BALLS OUT

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. NORTH SHORE - HAWAII - DAY

Grainy, faded archive footage of a pristine beach. Giant waves crash on the shore.

SUPERIMPOSE: North Shore, Hawaii - 1948

A line of SURFERS stands well away from the waters edge, unwilling to brave the killer pipeline.

A scrawny kid in baggy shorts, MICK SHELLY (13), walks up behind the surfers, snatches a LONG BOARD and dashes towards the surf.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
The career of legendary surfing pioneer Mick “Balls Out” Shelly began almost as dramatically as it ended.

The long board’s owner scrambles after Mick, but stops short as Mick paddles madly into the churning, chaotic water.

The bumpy footage CUTS to -

A huge WAVE, with Mick in its path. He paddles desperately to get into position.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
But what made Mick Shelly a legend?

INT. FARMINGHAM RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

A sterile room with old furniture and older occupants. A black and white TV plays Murder She Wrote with the sound off.

SUPERIMPOSE: Present Day

RONNY “PEARL” FLYNN (80) sits down and struggles with his shirt microphone. Sun ravaged skin hangs loosely on his old bones.

SUPERIMPOSE: RONNY “PEARL” FLYNN - SURFER

RONNY
The little prick stole my board. Just grabbed it and ran into the water.
EXT. NORTH SHORE - DAY

More grainy footage; a monster wave towering incredibly high, and little Mick is cutting and slashing it like a maniac.

RONNY (V.O.)
I woulda killed him, too, if he hadn’t worked miracles with my board.

INT. MICK SHELLY’S HOUSE - PRESENT DAY

Paunchy, sunburned and disheveled, MICK SHELLY (73) is the ragged poster boy for bad choices.

SUPERIMPOSE: Mick Shelly - Surfer

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Ronny Flynn said what you did back in 1948 was miraculous.

MICK
Nah. I just had a good reason to not fall off the board.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Why is that, Mick?

Mick shifts uneasily.

MICK
I, uh, wasn’t a strong swimmer.

INT. NANCY SHELLY’S HOUSE - DAY

NANCY SHELLY (75), an craggy dye-job brunette encased in too much makeup, primps and fusses with her hair for the camera.

SUPERIMPOSE: Nancy Shelly - Mick’s Sister

NANCY
Not a strong swimmer? Well, I guess that’s true. Technically speaking.

She chews her lips, frets.

NANCY
He’ll kill me for telling you this, but Mick never actually learned to swim.
INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Excuse me?

EXT. NORTH SHORE - DAY

More grainy footage; Mick shreds the wave, his eyes fiery and alive. This kid was born to ride the pipe.

The wave finally subsides, leaving Mick mere feet from shore.

The other surfers run up and congratulate him. He’s instantly one of the guys.

EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH PIER - PRESENT DAY

Mick strolls slowly along the pier, admiring the sky, the breeze, and the bikinis. He stops and looks over the rail.

The surf line is crowded with SURFERS. Mick sighs.

MICK
I may not look like it now, but I was a legend, a God.
(beat)
Surfers still speak my name with reverence.

INT. BOBO’S SURF SHACK - DAY

Surf culture co-opted by Corporate America hangs everywhere.

A shirtless, tan, 20-something SURF PUNK looks perplexed.

SURF PUNK
Who?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Mick Shelly.

The surf punk shakes his head.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Mick “Balls Out” Shelly?

SURF PUNK
Never heard of him, dude. Is he a porn star or something?
EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH PIER - DAY

Mick eyes the surf with a thousand yard stare.

MICK
I haven’t surfed a wave for almost six decades because of one mistake.

He strangles the railing with slightly palsied hands.

INT. NEW YORK PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

The New York skyline shines in through windows of a richly furnished apartment. Expensively dressed, STAN KRAMER (78) tries his best to stifle his laughter.

SUPERIMPOSE: Stan “Snarky” Kramer – Former Pothead

STAN
I apologize. Would you like me to start over?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
No, that’s fine. We can dump that in edit. So, do you deny ruining Mick’s career?

Stan catches his breath and collects himself.

STAN
Of course. I mean, I did get high with him. Supplied the weed, too. But he did what he did and has nobody to blame but himself.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
But you did start the chant?

Stan casts his eyes downward, nods ever so slightly.

INT. FARMINGHAM RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

Ronny’s eyes glaze over as he remembers events from long ago.

RONNY
This was the early fifties. Most of us had never even considered doing drugs.

INTERVIEWER
So you didn’t notice Mick was high?
RONNY
Mick was always a little off, if you get my drift.

A grin appears on his face.

RONNY
His smile was a little wider, sure. But he did what he always did. Walked up, grabbed someone else’s board, ran for the surf.

EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH PIER - DAY
Mick stares blankly at the pounding surf.

MICK
After I grabbed a board, it seemed like everything happened in slow motion.

EXT. NORTH SHORE - DAY
More grainy footage. The beach is filled with grandstands, onlookers and a huge banner which says "1st Annual Surf For Charity - 1950".

NANCY (V.O.)
Of course I was there. He’s my little brother.

INT. NANCY SHELLY’S HOUSE - DAY
Nancy continues to fuss with her hair.

NANCY
Besides, they were filming it. I wasn’t going to miss that for anything.

EXT. NORTH SHORE - DAY
In black and white, a sea of fans parts to let Mick through. Indeed, his smile is a mile wide.

He grabs a board at random and heads for the waves.

NANCY (V.O.)
Mick went out and ripped it up. Is that what they call it? Ripped up?
INT. NEW YORK PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Stan continues, almost reverently.

STAN
He did things on that board that
most men can only dream about. Like
nobody before or since.
(beat)
He practically invented the sport
that day.

INT. FARMINGHAM RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

Excited, Ronny rocks back and forth, remembering.

RONNY
He rode that wave like a demon
possessed. Perfect sick tail
slides, airs and shove its.

INT. NEW YORK PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Stan’s wide eyes bulge.

STAN
He was goofy footed, cross stepping
and carving it up. One eighties,
three sixties, bottom turns...

INT. NANCY SHELLY’S HOUSE - DAY

Nancy puts her feet up on her coffee table,

NANCY
Oh, and he did that tricky thing
where you put all your toes over
the front end of the surf board.

She points to her toes and wiggles them back and forth.

INT. NEW YORK PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Stan comes back to reality.

STAN
It was awesome. But you have to
understand. I wasn’t trying to get
Mick in trouble. He was a friend
who smoked my weed, that’s all.
Stan looks sheepish.

STANLEY
Besides, I was so high, I had no idea what I was saying when I whispered into that charity hag's ear -

INT. FARMINGHAM RETIREMENT HOME - DAY
Ronny smiles, revealing missing teeth.

RONNY
So Stan yells, “Balls out!”, as loud as he can, right in her ear, and everyone started laughing.

INT. NANCY SHELLY’S HOUSE - DAY
Nancy laughs so hard that she can’t catch her breath.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Miss Shelly, are you alright?

Nancy’s laugh turns into a wicked coughing fit.
The Interviewer approaches her and pats her back gently.

INTERVIEWER
Breathe, Nancy. Breathe.

INT. FARMINGHAM RETIREMENT HOME - DAY
Ronny’s smile morphs into a grim frown.

RONNY
Everyone thought it was hilarious. Except for that charity lady, of course. She didn’t get a lick happier when everyone started chanting, either. Balls out. Balls out. BALLS OUT!

INT. NANCY SHELLY’S HOUSE - DAY
Nancy collects herself, dabs her eyes with a hanky.

NANCY
I’m fine, really. I guess I’d forgotten how funny it all was.
Nancy tries, yet fails, to stifle one last giggle.

INT. RUBY’S 50′S VINTAGE DINER ON THE PIER – DAY

Placed at the end of the Pier, Ruby’s Diner embodies Fifties Americana. Burgers, Coca-cola and Big Band music everywhere.

Mick sits in a red vinyl booth and stares at the ocean.

MICK
That day has haunted me my whole life. It’s a wound that always aches and won’t ever heal.
(beat)
Sometimes I feel like...

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Like what?

Mick stares straight at the camera, thinking hard.

MICK
Look, if you talked with Stan, then you already know what happened.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
It’s what you remember that matters, Mick.

Mick remains silent for a moment, then relents.

MICK
As the wave mashed out and I got closer to shore, I could see the crowd cheering. I was stoked.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
It was a good ride?

Another short silence as Mick fights back the tears.

MICK
The best ride I ever had.

He shudders and then collects himself.

MICK
As I jogged out of the foam, I realized they weren’t cheering. They were chanting.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Balls out?
MICK  
Yeah. Balls out.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)  
What happened next?

Mick stares silently at the ocean for a few seconds, then without a word, gets up from the table and leaves.

The camera shakily follows him.

INT. FARMINGHAM RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

Ronny lights up a CIGARETTE and takes a long, greedy drag.

Seconds later, NURSE PHYLLIS (30’s) walks by and casually snatches the butt from Ronny’s shaky hands.

RONNY  
You’re a damn Nazi, Phyllis.

NURSE PHYLLIS  
Flattery will get you nowhere, Ron.

RONNY  
(to the interviewer)  
Sorry about that. Where were we?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)  
Balls out.

RONNY  
Right. So Mick walks up, lit like a Christmas tree, and we’re all chanting; Balls out, Balls out.  
(beat)  
And then he did it.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)  
Did what?

RONNY  
Ruined his career.

Ronny sneaks another cigarette from his robe and lights it.

RONNY  
The damned fool was so baked on Maui Wowie that he thought we were telling him to show us his, uh, wedding tackle.
INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
So it’s true!

INT. NANCY SHELLY’S HOUSE – DAY

Nancy, grinning widely, tries to maintain a calm facade.

NANCY
Dropped his shorts, whipped out his privates and started chanting along with the crowd. BALLS OUT! BALLS OUT!

Nancy burst into renewed, hysterical laughter.

INT. FARMINGHAM RETIREMENT HOME – DAY

Tears streaming from his eyes, Ronny laughs as hard as his weak lungs will allow.

EXT. BOBO’S SURF SHACK – DAY

The surf punk and his buds are rolling with laughter.

SURF PUNK
Dude, no way. He pulled out his hairy nutsack? That’s awesome, man!

INT. NEW YORK PENTHOUSE – NIGHT

Stan leans back in his expensive leather chair, a broad smile plastered across his face.

STAN
I still can’t believe he did that.
(beat)
In the end, that charity lady got Mick thrown in the local pokey for public indecency and drug use.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
How long was he in jail.

STAN
That’s the thing. The judge let him out of jail the next morning, but still managed to make Mick serve the hardest time there is for a guy like him.
Stan’s smile disappears.

STAN
He banned Mick from competitive
surfing. Banned him for life.

EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH PIER – DAY
Mick marches rapidly down the Pier. His eyes are steely,
determined.

The Interviewer hustles to keep up.

STAN (V.O.)
He was never the same after that.

Unable to keep pace with the old man, the Interviewer slows.

As Mick walks off, we see activity on the beach.

Huge tents, banners, grandstands full of people, logos cover
everything. An event is in full gear.

INT. NANCY SHELLY’S HOUSE – DAY
Nancy sips daintily from a glass of wine.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
So what did you think when Mick
told you about his plans to return
to competitive surfing?

Nancy does a spit-take and wine spews everywhere.

NANCY
His WHAT?

INT. FARMINGHAM RETIREMENT HOME – DAY
Ronny sits on the edge of his seat. Concern furrows his brow.

RONNY
Holy sheep shit! - Mick is seventy
something years old! He’s gonna
kill himself.

EXT. THE BEACH – DAY
Mick stands in the hot sand, arms folded, eyes searching.
Yards away, a giant banner proclaims, “1st Annual Huntington Beach Senior Surf Classic”.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
After so long, how did it feel to get that invitation in the mail?

MICK
(distracted)
Um, pretty good, I guess.

Silence. Seconds tick by.

Mick’s eyes dart about, but he offers nothing more.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
Forgive me, Mick, but I would think that after all this time, being invited to surf at an international competition would make you -

The Interviewer searches for the right word.

INTERVIEWER
Happy? Ecstatic? Like you’d want to, want to -

Mick eyeballs the man.

MICK
Want to what?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)
I don’t know... drop your pants and grab your -

Mick’s balled up fist shoots out at amazing speed towards the camera and connects with the Interviewer’s jaw.

The camera drops to the sand.

On its side, it continues filming Mick as he runs towards shore as fast as his old legs will carry him.

FADE TO BLACK:

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
That was my last encounter with Mick Shelly.
FADE IN:

INT. CHANNEL 8 NEWS CENTER - DAY

SANDY MCMURPHY (29), a perky bleached blonde anchor in a suit tastefully unbuttoned down to there, looks up from her notes.

SANDY
And in our final story, it seems that an elderly man, identified as Michael William Shelly, crashed the Huntington Beach Senior Surf Classic this afternoon.

EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH SENIOR SURF CLASSIC - DAY

Sports reporter, SKIP BARBER (45), flashes glowing white teeth as he interviews Pro Surfer KELLY SLATER (40).

SKIP
Quite a turn-out, eh Kelly? Any plans to join the senior tour?

Slater shoots Skip a “What the Fuck?” look, says something that is BLEEPED, flips Skip the middle finger and walks off.

Skip smiles nervously at the camera and draws his hand across his throat in a CUT motion.

SANDY (V.O.)
It seems Mr. Shelly was irate over not having been invited to the event. A word of caution; what we are about to show you may be disturbing to some viewers.

From behind the camera, the CAMERA MAN points.

CAMERA MAN (O.S.)
Hey, Skip. Look, look.

Skip turns and sees what the camera man is pointing at.

A dozen yards away, Mick’s arm draws back in preparation to punch the Interviewer in the face.

The camera ZOOMS in as Mick’s fist connects and the man goes down.

It stays focused on the victim for a second and then pulls back to focus on Mick, who is already gone.
The camera pans right and catches up with a running Mick.

Mick stops suddenly near a row of SURF BOARDS. After looking around furtively, Mick removes his shirt, his shoes – and his shorts.

His wrinkled butt is immediately obscured by an electronic blur.

The camera zooms in. Mick’s eyes shine with manic glee.

He grabs the nearest board and dashes for the beach, his mouth yelling something over and over that we can’t hear.

The cameraman races to get a better vantage point.

After a few seconds of running, he stops and focuses on Mick.

Flabby, bouncing butt still blurred out, Mick splashes into the surf and begins paddling madly.

Moments later, a HUGE WAVE rears up. Mick isn’t in position.

He and his board climb up the face of the wave. Just as he is about to be thrown backwards, we cut to –

INT. FARMINGHAM RETIREMENT HOME - NIGHT

Ronny watches the Channel 8 News footage play out on the big screen TV. Sandy wears a mask of detached professionalism.

SANDY

Mr. Shelly was pronounced dead at the scene.

Ronny turns off the TV, but continues to stare at the screen.

RONNY

Balls out, baby.

Ronny pulls a tissue from his pocket and wipes his eyes.

RONNY


EXT. NANCY SHELLY’S HOUSE - DAY

A red door fills our view. A hand reaches up and knocks.

Seconds pass and the door finally opens. Nancy peeks through the crack. Her voice trembles.
NANCY
Go away. Leave me alone!

The door SLAMS shut, but the camera stays focused on the red door a few seconds more.

EXT. STREET - NEW YORK - DAY
Stan walks down the street, yards ahead of the camera.
He glances back several times, anger on his face.
Finally, he turns.

STAN
You got a lot of nerve. The man is dead. What more do you want?

Stan reaches out, grabs the camera lens and SHOVES.

EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH PIER - DAY
Monster waves crash loudly on the shore.
SUPERIMPOSE: One year later

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Mick “Balls Out” Shelly was not a perfect man. Who amongst us is?

In the distance we see a large group of SURFERS approach the surf line, boards at their sides.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
But the one perfect thing Mick did was choose the manner of his passing.
(beat)
He died in the waves he loved so much.

The camera ZOOMS in on the surfers.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
And although he wasn’t able to reclaim the brief glory of his youth before he died, his memory will surely live on. Of that, there is no doubt.

The surfers stop at the water’s edge.
In unison, they lifts their boards above their heads and run towards the surf – all of them stark naked.

And although we can’t hear them, we know what each and every one of them is shouting.

FADE OUT: