

PRESS & WEB KIT**Background Notes**

The Journey of Kijana was an adventure sail expedition that aimed to produce a 13 part television series shot entirely by the crew to help fund the adventure. The concept was the brainchild of solo sailor Jesse Martin who started planning the Kijana adventure while he was on his first voyage around the world. This time he wanted to sail round the world with friends, and stop off at all the unexplored places he sailed past last time. With money raised from the book and documentary of his epic solo journey along with new sponsorship he bought the 54-foot yacht '*Kijana*'. It was an odyssey that Martin thought would take 3 years to complete. The 2 million dollar journey ended after 9 months, with only 3 of the original 5-person crew left and not one television episode had been produced.

The whole project was deemed a failure and Martin's dream disappeared from the headlines and into obscurity along with all the savings earned from his Lionheart voyage.

Martin acquired the rights to the video material and several months after returning home, shot post-journey interviews with 4 of the 7 participants. Then spent nearly a year with the journey's cameraman Josh Schmidt in front of a computer in a friend's bungalow, piecing together a story in an effort to explain 'what happened out there'. What was originally pitched as an inspirational 'journey of young people' soon turned into a more grounded and realistic story of a massive dream gone terribly wrong. The video tapes shot by Schmidt were showing up a unique dramatic story on the high seas that would eventually become the documentary film '*5 Lost At Sea*'.

In late 2003 a 63-minute rough cut was completed and pitched to all Australian free to air networks. All passed on the program. Martin and Schmidt had no producing credits and in their early 20's they were left to pursue other avenues of film production.

From 2004 to 2007 each built up an expanse of interesting production credits until 3 years after their initial rough-cut, the boys re-visited the Kijana work with fresh eyes and discovered a new ending in their material that re-inspired them to apply for the JTV docs3 funding scheme backed by the ABC and Screen Australia. They visited Denmark to interview Maria one of their crewmembers and returned to Australia and the news of a successful application in early 2008, five years after the journey came to an end. For the boys it felt like the break they'd been hoping for all along.

Screen Australia Project Manager Karin Altmann introduced the boys to veteran

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Editor Ken Sallows and Consultant Producer Fiona Cochrane, and along with ABC Executive Producer Debbie Lee and Composer Patrick Robertson onboard, post-production re-commenced in the same bungalow in late 2008.

The project now had momentum and with a broadcaster in place and funding behind them, Martin and Schmidt could for the first time in their life legitimately call themselves filmmakers. For a story that had endured a mix of bad luck as well as good luck, it seemed nothing was going to stop *5 Lost At Sea* from airing.

However nearing the end of post production Martin was driving his car along McKinnon Road with the hard drive to the entire project on the passenger seat when he entered a railway crossing and collided with a moving train, totaling his car. He walked away without a scratch and with the hard drive still in tact. Overall it seemed the story had endured more good-luck than bad, and 7 years after beginning the *Journey of Kijana* the true story '*5 Lost At Sea*' finally gets told.

Directors' Personal Statement

When chasing something big, there's always a chance of falling hard and often we only get to see the stories of people who succeed. This program shows that there is as much greatness in the struggle as there is in achieving the dream.

With this in mind, it feels like we have seen this project through, right to the end and have done justice to the original idea – a fair and honest representational journey of young people, made by young people.

We are extremely proud of this program for a number of reasons. Firstly, we have turned something that initially seemed such a waste into something worthwhile. Secondly, we've been able to keep the core idea of the original dream despite the obstacles. And finally, we've learnt to let go of old feelings and discover a story that is much more grounded and realistic and subsequently allowed us to grow personally as individuals and professionally as filmmakers.

Although the journey physically ended over 5 years ago, emotionally it has only concluded recently. We have discovered that coming to terms with the outcome has been the underlying reason for making this program. If we could create a film on every situation in our life that had messed up, we'd inevitably have a greater understanding of our own humanity and of the people around us.

Having arrived at this, despite all the twists and turns, it really makes the next projects seem so much more achievable.

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This is quite simply one of the most compelling adventures you will ever watch. The warts-and-all story of a doomed voyage driven by bad luck and bad relationships, '5 Lost At Sea' is a rollercoaster of emotions that will make you laugh as well as cry.

It's the story of what can go wrong when 5 people chase a dream - some of which have never met, 2 of whom are permanently seasick, and only one of who has ever really sailed before. Of course, it helps if the only experienced sailor is Jesse Martin.

Jesse is the youngest person in history to circumnavigate the globe solo, non-stop and unassisted. It was an amazing feat that Jesse achieved as an 18-year-old Australian schoolboy in 1999 and is a world record that still stands today.

Kijana was a challenge from its very inception. Jesse insisted that the crew should be novices. The crew consisted of his best friend Josh (21), his brother Beau (18), a recent friend Mika (23), and an American girl Nicolette (20) who nobody met until the day before they sailed. Jesse also met and fell in love with his first ever girlfriend, Maya, just weeks before they set sail in 2002.

The first cracks in the voyage appeared after just a few days, with the boys firing shotguns at fish, and the girls unable to do anything because they were seasick. It was very much boys versus girls, with a meeting called to air grievances ending in screams, accusations and tears.

The group is momentarily united when the boat hits the Great Barrier Reef in the middle of the night. Stuck on the reef for nearly an hour, Jesse reveals that their situation is potentially fatal. Both boys and girls literally pray for their lives. In Arnhem Land the boys go feral, with echoes of 'Lord of The Flies'. When the boat lands in Darwin, the girls immediately leave.

The boys meet 22 year old Danish backpacker Maria working in a Darwin pub, and invite her on the voyage. After 2 weeks at sea Maria and Beau are 'an item'. The new crew sail to West Timor and witness 40 buffaloes slaughtered in a funeral ceremony. They arrive in Kuta, 2 days after the 'Bali Bomb', which killed 202 people. By this time the mood is dark, Maria has left, and Beau wants to leave.

But Jesse is determined to find adventure, and persuades Josh and Beau to spend 2 weeks looking for a remote nomadic tribe supposedly untouched by modern civilization. When they eventually find the remaining tribe members though, they are all watching satellite TV. Will they *ever* find what they're looking for?

And then finally, they arrive at their paradise destination – the actual beach from the

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Leonardo DiCaprio movie 'The Beach' at Phi Phi Le in Thailand. By this time the boys' friendships are paper thin, and they are joined by a new crewmember. Jesse's girlfriend Maya has arrived. The bond between the boys finally snaps, and off-camera Beau punches Jesse. The dream is broken, leaving all the crew searching for answers.