

THE BEACH BOYS

FATHER OF THE MAN

"PART ONE"

written by

Garrett Vander Leun

"Have you listened as they played?
Their song is love-
And the children know the way
That's why the child is the father of the man..."

-Van Dyke Parks
The Beach Boys: SURF'S UP

OVER BLACK: DECEMBER 4, 1983

GRUFF VOICE

Here-

(clears throat)

Hey- here. This is my spot.

The sound of TRAFFIC and the WHINE of brakes. A DOOR OPENS-

EXT. SANTA MONICA BAY INN - DAWN

Over the roof of a weathered car, the PASSENGER stands, the details of his face softened in the cool blue light of dawn. If he has secrets, they're hidden in this moment...

This place does indeed seem like *his spot*. He's in old green army pants and a thin, battered jacket, but he turns to take it all in like he's the king of the world:

The three-level motel- a sad stack of stucco- is rimmed with the promise of a beautiful sunrise. Across the street now-

Chez Jay. The infamous restaurant and dive bar, its neon lights still lit from the previous night's revelry.

DRIVER (O.S.)

"California Girls."

INT. WEATHERED CAR

The driver leans over to make eye contact, embarrassed.

DRIVER

The song. I was just saying, you know-
I really like *California Girls*.

The passenger doesn't respond and the moment is suddenly so awkward that the driver just waves and departs. As he goes-

PASSENGER

...You and me both, Buddy.

The CRASH OF WAVES takes us to-

A SURFER

He rides the wave into the surf, leaping off just as... the sunrise crests the horizon and jags of light slice through the spokes of the Ferris wheel at the pier.

PASSENGER (O.S.)
 God damn! Ain't that something.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BAY INN - POOL

The same view as before, only hazed through a wall of Plexiglas that surrounds the pool. The passenger CLAPS, not yet done with his appreciation. He reaches inside a pocket-

A pint bottle, the label torn away. It's orange from the juice, but the bulk of its contents is vodka. He raises it-

MANAGER/CLAY (O.S.)
 Dennis?

ON THE PASSENGER

He turns and indeed the passenger *is* "Dennis." DENNIS WILSON (39), former drummer for The Beach Boys. Forever its sex symbol and rebel-with-a-sometimes-cause. Only now, well-

He's bloated with edema from a lifetime of booze and drugs. His face is puffy, his eyes bloodshot and his voice-

DENNIS
 Hey-
 (clears his throat)
 Morning, Clay.

It's almost gone, but it roars like a lion if he pushes it.

ON DENNIS

He ascends the stairs to the third floor, Clay trailing.

DAVE
 You can't be here anymore.

DENNIS
 Come on Clay, it's my birthday.

That stalls Clay long enough for Dennis to slip ahead-
 KNOCK-KNOCK.

EXT. ROOM 353

Dennis takes a breath. He has never been one to wait, so-

INT. ROOM 353

Dennis barges right inside the tiny kitchenette. There's a baby, GAGE (15m/o), sleeping in a pack and play. And in bed?

DENNIS

What the fuck is going on here?!

His former-lover and soon-to-be-ex, SHAWN LOVE WILSON (19), wakes and jumps up as the TWO MEN sleeping beside her struggle to do the same. They're all fully-clothed, but-

DENNIS (cont'd)

That's our fucking son over there!

That "fucking son" wakes and cries, startled by his father's terrifying roar. Clay is in the doorway, too-

CLAY

Dennis, you can't do this again-

DENNIS

They've got narcotics in here, Clay!

SHAWN

Get out of here!

On the verge of madness, Dennis PUNCHES A HOLE in the wall- Gage WAILS as Dennis turns the furniture over- BOOM!

SHAWN

You're scaring Gage!

Dennis finally zeroes in on Gage. His eyes well.. and then he reaches into the pack and play and grabs him! Shawn SCREAMS as he runs out the door and a car HONKS and-

EXT. SANTA MONICA BAY INN

Dennis, Gage in arms, waves for a car to stop on Ocean Park Boulevard as he limps his battered body across the street.

INT. CHEZ JAY

Multicolored Christmas lights on the ceiling, sawdust on the floor... and a very confused CLEAN UP CREW staring at Dennis as he enters with the CRYING baby in hand. From the back-

ALICE FIONDELLA (81), Jay's mother, bookkeeper and - like everyone else - a long-time fan of Dennis. She waves him in.

REAR BOOTH

The checkered tablecloth skirts the edges of the red, leather seat where Gage is curled beside Dennis, asleep.

He takes his jacket off and drapes it over the boy...

ALICE
You alright, Denny?

He nods and takes a quick pull off his pint bottle again.

ALICE (cont'd)
Your friend is on the way to get Gage.
Clay is out front waiting for you.
Patiently. He doesn't want to call the
cops. Not on you, anyway.
(off his relief)
He's a good man. And so are you.

He smiles, but it doesn't land- none of it does. Not anymore.
The easy charm, the adorable shtick- it's buried.

DENNIS
I'm going to get back in the band.
Carl said. Both my brothers did. He
said they'll pay for my treatment,
too. Anywhere I want to go.
(laughs)
You know they used to encourage me to
do all this? Back in the beginning,
when we needed a little edge?
Fighting, fucking, drinking.

He rears his head back warbles through some famous lyrics-

DENNIS (cont'd)
"I been all around this great big
world, and I seen all kinds of
girls..."

He COUGHS near the end of it and chases it with a cigarette.

ALICE
You can't do that in here, Denny.

DENNIS
Just one.

He takes a drag and exhales away from his son. He points-

DENNIS (cont'd)
You think *he* thinks I'm a good man?

ALICE
He will. If you clean up.

He tries that awe shucks smile again and it almost works.

ALICE (cont'd)
It's going to take guts, though.

And it's as if he just saw a ghost pass through the bar.

ALICE (cont'd)
...Denny? What is it?

DENNIS
Watch him, huh?

He stands and kisses her on the cheek as he slides out the booth. The cleaning crew stares as he pushes out the door-

EXT. CHEZ JAY

Clay is outside, smoking on the planter. Dennis startles him as he hurries across Ocean Park Boulevard again-

CLAY
Hey- Dennis!

The organ interlude from CALIFORNIA GIRLS drifts in as-

INT. ROOM 353

MUSIC CUE: The final vocal harmonies of CALIFORNIA GIRLS.

Dennis bursts into the room, rushing past Shawn to shove one of the men- *Let's go, Motherfucker!* The man isn't a fighter, but even so- WHAM! He hits Dennis in the face.

Dennis doesn't even try to avoid it- in fact, he leans in for more... Dennis is *letting* the man kick his ass- WHAM!

His face is covered in blood, the golden boy gone and gutted before our eyes. Still, he smiles as he takes it-

"I wish they all could be California girls..!"

As the song fades, Dennis' face fades with it-

OVER BLACK: THE BEACH BOYS

what is told herein is the truth...

...or what's left of it after decades of lore, love and loss.

And then, OVER BLACK: December 4, 1954

The harmony of a family SINGING "Happy Birthday" swells-

ON DENNIS

Same shit-eating grin, only ten-years-old and a flattop, lit by candles on a cake. He leans in to blow and-

INT. WILSON FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN

AUDREE (37) hovers behind Dennis. A mother hen to the "t," she's the peacemaker and the best voice in the house, too.

Brother CARL (7), a little overweight and a lot tender, eyes his mother for his behavior cues... and a slice of cake.

The eldest, BRIAN (12), sits at the head of the table, grinning and always on the verge of turning it into a laugh.

AUDREE

Did you make a wish?

BRIAN

I wish Carl wasn't such a lardass.

Brian cracks himself up with his distinct "har-har-har."

AUDREE

Brian..!

Audree slices cake and slides one to Carl's waiting plate.

DENNIS

I wished for Carl and Brian to stop pissing their beds at night-

BRIAN

Hey- that's low, Dennis!

DENNIS

Well then I wish I had my own room so I didn't have to smell you dogs!

The cherry on a pipe glows in the living room shadows- MURRY (36). Their father is a meaty, giant-of-a-man. Bespectacled and tough, his boys are his stallions, the house his stable.