Written by Charles Doane
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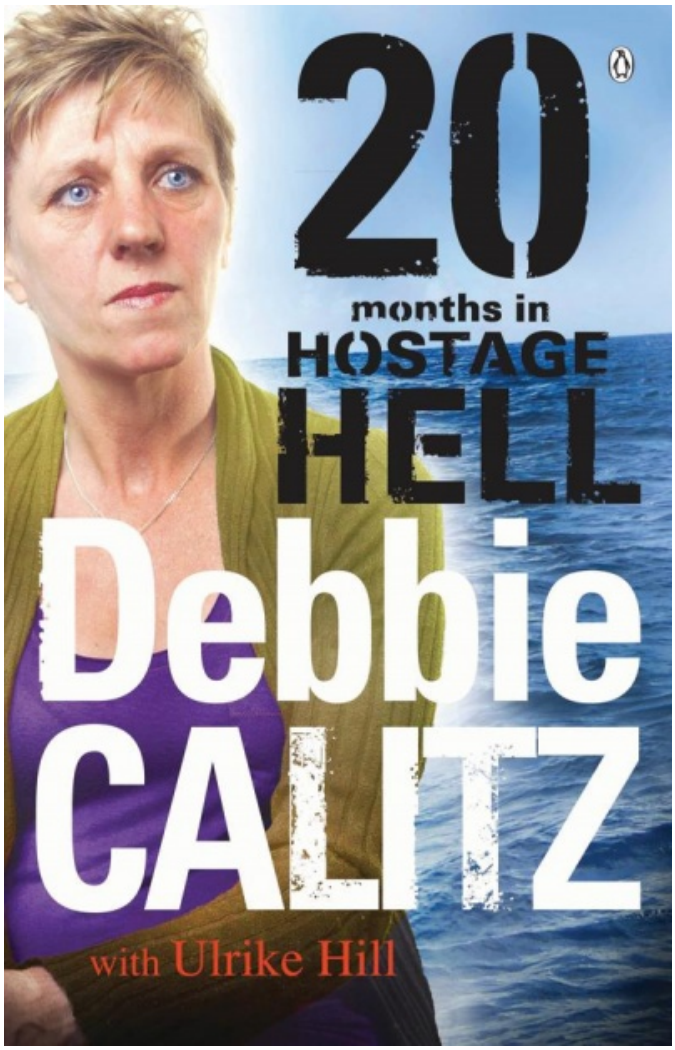

OH NO! (Not ANOTHER cruiser-got-busted story!) Just six months ago, Debbie Calitz, a South African sailor taken hostage by Somali pirates with her boyfriend off the coast of Tanzania, was finally released after 20 months in captivity. In little more than a week her book about her ordeal, *20 Months in Hostage Hell* (see image up top), is scheduled to be released by Penguin Books. Right now, however, she's up to her eyeballs in legal trouble, as she, her two children, and six others were arrested in her Pretoria apartment last Friday for possession of marijuana and hallucinogenic mushrooms.

Calitz and all other suspects were released on 1,000 rand bail yesterday.

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Debbie Calitz (left) and her 21-year-old daughter Kerri-Ann Cross at their bail hearing yesterday. Calitz's son, Jason Cross, was also arrested (Photo by Chris Collingridge)

Police reportedly were called to the apartment, which Calitz shares with her daughter and son, after neighbors complained of noise. According to police, Calitz bragged of her celebrity status as she tried to convince them not to go through with the arrest after they discovered pot and mushrooms on the premises.

"She was throwing her name out like it would mean something to us. She was carrying on as though we would turn around and walk out," one officer was quoted as saying.

Calitz's co-hostage, Bruno Pelizzari, was not involved in the incident, as the couple evidently recently broke up.

Calitz and Pelizzari sailing together in happier times

Pelizzari, who now lives on a boat in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, told reporters: "I can't do anything to be there for her because my

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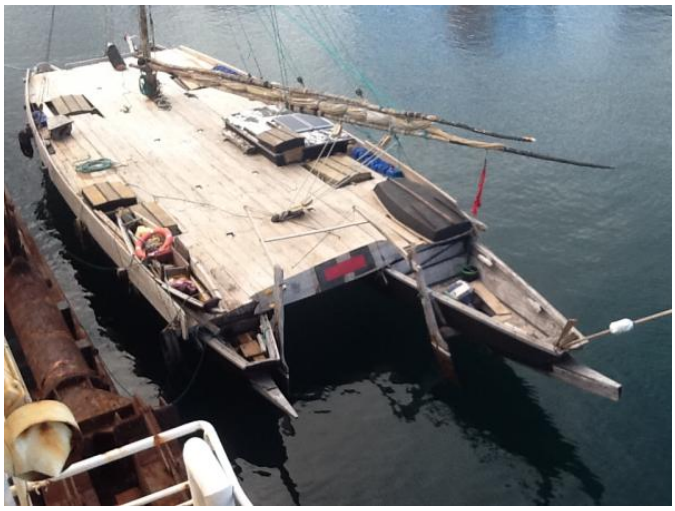
priority is my boat. I cannot leave it. It's my life and life savings, but Debbie didn't want to come back to the boat and that's that."

Calitz and Pelizzari were originally taken hostage in November 2010 on the coast of Tanzania while crewing aboard a South African yacht, *Choizil*, owned by Peter Eldridge. The circumstances of their release remain unclear, but reportedly a ransom of about $700,000 was paid. Somali and Italian military forces (Pelizzari holds dual SA/italian citizenship) may also have been involved.

MEANWHILE: Another cruiser who has had legal problems in South Africa, Swiss national Hans Klaar, who was jailed for six months on charges of rape, has surfaced again recently.



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He contacted my esteemed SAILfeed colleague, the mysterious Mariner, and passed on the photos above of his new 70-foot homemade asymmetric cruising cat. A very intriguing vessel! He built it on a beach in Gambia, sailed it up to the Azores, and was ultimately planning to voyage to the Canaries, Brazil, and the West Indies when he checked in.

You can read his complete report here.

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