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**KELLY PROFILE / CALIFORNIA / BRISICK PIX / ROY GONZ
MOIR'S MIND / ANDY / NORTH SHORE / GERRY'S FIRST TUBE**



SPRING 2003

R & G ON



BY STEVE ZELDIN

ROY ARTIST MONSTER LEZ

Surfer, artist, freethinker, and fashionista Roy Gonzalez has created mind-blowing art for years. His impressions and interpretations of the surfing world are vivid and humorous, with musical and political commentary fused into his ever-detailed mix. Read on and realize the road one travels to achieve such an impressive portfolio collection, though this is only a fraction of his much-published work. He lives the life of a true artist, which isn't always easy. So if you see Roy Gonz at a club, make sure to buy him a drink—be a patron of the arts.

Z: Are you originally from San Clemente?
G: Been there thirty years...I've drank enough of the tap water to be considered OG.

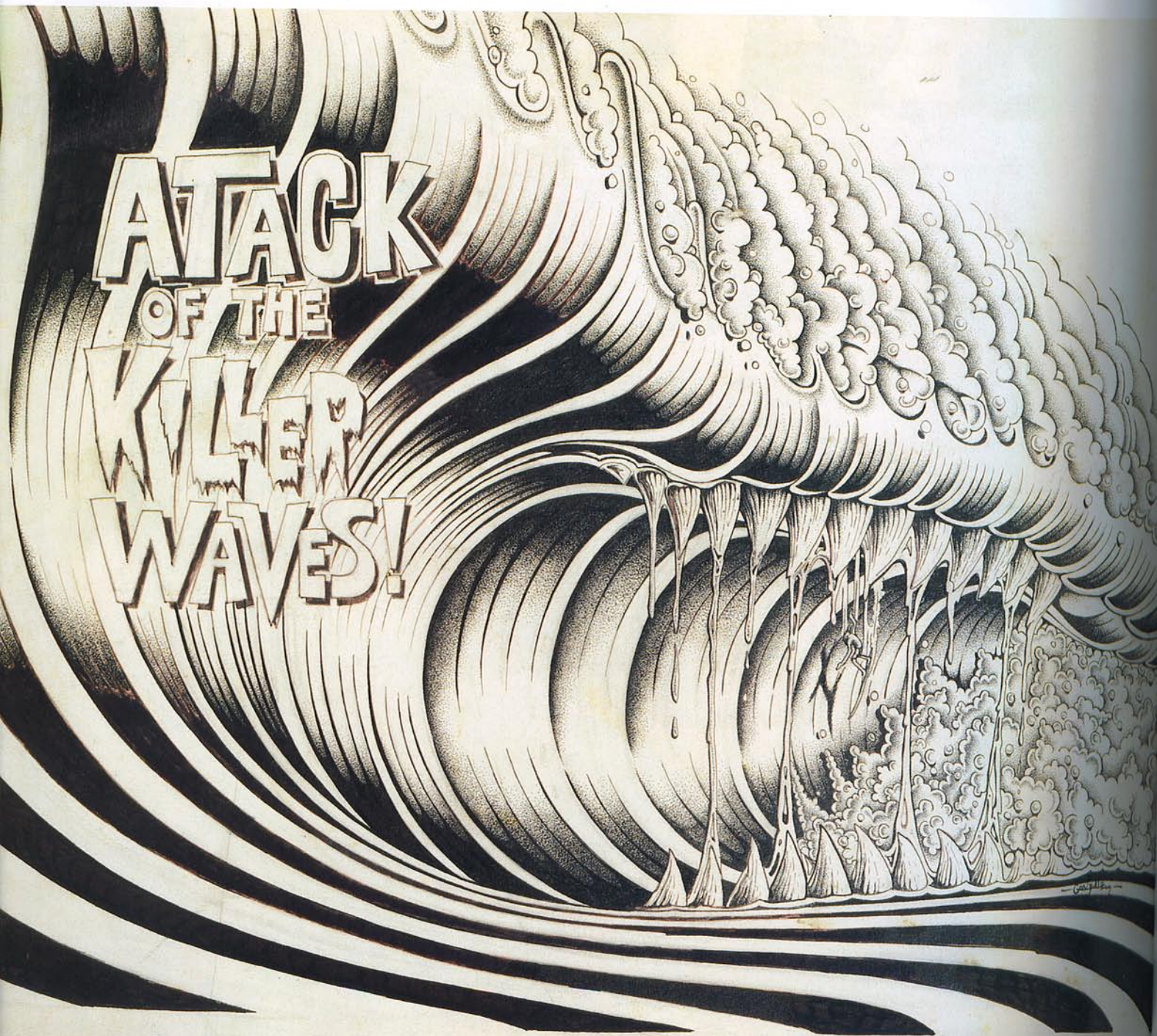
Z: You're well-known for your illustrations... are you a freestyle artist?
G: Freestyle?

Z: I just made that up.
G: Pretty much, yeah.

Z: Ever use brushes?
G: No...but I've painted big murals before. One thing I did was right at the beginning of all the computer type of art—I definitely unplugged that. I moved to Maui and just started drawing and painting. It was supposed to be the new kind of art, but after sitting in front of that computer screen, and then seeing a lot of people using the same programs, I just said, "Nah, I can't do this." I don't care if I've got thumbprints on my artwork or the corners are wrinkled. That's the way I want to do it.

Z: Keeping it real.
G: That makes sense?





Z: Totally. You're so satirical on things going on in life and, most notably, surfing culture. Do you see things wrong, or just so right, that you've got to capture them...what inspires you?

G: I guess I'm a smart-ass, so I illustrate, I play off stuff. It kinda depends on the mood. A lot of my earlier stuff was happy and bitchin'. Then, let's say, I broke up with my girlfriend...my ink's a little harder. It's all a road through life, what's going on at the time.

Z: You wear some great shirts, man. Whose shirts do you wear?

G: Thrift Shops.

Z: You're always in Cabo, or Costa Rica, and a lot of your work has a Latin flavor.

G: Yeah, like this piece (next page). There was a lot going on at the time with the Zapatistas (Mexican rebel army) coming back and Commander Marcos was doing his whole deal, helping the Chiapas Indians because everyone, like McDonalds, was taking their land. That's the original Emilio Zapata, and that was Emilio's girlfriend at the time during the revolution. I like putting everything in a blender...this was for a surf contest (The McStravaganza) that was going on at the time and I was drawing stuff that had to do with Mexico, since I'm Mexican. There's militia guys mixed with Spaniards and an Aztec woman. I aged five years after this contest. It was crazy. Everything went wrong at this contest, everyone was injured, but nobody got an injury from surfing.

Z: Who's the guy riding the marlin?

G: Just one of those cool, old fisherman cats you see and want to capture...my mom got mad at this, and she said, "You can't have the priest getting burnt." But in Cabo that's what happened. The Christians came down and the Indians said, "No, sorry," and they actually burned them. This is on the side of the churches and taxis. She thought I was doing something crazy but it's part of the culture.

Z: And the woman?

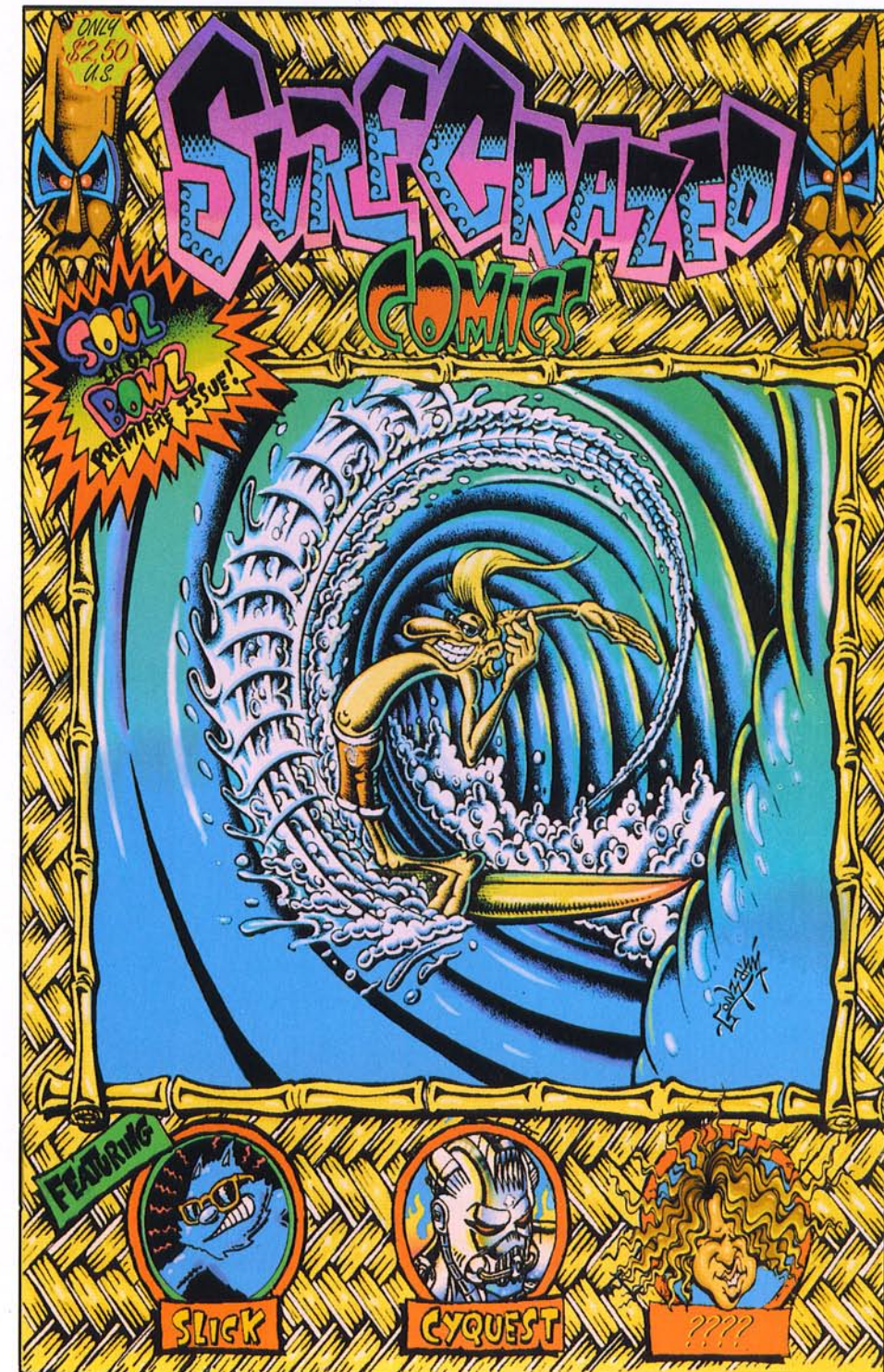
G: She was Emilio's girlfriend, Adelita. The men would fight and she would fight. And then at night she would give her body to the men. But he fell in love with her and told her, "Hey you can't be doing this, I love you." She said, "These guys are giving their lives for our country; I am giving my body." They made a whole movie about her.

Z: Excellent. Many people know your infamous Surf Craze comics. How'd that start?

G: When I was a kid, Rick Griffin was my all-time hero. I've been compared to Rick, and it's like a musician being compared to Hendrix—it's the ultimate compliment. He draws so well, he's on the pulse, everything is authentic: the waves, and the way the guys were turning...I'd walk by and see Rick doing his thing—he was doing rock 'n' roll, he was doing surfing. Years later, Gavin Beschen said, referring to when he was a little kid, "I'll never forget walking by the garage and seeing Roy doing his artwork." It's just how the generations go; I was the same guy watching Rick doing that, thinking, "Wow, cool."

Rick's manager later got ahold of me, during the punk days, when Rick was more in with Hendrix and all that; I was doing a lot of punk flyers then. I got to be friends with his agent and he told me something that was good: "Roy, even if you don't

make money on some things, just do them—Do the OP Pro, do the Blues Festival...because it's something that you love, so you're gonna put your best into it, and later it will be collectable. It makes you who you are through the ages." A lot of the stuff I did do—Chili Peppers, Beastie Boys, whatever—but the comics he told me not to do. I grew up looking at sequential art. In America, we pretty much invented this, like jazz. I wanted to do it. So me and (Sal) Paskowitz got together and started these comic books. Then Hanna Barbara called, Pee Wee Herman's agent, everyone called, we had an article in the *L.A. Times*...and I learned about Hollywood,



GONZALEZ
ROY · BOY · THE · GONZ · GONZALEZ



Z: Aloha from Hell...what's going on in this picture? (first page, left)

G: This was a song I wrote for Johnny Monster and the Nightmares and I wanted to illustrate it. It's Hawaiian-style Hell. When the comic book first came out, I remember I was so happy, seeing the very first one that came off the press. I remember walking to



G: This was another part of the whole comic book thing, part of Monster Island. I was playing with a lot of old horror movies, and my waves were cartoon ridiculous, there's no way you'd ride a wave like that. Now Laird and those guys at Jaws are riding waves even gnarlier than that. I have to make my waves even crazier now to keep up with Laird. This is way before tow-ins were going on, this is 1980-something.





Z: I know you've spent a lot of time on Maui too.
G: I think Hawaii, Santa Cruz, and San Clemente—we've all got the same tap water. I think that's why we all get along.

Z: Okay, here's Da Hui's Backdoor Shootout. The F.A.B. team was in the event and these are the four guys on the team: Nathan (Fletcher), Archy, Gavin (Beschen), and Dave Dixon.
G: Yeah, this changed my life or ruined my life, I can't tell which one. This was before the McStravaganza contest and no one thought we'd get second place. Gus (F.A.B. chief) just rolled the dice and boom, got our boys in there and we ended up kicking everyone's ass, almost getting first place. So, all of a sudden it's a real company. We wanted F.A.B. to be a skateboard-punk rock company, just for fun, to have gigs and whatever. And everyone had other things going on then, but after this, people were going "F.A.B., F.A.B., F.A.B.!" So I looked at Gus and I go, "No man, trust me, you do not want to do this." So he goes, "All right, we'll roll the dice again," and we did it the next year and we got first place...now it's really on. We've had to work at making F.A.B. a company because we've got a lot of people depending on us now and hoping we're gonna do it...I was in Costa Rica doing murals and Gus happened to see me down there. I'd known him from Capo Beach but I didn't really know him. We lived there forever and we'd always seen each other passing through. I got a kick out of him because Bud Llamas and me were the only Mexican surfers back then. Gus asked me to start drawing some stuff for F.A.B., and it was on. F.A.B. Optix...

Z: Nothing's cooler than a cool pair of shades.
G: When Black Flys started, Jack (Martinez) came to me and the first thing I told Jack was, "Don't do it man, you gotta have a lot of money." Jack knows I'm Mr. Thrift Store guy, I collect old glasses; I know my stuff as far as that and I love it. When Jack showed me his first shades I was like, "No, those aren't happening." That's when I designed the Fly No. 5 and that whole thing started. I'm not dogging Jack or (Dan) Flecky, but the only reason we started glasses was that Jack didn't help me out when I needed a favor for the McStravaganza: "Jack, get your boys down there, I need glasses." So when he didn't, and I didn't have shades, it was like, "What are we gonna do? I guess we'll make glasses." I had made glasses for other people and I like sunglasses.

Z: Classic...it seems the Fly No. 5 is more popular than ever now.
G: And the Elvis ones. "Do the Elvis ones, Jack"... I just had those Elvis ones from Graceland, you know. We did a shoot with those just because they were in my bar. Then the Fly No. 5 was the next one. Then it went from there. I said, "Man, you gotta have some gangster attitude." The worst thing about F.A.B. right now is I've got like, 20 designs lined up that I can't even get to 'cause we've got to sell the others first.

Z: Definition of F.A.B.?
G: Yeah, F.A.B. is Fucked At Birth. Things were hurting me, like not surfing in front of my parent's house because it was polluted; or walking down the street after ten 'cause the cops would go, "Freeze, what are you doing?" So restricted...there are a lot of inner-city kids that don't have it going on. I'm blessed. My cousin's in a wheelchair right now from a drive-by; my uncle O.D.'d on heroine...stuff like that. I'm Mexican; I would have been a white Casper

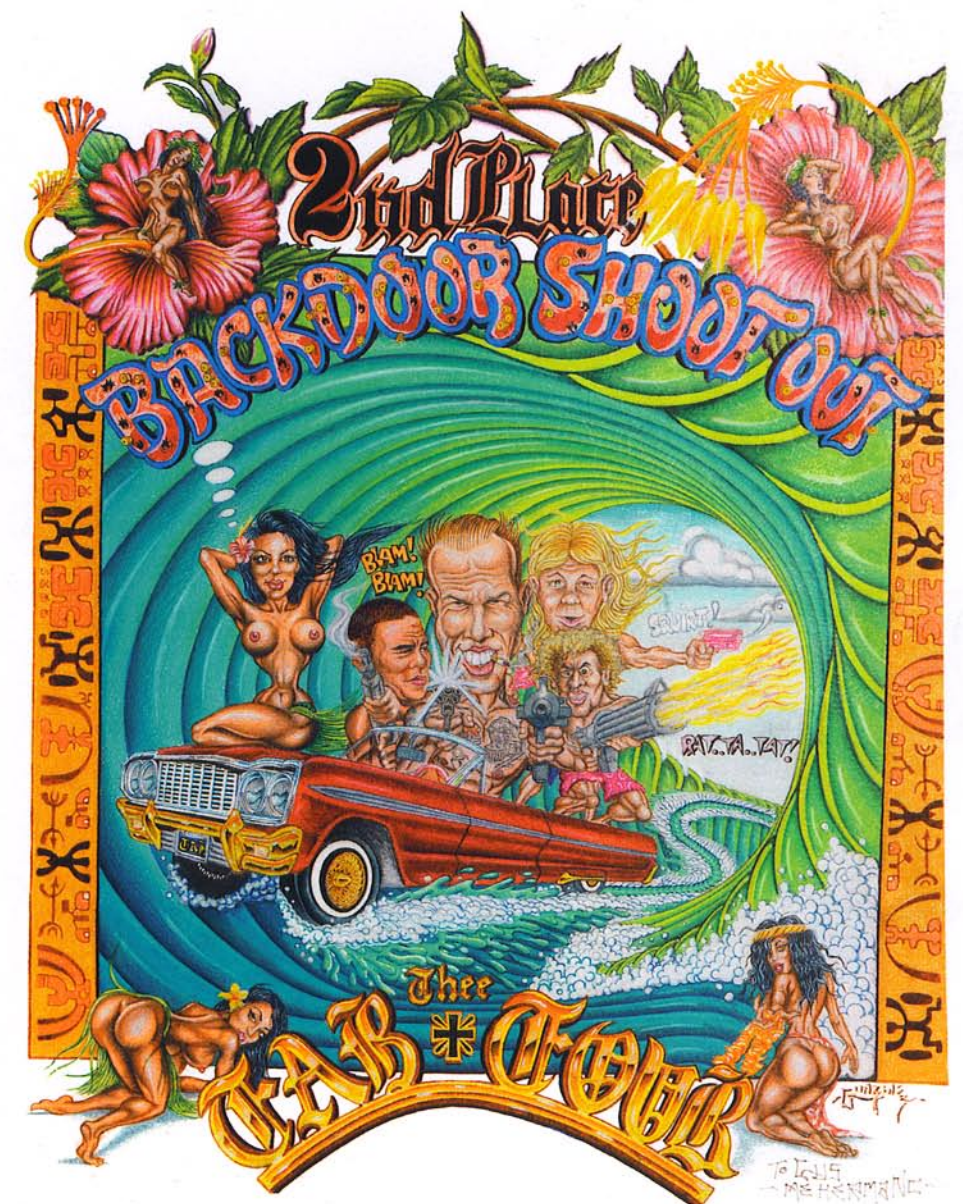
but my Dad went from a little shoeshine guy in L.A. working his ass off, to where he always got his family to the right place. When Gus asked me to do stuff for F.A.B., I said, "I ain't fucked at birth. Why am I gonna get behind that?" He goes, "So what, you're all about you?" I said, "Damn, okay I see where you're going—yeah, I'm down with that." If we make money, it's all about helping kids. Take 'em right out of Compton and say, "Here's how you catch a fish." We've got such a bad reputation, but the best part is that good is what it's about. I'll explain it to some people, otherwise I'll just say it's "Frank and Beans" or "Friends and Brothers," whatever you want it to be.

Z: This one is all-time. Title?
G: Tequila Tonight for Tomorrow We Ride (left).

Z: A mariachi playing what looks like a Gibson Les Paul electric. The detail in your work is always so intricate. What was this piece about?
G: That was going to be for the next McStravaganza with Jane's Addiction, Cypress Hill, Pennywise,

everybody. That was the poster, and no offense to the rock promoters who wanted to do a Corona ad instead in *Rolling Stone* magazine. This is a T-shirt; I think this is the first time in my life that I saw San Clemente pull together and we made money. We sat at that booth and must have sold 1,000 T-shirts in twenty minutes. It was insane. They wouldn't even let me in to sell the T-shirts. All I was trying to do was to save my buddy Damien who had lost his ass because of the way these guys promoted it.

Z: Christian Fletcher as an icon of hardcore surfing behavior (next page).
G: This was definitely changing the guard. Herbie is someone I've always looked up to; I've always loved Uncle Herb. I watched Christian grow up. He heard his own drumbeat. He was doing his own trip. Archy was doing his deal, flying through the air, but Christian had his own skateboard trip. This was during a lot of day-glow logos. It was getting goony. That's why I started Monster Island. I had Johnny Monster play for ASR. Snuck him in, doing Sabbath back when no one was doing that stuff. I remember





David threw beer and it ended up hitting Bob Hurley across the way at Billabong and security came in, took everyone away. I looked over and said, "Hey Bob, sorry about that." He goes, "No way, that was so bitchin'", that was the best thing ever—how did you pull that one?!" I got ASR to pay big for it. That was at the time when Christian, Rategui, and Hosoi were doing the vert-ramp stuff and Christian and Archy were the only guys doing airs during their heats. It wasn't three to the beach. No offense to Parson's...this logo didn't make any sense at the time but it worked out perfect. It just hit a chord with rebel kids out there. Christian and Herbie, two generations of being hardcore; Herbie was hangin' out with Hendrix, and Christian was at the forefront of the new trip. So Herbie was going, "Fuck man, make it like Hendrix and all fucking Grateful Dead eyeball-dripping." Christian's like, "No dad, Slayer, make it Slayer meets..." and I'm looking at this generation gap laughing. I just did Grateful Dead meets whatever. Next thing, Christian is flying through the air with that logo. I think it was a changing point in surfing right there. I mean, it really was a whole different direction. It actually pissed some people off, which for me as an artist was great.

Z: Great art always comes from a strange place.
G: That was Monster Island. That's an aerial view of a freak show. There's Sinatra and the Rat Pack. I got the hippies, the punks...it's just an island of all the subcultures in our life. Basically all the rebels or whoever I liked are there. Hendrix is there...all the guys live on this island.

Z: And of course the waves are amazing.
G: That's like a hundred foot, no, two hundred foot. The only place where Laird wouldn't go out, or he probably would actually...wait, am I the only one drinking? You guys are making me drink alone?

Z: Yeah.
G: Damn. Gus told me not to drink and start saying stuff...but you're a good Editor.

Z: And you're a gnarly artist. And this is an amazingly symbolic piece. What's going on? (pg. 123)
G: It's a little F.A.B. baby. We get so much grief for the F.A.B. baby. I just happened to draw a little devil soul arching in the tube. I always liked fire and water. The flames around water...I don't even know why you picked that one, but I'm glad you like it.

Z: It's just really humorous. Who would you compare yourself to?
G: Like, Robert Williams and, there are only so many of us...Severson's the daddy of it, then there was Griffin, and then there was Ogden...our surf culture.

Z: What's next?
G: Like I said, I got kinda sucked into the F.A.B. thing, that's okay, it's good. I hope it all works 'cause I love it. And if someone, like a big record company, wants something, I'll do it. In the meantime, I'll just finish this wine and then take your secretary out on a date.

