

The cover features a large, stylized white letter 'O' that serves as a frame for a sailboat with a red sail. The background is a dark, moody sky with a bright orange and red horizon, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The title 'The Sea Box' is written in a large, white, serif font, with the 'O' being the largest and most prominent letter. Below the title, the words 'BOOK 1' are written in a smaller, white, serif font.

The  
Sea Box  
BOOK 1

TERRENCE (T) MAULT

# *The SeaOx*

Book 1

Terrence (T) Mault



Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.

Copyright © 2014 Terrence Mault. All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the permission, in writing, of the publisher.

Strategic Book Publishing and Rights Co.  
12620 FM 1960, Suite A4-507  
Houston, TX 77065

[www.sbpra.com](http://www.sbpra.com)

ISBN: 978-1-63135-101-3

Design: Dedicated Book Services, ([www.netdbs.com](http://www.netdbs.com))

## ***Dedication***

For Patricia, a beautiful lady of infinite principle, my  
inspiration, my best friend, and my life mate.



# **Table of Contents**

Acknowledgement . . . . .	vii
Introduction . . . . .	viii
Chapter 1 Hans Christian Pilot House Sailboat . . . . .	1
Chapter 2 Hijacked . . . . .	6
Chapter 3 Marta and the Lake A-4. . . . .	11
Chapter 4 The Utrecht Chateau . . . . .	20
Chapter 5 The Twins' Guests and the Country Hustle . . . . .	31
Chapter 6 The Paris Broker and Attempted Escape . . . . .	40
Chapter 7 Widow Kidnapped. . . . .	48
Chapter 8 Basque Assassin in Control. . . . .	60
Chapter 9 Suspects. . . . .	74
Chapter 10 Revenge of the Basque Assassin . . . . .	82
Chapter 11 New Ransom Demand. . . . .	91
Chapter 12 UPS Driver Killed, Ransom Missing . . . . .	98
Chapter 13 Chateau Love, Lust, and Other Arrangements. . . . .	106
Chapter 14 Ruth and Her Basque Clients . . . . .	118
Chapter 15 Basque Money and Capture . . . . .	124
Chapter 16 Andre, the Broker, and the Basque Assassin . . . . .	130
Chapter 17 Andre Cleared, Ruth, and Assassin at Large . . . . .	137

Chapter 18 Andre, Ava, and Frosted Beer Mugs . . . . .	149
Chapter 19 Andre and Ava Sail to Portugal, Ruth and Pelling Plan Their Escape. . . . .	164
Chapter 20 Lisbon Marina, Where Old Enemies Meet . . . . .	177
Chapter 21 Trapping the Assassin . . . . .	200

## Acknowledgements

This book began many years ago while I was sailing with a good friend, Don Cranston. I asked myself, *what if a successful single guy chucked the rat race, bought a great sailboat, and started on an idyllic adventure, only to have disaster strike when his boat is hijacked and he is about to die?* The finished manuscript took too long and was too long. One of my first readers, John D. Hansen, suggested it could be two books. The author in residence at the University of Alberta suggested the same, or even a trilogy. So, the *SeaOx* became book one of a trilogy.

I would like to thank the special friends I have sailed with over the years: My first mate, Patricia, and John Fleming, Don Cranston, and Percy Ross Bradford. I would also like to thank the Long Ridge Writers Group for the knowledge I gained when taking their courses, and especially my mentor, Kris Franklin.



## ***Introduction***

I spent many years working in the Investment Industry as a stock and commodities broker for Richardson Securities and Merrill Lynch. Prior to Patricia and me taking sailing lessons, I took flying lessons and earned my pilot license. The boat of my dreams has always been a Hans Christian Pilot House model and the airplane is, of course, a Lake A-4 Amphibian, wonderful machines both. They are prominent throughout the story.

# Chapter 1

## *Hans Christian Pilot House Sailboat*

*The Radi Abri Marina  
Brest, France*

From his stool at the bar, the stranger sipped his beer and watched the green-hulled sailboat glide to a stop as her tall, tanned skipper stepped onto the dock holding the bowline. The skipper nodded to the marina employee helping with the lines, then entered the harbourmaster's office.

"Can I bring you another Beck's?" asked the cute, blonde bartender. She had delivered his first beer and introduced herself to the rugged, good-looking stranger, clearly hoping for a conversation, but he couldn't shift his focus from the arriving sailboat. He continued watching dockside.

"No, thanks. That's all for me," he said, eliminating conversation once again.

\* \* \*

Inside the office, the skipper handed his sailboat's papers to the marina manager. "Welcome to Brest, Captain Laurent. We've reserved slip 210 for the *SeaOx* for this afternoon. Proceed straight ahead and our dockhand will be waiting to assist with your tie up."

Andre Laurent paid for the dockage with a credit card and said, "I'll be leaving as soon as I top up my fuel and water. Is there a post office in your chandlery?"

"Yes, Captain, it's located at the back of the grocery section."

Andre Laurent left the office, untied the bowline at the dock, and hopped aboard with it in hand. “Heave me the stern line, please,” he said to the dockhand. He untied and heaved it aboard to the skipper, who then motored forward to his designated slip.

\* \* \*

The stranger stepped outside the Chart Room lounge to watch the beautiful Hans Christian Pilot House cutter chug slowly away from the dock. He smiled at the name on the transom, *SeaOx*. The morning light bouncing off the water reflected a kaleidoscopic dance along the emerald hull as it moved slowly down the water lane and docked at a slip alongside the main jetty, two hundred yards from the Chart Room entrance. Returning to the dining room, the stranger sat at a table where he had a clear view of the *SeaOx*. He ordered the fresh catch and fries his way, and continued his surveillance.

He watched as the tall skipper secured his boat’s lines, with the help of the dockhand, and connected the water to his boat. The skipper entered his boat, returned moments later with a small parcel, walked back up the jetty, and entered the chandlery.

The stranger’s meal of fish and fries arrived exactly as ordered: fresh-caught snapper poached, not battered, sweet potato fries baked in the oven, not deep-fried, and a sprig of steamed broccoli. He caught a waft of the sea coming from his plate and imagined this morning’s scene on the rolling and dipping boat that had produced this catch. His scene was complete with humming engines and the smell of fish and diesel fuel. His first taste of the snapper brought him back to the reality of this well-crafted meal.

While finishing his lunch, the stranger observed the tall sailor carrying a number of bags of groceries down the jetty to his boat. A teenaged boy carrying additional bags assisted him. The sailor tipped the boy and began taking the bags from the jetty onto his boat.

After paying for his meal, the stranger began moving up the jetty toward the busy sailor. When only two bags remained on the jetty, he was within two boat lengths. The unsuspecting sailor picked up the last two bags and carried them aboard. When the sailor reached the bottom of the stairs at the entrance to the boat's galley, the stranger made his move.

\* \* \*

Andre Laurent's dream about falling down a stairway was so realistic and painful it awakened him. The ache at the back of his head sent tears streaming down his cheeks. He was hanging naked, feet dangling a foot off the floorboards. He couldn't feel for a cut or bruise on the back of his head as his hands were tied behind his back. Shaking his head didn't help it clear. He tried to concentrate, listening to his sailboat's familiar sounds. The steady dip and roll and the pitch of the whirring rigging indicated the boat was sailing at about six knots. His wrists, underarms, and ankles throbbed for attention. The continuing motion of the *SeaOx*, surging forward from the pull of her sails, tempted him back to unconsciousness. He fought to stay awake, bringing his head up abruptly when it lolled against his chest.

*Who in the hell is at the wheel and why am I tied up naked like this?* He blinked his eyes and shook his head again, forcing himself to concentrate. *I'm dangling by my safety harness. It leads up through the overhead hatch and is attached to something on deck. I'm suspended just off the floorboards, one ankle tethered to the settee leg, the other tied to a table leg.*

"What the hell?" Andre croaked, but nobody responded. Terror rushed up his spine like an electric current, enveloping his body in a drenching sweat. His head drooped against his chest as he tried to remain conscious.

Deep breaths seemed to hold his fear in check as he tried to focus. *My memory video shows me topping up the boat's*

*fuel and water tanks at the Radi Abri Marina in Brest. I see myself with the envelope containing the audiotape I made for Ava, carrying it to the marina store, and mailing it to her in Hamburg. Then I buy a few provisions. Yeah, there's the young clerk bagging my groceries and helping me carry them to the SeaOx. We're setting the bags on the deck and I'm digging out a tip, thanking the kid. I see him moving up the jetty towards the chandlery as I start taking the bags down to the galley. I'm at the bottom of the stairs with the last of the groceries when everything goes black, and yet the SeaOx seems to be sailing well. If the attacker is at the wheel, he knows about sailboats, so why tie me up naked like this? Is he some kind of pervert? Why am I still alive? Stop it! Think! I'm not hurt that badly, but my wrists are so . . . numb. Where are we heading? Maybe it's just my boat he wants? Is he still on board? I'm losing it . . . gotta stay awake . . . try to think! My head is . . . soupy. Concussion? Or was I drugged?*

When the Seth Thomas clock on the port bulkhead chimed eight times, Andre calculated he was attacked just before he planned to cast off lines at 6:00 p.m. But was that yesterday? It was now eight in the morning. Could he really have been out of it for fourteen hours?

*Who's at the wheel and where's he heading? Is there only one hijacker? Maybe there's more than one of them.*

Andre heard someone coming down the steps from the pilothouse, and a man suddenly appeared before him wearing only a pair of Andre's white sailing shorts. He looked to be between thirty and thirty-five years old, built like a weight-lifter. He appeared to be military, with his sun-bleached hair cut close to his scalp, and his face clean-shaven.

Andre's parched throat croaked, "Who are you, and what do you want?" No response.

"Can you get me some water, untie me, and let me put on some clothes? It's humiliating as hell hanging here naked, like a side of beef. I won't cause you any trouble. I just need to get some circulation back into my wrists and ankles." Silence. "My feet are numb . . ."

The attacker untied Andre's ankles, and then swung him so he was facing the bulkhead and no longer blocking the entry to the forward v-berth. The man put his hand on Andre's naked buttock to push him out of his way. This so startled Andre that anyone watching would have thought he'd been zapped by a cattle prod. His nerves yelled "battle stations" and he went on immediate alert.

"Whoa! Easy, Laurent, you're not my type." The stranger's voice sounded amused. "When I was going through your papers, I came across Polaroid photos of you and a yummy lady, plus your explicit notes about her and her family. Looks to me like you have a wealthy widow on the line. Shame on you, Laurent, leaving naughty pictures lying around for anyone to see; someone might get the idea that you're in the blackmail business. Those notes say you and the hot widow have a rendezvous set for June 3 at her Paris apartment. Well now, you just stay cool and I'll see that you get there as planned."

Buy the B&N e-Pub version at:-

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-seaox-terrence-t-mault/1118849247>

Buy the Kindle version at:-

<http://www.amazon.com/SeaOx-Book-Terrence-T-Mault-ebook/dp/B00JCB03XW/>