

**IN SEARCH OF CAPTAIN ZERO**

Screenplay by

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Based on his book

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## BLACKNESS, THE VOID

The fast lub-dub of a heartbeat... the whoosh of a planing surfboard... and now the voice of Alex...

ALEX (V.O.)

I need to tell you about that wave...

A FANTASTIC EXPLOSION OF SWIRLING LIQUID ENERGY

Becoming a figure of a man as seen through the back of wall of a wave, all emerald and abstract, the man zooming by as the wave tunnels over him and -- strangely, because there is danger here and the man should be fearful -- the heartbeat is... slowing...

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...that... moment I had... inside that wave...

INSIDE THE WAVE

The heartbeat slows further... the shimmering blue-green cavern expanding... the man so deep inside... that space yet growing... immense... the man deeper still...

ALEX'S MOMENT

This is a moment **out of time**... a moment wherein there is no danger, no fear, because the future is an illusion... and being inside that moment and inside the miracle of a wave...  
***This is the most beautiful thing in the world.***

And that swirling liquid beauty slowly becomes... the blackness of the void again... silence...

...the heartbeat stops... Alex's voice now, so clear, calm, serene... so deep within himself...

ALEX (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm... there... right now... in that moment... because... that moment... is... *forever.*

Hold on the quiet and the blackness, then, the sound of hammering jars us and we...

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. SUBURBIA - DAY

Malls, Burger Kings, traffic. UGLY. NOISY. And the hammering carries over...

"Fall of 1996"

Pedestrians dressed for bad weather mindlessly scurry about.

"Inspired by a True Story"

More of the same. Continue the annoying sound of hammering over the street images, the noise and the ugliness.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Hammering louder still. The P.O. is being renovated. A long line of impatient customers to the only open clerk station.

In the back, an old sorting bin is being torn down, violently ripped from the wall and up from the floor.

A fat, sweaty, aggravated CARPENTER stops hammering and looks down. Spots something on the floor that was under the old sorting bin. He bends and picks it up.

A postcard. The Carpenter blows off a sheen of dust and looks at the front of the card. Smiles, as if whatever he sees there has calmed his agitation. He polishes the card with his sleeve, to see it better. Stares and for a moment his mind is far away and relaxed... He snaps out of it and hands the card to a female Postal Worker as she passes.

The Postal Worker purposefully moves off through the chaos, looking at the card. She stops to examine the front... smiles, wistful, taking a moment off from a bad day... she flips the card, squints at the address. Moves off.

CLOSE ON A P.O. BOX

The box is opened by the box's owner. We just see his hands. On the back of his right hand there is a tattoo: a Zen image, a version of the Buddhist yin-yang symbol. A stack of junk mail is extracted. As the box owner is about to close the box, the lost postcard is inserted from the other side. It slides right through and flutters toward the floor.

## FOLLOW THE FALLING POSTCARD

As it falls, we go to SLOW MOTION... time distends further... until the postcard's fall is arrested as it's about to touch down... meanwhile, our washed out image quality has altered, gone to normal, more than normal. The colors on the front of the card pop. As the postcard hovers in time and space, we...

## MOVE IN ON THE POSTCARD IMAGE

It's a watercolor of a tropical seascape, palms swaying, waves breaking, a sailboat anchored just offshore of a towering island. The colors are surreally intense. At the bottom are the Spanish words, *Venga a Paraiso...* and then the image comes alive and the Spanish words briefly become *Come to Paradise* before they dissolve away... MUSIC: Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup>, "Ode to Joy" booms.

...as if by magic two surfers appear, riding perfect waves... with the surreal, psychedelic colors, the precision of the waves, and with the obvious elation of the surfers (and of Beethoven's masterpiece)... it's a dream image...

Roll credits over the Dream of Paradise...

...then the image freezes and the lost postcard is as it was (end music; post office ambient noise returns)... and it completes its fall to the floor.

The box owner bends to pick up the card. (We only see his hands - that tattoo - and part of his body.) The stack of junk mail splatters onto the card.

## THE LONG LINE OF CUSTOMERS

waiting impatiently, rudely. ALEX in line, loaded down with mail. A suit and tie, early forties; beneath his harried exterior Alex retains his youthful good looks and athleticism. But middle age is creeping.

Alex is sorting through the junk mail. One by one he tosses envelopes into a nearby waste bin. All crap.

Now Alex is next on line for the clerk station. He's down to just a couple of pieces of mail... The lost postcard. Glances at the seascape on front, not reacting to it as the others did. He turns the card over and looks at the message side...

He fumbles for his reading glasses. The guy behind him nudges him, indicating that it's his turn to do business.

Alex frozen, staring at the postcard message. The guy behind him nudges him again, rudely impatient now, but Alex just stands there, eyes fixed on the postcard.

INT. ALEX'S CAR (A LATE MODEL SEDAN) - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Hard rain, people scurrying by outside. Alex sitting there, dripping wet but unmindful of that, an open briefcase on the seat, paperwork spilling out; a cell phone. The postcard on the dash: with the dismal weather the card's watery reflection from the windshield, it seems to glow. The cell phone ringing. Alex staring at nothing, a thousand yarder.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A battered early 1950s vintage flatbed truck towing a fisherman's dory rumbles down a dirt track to the beach; it stops on the edge of the sand. A stunning seascape. A cloudless summer sky, bright colors.

On the flatbed, on top of a pile of fish, are two kids holding a longboard between them: Alex and his best friend CHRIS at age 12. A vibe of excitement, as if the two were embarking on a great adventure.

"Summer of 1960"

The kids stand up and look seaward as LESTER, a grizzled old fisherman, exits the truck cab.

LESTER

Okay, fellas, this is where the waves are the highest 'round here.

Lester looks seaward. The boys are already staring that way.

WHAT THEY SEE

Glassy, unriden perfection peeling across the seascape.

LESTER (CONT'D)

We got a bit of a groundswell today.

But the boys are already sprinting toward the water, carrying their board together. More or less in unison:

ALEX & CHRIS AT 12

Thank you for the ride, sir!

They reach water's edge and put the board down. Gazing wild-eyed at the peeling waves...

ALEX AT 12

Lemme go first! This was my idea!

CHRIS AT 12

No fair! I paid for half the surfboard!

An impasse. Okay. Automatically - this sort of thing happens all the time - the two do "Rock, paper, scissor, match." Chris throws a "scissors," Alex a "match."

ALEX AT 12

Match burns scissor. I win.

CHRIS AT 12

No it doesn't! Scissor *cuts* match!

ALEX AT 12

I call do-over.

Chris frowns, knowing Alex is cheating. But he relents and they do it over. Chris throws "scissor" again, but Alex is way ahead of him and throws a "rock." Alex laughs.

ALEX AT 12

...You always throw the same on do over! Rock *bashes* scissor! I win!

EXT. IN THE WATER - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex paddling out, clumsily blasting through lines of white water... makes it outside through sheer wild-eyed enthusiasm.

Here comes a set. Alex paddles wildly for the first wave and... catches it! Stands up!

Chris hoots wildly from the beach.

Alex, unsteadily rides for a few feet then is knocked off... comes up hooting. The board washes ashore and Chris grabs it... paddles out, going by Alex swimming in.

ALEX AT 12

Did you see that, Chris!? I was surfing!

But Chris is too focused to respond. Strokes for the outside... paddling madly, angling his takeoff... jumps up...

Alex, on the beach, goes wild...

Chris in a fast section and by luck he's in exactly the right place at the right time: he's locked into this shoulder high zipper and really flying and the wave is going concave now, pitching out over his head as he crouches down.

Alex's enthusiasm wanes and his eyes betray... jealousy... Chris is outdoing him big time...

IN THE TUBE WITH CHRIS

The almond eye of the curl up ahead... and everything slows down... the roar of the wave fades... a thumping sort of like a heartbeat now... it *is* a heartbeat, Chris's...

And something is going on with Chris, crouching inside that wave, something unique and indescribable, but before we can examine it, understand it...

Chris is viciously snuffed, board flying...

Alex steps into the wash, looking for his buddy (heartbeat sound continues)... Alex, jealousy gone, is worried now... No Chris... for the longest time... Alex really scared... then...

Chris launches himself straight up out of the water, arms raised and scream of joy echoes off the cliffs and dunes...

Now Chris is running through the wash to Alex, eyes wild because he's got to tell him about what just happened... but he's trying to describe the indescribable...

CHRIS AT 12

...Did you see... I was... that wave...  
I was... I felt... something *happened*

in there, Alex!

Alex looking at Chris, not understanding, wishing he did... the heartbeat becomes a mechanical thump-thumping sound...

INT. ALEX'S CAR - STOPPED - DAY (1996)

The thump-thump of his windshield wipers... the cell phone ringing... Alex staring at the postcard... A car horn blares.

Alex is at a traffic light. It's green. More horn blaring.

INT. ALEX'S CAR - MOVING - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Heavy traffic. Ugly. More horns. Alex looks out the window.

WHAT ALEX SEES

A drive-in theater, gone to ruin. A wrecking crane going at it; the drive-in is being razed. A sign describes the shopping center to be built on the site.

On sudden impulse, Alex cranks the wheel sharply to turn into the drive-in. The car skids on the rain-slick street.

Sideways, out of control, the car skids to a stop at the crumbling drive-in entrance. Alex, shaken, gathers himself. Looks out the windshield, remembering how it was...

EXT. DRIVE-IN - DUSK

The drive-in is in full swing and crowded with early-to-mid 1960s models, lots of souped up hotrods.

"Summer of 1965"

*The Endless Summer* up on the screen. The vision of a "perfect wave," two surfers riding it together (a more than passing similarity to the postcard image)...

The movie image and Bruce Brown's narration relate to the search for the perfect wave, freedom, everything surfing is.

Two young guys sitting on a fence in the back, watching the flick. ALEX and CHRIS AT AGE 17. The two are narrating along with Brown; they've seen *The Endless Summer* 20 times... Then...



CHRIS AT 17

Alex, man...

ALEX AT 17

Wait. Shut up a minute.

Bruce Brown is talking about how, with sufficient time and money, a surfer could spend his life searching for the perfect wave.

ALEX AT 17 (CONT'D)

...Why don't we do that? Let's do that, Chris.

CHRIS AT 17

Okay. When do we--

ALEX AT 17

--But I'm serious. This isn't just another idea.

CHRIS AT 17

When do we leave?

ALEX AT 17

We might have to take some risks.

CHRIS AT 17

(laughs)

Sounds good. I'm ready.

ALEX AT 17

Right here, right now, Chris, I am asking if you are really ready. Because I'm not fooling around... *Are you with me?*

While the other kids cut it up, these two are dead serious... they shake... a pact...

CLOSE ON ALEX'S YIN-YANG TATTOO

Slowly PULL BACK to reveal...

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE (IN HIS HOME) - DAY (1996)

Alex at his desk. A computer screen: a financial website, an economic forecast. Paperwork scattered around, a mountain of

it. On the wall over the desk hangs a wildly colored Balinese ceremonial mask, a demon face. Lots of framed surf photos too, a wall of memories...

The lost postcard is face up on the desk, the dream of Paradise. Alex staring at it (not wearing his reading glasses). He turns it over, stares at the message, whatever it is. On impulse he throws open a drawer and rummages. Finds an old newspaper clipping. The headline reads:

"SURFER DROWNS IN MEXICO."

The dateline is "November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1988, Puerto Escondido, Mexico." There is an inset photo of Chris (in his mid thirties or so) on some tropical beach, holding a surfboard and grinning.

Alex snatches up the lost postcard. Squints at the faded postmark: "November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1988, Puerto Escondido, Mexico." *The same as the date on the newspaper article.*

Alex absorbing the implications of the matching dates... then, having sensed something, he turns.

DIANA in the office doorway, holding a bag of groceries. Late thirties, a looker, and with... character. Her eyes find the lost postcard. Alex looking at Diana but speaking to himself...

ALEX

He must've mailed it just  
before he paddled out.

Diana's expression asks, "What are you talking about?"

Alex staring at Diana, searching her face.

CLOSE ON A 16 YEAR-OLD DIANA - DAY (1969)

striding through a crowded place, carrying a knapsack. Fresh-faced and excited, clad in a peasant blouse, beads, a flower lei, more flowers in her hair. *She's beautiful.*

CLOSE ON A 20 YEAR-OLD ALEX

watching Diana, clearly smitten. Alex is deeply tan, hair long and in a ponytail. Aloha shirt, surf trunks, barefoot.

INT. HONOLULU AIRPORT - SAME

Diana threading her way through the crowded, noisy terminal, another young hippie chick, CANDY, close behind. Hawaiian music on the P.A. system. Arriving passengers streaming in, many wearing flower leis. Two types: hippies and servicemen.

"Fall of 1969"

Alex watches Diana disappear into the crowd. Turns and lets out a joyous whoop, having spotted...

A 20 YEAR-OLD CHRIS

entering the terminal from the International Arrivals section. Soldier's uniform, crew cut, big duffel over his shoulder. Pale. He spots Alex, sprints through the mob...

ALEX  
*CHRIS!!!*

CHRIS  
*Alex!!!*

...the two blasting their way through the throng and then...

The two best friends embrace, half-laughing, half-crying, incoherent for the joy... finally they separate...

CHRIS AT 20  
Alex... Alex... Alex...  
(a long beat... grins)  
So I hear you got some waves  
here in How-are-ya.

Alex's grin says it all about the waves in "How-are-ya."

INT. ALEX'S CAR - MOVING - LATE AFTERNOON

A broken down wreck. Chris in the passenger's seat, head lolling back, eyes closed, a beatific smile. Alex keeps glancing over at his buddy, wanting to say so much all at once that he doesn't say anything. He is fucking *happy*.

Alex glances at Chris's right hand, lazing on his knee. That yin-yang tattoo. (Alex doesn't have it yet.)

ALEX AT 20  
Cool tat... What is it? I mean,

like, what's it mean?

CHRIS AT 20

(serene)

Nothing... everything...

Alex staring at the tattoo. Sensing Alex is looking at it -- without opening his eyes -- Chris tilts it and suddenly the yin-yang symbol is the almond curl of a breaking wave... Alex mesmerized... and then for a quick instant he hears the wave's roar and the image seems to animate... Alex snaps out of it, looks out the front... hurriedly hits the brakes.

EXT. RURAL OAHU ROADSIDE - SAME

Diana and Candy sitting on their knapsacks, munching sugar cane from the field flanking the road. Diana's thumb out.

Alex's backfiring, smoke-belching, bucking old wreck skids to a stop. A quiver of surfboards is strapped to the roof.

Chris opens his eyes. Serenely observes as the girls shoulder their knapsacks and head for the car. Alex can't take his eyes off Diana. Smitten.

Chris gets out and tilts the front seat down. Bowing low as if to a princess, he directs Diana to the back. Diana grins at his goofiness as she enters the car. Chris hops in back behind her. Candy gets in the front, smiles at Alex.

CANDY

Cool.

But Alex is staring into the rearview at Chris and Diana in back... dismayed at how the pairing-up is working out.

EXT. NORTH SHORE ROAD - VARIOUS - NEAR SUNDOWN

Alex slips a tape into the stereo: Jimmy Hendrix's "Are You Experienced?" Candy fires up a joint.

Alex's wreck tools by a succession the best surf breaks on the planet.

EXT. NORTH SHORE BEACH PARKING LOT - NEAR SUNDOWN

Hendrix song continues. Chris, by Alex's car, tears off his army uniform, crams it into a garbage can. Quickly down to his khaki skivvies, then naked. The two girls laugh. Alex tosses Chris surf trunks, which he slides on. The two grab boards from the car roof and sprint for the water.

EXT. SURF LINEUP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

"Are You Experienced?" continues. Alex and Chris surf beautiful head-high waves together, the shimmering tubes backlit by the setting sun.

Diana watches from the beach, fascinated, Candy too busy rolling another joint to notice.

Chris disappears in a head-high (non-threatening) barrel.

INSIDE CHRIS'S WAVE

Surrounded by swirling turquoise... Chris relaxed, serene...

Alex paddling out, watching intently... showing just a trace of that same jealousy as when they were kids... then he grins and hoots as Chris pops out onto the shoulder.

The boys exit the water together at late dusk. Pure joy.

INT. ALEX'S BEACH SHACK - NIGHT

The four enter. Typical late 60s North Shore surf pad. Tin roof, patchwork walls, orange crates and bare mattresses, a banana stalk hanging in the primitive kitchen, surf posters and surfboards. Alex so amazed he's almost cranky...

ALEX

Nearly a year since you last surfed... and... was like you... how did you stay sharp like that?

Chris grins, winks. As he bends to open his duffel bag, Alex looks at a jagged, godawful shrapnel scar on his lower back. Diana sees it too, and is saddened, knowing the implications of the wound. "Are You Experienced?" fades.

ALEX AT 20

(trying to be casual)  
So, what was Vietnam like, Chris?

Chris turns and looks at Alex, his mind returning to the jungles of Nam. Looking intently into Alex's eyes..

CHRIS AT 20

It was the most beautiful place  
I've ever been..

His intensity softens as he dumps out the duffel bag..

CHRIS AT 20 (CONT'D)

And some amazing things grow there.

Out of the duffel come big glassine baggies crammed full of pot. No clothes or personal stuff in there, nothing but pot. Must be 50 pounds. Alex and the girls stare dumbfounded.

CANDY

Cool.

ALEX AT 20

You just... you flew back from... are  
you fucking nuts?

CHRIS AT 20

Like you said, brother. We might have  
to take some risks.

(shrugs; shakes the duffel)

Hey, surfers can do anything.

Chris shaking the duffel, trying to dislodge something stuck in there. It falls out. An AK-47 assault rifle. Carved into the wood stock is the yin-yang/wave symbol. The girls and Alex eye the weapon uneasily. Chris's grin widens.

CHRIS AT 20

Are you with me?

A beat then the gun is forgotten. Hoots and war whoops!

EXT. ALEX'S SHACK - LATE NIGHT

Nestled on the edge of the beach, waves breaking all up and down the pristine coast in the moonlight. Music: Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit."

INT. SHACK - SAME

Candy astride Alex on a mattress under the window to the ramshackle porch. Candy grinding away, meanwhile rolling a joint from one of Chris's mammoth baggies, which is resting on Alex's stomach. Her thrusts are mechanical, although more or less in synch to the rhythm of "White Rabbit," playing on the stereo. Alex's mind, too, is elsewhere: he's listening to the conversation on the porch, no more than a yard away out the tattered, screened porch window.

DIANA'S VOICE

Let me get this straight. You're inviting me to tour the world with you looking for surf...

CHRIS'S VOICE

With me and Alex. And we're looking for more than just surf... I'm talking about a life...

EXT. PORCH - SAME

Chris and Diana sitting on a tattered old futon under the window. Chris in a lotus position. Facing each other, fully clothed... Chris doing slight of hand, making a coin vanish.

DIANA AT 16

(not taking him seriously)  
Can Candy come?

CHRIS AT 20

Sure.

Alex frowns: No fucking way. Candy grinds away to "White Rabbit." She lights the joint, a big toke. Holding it in...

CANDY

Cool.

Candy exhales, passes the joint through a hole in the screen. Chris takes it, makes it disappear with slight of hand. It "reappears" from under Diana's blouse. Amazing!

DIANA

How did you do that?!

CHRIS AT 20

(theatrical; goofy)

Time and space are merely a  
a head trip, my dear.

(to Alex, inside; serious)

I'm thinking we off the pot, then  
buy a sailboat. A sailboat, Alex.

DIANA AT 16

I love sailboats. My dad used to  
take me sailing-

ALEX AT 20

-Need more money first. Need enough  
to last the rest of our lives.

CHRIS AT 20

(to Diana; a touch of irony)

Alex's specialty is thinking ahead.

DIANA AT 16

Dad says I'm a natural helmsman.

CHRIS AT 20

Really? That's great! Hey, Alex-

But Alex is waxing didactic, lecturing on Dope Dealing 101.

ALEX AT 20

-We take the rest of the winter, sell  
the shit by the ounce and quarter pound  
for max profit. Meanwhile we ride the  
best waves on the planet. Then South  
America. North coast of Colombia. That's  
where the money is.

CHRIS AT 20

The Endless Summer Express by  
sailboat..

(no response)

Hey... Alex...

With a groan, Alex comes. Candy, not much in the afterglow  
department, immediately slides off him.

CANDY

Cool.



Alex turns over to face the window, his mind far away.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (1996)

Alex in bed, staring at Diana, asleep next to him, although his mind is still in Hawaii in 1969, listening to Chris and Diana talking on the porch. It's later that 1969 night now, and the couple's voices are hushed, intimate...

DIANA'S VOICE

Tell me about the... the moment... you're looking for.

CHRIS'S VOICE

I can only tell you that wave riding is for me the way to reach it. I can't talk about the moment itself, except that it has to do with how we think of time. And with illusions. With masks.

INTERCUT between the two talking on the North Shore porch of 1969 and Alex in the present of 1996 listening. Or, rather, remembering.

DIANA AT 16

You mean like the masks we wear? With... I don't know... with dishonesty...

CHRIS AT 20

Yes, but it goes way beyond that. The Buddhists understand it, but they're smart so they know not to talk about it much. There was a man in Vietnam, a monk, I guess he was, who taught me a lot with very few words. He saved my life when I was bleeding very badly.

DIANA AT 16

You use surfing... you use nature... to try to find...

CHRIS AT 20

I don't use nature. I *am* nature.

Diana smiles, liking that.

Alex, in 1996, closes his eyes tight; he's trembling now. The recollection of Chris's words are affecting him deeply.

Diana, in 1969, starts to say something...

CHRIS AT 20

-Shhh... Just listen...

INT. ALEX'S NORTH SHORE SHACK - NIGHT (1969)

Alex on the mattress, listening. Silence at first... then a distant low whispering roar surfaces, punctuated by louder booms.

EXT. THE SEA - NIGHT (1969)

Misty, moonlit waves cracking along the North Shore. The sound they make is a simultaneous roar and purr, like some mythic beast from a scary yet irresistible fairy tale.

CHRIS'S VOICE

No sound like that on earth.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (1996)

Alex opens his eyes, stares at the sleeping Diana, next to him. We hear Diana (in 1969) sigh. Hushed...

CHRIS'S VOICE

Put your ear to my chest...

We hear a heartbeat, Chris's, in synch with the sea's roar...

INT. ALEX'S NORTH SHORE SHACK - NIGHT (1969)

Chris is at the foot of Alex's bed, smiling that beatific Chris smile. Alex grins back at his friend. But Chris's smile fades and now he's raising the AK-47.

CHRIS AT 20

*Motherfucker!*

The AK's muzzle flashes as Chris fires into Alex's chest but instead of the sound of shots, it's the heartbeat we hear, Alex's now, unbearably loud and fast.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (1996)

Alex asleep, fearful, sweating, having the above nightmare. His eyes snap open and the racing heartbeat is stilled. Alex looks at Diana, still asleep, facing away from him now.

CLOSE ON DIANA

Outside, the sound of a car starting. Diana's eyes open and we can tell she hasn't been asleep. She's been faking it. The car speeds off. Diana turns to see that Alex is gone.

CLOSE ON THE LOST POSTCARD

A drop of liquid splatters onto the image of the dream of paradise. Diana's hand turns the card over, revealing the message. The four words Alex spoke at the drive-in and repeated by Chris in Hawaii. *Are you with me? Under that, Captain Zero.* Another drop of liquid falls onto the card.

CLOSE ON DIANA

Looking down at the card. (Next to it on the night table on her side of the bed is a model sailboat.) Tears falling...

THE SUN

cracks the sea horizon. A new day has begun.

INT. ALEX'S CELLAR - DAY

Alex clearing lawn tools and assorted junk from a corner of the cellar. Intense, a man on a mission. Way down deep under the shit, he finds what he's looking for, a surfboard. Alex starts sweeping dust and dirt off the board.

Slowly reveal that the board's deck decal is the tattoo image, the yin-yang symbol.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Alex strapping bagged surfboards to the roof of a battered old pickup with a camper on back, a "For Sale" sign on the side. He removes the sign, tosses it away.

Alex changing the truck's sparkplugs... changes a tire... underneath, working on the suspension...

EXT. FRONT DOORWAY - SAME

Diana watches sadly... enters the house, gently closing the door behind her.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Alex rummaging through his closet, parting his hanging 3-piece suits, dress shirts, a tie rack. Tossing out t-shirts, shorts, a dusty wet suit that was way in back.

INT. CAMPER - NIGHT

Alex storing the above beach stuff in the camper's little closet and drawers.

In the truck cab, he finds that the overhead light is out. He changes the bulb. Unfolds a map of Mexico. Examines it.

He leans back and stares at nothing. Closes his eyes tight, as if to avoid a painful memory.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Dinner. Alex wolfing down his meal, avoiding eye contact with Diana, who picks at her food, with frequent penetrating glances at Alex. Alex finally breaks the strained silence.

ALEX

I should have gone to Mexico eight years ago... someone should have. Maybe just stand on the beach... say... something..

DIANA

Say *what*, Alex?

Alex has no answer. Diana staring at him, anger surfacing, but holding back... Another long silence...

ALEX

I need to go surfing again.

DIANA

(not believing him)  
...One question before you leave,

and please think about it... Alex...  
Are you with me?

INT. BEDROOM - PREDAWN

Diana in bed alone, awake and listening in the predawn as the truck outside starts up... pulling out now, the engine sound fading... once again, the tears come...

EXT. ON THE ROAD - DAWN

The pickup/camper tools out of town. (The sound track for the road sequence is what Alex hears on the truck radio - regional music, news, etc.)

EXT./INT. ON THE ROAD - DAY/NIGHT/DAWN/DUSK (WE AVOID GEOGRAPHIC SPECIFICITY ABOUT WHERE ALEX USED TO LIVE)

Suburban becomes rural as Alex begins his journey.

Mountains are traversed, farmland.

Somewhere in the desolate West a cowboy sits his horse.

A long, straight stretch of desert road...

EXT. DESERT REST STOP - DAWN

Alex dozing in the cab. The radio now does a syndicated newscast out of Washington: After a two year manhunt notorious Colombian drug lord/terrorist Chivo Morales has been hunted down and killed by a team of elite Colombian troops, with the help of U.S. drug enforcement agents.

Here, Alex's eyes open. As the story goes on about the hunt continuing for Morales' Colombian and American associates...

ANOTHER TIME AND PLACE - DISJOINTED, FRAGMENTED, SURREAL

A man (we can't see his face clearly) is killed by a point blank pistol shot to his head... his body falling slowly.

A SOFT, BILLOWY WHITENESS, LIKE MAYBE HEAVEN

POV falling through the sky, slowly, like the body. Subtle sound of the wind rises, soothing after the awful violence, and indeed, the disjointed radio barrage. Descending from a

high cloud, we see Alex's rig far below on a long road winding through the desert.

On-high, still descending... Alex, below, speeds down a long straight stretch toward the sea...

...still descending, the Tijuana border crossing below, Alex's rig in line for customs...

A distant, wave-laced central Baja coast... desolate, breathtaking... POV descending further and coming upon...

Alex's rig, parked on a high headland... overlooking a pristine point with waves wrapping in from the northwest...

EXT. HIGH HEADLAND - DAY

Alex un-bags the surfboard with the yin-yang decal...

FOLLOW ALEX

He picks his way down to the beach. Without breaking stride he paddles on out. Glassy, shoulder-high, no other surfers...

A set looms... First wave, he takes right off. Miss-times his turn, falls. Strokes back out and catches another. Makes his first turn but falls on a cutback. He paddles in and sits down, cross-legged. He's tense. Looks out to sea, sighs...

EXT. PIPELINE - DAY (1969)

Second reef Pipe going off. Big mean barrels.

Alex (at age 20) pacing on the beach, trying to relax, frequently glancing out at the beasts booming on the reef. A surfer drops in, gets eaten alive... Alex tenses up further...

Chris nearby, relaxed in a lotus position, his surfboard on the sand by him. Diana with him, her hand resting on his shoulder. Chris's hair has grown in and he's as tanned as Alex. A month has passed since he arrived in Hawaii. (Candy gone; it's just the three of them now.) Chris looks up at Alex as Alex paces by, hyperventilating from tension. Chris smiles serenely, deep within himself... his voice soft...

CHRIS AT 20  
 ...Alex... Alex... Alex... Sit down,  
 brother... Here, by me.

Alex, with an impatient frown, sits by Chris. Chris puts his hand on Alex's shoulder; his right hand, with the tattoo. Alex nervously makes a fist with his right hand: he now has the same tattoo as Chris. Chris's voice very soothing..

CHRIS AT 20  
 Become the energy of the wave...  
 say it, Alex... "I will become the  
 energy of the wave. I will be the  
 energy of the wave... forever..."

Alex watches as another guy gets viciously snuffed on a triple over-header. Alex's tattooed hand balls up into a fist. Faintly, we can hear his racing heart. Soothing..

CHRIS AT 20  
 Say it... say it... "I will become  
 the energy of the wave... forever." Say  
 it... feel your mind relax... your body...  
 ...feel your heartbeat... slowing..

CLOSE ON ALEX'S TATTOOED HAND

It relaxes, hangs loose. The sound of heart slows and fades...

ALEX'S VOICE  
 I will become...

Alex stands up and we see we are back in Baja in 1996. Alex picks up his board and paddles back out.

BAJA SURFING

Alex gradually gets his rhythm back. Morning, midday, sundown into dusk, Alex surfs alone. A man on a mission, obsessed with regaining what he once had.

Days pass, many sessions surfed, Alex getting better..

A cadre of Mexican fishermen arrive and set up camp in the nook of the point Alex is surfing. The men watch Alex surf as they work the inshore waters.

Alex preparing a meal by a campfire... fires up his boom box.  
Music we've heard before: Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup>, "Ode to Joy."

Next morning: Alex loose and within himself now, surfing  
with casual yet powerful elegance. "Ode to Joy" continuing,  
a perfect compliment to Alex's stylistic approach to wave  
riding. And to his joy at being in the water again.

EXT. THE POINT - SUNDOWN (MUSIC SLOWLY FADING)

Alex comes in from his session, scales the cliff.

WHAT ALEX SEES

On the next headland is another camper, surfboards on top.  
The figure of a man - a big guy with a ponytail - standing  
on cliff's edge by the rig. SETH, whom we will get to know...

Alex turns to walk to his rig and finds himself confronted  
by a Mexican with a shotgun, the guy having appeared out of  
nowhere... Alex then gets a good look at the guy, relaxes.

The Mexican has a rugged yet kind and open face, a face you  
know does not belong to a bandit. This is CHICHO, one of the  
fishermen who watched Alex surf.

FISHERMEN'S BEACH CAMP - DUSK

Dinner on the beach. A dozen or so Mexicans, including wives  
and kids, Alex their guest. As they eat, the following is in  
Spanish, with subtitles. Alex's Spanish is passable.

CHICHO

What is it you do in Estados  
Unidos, my friend?

ALEX

I... I had... it was a normal life.

CHICHO

Ahhh. You are a fisherman?

Alex nods, eyes betraying... confusion... as if he can't  
remember his old life. *Was* he a fisherman?

CHICHO

We were thinking this watching



you. You are good with the sea,  
with the waves...

The fishermen nod knowingly... then they eat in silence for a bit, Alex distracted, not really there. Chicho notices.

CHICHO

Why you are in Mexico, my friend?  
Only for the waves?

Alex handing something to Chicho: The photo of Chris from the newspaper article. Crumpled from being in his pocket.

ALEX

He would've come through here eight years ago, southbound.

CHICHO

No, I don't remember this man.

Chicho passes the photo to the next fisherman, who shakes his head and passes it down the table. No one remembers Chris. One fellow tries to pass it past his wife and on to the next man. The wife snatches it, annoyed that he didn't think she should look... trying to aggravate him...

FISHERMAN'S WIFE

The gringo is so handsome!

CHICHO

You are looking for this man?

ALEX

No... He... he drowned, here in Mexico.  
Lost without a trace.

The laughter and conversations quickly cease. Unease. Folks cross themselves.

CHICHO

My friend, why you show us a picture of a dead man?

Alex shakes his head, not able to answer Chicho's query... hearing in his mind the roar of a wave, a big wave...

EXT. SECOND REEF PIPELINE - DAY (1969)

A big nasty barrel jacking up and letting loose, it's surreal roar carrying over from previous scene, louder.

Alex and Chris outside in the lineup and the rest of the set is stacked up and bearing down on them.

Diana, on the beach, stands up and from her clothes and from the look of the waves we realize it's the same Pipeline day Alex remembered previously. Diana tensely watches as...

Chris paddles side-shore, deeper into the pit. Alex starts the other way, toward the shoulder, yelling back...

ALEX AT 20

Chris! Too deep! This way! The shoulder!

And indeed, from the look of the looming beast, Chris is making a serious error in judgment... Stroking for the wave...

CHRIS AT 20

Go go go go go!

ALEX AT 20

You're too fucking deep!

CHRIS AT 20

GO! I'll be behind you!

The beast towering over them, Chris 20 yards further back in the pit on the mammoth blue-green wall, stroking for it, eyes on Alex, nodding for Alex to go. They both drop in.

Alex is in the right place, the safer place (although there is no "safe place" on this wave); even so he barely makes the vertical drop.

Chris, way back where it's bigger and going concave even as he stands up... then a near freefall down the face. Both surfers carve off the bottom then fly across the wall.

UNDERWATER

All abstract blue-green curves down below... the shimmering figures of Alex and Chris rush by, that jagged Pipeline reef

just below their whooshing surfboards. So beautiful and so frightening.

Alex crouches, grabs his outside rail and leans forward as the wave barrels over him. He looks back over his shoulder.

Chris riding impossibly deep and that towering wall of ocean is going to eat him alive... and it's now that Chris does something maybe no other surfer would do... instead of charging for the shoulder and safety, he comes out of his speed crouch, stands tall and... *relaxes*... and then he is deeper still, so calm, so serene, arms spread and his head lolls back as if in acceptance of some great gift...

CHRIS

Inside that beast of a wave it's all rushing emerald and the lub-dub of Chris's heartbeat slows... and slows...

Alex staring back at Chris, so deep and so relaxed within that immense barrel, and he is awestruck at the sight.

With a roar the wave spits Alex out of the barrel onto the shoulder and safety. He looks back just in time to see...

CHRIS'S WIPEOUT

Chris is gone under the exploding white water and the wave's vicious roar tells us this is a bad one.

Alex looking for his buddy... paddling around calling Chris's name as the inside churns over the shallow reef... then an outside set peaks... the wave dumps... he's violently washed in.

Alex hauling himself out of the water... searching the impact zone for Chris... and then Diana is there, panic-stricken.

ALEX AT 20

Did he come up! Did you see him?  
*Did he come up?!*

DIANA AT 16

No!

A piece of Chris's board washes in, shattered.

Alex grabs his board and paddles back out to continue the search. Diana standing there crying. Helpless.

EXT. PIPELINE BEACH -- LATE DUSK

The dusk sky glowing red.. then, jarringly, a helicopter sweeps by low, its arc light searching the surf zone. Police cars, ambulances and rescue vehicles fill the parking lot.

Alex paddles ashore, exhausted. Eye contact with the head rescue guy, a tough Hawaiian. The guy's eyes say "No." Alex looks around. Spots Diana, standing by water's edge, alone, staring seaward in the waning light. Goes to her. She grabs him, overcome with grief. Alex embraces her..

...Alex's embrace becomes.. more than it should be.. then, looking over Alex's shoulder, Diana sees..

CHRIS

standing there, just a couple yards away. He's smiling at them, but his eyes tell us he is thinking about what just occurred between his lover and his best friend..

Alex looking at Diana and he's *so sorry* for what just happened, it's like something snapped.. but before he can say anything or do anything, he notices Diana's stunned expression.. follows her gaze.. to Chris.. and then Diana is all over Chris, hugging him, crying now for the joy..

ALEX AT 20

Where.. where did you..

CHRIS AT 20

Rip swept me down to Kammiland.

ALEX AT 20

But.. where have you been all this time?

CHRIS AT 20

Up in the bushes.. watching.

Diana looks at him, her joy becoming anger.

DIANA AT 16

What? What are you saying?

CHRIS AT 20

I wanted to see... what would happen...

Chris's eyes on Alex.

DIANA AT 16

You bastard! You fucking bastard!

Diana pummeling Chris now, all her pent up grief dissolving into outrage at what Chris has done. Chris quietly takes it, eyes still on Alex, unwavering...

CHRIS AT 20

I'm sorry... I shouldn't have done that... it was a terrible thing to do... I shouldn't have done that...

The chopper's spotlight blindingly illuminates the three...

INT. ALEX'S CAMPER, BAJA, MEXICO - NIGHT (1996)

Alex ransacking the rig, looking for something... shaking his head and repeating over and over...

ALEX

"Shouldn't have done that... shouldn't have done that... shouldn't have..."

Alex finds what he's looking for: the lost postcard.. The surreal seascape, the dream... he turns it over.

THE POSTMARK

Hazy, indistinct with age, looks to be November 6.

Alex squints... rummaging... finds his reading glasses... jamming them on... looking at the postmark... the date becomes clear...

It's not November 6, it's November 8. Alex's mind racing...

ALEX

November 8... Two days *after*...

The message: *Are you with me?*

Alex picks up the old newspaper article. "Surfer Drowns in Mexico." He knows now what Chris did those 8 years ago...

EXT. RAMSHACKLE BAJA CANTINA - MORNING

An old Mexican woman, bent and twisted with age and blinded by cataracts, counts pesos by feel behind the bar. A motley cadre of locals blatantly stare at...

Alex, on the bar phone. Breathless, agitated, excited...

ALEX

...he faked it, Diana, like that time...  
 (uneasy at the recollection)  
 ...in Hawaii... that sonofabitch *faked* it...  
 .....Diana? Are you there?... hello?.....  
 Are you all right?

The old woman blindly looks toward Alex and points to her wrist as if a watch were there. Alex distractedly fishes pesos out of his pocket and hands them over.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm going down to Puerto Escondido...  
 where he... where he did this... find out.....  
 Hello? Diana... Are you there? I can  
 hear you breathing... Say something  
 if you're there... going to Puerto-

Alex clicks the phone receiver. Slams the phone down. Looks at the blind old woman, then at the Mexicans staring at him, his mind racing.

ON THE ROAD - BAJA - VARIOUS - DAY

Alex at the wheel... utter determination...

The rig speeding through the desolate Baja terrain... the faded white line on the rutted blacktop of Mexico 1 speeds by... and then music is rising, the old Stones tune, "Sympathy for the Devil," and the desert blurring by becomes...

THE SEA BLURRING BY

An 80 foot banana boat charges through rough water. "The Fucking Boat" scrawled on her bows -- a souped up smuggling vessel. "Sympathy for the Devil" louder.

"Summer of 1978"

On top of the wheelhouse, a thirty-year-old Chris leans gleefully into the weather. Strapped to the roof by him is a stack of surfboards, plus stereo speakers blasting the Stones tune. Chris exhilarated, a huge joint in his mouth.

INT. WHEELHOUSE -SAME

Alex at the helm (likewise thirty-years-old), trying to see through the spray-covered windscreen. Stacks of marijuana bales everywhere, secured against the ship's rolling... and...

Shit! A rogue wave boards the ship and knocks her sideways, Alex gripping the wheel tightly, turning it, trying desperately to compensate for the ship's roll... and...

The wave sweeps the deck and the ship nearly broaches, Alex trying to regain control. Fear.

On top of the wheelhouse Chris holding on as the ship lays on its side, close to a capsize. Chris hooting his lungs out in exhilaration - by God this is fucking great!

INT. WHEELHOUSE - A MINUTE LATER

Chris enters, grinning, really jacked up. Alex worried.

ALEX

Radio and Nav gear are down, shorted out from sea water. We're lost and running blind. And no way to contact the off-load crew.

CHRIS

I wish Diana was here!

ALEX

Other thing is, we got a sprung plank below... We're sinking.

CHRIS

She'd love this!

ALEX

We'll be on the bottom by first light.

Chris shrugs, fires up the joint. Exhales contemplatively.

CHRIS

I'm thinking Diana and I might  
get married.

This distracts Alex from the coming nautical calamity.

ALEX

Have you asked her?

CHRIS

I'm thinking Bali for the wedding.  
There's a rumor of a serious left-  
hander there...

ALEX

(distracted about the marriage)  
How about we try to survive the night.  
Somehow get the load ashore.

Chris takes another toke, serenely observing Alex.

EXT. A CALM SEA - LATER THAT NIGHT

The Fucking Boat motionless on a calm sea. Dense fog.

Alex and Chris on deck by the wheelhouse door, Chris grin-  
ning contentedly into the impenetrable fog, joint dangling.  
He raises binoculars as a distant foghorn sounds.

CHRIS

We're near shore...

Alex takes the binocs.

WHAT ALEX SEES (THROUGH THE BINOCS)

A house faintly visible in the fog, the lawn sweeping right  
down to water's edge. Lights on, a car in the driveway... Alex  
and Chris looking at each other... Chris, a slow grin...

CHRIS

You thinking what I'm thinking?

Alex looks at Chris, clueless as to what Chris is thinking.



INT. THE WHEELHOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex throttles up to full bore, turns the wheel. Alex worried, uncertain about what they're doing.

The Fucking Boat accelerates in a tight turn.

Chris, grinning, fires up The Fucking Boat's mega-sound system: The Doors "Back Door Man."

EXT./INT. THE FUCKING BOAT - NIGHT

The 80 foot banana boat up on a plane, roaring toward the house. "Back Door Man" blaring from the wheelhouse speakers.

In the wheelhouse, Alex looks out at the house, a hundred yards away and rushing toward them. Chris grinning, loving this shit. Alex tense. Over the music, the engine's roar..

ALEX

I dunno, Chris! I mean, how's it gonna work?!

CHRIS

Simple. We fly to Bali, ride that left-hander... Diana and I get married, you the best man. Then a sailboat and it's the Endless Summer Express. Diana loves sailboats. She's a natural-

ALEX

-I'm talking about now! What we're doing this minute!

CHRIS

Ohh... We're gonna make some new friends.

INT. THE HOUSE ON SHORE - SAME

HAROLD and GRACIE relaxing in their living room, "The Tonight Show With Johnny Carson" theme blaring from the TV. Late thirties, Harold's hair and clothes reminiscent of Sonny Bono from back then. Gracie a former hippie chick

content with being an upper-middle class housewife. Harold rolling a joint from a baggie of pot. He cocks his head.

WHAT HAROLD HEARS

is an 80 foot banana boat charging in his direction, directly for his living room window - and, increasing in volume is "Back Door Man," blaring from the speakers on top of the wheelhouse.

Chris climbs up on the bow, as Harold and Gracie's house rushes toward him. Grinning like a madman, he looks back at Alex at the helm, Alex all concentration, worried but game.

A dog, a big yellow lab, at water's edge, barking at the approaching apparition.

The Fucking Boat closing on the house. The Doors blaring... Chris on the bow, gleefully leaning into the night.

Harold - quite sure he's heard something - rises and approaches the picture window. The "Tonight Show" theme winding down.

The Fucking Boat on a full plane... and closing closing...

Chris... Alex... only a few yards to go... "I'm a back door maaaaan!" Even Alex grinning now...

ALEX

This is nuts. Completely nuts...

INT. HAROLD AND GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Harold dumbfounded at the sight of a banana boat right there, filling his picture window. And then as Ed MacMahon yodels "Heeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeere's Jooooohhhhhnny!..."

EXT. THE FUCKING BOAT - CONTINUOUS

makes landfall. Strikes the lawn and just keeps going, hardly losing speed, plowing a deep furrow in Harold's well-tended grounds... squashing Gracie's petunia patch...

Chris on the bow, eyes aglow...

The lab bolts with a yelp, barely avoiding getting run over.

Clods of soil are blasted aside... and a house/banana boat collision seems imminent...

Alex and Chris lurch forward from their positions as...

The Fucking Boat groans to a halt 10 feet short of the house... right in front of Harold and Gracie's window... Chris and Harold are face to face, looking into each others' eyes.

Harold's panicky look goes to the phone by the couch, then back to Chris... Chris looks at the phone... Chris on the move now and he's not fooling around, this isn't funny, as he grabs his AK-47 assault rifle (that yin-yang/wave symbol on the stock) from a deck box...

Alex coming out of the wheelhouse, sees the assault rifle as Chris hops the rail... onto the lawn, running for house.

ALEX

Chris! No!  
(bolting after Chris)  
Goddammit, Chris.

Chris is crazed, nothing's gonna stop him, not now.

INT. HAROLD AND GRACIE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A panicky Harold picks up the phone, dials 911 but...

Chris barges in, gun raised, Chris's eyes mean.

Gracie screams. Harold stares at Chris, that expression, the violence there, Chris's finger twitching on the trigger. Harold carefully places the phone back onto the receiver.

Alex bolts in... takes in the scene, Chris's expression... indicating the assault rifle...

ALEX

Put that thing down, Chris.

Alex glances at the baggie of pot on the table... a Grateful Dead poster over the couch... with his eyes he indicates the pot and the poster to Chris... Chris's eyes narrow, realizing what Alex is thinking... lowering the gun, his deadly expression softening to a smile, the old Chris. Alex smiles.

ALEX

Could we use your phone, sir?

EXT. HAROLD & GRACIE'S DRIVEWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

An 18 wheeler arrives, "Inlet Seafood" emblazoned across the side. Four guys in sea boots pile out, a ragtag bunch of young commercial fishermen. Alex greeting them. Old friends.

INT. THE HOUSE - SAME

On the tube, Ed McMahon is suggesting we stay tuned for David Letterman's Late Show. A half dozen pot bales on the floor, one spilling buds. Chris on the couch now with Harold and Gracie, passing one of his cigar joints to Gracie, who is giggling. The yellow lab with his head on Chris's lap. Harold looks out the window. Stoned grin...

HAROLD

Oh, wow, Chris. A truck and more guys.

CHRIS

Just some fishermen friends, come to give us a hand. That okay, Harold? We're sort of wingin' it tonight.

HAROLD

Oh, hell yeah. Fine.

Chris pats the lab, rises. Indicating the pile of bales...

CHRIS

I trust these'll offset any inconvenience we might've caused...

Chris shakes Harold's hand. Kisses Gracie on the cheek. Gracie blushes; she's got a crush on him. Chris exiting...

HAROLD

Come back anytime you want, Chris. I'll build you a dock.

EXT. OFFSHORE FROM HAROLD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The banana boat settling in the quiet water, on her way down. Alex, Chris and the yellow lab watch from a dingy as...

The Fucking Boat slips under. A contemplative moment... Then Alex looks at the AK-47, cradled in Chris's lap.

ALEX

We agreed no guns, no violence.

Chris with an "Aw, come on, Dad" look... fondling the gun...

CHRIS

Alex... I wasn't gonna hurt anyone.

Chris opens the breach: no rounds in the chamber or clip... Chris shifts in his seat... a loaded clip clatters to the dinghy floor. Alex sighs... a slow smile, shaking his head...

The two hoot and high five each other...

ALEX & CHRIS

Surfers can do anything!

INT. CANTINA - DUSK (1996)

A rustic guzzlery in the desert landscape. Mariachi music.

INT. CANTINA - SAME

The Mariachis wander the room, belting out a yodeling *cancion*. All locals in the place, except for Alex at a corner table. Seth - the guy we saw watching Alex surf from the cliff - appears and joins Alex, sits right on down. Seth pours shots from a clear flask. Alex watches, curious. Who is this guy?

SETH

A special mescal blend I get from  
an outlaw distiller on the mainland.  
Has a little peyote buzz...

(smiles, offers his hand)

Seth.

ALEX

Alex.

SETH

Saw you surfing a couple days ago  
up north by the fish camp.

The two down the shots. Seth glances at the yin-yang tattoo  
on the back of Alex's right hand. Trying to remember...

SETH

Not you... another guy... same tattoo...  
and deck decal on his board... wait...  
the guy who ate it at Puerto in that  
epic south swell in '88.

ALEX

(uneasy)

...I... I don't believe he's dead.

Seth stares at Alex questioningly. Alex hesitates... pulls out  
the lost postcard. Puts it on the table. Seth picks up the  
card, examines the message side... looks at Alex...

SETH

"Are you with me?"

ALEX

It's postmarked November 8<sup>th</sup>. Two days  
after the day he supposedly drowned.

SETH

(flips the card, looks at the  
postmark)

Looks like a "6" to me. Doesn't mean  
anything, anyway... Shit, he could've  
mailed it a *month* before that day,  
fucking Mexican postal system didn't  
get around to stamping it. They're  
notorious for that shit.

Alex's mind racing... shit... that's right... maybe...

SETH (CONT'D)

Were you there that day?

ALEX

No. No I wasn't.

SETH

Well, I was.

ALEX

You knew him?

SETH

No, just saw him in the water that one day. Biggest swell I ever saw at Puerto and I've been surfing the place since the early 80s. Twenty foot, easy, when it peaked.

ALEX

Where were you?

SETH

In the water, where else?

(leans forward)

Tell you what. Your guy was *charging* the place. He have some North Shore in him?

ALEX

1969.

SETH

Hey, I ride Puerto deep, but this sonofabitch was way back, in the pit, on every wave. He was in another realm. Made every wave, except the last.

INSIDE ALEX'S HEAD

Chris deep inside an immense barrel. Surreal, frightening.

ALEX

What do you figure happened?

SETH

Bottom at Puerto is really shallow. Sand, but you come down hard the wrong way, you break your neck, or at least get knocked out. Rip sucks you offshore, that's all she wrote.

In Alex's head: Turbulent underwater images, scary... a body crunching, Chris being sucked out to sea. Meanwhile...

SETH

Why would he do it? Fake it?

Alex shakes his head, having no answer.

SETH (CONT'D)

...Let me ask you something. How come you don't already know all this stuff?

ALEX

...I wasn't... there...

SETH

You heard he was lost, you didn't come down? Maybe just stand on the beach, say... something to your bro?

Alex silent, Seth regarding him. A long moment...

SETH (CONT'D)

...You figure the guy's done a disappearing act, you figure on finding him, you're on a fool's mission, Alex. He went down and did not come up. Trust me, I was there.

The Mariachis appear at the table singing a mournful song, but Alex doesn't look up.

EXT. DESOLATE BAJA - NIGHT

Mariachi music carries over. Alex's rig parked in thick bush. In the near distance, the sea shimmers in moonlight. A campfire, Alex sitting by it.

Alex staring into the flames... the Mexican music becomes the sound of drums beating...

EXT. REMOTE BALI BEACH VILLAGE - NIGHT (1978)

Flames wavering, the drumbeat louder. A wild and primitive celebration at water's edge, costumed Balinese dancing and drinking from coconut husks around a bonfire... all at once the noise and revelry cease...



CHRIS AND DIANA (Chris 30, Diana mid 20s),

clad in Balinese garb, they stand before the village shaman, who is wearing a wild, multicolored ceremonial mask: the same mask we saw hanging in Alex's office.

"Bali, Indonesia, 1978"

Alex, behind the bonfire, flames wavering, watches as...

The shaman pronounces them man and wife Balinese style. They kiss... Chris looks lovingly into Diana's eyes, smiles, then goes to Alex, picking up two coconut husks...

CHRIS

Listen, brother... hear it?

That roaring, purring sound of waves breaking.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

No sound like that on earth...

Diana watching the two. She's happy, yet... Alex looks at her... their eyes meet briefly... Chris subtly registering this...

CHRIS (CONT'D)

First light, we find that left-hander.

Chris gives Alex one of the nut husks. Diana watches as the two click husks then down contents in mighty gulps.

The celebration resumes. Heavy drumbeat. Wild dancing erupts but the two friends remain quiet, smiling at each other.

Diana watching the two from a few yards away...

FERRY TERMINAL, PORT OF LA PAZ, BAJA, MEXICO - DAY

A line of cars descend the hill to the ferries. Signs announce that the ships are bound for Mazatlan.

INT. FERRY TERMINAL - SAME

Mobbed with mainland-bound travelers waiting on line. Out the window, the same bustle as above. Alex on line, waiting to buy his ticket. A ferry horn blares.

Two surfers in their early 20s, knapsacked and carrying boardbags, hurry into the terminal. TROY and STEVE, Troy wearing an ASP (pro surfing tour) t-shirt. Steve carrying photo gear and wearing a Surfer Magazine Staff shirt.

KAREN'S VOICE

Great! Just fucking great! Troy!

Alex looking out the window, but now distracted by Karen's plaintive voice. As he looks at her, he misses seeing an old van with surf posters plastered all over it pass by the window, heading for the ferries.

Troy's girlfriend barges in. KAREN is maybe nineteen, pissed, sweating bullets, excessive eye makeup running.

Troy spots Alex and makes for him, threading his way through the mob. Holding out some pesos...

TROY

Dude, could you do us a solid and grab three walk-ons with a sleeping cabin?

Alex absently takes the money. Karen and Steve catch up, the three right there by Alex. Karen royally pissed..

KAREN

This is not the way you said it would be, Troy!

TROY

I *told* you we had a long way to go to find that wave! I *told* you it would be rough!

Alex looks pointedly at Troy, but now he's hearing Chris..

CHRIS'S VOICE

It's not that rough, babe.

EXT. JUNGLE, BALI - DAY (1978)

Alex hacks through impenetrable bush with a machete, Chris and Diana right behind, arguing. The three with knapsacks and wearing their clothes from the wedding, the boys

carrying surfboards, Diana with a camera hanging. The shaman's demon mask sticking out of Alex's knapsack. Everyone sweating and panting.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

This is *fun*.

Diana slips, almost falls. This is not fun. This *is* rough.

DIANA

You said a *honeymoon* in Bali! Not a death-defying trek through-

ALEX

(up ahead)

-Chris!

Chris catches up to Alex. The two gaze through a hole Alex hacked in the bush.

WHAT THEY SEE

Perfect barrels booming. A pristine left-hander. Not a soul.

Alex and Chris hooting their lungs out. Leaving Diana behind, they strip down to trunks and head for the water.

Diana watches as they stroke for the outside. Sighs.

EXT. IN THE SURF - SAME

Chris and Alex paddling side by side. A set looming.

ALEX

Let's take it easy at first. We don't know what the reef is like. Looks shallow inside.

Chris has no intention of taking it easy. He drops in late on the biggest of the set. Disappears in an immense barrel.

Inside Chris's wave it's all swirling turquoise... the surreal magic of a deep tube ride... and space and time distends...

EXT. THE SWIRLING SEA - DAY

We PULL BACK to reveal that it's a ship's wake...

EXT. FERRY - SUNDOWN (1996)

Alex on the fantail cantina deck. A party. Alex with his back to the festivities, staring down at the ship's wake. As he takes something out of his wallet, a photograph...

SETH'S VOICE

Hey, Alex.

Alex turns to find Seth standing behind him, two sunburned tourist girls on his arm. A predatory grin...

SETH (CONT'D)

Meet Annie and Tina from Oshkosh.

(off Alex's inquiring look)

I made the ferry at the last minute.

Seth is obviously "with" Annie. Tina interested in Alex.

TINA FROM OSHKOSH

You a surfer too?

Alex shrugs, hardly giving Tina a look.

SETH

You're going down to Puerto Escondido, I got a break you gotta check out on the way.

ALEX

I'm gonna drive right through...  
How'd you know I was going to-

Seth waves off Alex's query, pulls a map from his backpack.

SETH

-Never make it in one shot. Besides, you gotta surf this wave. Was one of Chris's favorite spots.

Alex looks alertly at Seth. As Seth opens the map...

ALEX

So you knew him.

SETH

(shrugs; re: the map)  
Gas station here at San Cristobal?

ALEX

You said you didn't know him.  
(Seth silent)  
We never mentioned his name.

SETH

Heard it somewhere... Little dirt road  
behind the gas pump takes you right  
to the break. Going there myself.  
(casual)  
Careful of road bandits south  
of Vallarta, buddy. They call that  
stretch Bandido Alley.

Alex looks at Seth's map: A route line has been marked going  
from the top of Baja all the way down to the bottom of  
Central America on the Caribbean side, where there is an X.

Seth leads the girls off, Tina lingering, a come-on, which  
Alex ignores. He's still distracted by Seth's admission to  
knowing Chris... and by the map, that X... Alex frowns as if to  
say, "Ah, fuck it." Looks at the photo in his hand.

Old and crumpled, it's a shot of Chris about to be unloaded  
upon by a big barrel. And the photo comes alive...

EXT. BALI SURF BREAK - DAY

Chris is eaten by the wave from the photo. (A continuation  
of the previous Bali surf scene: of Chris's ride.)

Diana, on the beach, lowers the camera, watches, concerned.

UNDERWATER

A glimpse of Chris's tumbling form as the wave churns over a  
shallow, jagged coral reef...

EXT. SEA OF CORTEZ - DUSK

The ferry plies on eastward, the dying sunset in its wake...  
portholes go by, glowing bright. As we pass a porthole...

TROY'S VOICE

We're camping on the beach and  
you bring a fucking *hair dryer*?!

STEVE'S VOICE

Give her a break, man.

We enter the adjacent porthole to find Alex lying on his  
cabin bunk. Can't help but hear the argument next door.

KAREN'S VOICE

Thank you, Steve.

TROY'S VOICE

Whoa! What's this shit, bro?

STEVE'S VOICE

(placating)

I'm just saying...

As Alex turns over on his bunk, Chris's voice, placating..

CHRIS'S VOICE

Easy, brother...

EXT. BALI - DAY

Alex turning in his bunk becomes Chris stretched out on the  
sand at jungle's edge, Diana dabbing Chris's back with  
antiseptic. Alex standing over the two, angry.

ALEX

Easy, brother? Look at your fucking  
back. I warned you about the reef!

Indeed, Chris's is all sliced up from the reef. But, oddly,  
very little blood. Almost none. Chris nods, cheerful..

CHRIS

The reef tiger clawed me pretty  
good, all right.

DIANA

I don't understand. You're hardly bleeding.  
These are deep cuts.

Chris smiles that serene smile. Alex's anger building.

ALEX

We come all this way and you fuck yourself up on the first wave. You had zero chance of making that wave!

CHRIS

Gotta think of a name for this break. How about if we name it after ourselves?... That's immortality.

ALEX

Leave me out of it. Name it after yourself. Zero. Something Zero. When Chris takes a wave here there's zero chance of... How about "Captain Zeros?" That's you. Captain fucking Zero.

CHRIS

I almost had it this time, Alex.

ALEX

(annoyed)  
What? What?

CHRIS

That moment... that forever moment.

ALEX

(angrier than is called for)  
YOU AND YOUR FUCKING BULLSHIT MOMENT!

Diana is shocked by Alex's rage. Trying to change the subject:

DIANA

Am I being unreasonable if I do not call this a honeymoon?

Alex turns away, aware that his anger is out of proportion. Chris serenely holds up his hand for silence. Drowsy..

CHRIS

I'm getting light-headed..  
(Alex and Diana look at him)  
I got to tell my heart to beat..

less bleeding if... I slow it...

Silence as Chris's mind turns inward. Then we hear it, a single lub-dub.

And blood pulses from Chris's reef wounds...

Alex and Diana stare in shock at Chris's back as the blood flows... The silence broken by a horn blaring...

EXT. FERRY TERMINAL, MAZATLAN, MEXICO - DAY (1996)

The ferry blaring its horn. Alex's rig exits the ship and turns down a bustling street.

EXT. BANDIDO ALLEY - DAY

The remote mountain road south of Mazatlan. Alex negotiates a hairpin switchback...

...An old rusted, crumbling wreck on the roadside... surf racks on top, a line of bullet holes on the driver's door...

Continuing on, Alex scans the roadside bush...

SHIT! A guy standing on the road right in front of him!... Tires squealing, Alex pumping the brakes. A bearded face, crazy eyes out front and ...THUMP! he's hit as the rig stops.

A FACE

Right there at Alex's side window, those wild eyes, the beard, must be a Mexican road bandit... But then he speaks and its in that droopy, nasal SoCal surfer's drawl. THEO.

THEO

Excellent, dude.

ALEX

Are you all right?!

THEO

(scanning the roadside bush)

Not a good place to chat, dude.  
Gotta keep moving. This is road  
bandit country.



Alex nods... Theo sprints to the other side, gets in. Grubby jeans and t-shirt, leather vest, knapsack. Jittery...

THEO

Come on, hit it. Need speed. Some bros got shot up on this stretch last week.

Alex looks out the window at Theo's van on the roadside, the one with the surf posters we glimpsed at the ferry terminal.

THEO (CONT'D)

...Broken axle. Fuck. Timing, dude, timing. Bad timing can kill you down here. Fuck, and I got business down south can't wait.

Alex accelerates down Bandido Alley. Alex glances at Theo, registers a pistol in his waist.

THEO (CONT'D)

Next pueblo, about 15 clicks ahead, there's a gas station.

ALEX

With a dirt road to the beach?

THEO

Yeah. Righteous wave. Dude at the station has a truck can gimme a tow.

Theo fiddles with the pistol. He's high on something.

THEO

Got a DEA agent on my ass. Deep cover, wily sucker. Think I shook him.  
(suddenly edgy)  
Dude, you ain't him, right?

Theo eyeing Alex suspiciously... sees Alex's yin-yang tattoo...

THEO (CONT'D)

...Cool tat.

Alex shrugs. Theo mellows, as if the tattoo is significant.

THEO (CONT'D)

Bros like us down here, we gotta stick together. I watch your back... you watch mine.

Alex looks over at Theo. What is this asshole talking about?

Out the windshield, a troop carrier is coming from the other direction, a full-battle-dress platoon in back. As the two vehicles pass, Theo tenses, cranes to look back.

THEO

Fuck. Fucker's turning around.

Alex looks in the rearview: the troop carrier is in fact turning around. Really agitated..

ALEX

Fuck. They'll shake us down for sure.

ALEX

Toss the piece around the next curve.

THEO

Fuck that, dude. Just fucking hit it!

ALEX

We get caught with a gun, we're looking at serious Mexican jail time.  
(a look in the rear view)  
Toss it. Now!

Theo cranes to look back. Unzips his knapsack, revealing a bunch of white brick-shaped parcels in there. Drugs.

THEO

I'm holding, bro.

Theo takes the pistol out, checks the magazine.

ALEX

What are you gonna do, asshole, shoot it out with the Mexican army?

THEO

Hit it! I ain't tossing my piece or my shit!

The gun barrel wavers in Alex's direction. Alex pushes it away... hits the gas.

EXT. BANDIDO ALLEY -- VARIOUS

The rig barrels on down the road, Alex pushing the limits of high-center-of-gravity control, Theo cursing *federales*, the DEA, broken axles, road bandits, bad timing..

EXT. GAS STATION - A FEW MINUTES LATER

A dilapidated shack, one antique pump, livestock, an old truck. Theo pointing frantically.

THEO

Turn in! Turn in! Go around back!

Alex four-wheel drifts into the station, scattering livestock. Alex brakes, the rig skids.

THEO

Fuck! You passed it. Stop!

(pointing)

Back the fuck in there!

Alex jams into reverse and backs into a thatched enclosure.

The two watch out the windshield as the troop carrier speeds on by and down the road. Theo jumps out with his knapsack. A Mexican meets him, Theo blabbing, pointing up the road.

Alex exits the rig as the two get in the old truck. As they pull out, Theo whoops, fires his pistol in the air.

THEO

I owe you one, Alex!

Alex running after the truck..

ALEX

How do you know my name?!

Theo taps the back of his hand, referring to Alex's tattoo.

Alex watching the truck disappear north, back up Bandido Alley, Alex's wheels spinning... looks at...

An old sign pointing at a dirt road: *San Cristobal*. Added is a colorful painting of a tube-riding surfer. Bullet holes.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NEAR SUNDOWN

Alex passes through a gate fashioned of brush and barbed wire. In the same style as the abstract surfer is a drawing of a *bandido* with a black line through it ("No Bandidos").

EXT. THE POINT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex standing by his rig, checking out a primitive thatched hut at water's edge. Tattered laundry hanging, an old jeep with surf racks and covered with surf artwork of the same style as the signs. A talented artist.

Alex looks seaward.

Fine waves, as both Seth and Theo said. Two guys out.

EXT. THE SURF LINEUP - MINUTES LATER

Alex tucked into a head-high (non-threatening) barrel, lays back, lets it cover him, the translucent shimmering tube backlit by the setting sun. Cool move, beautiful image. Alex gets a hoot from BART, one of the two other surfers.

EXT. CAMPSITE -- DUSK

Alex, Bart and TOMMY, the other surfer. The three eating food cooked over a fire. Out over the sea a storm is brewing. A bottle of tequila passed. Tommy with a sketchbook; he's the artist. He's doing a portrait of Alex.

BART

An associate of ours is supposed to be here. He's overdue... maybe you've run into him.

ALEX

The asshole with the van? Posters on the side?

Tommy flipping through his sketchbook.

TOMMY

No, that's Theo...

Holds up a portrait of Theo, Theo frazzled, wild eyes.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Wouldn't think of it to look at him but he used to rip... before he got into white drugs, some smack but coke mostly.

Bart reaches behind him and drags a torn-open 50 pound bale of pot into the firelight. Starts rolling a mammoth joint.

BART

Theo's not welcome here anymore. You're holding white powder, you're not welcome either... Shit saps karma, fucks up your wave riding, brings down the heat.

(licking the rolling paper; Alex eyeing the bale)

You're into herb, moving it, whatever, god bless you and good luck.

ALEX

I'm not into anything.

BART

(nods, casual)

Overdue associate of ours is a guy name of Bo. Big guy, ponytail.

Tommy flips back in his sketchbook. Hands it to Alex. A portrait of Seth.

ALEX

Name is *Bo*?

Alex flips back in the book. Further. Further... A portrait of Chris. Sad, haunted eyes. Alex staring. Tommy looks.

TOMMY

Chris barrel rode like a demon. No fear. None. Totally driven.

BART

You got the feeling something  
wasn't right with him.

Alex looks at the date at the bottom: 10/88.

ALEX

"October, 1988."

TOMMY

A couple weeks before that big  
day at Puerto. He was headed there.  
Said he was hoping to meet up with  
someone.

Alex uneasy, guilt. Bart and Tommy watching him. Alex flips  
to the next page of the book. The lost postcard image. The  
waves, the towering island, the sailboat... The Dream.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

He commissioned me to do that. Took  
a few tries 'till I got it right. He  
had a very specific image in his mind.

ALEX

He had you do a postcard version.

TOMMY

That's right. It was the postcard  
he really wanted.

ALEX

...Do you... you believe he drowned  
that day?

BART

I believe he's... *desaparecido*.

ALEX

"Disappeared" doesn't answer the  
question.

Bart fires up his mammoth joint. A casual observation...

BART

My friend, the only thing down  
here that is what it is, is the

wave breaking on the reef.

The storm closer now, lightning pulses just offshore.

INT. ALEX'S CAMPER - NIGHT

Thunder and lightning. Alex studying the map of Mexico and Central America. Tracing a line down the Baja peninsula, across the Sea of Cortez, then down Mexico... on to Central America. Makes an X at the end of the road: Seth's route line, Seth's X. Adds a question mark...

EXT. BEACH - LATER THAT NIGHT

Alex walks by the glowing embers of the campfire as the storm breaks, dowsing the last of the fire. Sound of snoring from Bart and Tommy's shack. Unmindful of the rain, Alex walks down to water's edge and looks out at the sea.

WHAT ALEX SEES AND THEN IMAGINES

The sea, dark and stormy. And now we are moving from the beach outward past the surf... faster... skimming low and out to sea... past the storm... faster still... and now it's day, the deep blue of the water a blur just beneath us... a tropical isle ahead closing impossibly fast and then...

EXT. ANOTHER BEACH, ANOTHER TIME - DAY (1980)

Alex (early 30s) sitting on a pristine beach at the edge of deep rain forest. Staring seaward at...

Chris, surfing solo. Barrel riding big mean waves. Diana (late 20s) appears, sits by him.

Another barrel, Chris riding so deep.

DIANA

Why aren't you surfing?

ALEX

Sometimes I just like to sit and watch him.

DIANA

He's special out there, isn't he?

ALEX

Chris is special in a lot of ways.

Alex's comment was a dig, an unfair one. Retaliating..

DIANA

He's better than you, isn't he?...  
(false-innocent smile)  
I mean in the water.

Alex stung, but rather than escalating, Alex bares a truth.

ALEX

Chris... knows things. Things I wish...  
it's there in his surfing.

DIANA

The way he surfs... it scares me.

ALEX

Do you love him?

They watch as Chris gets barreled in a hairball section.  
Makes it. Barely. Diana gets up. Can't watch this.

ALEX

You haven't answered the question.

Diana starts for a jungle path off the beach. Stops and  
waits for Alex to catch up.

DIANA

Your friendship is everything  
to Chris.

Diana puts her hand on Alex's shoulder. Gently defining  
their relationship..

DIANA

And to me, too. Your friendship.

EXT. SURF LINEUP - SAME



Chris watches the two on the beach, Diana's hand on Alex's shoulder. (Chris's scars from his Bali wipeout have healed. They look like the mark of a tiger's claw on his shoulder - the "reef tiger".) Chris grimaces, misinterpreting the scene on the beach... then furiously paddles... drops in on a wave... disappears into its inner recesses.

EXT. BACK ON THE MEXICAN BEACH - NIGHT (1996)

Alex staring out to sea amidst the peaking storm.

CHIEF LOPEZ'S VOICE

This man... you say... he die here  
in Puerto Escondido?

INT. PUERTO ESCONDIDO POLICE CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY (1996)

Cluttered desk, ceiling fan, very Third World. Alex seated across the desk from CHIEF LOPEZ, natty and sleazy in his full dress uniform. Alex nods.

ALEX

In 1988. Drowned while surfing.  
November 6<sup>th</sup>... That's the story...

CHIEF LOPEZ

(stone faced; lying)  
I think you are mistaken.

ALEX

No, *senor*. *Seis de Noviembre*.  
According to the U.S. Consul,  
there was a police report.

Chief Lopez opens a filing cabinet, pretends to scan the files; he's hiding something, doesn't care if Alex knows it.

CHIEF LOPEZ

I am sorry, but the report is  
not... how you say? *Disponible*...

ALEX

Not *available*? You mean it's missing.  
(Chief Lopez shrugs)  
Maybe you remember that day.

Chief Lopez frowns, not bothering a response. A knock on the door then a uniformed cop enters, speaks to Chief Lopez.

CHIEF LOPEZ

I must go now.

Chief Lopez heads for the door, the discussion over.

INT. OUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A cadre of armed DAS AGENTS (the Mexican FBI/DEA) ushering in Theo and Seth, both handcuffed. One DAS guy has Theo's knapsack and pistol. Theo, seeing Alex, goes berserk, breaking free from his captors and attacking.

THEO

You fuck, I'll fucking kill you!

Two DAS agents plus Chief Lopez subdue Theo. Theo, struggling in his handcuffs, goes even crazier.

THEO (CONT'D)

DEA! I should have fucking known!  
Chris told me about you! Betrayer of  
the faith! Fingered me! Fucking DEA!

The two DAS agents punching Theo now, Theo spewing more curses. The rest of the DAS agents join the melee, drag Theo off. Seth looking angrily at Alex. Chief Lopez eyes Alex.

CHIEF LOPEZ

This is true? You are DEA?

INT. CHIEF LOPEZ'S OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Chief Lopez pacing, Alex seated. Lopez's arrogance is gone; he's edgy, eager to please, thinking Alex is DEA.

CHIEF LOPEZ

Yes, yes my friend, I know... So  
much corruption in my country.  
Some police working with bad  
people. But I assure you that I-

ALEX

-I don't care about that, you  
understand?

CHIEF LOPEZ

(kissing ass; re Theo & Seth)  
Those two, very bad men... work with  
Chivo Morales--

(Alex subtly reacts)

--who is now dead, thanks to you.  
DEA shoot him down like the pig he  
is. We in Mexico want to cooperate--

ALEX

(interrupts; stony)

-Your cooperation... Chief Lopez... in  
this other matter... will be greatly  
appreciated.

Chief Lopez stares at Alex... nods... he'll tell the truth now.

EXT. PUERTO ESCONDIDO BEACH - DAY

Alex standing on the beach, staring at the Puerto surf  
lineup. Head high and good, but Alex seemingly has no  
interest in a go out. His mind is elsewhere... then...

DIANA'S VOICE

Why did he do it, Alex?

Alex whirls around... Diana. Trying to maintain composure...

DIANA (CONT'D)

He did fake it, didn't he?

Alex managing to say...

ALEX

With help from the local cops...

Diana looks out at the sea. Shakier still...

DIANA

Is this where he... he did it?

(off Alex's nod)

Can we go somewhere else?

INT. PUERTO ESCONDIDO BAR - DAY

A gringo surf bar: hanging surfboards, surf posters on the walls, surfy patrons; surf jive as background chatter. Alex and Diana at a table, the vibe between them tense.

DIANA

I already lost the man I love once. Did you think I'd just sit back and let it happen *again*?

Diana lights a cigarette. Clumsy; this is her first try at smoking. Alex frowns, almost says something..

ALEX

It's not happening again. It's part of the same.. something. I should have come here eight years-

DIANA

-I know. *Someone* should have come. Who, Alex? You, his best friend, or me, his wife? How about if we both came? We could've gotten a cozy little room overlooking the break, waved good-bye, then fucked our brains out.

ALEX

You're forgetting something. He wasn't... isn't... dead.

DIANA

You're forgetting something... We were together before he left...

ALEX

...before he abandoned you.

DIANA

(angrily stubs the cigarette)  
I was so angry at him.

ALEX

Being angry at Chris is like being angry at a wave. At a force of nature.

DIANA

(not hearing him)  
You wanted me, you got me. It

worked out just fine, didn't it?

Alex hasn't heard her. His mind is somewhere else..

EXT. SECOND REEF PIPLINE - DAY

Chris (at 20) so deep within an immense cavern of a wave.

Alex out on the shoulder, looking back. It's that day in 1969 when Chris first faked his drowning. Alex watching..

Chris standing tall, relaxing, arms spread in acceptance as the wave expands all around him.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I don't use nature. I *am* nature.

INT. PUERTO ESCONDIDO BAR - DAY

Alex and Diana at the table, neither really with the other.

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - DUSK

Alex and Diana, Diana with her back to the view overlooking the coast, Alex staring out at the sea, the fading sunset.

DIANA

He was never the same after that last Colombian trip..

ALEX

(uneasy, a nerve struck)  
He didn't... it was worse for him than me. The way he is..

DIANA

You adapted to a... a normal life, he didn't... couldn't. It wasn't in him.

ALEX

How hard did he try, really?

DIANA

You knew that, and used that.

ALEX

Let's lay it all on me, right?

Diana sighs, nods. He's right. That was unfair.

DIANA  
What now, Alex?

ALEX  
I find him.

Diana turns and looks out at the coast. Getting shaky again...

DIANA  
I'm coming with you.  
(shakier still)  
It's not going to happen again.

Alex gently touches her face. She very subtly turns away.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Alex and Diana making love. Alex passionate, but something isn't right with Diana. She's tense, distant. Alex senses this and all at once they stop.

DIANA  
I'm sorry...

ALEX  
It's okay, baby. Relax.

DIANA  
It's been eight years. Maybe we  
won't find him. Maybe something  
happened down here. Maybe he *is* dead.

ALEX  
If history has shown us anything...  
it would be very unlike Chris to  
be dead.

Diana gets up, dons a robe, starts packing. Agitated.

ALEX  
Diana. Come back to bed. Please.

DIANA  
(rambling to herself)

What will we do when... what will we say to him? How are we going to find him? I mean where is he?

ALEX  
Somewhere to the south.

DIANA  
Why the south?

ALEX  
The natural direction of vanishment.

Diana explodes in helpless rage, pacing, throwing things.

DIANA  
That sonofabitch! That fucking sonofabitch! He doesn't care about anyone! FUCK HIM!

Alex gets up and manages to corral her. Holds her. Diana losing energy, then weeping quietly...

DIANA  
Hold me. Just hold me. Please.

Alex does so. She squeezes him tight. Pleading, sobbing...

DIANA (CONT'D)  
Let's just go home. Can we just go home? Please, Alex... go back to the way it was... I have a bad feeling... it's going to happen again... I could not take that, Alex... Alex...

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Diana has cried herself to sleep. The rumped bed-place next to her is empty.

Alex sitting by the bed looking at her. Longing... regret...

CHRIS AT 12 (V.O.)  
Alex!... Did you see... I was... that wave... it... I was... I felt...

EXT. BEACH - DAY (1960)

Again: Chris at 12 years old after riding his first wave.

CHRIS AT 12 (CONT'D)  
 ...something *happened* in there, Alex!

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - NEAR FIRST LIGHT

Alex staring off into the distance. PAN TO his view. The sea shimmering as first light approaches. PAN BACK to where Alex was standing. He's gone.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - MORNING

Diana asleep. Next to her on the bed is a note. "I love you. I will come home. It will not happen again."

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRLINER - AIRBORNE - DAY

Diana staring out the window, her face flickering fear, anger, sadness... too much emotion... she leans and presses her forehead against the glass... closes her eyes.

CLOUDS

Descending to a view of the southern Mexican coast, waves breaking down there. A road snaking along a desolate beach.

EXT. BEACHES/ROADS/SURF LINEUPS/ETC. - DAY/NIGHT - LATIN MUSIC TO BE CHOSEN

Alex powering south through desolate terrain...

...through jungly pueblos... hard stares from hard ass locals...  
 ...Alex always alert... in search of Chris...

...surfing remote breaks...

...late night... a raucous cantina...

...talking up various *viajeros* and locals... showing the photo...  
 ...no one remembers Chris...

...Alex surfing solo, aggressive in the water... driven...

...the chaos of a border crossing... Guatemala... corrupt officials... showing the photo...



(The vibe as Alex travels south is one of... *Deeper.*)

...at night, camping alone on a wild shore...

...no one remembers Chris...

...crosses into El Salvador... negotiates a violent, recently war torn pueblo... and random violence erupts on the streets... gunshots... Alex escapes by making for the sea...

...he surfs off the town... rioting on shore... more gunfire...

EXT. SURFER STRONGHOLD, EL SALVADOR - NIGHT

A dozen young surfers drinking by a fire, rock music from a boom box. Edgy vibe, the compound ringed by barb wire... safety in numbers. Distant gunfire...

Alex alone by his fire near the surfy group, waves shimmering offshore. Alex studying his map of Mexico and Central America. Someone at the other campsite lights a string of firecrackers, Alex winces. Tense laughter, war whoops...

TROY (O.S.)

Excuse me. Hey...

Troy, the young surfer from the Baja ferry terminal, comes into the light. Recognizing Alex...

TROY (CONT'D)

Baja, up at the ferry. How's it, bro?

Alex glances up, distractedly mutters a greeting. Troy squats by the fire. Another burst of distant gunfire.

TROY

Fucking crazy-ass country.

Alex nods distractedly.

TROY (CONT'D)

Moving on south in the morning... Got a problem. I'm camped over there with my girlfriend... I'm wondering if I could maybe borrow a condom.

Alex glances at the other campsite. Karen is huddled by the fire by Troy's buddy Steve, the Surfer Magazine photog.

ALEX

You'll return it in the morning?

Alex deadpan. Troy doesn't get it. Duhh.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...Sorry, don't have any.

TROY

Dude, you gotta be careful with the senioritas down here. Catch you a dose of nasty.

(glances at Karen; rolls his eyes)

In fact, I did, which is why I need the condom. She'll fucking kill me if she gets--

ALEX

--I'm with someone back... home.

Troy doesn't "get" that either. He's thinking, "So what?"

TROY

How do you slip one of those things on without the babe noticing?...

(no response from Alex)

So... Where you headed, dude?

ALEX

...I don't know.

Troy squats to look at Alex's map. Sees the line Alex drew from Baja on down through Mexico then Central America, to the bottom. Seth's line that Alex copied, with the X at the end of the road, the question mark. Troy grins knowingly.

TROY

It's cool. I'm going there too.

Alex looks at Troy questioningly. Troy points to the X on the map, the question mark.

TROY

You can erase the question mark. The place exists... Talk about a *serious* wave? Pipeline on steroids except a right-hander, way down past the end of the road. Just a handful of hardcore bros...

(lowers his voice; re: Steve)

My buddy's from Surfer Magazine. We're gonna break the story. I'm hoping for a cover shot.

KAREN

(calls out; impatient)

Troy!

Troy motions for her to be cool, he's coming.

TROY

Dude, could we catch a lift? Three of us. We could chip in-

ALEX (CONT'D)

-Like I said, I don't know where I'm going.

Troy nods but he's suspicious that Alex is bullshitting him. Starts to leave. Alex looks up. An afterthought...

ALEX (CONT'D)

...What's that break called?

Troy turns, trying to decide whether or not to spill it...

TROY

Zeros.

Troy goes off. Alex looks at the map, at the route line to that X and that question mark, down at the bottom, past the end of the road... Alex wincing again as another string of firecrackers is lit, the pop! pop! pop! carrying over, becoming automatic weapons fire as we go to...

EXT. SHIP - COLOMBIA - DAY (THE DOOR'S "WHEN THE MUSIC'S OVER")

Very real gunfire. A thirty-year-old Chris firing his AK-47 - that yin-yang/wave symbol on the stock - running as he does so.

Alex and Chris running along the rail of a ship, a big freighter docked at a sleazy Colombian banana port... and bandito types are shooting at them. Bullet's stitch mounds of marijuana bales as they run by -- the attack must have come during the on-load.

CHRIS

Back to the bridge!

The two sprint up the companionway to the bridge wing.

INT. BRIDGE - SAME (THE DOORS FROM A BOOM BOX ON THE CHART TABLE)

Below, on deck, utter chaos; men running, shooting, falling. Shots pierce the bridge, ricochet off the steel bulkheads. Chris returning fire near two surfboards bearing the yin-yang logo.

Alex trying to load his AK. Chris rams home the clip for him, Chris fierce and unafraid. More shots slice through the bridge.

A bad guy on deck fires a burst at the bridge. The shots hit the surfboards, fiberglass flying. Chris curses; he's enraged. Takes careful aim at the guy who shot the boards... the guy aiming back at Chris... Chris cool, aiming, absolutely steady... the bad guy hurries his shot, misses... and Chris calmly squeezes off a shot.

A hole appears in the guy's forehead. He collapses.

Alex and Chris make eye contact, Chris's eyes fierce. *Chris just killed a man.*

FREDI dashes in with his BODYGUARD and a Colombian army officer, THE GENERAL. Fredi is the boys' pot lord connection. Tough, but Fredi exudes a vibe of openness, honesty. A bandito with a good heart. He watches as Chris pins down the bad guys with calm dispatch. Grins, confident and unafraid; Fredi and Chris are kindred spirits. Heavy accent...

FREDI

Chris, my man. We send that piece of shit Morales back to Medellin, no?

Chris and Fredi high five. Fredi looks to Alex.

FREDI (CONT'D)

You okay, Alex?

Alex nods but he's badly shaken. Fredi squeezes Alex's shoulder to reassure him. Fredi indicates The General, looks at the dock.

FREDI

Don't worry. Soldiers coming.  
We okay now.

A truckload of Colombian troops arrives and boards the ship. Fredi at the window firing as men on deck scatter. More shots slice through the bridge. Then Fredi freezes, realizing...

The troops down there are shooting *his* men. A shot rings out right behind Fredi. Fredi turns to find...

The General's pistol pointed at him. Fredi's Bodyguard dead on the floor, shot by The General. Chris whirls to point his AK at The General, but The General has the drop on him too; Alex lowers his weapon. Fredi outraged, but he raises his hands in surrender.

Then a man enters the bridge. Short, plump, a moustache. Dressed oddly, considering the situation: plaid polyester bellbottoms, mismatched shirt: it's as if he were a few years behind the fashion times of 1980, and disco-bound.

CHIVO MORALES

I am Chivo Morales. Your ship and  
your load of stupid fucking  
marijuana are mine.

(to Alex and Chris)

You can now do business with me... or  
you... can... go home.

Morales tosses a glassine bag on the chart table... crammed with rock cocaine, crystals spilling.

CHIVO MORALES

The future, my friends.

Morales pulls a pistol and in a blur shoots Fredi in the center of the forehead... and those images Alex experienced when he heard on the radio that Chivo Morales had been hunted down and killed return (we now realize the man being executed in those images was Fredi)...Fredi's body falling so slowly...

THE EARTH FROM SPACE

POV descending slowly as dawn creeps across the United States, towards the coastline of Central America.. descending.. zeroing in on Central America.. the lights of cities in the predawn.. descending.. southern Central America.. scattered villages.. only one road down here, narrow, flanked by jungle.. a lone vehicle.. Alex, nearly at the bottom, at the end of the road, dawn just now overtaking him.

JUNGLE TRACK -- DAWN

Alex's rig rumbling down a one-lane dirt track and the sun is bursting through the thick bush, scattering rays like sunbursts.

FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

Deep bush, bad road, no traffic. Far to the south now.

Alex negotiating a sharp, blind bend, gearing down, avoiding a cavernous pothole.. hits the brakes.. The rig jams to a stop.

Alex anxiously scanning the deep bush. Something very wrong here.

A tree is across the road, blocking his path.

Then boom! from nowhere Alex is surrounded. Four armed *malvados*, sleazy bandits wearing bandanas over their faces.

Alex is violently pulled from the rig and frisked, his sunglasses swiped off. A bandit lifts Alex's wallet.

A bandit jimmies the camper door. As it swings open he freezes, having heard something. Looks up the road. Something coming.

It's a bus. Barreling down the rutted track at like 50 mph.

Closer now. It's an old school bus, battered and painted in wild psychedelic graffiti. The wheelman, black guy, dreadlocks, hunched over grinning as he bears down on the holdup. Nuts.

Closer now and the bandits are still frozen in place, watching the bus come.. Alex up against the hood, a gun to his back.

And here it comes.. a glimpse of the crazed driver leaning on the horn. Spray painted across the front up high where on a normal bus the destination would be are the words THE END OF THE ROAD.

Varooooom! Horn blaring, bandits scattering, the bus almost rolling over, and just for a heartbeat as it blurs by Alex glimpses someone standing on the other side of the dirt track. Another bandit, face obscured, mirrored shades. And CRASH! as the tree/roadblock disintegrates upon the bus's impact.

#### THE BUS AS IT BARRELS OFF

Packed with rowdy folks hanging out the windows, hooting, brandishing beer bottles; many fair-haired and pale, lots of women. A bare ass mooning, a middle finger raised. A blonde with corn-rowed hair.

The bus's artwork is a pastiche of twisted sex and drug imagery. Plus a rendering of a wave, a big, nutso barrel, a surfer with huge testicles. Spray painted across the top: "The BALLS For ZEROS?"

Alex looks from the disappearing bus to the other side of the road, at the bandit with the mirrored shades. A better look now: ragged fatigues, tattered bandana covering his face, those mirrored shades, fingerless shooter's gloves, an AK-47...

The Bandit approaches Alex from across the dirt track and he's raising the AK as he comes...

He reaches Alex, stands there looking at him... The Bandit's sunglasses reveal nothing but Alex's own reflection... the two stare at each other, the Bandit tapping his gloved hand on the rifle's trigger.

The bandit that jimmied the camper door comes out with a radio and some other booty.

The bandit with the shades turns and walks away... Alex watching him go. And something gets Alex's attention.

#### WHAT ALEX SEES

The Bandit's ragged jacket has a tear on the right shoulder. Under the tattered cloth the skin of his shoulder is scarred. Looks like the mark of a tiger's claw... the reef tiger...

Alex's eyes move slightly to...

...The Bandit's right hand, nervously tapping the trigger guard. The glove covering the back of that hand...

The bandit, walking off, stops briefly, his back turned to Alex... the nervous tapping ceases... as if he's sensed what Alex is looking at.

Then he and his men melt back into the bush.

EXT. SEASCAPE -- TIME LAPSE

Sundown then dusk come and go in a surreal rush, the red/yellow/magenta of the western sky doing a fast fade to starry.

FLAMES WAVERING

POV PULLS BACK to reveal Alex by a campfire in the bush by a stream by the sea. A bottle of rum by the fire. Alex's tattooed hand resting on his knee near the bottle, fingers dangling. Alex dead still, except for those fingers. They're vibrating.

CHIVO MORALES'S VOICE

The future, my friends,

A gunshot and we are back on...

INT. FREDI'S SHIP - DAY (1981)

Fredi's body falls, just having been shot by Morales.

CHRIS

is by the chart table, looking down at the cocaine Morales tossed there. Wets his finger, tastes it. Smiles at Morales and The General. Two other soldiers enter. Bad guys everywhere.

CHRIS

This is good shit, Chivo.

Morales grins; the bastard is in a fine mood. The General and his men relax a bit in their covering of Alex and Chris.

CHRIS

...Let's talk price. Let's talk  
1,000 kilos to start. Alex... here.

(as Alex joins him)

Taste it. bro. It's fine, really fine.

(whispers through his teeth)

Do it, Alex.



CHIVO MORALES

Ten thousand per kilo here in  
Colombia. Twenty thousand delivered  
in Panama or Costa Rica.

Alex nervously tastes the coke. Chris dumps a pile on his thumb  
and pretends to snort it, surreptitiously and distastefully  
brushing the shit off his skin. Whispered asides..

ALEX

What are you doing?

Chris eyeing the AK-47 by the chart table (the yin-yang symbol).

CHRIS

We're gonna kill this motherfucker.  
(smiles at Morales)  
We'll take delivery in Panama, Chivo.

ALEX

What? What are you--

CHRIS

--Fredri was our bro. We gotta do it.

Alex's looks at Fredri's body, his dead eyes, the bullet hole in  
his forehead... Chris's intense eyes... Morales is by the surfboards.

CHIVO MORALES

My son, he want to learn this  
surfing. He See it on ESPN and  
now he want to learn.

CHRIS

No problem, Chivo. We'll teach 'im.  
There's a good beach break down  
the coast from here.  
(aside to Alex)  
Go show him the boards. Distract  
all of 'em.

Chris edging toward the AK by the chart table. Fast asides..

ALEX

The soldiers-

CHRIS

We have all our money invested in this.  
(loud, to Morales; re: the coke)  
You're right about the future, Chivo.  
(aside again)  
Just distract these guys so I can  
grab the AK. I'll kill 'em all.

ALEX

We're a couple of *surfers*, Chris-

CHRIS

-Exactly. None of these assholes ever  
took the drop at Second Reef Pipe. They  
don't know who they're fucking with.

Alex looks over at Morales, who is now hefting one of the boards.  
He and The General laugh at the bullet holes in the boards.

CHIVO MORALES

Maybe I can learn too. Even if I  
am fat.

ALEX

I don't think-

CHRIS

-Don't think. Just like paddling  
over the brink.

Alex takes a step toward Morales... another step... Chris edging his  
way toward the AK... Morales smiling at Alex, then looking at the  
surfboard... Alex steadies himself, is about to commit... but then...

He turns and embraces Chris, hugs him hard, pinning Chris's arms  
to his side. Chris's right hand reaching toward the AK-47, just a  
couple feet away, but his hand is pinned by Alex's hard grip.

ALEX

(a hoarse whisper)  
I can't do it, Chris... I can't...

Chris's struggling, reaching out for the AK...

ALEX (CONT'D)

...I'm through... I can't do this.

A cadre of soldiers enters. They laugh derisively at the sight of Alex and Chris embracing, gesturing that Alex and Chris are a couple of fags. Morales laughing too.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...I'm sorry, Chris. I'm sorry... I want out of this.

A soldier examines Chris's AK 47. Checks out the yin/yang symbol carved on the stock. Likes it. The gun is his now. It's over.

CHRIS

It's okay... it's okay... We'll just... go home... forget it all... all of it...

Chris now returns Alex's embrace, hugs him hard, repeating that it's okay, that they'll just go home...

EXT. JUNGLE TRACK - MOVING - DAWN (1996)

Alex's rig moves past signs of man in the forest primeval... the vague form of an abandoned thatched hut... an old rotting truck.

Late afternoon... more jungle... another hut, lived in but no one around... a beached dugout canoe... a group of huts, a dog snoozing... the edge of a village... ramshackle, primitive...

EXT. THE TOWN AT THE END OF THE ROAD -- NIGHT

Alex's rig appears, slowly making its way down the dirt track into a village on the shore of a protected lagoon.

Alex's headlights sweep the bush on the roadside, illuminating...

BARED TEETH, SLAVERING JAWS

The silence is broken by a terrible snarling. A shock... It's a dog, a huge Rott mix chained to a palm, his face all scars. The dog goes wild, flinging himself repeated at the rig...

FURTHER ON

Torches light the rutted dirt track. Lair-like hutches, shadowed faces peer at Alex then are gone...

Alex, alert, tense, checking the place out as he creeps the rig down the dirt track, the sea shimmering off to the left.

In silhouette on the landward side, a small ring, like a miniature bullring... a cockfight... flapping fighting birds... raucous, drunken cheers from a shadowy crowd. Violent, ugly.

EXT. A LARGE STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Ramshackle bamboo and driftwood. Two stories, the windows upstairs emitting faint, smoky light. A sign over the door: "Road's End." By the structure is the End of the Road bus.

Alex parks by the bus, exits the rig.

WILLIE, the black Rasta remembered as the bus driver is working on some sort of engine outside the building. West Indies accent (all the locals speak thus), hyper...

WILLIE

You lookin' fo' da surfin place..  
 (points south with a shaky hand)  
 ...Zeros furthah down dot way, ovah da  
 rivah past da end of da road.

Willie tries to start the engine with a pull cord, which breaks. He curses a string. Really wired up, this guy.

ALEX

The surfer... who it's named for...

Willie impatiently indicates the building. Another string of curses. Bangs the engine with his wrench.

Alex starts toward the entrance. Hearing a loud Pop! and a hissing sound, he turns to look back.

Willie has fired up a huge welding torch. He's lighting a small dope pipe with it - talk about overkill -- his face glowing red.

INT. ROAD'S END BAR - NIGHT

Flaming torch-lit. The passengers from the lunatic bus are congregating here. White folks, mostly women, pale, weird, an assemblage out of early Fellini. The murmur of voices. Then...

The generator Willie has been working on outside coughs to life and boom!, a mega sound system erupts... pulsating disco lights

illuminate a scene of fierce abandon. A score of *touristas* dancing wildly with local blacks and *mestizos*.

Alex goes to the bar. A fat, ugly German woman is on a high tech phone; a sign reads "Satellite Phone -- \$10 a Minute." She's with a local black guy, handsome, naked torso, making a drug deal with the bartender: LARS, a wasted Norwegian expat. To Alex...

LARS

I don't remember you from the bus.

ALEX

I'm not from the bus. Just looking-

LARS

-What are you...

(hint of distaste)

...a surfer?

ALEX

Yeah, I'm a surfer. What are you?

(Alex calms, needing Lars's help)

Looking for a friend. Chris.

Lars frowns in disgust at the mention of Chris's name. A drunk, flabby tourist chick slams into Alex. Alex pushes her away.

ALEX

My friend...

As Lars moves off he points at the stairs.

UPSTAIRS

Alex ascends a rickety stairway, turns down a dim hallway with numbered doors... finds a door that was number 10, but the "1" is missing, leaving just its outline in the wood: looks like this is room "0". Alex knocks. The door moves inward.

INT. ROOM ZERO - SAME

More dim and seedy; a yellowed old surf poster hanging. A woman on a bed. Naked and bound spread-eagled. Sweaty, wild-eyed with passion. It's the corn-row-ed blonde from the bus. Before Alex can react... a match flares...

A guy sitting in a dark corner. Pop! hissss! He's lighting a small butane torch, eyes on Alex. Black guy, buffed, gold jewelry. JUNIOR. A quick hit on a pipe loaded with powder.

JUNIOR

Whatchoo want, mon?

Whoosh, he exhales. The girl hisses at Alex, baring her teeth.

EXT. ROAD'S END BAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex sitting in the rig, shaky... more pounding music...

EXT. THE TOWN AT THE END OF THE ROAD - FIRST LIGHT

Dawn and the party in Road's End roars on.

EXT. RIVER CROSSING TO THE SOUTH - EARLY MORNING

The rig pulls up to the bank of a shallow river. A hand painted sign nailed to a tree: IF YOU ARE HOLDING WHITE DRUGS DO NOT CROSS THE RIVER. Alex looks out at the river.

WHAT ALEX SEES

Thick mist rises from the river in swirling curtains, obscuring the other side. Ghostly, gothic.

Alex blinks, trying to clear his vision. He sees something.

Two figures knee deep mid river... one tall, one short... the two holding hands... standing there staring back. And then they are gone, lost in an eddy of the mist...

Alex leans intently forward.

CLOSER ON THE FIGURES

as they materialize in the mist again... a black kid, maybe 10 years old, dreadlocks with beads on the ends... holding hands with... Chris? A young Chris, maybe 30 years old, smiling?... or... an older Chris, staring back with hollow eyes?... the mist swirls around the two... they fade in and out of view...

...the mist closes around the figures and they are gone...

EXT. MID RIVER - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Water almost up to the rig's door... a rusty old sign sunk in the riverbed, a formal notification. FRONTERA. In smaller letters: INTERNATIONAL BORDER. Graffiti-ed over it all: "Fuck off," a couple bullet holes. The sign leans, bent by the current...

Alex reaches the southern bank and enters deep jungle.

EXT. DEEP JUNGLE - LATER

Rain forest gloom. Alex pulls up to look at another hand-done sign: "The Wanted and the unwanted."

And then the air shakes with the roar of some awful beast... another roar, from a different direction... another... surrounded...

EXT. SURF CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

The camp sprawls on a point overlooking the Caribbean and a river mouth. Makeshift, but these surfers appear to be here to stay: Thatched huts, tents, lean-tos; a half dozen or so structures. A sailboat of some 50 feet is under construction, up on a cradle.

Alex's rig fords the river, then pulls up.

ALEX, STANDING BY THE CAMPER

looks out at a flat sea. More bellowing from the bush. Either the beasts out there have followed him or they're everywhere.

EXT. SURF CAMP - VARIOUS - SAME

A half dozen camp denizens check Alex out. A lean, hardcore group. These are not kids. Late 30's to mid 40s, longtime expats. This is a much more mature, serious crew than the youngsters up at Puerto Escondido. No smiles. The boys are giving Alex a sour once over.

Alex approaches BEN, fixing a broken surfboard in a derelict ship cum surf shop by a shack on stilts. Mid 40s, big, tough, intense eyes. Ben's dog appears, snarling viciously. Eyeing the dog...

ALEX

How's it?

(Ben grunts while working)

...This is Zeros?

BEN

You solo, or someone else in that rig?

ALEX

Just me.

Bens nods in begrudging approval. The dog by Alex's leg now, still snarling horribly. In the jungle, the bellowing continues.

BEN

The howlers tell us when someone new shows.

ALEX

Howlers?

BEN

Monkeys.

EXT. A HOWLER MONKEY IN A TREE - SAME

A sizable primate. He opens his mouth - a serious set of teeth - and issues forth an incredible bellow.

BEN

They're territorial...

Alex looks around at the Zeros surf crew, their stares not unlike the howler's. Territorial. Plus that crazed dog.

ALEX

I hear you have a serious wave here.

BEN

Been flat. Dred says a swell is coming.

Ben indicates a black West Indian surfer nearby, staring stone-faced at Alex. Mid thirties, lean, self inflicted scars crisscrossing his face, reflecting his African heritage. DRED.

BEN (CONT'D)

(a gruff order; points)

You gonna wait for it, pull in there.

Ben goes back to work; for him the conversation is finished.



ALEX  
Looking for Chris.

Ben turns and stares at Alex, blatant hostility surfacing.

BEN  
He's not welcome here anymore.  
He an associate of yours?

Ben walks off before Alex can answer, his parting look saying that Alex isn't welcome here either, not if he's an associate of Chris. Ben's dog sniffing Alex's leg, still snarling demonically.

EXT. SURF CAMP - LATE DUSK

The Zeros crew, a half dozen or so... campfire, warm beer, rum, a joint going. A couple women, wives or girlfriends, lean and tan and like the men they're not kids either. Alex's rig nearby.

BEN  
Who'll it be, boys? I'm feeling  
"in voice."

ONE OF THE BOYS  
Kipling! Gunga Din!

Everyone simultaneously has a different suggestion... Alfred Lord Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade," Jack London, another Kipling: "The Road to Mandalay"; a female voice wants Keats; she's raucously overruled by a chorus of male voices.

ALEX

sitting on the camper stoop 20 yards away, smiles at this.

BEN  
Any of you numbnuts familiar  
with the Klondike poet, Robert  
W. Service?

Apparently not, from the grumbles and catcalls. Kipling is what they want. Ben stalks around the fire. Theatrical scorn:

BEN  
I thought not... illiterate surfers...  
(more grumbling; Ben bellows)  
Silence!

(they all shut up; Ben is  
indeed "in voice")

"The Men Who Don't Fit In," by Robert W.  
Service...

"There's a race of men that don't fit in,  
A race that can't stay still;  
So they break the hearts of kith and kin,  
And they roam the world at will.

Alex listening... the faces around the fire... rapt and thoughtful...

"They range the field and they rove the  
flood,  
And they climb the mountain crest.  
Theirs is the curse of the gypsy blood,  
And they don't know how to rest."

Alex appears unseen by the others on the edge of the firelight,  
listening, scanning the faces... some tough guys wax melancholy...

"If they just went straight they might go  
far;  
They are strong and brave and true!  
But they're always tired of the things that  
are,  
And they want the strange and new.  
They say: 'Could I find my proper groove,  
What a deep mark I could make!'

(Ben notices Alex and  
hesitates, his rhythm broken)

So they chop and change, and each fresh move,  
Is only... a fresh mistake..."

(dismissive)

There's more but...

Ben has quit because of Alex's presence... Guys glance stonily at  
Alex, get up. The group silently disperses, leaving Alex standing  
there alone on the edge of the firelight.

EXT. SURF CAMP - LATE NIGHT

A small shadowy figure slinks through the quiet camp, intent on  
not being seen. Goes to Alex's rig's door, knocks.

KIKO

Mistah... mistah... wake up...

Alex opens the door... a black kid maybe 10 years old. Dreadlocks with beads. The kid from the river that morning. KIKO.

ALEX

This morning, at the river... with...

Alex looking behind him and around to see if... if someone else is there. No. Kiko shhhh-ing, motioning impatiently to be let in. Alex stands back and Kiko enters, Alex scanning the camp again.

INT. CAMPER - SAME

Kiko makes himself comfortable at the settee, looks around curiously. Taking charge, he motions for Alex to sit.

KIKO

Dis is da ting: You owin' him money.

ALEX

He already got my money. On the road.

KIKO

(lying)

I don' know whatchoo talking  
'bout... but he figure you got more.

Alex staring at Kiko, thinking about this.

ALEX

He wants money, I'll give it to  
him. In person. Where is he?

KIKO

(evasive, nervous)

He gonna teach me surfin' some  
day... when I ready... he promise-

ALEX

-Take me to him.

KIKO

(losing composure)

I... I con't be doin' dot... jus' give  
me some money... mistah Alex... please.

ALEX

What's your name?

KIKO

Kiko.

ALEX

Take me to him, Kiko.

Kiko conflicted, afraid of failing in his mission.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE - LATER

The rig pulls up in front of a rundown shack.

KIKO

Jus' gimme a hun' red dollar,  
mistah Alex.

(on the verge of tears)

Please. Twenny dollar.

ALEX

Are you afraid of him?

KIKO

Jus' want him to be a happy mon.

Alex staring at Kiko, the kid holding back tears.

EXT. SHACK DOOR - A MINUTE LATER

Alex knocks. No response. Knocks louder. Nothing. A ploy..

KIKO

Not home. Never mind da money.

Alex tries the door. It opens.

INT. CHRIS'S SHACK - SAME

Alex steps in, looks around. Dim and squalid, a mess. Alex's radio, the one the road bandits stole, is on the floor. Alex registers it. Also sees his wallet on the table by the mirrored shades. Opens the wallet. Money's gone. He slips his passport out, pockets it. Then he sees...

CHRIS

passed out on a dirty mattress in one corner. Tattered shorts, no shirt. A dope pipe on the table amidst a clutter of garbage.

Alex squats and looks at his old friend. Chris's face is lined with the added years, the life he's been living. Stringy, dirty hair. His naked torso is not quite emaciated, but thinner.

ALEX

Chris... hey, Chris... Chris...

Kiko shushes Alex, goes to Chris, sits by him. Brushes some hair from his face. Gently massages Chris's temples.

KIKO

Dis da bes' way to wake 'im up.

Chris gradually starts coming around, all bleary and squinty and squirmy. Finally he focuses on Kiko. Smiles.

CHRIS

Kiko. Wassup, little brother?...  
Get the money?

Kiko's eyes dart uneasily in Alex's direction. Chris sees Alex...

KIKO

I sorry, Christophah...

Chris gently gestures that it's okay... Chris getting unsteadily to his feet... and then the two old friends are facing each other... Alex searching Chris's face... for a moment there is nothing there, but then Chris's face relaxes... a hint of that old Chris smile...

The two embrace and all kinds of emotions surface... a great shared joy. Kiko smiling, relieved... The two part.

CHRIS

Alex Alex Alex. It's really you.  
It really *is* you.

Alex smiling back... reaching to his pocket...

ALEX

You need money, I can-

Chris waves him off with a strained laugh...

CHRIS

No no no. Where did you get that—  
 (to Kiko; soft and kind)  
 Did you tell him that, Keek? Alex, some-  
 times Kiko just... See, I got this buddy  
 had some problems up north is all.  
 I was telling Kiko *he* needed money.

KIKO

That right, mistah Alex. I fuck up.

ALEX

Guy named Theo?

This freezes Chris... then he shakes his head, feigns not knowing what Alex is talking about.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...or a guy named Seth... maybe his  
 name is Bo?

The vibe suddenly very awkward. Alex looks around.

ALEX

So... where's your surfboard?  
 (taps his yin-yang tattoo)  
 The one you took... on your trip.

CHRIS

(evasive)  
 Broke it... on a big day here... beyond  
 repair... it's long gone...

A woman barges in. WANDA. An exotic *mestiza*, beautiful in a strange, maybe malevolent way. Her dark eyes firey, she snatches up the dope pipe, sniffs it. Glares at Chris, then indicates Alex. She wants him gone. Chris cowed.

ALEX

Listen. Why don't I come back?

CHRIS

(nervous about Wanda)  
 Yeah. I'll see you tomorrow, bro.  
 We'll... catch up...

The two hug again, but now it doesn't quite work.

EXT. PRISTINE COASTLINE - TIME LAPSE

Darkness becomes first light and then dawn, sky colors deepening then washing out as day breaks in a surreal rush.

SEASCAPE/SURF CAMP - EARLY MORNING

Dead calm over the Zeros reef. A few of the surf crew are up and around, doing chores. Alex's rig is in its spot by the river.

In the derelict ship/surf shop, Ben is shaping a surfboard: lean, elegant, a barrel cruiser.

ALEX (O.S.)

"He has failed, he has failed;  
He has missed his chance;  
He has just done things by half.

Alex sitting on a palm stump nearby. Ben hesitates a beat then continues with his shaping, not looking up.

ALEX (CONT'D)

"...Life's been a jolly good joke on him,  
And now is the time to laugh.  
Ha, ha! He is one of the Legion Lost;  
He was never meant to win;  
He's a rolling stone and it's bred in the  
bone..."

BEN

"He's a man who won't fit in..."

Ben puts down his shaping tool and looks curiously at Alex, wondering if he's misjudged him. Re: Ben's shaping work:

ALEX'S VOICE

You might think about hardening  
the rails back towards the tail.

BEN

Didn't hear you come back last night.

ALEX

Howlers were quiet. Maybe they've  
accepted me.

Ben glances at his lunatic dog, lying peacefully nearby, ignoring Alex... Ben takes Alex's hand, checks for the tattoo.

BEN

...Alex...

ALEX

...Everyone south of Tijuana seems to know who I am. Starting to get on my nerves.

BEN

Chris told me about you... a lot about you.

(unclear what Ben is thinking;  
bad or good)

He thought... thinks... the world of you.

ALEX

(a beat, letting this sink in)  
Yesterday, it didn't sound like you two-

BEN

-Ben...

(they shake hands)

When I showed up in '90, Chris had been here for a year... Camped on his own... We cut the road in from the village. Just the two of us for nearly another year... We started building that sailboat down by the river.

ALEX

You knew about his disappearing act.

BEN

We were close.

ALEX

Why'd he do it?

BEN

Why men do what they do is a question for the poets, not the likes of us.

(shrugs)

Or you could ask him.



ALEX

How long since Chris last surfed?

BEN

Getting right to the heart of the matter, aren't you?

ALEX

How long?

Ben goes to a bamboo board rack, slides one out: an elegant speedboard with the yin-yang logo.

BEN

He sold it to me about six months ago... And he hadn't been in the water for months before that.

ALEX

He said he broke it... beyond repair... said it was long gone.

BEN

In a sense I suppose that's all true...

EXT. THE POINT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex, Ben, Ben's dog walking a spit of sand toward the seaward edge of the headland. Ben indicates a dark band of water.

BEN

That's the reef. That's Zeros.

ALEX

Every surfer's fantasy... discovering some ultimate wave and putting his name on it. Chris figures that's the closest a surfer can come to immortality.

BEN

It was me that named the wave, for him. It caught on after others came and saw Chris ride it.

Alex is about to step on a dark-colored zone of rocks.

BEN (CONT'D)

You don't want to step on that.

Alex looks down at the dark mass he was about to step on. Ben puts his flip-flop down on it and presses. Picks his foot up. The flip-flop remains there, impaled on an array of long spines.

BEN (CONT'D)

Lava. This is what happens when molten lava hits seawater and cools suddenly... this is the stuff of the reef.

Alex examines the mass of lava. Those deadly spines.

BEN (CONT'D)

...At double overhead the impact zone is in three feet of water, Alex. You make a mistake, you take a fall, you hit the reef. Guaranteed. At triple overhead or bigger it's unsurvable. Fucking suicide.

Alex lightly taps the end of his finger on one of the spines... A drop of blood oozes. But Christ, the Zero's reef is *razor sharp*.

INT. ROAD'S END BAR -- DAY

Alex comes upon Lars on the satellite phone.

LARS

...No no no no, amigo... that's because fucking Theo, *Theo* is history, along with our merch..... DEA fucking got him and I don't know how they... well, Chivo is fucking dead..... So we..... Fuck Christopher. This is the last time we use him... What? You're fading!

(bangs the phone on the bar)

...Hello... Luis! Fuck... My battery's low! Shit! Get the plane in the air, Luis!

Alex leaning on the bar, watching as Lars bellows at the ceiling.

LARS (CONT'D)

Willie!!! Get your black ass out there and fix the fucking generator!

ALEX

I got to call the States. When will-

LARS

(looks at the ceiling; bellows)

-WILLIE!!!

EXT. SURF CAMP - NEAR SUNDOWN

Troy, Karen and Steve huff into the camp, all three tired and cranky, especially Karen. Troy glares at Alex, on Ben's shack's porch with Ben plus Dred and WAHOO, a hard core Zeros local.

TROY

So you didn't know where you were going, eh, bro?

(arrogant, to all the Zeros boys)

I'm a ranked pro. Stay out of my way in the water. I'm gonna show you old fuckers and no-names how to get barreled.

(looks out at the flat sea)

Fucking wave ever shows.

Ben, Dred, Wahoo and assorted other "old fuckers" and "no names" stare back, unamused.

ALEX'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The rig in its spot by the river, near the unfinished sailboat.

INT. CAMPER - NIGHT

Alex on his bunk, asleep. His eyes flutter open. He's heard, or sensed, something. Then a hollow thud, like a far off sonic boom... another... Alex's eyes go to the galley sink. Another thud. A plate rattles... A water bottle vibrating, ripples spreading within...

EXT. THE POINT - LATE NIGHT

A half dozen of the Zeros surfers lined up on the shore, staring into the night. Alex joins Ben, Dred and Wahoo. Another thud, much louder now. Alex looks out at the reef.

WHAT ALEX SEES

Hazy, indistinct but gradually becoming visible are walls of water freight-training right to left, creating that deep thudding

sound. And then a river of white water rakes the point and the crew gets inundated, knocked back. Ben hushed and shaky...

BEN

Healthy swell. Shit. And still  
on the rise.

DRED

Gonna build fo' a coupla days, mon.  
Gonna get *big*.

EXT. SURF CAMP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex walking back to his campsite by the river. He passes by Troy's tent. Steve sitting by himself outside, by the dying fire. From inside the tent, Karen's voice, fading as Alex goes by...

KAREN'S VOICE

What are you?... What is that? A  
fucking *condom*? Since when...

FOLLOW ALEX

As he goes by the half finished sailboat on a cradle by the river. The boat's name, etched in the wood, is The Endless Summer Express. A howler bellows, really close. Startled, Alex looks up. The animal is sitting atop the unfinished sailboat's cabin.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Alex... Hey, Alex...

Alex whirls around as Chris emerges from the bush. Startled...

ALEX

Damn, Chris, between you and the ape-

Chris ducks behind the boat as Ben appears. The howler bellows.

BEN

What's up, George? A stranger about?

(*"George"* bares his teeth)

We got a serious wave out there, Alex.

(re: the boat, rambling, nervous)

Chris's dream, and I bought into it. Then we... and he... gotta try and get some sleep.

(going off, nervous about the wave)

The man who was born to hang... The man who

was born to hang..

Ben's gone into the night repeating his weird litany. Chris reappears, shadowy in the dim light. Jittery, re: Ben..

CHRIS  
Asshole. Fuck him.

ALEX  
Yeah, well, I like the guy.

CHRIS  
Keep your voice down..

ALEX  
Let's go inside.  
(sour)  
That way no one'll see you.

Alex staring at Chris, Chris shifty, eyes elusive.

INT. CAMPER - A MINUTE LATER

Alex turns on the overhead light and looks at Chris.. Hollow, dilated eyes, molars grinding. A drug withdrawal.

CHRIS  
Just need a few dollars, man.

Alex eyes a dope pipe, tucked in Chris's short's pocket.

ALEX  
Sit down..  
(Alex sits; Chris fidgets)  
Just for a minute. Sit with me.

Chris hesitates, eyes darting around.. Alex stares up at him.. then Chris suddenly sits.. a sheathed filet knife on the table.. Chris picks it up, taps it on the wood.. unsheathes it.. razor sharp.

CHRIS  
Okay, I'm sitting. Fuck.

ALEX  
..How have you been, Chris?

CHRIS  
Jesus Christ, man... Fuck...

ALEX  
Why did you do it?

CHRIS  
Do it? Do it?

ALEX  
That move at Puerto Escondido.

CHRIS  
Get the fuck rid of you.

ALEX  
What was with that postcard then?

CHRIS  
A bit of cosmic fucking irony is all.

ALEX  
...Let's go back home, Chris.

Chris lets fly a high-pitched cackle, nervously taps the knife.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
-You've got to get out of here. Away  
from... all this. Back home.

CHRIS  
Back home? Back to my *wife*?

ALEX  
(uncomfortable but recovers)  
We do need to talk about Diana--

CHRIS  
-Nothing to talk about, buddy.  
Listen. Just give me thirty.

Chris's knife tapping faster, Alex watching him.

CHRIS  
I'll pay you back... tomorrow... I'll  
have money... this associate of mine...  
I can't go into it, man...

ALEX

What happened, Chris? What happened to you?

CHRIS

What happened to me? To *me*?

ALEX

We went our separate ways. Happens in life.

CHRIS

What happens in life is scumbags abandon their friends when they are most needed.

(intense)

Then they get *serious* about betrayal.

ALEX

When did you know... about Diana?

CHRIS

Just give me twenty. We'll call it square.

ALEX

Twenty dollars and we'll call it square for Diana?

The knife tapping...

ALEX (CONT'D)

Did you know that your buddies Theo and Seth, or Bo... they were associates of Chivo Morales?

The knife tapping even worse, a blur of nervous, druggy tension...

CHRIS

You think you know things but you don't.

ALEX

Chivo Morales. Remember him?

CHRIS

I remember him all right...  
 (that intensity again)  
 Do you?

...and Boom! Alex slams his hand down on Chris's - one tattoo image upon the other -- to stop the knife tapping... Summoning the past...

ALEX

There's a wave breaking out there,  
 Chris... a wave called Zeros.

Chris's eyes go hard and he turns it all around with five words...

CHRIS

Are you with me, Alex?

Alex's hand loosens its grip on Chris's... Alex's hand transferring a 20 dollar bill to Chris's hand... the knife drops.

ALEX

We're square. For everything.

Chris, clutching the twenty, is gone.

EXT. ZERO'S SEASCAPE - TIME LAPSE

Darkness, a blur of stars... first light in red/yellow/magenta... and then the rising sun washes out the sky... dark clouds scud the horizon and the waves beneath them are a blur of emerald motion.

EXT. SURF CAMP - EARLY MORNING

The Zeros crew readies for the go-out. Guys stretching... doing yoga... hyperventilating... sitting quietly... each has his own routine... Alex unbags a speed board... Ben un-racks Chris's old yin-yang model and he's chanting again... "The man who was born to hang..." over and over.

Alex watches the other surfers' final preparation and it's unique to the break called Zeros: the men are donning body armor... wetsuit vests and tops reinforced with Kevlar... reinforced knee and elbow pads lashed on... the armor has been repaired, stitched and patched... helmets - likewise damaged and repaired - are slid on and buckled down (one helmet sports a "No Fear" decal, but the "No" has been mostly gouged out by the reef, leaving just



"Fear")... Ben still chanting... and now he's on his knees vomiting from the tension...

...the two or three women are helping their mates in their final prep, making sure the armor is snug and right, submerging the tension in ritual... and the guys who are mate-less help each other... they silently lock stares... pooling their courage...

Gladiators preparing for the arena.

Troy waxing up, watching. Doubts. Steve setting up his camera.

Ben, his big mutt by his side, donning a full-blown flak jacket, all gouged up: "Honolulu Police Dept. S.W.A.T. Team" on back.

Ben tosses Alex a spare jacket and helmet... still chanting "The man who was born to hang..." Ben looks intently into Alex's eyes.

BEN

Sit and watch for a while, get  
a sense of it...

Ben turns to face the sea and he's deep within himself... and now he reveals the meaning behind his litany, by adding the tag...

BEN (CONT'D)

"The man who was born to hang... need  
not fear the water..."

With that, Ben is gone, paddling out via the river; the rest of the Zeros crew follow, stroking for the outside.

WATER'S EDGE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex squatting, board across his thighs, looking out at Zeros.

THE LINEUP

The half dozen surfers sit their boards in a tight group, as if for mutual support, the tension palpable...

A SET LOOMS

It's big and as the first wave feels the drag of the reef it suddenly doubles in size... and the sloping face of a moment ago is now pitching itself toward concave. Ben spins his board at the

last second... a near freefall down the face... as he's reaches the trough the wave is throwing itself outward in a gargantuan heave.

Chris's Pipeline beast was a serious wave but this ups the stakes big time... this wave is *serious*, throwing out ten, fifteen yards in front of itself, a barrel you could drive a Volkswagon through... and Ben is tucked up in it, racing it, and for all his nervousness and fearful chanting and vomiting the man has *balls*.

Alex watching, eyes betraying that mix of fear and desire endemic to certain death-defying endeavors.

Ben emerges from that immense tunnel.

Alex sighs, relieved that Ben is okay. Then a voice close by.

VOICE

Ol' Ben, he charges, doesn't he?

Seth. Likewise clad in a flak jacket (U.S.M.C. on back) and helmet and balancing his board on his knees. Smoking a fat joint.

SETH

...Chris, though... Chris was in another realm here. He *lived* in that barrel.

ALEX

Didn't spend much time in jail up in Mexico, did you? Seth... Bo... Whoever you are.

(Seth shrugs: so what?)

Another guy drops in, races the beast, makes it, arms raised in victory... and relief... as he pulls out.

ALEX

Theo...

SETH

Theo didn't have the temperament for a Mexican jail... or the connections to get out... he's dead... fuck 'im.

ALEX

You knew Chris was alive.

(no response)

You didn't want me to come here.

Wahoo drops in and it's a mistake. The wave goes almost instantly from an ocean groundswell to a concave mutant dumping on the reef -- no wall to drop in on. Wahoo is pitched outward and down, free-falling into three feet of water. Buried under tons of churning sea. That reef down there.

SETH

And yet here you are.

White water continues to explode, Wahoo gone under it... Alex glances at the edge of the lava flow beside him. Those deadly razor spines. Seth's wicked grin refers to the spines... the reef... other things...

SETH (CONT'D)

Glad you came, Alex?

Wahoo's head finally pops up... his broken board washes in... Wahoo staggers out of the water, an ugly gash running up one leg, helmet broken, blood pouring from his nose...

Seth stands up, casually flicks the joint into the wash.

SETH (CONT'D)

Care to join me, bro?

Seth hits the water. Alex gathering himself... follows Seth.

TROY, ON THE BEACH,

eyes the injured Wahoo, who glares back... Wahoo dumps his body armor and helmet in front of Troy. Troy looks at Steve, nearby...

TROY

I'm gonna take a pass on this.

Steve looks through his 1000mm lens as another of the Zeros "old fuckers" charges a beast. Snaps the shutter as the surfer disappears in a surreal barrel. Barely hiding his contempt...

STEVE

Whatever, bro, but I'm gonna shoot some barrels. This is cover shit.

Wahoo standing there, all bloody, a scary sight. He grabs Steve's camera setup and flings it far out into the white water.

WAHOO

Word leaks about this break, I will  
hunt you down and I will kill you.

Wahoo's crazed eyes - all that blood - plus the twisted grin of  
one of the Zeros women, tell Steve that the threat is real.

EXT. SURF LINEUP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

That first set scattered the pack. Some are inside paddling out,  
some further outside or edging nervously toward the channel --  
and safety. Alex joins Ben. Seth paddles by, heading deeper,  
toward the pit. Turns and strokes for a wave.

ALEX

Who is that guy?

BEN

One of Chris's many associates.  
Rides deep, I'll give him that.  
(a set looms; they stroke  
for the outside)  
Alex... careful of mutant sections  
inside, in the bowl.

Seth's wave is... very serious... Seth way back, deeper than anyone  
so far... and he disappears completely in the inside bowl.

EXT. NEAR THE RIVER MOUTH - SAME

Chris and Kiko, partially hidden in deep bush, watching. Chris  
nervously tapping a dope pipe on the back of his tattoo-ed hand.

EXT. THE LINEUP - SAME

Alex watching as the next wave approaches... hesitating...

Chris, hunched in his hiding place in the bush, muttering.

CHRIS

Go go go go go!

Alex hesitating... hesitating... self-doubt... fear...

CHRIS

Go go go go go go go! Aleeeex!

Alex, a last instant turn and burn... and his wave is every bit as serious as Seth's... an endless drop... projecting down the line...

Chris intently leaning forward, watching Alex...

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Yes Alex Yes Alex Yes Alex!

And Alex too disappears in the bowl... Seth paddling out, watching...

Chris trembling, bursting for the joy of witnessing Alex's ride...

INSIDE ALEX'S WAVE

All abstract shimmering turquoise and emerald... Alex in a crouch, far back in the wave's recesses... Fearful, yet mesmerized...

...Alex is eaten by the beast. Sucked up and over the falls...

Chris is unmindful of Alex's situation under all that white water, that reef... living vicariously through Alex...

CHRIS

You did it, buddy. You fucking  
*lived* in there.

...then he looks down at the dope pipe clutched in his fist and in a beat of rage he flings it into the river... utter self-loathing... Kiko behind Chris now, massaging his shoulders...

KIKO

You can be all right. Go into da  
bush an' you... rest up. I help you.

Chris staring out at the flowing river, a thousand yarder.

INT. BEN'S SHACK - SUNDOWN

Ben sewing a reef gash on Alex's chest, Alex's body armor in a heap on the floor. Wahoo and Dred are there too, Wahoo's leg stitched up, his broken nose bandaged. Alex wincing with every pull of the needle.

BEN

Got to stay dry for at least a week.

ALEX

That wave...

Dred sprinkling some herbs on Alex's wound... mutters a chant.

DRED

An' you mus' be very quiet, very still, wid no vexation in your mind. You' mind need to be very still to fight da jumbies.

BEN

He means the bacteria or some goddamn thing in the water out there, make you bust out in a fever-

ALEX

That wave... something... happened...

BEN

You got fucking snuffed is what happened, brother. I told you about that inside section.

Alex looking at Ben but his eyes are unfocused, far away. Then he smiles, shaking his head as if coming to his senses.

ALEX

I've had enough of this wave of yours, boys... enough of Zeros. I'm going home...

(rising painfully)

Gotta go into the village.

TROY (O.S.)

Hey! My girlfriend up there?

Troy is down below on the ground. Ben looks out.

BEN

Hope us old fuckers and no-names didn't get in your way today... while you were showing us how to get barreled.

TROY  
 (fidgets, cowed)  
 I guess she's not up there then.

Ben grinning down on the young pro.

EXT. ROAD'S END BAR - DEEP DUSK

Alex's rig outside, next to the lunatic bus. Thump thump of music from inside. Storm clouds scud the distant sea horizon.

INT. ROAD'S END BAR - SAME

Alex on the satellite phone, Lars nearby, donning a bush jacket. Tourists on the dance floor, white women, black local men. Alex sweating now, fevered, blood on his t-shirt over his reef wound. Alex frowning at the music, sees the generator cord snaking under the bar. He uses his foot to pull the plug. Silence... and the disco lights go off, the room now lit by torches.

LARS  
 WILLIE!

Alex dialing the phone. He's weak and woozy, the blood stain on his shirt spreading. The reef-fever has a grip on him.

Seth is at the other end of the bar, watching Lars pull on boots with distinctive stitching. Seth glances at Alex, on the phone...

ALEX  
 Diana... Diana, I'm coming home... I...  
 what?... yes, I found him... listen... you  
 were right. This was a mistake... I  
 miss you... I love you...  
 (sweating; a bit disoriented)  
 What?... no, he's not all right... Diana...  
 listen... please listen to me... what?...  
 Diana, he's... got problems...  
 (confused)  
 Listen to me, Diana, please... I'm  
 coming home... what?... yes... we...  
 we talked about you...

THE STAIRWAY

Troy appears, crazed, dragging Karen down the stairs, Karen half naked and screaming. She tumbles down the stairs, tourists

scattering. Steve appears from upstairs, shirtless, his pants undone. Vaults the stairs. Attacks Troy.

Alex slumps to a sitting position on the floor. The truth has dawned on him..

ALEX

You came south to get *Chris* back..  
When you said you wouldn't lose the  
man you love, not again.. you were  
talking about *Chris*.. not me..

(listens, numb)

Don't be sorry. It's... don't cry..  
...it's all right... I... I... understand..

Willie plugs the generator cord back in.. the room erupts in  
pounding music.

Alex lets the phone slide into his lap.

Steve grabs a bottle from the bar, smashes it, sticks the jagged  
glass in Troy's face, gives a violent twist. Blood spurts, flaps  
of skin hanging from Troy's face. The tourists watch, glowy-eyed.

Seth looking on in casual distaste, but his attention is mainly  
on Lars, who is strapping on a machete, not giving a shit about  
the fight. Exiting into the night, calling out to Junior..

LARS

Mop the floor when they're finished  
then see to the dogs.

Troy crawling on the floor, crying, blood everywhere, Steve  
kicking the shit out of him, Karen wild-eyed in terror.

Alex sitting on the edge of the chaos, the phone in his lap. Numb  
from the phone call and the fever. Then from somewhere, an awful  
bellow of rage, carrying over to..

EXT. TREETOP - A HOWLER MONKEY - NIGHT

Its mouth wide, baring its long canines, letting fly its  
characteristic bellow, mixed with thunder. And the bellow and the  
thunder become the roar of..

A big airplane and it roars overhead through low storm clouds.



INT. CHRIS'S SHACK - NIGHT

Alex staggers in from the storm, looks around the squalid room. No one there. Weak, his fever worsening..

ALEX  
Chris... Chris..

He goes to an inner door. Enters another squalid room.

Wanda, squatting by a little shrine. The Virgin Mary, herbs, bones and feathers. A small pot of liquid boiling on a little burner. Wanda adding herbs to the pot, chanting. Wanda turns and looks at Alex. A malevolent smile, exotic, dark eyes all aglow.

WANDA

squatting by Alex now, looking deeply into his fevered face, his unfocused, despair-ridden eyes. Touches the bloodstain on his shirt. Alex looking into Wanda's eyes.

BACK ROOM

Alex on the bare mattress, naked to the waist, his stitched up reef gashes oozing blood in the light of a dozen candles. Rain patters, comes through a nearby window. Lighting pulses, the distant grumble of thunder. Alex turns his head, looks at..

Wanda sitting on the bed by Alex, holding Alex's head so he can sip the brew... a flash of lightning... a violent thunder crack.

Wanda gently stroking Alex's reef gashes. Alex meeting her eyes. Then Wanda's head moves in an odd way. She looks up at the ceiling.

THE JUNGLE

A howler monkey looks up, its head moving in the same way Wanda's had: the movement seemed odd in Wanda because it is the movement of a wild animal. The howler opens its mouth wide, baring its long canines, and lets fly a bellow, mixed with thunder. And the bellow and the thunder become the roar of:

The airplane roaring overhead again in the deteriorating weather.

And the howler bellows, its head thrown back, wild-eyed.

## WANDA

throwing her head back, wild-eyed... Wanda is on top of Alex, both naked now, both soaked in sweat, Wanda grinding, Alex gazing up at her fearfully. Maybe this is against his will, maybe not. Wanda grimacing in pleasure or pain and then a terrible bestial snarling seems to come from her, hateful, different from the howlers' roar.

## A DOGFIGHT - JAGGED, DISJOINTED

A blur of snarling, frothy, bloody jaws... it's the Rott mix and another dog. The two careen around a dogfight pit, egged on by tourists from the bus.

## THE RAIN FOREST -- NIGHT

A large object crashes through the rain forest canopy, shattering tree limbs then hurtling to earth. Another crashes down. Dozens of them. Heavy duffel bags. The airplane roars overhead. Howlers bellow.

Men are in the jungle, picking up the drug bags that fell to earth. Gruff voices. Trucks, their headlights sweeping thick bush in the heavy rain. The howlers bellowing.

## A MAN'S LEGS

Knee-deep in a rain-splattered stream and we can hear the man huffing in exertion. The legs emerge from the stream and by the distinctive stitching on the boots, we know the man is Lars.

## EXT. THE JUNGLE FROM HIGH ABOVE - NIGHT

A fleet of military attack helicopters skims the treetops... converge on the smugglers' airplane.

## ALEX AND WANDA

Sweaty and breathless in their sex... if Wanda had taken Alex against his will, his will has changed. Wanda rakes Alex's stomach with her fingernails, leaving claw-like welts. That snarling again.

The dogs tear each other up in a blur of gore.

Choppers landing in a jungle clearing... Lars's boots fleeing... armed soldiers running... a duffel bag dropped... other men drop their duffels and flee... the gruff voices of soldiers and panicky smugglers... the howlers' bellow... Shots fired... violence and chaos in the rain forest as the bust goes down...

Lars is killed in the shootout, the others arrested or shot.

THE ROTT MIX

goes down, the other dog's jaws clamped to its throat. The Rott stops struggling and his eyes dim.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. A SECTION OF COAST - TIME LAPSE -- SILENCE

First light then dawn as the storm recedes, as if it's being sucked back into oblivion. The sun rises to its noon apogee then begins its descent over the towering cloud forests to the west.

EXT. SURF CAMP - LATE AFTEROON

Alex's rig pulls in. Alex weak, but his fever has broken. The camp has been severely damaged by the storm, a thick fog hanging over it, obscuring the sea... and the Zero's reef.

Alex exits the rig and heads for Ben's shack by the river mouth. Then another form materializes in the mist... Seth's rig, Seth sitting up on the hood staring seaward into the impenetrable fog.

SETH

It's fucking *big* out there...

Alex squints into the fog. Can't see the reef, the wave. Seth lights a joint.

SETH (CONT'D)

We had a wind shift this morning, got a look at it. It's fucking... *biblical*.

ALEX

You're a cop, aren't you?

Seth takes a hit from the joint, tries to pass it to Alex, who ignores it.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Deep cover kind of cop. Cop who barrel rides like a demon... smokes pot...

SETH

Some of my best friends are pot people. Up in Mexico, all over. Dealers and smugglers. I look the other way, they help me get the real bad guys.

ALEX

Did you bust Chris last night along with the real bad guys?

SETH

Been looking for him, but haven't found him.

ALEX

How about you leave him alone. He's harmless now. To everyone but himself.

SETH

Harmless? Tell Chivo Morales that.

ALEX

Morales? What are you talking about?

SETH

We would never have gotten Morales without Chris. We ran the fucker down and killed him largely due to Chris, his information, the people he enlisted or turned... we nailed a slew of other scumbags too... Theo... Chris set me up to get that piece of shit... Lars and his crew last night.

Alex staring at Seth, beginning to understand some things.

SETH (CONT'D)

...A guy lives deep undercover for eight years... living the life of the people he's trying to get... it takes a toll... even with a man like Chris. Maybe especially with a man like Chris. Can't do anything halfway.

ALEX

Eight years... his disappearing act.

SETH

Strange thing... it was not necessary then. Now it is. He's in danger, got to get out. Disappear...

ALEX

Then why did he do it? Fake his death?

SETH

Never would tell me. And he never would tell me about his vendetta against Chivo Morales. He was obsessed with getting Morales... Maybe you know about that.

Alex's eyes tell Seth that Alex does know.

SETH (CONT'D)

You know altogether too much about Chris. You were a danger to him... I didn't want you coming here.

(Seth slides off the hood, faces Alex)

Chris is up in the bush somewhere, maybe to get straight, I dunno. I left his new passport and "get lost" money with the kid, Kiko. Added Lars' money stash to it, although officially I did no such thing and would deny that... Chris deserves it. Does he ever.

(sighs, a hit from the joint)

I'm out of here. I hate this fucking place. As far as the wave goes... good riddance. Truth is, it scared the shit out of me.

ALEX

Didn't appear so, from the way you rode it.

SETH

A wave like Zeros isn't what surfing is about... not for us mortals.

EXT. BEN'S PORCH - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex mounts the stairs to the porch as Seth's rig crosses the river ford and disappears into the fog. Alex looks out to sea.

WHAT ALEX SEES

A bit of the shore but the reef is still obscured by the fog.

Alex tests the air by crumbling some rotten wood from the porch support and tossing it into the air. A breeze is rising.

The breeze is clearing the air over the reef... and now a set building. Massive and stacked, obscuring the horizon. The first wave thickens then barrels all across itself in one gargantuan heave.

And the reef seems to rise up to meet the immense, falling wave edge. A wave from hell.

And then Alex's breath catches in his throat...

*Someone is out there.* Paddling over a wave, barely making it outside.

Alex snatches up Ben's old binoculars from the table, muttering a plea as he raises them, but... knowing.

ALEX

No, please, no, don't be...

BINOCULAR VIEW

It's Chris all right, on the board he sold to Ben, the yin-yang board.

Alex frozen, wracked with fear as Chris paddles over the last and biggest wave of the set.

EXT. RIVER MOUTH - DAY

Alex paddles into the river, the current sweeping him seaward among the debris washed down by the rains...

EXT. CHANNEL - SAME

Alex paddling toward the distant figure of Chris and as another set looms he has a perfect view of what happens when really big

waves hit the Zeros reef... it's a barrel like no other, a barrel into which a Mack truck could fit with room to spare... a suicide wave, roaring like a living beast.

Chris stroking for the last wave of the set... Alex watching in terror as... Chris is caught in the massive lip and is almost sucked over the falls, but the wave passes him by...

Alex re-doubles his paddling speed...

A MINUTE LATER

Chris sitting his board in a lull as Alex paddles up to him from behind. Chris not needing to turn around to know Alex is there.

CHRIS

Swell's still on the rise. Hasn't peaked.

ALEX

We can just leave, get out of here...

CHRIS

I sat in the channel for an hour and watched. The last wave of each set... the big ones... they... might be make-able.

A wave dumps on the reef... onto those razor spines. Make-able? Christ.

ALEX

There are other waves to ride on this planet, Chris. Let's go find them.

CHRIS

Too late for that, Alex. This is the one. A special wave. The one I need.

ALEX

Let's go on in, Chris... figure where we're going next. The Endless Su-

CHRIS

-You said you were going home.

ALEX

I said a lot of things.

A set looms. Bigger. The swell *is* on the rise. And they're on the verge of getting caught inside.

ALEX

We got to get outside, Chris.

Chris makes no move to the outside. Just sits there as the set bears down on them. Alex desperately wanting to paddle for the horizon. Looks from Chris to the lead swell. Chris smiles, not looking at Alex but knowing what he's thinking.

CHRIS

Go ahead, brother. Stroke for the outside.

Alex stays put, hangs in there with Chris. Chris poised to launch himself as the wave looms.

CHRIS

-What about Diana? She coming with us?

ALEX

...The truth is...  
(hesitates)  
...she's with someone else. She wasn't loyal to either of us.

Chris closes his eyes, grimaces, saddened by this. He looks at Alex for the first time.

CHRIS

I'm sorry, Alex...

Alex at first can't hold his eyes, but then does.

ALEX

Just you and me now...

Chris grimaces, shakes his head, clearing it...

CHRIS

Okay... outside. Get out of here.

EXT. ON SHORE - SAME



Ben and Dred mounting the stairs to Ben's porch. Ben looks seaward and the shock is physical, a shudder.

WHAT BEN SEES

Watery mountains advancing, Alex and Chris paddling for the outside... make it over the next wave, which heaves with a roar that shakes the porch. And the next wave is bigger...

...but... Alex crosses Chris's wake... heading deeper into the pit.

EXT. BEN'S PORCH - SAME

Ben looking through his binoculars.

BEN

What the fuck, Alex?!

The two paddling for all they're worth, Chris for the shoulder, Alex angling deeper. Chris sees where Alex is going.

CHRIS

Alex! This way! The shoulder!

Alex stroking toward the last wave, the biggest. The beast is really sucking up now, starting to go concave. Alex stops paddling, looks back at Chris, safely out on the shoulder. The last wave is towering behind Alex. The two friends' eyes meet. Alex smiles, serene but sad. Launches himself over the brink.

Chris grimaces, shuts his eyes tight.

BEN'S VIEW FROM SHORE

Alex freefalling down the wave face... he recovers and he is tearing across that lunatic wall...

Ben gripping the porch post and he's vibrating with the tension.

CHRIS

sitting outside looking down at his board. A low chant...

CHRIS

You can do it... You can do it... You...

Alex tearing across that wall as it's about to cover him, but there's a hint of a shoulder ahead...

Ben is literally climbing the porch post and now there is an edge of excitement mixed with the unbearable tension.

Alex is now gone inside that wave but then the nose of his board reappears and the shoulder ahead is holding up.

BEN

He's gonna make it He's gonna make it  
HE'S GONNA FUCKING MAKE IT!

Dred, watching by Ben, shakes his head and looks away.

And the wave mutates, dumping all across itself, and Alex is gone, buried... the wave exploding on those upraised reef teeth.

Ben sits down slowly, staring at nothing, saying nothing.

Chris sitting his board outside staring down and with the lull that followed the last wave it's dead quiet.

EXT. BEN'S PORCH - DUSK

Chris, Ben and Dred trudge up the stairs to the porch. The three share from a large water bottle. They sit and are silent for a while. A profound sadness hangs.

BEN

Anything coming in over that reef  
gets caught in the side shore  
rip, then the river current'll  
take it out to sea... Right, Dred?

Dred nods... another silence.

BEN (CONT'D)

I'm not sure we'd want to find  
him... that reef... dammit, I'm glad  
we didn't find him.

Another silence... then a canine whine from out on the sand below.

EXT. PORCH - SAME

Ben's dog mounts the stairs to the porch... bare feet behind him...

Chris looks to the head of the porch stairs... to Ben's dog standing there... and then appearing out of the darkness behind the animal... Alex.

Alex standing there in the half-light looking back at Chris. He's naked. And uninjured, apart from the stitches on his chest.

Chris staring... yes, like he's seeing a ghost.

FROM BEHIND ALEX

Not a mark on Alex's back, buttocks or legs.

Ben and Dred have their backs to Alex. Seeing the look on Chris's face, they turn.

Alex steps forward into the light. He seems... pale... he gingerly sits down on a vacant chair... silence... Alex breaks the quiet and his voice is hushed and delicate...

ALEX

Lost my trunks... gnarly wipeout, boys...

Alex stops here. Something has distracted him, although there has not been a sound other than his own voice and no movement at all in the room. He nods, as if whatever it was, has passed.

Chris, Ben and Dred staring at Alex... not moving, not breathing. Alex's eyes on Chris, they haven't left him yet.

ALEX

You did that... at Puerto... you... faked it... because of Diana...

CHRIS

Was the only way you two could be together... I love you two... only people that matter. I fucked it all up. It's you she loves.

Alex shakes his head, grimaces at some inner pain.

ALEX

You think you know things but you don't.

CHRIS

Sent you the postcard. Mailed it  
a couple days after... so you'd know...

ALEX

It got lost in the mail...

CHRIS

Give you a... a choice.

ALEX

(to himself)

I wouldn't have come anyway...

Chris looks at the welts on Alex's stomach: Wanda's marks of  
passion, Chris knowing what they imply. He smiles in forgiveness.

ALEX

(shame/agonny)

I betrayed you... in every way I  
could... Chris... I... I was always so  
jealous of you... for everything...

CHRIS

You're my brother, Alex... and that's  
that... forget the rest...

ALEX

Promise me something...

(Chris nods)

Call Diana... Promise...

CHRIS

...Okay, but-

ALEX

-Promise.

CHRIS

I promise.

ALEX

Say it.

CHRIS

I'll call Diana.

Alex smiles. Closes his eyes, listening to the boom of the waves breaking on the Zeros reef...

ALEX

No sound... like that... on earth...

That distraction again, more pronounced. It passes more slowly.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...I want... have to tell you about...  
that wave... something happened...

Alex stops again, but now he's getting drowsy. Frowns, impatient.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Wait... wait... I got to tell my  
heart to beat...

Dred staring at Alex as if he knows what's coming. He looks away.

Alex's eyes flutter as he directs his mind inward, telling his heart to beat. And we hear it, a single lub-dub, in synch with the far off boom of a wave breaking on the Zero's reef...

And Alex's's wounds open up, dozens of bone deep razor slices crisscrossing the length of his body and all down his arms and legs and his back and his face too... his pallor is instantly covered by a curtain of blood.

From Chris's throat comes a cry like a small wounded animal and he can't choke back the horror.

Alex sorrowful for how he looks, subjecting his friends to it.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...I know... I'm sorry... but if I don't  
let my heart beat... I get light-headed...  
hand me that water there Dred, please...

Dred hands him the water bottle. Alex pours it over himself and the blood quickly washes away. And the razor slices are invisible, as before. Alex paler. Blood pooling on the floor.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...The reef tiger got me good.

Ben staring down, his head in his hands...

Chris looking from Ben to Dred, eyes asking for them to help Alex... do something... their silence and expressions saying there is nothing to be done... They quietly leave. Just Alex and Chris now.

ALEX

Got to tell you... about that wave... you were right... it was special... but it was me who needed it...

Chris's mind racing with denial...

CHRIS

There are other waves to ride. We can... we got to go find them. We-

ALEX

-Something happened... that moment I had in there... I became the energy of the wave.

CHRIS

We can just go... nothing stopping us.

With his remaining strength Alex grabs Chris's wrist. Shakes his head urgently for Chris to be silent...

ALEX

Listen... I'm... there... right now...  
...in that moment... because...

Alex pulls Chris close. Chris leans in, trembling.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...that moment is... *forever*.

Chris waiting for Alex to continue, to say something else, anything. But Alex is gone... Chris not... accepting... this...

CHRIS

Ben! Dred! Come in here! Sew him up! FIX HIM! BEN!... DRED!... BEN!

EXT. ZEROS SURF CAMP, THE REEF -- NIGHT - TIME LAPSE

Chris's screams for Ben and Dred to come fade as a blurry maze of stars streak over the horizon, and it seems like another world,

beautiful but so strange and disquieting. Then first light comes and the sun cracks the sea horizon and rises in a rush.

EXT. ALEX'S CAMPSITE - DAWN

Chris sitting by Alex's rig with the unfinished sailboat, *The Endless Summer Express*, lying forlorn on its side nearby, knocked over by the storm winds. Chris lost, deeply. He looks up..

Kiko standing there, holding a large paper bag.

KIKO

Dis fo' you.

Kiko squats and dumps out the contents of the bag: Stacks of U.S. currency. Seth's "get lost" money, along with a U.S. passport.

Chris looks away, not caring about the money. Not caring about anything..

KIKO (CONT'D)

It okay, Christophah. Mistuh Alex,  
he a happy mon now.

Kiko smiling with a serenity like Chris himself often did. He takes something from his back pocket, gives it to Chris.

The lost postcard. The perfect waves, the anchored sailboat, the high island. *Venga a Paraiso*. Chris looking at the card... and it... comes alive... becomes a real place..

The Dream... Chris's Dream... is real... in every detail.

"Mentawi Islands, Indian Ocean, New Years Day, 2000"

EXT. ISLAND LAGOON - DAY

A diver rises to the surface of the lagoon right under the stern of the sailboat. The name on the snow white transom is *The Endless Summer Express*, beautifully finished now. The diver is Diana. She doffs her mask and smiles at someone on deck. Kiko, with a surfboard. Older now, a fine young man. Kiko jumps overboard, paddling his board. Diana looks off.

WHAT DIANA SEES

A surfer up and riding. It's Chris. The wave is just head-high and completely non-threatening... but it's perfect, just like in the postcard...

...and then the wave envelopes us in its sparkling energy.

WAVE INTERIOR

All shimmering and abstract but then we are pulling back and the surfer in there is not Chris anymore.

It's Alex. Alex leaning forward in a speed crouch and as we pull back further and the view opens up, the immensity of the wave's interior tells us that we are back with him on that last wave.

...still more immense now and Alex comes out of his crouch, stands erect and his body relaxes, arms spread, head lolling back as if in acceptance of a great gift...

...time distends and this space Alex inhabits is not like a wave anymore, it's a shimmering emerald cathedral... and *now* is the moment he spoke of... and he was right... it is *forever*.

FADE TO BLACK

"Ode to Joy" cuts in and the music is so thunderous and clear and uplifting it could break your heart.

Send the link to the screenplay or hardcopy to whomever you think might be interested. As a writer I like to be read.