

## NAMU: THE KILLER WHALE



Jim riding Namu (1963).

My memoirs would not be complete without mentioning the extraordinary relationship between my brother Ted Griffin and a killer whale. The jacket copy of Ted's book *Namu: Quest for the Killer Whale* states:

Ted Griffin's unusual quest to befriend a killer whale, at a time when most people believed them worthless deadly predators, caused many to doubt his sanity. Driven by his burning desire to interact with a wild orca, he exhausted nearly every resource at his disposal, hovering near bankruptcy. Then when no oceanarium would risk purchasing a bull orca accidentally captured by Canadian fishermen, Ted was able to raise enough cash to buy the four-ton behemoth. His problems were just beginning; he must devise some method of transporting the whale 400 miles to Seattle. Ted's account of that remarkable journey with Namu was published in the March 1966 issue of *National Geographic Magazine*.

This man stunned the world by becoming the first person in recorded history to ride a killer whale. This single act changed world attitudes about the whale species, *Orcinus orca*. Suddenly the huge beasts, previously equated with sharks shot for sport, became almost human.

Certain of the orca's powerful intellect and communication ability, Ted sought to learn their language. Thus, began one of the most beautiful and incredible human-animal stories ever.