

— then spits him out

By BEATRICE DEXTER / Special correspondent

SYDNEY, Australia — Fortunate fisherman Torrance Cotts is a real-life Jonah — a man whose life was saved when he was gobbled up by a giant fish and brought safely to shore!

The 49-year-old man was washed off a fishing trawler, **swallowed by a whale** — and vomited up on land safe and sound eight hours later! Incredibly, Cotts survived his ordeal with minor injuries!

"Everyone says it was just like the story of Jonah and the whale in the Bible," says Cotts, who works on fishing boats out of Albany, Australia. "The experts believe I was **swallowed by a sperm whale**. They say what saved me is that I clung to the inside of the whale's throat and never slid down into the stomach. That way I got a supply of oxygen and eventually made the whale vomit me un."



... 8 HOURS LATER!

whale vomit me up."

Cotts was working on a small trawler when a sudden squall whipped up the waters of the Indian Ocean and a giant wave swept him overboard. The divorced father of three recalls drifting for several hours in the stormy seas desperately screaming for help.

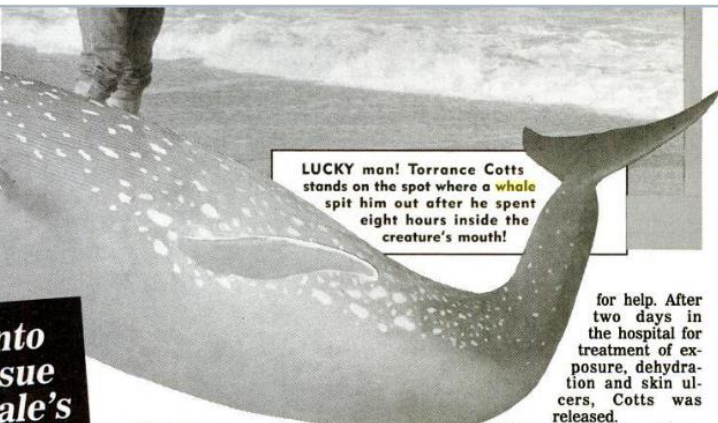
Night fell and the exhausted fisherman had given up all hope when suddenly the water swirled around him and a giant fish surfaced.

"I thought at first it was three or four sharks, but soon realized I was looking at a **whale**," Cotts said.

"The thing swam around me for a minute, then headed straight for me, opened its mouth and **swallowed** me right down.

"Inside the animal it was totally dark and slimy. I grabbed onto some soft tissue

"I grabbed onto some soft tissue inside the whale's mouth and held on for dear life."



LUCKY man! Torrance Cotts stands on the spot where a **whale** spit him out after he spent eight hours inside the creature's mouth!

for help. After two days in the hospital for treatment of exposure, dehydration and skin ulcers, Cotts was released.

loose," Cotts recalled.

"But I felt like

a flood of food came up from the fish's belly. I was just

"The man's story sounds unbelievable, but we have witnesses who saw him swept off

in its mouth and throat and held on for dear life."

Cotts says he knows he spent hours inside the **whale** because his waterproof watch continued to work.

He found he could breathe easily, but he was terrified the entire time because powerful

for dear life

muscles in the whale's throat threatened to push him down into the animal's stomach.

"Every time the **whale** swallowed, he nearly tore me

I had to stay up in the throat where I could breathe. I held on with all my might, but I was getting real tired and I didn't think I could make it much longer.

"Suddenly, the whale's throat muscles went crazy and

washed right out of the fish's mouth, back into the ocean again." Incredibly, Cotts found he had been thrown up by the **whale** — directly onto a beach near Augusta, Australia!

The dazed and exhausted fisherman staggered ashore and walked to a nearby house

the boat," said a spokesman for the Augusta police department.

"And doctors say the burns on his feet and calves could easily have been caused by contact with a whale's digestive juices."

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