

HARBISON. It's about this Seabee out here, sir. Billis. Commander Perkins over at operations estimates that Billis's act this morning cost the Navy over six hundred thousand dollars!

BRACKETT. Six Hundred—[Crosses U.L. to HARBISON.] By God, I'm going to chew that guy—send him in here!

HARBISON [Making his exit]. Yes sir.

BRACKETT goes over and taps McCAFFREY on the shoulder. McCAFFREY removes his earphones.

BRACKETT. Let me know the moment you get any word. No matter what I'm doing you just break right in.

McCAFFREY. Yes sir.

He replaces earphones and goes back to work. BRACKETT crosses D.R. and we hear the voice of HARBISON. The door opens and we see BILLIS's head, then his body as he slowly walks on and takes up position standing at attention D.L. He is naked to the waist, he wears an old pair of begrimed blue dungarees, the boars tooth bracelet and a silver necklace. He is followed by ADAMS and HARBISON. HARBISON closes the door. ADAMS stands just to R. of it.

HARBISON [As he pushes BILLIS in]. Get in there! Captain Brackett, this is Lieutenant Buzz Adams who flew the mission.

ADAMS [Saluting]. Captain.

BRACKETT [Returning salute]. H'y'a Adams.

BRACKETT stands quite still for a moment, then slowly raises his L. hand and points at BILLIS. BILLIS looks to his L., knowing that BRACKETT is pointing at him, thinks better of it and crosses R. standing to attention on BRACKETT'S L. HARBISON drops D.L.

BRACKETT. One man like you in an outfit is like a rotten apple in a barrel. Just what did you feel like—sitting down there in that little rubber boat—in the middle of Empress Augusta Bay—with the whole damn Navy Air Force trying to rescue you? And how the hell can you fall out of a Catalina anyway?

BILLIS [Stiffly at attention, facing front]. Well sir, the Jap anti-aircraft, busted a hole in the side of the plane and I fell through . . . the wind just sucked me out.

BRACKETT [Pacing D.L.]. So I'm to understand that you deliberately hid in the baggage of a plane that you knew was taking off on a very dangerous mission. [Back in original position to R. of BILLIS.] You had nerve enough to do that all right. Then the moment an anti-aircraft gun hit the plane . . . you fell out. The wind just sucked you out . . . you and your little parachute. I don't think you fell out Billis, I think you jumped out. Which did you do.

BILLIS. Well sir . . . er . . . it was sort of half and half . . . if you get the picture.

BRACKETT [Turns D.R. away from BILLIS]. This is one of the most humiliating things that ever happened to me. Adams, when did you discover he was on the plane?

ADAMS [Crosses D. to D.L.C.]. Well, sir, we'd been out about an hour—it was still dark I know. Well we were flying across Marie Louise. The Jap anti-aircraft spotted us and made that hit. That's when Luther . . . er . . . this fellow here . . . that's when he . . . left the ship. I just circled once . . . time enough to drop him a rubber boat. Some New Zealanders in P-forty's spotted him though and kept circling around him while I flew across the island and landed alongside the sub, let Joe and the Frenchman off. By the time I got back to the other side of the island our Navy planes were flying around in the air above this guy like a thick swarm of bees. [He turns to HARBISON who gives him no sympathy, swallows then continues the narrative. During the above the dialogue is

accompanied by descriptive hand gestures.] They kept the Jap guns occupied while I slipped down and scooped him off the rubber boat. You'd have thought this guy was a ninety million dollar cruiser they were out to protect. There must have been fifty-five or sixty planes.

BILLIS. Sixty-two.

Warn Mike O.P.
Warn Sound, Static Record.

BRACKETT. You're not far off Adams. Harbison tells me this thing cost the Navy about six hundred thousand dollars.

BILLIS is amused by this and chuckles quietly.

BILLIS. Six hundred thousand doll . . .

BRACKETT. What the hell are you so happy about?

BILLIS. I was just thinking about my uncle. *[Crosses to ADAMS.]* Remember my uncle I was telling you about. He used to tell my old man I'd never be worth a dime.

*ADAMS getting hot under the collar, backs away to U.L.
BILLIS crosses below ADAMS and speaks to HARBISON.*

Him and his lousy slot machines. Can you imagine a guy . . .

HARBISON glares at him, BILLIS's tale dries up, he looks at HARBISON for a moment, then crosses back R.C. stands at attention.

BRACKETT. Why the hell did you do this anyway Billis? What would make a man do a thing like this.

BILLIS. Well, sir, a fellow has to keep moving. You know . . . you get kind of held in. If you're itching to take a trip to pick up a few souvenirs you got to kind of horn in . . . if you get the picture.

BRACKETT. How did you know about it?

BILLIS. I didn't know about it exactly. It's just when I heard Lt. Cable talking to that fellow de Becque, right away I know something's in the air. A project. That's what I like, Captain. *[BILLIS stands easy, looks at BRACKETT.]* Projects.

BRACKETT glares at him—Pause—BILLIS, not so sure of himself continues.

Don't you?

HARBISON *[Fuming]*. Billis, you've broken every regulation in the book. And by God, Captain Brackett and I are going to throw it at you.

BILLIS moves as if to speak to HARBISON, thinks better of it, stands to attention.

ADAMS *[Crossing D. to D.L.C.]* Sir. May I barge in? My co-pilot watched this whole thing you know and he thinks that this fellow Billis down there in the rubber boat with all those planes over him caused a kind of . . . diversionary action. While all those Japs were busy shooting at the planes and at Billis. On the other side of the island, that sub was sliding into that little cove and depositing the Frenchman and Joe Cable in behind those rocks.

BRACKETT. What the hell do you want me to do. Pin a medal on this guy.

ADAMS drops back to U.L., clearing the doorway for BILLIS to make his exit later. BILLIS relaxes, scratches his head coyly.

BILLIS. I don't want no medals, Captain. *[Crosses to L. then to R. playing between BRACKETT and HARBISON.]* But I could use a little freedom. A little room to swing around in . . . if you know what I mean. If you get the picture. *[Looks at BRACKETT who is not amused, snaps to attention.]*