

~ Chapter One ~

Setup

Depending on how many films you've seen and how much of a hardcore movie buff you are, this story of how I found the job of my dreams diving in a giant saltwater tank is either going to be an amusing tale or the greatest movie Easter egg hunt you've ever been on. Why? Because I love movies! I'm the type of person who finds a way to work random film quotes into conversations. To me, it's a way of expressing myself and finding a connection with someone. There's something invigorating about saying a reference out loud and having someone acknowledge it. Movies, especially comedies, are subjective. Everyone has their own distinct taste in what they yearn for in a film, which is quite indicative of a person's personality and sense of humor. Whenever I meet someone new, whether it's a coworker or the friend of a friend, asking what their favorite movies are is one of my go-to questions, usually followed by, "Are you the Gatekeeper?" *Ghostbusters* anyone? "Bueller? Bueller?" Alright, you get the point—I love movies.

Films are a necessity. They provide a means of escapism from the many worries of life. The number of times a film has lifted my spirits—whether I'm lonely, angry, or bored—is immeasurable. As a result, I started writing my own screenplays as well as directing a handful of short films. Are any of my films the next *Citizen Kane*? Well, that depends on who you're going to ask. If it's my mother, then I guarantee a rave review in addition to a call to boycott the motion picture academy for snubbing her son. If it's anyone else in the world, then it's clear I still need a bit of practice. That's okay though. We all need to start somewhere, right? Now I should add that my mother is the reason I've developed the movie taste I currently possess. Her rebellious teenage years fell in the 1980s, an era of hair bands, cassette tapes, and movie comedy magic. Although she did mature over time, her cultural heart still belongs to that decade. Consequently, I grew up watching Def Leppard music videos on VH1 while being raised on movies such as *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, *The Money Pit*, *License to Drive*, and *Spaceballs*, to name a few.

One of my fondest memories as a child was being introduced to the original *Ghostbusters* movie. My mother sat my older brother and me down in the living room with a bowl of popcorn, and our eyes didn't leave the screen. I believe the initial fascination had to do with the colorful and flashy special effects of the ghosts as well as wanting my very own proton pack. But over time, the movie stuck with me for a different reason: the characters. Venkman, Ray, Egon, Winston, Dana, and Louis are individuals that we grow to care about, to root for. Their quirks and personalities linger long after the credits roll, which is the reason that film is so rewatchable. (Slimer's pretty cool, too.) Once this realization hit, I started viewing movies in a different way.

Not to sound like my middle school English teacher, but there's a big difference between plot and story. The plot could be anything. Plot gives the protagonist something to do; it raises the stakes, and it keeps the audience engaged. The story, however, is where the movie gets its emotional core. Think back to a film, or even a television show, that resonated with you enough to pull you back in for another viewing. Got one in mind? I bet in your example you're thinking

of the characters right now, or the message that stuck with you. Explosions, car chases, and set pieces are cool to watch, but they're useless without something deeper for people to connect with—and that's where the story comes in.

I guess what I'm getting at is, I'm approaching this book as if I'm writing a screenplay. I'm your protagonist for the next few days, or however long it takes for you to make it to the end, and a proper introduction to me as the main character is required. So here goes. Ever since my first job as a lifeguard at the local community center in the rural New Hampshire town where I grew up, I've yearned for a career that pertains to the water. Since that first job keeping a watchful eye over swimmers' lives—a rather enormous responsibility to entrust to a teenage boy who got distracted by the slightest glimpse of a girl's exposed skin—I've held twenty-seven different positions between jobs, internships, and volunteering. I fully embraced the notion that your twenties are best spent figuring out what you do and don't like, and I've figured out plenty. Those twenty-seven positions have covered many different fields: a backcountry caretaker living on a mountain, a delivery driver, a swim instructor, a teaching assistant, a waterfront beach director, an assembly-line factory worker, a movie theater attendant, and even a dockworker. I have, indeed, done a lot.

Upon graduating high school, I found myself attending the University of Vermont for environmental studies while minoring in thirty-seven different ways of cooking ramen noodles in a microwave. Additionally, during my junior year, I gained the skill of becoming a certified scuba diver through the local dive shop. However, there was a catch to getting hooked on a ludicrously expensive hobby. If you're on a budget, then steer clear of diving. Basic equipment can cost you an arm and a leg, both of which you'll need once you're underwater. I could barely afford to do my laundry let alone purchase any of the specialized gear that's required. Thus, I graduated from college heavily in student loan debt with a scuba-diving certification I couldn't take advantage of.

For now, we'll call it quits on the backstory. We're at the point in the book that we screenwriters refer to as the “inciting incident.” It's an event right at the beginning that sets the story in motion. Think about the opening scene from *Jaws* as an example. A group of college kids are drinking “water” out of paper cups as they enjoy a nice beach bonfire. Eventually, two individuals, one being Chrissie Watkins, decide to go for a swim at night, and that's when it happens ... Chrissie is violently yanked underwater and becomes the first of many victims of a rogue great white shark. This event is the catalyst thrusting the protagonist, Chief Brody, right into the conflict. My situation may not be as dire as a woman getting killed offshore, but a phone call from a private student loan company is still pretty scary.

I was serving in an AmeriCorps program in New Hampshire when I got a call stating my monthly student loan payments were going to skyrocket. For anyone who isn't familiar with AmeriCorps, it's a federal program where individuals volunteer their time and commit to either half-year, or full-year, programs. Usually, service members are provided with a “modest” stipend to pay for necessities (food, housing, etc.). Given the increase in my monthly loan payment, I'd have to dedicate my entire stipend solely to my student debt. (Secondary education is another topic I could go on all day about, especially the predatory practices some loan companies follow to lure in inexperienced, low-income families such as mine, but that's a topic for another time.) The point is, this loan company was gunning for me, and it didn't matter how much I was drowning in debt because they owned the life ring and it came with a hefty price tag.

It was spring of 2019 when I departed from AmeriCorps. I was broke and living out of my car part-time. Call it pride, or stupidity, but the last thing I wanted to do was move back

home. As much as I love my home state of New Hampshire, the number of well-paying jobs there are in short supply, with the bulk of them seasonal, or part-time, around the Lakes Region, a popular tourist area in the eastern part of the state. Additionally, the state's minimum wage matches the federal minimum of \$7.25 an hour, an amount so meager I still can't believe it's legal. Even if I wanted to remain in the state, I couldn't afford it.

One afternoon, I entered a local bank with a mason jar filled with coins to exchange for "bills" so I'd be able to afford gas. Once my tank was full, I sat motionless in the car, enveloped in a long, somber silence. I deliberated the next chapter of my life, pondering one idea and then another, but I was stuck. Orange and red light filtered through the windshield as the sun sank lower over the horizon. I peered stoically off into the distance, longing for something more in life as a John Williams score crept in and slowly built toward a crescendo—yes, I'm comparing myself to Luke Skywalker staring at the suns of Tatooine. I was the epitome of a broke college graduate, and the clock was ticking to start paying off my student loans.

"Why don't you come live with me, man? There are more opportunities down here in Boston," said my high school best friend who was following through with his weekly drunken phone call to catch up.

"I'm not sure about living in a city," I replied, "Burlington, Vermont, is the biggest place I've lived, and even the amount of people there would get to me every so often."

"You're such a loser—live a little! Boston is a sick place to be. There's plenty of bars, restaurants, bars, museums, and bars. I love living here."

"Are there any bars in Boston though?" I said, sarcastically.

"Yeah, there's plenty!" He could be oblivious sometimes. "I mean it, stay with me for the summer. Give the city a chance."

Unsure if it was desperation, or my friend actually being convincing, but I took a long inhale and gave my answer. "Alright, you've got yourself a new roommate."

He tittered. "That's awesome!"

"How big is your spare room?"

"Nah, there's no spare room, dude. You'll crash on the couch." He was someone who often withheld crucial information until the last possible second. "It's comfy, man. I crashed on it for a while before I finally moved in for real." Apparently, this apartment had a swinging door for low-income-lost-and-confused millennials.

I sighed. "How much?"

"I don't know ... couple hundred a month sound good? Maybe buy beer once in a while too ... probably help out with the utilities as well"

"Anything else?"

"More beer?"

I rolled my eyes. "Can't wait."

Not too long after that phone call, my friend came back to New Hampshire to visit relatives, which meant he could accompany me on my journey to the big city. I opted to get rid of my car because I could rely on public transportation—I was also tired of dropping money into that struggling machine—so my uncle became the new and proud owner of a used, rusty, and decrepit 2002 Jeep Liberty. Having grown up in New Hampshire, I can confidently estimate from personal observations that nearly a third of all vehicles in that state shouldn't pass inspection, including my Jeep.

Over the decades, my entire family has been "MacGyvering" their way into milking every last mile out of a car; there hasn't been a vehicle that a member of the Raymond family

couldn't fix. We're the type who'll buy a junker on the side of the road, park it in the garage, and kick the tires as we chug a Bud Light and declare, "Gimme some Bondo and an hour. I'll have this hunk o' crap up and runnin' in no time." In fact, that's exactly what was said as my grandfather pieced my Jeep back together. Deep down, I loved that car, but the floor was so rusted—held together by nothing but Bondo fiberglass resin—I'm surprised my foot didn't go through the frame whenever I stepped on the brake. The last time it got inspected, I was so nervous it wouldn't pass that I took it to a rundown garage in the middle of the woods, a place that screamed *Deliverance* with its eerie landscape and mountain men population, to ensure I had the best chances of success. I'll never forget the mechanic slapping the inspection sticker on the Jeep and saying, "She passed, alright. She was makin' a funny noise when I ran her though, but my hearin' is pretty shot. Might wanna get her checked out." I'm no mechanic but isn't it *his* job to check it out? Anyway, I put the thought aside, shook his hand, and made a hasty escape before he changed his mind, or before I heard someone strike up a banjo.

With my car taken care of, my friend—we'll refer to him as Comfy Couch—and I caught a coach bus at a small parking lot in the middle of nowhere New Hampshire (the "station" is literally a bench). My parents pulled me in close one last time, not knowing when they'd see me next, before we boarded the vehicle. In my head, the score from *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* faded in as the bus hit the highway.

We passed one farm field after the next until the landscape quickly morphed into the urban sprawl of a city. The bus arrived at South Station in the center of Boston sometime in the late afternoon. In total, I had a carry-on-sized suitcase, one gym bag, and a backpack filled with all my necessities—all were packed full and very heavy.

"How do we get to your apartment from here?" I asked, as back pain developed.

"It's just a short subway ride, man," he stated as he raced down a flight of stairs to catch the incoming subway train.

I quickened my pace, but the platforms were busy. Hordes of people were crowding in from all directions, which resembled the scene in *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* when goblins materialize in the Mines of Moria. I swear, people were slithering in from the staircases, elevators, sewers, and even the tunnels themselves. At one point, a woman, hunched over and hacking up a lung, even mumbled to herself, "My precious ..." as the train pulled in.

I was both overwhelmed and falling behind but managed to make it aboard where I stuck out like a sore thumb. My bags made me bulky. Every stop I had to turn to the side so people could get by. After about a half hour I was getting antsy.

"I thought you said it was a short ride to your apartment?"

"Yeah, I say a lot of things," Comfy Couch replied.

"So, how much longer?"

"One or two more stops."

Five stops later, we were still on the train. I wanted to slap him for exaggerating how easy this move would be, but I refrained. After all, he was my savior at this point in life.

"We should get some beer on the way home," he said, looking out the window and doing some mental math. "Yeah, I can afford it tonight. Or do you wanna buy, man?"

"I've been here for less than an hour, and you're already asking me that? I haven't even started working yet."

"Rain check then."

The remainder of the ride went by in complete silence as I contemplated my recent life decision. It was another ten minutes before we reached our stop, which was near the end of the

line—remember what I said about him withholding crucial information until the last minute? We walked for a couple of blocks before we finally arrived at my new home. It was a three-story house, split into multiple units, and we were located on the second floor. I ended up talking my way into sleeping on a mattress in the living room. As for the couch, it was broken. The center support piece was shattered so every time someone sat in it, the couch sank right to the floor. Clearly his definition of the word “comfy” was not only different from mine but also the rest of the world’s.

With a place to rest my head at night, the only thing I needed now was a source of income. I scoured countless websites searching for employment, but I didn’t have any luck. Initially, I desired something full-time with a salary but was quickly discouraged when I realized how ludicrous most postings were. To have the experience required for most of the jobs, I needed to have been working since the womb—I don’t think they make fetus-size hard hats. The most infuriating aspect of job searching is when employers state, “Experience preferred but will hire the right candidate,” only to later clarify that the “right candidate” should still possess ninety-seven years of “related experience.” Getting a full-time job that pays well nowadays is difficult, especially seeing how the country has moved toward a “gig economy” where people work multiple part-time jobs just to get by. But, hey, what do I know? I was a lazy infant who decided to be nurtured by my mother instead of pumping gas in diapers at the local Cumberland Farms.

After sending my resume out to a plethora of companies, there was finally light at the end of the tunnel. I was brought on as a site supervisor for a dock located on the Charles River; we rented kayaks, canoes, and stand-up paddleboards to anyone willing to brave the water. To be blunt, the river has some pretty gross days. Rain brings out the worst in the river as stormwater runs off into it, carrying with it all amounts of human detritus. Most mornings consisted of spending the first thirty minutes picking up trash and cleaning goose poop off the dock. A recurring joke was how we were trained as dock staff yet used as garbage collectors. Seriously, with the amount of trash we’d collect throughout the entire season, we could have opened our own landfill.

For each shift you were in either one of two places: the front desk or the dock. The desk person checks customers in, handles payments, and ensures everyone has completed a liability form. It was the easier of the two because you could sit in the shade while using the computer, but it came with a cost. On certain days, the entire population of Boston would turn up, so you’d be reciting the same questions every five minutes to a new customer: “Have you been with us before? Did you fill out a liability form? Did you take the safety quiz? You do understand that none of the boats have a motor, right?” You’d be surprised at the number of people who’d expect a motor to be attached to a *paddle* board.

Eventually, you repeat yourself so many times you can zone out for hours on autopilot mode and still provide all the necessary information. As for the dock, your entire job is getting people in and out of a boat. That’s it. Don’t get me wrong, it’s not a bad place to spend the summer, and the staff members are usually pretty great, but if the heat doesn’t break you, then the inexperienced customers who get lost on the river, a body of water that runs all of two ways, will.

It was a scorching afternoon in July when my faith in people disappeared. There were clear blue skies with no wind to counteract the sun—the kind of heat where you can see it radiating off the pavement. Inside the welcome kiosk sat myself and two others. I had just finished checking a customer out when the event occurred.

Ring ... Ring ... Ring ...

All three of us visually shook with nerves, eyes wide.

Ring ... Ring ... Ring ...

It was the site phone screaming at us. Nobody ever wanted to answer it, but because I was now free of customers, I instantly became the forced volunteer. I braced myself before answering. “Hello, this is—”

“HELLO?” said an unnecessarily loud man’s voice. (I imagine it was on par with what fast-food workers have to deal with at a drive-through.) “IS THIS THE BOAT ... PADDLE ... THAT PLACE WE JUST LEFT?”

I groaned. “There’s a strong possibility of that, yes.”

“WHAT?”

“Yes, yes it is. How can I assist—”

“WE’RE LOST.”

“You’re—”

“LOST. WE’RE LOST. YES.”

Now, for every position I’ve held, no matter how much I disliked it, I’ve always done my best to be professional. If you’re rude, or behave badly in general, you’re not only making a fool of yourself but you’re also giving the company a bad reputation. Yes, there are some places and managers out there that don’t deserve this decency, but the vast majority of them do. So, I held my sarcasm back and put on my best customer-service voice.

“No worries, sir. When you departed from our conveniently located dock in the Greater Boston area, what direction did you go? Did your party steer to the right, or did you steer to the—”

“RIGHT. MY KID SAYS RIGHT.”

“No worries, sir. Are you in a canoe or—”

“THE LONG BOAT. WE’RE ALL IN IT. IT’S A BIG ONE.”

“Okay. If you instruct your party to all paddle on one side of the boat, you’ll notice the craft starting to turn. When it does, point your boat in the opposite direction from where you’re currently going, and in no time at all you’ll be back at our conveniently located dock in the Greater Boston—”

“WE’RE NOT IN THE BOAT.”

I entered a catatonic state, attempting to process this new information. “Umm ... you’re not in the—”

“WE’RE LOST. YES.”

“What do you mean you’re not in the—”

“LOST. WE’RE LOST. YES.”

The conversation went on like this for some time. Eventually, I ended up taking the rescue boat upriver to retrieve the lost party. If it wasn’t for their helpful directions of, “WE’RE SOMEWHERE ON THE RIVER,” I might never have found them. Turns out, they flipped the canoe, swam to shore, and abandoned the boat. I learned all this from a fellow kayaker who reacted as if he were the star witness of a treasonous crime, for he was gesturing flamboyantly for attention and on the verge of chanting, “Attica! Attica! Attica!” I towed the canoe back to the conveniently located dock two miles away.

That night, I plopped myself down at the dining table, both physically and mentally exhausted. It was one of those nights we’ve all had when you stare out the window for hours and do nothing except contemplate your future. The apartment was empty, a much-needed silence,

yet I couldn't help but feel melancholy. I was still new to this place. Sure, I had met some fun people at work, but I didn't have anyone to call my friend. Well, apart from Comfy Couch, who texted me during my moment of peace to ask if he had left the stove on. I found myself turning to Facebook, where I scoured the Internet for various groups in the Boston area with similar interests. I discovered a small business located a few miles away that offered acting classes for the general public. I wasn't trying to break into the acting scene, but it was something I had enjoyed in high school and knew I could meet people easily.

If you've never taken an acting class, then let me enlighten you: It can be incredibly awkward. We began the first class with several warm-ups, starting with tongue twisters, some light stretching, and then progressing into tossing an imaginary ball around a circle, emoting whether it was a heavy ball or a light one, as you pretended to propel it toward your intended target. Oh, and there's constant eye contact with strangers. Constant. Eye. Contact. However, after ten minutes everyone feels equally awkward, so you get comfortable in your surroundings quickly. Once we were all deemed masters of juggling invisible balls, we shifted to a more physical exercise that involved using your body to display various emotions. We were tasked with pacing around the room, walking in the manner associated with key words the instructors would shout out. Walking around the room angrily is easy, but hearing a teacher yell "spiky" is something entirely different. I turned to the closest classmate and asked how one paces in a spiky manner. Their response was the equally confusing answer of, "I don't know ... I'm just imagining myself as a porcupine." The purpose behind these exercises is to get you to realize that it's not just about saying your lines in a certain tone but also using your body to express that emotion further. Plus, everyone gets the opportunity to look like an idiot together, so it's more bonding!

I strongly recommend everyone take at least one acting class in their life. Even if you don't plan on becoming the next Meryl Streep, these classes can greatly improve your public-speaking skills as well as provide a crucial life lesson we should all learn: Don't take things too seriously. Have fun and don't be afraid to make a fool out of yourself. Everybody fails at some point, so instead of feeling embarrassed, embrace it! Laugh at yourself. Once you develop that mindset, you'll notice a change in the way you present yourself to others.

The rest of the summer consisted of acting classes, the dock, and restless nights spent with the always loud Comfy Couch. The main problem when it comes to sleeping in a common area is that you're on everyone else's schedule, not your own. Countless nights I was awakened by the slamming of doors or the sounds of obnoxiously loud footsteps. After roughly four months on the floor of that living room, it was time for a new start. The lease on the apartment would be up at the end of the month, so I needed a new place to stay. Comfy Couch was headed off to grad school in a different state, which meant I was all alone. Luckily, two coworkers were seeking to move out of their parents' houses, so I joined them in a quest for affordable housing. Within a matter of weeks I had a new apartment lined up, one with an actual bedroom of my own. It was clear from the outset though that this living situation was going to be equally as interesting as my last arrangement.

One day after work, I accompanied one of my new roommates on a "viewing" of the apartment. I put quotations there because it was more closely related to breaking and entering than an actual viewing. Upon arrival, there was nobody in sight. We walked up the front steps to notice the front door was not only unlocked but had also been left slightly ajar for anyone to just waltz in—so we did. The windows had massive cracks that were covered in tape, the radiators were alarmingly rusty, and every square inch of the place was covered in dust, which the

previous tenants had apparently grown the strongest set of lungs on earth to resist—in other words, it was a perfect apartment for three millennials on a tight budget. My favorite part of this initial visit was witnessing one of my new roommates mistake the fake bricks above the kitchen sink for real ones. Seriously, they were as fake as the CGI used in *The Mummy Returns* to make Dwayne Johnson the Scorpion King.

So there I was. Beginning the fall with a new apartment, a semidecent job, and a new group of friends I could lean on. As the days got colder, traffic at the dock decreased until we officially closed mid-October. Boats were shipped to their winter storage locations, and once the site was completely taken down, it was off to the ice rink for me. My company had a partnership with a local nonprofit that had contracted some of us to work for it. It was an outdoor ice rink created by flooding tennis courts on its property. The building is old, having been around since 1898, and has a ski-lodge aesthetic with its broad windows, stone fireplace, and tiled roof. At night, strands of lights running along the boundary of the property come to life, creating a sight that can only be described as “magical.” The work can be boring, as you’re essentially a caretaker babysitting both the building and the ice, but the people are incredible.

During this first winter, I branched out even more, exploring the city and what it has to offer. My days off consisted of strolls into the heart of the city. I journeyed to TD Garden (where the Bruins and the Celtics play), historic Faneuil Hall, the Boston Common and the Boston Public Garden, and wandered through the North End, also known as Boston’s Little Italy. They were all great experiences, but I found myself always gravitating back toward the harbor—to the water. The ocean has always calmed me. There’s something about the way it moves, the scent of saltwater in the air, and a pleasant breeze that puts you at ease. Well, as long as you can ignore the squawking seagulls begging for food. I was standing on a dock overlooking the harbor when something caught my attention off in the distance.

I followed the boardwalk until I hit a large parking structure attached to what appeared to be an education center. There were cutouts of various sea animals hanging on display in the windows, and on the inside adults and children alike appeared to be having a great time with whatever it was they were doing. Farther along, there was a jogger who stopped to take in the view beside a small theater that was playing marine-related films. Beneath my feet, I even noticed the walkway transformed from pavement to bricks that led to a booth where people waited in line to board their whale-watching vessel. And that’s when I saw it: a bulky building with broad exterior walls of pure concrete, decorated with metal slabs to resemble fish scales. Out on the plaza, there was even an outdoor exhibit holding several harbor seals, all of whom were unwittingly using their full level of cuteness to entice people inside—I had arrived at the New England Aquarium, affectionately known to many as “the NEAq” (“N-E-A-q”).

I’d never visited the Aquarium before so I bought an admission ticket and headed inside. Smiling staff members greeted me while offering endless amounts of information. You could tell the majority of them loved their jobs as well as the animals. Once you leave the lobby and enter the exhibits hall, the building becomes, essentially, a big five-story-tall box. Pathways and exhibits run along the perimeter, ascending all the way to the top, and directly in the middle sits a giant cylindrical ocean tank—cleverly named the Giant Ocean Tank (“the GOT”)—that’s twenty-three feet deep and forty feet across; a ramp spirals around the circumference of the tank. The entire building is filled with various species ranging from sea turtles to jellyfish to anacondas and even shorebirds. You’ll be introduced to some of them later, but for now we’ll jump into the “key incident” of the story.

The key incident in a movie occurs when the protagonist makes a decision that propels them into their journey, and it forces them to enter a new situation. It's the end of Act 1 and the start of Act 2. Think Frodo when he decides to take the ring to Rivendell, or Luke when he decides to follow Obi-Wan after his aunt and uncle are slain. For me, I was standing at one of the windows of the GOT observing Myrtle, a 500-pound green sea turtle who's resided in the tank for more than fifty years, when all of a sudden a scuba diver gently descended to her side. The diver scratched her carapace with a brush, and Myrtle happily responded with a small body quiver, which is what I imagine as the sea-turtle equivalent of a dog wagging its tail. After a couple minutes, the diver rose back to the surface, but not before providing me with a quick wave goodbye as if saying to me, "Thanks for coming to the Aquarium!"

I stood there absolutely rapt. At that moment, the diver was the coolest person on the planet. I never realized there was a job out there where someone had the opportunity to get that close to such a majestic animal. I didn't want to lift boats or shovel snow off of ice anymore. I wanted to use my scuba certification in order to dive in *this* tank with *those* animals. I wanted to be the person in the water waving to the guests. I wanted to scratch Myrtle's carapace. Plus, working at the Aquarium would provide me with an opportunity to contribute to something larger than myself. The world's oceans are in danger, and I could serve as an ambassador by educating visitors and providing them with information to combat the grand challenges our oceans are facing. For the first time in my life, I could feel a sense of direction and purpose—a sense of belonging. It was during this inaugural visit to the Aquarium that I decided I was going to become a GOT scuba diver or die trying.

Well, not actually die. A majority of film protagonists say that, and I've always wanted to state it myself, so let me have this.