

JOHN FROM ELSEWHERE

“Pilot”

By

David Milch & Kem Nunn

"John From Cincinnati Meets The Surfing Yosts"

FADE IN:

1 EXT. TIJUANA RIVER VALLEY - FIRST LIGHT 1

A swath of land five miles deep and two wide, running east to west along the U.S./Mexican border. It holds within its dark recesses the last reaches of the Tijuana River, ending in beaches vacant as the moon --

High ground lies to the south -- mesas cut by THE FENCE, and beyond these the hills of Mexico --

North, the land is flatter. The grasses of a broad estuary give way to the nearly featureless waste we will come to know as IMPERIAL BEACH -- the last beach town in California. The one no one wants. From the aluminum framed windows of its cheap tract homes can be glimpsed the great rounded edge of the Tijuana bullring emerging from the polluted coastal airs as though the mother-ship of some alien race had settled there to survey its holdings --

DISSOLVE TO:

2 EXT. TIJUANA RIVER VALLEY - FIRST LIGHT 2

A man carrying a surfboard and wearing a wet suit approaches a 1950 Plymouth station wagon parked at the foot of a shallow dune. Beyond the dune can be seen the beaches of The Tijuana Sloughs, Mexico close enough to touch, the old bullring and its attendant light-house -- a dull bone in the gray light. West of these, glassy, A-framed peaks fill in from the south. The man, mid-fifties, balding, whom we'll come to know as MITCH "THE FLEA" YOST, shoves his surf board into the back of the wood-sided station wagon, climbs in --

TIME CUT TO:

3 EXT. THE CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH - FIRST LIGHT 3

We see it now through the windows of Mitch's car -- its sorry strip-malls and sun-bleached pastels. The radio plays Lightning Hopkins, a slow blues --

(CONTINUED)

He passes the local high school -- marquee proclaiming Spring Break. Yes, it's Easter week, and anywhere else along the Southern California Coast this might mean a swelling of the ranks. In I.B. it doesn't mean dick --

Mitch turns onto a deserted main drag, along an empty boardwalk, an arthritic pier wobbling seaward, its entrance marked by a series of odd, Plexiglas swizzle sticks, conceived as a tourist attraction by some bipolar civic booster, and known by those who know it at all as SURFHENGE. Across the street, a sign identifies as the Snug Harbor the run-down motel before whose twenty-nine rooms one vehicle is parked. Another less-weathered sign announces the structure as for sale, contact Seymour or Meyer Dickstein, and the business phone number of the Dickstein Brothers, who are Attorneys At Law, and also Abogados. The signs are flanked by midget palms in need of water. As he passes the Snug Harbor, as if something within were a danger to him or disappointment, Mitch looks elsewhere --

TIME CUT TO:

4

EXT. YOST HOUSE - DAWN

4

Seedy lower middle-class. One among many. Its distinguishing feature the Polynesian motif evidenced by the palm fronds-shaded barbecue pit, the Tiki Gods carved from driftwood, the array of surfboards lining the fence. Mitch pulls into the drive, parks and gets out, suppressing the impulse to enter the garage which has been converted to living quarters. He goes into the house instead --

CUT TO:

5

INT. YOST HOUSE - DAWN

5

Having peeled off his wet suit, Mitch is down to a pair of swim trunks, drinks milk from the carton as he stands before the refrigerator. His wife CISSY enters, half-asleep but awake enough to see on a second look that Mitch is an eighth of an inch off the ground. After a beat of her trying to process this --

(CONTINUED)

CISSY

What's going on?

Mitch's look, leaving room for his wife to give her query context, conveys as well that in the area of difficulties in communication, they're not without experience. Cissy grabs a fly swatter off the kitchen table and waves it in the eighth of an inch space between her husband's feet and the floor --

CISSY (CONT'D)

With your feet, Mitch. You're off the fucking ground.

MITCH

Let's see how long I stay up.

They stay still and silent for a beat --

MITCH (CONT'D)

This is twice now.

And then Mitch is down. They stare at each other --

CISSY

When was the first time?

MITCH

Just now. On the water. Just before sun-up.

CISSY

And you'd've told me if I hadn't caught you.

MITCH

Sure.

CISSY

Right.

Cissy walks away. Off Mitch --

CUT TO:

6

INT. YOST HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

6

Mitch comes in. Cissy, on the bed, turns away from him.
Mitch lies down next to her and stares up at the ceiling --

MITCH

It was this weird wave off The
Point. I wasn't doing anything
special. 'Looked down and saw I
was up.

A beat --

CISSY

That's great, the way you tell it.

MITCH

I'll be in the garage..

CISSY

Thanks for the visit.

Mitch gets up, realizes he doesn't want to go. But doesn't
know what to do. He stands there. She turns to him --

CISSY (CONT'D)

What are you going to do about it?

A beat --

MITCH

Wait for it to happen again I
guess.

He recognizes the disappointment her silence tries to hide --

MITCH (CONT'D)

What do you think I should do?

CISSY

I don't know Mitch. I guess go to
the garage or fuck me.

The tone of which is meant to convey, "for all the pleasure
you give me when we fuck, you might as well go to the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

garage." He gets back on the bed with her and takes her in his arms to make love to her. She waits with resignation for the feeling of futility which invariably accompanies their carnal pleasure. When the feeling of futility comes she is surprised at its diminished intensity --

CISSY (CONT'D)

Mister high-fucking-flyer.

Off which --

CUT TO:

INT. SNUG HARBOR - BUTCHIE'S SUITE - DAWN

Butchie is pacing and maybe has a syringe dangling out the main line in his forearm --

BUTCHIE

I'm "disappointed," Freddy, over here in California. I'm out the twenty-three hundred, I'm not fucking high, and I got dibs on "disappointed." Mother-fucker --

By this last Butchie identifies as par for the course the rhythms of the "deadbeat tattoo" being knuckled on his front door -- and maybe as a bogey the blood-ooze which ensues on his yanking the needle from his vein. He approaches the door, which he does not open. He does not look through the peephole, though his tone would suggest he has --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

What do you want?

YOUTH (O.C.)

What do you want?

Now Butchie does peep out --

POV - BUTCHIE

to see a Youth whose features, while pleasant, are not electric with intelligence --

RESUME - BUTCHIE

(CONTINUED)

still at the peephole, sufficiently unimpressed by the Youth to break a little bad --

BUTCHIE

I want you to tell me you're from the douchebag in that ice cream truck.

YOUTH (O.C.)

I am from that douchebag.

Good fortune having been a stranger these last years, Butchie renews acquaintance carefully --

BUTCHIE

So what've you fucking got for me?

The Youth seems inclined to blow as bad as Butchie --

YOUTH (O.C.)

I don't know.

Butchie's only briefly taken aback --

BUTCHIE

'Cause it's sealed in a thick fucking envelope, 's what I'd like to hear from you now.

YOUTH (O.C.)

It's sealed in a thick fucking envelope.

A beat. Butchie addresses the door --

BUTCHIE

Take two steps back, show me the fucking envelope, and turn your pockets inside-out.

Butchie watches through the peephole as the Youth complies, producing from his pockets two wrapped packets of hundred dollar bills and a gray piece of plastic --

(CONTINUED)

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

Where's the fucking envelope Harpo?

YOUTH (O.C.)

I don't know.

BUTCHIE

Is that real money?

YOUTH (O.C.)

I don't know.

Butchie opens the door and comes out --

BUTCHIE

Keep your hands where I can fucking
see 'em.

Butchie acts as if he's talking to someone behind the Youth --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

Make sure Harpo doesn't go for his
horn.

Perhaps more than one person --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

You know what.

Butchie has closed on the Youth, indicates the packets of
money --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

Let me look at those, and no
fucking trouble.

The Youth hands over the packets. Butchie alternates between
scrutiny of the currency and dangerous study of the Youth.
Finally, nodding for the invisible others to leave them, he
considers the piece of plastic --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

Is your name John, or would this
card be boosted?

(CONTINUED)

YOUTH

I don't know.

BUTCHIE

I'm going to call you John.

YOUTH

Call me John.

BUTCHIE

I'm Butchie.

JOHN

You're Butchie.

BUTCHIE

Hold these for me John --

By restoring money and plastic to the Youth's possession as defined by legal statute, Butchie takes precaution against a suddenly perceived contingency, while a hand to the Youth's back maintains practical control of the Youth's person --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

-- and please come in.

An avuncular tone seems a fixture now of Butchie's voice. The avid intensity of Butchie's study of his possessions seems to animate John's own view of them. As John and Butchie head into Butchie's shitbox room --

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A few wet-suit clad surfers vie for waves in the early light. Mexico two miles south, as marked by the dark shape of the bullring. A heavy-set man in gray sweats walks the boardwalk. His name is BILL JACKS. He turns onto a narrow street lined with cheap houses, puts a hand into a pocket, comes out with several small stones, as one might pick up along the shore, looks at them as though for the first time --

BILL

Now what the fuck?

(CONTINUED)

-- as a small amount of sand trickles from his fingers --

BILL (CONT'D)

(re himself)

You're a rock-hound now?

(a beat)

Just tell me you didn't lose the
fucking keys.

In fact, the prospect appears to frighten him. He stabs a
second hand into a second pocket, comes out with the keys.
He throws the pebbles aside, turns up the drive of one of the
houses and goes inside --

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Barry of Azusa walks out of a house. He is accompanied by
one of the Dicksteins --

DICKSTEIN

Isn't it wonderful.

BARRY

It is wonderful. Even before the
erection of this imposing structure
my mother and I would come up here
for the view.

DICKSTEIN

How long ago would that have been?

BARRY

Twenty, twenty-five years.

DICKSTEIN

Isn't the view even better, with
the river more eroded?

It's as if Dickstein hasn't spoken --

BARRY

The house, of course, must be
levelled.

CONTINUED:

Once illuminated, Dickstein has learned to see the virtue in any position --

DICKSTEIN

Levelled! Hmmm!

Barry crosses to his white Toyota Prius --

DICKSTEIN (CONT'D)

I'll bet you save a fortune on gas!

Off which --

CUT TO:

10

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

10

Modest yet furnished with care - antiques, oriental rugs ... And about a hundred and twenty-five birds. A television plays Mexican wrestling, the sound off, wherein one chunky Mexican man in a mask, body-slams another chunky Mexican man in a mask. As off this silent ballet --

BILL (O.C.)

Oh, Jesus, fuck --

-- Bill, having come upon one of his birds -- heap of yellow feathers at the bottom of a cage --

BILL

Zippy ... What the fuck, pal --

-- his voice cut short by the lump in his throat, resumes in broken fashion, as would suggest despair beyond even the loss of a beloved pet --

BILL (CONT'D)

I've seen too much of this shit. I am full up ...

-- as suddenly he's crying, and trying to pull himself together at the same time --

(CONTINUED)

BILL (CONT'D)

Okay. Okay. This isn't Ted Mack.
Or this isn't Arthur Godfrey.

-- addresses the assembled flock, as he lifts the dead Zippy
from the cage --

BILL (CONT'D)

It's one for all and all for one
around here, and I've said I was
full up plenty, and plenty found
out after I could take fucking
plenty more.

-- places Zippy in a fruit bowl on the dining room table.
His lower lip begins to quiver as he stares at the bird --

BILL (CONT'D)

And this is a fucking tough one,
and I don't pretend it fucking
isn't. Believe you me.

He begins to sob. Goes to a thermostat, shoves it to one
side. A mechanical HUM kicks in. Goes to a swamp cooler
mounted on one of his windows and turns that on too --

BILL (CONT'D)

And it's one for all still, and all
for one still, if steps have to be
fucking taken. No one's abandoned
in this operation. We don't leave
ours behind, which is one big
fucking difference.

He realizes he's veering into a new line of thought about his
service with the Marines --

BILL (CONT'D)

Don't make me get into that now.

-- whereupon a KNOCKING interrupts the flow. Bill stops,
listens. A second KNOCK brings him to the front door, red-
faced and sweating, in spite of such arctic winds as now blow
through his house. He opens to a surfer/slacker-looking kid
of perhaps fifteen, whom we will come to know as SHAUN YOST.

(CONTINUED)

And the kid's looking a little shell-shocked himself, red-eyed, like maybe he too has been crying -- the recognition of which brings the older man to some tenuous mastery over his own emotional state --

SHAUN

Why is my old man such an asshole?

Bill drags a hand over his face --

BILL

Aren't you suppose' to be in school?

The kid walks in, starts slapping himself with his arms, sees the dead bird in the fruit bowl --

SHAUN

What happened to Zippy?

BILL

Birds die.

SHAUN

Maybe 'cause you got it so cold in here.

BILL

When you're older you'll understand.

Shaun gently persists --

SHAUN

Isn't it bad for your birds Bill?
How cold it is.

BILL

Yea, well, maybe ... Test of the emergency system ...

Bill goes to the thermostat, turns it up, and on to the swamp cooler, which he turns off --

BILL (CONT'D)

How'd it go last night?

(CONTINUED)

SHAUN

I told you, shitty.

BILL

Yeah, you lost?

Shaun studies Bill --

SHAUN

I mean with my Old Man.

Bill nods, trying to cover his confusion --

SHAUN (CONT'D)

I won at The Pond, remember?

BILL

No, I know you fucking won.

SHAUN

You dropped me off to talk with my
Dad.

BILL

And how the fuck did that go?

(looks accusingly at
Zippy's corpse)

'Fucking bird.

SHAUN

Don't ask his opinion, getting
sponsored in a sport for cunts.
He's sorry he gave me his Pipe
Masters trophy and if I tried to
give him my trophy he'd go ahead
and pawn it.

BILL

This is your Dad.

Shaun's starting to kind of cry again. Bill starts looking
around for something to give him --

BILL (CONT'D)

You want a Seven-Up?

(CONTINUED)

The kid shakes his head --

BILL (CONT'D)

I got Twinkies somewhere around.

He's looking in the refrigerator --

BILL (CONT'D)

Or maybe they're fucking gone.

Bill closes the refrigerator door, turns back to Shaun --

BILL (CONT'D)

Is it too cold? Should we go
outside? It might be warmer.

SHAUN

You want to bury Zippy?

Bill just stands there --

SHAUN (CONT'D)

You want me to bury him?

The kid's picked up Zippy from the fruit bowl and started
smoothing his feathers --

SHAUN (CONT'D)

I could help you do it.

A beat, then Bill takes the bird from Shaun --

BILL

You can watch. When you're older
it'll be for you.

Bill starts for the sliding glass doors --

BILL (CONT'D)

Out back by the fence ...

Shaun walks behind Bill, from within whose hands, as he
passes the Mexican wrestling, comes this little CHEEP. Bill
stops stock-still, uncups his hands, to discover Zippy alive
--

(CONTINUED)

BILL (CONT'D)

Jesus, Joseph, and Mary.

He instinctively raises up the bird to within kissing distance of his lips, and Zippy kisses him --

BILL (CONT'D)

Fucking Zippy.

The bird flits to the top of its cage where it sits preening its feathers. Shaun and Bill just look at each other, look at the bird -- a long beat --

BILL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry you have to learn about this now, but I'm completely losing my mind. I don't know chowder from chum, or if a bird's alive or dead. You probably shouldn't even come around anymore.

SHAUN

The bird was dead, Bill. I saw it.

BILL

Well obviously he wasn't. You'll understand when you're older. This is not any kind of shit you even should have to think about right now.

Shaun's looking past the old man --

SHAUN

That is fucking sick.

Bill follows Shaun's gaze, to where, atop his cage, Zippy has gone into some kind of little dance, bobbing up and down, moving his head back and forth. Shaun imitates the bird --

BILL

What are you doing? You wanna throw your neck out? That's bird shit ...

(CONTINUED)

SHAUN

It's cool.

Tries a few more, as does Zippy. As off Bill, watching, subtle shifts in body language suggesting more moderate variations of Zippy's dance may be in the offing --

CUT TO:

11

EXT. MOTEL OFFICE - DAY

11

The manager of the Snug Harbor Motel, Ramon Gaviota, has been found applying tinted film to the outside of the motel office windows by Barry from Azusa --

BARRY

Perdoname. Como se llama usted?

RAMON

Me llamo Ramon.

BARRY

You and I, Ramon should sit down and have a little tete a tete.

Ramon doesn't know what "tete-a-tete" means --

RAMON

Me and you should?

Barry by glance and gesture indicates the motel and it's grounds --

BARRY

With regard to your future in this operation.

RAMON

This motel right here?

BARRY

This operation. This motel. Do you have a future here? Any more "manyanas."

(CONTINUED)

Ramon recollects the faded sign nailed to a palm tree --

RAMON

You see the sign, "For Sale." If you think of buying there are many, many owners.

BARRY

The thinking part is over Ramon. Se acabo esta phase.

RAMON

The hermanos Blechman, muchos Greenspan Junior, Zimmerman Family Trust --

BARRY

A complicated and contentious situation, but the Abogados Dickstein saw me through --

RAMON

Como --

BARRY

-- along with my all-cash offer, contingent on short escrow, at three times the offering price. Claro?

To Ramon, little seems "claro" just now --

BARRY (CONT'D)

Me llamo Senor Cunningham, Ramon.

RAMON

Tanto gusto.

BARRY

When we're solamente you may call me Barry.

RAMON

Tanto gusto Barry.

(CONTINUED)

BARRY

Tanto gusto, si. I'll ask you now
to show me around.

RAMON

Today I am not able. Tomorrow I
show you completamente, and you
will see Barry, this business is
not so simple just to buy and run
it yourself.

BARRY

Today you will show me Ramon. Hoy
dia.

Ramon is uneasy --

RAMON

En una hora?

BARRY

Inmediamente.

Ramon commences their tour with dissembled uneasiness. As
they move away from the camera --

BARRY (CONT'D)

A proposito Ramon, tenemos "guests"
aqui?

To Ramon, the mysteries of his second language seem to deepen
--

RAMON

"Guests?"

BARRY

Aqui, Ramon, si. Guests. Off the
libros.

The figures have not so diminished in the camera's eye as to
make unobservable an insistent gesturing by Ramon, unobserved
by Barry, as a 1942 Ford pickup, lovingly restored, moves
past them on the street --

12

INT. BILL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

12

Bill's driving. Shaun construes Ramon's gesticulations --

SHAUN

Let's go to the Surfing Donut.

BILL

Are you hungry?

SHAUN

Ramon don't want us at the motel now.

BILL

I don't give less of a fuck what that beaner wants or doesn't.

SHAUN

He's with somebody.

BILL

He can be with the Mexican President for all the fuck I give -- I'll park where the fuck I want.

Bill's pulling into the Surfing Donut --

BILL (CONT'D)

You think your Dad wants some crullers?

SHAUN

If he's on a dope run prob'ly.

Possibly because he concentrates on positioning the pickup between a set of parking stripes, Bill gives no sign he's heard Shaun --

BILL

'Force you to park within these for no Goddamn earthly reason. Revoke your fucking license.

(CONTINUED)

12

CONTINUED:

12

Off which --

CUT TO:

13

INT. YOST HOUSE - DAY

13

Cissy's on the phone. Her voice is low. She keeps looking back at the closed door of the bathroom --

CISSY

I'm not smoking and I'm not tripping. Get the fuck out of my head Freddy -- my head's not where the party is.

Listening to Freddy's response, Cissy reacts as well to the sound of the toilet flushing in the bathroom --

CISSY (CONT'D)

That could work out when you get here, a little private party for yours.

It's too hurried to be truly salacious --

CISSY (CONT'D)

All right. All right. Got to go.

Mitch has come out in his boxer shorts --

MITCH

I couldn't find the Glade.

She nods, feeling some guilty impulse to move away from the phone --

CISSY

I'm going to Costco now.

MITCH

Who was on the phone?

CISSY

Freddy.

(CONTINUED)

Mitch waits --

CISSY (CONT'D)

What else do you need from Costco?

MITCH

I didn't hear the phone ring.

CISSY

So what?

MITCH

Did you call him?

CISSY

Hey fuck you Mitch.

(lying)

I did not fucking call him.

A beat --

MITCH

What did he want?

CISSY

'Let us know he's coming.

MITCH

What's he coming for?

CISSY

Why would I ask Freddy what he's
coming for when all he'd do is lie.

What else do you want from Costco?

A beat. She stares at him --

MITCH

Have they got toilet seats?

She shrugs, pained by his decision to trust her --

(CONTINUED)

MITCH (CONT'D)

(re the bathroom toilet)

If they've got a seat that size for
the garage.

She's gone. HOLD ON Mitch, very sad. Now rising, mystified
hope reborn. Experimentally stepping out from his levitation
plane, discovering he can get down to terra firma. Looks
behind, to the Plain Of The Third Elevation. Invisible to
the naked eye. As he goes to put on his pants the phone
rings --

[THIS WILL TURN OUT TO BE THE CALL FROM BARRY CUNNINGHAM]

CUT TO:

INT. SNUG HARBOR MOTEL - BUTCHIE'S SUITE - DAY

Butchie's got John inside. The place is of course a mess.
And no place to sit save the mattress on the linoleum floor,
which Butchie now makes a show of tidying up. Gestures in
magnanimous fashion toward the soiled mattress, covered now
by the old sleeping bag he has smoothed out across the top.
Smiles indulgently, as if to suggest this is a condition with
which any man of the world might sympathize, as, indeed,
John's own smile would indicate --

BUTCHIE

Most of my time I'm on the North
Shore -- house there overlooking
Rocky Points. Jerry Lopez right
next door --

JOHN

Jerry's next door?

BUTCHIE

Don't get me started about fucking
Jerry.

-- checks John to gauge his familiarity with such names and
places while moving toward the small, apartment-sized
refrigerator jammed into what passes for his kitchen --

(CONTINUED)

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

O.J.? --

-- opens the door, only to close it immediately, recoiling at some smell --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

-- unbelievable. Fucking grommet I pay to keep an eye on this place while I'm gone -- 'fucking cure for something could be growing in that O.J.

Butchie rubs at the inside of his elbow --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

Anyways, here you are, all the way from -- wherever --

-- looks to John for some indication of where, exactly, he might be from --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

Knowing what you want and having the balls to go after it.

JOHN

I have the balls to go after it.

BUTCHIE

To fucking surf, right John? -- right John Monad? And to learn from Butchie Yost, a.k.a. "The Fucking Beast!"

JOHN

A.k.a. The Fucking Beast Butchie!

BUTCHIE

I'd like us up on a wave right now, just behind the fucking balls you showed getting out here. Because you are a charger John. And o'course I'd have to be on my way to fucking Florida, to the Annual
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

Butch Yost East Coast Surf Camp,
that I got to leave for in half an
hour.

JOHN

You got to leave Butch?

Butchie chortles good-naturedly --

BUTCHIE

What do you think John, you're
going to take four thousand dollars
out of one of those two packets and
kick in the one week contractual
Surf Camp postponement clause? You
got that kind of fucking money to
throw around?

JOHN

Fuck yes!

John takes the money out and throws it around. Butchie
stares at him, sits down on the mattress --

BUTCHIE

We're going to take a moment, then
we're going to collect that money
off the floor John, and what I'm
going to do, I'm going to take four
thousand dollars for the kick-in
postponement refund and not one
fucking cent more, and I'm going to
tell you why.

JOHN

Why Butchie, a.k.a. The Beast?

Butchie is collecting the four --

BUTCHIE

You get the rest back, and you get
your platinum card back, because
just now all my funds are in my
North Shore property, but these are
(MORE).

(CONTINUED)

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

usually the sums I'm around, more often than not. Do you understand?

JOHN

I understand Butchie.

BUTCHIE

So pick up your fucking money, and don't be leaving your fucking money on the floor, and put your fucking credit card away, and if you want to use it later we can.

JOHN

I'm putting it away Butchie, a.k.a. The Beast.

Butchie rubs his neck, averting his gaze --

BUTCHIE

'Cause that shit don't tempt me to violence.

Pounding on the door --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

(low and insistent to John)

Who the fuck is that now?

JOHN

(low and insistent)

I don't know.

BUTCHIE

(calls out)

Yea.

BILL (O.C.)

It's Bill Jacks.

BUTCHIE

Nothing about nothing John. Very important.

(CONTINUED)

John does as he's told, as Butchie goes to the door, opens it to see Bill standing in front of him -- Shaun back in the lot, behind Bill, turning lazy circles on his skateboard, never looking toward Butchie's room --

BILL

We need to talk.

Butchie seems suddenly much depleted, in such light as now finds its way into the seedy courtyard. He speaks to Bill, but his eye strays to Shaun -- notes the easy grace of his circles in the sun --

BUTCHIE

How would later be?

BILL

How about go fuck yourself.

The two men trade looks. Butchie turns to John --

BUTCH

John. Why don't you wait outside for a minute. You can talk to Shaun, on the skateboard over there.

John comes to the door. Bill studies John --

BILL

Who are you?

JOHN

John Monad.

BILL

From where?

BUTCHIE

He's from Cincinnati Bill. You want to talk to him or me?

Butchie does his best to hurry him out, while making sure that he will not go far --

(CONTINUED)

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

We got a deal John. Lessons this
afternoon, for right now stay put,
right where I can fucking find you.

JOHN

Okay, Butchie.

He goes out. Bill looks after him --

BILL

Who's the Numb Nuts?

BUTCHIE

What do you want?

CUT TO:

15

EXT. SNUG HARBOR MOTEL - PARKING LOT - DAY

15

In whose parking lot, a distracted Shaun does tricks on his
skateboard, thinking about Bill and his Dad. John, come out
from Butchie's room, approaches --

CUT TO:

16

INT. SNUG HARBOR MOTEL - BUTCHIE'S SUITE - DAY

16

Bill's picked up the tipped-over skateboarding trophy --

BILL

This is none of my fucking
business, is the first thing to
say.

BUTCHIE

Always.

BILL

What does that fucking mean?

BUTCHIE

You say it's none of your business
before you start breaking my balls.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Maybe you need your balls always
broken 'cause you always hurt your
kid's feelings.

CUT TO:

17

EXT. SNUG HARBOR MOTEL - PARKING LOT - DAY

17

Shaun's used to spectators and ignores John --

JOHN

Are you Shaun on the skateboard?

Shaun doesn't stop skating --

SHAUN

You know my Dad?

JOHN

I don't know your Dad.

SHAUN

Butchie.

JOHN

Butchie told me to find you.

It pleases Shaun to hear this. Not to get an answer which
will reveal Butchie's motive as pragmatic and uncaring, he
doesn't ask about it further --

CUT TO:

18

INT. SNUG HARBOR MOTEL - BUTCHIE'S SUITE - DAY

18

Butchie and Bill --

BUTCHIE

Is this about the fucking
skateboard contract? Tell him to
sign the fucking contract Bill.

BILL

He's a fucking minor.

(CONTINUED)

BUTCHIE

Tell my Dad to sign it as his guardian --

(taps on his forehead)

-- let me try to remember who had me sign guardianship to my Dad.

BILL

To keep you out of fucking jail, and I'm not too insane to know you should be fucking ashamed of yourself.

Butchie flares --

BUTCHIE

I'm saying Bill, if you'd fucking listen, tell Shaun to sign with the Seven Flying Cunts of the Skateboard or whoever the fucking contract's with, tell Mitch to okay it as his guardian, and leave me the fuck alone.

Butchie goes out the door. Bill follows, feeling bad about breaking Butchie's balls --

CUT TO:

19

EXT. SNUG HARBOR HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

19

Butchie's watching Shaun and John who are at some distance. Bill comes beside Butchie --

BILL

You know he knows you're on a fucking drug run, your son.

BUTCHIE

Very few people don't.

ANGLE - JOHN AND SHAUN

(CONTINUED)

A lonely kid who likes company without having been taught how to come by it, Shaun does another trick or two, warming to John's observing presence --

SHAUN

You ride?

JOHN

I ride.

Shaun stops. He grabs his board and hands it to John. John studies the board --

SHAUN

You don't ride do you?

JOHN

I don't ride.

SHAUN

You want me to show you a thing or two?

JOHN

Yeah.

SHAUN

Okay put the board down on the ground.

John puts the board down, like Shaun was his big brother --

SHAUN (CONT'D)

You a rightie?

JOHN

I'm a rightie.

SHAUN

Okay then. Put your left foot in front and then...

RESUME - JOHN

(CONTINUED)

John gets on the board and he's off. He's emulating the tricks Shaun was doing about as well as Shaun was doing them with an ease and a robotic stature --

RESUME - BUTCHIE AND BILL

the former understanding what he's seeing --

BUTCHIE

Fuck.

RESUME - JOHN

flipping Shaun's skateboard onto a handroll and sliding it, wheels-up, the length of the steps before flipping it back around to nail the landing, a perfectly executed Dark Slide. Shaun runs up beside him --

SHAUN

I thought you said you didn't ride.

JOHN

I didn't ride.

SHAUN

You do now.

JOHN

I do now.

RESUME - BUTCHIE AND BILL

Butchie squints --

BUTCHIE

I got to get that looney toon on the water.

Off which --

CUT TO:

20

INT. COSTCO - DAY

20

Cissy is pushing an over-sized shopping cart down an endless aisle. At intervals she takes from one of the shelves some household necessity to toss into the cart, each tossing-in like the demoralized, resignedly-panicked breathing of someone with damaged lungs. She's coming to the end of the row. Heading for the short aisle perpendicular, Cissy pushes and turns her cart hard as she passes an associate named Dwayne, "accidentally" clipping him in the ankle --

CISSY

Can I get by?

The beat their eyes hold announces Cissy's and Dwayne's understanding that, any coincidence of purpose aside, they are enemies. Cissy passes a young mother and her three-year-old son whose legs dangle out the front basket of the shopping cart. They understand in a second each others' stories. Cissy resumes her mission. She sees another associate, Gary, stacking bulk blocks of toilet paper rolls onto the shelf --

CISSY (CONT'D)

I'm looking for toilet seats.

GARY

You're looking at it lady.

There's savoir faire in Gary's tone. Cissy stares at Gary --

CISSY

A toilet seat. Where you put your ass to take a shit.

Gary doesn't like having expended the best of his savoir faire to be answered with an obscenity. He considers Cissy with narrowed eyes --

CISSY (CONT'D)

Seats, Gary. Toilet seats, for my husband's useless ass.

GARY

Ma'am get a hold of yourself.

(CONTINUED)

CISSY

You know anything outside of paper products, or would these be it for you?

GARY

I don't know where the toilet seats are.

Cissy arm-sweeps Gary's carefully stacked toilet paper off the shelf --

GARY (CONT'D)

One of those nearly hit me.

CISSY

No Gary, one of those nearly didn't. Why don't you go fuck yourself, or fuck Dwayne in Back-To-School.

Gary walks away. Cissy knows she might be in trouble but wills herself into thinking that if she can get past what's just happened others will as well. At this moment Cissy sees at the end of the aisle a toilet seat, shiny and new and pulsing with light. She moves toward the light. She reaches the toilet seat without incident, encouraging her sense that her behavior is having a salutary effect on unseen others. She turns the toilet seat over and considers its pedigree --

CISSY (CONT'D)

Boy they've got great stuff here.
Great prices. Thirty-five dollars more at Bed Bath and Beyond. Exact same toilet seat.

Two male security guards approach with Gary in tow. Gary points at her, meeting Cissy's eyes, nodding silent representation of what her next few hours are going to be like --

SECURITY GUARD #1

Put the toilet seat down Ma'am.

(CONTINUED)

CISSY

I'm buying it.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Put down the seat and step back
from the display.

Cissy pulls the toilet seat close to her chest. The second
security guard approaches to take the seat from her --

CISSY

Get the fuck away from me you
fucking moron.

The three men move to surround Cissy --

CISSY (CONT'D)

What did Gary tell you? Did Gary
got scared by the toilet paper?
Toilet paper go by Gary's head? --
that's usually up Gary's ass?

Security Guard Number One confides in Security Guard Number
Two --

SECURITY GUARD #1

Four-twenty-seven.

Security Guard Number Two nods emphatically --

CISSY

(to the three)

Is it a four twenty-seven? Am I a
four twenty-seven? Are your pricks
all fucking stiff now?

Off the thought occurring to Cissy that the group of better-
behaved Costco customers collecting around her could fairly
be described as a crowd --

CUT TO:

21 EXT. SNUG HARBOR MOTEL - DAY

21

Ramon leads Barry along the back of the motel past the back windows and fan outlets for the rooms --

BARRY

No guests, verdad Ramon?

RAMON

No guest, no guest, no guest.

-- and past a storage closet from which runs an extension cord. Ramon kicks base of the door --

RAMON (CONT'D)

Things needing to be kept.

-- then moving past, finds he's unwittingly led Barry to a place from where the skateboarding acrobatics of Shaun and John are visible --

RAMON (CONT'D)

I must be open with you Barry.

BARRY

Please Ramon, be completamente abierto.

Ramon interposes himself but finds himself giving way, before the determined Azusan, who's moving toward the parking lot and the front of the motel --

RAMON

There is no guests allowed at this moment, but there is some residents.

They watch the passing of an I.B. sector-car with lights and sirens working --

BARRY

I have photographic evidence of the residents Ramon -- evidencia indiscutable -- I myself have gathered over the past week --

(CONTINUED)

Indeed, from the position the two men have now reached the evidence is undeniable, Bill and Butchie being visible, as they take in the surfing action, from the vicinity of Butchie's suite --

RAMON

Residents which is handymen, helping me accomplish certain repairs which the inspector will not issue a certificación to permit the legal accommodation of guests without, Barry.

BARRY

Butch Yost is no handyman.

RAMON

Acordado, much people know him better for surfing.

Ramon plants his feet and places his hands as if riding a board. Barry sees Mitch Yost's car pull into the parking lot, moves in that direction --

BARRY

I'd remind you to refer to me as Senor Cunningham, propietario, in the presence of others.

ANGLE - SHAUN

JOHN

Does this "own," Shaun? Is this "uber ownage?"

-- and to verify the continued existence of the unlikely accord sprung up between the two --

SHAUN

Uber fucking ownage, John.

JOHN

Uber fucking ownage.

(CONTINUED)

-- also sees his grandfather Mitch arriving, glances toward Butchie and Bill both to confirm their presence --

ANGLE - BUTCHIE AND BILL

Butchie's answering his stolen cell phone as Barry and Ramon move past them --

BUTCHIE

Yeah.

It's his mother asking where his father is --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

He just pulled in.

(listens)

So he must've forgot it.

(listens)

In fucking Costco?

ANGLE - MITCH, BARRY, AND RAMON

Barry has taken up a position to confront Mitch to maximum effect --

RAMON

Senor Cunningham, from Azusa. New owner.

MITCH

(to Barry)

Are you the guy that called me?

BARRY

I am he. And I'd ask you to agree, Mitch Yost, that while Time takes us all on, it's quite beaten the shit out of you.

John b.g. continues to perform gyrations on Shaun's skateboard --

CUT TO:

22 EXT. COSTCO PARKING LOT - DAY

22

Cissy is being escorted to a police car, her hands cuffed behind her back. She's shaking and having a hard time sustaining the tough-girl act --

CISSY

I fucked up. I wanted to buy my husband a toilet seat.

Cissy sees the two security guards and Gary on the margin staring with satisfaction --

CISSY (CONT'D)

Mitch Yost. 'Wonderful surfer from before the talkies? He was thinking of trying the house again.

The cop shepherding Cissy into the back of the sector-car makes his bow to the Department's insurance carrier --

COP

Watch your head.

CISSY

What the fuck does that even mean?

As the cop closes Cissy inside the car --

CUT TO:

23 EXT. SNUG HARBOR MOTEL - PARKING LOT - DAY

23

Although no corners are anywhere visible, Barry seems to have Mitch in one, as is perceived, respectively, by Bill and Butchie, John and Shaun, and the ever-disempowered Ramon --

BARRY

Is that your son Butchie I see?

MITCH

Yeah.

ANGLE - BUTCHIE AND BILL

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Retired and struggling against senility, Bill, a great cop, is obsessed with extricating Cissy, whom he personally abhors, from the clutches of The System --

BILL

Spread-eagled probably by now, by a pack of fucking bull-dykes.

Butchie's squinting --

BUTCHIE

I think I went to school with that faggot.

RESUME - MITCH AND BARRY

BARRY

Is it crack your son favors or smack, Mitch, the papers can't seem to agree.

MITCH

What do you want?

Barry gestures toward Shaun and John --

BARRY

And who would these young fellows be?

MITCH

What did you call me for?

BARRY

Crouching down to collect a seashell was what put me off my guard, lo those many years ago. Struck atop my effeminate head by a broom handle. Any of this ringing a bell?

Mitch is remembering --

MITCH

You got a fractured skull?

(CONTINUED)

BARRY

I'm the kid that got the fractured skull, Mitch, and the epilepsy ever since. And you were the man on the surfboard that paddled in to see what happened, and asked how I was doing, then turned around and paddled back out. Let's say twenty-three years ago.

MITCH

You said you were all right.

BARRY

Yes I did. Yes I did. And you know who it was who hit me? It was Butchie, Mitch, your surf-star, gluebird son, and what I want to do now, because faggots can win the lottery, is fuck your family up.

Butchie and Bill have come up to them --

RAMON

(gratuitously)

New owner.

Ownership is something Bill can show good manners about --

BILL

(to Barry)

Lots of luck.

(re Mitch)

This guy's wife just got arrested. He needs to get her out.

BARRY

De acuerdo Ramon, while Mitch is seeing to Mrs. Right, get his asshole son off my property.

BILL

Watch your language.

(CONTINUED)

BARRY

You have to be kidding.

Off which --

CUT TO:

24

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

24

The Yosts, Mitch, Butchie and Shaun occupy a bench in the waiting area. John and Bill are there as well. The clock ticks. At which point, Bill has had enough, gets to his feet and attempts to let himself through the little gate separating the desk Sargent's domain from that of the larger waiting room --

SARGENT

Where do you think you're going?

BILL

Fucking bullshit. This is an O.R. Release. I'm letting her out.

Bill's inside the gate by the time the Sergeant blocks him --

SERGEANT

What you're gonna do is sit back down and behave yourself.

BILL

The fuck if I am!

SERGEANT

You fucking senile bastard! I know what they fucking three-quartered you for in fucking San Diego!

BILL

Fuck you!

-- the commotion enough to draw a Captain -- sticking his head out from a door somewhere back of the Sargent's counter --

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN

What the fuck!

-- see's Bill, see's the outrage on Bill's face, like he's about to have a fucking stroke. The Captain comes out of his office, addresses the Sargent --

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

I'll handle this.

He lets Bill through the gate but takes him to one side --

BILL

Bill Jacks. I grew up here, I did twenty-two years in San Diego.

CAPTAIN

We've met Bill.

BILL

(covers)

That's right. That's right.

CAPTAIN

What's going on?

BILL

(re the Sargent)

Bullshit. What I was telling numbnuts here. This is a O.R. Release, pure and simple. Let her the fuck go ...

CAPTAIN

Cissy Yost.

BILL

Cissy Yost.

CAPTAIN

Can't do it.

BILL

Why the fuck not.

(CONTINUED)

At which point Captain Phil is getting a little red-faced himself --

CAPTAIN

Because that's a busy fucking family Bill, and you ought to let matters run their course.

BILL

I know them.

The Captain lowers his voice, resentful at being made to go into this --

CAPTAIN

You know Butchie?

BILL

I straightened a beef out for fucking Butchie in fucking San Diego for Christ's sake.

CAPTAIN

You know Steady Freddy Lopez? -- that moves weight, fucks the Costco perpetrator, and uses Butchie to mule?

BILL

You mean the half-Hawaiian fucking beaner that's just a nigger to me?

The Captain just looks at him. Bill tries to muster some note of conciliation --

BILL (CONT'D)

I'm from here. I know all of 'em, for Christ's sake.

It's all he can do to hold the other man's eye -- a long tortured beat, off which --

CAPTAIN

I'm gonna make a phone call.

(CONTINUED)

-- steps into his office, leaves the door open. Bill signals the others a thumbs-up whose persuasiveness is somewhat undercut by the fact that his hand is shaking. We hear the Captain's side of the ensuing conversation --

CAPTAIN (O.C.) (CONT'D)

The Yost female. What do you think?

(a beat)

I'm recommending five hundred.

(a beat)

Right.

He hangs up, calls from his room --

CAPTAIN (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Five hundred. They make that, let 'em the fuck go.

Bill walks closer to where the other sit, sweat streaming from his face, address them as if they have not all heard every word themselves --

BILL

Who's got money. We need five hundred.

JOHN

I got money to fucking throw around.

In the phrasing of which, John might be Butchie exactly --

CUT TO:

INT. SIZZLER RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON

The dim light of overhead fixtures shaped as wagon wheels finds congress with the sun's declining beyond tinted windows. The resulting orange glare illuminates the surfing Yosts, and friends, at a round table near the salad bar, who have given their orders and wait to be called --

No one speaks. The strains of "Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round The Old Oak Tree", as performed by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir,

(CONTINUED)

issue from speakers affixed to the paneled walls. An argument conducted in Spanish drifts from swinging doors that mark entrance to the kitchen, as several women dressed for golf concentrate on the end of the salad bar containing the chowder --

The Yosts and their friends have their salads. All but John meditate what misfortune might ensue were any word at all to be uttered. Cissy cannot forbear --

CISSY

(aside, to John)

I guess you figure I owe you about a dozen fucks.

John touches the bracelet on her wrist, looks to Butchie --

JOHN

What is this Butchie?

BUTCHIE

(to Cissy)

What is that?

CISSY

That's the El Solitario El Loco Asesino bracelet, given 'me by my cellmate Rosaria to give to her son Miguelito that she thought was waiting for her outside the jail.

Shaun is a Mexican wrestling aficionado --

SHAUN

El Solitario is nuts.

MITCH

We gotta get wet.

BILL

If we change the orders "to go," the salad bar goes to full price.

Bill gets to his feet --

(CONTINUED)

BILL (CONT'D)

I'll talk to 'em.

Cissy now takes John for retarded, shows him the bracelet --

CISSY

Look how it sparkles Honey.

Off John, touching the bracelet --

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN BEACH - SUNSET

An evening redness in the west, hot-rod pinks and ashes of rose, while off to the east, the moon has come full above the Border Highlands -- Smugglers Gulch and Spooner's mesa. On a darkening sea, glassy head high peaks, fifty yards out, the spray from their crests like sparks before a setting sun.

CISSY sits on the sand. Bill stands next to her. Notes a toy bracelet on her wrist --

BILL

What's that?

CISSY

A whore gave it to me in jail.
Look at that.

She's watching Butchie and John, near the water's edge where Butchie has put one of the family long boards on the ground and is showing John some things about paddling and getting to his feet -- too far away to be heard.

BILL

You ever see that movie, Rain Man?

CISSY

Dustin Hoffman. Tom Cruise.

BILL

Rain Man. A fucking nutjob 'counts cards like a motherfucker and can't zip his own pants.

(CONTINUED)

Bill nods in the direction of John. Cissy follows his gaze --

BILL (CONT'D)

Told Shaun he'd never rode a skateboard till this afternoon then turns around and does a coon ass slide or some fucking thing's never been done but twice in the history of the world.

(a beat)

You see him at the Sizzler? Put the corn chowder on top of his salad.

CISSY

So what's with him and Butchie?

BILL

Nutjobs can be rich. Maybe he's some Lord Fauntleroy nutjob Butchie's tryin' to rob before Fauntleroy senior shows up.

CISSY

Butchie is such a dick.

Bill takes some sunflower seeds from his pocket, starts feeding the gulls --

BILL

Who the fuck knows anything anymore.

As in the distance, some fifty yards out, Mitch catches his first wave --

CUT TO:

27

EXT. ON THE WATER - SUNSET

27

Where for the first time we are given to understand what Mitch Yost was and is all about -- 'Cause the ride is nothing short of a clinic, replete with drop kneed bottom turns and round-house cut backs. Trips to the tip, ten toes over --

(CONTINUED)

Mitch hoots at the end of his ride, still stoked at fifty-five. He shoots a grin at Butchie and John a few yards away, now paddling out --

MITCH

(to John)

Howzit brah? Everybody rides.

JOHN

(grinning back)

Howzit brah?

-- looks at Butchie.

BUTCHIE

You want to pace yourself, getting out ...

Fact of the matter is, Butchie is in such crappy shape he's already winded, gets John to float with him, letting the white water from a couple of waves wash over them as Shaun takes an outside wave, shreds his way past, off which --

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WATER - SUNSET

Butchie and John have gained the calms beyond the surf line. They sit astride their boards, Butchie doing his best to disguise the fact that the paddling has left him winded, old beyond his years --

BUTCHIE

So how about this, John. Here we are, on the water. First day, just like I said.

JOHN

Just like you said, Butch.

Butchie nods, waiting on his wind --

BUTCHIE

Always good to just sit out here
for a bit, get the feel of the
waves ...

John nods --

JOHN

I have the feel, Butchie.

BUTCHIE

None of this rings a bell, maybe
it's something you've done before?

JOHN

None of it rings a bell.

BUTCHIE

Any of what we did this afternoon
ring a bell, 'far as even
remembering what the fuck it was.

JOHN

I skated with Shaun. We got your
mother from the jail. We went to
the Sizzler.

BUTCHIE

Look at you remember. Look at you
remember John from Cincinnati, with
the mind of a fucking steel trap.

Butchie sits there on his board looking at John, dripping
wet, grinning. Butchie can't quite keep himself from
grinning back --

BUTCHIE (CONT'D)

First day of the rest of your life.
Is it like that every fucking day
John?

JOHN

Every fucking day Butchie.

-- as Butchie notes a set building on the outside --

(CONTINUED)

BUTCHIE

Here we go, brudda. First one has
your name on it

JOHN

Where, Butch?

BUTCHIE

Paddle, John.

As off John, paddling before the oncoming wave --

CUT TO:

29

EXT. ON THE WATER - SUNSET

29

Where Butchie sits on his board, watching from behind the
wave as John glides toward shore, smooth as silk --

BUTCHIE

(with no small degree of
wonder)

Motherfucker.

Of which --

CUT TO:

30

EXT. THE SAND - SUNSET

30

Cissy watches John's ride from the beach, takes off her watch
and sandal and bracelet, and down to the water's edge in
shorts and tank top and under she goes, diving beneath the
white water, stroking for the outside, with all the skill of
an experienced ocean swimmer --

CUT TO:

31

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

31

Where Bill walks, throwing the last of the seeds to the wind,
Gulls circling around him, and watches Cissy swimming out and
the others surfing, and gets to that place where Cissy was
sitting and looks down and sees the little bracelet, which
has begun to spark and glow --

(CONTINUED)

BILL

What the fuck is this now?

CUT TO:

32

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - SUNSET

32

If there's a Park Place in Imperial Beach, this is it. Three-story beach front homes look in one direction across the grasses of the estuary marking the northern reaches of the valley, while in the other they front the sea, as before one of these houses, the last on the strand, we see Barry of Azusa's white Toyota parked in the driveway.

33

EXT. HOUSE - SUNSET

33

Three stories and a roof garden, upon which Barry drinks from a bottle of Perrier and looks out across the beaches below, and he can see the Yosts out on the water, and he watches as John and Butchie take a wave, and ride it together, the two boards weaving complicated patterns across the face. He looks away and his eye carries to the figure of Bill Jacks standing alone in the sand, looking down at his feet --

THE CAMERA RISES UP --

above them all -- Barry and Bill and the Surfing Yosts and John from Cincinnati, but not so high as to take from sight the little display at Bill's feet -- Cissy's bracelet, funky juke-box colors winking in waning light --

FADE OUT.