

Bustin' Down the Door and The Surfer's Code: Awesome, even if you don't surf



This post is mostly about surfing. I don't surf and never have, but I grew up in Huntington Beach immersed in the sport and attitude of surfing. But, when Shaun Tomson, one of the greatest surfers who ever paddled out to catch a wave, walked into our cafe in Carpenteria 8 years ago, I didn't know who he was.

Shaun and his wife Carla were friendly, gracious, loyal customers. They would come in with their son, Mathew, sometimes and I would watch them sharing a meal and talking warmly to each other. I was so saddened when I heard the news of their son's tragic death.

I mean, really devastated.

During the time we knew the Tomsons Larry and I were trying desperately to get pregnant, but with no success. If you've ever struggled with infertility you know, it's pretty much all you can think about. Babies are flippin' everywhere. Every woman you see is pregnant. Every family you lay eyes on is happy and contented.

To me, the picture of their family, and especially Carla's tenderness toward her son, were inspiration to keep trying.

She would say things to me like "You're going to be a great mom" or give me the thumbs up when I would hold a customer's baby. It was what I needed at that time in my life. It's not like we were all chummy or anything— just casual acquaintances. But, their family was important to me in a way they probably didn't even know.

You know how life is, once I got pregnant (finally) and we moved back to Orange County, I didn't really think about them

much...until I heard about Mathew. I sent Carla a card, but I don't know if she ever received it, but I hope she did.

The other night Larry and I watched "Busting Down The Door," a surf documentary about how Shaun Tomson, Wayne "Rabbit" Bartholomew, and Mark Richards ignited a surf movement in the mid-'70s that has made surfing the professional sport it is today. Even if you don't surf and know nothing about it, I would still recommend seeing it. (Watch the trailer here)



The love these guys have for surfing, the tenacity they showed as young men pursuing their passion, and the hardships they have overcome, makes this documentary powerful with some intensely personal moments.

Yes, it does have some pretty bitchin' surf sequences that will make you elbow the person next to you a million times to say, "Did you see that?" It also will give you a heavy dose of retro '70s surf culture: Lighting Bolt surfboards and puka shells, that sort of thing.

In the last scene of the movie they show the three of them today—Shaun, Rabbit and MR—walking out to surf together again. As they each ride a wave they cut seamlessly to video of them riding back in the '70s—chills, you'll get chills watching it.

This is The Surfer's Code, written by Shaun Tomson. Now that you know a little of his story, you'll see it is meaningful to anyone, not just a surfer.

Surfer's Code:

I will never turn my back on the ocean

I will always paddle back out

I will take the drop with commitment
I will know that there will always be another wave
I will realize that all surfers are joined by one ocean
I will paddle around the impact zone
I will never fight a rip tide
I will watch out for other surfers after a big set
I will pass on my stoke to a non-surfer
I will ride, and not paddle in to shore
I will catch a wave every day, even in my mind
I will honor the sport of kings

Leonard Cohen's "Who by Fire"
plays at the beginning of "Bustin' Down The Door."