



H O M E

BY DAVE PATTERSON

In March I had the opportunity to visit the Alliance Wakeboard offices for the first time. I can remember how nervous I was as I walked the 2.7 miles from my hotel to their offices in Cardiff, CA. To me, these guys were everything. I had been an avid reader/viewer since the days of Bluetorch (for those of you who don't know, Bill McCaffray was a big part of that before Alliance) and was honestly intimidated out of my mind. I had no clue what I was going to say, or how I was going to prove my wakeboard bro-factor. Nevertheless, I marched on.

I swear I was walking for hours, but eventually a local Cardiffian picked me up. They kindly took me to the location of the red star on my Google Map. I double checked my coordinates, but there was no sign of a magazine office. I kept cruising around, but all I could see were little town apartments and a few shops. After some time I found a window with a "Friends of Alliance" sticker, and proceeded to investigate. I headed around the back and to my shock found a bunch of surfboards and dripping wetsuits thrown all around. I laughed. "So this is corporate Alliance," I thought, and my jitterbugs were gone.

The rest of the day was incredible. From the moment Bill greeted me at the door I was treated like a good friend. Each department graciously opened their arms and showed me all the ins and outs of the mag. I felt like a little grom zooming around Toys R' Us in a confiscated 4-wheeler. A day I'll remember for sure. But the coolest thing was, I wasn't the only child there. Not only was each crew member really open and friendly,

they were absolutely stoked and passionate about what they did. I felt at home.

Now it's the end of the summer. I just got back from visiting my hometown in Park City, UT shooting a potential piece as an intern for Alliance. There I met up with local riders and friends Nick Weekes, the Baggley brothers, and Billy McKee. What an amazing experience. To go back home as a representative for a magazine I still drool over... it was unreal! This sport gave me so much as a kid, and feeling like a contributor was, and is still, hard to believe. But I'm here (at least I think I'm here) because a few years ago I made a decision. A decision that I think many can relate to, and one that forever changed the course of my life.

I was 21. For some reason I was thinking I had to "grow up" a little, and that meant stop breathing wakeboarding. It was literally all I ever thought about, but since I had yet to take it anywhere, I just figured I had to move on. It was quite the sucky feeling, but I tried to hide it and continue with school. Luckily my dad started to pick up on the internal struggle I was having. One night he called me into his room. I didn't have a clue what was going on, but I will be forever grateful for what he said. "Dave, my son, (he actually didn't say my son, but it sure sounds intense) you're moving to Orlando."

Say what?

"You need to stop fighting your dreams," he continued. "You've always talked about pursuing wakeboarding, and you'll forever wish you had if you never go. It is such a big part of you... you need to go... for yourself and for your future."

It's like inside I had been waiting my whole life for someone to give me that extra boost. My dad had always supported me in my riding, but for whatever reason I thought I would be letting him down if I didn't grow out of it. And that's all it took. I can still remember the butterflies. Yeah, I didn't know what was going to happen or where the next few years were going to lead, but it didn't matter. I knew what I felt inside and that what I was pursuing was something I loved with every part of me. And because of that, for the first time in my life, I felt a peace and confidence about the future.

The road since that day has been amazing. A few years and many homes later, I'm sitting in the office of Alliance surrounded by people who, like I just learned to do recently, have chased their dreams. It has been a whole lot different than I could have imagined, however, and by no means has it been easy. At times I've felt confused; at times I've felt I have failed. But it's in those moments I remember I'm doing what I love and that so called "failure" ends up opening some door to the next opportunity. It's strange how it all works, but that's just how it is. When you do what you're passionate about and you're open to change, failure doesn't exist. New homes and opportunities are always there, you just need to be willing to let your dreams evolve. So far, I've never met anyone who regrets pursuing what they love, but I've met a bunch of people who wish they had. Don't be one of those guys. Don't live wondering what could have happened if you did. Just live.

