

## Road Warrior

*Tracks* was going gangbusters, its circulation growing by a thousand a month, its advertising revenue up ten percent every issue. It seemed like people were lining up to throw money at Alby Falzon, who was now the sole owner of the magazine.

One of the more interesting benefactors was American Express, which wanted us to partner in a travel venture to be known as the *Tracks* Travel Company. Bali surfing packages were starting to mushroom, largely due to the groundbreaking work of Jack de Lissa and Rennie Ellis at Bali Easy Rider Travel. AmEx had its eye on that, but its initial interest was in the 50th addition to the United States: Hawaii. The general idea was to create a Bali-style surfer resort in Hawaii, and give it some cred by putting the *Tracks* name on it. In my view it was never going to work—in those days the vast majority who went to Hawaii for the deeply-challenging waves of the North Shore were elite surfers and self-starters. But how quickly I fell into line when Alby asked me to fly to Hawaii and put together a magazine supplement to promote the new partnership.

As an afterthought Alby said, “They’re giving us two tickets so Frank will go with you and take the photos.” Great. Frank Pithers was the *Tracks* staff photographer and photo editor, which meant that when Frank emerged from the dark room, you only ever saw the single print that he’d selected for use. As editor I objected to this, but that was only the professional side of the animosity between us. He was an excellent photographer and he had a sick sense of humor, which I appreciated, but he also had a rather menacing demeanor, particularly around me. It was a nine-hour flight. I wondered how we’d survive that much proximity, but we did. Maybe our relationship was making progress.

Our mission was to sample what the AmEx Tour intended to offer and present a glowing report that would be the centerpiece of the introductory editorial and advertising campaign. The problem was that it was a winter-season package and we were there at the height of summer, which meant that the North Shore of Oahu, the home of the biggest waves in the known world, would be like a lake. And that was only one of the problems. Another was that the North Shore accommodation for the tour was not on the North Shore, but a half-hour drive away at Laie. Yet another was that the motel was attached to the Mormon-owned Polynesian Cultural Center, and was alcohol-free.

Frank and I bonded over our desire to spend as little time as possible in the AmEx Mormon prison. In fact, we didn’t last a night, driving our cheap rental car back to Waikiki and checking in to a motel in the middle of the Ala Moana sin strip. This was the first experience of Hawaii for both of us, and we badly needed direction, but none of our pro-surfer mates were in town to give it. In the morning, however, Frank, I have to admit, had a very good idea.

# Brine Trust

In its early 70s glory days, Australia’s *Tracks* magazine was the loosest kid on the block, epitomizing the era’s sex, drugs, and rock’n’roll anti-ethos. Editor and emeritus surf journo Phil Jarratt tells all in his recent memoir, *Life of Brine*—and in this excerpt from same.

Queensland surfer Paul Neilsen, the 1971 Australian champion, had been one of the first Australians to establish solid-social connections in Hawaii, a fact demonstrated by his closeness to the legendary Aikau family, and underlined when he flew his glamorous Waikiki squeeze, Faye Parker, out to Australia for the 1975 contest season. We had both met Faye at Bells and in Sydney and instantly liked her brash charm and naughty aunty persona. Mysteriously, Frank had her number.

“So glad you called,” Faye gushed. We were invited to lunch at the Outrigger Canoe Club and a luau dinner at her home in the hills above Diamond Head. Faye had been married to the actor Doug McClure and the star footballer Don Parker, among other prominent men. She was well-connected with the local entertainment crowd, as well as the surfing fraternity. The point where those two groups collided was the hit TV show *Hawaii Five-0*. At the Outrigger, she introduced us to the former world surfing champion and boss of

the emerging pro movement, Fred Hemmings, but her real coup for the day came when we arrived at her place for the hilltop luau to be greeted by James “Jimmy” MacArthur, who played Danno on *Hawaii Five-0*.

Ironically, given that Faye, Paul Neilsen, and his older brother Ricky were all staunchly anti-drugs, that evening at the luau was my first encounter with cocaine. I walked into a bathroom and discovered several of the guests chopping up the powder on the marble counter. No one said a word. They just handed me a cut-down straw and watched as I nervously hoovered up a long line. I discovered that Frank was already in on the action, and suddenly we were the life of the party, laughing uproariously at our own jokes and sharing tales of derring-do. It was a long night, probably much longer for those who hadn’t taken the magic elixir that removed self-doubt.

After a couple more days surfing and soaking up the atmosphere of the South Shore, we headed for the airport, less than confident that we had covered the job. For some reason, when I picked up my complimentary ticket from Pan American Airways, it was a round trip to Rio, via Honolulu, Los Angeles, and Guatemala City. I had work obligations in Sydney, but seriously considered blowing them off and doing the whole trip. Given our failure to produce the goods in Hawaii, this may have been too much, even for as easygoing a boss as Alby. I compromised with a stolen week in California.

California was another first for me and, I have to admit, I was horrified as the plane dropped through the intense gray marine layer that I took for smog on descent into Los Angeles International. I rescued my naked Brothers Neilsen swallowtail (I still had no board bag) from the carousel, rented a Ford Pinto, and headed for the freeway. It was six on a gloomy Friday afternoon, and I had no idea where I was going. I turned right onto the 405 and edged south, listening to a new band called The Eagles on the radio.

The stop-start traffic was too much to bear, so I took the first beach exit south of the airport and found myself in Redondo Beach. A few blocks back from the beach, a neon sign caught my eye: EL RANCHO MOTEL—COLOR TV—NO POOL—WE JUST LOOK EXPENSIVE—VACANCY. I pulled into the drive and paid \$15 for a room on the first floor.

That night, I drank at a sleazy Tiki bar on the Redondo Pier and listened to a country rock outfit butcher the Eagles songs I’d heard on the radio earlier. It could have been depressing, but I found myself in the first throes of a love/hate relationship with Southern California style (or lack thereof) that endures to this day.

I skipped Hollywood and the theme parks and drove north on the 101, casting an eye over the famous but ridiculously crowded Rincon Point and coming to rest somewhere on the Montecito coast just south of Santa Barbara, where I could see waves breaking beyond the beachfront estates. I parked down a side street, grabbed my board,





spring as you leaned into turns. These were the big guns of the skate world and, after he'd whipped up an avocado salad for our lunch and rolled us a fat joint, Tom took me out to show me how to ride them.

I've never forgotten that session—speed warping down smooth, paved hills in the blue-gray of evening, occasionally catching glimpses of the ocean below us. Tom was fluid and fast, no tricks, just speed-lines all the way. Following behind him, I was scared shitless, but I made the runs unscathed, and when we settled back at the house and drank some beers, I felt a wave of contentment come over me that skating has never induced since. I invested \$50 in two of his skateboards to take home, but they were rarely used.

Before a fire that night, a little twisted to be sure, Tom told me about his bold plan to make the sliding game his own. "I'm going to take skateboards to the snow," he said. One of his financial backers nodded sagely from an armchair opposite us, sucking a joint through his teeth. "I'm gonna make a fucking fortune!" he added and cackled maniacally, then got more drinks.

Before the end of the 70s, Tom Sims had won a world skateboard title and patented a snowboard design. By the mid 80s, he'd added a world snowboard title to his collection, and the name Sims was synonymous with the best skateboards and snowboards in the world. He made his fortune, and then some. We'd just gotten back in touch through social media when he died of a heart attack in 2012.

I had only been back at work in Oz for a month or so when it was time to go to Bali. An invasion of surfers was underway on the island and I convinced Alby that, since he'd virtually invented it, we needed to keep covering the "Island of the Gods." I'd been dating a girl who worked at The Scullery in Avalon, so I invited her to come with me.

In those early days of surfer settlement, everyone tried to be "Bali-er than thou."

jumped a few fences, and paddled out to a glassy, head-high right with only a handful of surfers on it. As I reached the zone I nodded and smiled, as you do when you're new to a break. No one smiled back, but one guy paddled directly over to me and asked where I was from, so I told him.

"Australia!" he said. "No shit! That probably explains it. See, this is Hammond's Reef. It's private."

"I'm sorry," I said. "I had no idea." (All those signs, all those fences, who knew?) "I'll catch a wave straight in."

"Hell no, you're here now, let's surf," he said.

My new friend was a long-haired, mustachioed Aussie-phile named Tom Sims. When he found out that I worked for *Tracks* and Alby Falzon, he almost lost it.

"No shit!" he said. "Hey fellers, this guy writes for *Tracks* and he knows all the *Morning of the Earth* dudes!" I was no longer an intruder. I was an honored guest.

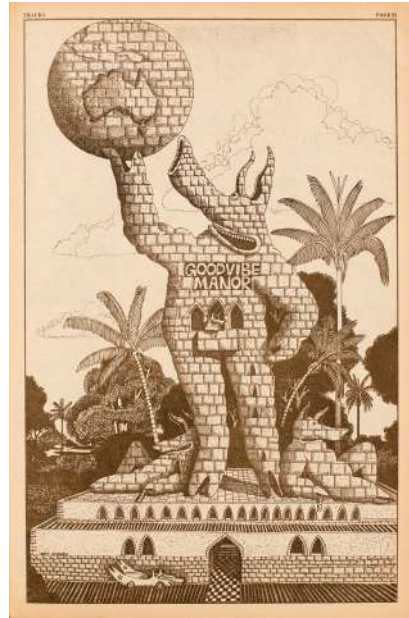
After our surf,

Tom guided me up into the Montecito hills to his mud-brick cabin, set between Spanish-style stucco mansions. I was staying with him, no excuses accepted. We'd skate the hills all afternoon, party all night, and surf again in the morning, he told me. I suddenly realized there were skateboards everywhere I looked, but most of them were unlike any I'd seen in Australia. They were around a meter long with beautiful, polished-wood decks that gave a very different kind of



Considering I'd only been there once before, my own contribution to the argument over whether we were indeed destroying the place was as naive as it was trite. However, it speaks of the times:

"The hippies will tell you," I wrote in my diary, "that the Kutarese are prime examples of what the tourists are doing to Bali—these people who live close to the sea and the devils within, far from the gods who guide the mountain people. It's hard to tell just what the Kuta locals think of



us. They realize that tourism has brought them wealth, which much of the population will never know, but they cling to their family traditions, make their offerings to the gods, respect authority at every level, and generally shun the freedoms of Western life."

"They're funny little people," my girl said, watching them take breakfast of tea and toast to a statue in the garden. "But no doubt they think we're funny big people, giving them enough money for a week's rice in exchange for clothes we'll never wear and paintings we'll never hang."

That season I worked with Jack McCoy and Dick Hoole, good photographers who had formed a business partnership called Propeller. Together we documented the return of Gerry Lopez, fast becoming the surf god of Bali, and the performances of young Australians Tony "Doris" Eltherington, Larry Blair, Peter "Grub" McCabe, and Terry Richardson.

Surfers were arriving from all over. You never knew who you might find paddling out. One morning, Jack McCoy screeched his bike to a halt in front of my room at Sunset Beach Bungalows. "Grab a tape recorder and jump on," he said. "Dora's in town, and he's agreed to an interview."

Miklos Chapin Dora, better known as Miki, was the black knight of Malibu, a legendary figure in Californian surfing, probably the best to ever ride the fabled waves of First Point, Surfrider Beach. It was said that Miki had never worked a day in his life—that he was a conman and a

fraudster who was on the run from the FBI. And now he was waiting for us in his room at the Legian Beach Hotel.

Dora was gruff when we knocked on his door. It looked like we might have woken him. As he let us in, he said, "No interview, no photos."

Still, we spent two hours with him in that darkened room.

In his early forties at the time, Miki was deeply tanned, unshaven, and wild-eyed. He spoke in staccato bursts about all kinds of weird shit. I was fascinated by his unusual delivery and by his dark-eyed, outlaw aura. I listened intently to his rant, then got McCoy to drop me off at a cane juice bar in Kuta, where I sat in the corner and scribbled down every bit of the conversation I could remember. We published this "unofficial interview" in *Tracks*. It took Miki more than 20 years to forgive me.

### California Dreaming

*Tracks* continued to assault the senses and grow ever more popular. Effectively, this meant that, editorially speaking, we could pretty much do whatever we wanted.

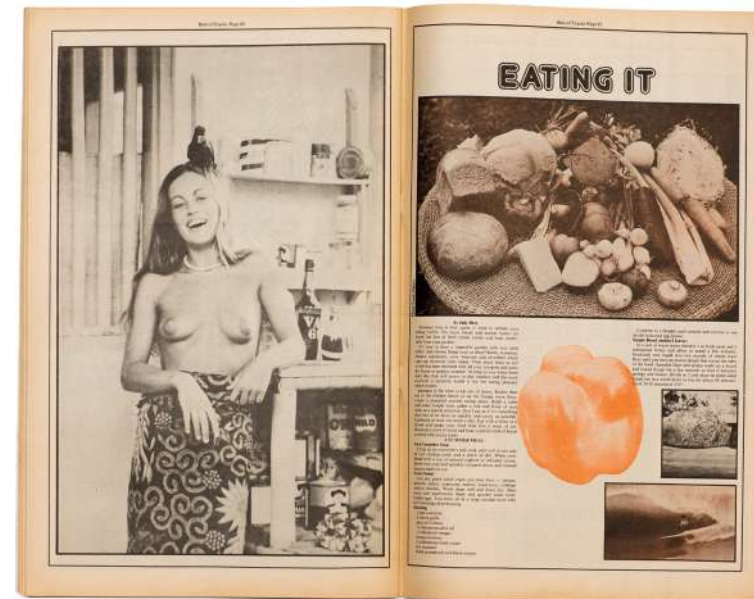
At the same time, the magazine's content was becoming more diverse. We looked for ways to marry diversity with outrage, and found them constantly. When an earnest hippie named Jan Whiting (who was to become a colleague and a dear friend) contributed an article about saving trees by using water (rather than paper) in your ablutions, we titled it, "How To Wipe Your Bum." When an excellent rock journalist named Annie Burton wrote a considered piece about misogyny and sexism in surfing, Frank Pithers talked our beautiful secretary, Mary, into posing naked on the sand with a paper bag over her head to illustrate the point, which, unwittingly, I'm sure it did.

We seemed to have no filters, but nor did anyone else in the youth culture of the time. I had become friends with Graeme "Shirley" Strachan, the lead singer of the hit Melbourne band the Skyhooks, after hearing him belt out a moving rendition of their party anthem, "Why Don't You All Get Fucked," on a paddock near Bells Beach. A tradie and a surfer from Phillip Island, Shirl seemed diametrically opposed to the Carlton, arty-farty sensibilities of his band-mates Red



Symons and Greg Macainsh. Thus, whenever the Hooks were in Sydney, he would bail out on the band and make a beeline for Whale Beach to surf and hang out.

On one of these visits, after a session at the Wedge and quite a few beers, I persuaded the rock star of the year to drop his dacks and pose sitting on our backyard dunny, reading the latest issue of *Tracks*. We ran Shirl on the bog as a full page. Only fervent pleading from his manager, Michael



Gudinski, stopped us from putting it on the cover.

I seemed to be surfing less and enjoying it more. Or at least enjoying the fact that I could hang out with the surf stars without having to pretend to be one. One of the reasons the act of surfing had taken a step back in my life was that I had fallen in love with another girl who worked at The Scullery. It might seem like I was working my way through the female staff, but this one was special, and, of course, she had history. She

was the former wife of one of Australia's greatest rock stars—then battling heroin addiction—with whom she had a young son.

I took on the baggage gleefully, with no thought of the consequences, and proposed to her at Brian Singer's house during the Bells Rip Curl Pro on Easter weekend. I even brought her a dog! We planned to marry...soonish. It was always going to end in tears, and I should have known that from the very early days, when I was hustled out

of bed and out of her house on Christmas morning because the rock star was coming to see his son. But love is blind, and I hung in until the bitter end.

Heartbroken again, I moved into a rental house just a few doors down from the *Tracks* office, sharing it with some new friends from Cornwall: surfboard shaper Paul Holmes and his partner, Simonne Renvoize. Paul was a talented writer who had also done some editing, so he soon became associate editor while shaping part-time. We also had a job for Simonne after our secretary, Mary, unexpectedly landed an extra's role on the feature film *Mad Dog Morgan*, then ran off with its star, Dennis Hopper, to Texas. Simonne took over as my secretary.

I threw myself into work, as many surf trips as I could fit in, and an increasing flirtation with cocaine, which suddenly seemed to be everywhere on the peninsula. Then I met another girl. Her name was Jackie, and she lived right across the street. She had just split up with her American musician husband and was sharing an old beach house with another American musician. I knew she had a young son, Sol, because he used to find his way up to the *Tracks* office from time to time to play with Frank Pithers' young son, Zahn. I didn't find out about her one-year-old daughter, Sophie, until Jackie appeared at the door one day with a little cutie on her hip.

Jackie Sadler had arrived from England with her parents and sister as "ten-pound Poms" on the liner *Oriana* in 1963. A dozen years later, there was no trace of an accent. She was a slinky, sexy thing who spent a lot of the summer on the beach topless, her tan complete but for a tiny, white bikini stripe. But she also had a sharp mind, a wicked tongue, and we laughed about the same things. She'd seen me on TV, doing the surf report from a lumpy bed. Her friends had warned her off, describing me as a shallow, self-obsessed womanizer, but it still began to happen. And it happened very fast. And, once again, I found myself taking on the mantle of stepdad



with no thought for the consequences, nor any comprehension of the years of bitterness and rancor that lay ahead (before time would eventually heal the wounds, and the children's father and I would form a friendship based on, among other things, our mutual love of surfing).

Once again, just as a relationship was developing into something serious, perhaps even lasting, I was committed to a long trip away. I kissed Jackie and the kids and took off for California and Hawaii for two months.

My second trip to California was on another weird, cheap ticket, this one requiring me to enter via Vancouver, Canada. No one knew that there was good surf a ferry ride away on Victoria Island, so I didn't plan to linger there. I found, however, that I couldn't rent a car to take over the border, so I took a cheap room near the bus terminal and grabbed a Greyhound to Seattle in the morning. Again, I had trouble negotiating a one-way rental to Los Angeles. For an arm and a leg, National kitted me out with a white 1976 Buick Century coupe with layback seats, one for me and one for my board.

I filled the center console with ice, jammed a few Coors beers in there, and drove south through the redwood forests of the Pacific Northwest, Waylon Jennings thumping out of a country music station and keeping me awake. In the early hours, I pulled into a parking lot behind a roadhouse, pushed back my seat, and slept like a baby. In the morning, it was a short drive across the border into California, where I found inviting waves in Crescent City.

Over the years, I've surfed up and down the West Coast of the U.S., and had plenty of good sessions and plenty of shockers. I've surfed lonely coves in Big Sur and been chased out of the water by a psychopath at Huntington Pier. Much of it has become a blur, but I can remember every detail of that first session with a couple of throwback locals in ducktail wetsuits at Crescent Beach in 1976. My diary notes tell me that the water was a chilly 49 degrees Fahrenheit and that the large pebbles on the shore made minced meat of my feet. They don't mention the head-high sets bobbing up in the murky water or how I had to learn to dodge the logs in the lineup. All of that is instead etched in my memory bank.

In the afternoon, I drove the beautiful coast road through tall stands of Redwoods to a town called Fort Bragg, where I rolled into an old-style saloon and drank a beer while I consulted a tourist



map. Mendocino was just down the road. I'd heard of Mendocino, courtesy of a 60s hit for a band called the Sir Douglas Quintet.

"What goes on in Mendocino?" I asked the bartender.

"Ain't nothin' there but hippies an' drugs," he said.

I left a couple of bucks on the bar, ran to the Buick, and pointed her south.

Just outside of town, I picked up a hitchhiker



in a fringed buckskin jacket who squeezed under my surfboard and directed me to the Caspar Inn, where the joint was jumpin' to a very good 3-piece band. The clientele ranged from ageing flower people in robes to hip cowboys and bikers in leather. I made some friends and, as night turned into morning, we progressed to the Sea Gull Inn, where a shambling drunk of a man joined our group and began dunking cigarettes into a vial of hash oil and passing them around.

I was introduced to Gene Clark, founding member of The Byrds, who had moved to Mendocino to overcome his drug and alcohol problems. (That didn't seem to be going well.)

Nursing a hangover the next morning, I drove to Marin County, north of San Francisco, and found my way to John Grissim's converted wine-barrel home at Stinson Beach, where the former editor of *Tracks* limped out to greet me. (Clearly the Filipino faith healers had let him down.) Grissim had a supersized can of Foster's beer in one hand and a fat joint in the other.

"Jeez, mate," he called in exaggerated, mock-Aussie. "How ya bloody been, ya bastard?" I had never heard Grissim talk like this. I guessed he was excited to see me.

Grissim said that between Stinson and nearby Bolinas there was plenty of surf, though I noticed that his board, which stood decoratively beside a framed *Rolling Stone* cover, was not waxed. Still, we tried, and were rewarded with a few small sessions at a break out in front of the Bolinas Lagoon and at Stinson's main beach.

I liked the pace of life in West Marin, full of hippies and dreamers, and Grissim did a good job of introducing me around. In the main street of Bolinas there was a saloon on one side of the road called Scowly's and, on the other, Smiley's. Behind the bar at Smiley's we found Jim Anderson, a well-known gay rights activist and co-editor of the underground magazine *OZ*, which had been brought to trial on obscenity charges in both

Australia and London. Down on the beach, I met the famous Mitchell brothers, Jim and Artie, who were then making a fortune out of porn films like *Behind the Green Door*. We went back to their beachside compound for drinks and the ubiquitous lines of coke. They seemed like fun guys—or so I thought at the time. Jim would later shoot his brother dead.

Grissim also spent a lot of time on the phone lining up interviews for me in San Francisco. The prize among these was a marathon three-hour session with the enigmatic Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane. I walked into that one a little bit in awe, and walked out a little bit in love. On my final weekend in the Bay Area, Grissim got me invited to the party of the year at the crumbling North Beach mansion of the avant-garde, German-born artist Wilfried Sätty, who was made famous by his psychedelic poster art and his illustration of the works of Edgar Allan Poe.

There seemed to be bars set up in dark alcoves

(THIS PAGE) PHOTO BY ADAM STONE

on every floor of the rambling house and, around each of them, the star power was dazzling. In one corner Jack Nicholson juggled several drinks as he moved to a table. In another, Grace Slick was deep in earnest conversation with Paul Kantner. Over there was the singer Dan Hicks and *Rolling Stone* publisher Jann Wenner. It was Disneyland for starstruck, drooling dickheads. I tried to stay cool but just couldn't.

When most of the guests had drifted off, I found myself with Grissim and Sätty and a few others in a vast drawing room, full of overstuffed furniture and dark art on the walls. When I enquired about his work, Sätty signed a collection called *Time Zone* for me. I still have it, with its scrawled pencil inscription: "To Fil." He, also, died young. Two men at the drawing room table, who turned out to be half of a San Francisco band called The Tubes, were pouring powder onto the glass-top and arranging it in thick lines. I asked Sätty what it was, fearing it might be heroin.

"It's called green," he said. "It will take you to places you never dreamed existed."

A Tube pushed a straw under my nose. I inhaled deeply and the night developed a mind of its own. I still had my copy of Sätty's book as I made my way through the gray dawn streets to my hotel, but that is all I can tell you.

I was running out of time. Soon, I'd have to be back in Sydney. I ditched the Buick and flew to L.A., hoping to renew my acquaintance with surfing. Two things were different about Southern California this time. One, the weather and the surf were a lot better in November than in the gloom of June. Two, the longboard was back. Less than a decade since the 9-foot plus "Malibu" disappeared off the face of the earth, expunged by the shortboard design revolution—a shift that sent many big manufacturers to the wall—the damned thing was back.

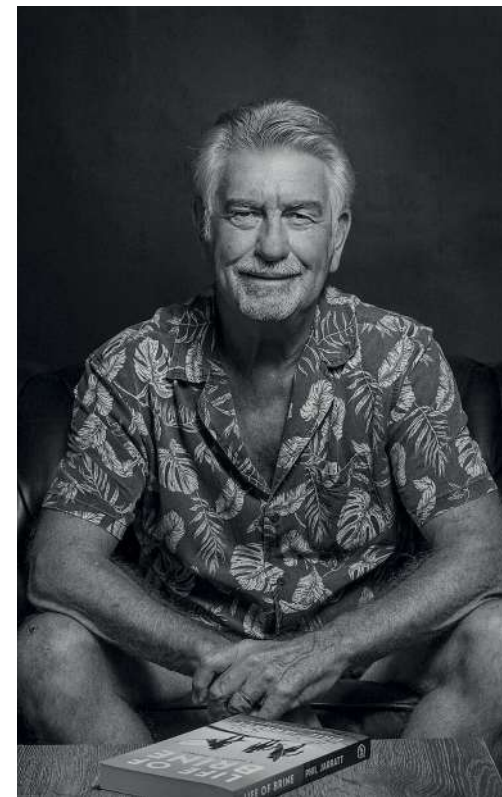
"Herbie Fletcher is making and surfing 8-foot noseriders," I wrote in the December 1976 issue of *Tracks*. "Art Brewer at *Surfer* has a brand new double-ended Stretch...and up at Pacific Palisades, yesterday's hero, Lance Carson, is back in business with 9-foot hotdoggers."

Although it would take nearly another decade to reach Australia, California's longboard renaissance was laid out for me in all its glory when Denny Aaberg took me for a surf at Malibu on a very late-season south swell. Denny, who with brother Kemp was Malibu aristocracy, had been to Australia and we had many mutual friends. He was a writer too, and had written a hilarious and well-received article for *Tracks* called "No Pants Mance." As we cruised around the First Point lineup, sneaking waves off shortboarders with our superior paddling speed, Denny commented, "I think eventually there will be two accepted styles of surfing—shortboard and longboard side by side. The guys who were hot ten years ago will be stars all over again."

If you'd said this at 54th Street in Newport Beach—or at Narrabeen, or Kirra—in 1976, you would have had to wash your mouth out with

soap (as my mum was wont to say), but Denny was proven right.

Denny had developed "No Pants Mance" into a screenplay that glorified surfing's golden years and lamented their passing. The Hollywood producer and director John Milius—himself a one-time Malibu surfer—had purchased the rights. *Big Wednesday* was now in pre-production, and Denny arranged for me to interview Milius at Burbank Studios.



Phil Jarratt, Noosa Heads, Australia, 2017.

I found him in a plush director's office going through the final draft of the script with Denny. The walls of the air-conditioned suite were lined with a curious blend of culture symbols: stuffed bears and hunting trophies and faded photographs of great days at Malibu in the 1960s. Milius himself looked a little like Sean Connery in *The Wind and the Lion* (a recent Milius film). He played menacingly with a paper knife while we talked.

Milius was a big man with a penchant for a grand gesture and grandiose turns of phrase. Waving his stogie around, his feet on the desk, the afternoon sun filtering through the window and catching the smoke in blue shafts, he said, "This is probably the most personal film I will ever make. This is surfing's *How Green Was My Valley*—the

loss of an aristocracy, the end of an era."

He may have been overcooking the egg, particularly in light of *Big Wednesday's* mediocre box office returns when it was released in 1978, but it did speak to my generation of surfers, and to all those who have followed. It's still surfing's leading cult classic today.

The romance between Mary Camarda, my old secretary, and Dennis Hopper was over and she was living in West Los Angeles on La Cienega. I stayed for a few days and was amazed at her connections. She was another John Grissim! I found myself sitting four tables from the stage at The Troubadour nightclub on Waylon Jennings' opening night, courtesy of *Billboard Magazine*. The back of my ticket read, "unlimited free drinks."

While staying with Mary, I received a phone call from Simonne Renvoize in the *Tracks* office, relaying bad news. The pioneer surf filmmaker and publisher Bob Evans had died suddenly of a brain hemorrhage in Florida while road-showing his movie, *Drouyn and Friends*. He was 47.

Back when I had rented a place in Whale Beach, "Evo" had been my neighbor. I'd dated his kids' nanny. We'd become friends, frequently sharing an evening scotch on his veranda. I'd attended the media preview of *Drouyn*, which Evo believed was his best work, and had celebrated with him and Peter Drouyn, the temperamental but hugely entertaining subject of the film, into the wee hours. I was devastated when I heard the news of his death.

"Oh, and Alby has sold *Tracks*," Simonne said as an afterthought.

"He's fucking what?"

I couldn't believe it, but he had—to an English publisher named Philip Mason, a stuttering dandy of a man who, in those days, bore a passing resemblance to the singer Bryan Ferry. Philip published *Rock Australia Magazine (RAM)*—where my Grace Slick interview was published—and was looking to create a stable of youth publications. I had no right to, but I felt slighted that Alby hadn't consulted me before the deal was done. I felt like he'd thrown us to the wolves. Overnight we'd gone from a boss who was a laid-back surfer to one who was an ambitious businessman with one eye forever on the budget.

I wondered if *Tracks* would survive. Of course, my fears were unfounded, and a very different form of *Tracks* still thrives as it approaches its fiftieth anniversary. I was out of the editor's chair by the end of the 70s and off on a journey that would see me in and out of the surf media and industry like a demented yo-yo. The current editor of *Tracks* is a kindly soul and I find myself with a column in the back of the mag, where I can make appropriately grumpy noises from the gallery. ●

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