



# THE WIND THAT BLOWS

A PORTRAIT OF THE LAST YANKEE WHALERS

A film by  
Tom Weston

**Press Kit**



## Synopsis

***The Wind That Blows*** is a story about the conservation of whales, heroes and the unique identity of a tiny Caribbean island.

Spanning an entire generation and told from the perspective of a proud people infinitely more connected to nature than any Prius driver, this film challenges conventional thought about the impact of global conservation and modernization.



## Summary

In the mid-19th century, Yankee whalers enlisted seamen from such places as tiny Bequia in the Grenadine islands of the British West Indies. One of those men purchased two whaleboats from the Yankees and Bequia's history of whaling began. To the consternation of many, Bequia's whalers continue the tradition to this day.

*The Wind That Blows* affectionately examines the lives of this unique group. These men, whose lives are entwined with nature, seek sustenance for their families and neighbors but, in the process, bestow something else: identity.

Production of this award-winning doc began in 1989 and continued through 2013, a period which witnessed the digital revolution affecting the way we live our lives, including those on once isolated Bequia, as well as the way this film was made. Also during that time, tourism established itself as Bequia's prime industry, luring people away from the trades and traditions of the past. Hotels, new roads, an airport and other improvements transformed Bequia's appearance...and its soul.

Amidst the clamor of globalization, *The Wind That Blows* gives a deserved voice to a humble community on a tiny island clinging to a proud past.

# Director's Statement

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Sometimes we are drawn to a story that is so filled with irony, ambiguity, beauty, dismay and truth that it compels us to take a drastic departure from our normal lives and try to capture a fleeting moment. That is what happened to me when I met the last Yankee whalers in the world while visiting the island of Bequia in 1988.

At that time, we in the developed world were beginning to come to grips with the damage that the human consumption of resources had done to our planet, and we sought out symbols to represent the urgency of environmentalism. The endangered humpback whale was just such a mighty and majestic icon. "Save the Whale" bumper stickers appeared in traffic jams and super market parking lots everywhere.

On this tiny island in the West Indies, I met men whose lives, unlike ours, were directly connected to nature; men who live in modest homes, walk to work and row from shore in a six man open sailboat, sprightly setting sails in the Caribbean breezes to hunt and harpoon the very symbol we had just embraced. I learned of the whalers' unique history and saw the joy, pride and bounty a landed humpback brought to their fellow islanders. I determined to tell their story, as difficult as it would prove to be.

After twenty-five years in the making, we are presenting a portrait of those men produced across a generation with the help of some of the finest people I have ever known. My sincerest gratitude goes out to each of them.

To this very day, a few whalers remain in Bequia. Happily, humpbacks are no longer endangered, however, opposition to the Bequia whale hunt grows. Internationally, the consensus is that this arcane practice should come to an end. Locally, many see great value in a tourist economy that seems incompatible with whale hunting.

Henry David Thoreau, an early environmentalist among other things, provided the title for the film in his poem about the false sense of pride we have in our technological advances. In it he concludes, "The wind that blows is all that anybody knows." Few people understand the wind better than the whalers of Bequia.

*The Wind That Blows* is a film about perseverance, tradition and identity... and it is our labor of love.

Respectfully,

Tom Weston,  
Filmmaker

# Production Notes

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## The Shoot

The digital advances over the past two decades greatly impacted the way this film was made. We started off shooting with a variety of film cameras (Arriflex, Aaton and Filmo – all donated and with gratitude to Scott Fleischer of General Camera, now Panavision NY) and recording the audio on ¼ inch analog magnetic tape with a Nagra (thanks to Garrett Brown). Some very fine cinematographers joined us. Anastas Michos, Peter Hawkins, Garrett Brown and his son, Jonathan, Kyle Rudolf and James Marshall among others made significant contributions. (We even had a Steadi-cam with us, thanks to Garrett and Anastas). For a few years during the '90s we shot and recorded sound with Hi-8mm Sony and Canon cameras, analog video and digital audio on small tape cassettes. After that, now into the 21st century, we shot hi-definition video digitally on tape with a Panasonic camera and recorded audio with a small solid-state hand held recorder made by Zoom. In our final shoot we photographed with Canon DSLRs and recorded audio with the Zoom, completing the paradigm shift in filmmaking technology from analog machines with turning gears and belts, film and sprockets to entirely solid-state recording of image and sound.

## The Edit

Initially, the film footage was transferred to ¾" video tape and we edited an off-line 20 minute version. Steven Kraftsow donated his fabulous talents and editing equipment (thanks to Crew Cuts Editing in NYC) to achieve this early version. Between 2010 and 2012, after years of fiddling with the footage off-line in the analog form, all 50 hours or so of the varied material were digitally transferred to Pro Res 422HQ, ingested into an iMac with a raid of hard-drives and edited using Final Cut in my basement over hundreds and hundreds of hours (granted, many of those hours were spent with me trying to learn that amazing editing program). Over several months the sights and sounds were chopped, arranged and massaged into the hour we are presenting. It was a little like putting together a million-piece jigsaw puzzle without having a picture on the box to help.

## The Music

Allen Krantz provided a beautiful original musical score for the earliest, off-line version of the film. All of Mr. Krantz's music, some of which cleverly brings the melodies of the island to the fore, some of it haunting and singular, remains in the final piece. There is also music recorded on Bequia, a traditional song of the sea played joyfully on a squeaky violin by retired whaler 84 year-old Bertram Wallace and a few songs local to Bequia performed by Stanley Kydd, his brother Eustace (a featured whaler) and De Real Ting String Band featuring J Gool. In 2012 more music was added, donated by two very talented Bequians, Colin Peters and Enos Penniston, who have become accomplished writers, performers and producers since the days I shot music videos for them as teenagers in Bequia. The music in this film presents a wonderful tapestry, and fitting backdrop to the story.

## The Voices

Interviews were held only with Bequians or people who were intimate with the island and to whom this tradition held deep personal meaning. It was never intended to discount the opinions of others as the opposition to whaling is well documented elsewhere. Narration was written and performed by myself, someone who had become enamored of this wonderful little island, having lived there for the better part of five years with my wife and young sons. As to my credentials, well, I was willing, available and cheap.



# Awards

2013



# Credits

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**Executive Producer:** Janet Blevins Weston

**Director:** Tom Weston

**Co-Producers:** Chad Oliver, David Welch

**Cinematography:**

Tom Weston  
Anastas Michos  
Peter Hawkins  
Jonathan Brown  
Kyle Rudolph  
Garrett Brown  
Douglas Hart  
James Marshall  
Patrick Capone

**Camera Assistants:**

David Welch  
Earlyn Kydd  
Gerard Sava  
Jonathan Mora

**Lighting and Sound:**

David Welch  
Colin Weston  
Stacey Roberts  
Nancy Boake  
Richard Asbury  
Martin Renkis

**Editing:**

Tom Weston  
Steve Kraftsow

**Edit Consultants:**

Paula Martino  
Verne Mattson  
Adrian Romero

**Location Production:**

Janet Blevins Weston  
David Welch  
Nancy Boake  
Donavan Ollivierre

**Post-Production Sound:**

Matt Haasch

**Financial Support:**

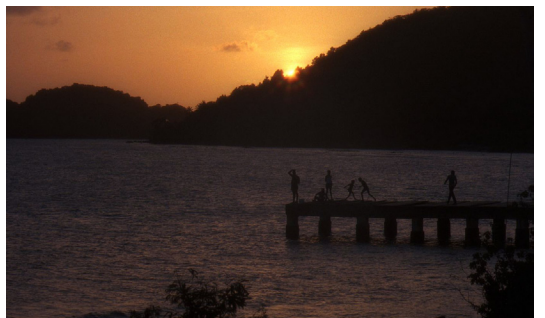
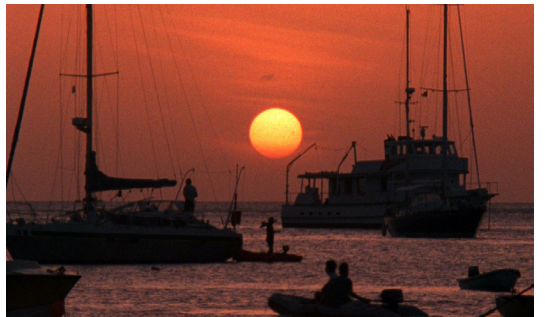
Charlene Engelhard  
Dr. William Crocker  
Garrett Brown and Ellen Shire  
Anastas Michos  
Gifford Agnew

**Special Thanks to:**

Ekhard Ebert, Scott Fleischer, Gloria Lewis, James Clare, Panavision NY (formerly General Camera), Crew Cuts Editorial, Chiemi Karasawa, Martha Pinson

**Musical score and composers:**

When Nature Calls – Enos Penniston, Christopher Ballew  
The Wind That Blows Overture – Allen Krantz  
We Have an Anchor (19th Century hymn) – Priscilla Owens, William Kirkpatrick  
Watching and Waiting – Allen Krantz  
Trance – Enos. Penniston, Christopher Ballew  
My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean - traditional  
Glass Flashing – Eldon Hazell  
Bequia Sweet Bequia – Stanley Kydd  
Athneal Was the Greatest – Bernard Hazell  
Got to Find a Way – Mystic Vibration  
The Chase – Allen Krantz  
Wonderful World – Mystic Vibration  
Dead End – Enos Penniston, Christopher Ballew  
Strivin' – Mystic Vibration  
Morality – Stanley Kydd/Allen Krantz  
Journey of Life – Mystic Vibration







## Contact & Access

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