



info@thedailysurf.co.nz

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BETWEEN THE LINES: Two Surfers and the Vietnam War

A Documentary Film

This documentary film examines the relationship between two 1960's era surfers and the Vietnam War. The film uses interview based first hand accounts, archival war footage, archival & contemporary surfing footage, archival & contemporary still imagery, art, and of course iconic 60s era music.

The film's theme is twofold: Freedom and Choices. The two main characters—both lifelong

surfers, Pat Farley and Brant Page, each represent an extreme side of these themes.

Rather than be drafted, Pat Farley chose to volunteer for the Army. A hardcore surfer and a decorated soldier, Pat's story is intense. Pat was discharged with a lifelong full psychiatric pension. But with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder haunting him was Pat's choice the right choice?

Brant Page chose to evade the draft. His escape to the Hawaiian Islands found him living the idyllic lifestyle that every surfer dreams of: Living off the land in a tropical paradise surfing perfect waves... Sounds like a good choice. But Brant Page was hunted for years by the FBI and lived in constant fear of being captured. Was Brant really free?

and interviews about the surfing lifestyle and the Vietnam War, from GI's surfing in enemy territory, to the anti-war movement at home, to the living aftermath of the war.

In light of an increasingly unpopular war in Iraq, a war that parallels the Vietnam conflict in many ways (a conflict that begs the same question as the Vietnam War did - Why are we there?), the films themes, freedom and choices, are highly relevant.

Co-Directed by Ty Ponder and Scott Bass, this film documents a story of freedom, bravery and life altering personal decisions.

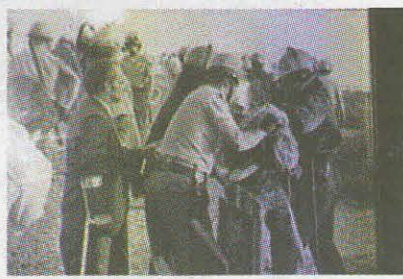
"As we began initial research our idea became not only a fascinating and untold story of the youth and surfing sub-culture, but it was soon apparent that we had uncovered a significant and personal journey into the character and strength of the human spirit in the face of extraordinary circumstances.

Extensive rare and never before seen footage and photographs were discovered and utilized in this film ranging from surfing in Vietnam to personal combat footage.

A haunting audio taped "letter" home was uncovered featuring a young soldier telling his family about his first days in combat and his first surfing experience in Vietnam. Four days after making the tape, he was shot dead while walking point in the Mekong Delta. By the time his family listened to the tape at home he had been killed.

All interviews were shot with three identical, high quality digital video cameras. Two on fixed tripods and one roaming on a steady-cam, which creates a highly professional "floating" effect. This flexibility allows the editor to creatively cut between camera angles doing away with the stale, one camera interview look.

Our primary characters, Pat and Brant are both experienced surfboard shapers and through this medium they shared the personal experience of making a surfboard together even though they had not yet met. In a climactic moment Pat and Brant will finally meet and present this surfboard to a young U.S. combat vet who has returned from Iraq, in appreciation for his sacrifice."



The film supports the main theme through historical insight

Huge Bodyboards and Tiny surfboards.

The guys referred to in the movie/doco on the facing page were invited onto the 'Out the Back' surf show one Friday. Here, the 2 guys told of their stories and what surfing meant to them at this stage of life. Both were well into their 50's and rapidly closing in on their 60's. So they had been around the traps a bit, both into shaping their own boards and showing no signs of easing up on the number of sessions they managed each week.

Brant Page (a cousy bro' of Greg Page) was a friend of Tom Morey. Some may remember Tom as being the father of the Morey Boogie board and the man behind the Doyle/Moore Soft boards of the 80's. Well Tom is still alive and kicking and still into kicking new ideas around when it comes to surf craft.

He has been instrumental in designing the Wave Skater. A body board with a hydro hull that allows for more steege than your conventional body board.

He is also heavily into re-designing Softboards. Softboards may be discounted by your average surfer. Pooh-poohed as a learners board and not given any consideration at all.

Well surfers that have their blinkers off and are keen to try all manner of craft are finding some redeeming features in Softboards.

Brant is certainly one of those surfers. Sure he has a quiver of conventional boards and, I guess, not so conventional boards. But at this moment in his life, he is right into Tom Moorey's latest contraption. Probably a term and description that belies the abilities of the board. And certainly at first, second and third glance, you'd have to raise a quizzical eyebrow. The board has 4 ridges along the bottom - aren't we all expecting smooth bottoms with just the right concaves and edges? Add a series of 10mm holes across the board at each ridge. Joke? Surely.

Not according to Brant who suggests that they are to entrain air under the board to give it lift and forward motion. Pretty much what the concaves are asked to do. Chuck in some beveled edges along the third of the board, where we expect a hardening of the rail and surely it's come off the assembly line a bit wrong.

Brant reckons the thing flies. Mows down all the other guys who take off outside him on the peak and makes more sections than he's ever made before.

A single fin was all that was needed but the need to get the right fin shape meant that he was right into fine-tuning the contraption and that he was persisting in getting it just right. Given that it was the only board that he bought to New Zealand,

you'd have to believe in his sincerity. I really wanted to give it a go but time ran out and so I guess the jury's still out on that one. Just don't expect to see many gracing he board section of your local surf shop in the next summer or two.

Brant may well go down as the father of 'Finger Surfing'. Mmm! Another scheme from left feild. But as you can see from the photos below, he has made a diverse range of miniature surfboards. They all have leashes and are used to surf standing waves in rivers. He reckons they are the ideal craft to improve your techniques and are the answer to those horrible onshore days. After a couple of beers on a Friday evening, both JM and myself respectfully declined the offer to go 'Finger Surfing' lest we be seen out in public. He did leave one with me though. It's a beautiful mal with a fin at each end. I might just try it when I'm sure no-one is looking. Gotta ask yourself the question though.



Above: The crew at the Surf Show. L to R. Arch, Jason Matthews, Ty Ponder (producer of the film), Brant Page and Pat Farley.

Botom Left: Brant Page's Dane Kehaloa model for a spin at the Meeting of the Waters.

Right Bottom: Some of the Miniatures boards as laid out on the bottom of the Tom Morey special. There were over 30 separate models. A fair portion were replicas of the famous boards over the various eras. Time spent on these must have run into hundreds of hours.

Above Right: Brant explaining the theories behind the Morey special to Jason Matthews. It got more cloudy as the evening passed.

