...And what did I say to do... "Go  
Northwest Marie Ann" If this isn't  
the Megalodon all over again I  
don't know what-

WHELDON

Shhhh...

Wheldon stands up and looks into the distance. A pink colored dolphin swims towards The Ariel.

Marie Ann looks up from her book, then shoots up in amazement.

MARIE ANN

Oh...my...god! That's a-

WHELDON

Chinese White Dolphin. Yea. I know.

MARIE ANN

But-But their habitat is the South  
Pacific in -the Indonesian Islands!

Roy pulls his binoculars to his eyes to get a closer look at the dolphin.

ROY

Holy cow! What we have here is a  
rare spectacle a truly magnificent  
sight! Are you capturing this?

The camera zooms in extremely close to the dolphin.



EXT. THE FRONT ROY'S EXPEDITION BOAT - MIDNIGHT

Wheldon makes a strange call towards the Chinese dolphin and offers out his hand full of mangos. The dolphin swims closer, and begins to eat from Wheldon's hand.

ROY

This...is...marvelous. I can see it in the headlines now "Roy Flennigan saves a rare Chinese dolphin and discovers a mermaid all during the same expedition! Eternal Fame and Glory"

Marie Ann's excitement dies down.

MARIE ANN

Roy...

ROY

Yes-Marie Ann what is it? Cameraman? Come closer make sure you get a perfect view of this magnificent creature!

Roy guides the camera to view the dolphin more clearly. He then runs into the cockpit to retrieve his nets and ropes.

INT. COCKPIT OF THE BOAT - MIDNIGHT

Roy unties all of the rope from the corner of the boat. Marie Ann tries to stop him.

MARIE ANN

Roy...Roy. What are you doing?

ROY

What does it look like Marie Ann-trying to catch a rare Chinese dolphin.

MARIE ANN

Are you serious? What has gotten into you? You're not actually going to capture it...are you?

ROY

Of course I am! What does it look like I'm doing? This is my big Comeback! Everyone has their comeback! Look at that singer Britney, and that fellow Ben Affleck! This expedition will be my Argo to the world!

(CONTINUED)

MARIE ANN

Roy! Look out there! Look at your nephew...

ROY

He's not my-

MARIE ANN

He's your family Roy. And right now he seems to care more about that creature than you do...If we do find this mermaid...I don't think we should you know-take it...captive.

Roy glances outside the cockpit window, and observes Wheldon's gentle nature towards the dolphin. Marie Ann walks closer to him, looking at Wheldon.

MARIE ANN (CONT.)

Look at that...Isn't this why we chose this profession-to do what we love, to take care of the sea, not keep it man's prisoner.

Roy half smiles, contemplating what Marie Ann has just told him.

MARIE ANN (CONT.)

Think about it Roy...

She gives him a quick kiss on the cheek and walks out of the cockpit.

EXT. FRONT DECK OF THE BOAT - DUSK

Wheldon feeds the dolphin the last mango slice. Marie Ann squats beside him to pet the dolphin.

WHELDON

Marie Ann... If I was going to bet on it...I think this dolphin has been the one eating my mangos not the mermaid...

MARIE ANN

I think you might be right.

WHELDON

It just sucks that we couldn't find the mermai-

Roy runs out of the cockpit. The radar beeps wildly in his hands. The dolphin begins to swim away.

(CONTINUED)

ROY

Marie Ann! Take the wheel! This expedition is not over yet!

WHELDON

Jesus Roy! You scared away the dolphin-

Wheldon stands up next to Roy to take a look at the radar.

WHELDON (CONT.)

Look the dolphin is headed in the same direction!

MARIE ANN

You don't think-

ROY

It could be! Marie Ann follow that dolphin!

Marie Ann runs into the cockpit to take the wheel, she steps on the gas, and the boat gains speed in the water. The Ariel starts up and follows the Chinese Dolphin. Wheldon flips rapidly through the pages of his book.

WHELDON TALKING HEAD

WHELDON

It says in my book "453 Things You And Everyone You Know Should Know About Mermaids" that sometimes dolphins hang around mermaids to keep them company, and this is a weird rare dolphin so I'm assuming that- I mean it would make sense that a mermaid could be near? Right?

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT OF THE BOAT - MORNING

Marie Ann pulls the boat to a halt. Roy hovers over her. The Chinese dolphin is visible in the distance.

ROY

Well...what now?

Marie Ann begins to answer just as Wheldon barges into the cockpit.

(CONTINUED)

WHELDON

Marie Ann! Come outside! I hear something...

EXT. ROY'S EXPEDITION BOAT - MORNING

Roy, Marie Ann and Wheldon step outside of the cockpit. Marie Ann holds the radar in her hands. Overcome with a strange vocal noise that they've never heard before. The radar begins to beep sporadically on the floor of the boat.

ROY

Well I'll be damned! Lad! Lassie!  
We've got a mermaid in our midst!  
Just listen to her!

In the distance a woman like figure emerges from the distant sea cave, she approaches the Chinese dolphin.

WHELDON

The mer-mermaid?

MARIE ANN

Oh my god!

She swims closer to the boat. Everyone is stunned, mouths dropped. She waves and flaps her emerald green tail. Her hair is long silky black and eyes are dark blue reflecting the deep hue of the ocean waves.

Wheldon pulls a mango out of his backpack, and reaches out his hand to give it to her. Roy pushes him out of the way and takes the mango. He then moves closer to the edge of the boat, offering the mango with both hands. She takes the fruit as she and Roy make eye contact, their hands touch.

Marie Ann walks towards Roy hand places a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

MARIE ANN

Roy-you did it. This  
is-unbelievable.

Roy takes in what he sees. Then directs his attention to the cameraman.

ROY

Turn it off!

DOCUMENTARIAN

But you said to never stop rollin-

(CONTINUED)

ROY

Nevermind what I said! This is sacred! This expedition can never be seen! Turn it off now!

DOCUMENTARIAN

No- this is the greatest discovery of the millenium-

ROY

Give me the camera-give it to me-

Roy fights with the cameraman. The mermaid seems frightened and begins to distance herself from the boat.

WHELDON (O.S)

Roy! You're scaring her! Stop.

MARIE ANN (O.S)

Gosh...she's so beautiful.

WHELDON (O.S)

The great mermaid expedition that no one will know about...

Roy continues to fight with the camera man. The camera falls into the ocean. The mermaid swims into the sun, glittering all the way, followed by the Chinese dolphin.

FADE TO BLACK

"Yellow Submarine" by the Beatles plays

As the credits roll...

DOCUMENTARIAN (O.S)

You're all insane-I'm going to call a goddamn lawyer! 24 hours of hell and for what! What do I get from this? Huh? Roy fuckin Flennigan is nothing but a god forsaken maniac! What about my money? My fame?

END CREDITS

EXT. ANTIGUA BEACH - SUNSET

A SCUBA DIVER sits on the beach. The camera that dropped into the ocean emerges from the water and floats towards him.

CUT TO BLACK