

In my last revision of Māhū, I had to cut out a lot about Kimo's first romantic interest, attorney Tim Ryan. Here are some of those deleted scenes:

Tim lived in a high-rise on Ala Wai Boulevard, down the street from Harry Ho. But while Harry's apartment looked mauka, at the Ko'olau mountains, Tim's faced makai, and had a fantastic view of the ocean stretching all the way from downtown to Diamond Head. "Sometimes I just come out here and stand," he said, facing the water. "I look at the ocean and wonder why it took me so long to get here."

I stood a little behind him, and couldn't resist the chance to check out his body from the rear. He had muscular calves and strong thighs that welled up to a round bubble butt that looked molded into his Speedos. Narrow waist, and then his back veeing up into wide shoulders. He leaned forward a little and gripped the balcony railing.

On impulse I stepped up behind him and began to rub his shoulders. His skin was hot and smooth. "Oh," he sighed. "That feels great."

"You're so tense," I said. "Relax. This is Hawaii. Tropical paradise."

I kneaded the cords in his neck, rubbing gently at all the tension in his back. Little by little he relaxed. "You're great," he said. "Where'd you learn to give massages like that?"

"Years of dating tourist women," I said. "It's a great way to get close to someone without being threatening." As soon as I said it I realized it was true.

I moved a little closer to him, and the narrow space between our bodies was almost electrified. I kissed the back of his neck and he shivered, but he made no move to resist. I could hardly believe it of myself. All those years of fear and ambivalence seemed to slip away. This felt right.

I let my hands roam up over his shoulders and wrap over onto his chest, and stepped up so close that I was pressing against his backside. He knew what I was doing; all he said was "That feels good."

I kissed the back of his neck a couple of times, and then stepped back. I said, "Feel more relaxed now?" and stepped up next to him at the balcony railing.

He looked at me and smiled, and I leaned over and kissed him. Lightly at first, until I felt him pressing back, and then I put my arms around him and gave him a little tongue, and he wrapped his arms around me and gave a little back. We kissed for a minute or two, and then he pulled back from me and said, "Why did you do that?"

"Because it felt right," I said. "Didn't it feel right to you?"

"I don't know," he said. He turned back to look at the ocean again. From this height, swimmers and surfers were mere dots on the waves. The ocean stretched out into the distance, gentle, forgiving, but always moving with a strong, sensual power. "I didn't ask you up here for this," he said, finally.

"When was the last woman you slept with?" Tim asked.

I had to think about it. Winter is the big season for tourist wahines, shy secretaries and fresh divorcees getting away from the snow and cold for a tropical holiday. I remembered two during that time who had lasted almost a week before flying home, and at least three, no four, one-night stands. Then Harry came back to Waikīkī in May, and we'd started hanging out together again. Since then there'd really only been one woman, a teacher at a hula halau in 'Aiea who I'd met at a competition out there. We'd dated for almost a month before she detected a lack of interest on my part and broke up with me.

"What's a hula halau?" Tim asked.

"A hula school," I said. "You learn the dances, but you also learn about

‘ohana, about Hawai‘ian religion and customs. When we were kids, my brothers and I all learned the hula. Now their kids go.”

“You? Do the hula?” He laughed. “Isn’t it just for girls?”

I shook my head. “Not at all. There are men’s hulas and women’s hulas. When the missionaries came to Hawai‘i in the nineteenth century, they didn’t like the hula because they thought it was too erotic, so they banned it. It wasn’t until the 1880s, when King David Kalākaua ordered that hulas be performed in public, that they came back. And even then, it was mostly the women’s hula, though the earliest records show that men were actually the first hula dancers, and they taught the women.”

“So you get up and sway your hips and all that?”

“Not really. There’s actually two kinds of hula, the hula kahiko and the hula ‘auana. The hula ‘auana is the one you know. It’s the more modern one, and there’s music, and grass skirts. The hula kahiko is the ancient-style one, and you perform that one to chants, and to the rhythm of a couple of instruments. There’s the ipu hula, which is two gourds glued together, and the pahu hula, which is a sharkskin drum, and the ‘uli ‘uli, which is a gourd rattle. It’s a much simpler, more athletic kind of dance, usually telling some ancient legend.” I took a sip of ice water and looked at him. “The hula ‘auana is the sexy one. Rolling hips, swaying hands, all that stuff.”

“I’d like to see it sometime,” he said, looking back at me.

“The big festival is the Merrie Monarch, named after King David Kalākaua, in Hilo in April, but then there’s the King Kamehameha Competition at the Blaisdell Center in June, and there are small ones all the time. I can let you know the next time my nieces and nephews are in one.”

I smiled at him, and he smiled back, and then he told me a story about a trip he'd made to New York a couple of years before. "Three other lawyers and I were there to take depositions. We went out for a huge dinner, and afterwards everybody was yawning and saying how tired they were. After we went back to our rooms, I changed and slipped out of the hotel, this big place right on Times Square, a Marriott I think, with a big lit marquee like a theater. I went out the side door and found a gay porno theater. I took a seat, and pretty soon I had my pants open and I was jacking off."

My mouth was dry and I had a huge erection, just listening to him. A couple passed us, holding hands, and Tim waited to continue the story until they were gone. "After a little while a guy came over and sat next to me, and gave me a blow job. It was fantastic. He was really a world-class cocksucker. After he finished I could hardly move, I was so drained."

He uncrossed his legs and stretched. I was trying to see if he was hard, too, but I couldn't tell in the moonlight. "I finally zipped up and walked out. Right in front of me, as I was leaving, was one of the other attorneys from my firm. I dropped back against the wall and he didn't see me."

"Was he the guy who blew you?"

He shook his head. "It was dark, but it wasn't that dark. But still, he could have seen me. I couldn't stop my heart from pounding. I was so scared. It was weird, like this huge roller coaster of emotions that day, from the stress of the depositions, up to the blow job, then back down again with fear."

"Did you ever say anything to him, to the other guy?"

He shook his head. "He quit a few months later and moved to Atlanta. We didn't keep in touch."

After dinner we went for a walk on the beach. We sat on a couple of big

boulders and listened to the pounding surf. I wanted to touch him, but I didn't know how to start. Every now and then someone would pass us, a single or a couple, out for a moonlight stroll. Tim and I kept talking, about our experiences, our lives. It was like a date, but it was somehow more immediate than dates I'd had with women.

"If you could do anything, go anywhere, be anybody, what would you do?" Tim asked. He'd taken his shoes and socks off, and crossed his right leg over his left. Now his naked right foot dangled close to my thigh, and I had a powerful urge to touch it, kiss it, run my finger up his instep and see if he was ticklish there.

Instead I said, "I'd like to live in New York, just for a month or so. Wear a suit, go to work in some big office in a skyscraper. Something totally different from my life here, just to try it."

He laughed. "You know, those high rises are filled with people dreaming of your life," he said. "Doing just this. Warm breezes and tropical drinks with little umbrellas. Kicking your shoes off, sitting on a beach somewhere with someone you like."

"And do you like me?" I asked.

He stretched his foot a little, and his toes grazed the outside of my thigh. Through my khaki pants, that touch ran direct to my spine. "I do."

Then he yawned. "I'm tired," he said. "Long day. You ready to go home?"

Derek's and Wayne's attorney arrived. I was astonished when Tim Ryan walked in the front door, wearing a charcoal-gray pinstripe suit and carrying a leather briefcase. He was almost as surprised to see me as I was to see him.

I recovered first. "What are you doing here?"

"Hollings and Arakawa represent Hui 812," he said. "I'm here to meet with

our clients.”

Akoni pulled me aside. “You know the attorney?”

I knew him, all right, and I knew he had no business representing clients in a case I was investigating, but I couldn’t say all that. “Yeah. Just as a friend.”

He looked down the hall toward where Wayne waited, then looked back at me. “That kind of friend?” He didn’t even wait for an answer; all he had to do was read my face. “Shit, Kimo! You tell him anything about the case?”

“He went with me to the Boardwalk, but I don’t think I ever told him why,” I said finally.

Akoni crumpled a piece of paper fiercely and shook his head. “I’ve gotta get some air,” he said, and he walked outside.

About ten minutes later Tim left Derek’s office, took Wayne by the arm and led him across to his own office. After another ten minutes, Akoni came back inside, and Tim left Wayne’s office.

“Are you going to charge my clients with anything, or are you just here harassing them?” he demanded.

I motioned to the techs, who were examining the office, piece by piece and box by box. “Depends on what they find. And depends on what the DA thinks. But my guess is there’ll be charges. I tried to explain to your clients now is the time to cooperate, get ahead of this thing, but they don’t seem to understand. Maybe you can explain to them.”

Tim mopped sweat from his brow. “They understand how the police work,” he said. “You guys are here grasping at straws. You don’t have any kind of case against either of them, and they’re not going to say anything that you can twist around.”

Tim hung around for a while, talking alternately with Derek and Wayne, and finally I said, “Can I talk to you, Counselor? Outside?”

He followed me out to the parking lot. "What are you doing here?" I asked.

"I told you before. Hollings and Arakawa represent the company. They sent me out here to protect our client's interests."

"You can't work on this case. Our relationship compromises both sides."

"I have to do this, Kimo." He looked around, then lowered his voice. It was blazing hot out on the asphalt, without a shade tree anywhere in sight, and we were both sweating. "I didn't want to. The partner who usually handles their business is a real scumbag, but he doesn't have any criminal experience. When he called me in and gave me the details, I told him I wasn't interested. Nobody else in the firm would touch it either."

"Then why did you?"

"Because he knows I'm gay, and he threatened to out me to the firm unless I do this. If I go back now and tell him I know the detective in charge he'll still out me. I need this job, Kimo, and I don't want anybody dictating what goes on in my personal life."

"You can't let him bully you."

"I don't have any choice. Now that I know he knows, I'm going to have to start testing the waters at the office, or else look for a new job. But I can't do anything about this." He paused. "I remember we talked about one of your cases, something about copyright infringement. I didn't make the connection until I saw you here. But you didn't tell me anything about a murder, or anything that would compromise my ability to represent these two guys."

He wiped his brow again. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to get back inside and watch what your technicians are doing." We stood around awkwardly until the techs finished.

"Good work today," I said, as we got into Akoni's Taurus for the ride back down into Waikiki. "One of them will talk eventually, even if just to incriminate the

other one.”

“I think it was Tommy Pang,” Akoni said. “At least that’s what they’ll say.” The inside of the car was roasting hot, and he put the windows down and turned the air on full as he backed out of the lot. “They’ll get charged as accessories, and they’ll plead something out.”

I stuck my head out the open window like a dog, feeling the breeze on my face. “You don’t know that,” I said when I pulled back into the car. “In the meantime, we’ve closed a case. Well, almost.”

“You want to tell me something about this lawyer? How you know him?”

“I met him on the beach, we had a couple of dates, I asked his advice about copyright,” I said. “End of story. You don’t need to worry about him or me.” I settled back against the seat, and turned the air conditioning vents to blow on my face. But all through the long slow drive down out of the hills and into Waikīkī, I worried about Tim Ryan and the new complications his involvement presented.

Tim called late in the evening. “I’m sorry about what happened today, Kimo, but we need to slow down a little, anyway. I’m not ready to rush into something, and you need to take your time. We shouldn’t really talk while we’re on opposite sides of a case. Let’s finish it, and then we’ll see where we are.”

I felt hurt, though I knew he was right. It’s just that I had waited almost twenty years to let myself feel this way, to jump onto the roller coaster, and it was hard now to slow it down. I went to sleep hoping I would dream of Tim, but in the morning when I woke all I remembered were boxes, haphazard piles of boxes everywhere.