

Hey Flipper

By
Chuck Stewart
and
James Cabral

3722 Bagley Ave. #19
Los Angeles, CA 90034
310-838-6247

All Rights Reserved.
May, 2006

NOTE: Surfing shots add approximately 15 minutes
of time to the overall running time of this script.

EXT. LAGUNA BEACH -- MORNING

It is very early morning at Laguna Beach California with the sun just ready to break the horizon. A few surfers are out on this perfect summer day.

DERRICK, CHAD, and JERRY, sit on their boards waiting for a wave. All three boys are eighteen years of age and will be graduating high school in a few days.

Derrick, with his All American looks and blonde hair, catches a wave very expertly.

Chad and Jerry float on their boards near each other watching Derrick. They glance back for the next wave.

Chad begins to paddle.

CHAD

It's mine!

Chad catches the wave and hot-dogs with a few tricks. He takes it all the way into shore and walks up to the sand.

Chad is used to being the center of attention and wears much brighter and colorful trunks than the other surfers.

Derrick paddles back out to sea.

Jerry looks around for the next wave. He paddles fast. Just as it looks like he is catching the crest, he falls off in a sea of foam. He's rolled into shore. That is how it is for Jerry, always trying but never quite getting it.

Jerry walks up the sand and stands next to Chad. They look out to sea.

A group of dolphins surround Derrick. One dolphin pokes its head high out of the water to stare at Derrick. There is a long stare. The dolphin is unusual in that it has a BLEACHED SPLOTCH on its face. After a moment of time, the dolphin sinks back into the water and rolls on its back presenting its belly. Derrick reaches out and strokes the dolphin's skin.

JERRY

I don't see Derrick?

CHAD

(pointing out to sea)
He's out playing with the Dolphins again.

Chad cups his hands and yells out to Derrick.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hey Flipper. You pervert.

MARGARET, Derrick's frumpy half Asian girlfriend, walks up to Chad and Jerry. She looks at her watch.

MARGARET
Where's Derrick?

The guys point out to sea.

JERRY
Still out.

MARGARET
We've got to go or we'll be late to first period.

Margaret looks out and waves toward Derrick.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Is he playing with the dolphins again?
He's the only person I know who can do that.

Margaret glances out to Derrick and waves again; beckoning him in.

A Boy And Girl Couple with great bodies and small swimsuits walk by.

CHAD
Whoa. Take a look at that. Betcha a screamer. I like it when they scream.

Jerry turns his head and nods. He then turns back to watch Derrick.

Derrick paddles strongly and catches the next wave in. Smooth as always, he expertly rides the wave.

JERRY
He's so good.

As Derrick walks out of the ocean carrying his surfboard, Margaret runs up to him and gives him a kiss.

DERRICK
Shit, it's that late.

They all run up the beach and load their surfboards onto the top rack of Derrick's PT Cruiser. Nudity is not a problem with these kids and they change out of their suits in public. Margaret chats about school and nothing in particular. The boys ignore her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR LOCKERS -- LATER

Busy high school hallway with students opening and closing lockers and talking loudly.

INSERT: BANNER

BANNER across hallway says "Congratulations Graduates."

Derrick stands in front of his open locker putting in books. Margaret hangs onto Derrick. Jerry and Chad walk up.

CHAD

What's up?

MARGARET

Derrick's been accepted.

CHAD

Cool. How soon?

Derrick turns around with a letter in his hand. Jerry reaches for the letter and takes it to look over.

DERRICK

Next Fall. I'm off to Michigan State for the ROTC program.

Margaret butts in.

MARGARET

WE are going to Michigan State.

CHAD

Cool. You can get some milk-fed booty up there.

MARGARET

You're terrible. He's with me.

She squeezes Derrick's arm. He grimaces.

Jerry looks up from the letter, looks Derrick directly in his eyes, and sadly hands him back the letter.

JERRY

(said with sincerity)
That's great. I'm sure you'll do well there.

Beat.

DERRICK

Jerry, don't worry. I'll be back every holiday. We can go surfing then. Hell, I'll need it. Michigan.
(MORE)

DERRICK (CONT'D)
Winters. You do the math. I'll
need to catch up on my surf and ray
quota.

CHAD
... and babes.

Margaret pushes Chad away.

MARGARET
WE are going away where YOU can't
corrupt Derrick.

CHAD
Nothing to worry about, I'm off to
UC San Diego. Gotta stay near the
beach man...

Some good-looking blonde male and female Cheerleaders walk
by. Chad turns to check out the sight.

CHAD (CONT'D)
... and the California blondes.

MARGARET
(speaking to Chad)
Sex, sex, sex. That's all you ever
think about!

Derrick closes his locker and the kids walk down the hallway.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL LUNCH AREA -- CONTINUOUS

The group walks to the lunch area and sit at a table. They
pull out their lunches. The lunch area is loud and messy
with many students milling around.

Margaret stares at Jerry. He becomes uncomfortable.

JERRY
What?

Margaret stares even more annoyingly.

JERRY (CONT'D)
I hate when you do that.

MARGARET
You know.

Jerry looks around.

JERRY
What?

They all look at Jerry knowingly.

DERRICK

Did you apply?

Derrick, Margaret and Chad stare Jerry down. Jerry looks away.

JERRY

I just don't see the point.

MARGARET

Oh no, not again. Here it comes. Jerry the loser. My father is distant and boring. My mother is a fanatic. There's no purpose to life and I can't get my act together. Give it a break. In a few months, we'll probably never see each other again what with Chad off to San Diego, Derrick and me off to Michigan and you... well, where ever.

A few students walk by and give Derrick high-five slaps on the hand.

JERRY

See, see. That's what I mean. Derrick has it all - captain of the basketball team, class president, a girlfriend and now college paid for. Everyone likes him. He has a future.

Margaret looks at Derrick and Chad and upturns her hands.

MARGARET

Am I good or what?

A Male Student walks by with shirts off holding the hand of his Beautiful Girlfriend. in short-shorts. Chad turns his head to watch the couple walk by. Chad is not listening to Margaret.

CHAD

Bitchin'

DERRICK

(to Jerry)
So, did you apply like I asked?

JERRY

Yes.

DERRICK

And?

JERRY

Haven't heard back.

DERRICK

I'm sure you'll get in. You are a good student.

JERRY

Not like you.

DERRICK

Actually, better. I came to you for help with math and science. I hate how you keep putting yourself down.

Chad jumps in.

CHAD

Man, without you, I'll never have gotten through algebra.

Margaret looks exasperated.

MARGARET

Now we do the "build Jerry up" routine.

Derrick is annoyed by Margaret.

DERRICK

Margaret, go get us Cokes from the machine over there.

Margaret gives a look of irritation.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

PLEASE.

She puts out her hand and Derrick gives her some money. She gets up and walks away. Chad throws a soda straw at Derrick. He turns around.

CHAD

Man, I don't see what you see in her. She can be a bitch.

DERRICK

I've been thinking. After this summer, it could be the last time the three of us are together. I don't want it to happen, but life is pulling us apart... So, I have an idea. How about if we load up the car and drive north... hitting some of the beaches we always wanted to surf?

JERRY

A road trip?

CHAD
(chanting)
Road trip. Road trip. Road trip.

JERRY
Really??

The guys laugh. Margaret walks back with two Cokes and sits down.

MARGARET
What did I miss?

CHAD
We're going on a road trip...
surfing...
(beat)
... AND without you.

Margaret scowls.

DERRICK
We're just thinking about one more
time together. You know, a guy thing.

MARGARET
And leave me behind for the whole
summer. No way.

DERRICK
Just a week. Up and back.

MARGARET
I trust you, but not dickhead here...
(she points at Chad)
... Or Mr. Indecisive
(tossing her head
toward Jerry)
... I'm going and that's that.

Silence.

Derrick looks to the guys for approval.

DERRICK
It's just a week.

CHAD
Hell no. She'll ruin everything.
She always does, anyway.

DERRICK
Come on fella's, she'll stay out of
the way... right Margaret.

MARGARET

We could use my Dad's van. It's bigger than Derrick's Cruiser. And if we go as far north as Carmel, I have relatives we could stay with. That'll save money.

Silence.

CHAD

What's the plan?

DERRICK

How about after graduation?

JERRY

My folks are going for a vacation that week and want me to go then.

DERRICK

No, I mean RIGHT after the graduation ceremony... that afternoon. We'll be back by the next week.

MARGARET, CHAD

Alright.

Margaret and Chad look at each other annoyed.

JERRY

I'll have to check with Mom and Dad.

BELL RINGS for next period. They get up and leave.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JERRY'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Jerry's home is a lower-middle class house showing signs of neglect. Even though this is Laguna Beach, Jerry's family is poor compared to the community.

BOB, Jerry's father, sits holding a newspaper in front of TV in the living room. He is a defeated, over weight 40-year-old who is fast asleep. JILLIAN, Jerry's mother, sits in an adjacent Lazy-boy chair doing some crochet. She is uptight and uses way too much hairspray on her ratted hair. Jerry's 13-year-old brother, KEN, lies on the floor in front of the TV, watching.

Jerry walks into the room.

JERRY

Has Derrick arrived?

Only his Mother turns her head.

JILLIAN
Shhhh. Not so loud. Your father's
sleeping.

JERRY
(in a lower voice)
Is he here?

JILLIAN
No... are you going out?

JERRY
Just for a short time.

JILLIAN
Look here. I'm almost done.

Jerry's Mother holds up her crochet that says, "Jesus loves
you."

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Nice, isn't it.

Jerry looks at the wall behind her that contain a large
display of Madonna's, Jesus, and other religious artifacts.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)
Oh, you got some mail. I put it on
your bed.

INT. JERRY'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jerry walks to his room, throws down his backpack, sits on
his bed and rips open the letter.

INSERT: LETTER

"Dear Jerry Orbach,

We are pleased to accept you into the Fall class of University
of San Diego..."

Jerry breathes deeply, glances again at the letter, and tosses
it aside.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

JERRY
Come in.

Jerry's Father walks in. Jerry places some books on top of
the acceptance letter to hide it from his father.

BOB
Son, your mother says you are going
out again tonight.

JERRY

Just for an hour or so.

Jerry's Father eyes him up and down.

BOB

I know you've done better in school this year, and it is just a few days to graduation, but your mother and I think you spend too much time away from home.

JERRY

Dad, I mean, finals are over, we just have practice tomorrow. There's nothing left of school.

BOB

Irregardless, you're spending too much time with Derrick.

Jerry cringes when he hears his father use the incorrect word "irregardless."

JERRY

Dad, the word is "regardless."
There's no such word as
"irregardless."

BOB

That's what I mean. Derrick fills your head with thoughts that you are better than you are... that you are too good for this family.

JERRY

Derrick's my best friend. He's much better than you'll ever be. Why, he has been accepted into ROTC at Michigan. He's going places.

BOB

Not with you he's not. You'll be lucky to get a job as good as I've got.

Jerry crosses his arms with a huff.

BOB (CONT'D)

No, you are staying home tonight and helping your brother memorize his Bible sayings for this Sunday.

Silence.

Jerry's Father walks out leaving the door open. Jerry reaches for the door and SLAMS it shut.

Jerry picks up his phone and dials Derrick.

JERRY

Derrick? Yeah, it's me. I'm going...
Yeah, I've got to get out of here.
My folks are driving me nuts... Right
after graduation? You've got it.
Meet behind the house in the
alleyway... I'll have my board and
everything packed... No, thank you...
I can't wait.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD -- DAY

Hundreds of chairs are set up on the football field in front of a temporary stage. Typical graduation with rows of students dressed in caps and gowns in the front rows, parents behind and a small contingency of students and teachers on the stage. Most of the ceremony is over. Derrick is giving the final speech at the podium.

DERRICK

... and to our class, I say goodbye
dear friends and hello to our future.

The audience claps enthusiastically.

In the student row, Jerry is seated between Chad and Margaret - acting as a neutral zone between his two friends. Chad gets on his CELL PHONE, turns and engages in a private conversation. Jerry and Margaret are annoyed that Chad is on the phone.

The band begins the final song, the student stand up, throw their caps into the air, and disassemble blending with the mobs of parents.

Derrick shakes a few hands, jumps off the stage to his parents giving a few high-fives along the way. Margaret takes Derrick's hand and drags him over to her parents- DR. HOWARD and MRS. HOWARD. Margaret's parents are white even though Margaret looks more Asian than American.

Dr. Howard shakes Derrick's hand.

DR. HOWARD

That was an excellent speech Derrick.
You're a fine young man. Margaret's
told us how you have been accepted
into ROTC at Michigan State. They
will be lucky to have a student as
good as you.

Mrs. Howard shakes Derrick's hand.

MRS. HOWARD

We are so proud of the both of you.

Margaret sees that it is the perfect time to make a request from her parents.

MARGARET

Dad, we would like to use the van for a trip.

DR. HOWARD

Derrick and you?

MARGARET

Jerry and Chad too.

Derrick jumps in before Margaret's Father can say no.

DERRICK

It's just for a few days. Up to Carmel... surfing along the way. We'll be careful, sir.

MARGARET

We can stay with Aunt Helen in Carmel.

Margaret's Father turns to the mother who nods approvingly.

DR. HOWARD

I guess so. As long as only you or Derrick do the driving. When do you want it?

MARGARET

Actually today... this afternoon.

Margaret's Mother tugs on the Father's arm.

MRS. HOWARD

But honey, aren't we moving some plants next week?

MARGARET

We'll be back before then... and we'll help you load the van.

DERRICK

I'm sure the guys won't mind pitching in to move the plants. It'll go faster that way.

The parents look at each other in agreement. Mrs. Howard takes Derrick's and Margaret's hands.

MRS. HOWARD

It will be a good graduation gift.
(MORE)

MRS. HOWARD (CONT'D)
We'll also give you money toward
gas.

DERRICK, MARGARET
Alright!

Chad and Jerry walk up from the crowd. Margaret turns to them and speaks excitedly.

MARGARET
We got the van.

Margaret turns to her parents to introduce Chad and Jerry.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
This is Jerry... and this is Chad.

MRS. HOWARD
We've met before boys.
Congratulations.

DR. HOWARD
Yes, congratulations.

MRS. HOWARD
Are the two of you going to college?

CHAD
Yes Mam'. I've been accepted to UC
San Diego.

DR. HOWARD
Excellent school. What major?

CHAD
Probably pre-med and then transfer
to USC.

Margaret's parents look impressed.

DR. HOWARD
Pre-med! Good choice. I got my
medical degree from USC. Good school.

MRS. HOWARD
And you Jerry, what are your plans?

JERRY
Ahh... I haven't decided.

Some classmates come barreling over and shake Derrick's hand. A few of the girls give Margaret hugs.

DR. HOWARD
Honey, we'll meet you at home. I'll
have the van filled with gas.

Dr. Howard turns to his daughter to hand her some money.

MARGARET

Thanks Dad! We won't be long.

Derrick turns to the guys.

DERRICK

We got the van. Everything OK with you guys?

CHAD

Cool.

JERRY

All set.

DERRICK

I'll ride back with Margaret and get the van. Chad, we'll pick you up first, then Jerry.

CHAD

Cool.

Margaret puts her arm through Derrick's arm as they walk away.

Jerry pulls Derrick aside and speaks in a low tone.

JERRY

Remember, in the back alley.

DERRICK

Not a problem.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SEAL BEACH PARKING LOT -- SUNRISE

Another quiet morning at the beach. Seal Beach is along city streets and buildings. The van is parked in a parking lot along the sand and near the pier. A park bench and table are nearby.

The door to the van slides open. Chad and Jerry climb out, stretch, reach back for the food box and pull it out onto the ground. They begin rummaging through the box for something to eat.

Through the open door, Derrick and Margaret are seen partially asleep in one sleeping bag on the floor of the van.

DERRICK

(said sleepily)

Close the door, man. It's cold.

Jerry reaches over to push the door shut. Chad stops him.

CHAD

Leave it open. Derrick needs to get up.

Chad reaches into the van to shake Derrick.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Come on man, time to get your ass out of bed. Waves are a'waitin. We didn't come all this way for you to dick 'round the whole trip.

DERRICK

Awwaak.

Derrick pulls the top of the sleeping bag over his and Margaret's head.

Jerry pulls some granola bars out of the food box and tosses one to Chad.

JERRY

I don't know if I ever told you, but I like early morning best... I mean, it's quiet.. calm. I never understood those kids at school who had to sleep the whole morning away.

CHAD

Yeah, best of all, the waves are clean with no wind.

Chad walks over to the side of the van and slaps it a few times.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hey assholes, get up and out of the van. We're heading off.

Chad and Jerry grab their boards and take to the ocean. The weather and water are luke warm and they chose not to wear their wetsuits.

EXT. SEAL BEACH WATER -- CONTINUOUS

Waves are decent size and breaking long.

MONTAGE

1. Chad and Jerry ride the waves.
2. Chad hotdogs on his board.
3. Jerry is good but cautious.

4. The waves create an eternal rhythm.

5. Sunlight on the water surface sparkles with new day hope.

EXT. SEAL BEACH WATER -- LATER

Derrick comes paddling out to the guys. He is wearing his wetsuit.

Jerry spots Derrick.

JERRY
It's breaking good.

Jerry and Chad look cold; their arms crossed and shivering.

DERRICK
You guys should have worn your suits.

CHAD
It's summer man. Live like you mean it. Don't be a fucking pussy.

Just then Chad takes off paddling hard to try and catch a wave.

Jerry and Derrick are left alone floating on their boards. Dolphins begin to surround them. Jerry calls to Derrick.

JERRY
Hey Flipper. Look at them all.

Derrick and Jerry look around. A few get very close to Derrick. One pokes its head up and stares at Derrick.

JERRY (CONT'D)
What is it about you? Everywhere you go, you attract dolphins.

DERRICK
Maybe they are related to the ones in Laguna?

A few of the dolphins swim under their boards, just below their feet.

JERRY
Woo, that gives me the creeps when they do that.

DERRICK
I think it's my wetsuit that attracts them.

JERRY

Last week you weren't wearing one...
and one of them let you pet it.
I've never heard of a wild dolphin
allowing anyone to touch it.

DERRICK

Yea, I guess you're right. I really
don't know.

Chad comes up and the dolphins disappear.

CHAD

Are you guys going to talk all day
or what? Where's the ridin'

JERRY

You chased the dolphins away.

CHAD

Again?

Chad turns to Derrick.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Flipper here has some perverted
attraction to them. Maybe he fingers
them.

JERRY

Eew.

CHAD

Hey, they've got to be better than
his bitch.

DERRICK

Come on, let up on Margaret she's
ok... just surf.

The guys take off.

MONTAGE

1. Derrick surfs perfectly.
2. Chad hot dogs on the board.
3. Jerry is stiff and occasionally falls off his board.

EXT. SEAL BEACH TABLE -- LATER

An hour later, the guys come in from the ocean to the beach
picnic table near the van. Margaret sits at a table reading
with a bag of munchies next to her. Margaret notices Derrick.

MARGARET

I've been reading all about the University of Michigan. I think I'll really dig their Theater Arts Department.

She hands the brochure to Derrick. Chad looks around the food box and is disappointed.

CHAD

I'm hungry. I'm going to walk into town and get some donuts. Anyone want one?

DERRICK, JERRY

Sure.

MARGARET

I've eaten.

CHAD

I'll be right back.

Chad throws a towel over his shoulders and walks past the van to the row of stores and buildings fronting the beach.

JERRY

So, the two of you are really going to Michigan.

Jerry and Derrick begin to change clothes.

DERRICK

To be honest, I really hate the idea. I don't want to leave Southern California. I was born here and have only been in snow once... and that was enough. But ROTC is the only way I can afford school.

JERRY

You could stay here and go to JC. They're cheap.

DERRICK

No, it's got to be a real school; one I can use later in life for a good living.

MARGARET

Who can afford a house in Southern Cal... with only an AA degree. And kids cost a bunch. We have plans and it means getting a good education.

Derrick is not comfortable about the conversation about kids.

JERRY

I'm sure if you stayed here,
everything will work out. I mean,
everything always goes your way
Derrick. You've always been blessed.

DERRICK

I've decided for ROTC.

JERRY

Aren't you worried about going to
war; getting killed?

DERRICK

I don't consider it.

MARGARET

Derrick will be an officer; probably
medical. He will always be safe and
then we will be set for life.

Derrick looks inside the food box, picks up something, and
immediately throws it back in disgust.

DERRICK

Where's Chad?

They look around and see Chad across the street talking to a
BLONDE SURFER who is athletic and in his late 30s.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

Let's pack up and pick him up. I
want to hit the road before there is
too much traffic getting out of the
city.

Margaret moves into the van.

JERRY

OK.

Jerry gets into the van. They start up the engine and pull
over to where Chad is standing.

EXT. SEAL BEACH SIDEWALK -- MOMENTS LATER

A box of donuts sits on the ground next to Chad's feet. The
Blonde Surfer hands Chad a small plastic bag. The van pulls
up and the door slides open.

Chad is caught off guard and is startled. The Blond Surfer
walks away.

DERRICK, JERRY

Come on. Jump in. We're hitting
the road.

Chad hurriedly stuffs the plastic bag into his swimsuit acting suspiciously. He hesitates and then picks up the donuts.

CHAD

I... uh... uh, here are the donuts.

Chad glances back for the Blonde Surfer but he is nowhere to be seen. He climbs into the van.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hope you like apple fritters.

Margaret looks around trying to spy the Blonde Surfer.

MARGARET

Who was that? He's real cute.

Chad ignore Margaret.

DERRICK

To Ventura it is!

EXT. PCH -- LATER

The van drives up PCH. The kids are listening and grooving to music, looking at the highway, traffic, hills and ocean.

EXT. VENTURA BEACH -- LATER

The van pulls into Ventura State Beach. The parking lot is virtually empty. They park near the lifeguard tower.

Only a few very young children play along the edge of the water. No one else is in the water; which is odd for it being a hot summer day. The lifeguard tower has a NO-SURF flag posted.

Derrick, Margaret, Chad, and Jerry survey the area and are perplexed. They climb out of the van and scan the horizon. The surf is very small and uninviting.

DERRICK

Where is everyone?

MARGARET

Eww... What's that smell?

The air smells like rotten eggs.

JERRY

Eew. Rotten Eggs.

CHAD

This sucks.

Derrick leads the way to the lifeguard tower with Jerry and Chad in tow.

Derrick calls up to the LIFEGUARD who has rugged good looks.

DERRICK

What's up? Why is no one in the water?

LIFEGUARD

Red tide. You can smell it. It's not dangerous, but you shouldn't go in the water.

CHAD

Bummer. I always heard the surfing was good here.

LIFEGUARD

Which way are you guys headed?

DERRICK

Carmel.

LIFEGUARD

Last I heard, the red tide extends just a few more miles north. It's OK above Santa Barbara.

The guys scan the horizon.

JERRY

Might as well continue up to Refugio.

CHAD

Refugio?

JERRY

Derrick and I talked about it. It's probably the best beach campground in California. It has a lagoon, a cove and palm trees along the water. I've always fantasized that it was Hawaii. My family has camped there many times. Guys surf near the cliff jutting out into the cove.

DERRICK

Yea, it's about 30 miles north of Santa Barbara... so we should be above the red tide.

They walk back to the van. Margaret looks at them quizzically. Derrick throws his towel to her.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

Red tide. We're going drive above Santa Barbara.

MARGARET

Red tide?

JERRY

Red tide is caused by a bloom of the toxic alga *Alexandrium fundyense*. Millions of microscopic plants grow in every drop of seawater. They turn the water reddish in color and give off a nauseating smell. The lack of oxygen kills small fish whose rotting bodies add to the smell. In general it is not toxic to humans but can cause itching and rash. It is a naturally occurring phenomenon that lasts for a few days each year.

Margaret, Derrick, and Chad look dumbfounded, surprised and amused.

Chad salutes Jerry.

CHAD

Ok, Mr. Wizard.

Jerry is embarrassed.

DERRICK

That's why we all cheated off you through school.

MARGARET

Ugh. Let's go. The smell's awful.

They all climb into the van and drive off.

EXT. PCH -- CONTINUOUS

Van continues its drive up PCH.

INT. VAN -- LATER

Derrick is driving. No music is playing. They all look hot and tired.

MARGARET

I'm hungry.

Everyone ignores her.

Through the van window is seen the large SANTA CLAUS atop the restaurant roof of SANTA'S CANDY KITCHEN in Carpenteria.

INSERT: ROAD SIGN

The road sign says "SANTA CLAUS LANE."

JERRY

Let's stop.

DERRICK, CHAD

It looks dorky, like shit.

JERRY

It's fun. My family always stops here.

MARGARET

I want to eat.

Jerry has always enjoyed the tacky restaurant stop and builds upon Margaret's whine.

JERRY

Yeah, they have hamburgers and good food. Hungry, aren't you?

DERRICK

Uh, OK.

CHAD

If we must.

EXT. SANTA CLAUSE LANE PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

Derrick pulls the van into the parking lot. They all climb out. The parking lot is almost full with vans and RVs. A few families are walking to and fro.

There are picnic tables in front of the building near the entrance. Only one table is left open in front of the large picture window.

Jerry is excited and pulls the gang along.

JERRY

Come on, come on.

A good looking Man and Woman in skimpy beach attire walk by holding hands. Chad turns his head to stare.

CHAD

Now, that's a Christmas present.

They all enter SANTA'S CANDY KITCHEN.

INT. SANTA'S CANDY KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Margaret heads straight to the order window. Chad holds back and barks his order to Derrick and Jerry.

CHAD

Just get me a hamburger and fries...
oh and a Coke. I'll be outside
holding down a table.

Chad pulls out his cell phone, places a call, puts it to his ear, walks outside and sits at the only open table.

Derrick moves to Margaret's side.

Jerry takes his time looking at all the kitsch on the shelves. He is fascinated by a FIGURINE of a dolphin with Santa Claus perched on top like he is riding a horse. The name-*Carpenteria*- is stenciled on the base.

Jerry picks one up and walks over to Derrick and Margaret. He shows the figurine to Derrick

JERRY

Hey Flip, look at this.

Jerry hands the figurine to Derrick.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I want one.

MARGARET

That's tacky.

JERRY

No, no, it reminds me of Derrick...
and this trip.

Derrick rolls his eyes and hands it back to Jerry.

DERRICK

Whatever you say, pal.

Jerry feels miffed and walks back to the shelves and places the Figurine back in its place.

After some wait, Derrick, Jerry and Margaret get to the front of the line and place their orders. They move off to the side waiting for pick up.

Margaret looks out the front window toward Chad who is seen chatting wildly on his cell phone. His back is to them and he is hunched over the table. Small plastic bags appear and disappear in front of Chad as he pulls them from his swim suit. It could be mistaken that Chad is sniffing the contents of the bags.

MARGARET

What's Chad doing?

Derrick and Jerry turn their heads toward the window.

They all squint their eyes against the harsh back light.

JERRY
He's just talking.

MARGARET
No, I mean the bags.

DERRICK
I don't see any bags.

MARGARET
Is that coke?

DERRICK
I don't see anything.

MARGARET
I'm sure I saw him sniff one of the bags... he got yesterday... from that Blonde.

JERRY
Chad doesn't do drugs.

ANNOUNCEMENT (O.S.)
Number 23.

DERRICK
That's ours.

Margaret is transfixed looking out the window. Jerry picks up the tray and pays the cashier for the food.

Derrick pulls Margaret along. Jerry turns to Margaret.

JERRY
You have something against Chad, don't you?

They walk out the restaurant/shop without saying another word.

EXT. PICNIC BENCH -- MOMENTS LATER

As they approach, Chad hurriedly gets off the phone and stuffs something down his pants. He wipes his nose. Chad seems unusually happy and hyper. They sit down with their food. Margaret is insolent.

MARGARET
Is that drugs you used?

CHAD
What?

DERRICK, JERRY

Margaret!

MARGARET

I saw you... you have plastic bags
down your pants.

Chad looks at Derrick and Jerry.

DERRICK

Margaret thinks she saw you use coke.

CHAD

Bullshit.

MARGARET

Show me the bags. I don't want to
ride in a car with drugs.

Everything stops.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Show me.

CHAD

This is bullshit.

Margaret reaches for his pants.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hell no pervert!

Chad pushes Margaret off. Derrick moves in to put himself
between Margaret and Chad.

Chad pulls a plastic bag containing LIFESAVERS out of his
pants and throws them on the table.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Have one.

MARGARET

Lifesavers?

CHAD

Lifesavers.

MARGARET

I'm so sorry. But I... who were you
on the phone?

CHAD

Don't' you ever stop?

MARGARET

So, who?

CHAD
None of your business.

MARGARET
Who?

CHAD
My mother. Satisfied bitch? Any more questions?

Chad turns angrily away toward Derrick and Jerry.

Jerry has been quietly eating his hamburger and watching through the altercation.

CHAD (CONT'D)
I told you she shouldn't have come.

Margaret storms away.

Derrick hands food to Chad.

DERRICK
Here. Food will help. We're all grouchy.

Derrick hurries after Margaret. Jerry sits down with Chad.

JERRY
Man, I never doubted you.

CHAD
Her damn hormones. How does Derrick put up with it?

JERRY
Hey, she's his girlfriend... something neither of us have.

CHAD
Who needs them?

Derrick sits next to Margaret a couple of tables away. His arm is over her shoulders. They take a few bites from their food. She occasionally cries then makes a fist that she waves in the air.

The afternoon wind comes up blowing trees and water. Chad and Jerry squint against the blowing sand.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's hit the road and get to Refugio before nightfall. There we can get some distance away from her.

Chad and Jerry stand up and walk over to Derrick and Margaret.

Derrick hugs Margaret. The wind is blowing hard and Margaret keeps holding her hair down. Derrick puts his hand on Chad's shoulder. Things seem to calm down. Chad and Margaret shake hands. They all walk to the van.

EXT. PCH -- LATER

The van winds up PCH through Santa Barbara then to the off ramp at Refugio.

INSERT: ROAD SIGN

Road sign says, "Refugio State Beach."

EXT. REFUGIO BRIDGE -- CONTINUOUS

Jerry is driving and stops under the bridge.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

JERRY

If we park down here, we can walk in without paying. We can stay until 9 PM. Then we'll come back and drive a bit up the canyon to sleep. Cool?

DERRICK, MARGARET, CHAD

(mumbling)

Yeah.

EXT. REFUGIO CAMPGROUND -- MOMENTS LATER

They climb out of the Van carrying a picnic basket and walk along the creek through the campground. Jerry is excited and points out landmarks.

JERRY

I really love this place. My family camped here almost every year when my brother and I were in the Boy Scouts.

They pass the palm trees and head for the sandy beach.

EXT. REFUGIO BEACH AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

Refugio is a very picturesque beach area. To their right is the cove and pinnacle jutting out into the ocean. To their left is endless beach extending all the way to Santa Barbara. Palm trees line the beach giving the feeling of tropical paradise.

DERRICK, CHAD

Wow! This IS like Hawaii.

MARGARET

Cool.

JERRY

Much better than the asphalt strips
along most of the camping in the
southern California beach areas,
huh?

CHAD

Bitchen'

The wind picks up while the last rays of light spread from
the sun.

MARGARET

What's that smell?

They all look around.

CHAD

Oh no... red tide.

JERRY

Red tide?

DERRICK

It doesn't seem so bad.

They look out to the water as the last rays of sun set beneath
the waves. They take the time to take in the view.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

It's too late to drive farther
north... why don't we at least eat
dinner here then back to the van to
sleep. In the morning we'll drive
on to Pismo Beach. Ok?

CHAD

This trip is beginning to suck.

JERRY

It'll be OK.

Margaret throws a blanket down under the ridge to block the
wind, sits down, and spreads out the food.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Chad, may I borrow your cell phone?
I need to call my parents.

Chad throws him the phone and sits down. Derrick also sits
down. Jerry walks away toward a grassy area that has a large
Swing Set.

Derrick, Chad and Margaret begin to eat.

DERRICK

I'm sure the red tide won't extend up to Pismo Beach. I can barely smell it here.

CHAD

Today was pretty much ruined anyway. Let's eat.

They really dig into their food.

Jerry seems to be arguing on the phone. Sometimes he sits in the swing seat, swings a few times, stops, stands up, paces, and repeats. His hands are flying.

DERRICK

Jerry looks very upset. Maybe I should go over to him?

MARGARET

He's a big boy. Let him alone.

DERRICK

He's upset. I can tell, I'm going over.

Derrick stands up and walks toward Jerry leaving Margaret and Chad alone.

EXT. REFUGIO CAMPGROUND -- CONTINUOUS

Jerry hangs up and begins to walk fast into the campground. Derrick yells to Jerry.

DERRICK

Jerry. Jerry. Wait up.

Jerry looks back but walks faster. Derrick runs to catch up. Jerry's face is flushed, almost to crying.

JERRY

I don't want to talk about it.

DERRICK

Come on man. I'm your friend.

JERRY

What's the point? There's nothing you... or I can do. They are so whacked up.

DERRICK

Your Dad?

They stop walking. Jerry kicks a trash can.

JERRY

What has he ever done? Insurance, he sells insurance and he thinks that's a great job. Who the hell is he to tell me how to run my life?

DERRICK

What did he say?

JERRY

I'm so angry at him... and my mother too. They had the nerve to order me home, now. Fuckers. Can you imagine? Now. Why? Because I'm with my "loser" friends. That's what they called you... loser. You're no loser. You're the best thing in my life. I'm the loser.

They sit down on a log near one of the campsites that has a fire burning. Flicks of light cross their faces.

DERRICK

You're no loser. Your parents are, but not you.

JERRY

I just can't do anything right. Oh god. I'm going to end up like them.

Pause.

Derrick grabs Jerry's shoulders.

DERRICK

I know I've said this before, but this time I want you to really listen. You're 18-years-old. You're a man. You can go on your own. You don't need your parents. I've always hated the way they put you down.

JERRY

(tries to squirm away)
But...

DERRICK

No buts. Listen. You are the brightest kid in school. We all know it. You really know it but won't accept it. It is you who always knew the answers to the homework. All of us came to you. It didn't matter if it was math, science, history or whatever, you always knew the answers.

(MORE)

DERRICK (CONT'D)

But, and here is the "but," the last few weeks of every semester, you choked. Something in you prevents you from finishing your classes at the top. So you got B's instead of straight A's. That's all.

Jerry looks away.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

I had to struggle to get good grades. I studied all the time while you seemed to... just know. You have a gift that none of have. I wish I could make you see that.

JERRY

But I always fuck up.

DERRICK

It's your fucking family. If you were to go away to college, I'm sure you would find yourself.

Long pause.

JERRY

I don't know.

They stand and begin to walk back to the picnic area.

Derrick turns to Jerry and looks him in the eye.

DERRICK

I want you to make me a promise... I want you to promise that you will go to college in the Fall. Not the junior college, but away to college so you don't have to live at home... Do you promise?

(pause)

Do you promise?

JERRY

(said softly)

Yes... But you must come back to visit.

DERRICK

Every holiday and summers.

EXT. REFUGIO BEACH AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

Derrick and Jerry arrive back to the picnic blanket. Chad and Margaret are nowhere to be seen.

Jerry looks out toward the ocean. The water sparkles with a thousand lights when the waves crash onto the shore.

Jerry points to the ocean.

JERRY

Cool. Derrick. Look. The red tide makes the water sparkle. I've only read about this. Wow.

Derrick looks out.

Two black silhouettes are seen in the dark.

DERRICK

Is that Chad and Margaret?

Jerry squints to see.

Chad and Margaret, in dark silhouettes, run along the edge of the water, kicking sand and water towards each other. Each time, a firework of sparkles occurs.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

Cool. Let's go down.

EXT. REFUGIO WATER'S EDGE -- CONTINUOUS

Derrick and Jerry run to the water's edge. Just as they get there, Margaret trips and falls into Chad's arms. They both fall, laughing all the way. Margaret takes a handful of water and sand and throws it toward Derrick. It sparkles.

MARGARET

Isn't it cool?

They all LAUGH.

It is truly picturesque to see the cove and the pinnacle jutting out into the darken sea and, each time a wave crashes, the water sparkles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CANYON ROAD -- MORNING

The van is parked along a narrow road surrounded by citrus orchard. The ocean and Refugio can be seen just a mile away down the canyon.

Margaret, wearing a heavy coat, sits in the sun on the ground with her back against the front tire of the van. She is reading a book.

One-by-one, the boys come out of the van, go around the backside of the van in the orchard to pee, and return. It is very quiet.

Derrick sits on the ground next to Margaret and nestles. Jerry pulls out the food box and rummages through looking for something to eat. Chad looks at his cell phone to check for messages.

JERRY

Guys, we're out of food.

No response.

Derrick has his eyes closed, head thrown back against the van taking in the sunrays. Margaret is immersed in her book whereas Chad is still studying his cell phone.

CHAD

Boy, are we out in the boonies.
There's no reception here.

JERRY

I think its time to go.

Margaret lifts her head from the book and speaks to no one in particular.

MARGARET

This is California... the way I want
to remember it. Quiet, orchards,
the scent of oranges, and the sea.

JERRY

Guys! Food.

Derrick rises and pulls Margaret up.

DERRICK

Come on Ms Nature. The savages need
to go hunting for food.

Chad begins to chant.

CHAD

Egg Mac Muffin! Egg Mac Muffin!
Egg Mac Muffin!

They climb back into the van and drive north onto PCH.

INT. PCH -- CONTINUOUS

Derrick looks out the windshield of the van down into the Refugio Campground and off into the ocean.

DERRICK

I say we come back next year when
there's no red tide and camp for a
week.

EXT. PCH -- CONTINUOUS

The van drives through the Goleta pass, past Split Pea Anderson billboards, and past MacDonaldis restaurant along the highway. The van pulls into MacDonaldis drive-through. Bags of food are handed to Derrick and distributed to everyone else in the van. The van returns to the highway.

EXT. PCH APPROACH TO SOLVANG -- MOMENTS LATER

The van drives along PCH approaching the Solvang offramp.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

DERRICK

Should we stop and really see Solvang.

JERRY

Yes.

CHAD

No.

MARGARET

No.

DERRICK

How about on the way back?

No one responds.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

Hell. I'm itching to surf. I say onto Pismo Beach.

EXT. PCH -- CONTINUOUS

They drive past the Solvang off ramp.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

Derrick is driving and Jerry is in the front passenger seat. Margaret and Chad are in the back seat talking and laughing while munching on their Egg Mac Muffins.

JERRY

I wonder what's come over Chad and Margaret?

DERRICK

Count our blessings. At least we'll get some peace.

Giggles emanate from the back seat.

EXT. PCH -- CONTINUOUS

The Van drives through the rolling hills of Santa Ynez Valley, past Santa Maria, and drops down to Pismo Beach.

EXT. PISMO BEACH -- LATER

It is a bright beautiful morning. The beach is empty except for a few surfers wearing shirts in the water. The waves are large and long. There is a pier at one end of the parking lot. Most of the surfers are near the pier.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

Simultaneous Dialogue

DERRICK

Whoa wee.

JERRY

Look at those waves.

CHAD

Let's slide.

EXT. PISMO BEACH PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The van parks at the Pismo Beach Parking lot. Everyone piles out. Boards are unhooked from the roof of the van. The guys put on their swimsuits and shirts, and head for the ocean.

Margaret spreads out a blanket on the sand, sits down, and begins to read.

EXT. OCEAN -- CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE

1. Surfing footage.
2. Derrick rides expertly.
3. Chad sometimes goes near and into the pier taking great chances.
4. Jerry falls off, but is discernibly better than before-- displaying greater confidence.
5. Margaret sits at the beach, occasionally looking toward the guys surfing.
6. The guys have a blast.

After a few hours, the guys come in from the ocean all energized.

EXT. PISMO BEACH -- CONTINUOUS

CHAD

Man, that was fuckin' shit.

Derrick falls to his knees next to Margaret and gives her a hug and kiss.

JERRY

This was much better than back home.
I'm famished.

MARGARET

I'm ahead of you guys.

Margaret pulls out a box of food.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I went shopping while you were out.

The guys dig into the food like sharks at a feeding frenzy.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It's really a quaint little town. I
could imagine living here... raising
a family.

Margaret gives Derrick a little squeeze.

The four eat in silence glancing at the view.

The ocean is very blue. The sky is radiant and the sandpipers
dance at the water's edge.

EXT. PISMO BEACH -- LATER

The four kids lay face down on the blanket fast asleep.
Derrick's arm is over Margaret. It is very tranquil.

Jerry is on his back asleep. He wakes slowly. Rolls to one
side and from his POV see Margaret and Derrick asleep. He
rolls to his other side and from his POV sees Chad sitting
at a park table a few feet away.

Chad's back is to the group and obscures a view of the table
and his hands. It looks like Chad is pulling out plastic
bag from his pants and putting them on the table in front of
him.

Jerry blinks his eyes and wakes from his groggy state. He
props himself up on his elbows and looks toward Chad.

From Jerry's POV, he sees Chad bend forward in a way that
suggests that he is sniffing the content of the bags. Chad
then pulls out his cell phone and speaks rapidly.

Jerry drops back to the blanket and falls to sleep.

A moment later, Margaret pushes Jerry to wake up.

MARGARET

Come on. Come on. We're going.

Derrick loads up the surfboards onto the Van. Chad is nowhere to be seen. Strong wind tosses sand everywhere. It is the afternoon ocean breeze.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It's time to go.

Jerry sits up and squints his eyes against the blowing sand. He sees the nearby bathroom.

JERRY

I'll be right back.

Jerry stands and walks to the bathroom.

Margaret and Derrick enter the van and closes its door against the strong winds.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

Through the van window, Jerry is seen walking back. He opens the van door, takes a back seat, and closes the door.

JERRY

Wow, strong wind.

DERRICK

Was Chad with you?

JERRY

Uh, no.

DERRICK

Where could he be?

MARGARET

That's just like him. He's always going off someplace. He can be so irritating.

Derrick starts the van motor.

Through the van windshield Chad is seen walking toward the van. He tosses a green tennis ball from hand to hand. He opens a door and climbs in the back seat next to Jerry.

DERRICK

We've been waiting.

MARGARET

Where've you been?

Chad turns to Margaret.

CHAD
Natasha again?

Chad tosses the tennis ball to Derrick. Derrick places the ball on the dash board.

Chad breaks into his Mr. Chekhov voice impersonation from Star Trek.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Where to Captin'

DERRICK
Guys, we have a proposition... Margaret wants to stay in a real hotel tonight... you know; take a bath, real beds. There's a Motel 6 up in San Luis Obispo. It's only a half hour away.

CHAD
Aye, aye, Captin'

Silence.

DERRICK
What about you Jerry?

JERRY
Uh, do we have enough money?

MARGARET
Not a problem.

JERRY
Then, I'm up for it.

The van pulls out of the parking lot back onto PCH.

EXT. PCH -- AFTERNOON

The van drives up PCH taking the curve inland toward San Luis Obispo.

INT. VAN -- LATER

Everyone is singing along in high spirits to the songs on the radio.

INSERT: ROAD SIGN

Through the windshield is seen the sign for "Madonna Inn."

MARGARET
Let's stop?

No response.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
No, really, let's stop.

DERRICK
Here?

JERRY
Yeah, let's stop here. My family
always stopped here.

DERRICK
It looks... um

JERRY
(speaking very fast)
No, no. It's really special. It's
over the top and tacky. I love it.
You got to see the men's bathroom.
You get to pee into a waterfall.
Turn here. Everyone knows about the
Madonna Inn. Turn here.

Derrick hesitates and Jerry reaches for the steering wheel.

DERRICK
Hey, I've got it.

Derrick pushes Jerry off and makes a last moment turn.

EXT. MADONNA INN -- CONTINUOUS

The van turns off and into the parking lot and park near the
entrance. They all pile out and stare at the entrance.

CHAD
Is this, like, Dolly Parton tacky?

INT. MADONNA INN -- CONTINUOUS

The four of them walk up to the MAITRE D', and are put on
the list. The restaurant is over-the-top in gaudy lights
and more. There are thousands of little white lights covering
every pole and every inch of ceiling space.

MAITRE D'
It will be a few moments.

JERRY
Guys, you've got to see the bathroom.

Margaret looks resistant. He beckons the group to follow.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Margaret, stay here. We'll see if
the coast is clear.

Jerry goes into the men's bathroom, returns and gives the OK sign to enter.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jerry points to the urinal. It is a long waterfall.

JERRY

Isn't that cool or what?

MARGARET

You brought us in for that?

DERRICK

You've got to get a life.

CHAD

It reminds me of the locker room showers.

Margaret turns and quickly walks out. Derrick shrugs with Chad following. Jerry whines.

JERRY

Hey, I was a little kid the first time I saw this. I thought it was cool.

Jerry follows everyone out.

INT. MADONNA INN RESTAURANT -- CONTINUOUS

The Maitre D' summons them over.

INT. MAIN DINING -- CONTINUOUS

A WAITRESS leads the way to a table in the middle of the main dining room. The room is about one-third full.

WAITRESS

My name is Shelly. I'm your waitress for this evening. What can I get you to drink?

DERRICK, CHAD

Water.

JERRY, MARGARET

Coke.

The Waitress hands them a menu and walks away.

Jerry looks toward the ceiling.

JERRY

Betcha it costs a lot to keep all these twinkle lights on.

There is a moment pause while they read the menu.

DERRICK

The prices are a bit high?

MARGARET

Everyone, its my treat. Actually, it's my Dads treat. He gave me extra money to spend a special night with you all.

CHAD

Ok then, let's go expensive.

JERRY

Gee, that's great.

TWO ELEGANT LADIES are directed to a nearby table by their waitress. They wear formal evening wear and are stunningly beautiful. Chad follows them with his eyes as they walk by.

The waitress comes back to the kids.

WAITRESS

Have you decided?

Derrick, Margaret, Chad and Jerry sit up straight and begin to take on an adult air and an affected English accent.

MARGARET

I'll have the roast beef with horseradish on the side.

WAITRESS

Soup or salad?

MARGARET

Salad with Ranch dressing.

DERRICK

I'll have the same.

Margaret reaches over and squeezes Derrick's hand.

Jerry turns to Chad.

JERRY

What are you having?

CHAD

I feel like Italian Sausage with Angel Hair pasta.

Margaret giggles.

Chad gives Margaret a knowing eye and speaks to the Waitress with a pompous accent.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Does the sauce have sun-dried
tomatoes?

She answers back with a just as snooty accent.

WAITRESS

Of course and with freshly roasted
pine nuts and grated Parmesan cheese.
And if you want, we could put Gray
Poupon on it.

MARGARET

(mutters)
SO Californian.

The Waitress gives a sly look.

Chad laughs under his breath.

JERRY

Then I'll just have the chicken
dinner.

WAITRESS

How do you want your potatoes?

JERRY

Uh, ueah, French fries.

The waitress leaves.

TWO GOOD LOOKING MEN in suits walk to the table with the Two
Elegant Ladies. Chad turns his head to watch. The Two Good
Looking Men lean over the table, say a few words to the women,
then leave.

DERRICK

(acting formally)
I want to thank you all for coming
on this trip.

Everyone smiles.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

Really. We've all been friends for
so long, I cannot imagine a better
graduation gift than being with the
three of you.

Jerry clicks the side of his water glass with a knife that
makes a louder than expected tinkle. Jerry is a bit
embarrassed since a few people in the restaurant turn around
to look.

Chad holds up his glass.

CHAD

A toast.

Derrick, Margaret, and Jerry hoist their glasses.

CHAD (CONT'D)

To friendship!

DERRICK, JERRY, MARGARET

To friendship.

They smile and giggle at acting this way.

The Waitress brings their food. They begin eating with nosily comments and laughter.

TWO MORE GOOD LOOKING MEN who are dressed expensively, walk by the table toward the Elegant Ladies. They lean into the table without sitting down and exchange a few words with the Elegant Ladies.

Chad speaks under his breath.

CHAD

Hey guys, check out that table...
the one with the two sweet babes.
(yanking his head)
Over there... that's the second set
of guys who have gone up to them.

The Two More Good Looking Men walk away from the table leaving the two Elegant Ladies to continue their dinner. Chad's head follow the men away and then back to the group.

CHAD (CONT'D)

What's up?

DERRICK

Look like friends to me.

The four of them turn their heads to look again. Margaret turns back first.

MARGARET

Stop staring. Just leave them alone.

The four of them resume eating.

Jerry is situated directly across from the Elegant Ladies and has the clearest view. From his POV he sees the Elegant Ladies kiss on the lips. Jerry almost chokes on his food.

JERRY

(in hushed voice)
Guys, I think they're lesbians.

CHAD

No.

Chad and Derrick turn their heads.

MARGARET

Guys, don't look. They have a right to a quiet dinner.

CHAD

But they're just fuckin' bitches.

MARGARET

Chad, YOU should be the last person to say that!

The table goes silent.

Chad recoils giving Margaret a look of "don't reveal my secret."

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Sometimes I feel like... like I am surrounded by teen-age sex-crazed Neanderthals. Stop referring to women as "bitches." You need to start treating everyone like people, not objects.

The two Elegant Ladies finish their dinners, stand up, and walk by the table.

The Elegant Ladies are holding hands as they walk by.

DERRICK

Alright!

JERRY

I told you.

CHAD

But they are so fuckin' hot!

MARGARET

Chad! You know better. Lesbians can be beautiful. The stereotype - fat, motorcycle ridin' butch dyke - applies only to a few women. Most are average and a few are "lipstick lesbians." Women come in all shapes and sizes. Women are beautiful.

CHAD

What makes you a "feme-nazi?"

MARGARET

Honesty.

CHAD
And I'm not honest?

The moment Chad says this, he cringes at the door he has opened.

Silence.

Margaret surveys his face.

MARGARET
Each of us needs to find the truth
that is buried in our souls and find
the strength to be honest with
ourselves and others.

Awkward Silence.

DERRICK
I'm sure Chad didn't mean any harm.

More silence.

Margaret speaks very softly.

MARGARET
Honesty comes from the heart...

She turns to Derrick.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
.... and I feel I must tell you...
I'm not sure I want to go to Michigan.
I'm not sure if I can be your
girlfriend.

Silence.

Derrick is dumbfounded.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I like you. I think I love you.
But, I am not certain that what I
feel for you is not just my need
for... stability, for someone I can
absolutely count on...

He reaches for Margaret's hand. She pulls away.

DERRICK
Where is this coming from?

MARGARET
...hear me out. As you know, my
parents adopted me just a few years
ago. I was born in Shanghai.
(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

What you don't know is my father, my adopted father... is my real father. He was in the military and stationed near Shanghai. He met my mother in Shanghai and got her pregnant... She was a prostitute... When I was born, I was placed in an orphanage in the outskirts of town. Do you have any idea how it is to be Chinese with blue eyes?

The boys lower their eyes as Margaret survey's their faces.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

All the kids picked on me. They told me my father was an American "dick" who abandoned me and my mother... I still don't know how my father found me - perhaps my mother contacted him - but he came and got me when I was eleven and brought me back here... I always wanted a father. I knew he was American, but he looked so different from my people. And when I came here, I stood out. The kids here picked on me too. Didn't matter where I lived, I didn't fit in... I hate when people make derogatory remarks about other people because they look or act differently. I just hate it...

Margaret looks into Derrick's eyes.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Which brings me to us. I know that I am opinionated. I know that I can be clingy and I often chastise myself about that. I fear you will go away or I will push you away. I fear that I am with you for the wrong reason.

Derrick places his hand on her shoulder.

DERRICK

I don't feel you cling.

MARGARET

(nuzzling up to the hand)

I... I... appreciate the thought. But I know better. I've tried to change.

Margaret begins to rub her left pinkie finger that is shortened by the length of a fingernail.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

American kids were so mean to me. I just didn't fit in. I began drinking when I was thirteen and fell into a bad group of kids. I was really lost. Craig helped me. He was an Amerasian kid down the block. He helped by regain my Buddhist roots. He helped me find the harmony preached in Buddhism. He taught me about the sacrificial ritual of Yubi-tsume.

She rubs her finger faster.

Everyone in the group leans in to give her undivided attention.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It really is a ritual of sacrifice and forgiveness. I have an addictive personality and needed to get rid of it. I needed to forgive myself for all the pain. I must be willing to sacrifice something of value, something of myself.

She holds out her left hand exposing her cut off pinkie finger.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

None of you have ever asked me about my finger... A friend and I got everything together. I knew First Aid. We got the large carving knife from home. While it was a new moon, we went to the field out back of the house. We chanted prayers of Yubi-tsume - prayers of forgiveness. I tied a string around my left finger to cut off circulation. My friend helped me pray. I had to do the cutting. It had to be me making the sacrifice. I placed my hand on a piece of wood covered by a prayer cloth we blessed earlier. I took the knife, stared at my finger and as I came down... I must have closed my eyes, because I came down in the ground next to the board. I was really nervous but I had to do it. I wiped off the blade with alcohol, lifted it above my head and came down strongly... I didn't feel any

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

pain, really. I saw the tip of my finger on the ground. Craig picked it up and we placed in it a small box. We prayed again and buried the box. Craig placed a compact over my finger and loosened the string. The blood rushed in and I felt the sudden spike of pain. It really hurt, but I felt free. Words don't adequately describe how I felt. I felt free of the addiction and hate. I forgave myself.

Silence.

CHAD

You're shittin' us!

Margaret turns to Chad.

MARGARET

And I forgive you.

Margaret stands up and faces Derrick.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I'm tired. I want to get a room, here, tonight... alone.

Margaret walks away.

DERRICK

Ah, OK.

Derrick rises to follow her. He turns to Chad and Jerry.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

I'll go with Margaret and get us signed in.

Derrick catches up to Margaret headed for the Reservation Desk.

JERRY

I don't know what to say. I never knew.

The Waitress walks over and places the bill on the table.

WAITRESS

Can I get you boys anything else?

JERRY

Ah, no thanks.

The Waitress walks off at the same time Derrick returns.

DERRICK

Margaret is set. She's sleeping alone. We guys have the "Caveman Room," whatever that is.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MADONNA INN "CAVEMAN ROOM" -- MORNING

The Caveman room has a large king-size bed surrounded by rocks on the floor, walls and ceiling. The bathroom is all rock with a waterfall shower.

Derrick and Jerry are still in bed. There is a depression in the bed indicating Chad slept on one side.

The sound of the shower running in the bathroom can be heard.

Jerry wakes up slowly and looks toward the bathroom. He doesn't see Chad but he hears him on his cell phone talking to someone.

CHAD (O.S.)

Yeah, in deeper, deeper, yeah, oooh
I like it, yeah, I'm cumming, I'm
going to cum, augh.

A few moments later, Chad walks out of the bathroom wearing only white briefs that show he still has a hard-on. He carries his cell phone and puts it on the dresser. Jerry feigns being asleep.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Guys, guys. It's me. Open up.

Chad walks to the door and opens it. Margaret walks in, looks at Chad and walks over to Derrick. She rocks him.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Come on. Wake up honey. We need to go.

Derrick stirs. Jerry gets up.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It's almost 10 AM.

CHAD

Whoa, it's that late?

Derrick climbs out of bed.

MARGARET

Yes, and checkout is in an hour.
(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

We don't want to be charged these rates for another night.

The guys use the bathroom and collect their belongings.

Margaret looks over the room.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Cool. This room is far-out. All my men in one cave. What more could a girl want.

Derrick stumbles over and gives Margaret a hug and kiss.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Yeah, I've calmed down. It's a new day. Let's have an adventure.

The guys finish packing and exit out the door.

EXT. HIGHWAY 101 -- NOON

The van drives up Highway 101 and makes the turn onto Highway 68 toward Monterey.

INT. VAN -- NOON

Jerry is driving. Derrick is in the front passenger seat looking at a map. Music is blasting and the kids are grooving.

DERRICK

Hey guys, Laguna Seca is coming up next.

MARGARET, CHAD

What?

DERRICK

Laguna Seca. The racetrack. I've always wanted to see that. I vote that we go and check it out.

MARGARET

We need to be to Aunt Helen's by evening.

DERRICK

No problem. It's on the way.

INSERT: ROAD SIGN

Road sign is seen through windshield for "Laguna Seca Racetrack."

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

Jerry makes the turn.

JERRY

Here we go.

EXT. LAGUNA SECA -- CONTINUOUS

The van drives into Laguna Seca, around the service road and into the pits.

There are many teams set up. A few cars are on the track. No one stops them from entering.

The van parks.

EXT. LAGUNA SECA PARKING -- CONTINUOUS

Everyone piles out of the van.

DERRICK

What's today?

JERRY

Thursday.

DERRICK

Cool. We're in luck. This must be a local race event scheduled for this weekend. Everyone is setting up today and taking practice runs. That means everything is open and NO COSTS. Everything's free. Cool.

JERRY, CHAD

Cool.

The foursome walk around the pits seeing cars in various stages of preparation. Derrick and the guys show great interests in the engines, chassis and bodies. Sometime they stop to ask questions. Margaret and Derrick walk holding hands.

EXT. BLEACHERS -- CONTINUOUS

They walk toward the fence and sit in one of the empty bleachers to watch cars take practice runs.

JERRY

Anyone hungry?

DERRICK, MARGARET

Yeah.

JERRY

What about you Chad?

No response.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Chad?

Chad is entranced by the cars on the track.

Jerry turns to Derrick and Margaret.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Why don't the two of you stay here
and we'll find something to bring
back.

MARGARET

Thank you Jerry.

Jerry grabs Chad's arm and pulls him up.

JERRY

Come on Chad. I need you to help
me.

CHAD

Hey man, I'm busy watching.

JERRY

Come on.

Jerry gives Chad a determined look.

CHAD

Alright then.

Chad looks put upon, but gets up and walks with Jerry.

EXT. FOOD COURT -- MOMENTS LATER

The food court is fairly empty of people.

CHAD

Why did you do that?

JERRY

I think Margaret and Derrick need
some time together... alone.

CHAD

Oh, yeah.

Jerry and Chad walk up to one of the food stands.

EXT. BLEACHERS -- MOMENTS LATER

Chad and Jerry return to the bleachers. Margaret and Derrick
are deep in conversation. Jerry hands food to them.

JERRY

Chad and I are going to walk around
a while. We'll be back.

Jerry and Chad walk down the bleachers.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Obviously, they need more time.

EXT. PITS -- CONTINUOUS

Chad and Jerry slowly walk from station to station looking
at everything.

Chad pulls out his cell phone and checks for messages.

JERRY

Anything interesting?

CHAD

Not really.

JERRY

How much does one of those things
cost?

CHAD

I keep it under \$50.

JERRY

Really? Even with all the porn calls
you make!

CHAD

What? I don't make porn calls.

JERRY

I heard you this morning.

Chad is annoyed.

CHAD

Man, what a crock of shit.

JERRY

Nobody could miss it. The moaning.
The dirty talk. I bet you're the
screamer. How much did you pay for
her?

Jerry pokes Chad in the side.

CHAD

Shut up Jerry.

JERRY

Don't you know you pay for some old
fat lady on the other end?

CHAD

I don't pay.

This takes a few moments to sink into Jerry's mind.

JERRY

What? How?

CHAD

I just don't.

JERRY

How do you do it?

CHAD

Man, I don't need this shit.

Chad walks quickly away leaving Jerry alone.

Jerry walks back to the bleachers.

EXT. BASE OF BLEACHERS -- CONTINUOUS

As Jerry approaches the base of the bleachers, there seems
to be a fight going on.

Margaret and Derrick hang over the top edge of the bleachers
to see what is happening.

MICHAEL, an American vet in a wheel chair is yelling. He is
surrounded by a few REDNECKS who are yelling back. On
Michael's wheelchair are the BUMPER STICKERS, "Iraq Vets
Against The War" and "Bush Lied."

MICHAEL

Leave me alone.

REDNECKS

(said overlapping)

You disgust me. Go back to Canada.
You should have died like a man.
Queer. Fucker.

The Rednecks push the wheelchair around.

Margaret and Derrick run down the bleachers to Michael.
Jerry sees them and runs to them.

Margaret takes hold of the wheelchair handles and yells to
the Rednecks.

MARGARET

Leave the man alone.

REDNECKS
Another liberal pinko. Get out of
there bitch.

Derrick backs up Margaret.

Margaret moves close to Michael's ear.

MARGARET
We're going to get you out of here.

Jerry gets in front of Michael and pushes some of the Rednecks
out of the way.

REDNECKS
Traitors. Fucking traitors.

Margaret and Derrick push the wheelchair. Jerry, Margaret,
Derrick, and Michael move quickly from the area to the parking
lot and next to their van. The Rednecks do not follow.

EXT. LAGUNA SECA PARKING -- MOMENTS LATER

JERRY
Man, that was close.

Margaret moves in close to Michael to console him.

MARGARET
Are you all right? Are you hurt?

Michael is overwhelmed by the generosity and chokes up.

MICHAEL
Man, I didn't think it would be this
bad.

He shakes his fist toward the bleachers.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Damn Bush and all the rest of the
neo-cons. They put me in this
wheelchair... just to get rich off
oil.

Jerry and Derrick stand back. Margaret bends down to Michael,
who is in his early twenties, to brush his hair away from
his face. Michael calms down and looks directly at Margaret.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.

Michael tries to roll away but has little strength. Margaret
stops him and introduces herself.

MARGARET

My name is Margaret. These are my friends Jerry and Derrick.

Derrick and Jerry move forward to shake Michael's hand.

MICHAEL

I'm Michael.

Pause.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm glad you came by. I'm not sure how far the idiots would have roughed me up. I'm really grateful for your help.

DERRICK

Margaret can't resist helping people in need... or stray animals.

Margaret gives Derrick a dirty look.

MARGARET

Do you have friends here? Can we help you go somewhere?

MICHAEL

Oh, you've done enough. I shouldn't bother you.

MARGARET

Come on. Let us help you.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry. I came by tram from my home in Monterey and I'll be going now.

Chad comes running toward the van.

DERRICK

I don't think it's safe for you to stay... not with those signs.

Derrick points at the slogans on his wheelchair.

MICHAEL

Like them? Just put them on today. Ha, I'll show them... Man, I feel shitty. They showed me. Sometimes, I feel that I'm just too young for this all.

CHAD
 (breathing heavy)
 Is everything alright? I came as
 soon as I heard the fight.

Chad looks down at Michael.

CHAD (CONT'D)
 Who's this?

MARGARET
 Chad, this is Michael.

Michael extends his hand. Chad walks up and shakes it.

CHAD
 So everything's alright?

JERRY
 Oh yeah. Michael here decided to
 become Mr. Activist today. It almost
 killed him.

MICHAEL
 Hey, I thought you guys were on my
 side.

JERRY
 We're not on anybody's side. But
 show some gratitude why don't you.
 We just saved your neck.

Margaret impatiently rocks the wheelchair back and forth.

MARGARET
 I'm done here. Let's leave. I say
 we take Michael back home on our way
 to Aunt Helen.

Everyone looks around at each other.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Come on. We've been here for hours.
 I think we've seen everything there
 is to see plus it looks like track
 racing is over for the day.

DERRICK
 They do stop at sundown.

MICHAEL
 I'd be much obliged.

DERRICK
 Sure, why not. We're done here.
 Come on guys.

Derrick opens the van door, Chad and Jerry jump right in and they all hoist the wheel chair into the van. They all climb in. Chad is driving with Jerry in the front passenger seat. Michael is in the back with Derrick and Margaret.

EXT. LAGUNA SECA -- AFTERNOON

The van drives out to highway 68 toward Monterey. It winds through the hills.

INT. VAN -- LATER

MARGARET

Michael, were you in Iraq?

MICHAEL

Yeah, at the beginning of the overthrown of Saddam ... was there for 2 tours of duty... they kept calling us back since not enough men were volunteering...

Michael fumbles in his backpack for a water bottle. He finds one and takes a swig.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

There until the elections... that's when I was injured... the damn roadside mines.

MARGARET

What was it like?

Michael squirms.

DERRICK

Margaret, perhaps he doesn't want to talk about it.

MICHAEL

Hell no. I want to talk about it. I want everyone to know. I'm so angry at them all. The world should hear.

MARGARET

Hear what?

MICHAEL

That the whole thing is fucked up. I mean, we were told the Iraqi people would greet us a liberating army. Some did, but most spat at us, or worse, shot at us.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Within a few short months, we mostly held out at the Green Zone and rarely ventured out. Those self-absorbed embedded journalist... god they were primadonnas... only saw what we wanted them to see. They didn't see the daily fear or disgust we experienced... I was wounded when my Humvee was blown over by a mine... It wouldn't have happened if we were fully armored, but this was one of the early Humvees still in operation... Shit, they can spend hundreds of billions of dollars for the war but couldn't put enough armor on the Humvees. Shit.

Derrick stares at the stumps Michael has for legs. Michael notices Derrick's stares.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Yeah, they're real.

Derrick is embarrassed.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You can touch them if you want.

DERRICK

Do they hurt?

MICHAEL

It was shock at first. Couldn't feel a thing. Then the excruciating pain before the hospital knocked me out.

DERRICK

I mean now?

Michael slaps the ends of this stumps.

MICHAEL

Now? No. Well, sometimes. It's really weird, but sometimes I still feel my whole legs... They call that phantom limbs syndrome...

EXT. MONTEREY -- CONTINUOUS

The Van enters into Monterey.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

No one says a word. Michael looks through his bag and pulls out some metal pieces and holds them up.

MICHAEL

These were in my back. The doctors...
I knew my legs were gone, but...
paralyzed from the waist down.

Michael gets riled and pounds his fists.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

When I got back to the states, I was
really angry and wanted to blame
somebody... I'll never walk again,
shit, I'll never have kids...

Michael's eyes move rapidly from side-to-side as he
hyperventilates.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Somebody should pay... I really went
through a head trip when I got back...
At first I parroted anti-war slogans
but felt that I was being manipulated,
same as I was in the war. Everyone
was using me. The newspaper at home,
the military, so many people used me
for their end. I told them all to
go to hell... I began reading, trying
to find answers... We've been lied
to. There were no weapons of mass
destruction. There were ties with
Al Qaeda. There was no threat. And
Bush knew this. They all lied, they
whole gang. And, most importantly,
no one will tell you where the oil
money is going. It's impossible to
find out...

Michael looks around at everyone in the van.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm not lying. Really, go on-line,
try to find anything written about
the oil money. Many respected
journalist are trying to find out,
but no one is telling. That made me
mad... that I fought over oil for
someone else's pocket and was told
lies and lost my legs.

Long pause.

Margaret takes Derrick's hand.

MARGARET

You really can't have kids?

Michael turns away. Awkward pause.

JERRY

Margaret. That's awfully personal.

MARGARET

He said it first.

MICHAEL

That's OK. You should know.

Michael takes a deep breath.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I can't get it up. The nerve endings were damaged. Maybe they can extract some of the little guys and do artificial insemination... but what's the point. I mean, what woman would want me when I'm... I'm half a man, no, really no man at all.

Very long pause.

MARGARET

Derrick's going to train as a doctor. Maybe someday in the future, they will be able to heal those nerves.

MICHAEL

Hell, Christopher Reeves wasn't able to and he had millions. Fuck.

Michael glances out the window and sees his street. He speaks to Chad.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

This is my street. Just make a right and I'm down two buildings... yeah, right here.

The van makes the corner and comes to a stop.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I can't tell you how much I appreciate your help... Before I go, I have one more thing to tell... What I found most surprising through this whole thing was that I could not talk to anyone who was in the system... not my parents, not my military buddies, or any of the Republicans, or conservatives. They do not want facts. They believe without facts. That frightens me more than anything and has made me want to tell the world - *wake up*, find out facts and fight for truth.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Be honest. That's why I put these bumper stickers on my wheelchair today...

DERRICK

Maybe you will want to take those bumper stickers off and only put them on when you know it is safe.

Michael reaches into his backpack and gives Derrick a button that says, "It is Patriotic to Question."

MICHAEL

Keep questioning.

Margaret extends her hand.

MARGARET

I'm glad we met.

EXT. MONTEREY -- CONTINUOUS

Chad, Jerry and Derrick help lift the wheelchair and Michael out of the van. They each give Michael a handshake.

Michael waves goodbye as he wheels up his walkway. Everyone climbs back in the van.

Chad continues driving the van up highway 68.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

Chad turns to Derrick.

CHAD

Probably good thing you didn't mention that you are going into ROTC.

DERRICK

Yeah, probably good I didn't tell him.

MARGARET

Can you image being so young... and your life is essentially over?

Silence.

JERRY

Do you think he'll take off those bumper stickers?

DERRICK

No. He's a man with a destiny. I'm sure his road will be tough.

EXT. MONTEREY -- CONTINUOUS

The van winds through the city of Monterey into the city of Carmel.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

Margaret points out through the windshield.

INSERT: ROAD SIGN

Road sign says, "Pebble Beach."

MARGARET

Let's keep going to Pebble Beach for the sunset. It'll be beautiful. Then we can go to my aunt's.

EXT. PEBBLE BEACH -- SUNSET

The van drives down to Pebble Beach. The sun is low in the sky. It is a clear day and the surf is wild and a very strong wind has come up.

The van parks at one of the turnouts. Everyone climbs out.

CHAD

Whoa. That's strong.

Derrick cuddles Margaret from behind while their jackets blow in the wind.

JERRY

I hope it isn't like this all the time.

MARGARET

Oh no. The surfing side is over in Monterey. Isn't this just beautiful.

A very strong gust of wind comes up and catches Chad's jacket. The jacket is blown open and is almost ripped off him. His shirt also pulls up and comes over his head. In doing so, his cell phone goes flying, small plastic bags are pulled from inside his pants, and a book of matches comes out.

Everyone scurries to catch the flying items. Derrick picks up the cell phone and hands it back to Chad. Margaret holds the plastic bags. Jerry has the Book of Matches.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Just what are these?

Chad reaches for them embarrassed and mad.

CHAD

Nothing.

MARGARET

I told you. I thought he was using.

Margaret opens one of the bags but notices that it is sand. She holds some in her hand.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Sand?

CHAD

Yes. Sand.

Chad plucks the bags from Margaret's hand.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Do you mind?

JERRY

Sand? Man, that's weird.

MARGARET

Yeah, that's weird. What's it really for?

CHAD

None of your business.

Chad walks over to the van, gets in, slams the door shut, pulls out his cell phone begins talking.

Jerry absentmindedly places the book of matches in his pocket.

JERRY

What's up with Chad? He's been on edge this entire trip.

MARGARET

He's dealing with some personal issues... I think it's time for us to go.

She looks at her watch and toward the van and sees that Chad is off the phone.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

He's done, so let's go. We're still a bit early to arrive at my Aunt's since she works 'til 7. I know a great little restaurant to have dinner. Let's go there.

Derrick, Margaret and Jerry walk to the van and get in silently.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALEJO RESTAURANT -- EVENING

The four are seated at a table eating. They are very tired and quiet.

Derrick tries to lighten up the dinner.

DERRICK

I would like to say that I've really enjoyed the trip so far. I mean, the surfing at Pismo Beach was excellent. I know the red tide ruined Ventura, but it was fun to play at night at Refugio; the way the water sparkles.

Derricks looks toward Jerry for support.

JERRY

And who can forget the Caveman Room at the Madonna Inn.

DERRICK

And Laguna Seca was awesome... and free.

Chad does not perk up. Awkward silence.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

What about you Margaret?

MARGARET

I've really enjoyed the quiet times while you boys were surfing. I got to walk and see the hills, the citrus orchards - quintessential California. And got time to think. Think about who I am, my future, my relationship with Derrick and all of you. I want to thank you for being my friends.

Jerry reaches for his water glass and knocks it over. Some of the water puts out the votive candles on the table.

JERRY

Oops.

Derrick reaches in to help. A VERY CUTE MALE WAITER comes by with new napkins and candles.

Jerry reaches into his pocket and pulls out the book of matches he picked up at the beach that belonged to Chad. Jerry lights a match and uses it to light the candles.

Jerry looks at the cover of the matches. It says "BOOM BOOM ROOM LAGUNA BEACH."

JERRY (CONT'D)

Boom Boom Room. Hey isn't that in Laguna? Chad, these blew out of your pocket.

Jerry tosses the matches to Chad.

Chad freezes and looks at Margaret.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Hey, isn't that that queer bar?

Jerry turns his head toward Chad. Awkward silence.

JERRY (CONT'D)

What were these doing in your pocket?

Derrick tries to get Jerry's attention to get him to stop the line of questioning.

Chad does not respond. More silence.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Am I the only one here who doesn't know something?

Chad, Margaret and Derrick look at each other.

MARGARET

Chad, just come clean, you'll feel better.

JERRY

You know? What?

Derrick speaks directly to Chad.

DERRICK

Man, you know we are your friends.

Chad turns to Margaret

CHAD

You told Derrick?

DERRICK

She didn't have to. I've known since 3rd grade. I just wondered when you would finally come out to your friends.

Jerry is very confused and looks to Chad

JERRY

Out? Chad?

Chad speaks to Derrick.

CHAD

And you didn't mind?

DERRICK

No Chad, you're my good friend. Friends support each other. Besides, being gay is no big deal these days.

JERRY

Gay?

Pause.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You all knew, and nobody told me.

Margaret and Derrick chuckle.

MARGARET

Jerry, you're a good boy. Considering your family, I don't think you would have had a clue about gay people. Yes, we've all know for a long time.

Jerry turns to Chad.

JERRY

Is it true?

CHAD

Yeah.

JERRY

I always thought that Chad was a stud, you know, the man. All he ever talks about is getting laid. I mean... he's the man. He likes women.

MARGARET

It was a cover. Don't take it so hard.

JERRY

But its not possible. Just not possible.

Jerry is visibly disturbed and agitated by the news. He looks like he is ready to bolt from the table.

CHAD

Jerry, I mean, take it easy. I'm the one coming out. I'm the one who gets the drama, not you.

A few moments of silence go by. Jerry is subdued, thinking.

Chad speaks to Derrick.

CHAD (CONT'D)

You really knew, way back then.

DERRICK

It was always obvious to me. And when you and Margaret warmed up at Refugio, I figured you must have told her. She has that way with injured people. I just have one question...

They all lean in attentively.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

What's with the sand?

Margaret, Derrick and Jerry lean back and laugh. The tension is broken.

CHAD

You won't believe it, but it's for my boyfriend. He wanted me to pick up samples from each beach we visited.

MARGARET

You mean, the blonde guy we saw back home.

CHAD

Yep. Alex.

JERRY

You mean that old guy is your boyfriend?

CHAD

Alex's only 38.

JERRY

That's, that's 20 years older than you... Did he seduce you?

CHAD

Fuck no. I pursued him. He's just my type. Many of the guys we surf with are gay, but he's a catch. I talked to him, and went over to his place and bugged the hell out of him until he consented to go on a date. He said we had to wait until I turned 18. So, on my birthday, he plowed me like the screaming bitch that I can be. It was great.

Derrick and Margaret laugh loudly.

JERRY

But, he's so... old.

CHAD

He sometimes says that we shouldn't be together because he is so much older. But, I won't hear of it. He's what I want.

DERRICK, MARGARET

(said over each other)

This is great. This is great.

The Very Cute Male Waiter brings over the check.

Margaret leans into Chad.

MARGARET

Isn't he cute?

Chad looks at the Very Cute Waiter.

CHAD

Yeah, cute, twink, not my type. I like real men.

Everyone laughs. Even Jerry has a smirk on his face too.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CARMEL HOUSE -- NIGHT

The four kids are on the landing of a house RINGING THE BELL. The door is opened by AUNT HELEN who greets them and shepherds them in.

INT. CARMEL HOUSE -- NIGHT

Aunt Helen gives hugs to Margaret and handshakes to the boys.

AUNT HELEN

Are any of you hungry?

MARGARET

Thanks Aunt Helen. We just ate at Alejo's. We're beat and want to get up early in the morning to go surfing.

AUNT HELEN

Over here. I'll show you your rooms.

Aunt Helen escorts them to their rooms. She shows Margaret and Derrick the door to their room and they enter.

INT. CARMEL HOUSE BEDROOM 2 -- MOMENTS LATER

Aunt Helen takes Chad and Jerry to the other bedroom.

JERRY, CHAD

Thanks ma'am.

Chad pulls out his cell phone. It does not work.

CHAD

Damn. It's out of charge. I'll have to charge it tonight...

Chad turns to Aunt Helen.

CHAD (CONT'D)

May I use your phone? It's to call home.

AUNT HELEN

Sure dear. There's one in each bedroom.

She points to the corner of the room where the phone is located.

Chad picks up the phone and dials. He looks at Jerry.

CHAD

Jerry. Would you mind? It's personal

JERRY

Oh, no. No problem.

Jerry leaves the room.

INT. CARMEL HOUSE BEDROOM 1 -- MOMENTS LATER

Jerry enters into Margaret and Derrick's bedroom.

JERRY

Nice room.

DERRICK

Where's Chad?

JERRY

Oh, he's making a *personal* phone call. Didn't want me in the room while he talked.

MARGARET

Do you think he's is coming out to his parents?

Margaret looks to both boys and then reaches for the phone.

DERRICK

No, Margaret.

JERRY
That's not right.

MARGARET
He won't know. Besides, we're his
friends. He needs us.

Margaret picks up the phone holding down the button then letting it up slowly so as not to be heard. Derrick and Jerry are making hand motions telling her not to pick up the phone. Margaret listens in.

CHAD (V.O.)
... but I want to be with you.

ALEX (V.O.)
I think it's best this way. I'm way
too old for you.

Margaret caps the end of the phone and whispers to Derrick and Jerry.

MARGARET
(whispers)
It's Chad's boyfriend Alex.

CHAD (V.O.)
I don't care about age. You are he
one I want. I want to be with you,
no one else.

Chad chokes up.

ALEX (V.O.)
Chad. I'm doing it for your own
good. I'll still see you down at
the surf. You can still visit, but
we can't be boyfriends.

CHAD (V.O.)
Please... but please.

Margaret hangs up the phone.

MARGARET
Oh no, Alex just broke up with Chad.

JERRY
What a bummer.

Just then a LOUD DOOR SLAM is heard throughout the house. Derrick, Margaret, and Jerry walk out into the hallway.

INT. CARMEL HOUSE HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

They see Aunt Helen at the end of the hall facing the front door. She turns her hands up.

AUNT HELEN

He went storming out. Is something wrong?

MARGARET

Nothing to worry about Aunt Helen. I'm sure he'll be back in a couple of hours. He just needed to walk off some steam.

Margaret turns to Jerry and Derrick.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Might as well go to bed. He'll be back when he's ready. Don't say anything. We'll let him bring it up when he's ready.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MONTEREY BAY -- EARLY MORNING

Monterey Bay is virtually vacant with a thick overcast. The few surfers out in the water are wearing wetsuits. The water is very cold.

Margaret is on a blanket on the beach. She is bundled in a heavy jacket and blanket over her legs.

While reading her book, Margaret chews her lip and occasionally looks out to the ocean. She looks tired.

Out in the ocean, Derrick sits on his surfboard. He often sits out wave he could have caught and, instead, stares out to the ocean.

Jerry swims close to Derrick.

JERRY

Everything OK?

Derrick does not respond.

A ways over, Chad uses his surfboard to glide among the pier. He ignores most waves seeming to want to be by himself investigating the pylons.

The thick overcast creates a feeling of being both in the comfort of a nest while at the same time with a sense of foreboding.

Jerry is the only one having fun catching most of the wave. His skill and confidence has improved.

MONTAGE

1. Margaret reading a book at the beach biting her lip.

2. Derrick staring out to the ocean.
3. Jerry surfing.
4. Chad among the pier pylons.
5. Sandpipers running along the water's edge.
6. Clouds and fog against the hills.
7. An almost eerie silence.

Derrick, then Chad, exit the water individually and walk up to Margaret who is sitting on a blanket on the sand. Margaret gives each one a hot drink. Steam slowly rises in the calm air.

No one talks.

They put heavy jackets over their wetsuits.

Jerry runs enthusiastically up the beach and plops down on the blanket.

JERRY (CONT'D)

The surf was good.

Derrick, Chad and Margaret make no comment.

DERRICK

Shame we're leaving tomorrow to go back home. I like being on the road.

Long silence.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

I want to let you guys know that Margaret and I have talked and decided that our relationship is... well... she's going to Michigan without me.

Margaret looks down.

Chad is not listening and looks into the distance very distracted.

JERRY

You've broken up?

CHAD

Asshole.

Jerry is taken back.

CHAD (CONT'D)

He dumped me.

Chad turns to everyone.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Said he's too old for me. Can you believe that? Really, the problem is I'm too young for him. Asshole. Age didn't mater to me, but it did him. You would think an older person with more experience would not care about age, but, no, "he's too old for me." Asshole. Men are slime.

MARGARET

Sorry to hear about that.

JERRY

Wait a minute. What? Margaret? Derrick?

Chad continues on ignoring the implications of what Derrick has said.

CHAD

Well, I'm looking forward to going to UC San Diego, away from Laguna men; they are so superficial. Fuckheads.

JERRY

The two of you are breaking up?

DERRICK, MARGARET, CHAD

Yes.

Jerry brushes toward Chad and then speaks to Derrick.

JERRY

No, not you Chad. Haven't you listend... I'm confused. Margaret's going to Michigan but you're not? So,... so, that means, uh...

DERRICK

I just can't go into ROTC. Meeting Michael yesterday got me thinking. I just can't do it. We're all being used. If I go to ROTC, I'm using them to finance college so that they can use me for... whatever. And Margaret has a future in Michigan. I can't hold her back.

JERRY

But, where will you go?

DERRICK

Don't know. ROTC was my ticket.

JERRY

But everything goes your way. You're the golden boy.

DERRICK

Shit, I wish you would stop saying that. You're so much smarter than me, just... not very directed. I, on the other hand can be so anal... that's how I get by... and, and people like me. Shit, I just can't do ROTC.

MARGARET

And I need to stop using Derrick... being so clingy. I need to go to Michigan without Derrick. I... I... you all know how I am. You saw it on this trip. It's like a roller coaster. I still struggle over my family... and I attack the ones I love. My father wasn't bad when he abandoned my mother and me in China. It's just the way it was. And he did come back, but I was so screwed up. I have to go... and Derrick needs to find his own way. Maybe we will meet up later in life.

CHAD

Oh, cut the existential crap. You're dumping Derrick. You're no better than Alex.

MARGARET

Shut up! I get so fucking tired of your narcissism.

Margaret lunges toward Chad and puts her hands around his throat to strangle him.

Derrick jumps in to separate them.

DERRICK

Stop it. Stop it you two.

Derrick pulls Margaret off Chad. Chad reaches for Margaret.

CHAD

That's the way bitch. You ruin everything.

Margaret bursts into tears, stands and runs off toward the Van parked a few yards away.

JERRY

Shit Chad, you don't need to be so rough.

CHAD

I get pissed... at first she's close, then she whines, then she pushes away... and, and, she dumps the best boyfriend she's every going to have.

Chad turns to Derrick.

CHAD (CONT'D)

You don't need this shit. I'm glad she's gone.

Chad stands, pulls off his jacket, pulls up his wetsuit, grabs his board and runs down to the water and paddles out.

JERRY

Are you OK?

Derrick has his legs pulled up and his face buried in his knees.

Jerry places his hand on Derricks shoulder.

JERRY (CONT'D)

OK?

DERRICK

Man, I don't know what I'm going to do.

JERRY

We'll think about it when we get home... Shit, I haven't thought about home for a while. It's been nice... on the road... with you. Let's be beach bums?

No response.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I just can't face my loser father and my mother, the religious nut. They're the losers, not me. It's going to be awful when I get back.

DERRICK

Come on. Let's surf.

The guys take off their jackets, pull up their wetsuits, pick up their boards and head for the water. There are no other surfers in the water.

Derrick and Jerry paddle out to Chad.

JERRY

Hey.

CHAD

Hey.

Chad turns his board, catches a wave and heads for the pier leaving Jerry and Derrick behind.

He comes close to the pylons but stays outside the edge.

JERRY

I hate when he does that. It's so dangerous.

Chad paddles back to the guys and rests within speaking distance.

CHAD

That really gets me off... Come on. Let's race.

A big swell comes up. Chad begins to paddle. Derrick and Jerry join in. Jerry loses the swell and falls back. Derrick and Chad surf side-by-side.

The wave takes the two of them near the pier. Unexpectedly, Derrick veers across Chad and into the pier. He disappears between the pylons.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Whoa! What the fuck.

Chad, falls into the water and tumbles onto the shore in the white water. His surfboard washes up onto the sand.

Jerry watches this situation not knowing what has happen. From his POV he sees Chad emerge from the water; looking around the sand for his board. Chad walks to his board and briefly checks it out. All of a sudden, Chad drops his board and sprints to the pier. He yells, but Jerry is too far away to make out what he is yelling.

Jerry senses something is wrong and quickly paddles back to shore, all the time trying to spy what is happening under the pier.

Margaret runs down the sand and meets up with Jerry as he comes out of the water. Jerry and Margaret run together to the pier. They can see Chad's silhouette in the darkness of the pier standing over something, or someone.

The light changes from bright to dark as they run under the pier. Derrick is laying face down in the sand. There is a large gash in his lower back. Chad reaches down and turns him over. He has another gash on his head. Chad checks for a pulse. He fumbles and screams.

CHAD (CONT'D)
 There's no pulse! God, there's no
 pulse!... Do you know CPR?

Jerry jumps down and pushes Chad out of the way at the same
 time giving directions.

JERRY
 Move over. Apply pressure to his
 head to stop the bleeding. I'll do
 the CPR.

Jerry begins CPR, alternating between chest press and mouth-
 to-mouth.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 Come on. Come on.

Margaret drains of all color and looks horrified. Chad turns
 to Margaret.

CHAD
 Go get help.

She hesitates.

CHAD (CONT'D)
 My cell phone is in the van... NOW!

With a look of anguish, she runs back up the beach out of
 view.

Jerry continues CPR while Chad looks on applying pressure to
 Derrick's head.

JERRY
 Come on man. You're not going to
 die on me. You're not going to die.

Looking into blackness under the pier, Chad and Jerry look
 only like black silhouettes.

Margaret finds the cell phone in the Van and calls paramedics.
 SIRENS are heard headed for the pier.

CLOSE ON: DERRICK

Derrick coughs and sputters but does not open his eyes.

Paramedics stand over him and have taken over.

Jerry, Chad, and Margaret stand nearby looking helpless while
 Derrick is placed on a stretcher.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM- DAY.

Margaret, Chad and Jerry sit in the hospital waiting room. The rest of the room is empty.

Aunt Helen enters.

Margaret runs to her and throws her arms around her. Margaret sobs.

MARGARET

Oh, Aunt Helen. It's terrible.
It's terrible.

Aunt Helen looks over to the boys.

CHAD

He hit one of the pylons at the pier.
It was an accident.

Jerry does not move. He just stares ahead and is really out of it.

A DOCTOR walks in carrying a clipboard.

DOCTOR

We've reached his parents. They will be flying up later today. Derrick is stable and resting. He has a broken pelvis and shattered lower back. There seems to be no other injuries. You will be able to see him in a short while.

MARGARET

Broken?

DOCTOR

Whoever gave him CPR and mouth-to-mouth saved his life.

Chad and Margaret look toward Jerry. Jerry does not react.

AUNT HELEN

How will he come out of this?

DOCTOR

Most likely he will be in the hospital for a couple of months, then in therapy for almost a year. Typically, with these kinds of injuries, the patient will recover, but be paralyzed from the waist down. If he is extremely lucky, he may be able to walk with braces.

AUNT HELEN

Oh, dear... he was so athletic.

DOCTOR

He's a strong boy. That's what saved him. The injuries could have been much worse and he could have died.

MARGARET

He won't be able to walk?

DOCTOR

No!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DERRICK'S HOUSE FRONT DOOR -- MORNING

Jerry stands at the front door of Derrick's house. It is October, a house across the street has Halloween Decorations. Jerry wears jeans and a jacket and his hair is noticeably longer. He rings the doorbell. DERRICK'S MOTHER opens the door.

DERRICK'S MOTHER

Oh, hello Jerry. I'm so glad you could come. Come right in. How are you?

JERRY

(in low voice)

OK.

Jerry enters and she gives him a long hug.

DERRICK'S MOTHER

His room is this way.

INT. DERRICK'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Derrick's Mother leads the way to Derrick's room. She opens the door. There is a pile of empty boxes to the side of the bed.

DERRICK'S MOTHER

Derrick will be coming home today. We need to rearrange the room and move stuff out so he can get his... wheelchair in.

Derrick's Mother holds back from crying. She points at specific furniture.

DERRICK'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Here, and here... take those to the garage.

Derrick's Mother exits.

INT. DERRICK'S GARAGE -- LATER

Inside the garage, Jerry piles boxes and furniture.

Derrick's Mother enters carrying a suitcase. She puts it down on the ground next to her.

DERRICK'S MOTHER

Jerry, may I talk with you.

Jerry does not respond back.

DERRICK'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Derrick has really missed you these past months.

JERRY

I... I... I've moved out from my parents and have a new job. It's hard to get away.

DERRICK'S MOTHER

Oh, I didn't know that.

JERRY

It's nothing really. A shit job at In-and-Out. I just had to get out. I live a block from the beach.

DERRICK'S MOTHER

Well, I didn't know. Derrick would love to see you. He's quite alone now with Chad and Margaret both off to college.

Silent pause between them. Jerry is embarrassed from neglecting his best friend.

Derrick's Mother pushes the suitcase toward Jerry.

DERRICK'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Jerry, please put this up on the top shelf.

Jerry grabs the suitcase, hoists it over his head, the latch breaks, and the contents fall out. Derrick's clothes fall out over Jerry and onto the floor. Out falls a small package wrapped in Christmas paper.

Derrick's Mother reaches for the package. She looks at the label.

Derrick's Mother hands the package to Jerry.

DERRICK'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Here, it's addressed to you.

JERRY

What?

DERRICK'S MOTHER

That was his suitcase he had on the trip.

Jerry rips the paper and opens the package. Inside is the Dolphin FIGURINE with a Santa Claus riding on it with the name Carpenteria printed on the side.

JERRY

But, but... I showed this to him at Santa's Candy Kitchen... he must have bought it for me when I wasn't looking...

Jerry is overcome by grief and begins to sob.

Derrick's mother walks over and holds him. She also cries.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Oh God, this has been so terrible. What will I do?

Long pause.

DERRICK'S MOTHER

Please come visit. He really needs you.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Jerry's apartment is a very small single unit in which his twin bed barely fits. Steep stairs lead from the front door to the one room. The unit is very worn with old rugs and marked up wall. Jerry has not hung any pictures and it is very stark. A large window dominates the one wall that looks between buildings toward the ocean. Clothes and things are strewn around. The place is a mess. A single naked light bulb hangs above the stove. The rest of the unit is dark.

Jerry is wearing the same clothes that he wore earlier that day when he helped Derrick's Mother.

Jerry uses a can opener to open a can of corn. He dumps the corn into a pan and places it over the lit burner on his stove.

Jerry stares at the boiling water and rising steam. He has no emotion.

He scoops out some corn onto a plate, walks to his bed, pushes stuff off the bed and onto the floor, and sits staring out his window.

Only light from outside his window illuminates his face.

He blows on the corn to cool it down and resumes staring out the window.

In a fit of anger, he throws the plate across the room against the wall.

Some of the corn sticks and slowly runs down the wall.

Jerry stares at the corn on the wall.

JERRY

Shit.

Jerry reaches for his phone, hesitates, then dials. Derrick answers at the other end.

DERRICK (O.S.)

Hello.

JERRY

Hey...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DERRICK'S HOUSE BACKYARD -- DAY

Derrick's backyard has been transformed with parallel bars and weights to help in his exercise and rehabilitation. A wheelchair ramp extends from the back door to the exercise equipment. There are trees and a nearby bench.

MONTAGE

1. Derrick rolls down the ramp with his mother pushing the handles and Jerry following behind. Derrick and his mother show the equipment to Derrick.
2. Jerry helps Derrick out of his wheelchair to the parallel bars. Jerry is awkward and fumbles the first time he helps.
3. Derrick struggles the first time on the bars.
4. Derrick in his wheelchair. Jerry sits next to him on the bench and the mother brings them glasses of tea.
5. The boys are wearing different clothing, and the sky is cloudy, indicating another day. Derrick struggles using the equipment while Jerry encourages him on.
6. Another day. While Derrick works out, he gets angry and lashes out at Jerry. Frustrated, Derrick breaks down crying. Jerry holds him while he cries.
7. Another day. Derrick is making progress using the equipment and almost stands.

Clouds are overhead and it begins to rain. Jerry and Derrick find this funny.

8. Another day. Derrick and Jerry quarrel for some unknown reason. Derrick angrily pushed himself back up the ramp into the house leaving Jerry behind. Jerry kicks up some sand, pushes over one piece of equipment and stomps out.

9. Months have gone by. The trees have changed color and are dropping their leaves. Both boys are dressed warmly. Derrick is making considerable progress and can stand on his own using braces. However, as he takes one step, he falls into Jerry's arms.

10. Derrick sits in his wheelchair holding boxes of Christmas lights. Jerry pulls the strings and plugs them in. They both put down the lights and Jerry helps Derrick stand up. Derrick pushes Jerry aside. Derrick's Mother comes out and sees Derrick standing. He makes grand movements with his arms and takes one step. He doesn't fall. He takes a second step and does not fall. Derrick's Mother and Jerry move in to hug him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Jerry has cleaned up his apartment and a Christmas wreath is hanging on the inside of the front door. Inside is a very small Christmas tree. There is the heavy scent of cooking.

RING, RING.

Jerry bounds down the stairs. He opens the door to greet Margaret, Chad, and Derrick in his wheelchair.

JERRY

Howdy!!

DERRICK, MARGARET, CHAD

Merry Christmas

JERRY

Come on. Come on in.

Chad and Jerry pick up Derrick and carry him up the stairs Margaret holds the wheelchair and carries it up behind the boys. Upstairs, the boys place Derrick back into the wheelchair.

Jerry hugs Margaret.

JERRY (CONT'D)

So good to see you.

Jerry gives Chad a handshake.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Chad, you're looking good.

Jerry is very pleased to see all his friends.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Come, sit. I've made something to eat. What do you all want to drink?

Jerry moves to the kitchen area.

CHAD
Beer.

DERRICK
Coke.

MARGARET
Diet Coke.

Chad sits down while Margaret mills around looking at everything. She finds the Figurine.

Margaret handles the Figurine of the Santa sitting on a dolphin and the word "Carpenteria" printed on the side.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Hey, here's that Santa riding the dolphin. I remember Derrick buying it and to keep it a secret.

She holds the Figurine up for everyone to see.

JERRY
Tacky, I know.

CHAD
Tacky! Nothing like the Madonna Inn!

DERRICK
That was something.

Jerry brings over the drinks. Margaret sits down in a chair next to Derrick and places the Figurine on the coffee table. He reaches out and holds her hand.

JERRY
Here, take your drink.

Jerry hoists his drink into the air.

JERRY (CONT'D)
A toast. Merry Christmas and to a new and better year.

ALL
Yeah. To Christmas. A new year.

CHAD

I really like your pad, man. Living, on your own. Must be bitch'n. You can have over girls anytime you want.

JERRY

(half-heartedly)

Yeah, bitch'n. What about you? You're away at college. You must be able to have girls... ah... guys over.

CHAD

With Chester!? That beeder I share a dorm room with? Real bummer. I tried going to the gay student group, but it's a bunch of losers... and twinks. No surfers. I want a real man. That's why I'm hoping we can stop by the Boom Boom Room on our way home tonight?

Chad looks toward Derrick and Margaret for approval. They ignore him.

JERRY

So your parents are cool about it?

CHAD

Still haven't told them.

MARGARET

Not yet. How could they miss it? Why my dog knew you were gay the first time he met you.

CHAD

So that explains why he humps my leg every time I come over.

Everyone laughs.

CHAD (CONT'D)

They probably know, but just don't want to acknowledge it. Besides, they are paying for college and I don't want to mess that up.

Margaret pulls her hand away from Derrick and waves her hands in animated speech.

MARGARET

Oh, oh. I want to announce that this semester at the University of Michigan, I not only participated in, but also organized, an anti-war rally on campus.

DERRICK, JERRY, CHAD

No, really.

MARGARET

Remember Michael, this summer at Laguna Seca?... you know, the Iraq Vet we met?

DERRICK, JERRY, CHAD

Yeah.

MARGARET

I met him again at college. He was there on a speaking tour. We had coffee and I learned so much more and that got me going. My political science teacher use to march in the Vietnam protests and made it a class assignment to volunteer with one of the political groups on campus. Well, FAW, *Feminist Against the War*, really kicked butt and I had to belong. Oh, oh, what's more, I've been selected to represent the organization in Washington DC as part of the campus outreach. I'm going to be transferring to American University next year... and, best of all, its paid for by FAW.

Derrick is in shock.

CHAD

You go girl!

JERRY

That's great.

Long pause while they sip their drinks.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I want you to all see how much progress Derrick has made.

Jerry looks toward Derrick. Derrick cringes.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Come on Derrick. Here, I'll help.

Jerry gets in front of Derrick to help him out of his wheelchair.

DERRICK

No. No.

Derrick pushes Jerry's arms away.

JERRY

Ok. Ok.

Jerry sits back down.

JERRY (CONT'D)

We've gotten him to stand with the use of leg braces and take a few steps. We expect that he will be able to stand soon without braces. Hopefully, he will walk without braces this coming year.

Jerry beams toward Derrick. Derrick's eyes begin to moisten.

DERRICK

It's been so hard.

Jerry takes both of Derrick's hands into his hands.

JERRY

Man, that's what friends are for.

DERRICK

Thank you.

JERRY

No, thank you. After your accident, I was lost. I fought with my parents all the time and finally moved out. I just couldn't... couldn't come see you. It was too depressing. But this life, in this apartment, sucks. All I do is work my shit job just to pay rent.

Jerry turns to Chad.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Girls? Girls? What girls? Who has the time or energy or money to date? I mean, I never get ahead.

Jerry turns back to Derrick.

JERRY (CONT'D)

But the day I helped move your stuff into the garage, that's the day I knew you were much more important than this life. I'm there for you bud.

Margaret turns to Chad.

MARGARET

Do you have your cell phone?

Chad nods.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

May I borrow it? I need to call home.

CHAD

Sure.

Chad hands his cell phone to Margaret who stands up and walks to the kitchen area for a semiprivate conversation.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I say that next summer, when I'm home from school the three of us go on another road trip. What'll you say?

Derrick smiles.

JERRY

We'll see.

Margaret walks back.

MARGARET

I need to go. Both Chad and I just got into town... my family expects me for home for Christmas Eve.

Derrick reaches for Margaret's hand. She pulls it away and puts it on his shoulder.

CHAD

Ah, well, OK.

Jerry stands and goes to the kitchen where he busies himself wrapping some food.

JERRY

Chad, here's some food for you to go.

Chad stands up and walks to the edge of the stairs that are next to where Jerry is working in the kitchen.

Margaret and Derrick have a semiprivate conversation.

DERRICK

I'm so glad you came home. I've missed you.

Margaret drops her head and brings it back up slowly.

MARGARET

Derrick. I'll get to the point.
(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I'm going to American University.
I want a career in politics. I,
I... We... Let's be honest. It's
time for us to go our separate ways.
I loved you but... I can't be with
a cripple. I know that's horrible
to say, but I'm sorry. It's just who
I am.

Margaret pulls away and stands up. Derrick is shocked and says nothing.

Margaret stands, pushes Chad out of the way and rushes down the stairs and out of the apartment.

CHAD

What?

Derrick takes his soda can and throws it after Margaret making noise while it bangs down the stairs.

DERRICK

Fuck! Get out of here! I don't
need you.

Derrick begins to sob. Jerry sits next to Derrick.

JERRY

Man, you can stay here tonight.

DERRICK

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

Jerry stands and turns to Chad.

JERRY

Please take Margaret home. Derrick
will stay here with me tonight.
I'LL call his parents and let them
know.

CHAD

OK.

Chad turns to Derrick.

CHAD (CONT'D)

See you later?

Derrick is still sobbing and does not respond.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Jerry. Thanks man. You're a real
friend. I'll see you before I leave.

Chad walks down the stairs and exits.

DERRICK
 Fuck. I lose my legs, I lose my
 girl. Why? Why fucking me?

Jerry takes him in his arms. Derrick sobs harder.

DERRICK (CONT'D)
 What did I do wrong?

Jerry holds Derrick while he sobs and rocks gently. He stares
 out the window at the Christmas lights outside.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT -- CHRISTMAS MORNING

Derrick is still asleep in bed. Jerry, who is standing next
 to the bed, rocks Derrick awake.

JERRY
 Come on man. Time to get up. It's
 Christmas morning.

Derrick moans.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 Come on. I have something to show
 you.

Derrick opens his eyes. Jerry throws wetsuits on the bed.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 We're going surfing.

DERRICK
 What the hell.

JERRY
 I mean it. We, you and I, are going
 down to the beach to surf.

DERRICK
 That's a sick joke.

JERRY
 No, no. This is going to be your
 Christmas present to me. Now, let
 me help you up.

Jerry leans over and hoists Derrick to his wheelchair. He
 pushes him toward the bathroom.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 We'll just lay you on the board.
 (MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)
 You can paddle out. We'll ride back.
 I'll be right with you, man.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAGUNA BEACH -- LATER

It is a bright Christmas morning at Laguna Beach. The fog has lifted and the waves are small. Only a few other surfers are out in the water. It is very still.

Jerry stands next to Derrick who is in his wheelchair. They both are wearing wetsuits and are at the edge of the beach. A surfboard is on the ground.

Jerry walks the surfboard down to the water's edge, comes back and rolls Derrick's wheelchair along the harder packed sand to the water. Sand pipers dash along the water's edge. Jerry picks up Derrick and carries him out to the surf at waist height and lets him go. Derrick treads water.

DERRICK
 Woo, this is cold.

Jerry walks back for the surfboard. He brings it to Derrick and helps him roll on. He helps guide the board out into the water while Derrick paddles.

DERRICK (CONT'D)
 Man, this feels good.

A small wave comes in. Derrick paddles, catches it, and rides it in on his stomach with Jerry swimming along side. In the white water, Derrick flounders, but Jerry helps him back on the board to paddle out.

DERRICK (CONT'D)
 Woo, that's going to take some getting used to.

Derrick paddles back out with Jerry in tow.

JERRY
 I think all these months of weight training have really paid off. You're strong enough to pull me along.

There is a lull in the waves.

JERRY (CONT'D)
 Derrick, I've been thinking... I want to go to college next fall... and I would like you to come along.

DERRICK
 College?

JERRY

Yeah, together. I mean, we can both make a future with an education. If we go to UC San Diego, there'll be Chad and we can surf.

DERRICK

Man, I don't know. I'd hold you back.

JERRY

You're getting stronger every day. I'd feel better if you were there.

Derrick looks around.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I'll body surf in and wait for you.

Jerry leaves, catches a wave and rides in. He stands in the white water waiting for Derrick.

A group of dolphins congregate around Derrick. The dolphin with the White Splotch on its face surfaces and stares at Derrick. The dolphin stares for a long time and Derrick reaches out. He strokes the beak of the dolphin. The air has become very still and is a magical moment.

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

Hey Flipper. Hey Flipper.

Derrick looks up and from his POV he sees Jerry waving his arms and pointing at him.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Yeah, you. Flipper.

Derrick looks back at the dolphin who seems to give a nod. Derrick is overcome by the moment and laughs and cries at the same time.

The dolphin slowly lowers back into the water. Derrick catches the next wave and rides back on his stomach. Jerry catches him in the white water.

DERRICK

That's enough for today.

Derrick is all smiles. Jerry picks him up and puts him in the wheelchair. They stand looking at the water. Jerry has his hand on Derrick's shoulder.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

OK. College in the fall. We'll be roommates. But Chad has got to have his own space. Way too much drama.

They both laugh.

THE END