

VENICE

Written by
Byron Balasco

Directed by
McG

ACT ONE

EXT. VENICE, CALIFORNIA - DAY

CLOSE ON: "Venice Reconstituted," Rip Cronk's surrealist MURAL of the Venice Boardwalk. PUSH IN on the roller-skating Botticelli Venus, her thought bubble reads:

HISTORY IS A MYTH...

CHRIS (V.O.)
Venice, California is my home.

SERIES OF SHOTS of this iconic SoCal town: The Venice Sign, surfers carving up the Breakers, the funky homes lining the canals, the surf shacks...

CHRIS (V.O.)
Everything is for fun and for free.
Just wake up, let Venice handle the rest.

Eclectic beautiful people at an all day/everyday bohemian beach party. We TILT UP to the sun and BURN TO...

EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY

CHYRON: 26 years ago. The same beach. A SURFBOARD, a blanket, and a young bohemian Venice couple, JAY CARVER (20's, charismatic, free-spirit) and his wife LISA (20's, lovely).

CHRIS (V.O.)
My parents, Jay and Lisa, were dogtown surf-hippies. My father's key to happiness went something like this: 'Find something that makes you feel good, do it until it doesn't, then find something else.'

She leans back in his arms cuddling a NEWBORN CHRIS CARVER.

CHRIS (V.O.)
To that my mom would say; 'No jackass. You'll only be truly happy when you love something more than yourself.'

Jay kisses her neck, wraps his arms around his young family.

CHRIS (V.O.)
My father was truly happy...

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

CHRIS (V.O.)
 I didn't play baseball growing up.
 I wasn't a boy scout. Didn't play
 the trombone...

Jay teaches Chris, now a toddler, how to surf on a longboard.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 But I could surf before I could
 walk. And that's what we did
 everyday...

EXT. VENICE BEACH - DAY

A shimmering honey-colored day. Venice beach party. Chris (8) and his best friend JOSH NANCE (8) run up from the ocean, both with surfboards to their fathers Jay and GORDY NANCE (rugged all-American good looks) with Lisa.

We also meet Jay's brother, ROBBIE CARVER (hardcore surfer).

CHRIS (V.O.)
 Friends were like family. And my
 father's best friend was Gordy
 Nance.

CLOSE ON Gordy and Jay, laughing, drinking beer.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 They grew up together on Rose St.
 His son, Josh, was like a brother
 to me. Our families were
 inseparable. That's how it was.
 And that's how the business was
 born...

EXT. VENICE - BEACH - DAY

QUICK POPS: WHOOSH, WHOOSH, WHOOSH -- Jay silk-screens T-SHIRTS on the beach out of an Airstream. We glimpse the shirt LOGO: SWELL. Chris mixes dyes...

CHRIS (V.O.)
 They started a company together
 called Swell. The idea was simple:
 Make clothes we want to wear, make
 boards we want to surf, for Venice,
 by Venice. That was it. My father
 was the heart. Gordy was the
 hustle.

Chris hands a stack of T-shirts to Josh who runs around the trailer to find Gordy with a cashbox and a line of CUSTOMERS.

EXT. SURF SHOP - DAY

CHRIS (V.O.)
And it worked.

Modest surf shop with a detached shed. SIGN reads: SWELL. Jay and Gordy strike a grand opening pose in front of the shop, arms around each other, big proud smiles.

CHRIS (V.O.)
It wasn't long until every old-head
and grommet in Venice proper was
wearing Swell.

POPS of Swell all over Venice: On surfers, models, musicians, teenagers at the skate park...

EXT. BEACH BAR - DAY

Gordy, Jay, Robbie, and Lisa at a patio table, Swell t-shirts on, beers, Jay's arm slung over his love Lisa. Sublime.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Swell became a Venice institution.
My father and Gordy were a perfect
balance of art and commerce.
Business was good. Our families
started to grow...

CAMERA FLASHES take us through Carver and Nance family PHOTOS through the years: at the Swell store, the beach, Venice. With each shot, the families grow. Last photo will be CARVER -- Jay, Lisa (PREGNANT), Chris, young son SHEALY. NANCE: Gordy, Josh, and young daughter SOPHIE...

EXT. CARVER HOUSE - BACKYARD

BBQ overlooking the canals: Carver family, the Nances and a few other good FRIENDS (surfers), lots of love. Robbie works the grill, drinks a beer, sneaks a sip to Chris and Josh (both now 13) -- shhh. Sophie tags along.

CHRIS (V.O.)
But money changes everything...

Everybody's having fun. But Lisa (pregnant) is tense. She bounces her second son, Shealy, on her knee...

LISA'S POV: Through the kitchen window we see Jay (sallow, strung out, missing the spirit we saw before) and Gordy arguing, it's heated. Volatile Jay throws a glass. Storms out of the house past the party.

Lisa's troubled, this has been happening a lot lately. Gordy in the kitchen, rubs his neck in frustration.

EXT. CARVER HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

A trail in the grass: bent spoon, rubber tube, syringe. *

CHRIS (V.O.)
And life turns on a dime.

Chris stands at the edge of the canal, numb, saucer-eyes: Jay Carver floats dead in the canal. Chris screams. Lisa rushes out, Gordy right behind her...

CHRIS (V.O.)
When my father died, everything changed.

PUSH IN ON Chris's eyes then MATCH TO...

INT. SAN QUENTIN PRISON - CELL

Those very same eyes, now deepened. PULL BACK TO REVEAL CHRIS CARVER: now 27, contained, soulful eyes, sits at a molded metal desk sketching the SILHOUETTE of his father surfing, barrel crouch, wild hair, from an old worn PHOTO.

CHYRON: PRESENT DAY. A PRISON GUARD comes to the cell door.

PRISON GUARD
Let's go, Carver. Today's the day.

Chris slips the silhouette into a sketchbook.

INT. SAN QUENTIN PRISON - DISCHARGE - DAY

QUICK SHOTS: Chris changes from his prison jumper into his civilian clothes. Athlete's body. Pulls on jeans, beat up Vans, a threadbare T-SHIRT -- the faded logo reads SWELL.

EXT. SAN QUENTIN PRISON - PARKING LOT - DAY

LISA CARVER, 44, warm, bohemian elegance, leans against a '77 FORD F-SERIES TRUCK -- arms folded, fingers tapping, feigning calm but jumping out of her skin.

The gates buzz open. Chris exits with just his sketchbook. Sees his mom. She rushes to him. They embrace. He can feel her sobbing. Holds her tighter.

CHRIS

Hi, mom.

She pulls back, wipes tears. Her son is free. Chris smiles at her. They walk back to the truck...

EXT. PCH - DAY

Chris's truck speeds down the PCH south from Marin to Los Angeles past cliffs and breathtaking vistas over the sparkling ocean. Beats the shit out of San Quentin.

INT. CHRIS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Windows down. Lisa beams. Chris takes an exit...

EXT. VENICE, CALIFORNIA - DAY

Sun pours down as we follow Chris through the streets of modern VENICE -- Dogtown meets Boomtown: Multi-million dollar mansions wedged next to surfer bungalows. A Bentley parked in front of a wall of graffiti... The city's a clash of sex, art, ocean, money, soul -- primal cravings of life. From hip trendy Abbot Kinney with its upscale cafes, galleries, and boutiques, populated by the SURFERS and SKATERS flirting with bohemian chic MODELS in bikinis to Venice Originals.

Lisa watches as Chris takes it all in...

LISA

(re Venice)

Does it look the same?

CHRIS

Mostly.

(then)

How's it going at the shop?

A beat. She has to tell him...

LISA

Not great. We're losing money. I'm only there two days a week and even then there's not much to do. Your uncle Robbie's devastated. Of course he thinks Gordy's using his connections at the bank to cut our line of credit.

CHRIS

Is he?

LISA

He's definitely started circling.

CHRIS
Stealing Swell wasn't enough? Now
he wants our shop too?

LISA
(battle weary)
Part of me says let it go. Maybe
it's time for us to move on.

Chris absorbs, tries to suppress his anger. Lisa senses it.

LISA (CONT'D)
You have to promise me something,
Chris. Promise me you won't get
sucked into this --

CHRIS
Mom, I'm not.

LISA
I mean it. I lost you for six
years. I'm not going through it
again.

CHRIS
That's not gonna happen.

LISA
You say that but as soon as we get
to the party later everybody's
gonna be pulling at you. Robbie's
all wound up about you coming home
and raising hell with him --

CHRIS
It's not gonna happen because I'm
not staying in Venice.

Lisa's taken aback.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I want to spend a couple days with
you and Shealy and Nico. But then
I'm going to Costa Rica.

LISA
What's in Costa Rica?

CHRIS
Nothing. That's the point. I can
shape boards, make enough money to
surf and eat. That's what I need.
You said it yourself, there's too
much history here.

Lisa contains her emotion. Just got her son back, now she's losing him again.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I know it's not what you want to hear.

But Lisa's selfless -- it's what's best for Chris.

LISA

You're right. Doesn't matter what I want to hear or anyone else. It's your life. You deserve happiness. That's all I ever wanted for you.

(then)

But be careful while you're here. This town won't let you go without a fight.

Off Chris...

EXT. LOFT CONSTRUCTION - DAY

Chris's uncle ROBBIE CARVER (now 51, we recognize him as Jay Carver's brother from the opening sequence), Dogtown classic, handsome lined features, shirtless, still shredded, DUFFEL BAG strapped to his back, stands before a half-built live-work loft space.

SIGN: A PHOTO of GORDY NANCE (now 49). "A GORDY NANCE PROPERTY: KEEPING VENICE BEAUTIFUL". Robbie reviles that sign. He squeezes past the construction fence and we --

CUT TO:

INT. LOFT CONSTRUCTION - MOMENTS LATER

QUICK SHOTS: Robbie unzips the duffel. Douses the place with highly flammable surfboard RESIN. Pulls a crude PIPE-BOMB from the bag. Sets the timer. Gets the fuck out.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANALS - MOMENTS LATER

Robbie paddleboards away. Checks his watch.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. LOFT CONSTRUCTION

The loft... then BOOM!! The structure EXPLODES. Engulfed in flames. As the photo of Gordy's face burns we MATCH TO...

EXT. OCEAN - BREAKWATERS - DAY

GORDY NANCE, focused, rugged stud, dropping in on a monster WAVE. Other SURFERS defer. Gordy's the alpha. He cuts back into a wave and we FREEZE on the bottom of his board -- SWELL, written in bold colors.

EXT. SWELL CORPORATE CAMPUS - DAY

Swell's come a long way... The Swell Surf and Sport Corporate Campus: A stunning cluster of low-slung blonde wood buildings with dramatic Fleetwood doors opening to a courtyard where EMPLOYEES (hip, young, eclectic) congregate, skate, grill out -- dream jobs in a dream office. Gordy cuts through campus, SURFBOARD he was just using under his arm, hair still wet, dressed in expensive California comfort (think James Perse). "Good morning, Gordy's" from everyone. Gordy continues, looks tense...

INT. SWELL CORPORATE CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

...Gordy passes all the departments: Surfboards, Apparel, Marketing. The Swell logo everywhere. MURALS and massive surfing PHOTOGRAPHS of the Swell lifestyle.

His son JOSH NANCE, now 27, hip, dad's looks, on top of his shit, catches up to him.

JOSH

Dad, we need to talk.

GORDY

No kidding. I just rode the new design. Toxic Chinese crap probably gave me cancer.

Gordy's assistant, PENNY 20's, tattoos, sexy, all business.

GORDY (CONT'D)

Morning, Penny.

INT. GORDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Gordy and Josh enter the huge, vibrant, airy space packed with PHOTOS (family: Gordy, Josh and Sophie, Old Swell photos minus Jay Carver), folk art, surfboards, toys, expensive furniture. Big money. Gordy throws down the board.

GORDY

Feels like I'm surfing a goddamn piece of plywood.

JOSH

You said save money so I moved production to China. Told you there'd be a dip in quality.

GORDY

It can't just be about saving money, son. We gotta make it too.

JOSH

I understand that.

GORDY

Do you? Do you understand that if things keep going in this direction there will be no company?

JOSH

Yes, dad. I'm the guy that looks at the books everyday.

Gordy never gives him an inch, never satisfied. Josh endures. Tosses the file on his father's desk.

GORDY

More good news?

JOSH

Sales figures for the new apparel line. It tanked.

Gordy looks over the file. Stressed.

GORDY

What are we doing wrong here? It's not lack of exposure, we're in every Walmart from here to Miami.

JOSH

I think that's part of the problem. We've lost our way. We're focus grouping what some kid in Kansas wants to wear, but that's backwards. What he wants is Venice. We have to recapture that.

GORDY

Then you need to get with Yoki and come up with some better designs. Ask your sister for help, she's got great taste.

JOSH
 (defensive)
 Sophie doesn't work here and I'm
 already into it with Yoki.

Gordy mulls things, frustrated. Eyes land on a PHOTO: The
 OLD SWELL SHOP -- young smiling Gordy proudly out front.

GORDY
 I want that shop back from Robbie
 Carver. If we're gonna re-brand it
 has to start here, in Venice, in
 the cradle. I want our flagship
 store in Swell's original location.
 Where I built this thing.

JOSH
 I'm working on it. Robbie's four
 months late on his payments. Bank
 knows we have a cash offer ready to
 go as soon as the shop goes into
 foreclosure. Unfortunately, Robbie
 knows too. He set another fire at
 the Navy St. development this
 morning.

GORDY
 That's twice in the last month.

JOSH
 The cops are opening an
 investigation, we should tell them
 about Robbie. *

GORDY
 No. It'll complicate the deal. *

JOSH
 He could kill someone. *

GORDY
 (sharp)
 I'll handle it. Honestly, I'm more
 concerned about Chris coming back.
 God knows where his head's at. Last
 thing we need right now is him
 backing Robbie up.

Josh clearly has his own complicated feelings about Chris's
 return. Penny BUZZES.

PENNY (THOUGH INTERCOM)
 Sophie's here.

GORDY

Send her in.

(to Josh)

Let's not mention any of this to Sophie.

SOPHIE NANCE enters -- 22, California stunner, effortless style, pure heart. Gordy brightens for his daughter.

GORDY (CONT'D)

Sophie-girl. Thank you for coming by.

SOPHIE

Hey, daddy.

Gordy gives her a hug and a kiss.

GORDY

Look at you. You're the morning sun.

SOPHIE

(to Josh)

Uh-oh. What's he about to ask me?

Josh smiles. Kisses her on the cheek on his way out.

JOSH

I gotta meeting with Yoki.

GORDY

Well, since you asked. I want to talk about your boyfriend.

Gordy turns around a life-sized promo CUT OUT of surfer ALEX GAINES -- ripped, hot, wet, Swell board-shorts, mega-watt smile. "ALEX GAINES FOR SWELL." Gordy offers some playful urging... *
*

SOPHIE

He's not my boyfriend -- *

GORDY

(fingers crossed)

Yet. *

SOPHIE *

We're just dating. It's been two months. We're having fun. *

GORDY

No pressure. I'm just saying, you could do a lot worse than Alex Gaines. And he also happens to move a lot of merchandize for us.

*
*
*
*

SOPHIE

(moving on)

I'm well aware. But I'm running late, so what did you want to talk about?

*
*
*
*
*

GORDY

Alex was just named ASP's World Tour Champion for the fifth straight year and I thought it would be nice if we threw a party for him at the house. We'll call it a fundraiser, charge a grand a plate and donate the proceeds to the city.

*
*
*
*
*

SOPHIE

We?

GORDY

We as in I need you to plan it. Day after tomorrow. Soon as he gets back.

*

SOPHIE

I'm so busy with the boutique and trying to launch a second location, isn't there somebody here that can do it?

GORDY

It will mean more if you're involved. Look, Hurley's making a big play for Alex and quite frankly we can't match the kind of cash they're offering. I need to show Alex that Swell is his family. I think it'd mean a lot to him if you took the reins on this.

Sophie rolls her eyes, smiles at her father -- piece of work.

SOPHIE

You have no shame.

GORDY

I have no choice. Please, sweetheart.

(MORE)

GORDY (CONT'D)

I'm throwing myself at your feet.
Swell can't afford to lose Alex.

(then)

You'd be doing a nice thing for
Alex, the city you love, and your
father. Everybody wins.

*

Hard to say no to her father.

SOPHIE

OK. I'll do it.

GORDY

I'm forever in your debt.

SOPHIE

I gotta run.

Gordy kisses her goodbye. She leaves, his facade falls, he hated that. His mood darkens as he dials his CELL.

GORDY (INTO PHONE)

Tito, it's Gordy. There's been
another fire...

INT. CHRIS'S TRUCK - DAY

Chris and Lisa pull into the beach parking lot. Chris's welcome home BEACH PARTY already in progress. Chris kills the ignition. They notice an old Bronco parked nearby. SOMEONE inside tips back a bottle of Tequila. Lisa's troubled.

LISA

He knows you're leaving. I had Nico
tell him.

They exit. Lisa walks to the party, Chris to the Bronco, he KNOCKS on the window and we pop --

INT. SHEALY'S BRONCO - DAY

SHEALY CARVER, 23, lost boy good looks, damaged, stewing, in his truck with a BOTTLE of Tequila watching the party. He ignores Chris. Big pull of Tequila. Chris knocks harder.

CHRIS

Shealy, come on.

Shealy rolls down the window.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(re: the Tequila)

What are you doing?

SHEALY
Celebrating you, brother --

Chris suddenly reaches in, pins Shealy back to the seat, and grabs the KEYS from the ignition. Shealy shakes his head at Chris playing big brother.

SHEALY (CONT'D)
King Chris gracing us all with his presence.

CHRIS
You're upsetting mom. You want to be pissed at me for leaving, fine. But show her some respect.

SHEALY
Pissed at you for leaving? Nah, man, you've been gone for years.

We feel Shealy's anger and hurt at his brother's absence. Shealy polishes off the bottle then gets out...

EXT. BEACH PARTY - DAY

At the edge of the party, Chris and Shealy approach NICO CARVER, 17, adorable type-A, waiting by an OLD LONGBOARD stuck in the sand as a welcome SIGN: "WELCOME HOME CHRIS!" Shealy blows past to the party, unsteady.

NICO
Wow. Drink much, Shealy?

CHRIS
Hi, Nico.

NICO
Welcome back, big brother.

They hug.

CHRIS
(re: Shealy)
He's in rare form.

NICO
No, actually, that's pretty much how he's been since you left. You're the only one he's ever listened to.

CHRIS
Is Jess here yet?

NICO

Oh yeah. First to arrive with a big smile on her face.

Chris looks to the party, braces himself.

CHRIS

I haven't told her.

NICO

Well, it's not a party unless somebody's crying, right?

Chris smiles. Puts his arm around Nico and we follow them into the quintessential Venice beach party: A COUPLE AIRSTREAM TRAILERS in the sand, live MUSIC, makeshift BAR and a pure eclectic Venice CROWD -- hip, sexy, WHITE, BLACK, LATINO surfers all drink, grill, dance, swim, and surf. Chris greets old friends, hero's welcome, then finally...

JESS ROMAN, 25, gorgeous, sexy, approaches. She's been waiting six long years for this.

CHRIS

Hi, Jess.

A beat, then she throws her arms around Chris. Chris holds her, then breaks the moment.

JESS

What is it, baby? What's wrong?

CHRIS

Can we talk alone?

Chris takes her hand and we TIME CUT to...

MOMENTS LATER: Chris and Jess alone by an Airstream.

JESS

(upset)

I can come with you.

CHRIS

No, Jess, you have so much going here. You're sponsored now, you're actually making money surfing. I can't ask you to leave that.

JESS

It'd be nice if you did. Chris, we're supposed to be together. I waited for you.

CHRIS
I told you not to --

JESS
But I did because I love you. How
could you not tell me?

CHRIS
I should have.
(trying to let her down)
You mean so much to me, Jess. But
you have a life in Venice. And I
have to go find mine.

JESS
I thought we were gonna find it
together.

Nico interrupts.

NICO
Hey. Mom's looking for you.

A beat. Chris looks to Jess.

CHRIS
Can we talk about this more
tomorrow night at the house?

Jess nods. Over this, we HEAR the CLINKING of a glass and
TIME CUT to... LATER: Lisa addresses the party. *
*

LISA
Obviously, I'm very happy today.
My baby's home. Even for just a
little while. We missed you,
Chrissy.

Cheers for Chris. He smiles. Lisa pulls him up to speak.

CHRIS
I don't really have a lot to say.

LISA
What else is new?

Everyone laughs. Jess looks away, upset.

CHRIS
This is intense, all you guys
showing out for me. Thank you.
Because the truth is, I don't
deserve it. I let a lot of people
down. People I love.
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

When I was locked up, I kept thinking of my dad -- how disappointed he'd be that I was rotting in a cell instead of living every inch of my life like he would. So that's my promise. I'm gonna live a life that he'd be proud of. He'd say; 'light out and find your way.' But I know wherever I end up, this will always be my home.

(beat, to his mom)

Can I stop talking?

LISA

Yes. Everybody drink, we have a ton of booze to get through.

The party cranks up. Chris gives Lisa a hug. Jess watches him. Chris looks up to see his uncle Robbie has arrived -- not in a party mood.

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Down the beach, Chris and Robbie, animated, talk. A GIRL SURFS at a distance.

ROBBIE

Shealy told me you're leaving - I thought he was high. You know Gordy's coming after the shop.

CHRIS

I heard.

ROBBIE

I need you here.

Robbie stops him.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

I've sat by for years watching Gordy spread like a cancer through Venice. I held my tongue, kept the peace -- mostly out of respect for your mother. But now he's after the last bit of ground this family has.

CHRIS

Robbie, what do you want me to do?

ROBBIE

Help me fight him -- I can't do it alone. The war is heating up again. Gordy's trying to bury us.

CHRIS

All due respect, but I've been gone for six years. I'm not at war with anyone.

Chris walks away.

ROBBIE

Chris -

Chris waves him off and walks alone down the beach. Then he suddenly stops. Struck. His eyes pulled to that surfer girl.

CHRIS'S POV: Time slows. Chris watches her surf, graceful, natural, effortless style. Totally connected to the break. Chris can't take his eyes off of her as she paddles in -- it's visceral, magnetic. And as she walks up the beach, we finally reveal -- it's SOPHIE NANCE. She unzips her backpack and slips on her dress. She's a vision: saltwater, sun-kissed, beautiful. Chris can't stop it - he goes to her. She looks up -- shocked to see him. *

SOPHIE

Chris? Oh my god... Hi.

CHRIS

Hi. You look... last time I saw you, you had the pigtails and braces...

SOPHIE

(knows she's beautiful)
It's been awhile.

Her smile hits him like a bolt. They fumble through.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

So, are you back in Venice or..?

CHRIS

No... Just a couple days. Then Costa Rica...

SOPHIE

That's too bad. Venice hasn't been the same without you.

But they barely hear the words. Lost in each other.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Were you watching me surf?

CHRIS
I was. How'd you get so good?

SOPHIE
Watching you. You have any tips for me?

Every nerve and fiber pulls them together.

CHRIS
Let go. Lose yourself. And don't fight the wave --

SOPHIE
Because the wave always wins.

They let themselves linger... a perfect connection.

CHRIS
But mostly... just try not to drown.

Sophie laughs. Then notices Jess and Robbie watching from a distance.

SOPHIE
Somebody's looking for you.

Chris looks back to Jess and Robbie.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
I should go. Have fun in Costa Rica. It was good to see you.

CHRIS
Good to see you too, Sophie.

Sophie smiles, grabs her bag, walks down the beach. Chris looks down, notices an EARRING where Sophie's bag was. He picks it up, about to call out to her, then doesn't. He just watches her walk down the beach... she feels it... looks back and melts him with that killer smile. Chris palms her EARRING, something left behind, something to return.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. ABBOT KINNEY - CAFE - DAY

Chris spins Sophie's lost EARRING on a patio table, sips coffee, works up nerve...

CHRIS'S POV: Sophie, ethereal in morning light, dresses a mannequin in the storefront window of her exclusive boutique.
SIGN: SOPHIE'S.

Chris gets his nerve, about to head over when A MOTORCYCLE (pristine 1940 CROCKER BIG TANK -- \$230K if you can find one) rumbles up to the curb. It's Gordy Nance. He clocks Chris as a WAITER (20's Latino) greets him -- VIP.

GORDY

Morning, Javy. Gimme the usual.
One for Sophie too, no onion.

The waiter enters the cafe. Gordy looks to Chris.

GORDY (CONT'D)

(polite but freighted)
Welcome back, Chris. How are you?

Chris slips the earring back in his pocket. Won't look at Gordy -- no love lost.

CHRIS

I'm good. Thanks.

Gordy looks across the street -- Sophie in the window -- then back to Chris -- doesn't like Chris in her orbit.

GORDY

Isn't that something? Sophie's got her own joint. All local designers, bread and spread in Venice -- that's her trip. Slim margin, but she's determined. That's my girl.

An implicit warning. Stay away. Chris won't engage.

CHRIS

Have a nice day, Mr. Nance.

INT. SOPHIE'S BOUTIQUE - DAYS

Sophie watches through the window. Sophie's POV: Chris and Gordy. Chris throws his coffee away, drives off in his truck. Gordy watches him go.

Off Sophie -- what the hell was that about?

EXT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - DAY

The old Swell SHOP. Lots of soul. Lack of cash. Chris's truck parked out by the shaping shed.

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - SHAPING SHED - DAY

Chris takes in the cobwebbed, neglected, simple shaping room. Lot of memories here. Hurts to see it left to seed. Chris blasts ZEPPELIN, lowers his dust mask...

MONTAGE: Chris shapes a board. An artist like his dad. He studies the sketches, circles the foam blank, marks off dimensions, saws the foam, shapes the concave, then the rail-runner, stretches the bamboo cloth and glasses the board with resin... his world, his escape, we end...

CLOSE ON the BOARD: Chris stencils that silhouette of Jay we saw him sketching in prison. It's finished, it's beautiful and it nearly breaks his heart...

ROBBIE (O.S.)
You haven't lost your touch.

Robbie recognizes the silhouette of Jay -- emotion plows through him.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
I took that photo.

Chris pulls the photo from his pocket. Gives it to Robbie.

CHRIS
It's yours.

A beat.

ROBBIE
You know, Sophie Nance has a boyfriend.

Chris didn't. Plays it off. But it bugs him.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
She's with Alex Gaines. Thought you should know. He's big business for Swell.

*
*

Chris won't react. Takes the board and Robbie follows...

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - STORE - CONTINUOUS

Chris throws some SURF WAX and CASH on the counter, trying not to engage Robbie.

ROBBIE

Look. Sophie's a good girl but never forget who her father is and what he's done to our family. He stole Swell from us. Nevermind her brother sending you to prison --

CHRIS

She's got nothing to do with any of that. Let it go. It's in the past.

ROBBIE

Not for me. Jay was your father, but he was my brother. I miss him. And when I see you talking to Sophie it's a slap in my face. To me, and especially your father.

This burns Chris. But he keeps cool.

CHRIS

Can I just pay for this?

Robbie pushes the cash back.

ROBBIE

On the house. Family discount.

Chris won't get pulled in. He leaves with the surfboard and wax.

EXT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - DAY

Chris carries the surfboard to his truck. TWO CUSTOMERS intercept him.

CUSTOMER #1

Chris Carver, right? Are you shaping boards again?

CHRIS

Sorry, guys.

CUSTOMER

(re: Chris's surfboard)
I'll give you fifteen-hundred cash for it right now.

CHRIS
Not for sale.

Chris puts the board in the bed and drives off.

INT. SOPHIE'S BOUTIQUE - DAY

Sophie's boutique -- Venice chic clothing and jewelry, the fashion forward but communal ethos an extension of Sophie herself. Sophie, swamped, works the books as EVA (21, cute, Latina) hangs dresses.

EVA
For sure, Chris was coming to see you.

SOPHIE
Or he just wanted a cup of coffee.

EVA
Text him -- go have a drink. Here, I'll get his number from Shealy.

Eva texts Shealy.

SOPHIE
Eva. Stop. I'm seeing someone. *

EVA
Alex? Barely -- *

SOPHIE
I'm too busy anyway. Between opening the new store and planning this party for Alex, I can barely think. *

EVA
You don't need to think. You need to call him --

SOPHIE
You do know Alex is the face of my family's company. It's complicated. *

EVA
So what -- you've been in love with Chris since you were twelve-years-old. *

It's true. Sophie's never stopped thinking about him.

EVA (CONT'D)
 Sophie, come on. You said he's
 only here for a couple days.
 What's the harm?

Eva text alert CHIMES. Sophie stares at the phone.

SOPHIE
 (last excuse)
 He's probably still with Jess. She
 was watching us like a hawk.

EVA
 Yeah, watch out for her. That
 bitch is crazy.
 (then)
 But think of it this way: When
 you're lying on your death bed are
 you gonna say 'thank god I never
 saw Chris Carver again?'

Sophie knows she's right. Eva smiles and forwards the text.
 Sophie's phone CHIMES. TEXT: Chris's number and a little
 encouragement; "DO IT, BITCH". Off Sophie...

EXT. VENICE - BEACH - DAY

Shimmering water. Chris, with the surfboard he just made,
 checks the break from the beach.

JOSH (O.S.)
 Thought you might be here.

Chris turns to see Josh, then looks back to water.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Breaks been dope lately.

CHRIS
 Looks dead today.

A beat.

JOSH
 I don't really know what to say.

CHRIS
 Really? Because you had six years
 to think of something. I was
 sitting in there trying to figure
 it out? Where's Josh? He can't be
 mad at me? I mean, I'm the one
 that took the fall.

*

JOSH
 (pushes back)
 That's on you. I didn't put you
 there --

CHRIS
 But you left me there. That's the
 point. Not one visit. You, me, a
 piece of plexi-glass between us and
 a ten minute conversation, how was
 that hard for you?

Josh can't defend it. Chris stops himself, buries pain.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Good to finally see you again,
 Josh.

Chris starts to leave. Josh stops him with...

JOSH
 I actually came here to talk to you
 about something else.

Chris turns -- all ears.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 It's Robbie.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - SHAPING SHED - DAY

Robbie calmly watches as Chris, amped and furious, searches
 the shed, shelves, drawers, then a LOCKED CABINET.

CHRIS
 You're burning down buildings now,
 Robbie? Is this your little
 workshop?

Chris grabs a HAMMER. Starts bashing the lock. Robbie,
 chill, grabs a beer from an old fridge. Pops it.

ROBBIE
 I'll give you the key, Chris.

The lock pops. INSIDE THE CABINET: Timers, PVC Pipe, resin.
 Chris pulls out a half-built pipe-bomb.

CHRIS
 Pipe-bombs? Robbie, Jesus... I love
 you, but you're out of your mind.

ROBBIE

Gordy lit the match by coming after
this shop --

CHRIS

You're gonna kill somebody --
you're gonna kill yourself.

ROBBIE

I fight with the tools I have.
What are you gonna do about it, run
away?

The question pierces Chris. Robbie calls him out.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

What are you even doing here? You
wanna give everybody a hug, make
sure the family is all good before
you slink off?

(beat, off Chris)

Sorry, Chrissy. There's no peace
here. You should take your board
and get on a plane tonight.
Because if you're not gonna stand
up, then step aside.

Robbie puts the bomb back in the cabinet. Off Chris we PRE-
LAP the ROAR of an engine --

EXT. PCH - DAY

Gordy cruises up the PCH to an ocean overlook -- surfer vans,
and motorcycles parked cliff-side. Gordy pulls up next to A
MEXICAN on a BLACK DUCATI. TITO VALASQUEZ, 32, imposing,
gang-ink, hard.

EXT. MALIBU - OCEAN BLUFF - TIME CUT

Gordy and Tito lean against their bikes watching surfers.

GORDY

The fires have to stop before the
cops start digging into me and my
business looking for enemies.

(pointed at Tito)

Or friends.

TITO

Boss would say let's smoke Robbie's
ass and be done with it.

GORDY

The boss needs to understand this isn't Jaurez. LAPD actually solves murders. Just give him a warning. Robbie's crazy but he's not insane. If you hit him hard enough, he'll back off.

Tito considers it. Respects Gordy.

TITO

Alright.

(then)

By the way, I'll be dropping off some laundry in a couple days.

GORDY

(concerned)

How much?

TITO

Million, million and a half.
That a problem?

GORDY

I told you guys the large sums are hard to clean. Swell's revenue is down, it's hard to justify the extra cash-flow.

TITO

Sometimes it's like you forget who you're working for. Boss bankrolled you when you were slinging t-shirts in the sand. Now look at you. Pimp bike, big ballin... Don't forget the little people, 'cause we won't forget you.

GORDY

As I'm constantly reminded by the shark-skin boot on the back of my neck.

TITO

I tell you this as a friend; Get Swell making money again. Fast. Because I don't want to see your head washing up on that beach.

Off this dire warning...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Charming canal cottage. Eclectic local decor. Sophie drinks wine and Skypes with her boyfriend, ALEX in Fiji.

ALEX

I was hoping you could wear that black dress to the party.

*

SOPHIE

Maybe, I don't know. I haven't even thought about it.

ALEX

That's too bad, because it's all I've thought about.

*

*

Alex smiles. But Sophie's mind is clearly elsewhere.

*

SOPHIE

Sorry. One of my investors is getting cold feet about the second store, so I'm scrambling.

*

ALEX

Don't worry about it. Somebody else will step up.

*

*

SOPHIE

Not necessarily. Once one investor falls out the others get skittish and the whole deal falls apart.

*

*

*

*

ALEX

It'll be fine. Stop stressing. Maybe you just need a break. We should go down to Mexico.

*

*

*

*

She doesn't want a break. She wants to run her business.

*

SOPHIE

(frustrated)

No. I can't leave. Like I said; things are crazy right now.

*

*

*

(then)

*

In fact, I should probably get some sleep.

*

*

ALEX

(backs off)

Ok. I'll see you tomorrow. Can't wait. Kisses, girl.

*

*

*

SOPHIE

Kisses.

They hang up. A beat. Then she grabs her phone. Eva's TEXT: Chris's number..."DO IT, BITCH". Off Sophie, phone in hand. *

INT. CARVER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

WHRRR! Shealy blends Margaritas while Lisa and Nico make seafood paella. Shealy pours too much Tequila. Lisa clocks it.

LISA

Shealy, take it easy.

SHEALY

This is how I make'm. You want one or not?

LISA

Yes, please.

Shealy pours her one. Then a KNOCK at the door. Nico answers, it's Jess with a couple bottles of wine.

LISA (CONT'D)

Hey, Jessie. Chris is in the shower. Opener's in the drawer.

Jess grabs the corkscrew and opens wine, listless. Lisa reads it.

LISA (CONT'D)

(to Nico and Shealy)

Why don't you guys go set the table. *

They take the hint and leave Lisa and Jess alone.

LISA (CONT'D)

How you holding up?

Jess is hurt. Lisa lets her work through it.

JESS

He didn't even think about me, Lisa. Here I am floating around, waiting for him to come home and I wasn't even a passing thought. I feel like an idiot -- what am I even doing here?

LISA

Honey, no. Chris is just trying to get his life on track. He cares about you. He just needs some space. From all of us.

Robbie KNOCK/barges in a fine drunken mood.

ROBBIE

Jessie! Come here sad girl. Let me spin you. *

Robbie sweeps her up in her arms and they waltz around the kitchen. Lisa knows he's half in the bag.

LISA

Careful, Robbie.

Jess laughs, as Robbie spins her around. Sloppy but spirited. Lisa's nervous. They twirl then Robbie stumbles into the stove spilling the paella across the floor. Shit.

LISA (CONT'D)

(simmering)

Can I talk to you outside please?

Lisa leads Robbie out.

EXT. CARVER HOUSE - CANAL PATIO - NIGHT

Pink sunset. Lisa's pissed. Robbie's drunk.

ROBBIE

I'm sorry. I'll go pick up dinner.

LISA

Forget dinner, Robbie. You think I'm letting you around my family like this? You're a train wreck.

Robbie sizes her up. Shakes his head.

ROBBIE

Jay would be spinning in his grave if he could see you now.

LISA

What are you talking about?

ROBBIE

Chris is turning his back on us, and you're supporting him.

LISA

That is not what he's doing.

(then)

I'm sorry about the shop, Robbie.
It breaks my heart too. But it's
not Chris's responsibility. Let
him live his life.

ROBBIE

This is his life.

LISA

No, it's not. It's yours. And I
will not let my son turn into you.

A beat. Robbie cuts deep.

ROBBIE

You've always been a mystery to me.
Gordy killed him --

LISA

(this again)

Stop it, you're delusional. He
overdosed. That's what happened.

ROBBIE

Maybe I can't prove it, but one way
or another he put Jay in the
ground. How do you forgive that? *

(insinuating)

I know you and Gordy used to be
close. But what am I missing?

Lisa SLAPS him hard across the face. It hangs there. Robbie
rubs his jaw, knows he nicked her nerve. Then they notice *
Shealy at the door -- he saw everything. A beat, then... *

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

(to Lisa) *

Have a lovely dinner.

Robbie leaves, Shealy follows - clearly on Robbie's side. Off *
Lisa, shaken and emotional. *

INT. CARVER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jess wipes paella off the kitchen the floor... then a TEXT
ALERT CHIMES. She looks up -- Chris's CELL-PHONE on the
counter. A beat. Fuck it. She reads the TEXT: "Next time
you're by my store, come say hi -- Sophie".

Her heart sinks, adrenaline floods, and she deletes the text.

Chris enters, wet hair. Jess quickly puts his phone back, he didn't see. He feels the heavy room.

CHRIS
Hey. What's wrong?

Jess could explode -- tears and anger welling. Chris moves to her but she pulls away.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Jess, what's going on? Talk to me.

JESS
What's the point? You never say what you mean anyway.

She blows past him. Off Chris, the paella on the floor. *

INT. CHRIS'S TRUCK - MORNING

Chris drives Nico to school. She's the centered one.

NICO
Get out while you can.

Chris smiles a little. Shakes his head.

NICO (CONT'D)
Seriously, don't stay here out of guilt. Crazy Robbie, angry Shealy -- none of this is your fault. Well, Jess is your fault but the family spiral started way before you went to prison.

CHRIS
I wish dad was still around.

NICO
Everybody says that, but I say when the hell was dad ever around? We act like he's some tragic saint, but as far as I can tell he was just a self-absorbed surf-hippie wrapped up in his own trip. The guy OD'd when mom was pregnant with me. That says it all right there.

CHRIS
Tell me how you really feel.

NICO

I just think it's funny. Everybody acts like Gordy screwed us out of Swell, but dad signed it over to him.

*
*
*
*
*

CHRIS

On a cocktail napkin while he was strung out --

*
*
*

NICO

Doesn't matter. Dad didn't want the responsibility. He wanted to surf and get high.

*
*
*
*

CHRIS

It's not that simple, Nico.

*
*

NICO

But it kind of is.

*
*

She's steadfast. A beat, then Nico notices Sophie's EARRING in the cup-holder. Grabs it.

*

NICO (CONT'D)

This is pretty. They make you wear it in prison?

Chris smiles -- loves Nico. They stop in front of VENICE HIGH SCHOOL.

CHRIS

What about you? How you doing?

NICO

(don't worry about me)
Living the dream.

Nico kisses him on the cheek.

NICO (CONT'D)

Try to have a little fun while you're home.

Nico walks into school. Chris studies the earring...

*

INT. SWELL - JOSH'S OFFICE - MORNING

Sweet office, slightly smaller than Gordy's. Old surf photos and a Yale diploma on the wall. Josh at his desk peruses an apparel "look-book." A nervous designer, YOKI (23, Asian, hipster), awaits judgement. It's not going well.

JOSH

It's not working, Yoki. You did a good job, but it just feels nostalgic. We gotta be fresh.

YOKI

I'll be honest, this aesthetic you want is crazy elusive. It's gotta be old-school, but fashion forward.

Josh paces, brainstorms.

JOSH

It's gotta be classic Swell. But not some lame retro gimmick. The look has to capture our DNA, our soul.

Yoki's working up to something, afraid to bring it up.

YOKI

Can I throw something out there?

JOSH

Yes, dude. Ideas. Please.

YOKI

What if we bring in Chris Carver? Just to consult.

Josh goes cold.

YOKI (CONT'D)

I don't know where things stand with you guys, but Chris has a killer eye -- he is Venice, he's got that flow his dad had --

JOSH

(ice)

Any other ideas, Yoki?

Meeting over. Yoki gathers his look-book.

YOKI

Josh, I was just spitballing. No disrespect --

JOSH

Five new looks, on my desk, tomorrow.

Yoki leaves. Josh shuts the door. Chris heavy on his mind. He looks to his Yale diploma and we DISSOLVE TO...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (7 YEARS AGO)

Josh, amped, paces room. Chris sits at a table, resigned. Both look ragged -- been a long night.

JOSH

They got us on ten pounds of weed.
Ten pounds. That's real prison.

Chris doesn't respond. Josh sits down. Tries to reason.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Listen. We screwed up. But the
cops know we're amateurs -- they
don't want us. They're giving us a
lifeline here.

CHRIS

Obviously, you took it.

JOSH

I had to say it was yours because I
don't know your supplier. But it's
OK, because all you have to do is
give'm a name and we both walk out
of here. Together.

(pleading)

Don't throw your life away. Give
them a name. Please don't make me
walk out of here without you.

A beat. Chris studies Josh.

CHRIS

We got caught. So now I'll take the
hit. That's how it works.

JOSH

No, no, no. Chris, no! That's not
how it works. They're giving you a
deal --

CHRIS

You're going to college, Josh. I
get it. Do what you have to do.
But I'm done talking.

Josh is at a loss. A beat, then...

JOSH

Who are you protecting?

Chris stays silent -- wrung out but keeping his secret. Off
Josh, frustrated by Chris's decision.

INT. SWELL - JOSH'S OFFICE - RESUMING

Back on Josh, haunted by the day...

EXT. ABBOT KINNEY - DAY

Sophie exits a cafe then stops in her tracks. Across the street, Chris waits for her in front of her shop. She crosses. He dangles the earring. She smiles and takes it. *

SOPHIE
You little thief. *

CHRIS
Known felon, what can I say?

She laughs. A beat. *

SOPHIE
So you did get my text. *
(off Chris) *
Last night? 'Say hi' -- you didn't *
get it? *

CHRIS
No text. I thought of you all by *
myself. *

A beat, then Chris grabs the moment. *

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Your place is great. What you're *
doing, pushing local designers, *
it's good for Venice. *

He gets it. She loves that.

SOPHIE
Thank you. It's not easy but I *
think it's worth it. *

CHRIS
It has to be. If everyone sells *
out we might as well be Santa *
Monica. *

SOPHIE
I know. Sometimes it feels like *
it's going that way. *

A beat.

CHRIS

You wanna go surfing right now?

She'd love to, but...

SOPHIE

You know we can't be seen together.

CHRIS

I'm not worried about that.

SOPHIE

I am.

CHRIS

Really? Then why'd you text me?

SOPHIE

I had too much wine.

Chris smiles. A beat, then...

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

We take separate cars and meet
somewhere not in Venice.

CHRIS

How about Malibu?

SOPHIE

Zuma's better. More secluded.

Off Sophie, smiling, charged -

*

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

SURF MONTAGE: Secluded break. Pristine day. Shimmering ocean. Break's just right. Chris and Sophie surf together on longboards -- graceful, flowing, surfing's purest spiritual form. Chris shows her tricks, cross-stepping, noseriding, he's a natural... Sophie matches him... They paddle out, side by side... float together, wait for a set... As it rolls in, Sophie hops on Chris's board, they drop in and ride together, Chris's arms around her, holding her steady, but Sophie doesn't need it... it's obviously more... It's easy out here... easy between them, physical, playful... They bring that out in each other... We feel them getting closer... all troubles left far away on shore... but the world still spins...

EXT. GORDY'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

A gorgeous, much-photographed architectural masterpiece sprawling three beach-front lots. California dream.

INT. GORDY'S HOUSE - TERRACE - LATER

Josh, Lanvin tuxedo, scotch in hand, epic view of the Pacific, head full of thoughts. On the terrace below we see STAFF setting up for a high-end party. Gordy joins, Givenchy tux.

GORDY
(re: Josh's scotch)
You got another one of those?

Yes sir. Josh hands him a scotch, big gulp. Gordy checks his watch.

GORDY (CONT'D)
Where the hell is your sister? She should be here by now.

JOSH
I'll call her again.

Gordy downs the scotch, heads inside. Josh dials Sophie, voicemail... BEEP.

JOSH (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Sophie. Where are you..?

EXT. OCEAN - LATE AFTERNOON

No cell-phones here. Sophie's empty surfboard lulls lazily in the crisp blue water beyond the break... because she's on Chris's. They straddle the board, facing each other, both blissed out from surfing all day. Sun's getting low.

SOPHIE
(giving him shit)
...You were so cocky. You knew you were the best surfer in Venice.

CHRIS
I never said that.

SOPHIE
Because everybody else said it for you. And you ate it up. You were in love with yourself.

Chris laughs.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
But I'm not gonna lie, I kinda was too.

Chris likes hearing that.

*

CHRIS

How come you never said anything.

SOPHIE

Because I was *twelve*. I was the little tagalong begging you and Josh to let me come surfing.

A beat.

CHRIS

Feels like another life, doesn't it?

Sophie looks back to the gorgeous secluded beach.

SOPHIE

Chris Carver... Josh would kill me if he knew I was out here with you. I don't even know what my dad would do...

CHRIS

According to Robbie, I'm spitting on my father's grave.

SOPHIE

See? I told you we shouldn't be doing this.

CHRIS

And what is it we're doing?

A beat. Sophie looks in his eyes.

SOPHIE

Surfing.

CHRIS

Nobody's gonna tell me I can't surf, Sophie. It's what I love.

He draws her closer, she's melts into the moment...

SOPHIE

That's a good way to look at it.

They're impossibly close now, a breath between them. Her eyes close... then...

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Chris, don't... I'm with someone else.

CHRIS
You're with me now.

SOPHIE
I shouldn't be...

Chris holds her face in his hand.

CHRIS
You were not part of the plan,
Sophie...

And he kisses her. Deep. A perfect narcotic, saltwater kiss. She's swept up, then suddenly pulls away.

SOPHIE
No, I gotta go... I gotta go.

She slips off the board, onto hers.

CHRIS
Wait...

SOPHIE
No, I can't. I'm late. I gotta go.

She paddles to shore. Off Chris, full addiction...

INT. GORDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/TERRACE - NIGHT

SIGN: PHOTO of Alex Gaines surfing. "Swell congratulates Alex Gaines, five time ASP WORLD TOUR CHAMPION.

FLASH! Professional PHOTOGRAPHERS snap shots of ALEX GAINES, stud in a tux, posing with Gordy and other guests at the swanky black-tie cocktail party in his honor. Gordy smiles big, arm around his prized athlete. Josh hangs back, making sure everything's right. He notices...

Sophie as she arrives, late but stunning, hair up, simple sexy white dress. Josh beelines to her...

JOSH
Glad you could make it.

SOPHIE
Sorry. I got held up. Did the
food show up?

JOSH
Everything's fine. Where were you?

Sophie blows past it, fastens the earring Chris returned and joins Alex and her father. Alex kisses her.

Gordy pulls her into the photos. Alex puts his arm around Sophie. Posing beautiful couple. FLASH, FLASH, FLASH and we PUSH IN on Sophie, behind her charming smile, we know she's only thinking of Chris. She tucks a wisp of hair behind her ear and off her earring we trace down her neck, along her shoulder, as MUSIC melts us into...

INTERCUT WITH

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - SHAPING SHED - NIGHT

...the sensual curve of a surf board. Chris, IPOD in his ears, shapes the body, his hands shaping Sophie herself. She guides him, inspires him...

INT. GORDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/TERRACE - NIGHT

Sophie at Alex's side. There in body, spirit with Chris... She subtly bites her lip, tastes their kiss...

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - SHAPING SHED - NIGHT

...Chris details the board art, smooths his hands over the glassy surface... puts the final touches on the board... beautifully simple, soft colors, elegant "S" near the nose. Pure Sophie... But the MUSIC fades...

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - STORE - NIGHT

Closed. Robbie counts the register -- not much. Stack of late bills and a foreclosure notice. The door CHIMES open.

ROBBIE

We're closed.

He HEARS the deadbolt LOCK. Looks up to see Tito, with two equally burly BANGERS (20's, Latino, jacked). Bangers close in. Robbie knows it's on. Shit goes off. Robbie attacks, hits first, that's how he is. And he's a beast, grabs banger #1, lays him out with a haymaker. Gets wild. Breaks a surfboard across banger #2's head. Tito pursues. Robbie throws racks of clothes. But the numbers take over, Tito's an animal. Ground and pounds Robbie to a bloody pulp. Finally, stops. Robbie moans. Tito stands over him.

TITO

No more fires, Robbie. Last warning.

Tito grabs cash from the register and leads his crew out. Off Robbie, prone on the floor.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - STORE - NIGHT

Chris leans over Robbie as EMT's work on his vitals.

CHRIS

Who did this, Robbie? Look at me --
who did this?

ROBBIE

(faint)
...Gordy.

The EMT's push Chris back and rush Robbie out. Off Chris, alone in the trashed store, blood-stained floor, furious...

EXT. GORDY'S HOUSE - TERRACE - NIGHT

Gordy, MICROPHONE in hand, speaks to the seated guests.

GORDY

Swell is incredibly blessed to have
Alex Gaines. Top competition
surfer in the world, devilishly
handsome...

Laughter. Alex feigns embarrassment.

GORDY (CONT'D)

We all know what he brings to the
table from a marketing stand point.
But it's more than that. Alex is a
part of the Swell family. And Swell
is part of the fabric of Venice.
That's why all of tonight's
proceeds will be donated to my
development initiative, "Keeping
Venice Beautiful."

Applause. Alex squeezes Sophie's hand. She's not feeling it.

INT. CHRIS'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Chris white-knuckles through Venice, mind ablaze. He cuts down a fancy street towards the beach.

INT. GORDY'S HOUSE - TERRACE - NIGHT

GORDY

I've always said, if you truly want
to know Alex's genius, grab a beer,
sit back, and just watch him shred.

Gordy steps to the side as a HIGHLIGHT REEL of Alex's year in surfing plays to music on the screen. Alex whispers to Sophie.

ALEX

Let's get out of here.

He leads her by the hand as they duck out. Josh clocks it.

EXT. GORDY'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Chris's truck rips up to the house, scatters VALETS. He jumps out and is immediately met by THREE of Gordy's SECURITY GUARDS. Chris swings on the first one - connects - but these dudes are big and they subdue Chris. He thrashes.

CHRIS

Where's Gordy!

Guard #1 steps off with his WALKIE.

GUARD #1 (INTO WALKIE)

We have a situation. East driveway.

INT. GORDY'S HOUSE - UPPER TERRACE - NIGHT

Sophie and Alex overlook the ocean. Sophie's distant.

ALEX

These parties are so embarrassing.

Bullshit. He loves it.

SOPHIE

I'm sure you'll suffer through it.

ALEX

Hey, this was your dad's idea. He's wiggling out 'cause he thinks I'm leaving Swell.

SOPHIE

Are you?

ALEX

I'm not gonna lie, I'm getting some big offers. But I'll leave that to my agent.

(then)

I'm just glad to see you.

SOPHIE

Me too.

*
*
*

ALEX

Are you sure? Because you've
seemed pretty distracted all night.

SOPHIE

There's a lot going on right now. *

Alex puts his arms around her.

ALEX

So maybe it's time to get away. *
You, me, seven days at Las
Ventanas. We fly out tomorrow.

SOPHIE

What? Alex, I told you I can't.

Sophie pushes away.

ALEX

Soph, it's fine. It's booked. All
you have to do is pack.

SOPHIE

Did you not hear a word I said?
I'm slammed. I can't just take off
to Mexico.

ALEX

Eva can watch the store, what's the
big deal?

SOPHIE

(lashing out) *
I'm not managing a fucking Gap. I *
own the place. *

Alex is taken aback. Sophie catches herself. *

SOPHIE (CONT'D) *

I'm sorry. I appreciate what you're *
trying to do -- *

ALEX *

You know what? Forget it. My agent *
wants me to stay in town anyway. *
I'm gonna have a lot of meetings *
next week. *

SOPHIE *

Alex... *

But he blows past her. Off Sophie... *

INT. GORDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/TERRACE - NIGHT

The Alex Gaines highlight reel continues. SECURITY whispers in Josh's ear. Josh excuses himself.

EXT. GORDY'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Josh rushes out to find Chris facedown on the driveway, pinned by a guard's knee in his back.

JOSH

Guys easy, easy. Let him up. *

The guard releases Chris who gets to his feet, furious.

CHRIS

I want to talk to Gordy. *

JOSH

He's busy-what are you doing here?

CHRIS

Are you surprised to see me? You think I'm not coming back at you for this?

JOSH

For what?

CHRIS

For sending your goons to put a beat down on Robbie at the shop.

Josh clearly didn't know. Chris thinks he did.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(off Josh's confusion)

Oh, you didn't know? That's your game? Put on the tux, kiss some babies, while your head-breakers handle the real business.

A beat. Josh hides his surprise, closes ranks with his dad.

JOSH

I don't know how things work in San Quentin because I wasn't there. But out here, in the civilized world, it's real simple: You don't pay the bills, you don't keep the shop. *That's* the real business.

Chris tries to reconcile what his friend has become.

CHRIS

So this is you. This is what you are now?

JOSH

I grew up, Chris. Believe it or not, the world kept spinning, even while you were gone.

(beat)

I don't know what happened to Robbie, but I'm sorry to hear about it. You should go home and be with your family.

Josh turns the walk back inside.

CHRIS

We're not done --

JOSH

Yes, we are. What are you gonna do? Kick down the door, grab the mic, give a rousing sermon on the plight of the Carver family? Venice is bored with the myth. They know the truth: My family pours millions into this city. All you guys do is burn it down.

Off the stinger, Josh walks back to the house, resolute. Josh catches Sophie watching from the terrace. Her look keys Josh to her interest in Chris.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Chris, Nico and Shealy await word on Robbie. Lisa enters with an update.

LISA

He's gonna be OK. He's sedated now so it'll be awhile before we can see him. You guys should go home and get some rest.

SHEALY

Go home and get some rest? Are you kidding me? We should take a crew to Gordy's and tear his ass up. Tonight.

CHRIS

I tried. You won't get past the driveway.

SHEALY

Then let's storm the beach --

LISA

Absolutely not --

SHEALY

What is wrong with you guys?
Robbie just got mauled, we know who
did it, and you just wanna sit here
and have a prayer circle? Hell.
No. I'm not bowing down like a
bitch while Robbie's eating through
a tube.

Shealy starts to leave, Chris grabs him.

CHRIS

Don't be stupid --

Shealy slams him against the wall.

SHEALY

Don't put your hands on me. You're
just passing through, Chris. Know
your place.

Shealy lets him go, leaves.

LISA

Shealy...

But he's gone. Lisa's fraught. A beat.

NICO

(to Chris)

He's right. We can't let this
slide. We have to do something.

She's right. Chris knows he can't walk away from this. Off,
Chris, galvanized, his plan forming...

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Moonlit beach. Josh, sits on the beach drinking a beer,
shaken from the Chris encounter. The party still twinkling
behind him. Sophie joins him. Silence for a beat.

JOSH

You were with Chris today, weren't
you?

Sophie doesn't answer.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You literally couldn't pick a worse time to do this.

SOPHIE

Whether or not Alex stays with Swell has nothing to do with me. *

JOSH

Actually, it probably does. Swell's in trouble, Sophie. *

(then) *

And I'm worried about dad. *
Something's not right. *

SOPHIE

What do you mean?

JOSH

I don't know for sure. He's riding me like a rented mule to get Swell profitable again but when I look at the books, the cashflow doesn't add up. Money shows up, then it disappears. It doesn't make sense.

Sophie processes.

SOPHIE

What were you and Chris arguing about?

A beat. Josh doesn't want to tell her.

JOSH

Somebody beat the hell out of Robbie. Chris thinks dad had something to do with it.

SOPHIE

Did he?

JOSH

I hope not.

(beat)

But you have to forget about Chris. It's gonna get nasty again and right or wrong, this is about family. It's about loyalty. Make sure you're on the right side. *

Off Sophie...

INT. HOSPITAL - ROBBIE'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Jess enters. Lisa sits bedside to Robbie. Jess's heart breaks at the sight of him. Lisa embraces her.

JESS
What happened?

LISA
Police think it was a robbery, but it's got Gordy written all over it. They've been fighting over the shop.

Jess gets Machiavellian. Sees her chance to drive a wedge between Chris and Sophie.

JESS
(calculated)
Lisa... I shouldn't even bring this up, but it seems like something you should know about.

LISA
Jess, what is it?

JESS
Chris and Sophie Nance have been hooking up.
(off Lisa)
I was trying to figure out why he blew me off and I shouldn't have but I saw a bunch of texts on his phone. It was pretty obvious.

Lisa's stunned. Jess adds fuel to the fire.

JESS (CONT'D)
Gordy's really protective of her... what if he comes after Chris?

Lisa is deeply disturbed by this development. Exactly what Jess wanted...

EXT. SHEALY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chris pulls up to Shealy's. NOFX blasts from inside the house. Sounds like a party. We follow Chris...

INT. SHEALY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Music blares. But there's no party. Just Shealy, sitting alone. Chris cuts the music. Sits with his brother. Beat of silence.

CHRIS

I am sorry that I haven't been around, Shealy.

SHEALY

Not your fault Josh punked you out.

CHRIS

Forget about him. This is about us. I made a bad decision and lost six years of my life. I broke mom's heart, and I let you and Nico down. I'll never forgive myself for that. But I can't change it. All I can do is keep my eyes straight ahead, and right now I see you and me at a crossroads. You're right, what Gordy did demands a response. That can go one of two ways. Option one: we beat the living hell out of him like a couple of savages.

SHEALY

Love it. Let's go.

CHRIS

Downside, we end up sharing my old prison cell. I'm not putting mom through that again.

SHEALY

So what's the other way?

CHRIS

We fight smart. Find his soft spot and twist the knife. Think about it. Why does Gordy suddenly want our shop?

SHEALY

Because he wants to curb-stomp our family.

CHRIS

It's deeper than that. He treats Venice like a hooker -- cash for love.

SHEALY

Seems to be working out for him.

CHRIS

Yeah he's got half the town, but not the half he wants. When dad died he got the money, but dogtown iced him out. He can't get over it. Neither can Josh. Our family, and that shop twist the knife everyday. He thinks he can erase us, that's why he's after the shop.

SHEALY

Fine, but unless you somehow got rich in prison, what are we supposed to do?

CHRIS

Hear me out: Some dude offered me \$1,500 cash for a board I shaped the other day. I got a book full of designs from when I was locked up. I say you and me rally the troops, start shaping boards at the shop, and let Nico handle the money. We could make enough to stay in business. From there, who knows?

Shealy's interested. One problem...

SHEALY

That's all nice and everything, but I thought you were leaving. What happened to Costa Rica; peace, love, surfing..?

CHRIS

I got love and surfing right here in Venice. Two out of three, I'll take that all day. Besides, Robbie's right about one thing: It's time to stand up and fight.

*

*

Off the brothers, a new battle begins...

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. VENICE - DAY

MUSIC RISES over sunny Venice. Locals buzz.

We FIND the marketing team, Nico and TWO GIRLFRIENDS (17-18, SoCal pretty), as they hand out FLIERS at the beach, the skate park, Abbot Kinney -- they flirt, laugh, play, whatever they're selling, you wanna buy.

Nico drops flier on the windshield of a LOTUS.

FLYER: The SILHOUETTE of Jay Carver surfing: "CARVER SURFBOARDS. HAND SHAPED BY CHRIS CARVER, VENICE, CA."

EXT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - SHAPING SHED - DAY

Chris unlocks the shed. Shealy and a crew of FOUR FRIENDS (20's, core, locals) roll up in a Bronco. Time for work...

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - SHAPING SHED - DAY

Chris and Shealy sand boards while two others sweep and prepare the next foam blanks...

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - STORE - DAY

Two surfers clean out the wreckage left from Robbie's assault with the girls we saw with Nico...

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Jess grabs a COFFEE. Sees the Carver flier tacked on the wall. Chris is staying. Nobody told her. She simmers.

EXT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - SHAPING SHED - DAY

A well-surfed wooden LONGBOARD lays vertical on a shaping-stand as signage: Simple, clean lettering reads "CARVER".

Nico takes board orders (spec, dimensions) behind a foldout table. Line of CUSTOMERS. Swipes cards through her iPhone "Square," or cash in the dropbox, \$1,600 a pop.

Shealy, pops out, mask around his neck, grabs a stack of orders and we follow back inside...

INT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - SHAPING SHED - DAY

...Chris puts the finishing touches on an elegant cornflower blue longboard. Done.

Shealy racks it with the others and we STAY ON the new LOGO that will be the signature of every board: The SILHOUETTE of Jay Carver -- "CARVER - VENICE, CA - 001(serial number).

A business is born...

INT. SOPHIE'S BOUTIQUE - DAY

CLOSE ON a CARVER FLIER on the counter. Sophie's talking to someone unseen in the dressing room.

SOPHIE
...That dress is actually made from
salvaged vintage materials --

The curtain flings open to reveal Jess. She models the dress in front of the full length mirror.

JESS
How's it look on me?

SOPHIE
Killer.

JESS
You think Chris will like it?
(ice)
You seem to know what turns him on.

A beat. Jess is combustible. But Sophie won't be intimidated, she stands her ground.

SOPHIE
You look great.

JESS
Good. I'll wear it out.

Sophie rings her up. Off Jess glaring daggers.

INT. SWELL CORPORATE CAMPUS - DAY

Lisa Carver cuts a swath through the Swell offices. Work ceases -- EMPLOYEES shocked to see a Carver in the belly of the beast. She arrives at Gordy's office. Penny tries to intercept...

PENNY
You can't go in there --

Bullshit.

INT. GORDY'S OFFICE

Lisa plows inside, startles Gordy at his desk.

LISA
You son of a bitch.

Gordy keeps it cool, waves Penny off, shuts the door. A beat.
Lisa fumes.

GORDY
I didn't want it this way, but
Robbie left me no choice. *

LISA
He's in intensive care.

GORDY
And he'd be in the morgue right now
if it wasn't for me. Do you have
any idea, the people he's
antagonizing? When they lose
money, they cut off heads.

LISA
I know exactly who they are. I was
there when Jay told you not to take
their money. You got greedy. You
took something pure and you
poisoned it. *

GORDY
The company was dying on the vine,
Lisa. Believe it or not, Jay
slamming smack all day wasn't
turning a profit. I took control
and did what I had to do to save
Swell. I will not apologize for
that. *

(then)
And don't lecture me about purity.
You're not exactly the driven snow,
now are you? *

Cheap shot from a shared past. Lisa pulls back.

LISA
Gordy, I'm not here to rehash the
past.

GORDY
We could talk about the good times.
We had a few of those too.

Gordy misses those buried good times. But for Lisa it's a guilty wound she'd rather not open. A beat, she moves on...

LISA
I'm here about Chris and Sophie.

GORDY
(confused)
What about them?

He doesn't know.

LISA
You're gonna find this out sooner or later so you might as well hear it from me: Chris and Sophie are spending time together.

Gordy's pissed -- last thing he needs.

LISA (CONT'D)
She's your daughter, you need to make it stop. And I'm telling you right now, if you lay a hand on my son, I will tear down everything you have.

GORDY
Do you really want to go down that road, Lis?

LISA
No, I don't. But I will protect my son at all costs. Anything happens to him, I'll give the police the whole book on you.

Gordy sizes her up. She's not fucking around.

GORDY
(warning)
I've seen you a lot of ways, Lisa. But I've never seen you crazy.

LISA
I hope you never do.

With that Lisa leaves. Off Gordy, deeply troubled.

EXT. ROBBIE'S SURF SHOP - SHAPING SHED - DAY

Chris and Shealy count cash after the day's work, zips it up in a BANK BAG.

CHRIS
Nice work. This should cover us for
the next two months.

Chris hands Shealy some extra CASH.

SHEALY
What's this?

CHRIS
Deposit. I'm moving in to your
place. Too old to be sleeping on
mom's couch.

Shealy looks at the money.

SHEALY
You know this won't change
anything. Gordy will keep coming.

CHRIS
And we'll keep fighting.

A beat. We see a darkness behind Shealy's eyes.

SHEALY
Well, you're the man with the plan.
Guess I just need to fall in line.

Shealy stuffs the cash into his pocket, hops in his Bronco.
Nico pops out from the shop.

NICO
Chris, someone's here to see you.

INT. SURF SHOP - DAY

Josh runs his hand over the CARVER logo on the cornflower
blue longboard. It's a work of art and he knows it.

CHRIS (O.S.)
For sixteen hundred bucks, it's all
yours.

JOSH
Steep.

CHRIS
You get what you pay for.

Josh gestures to the store, it's cleaned up, a big photo of
JAY CARVER on the wall.

JOSH

You and Shealy making a couple boards a day -- you think that keeps the lights on?

CHRIS

Fingers crossed.

JOSH

You're throwing good money after bad. We'll get this place sooner or later.

CHRIS

I wouldn't sweat this, Josh. Swell's a global brand. You guys are worldwide. All we want is Venice. You can have the rest.

Battle line drawn. Josh pulls out his wallet, drops \$1,600 on the counter like it's nothing. Takes the board.

JOSH

You're a true artist. This'll look good hanging on my wall.

Josh starts to leave, then stops.

JOSH (CONT'D)

And Chris? Stay away from my sister. I won't tell you twice.

Josh leaves. Chris sees the board he made for Sophie.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROBBIE'S ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON Robbie, sedated, hooked up to machines, rough shape. PULL BACK TO REVEAL Shealy, eyes red as he takes in his battered uncle. Slowly, his heartbreak gives rise to anger...

EXT. VENICE - DAY

Rough part of Venice, ghetto by the sea. Shealy skateboards up to some BANGERS at picnic table on path by the beach. He hands them cash, gets a BROWN PAPER BAG in return. Shealy opens the bag to reveal a GUN.

He plants his foot, skates off, aimed at Gordy, biblical revenge on his mind. A vigorous SCRAPING SOUND takes to...

EXT. GORDY'S PATIO - DAY

Gordy waxing his surfboard with therapeutic intensity...

*

EXT. JAY CARVER FUNERAL - FLASHBACK

Young Chris, Lisa, Shealy, Gordy, Josh and Sophie gather with other MOURNERS for a surfer's funeral on the beach. Robbie charges up to Gordy.

ROBBIE (O.S.)
How'd you do it, Gordy?

The entire funeral watches as Robbie gets in his face. Gordy shoos Josh and Sophie back.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
How did you get him to sign over
the company?

GORDY
Not here, Robbie.

ROBBIE
How high was he? Was he even awake
or did you just put the pen in his
hand and sign it for him.

POP! Robbie clocks Gordy in the jaw, jumps on top of him.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
You killed him, didn't you. Didn't
you! You greedy little prick!

Robbie throws a punch but Gordy slips his hips out and flips Robbie on his back. About to swing...

LISA
Gordy, no! Stop it! Stop it!

A beat. Gordy, raw, finally relents. Pulls himself to his feet, nose bloodied, all eyes on him. He looks to Lisa.

LISA (CONT'D)
You should leave.

Gordy looks around -- unwanted by everyone. He takes his children by the hand and leaves...

EXT. GORDY'S PATIO - RESUMING

*

Gordy's lost in the memory, doesn't hear...

MAN (O.S.)
Gordy! Hey, Gordy!

Gordy finally looks up to see Tito, wearing a backpack, walking up the beach to his house. Last guy Gordy wants to see. Tito drops the backpack at his feet -- heavy.

TITO

1.75 million. As promised.

Gordy unzips. Full of CASH.

GORDY

Like I said, it's gonna take awhile. I gotta break this up.

TITO

I'll let you explain that. The boss will be in town next week. Wants to sit down with you.

GORDY

Why? There's no reason for us to be in the same room together.

Tito shrugs -- what can you do? Gordy dreads it.

GORDY (CONT'D)

Can I at least get a heads up? What's it about?

TITO

Business. Swell's got shipping pipelines to and from Asia. We want to piggyback some of our product in those shipping containers.

GORDY

Smuggling? Jesus...

TITO

We also need to talk about Chris Carver.

GORDY

What about him?

TITO

The prodigal son's back in Venice. Maybe he's got payback on his mind. We just want to make sure you and your family are protected.

GORDY

He's nothing to worry about.

TITO

(cold)

That's what you said about his old man. I'll keep you posted on that meeting.

Tito leaves him with that. Gordy dials his cell. Voicemail.

GORDY (INTO PHONE)

Sophie, damnit, I know you're avoiding me. You have to call me back.

Gordy watches Tito recede down the beach.

GORDY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Please stay away from Chris Carver. It's not safe for you to be near him.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Sophie's CELL-PHONE rings and rings on a pile of Sophie's CLOTHES in the sand. LCD: "dad, FIVE MISSED CALLS." PULL BACK TO REVEAL SOPHIE (bikini) AND CHRIS (board shorts) STANDING IN THE SURF. Sophie has the board he shaped.

SOPHIE

So you're staying?

CHRIS

This is where I live.

They both know the consequences - the heavy price of their love. And yet here they are. Together.

CHRIS (V.O.)

It's like my mother said; 'You'll only be truly happy when you love something more than yourself.'

(then)

I'm going to be truly happy... Even if it kills me.

Chris slips his arms around her as CAMERA goes HIGH over our star-crossed lovers -- impossible, dangerous but undeniably together on this golden Venice day...

END SHOW