

Motley Crew

by Katie Norton

Paul had come to Hawaii, like many young haoles from the mainland, to party. Partying proved to be lucrative for him. By early October 1982 he had done well for himself in Hawaii, living in a country house with sprawling lawns that held back the jungle foliage in Pupukea, North Shore, Oahu. Paul was the first person Lynn had ever heard of to do indoor marijuana growing. From what she gathered, he had several big indoor grows going on and made a fine living at it. Not that he divulged any of the details. Successful dope dealers keep their cards close to the vest. Lynn and her boyfriend Troy, Paul's friend, were regular visitors to Pupukea for long, lazy North Shore afternoons.

Paul and his girlfriend Mona had three small children. She was the daughter of English people who had moved to Hawaii after spending many years living in Hong Kong. Mona was a complete hippie chick who only wanted to stay home and make babies. She was one of those blondes who is so fair they are almost albino. Even in Hawaii she was milk-white. Paul was blond too, but was dark tanned because he spent a lot of time outdoors doing guy things.

One of Paul's manly pursuits was building his own boat. On this particular visit, Paul suggested that everyone take a ride in his boat. Lynn was 9 months pregnant, a week past her due date.

Their friend Amber was also visiting that day. Amber worked as a stripper at the Club Hubba Hubba on Hotel Street. She brought along the saxophone player from the club band, a city boy from New York who wasn't comfortable in the country, with Paul's small kids running around. Mona decided to stay home with the baby. The rest of the group went down to Haleiwa Harbor. Paul's small boat appeared to be made mostly of plywood. It looked homemade. Paul brought along Paul Jr., 5 and Shawna, 3. That made a party of seven on the boat ride, plus Lynn's unborn baby. Paul put life jackets on the kids. Early October was before the big North Shore waves

kicked up so Lynn figured a short ride around the harbor would be fine.

All of the adults were stoned on Paul's' finest product and full of beer as well. Except for Lynn. She'd had a couple of tokes of weed, but no booze due to being pregnant. They left the harbor and headed out to sea. And out further and further. Paul kept on going, not seeming to notice how far he was getting. Lynn was scared because the swells were twice the size of the boat. Just as she was looking at a wall of water and hoping nothing bad would happen, the engine sputtered, stalled and quit. The adults all realized they were in jeopardy. Not that any of them panicked.

Amber was wearing a one-piece swimsuit that was more revealing than the smallest bikini — it was three wisps of fabric held together with strings that criss-crossed her body. Amber was too short to be a great exotic dancer, but she had a spunky personality. She had brown curly hair and laughed a lot. Amber might have been considered hyperactive, except she toned it down by using heroin, just recreationally, she claimed. The saxophone player was nervous but trying not to show it. He was an Italian-looking dude wearing a pork-pie hat and hound's-tooth checked pants. Lynn assumed they were the same clothes he had worn the night before at the club.

Lynn wondered who would find her body if she died at sea. Her relatives would wonder what she had been doing in the company of a dope grower, stripper and saxophone player from New York on the high seas in a homemade boat.

Lynn's father would have prayed devout Catholic prayers if he were stranded at sea. Lynn was an agnostic. To hedge her bets she said a generic prayer in her mind, picturing God as an old white haired man with a beard, in heaven on a cloud. The internal debate over whether prayer would do any good, combined with Lynn being mad at herself for not having enough balls not to pray, calmed her down. It was so ridiculous. Lynn realized that highly stressful situations do not bring on labor.

Lynn thought of Mona's parents, who lived in a luxury condo in Honolulu. Mona's mother invited Troy and Lynn to all their holiday

dinners because she liked to entertain. Lynn supposed Mona's parents did not know many people in Honolulu, after leaving behind a career's worth of friends in Hong Kong. Mona's mother had showed Lynn how to make authentic English Yorkshire Pudding with Roast Beef in the condo overlooking the Hawaiian ocean.

Troy was always at home in the water. He looked like a Viking, tall, hard, tanned, with ocean blue eyes above high cheekbones. He and Paul tinkered with the engine. Paul's children were happy to be on an outing with Dad. They were hanging all over Paul and he was keeping one eye on them while he worked on the engine. Lynn was not good with kids and these two didn't like her. As the boat was rocking violently in the huge swells and she was preparing to meet her maker if he existed, Paul managed to start the engine. He turned the boat toward shore. Fortunately, the engine kept on humming along until they saw the harbor.

It would have been an admission of fear to head straight back to the dock. The super macho can never do such things. At least Paul headed inland. They cruised past the harbor up a shallow river. A black and white clip of the movie *African Queen* starring Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn flashed in Lynn's head. In place of Katherine Hepburn, they had Amber the Stripper jiving around in her monokini. Troy and Paul were in their element. Lynn relaxed and looked at the coconut-laden palms on the shore. All the palms in town were kept free of coconuts so that tourists wouldn't get conked on the head by falling coconuts and parked cars wouldn't get dented. It was nice to see some natural coconut trees on the river bank. There were some papaya trees too. Just another day in the country.

