

**Surf City is a true story set in 1990s Anchorage, Alaska, when I opened one of the first internet cafés in the country. By night I was a Department of Defense munitions inspector, and by day I was trying to keep this tiny Cape-Cod-style cafe — with blue and gray Cat-5 cables snaking through the walls — alive, in snowy downtown Anchorage.**

**We were always on the brink of failure — maxed-out credit cards, rent hikes, and me burning through sick leave and comp time just to keep the doors open. But the place became a refuge for outcasts, gamers, and coders who didn't fit anywhere else in this last frontier. And then we stumbled onto something no one saw coming — players were willing to pay real money for virtual items in an open-world game called EverQuest, the biggest online game before World of Warcraft.**

**Suddenly this failing cafe became ground zero for the early digital-item economy. We built a 'digital foundry' upstairs, with gamers farming loot in shifts to keep the lights on. And it worked... until it worked too well. eBay's legal team shut us down, so we built our own auction site from scratch. Then the game studios sent lawyers. Every time we found traction, big tech came after us, and we had to pivot — faster, smarter, scrappier — just to survive.**

**The film has the energy of *The Big Short* in the last frontier — a fast, funny, true tech-hustler story about a small cafe that accidentally helped spark a billion-dollar industry. But at its core, it's about legacy, community, and the absurdity of trying to stay legal while building the future. Surf City wasn't just a business — it was a found family trying to create something meaningful before the internet was tamed.**