

THE DOGS OF WINTER

by

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and

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Based on the
Novel by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CHEAP MOTEL - DAY

First light. A driving rain. A sorry collection of gaily painted clapboard cabins hunker amid thundering redwoods...

Superimpose caption: SWEET HOME, CALIFORNIA

At the entrance to the motel a white Ford Bronco with a gold shield on the door sits next to a battered sign: MOUNTAIN MEADOWS. CABLE TV.

Deputy TRAVIS McCADDE, 27, dark, handsome and half Hupa Indian, crouches at the side of the Bronco, looking into the motel with a pair of binoculars. He turns as a second Bronco arrives on the scene, emitting...

Sheriff TOM BLACKLAGE, 54, fat and ruddy, draped in a huge plastic poncho. Blacklage huffs and puffs his way to Travis.

BLACKLAGE

What's up?

TRAVIS

Lucy Roundtree called... Marvus Dove's in number fifteen with Amanda Jaffey.

Blacklage squints through the rain at the crappy cabin -- at this moment as silent as the tomb.

PBLACKLAGE

What makes you think...

TRAVIS

Girl's got a restraining order. Dove's not to be within a hundred feet of her.

A silent beat -- as the men trade looks...

BLACKLAGE

What do you have in mind?

TRAVIS

Get around back, see what I can see while you watch the front.

Blacklage nods, takes the glasses, as Travis jogs around one end of the buildings.

EXT. CABIN #15 - DAY

Where Travis sneaks up close enough for a peek through the window, recoils, then looks once more, just to make sure --

A quick GLIMPSE of a half naked girl, prone on the floor, blood pooling about her head... At which point...

there's A NOISE at the rear of the cabin. In the next instant, the door swings open, revealing MARVUS DOVE, a huge, bull-chested man with shaggy black hair.

Travis' gun is still in the holster. Near the rear door is a pile of wood and an eight pound maul propped against a chopping block.

In a heartbeat each man takes in the situation... measuring speed against distance...

And Marvus goes for the maul. In one fluid motion he reaches it and swings...

Travis jumps back, his gun clearing the holster...

as the maul whistles past his face, caving in four feet of cabin wall, ripping a hole by which the girl is made visible once more...

And Travis has a split second to decide... to shoot... at point blank range or to...

move one half step closer, bringing the barrel of the gun down on Marvus' bison head with all the strength he can muster... Once, twice, three times... As at last...

The big man goes down... crashing like the Hindenburg...

Travis is on him at once, pulling his arms behind his back, cuffing him. As he does, something tumbles from one of Doves meaty hands.

Travis picks up what has fallen, gets to his feet. Marvus rolls to his back, gasping, glaring at this object now dangling from Travis' hand, on a broken rawhide string --

A SMALL WOODEN SURFBOARD carved from redwood, polished to a glassy finish...

As, off Marvus Dove's venal death-glare, in almost absurd counterpoint, we PRE-LAP the Ventures' jaunty, tremolo-ridden surf classic "Walk-Don't run" and, from the gloom of the great Northwest...

CUT TO:

EXT. WAIMEA BAY - DAY

Where, by dazzling tropic light, half a dozen surfers claw their way up the face of a towering thirty foot wave...

Superimpose caption: THE QUICKSLIVER BIG WAVE CHALLENGE, WAIMEA BAY, HAWAII

A glimpse of the beach captures the scale of the event, standing room only on the sand, an army of photographers, emergency vehicles, the Kam highway jammed with cars...

Then rejoin the surfers... close enough to HEAR their hyperventilation, the wind howling off the lip of the wave as it begins to feather...

One surfer wheels around, trying to catch this mountain of water. We HEAR his board, clattering across the wind chop, then WATCH as the board bounces off the face, pitching the rider into oblivion...

The rest of the pack push through the top, where, as the spray of the breaking wave rains down upon them, they are greeted by a sight both beautiful and horrific...

As far as the eye can see... ONE WAVE AFTER ANOTHER... stacked to the horizon... as if this procession of monsters might just reach clear to the storm ravaged Aluetions, and the place of their birth.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH, CALIFORNIA - DAY

Awash in hazy afternoon light... as we MOVE ACROSS THE SAND, over the SUNBATHERS and VOLLEYBALLERS and OUT PAST the surf line -- where SURFERS carve tracks from glassy head-high waves...

In contrast to what we have just witnessed, there's not much amiss here... just Green water and blue sky. Frothy sea spray and long, golden rays of sunlight... A full-on Brian Wilson wet dream, pun intended...

WE TAKE IT ALONG THE PIER -- where GIRLS on Rollerblades glide among SKATEBOARDERS and TOURISTS, past GANGBANGERS with fishing poles, lines running to a polluted Pacific.

At last, we SETTLE ON

EXT. THE WINKING SEA LION MOTEL

A cheap joint even in its prime, paint now peels from the sun-bleached stucco. A three-foot SAND SHARK circles in the tiny kidney-shaped pool as, nearby, a HOMELESS MAN is discovering the salubrious effects of a vintage bottle of Nightrain...

So we'll MOVE UP the concrete stairs, toward one battered blue door... As a PHONE begins to RING...

INT. ROOM - DAY

What we notice first, in stark contrast to the post-Harry-Truman-Nagasaki vibe of the decor here -- are the

SURFING PHOTOGRAPHS

hastily-framed, if lucky enough to have been framed -- they are beautiful and dramatic... Not even their curling corners or the mustard splotches that besmirch them, can deny the mastery of light, of composition, at work here.

The PHONE continues to BLARE... As we get a better look at our environs... Hoo-boy...

Assorted CAMERA PARTS and STACKS of CONTACT SHEETS, yes, but also, a city scape of overflowing ashtrays, empty bottles of Jack Daniels, dirty highball glasses, and a few busted water pipes leaking dirty brown bong water like sewage...

Clearly the detritus of A Lost Weekend that has extended itself into a lifetime...

** (We should also note the ROLLS and ROLLS of BUBBLE-WRAP -- you know the plastic-packing material folks like to pop -- because there's a lot of it around here)...

A VOICE GROANS. A hand snakes out from beneath the sleeping bag draped across a sagging couch -- groping, knocking over a half-full bottle of beer --

As the beer soaks into the shag rug, to join its previously-spilled comrades, we get a good look at

JACK FLETCHER, late 30s...

And, damn, if he doesn't look like a character who's emerged, fully-formed, from a Jimmy Buffett fever-dream:

Old-school beach-boy good looks gone the way of the Winking Sea Lion, though not even a thousand hard day's nights could snuff out the twinkle in those eyes...

Fletcher manages to free himself from the bag and answer his phone... His voice a rasp:

FLETCHER
Fletcher Studios.

VOICE (V.O.)
Hey, that's a good one... If by "Studios"
you mean a place where people drown in
their own vomit...

Fletcher looks at the phone, grimaces...

FLETCHER
Peters?

VOICE (PETERS)
You got it, Doc. Long time...

FLETCHER
Apparently not long enough. Cos I hear
your voice, I still wanna start the car
with the garage-door closed...

PETERS (O.S.)
Only you ain't got a garage door...

FLETCHER
I ain't even got a car...

Fletcher sits up, his spine pocorning as the vertebrae reconfigure themselves after a night of arthritic slumber... Fletcher winces...

PETERS (O.S.)
Meet me at Duke's in an hour.

FLETCHER
No thanks. Got plans.

Fletcher stands, stretches, phone cradled to his neck. Even this move forces a grimace. It's like the dude is made of painful, inflamed wicker. Fletcher's hand navigates the coffee table, knocking shit over, at last coming up with a PILL BOTTLE... He shakes a couple out, dry swallows them...

PETERS (O.S.)
Cancel them. Meet me at Duke's in an hour. That's seven-O'clock. I got something that may just inspire you to get off your...

Only Fletcher isn't listening. Because at last something has managed to penetrate the tundra of his gray matter. "Seven-O'clock." "In an hour." Oh shit.

FLETCHER
In an hour. Seven o'clock. Seven o'clock is in an hour?

PETERS (V.O.)
Yeah. I know they have yet to introduce the concept of "Time" at the Institute of Complete Fuck-Ups, but come on --

Only Fletcher has dropped the phone... A glance at his watch tells the tale...

FLETCHER
Shit...

And a mad scramble for socks and shoes... For bad Hawaiian print shirt and filthy Madras pants... For camera gear and tripod... For a strip of bubble-wrap... For the quart of OJ in the fridge, half of which is poured out...

For the pint of vodka on the counter, all of which is poured into the remaining quart of OJ...

EXT. WINKING SEA LION MOTEL - DAY

Oh, but for the sun, sinking in the horizon, pitiless and inexorable, like the Wicked Witch's hourglass...

Fletcher, laden with gear and his OJ, emerges from the room, wraparound shades and a wobble to his walk...

He is immediately affronted by MR. CHU, the Asian manager of the Winking Sea Lion, whose English is as fractured as his mood upon seeing Fletcher...

MR. CHU
You now. Three month. Three month, no pay. Three month...

FLETCHER

I know that, Mr. Chu. But I got a lot of things going on here. In fact, if I could borrow the truck, I'm going to a job right now that...

And, as he speaks, he is moving towards an old PICK-UP TRUCK with "The Winking Sea Lion" stenciled on both sides...

And, to Mr. Chu's amazement, Fletcher tosses his gear into the truck, climbs behind the wheel and starts her up...

MR. CHU

No! No, you cannot! I need for truck.
I need for tru--

But Fletcher is gone with a wash of exhaust. Leaving Mr. Chu to fume in a sea of fumes...

EXT. THE RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL - REAR BLUFF - DAY

A WEDDING PARTY in progress. Or rather, in a holding pattern. They are on a bluff overlooking the sprawling sea, as the blood-red sun loses shape upon the horizon...

In other words, an hour ago this was a photo op nonpareil. Now, it's long shadows and unflattering glare.

The BRIDE is tearful. The GROOM paces, angry. The FATHER OF THE BRIDE is a big, red-faced Brian Dennehy cat, who looks like he got tossed out of his Anger Management class for punching the instructor...

Now they are all watching as the Winking Sea Lion pick-up truck lurches and farts to a stop before them... Emitting a disheveled Jack Fletcher, who hurries across the grass, camera equipment dangling and dropping, his face illuminated by a false smile...

FLETCHER

Sorry I'm late, sorry... The MacIntosh Twins' birthday ran late. You know those debutantes...

He tries a chuckle... Begins to unfold a tripod... Either 'cause he's drunk or nervous, he wrestles with it, very Buster Keaton...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

We've still got some great light here. Wow. Very... Majestic. Very... Maxfield Parrish meets Edward Sherrif Curtis in a barren horizon, desaturated landscape, kind of way...

He nods at the sea. As the sun is clearly dipping below the horizon line... The wedding party stare at him, agog.

The Dennehy-Dad advances on Fletcher...

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Do you even know *why* we chose this place,
shitball?

Fletcher affects a look of concentration, checking a light meter.

FLETCHER

We are going to be able to get something quite dramatic here... A "Young Love In the Quiet Embrace of Nature's Spectacle" kind of thing. A motif of hope, if you will...

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

The sunset, you idiot. We were here for the sunset... Which an hour ago was perfect...

FLETCHER

I disagree, sir. If an hour ago it was perfect, now it is sublime. And I'm a professional, and this is --

And he turns... To where the sun is just an amber slice at the edge of the universe... And the Bride erupts in a ruinous wail, crumbling into her MOTHER's arms...

MOTHER

You've wrecked everything...!

Fletcher sighs, cos they're right. The shadows having engulfed them all. He pockets the light meter, takes a flute of champagne off a passing WAITER's tray...

FLETCHER

Look at it this way: wars and weddings. Two things we document diligently... And then shrink back from in horror upon later appraisal...

He shrugs. Smiles. Sips his bubbly. The wedding party stare at him in shocked disbelief...

And then the Bride removes a SHOE. A lethal pump.

And she THROWS IT AT FLETCHER. End-over-end it sails, like a tomahawk, the stiletto heel catches him on the corner of one eye, and off the sickening THUK! we

CUT TO:

INT. DUKE'S AT THE BEACH - NIGHT

Polynesian atoll décor with heavy surfing motif. TOURISTS and LOCALS lay waste to buckets of steamers and pitchers of Margaritas...

At the bar, a BIG MAN with a sunburnt face, equal parts rancor and good cheer, chats with the hot female BARTENDER. This is MICHAEL PETERS, the Jann Wenner of the surf world...

Fletcher takes a stool beside Peters... He's got a nasty bruise where the heel hit home...

FLETCHER
Double Cadillac with a shot back.
Actually Dale, why don't you just bring the bottle. It's been a long day...

BARTENDER
No can do, Fletcher. There's this new thing? It's called "money". We use it as a currency to exchange for other commodities...

FLETCHER
I've heard of it. It's that root of all evil thing, right?

BARTENDER (DALE)
You've heard of it but you don't have any... I know, cos I've fronted you many times in the past... And what did I get for my troubles?

FLETCHER
Three painful hickies and a spectacular series of nudes --

DALE
Every one of which can now be downloaded off the Internet...

FLETCHER
Turn the girl into a cyber-star and this is the thanks I get --

DALE
You're an asshole, Fletcher --

PETERS
I'm buying, Dale...

DALE
Michael --

PETERS
Go...

And Dale, pissed, goes to fetch the drinks...

PETERS (CONT'D)
See you're still winning friends and influencing people...

FLETCHER
The only thing more overrated than friends are people...

Dale puts the drinks on the bar. Fletcher downs the shot and goes to work on the Margarita... Dale places the bottle of Tequila before him...

DALE .

Here. On the house. Have yourself a Dylan Thomas, Scott Fitzgerald, Keith Moon evening, Fletcher...

FLETCHER

See what she does there, Mikey? Invokes the names of three men who drank themselves to death and wishes it on me...

PETERS

You must be some lousy lay...

FLETCHER

All I did was ask for cab fare home the next morning...

DALE

We were at your place... !

She walks away... Fletcher shrugs... Peters studies him.

PETERS

What happened to your eye?

FLETCHER

Ah, you know. Ran into a door.

PETERS

Right. Whatever. I don't really give a shit, if you want to know the truth, about anything you do. You must know I wrote you off a long time ago...

FLETCHER

I know, I know. All of you did. You. Mom. Our Lord in Heaven...

Peters sighs, shakes his head...

PETERS

Okay. I can't help myself. I've got to ask... Do you have any idea what happened in the Islands today? Do you know what's on the way?

Fletcher offers a blank look, a beatific smile.

PETERS (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

Peter's downs a drink of his own. He wears the expression of a man about to scrape the shit from his shoe with a small stick.

PETERS (CONT'D)

Something's come along and I need to know if your up for it. I should add that it's more than you deserve.

FLETCHER
I've gotten everything I deserve,
Mikey...

Beat... Peters takes his time with the next... Then:

PETERS
Drew Harmon called me...

The name has a visible effect on Fletcher.

PETERS (CONT'D)
He's in Northern California. Some place
called Sweet Home...

Nothing from Fletcher. Pours from the bottle of tequila.

FLETCHER
I thought he was in Costa Rica...

PETERS
Me, too. Although I heard Peru and Bali,
and Portugal, as well... Somebody told me
they'd seen him in Alaska raising sled
dogs... Another story had him fighting
alongside the Bantu in Nigeria... But
he's not... He's in Northern Cal...

FLETCHER
Doing what?

PETERS
Surfing Heart Attacks.

And now Fletcher is visibly shaken...

FLETCHER
Heart Attacks...?

PETERS
That's what he says. Heart Attacks. The
old lion and the last secret spot. That
kind of copy makes me moist. The surf
magazine equivalent of "I Slept With The
Ghost Of Elvis".

Peters slides over a stack of magazines... High-gloss
confections called "SURF MAGAZINE"...

PETERS (CONT'D)
In case you're wondering what we look
like these days...

Fletcher ignores them, polishes off his drink.

FLETCHER
Heart Attacks is bullshit. It's one of
those mysto spots that don't exist. You
know: like Shangri-la. Or the Lost City
of Atlantis. Or a place to get decent
Chinese in Los Angeles...

Fletcher pours another drink.

PETERS

Regardless. He claims he's found it.
And he wants you to take the pictures.

FLETCHER

You know what this is, don't you... It's
Harmon jacking you around. Just like old
times.

(a long beat)

What did you tell him?

PETERS

I told him you were out of the game; that
you had become a fuck-up; that I had a
half a dozen guys could do that job
better than a dinosaur like you...

FLETCHER

And what did he say?

PETERS

Why do you think we're having this
conversation? The man's living in the
past. Yours and his.

Fletcher downs the shot.

PETERS (CONT'D)

Look... Doc... this is the lost coast
we're talking about. It's cold. It's
sharky. And it's got size...

(a beat)

Even when the Oregon's buoy's not showing
at sixty feet.

Fletcher stares at him. No sarcasm, just a stone cold look.

FLETCHER

Waimea...

PETERS

Yesterday afternoon... as big as I've
ever seen it. It's a classic
Northwestern... Straight out of the Gulf
of Alaska, past the Islands, and coming
this way. If Harmon's right about this
thing... this mythic reef... These could
be the biggest cold water waves ever
ridden... Christ, they could be the
biggest waves we've seen anywhere in
twenty years...

(a beat)

Harmon and Heart Attacks. I wouldn't
want to miss it, Doc. And I don't want
it from some forest half a mile away. I
want it from the water... If you catch my
drift.

Fletcher looks across the bar, past the glittering bottles, catching his own sorry reflection in the marbled mirror. It's not a pretty sight. He looks away, pours another drink.

FLETCHER
So tell him I'm not up for it. Maybe
he'll let you send someone else.

As Fletcher downs the shot a middle-aged SURFER walks up next to him.

SURFER
Excuse me, but aren't you Jack Fletcher?

PETERS
He used to be...

The man produces a handsome but well-worn BOOK OF PHOTOGRAPHS. It's called "THE DOGS OF WINTER".

SURFER
I thought it was you, man. I ran home
and got this. Was wondering if you'd
sign it...

Fletcher takes the book. He turns the cover for Peters to see: a SURFER, broad, blonde and bronze, stares back from the pit of a dredging turquoise tube...

PETERS
Harmon. Back door at Rocky Point. That
was a radical shot.

Fletcher takes a pen from his fan, signs the book... Hands it back to the fan...

FLETCHER
It's still a radical shot. See you
around.

Fletcher gets off the stool. Peters puts a hand on his arm.

PETERS
You're sure about this?
(a beat)
I mean, I know you could use the scratch.

Fletcher silences him with a look.

FLETCHER
Not at all. You'd be surprised: nudie
shots of a bartender can keep a fella in
all the corn-dogs he could want.

Dale flashes him the finger... Fletcher grabs one last shot from the bar, knocks it back...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
Now if you'll excuse me: this dinosaur's
gotta get back to his tar pit...

Peters just looks at him, as Fletcher walks off, the fan prattling on at his ear...

EXT. WINKING SEA LION MOTEL - LATER - NIGHT

Fletcher gets out of the pick-up, climbing up the stairs to his room... He keys the lock... It doesn't work... Tries it again... Nothing... Lock's been changed...

And then he notices... On the ground below... All of his shit... All of his shit has been tossed out...

FLETCHER
For Chrissakes --

He moves for the FRONT OFFICE... Bursts open the door... To find Mr. Chu there...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing, Mr. Chu?

MR. CHU
Three month. Three month, no pay.

FLETCHER
Yeah, yeah, but...

He stops short. For THREE uniformed POLICEMEN are in Mr. Chu's office...

POLICEMAN
Jack Fletcher?

FLETCHER
That's right --

POLICEMAN
We got a call about a stolen vehicle...

FLETCHER
Aw, c'mon, he lets me borrow it all the time... He's just sore cos I'm late with the rent...

MR. CHU
Three month. Three month, no pay...

FLETCHER
It's months! Three months! Plural!
Plural, plural, plural!

But the cops haul him out. Mr. Chu smiles to his wife...

MR. CHU
Justice. Justice to serve...

EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Fletcher is walked out of the holding cell by a COP. Michael Peters and a BAIL BONDSMAN wait there...

PETERS
Nice show, Fletcher --

FLETCHER
Hey, it's my downward spiral and I'll cry
if I want to --

He collects his personal property from the DESK SERGEANT.
Turns to Peters...

PETERS
I spoke to Harmon. He only wants you...

FLETCHER
Where's the rest of my shit -- ?

PETERS
It's in my car --

EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

At Peters' BMW... Trunk open... Fletcher goes through his stuff... Finds a pill bottle... Shakes a few out and dry swallows them... He then finds his bubble-wrap... Pops a few... Peters is going through some of the PHOTOS...

PETERS
God, could you shoot --

FLETCHER
So could Sirhan Sirhan, and look where it
got him...

But maybe even he pauses to reflect on a photo or two...

PETERS
Do you even remember what it was like
when I took over the magazine? It was a
bunch of mopes shooting from the beach.
We changed all of that, Doc. You changed
it. You didn't just shoot it from the
water, you shot it from inside the damn
wave... You got angles no one had ever
seen before...

Fletcher begins unloading his stuff... Nowhere to put it, of
course... He just rests it on the curb...

PETERS (CONT'D)
Helmet rigs. Poles. Mats. 'Copter shots.
Christ. Half the shit they're using out
there now is shit you came up with... You
raised the bar, Doc. Only to pass-out in
the gutter, in front of the bar...

FLETCHER
Good one, Peters.

Beat... All of Fletcher's stuff is on the curb...

PETERS

I'm paying top dollar, you get the snaps...

FLETCHER

Right. Of Drew Harmon. As Ghosts of Christmas Past go, he's not one of my favorites...

PETERS

I know, I know. You blame him for your considerable decline...

FLETCHER

All considerable declines, of course, requiring considerable blame...

PETERS

Put that shit behind you. And I'll let you in on a little secret. This isn't just "SURF MAGAZINE" we're talking about... I ran it by my guy at "SPORTS ILLUSTRATED... He went nuts... The greatest big-wave rider of them all, comes out of exile, claiming to have found a mysto California spot that's never been more than a rumor, just as the super-nazz, once-every-thirty years swell is coming in...

FLETCHER

It's a good story. Too bad it can only be found in the fiction section.

PETERS

Look at it this way, Doc... You bring me these guys...

FLETCHER

What guys? I thought we were talking about Drew Harmon...

PETERS

And Robbie Jones... I'm flying him in from the islands. You can pick him up on the way...

FLETCHER

You know what Robbie Jones was doing the last time I saw him? He was head-butting some guy's car for checking out his girl friend...

PETERS

R.J. just won the Eddie in thirty-foot surf. He's the real thing, Doc. Like Harmon. Sort of like you were, once...

FLETCHER

Don't tell me: you want the legend and the new star, passing the torch in mysto California surf...

PETERS
With Doc Fun, the best in-water
photographer ever snapped a frame,
chronicling it all...

FLETCHER
Except: I don't go in the water anymore.

Peters smiles, oh-so-gleeful...

PETERS
I think you've just gone and written my
pull-quote...
(a long beat)
I can get you some wheels. You can leave
tomorrow...

FLETCHER
Tomorrow?

PETERS
Oregon buoy's already showing, son...
Another twenty-four hours, the joint will
be rockin'

FLETCHER
Yeah, but tomorrow... I've got a few
loose ends to tie up...

PETERS
Seems to me your entire life is right
there on the curb...
(a long beat)
Like I was saying... Look at it this way,
Fletcher: you get this right, maybe you
can tell the newly weds and Bar Mitzvah
boys to go fuck themselves...

Fletcher looks at him... Peters grins... And we PRE-LAP
Method Man and Redman's hip-hop gem "Da Rockwilder" and

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - SEAL BEACH - DAY

Picture MTV's "Spring Break" gone to urgent Southern Cal
seed... Or better yet, a Snoop Dogg video as directed by
Sinjin Smith:

Waves of flesh, toned and tanned, blessed and bikini'd...
Everyone dances to the tune... 40-ouncers are guzzled...
Thumb-thick blunts are passed... Surfboards stick up out of
the sand like the heads of Easter Island...

Jack Fletcher pulls up in a beater-van loaned to him by
Peters... He eyes the party like a dermatologist would a
particularly nasty case of head lice...

INT. BEACH HOUSE - SEAL BEACH - DAY

More perfect bodies tearin' the roof off... On three big-screen TVs, SURF VIDEOS provide one perfect wave after another... And there's a makeshift GALLOWS, where a half-dozen inflatable LOVE DOLLS were hanged at dawn --

Fletcher enters... Perhaps he's recognized by a few of the KIDS... Gestures are made as he walks through...

Surf posters adorn the walls... He stops before one: a barrel-chested man (the same one on the cover of his book), free-falling a 30-footer... Fletcher regards it... Walks on... To the dance floor...

The eye of this hurricane is a twirling, whirling, Ecstasy-scorched KID, early 20s, who knows every word to the song and owns a face so perfect it belongs on the side of a coin, and a body so ripped it'd make Michelangelo's David self-conscious...

Say hello to ROBBIE JONES, whom they call "R.J." R.J. is one of those cats given every gift by God, who couldn't give a fuck...

R.J. wears pink sunglasses with little Donald Ducks on each lens; an old-school Captain Blood hoop earring; a Reef bikini MODEL on each arm, dancing down...

Fletcher fights his way through the throbbing multitude... He is handed a beer... He sees R.J....

R.J.
(singing)
"This side/Niggas-too-hardcore/That
side/Niggas-too-hardcooorreee..."

R.J. opens his eyes... He sees Fletcher, standing there, looking just as clunky and out-of-place as he feels...

R.J. nuzzles one of the Reef models...

R.J. (CONT'D)
Doc Fun. This is "Windy". Her father
named her "Windy" cos he was a sailor and
wind was his gold. How phat is that?

FLETCHER
Fairly phat...

R.J. giggles... He likes that...

R.J.
Fairly phat! Fairly-fucking-phat!

He goes to Fletcher... Embraces him... Fletcher looks uncomfortable... He doesn't know the kid that well...

R.J. (CONT'D)
You look good, Doc. In a bloated, boozy
kind of way...

FLETCHER
Capillary action. Keeps me perky. You ready?

R.J.
Yeah. Lemme just get my shit...
(whispers in Fletcher's ear)
You want a blow-job before we go?

FLETCHER
Thanks, R.J., I'm flattered, but we got an eight-hour drive --

R.J.
Not from me, Doc! From Windy's sister!
That's...

He gestures to the other Reef model... Fletcher says it with him:

FLETCHER
Breezy...

R.J. blinks, amazed...

R.J.
Yeah. How'd you know?

Fletcher shrugs...

R.J. (CONT'D)
Right, right. This ain't your first barbecue... Okay... Gimme a sec...

R.J. disappears into the crowd, dragging Windy and Breezy... Fletcher watches them go... Watches the stream of dancing, raging KIDS, his expression at once amused and wistful: just cos you've been-there-done-that doesn't mean the nostalgia still doesn't prickle...

As Fletcher walks back through the house. He sees a dark room, lit only by a computer screen. He stops, goes in...

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

A regular surfer's weather room... Some weather maps, charts and photographs... a computer is already logged on: WAVETRACKS.COM...

Fletcher moves the mouse, clicks, calls up a MAP of THE UNITED STATES, clicks again, calls up the WEST COAST, moves the arrow to the CALIFORNIA/OREGON Border, clicks one last time... calls up a satellite weather photograph, and sees it for the first time -- THE STORM, a swirling mass of cloud...

He goes to the BEACH CAMERA at Seaside Oregon -- A LIVE SHOT... the entire beach, closed-out, one thundering giant after another...

Fletcher stares into the screen, eye to eye with the thing he is going to meet... then turns and walks from the room.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - SEAL BEACH - DAY

Fletcher waits in the van, lost in thought, pulled rudely back into the present as R. J. descends upon him, ripping open the back door, throwing in his gear -- board bags and stuff bags, banging fists with his BROS... kissing Windy and Breezy, then heaving himself into the passenger seat...

R.J.
Me and Doc Fun. Going to find Drew
Harmon and the mystic wave. This is so
old-school, it's what they tore down to
build the old school!

R.J. howls... Fletcher hits the gas... They're off...

EXT. FLETCHER'S VAN - MOVING - DAY

Due north they go... Fletcher at the wheel, working a length of bubble-wrap... R.J. drinking beer and eating pork rinds from the bag, tugging on a roach of hydroponic nuggety-nug...

R.J.
You remember the last time we worked
together, Doc? It was like three years
ago... The mag got you out on the rocks
under that old church to shoot the
Eddie... It was you and Phib Duncan, the
only two photogs they'd let out there --
one for each magazine... It was a
beautiful day... Lines stacked up to the
horizon... A huge clean-up set or two...

FLETCHER
I remember --

R.J.
You shot the whole thing... Got some
truly epic snaps...

FLETCHER
Yep...

R.J.
With film you'd *already exposed*...

FLETCHER
I love these strolls down memory lane...

R.J.
Bro, you fought the drugs. And the drugs
won --

And R.J. laughs... And Fletcher drives... So we

CUT TO:

A TRAVEL MONTAGE

as Fletcher steers the van into California's midsection -- two hundred miles of farmland and John Deere balers, cattle waiting for the slaughter...

A SERIES OF CUTS

display R.J.'s frenetic energy, as boundless as the landscape... Nonstop surf speak... Puffing blunts, guzzling beer, eating junk food, rocking to the radio, cat-calling to passing HOTTIES, ripping through surf magazines, showing Fletcher all the dopest snaps...

Fletcher just keeps it real... Driving on...

Into the redwoods and mountain roads... Through sorry little outposts of humanity, until even these are gone and there is nothing but forest, by which time R.J. has given it up, snoring in the passenger seat, spent like a five-year-old after a day at Disneyland...

Fletcher swallows a pill and bears down... Because... The drive goes on...

There are no interstates leading into the lost coast. The rented van runs on alone, a white speck on a twisting ribbon of asphalt, dwarfed by the ancient trees, beneath a darkening sky, as... it begins to rain.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. VAN - MOVING - DAY

The rain comes in sheets now, as Fletcher glimpses what may be the first sign of human habitation he's seen in hours. He pulls over, rolls down a rain-streaked window for a better look and comes face to face with the carcass of a spotted owl, freshly spiked to the trunk of a towering redwood.

A little sign has been nailed to the tree beneath the bird's tail: "THIS COMMUNITY SUPPORTED BY TIMBER".

Welcome to back to SWEET HOME, where the road ends, both literally and figuratively.

Fletcher rolls up his window, drops the van into gear and enters the town.

EXT. SWEET HOME - DAY

A regular boom town once, before the slash and burn timber wars of the late 'Seventies laid the mountains to waste...

Not much here now but a smattering of tin-roofed storefronts and grim little bars... And of course the fifteen foot statue of BIG FOOT THE BEAST... erected at town center in anticipation of a tourist trade that's been a long time coming...

Fletcher pulls up in front of the huge wooden animal and stops.

INT. FLETCHER'S VAN -DAY

Fletcher shivers, spreading a map across the steering wheel -- as R.J. opens his eyes, sees Big Foot, and comes-to with a start...

R.J.
Christ!

Fletcher smiles. R. J. shakes his head.

R.J. (CONT'D)
Give a guy a coronary... Where are we?

FLETCHER
Sweet Home.

R.J. clocks the desolate little burg...

R.J.
And what optimistic asshole named it that?

He fishes in his sweatshirt pocket for a roach... Starts to light it, when --

FLETCHER
Easy, R.J. --

Because he sees -- across the street -- a WHITE FORD BRONCO with a gold shield on the door... and Travis McCade, the Deputy, sitting behind the wheel...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
Wait here...

R.J.
Are you sure, bro? Cos I was gonna go check out the nightlife --

Fletcher gets out, as R.J. slumps dispiritedly into his seat.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Fletcher crosses the street to the Bronco. Travis rolls down his window...

TRAVIS
Can I help you?

FLETCHER
There's a road marked on here I can't seem to find...

Travis takes the map, reading the notes scrawled on it... We see him visibly tighten...

TRAVIS
You trying to find Drew Harmon's place?

FLETCHER
Yeah. You know him?

Travis doesn't answer... But Fletcher groks the shift in Travis' demeanor -- a little uneasy now...

TRAVIS
There's an old logging road back there where you crossed the river. Take it toward the coast. You can't miss it... Although you might want to wait 'til morning... You don't want to get lost on these roads at night...

FLETCHER
You sound like a pubkeeper telling me to "keep off the Moors" in one of those old werewolf movies...

TRAVIS
You've no idea how right you are, friend... Take care now...

And Travis drives off... Leaving Fletcher to look after him... Fletcher walks back to the van...

R.J.
What'd he say?

FLETCHER
He said: don't get lost...

EXT./INT. FLETCHER'S VAN - MOMENTS LATER - DUSK

They're lost. Lost on a logging road, deep among the redwoods, inching along a steep switchback, as huge, dripping ferns drag at the windows, and the light fails among the trees...

R.J., baked, grooves on it all...

R.J.
This is some cool shit up here, bro.

Fletcher glances at him, pissed... R.J. shouts:

R.J. (CONT'D)
WATCH OUT -- !

Fletcher looks ahead... And HITS HIS BRAKES...

The van slides through the mud, slamming to a stop six inches before a huge fallen TREE...

R.J. (CONT'D)
Fallen tree, bro...

Fletcher glares at him... And then shoulders his door open... Leaving R.J. to sit there, staring into the gloom... Suddenly spooked...

R.J. (CONT'D)
Yo, wait for me...!

EXT. THE WOODS - LATER

Fletcher and R.J., now on foot and soaked to the bone, push through chest-high ferns...

They emerge into a CLEARING, and come to a dead stop...

They have come to the very edge of a towering CLIFF...

The rain has backed off and the Pacific lies two hundred feet below, turned to the color of old brass in the light of the setting sun...

The beach, littered with rocks and driftwood, is split by the mouth of a broad RIVER where it empties into the sea.

The ocean surface is muddied and confused, with waves crossing at treacherous angles. Suddenly, however --

A huge outside WAVE begins to build north of the river. The wave lumbers toward the coast then finds a REEF, going suddenly top to bottom, a 30-foot face turned toward the cliffs before breaking in sections 50 feet long. There is an accompanying SOUND comparable to cluster bombs dropped from high altitude...

R.J.
What do you think? Izzat Heart Attacks?

But Fletcher is distracted by something else... Because a beautiful

ROOSEVELT ELK

stands completely still, amidst a mezzotint of ferns and branches, a light steam rising from its coat...

R.J. (CONT'D)
Whoa --

Fletcher holds up a hand to silence him... The elk stares at them with its huge liquid eye. They are transfixed...

This is a moment. Only the vague thunder of the shorebreak below, and the sporadic honks and tweets of the avian denizens of the forest are heard...

It's almost perfect. A perfect moment. Nature, at her purest; bright and shining and God-affirming...

But then --

AN ARROW

FLIES through the woods...

Taking the elk cleanly through the neck.

The beast leaps and wails, then falls to the ground in a spasm of death, its blood spraying the delicate ferns...

Fletcher grabs R.J. and takes him to the ground. They cower. The woods are silent, and then a SOUND... Someone approaching from the opposite side of the dead elk...

A figure EMERGES from the gloom... A big MAN, with a CROSSBOW in his hands, and a quiver of arrows slung over one shoulder. This is

DREW HARMON

Early 40s. Surf legend, big wave charger, freak-of-fucking-nature... Brown as a berry, handsome as a bastard, with baby blues that Cool Hand Luke'd covet...

Two parts Zeus, one part Ahab, a dash of Grizzly Adams, a sprinkle of Jim Morrison circa "L.A. WOMAN", and one rounded teaspoon of The Mad Hatter... All mixed-up in a Papa Hemingway blender...

DREW

Damn, boys. You really missed it. You should've been here yesterday.

An old surfer's joke. Fletcher smiles. R.J. just stares.

FLETCHER

How are you, Drew?

DREW

Dr. Fun! Doctor-fucking-Fun...! Last time I saw this guy, he was wearing a stewardess for a hat --

FLETCHER

Her name was Nora.

DREW

Right, right. Nora The Fedora. You look good, Doc. A little old. A little crispy. But good...

FLETCHER

You, too, Drew...

Harmon slaps him roughly on the back... - - - - -

DREW

And this must be the superstar...

FLETCHER

Robbie Jones, Drew Harmon...

R.J. continues to stare at the twitching elk...

R.J.
Why'd ya have to go and kill the moose?

DREW
Elk. It's an elk.
(to Fletcher)
Where's your ride -- ?

Fletcher waves towards the woods...

FLETCHER
There was a tree across the road.

DREW
I know. I put it there.
(off their looks)
Security...

FLETCHER
From what?

DREW
Better use the light to get your car
turned around. Go back the way you came.
You'll see a little bridge about a mile
back. Take a right this time... It's the
long way around but it will get you
there.

Drew returns to the fallen elk, drawing a huge Bowie knife...

R.J.
You're not gonna --

But Drew stops, smiling at the distant THUNDER of another big
WAVE breaking over deep water.

DREW
Swell started hitting this afternoon. It
will be bigger by morning...

R.J.
Is that it? Is that Heart Attacks?

The smile drains from Drew's face. He bends to the elk...

DREW
I'll meet you boys at the house. You
don't want to get lost on these logging
roads when the sun goes down.

FLETCHER
Why's everybody keep saying that...?

But Drew's answer is the THUNCHING SOUND of his knife sinking
into the elk...

EXT. FLETCHER'S VAN - NIGHT

as it rolls from the forest, stopping in a muddy turnout at the edge of a river... They come out to

AN OLD SHACK

on a wooden landing, around which a number of SURFBOARDS lean against weathered siding.

The land here is wooded, rising sharply from the water's edge and further up the hillside,

A LOG CABIN

can be glimpsed among the trees. A club sandwich of time and the elements has done its best to render this abode unsightly, but nothing can deny its obvious craftsmanship or its quiet loveliness.

R.J.

So Doc... Tell me: what does a guy like Harmon want with pictures?

Fletcher stares into the gloomy setting.

FLETCHER

That's what nobody knows.

EXT. DREW'S PLACE - NIGHT

Fletcher and R.J. start up the stairs, leading to the log cabin... But they are stopped by DREW'S VOICE, booming at them from the trees...

DREW (O.S.)

That ain't the way. It's down here.

Drew stands behind them, a lantern in his hand. As R.J. turns to go, Fletcher sees something on the landing at the top of the stairs:

It is a WOMAN, early 30s. She is stunning, albeit witchy, with her long, raven hair, framed in the yellow light... She looks down on Fletcher... This is KENDRA...

Fletcher is taken by the sight, until...

DREW (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Doc Fun. That's Kendra. Kendra, say hello to the good Doctor...

Kendra nods.... Harmon slaps Fletcher on the back...

DREW (CONT'D)

Let's go, Doc.

As Drew leads him toward the shack, Fletcher sneaks a last look at the landing. But the girl is gone in full-on will-o'-the-wisp fashion.

None of this is lost on Drew, who big-grins it cheerfully.

INT. DREW'S SHACK - NIGHT

A camping stove and mattress occupy one corner. The rest of the room is filled with books, tapes, tools and huge PLANKS OF EXOTIC WOODS...

Across one wall rest half-dozen beautiful BIG WAVE BOARDS, shaped from redwood and balsa.

At the center of the room there is another board, freshly glassed, supported by two saw horses.

Drew stands at an old work bench, pulling cans of tamales, from a cardboard box, firing up his hot plate.

FLETCHER

You know Peters set me up with an expense account for this trip. If there's anyplace in town you'd like to eat...

Fletcher looks toward the log cabin.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

We could take your friend, or whomever...

DREW

She's not my friend. She's my wife. And we don't go into town. We're not liked.

FLETCHER

Why not?

Drew softens several tortillas on a skillet...

DREW

There was an incident.

FLETCHER

"An incident?"

DREW

Yes. On karaoke night. I sang "Wichita Lineman". Badly. They take their Glen Campbell real serious up here!

Fletcher just looks at him. R.J. checks out the board on the saw horses.

R.J.

Yo Drew, where'd you get this? Antique store? Museum? The Retired Surfers Home?

DREW

The forest. That was 300 pounds of solid redwood. Had to send all the way to Ecuador for the balsa...

He continues to fry up the tamales...

R.J.
You made it?

DREW
Made all of them, ace... I've been building and collecting for years now, You won't see anything like this... Anywhere... I thought maybe the Doc could get some snaps of me and you riding a couple of them...

R.J.
No way, bro... this thing must way thirty pounds...

DREW
Thirty-five pounds.

R.J.
Exactly. It's a couch.

DREW
What was the water temp when you left the islands, superstar? 80 degrees?

R.J.
Yassa...

DREW
We get to Heart Attacks, we'll be lucky if the water hits fifty. You know what the difference is between a 30 foot wave in eighty degree water and a 30 foot wave in fifty degree water?

R.J.
Thirty degrees.

Drew transfers the finished tamales, crisp and brown, onto a paper-towel-lined pan... Then pulls a sheet of paper out from beneath the empty tin cans and walks across the room.

R.J. (CONT'D)
What's that?

Drew spreads the paper over the deck of the board, smoothing it out so they can all see it.

DREW
Weather map. A little picture of what's coming.
(to R.J.)
How big were the waves when you left the islands?

R.J.
I dunno... Thirty, thirty-five feet, maybe... The Bay was closing out...

DREW

Right. Well guess what? This thing is feeding off a second low moving down from Canada. It's picking up speed. The swell is getting bigger. And I'll tell you something else, Heart Attacks won't Close-out... You're gonna see sixty foot faces out there...

R.J.

Great. Where's the jet ski?

DREW

Don't need one.

R.J.

Come on, man... you can't paddle into something that big.

DREW

Maybe not with what you're riding...

Drew runs a hand along the rail of the big wooden gun.

DREW (CONT'D)

The colder the water is, the denser it is. You get one of those big, cold motherfuckers coming down on you, you'll think you've been buried in wet cement... You'll have an ice-cream headache so extreme, it's like your melon's been shot off by a 300-grain silvertip... And to a point, your right. At sixty feet... You can't paddle into it... on a light board.
(a beat)

Take my advice. You paddle out on one of these, the spirits will smile on you...

R.J.

That's cool. You ever done it?

DREW

Done what?

R.J.

Paddle into one of these waves you're talking about?

Drew just looks at him, then turns to Fletcher.

DREW

How about you, Doc? What did you bring?

FLETCHER

You mean to shoot with...?

DREW

I mean to shoot from.

There is a long beat of silence between the two men.

FLETCHER
I didn't bring anything, Drew. I don't shoot from the water anymore, but then you knew that.

DREW
I'd heard it. I took it for mean spirited bullshit spread by jealous rivals.

FLETCHER
No bullshit, Drew. Fact.

R.J.
Word in the islands is... even Evian bottles make him nervous.

R.J. cackles. Drew ignores him.

DREW
You got old on me, didn't ya, Doc?

FLETCHER
You have no idea...

DREW
Actually... I do.

He grabs an old jacket from a peg on the wall.

DREW (CONT'D)
Tamales are finished. There's cerveza in the ice chest. You want to piss, do it in the river.

R.J.
Where you going?

DREW
I gotta get supplies. Stay put. Stay outta town. We leave at first light.

R.J.
What are we supposed to do?

DREW
Do anything you like. As long as you don't do it in the road and frighten the horses...

Drew walks out singing:

DREW (CONT'D)
(singing)

"And I need you more than want you/And I
want you for all time/And the Wichita
Lineman/Is still on the liine..."

And, after he's gone, his brazen baritone fading off:

R.J.
What fucking horses?

INT. DREW'S SHAPING SHACK - NIGHT

R. J. smokes a fatty, watching a surf video on Drew's battered Zenith...

EXT. DREW'S SHAPING SHACK - NIGHT

Fletcher sits on the porch, nursing a beer and his bubble-wrap... He sees a FLASH OF WHITE in the thicket... He moves toward it...

Along the trail, in the gathering darkness, trying to get his pill bottle open... And nearly collides with --

KENDRA HARMON

moving out of the shadows from the opposite direction, dressed in a white shift and chunky flip-flops.

Fletcher just stares. He can't quite help it. The girl is downright radiant in the pale light...

KENDRA

You must be the photographer.

FLETCHER

How'd you guess?

KENDRA

The pills...

FLETCHER

Oh. Right.

KENDRA

Your reputation precedes you...

She points to the bubble-wrap stuffed under one arm...

KENDRA (CONT'D)

And what's that?

FLETCHER

A little affectation I picked up along the way. Years ago, it made me oddly eccentric. Now, I'm afraid, I'm just a dork who makes popping sounds.

Kendra laughs... A lovely little flute-like eruption she covers, embarrassed, with her hand.

KENDRA

Drew said you were a friend of his from the islands...

FLETCHER

Not a friend exactly. We knew each other there.

KENDRA
The glory days...

FLETCHER
And then some...

Kendra nods, sadly. She stares into the darkness, then moves off toward the river...

Fletcher watches her go, stuffs the bubble wrap in his pocket, dry swallows a Nembutal, and follows her...

EXT. THE FOREST -NIGHT

Kendra and Fletcher have come into a MEADOW, from which they can see the RIVER - a ribbon of light among the trees...

FLETCHER
Wow...

KENDRA
You forget sometimes. You lose it to the fog, the rain... then... this...

Fletcher sits on a log to catch his breath... Kendra looks at him... She smiles once more in that sad way...

KENDRA (CONT'D)
Drew speaks quite highly of you. But you said you weren't his friend.

Fletcher looks at her, shrugs...

FLETCHER
The nature of the times, perhaps... There was always a party, always lots of people, and booze, and....

KENDRA
Girls...

FLETCHER
Yes, and those. The North Shore was like the wild west in those days. There was a little money in the sport for the first time. Everyday there was some crew shooting a new surf flick, a new magazine on the racks... people scrambling for a piece of the pie, everybody from iron men to holy goofs.

Kendra smiles.

KENDRA
Which were you? Iron man or holy goof?

Fletcher laughs.

FLETCHER
I was an iron man, for about fifteen minutes.

KENDRA
Drew says you got hurt.

FLETCHER
Yea, well... he ought to know.

KENDRA
You were together?

FLETCHER
We were pretty much always together when it came to the surf... You might say we made each other's reputation.

(a beat)
I wouldn't want you to think there weren't good times... moments of purity... Drew could make anything possible out there. But without me, it never happened, it was just ephemera, finished the moment it was done, with only the Gods and a few folks on the beach to testify it had ever occurred...

KENDRA
So what happened?

FLETCHER
Operation Avalanche.

Kendra laughs.

KENDRA
Sounds like a bad spy movie...

FLETCHER
Exactly so... It was a dumb stunt is what it was... a dumb stunt played for publicity... It deserved to fail... I probably deserved to get hurt...

KENDRA
And Drew?

FLETCHER
Walked away without a scratch... Always did... From everything...

KENDRA
Why do I get the feeling you blame him for that?

Fletcher shrugs. Kendra reaches down to pick some flowers at her feet... And she is backlit by the moonlight, her body clearly limned through the sheer white shift...

FLETCHER
That is one beautiful coastline...

She looks at him... But he recovers, gesturing to the shore. She nods... There's a beat of silence...

As Kendra moves, something spills from the neckline of her shift -- a little wooden surfboard attached to a thin strip of rawhide. She wears it around her neck, though till now it has been hidden by the shift.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
What's that -- ?

He examines the little board, unaware of the haunted look in Kendra's eyes...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
It's a little hot curl board.

He turns it over for her to see the bottom.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
See the little V in the bottom? That's how the Hawaiians made their boards before the haoles taught them about fins... But you probably know that...

KENDRA
Drew says it was a pure design... born from a pure source... He says the haoles didn't just change the boards... they changed everything...

FLETCHER
I guess that's one way of looking at it.

Kendra looks him in the eye, suddenly very intense, as if she has made up her mind about something...

KENDRA
There was a girl, from upriver, Amanda Jaffy... A young Hupa... Quite beautiful. She was found last week, in a motel room on the outskirts of town with her throat cut. She was four months pregnant.
(a beat)
They arrested her boyfriend. The man had a history of violence.

She exhibits the little surfboard for Fletcher to see.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
They say he had one of these when they caught him... They say it had the girl's name scratched in the back...

FLETCHER
(a beat)
Who exactly are "they"?

KENDRA
The sheriff... his deputy. They were out here asking Drew about the little board?

FLETCHER
What did he tell them?

The girl fixes him with a long look...

KENDRA

You know the first settlers up here used to go mad with alarming frequency. It's true. There were so many trees. They couldn't see the sky and it rained for days on end. They were crawling over each other like blind worms...

Fletcher is not sure what to say to that... But lest he fumble a response:

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Goodbye --

And she walks off... Into the forest... Into the mist...

Gone.

EXT. DREW'S SHAPING SHACK - LATER - NIGHT

Fletcher's got the van in gear, backing up, rattled by his encounter with Kendra. R. J. comes out of the shack...

R.J.

Where you going -- ?

FLETCHER

I feel like dancing...

R.J.

He said to stay put.

FLETCHER

So stay put.

R. J. looks back at the spooky shack, the thick suede forest... Considers... Fletcher pins the gas... And...

R. J. does a run-and-jump into the van...

INT. FLETCHER'S VAN / EXT. DOWNTOWN, SWEET HOME - NIGHT

Quiet. A few shadowy figures lurch drunkenly from one feeble street-lamp gloaming to the next.

R.J.

Come To Sweet Home: Where Good Times Go To Die...

At which point... they are

NEARLY SIDE-SWIPE --

by an old, battle-scarred Dodge POWER WAGON, worn to the metal and bearing upon its back a homegrown camper of outrageous proportions...

R. J. howls, sticks his head out the window, screams:

R.J. (CONT'D)
YOU MANIAC -- !

He catches a glimpse of the, DRIVER -- a spectral, red-eyed ALBINO, his face twisted in a maniacal grin...

As the Dodge veers off, its absurd load swaying and groaning like some runaway calliope...

R.J. (CONT'D)
That was close...

Fletcher's van rolls up in front of one little clapboard saloon: "TED'S BUCKET OF SUDS".

R.J. (CONT'D)
Good choice, Doc. We shoulda called in advance. Give 'em time to fire-up the chain saws...

INT. TED'S BUCKET OF SUDS - NIGHT

Picture "THE ICE-MAN COMETH" as re-imagined by Diane Arbus. As in any decent lumberjack bar, not a soul here is complete: missing eyes, arms, teeth, legs, ears.

We should also note a short Indian KID, 18, dressed like a gangbanger. This is BEAN DIP... He sits near the bar, watching all...

Fletcher grabs a stool, sits down. R. J. nods to a few of the LOCALS, who merely stare as he takes the stool next to Fletcher, now speaking to the beefy blonde BARMAID --

FLETCHER
What's your name?

BARMAID
Lucy --

FLETCHER
Jack, rocks, lucy...

The barmaid's eyes tick to R.J.

R.J.
Corona, lime...

She grunts and goes to fetch their drinks.

R.J. (CONT'D)
Why do you care what her name is?

FLETCHER
That's not the question, R. J. The question is: why don't you care?

R. J. scowls. Scans the joint. The eyes of the world are on them...

R.J.
You could build five whole people using
just what this bunch is missing.

The front door opens. To the ALBINO who nearly side-swiped them. He has long, white hair and boo-koo tattoos. And his name is FROSTY.

Frosty nods to someone sitting in the rear of the joint, in the shadows. He then leans in to LUCY, the barmaid --

FROSTY
You know how to make a "Big Red Hooter",
Lady?

BARMAID
No.

FROSTY
You make me one, I tell you how?

BARMAID
We'll see --

R. J. clocks Frosty. Recognizes him from the side-swipe.

FROSTY
It's tequila, Amaretto, pineapple juice
and Grenadine. All rocked together.

BARMAID
In what proportion?

FROSTY
I dunno. My friend Cecil Herbert, makes
'em... They're dee-licious!

BARMAID
I dunno the proportion, I can't help
you...

As Frosty notices R.J. staring at him...

FROSTY
What're you lookin' at, balloon dog?

R.J.
One shitty driver --

FLETCHER
R. J. --

Too late... Frosty is into R.J.'s face almost at once...

FROSTY
Got a plan, beautiful?

R.J.
Just that you should watch where you're
going. You coulda killed us...

FROSTY
Izzat so?

R.J.
That's so...

And now they're nose to nose... The bar goes quiet... Trouble is a regular occurrence here, but it's always fun to watch...

ANGLE - SUBJECTIVE P.O.V. From the back. Watching them.

FROSTY
I just get to thinking, seein' ya, that you'd look real nice curled up around my feet. Like a kitten.

And he licks a thumb. And rubs it across R. J.'s left cheek. R. J. recoils... But before he can parry...

Fletcher is out of his seat... Hands on Frosty's shoulders... Firm, yet not unfriendly...

FROSTY (CONT'D)
What do you want -- ?

FLETCHER
It's an ounce of tequila, 3/4 ounce Amaretto, to an ounce of Grenadine. Then you fill up the rest with pineapple juice.

FROSTY
What?

FLETCHER
"Big Red Hooter". That's how you make it...

R.J.
Fletcher...

FLETCHER
That's it. Lucy, make the man a "Big Red Hooter." I'm buying --

His grip is strong, his weary eyes flash some kind of heat; some kind of heat that Frosty recognizes from years in the pen... The heat of nothing left to lose... But:

VOICE (O.S.)
What's going on, Frosty?

The voice belongs to

WILLIAM LITTLE,

Early 30's, rangy, all cell-block sinew and shoulder-length black hair. With him is a MASSIVE DUDE with a shaggy beard and full-sleeve-tattooed arms. This is SNACKTIME... They were the ones watching from the back of the bar...

FROSTY
Not much.

William Little's dark eyes tick to Fletcher and R. J.

WILLIAM LITTLE
Who are your friends?

FROSTY
Just met 'em. The pretty one's a little smart... But they're good boys...

WILLIAM LITTLE
(to R. J.)
Smart? You're smart?

LUCY THE BARMAID
We don't want any trouble here...

FLETCHER
No trouble. Just another one of these.

He waves the shot glass... William Little is fixed on R. J.

WILLIAM LITTLE
Like a dolphin. Dolphin's are smart.

R.J.
Whatever, bro...

And R.J. turns back to the bar, to Fletcher...

WILLIAM LITTLE
Do you know that a blindfolded dolphin can find a shirt-button at the bottom of its tank?

Fletcher and R. J both turn back toward him --

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)
Think you're that smart?

And he takes a bandana from his back-pocket... Shakes it out... Twirls it into a blindfold... Grins...

And Frosty plucks a button from R. J.'s Pendleton shirt...

R.J.
Hey...

Frosty flicks the button into the barroom...

William Little holds the bandana to R. J.'s eyes...

Fletcher gets to his feet, but Snacktime blocks his way...

It's all turning into a wild clusterfuck. Until --

The FRONT DOOR OPENS. And, all back-lit and combustible, stands Drew harmon

DREW

I told you to stay put, Doc. There is no safety from the courage of children.

And he walks into the bar... So formidable in his forthrightness...

DREW (CONT'D)

I see you met William Little, Jack. Or, as they call him in the cathouses: Little William.

WILLIAM LITTLE

You got some sack onya, Harmon, I'll give you that --

DREW

I know, I know...

(to Fletcher)

I told you: Glen Campbell freaks.

He turns to Frosty, still in the clinches with R. J.

DREW (CONT'D)

You wanna leggo a him, partner? Or risk it all for a man you don't even know?

Beat... As eyes dart and alliances are drawn, and positions telegraphed... Drew turns to William Little:

DREW (CONT'D)

Maybe you'd like to tell your bleached factotum to desist -- ?

Drew and William share the glare.

WILLIAM LITTLE

Oh, I think maybe he'd like to hear that from you, Harmon... Then maybe he'd like to hear about how you did his partner...

DREW

Maybe he'd just like to hear a little "Rhinestone Cowboy?"

Fletcher and R. J. look at Drew, shocked. Especially as Drew begins to sing:

DREW (CONT'D)

(Singing)

"I been walking these streets to long/singing the same old son/ I k n ow every crack in these dirty sidewalks of Broadway..."

William Little and his chums just stare at him. Drew takes Fletcher by one arm, R. J. by another...

And leads them out of the joint....

ANGLE - BEAN DIP. Watching. And smiling...

EXT. TED'S BUCKET OF SUDS - NIGHT

Drew leads them out of the bar... back to their van...

DREW
Thought I told you to stay put...

They've crossed the street. As the door to Ted's opens... As William Little and his sidekicks come out...

WILLIAM LITTLE
Why you makin' yourself so scarce
upriver, Harmon... You know there's more
pretty girls than one...

A ribbon of asphalt separates them... Drew turns back, and Fletcher can see it in his eyes -- the fleeting starburst of fury...

But then the WHITE SHERIFF'S BRONCO pulls up... And Deputy Travis McCade steps out... Between them...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)
Deputy McCade. How goes it?

TRAVIS
Goes fine, William. But I'd hate to lock
you up, your first night back in town...

WILLIAM LITTLE
I don't know. You lock me up, I could
have a little sit-down with my buddy
Marvus...
(with a look at Drew)
Get his take on things...

TRAVIS
You can do that tomorrow, as scheduled.
Go back inside. Now.

William Little hesitates. Travis' hand moves, ever-so-subtly, to the butt of his gun... A tacit urging...

William Little cobbles up a good glob of snot and saliva. And hocks a looeey in the general direction of Harmon, then walks back into the bar, Frosty and Snacktime behind him.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
I warned you away from that crew...

DREW
They weren't being hospitable to my out-
of-town guests... That's all...

TRAVIS
There's a lot percolating around here,
Drew. Maybe it's a good time for you and
yours to stay away...

DREW

I appreciate your concern, Deputy... I'll keep that in mind...

Travis offers a last, withering look, then walks back to his Bronco. The surfers can see him in the front seat, talking into his radio.

R.J.

Who are those assholes?

DREW

Locals call 'em ridge-runners. They live up river, run contraband on the back roads, everything from illegal salmon hauls to crystal meth and they'd just as soon cut your throat as look at you... which is what these particular assholes are doing in town. They've got one of their own locked down for murder in the local jail...

FLETCHER

He the one that killed his girl friend?

Drew gives him a long look.

DREW

Doc... Sounds to me like you've made a friend in my absence.

(a beat)

Maybe you ought to get back there. And get your gear ready...

R.J.

What about you?

DREW

One more stop. I'll be right behind you. We leave tonight. I want to be on the river before first light.

FLETCHER

On the river?

DREW

That's right Doc. You don't think they've built a road to Heart Attacks and put in a parking lot? The best approach is off the ocean, straight up the coast. We'll take the boat.

Drew walks back to his van, then looks at them one more time.

DREW (CONT'D)

There's a reason this place has been a secret for so long.

Drew slams his door, fires up the dilapidated van and drives off into the night.

R.J.
Oh, yeah. This is some kind of party.

EXT. DREW'S LANDING - NIGHT

Where an inflatable Zodiac - frayed at the edges, bleached by the sun, patched in duct tape, sits on the wooden deck...

Drew tinkers with an ancient outboard motor, beneath which a small pool of oil winks in the moonlight...

R. J. and Fletcher look on, R. J. amused, puffing a blunt, Fletcher aghast...

FLETCHER
This is bullshit... there's gotta be another way...

DREW
Yea? What way is that, Doc?

Fletcher is of course, without an answer.

DREW (CONT'D)
I'm tryin to help you out here, Doc. You shoot this place from the beach, you won't get dick. And you won't shoot it from the water... So what's the next best thing? You shoot it from a boat...

FLETCHER
Except, that's not a boat.

DREW
You don't have to surf it, Doc. You don't have to roll a wave with it. Christ, you can sit a hundred yards off the impact zone. At least you'll get the pictures...

R.J.
He checks his film first...

Drew Harmon gets to his feet. He wipes his hands on a rag, looking Fletcher in the eye...

DREW
That's what you came for, isn't it, Doc... get the pictures... get back into their club...

FLETCHER
I don't know, Drew... I don't much like their club anymore. Not since I puked in the coat-check room...

DREW
I glad to hear you say that, Doc... But it'd be nice if they asked, wouldn't it?

(MORE)

DREW (CONT'D)
Just so you could tell them what to do
with the invitation.

He hands the rag to R. J.

DREW (CONT'D)
Clean the rest of that oil up for me,
will you?

And walks into the trees.

INT. DREW'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Kendra sits alone on the floor, a half-empty bottle of wine
by her side. Candles burning...

DREW (O.S.)
Did you call Pam?

Drew is standing in the doorway. Kendra looks at him
without answering.

Drew sighs. He goes to the sink, splashes water on his face
and draws his hands back through his hair, plastering it to
his skull.

KENDRA
What was Operation Avalanche?

Drew turns to her, the water dripping from his face.

DREW
I see you got to meet the doctor. Amanda
Jaffey. Operation Avalanche. Was there
anything you didn't talk about?

KENDRA
I want you to talk to me, Drew.

DREW
Avalanche is a Hawaiian reef... too big
to surf on a board.
(smiling)
I once convinced a magazine it could be
surfied in an outrigger canoe. They
wanted Doc to take the pictures.
(a beat)
I was wrong. Couldn't be surfied in a
canoe either...

KENDRA
Well.. that's a start. Will you tell
me...

But Drew crosses the room, stopping her short. He puts his
hand to the side of her face, caressing her, brushing the
corner of her mouth with his thumb...

DREW
Kendra...

She looks up... expectantly... But Drew's hand falls to his side. He leans forward, his face like some haunted bird of prey, to kiss her lightly on her forehead.

DREW (CONT'D)

I want you to call Pam. Okay? I want you to call her tonight. I don't want you out here alone.

(a beat)

Will you do that? Will you do that for me.

She looks at him a long moment, hurt, frustrated. When she answers however, it is by rote, without conviction.

KENDRA

Of course.

His fingers reach to touch her face once more... but at the last moment, she turns away, impassive, cold in the amber flicker of the candlelight... Drew studies her a moment longer, then turns and walks from the room.

INT. SWEET HOME SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Travis sits at his desk, doing paperwork. Sheriff Blacklage walks in, rubbing his hands to warm them up.

BLACKLAGE

We change our visiting hours lately?

Travis looks up. Blacklage nods toward the street.

Travis looks through the blinds covering the window...

What he SEES is THE POWER WAGON BEARING ITS OUTRAGEOUS LOAD.

BLACKLAGE (CONT'D)

William Little?

TRAVIS

And friends.

BLACKLAGE

Want me to move them along?

TRAVIS

Why bother? Another day or two, we get Marvus shipped down to Eureka for trial, we'll be shed of the whole lot...

(a beat)

I'm looking forward to it, believe me.

BLACKLAGE

Our boy still protesting his innocence?

TRAVIS

Night and day. Says the girl was dead when he got there... Says he knew no one would ever believe him...

BLACKLAGE
Yea, well... he's got that right.

Travis looks over his paperwork.

TRAVIS
The lab says Amanda had skin under her nails. We find out whose, maybe we'll know if we owe Mr. Dove an apology.

Blacklage offers a sour look.

BLACKLAGE
Poor girl just about had her head sliced off... had her forearm snapped like a twig. If it wasn't Marvus, it was somebody damn near as strong...

Travis opens a desk drawer, and takes out the little wooden surfboard on its broken rawhide string. He tosses the board on the desk top, where both men look at it -- a long beat...

BLACKLAGE (CONT'D)
Harmon?

TRAVIS
Let's see what the lab says.

Blacklage nods, then walks across the room.

BLACKLAGE
I'm gonna look in on the prisoner, then call it a day.

Travis picks up his pen, goes back to work...

TRAVIS
(without looking up)
Keep your distance. Guy's got a grip.

INT. HOLDING CELLS - DAY

Blacklage walks down the corridor. The other cells are empty. Blacklage doesn't heed Travis' words. He walks close to the bars. Too close. He talks as he walks:

BLACKLAGE
How about it, Marvus... You looking forward to the big bus ride? I hear they got a new warden at Pelican Bay...

which is as far as Blacklage gets -- as a hand thick as a dictionary, shoots out from between the bars, snaring Blacklage's shirt --

Slamming him to the bars... Where a second hand wraps around Sheriff's throat... Squeezing --

And there is Marvus Dove. Teeth clenched. Neck veins corded. Choking...

Blacklage is no match. Legs buckle. Head swimming to black. One trembling hand gropes for his service revolver...

Marvus, unaware, continues to throttle. A crowbar smile starts to form, when --

BLAM! BLAM!

Blacklage fires... Chunks of Marvus spackle the cell wall, as the big man is flung backwards...

And Blacklage goes down in a gasping huff...

And Travis comes running down the hall... And stops short, mouth agape, faces gone slack --

As he sees Marvus. Sprawled on the cell floor.

Deader'n dirt.

As, off Travis' sickened expression, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIVER - DAY

And the surfer's Zodiac -- gliding through the half light of approaching day, as a fine mist rises from water.

The old raft, with its patchwork surfaces, its load of men and gear, the surfboards lashed to its sides like primitive shields could be straight from Heart of Darkness...

And Drew sits Kurtz -- in his black wet suit, and stocking cap, beneath which his hair spills to his shoulders. He kneels by the old engine, guiding them along the river.

R. J. and Fletcher sit facing each other. R. J. munches a power bar. Fletcher sits uncomfortably in an old wet suit, a battered orange camera housing on his lap, his face a mask...

As, suddenly, Drew kills his engine, tilts it up out of the water, allowing them to drift in silence...

DREW

There! Can you hear it?

As... above the rush of the river... they HEAR what Drew wants them to hear... THE DISTANT THUNDER of huge waves...

Whereupon they round a last bend in the river... and SEE it for the first time...

THE RIVER MOUTH

Their gateway to the sea... and nothing but white water... as wave after wave DETONATES across the sand bars which mark it -- a seemingly impassable barrier...

As Drew Harmon wakes up the wildlife with an old fashioned REBEL YELL and lowers his engine, gunning them across the last of the glassy water and into...

THE MAELSTROM

Where the raft charges up the face of one wave after another, bucking over the crests, sliding into troughs...

With Drew Harmon, at the helm, eyes swimming with intensity, alternately hooting and cursing as he pushes them toward the open ocean...

R. J. joins right in, screeching above the din...

R.J.
Yo, homeboy is mad! I'm talking crazy-fucking-barnyard-bahoo mad! Drew harmon! Drew harmon rips it, yo! Rips it! His shit is straight stoops!

As Fletcher hangs on, face like a ghost... He looks toward the sea... directly into a DREDGING TEN FOOT WALL OF WATER...

But Drew just HOWLS, driving them up the face, bending the raft practically in half as they bridge the crest...

And then they are through, past the sand bars at the river's mouth, and into...

THE OPEN OCEAN

THE HORIZON does not appear as a straight line in a swell of this magnitude, but rather as a moving range of sawtooth mountains pushing down from the North.

THE BEACHES are nothing but white water...

NORTHWARD, the waves appear in silhouette, as every reef and sand bar for miles around gets into the act...

DREW
Christ, Doc... look at it... the Pacific's on fire! You ever see anything more beautiful?

And in fact, for a moment, all of them simply gape at this spectacle... The Pacific Ocean... as it stands and delivers... the swell of a lifetime

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SWEET HOME - DAY

The front door bursts open. As William Little explodes from inside. Having just received the news.

His face is a mask of rage. He looks down the sorry main drag, at last settling on "Ted's Bucket of Suds". He starts for it, Snacktime and Frosty trailing him like rabid remora.

INT. TED'S BUCKET OF SUDS - DAY

As William Little enters, the morning sun at his back, flooding the dim joint with a brilliant light... the day drinkers recoil like bugs under an upturned rock.

William Little dog-steps up to the barmaid - same as last night- Lucy...

WILLIAM LITTLE
Drew Harmon. Where's he live?

LUCY THE BARMAID
Can't help you --

He puts his gnarled hands down on top of hers.

WILLIAM LITTLE
Where -- ?

LUCY THE BARMAID
Wouldn't know. And if I did: I wouldn't tell you --

Lucy holds his sneer. The bar is silent. Until:

VOICE (O.S.)
I can take you to Harmon --

All eyes tick. To Bean Dip. The little faux gang-banger

LUCY THE BARMAID
Bean Dip, you little shit --

But Bean Dip is looking only at William Little. The kid dry-swallows in the beams of those mirthless eyes...

BEAN DIP
I can take you to Harmon...

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

As Drew takes them north, along the rugged shoreline, rising and falling among the huge ground swells...

DREW
It must be thirty feet already in some of these spots...

He waves toward the coast... toward the backsides of huge breakers exploding on rocky shores.

R.J.
Whoa... shit... check that point.

They are in fact approaching a point of land around which huge waves pour into a narrow inlet.

R.J. (CONT'D)
That's it, bro! That's Heart Attacks!
Holy shit!

Drew just laughs at him.

DREW
Actually... its a place I call
Pelicans... never seen it that big...

R.J.
Damn... you're not just going past it.

DREW
That's not where we want to be.

R.J.
Yea, but, dude... check it out, that's
pure nectar...

Drew looks at the waves wrapping around the point.

R.J. (CONT'D)
Come on, man... one tube a piece...
(a beat)
That's if your not too old and creaky to
still get a cover-up...

Drew consults a well-worn diving watch...

DREW
You're on, ace... under one condition.

R.J.
Name it, bro.

DREW
We ride my boards... The Doc here can get
a few snaps.

R.J. shakes his head but he's already unstrapping one of the
wooden guns, and grinning ear to ear... Fletcher on the other
hand looks like he's about to blow chunks

DREW (CONT'D)
Take the tiller, Doc... just follow us
in, shoot from the shoulders
(to R. J.)
Thirty minutes and we're out of here...

Drew unleashes a board as he talks... and then, just like
that he is gone, without looking back, over the side and
paddling for the break...

And Robbie Jones is right behind him...

And Jack Fletcher is all by his lonesome, knuckles white,
clutching the tiller, his camera gear at his feet.

He watches the two surfers paddle toward the break then eases the engine into the water, and follows them in... as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HARMON CABIN - DAY

The wine bottle is empty now. Kendra sleeps on the floor. The candles have burnt out and the yellow light of day streams through the curtains... A SOUND... She stirs... lifts her head...

The cabin DOOR SLAMS OPEN --

to REVEAL Frosty, the albino, his face broken into a ragged, demented grin.

Kendra jumps to her feet... As Frosty moves to the side, allowing William Little to enter --

He steps forward, striking her with an open hand, reducing her world to blackness... and...

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAY

A WALL OF WATER FIFTY YARDS LONG AND THIRTY FEET HIGH

The sight is one of both terror and fluid beauty -- as though what we are seeing is a piece of the Earth become liquid:

And Drew Harmon -- paddling in, then shooting a quick look back into the bowl -- to find --

R.J., already on his feet, driving toward daylight, arm out, fingers extended -- "V" for victory...

As we HEAR the clicking of a camera and... PULL BACK to REVEAL:

EXT. ZODIAC - DAY

Where, for a few fleeting moments, we glimpse the old Jack Fletcher, fierce and resolute, impeccable in his timing...

Then watch, as he tries a new angle, and sees he is too far inside the next wave. When he tries to lower the engine however, something happens... The engine splutters, and dies.

Fletcher jerks the starter cord... and the ENGINE CATCHES... and the raft LEAPS FORWARD... throwing Fletcher off balance... He grabs once at the slick rubber boat -- a futile gesture... then TUMBLES into the icy water... directly in the path of the huge WAVE...

FLETCHER

sinks beneath the surface, turning his fall into a dive, the orange housing held at arm's length, pushing for the relative safety of deep water...

But he is still too shallow and the TURBULANCE hits him -- pummeling his body...

Fletcher fights to outlast it... and finally to reverse direction, clawing for daylight...

and breaks the surface... gasping for air... and looks toward the break... just in time to see the Zodiac sliding up the face of yet one more huge wave, with no hope of making it over the top...

And watches... as their only apparent means of transportation is sucked up the face, and hurled downward, cart-wheeling in the white water...

And Fletcher dives once more... waits out the punishment once more... and surfaces... to find the remains of the raft floating, half submerged, twenty yards away.

He swims toward it. There is a huge tear along one side of the raft. Debris floats around it - cubes of wax, canned goods, water bottles... Several day packs float at the sides of the raft, still attached by canvas straps...

Fletcher grabs hold of the wreckage... as one more wall of white water crashes into him...

CUT TO:

INT. CAMPER SHELL - DAY

A dark, claustrophobic space. Kendra regains consciousness. There is a bruise across one side of her face...

She hears VOICES and sits up, peering through a narrow window...

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The weird house car, with Kendra trapped in it, has come to the dead end of some logging road deep in the wilderness...

FOUR MEN squat around a small fire in the gray light - William Little, Frosty, Snacktime...

And the short Indian kid from the bar --, Bean Dip.

BEAN DIP

This is the way to the Heads, I know it.
We could probably see it from here...

He waves toward a seemingly impenetrable stand of old growth forest. The other three men exchange looks. Snacktime points to the house car.

SNACKTIME

Maybe we ought to get her to show us...

FROSTY

She's gonna show us something. Before she's done...

SNACKTIME

Yeah. How her toes look reaching for the clouds...

They laugh... High-five...

BEAN DIP

You should be careful. She's a Hee Dee.

SNACKTIME

What's a Hee Dee?

BEAN DIP

A witch. She's a witch, that one...

WILLIAM LITTLE

Now why would you say that?

BEAN DIP

She walks the river at night... People have seen her... I've seen her. I know, man... I can tell...

William Little just laughs, takes out a bottle, cracks the seal with the butt of his hand...

Snacktime reaches down to pinch Bean Dip's cheek...

SNACKTIME

You should see to it that you never do time, Bean Dip. Cos you'd last all of five fucking minutes...

The men laugh. Bean Dip looks like a ground squirrel trying to get comfortable among the wolves.

INT. HOUSE CAR

Kendra watches as the men pass the bottle, then moves from the window. She lies on her back, shivering... her eyes on the ceiling... on a SHARP PIECE of splintered wood... and something occurs to her... And she reaches up, hooking the splinter with her thumb, driving it deep into her flesh...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BEACH - DAY

and Jack Fletcher, engaged in a tug-of-war with an angry Pacific over the remains of Drew Harmon's boat...

The two have washed ashore... on a sliver of black sand, raked at a forty-five degree angle... hemmed in by jagged rocks and huge pieces of broken timber which, over the years, have collected at the base of the steep cliffs which further ring the beach...

The raft is in shreds. Fletcher is trying to save what he can of the gear -- several nylon day packs as...

Drew and R. J. emerge from the shore break, hefting their boards, clamoring up the steep beach to help Fletcher...

The men must SHOUT to make themselves heard over the roar of the waves...

DREW

We're losing the beach! Follow me...
Now!

He has no sooner spoken than a HUGE TIMBER, loosed by the white water comes rolling toward them with deadly intent...

The men dance to avoid it... at which point two things happen almost simultaneously -- as one timber SLAMS into the ruined zodiac, driving it into the sea, A SECOND TIMBER is shaken from its resting place and follows the first...

Drew doesn't have to tell them twice. The surfers grab what they can of their gear and dash into the rocks, climbing to escape what is now a virtual avalanche of logs...

The principle casualty at this juncture being R.J.'s surfboard, left on the sand -- ground to resin dust as the huge logs tumble across the beach on their way to the sea...

The surfers climb to a level place in the rocks, where an ancient stump, long ago split by lightning, juts above the swirling water...

Fletcher goes to the ground, half frozen, bone tired. Drew rests his hands on his knees, collecting his breath...

DREW (CONT'D)

Goddamn, Doc. They told me you had become a fuck up...

FLETCHER

They lied, I was always a fuck up.

DREW

I figured... the guy maybe out of shape, but how bad can he really be...

FLETCHER

Now you know.

R.J. slams the board he has ridden up against the old tree, resting it there while he catches his breath...

R.J.

Now you know... No shit...

But Harmon cuts him off.

DREW

Hey, kid... do me a favor will you, put a sock in it.

(MORE)

DREW (CONT'D)

(a beat)

I'll tell you something else. You ever snake me again, I will put your lights out.

R. J. can't quite believe this twist in the conversation.

R.J.

Snake you? We just lost our boat... We're stranded out here in the middle of bum-fuck nowhere and you're moaning about getting snaked...

DREW

We're not stranded. We're on our way to Heart Attacks. And I'm giving you notice, comprende'?

R.J.

The bus just sank, bro...

Drew looks toward the waves marching in off the horizon.

DREW

We can still make it... It's gonna be a hell of a lot more work... but if we can beat the tide around that far point... We can do it...

He waves toward an impossible shoreline, toward a distant arm of land, barely visible in the mists

R.J.

What about Dr. Pill Head there, you really think he's gonna make it?

DREW

You know The Doc and I once swam the Na Pali Coast? Twenty-five miles in the water... Took us almost three days. We didn't have anything besides trunks and goggles. Ate raw limpets off the rocks. Slept on the beach, covered in sand like a couple of turtles... Never been done, before or since...

Drew offers Fletcher a hand and pulls him to his feet.

DREW (CONT'D)

They still talk about you over there, Doc. And they still got your pictures on the walls...

FLETCHER

No shit? What will that buy me, Drew? One drink or two?

Drew just looks at him, incredulous...

DREW
What will it buy you? It's what remains,
Doc. It's everything else that's
bullshit.

Drew bends to shoulder a pack, to heft a board.

FLETCHER
You know, I could probably get Peters to
wire money for another boat... We'd have
it by noon. What about going back...
trying again?

Drew just laughs at him, and looks south -- where the
shoreline is nonexistent -- nothing there save sheer cliffs
and the huge waves which slam against them.

DREW
Fact is... You've gone and left us in a
bad spot here, Doc... if you want to know
the truth. We couldn't go back if we
wanted to.

R.J.
And what happens if we don't make the
point -- ?

The surfers take a moment to consider their surroundings...
the narrow beach... the sheer cliffs... The thundering
sea... the building swell...

DREW
Like I said, lads. Heart Attacks is that
way. Six hours... Just try to keep up.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

AN EMPTY WHISKEY BOTTLE breaks against the rocks... as
William Little gets to his feet, stares down on Bean Dip.

WILLIAM LITTLE
Okay, kid... It's your big day... We'll
see if you can find these guys or not...

SNACKTIME
Kid's wrong, its a long way to the
beach...

FROSTY
I say we ask. What do you say, William...
Maybe get a little taste while we're at
it?

WILLIAM LITTLE
No taste till we find Harmon.

FROSTY
Aw, that's bullshit...

WILLIAM LITTLE
Is that what it is... This isn't about a
taste, Frosty. This is about Marvus.

FROSTY
Marvus'd want a taste -- !

He and Snacktime high-five...

FROSTY (CONT'D)
C'mon, man, just a little bit --

And Frosty gets to his feet, moving to the back of the truck.
He fumbles with the lock, jerks opens the door... William and
the others watch as Frosty enters the camper --

And then recoils, backing out, shocked --

The others go to the camper... Peer in, surprised... For what
they see is --

Kendra, sitting on the mattress, legs tucked beneath her,
arms held in the attitude of skull-and-crossbones, her eyes
fixed on some middle distance, a BLOODY PENTAGRAM in the
center of her forehead...

KENDRA
I have eaten from the drum. I have drunk
from the holy basket. I have passed
within the bridal chamber. You come in,
you can meet my friend...

SNACKTIME
Jesus -- !

BEAN DIP
I told you --

and slams the door, reducing her world to darkness once
more...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BEACH - DAY

A prehistoric landscape of swirling tidal pools and stone
corridors, reverberating with the thunder of waves...

And Jack Fletcher, with his camera gear and daypack, having
failed to keep up, slipping and sliding amid the rocks...
lost in the funhouse... As the sea rains down upon him. He
even calls out to the others, but his voice is lost in the
roar of the waves.

He slogs through a big tidal pool four feet deep, sucking
air, looking for a place to rest... then slumps against a
huge barnacle incrustated rock, except...

IT'S NOT A ROCK!

It's twelve hundred pounds of BULL ELEPHANT SEAL and when Fletcher ties to use him for a seat... he wakes up in a hurry... in a bad mood...

Fletcher back peddles through the swirling, waist deep water.

The bull seal is right after him... its huge chest breaking the water like the bow of a ship...

Fletcher loses his footing, falls backward... and suddenly there is no where else to go... He's trapped in the pool, his back against the rocks...

And the huge beast is about a foot from his face...

And Fletcher is staring straight into the slavering mouth of the thing itself... and it's one ugly motherfucker...

Huge yellow tusks poised to strike...

Weird red mouth and tongue like toxic genitalia...

Breath like the stench of death...

As the animal barks and bellows... loudly enough to be heard -
- even above the swell of a life time...

And then... Just one other sound getting though... a human voice punctuating the din...

VOICE (O.S.)
Don't look at it, Doc!

This is easier said than done. Fletcher stares into the horror that confronts him.

VOICE (CONT'D)
Turn your head!

And we PULL BACK to REVEAL:

Robbie Jones, on the far side of the pool shouting out instructions...

R.J.
Come on, Doc! Just do it! Now!

And finally... Fletcher does... one centimeter at a time... until he is staring not into the face of the seal, but that of Drew Harmon, hunkering behind a rock, a finger over his lips, a crazed half-smile on his face...

The two men look at each other -- a long beat -- as...

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE POOL -- R.J. has moved right down to the edge, slapping at the water with his hands, engaging the attention of the BULL... which now turns toward him, splashing through the water and up onto the rocks where it moves overland with surprising speed and agility...

But R.J. knows it's coming and scampers up several layers of rock before the beast can reach him...

The bull bellows a few more times, then slips back into another pool where it sinks from sight...

At which point Harmon grabs Fletcher by his day pack and pulls him up, onto the stone ledge which borders the pool...

FLETCHER

Thanks.

DREW

Thank him.

He waves at R. J. moving around the ledge to meet them.

R.J.

It's mating season, bro. Dude probably thought you were after his bitches...

(a beat)

That ever happens again... look away. Fast. You stare at them, they think you want to fight.

FLETCHER

Now how the hell do you know that?

R.J.

"DISCOVERY CHANNEL", bro. I never miss one...

Fletcher looks at Drew, who is smiling, impressed.

DREW

Good get, superstar --

R.J.

No worries...

And R. J. grabs his pack... And whistles off...

Fletcher uses the opportunity to dig a pill from his daypack with shaking hands.

DREW

What's that?

FLETCHER

Vitamins.

DREW

Take 'em later.

FLETCHER

These are the kind you've got to take right now...

Drew watches, disgusted, as Fletcher washes down the pill.

DREW

What's the matter with you, Doc? You think this is some kind of joke... You think I'm kidding about making it around that point?

FLETCHER

As I remember it, you always took your tides and your points real serious...

DREW

As I remember it, you did too.

The two men stare at each other.

DREW (CONT'D)

I need you on this one, Doc... I need you not to blow it.

And there's almost a kind of pleading in Drew's eyes... And nothing reciprocal in Fletcher's -- not even close...

FLETCHER

I thought the magazines were bullshit.

Drew shrugs it off, his eyes hardening once more...

DREW

They are.

FLETCHER

So what happened? Why now?

DREW

Because I'm gonna let the bullshit work for me for a change... Get outta this place...

FLETCHER

And go where -- ?

DREW

Who knows? Maybe Chile...

FLETCHER

Chile?

DREW

Why not? Fourteen hundred miles of virgin coast... all that Mediterranean clime...

FLETCHER

And what about your wife?

DREW

What about her?

He looks down the beach, in the direction from which they have come -- as if the little cabin with its shack on the river was something he could see...

DREW (CONT'D)
What did she tell you last night, on that
little walk of yours?

FLETCHER
Not much...

Drew laughs at him.

DREW
Right, right... I'll let you in on a
little secret, Doc. It's about my
wife...

FLETCHER
Yeah -- ?

Fletcher appears too interested... Drew sees it, comes in
low, conspiratorial:

DREW
She's as pure as the driven snow. But
she thinks the owl is the baker's
daughter.

Fletcher looks into Harmon's face -- the crazy half smile --
flushed with intensity from the task at hand, or simply
deranged -- it's hard to say --

DREW (CONT'D)
Now, let's go, Doc Fun. Start humping...

He walks, and Fletcher follows, his face a question mark.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE CAR - DAY

As the door creaks open, letting in a sliver of light,
revealing... WILLIAM LITTLE...

As he stoops to enter the car -- the others can be seen
standing in the background -- maybe just a little too spooked
to come any closer...

William Little crouches in the cramped space.

WILLIAM LITTLE
You think your pretty smart, don't you?

He takes out his Bowie knife, holding it loosely in a hand,
draped over one knee...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)
I know what you're trying to do.

KENDRA
Do you?

WILLIAM LITTLE
I spent two years with Marvus Dove in
Pelican Bay. I know what you're
pretending to be...

KENDRA
What if I'm not pretending?

WILLIAM LITTLE
I'll take that chance. But that kid out
there's not worth shit. I believe he's
gotten us lost. Maybe it's time for you
to show us where they are.

KENDRA
I don't know where they are.

WILLIAM LITTLE
You can't have it both ways, little
sister. You're a witch, like you say.
Then you would know...

He moves up close beside her, holding the point of the knife
to the pulse in her neck.

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)
But I think maybe you're one of those
hippie witches. You know: the kind that
like to run around barefoot in the woods
and eat mushrooms. Have names like
Morning Glory. Sunshine. Promise...

Kendra closes her eyes. The knife against her skin...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)
I remember running into a few witches
like that once. Years back. Me and
Marvus. Had us a good time with them.
Little hippie freaks. Thought it was all
sex, drugs and rock-n-roll, 'til Marvus
punched out the first one's teeth...

He looks at her... Eyes swimming with bad intent...

KENDRA
Where they are will depend on the
direction of the swell...

WILLIAM LITTLE
Will you know that when you see it?

Kendra looks at him... Then:

KENDRA
Yes.

William smiles. He returns the knife to its sheath and
leaves the camper.

Kendra huddles in the corner of the car, wrapped in the
blanket, trembling and alone...

And then she sees something on the floor. It is a WALLET. She opens it, rifling through, until she has found a DRIVER'S LICENSE -- the albino's.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Where the mists of morning have burned away... And where the surfers have come to the point Drew has told them they will have to cross if they are to escape the tide --

A ROCKY SHELF extending into the sea, fifty yards across, creased and grooved, punctuated by jagged blowholes through which plumes of white water shoot high into the air... And across whose lunar surface the largest of the waves are already beginning to wash...

The surfers hunker in the rocks, exhausted, in contemplation of the path head as suddenly... They are surrounded by...

A raucous congregation of SEA BIRDS, speaking in tongues, lifting from the rocks... PELICANS, GULLS, OSPREYS... screaming above the din of the waves... HUNDREDS of them... As though driven mad by the agitation of the sea...

R.J.
What the fuck...

Drew looks at the birds, at the sea beyond the point.

DREW
There's something in the water.

The others follow his gaze.

R.J.
Where?

Drew just shakes his head...

DREW
I don't know. Out there.

They watch as a huge ground swell sweeps the point, as the birds circle and dive. Drew shoulders his gear.

DREW (CONT'D)
Time's a wastin' boys. Let's do it.

The men start into the rocks, climbing to reach the shelf...

R.J.
All I can say is, this place had better be worth it...

DREW
I'm going to show you something out here, superstar... I'm going to show you a wave like you've never seen...

(MORE)

DREW (CONT'D)

(a beat)

The Indians buried their dead in the shadow of Heart Attacks. It's sacred land there and they knew it... Just like the Hawaiians knew it about Waimea. They called this place Humaliwu: The Place Where Legends Die...

R.J.

Oooh... that just's makes me all oogly inside...

But then... reaching the shelf... stopping in his tracks... his eyes on the water...

R.J. (CONT'D)

Whoa!!!

And now they all see it...

THE WHALE --

not a hundred feet away... floating at the edge of the shelf... as...

A HUGE SET WAVE thunders in from outside... The water rises... and suddenly...

THE WHALE is lifted up, born on the power of the ocean and hurled upon the rocky shelf...

The surfers jump back as the huge animal sweeps past them.

Behind the whale's head there is evidence of what killed it -- A HUGE BITE MARK -- a grisly arch of missing flesh, muscle and cartilage...

It is an awesome sight. Gigantic flukes sweep the air, trailing arcs of spray. The great tail pounds the rocks.

The sea birds go mad, striking at the dead animal, darkening the sky...

The whale slams against the base of the cliffs, then retreats with the white water, tumbling toward the sea. As it reaches the end of the rocks however, a new wave flings it back upon the shelf.

In fact... the tide has risen... and the whale is now trapped, rolling in great, uncertain arcs, back and forth across the rocks -- more dangerous dead than alive...

At least to our boys... and R.J. has seen enough. He starts to jump back off the shelf, then checks himself as he realizes: THERE IS NOWHERE TO JUMP...

The spot from which they began their climb is already underwater. And indeed... there is nothing left of the beaches to the south... They are simply gone, buried in the white water now pounding upon the faces of the cliffs.

And R. J. shouts into the wind, above the roar of the waves... one word, which just about sums it all up...

R.J. (CONT'D)
Shit!!!

And Drew answers, his hand on R.J.'s shoulder.

DREW
Another ten minutes and this place will
be gone too... Only one way to go from
here, R.J...

And he points north, past the rolling carcass of the whale.

FLETCHER
And you really think we're gonna find a
beach on the other side? On this tide?
In this swell?

DREW
No idea, Doc. I've never seen a swell
like this... never seen it this big...
(a beat)
But then we don't have much choice do we?

The troubling part is, he actually looks happy about it -- a man in his element -- at play in the fields of the lord, or flat out insane. As usual, it is difficult to say.

DREW (CONT'D)
Let me show you how it's done.

Drew waits for the whale to hit the cliffs, then runs toward it, a board beneath one arm, a day pack on the other, sprinting over rocks encrusted with shells, slick with sea grass, cutting between the carcass and the cliffs as the whale rolls toward the sea...

But his footing is sure and when the next wave lifts the whale, propelling it toward the cliffs, Drew is beyond its path, looking back at his companions.

R. J. goes next... and he makes it...

And now Doc Fun's turn. He wasn't in very good shape when the day began, and things haven't improved... He times his run like the others, but in his weariness, he stumbles...

His foot slips in the sea grass, and he GOES DOWN HARD...

The day pack goes one way. The camera and orange housing go the other, sliding across the rocks... as...

From outside comes the thunder of a breaking wave, the white water rushing to lift the whale...

Fletcher gets to his knees, stunned. There's a cut on his chin from hitting the rocks. He looks at his fallen gear -- the day pack, the old camera, as, from across the shelf...

Drew Harmon is screaming for him to JUST RUN!!!

Fletcher looks at the two surfers, urging him on... looks at the MAMMOTH CARCASS tumbling toward him... looks at his fallen gear... and chooses...

He dives for the pack, grabs it with one hand... with the other he grabs the camera, and staggers to his feet...

The sea birds swirl around him. He moves forward, slipping and sliding, but stumbling from the path of the whale...

Which comes on like the Queen Mary...

And misses him by inches... so close the wind of its passing is enough to knock him from his feet...

Straight into the hands of Drew and R. J., waiting to reel him in, all of them now showered in spray, in the bits of blood and flesh thrown off by the murdered whale...

And then stumbling together, all three of them, helping one another to push through the white water sweeping the rocks... onto the far side of the shelf where... all three come up short for what might just be the last time, stopped cold by what they see...

And this time it is Drew who says it, speaking for them all...

DREW (CONT'D)

We were too slow...

And it's true. Whatever beaches lay north of the point have been buried, like those to the south...

Fletcher and R. J. stare, across the backs of the waves that sweep toward granite cliffs, numb to the bone... beaten for the first time...

Drew however, looks wildly around, unwilling to give it up... his eyes filled with a mad light... and then...

DREW (CONT'D)

There!

At their feet lies a fissure cut through the stone, wide enough for a man to walk in. How deep it is might be a another story, but Drew jumps in...

And the water rises to his chest... and stops... and he begins to push forward...

And the others see what he's headed for -- the jagged black mouth of a narrow cave. He reaches it without so much as a glance over his shoulder, and disappears inside...

Fletcher and R. J. look on, dumbstruck... but there is not much time to think it over... A fresh set is building off the point, corduroy to the horizon... They drop into the fissure and follow Drew...

INT. THE CAVE - DAY

Narrow... twisting... dark... yet high enough to stand in...

They feel their way... fighting to get the boards through... twenty yards of darkness and uncertainty... and then...

A miracle...

EXT. COVE - DAY

As the cave becomes A TUNNEL... opening upon...

A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE COVE on the north side of the point.

And though there is no way out on a high tide, the cove is deep enough to offer protection -- a triangle of unmarked white sand, cut deep among towering cliffs capped by old growth redwood, at the apex of which, a waterfall tumbles from the forest to the sand...

The surfers stare in wonder...

DREW

I've hiked this stretch of coast a dozen times. I never knew this was here.

R.J.

Yea, well... I can see where it would be easy to miss. How did you know that cave was going to lead anywhere?

DREW

I saw the white water running in, but none coming out... under the circumstances... I figured what the hell.

The men look at each other, and laugh, harder than might seem called for. The fact is... they laugh like three guys who have just cheated death... and know it...

DREW (CONT'D)

I thought we'd lost you back there, Doc...

R.J.

No shit... death by blubber...

They dump their gear and sit on dry sand, still laughing...

FLETCHER

What do you suppose killed that thing? A shark?

R.J.

No, it died on the toilet eating a peanut butter sandwich -- Elvis style.

FLETCHER

One hell of a shark, then. What makes you think it wasn't a killer whale?

Drew just shakes his head no, waxing philosophical...

DREW

Japs caught themselves a pregnant female white a few years ago. First one, ever. They cut it open and found ten full-term, four-foot long embryos. And what do they find in the babies' stomachs? Teeth. The babies' stomachs were full of these tiny teeth....

R.J.

You lost me, Captain Quint --

DREW

The little beauties are swimming around in the womb, eating each other. They're predators before they're even born...

(a beat)

Says something about the nature of the world, don't you think?

R.J.

Yeah. Sharks are bad. Excellent discovery. All those years of research really paid off...

R. J. laughs, still a little giddy, but Drew only smiles, and looks out to sea, at the huge swell...

DREW

What I call them are the Silent Gray Fellows. Lying in wait. Under reefs, hidden in the shadows... It's the sneaky shit that gets you in the end. Ain't that right, Doc?

FLETCHER

I guess that's one way of looking at it.

DREW

What do you think, R.J.? You got any opinion about anything?

R.J.

Yeah, I do, dude. My opinion is that you've been out here too long...

Drew looks at Fletcher.

DREW

Hear that, Doc? I've been out here too long.

A long beat -- then -- half to himself --

DREW (CONT'D)
Maybe that's what happened.

And he looks Fletcher in the eye, his mercurial nature down shifting into the darker ranges once more...

DREW (CONT'D)
Maybe that's why I killed that girl...
What was her name, Doc?

As a shadow falls upon the little cove, and a dead silence, where only moments before there was laughter -- Nothing here now but the crash of waves.

FLETCHER
I never said you killed anybody.

R.J.
What girl?

DREW
But that's what she told you, wasn't it?

FLETCHER
I never said that, either.

R.J.
What fucking girl?

DREW
A local girl. Amanda Jaffey. Got her throat cut...

R.J.
You did it?

DREW
Doc Fun, here, seems to think so...

FLETCHER
I never said that --

R.J. looks at the two men, staring each other in the eye... each, in some way, trying to take stock of the other...

R.J.
You get old, you get weird. Fact.

R. J.'s words seem to break the tension, at least for the moment... as Drew's face breaks into an easy grin...

DREW
Hey, maybe the kid here is right, Doc.
Maybe I have been out here too long...

R.J. looks relieved. Fletcher doesn't. Drew looks across the beach and when he speaks it is to no one in particular, the easy smile vanishing as quickly as it appeared...

DREW (CONT'D)
 Maybe that's why I did it...

and so saying, walks back into the cove, where he begins to collect drift wood for a fire...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

It is late in the day and Kendra and her captors have reached the coast... They are on foot now, and have come to a fork in the trail...

WILLIAM LITTLE
 (to Kendra)
 Which way?

Kendra studies the sea, shrugs, then looks at William Little.

KENDRA
 Actually, you can go any way you like.
 It doesn't make any difference now.

The men look at her, a little uneasy.

FROSTY
 What's that suppose to mean?

KENDRA
 It means they had a boat. They will have already surfed the place and gone... You can look all you like.

Frosty strikes her with the back of his hand. Kendra keeps her footing, stares him in the eye...

KENDRA (CONT'D)
 You missed them. All you have is me.
 It's like getting the poisoned apple...

Frosty makes a fist this time, set to deck her... But William Little grabs him by the wrist...

WILLIAM LITTLE
 Nothing changes, Frosty. We'll find him.
 She stays in one piece till we do.

Frosty glares, but backs down in the face of William Little, who now turns to Bean Dip.

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)
 What say you, Bean Dip?

Bean Dip stands at the edge of the action, his lip quivering, his eyes on Kendra...

BEAN DIP
 They would be up there...

He points in a northerly direction.

SNACKTIME

Kid's lost it, man... I say we do both of them and hike out tonight, catch Harmon on the river...

KENDRA

Except he won't be there either. He'll be looking for you...

SNACKTIME

You know I've heard about enough out of this bitch...

WILLIAM LITTLE

Shut up! All of you...

He looks toward the horizon, a declining sun...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)

We're losing light. We'll camp here. In the morning we'll look where Bean Dip says... If they're not there... maybe we'll just take her up river, let him come to us...

The men dump their gear on the ground. No one seems too happy with this prospect...

Kendra walks a short distance away and lies down on the ground, wrapping herself in a blanket...

SNACKTIME

Witch or no witch. That bitch is spooky.

FROSTY

I don't care if we find Harmon or not. She's mine.

He pulls a rifle from among his gear, slings it over his shoulder and heads for the trees.

WILLIAM LITTLE

You going anywhere in particular?

FROSTY

Yeah. I'm gonna prove this bitch is lying. I'm gonna find this beach in the dark if I have to and see what's there...
(points to Kendra)
And crush that right after --

WILLIAM LITTLE

Don't get eaten by a bear --

SNACKTIME

Or fall down a rabbit hole --

They laugh at him. Frosty gives them the finger. And stalks off into the gathering gloom...

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

The surfers huddle about a fire, wet suits peeled to their waists, clothes from the packs staked out to dry... as the last of a lipstick sunset smears the sky...

R.J. torches a fatty... Drew pulls a chill-pack from one of the packs -- three beers left and he passes them around, seemingly at ease once more...

R.J.
Thanks, bro --

DREW
No worries, R.J. Although you will remember what I said about snaking me...

R.J. just laughs at him...

R.J.
You were paddling like an old man, dude.
I couldn't help myself...

Drew looks at Fletcher... Fletcher shrugs...

FLETCHER
Youth --

R.J. looks at them...

R.J.
How long you freaks known each other anyways -- ?

FLETCHER
Forever.

DREW
The Doc there grew up in old H.B., before they turned it into Viejo Nuevo...
(a beat)
I started out not that far from here, really. My old lady ran away from my pop and took me with her... All the way down to the South Bay. She hit the bars. I hit the surf. Found out there were people actually willing to pay me to ride their boards...

FLETCHER
And the rest is history...

R. J. looks at the two of them, like there is something he's been wanting to ask for awhile.

R.J.
You guys found G-land, didn't you?

Neither surfer responds. R. J.'s hit a main line. He's just not the type to pick up on it...

R.J. (CONT'D)
 Man, talk about back-in-the-day... Musta
 been trippy...

Drew picks up a stick, tosses it on the fire. He and
 Fletcher look at each other through the flames...

DREW
 As trippy as it gets, son, as trippy as
 it gets... We saw it from the air. G-
 land. Five miles of virgin beach... just
 one reef after another. Every one firing
 and not a soul in sight. We'd surf,
 eight, ten hours a day...

FLETCHER
 Sleep in the trees...

DREW
 That's right... there was nothing there
 then... I mean the whole of Java... it
 was all jungle...

FLETCHER
 Fish off our boards.

DREW
 It was like everything you always knew it
 could be... and that there is the stuff
 of life, boy-O... The thing itself.

They grin at R. J. who giggles, grooving on it, high...

R.J.
 Did you ever think of just... maybe not
 telling anybody... I mean losing the
 pictures....

FLETCHER
 What pictures?

R. J. just looks at him, then looks at Drew.

DREW
 Magazine had sent us down there to shoot
 Bali... We never told them what we found.

And Drew and Fletcher even share a smile, a real one, for
 maybe the first time in a long while...

DREW (CONT'D)
 I'd say that was one we got just about
 right.

FLETCHER
 Just about.

There is a beat of silence around the fire, Drew leveling a
 look at Fletcher through the flames...

DREW
 Maybe we'll do'er again, Doc... Out
 here... Get one right to go out on. What
 do you say?

And Fletcher looks back, meeting his old friend's stare, but R.J. is grinning, ear to ear, and hammering the sand with his fist, the G-land routine just starting to sink in...

R.J.
 That is so phat--!

Then taking time to think about it... a question forming...

R.J. (CONT'D)
 So what...

DREW
 Fucking Aussies... blew our cover six
 ways from sundown...

R. J. nods...

R.J.
 Fucking Aussies...

And there follows a moment of silence... for what might have been... then...

R.J. (CONT'D)
 So, Drew... I just got one question for
 you... You said this morning... Heart
 Attacks was six hours away... We hiked
 all day, bro... You sure this place is
 really out here?

Drew just laughs at him.

DREW
 Look at it this way, R.J. The swell is
 still building and the the worst is
 behind you. Tomorrow morning... first
 light... a minus tide... we're gonna walk
 out of this cove...

But he breaks off, interrupted by a sudden cascade of rock,
 tumbling from a cliff above...

Fletcher picks up his camera, pointing at the spot...

ANGLE ON CLIFF TOP - FLETCHER'S POV

At first there are only the trees... dense... wild...
 then...a sliver of reflected light, and SOMETHING moving...

Fletcher lowers the camera, looks once with the naked eye,
 then raises the lens once more, fine-tuning the focus. Both
 Drew and R. J. are watching him now.

R.J.
 What?

ANGLE ON CLIFF TOP - FLETCHER'S POV

Because there is

A MAN

in a frayed buckskin coat, standing beneath some trees, waist-high in manzanita and berry bushes... It looks like Frosty, though we can't be sure...

But we are sure that the man holds a RIFLE with a mounted scope, through which he is looking --

Looking directly at Fletcher.

It is a moment frozen in time. Fletcher blinks.

And then: PUFF! PUFF! PUFF! PUFF!

As the man FIRES. And little eruptions of sand kick up all around them...

Drew and R.J. look at the sand-puffs, puzzled... Fletcher hits the deck...

FLETCHER

Get down! Get down, get down, GET DOWN!

They do... Faces in the sand...

R.J.

What's your damage, Doc?

FLETCHER

We're being shot at! We're being fucking shot at!

They look at him, dubious... Until a PING! off a rock resonates... Drew grabs the camera from Fletcher...

Looks through the lens...

In time to see the shooter vanish in the brush...

DREW

He's gone --

FLETCHER

What was that? WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT?

DREW

Calm down, Doc.

FLETCHER

"Calm down"? "Calm down"?

DREW

Yeah. Calm down...

R.J.
We just got shot at?

FLETCHER
Shot at...

DREW
It was probably some pot farmer down from the Heads, hunting birds...

FLETCHER
Yeah. Or maybe one of those guys from the bar. Hunting us...

DREW
No way...

FLETCHER
No way? Why not? They seemed pretty pissed off...

DREW
You're giving them too much credit, Doc. Those guys you saw at the bar live a hundred miles up river. This is not their turf...

R.J.
I don't know, man... I don't much like the idea of someone shooting at me. I don't care who the fuck they are...

Drew goes to his gear and pulls out a ten-inch diver's knife in a plastic sheath which he straps to his leg...

R.J. (CONT'D)
Where you going -- ?

Drew says nothing... He merely walks off, toward the apex of their little cove, disappearing in the fog which has begun to roll in from the thundering sea...

EXT. WILLIAM LITTLE'S CAMP - NIGHT

A small fire... Snacktime and Bean Dip pass a bottle... Kendra is huddled some ten feet away, her wrist rope-tied to a railroad spike buried in the hard scabble dirt.

William Little walks over to her... He offers her a bottle of pop... She declines... He kneels at her side, a little drunk...

WILLIAM LITTLE
It's a dangerous game you play Little Sister... But you play it right out to the end, don't you?
(off Kendra's silence)
Play the hand your dealt. I admire that in a person... I must say... You sure you don't want this pop?

Kendra shakes her head no...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)

Okay then... Let me tell you a little something about my hand...

(a beat)

My first jolt was a narc bust. Possession with intent. Crank, mostly. And these cigarettes dipped in PCP, we called "Sherms." Nothing big. But the judge sent me to The Bay... I was all of 19... Maybe you can feature what that was like. Maybe you can feature what they do to 19 year old kids at places like Pelican Bay... Maybe you'd like to venture a guess...

William Little watches her, licks his dry mouth.

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)

No... Well... let's just say your ass goes up for sale the day you walk through the door... You can go with the flow. Or you can fight... Two choices. Both bad. You go with it they take your soul. You fight, they take your life... And I would have died there. Believe me. I would have died my first night down, in the goddamn latrine at the hands of The Hammerclaw Nation... Except for this one guy... big, crazy Indian son of a bitch, descends on these skin headed motherfuckers, all four of them and fucks them up six ways from sundown...

Kendra nods... Trying not to listen, but fascinated...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)

And that big Indian cat was Marvus Dove... And we've been like family ever since...

He holds a pair of crossed fingers in front of Kendra's face.

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)

And now he's dead.

KENDRA

Dead -- ?

WILLIAM LITTLE

The Sheriff shot him just last night. Says it was self-defence of course... but then they say he killed his woman too.

And for a moment, they just look at each other...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)

The girl was pregnant. Did you know that?

KENDRA
I'd heard...

WILLIAM LITTLE
And how about the father, what did you
hear about him?

Kendra shakes her head, turns away... William Little studies
her -- a long beat --

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)
That's all Marvus wanted to hear... hear
about the father... hear about it from
Amanda I guess, because everybody else
already knew there was only one
motherfucker crazy enough to come up
river to kick in Marvus' stall and I
can't believe you don't know who I'm
talking about...

(a long beat)
The thing with me is... I don't much give
a shit who killed that girl. What I know
is this... I know Marvus is dead for the
simple reason your old man was possessed
of the unmitigated arrogance to mess with
his woman and that's who Marvus was
coming down here to kill. He was coming
down here to kill Drew Harmon and when I
heard Marvus was dead... I knew how it
had to be.

And he looks at her... Because for some reason, he wants her
to understand...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)
You may think we're animals, witchy
lady... but we're not Cos animals, when
their friends get fucked-up wrong...
Animals don't grieve...

And he bends down, so his next words, evenly-spaced, are in
her face, in her ear...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)
And... They... Don't... Get... Crazy...
Mad...

And he chucks the empty bottle of grape soda, which shatters
against a rock... And he walks away... Leaving Kendra to
truly appreciate how much danger she is in...

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAVIS' BRONCO - LOGGING ROAD - SWEET HOME - NIGHT

Travis and Sheriff Blacklage drive the logging road...

SHERIFF BLACKLAGE
We just ask him a few questions. Due
diligence, etcetera... Mainly I just
want to see he stays put till we get this
lab work back...

Travis nods... As they break into the clearing at Drew's landing, and come to an abrupt stop...

SHERIFF BLACKLAGE (CONT'D)
Jesus, man... what happened...

The place is in ruins. The log cabin has been burned. The shaping shack has been toppled from its pilings, The structure itself, and all that it contained, lost to the dark, swift moving water...

SHERIFF BLACKLAGE (CONT'D)
Harmon get his resin to too hot?

TRAVIS
Or had some visitors who like to play with matches.

Travis climbs from the Bronco... As, off his grim look we

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - NIGHT

An eerie, primordial place. Ancient redwoods soar, reaching into the moonlight... Fog hangs among the branches in translucent rags, like the vestments of some holy gown torn violently asunder....

Frosty the Snowman glides through this world, in something of a tumult, in and out of the shadows...

We soon realize he is lost...

FROSTY
C'mon, man! Where the fuck are you? I found 'em!... WILLIAM! WILLIAM!

The echo spooks him... He huddles behind a tree... Then continues his frenzied search...

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT

Drew Harmon has walked deep into the recess of the surfer's cove, arriving at the waterfall which tumbles from the darkened woods high above him.

He stares for a moment up at the falling water, white as snow, then takes a step back, and LUNGES forward, catching hold of a rock at the edge of the falls.

And he begins to climb.

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT

Fletcher and R.J. have moved back into the rocks on the north end of the cove, making camp in a shallow cave.

Before a small fire, R.J. puts the finishing touches on a fatty... Torches it... Passes it to Fletcher...

R.J.
This trip's getting a little Mister
Toad's Wild Ride, bro, I gotta tell ya...

Fletcher accepts the joint.

R.J. (CONT'D)
I mean, maybe he killed some girl...
Maybe he didn't... What kind of mind game
is that?

FLETCHER
I don't know.

R.J.
And what about this break? Does Harmon
know where this place is or doesn't he?

FLETCHER
Could be he's still looking for it.

R.J.
Could be it doesn't exist...

FLETCHER
Or it could be like Phantoms. Goes off
once every ten years.

R.J.
I don't know man. I think maybe the
guy's lost it. I mean check it: you'd
have to be fairly gacked to go to a
magazine, get 'em to send a crew, just
guessing you'd get a big enough swell to
unearth some place no one has ever
seen...

FLETCHER
Yeah, gacked... Or desperate...

R.J.
For what? His picture in a magazine? He
must have thousands of those...

Fletcher just shakes his head...

FLETCHER
It's not about his picture in a
magazine... There's something else going
on up here...

R.J.
What?

FLETCHER
You saw those guys at the bar... the tree
across the road... And you saw his wife.
Anything wrong with that picture?

R.J.
Not that I could see.

FLETCHER

Except he's living in that shaping shack
and she's up on the hill.

(a beat)

I think maybe the pictures are to help
him move those boards. Help him get out
of here... Maybe even help him get back
with his wife...

R.J.

You believe that?

FLETCHER

Think about it. Pictures of you and him.
On his boards. In epic Heart Attacks.
Packaged-up in the magazine... Free
advertising to a couple million people...

The men sit for a moment in silence.

R.J.

And what happens if we don't find this
place tomorrow? I mean, how long are we
going to look?

FLETCHER

I don't know.

R.J.

Yeah, but you've thought about it at
least?

FLETCHER

Not really.

Fletcher reaches for a strip of bubble-wrap... R.J. just
looks at him...

R.J.

Dude. Maybe you oughta start.

EXT. THE FOREST - NIGHT

Frosty continues to work his way slowly along the edge of the
cliffs... He has come to the precipice above the falls --
within sight of the surfers' camp...

And perhaps he can see, far below, a russet dancing
FLICKER... Like that of a campfire reflected off all those
rocks...

Frosty raises his rifle... Sights the scope... Grins over
black sour teeth which appear in his relief against his
opaque skin...

Finger on the trigger... Ready to squeeze... He sights the
flicker...

When... From beneath the raging waters of the falls, DREW
HARMON EMERGES, as if birthed by the torrent, his ham-hand
clutching at Frosty's nutsack... Squeezing...

Frosty cries out, both in pain and surprise... Drew pulls for all he is worth...

Hauling himself up to the precipice... He slaps the rifle from Frosty's hands...

DREW

Where are the others?

In reply, Frosty draws a fisherman's KNIFE from his boot... He hunkers down... And lunges at Drew... Drew parries... He's fast... Frosty misses...

His momentum carries him forward... He nearly stumbles... rights himself... Turns to face Drew...

DREW (CONT'D)

It doesn't have to go down this way --

But Frosty lunges again... This time he slashes at Drew's hand... The knife slicing flesh... Frosty grins...

And lunges yet again... And he misses yet again...

And pitches forward and TRIPS, head over heels, somersaulting toward the falls...

Frosty FLIES OUT into the night, toward A FRESHLY-BROKEN TREE, its shard of SPLINTERED TRUNK waiting to receive him. THUTCH! Like a spindle through a phonograph record.

Drew looks down... And he wraps his bloody hand in a bandanna... And moves off... into the pitch ..

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

R.J. and Fletcher wake in the first light, to the POUNDING SURF, and an empty camp.

R.J.

Shit. Where is he?

The question goes unanswered. The surfers crawl from their cave and stand on the rocks, looking out at the huge swell lines moving through the gray, misty light.

R.J. (CONT'D)

Christ. He was right. It is getting bigger.

They slap themselves with their arms, seeking warmth. They look at the empty cove, the cliffs towering above them...

R.J. (CONT'D)

What do we do?

FLETCHER

Two choices. We go look for him. Or we wait here...

R.J.

I'll clue you in on Door #3, Doc Fun: we bail. We get seriously gone...

Fletcher just laughs at him.

FLETCHER

Where do you think you're going without him?

R.J.

I don't know. Out. Home. Back to that stupid van, if I can find it. I never thought I'd be so happy to see that piece of shit again.

FLETCHER

Chances are you never would.

R.J.

Hey, it's as good as following Drew Harmon to some place that may or may not be there, not to mention maybe getting shot at along the way.

The kid has a point.

FLETCHER

He was right about the swell... it's getting bigger... you said so yourself...

R.J.

Yeah and if we leave now we can catch it at Todos Santos. At least we know where it is. And it's warm too.

Fletcher stares into the turbulent sea...

FLETCHER

How about we try for the top? We should be able to get a good look north from there... If we don't see anything that looks like Heart Attacks, then he was full of shit and we'll do it your way, try and get back...

R.J.

Sounds like a plan, Stan...

FLETCHER

He'll be pissed --

R.J.

He can suck my ass. Fucker's probably off, right now, killing some other poor girl, like what's her name... ?

FLETCHER

Amanda.

R.J.

Yeah. Like her... Don't know why I let Peters talk me into this happy horseshit... I could be pulling into the green room at The Pipe, up to my eyeballs in clitoris. Instead, I'm on a fucking walkabout in the jungle with a pillhead and a psychopath... Jesus Christ... I mean --

(to the heavens)

JESUS CHRIST -- !

EXT. THE CLIFF - DAY

Fletcher and R.J. have reached the waterfall where Harmon made his climb. They stand looking up -- at a twisting 200 - FOOT VERTICAL ASSENT...

R.J.

You're kidding me, right?

FLETCHER

Looks like the only way out is through the sky --

R.J. looks around the little cove -- pretty much sheer granite, with the exception of the falls...

Fletcher looks for a handhold, is about to lunge, when R. J. pushes past him, shouting back as he begins to climb...

R.J.

See ya at the top, Doc fun -- !

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CLIFF FACE - DAY

Nearing the top... where its a long way down, and the doctor is not doing well, pressed against the rock face, perched on a narrow ledge, sucking air, as...

some twenty feet above, R.J. scampers like a spider monkey, digging fingers into cracks, shooting out legs to hook rocks with his heels, oblivious to the chasm below... and then...

R. J. plants his foot on a ROCK, and pushes off, going for a hand hold high above his head, when...

The rock BREAKS LOSE... and tumbles down the cliff face, narrowly missing the head of a panting Fletcher, who looks up to see...

R. J.

sliding down... Fast... shooting along the slick rocks at the edge of the falls, careening, grasping for purchase...

Fletcher has one shot. He sinks his fingers into the nearest crevice, and swings out his other arm, trying to catch R.J.

The men clasp arms like two drunken trapeze-artists executing a sloppy triple...

As Fletcher takes R. J.'s weight, his own hand is pulled loose... And they're both flailing earthbound --

But R.J. has been slowed just enough to grab hold of a single bloated ROOT which protrudes from the falling water...

Feature this tableau: the two men hanging there - R. J. holding Fletcher, the root holding R. J., and the water pouring down on both of them...

And, more upsetting still, as we PULL OUT TO REVEAL: the root R.J. clutches, is in fact connected to the very tree from which FROSTY THE ALBINO hangs impaled, maybe twenty feet from where they dangle.

R. J. manages to swing them back over the narrow ledge, where they claw at hand-holds... after they settle:

R.J.
Thanks for that, bro --

Fletcher nods. And up they go, on to the top, focused on their climb, never seeing the body of Frosty, hidden by the water which separates them, pouring down from the forest above...

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SWEET HOME - DAY

Travis McCade sits at his desk. Sheriff Blacklage walks in, tosses a FILE in front of Travis.

SHERIFF BLACKLAGE
There they are. The organics from Amanda Jaffey...

He watches as Travis flips through the file till he finds what he's looking for, and stops...

SHERIFF BLACKLAGE (CONT'D)
How about that?

TRAVIS
We'd better find Harmon.

SHERIFF BLACKLAGE
I'd say so...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - LATER - DAY

Fletcher and R.J. have managed to gain the forest above the cliffs. It is dark and lush and forbidding.

Shafts of light fall among towering redwoods. Mushrooms the size of serving platters sprout from fallen trees covered in moss, draped by vines.

They push through the undergrowth, searching for a trail, encumbered by their packs, stumbling over rotting logs and then, they break suddenly into a kind of

CLEARING

littered with burnt-out OIL DRUMS, half-covered in vines. In the distance, a cluster of SHACKS, more like lean-to's, are hidden amongst the sedgy flora...

R.J.
Now what -- ?

He is answered by an explosion of HOWLS and BARKS --

-- as three oversized PIT BULLS come charging at them from the treeline --

Fletcher and R.J. jump on top of

A PAIR OF OIL DRUMS

as the dogs rush toward them, snapping at the air -- their jaws within inches of the surfers' feet...

R.J. (CONT'D)
Easy, boys... Easy... Good doggies...

And then a MAN appears... Early 40s, rail-thin and shirtless, arms and torso covered in the telltale picked-at SORES of a speed freak...

The man sniggers, and raises an old-fashioned PISTOL at the surfers. The dogs continue their florid assault...

R.J. (CONT'D)
Yo, dude, what's up with the gun?

And then another MAN appears... A little heavier, with the typewriting jaws of the crank fiend, in filthy red long johns, motorcycle boots, a .45 automatic in a shoulder-holster... Let's call him BLAMMO...

Blammo attaches a chain to the collars of the dogs, pulling them back, away from the drums, hooking them to a spike... Blammo regards Fletcher and R.J. Circles them...

BLAMMO
How many times does a duck quack?

R.J.
What?

BLAMMO
How many times does a duck quack?

R.J.
I don't know what -- Fletcher --

BLAMMO
Someone once told me seven... Quack.
Quack. Quack. Quack, quack, quack.
Quack...

The Skinny Dude chortles, gun level to Fletcher's crotch.

R.J.
Dude, man... We're not looking for
trouble. We're lost...

The dogs continue their barking... Blammo turns on them,
kicking out, sudden and violent...

BLAMMO
SHUT-UP!

And the dogs do. Whimpering softly. Skinny Dude giggles.

BLAMMO (CONT'D)
Hounds. I hate hounds.

FLETCHER
(to Skinny Dude)
You lower that thing, pal -- ?

BLAMMO
Lemme do an impression for ya...

R.J.
Bro --

BLAMMO
I can do anyone. Got what-you'd-call a
knack... Anyone... Shout it out --

R.J.
What do you --

BLAMMO
(suddenly screaming)
SHOUT IT OUT -- !

R.J.
I don't know what you're talking about,
man --

R.J. is starting to lose it... And the Skinny Dude presses
bore to balls... So Fletcher shouts it out...

FLETCHER
Groucho Marx -- !

R.J.
What -- ?

BLAMMO
There you go...

And he hunches over, wiggles his eyebrows, twiddles a phantom cigar --

BLAMMO (CONT'D)
(Groucho)
"Last night I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got in my pajamas I'll never know -- "

It's bad, 7th-grade style... As all of the following are:

BLAMMO (CONT'D)
Another -- !

R.J.
What the fuck, man -- ?

FLETCHER
Cary Grant -- !

BLAMMO
Yes, sir --
(bad Cary Grant)
Judy, Judy, Judy -- !

And, the following should be RAPID-FIRE, QUICK CUTS, as Fletcher shouts out names and Blammo does his feeble impressions, and the Skinny Dude wags his gun and giggles, and the dogs bark, enraged...

The whole thing, fast, furious, dizzying, should have the slightly cloggy, breathless, night-sweat feel of a 72-hour amphetamine jag...

FLETCHER
Kirk Douglas -- !

BLAMMO
Soup. Soup. Souuuup...

FLETCHER
Desi Arnaz -- !

BLAMMO
Lucy, you got a lot of 'splainin' to doooo -- !

FLETCHER
Richard Nixon -- !

BLAMMO
 (flashes peace signs)
 My fellow Americans -- !

He joggles his jowls... Skinny Dude loves it...

BLAMMO (CONT'D)
 Pretty good, huh?

FLETCHER
 Uncanny --

BLAMMO
 More. More, more, more!
 (to R.J.)
 You shout one, fuck-face...

R.J.
 Me -- ?

BLAMMO
 You --

R.J.
 Uhhh...

Skinny Dude presses his gun to R.J....

BLAMMO
 You -- !

R.J.
 Uhhh... Mickey Mouse -- !

BLAMMO
 Pass -- !

R.J.
 Pass -- ?

BLAMMO
 Pass, fuck-face... Another!

R.J.
 Popeye --

BLAMMO
 Pass -- !

R.J.
 Jesus... Uh... Clint Eastwood...

BLAMMO
 Pass -- !

R.J. is really losing it... Looks to Fletcher, terrified.

FLETCHER
 Gene Hackman -- !

BLAMMO
Nice -- !

And Blammo twists his body, flipping himself upside-down-like... Fletcher and R.J. look at him, confused --

BLAMMO (CONT'D)
"POSEIDON ADVENTURE", fuck-faces!

FLETCHER
Oh. Good one...

BLAMMO
Damn straight. Quack, quack.

And he picks up a BASEBALL BAT...

BLAMMO (CONT'D)
Yankee Clipper...

R.J.
What?

BLAMMO
Yankee Clipper. Yankee Clipper. Yankee
Clipper... Shout it...

R.J.
Yankee Clipper -- ?

FLETCHER
Joe DiMaggio -- !

BLACKLAGE
Good one! Joe DiMaggio! Joe DiMaggio!

And Blammo SWINGS THE BAT... Connecting full with R.J.'s leg... We can hear his FEMUR CRACK, from here in the cheap seats...

R.J. topples off the oil drum... Blammo drops the bat, shields his eyes with one hand, as if watching one leave the ballpark...

He raises his arms... Begins to make an imaginary home-run trot around a tiny diamond...

BLAMMO
Quack. Quack, quack, quack...

Fletcher looks down at the writhing R.J., at the two sniggering freaks, and he knows all is lost...

BLAMMO (CONT'D)
Quack, quack. Quack...

But suddenly, there is a CRACKLE! And the Skinny Dude is SCREAMING! Screaming at the top of his lungs...

Because his HAND is no longer... It is a pulverized NUB of bone and gore, gun falling harmlessly to the ground...

All look up --

To see Drew Harmon, stepping from the shadows, Frosty's RIFLE raised...

Skinny Dude continues his screams... Blammo clamors for the .45 in his holster... Plucks it out... Raises it...

(CRACKLE!)

... but a crimson pin-prick appears on his forehead...

And his brains exit stage right out the back of his head.

Blammo flops to the ground... Skinny Dude scurries off, into the thicket...

Harmon marches up to Fletcher and R.J.

R.J.
(re Blammo)
You... You killed him -- !

DREW
You, my friend, have a future as a medical examiner --

R.J.
Why'd you do that -- ?

DREW
Cos you had everything under control, right?

R.J.
But... But...

DREW
Come on... Let's move.

Fletcher starts to say something, then discovers he can't... He swallows, and tries again...

FLETCHER
Who were they -- ?

DREW
Crankster gangsters... Cookin' meth... You stumbled onto their lair... They don't like that... And just where were you going, anyway -- ?

But before Fletcher can respond, R.J.'s howls split the air. For he has tried to get up, and discovered he can't.

R.J.
I think the fucker's broken, man...

Drew looks at R.J.'s leg...

DREW
What do you know, superstar? You're finally right about something...

Drew goes to the shacks... Fletcher kneels at R.J.'s side. The boy rolls his head in obvious pain...

R.J.
This isn't happening... None of it...

Fletcher reaches in his pocket for a pill bottle, shakes one out for R.J....

FLETCHER
Try this...

R.J. gropes hungrily for the pills... Takes two...

Drew returns, carrying a sheet... And a dirty buckskin jacket, which we recognize as belonging to Frosty...

DREW
There's your shooter, Doc. Whichever one of these guys fits this jacket...

Fletcher notices that one of Drew's hands has been wrapped in a bandanna, stained with blood...

FLETCHER
What happened to your hand?

Drew dismisses the question with a shrug.

DREW
I cut it on the rocks, climbing out of there last night...

FLETCHER
Where'd you go -- ?

DREW
Looking around --

Fletcher looks at him... Clearly, there's been a change in Drew Harmon... the spirited mirth is gone, having been replaced by something much grimmer, much angrier...

Drew has finished wrapping R.J.'s leg...

DREW (CONT'D)
That should hold her for a bit... Come on, Doc: grab his gear. Lets get out of here.

Drew slings R. J. over his shoulder as if he weighed no more than a blanket roll. R. J. groans...

DREW (CONT'D)
 Unless you want to try and find your way
 out on your own again...

Drew speaks without looking back... Fletcher follows, a pack
 on either shoulder, stepping over the body of Blammo

Following Drew Harmon into the forest once again...

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

William Little moves through the forest, Snacktime and Bean
 Dip dragging Kendra along...

They come within sight of the ocean, by the waterfall...

SNACKTIME
 Holy shit --

He points... Twenty feet below them, they can see...

FROSTY

impaled upon the broken tree.

WILLIAM LITTLE
 (to Bean Dip)
 Keep an eye on her --

William Little and Snacktime move down along the rocks,
 getting as close as they dare...

Bean Dip remains on top, transfixed, then terrified. He
 turns to Kendra... She faces him, icy grin on her lips, and
 takes something from her pocket... Holds it up...

It is some kind of TALISMAN... We don't get a clear look at
 it, but Bean Dip is freaked...

He shrinks back... And Kendra drops the object... Bean Dip
 picks it up... And Kendra uses the moment --

To flee...

Into the woods... Bean Dip is frozen, staring at the
 object...

WILLIAM LITTLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 WHAT ARE YOU DOING, BEAN DIP? SHE'S
 GETTING AWAY -- !

Bean Dip recovers... And gives chase... In moments, he's
 gaining on her --

But then there's a GUNSHOT and a RED HOLE appears in his
 chest, just below the collarbone... The exit wound of a large
 caliber bullet, which passes through him to chip the bark of
 a tree near Kendra's head...

Bean Dip falls... Kendra pauses... Looks at him... At his terrified countenance, more frightened of her than of being mortally wounded... And then she is gone...

William Little and Snacktime have arrived...

SNACKTIME

Fuck me. I shot the kid.

They walk to the fallen Bean Dip, still alive, but in bad shape. And he is clutching Kendra's talisman to his chest. William pulls it away from him...

We see it clearly for the first time. It is a kind of

WITCH'S POPPET

A piece of cloth stuffed with grass, held together with a sharp little stick. The stick holds a PHOTOGRAPH to the poppet -- the one torn from James Purdy's driver's license. The face is smeared with a single word: "DIE".

William Little and Snacktime look down on Frosty's corpse...

SNACKTIME (CONT'D)

Ya gotta be kidding me..

William drops the poppet on the ground. To Bean Dip;

WILLIAM LITTLE

Tell me about that beach again.

The kid looks at him with glazed eyes...

WILLIAM LITTLE (CONT'D)

You said there was a cemetery, a trail to the beaches... It's north of here? North of the point?

The kid manages a nod, and dies. And William Little gets to his feet.

SNACKTIME

What about the girl?

WILLIAM LITTLE

What about her? She'll try to find them, just like us...

But Snacktime is pointing to the poppet.

SNACKTIME

I was thinking more about that. What was it the kid called her?

WILLIAM LITTLE

A Hee Dee.

SNACKTIME

Yeah...

WILLIAM LITTLE

Marvus told me what you have to do if you meet a Hee Dee --

SNACKTIME

And what's that?

WILLIAM LITTLE

You have to show them your magic is stronger than theirs.

And he walks... And Snacktime regards the fallen Bean Dip... The impaled Frosty... And after a beat, he follows.

EXT. THE BEACH - DAY

The surfers are back where they started, in the relative shelter of the shallow cave. R.J., starting to feel the effects of Fletcher's dosing, stares pleasantly at his bad leg, wrapped tightly in the sheet. And he's got a strip of Fletcher's bubble-wrap, too... Popping it...

R.J.

Doc Fun is right... This stuff is the shit...

(sings)

"Have a holly-jolly Christmas/And you will come to see/oh, what fun a holly-jolly Christmas, can be..."

R. J. giggles. Drew stares toward the swell lines marching in off the horizon...

FLETCHER

What are we going to do with him?

DREW

We'll never get him north of here. The climb's too steep.

FLETCHER

What do you suggest?

R.J.

Burl Ives. Who's Burl Ives and why is he living in my head?

DREW

We leave him here... Hike over and hit it... He'll keep for a few hours... It looks like you've already given him a prescription for his pain...

R.J.

Yes, he has... And Doc Fun, tell me: is it the pills that make the popping so rad? Or is it the popping that makes the pills -- ?

Drew brings Frosty's rifle over to R.J.

DREW
In case anyone bothers you...

Drew starts to pack up his gear.

FLETCHER
Maybe this isn't such a good idea. Maybe
the waves are for another time.

Drew just looks at him.

DREW
Listen to it, Doc... Listen to the
goddamn swell...

Indeed the morning is filled with the locomotive breath of
the HUGE SWELL...

DREW (CONT'D)
You know what it reminds me of? Makaha
'83.

He looks at Fletcher, who nods... He remembers...

DREW (CONT'D)
The first thing I thought that night,
when it started coming up? I thought the
Army was moving its tanks out of
Schofield... I'd never heard it that big.
You remember that, Doc? You remember the
pictures you took that day?

The two men look at each other - a long beat.

FLETCHER
Yea, I remember... But that's hardly the
point now, is it?

And suddenly, angrily, Drew grabs him by the collars, shoves
him against the cave wall...

DREW
What are you talking about? It's exactly
the point. Always was, always will be...
And you know what, Doc? There's always
something or somebody trying to cheat you
out of it...

FLETCHER
At a certain point, the injustice-seeking
shit becomes almost pathetic.

Drew releases him... Goes back to his gear...

DREW
The cops tried to keep us out of the
water that day. You remember? We had to
drive half way to Honolulu then hoof it
through the pineapple fields... And you
know what?

(MORE)

DREW (CONT'D)
 The point hasn't broken since... Not like that. It was once in a lifetime stuff. And so is this.

Drew throws a wet suit over his shoulder, hefts a board.

DREW (CONT'D)
 Shit, Doc... You probably still think this is all about the pictures, don't you... some spread in a magazine...

FLETCHER
 The thought had crossed my mind...

Drew just shakes his head, half sad, half amused...

DREW
 Let me ask you something, Doc... You really think we're gonna see a swell like this again? You and me?

And there is a certain urgency in Drew's face now, an urgency born of the moment... and what this moment means... and what he really wants is for Fletcher to see it...

And Fletcher does. He has too. It's just... there's this weight of the past dogging his heels and he meets Drew's gaze with a stony silence.

DREW (CONT'D)
 It's the last Dance, Doc. Whether you see it or not. And I'm gonna ride these waves, with you or without you...

And he walks out. And Fletcher looks after him, then sees R.J. staring at him, eyes swimming, about half there...

R.J.
 He's playin' you, bro.

FLETCHER
 It's what he does.

R.J.
 So what if that shit about the girl is true? You saw him snuff those freaks. On the cold-blooded-Chuck-Norris-Rambo-Seagal trip. What if he really killed her? What if that's why he wants the pictures? It ain't about his wife. And it ain't about some funky last dance... It's about trying to save his ass because he's a fucking killer and he thinks if he gets these snaps and sells these boards, he can stake himself to a good run...

And suddenly R.J. is momentarily lucid, his face grave...

R.J. (CONT'D)
 You ever think of that, Doc Fun?

FLETCHER
Yeah. I did.

R.J.
And -- ?

Beat... as R.J.'s face assumes exaggerated, barbiturate query. Fletcher grimaces...

FLETCHER
And give me your fucking wet suit.

EXT. THE ROCKS - DAY

Fletcher walks out onto the rocks, carrying a board and R. J.'s wet suit.

Drew looks at him, grins.

DREW
Glad to see you could make it.

FLETCHER
Wouldn't want to miss the moment of truth. The mystery revealed. Has he found it, or hasn't he?

DREW
You really think I'd drag you all the way up here if I hadn't?

FLETCHER
There's waves all over the place up here. You get a few shots of you and R. J. riding something, stick it in the magazine, let it be known you're trying to move those boards... that's all you really need, isn't it? A little free publicity to buy your way out of a jam? Maybe Heart Attacks was just the bait...

DREW
That's quite a theory, Doc...

FLETCHER
Based on experience.

The men look at each other - a long beat.

DREW
Then I guess I'll just have to show you.
(a beat)
Too bad about that kid in there. I think maybe Peters is right about him. Maybe he is the real thing.... You think?

FLETCHER
Maybe you ought to tell him that yourself.

Drew looks at him, nods, starts into the cave.

DREW
You'll be here when I come out?

Fletcher declines an answer. He takes a pen knife from his pocket and starts on the wet suit, cutting it into pieces.

Drew watches, curious, then walks back into the cave.

INT. CAVE - DAY

R.J. is sitting where Fletcher left him, back against the rocks, the rifle across his legs. When he sees Drew coming toward him, he wipes at his face with the back of his hand. It is clear that he has been crying.

DREW
Yo, superstar...

R. J. nods, looks into the rocks.

DREW (CONT'D)
You caught a tough break here, R.J. I'm sorry...

R.J.
Shit man... Pacific's on fire and I'm fucking missing it... missing it like maybe it will never come again. I mean... Once in a lifetime, stuff... You said it yourself.

DREW
What's once in a lifetime, R. J. is the skills you got. The swells come and go. It's the skills that remain. It's all in front of you. You hear me.

R. J. looks up at him for the first time.

R.J.
You think so?

DREW
Absolutely. You'll be burning 'em down for years to come.

R.J. nods, wipes his face one more time.

R.J.
Get a big one for me, will you...

DREW
Yea, an the next time you see it this big... you get one for me.

R.J. musters a grin, puts out a fist. Drew taps it with a fist of his own.

EXT. ROCKS - DAY

Fletcher is still working on the wet suit when Drew returns from the cave.

DREW
What's that -- ?

FLETCHER
I had this idea once... About how to get outside with my camera, if I ever needed to shoot from a board, in big surf... maybe today's the day, huh?

Drew just grins...

DREW
Maybe so, Doc... Maybe so...

FLETCHER
How did it go in there, with the kid?

DREW
He said to get a few for him.

FLETCHER
What did you tell him?

DREW
I told him it was all in front of him.

FLETCHER
What he say?

DREW
Christ, Doc, you're nosier than an old lady...

Fletcher shrugs, pushes a piece of the wet suit around the nose of his board, so that it fits over it like a big rubber band, tucks his camera inside and gets to his feet, ready to start out... Drew puts a hand on his arm.

DREW (CONT'D)
I Think maybe you're forgetting something, Doc.

FLETCHER
What's that?

DREW
Your pills, they're still in there, with the kid.

Fletcher just looks at him -- a long beat.

FLETCHER
Let him keep them.

EXT. THE ROCKS - LATER

Drew and Fletcher move across the rocks... they wear their wet suits and booties. They each carry a board...

DREW

Have I told you how I met Kendra?

FLETCHER

I didn't know there was a Kendra till I came up here... Why don't you tell me.

DREW

I was doing some east coast promotionals. And looking for a boat. I'd heard about some surf that required one. Turns out, her father had one to rent. I went to see about it. And there she was... Never seen anything like her in my life... She was nineteen... And couldn't care less about surfing...

FLETCHER

Which is, no doubt, why you fell in love with her... To big game hunters, nothing attracts like indifference...

DREW

Izzat so? You fall in love with her, too, Doc? On that little walk of yours?

FLETCHER

Probably...

DREW

I saw you looking at her. Like a guy who never cared much about living forever 'til that very moment...

Fletcher scowls...

FLETCHER

What are you talking about? She's your wife...

Drew just laughs at him.

DREW

Hey, I'm on your side. Peters wanted to send someone else. You know why I made him send you?

FLETCHER

Cos I'm sexy-action-cool?

DREW

Take a look around you. The Surf star is back in that cave. Take a look at who's still here: Doctor Fun!

FLETCHER
That's what they call me --

DREW
You remember the first time we worked together...

FLETCHER
Pipe Masters... eighty-two.

DREW
You lost your camera, then dove for it for three hours... The island boys all thought you were crazy. They were taking bets on whether or not you'd drown...

FLETCHER
Twenty years later and still no clear outcome...

DREW
You didn't have to dive for that camera, not for that long. You remember what was in it?

FLETCHER
The first barrel anyone had ever pulled into on the second reef...

DREW
I got six years of sponsorship out of those pictures. What did you get?

FLETCHER
A thousand bucks.

Fletcher shrugs. Drew laughs at him.

DREW
You didn't risk your life for a thousand bucks.

FLETCHER
Okay. The suspense is killing me. Why'd I do it?

DREW
You knew how good the pictures were. It didn't make any difference how much they were going to pay you. You knew they were good and you wanted them. Nine out of ten guys would've left that camera, given the conditions...

FLETCHER
I ran into all nine of them the other day. They drive Ferraris and own houses in Montecito that have *names*.

DREW
Purity of vision, Doc. It was the thing
we shared. You just lost it...

FLETCHER
Right, with a little help from an old
friend...

Drew stops in his tracks, turns to face him...

DREW
You haven't been laying your getting
busted up on me all these years?

FLETCHER
Life just doesn't seem to have the same
kick when you've got no one else to
blame.

DREW
We both knew the risks...

FLETCHER
To a point... But You were the big wave
expert. You were the guy who told me it
could be done...

DREW
For Christ's sake, Doc... You never know
till you go... You ought to know that if
anyone does...

FLETCHER
Easy to say when you walk away without a
scratch... try it with three fractured
vertebrae and a ruptured spleen... all in
the service of some cheap stunt.

DREW
That's what you think it was? A cheap
stunt? It was something that had never
been tried... That was your M.O., Doc.
Mine too. It was the life we chose bro.
Take some responsibility...

FLETCHER
Fuck you, man... I lost everything I had
behind that stunt... What would you know
about that?

Drew just looks at him -- a long beat.

DREW
What you lost, Doc, was your purity of
vision. And you didn't lose it behind
any stunt.
(a beat)
Shit man, you'd been up for two days on a
champagne and whiskey bender before we
even went out that morning, in case
you've forgotten...

(MORE)

DREW (CONT'D)

And I'll tell you something else, in case you've forgotten... You hadn't had a cover shot in six months.

(a beat)

You were slipping, Doc. And it wasn't the stunt and it wasn't the wave, and it wasn't me... It was Doctor Fun that did you in, Jack... You did it to yourself.

(a beat)

And if you still want to know what I know about it... I know the whole goddamn routine... 'cause I lost it too. I had to come up here to do it, but I did... and all this other shit, about who's to blame... It's the shit we tell ourselves so we can shave once in awhile without cutting our own throats...

Beat... As this lands on Fletcher... Lands on him hard...

Drew walks off. After a beat, Fletcher follows...

EXT. ROCKY PLATEAU - DAY

They are above the spray of waves now, following a trail of hard-packed dirt near the top of the ridge, covered in scruffy winter grass...

FLETCHER

Okay... So I know why you might have asked for me back in the day. But the question remains... in light of my many failings... Why now?

DREW

I needed a witness.

Fletcher gives this a moment's thought.

FLETCHER

Anyone could be a witness. Try again.

DREW

I won't take credit for your fall, but I've always believed I owed you something.

(a beat)

I knew you weren't in great shape that day at Avalanche. I could've left your ass on the beach.

FLETCHER

I guess you might have tried.

Drew just grins at him.

DREW

Oh, I think I could have managed. I guess I just wanted those pictures...

FLETCHER

I thought maybe that's what this was about... the pictures...

DREW

Yea, yea... The pictures are part of it.
But they're not for me this time out...
They're for you... and for her...

(a beat)

I let her down up here, Doc. It wasn't
for lack of trying... She tried to get
pregnant... Couldn't... That didn't
help...

The men walk for a moment in silence.

DREW (CONT'D). (CONT'D)

I've had a lot of people pass through my
life, Doc. Only two that I really
loved... And maybe a third to make me
understand everything...

FLETCHER

Amanda.

DREW

R.J. was right, you know. Back there at
the point. He didn't snake me, not
really. I was paddling like an old man,
just like he said...

FLETCHER

Tell me about Amanda, Drew.

DREW

Look, Doc. I loved Kendra. You've gotta
know that. And maybe... if Kendra hadn't
miscarried... if the money hadn't run
out... if a dozen other things hadn't
conspired against us... maybe I would
have stayed home... maybe I wouldn't have
started going up that river... And maybe
I wouldn't have met Amanda. But I did.

(a beat)

All Amanda knew is what I presented to
her. She didn't know about what I had
been. So she didn't know about what I'd
lost. That made her very seductive. But
she was dangerous too, given who she was
with... I just thought... any violence
would be directed at me. And I figured I
could handle it. Christ, I always have. I
never thought Marvus would go after
her... I never thought... Period...

He stops, looking Fletcher in the eye -- a long, sad beat...

DREW (CONT'D)

Same as it ever was... huh, Doc... Once
an asshole always an asshole.

Fletcher just looks at him, a little take aback... and maybe
just a little taken -- such honesty -- from the legend
himself...

DREW (CONT'D)

I never meant for any harm to come to that girl. I didn't hold the knife. But I helped to kill her all the same... And you know what else... I can't even look Kendra in the eye... Not anymore... It's like all I see is this grim reminder of the man I used to be... You know about that, Doc?

And Fletcher gives into it for the first time in our story -- They were friends once... and he smiles his own sad smile...

FLETCHER

The Man I Used To Be? Hell, yeah. I keep him in my pocket and feed him Scooby-Snacks every now and then, just so he'll leave me the fuck alone...

Drew looks back in the direction from which they have come.

DREW

That kid back there... the superstar... I wonder if he even knows what he's got?

FLETCHER

Hasn't a clue. And by the time he figures it out, they'll change all the rules...

They have come to a high place, from which they can see:

A patch of windswept grass capping a barren FINGER OF LAND that forms the northern edge of a small BAY...

This is the old Hupa cemetery Drew spoke of, and there, below the cemetery, a hundred yards from the rocks,

A WAVE

has begun to build... It is bigger than anything we have yet seen: a blue-gray wall of water at least 40 feet high, half a football field in length, wrapping around the point to explode in one long, perfectly formed section... This is

HEART ATTACKS

in full-tilt epic guster... And even Drew Harmon is, for maybe the first time, rendered momentarily speechless...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Jesus... I've never... Seen anything like it...

DREW

That goddamn reef... I've spent the last three winters wondering what kind of swell it would hold... how big...

FLETCHER
Now you know...

And Harmon laughs out loud... and points to the cemetery...

DREW
And that's Humaliwu. You remember what
it means -- ?

FLETCHER
The Place Where Legends Go To Get Their
Asses Kicked -- ?

Drew grins at his discomfit... And for a moment this is what
the old days must have been like: just a half-mad kid from
the South Bay and a wise-ass from old H.B., looking down on
the break below them...

DREW
You know you could shoot this place from
the rocks...

Fletcher nods.

FLETCHER
Yea, I could...
and stares into the thundering surf... and reaches for
something... deep in side...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
But then the best shots are out there.
Aren't they?

And the two men look each other in the eye... because they've
come to the moment... and each of them knows it...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
Hey... We're gonna do this, we may as
well do it right... Isn't that what we
always said?

DREW
Hell, Doc... I was beginning to think
you'd forgotten...

FLETCHER
I had... I just had to come up here to
remember...

And Drew Harmon offers up a smile - the likes of which serve
to remind us of what this guy really was, the best of his
time... and one charming son of a bitch...

DREW
And they told me you were all washed up.

FLETCHER
Fuck 'em... Let's go surfing.

And the men start down... out of the rocks... toward the beaches below...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

I just got two observations for you bro... I feel compelled to point out that Mr. Jones was right... Folks don't generally paddle into waves like these.

DREW

That's one. What's the other?

FLETCHER

Swell's still building.

As Drew just grins, and leads the way... As Heart Attacks roars like some just-awakened ravening sea monster...

Which is exactly what it is...

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

William Little and Snacktime emerge from the trees to the north side... They look down, across a little cemetery, to the beach. Where they can see:

TWO SMALL FIGURES, with surfboards, working their way over the last of the rocks to a tiny sliver of sand...

WILLIAM LITTLE

I should've been nicer to that kid while he was still alive...

EXT. THE ROCKS - DAY

Fletcher and Drew have come to a place where the rocks drop off into deep water... The level rises and falls with the rhythm of the waves.

DREW

The trick will be to jump while the water's high, ride it away from the rocks, then paddle your ass off...

The pool below begins to fill... It's time...

DREW (CONT'D)

I'd like to ask you for something, Doc. Two favors...

(a beat)

In my pack, back up there with R.J., there's a key. To a storage shed in Eureka. In the shed, you'll find fifty of my boards. Drew Harmon signature models...

FLETCHER

Fifty -- ?

DREW
Fifty. Anything happens out here today.
I'd like you to see those boards get
sold. I'd like you to see the money goes
to Kendra...

FLETCHER
And, of course, you have considered the
value of the boards goes up immeasurably
with your death...

DREW
Ain't that the final cold comfort? Worth
more dead than alive...

The huge sets thunder around them... Fletcher begins to
answer, but Drew cuts him off.

DREW (CONT'D)
And should you have to get out of here on
your own, don't try to go back the way we
came in...

FLETCHER
What about...

Drew holds up a hand.

DREW
Just listen to me, Doc. Go up through
that old cemetery. There's a trail
there, leads up to a ranger station.
Have them call Travis McCade, the deputy.
Have him come get you. R.J., too. Don't
try to go back there on your own...

FLETCHER
You found them, didn't you?

DREW
I found one of them. I might have found
the others, but you stumbled onto that
meth lab and needed saving.

Fletcher just looks at him...

A long beat... Drew turns to Fletcher, his face drawn with
intolerable pain, searing resignation...

FLETCHER
You said two favors...

DREW
Promise me you'll look in on her now and
again. See that she's okay. Can I trust
you on that?

FLETCHER
Why don't I look in on both of you?

DREW
I'm afraid that's not gonna work --

Drew looks at him, the familiar twinkle returns --

DREW (CONT'D)
I was only ever good at one thing, Doc.
Real life wasn't it...

And Drew makes the jump...

And if Fletcher would like to ask anything more, the opportunity is past... And he stares into the boiling cauldron that is the pool...

And we should see the abject fear in his face... As it slowly subsides... Is slowly replaced... By a steely determination... A bristling resolve...

A thing they used to call courage.

FLETCHER
Lord have mercy.

And he JUMPS...

EXT. HEART ATTACKS - DAY

They paddle away from the rocks, fighting the incoming surge...

Toward the north end of the bay, toward the MONSTER WAVES -- now fifty feet high -- which, from the deck of a surfboard look like liquid skyscrapers, blotting out the sky...

Drew and Fletcher, side by side, ten yards apart...

They approach from the south, paddling up the faces and over the tops of the waves...

There is no time for conversation. Each man must focus on the task at hand: If Drew is to catch a wave, he must paddle further north...

If he is to shoot the wave, Fletcher must stay to the south, taking his pictures as he slides up and over the shoulders...

So Drew is off, and Fletcher is now alone, far from the shore, straddling his board, pulling the camera from its mooring and sighting through it.

ANGLE ON DREW HARMON - FLETCHER'S P.O.V.

as Drew strokes into a huge wave. He must paddle for all he's worth to overcome the amount of water flowing back at him, up the face of the wave...

It is a late take-off, a long and radical drop, a powerful bottom turn...

Fletcher shoots, then strokes quickly to his left, getting himself in better position as Drew sets his line across the face of the wave --

The photographer, in sync with the rider, and you can see it in Fletcher's face now --

No fear.

Only the thrill of the hunt.

Epic Heart Attacks...

This is the shit...

ANGLE ON DREW - FLETCHER'S POV

driving straight into Fletcher's lens, holding beautiful position across the face...

And, now that we think about it, we've yet to actually see Drew Harmon truly surf in our tale...

That is by design. Because now we are seeing him...

And it is, nothing short of, *spectacular*...

QUICK SHOTS

of Drew Harmon, carving like the big wave master he is - bottom turns so powerful they throw plumes of spray twenty feet high, back into the face of the wave, driving high into the hook, then pulling into barrels big enough to build a house in... and out the other end...

And Fletcher, getting it all... as impressive in his angling for the shots as Drew is in his ripping... and for a moment, we see what it must have been like... back in the day... with Fletcher knowing what Drew is going to do before he does it, capturing each move at its most dramatic point...

But suddenly, Drew FALLS...

... off his inside rail and into the wave, where he is sucked immediately up the face, and over the falls --

He disappears from sight, a trail of red materializes upon the falling lip, making it clear why he has fallen:

HE HAS FALLEN BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN SHOT.

Fletcher lowers his camera and looks toward the shore, the rocky cliffs, the cemetery...

He raises his lens and now he sees them:

William Little, rifle and scope, and he SWINGS IT IN FLETCHER'S DIRECTION --

Fletcher stuffs the camera beneath his jerry-rigged-wet-suit-harness and DIVES --

Just as a MOUNTAIN OF WATER is massing, another thoroughbred Heart Attacks special...

The wave pounds him mercilessly, driving him inexorably toward the narrow beach...

FLETCHER

fighting the current, which is dragging him to shore...
Twisting, turning, Maytagging...

He can see William Little and Snacktime, waiting for him...
But he can't fight it... The tide is literally

DEPOSITING HIM AT THEIR FEET...

Fletcher arrives, half-drowned. His board has been BROKEN by the power of the surf -- the tail block and fin still connected to his ankle by the leash...

The nose, with the wet suit and camera on it, washes in a few feet away...

And William Little kicks Fletcher in the gut... And points the rifle down at him...

WILLIAM LITTLE

It sucks to be you --

And it's pretty much over...

Until a SCREAM from the cemetery gets their attention --

It is Kendra Harmon, her hair and tattered clothes trailing like flags before a tarnished sky...

She is moving toward them, indomitable and otherworldly, almost offering herself as a target. The sight of her seems to spook both William Little and Snacktime...

SNACKTIME

Damn...

William Little raises the rifle to Kendra... Who keeps coming, unmindful, almost as if this were a test of wills.

And this is all the distraction Fletcher requires --

Because he GRABS the BROKEN HALF of his SURFBOARD...

And BURIES IT -- FIN FIRST -- into William Little's guts...

William Little, astonished, looks at Fletcher --

FLETCHER

It sucks to be you --

And William Little lurches forward and falls, face-down into the rocky sand...

Snacktime stares at his dead friend in horror... And then
LEAPS ON FLETCHER --

And the two roll around in the surf, snarling, snapping, punching at each other...

Fletcher's not much of a fighter... And Snacktime is huge... So in moments, it's decided...

Snacktime on top of him... And he unsheathes a Bowie knife... And gets ready for some stab-time...

When -- KE-RAK! -- a rose petal blooms on Snacktime's chest...

And he flops off of Fletcher, into the surf...

Revealing Kendra behind him... William Little's rifle raised and smoking...

And Fletcher gets to his feet, shaken, staggered...

And we are in a SUBJECTIVE POV --

From way out on the point... Looking to shore... Seeing Fletcher... Seeing Kendra...

ON THE BEACH

Fletcher goes to Kendra...

He looks at her... Despite the ravages of the last 24 hours, she's still pure poetry...

But she is looking out to the sea... To where --

DREW HARMON

has climbed back onto his board...

Blood streaks his wet suit, as he paddles toward the waves once more --

And these waves are outrageous. Heart Attacks has reached its limit and many of the set waves are beginning to close out -- to break from one end of the bay to the other, impossible to make...

Fletcher runs down the beach. He calls Drew's name, then turns to find that Kendra has taken his camera from the deck of the broken board...

KENDRA

This is the place, isn't it? The place
he thought was here?

FLETCHER
It is... But I don't know what he's
doing... It's over... The place is
closing out...

KENDRA
Shoot it...

FLETCHER
What -- ?

She holds out his camera...

KENDRA
Shoot it...

He looks at her... Her face set... She nods... He takes the
camera... And turns back to

HEART ATTACKS

where Drew Harmon, 100 yards from shore, strokes into

THE LARGEST WAVE

we have ever seen... A booming, thunderfuck, Great Wall Of
China-style beaster --

And through his lens, Fletcher can see that there is
SOMETHING ELSE there as well -- actually SILHOUETTED in the
wave itself --

The OUTLINE of a huge GREAT WHITE SHARK...

FLETCHER
Jesus... There's a shark...

KENDRA
Shoot it...

He looks at her... She's stony... A hint of sorrow, yes, but
stony just the same...

KENDRA (CONT'D)
It's what he wants... Shoot it...

As DREW HARMON, oblivious to the shark, bleeding shoulder and
all... begins to stroke for the wave...

And indeed this is THE WAVE he predicted... The kind of wave
R.J. once asked him about... The kind of wave "folks don't
generally paddle into"... and now we SEE why...

The amount of water flowing up the face is tremendous...

It is a contest of strength and will... played out against
the ticking clock of the wave itself, which will break,
whether Drew catches it or not... And so...

He pits his strength against that of the sea, driving the big board forward... and down... as the wave seeks to draw him up... growing steeper by the moment...

And steeper... until Drew, poised in the very hook of the wave, gets to his feet... And there is A MOMENT here... where we can't really tell... if he will ride the wave or be pitched down its sixty foot face... And in fact...

The wooden gun free falls through ten feet of air... before making contact with the face of the wave... where...

A rail catches... and Drew is in... speeding across the face of one of the largest waves ever ridden...

But already the lip is beginning to pitch fifty feet in front of him -- throwing out into a huge barrel he has no hope of both entering and exiting...

But Drew makes no effort to either straighten out or dive for the bottom... He sets his line and pulls inside...

And Fletcher continues to shoot... climbing out over the rocks, getting as far into the water as he can... Snapping away...

Drew disappears from sight, as the wave collapses upon him...

And Fletcher can take it no more...

He dives into the rough water and begins to swim, then realizes... He's still got the camera, and he has to choose, one more time... and he does... In a heartbeat, he drops the camera, lowers his head, and swims as hard as he can...

As the old camera in its orange housing, sinks beneath him and passes from sight...

Floating to the bottom...

ON THE BEACH.

Kendra watches as Fletcher disappears in the surf. But then she looks up, at some new SOUND, as a huge

U.S. COAST GUARD HELICOPTER

its blades beating the air, swings out from above the cliffs, Deputy Travis McCade hanging out the side...

FLETCHER

raises his head to call Drew's name, then sees something, floating... And swims toward it, to find...

DREW'S BOARD.

Fletcher pulls himself up on the deck, calling Drew's name again, but the sea is wild and empty.

There is no sign of Drew Harmon. Or the great shark.

Just the sea. Wild and empty.

EXT. THE CEMETERY - LATER - DAY

A battered Fletcher, and an equally-battered R.J., sit at the open door of the helicopter. Travis stands in front of them.

FLETCHER

She was right there on the beach when I swam out...

TRAVIS

I know. I've got half a dozen guys and two dogs out there. We're not leaving 'til we find her. But you are...

Fletcher slumps into the aircraft... And they watch as William Little and Snacktime are zipped up in body bags.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Stupid bastards...

Fletcher looks at him....

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

A girl was killed up here... a short time ago... I believe these boys thought Drew did it... I believe that's what a man named Marvus Dove told them...

(a beat)

They were wrong. We just got the complete organics back... Marvus Dove was the killer...

Fletcher and R.J. share a look... A sad look... And then R.J., still half-stoned, dully intones:

R.J.

"Five miles of virgin beach... just one reef after another. Everyone firing and not a soul in sight... Fifteen foot swells, no wind, every day better than the last... the thing itself...

Fletcher nods... Travis looks at them, slightly baffled, then steps away, as the chopper's blades begin to beat the air --

Up it goes... And we are CLOSE ON FLETCHER --

As he/we get his/our last looks at

~~HEART ATTACKS~~

The empty cliffs. The old cemetery. The turbulent sea, its slate-gray rhino-skin a somehow fitting watery grave for a legend...

Buried in the huge close-out sets now marching across it...
Impossible to ride... Magnificent to behold.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DUKE'S AT THE BEACH - A FEW WEEKS LATER - NIGHT

Closed to the public. Rented out for the night by "Surf Magazine" and SPORTS ILLUSTRATED Welcome You." It's a party in honor of the largest cold water waves ever ridden.

And a slick surfer CROWD, at the center of which, we FIND R.J., much restored, his foot in a cast, a dozen pretty GIRLS lined up to sign it...

R.J. is holding court, regaling the crowd with tales of his recent adventures...

The centerpiece of the affair is a huge blown-up PHOTOGRAPH of R.J. bucking down the face of the big wave -- at the the place Drew called Pelicans. It is an exquisitely beautiful shot.

Michael Peters is here, making his rounds, clapping shoulders and shaking hands, but clearly looking for someone...

JACK FLETCHER

at the bar, at the edge of the party. More an observer, it would seem, than a participant. He's tan and fit. The hostile bartender from earlier -- Dale -- flirts with him now...

DALE

Why don't you call me sometime, Fletcher?
We can check out a band at The Kingfish
or something --

He searches her face for even a hint of ironic acknowledgment... Finds none... So he nods...

FLETCHER

Can I have a club soda, Dale -- ?

Now it is her turn to search for irony...

DALE

What do you, got a stain?

FLETCHER

Club soda.

She frowns... Goes to her gun... Peters claps him on the shoulder, then nods toward the big photograph...

PETERS

I can't quit looking at it. You're back
on the cover, Doc...

Fletcher smiles, nods...

PETERS (CONT'D)
O'Neil's gonna want this one too, you
know. You're gonna make some money...

Peters looks back toward the photograph once more.

PETERS (CONT'D)
Imagine, though, if you'd gotten
something of Drew Harmon... on that last
day...

Fletcher nods, shrugs it off, a faraway look in his eye.
Peters studies him - a long beat -

PETERS (CONT'D)
But you lost the camera. I know. Even
in your greatest triumph, Doc Fun, the
fuck-up remains...

FLETCHER
My most loyal ally...

Peters points to the photo and leans in for:

PETERS
I just need to know, Doc, that if I put
it out there that's Heart Attacks -- and
R.J. is definitely with the program,
smart boy that he is -- that no pictures
of the real deal are gonna suddenly
surface --

Fletcher looks across the room, at R.J. enjoying his
celebrity...

FLETCHER
That ain't gonna happen --

PETERS
Good...

Beat... They sip at their drinks... Peters turns to him...

PETERS (CONT'D)
You ever gonna tell me what really went
on up there?

FLETCHER
I already have.

PETERS
Yeah yeah. A shark took him -- the
greatest big wave rider of them all -- in
huge surf, in the heart of The Red
Triangle...

FLETCHER
It's not a bad story.

PETERS
You kidding? It's a great story. But
that's all there is to it?

FLETCHER
He told me he needed a witness.

Peters just looks at him.

PETERS
Now what the hell is that supposed to
mean?

Fletcher shrugs. Peters signals Dale for another drink.

PETERS (CONT'D)
Get me another bourbon, Dale... You want
something, Doc -- ?

He turns back to Fletcher. But finds only an empty stool.

ANGLE, R.J. - still talking... Follow his eyes as he sees
Fletcher walk out of the joint... Fletcher looks back at
him... There's a nod, an immutable connection, a tacit
acknowledgment...

R.J. turns back to the rapt crowd... And, if we hadn't
noticed it before, he's working on a strip of BUBBLE-WRAP.

R.J.
What you have to understand... is that
the colder the water is, the denser it
is. A lighter board probably wouldn't
have even gotten me into the wave... I
tell you something else... you paddle out
in some epic mysto spot, The Place Where
Legends Die, on a wooden gun shaped by a
master like Drew Harmon, with another
legend taking the snaps... You just know
the spirits are going to smile on you...

EXT. THE WINKING SEA LION MOTEL - NIGHT

Fletcher climbs the stairs to his old room. When a

VOICE (O.S.)
Mr. Felcher!

is shouted. He turns. To see Mr. Chu, the manager. Now all
sweetness and light...

MR. CHU
Much mail. Much mail for you --

And he hands him a stack of mail...

FLETCHER
Thank you...

MR. CHU
No. Thank you, thank you...

And, oddly, Mr. Chu giggles, knowing grin and all... Then he bows... Vanishes...

Fletcher frowns... Keys his lock...

INT. FLETCHER'S ROOM

Fletcher enters, going through his mail. He stops short.

Kendra Harmon is there... Sitting on a chair... Somehow, even more stunning than Fletcher remembered, the moonlight falling across her face...

KENDRA
Mr. Chu let me in...

FLETCHER
Good old Mr. Chu --

Fletcher is not sure what to say. Beat...

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
You got my note, about the boards?

KENDRA
Travis gave it to me...

FLETCHER
I tried to tell you myself.

KENDRA
I know.

Beat...

FLETCHER
I'm sorry. About how things turned out...

KENDRA
Don't be. He chose, you know. He chose his myth...

FLETCHER
I would have chosen differently.

KENDRA
I know.

Beat... Then:

FLETCHER
Drew said that I looked at you like a guy who suddenly wanted to live forever...

KENDRA
What do you think?

FLETCHER
Well, I do feel an overpowering urge to
renew my subscription to "NEWSWEEK"
indefinitely...

She smiles... And Fletcher averts his eyes, busies himself
with the mail... And then he sees it...

A SMALL PACKAGE --

Postmarked "Punta De Los Lobos". Chile.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)
Now, just hold on here --

And he rips it open... It contains two objects... He shakes
them out...

The first is the little balsa SURFBOARD necklace...

The second is a ROLL OF FILM...

Fletcher and Kendra exchange a look...

INT. FLETCHER'S DARKROOM

Really, the second bathroom... As he develops the film...
Kendra with him...

THROUGH SEVERAL DISSOLVES --

We see one PHOTO as it goes through the chemical trays...

And Fletcher clips it, dripping with developer, to a line...

And they peer at it... At each other...

And now WE SEE IT:

Drew Harmon's bottom turn in epic Heart Attacks, on a wave
that dwarfs the one now serving as centerpiece for the surfer
party...

And a chill runs through them both...

FLETCHER
He needed a witness...

He looks at her, not sure how she'll react...

But then she smiles... A pure smile of golden sunlight...

And he takes her to him...

As the OPENING Phil Spector-esque drums of The Beach Boys'
"Don't Worry Baby" SOUNDS UP ON TRACK...

And we MOVE AWAY FROM Fletcher and Kendra, MOVING CLOSER TO
THE PHOTO --

CLOSER to Drew Harmon, as he stares into the cavernous tube,
his eyes fixed on eternity...

DISSOLVE TO:

AN ELEPHANT SEAL

as it raises its sleepy head -- As if it hears the music...
It looks out to sea --

EXT. PUNTA DE LOS LOBOS - CHILE - DAY

Large waves roll and crash in marvelous shore break. Green
water and blue sky. Frothy sea spray and long golden rays of
sunlight... Where --

DREW HARMON

is riding hard in the big dumping surf...

The Beach Boys crank...

As Drew rides this seemingly ceaseless wave...

And he turns to grin at us...

A smile as big as the ocean...

As big as the man...

Although not quite as big as the legend...

THE END