

DREAM
SURFING WIDOW'S DREAM

||||| BY LOGAN MURRAY |||||

In a surf town where I used to live, one of the regulars in the lineup was a very successful real estate agent. Garth had studied all those “how to make a fortune” books and idolised those who epitomised material success. When he stepped out of his black SUV to check the waves – all tailored suit, George Clooney haircut, perfect white teeth and well-shined black Italian shoes – every inch of Garth oozed success. He had worked hard was proud of the carefully constructed image he presented to the rest of us, who rolled up in our old rusting shithoops, barefoot, dishevelled and unshaven. Some of the old surf dogs would mutter snide remarks. He never let this hold him back; his success was eclipsed only by his ego.

As pressure for beach housing increased and marginal coastal farmland was transformed into upmarket new subdivisions, Garth took on the agency work for many of the developers. One of the developers of such land was an attractive woman with a reputation as a man-eater. An affair ensued, and those who knew of the liaison made jokes about Garth collecting extra commissions on his sales. Having an extramarital affair in a small town is an act of madness. Garth's loyal wife learned of the affair and the shit hit the fan.

Garth's wife was shattered, but she kept her cool. She knew exactly what she wanted to do. She took a large carving knife from the kitchen, went to the garage and selected a surfboard off the rack; not any random board, but the board she knew to be Garth's long-time favourite. She carefully unsheathed it from its protective board bag, and then vented her rage and her hurt on that treasured possession that Garth enjoyed so much of his free time with. A slim and petite woman, she must be quite a strong woman, or perhaps her rage gave her strength. Some of the knife wounds penetrated all the way through the board where the blade had come out the other side. There were a lot of them. When she was finished, she simply left the board lying like a corpse in front of the garage and called a locksmith to change the locks on the house.

Most men caught in such circumstances would humbly dispose of the board and shamefully order another replica to be built by the same loyal shaper; or secretly take it to a trusted backyard repair guy for a discreet repair. Garth is shameless. He marched in front of the shop counter of the largest surfboard factory in town where the board had been made, and handed over his much loved but mutilated favourite to the intrigued manager with a simple “My wife did it”.

On hearing the story, a woman I know exclaimed “What a lucky woman Garth's wife is!” “Why is that?” I asked out of naivety. “Because she had the perfect excuse to do what every surfing widow dreams of being able to do, she got to trash his favourite surfboard!”

As word of the story rippled through the town, the now infamous surfboard was repaired and put back into service. Garth managed to win his wife back, although he is kept on a tight leash these days, with his wife now working alongside him in his office.

He still looks immaculate when pulls up at the beach before work for a surf, and unsheathes a scarred favourite to paddle out on.

DREAM
LEKKER

||||| BY GARY YOUNG |||||

It was New Year's day 2004 and it was the first morning since we'd been staying at Rudy's place that I had to wake him up rather than him disturbing my dreams. The bloke is a certified Grom for life. Dawn every morning he'd rattle the tent “Wake up Bru, it's looking lekker”

Rudy and his family run a backpacker's hostel on Ansteys Beach and I was camped in the garden. I had to find him, it was looking slightly more than *lekker* to me and Cave Rock was firing. For the previous week he'd mentored me on the shifty peaks right out front but today it had lined up and was shutting down in one pre-dawn, slow-motion closeout.

We walked down the seafront, Rudy was frothing not only on the waves, but also the fact that today was the day that traditionally everyone, and I mean *everyone*, comes to the beach with their entire extended family, and barbecues all day long. I was finding it hard to concentrate on what he was saying. The butterflies in my stomach were trying to smash their way out, and the voices in my head were asking me too many questions to keep up with. Of course everyone there knew Rudy and everyone there was asking him questions. If you mention Cave Rock to a Saffa they'll name Rudy as the man. I felt privileged – fucking shit-scared – but privileged.

Eventually we jumped in the channel, there were definitely more watchers than takers, but a few others were strapping leggings on as the sun started to peak over the horizon. I don't even remember having to duck dive, but in no time we were on the spot and Rudy – before I'd even had a chance to sit up on my board – was calling me into the rising darkness looming in front of us. My head said, “You're not ready”, my heart said, “Boom boom”, in rapidly increasing frequency, and Rudy was saying, loudly, “Go man, go!” I had no choice.

I made the drop, I made the turn and I got my line. I had every intention of gunning it for the shoulder and getting out as quick as possible but the wave had other ideas. It threw, massively, and without warning. The shoulder got further away and the wall I was dragging my hand along suddenly illuminated bright green, the lip that was over my left shoulder was now in front of it and the view up the beach was framed in an oval. Then someone turned a power shower on behind me and as it hit my bare back and engulfed me I heard hoots.

Then it was sunny.

I kicked over the back and my knees turned to jelly, I didn't so much drop back down on to my board as collapse. The hooters' mouths were moving but I couldn't hear them, my arms were paddling but I couldn't feel them. Rudy was laughing and I couldn't even speak. Never before had I felt the spit on my back. Never before had I been that deep (with my eyes open!) I stayed out but I don't remember getting any more waves, I don't think my legs would have supported me.

When I got to the beach it was like a scene from Milius's masterpiece. Smoke shrouded the whole seafront and breathing was a struggle. My eyes were watering. The barbecues were being lit. The rest of the day? No idea.

Sometimes when I fall asleep, I twitch and I'm there.

SURFBOARD
THE GIFT

||||| BY MARA WOLFORD |||||

“You fucked for that board,” said the skinny blond punk. Her steady paddling rhythm came to a dead stop. A long silence followed. “Yes, you're right, I did. So what?”

She was a kid, grabbing any sort of board she could find in any garage, borrowing any holey, old, baggy men's wetsuit in an attempt to stay warm. As a joke the boys put her on a 5'8" Stretch four-fin, swallow-tail channel-bottom to learn to stand up. It may have taken a bit more time than if they had found her an old 7'2" gun, but she persevered. The boys saw her determination and found her an old Santa Cruz Surfboards 6'4" thruster. She was up and riding.

Mike also saw this. He owned a small surf shop around the corner and came from a local founding family. He offered to shape her her very first board. She told him she was just a kid waiting tables, paying school fees and rent by herself and that all she could afford was free boards ditched in garages. “I'm giving you this board, come shape it with me.” Wow! Neato bandito!

She arrived at the factory right on time. Mike took her back into the bay, sat her on a stool and started in on cutting out and shaving down exactly what he thought she needed. She was heart-warmed to see someone put so much energy into something just for her.

She was alone in the world and used to expecting nothing from anyone. She was entranced by his skills and delicacy in screening each edge to perfect symmetry. The artistry was magical to her.

He invited her into the house for a beer. What was going to happen happened. And it was as equally magical as what she had witnessed just prior in the bay. The fact that she was half his age didn't seem to matter much that night, and the nights led into each other. He was a better teacher than the 16-year-old boys she'd known in the past.

She was so ravished with this gift that she asked if she could decorate it herself. The next day she turned up with three grams of mushrooms, her big box of pastels, a can of fixative and went at it. The tail was a moon and stars that evolved into green leaves that spun into a reeling wave, with a big, goofy sun smiling on the nose. No-one had a board like that. It was every teenage surfer girl's dreamscape.

She picked that board up from the glasser and she was out there. She rode it every day, rain or shine, winds or calm, swell or none. She'd never been so grateful for anything in all of her life. The relationship continued on for a few more months, but peer pressure and public opinion finally got the best of both of them. He went back to his long-time girlfriend and she went back to her little surfer boys.

He continued to shape her boards over the following years, until he put his planer aside out of boredom. She sat and watched him shape each and every one, not really knowing or caring what he was doing for her this time, trusting that he knew best at each moment what she needed in her boards. She just liked to watch, it turned her on and she continued to fuck for her boards. It wasn't an obligation, it was a pleasure after witnessing such mastery and generosity. And who cared who thought what about it? She certainly didn't.

RIP Mike.