

THE TREASURE HUNTERS

DARYL HEMMERICH

FADE IN:

CREDITS OVER:

EXT. OPEN SEA - NIGHT

An old wooden pirate ship is tossed about by a raging storm. Sailors scurry around trying to secure the sails.

The ship comes out of a cloud bank and is faced with a rapidly approaching jagged coast line.

ON THE MAIN DECK

the Captain, gruff looking, bearded, makes his way to a life boat, followed by a handful of crewmen, two of which are carrying a large chest.

WIDER

the ship suddenly lurches to a halt. Sailors are thrown overboard. The hull makes a god awful creaking, cracking noise.

The ship lists to one side, takes on water and quickly begins to sink. Within moments she disappears beneath the surface, revealing the Captain and three crewmen in a small lifeboat.

INT. LIFEBOAT

As the crewmen fight the surging sea, desperately trying to head for shore, the bearded Captain looks on coolly... starts to laugh.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

CONTINUED:

INT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - HOMEROOM - DAY

The entire classroom is assembled.

"LAST DAY OF SCHOOL" banners hang on the wall.

Kids are antsy, anticipating the beginning of summer vacation.

ANGLE ON:

MR. JOHN THATCHER, a teacher, 30's, handsome, caring and proud of his student's achievements. He stands at a podium wearing prescription glasses that he continuously puts on and takes off as he reads names and looks out to find students.

He calls out the names of students, one at a time... the students stand and walk to the front of the class to receive their report cards.

As Mr. Thatcher calls out the names of a particular group of teenage children, we FOCUS IN on them as they stand and walk to the front of the class individually, returning with their report cards in hand.

WE FOLLOW these particular individuals as Mr. Thatcher continues to call out the names of the other classmates..

MR. THATCHER

Bobby Hanson. Hi, Bobby.
Congratulations.

BOBBY HANSON, 14, bright and outgoing, a good-looking boy with dark hair. He wears glasses when in class.

BOBBY

Hi, Mr. Thatcher. Thank you,
Sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. THATCHER

Good job son.

(beat)

Amy Myers. Good morning, Amy.
Congratulations.

AMY MYERS, 14, intelligent and thoughtful. A beautiful girl with blonde hair. Amy wears glasses occasionally.

AMY

Good morning, Mr. Thatcher.
Thank you very much.

Mr. Thatcher continues to call out other students' names... The students stand, walking to the front of the class for their report cards.

MR. THATCHER

Melissa Fisher, please come forward.

(beat)

And congratulations to you too,
young lady.

MELISSA FISHER, 14, pretty, extremely intelligent for her age, with long dark hair.

MELISSA

Why thank you, Mr. Thatcher.

The clock on the wall, at the head of the class, strikes eleven o'clock as Mr. Thatcher continues handing out report cards.

While Mr. thatcher continues passing out report cards, we see Melissa and Amy passing notes back and forth to each other. We do not however see what they are writing.

In the background we HEAR Mr. Thatcher as he continues to call out names of additional students.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. THATCHER (O.S.)
Taylor Wells...

The camera remains on Melissa and Amy's activities.

MR. THATCHER (O.S.)
Amanda Peyton...

MR. THATCHER

standing in front of the classroom near his desk.

MR. THATCHER
Timmy, Timmy Baker. Please come
up for your report card.

TIMMY BAKER, 14, a bright and curious young boy, good-
looking with light brown hair.

TIMMY
Good morning, Sir.
(beat)
Thank you.

MR. THATCHER
You're welcome, Timmy. Great
job, son.

Mr. Thatcher looks up and addresses the entire class.

MR. THATCHER
You have all done a wonderful
job this year. I'm very proud of
every one of you.

ANGLE ON:

Girls in the class giggling.

RETURN TO:

Mr. Thatcher gesturing toward a student.

MR. THATCHER

And finally, Herman. Please
come up for your report card
Herman.

HERMAN JANSON, 14, an extremely bright intellectual, shy
and reserved, diligent. Herman is the most studious
looking of all of them. He is good-looking with long
blond hair. Herman wears wire rim glasses.

HERMAN

(softly spoken)
Thank you, Sir.

MR. THATCHER

Thank you, Herman. You've done
very well, as usual.

Herman returns to his desk while Mr. Thatcher again
addresses his students.

MR. THATCHER

I would like to take this
opportunity to say that I have
really enjoyed being your
teacher this year, and I look
forward to seeing you all
through-out the summer.

The clock strikes twelve, and the bell rings... school
is out for the summer. Mr. Thatcher looks up at the
clock, then back at his students who remain seated
waiting for permission to stand.

MR. THATCHER

You may leave now.

The children rise, gather their things, and file out of
the classroom while saying good-bye to their teacher.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. OLD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

At twelve o'clock, it's already ninety degrees and very humid. A typical summer day in Florida.

The flood gates open and kids pour out of the building.

ACROSS THE STREET

a row of houses that look like they were constructed back when the town was first built. A number of them look like they could use fixing up.

There we find TWO ODD LOOKING CHARACTERS, trying desperately to repair and paint a fence.

AL PARKER, 40's, an average size man on the thin side. Al's not very bright, although he thinks he's the brains of the relationship he has with Bud, his best friend. Al's a physical character, always pushing, shoving, and slapping Bud around. He is extremely lazy, and tries to get Bud to do all the work, when they can find work, that is. Al is the straight man.

BUD LOUIS, 40's, on the other hand, resembles an overweight, cartoon character with comical facial and body features. Bud is the eternal troublemaker, with a child-like mentality. You can't help but love Bud. Like Al, Bud is not very bright either, and often looks to Al for guidance. Everything Bud touches turns into a disaster.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Bobby, Amy, Melissa, Timmy, and Herman, obviously best friends, have gathered together.

AMY

Hey guys, what do you want to do tomorrow... the first day of summer vacation?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They all ponder the question for a moment...

BOBBY

Let's go to the beach.

MELISSA

We always go to the beach.

BOBBY

But tomorrow will be different.

HERMAN

Different how?

TIMMY

No worries, no homework, no
SCHOOL!

AMY

I don't mind the beach.

Melissa rolls her eyes at Amy. She's obviously out numbered. She thinks for a moment then...

MELISSA

Oh, okay. 10 o'clock?

Shading their eyes against the sun, they all nod in agreement. Within seconds they're on their bikes speeding off in all different directions.

FADE TO:

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Al and Bud sit at the counter of a grungy diner.

A MEAN LOOKING WAITRESS plops down two cups of coffee and two bowls of chili.

Bud digs right in, enjoying every bite.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Al scoops up a spoonful of the watery chili, lets it dribble back into the bowl. He is nauseated.

AL

This slop is disgusting!

The waitress takes offence, is about to take Al's bowl back. He grabs it, spilling half of it on the counter. He takes a spoonful eats it and smiles feebly.

AL

Mmmm... good.

Satisfied, the waitress backs off.

AL

I just don't know why business is so bad... we got the only junk yard in town. We got some mighty fine junk too.

BUD

Mighty fine, Al.

Bud continues eating, makes a loud slurping noise with every bite. Al WHACKS the back of his head.

BUD

What! What'd I do this time, Al?

AL

(beat)

We can't go on like this. We gotta find a way to get ahead.

BUD

I could take up the paper route again.

Frustrated, Al shakes his head and rolls his eyes as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOBBY'S KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Bobby sits with his father, BILL and mother, JANE, at the kitchen table where they are eating breakfast. A two year old sits in a high chair.

BILL

Well son, I've got a couple of fun projects lined up for you and I.

Jane puts a bowl of baby food down in front of the two year old who looks at it disdainfully.

BOBBY

Gee dad, I...

BILL

Now look, Bobby that was the deal... if you didn't get a B average, you'd have to study over the summer and do a little hard labor.

The two year old picks up her bowl of baby food and dumps it onto the table. Some of it splatters on Bill.

BILL

Jesus...!

JANE

Don't you swear in this house, Bill Hanson.

Jane gets up to clean up the mess, hands Bill a paper towel.

Bill frenetically cleans up the mess...

BILL

A deal's a deal, Bobby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jane finishes cleaning the mess, begins hand feeding the baby...

JANE

Oh for heaven's sake Bill, it's
the first day of summer vacation.

Bill finishes cleaning up the mess. He sighs, takes a drink of coffee. He looks over to Jane who smiles warmly and nods.

BILL

Oh alright, take the weekend off
but first thing Monday morning
we get started on reorganizing
the garage.

Bobby's glum face changes to a glowing smile. He lunges toward his dad, hugs him.

BOBBY

Thanks dad!

He kisses his mom on the cheek and gives her an appreciative look, then he bolts out the door.

Through the kitchen window we see him speed off on his BMX bicycle.

The two year old pounds her hands on the high chair and giggles.

Bill and Jane look at each other, shake their heads and smile.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Amy knocks on the door.

INT. HOUSE

Melissa, her mother, MARY, her father, JON, and her young brother, MIKE, sit at the kitchen table. Melissa jumps up.

MELISSA

That's Amy, gotta go.

MARY

But you haven't finished your breakfast.

Amy hesitates for a moment...

JON

You heard your mother.

Amy downs her glass of orange juice, grabs a piece of toast.

MELISSA

I'll eat on the way.

We hear another KNOCK at the door. Melissa looks at her parents pleadingly.

Mary looks to Jon who nods approvingly.

MARY

Alright, honey...

Before she can finish, Melissa bolts for the door.

MARY

(yelling)

Don't forget the sunscreen!

MELISSA

(shouting back)

Got it!

EXT. HOUSE

The door flies open. Melissa hurries out...

MELISSA

Bye mom, bye dad!
(closes door behind
her)

Amy and Melissa hop on their bikes, speed off.

UPBEAT MUSIC BEGINS TO PLAY OVER...

INT. TIMMY'S HOUSE

as he grabs a towel from the bathroom, says his good-byes to his parents, and makes a hasty departure.

We see him through a living room window peeling out on his bike.

Pretty much the same scene at...

HERMAN'S HOUSE

as Herman struggles to get his shorts on, he trips and falls, knocking his glasses to the floor. His father accidentally steps on them, smashing them to pieces.

Herman fumbles for his dresser, pulls out an old taped up pair. He pulls on a t-shirt, bolts for the door.

His father and mother at first bewildered, shake it off, shrug and go about their business.

TIMMY AND HERMAN

almost crash into each other as they meet at an intersection. Barely avoiding collision, they continue on and soon arrive at the head of an old dirt road where the others are already waiting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They all head down the old dirt road which winds its way precariously down to their favorite beach, Devil's Pass. The music FADES as...

OLD MAN O.S.
(narrates in gruff
voice)

The town these children live in is called Pirate's cove. It's an old quiet little town tucked inland from the coast. The only access to the ocean is by a dirt road that was once an old foot trail. Legend has it, that long ago pirates would come ashore here at Devil's Pass, looking for fresh water and food inland. And that was how the old dirt road was made. Heh heh heh.

(beat)

Another true story is that pirates would sail near Devil's Pass and end up shipwrecked with treasures from all over the world. It's said that many a ship lay at the bottom of Devil's Pass.

(Beat)

Now, Pirate's Cove has never grown to be much of a town over the years, mostly due to Devil's Pass. You see, Devil's Pass is impossible to sail a boat near for many reasons: The waters are extremely dangerous, with waves high and unforgiving; beneath these waves lie hidden treacherous currents; reefs hidden beneath the surface rip through ships' hulls like razor blades.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MAN O.S. (cont'd)

(beat)

Not much to see but the huge waves crashing down on the ocean's surface, and the mountain peak that rises out of the water like a gigantic horn. If you were not familiar with Devil's Pass... you might even think that it was haunted.

THE CHILDREN

Arrive at Devil's Pass. They jump off their bicycles, hiding them in the nearby bushes. They climb down the steep cliffs using an old pirate's path.

As they descend, we can't help but feel something mysterious all around, as if they were going back through time when pirates roamed this beach.

When they finally do reach the sand, we see a beautiful beach, undisturbed by humans.

At the far end of this beach is what appears to be the remains of an old wooden ship, the mast still standing proudly, what's left of it.

The children undress, hanging their clothes on this once magnificent ship. They all have on bathing suits under their clothes, as they do everyday.

BOBBY

(while undressing)

Last one in is a rotten egg!

AMY

(to Bobby)

That's you... 'cause you stink!

(beat)

Hurry Melissa!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
(close behind the
girls)
Oh yeah! I'll beat you into the
water easily.

And with that, Bobby trips, falling to the sand.

The rest of the gang runs into the warm ocean waters
laughing.

MELISSA
(laughing)
C'mon stinker!

Bobby runs into the ocean, splashing the others for
teasing him.

CUT TO:

SOMETIME LATER

the children come out of the water and lie down on the
sand in the warm Florida sunshine.

TIMMY
(sitting up)
Hey! Let's build a huge sand
castle.

HERMAN
(overlapping)
Yeah! We can have a moat and
draw bridge too!

And they all begin to pile sand into a big mound,
packing it down with their hands.

HOURS GO BY

and the castle begins to take shape. As the boys dig deeper, they hit something hard beneath the sand.

TIMMY

(gesturing)

Hey, give me a hand digging this wood out.

Bobby and Herman pitch in, helping to dig out the wood.

HERMAN

(hesitating)

Gosh... this is big, are you sure we should dig it up?

BOBBY

Uh-huh, if we don't, the moat won't be deep enough.

HERMAN

(anxious)

O.K. let's keep digging.

CUT TO:

FARTHER UP THE BEACH

Al and Bud are moseying along the shore line. Bud is collecting bottles, cans, and anything else he can find. Al is searching the sand with a metal detector. They are unwittingly walking in the direction of the children.

They reach a bend in the beach, and as they approach the other side, both men come to a dead stop and freeze in their tracks.

AL AND BUD'S POV

The children digging a hole in the sand.

ON AL AND BUD

Al quickly grabs Bud, pulling him back amongst the rocky cliffs.. out of sight.

AL
(grabbing Bud)
Quick, take cover behind the
rocks.

Both Al and Bud watch from the safety of the cliffs.
They are suspicious of the children's activities.

AL
That's mighty strange.

BUD
It's a sand castle, Al. What's
so strange about that?

Al SMACKS Bud across the back of his head.

AL
Not the castle, you idiot. Look
how deep they're digging that
hole.

BUD
Now that you mention it, that is
strange. Why do you suppose
they're digging so deep?

AL
We'll find out soon enough.

ON THE BEACH

the boys continue digging until they have dug up an area five feet by five feet deep.

TIMMY

(surprised)

It's a treasure chest! And skeletons, gross!

Amy and Melissa lean in for a closer look... Melissa covers her face with her hands so as not to see anymore.

AMY

(spinning around)

Disgusting!

MELISSA

(covering her face)

Oh, gross! Dead men!

Seeing the skeletons lying in the hole sends chills up and down the girl's skin. Indeed, the discovery of the mysterious chest and the skeletons is shocking even to the boys.

BOBBY

(motionless)

Creepy, isn't it?

HERMAN

(trembling)

Mm-hm, sure is.

Nevertheless, the boys continue digging carefully, trying not to disturb the skeletons.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A. The treasure chest and skeletons dressed in pirates clothes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

- B. A skeleton with a sword in its chest.
- C. A second skeleton with a bullet hole in its forehead.
- D. The boys as they continue digging... eventually the chest is ready to be opened.

WIDER

on all of them.

BOBBY

(nervously)

O.K. let's stay calm, and watch
out for pirates.

TIMMY

(troubled but excited)

Hurry, open it before the hole
fills up with water.

HERMAN

I'll get some rocks, we can bust
open the lock with 'em.

TIMMY

Good idea, I'll help.

Herman and Timmy help each other climb out of the hole
in search of large rocks.

BOBBY

Hey girls, will you keep watch
while I help find some rocks?

AMY

Alright, Melissa and I will stay
here, you boys go ahead, but
don't be long.

The girls remain at the hole keeping an eye on the chest
and watching for pirates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bobby, Timmy, and Herman all gather large rocks and bring them back. They began throwing the rocks at the lock. Over and over again...

The rocks SLAM against the old rusty lock until SNAP!
The lock cracks and falls off.

MELISSA

Well, who's going to open it?

AMY

I once saw this movie, these guys found an old treasure chest too.

HERMAN

(curiously demanding)

Well...

(beat)

What happened?

AMY

They opened it.

TIMMY

(anxious)

So, let's open ours.

AMY

(leaning into everyone)

Ghosts flew out of it.

With wide open eyes, the girls hold each other close.

HERMAN

Gho... gho... gho... ghosts?

AMY

(nods slowly)

Yeah, lots of um.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

(critically)

Ahh... c'mon, it was just a
movie. There's no such thing as
ghosts.

After hearing Amy tell her story, everyone is frightened
and in no hurry to climb back down into the hole to open
the chest.

MELISSA

(folding her arms
across her chest)

Fine, then you open it. Amy and
I will watch.

BOBBY

(stubbornly)

Ahh... we're not afraid. Common
guys.

Reluctantly, Timmy and Herman follow Bobby... sliding
back down into the hole, trying not to disturb any
ghosts that might be lurking inside the chest.

Herman puts his fingers up to his lips, signaling the
others to keep quiet.

HERMAN

Shhhhhh...

Bobby whispers to the other boys.

BOBBY

Let's all lift at the same time.

TIMMY

O.K., O.K.

HERMAN

(with uncertainty)

I'm ready.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SLOWLY, the boys raise the top of the chest higher and higher until the top FALLS off backwards...

Pandemonium erupts... Herman, Timmy And Bobby SCRAMBLE to climb out of the hole as quickly as possible. The girls are frightened too... and SCREAM OUT.

Amy and Melissa trip while running, and fall. The boys trip over the girls, falling on top of them.

FROM WITHIN THE CLIFFS

Al and Bud are frightened by what they see and they too run away with a comical twist.

While running, Bud falls on Al, bringing them both CRASHING to the sand where they continue to SCRAMBLE for safety while on their hands and knees... Al grabs Bud's foot.

AL

Wait a minute! Wait a minute!
What are you doing? Get back
here!

BUD

I'm getting the heck outta here!

AL

Come'ere. The only place you're
going is back there, to find out
what those kids are up to.

They get back up on their feet. Al pushes Bud back where they were watching from when everyone panicked and began running.

AL

(pushing Bud)

Go on, ya chicken. What are you
afraid of anyway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUD
You go first.

AL
(smacking Bud)
Go ahead, I'm right behind ya,
watchen' your back so nothing
happens.

Al continues to push Bud back toward the cliffs.

OUT ON THE BEACH

Timmy yells out to the others, as he glances back at the sand castle.

TIMMY
Wait! Listen!

Everyone is perfectly still.

HERMAN
(confused)
To what?

TIMMY
Exactly, what?
(beat)
I don't hear *anything*.

While getting back up on their feet, the children look back toward the castle, watching and listening.

Amy and Melissa stand behind the boys holding onto each other.

Herman trembles while adjusting his glasses that hang half off his face from the fall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HERMAN
(hesitant)
I think it's O.K.

AMY
Are you sure?

MELISSA
(pushing the boys from
behind)
Somebody check it out.

Everyone is waiting for someone else to volunteer. The girls still holding onto each other.

AMY
(trembles)
Oh please, let's just forget
about it and go home.

MELISSA
(Overlapping)
I'm with you, I'm too young to
die.

TIMMY
(looking at everyone)
We can't just stand here all
day, let's all check it out.

Amy pushes Timmy forward.

AMY
(still holding on to
Melissa)
Fine, you first, we'll be right
behind you.

SLOWLY, the boys inch their way toward the sand castle... Amy and Melissa following close behind, pushing them forward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As they near the castle, the children crawl the remainder of the way, creeping up on the hole.

Herman peers over the edge. While looking in, he loses his balance and FALLS in head first!

HERMAN

Ahhhh....!

SPLASH! Into the hole falls Herman. Backing himself up against the wall, he looks into the chest.

BACK AT THE CLIFFS

Al and Bud are still watching the children, waiting for something to happen.

AL

(smacking Bud)

I told you there was nothin' to be afraid of... didn't I?... Well, didn't I?

BUD

Yeah, your right, Al.

AL

Of course I am. Now keep watching.

FROM INSIDE THE HOLE

Herman yells out to the others.

HERMAN

Hey... guys. Look!

There, at the bottom of the hole, half submerged in the water is Herman, the two skeletons, and the wooden chest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSIDE THE CHEST: navigation instruments, what appears to be a captain's log, and a MAP!

BOBBY

(excited)

Wow! What is that?

HERMAN

(fumbling through
everything)

Looks like instruments for
navigating and a map!

Herman quickly reaches for the map.

AMY

(Jumping to
conclusions)

It's a treasure map!

MELISSA

(overlapping)

We're rich!

TIMMY

(Offering a helping
hand)

Herman, bring the map up here,
quick.

With help from Timmy and Bobby, Herman climbs out of the hole and spreads the map out for everyone to see.

AL AND BUD

watching impatiently from the cliffs, are equally surprised to see what Herman has brought up from out of the hole.

Al pulls out from his belt, a telescoping lens. Looking through it, he verifies that in fact it is a map.

AL'S POV -- THROUGH TELESCOPE

an old cloth map being spread out on the sand.

AL

Aha... what I tell ya Bud. I knew those kids were up to something. Appears to be a map of some sort they dug up.

BUD

A map... to what, Al?

AL

I'll bet it's a map to a lost treasure.

BUD

Treasure!

AL

wraps his hands around Bud's mouth, trying to shut him up.

AL

Quiet, you idiot. Ye want 'em to know we're here?

BUD

Right, shhh...

(beat)

I think we got to get a look at that map, Al.

AL

Let me do the thinking around here.

(beat)

We need to get a look at that map.

(CONTINUED)