



# **Torn in Two: The Sinking of the Daniel J. Morrell and One Man's Survival on the Open Sea**

*Michael Schumacher*

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Dennis Hale reached the dock just in time to see the *Daniel J. Morrell* heading out to open waters, a 600-foot freighter that had plied the waters for sixty years, carrying ore from Minnesota's Iron Range to steel firms around the Great Lakes. The twenty-six-year-old watchman had, quite literally, missed the boat—which meant scrambling to rejoin the *Morrell* at its next stop or forfeiting a good chunk of his pay package. Seventy-two hours later, Hale would find himself clinging to a life raft alongside the frozen bodies of his crewmates in the violent waves of Lake Huron. The boat would not be reported missing for another twenty-seven hours and by the time the life raft was found, Dennis Hale would remain as the sole survivor of the wreck of the *Daniel J. Morrell*.

This is life-and-death drama on the inland sea as only Michael Schumacher can tell it. In *Torn in Two* the great Lakes historian recreates the circumstances surrounding the terrible storm of November 29, 1966, that broke the mighty freighter in half, sending twenty-five of the *Morrell's* twenty-nine-man crew to their deaths and consigning the surviving four to the freezing raft where all but Hale would perish. At the heart of *Torn in Two* are the terrible hours spent by Hale on the life raft with his crewmen, clinging to life for thirty-eight hours in freezing temperatures and wearing only a peacoat, life jacket, and boxer shorts. The fight to save Hale and find the others, the Coast Guard hearings into what happened, the discovery of the wreckage—Schumacher's vivid narrative captures every harrowing detail and curious fact of the *Morrell's* demise, finally doing justice to this epic shipwreck fifty years past.

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