

*Escape*  
FROM  
*Hawaii*  
A TROPICAL SEQUEL

*Jack  
Handey*

CHAPTER 1



*Leis*

At Aloha State Prison, the most terrifying sight was when the dump truck drove in and dumped a huge load of flowers. All those flowers had to be turned into leis\* by us, the prisoners.

After making countless leis your fingers would grow numb and you'd lose all sense of good color combination. If you slowed down, you were yelled at and whipped. You might be trying to decide between an orchid and a carnation when *KA-RACK! YOWW!* The cat-o'-nine-tails!

One bad lei and you'd get humiliated. The guard would rap you on the back of your head with his billy club and hold up your latest effort.

\*A lei is a Hawaiian necklace of flowers. You might say you already knew that, but I don't think you did.

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“What is this?” he’d snarl.

“A lei?”

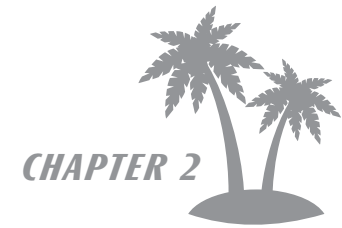
“I wouldn’t wear this to a dog fight!” he’d shout and throw the lei in your face.

If you tried to point out that the leis were just for tourists, so they didn’t have to be perfect, the guard would yell: “You don’t think tourists have feelings?!” Then he’d whip you again.\*\*

Too many bad leis and you’d be sent to solitary. And you’d have to attend a Johnny Cash performance. Every few months Johnny would come to the prison and sing a song about what it’s like to be in prison. “Please, please, not another Johnny Cash concert!” you’d beg. But it did no good.

If people knew that leis were made under such horrific conditions, they might not buy them. Every time I see a photo of a smiling tourist wearing a lei, it makes me sick to my stomach.

\*\*If you ever get whipped by a cat-o’-nine-tails, try to breathe *in* as the whip is going back, and *out* as it hits your back. Or is it the other way around? Anyway, you’ll figure it out.



## *Up the Aloha*

How did I wind up in such an awful situation? It’s a long story. My friend Don and I came to Hawaii from America to find the Golden Monkey. We found it, and I stole it, but then it was stolen from me by my Uncle Lou. I was arrested and tried. I guess it wasn’t such a long story after all.

The Hawaiian justice system is really unfair. If you steal something, but then someone steals it from *you*, shouldn’t that erase the first stealing? The judge said no. I was sentenced to twenty-five years, with credit for the one week I had spent in jail. So it was actually only twenty-four years and fifty-one weeks, which I thought was pretty good.



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In Honolulu, a big group of us convicts were made to change out of our regular clothes into the prison uniform: a flowery Hawaiian shirt, cutoffs and flip-flops. It's well-known that if you see someone in a Hawaiian shirt and cutoffs, he's probably an escaped criminal.

We were loaded on a boat and shipped up the mighty Aloha River. The Aloha is one of the slowest-moving rivers. When Darwin sailed up it, he joked, "I can't tell if this river is moving upstream or downstream." His joke was met with silence, except for a couple of sailors coughing and the gentle flapping of the sails.

As we passed the House of Forbidden Aloha, the girls came out and waved. I waved back.

We continued upriver. The sun was shining bright and the pui-nassi birds were singing in the trees. The air was filled with the scent of fresh boat exhaust. I thought, Maybe going to prison isn't so bad.

One prisoner jumped ship and tried to swim to shore, but he was attacked by crocodiles. It was horrible! The water was strewn with blood and pieces of flip-flops. Maybe I shouldn't have encouraged him to give it a try, but he looked like a stronger swimmer than he turned out to be. People can fool you.

## *Escape from Hawaii*



The boat got stuck on a sandbar. The captain tried to call for help, but the radio was broken. We were almost out of food and water. The men began to get restless.

The captain was trying to fix the radio, but was having no luck. "Mind if I give it a try?" I said. The captain gave me a suspicious look but said, "Sure, go ahead."

I took the screwdriver and poked around in the back, unscrewing some things and prying some things loose. But it still wouldn't work. So, hiding my mouth behind the radio, I made some static sounds and then a radio voice going "Where are you? What is your location?" I thought it was a pretty good joke, but nobody laughed.

We finally got pulled off the sandbar by another boat. I waved a thank-you wave to the other captain, and he waved a you're-welcome wave back. There are so many things you can say with a wave.



When we got to Aloha State Prison, the guards herded us into the main yard. The warden was waiting. "Welcome, gentlemen," he said, but the way he said "gentlemen," I felt,

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was a little sarcastic. I hate to judge someone, but that's the way it seemed.

The warden said no one had ever escaped from Aloha State Prison, and that we shouldn't even think of trying. That's when I noticed the main gate was still open, and I just walked out. Then I ran.

The guards caught up with me, beat me, and threw me into a cell. To this day I still wonder what the rest of the warden's speech was about.

PHOTO BY MARTA HANDEY

