



IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea 2015

**Award Ceremony
19 November 2015
IMO headquarters**

Speech by AST Leon

I would like to start off by thanking the IMO, the Secretary-General and the panel of judges for this amazing opportunity to be here in London.

I am truly honoured and humbled to be receiving this award today.

I would especially like to thank the crew of the helicopter, Lieutenant Scott Black, Lieutenant Jesse C Keyser and flight mechanic Michael Spraggins, because nothing I do, can be done without them; and everything we do is a team effort – especially for this case.

Fraser, Sam and James, it is great to see you again in different circumstances.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my wife for supporting me in having my dream job and being totally OK with me hanging out in a sinking row boat 60 miles offshore in the middle of the night.

Thanks again for this amazing opportunity to be here. It is truly appreciated.

Speech by rescuee Sam Collins

I would like to start with an acknowledgement that what we were doing – attempting to row the Pacific Ocean – was, I suppose you could say, a selfish act in a sense really. One motivated by just wanting to do something for your own good.

What Chris did is anything but that. What Chris did was a completely selfless act. Something quite special.

Chris Leon woke up in the morning and no doubt brushed his teeth, had a normal day.

And then, in the darkness of night, a year and a half ago, he launched himself off the side of a helicopter into gale force winds and over six metre high seas just to save our lives.

And as a result we are alive. We will have children. Our children will go on to have children. And we can hopefully repay him, by making the most of our lives.

So what I am trying to say, is: thank you, Chris, you really deserve this award for what was a truly exceptional act of bravery at sea.
