



A PLANET IN TOTALITY

LIFE ABOARD SCAME, AS TOLD BY MOTHER AND SON, JANINE AND TEIKI BALLIAN

Janine, mother

My husband Daniel and I first set sail in 1971 on a very small boat that we were delivering from Martinique to San Francisco. It was my first time on a boat, and I knew it would become our life. From that point, I knew I always wanted to live on the water with Daniel, surrounded by nature. It was a lifestyle and we could earn a living without stress, without needing to hustle or fight.

We sold our smaller boat, which was also a wooden schooner, and we bought the *Scame* in the Antilles. We hadn't planned to buy a boat as large as the *Scame*, but the opportunity came up, so we jumped on it. Our plan was to sail around the world and have a little baby during this time. We sailed back to the Mediterranean to work the boat as a vacation charter, then depart on a world tour, with friends joining us at certain points along the way. We crossed the Pacific in 1981-82, made it through Polynesia and around to Asia in November, arriving back in Marseille, breaking the world tour with the birth of Teiki in Ciotat, near Marseille, in May 1985. We lived on our boat with our new baby, then sailed to Greece and Turkey before we set sail again for the Caribbean in November, like all good sailors do, to charter the boat in the Antilles during the peak sailing season.

Teiki has been on the boat since birth; he first traversed the Atlantic at six months old. We raised him on the boat. We were his parents, his teachers, his everything. His world was the boat that sailed around the world, and his life consisted of us and the sea.

We made our way around the world a second time with him. We traversed the Pacific, the Philippines, Singapore, and this time we headed to Australia, then made our way back north through Indonesia. Teiki was older by then, and had already started surfing. We were seeking a base where he could surf and we could charter the boat out, and if we could find that place, our lives would be perfect. That place ended up being the Mentawais and we began booking the boat out on surf charters the following season. We generally moored during cyclone season if we could.

Storms at sea are terrifying, and we sought to avoid them at all costs. We didn't have reliable weather reports back then, and we got caught in a cyclone off Tahiti. El Nino winters were also very rough. You simply have to submit to the power of the ocean, and it's best to not get caught in situations out of your control, so we made a real effort to avoid that happening.

The memorable moments aboard are too many to count: it's an amalgam of discovering new places, people and cultures. Between the austerity of life at sea, where there is nothing but the horizon and no odour or landscape, contrasted with the lushness of a place like the Marqueses, where the air is thick and heavy with the scent of tropical flowers, lies an experience that has always marked me. I've always found the Pacific especially magical – the Galapagos, Tahiti, the Marqueses – and the gentle kindness of Polynesians has always profoundly touched me.

Daniel passed away this year. The beautiful

Scame that brought us to so many amazing places, through so many adventures and brought so many people into our lives, needed to be sold. After 40 years of life aboard, it's the end of an époque.

Teiki, son

I was born May 11, 1985 in La Ciotat, south of Marseille. My mom left the boat and flew home a month before she was due to have me. My dad sailed back with the boat just before I was born. They flew to Cypress a week later with me, their newborn baby, to charter the boat for the season.

My first memories are of birthday cakes in the middle of the ocean, jumping off the boat in the middle of the sea, hanging around the ladder of the boat, arriving on secret islands, and all the little kids in canoes coming to play with me. I remember the Galapagos distinctly. There were iguanas, turtles, and the seals camped out in our dinghy. I must have been four or five.

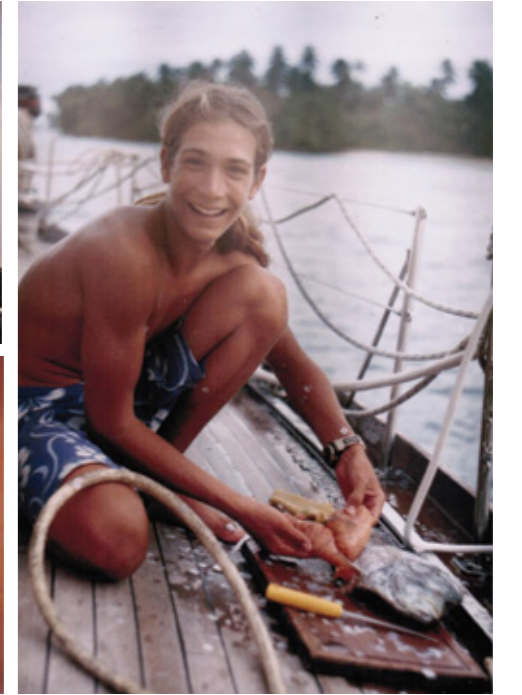
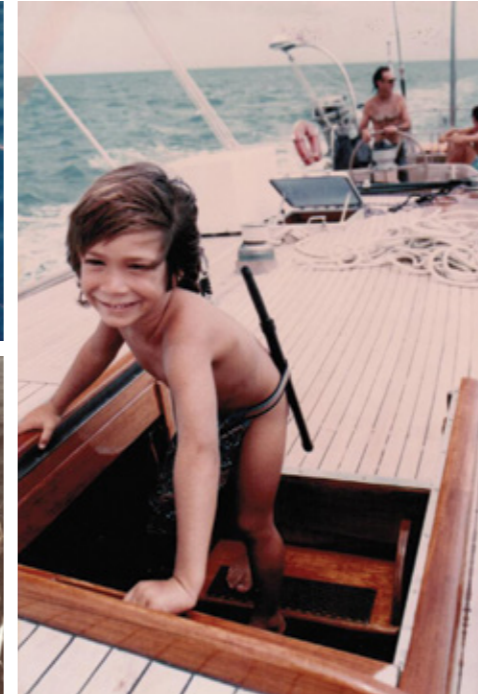
I was educated via correspondence school in France, which had a very stringent programme. My parents taught me my courses. Because we were always at sea, the books would be returned to the school a month or two late. The school complained about this and told my parents they were doing a poor job of raising me and if it continued, they would file a complaint to the government, asking that I be removed from my parents' guardianship.

My dad didn't take that very well, so I wrote a letter to the school telling them more or less to get fucked. We finally worked it out with my aunt, who was a schoolteacher in Marseille and sent us





Life growing up on the *Scame* and Teiki, more recently, on opposite page. Surf photo by Federico Vanno, all other photos courtesy Janine Ballian



my cousin's used books. My parents taught me courses in French, history, mathematics, science – a custom-made curriculum out at sea.

I would start at 8.00am and finish around 1.00pm. We would work through the books, then give them away. I never did an exam in my life, and I never went to school. They sent me to a Buddhist school in Thailand when I was seven. That lasted about two months, but I hated it and ran away; then again in Colombia, at age 11, but I couldn't fit in, my hair was too long, they hated me and tried to pick fights. It didn't work out.

My name is Polynesian, but we've never lived in Polynesia. We've done two world tours on the *Scame*: one from when I was born until I was seven, and a second one until I was 17. We lived everywhere: Central America for three years, another two in the Caribbean, New Caledonia for a year, but most of my life has been spent in Asia. I love Asia.

My friend Peter went on a boat trip to the Mentawais in 1997 and fell in love with the islands. He suggested to my parents to run the *Scame* as a surf charter out in the Mentawais, as there weren't that many boats operating out there at the time. We also knew it would be great for my surfing.

The first year, we worked with Rick Cameron

and at the same time my surfing evolved quickly. Neither of my parents surfed, but they saw how much I loved it and they were willing to do whatever it took to help me improve.

I'd never had a surfing career, I'm a B-grade surfer, the one in the water with no stickers. Especially in the Mentawais where there are so many pros, but I tried to get motivated to surf just as good, if not better than them. Then, when I was around 20, I changed my mind: I knew if I didn't find sponsor soon, I never would. So I went to France and worked out a deal with Oxbow, and finally I received some gear and a little money to travel and compete. Friends have sponsored

government changed the laws on foreign-flagged ships operating in Indonesian waters. A hefty luxury tax had to be paid to keep the boat running in Sumatra. We decided it wasn't worth it, so we kept the boat in Phuket and ran surf charters up to the Andaman Islands. After 2012, I decided to spend a bit more time off the boat.

I moved to Bali, where I lived with our friend Jerome at the Mu Hotel, bartending, helping him manage the beautiful hotel right on the cliffs at Bingin. I was still sponsored and I had a small salary. I travelled and competed on the Asian pro tour, which was kind of just for fun. I was surf guiding around Bali, running back up to Thailand

sopped by waves, and not having any time to do anything else other than exactly what needs to be done at that moment. You have to do what you have to do. We always thought pirates were a joke, until a few years ago.

My parents were on the east coast of Malaysia, running charters for a small resort out in the islands there. My dad was already sick with cancer and not very strong at this point. One night, these guys came aboard with balaclavas, machetes and a gun. They tied my parents up and stole everything off the boat. It was a terrifying moment for my mom. After 45 years at sea around the world, and this happens off the coast of Malaysia? It was ridiculous.

There is no one moment that marks me more than another. My life has consisted of nature, the sea, unique cultures and my parents, and it's been wonderful.

My father wanted to found a little community that consisted of the three of us. It was our own planet that we controlled in totality. If there was a problem, you hoist anchor and leave. Bye. We were free to come, go and do whatever we wanted. We travelled with no baggage, everywhere we went was home, because our home was the boat, and the experience has been one of a lifetime.

MY FATHER FOUND A LITTLE COMMUNITY THAT CONSISTED OF THE THREE OF US, OUR OWN PLANET THAT WE CONTROLLED IN TOTALITY

me, as it's been hard for me to compete as one nationality or another. I live in Indonesia, but I'm French, which meant there was no place for me on either of these teams.

We ran surf charters in Indonesia from 1998 to 2012, primarily in the Mentawais, eight months of charters, then four months back in Phuket during the off season. In 2012, the Indonesian

to help my folks with charters and surfing a lot. Maybe partying a bit too much at one point as well, but I grew out of that.

People always ask me what my most terrifying moments were on a boat. Well, I grew up on that boat, and I don't ever remember being really scared. You don't have time to be scared. I remember pulling sails in heavy winds, getting