



The I'M ALONE

Wade Hemsworth

*Remember, yes I remember well,
The most famous rum-runner of them all:
Remember, yes, I remember well,
The most famous rum-runner of them all,
It was the schooner from Lunenburg, I'm
Alone
In the Gulf of Mexico she went down
under fire
Of a Yankee cutter on the high seas
outside treaty waters.*

Chorus
*Oh, I'm alone
A long way from Lunenburg she went
down
Because Skipper John Randall wouldn't
heave to
On the I'm Alone.*

*It was in nineteen hundred and twenty-nine
When the smuggling of liquor was a
profitable pastime
Many a Maritimer didn't see why
He shouldn't turn a profit, Uncle Sam was
dry
Many a family took on style
Prohibition made it very worthwhile
To be a good Samaritan to long-suffering
thirsty Americans.*

*Now the schooner's captain was a wild
Newfoundlander
A hard-driving man, name of John
Thomas Randall,
A decorated veteran of the First World
War,
A sea-going gentleman adventurer.
From Belize, he'd take the I'm Alone
To the coast of Louisiana, and anchor
south of Trinity Shoal
Where he would meet his man and
discharge the cargo according to plan.*

*It was all clear sailing for the I'm Alone
With the profits of six or seven trips salted
down
The coastguard had bothered her a couple
of times
But Skipper John's seamanship had left
them behind.
One March morning in the wind and the
swell
She was reaching along under jumbo jib
and storm trysail
When the cutter Dexter swept on the I'm
Alone's starboard quarter.*

*Now the Dexter's captain was a very rough
man
He had sworn he'd never lose the I'm
Alone again
He ran a string of signals, saying, "How
do you do?
You know that I'll fire if you don't heave
to."
Skipper John semaphored immediately,
"We're on the high seas, you have no
jurisdiction over me!"
But the Dexter's captain sent several
volleys
Through the I'm Alone's rigging.*

*The bullets tore the booms, the sails, the lines,
Even tore a hole in the Red Ensign.
When Skipper John saw that he was fit to
be tied
At this disrespect shown to his national
pride.
The crew said, "Sir, don't you trouble your
mind -
We'll all go down together with the old
Red Ensign flyin'!"
So he signalled to the Dexter, "Shoot and
be damned to ya!
I'll not surrender!"*

*So the Dexter opened fire and it didn't take
long*

*Before her guns had stitched a seam along
 the I'm Alone's waterline
 Skipper John ordered every man to the sea
 There was water on the bridge when he
 himself jumped free.
 Stern in the air, the I'm Alone went down
 A heavy sea a-runnin', a wonder only one
 man was drowned -
 The bo'sun was the one who was pulled
 aboard the cutter
 When his life had gone.*

*That's how it happened, there isn't much
 more-
 The I'm Alone became an international
 affair
 Skipper John and his seamen were all
 released,
 The U.S. Government couldn't make a
 case.
 That kind of violence is bound to happen
 When a law like Prohibition sits up and
 begs to be broken
 And we'll still remember the story of the
 I'm Alone
 And Skipper John Randall.*