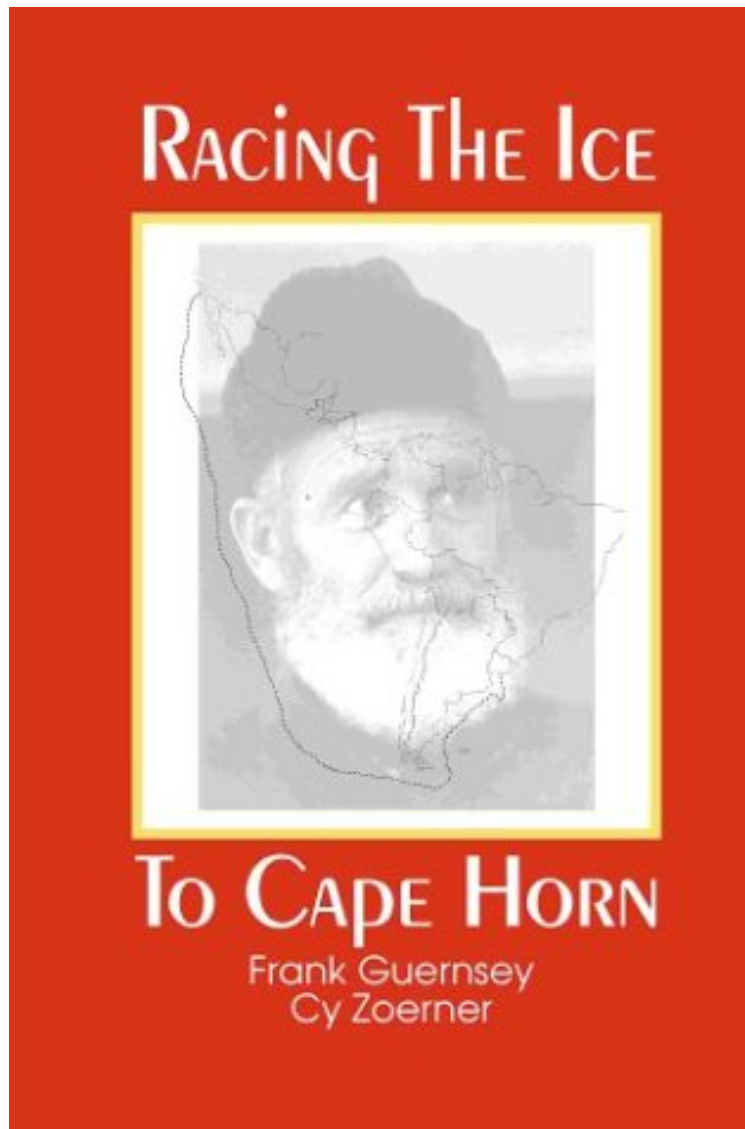


[Library ebook] Racing the Ice to Cape Horn

## Racing the Ice to Cape Horn

Frank Guernsey, Cy Zoerner  
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**Frank Guernsey, Cy Zoerner : Racing the Ice to Cape Horn** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Racing the Ice to Cape Horn:

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of 3 people found the following review helpful. Amazing Adventure By JEFFREY C ZOERNER Frank Gurnsey undertook an adventure that compares favorably to the conquest of Everest. No one could possibly fathom what this ordeal was like unless he read this book. It is fascinating, and it would even be inspiring, except that most of us aren't as crazed as old Mr. Gurnsey. This book could only have been written by an excellent writer and someone who had a deep understanding of and appreciation for sailing. Co-author Zoerner qualifies on both accounts. His understanding of the subject and his treatment of it are great. The book hooks you after a few pages, and you never feel like putting it down thereafter. I've met Mr. Gurnsey a few times, but I feel I only truly understand him after reading this book. I'm not much of a sailing aficionado, and I loved it. A fine job by both men.

Frank Guernsey lived through this tale of his record setting journey, sailing single-handed from Southern California, around Cape Horn to Uruguay, in a twenty-four foot engineless sailboat. Cy Zoerner put this harrowing adventure into words as no other author could. As Frank revealed the story to Cy he began to wonder, as would we all, what could drive a man to commit to an outrageously dangerous undertaking in such a small craft. After endless hours discussing life and love with Frank, Cy understood and a story, like no other, poured forth. This will be the best sailing adventure you will ever read and quite possibly the best book you will read for years to come. The greatest fiction can not match the adventures and life of Frank Guernsey. "Humans!" The handle of my precious watermaker stopped in my hands. My eyes strained at the black speck on the gray, watery horizon. The misery from the open saltwater sores I sat on, winked out. As I switched on my video recorder, my only companion since I set sail, I repeated, "Humans? After all these months alone..." I glanced at my watch. It was January 2, 1000 hours.

About the Author FRANK W. GUERNSEY is a world-class solo sailor. His most recent adventure, aboard a 24-foot fiberglass sloop, took him on a 128-day nonstop voyage from Redondo Beach, California, to Punta del Este, Uruguay, via Cape Horn. In 1978, he sailed the 26-foot Boogie down the coast of Baja, California, then voyaged to Maui, Hawaii, in 1980. Five years later, he sailed his wooden sloop Amethyst to Papeete, Tahiti, in 47 days. In 1988, he again set out on Amethyst, this time to Aburatsubo, Japan, in which took 87 days. In all, Frank has voyaged 262 days (almost nine months) alone at sea in small sailboats. His exploits have been highlighted in the Japanese and South American media and in the local, regional, and national media in the United States. Born in 1942 in Los Angeles, he spent his teen years in the rebel-without-a-cause Southern California culture and in the United States Marine Corps. He is a member of the Los Angeles Adventurers' Club and the Redondo Beach Yacht Club, where, in club races, he tunes for his prospective ocean voyagers. When not crossing oceans alone, Frank runs an insurance business. His son Frankie manages the business during his father's voyages. Frank and his wife, Mary, live in Redondo Beach. CY ZOERNER (pronounced Zerner) sails and writes. Almost daily, he singlehands Tough Ship out of King Harbor, near his home in Manhattan Beach, California. According to his log, he has spent more than 2,000 hours alone at sea. When he's feeling adventurous, he sails his 14-foot sloop to Catalina Island, some 25 miles from his home port. Cy has crewed in the international Newport-Ensenada race and in numerous regional off-shore races. Locally, he races in the Horizon Series sponsored by the Redondo Beach Yacht Club. Aboard Jedna, a competitive Cal 25, he trims the main sail in one-design races at the Long Beach Yacht Club. His articles have appeared in major American newspapers, magazines, and journals for more than 30 years. He wrote Marketing First, a successful college textbook, and has ghost written several nonfiction books. His work has appeared in The Spray, the publication of the Joshua Slocum Society, and in national and regional sailing magazines. Cy is considered an authority on the Igdrasil, a copy of Slocum's circumnavigator. He holds a doctorate from the University of Illinois. Cy and his wife, Laura, have four children and three grandchildren. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. From Chapter 1: "Humans!" The handle of my precious watermaker stopped in my hands. My eyes strained at the black speck on the gray, watery horizon. The misery from the open saltwater sores I sat on winked out. As I switched on my video recorder, my only companion since I set sail, I repeated, "Humans? After all these months alone..." I glanced at my watch. It was January 2. 1000 hours. In my excitement, the watermaker clanked onto the fiberglass cockpit floor, just missing my foot. I reached inside the cabin for binoculars. The glasses revealed hardly more than a faint dot, but across the placid, long swells, the dot had the vague shape of a boat. "Yes!" I shouted into the desolation. It was easy to anticipate the life aboard the oncoming ship -- a capable captain, a jolly crew, with heated cabins and the smells of hot food wafting from the galley -- spotting my small boat, coming to investigate, to see if they could give me assistance. They'd have warm, dry bunks, hot food, dry clothes, so much fresh water they could drink all they wanted, and probably even shower in it. Their boat would cut through the water, unlike my craft, thrashing in every wave, sapping my energy just keeping my balance. I couldn't wait to see their smiling faces and waving hands, hear their surprised voices shouting. Truly an unlikely sight in these waters. Though I wouldn't board, I'd certainly have a drink with these fellow mariners. Camaraderie here in this most enormous wilderness on earth would be sweet, human contact and all that human contact means. How I would love to hear human laughter again. "No!" Not after being so close in this great ocean. Was it my eyes? Was the speck turning away? Frantically, I keyed my tiny VHF marine radio. "This is the sailing vessel Cestus out of Redondo Beach, California, calling the motor ship. Can you hear me?" Only white noise. I knew

my radio was working. I had talked with a lone Chilean close ashore only two days prior. I desperately needed this vessel, because my tiny radio transmitted only line-of-sight, relatively few miles across this wilderness. I was aching to let my wife, Mary, and my family know I was still alive. Any boat except mine this far off the traditional course would carry powerful single sideband transmitters that could relay my messages back to the world. "It's turning back. I think, it's coming this way." I was laughing, almost giddy. "Maybe he's a fisherman or maybe a naval vessel." Chilean or Argentine, probably, but it could be almost anyone. Sighting the boat had broken my reverie. Trying to dry out from the heavy weather, I had relaxed, composing myself after stressful months of violent seas. Accustomed as it was to everlasting gales, the skin of my face felt almost numb in the calm. The agony of eroding skin, many saltwater sores, cuts, bruises, and aches -- inflicted by some of the most berserk seas on earth -- eased a bit as I basked in the pale sunlight. It was a time of relief and recovery. I gazed into the water, seeing a stranger. The reflection revealed a gaunt face and a white beard. No doubt I had lost many pounds after months of mariner's fare. Visions of oranges, apples, bananas, lettuce, grapes, and melons tantalized me. We rode the peaceful swells, the scions of a distant and forgotten storm. Cestus gently rose to the vast mounds that passed under, like a slow ride up a mountain, and my mind was flowing with it. Compared with yesterday, Cestus was a floating featherbed instead of a grinding concrete mixer. This was good, and a good place to be, in the sunlight, at the center of a giant, blue-gray ball, in ethereal time. Lazily, I was thinking of the return of a sailing wind and the currents that would confront me on my future course. Ahead lay the Burdwood Bank, the Mintay Reef, and the alien Atlantic Ocean, alien at least to me, for decades a Pacific Ocean sailor. But for the moment I was at peace, pumping the watermaker, counting -- often miscounting-- each stroke between 500 and 800. As I babbled to myself, the speck in the binoculars slowly transformed into a gray vessel of about seventy feet. It looked as if it meant business, a patrol boat or gunboat. Why was it advancing so deliberately? Was this to be an official visit? On the one hand, I hungered for camaraderie, and I prepared for some kind of exchange. But there is also a down side to humans, and I was at the mercy of strangers. They could be coming to kill me. No one would ever know what became of me. Or was this only the paranoia of enforced solitude? "I hope this guy's not a pirate," I said to my video recorder. The closer the boat came, the more my mouth and throat grew dry and, ironically, the more alone I felt. The stranger was armor-plated, and behind the gun slits, who knew what kind of weaponry lurked? Probably, at the least, fifty-caliber machine guns. He might now be in radio range. "This is Cestus calling. Can you hear me?" Not a sign of life aboard. Involuntarily, I went on the alert. He was less than a mile away. Why wouldn't he respond? I tried again, this time in my tortured Spanish. No reply. "When you're alone out here, you just don't want to be approached by who you don't know. At least I don't," I said aloud, hearing a growing panic. He circled me silently, ever tightening his arc. Was he simply curious, or was he stalking me? Why was he checking me out so carefully? My hope of contacting Mary died. "He's not acknowledging my calls, as I sit here wondering..." My heart pumped with the ancient rhythm of danger. In some primitive way, my perception focused with perfect clarity. No longer did I need the binoculars. What did I have that anyone would want? My boat was a 31-year-old fiberglass sloop with water leaking into the sloshing bilge. Cestus was only an old sailboat, engineless, and worked from a long voyage in seas it was never intended to navigate. Absurd to think a pirate might want it for profit. But what about my food? "I'm down to 38 meals," I said to the video recorder. I had little confidence that my food would last to my intended port, Mar del Plata, Argentina. My most valuable piece of equipment was probably the PUR watermaker, which rendered sea water drinkable, but it would be ridiculous for this marauder to kill me for it. No wind in my beard, no ripples on the water. The benevolent seas mocked me. Removing the video camera from its mount, I taped the slow-moving, malevolent boat. I zoomed in closer. There was a good chance nobody would ever see this tape of the circling patrol boat, gunboat, pirate -- whoever -- or maybe any of the other tapes from my voyage. I felt utterly helpless. And now it was clear that this ugly steel hulk posed another of the many obstacles in my path to safety. "It's an uncomfortable feeling, but you have to deal with it." Had I come this far, trying to reach an impossible dream, for nothing? My bottom lip cracked as I grinned at the irony. My iceberg enemies had been forming for millennia, waiting to crush me. Now, if I fell prey to this gunboat, they would be cheated. Few people around the bar at the yacht club had given me much chance of survival. One said, "Frank, if you fight icebergs, the icebergs always win." At the time I had the sinking feeling she was right, even though I didn't exactly intend to "fight" the bergs. Who would ever know how far I had sailed in my quest before the end? Or was that even important now? Yards from my boat, a large albatross paddled in the long swells. Like the Ancient Mariner, would I finally wear it around my neck? Near him were a dozen little black birds I couldn't identify. In this relative warmth, perhaps the sea birds congregated to mate. Maybe life and death floating along together. "This is the sailing vessel Cestus..." He remained mute. Like the Mary Celeste, the gunboat seemed abandoned. No waving hands. No smiling faces. But there was some intelligence guiding that helm. Was it evil? The gun slits looked like dark slashes, but I couldn't see the guns. It was still possible he was a government patrol boat, but which government? I could see no flags, nor any other identification. One thing was sure: This was no fishing or commercial boat. I began to sweat, almost unthinkable at 56 degrees south latitude. I smelled of wet wool. The skies were serenely clear and the temperature was about 70 degrees Fahrenheit, a typical day in my California home, but extremely rare this close to the South Pole and the "red line" of icebergs. By nightfall, I knew, the cold would return to pierce me. With luck. The peaceful water slapped my calmly rocking craft. As the intruder circled

closer, I heard the faint drone of diesels. "I don't want any trouble," I said aloud, my voice imploring. The closer he approached, the more terrifying he appeared. Was it possible his dark hull, white superstructure, businesslike gun slits and bristling antennae array added up to my last voyage? The acrid diesel smoke was like an assault across the water. A confrontation was inevitable. Now there seemed only one course of action. By nature, I am gentle. The last thing on my mind was killing, even in self-defense, but I wasn't going down without a struggle. I had a 12-gauge shotgun aboard, and a friend had provided ammunition before I sailed from King Harbor. Maybe an old Cold War strategy would work. I'd show the shotgun and hope it would give him proper notice, provide a deterrent. Of course, it might provoke an attack. It was something like a match between an air rifle and a cannon. In any case, having the gun handy would provide a comfort. He could blow me out of the water at will, or run me down. Up close, I might blast his hull, but would my 2 3/4-inch slugs, selected by a Los Angeles County deputy sheriff, penetrate the steel below the waterline? Almost two hours had passed since he started stalking me. It was time for action. I couldn't run because of the calm, and there was no place to hide in this rolling isolation. I must be ready. Ridiculously outgunned, I must face whatever was in store. I reached below. The weapon felt cold in my bruised hands. Inhaling his diesel fumes, I could almost hear the hammering gunfire as it shattered the Antarctic silence. I could feel myself sinking beneath the paralyzing, cold water, caught in the same current as my enemy icebergs. Clack-clack. I injected a slug into my shotgun.