

SONS OF HAWAII

Ragged work boats and trucks with black lizards painted across them parked out front. The coming of the skinheads created a stir, and the frenzied commotion of night revelry, blazing stereo, and bursts of weaponry confirmed local sentiment: We were certainly not your run-of-the-mill hippies stealing fruit and playing flutes. Soon local fishermen and pig hunters dropped by with their catch, and stayed to drink with us. We were fitting in. I thought it strange, these values, but if violence was in vogue...so be it.

The yellow submarine was filling up, with three more mainland girls moving in with the divers. I hired local kids to help with the field work, and we fished and hunted to feed our growing family. It became like Hana--once we'd broken the ice everyone wanted to see what the crazy "haoles" were up to.

Powerful fishermen from remote villages like Milolii stood like hereditary kings, "alii," shadowed around our campfire. During these exchanges they'd initiate themselves to our drugs, women, and the delight of emptying a clip from a machine gun into the hippie target. When Moe and Caddy came down from Honolulu with their syndicate bodyguards to ply me with cocaine, alcohol, and threats into my old modus operandi, the resulting orgy cinched our place in this stolid community as non-hippies at worst, and to my thinking at the time...a power to be reckoned with, at best.

After several bizarre incidents, I rethought my plans and began to ease my crazy friends out of my life and create something I could be proud of. I really wanted to shake my past, but found it hard to do. The syndicate was most displeased to hear of my retirement plans, and none of my macho friends wanted me to cut off the logistics of their profit or dementia, but I stood my ground. I was absolutely finished and that was it! What could they do? Kill the goose to make it lay another?

I called Crane on Maui and told him I'd teach him the ganja business if he'd take over for me...and that's just what happened. He went straight out there, refinancing and expanding the entire operation, beyond my scope for sure! Realizing the APO was limited, and needing an ocean port, he got this General friend of the Warlord Khun Sa, a guy named Tiger, together with some mercenary Scots from Wee Robbie's Black Watch, and they moved the entire growing scene into Burma. It was awesome what he pulled off, never even thought of before, transplanting a whole agrarian population to another country building villages, schools, and all!

Where I'd moved in my greatest solo lift a thousand

pounds, Crane brought out 44,000 kilos using a mother ship that made drops from Canada to Mexico, and a high-speed, 110 foot transport with three V-12 turbos, flame-throwers, and rockets, which zipped in and out of the teak port of Prachuap into the Straits of Malacca to rendezvous with her. A contingent of the Mon army protected his encampment and operations.

He improved the quality, sexing the huge fields himself to pure sensimilla, bringing convoys of bat guano in, and even using elephant power in the wet season. I was impressed and so were my syndicate pals, who let me gracefully off the hook. They were gonna make a lot more money with his advanced thinking. All I'd done was find the stuff in the beginning. Hence came the era of "Elephant" and "Thai sticks." Everyone was happy in the end and I was forgotten...which seemed to suit us all.

So the gangsters, outlaws, and madmen of my past drifted away, and in that vacuum I planned a course of renewal. My reputation preceded me, and the community both feared and wondered who I was. It was confusing, and would take a lifetime of hard work and service to prove myself a true son of Hawaii worthy to Kona's farming family.

I hired a bulldozer to clear the land for mechanized mowing, ripping and crushing the lava into something we could plant. The farm hummed with activity, and more local kids came to work and learn our ways. We hunted on the volcano every week with their packs of trained pig dogs. Early mornings found us steaming silently through ferns and tall grass of the Honaunau Forest Reserve, dogs criss-crossing ahead of us, intent on the spoor of violent boars with flashing tusks and black hair bristling.

It was intense, for if we didn't get there quickly to dispatch these raving beasts with a pistol shot to the ear, they'd tear up our dogs in no time. Many a life-and-death battle was waged before dawn in our flashlights amidst the blood, mud, and gore. Then we'd pack the huge carcasses on poles as the dogs licked their sticky coats and Limpy hung close by me. These were good times.

"Kiawe" logs blazed in the deep hole, or "imu," heating round stones while we cut "ti" leaves and pounded banana stumps into shredded matting to insulate the pork from our earthen oven. The pigs were scraped clean of their hides and lowered in chicken wire cages, their stomachs packed with bananas, yams, and breadfruit. The whole works, steaming and hissing, was covered with more matting and leaves, then buried to cook all day while Toddy stood vigil keeping his trained eye peeled for steam leaks. We'd shower and go to work on the farm.

These early creative times could've been the happiest days of my life. I didn't have a woman but at least I had a mission. We lived off the land as much as we could, feeding our little band as the natives had for generations...taking

from the ocean seaweed, shells, and fish as we needed, hunting and trapping the animals of the forest, and growing corn, pumpkins and yams like the first settlers. Giant marlin towed us about, nearly sinking our canoe, as they shook in the air dancing in their drama of death. Huge tuna, called "ahi" or fire, burned smoking grooves into our gunnels as the line peeled out following their powerful surging into the depths.

Fishing at night for the little, sardine-like "opelu," we watched as ferocious sharks would swirl in feeding frenzies around our light, chomping at our catch in startling flashes...until I killed them with blasts from my sawed-off shotgun. Toddy built a smoke house, and our larder was filled with all manner of local delicacy. The kitchen was piled high with lobsters, "opihi," crabs, and fish as the hungry crews gathered on the huge "lanai" to look across the communal dreamscape we'd carved from jungle and rock. Ours was a profound camaraderie, for we were creating something exceptional on our own.