



SCRIPT & STORY



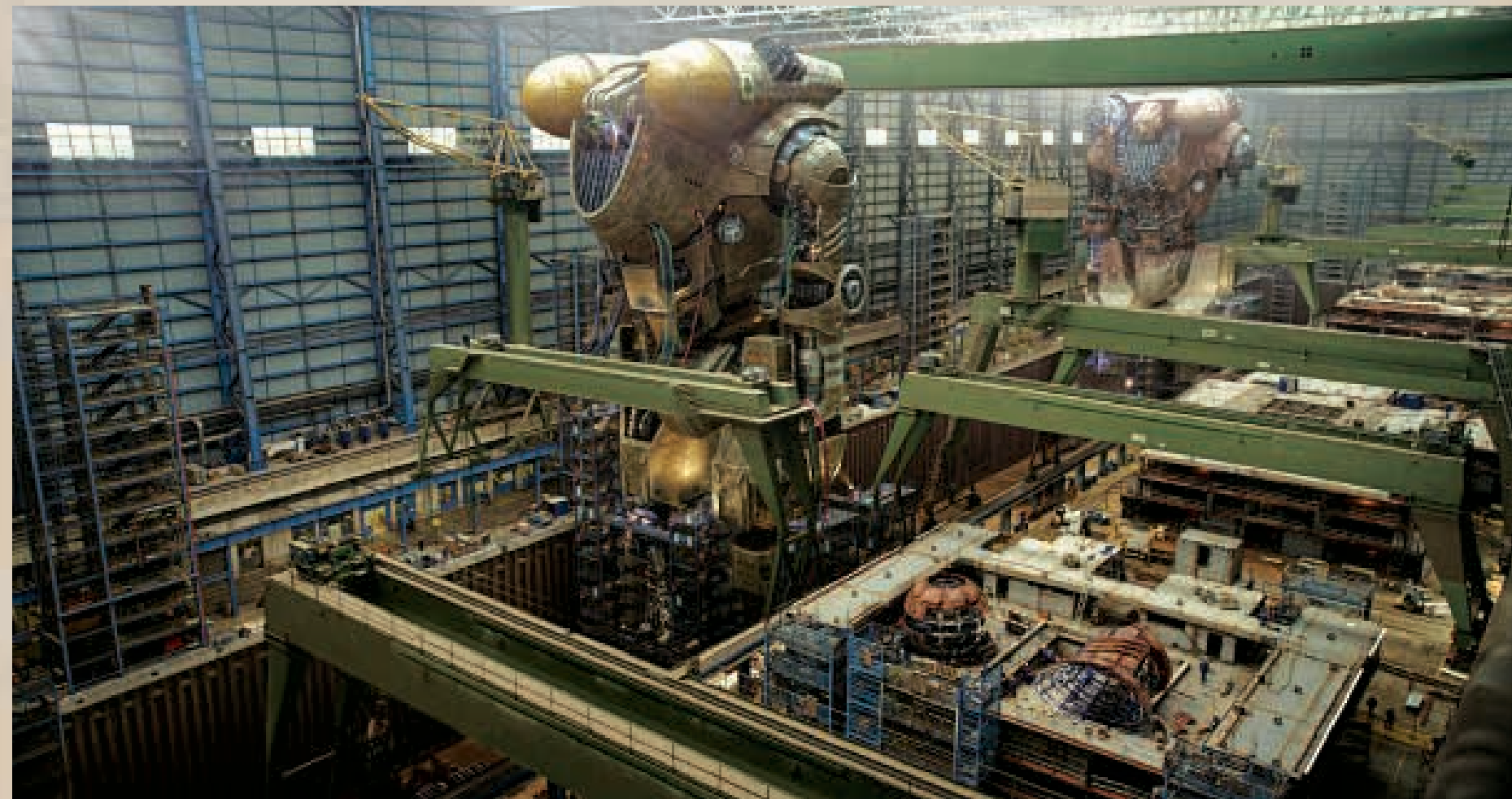
FEW STRETCHES OF SAND are as tame as Santa Monica Beach. The breezes are light, the surf gentle, the sand smooth and blanketed with sunbathers. Dolphins frolic just yards offshore. Only rarely are there reminders that nature is not always benign, like the temblors that rupture the seabed and send up oil to foul the sand. But on some days, sea and sky conspire to reclaim a bit of mystery, if not menace, for this oh-so-civilized shore. Cool fog glides in, the sunbathers withdraw, and the beach is left to more determined, thoughtful souls. It was on such a morning that *Pacific Rim* was born.

It was the summer of 2007, and Travis Beacham was taking his daily walk on the shore. Beacham, an up-and-coming screenwriter, was new to California and almost as new to his craft. But he'd already had his first big break: A screenplay he'd written in his University of North Carolina School of the Arts dorm room, a fantasy murder mystery called *A Killing on Carnival Row*, had been optioned by New Line Cinema, and he'd been developing it with Guillermo del Toro. "He is the first director I met or worked with on any real basis," says Beacham. "It was one of the more surreal experiences of my life, but it prepared me for almost anything that came after it."

Beacham had rented a modest apartment near Santa Monica Beach and would walk there every day, sometimes because he was stuck on a writing problem, sometimes just to enjoy the place. On this morning, he found the beach quiet. An unseasonable mist blanketed the bay. A handful of swimmers and surfers took to the water, black wetsuits glistening. As Beacham made his way north, he saw the Santa Monica Pier about a mile away, almost hidden in the gloom. Then, beyond the darkened arcade and Ferris wheel, he pictured something astonishing: a giant robot and a giant monster in a fight to the death.

"They just sort of materialized out of the fog, these vast, godlike things," he remembers. But Beacham is prone to picture such things, and he knows an image alone is not enough to build a script on. So he turned over the vision in his mind, pondering it for weeks, months, and finally years.

"I didn't know that I had something that I really wanted to write," he says, "until I realized these robots are driven by two pilots, and what happens when one of those people dies? What happens to the leftovers? Then it became a story about loss, moving on after loss, and dealing with survivor's guilt. That makes the monsters scarier, because now you care about the people who are in these robots."



PAGES 12-13 Keyframe of the Kaiju dubbed "Karloff" by Guy Davis and Doug Williams.

OPPOSITE Storyboard art depicting Striker Eureka exiting the Shatterdome to challenge Knifehead by Stephen Erik Schirle.

ABOVE Final frame of a Jaeger factory.