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[Surf Culture - Club Of The Waves](#)

Beach fights

15 short illustrated articles



This exclusive collection of stories was put together by [Ron Croci](#). 'Beach fights' is an unfortunate part of surf culture, a simple consequence of passionate surfers, protective of 'their' spots, waves and honor, with alcohol only making things worse. This series of short stories, accompanied by illustrations, chronicles the events he's witnessed....

There have been many stories told on the topic of beach fights. These fights are mostly the underbelly of our beautiful sport. However, here, I would like to explore this topic in a different way. I have stories to tell, along with illustrations. I must be clear that I in no way condone beach violence. I am very disappointed by some of the very events that I describe here. Non the less, these are a few of the fights I have seen.

I have recalled here 15 fights that stand out vividly in my surfing history. Some funny, some serious. I know many of the participants, but here, use only their initials. I have attempted to illustrate my brief descriptions by accompanying each story with a small watercolour painting. I limited myself to 20 minutes per artwork. I am trying to show, quickly, the impression these encounters made on my memory.

We hope you enjoy these stories, and lets hope for a more peaceful time in and out of the water.

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Wander Inn Demolition

During the late 1960's, when I surfed Pedro Point, a cove 20 miles south of San Francisco. There was a lively scene in front of the Wander Inn bar and restaurant. The surfers were kind of like scrapers and delinquents, instead of the Southern Californian beach boy archetype. One day a kid moves there from Malibu with his parents. He was about 18 years old. This kid had the perfect Beach Boys look. Blonde, Prince Valiant hair, Pendleton, faded jeans and Purcell shoes. When he showed up and tried to be friendly that summer, he immediately became the scapegoat for all the hostility between the Northern

Californian and Southern Californian surfers. Things went like this for him that summer...

Week one. His name is John, so everyone starts calling him "Malibu John". Hardly calling, but jeering really.

Week four. Although he tries to be friendly and can surf good, no one gives him a wave.

Week eight. Then one day, the biggest guys, who were by the way, drunk college football players, champion wrestlers and loved fighting, began to hassle him. They crowded around and started with the *"why don't you go back to Malibu,"* right in his face and then ripped up his shirt.

Week ten. He foolishly returns with his board. The ruffian surfers were hanging out at the beach, feeling bored and getting drunk, when Malibu John shows up. As I'm watching I see these guys spring to life. They began to accost him right there, took his board and laid it over a parking lot telephone pole. Then one guy stood on the tail, as the football player, in a drunken spasm, jumps on the nose and breaks the board in half. The poor kid was aghast and feared for his safety. Then, unfortunately the guys began to really shove him around. Even hit him a couple of times. He ran away and I never saw him again.

Ano Nuevo Knockdown

R. was one of the first people to surf the beach break called Ano Nuevo, about 45 miles South of San Francisco, in 1963. Naturally feeling possessive of the spot as he was one of the first to discover it's potential, he would occasionally drop-in on newcomers. This break was very much like Velzy Land, with a sand bottom. A short intense peak and barrel. These were the days before Ano was a park, before sharks and before the sea elephants returned. Just a wild, wonderful, wind swept and grassy farmland.



One day while surfing the peak, a perfect A Frame comes right at *R*.... and one of the newcomers. *R*. casually looks to his left and drops right in. *R*. gets the perfect barrel and the newcomer gets creamed and loses his board. *R*'s ride ended up on the sand and he see's the newcomer standing next to his board on the beach. *R*. walks over to him to see if he is alright. The newcomer was seething. *R*. graciously asks if he is okay and squats down to see if his board has any dings, which it did. While *R*. was looking at the board, the newcomer (idiotically) spit a huge lungur on his head. *R*. was not an explosive person, however that spitting enraged him. From the squatting position, I saw him fire his fist upwards at the newcomers' jaw, while launching off his legs. The guy was hit so hard that he flew up and backwards, ending up on his back. Then *R*.

stood over him like the Rumble in The Jungle. Well, that was that. Funny thing though, I saw the newcomer actually try to be friends with *R*. in the days that followed.



Flying Bicycle

T.F is one of the biggest and most taciturn of all the bulls that surf the Kaiser Bowl. He also loves rebuilt classic Volkswagen buses. One day he drives up and parks in his newly painted, turquoise 1963 VW Bus. As picturesque as you can imagine, the blue sea, sky, whitewater and polished turquoise paint. As *T.F*. goes off to talk with someone, a homeless surfer that we all knew by the pseudonym of "Jaysoon" comes riding up on his rickety old bicycle. He stops, gets off, and absentmindedly leans his bike against the new paint job. As *T.F*.

returned and saw the bike, his rage was instant. Growing almost two times his normal size, with eye's just melting the bike, he grabbed it and flung it over the rock jetty and into the Bowls lagoon. At least a thirty yard throw. Furthest I have ever seen a bicycle fly. As I recall, the dripping wet homeless surfer was last seen walking his bike across the reef and back to the parking lot.



Topanga Anger

On this day, I was surfing Topanga Point, which was my home break for many years. One day, two big guys on longboards, who surfed the break infrequently, started yelling at each other. These two imbeciles were so angry that when one dropped in on the other and they rode the same wave, they began screaming back and forth. Then they both straightened out and rode toward the beach, side by side, swinging at each other's faces.

Topanga has a very rough cobblestone bottom mixed with worn blocks of concrete and is difficult to climb over in the shore break. As all the surfers cheered them on, they were punching each other while they were stumbling along the rocks and their boards were getting dinged. They made it to the sand, threw their boards down and just started slugging each other black and blue. The whole time staggering, hitting, missing and connecting, until, both exhausted, they stopped, walked away and I never saw either of them again.

Giving Slaps

J. was a guy who surfed Kaisers very well... when sober. *J*. was short, petite, with nut brown skin and very long black hair. He would try to take advantage of anything that came his way. His arrest record was so long, and his reputation so well known by the Honolulu police department, that if a cop saw him behind the wheel of a car he was automatically arrested and sent to jail.

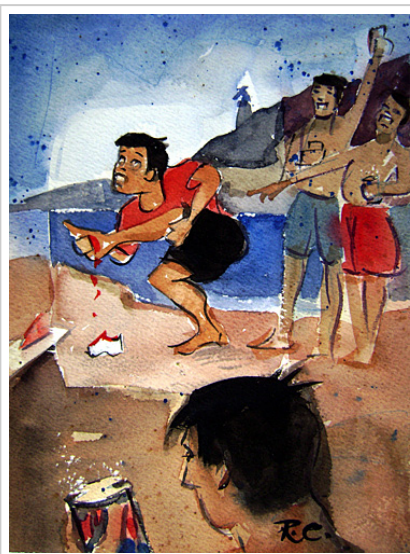
Then there was *M*... a large Hawaiian man who completely dominated the Kaiser Bowl. Although he was a good friend of mine, if he looked at someone in the wrong kind of way, it was time to run. *M*. was involved with



a woman, C., who surfed as good as most men. She was M.'s girlfriend, kind of. J. was always trying to put pressure on her for sex, and M. found out.

One day, as we were all drinking, surfing and standing around the Hibachi, J. saunters by, with that typically sneaky look on his face. Instantly and with no warning, M.'s hand reaches out and grabs J. by the throat. He then bends him backwards over a car and starts slapping the hell out of him. Backhand, palm, backhand, palm, again and again. This is what beach boys call "*giving slaps*". Boom, boom, boom, he continues, then he throws J. aside, just like a rag doll. When M. turned around, the glare in his eyes caused us all to shrink back. He looked like one of those fierce Tiki's of the Hawaiian God, Ku. Then, after all of this, nothing changed. They both tried to hustle the same girl, till she got tired of it and ditched both of them for a bronzed Aussie.

The Beach Fights Back



I just recalled, back in the 70s at Ocean Beach, San Francisco, the only time I saw the beach fight back...

K. was a carpenter by trade and a blustering, surfer and drinker, with a nasty temper. Though he and I got along pretty good, he'd get riled over things like territory and general principles of power tripping. Anyway, this one weekend, in the afternoon, he rushed up and grabbed me because I was hooked in with the Pedro Point crew. All I wanted to do was float along, with the wind... sun, surf, the babes, energies, raps, ease of the environment, drinking, drugs, and mocking & fooling with friends. K. was often powered up on brew, but this time he was particularly intense and wanted me to get fired up and fight some other beach crew. He was going to fight them himself, however, for some reason he thought he needed my help. So he pulls me along and says we are going to stomp these intruders. He takes a big step forward and lands right on a shard of glass. WOW! I could see the whitish pink fat in the foot cushion, outlined by the dirty dark foot skin. K. is now rolling around in agony and out of commission. Now who should turn around, mingling with the opposing

beach crew, but K's sister! She rushes over, we help K. to the car and they go to the hospital.

It's almost mystical how one guy leaves a shard of glass, which cuts another guys foot, and stops a beach rumble, while punishing the perpetrator.



Serious Consequences

This fight is not funny and had serious consequences.

One beautiful morning, as the Kaiser Bowl was going off, a local guy who I'd never seen before dropped in repeatedly on L. who is a highly respected surfer there. Next, they had words, then hollering, then, "*see you inside, you f***** kook!*" Everyone was angry, and no one wanted to lose face. I don't know what these two grown men were thinking, but they decided to square off at the jetty. Normally it's tiring just to come in, much less keep on a head of steam.

However, there they were. They face each other, scowl, a few swinging fists and L. lands a good one. I'm not sure if the guy lost his balance, or he got knocked over by a blow to the face, but, bam! He cracks his head open on a rock, knocking himself out. L. splits, but the police find him. The judge sentenced him to three years in Halawa prison.



Flailing at Bowls

There were these two guys who surfed Ala Moana Bowls a lot. I didn't know them and they didn't know each other very well, but I saw them a lot. They were angry that day because one of them dropped in on the others son. The father didn't like it, they had words, both middle aged men, both in a rage. They squared off at the Bowls shower and began exchanging a few blows, these men were so out of shape and neither knew how to box, so they were just flailing away like little girls. However, even though they looked goofy and scary, they both managed to land a few good ones to the head and chest. After that, they

were exhausted, and, with fists weakly raised, they glared at each other for another 5 minutes... Too tired to continue, they both left. I never saw them again.



Kalakaua Encounter

One day, I was driving down Kalakaua Blvd., right next to Queen's Surf in Waikiki. As I stopped at a light a very beautiful, sexy, stripper like blonde was walking down the street, coming right at me. When all of a sudden the car in front of me stops and the doors fly open. Two huge Hawaiian Teita's come blasting out and one is swinging a fishing pole handle. They start to wail on this woman and in the time it takes the light to turn green, they lay her right out on the sidewalk. As they speed away, she staggers to her feet and walks into the police station annex., right near the Duke statue. During all of this, the

turquoise waves of Queen's Break, the surfers and the happy tourists continued on with their oblivious roll with destiny. No one but me even notices.



Hawaiian Chivalry

I'm surfing Canoes one day and this haole tourist guy starts screaming at a local girl, just going crazy. Hollering at the top of his voice, profanities like a psycho. The girl just stares, wide-eyed. So a big local bull is sitting on his board nearby and in the sitting position, puts his feet up on the rails and casually paddles over to the screaming guy. I can see the screamer starts telling the local guy what a kook the girl is. I am watching and I see the local guy paddle right up to the screamer, seeming to listen. Then, BAM! With a fist the size of a

sledgehammer, he punches the screamer directly in the nose. There was a full blood explosion as the guy toppled off his board. We three just stared as the screamer got on his board and paddled in. Now he really has something to scream about, but of course, he is silent. Can't say he didn't deserve it.



Rivals

There was a rivalry for a beautiful local girl between *L.* and *M.* and it got very heated. Then *M.* started 'banging her' and *L.* who was very hot headed at the time (and had a foul temper) got really angry. The angrier he got, the more the girl loved it, and she played the two against each other. Saying things like, *"you're not really afraid of him are you?"*

One winter day on the North Shore, *M.* brought his beautiful Corvette, with two brand new boards inside to the beach, at Lani's. I was hanging out there as *M.* went for a surf, just as *L.* drove up, and wow, he sees the Corvette. *L.* storms out of his car and as a host of notables stood around and watched, *L.* proceeded to take a baseball bat and pound the hell out of the car. He

broke out the windows, took out the two new boards and smashed them. You can imagine *M.*'s surprise, shock and outrage when he returned from the surf and saw his car.

L. went to court and the judge ordered him to pay reparations. However, since *L.* was a surfer and didn't have any money to speak of, the judge ordered him to pay \$50 a month for five years.

The two met again sometime later while surfing Waimea. They talked it over, shook hands, hugged and made friends again. They told me later that they *"should have used the bat on the girl."*



Twisted Skewer

On a hot summer Sunday at the Kaiser Bowl, it seemed like everyone who surfed was there. Of course, with so many surfers, canoeists and tourists, there had to be some people who got out of control, mainly from drinking too many Heineken's and smoking too much Paka's.

I am sitting at the picnic table, feeling pretty good myself after surfing perfect In Betweens and having a couple of ice cold ones (my limit), when I see this tourist girl come walking through the party with a *"this looks like fun"* expression on her face. Just then *J.* who is severely drunk and completely unpredictable, tries to talk with her and her expression changes abruptly to *"get me out of here."* *J.* sees this and for some unknown reason picks up a shish kabob skewer, pushes her up against the fence and holds the point up to her throat. No one is coherent enough to see, but me. I jump between them and grab the skewer. *"What are you doing J!"* I say, as he stares at me through moist, red

and yellow eyes. The girl ran off and the partying continued as though nothing had happened. I told *J.* he should leave, but of course he didn't. By the way, *J.* ended up spending 3 years in a Minnesota prison for various offenses.



Court Order

This is not a fight, in the real sense of the word, however, it was so unusual that I wanted to write about it. *T.* was a huge South Shore Bull, with a sullen, taciturn temper. For some reason he began terrorizing everybody, even his friends, on the strip between Three's and Ala Moana. By the way, I would NEVER drop in on him. Just one look from those white eyes glowing from that sun-browned face, told everyone, he was going.

One day he started hassling his long time friend and surfing companion, *A.*, at the Kaiser Bowl. *T.* put so much pressure on *A.* that he could not surf in peace. *T.* threatened *A.*, violently, so many times that *A.* got a judge to put a restraining order on him. So for six months, whenever *A.* surfed anywhere, *T.* was legally bound to stay one hundred yards away from him. As far as I know, this is the first time a judge has ordered an individual person to stay away from another named individual in the lineup. So in this way, peace returned to the Bowl, and *A.* was once again able to enjoy the glorious delight of that turquoise barrel.

\$10,000 Rolex

I didn't witness all the events recalled here, however I was there at the beginning and I heard the rest from several reliable sources...

A spectacular, hot, beach day, surfing and hanging out, each day very much like the previous and all strung together into a wonderful season called summer. Summer, that is, at the Kaiser Bowl. So as I am sitting on the



bench, just enjoying everything... I see nearby three huge local guys, also sunning themselves. Out of nowhere a tourist shows up. Neatly groomed, 30ish, very white skinned and completely out of his element. He walks up to the three guys and says, "Hey fellas, your Hawaiian right?", which they were not, "You know how to dive underwater, right? Well I just lost my \$10,000 Rolex watch by the pole where I was swimming." The threesome's eyes pop wide open. They stand right up and say "shua, we getum." So they go out and start swimming. Now I kind of know who they are and I smell mischief. While the guy is waiting, they start looking and immediately find the watch. They stash it under a rock and come back to say they couldn't find it. I heard about this later, but all I saw was the discouraged man nodding his head and leaving. The three go back out, get the watch and pawn it. Now, they go on a huge binge. Beer all day, all night and God knows what else. The binge lasted for about a week and as the week progressed, this is what happened...

The three guys were at a party at the Ilikai Hotel. Of course they were drunk as hell, when one of them got into an altercation with someone. The two altercating drunks decided to meet downstairs, where they would slug it out. While the one partier took the elevator downstairs, the local guy decides to hop over the balcony rail and climb down the drainpipe. Then, as he is climbing down the pipe, it pulls off the wall and he falls to his death. Now the other two guys are very distraught and go on an even bigger binge. Then as always happens, the money runs out. They probably only got a thousand dollars for the watch anyway. These guys were not criminals or vicious, they were more like destructive adult children. What do they do next? They rob an Australian tourist at knifepoint. Somewhat knowing these guys, I am sure they weren't planning on hurting anyone; they just wanted to get more party money. Well, they got caught and both were given stiff sentences for armed robbery.

Certainly a shame. However, that's life at the beach.



Drop In

OMG, I saw another beach fight today! I had some markers in the car so I made a quick sketch of what happened along with a description.

I was paddling out at Palos Verdes Cove through the left channel when I see a middle aged guy take off on a beautiful five foot wave. I could see he had the perfect position. As he was tucking right into the curl a young guy, around 25 years old starts to take off in front of him. They both look at each other, and I see incredulity on the face of the *Curl Rider*, and a complete lack of caring on the face of the *Drop In*. The guy drops right in and ruins *Curl Riders* ride.

Many waves at The Cove have two people riding, so I didn't think much of it, until I see *Curl Rider* race right up behind the *Drop In*, leap off his board and grab the *Drop In*'s wetsuit by the neck collar. They both wipeout and *Drop In* comes up second only to be greeted by a solid punch to the forehead by *Curl Rider*. *Curl Rider* gets up on his board while the *Drop In* starts screaming at him, all the while keeping his distance. I'm right next to him now and I see *Curl Rider* aim his longboard and shoot it to about two inches from *Drop In*'s face. Then *Curl Rider* says, "We may both go to jail, but I'll still beat the **** out of you!" He paddles away and shortly there after we are both sitting next to each other in the line up. I say to *Curl Rider*, "That was quite a rumble over the Left". *Curl Rider* turns to me with that blank look of a man with no conscience and says, "I'm not beyond taking a bite out of that guy."

Final Note

Well, there it is, some of my least favorite memories of surfing. However, I hope you found them interesting enough. These unfortunate things happen a lot and I don't condone them at all. It seems like most of the

incidences described here, are fueled by alcohol. I can see why there are so many "NO DRINKING" signs everywhere. I also understand how tempers flare in the lineup. The younger guys have so much energy, and are so amped when the surf is good, that they just, go off. Also, when a surfer spends day, after day, going to his home break, developing many relationships with other surfers and spending lots of money. After wishing and waiting for those glorious days when the surf is perfect, and on that day, a freckle faced, nervous eyed, ego maniac, just off the plane, drops in on the wave you have been waiting for all season, YEAH!, you're going to rage. Surfers will quarrel over waves, because for the dedicated, they are more valuable than gold.

Please, use restraint when dealing with 'kooks'. As I have described, something that starts out with a few words, can end up catastrophic.

Peace.

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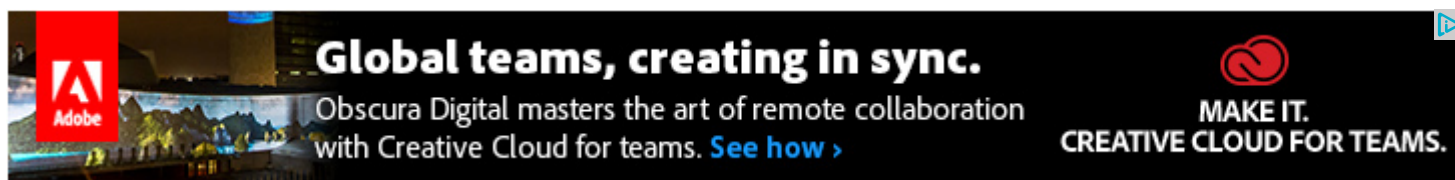
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