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## Last Man Off: A True Story of Disaster and Survival on the Antarctic Seas

By Matt Lewis



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By Matt Lewis

**“A sinister version of *The Perfect Storm*. Thrilling.”—*Sunday Times (UK)***

**For readers of *The Perfect Storm*, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, and *Into the Wild***

There's nothing that armchair adventure lovers relish more than a gripping true story of disaster and heroism, and *Last Man Off* delivers all that against a breathtaking backdrop of icebergs and killer whales. On June 6, 1998, twenty-three-year-old Matt Lewis had just started his dream job as a scientific observer aboard a deep-sea fishing boat in the waters off Antarctica. As the crew haul in the line for the day, a storm begins to brew. When the captain vanishes and they are forced to abandon ship, Lewis leads the escape onto three life rafts, where the battle for survival begins.



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**Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

**An Amazon Best Book of May 2015:** In 1998, a young Scotsman named Matt Lewis sought to boost to his budding career as a marine biologist by securing a position as the "scientific observer" on a fishing vessel. Though he would be considered an officer, his role would be limited and relatively tame compared to the rest of the crews': documenting wildlife the boat encountered, while also keeping notes on the crew's adherence to fishing regulations. A coin flip landed him aboard the *Sudur Havid*, a South African boat bound for the outer waters of Antarctica's frigid and tempestuous Southern Ocean. Even though his novice eyes, Lewis was immediately struck by its apparent unreadiness, including a dearth of adequate boots and survival suits, and a crew seemingly unprepared for work in the harsh polar environment.

His misgivings were soon realized. As winds rose and whipped the seas into a ship-tossing frenzy, the fuel- and fish-heavy boat listed, taking on water. A disastrous and inexplicable chain of decisions--starting with the *Sudur Havid*'s chief officers and running down through the ship's engineers and some of the crew--doomed the ship, putting Lewis in the unlikely position of organizing the frantic evacuation. These are not spoilers--Lewis's narrative is rich with detail, putting readers in the thick of the action as the panic-struck men stuff themselves into three inadequate rafts and embark on a nightmarish struggle on the open ocean. *Last Man Off* is a tale of survival, not an adventure story; and while the particulars are often grim and the outcome unhappy, Lewis's book is a sort of catharsis, a compelling testimonial to his experience and the ones that didn't return. --*Jon Foro*

Review

"A story that reminds us of the unforgiving nature of the sea and the courage that lies within the everyday heroes that have found themselves in hell."—**Bear Grylls**, bestselling author of *Mud, Sweat, and Tears*

"Reads like a sinister version of *The Perfect Storm*... Thrilling, compelling, unsettling, rewarding."—*Sunday Times*

"A dramatic tale of survival in one of the most brutal situations on earth. Feels like reading the diary of a doomed man...so personal and chillingly real; totally takes you there in a way that is not always comfortable."—**Steve Backshall**, *Deadly 60*

About the Author

**Matt Lewis** is a trained marine biologist with an MSc with distinction in Marine and Fisheries Science. He now lives with his wife and two children in Aberdeen.

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**Scott Halpin:**

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