



# Corky's Capture



There was a fierce and terrible storm, December 11 1969, the night Corky was captured. Her pod chose that evening to enter Pender Harbour on the Sunshine Coast north of Vancouver, British Columbia. It was just after 9pm when word reached a group of local fishermen, enjoying the warmth and shelter of the pub, that there was a group of whales close by. This was the chance they had been waiting for. Ever since the last capture in 1968, in the same area, they were aware that whales meant money. Aquaria around the world were willing to pay top dollar for a "killer whale". Quickly, the fishermen jumped onto their boats, located the whales, and encircled part of the pod with fishing nets. All night they battled to keep the nets in place and afloat. Thousands of dog fish got trapped in the nets and threatened to pull the cork lines under. "Sheets" of rain poured down in the darkness.

At daybreak on the morning after the capture, half of Corky's pod lay trapped inside the net, with the others still outside. Then they were surrounded too. The buyers soon arrived and six whales were selected. The other six were released but they did not go away immediately. Corky was now separated from her mum for the first time in her life.

The buyers then organized her removal. Separated from the others, Corky was moved into shallow water. Divers got into the water and positioned a sling around her body.

There were holes for her pectoral fins. A crane slowly lifted Corky's sling out of the water and hoisted her onto a truck. The truck pulled away from the dock and drove over a narrow winding road to the ferry. Grease was spread over Corky's skin to prevent it from drying out on the long journey ahead. Sponges of cool water were squeezed over her to try and keep her body temperature down. Removed from the almost weightless experience of the ocean, Corky's own weight was now crushing down on her. The transport truck had been modified with a tank which partially helped to support her weight. The journey was long: another road after the ferry, then transfer to a special plane, the flight, transfer to another truck, more roads, and then the final lift into the tank.

