

# R GILBERT VAN R YCKEVORSEL

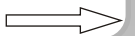
I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU...

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one particular incident from my experiences in the early seventies when diving in St. Margaret's Bay, N.S., with Bluefin Tuna. I had the good fortune to be invited to dive as an assistant with famous National Geographic underwater photographer David Doubilet when the Magazine became attracted to do a story on the North Atlantic Inshore Fishery when their by-catch of Bluefin Tuna started becoming a phenomenal commercial success-story by inspiring fishermen to keep their fish alive over months, feeding them like beef cattle in coral nets to achieve a high oil content and trade them to the lucrative Japanese gourmet specialty market for the famous formal gourmet tradition of sashimi. The experience in working as a support diver with David Doubilet changed me from a sports diver into a photographer specialized in the underwater worlds and eventually led into my career rendering the aquatic environments of salt- and freshwater of Atlantic Canada.

**A**s the story appeared in the National Geographic other well known cameramen of that period came to extend on documenting Bluefin Tuna in St. Margaret's Bay and contacted me to assist them. One day I was called by another well known photographer by the name of Douglas Faulkner known from his books on the Palau Islands in the central Pacific, expert in using the medium format Rolleiflex camera placed into a housing developed by legendary ocean explorer Dr. Hans Hass.

As the Rolleimarin brought one of the best cameras of that time underwater, it suffered however from a major handicap, caused by its viewer positioned to look down and the difficulty this caused to capture on still images the fast motion of closeup Bluefin Tunas. My solution to deal with this handicap was that I touched Douglas on the side from where Tunas were approaching him and he would have a good chance to capture a piece of them at the distance of about 2 meters or less.



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**A** hard case to come up with a good image. However the heavy camera housing holding an attached bracket arm with a flashbulb inside a alluminum dish reflector hung on leniard from his neck.

These achieved one single flash and a burned out bulb had to be replace after each shot.

I attracted a group of 8 giant Bluefins to feed at close quarters and made them as much as could be expected to come right out of the sunlight at a depth of about 5- 8 Meters feeding them from a bag filled with mackerel, all of this held in a fairly strong ocean current.

3 -5 baitfish drifting at armslength brought the fish into touching length as well as the halfmoon shaped flashdish at this closeup action I thought - could easily be identified by the fish as an additional mackerel bait...

When this tought came to me I looked downward and Douglas was nowhere to be seen.....

**T**hen this picture appeared to my limited visibility and vision

< A Giant Tuna thrashing like mad - towing the diver connecting by the bracket arm of his camera by his neck - around the netspace.

In a matter of 10-15 seconds they suddenly came apart and the diver slowly sank uncontious down to the bottom of 20 meters. Instantly I sunk down and brought him up to the surface where he was lifted on deck and thus saved his life.

Douglas came to on deck of our cape island boat and - believe it or not - 2 hours later he was in again in a desperate attempt to archieve the images needed for his assignment.

Good luck was with us that day, water is an unforgiving world where accidents are only good outcome when acted on with experience.

**Gilbert van Ryckevorsel**