

Thalia-Bullwinkle cont'd

Weltanschauung America

There is a wave just off San Luis Obispo, California that is said to embody all that is perfection and death; and there is a special breed of men that ride the San Luis Obispo Wave. They are fearless and insane. They are unequivocally American.

Each day, from the bone white sand of Elysian Beach, these men swim out to encounter the Wave. They are watched from the beach by their women, and by the Martyrs Of The Wave—spiritually undefeated men who wear their swimsuits and prostheses like the sublime decorations that they are. The Martyrs sit in the front line of the beach, closest to the surf. They are honored but they serve as a sobering reminder of the price the Wave exacts for glory.

Ace was just another systems analyst before he was called to the Wave. He says: "I was just so fed up with all that inner directed stuff. I just wanted to be a man." Ace then tells you about the day he quit his job, got into his car and walked onto the beach where it seemed to him that a whole nation of people was watching a select few men surfing their bodies across the edge of what had to be the most powerful wave on earth. That night, when the people had left the beach, Ace swam out to try and catch the Wave. It very nearly killed him, and it changed his life. He says: "The Wave has given my life meaning."

Bruce was black, unemployed, and contemplating a life of crime when the Wave summoned him. The call came in the form of an old Beach Boys song called "Surfin' U.S.A." Bruce heard the song on a radio he

had stolen and was immediately filled with an almost patriotic remorse. He explains: "Well this song come on this radio see, and all of the sudden I feel really bad 'cause I been like feeling sorry for myself all my life and blaming the world when all along it's been my fault. Well I got to thinking: shit, if Mexicans can make it in America then any dumb-assed nigger can make it too." Without thinking about what he was doing Bruce hitched to San Luis Obispo to give the Wave a try. Today Bruce rides the Wave every day. He owns a business, a home, a car, and a wife. The Wave has given Bruce what it takes to make good in a free economy.



Cliff's life was also irrevocably changed by the Wave. He tells it like this: "I was a pretty good student in High School but there wasn't enough money for me to go to college so I had to go to Vietnam instead. When I came back I found that nobody liked me much anymore. That confused me. I'd been reasonably popular when I left; I mean I wasn't on the football team or anything but I wasn't a geek either. I couldn't understand what I had done wrong. Sure I killed some dinks. I was following orders. If you didn't follow order you got a court martial or a dishonourable discharge or something. And if you got a dishonourable

discharge you couldn't go to college on the G.I. Plan. I didn't want to be no hod carrier like my old man, I wanted an education. So I killed dinks when I was told to kill dinks. It wasn't like I enjoyed it." But alienation not enlightenment awaited Cliff behind the ivy walls. He was called a child murderer and a monster and he was forced to listen to such misguided liberal rhetoric as: 'Gooks are people too you know.' Not surprisingly Cliff dropped out and moved back in with his folks, who understood. After ten years of introspection and self-loathing in a dark back room, Cliff resolved to drown himself. He took a cab to the beach in his native San Luis Obispo. The beach was crowded with his Fellow Americans who were watching the brave young men cheat death on the Wave. Someone then noticed Cliff, someone from High School, and shouted a greeting to him. Then someone else saw him. It seemed to Cliff that his whole High School class was on that beach, and they were all happy to see him. Even the ones who only a few years ago had called him a child murderer. Frisbees were thrown to Cliff and he was entreated to return them, but Cliff had no time for games. He knew that the moment had come for him to ride the Wave. Today Cliff is the most celebrated of the Wave Riders, and yet he remains one of the least egotistical. "I'm just an American," he says, then adds pensively: "And you know, the Vietnam thing, I'd do it all again."

Yes, the men who ride the San Luis Obispo Wave are a special breed. Nowhere else but in America will a generation of clear-thinking and well muscled young men risk death and dismemberment for an aesthetic. It is a heroism unprecedented in history.



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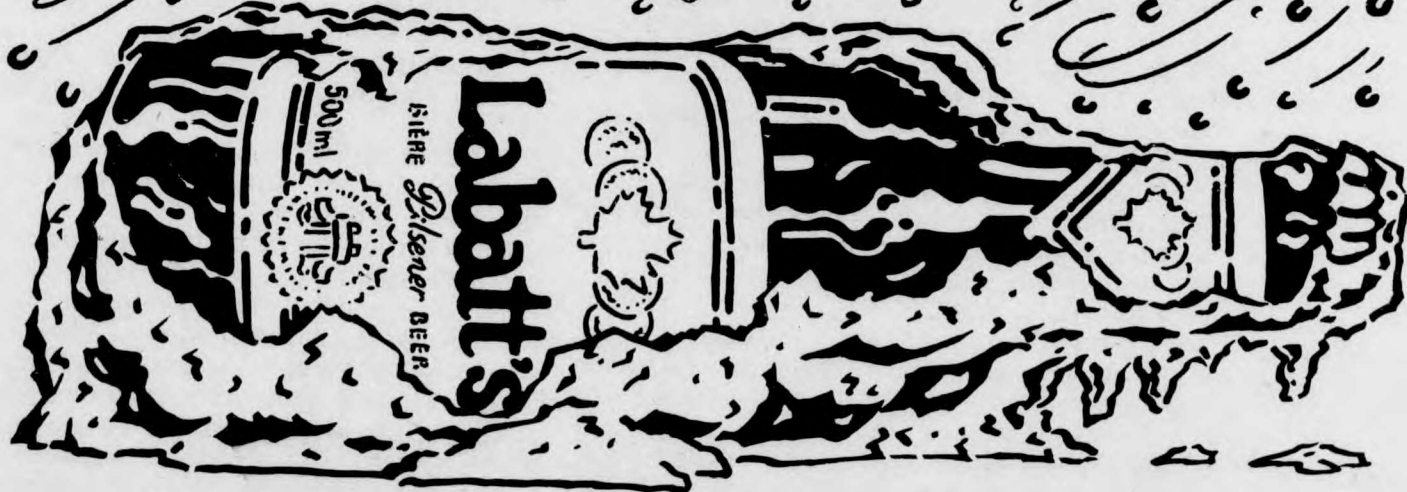
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