

In The Beginning, We Created Buds

No book on Maui during this time period would be complete without a stony chapter. Yes kiddies, if your parents live on Maui back then they probably smoked weed, no matter what they tell you. I was a part of a group of people who figured out how to grow killer buds by trial and error experimentation in the early 1970's. There was no cloning, grow lamps, hydroponics or medical marijuana back then. We were all under 30 years old learning how to grow from experience and sharing growing tips. No older growers existed to teach us. Many have followed in our footsteps and are growing today, but nothing compares to this OG golden age of discovery on Maui.

The four tales in this chapter come from my years growing killer buds commercially in Hana that became known as "Maui Wowie". All the tales and photos in this chapter are from before 1980 and describe the highs and lows of growing buds in Hana back in the day. There are many stories about the development of the pot that became known around the world as "Maui Wowie", most of it bullshit. I actually thought the name was stupid the first time I heard it. We called our buds "da kine". Everyone and their uncle started calling their weed "Maui Wowie" after the name was used in the 1978 movie "Up In Smoke". These are the true of tales of Maui Wowie from my bud growing days in Hana with photos to back them up. I have lost track of most of the people in this chapter. The following tales happened a long time ago in a far out place, during a era that is long gone.

"Maui Wowie" the Beginning" is the story of the fun days of growing buds in the Nahiku jungle.

"The Pakalolo Poster Trip" shows the results of a stony idea to make Maui bud posters in 1977.

"Uncle Joe's Ripoff" tells a tale of how the dark side took over growing buds for money in Hana.

"Tomato Rotten" chronicles the mishaps of my last attempt to grow buds at my place in Hamoa.

This chapter is about great friendships and deep betrayals as the forces of human nature changed the mellow, beautiful lifestyle of growing buds in Hana. Looking back, it seems like an unreal fantasy. Just to be clear, all the tales and photos in this chapter are for historical purposes only.

Maui Wowie, The Beginning

After years of experimenting with crossing strains and finding ways of producing the sensemilla buds so common today, I started growing pot commercially by myself in the jungle above my place in lower Nahiku in 1975. We all grew outside in the beginning because there were no helicopter Five-O raids yet. Even rip offs were somewhat rare. Once another grower found one of my patches in the jungle and left a note on my pot to come over for a beer. We were all guerrilla growers in the beginning and it was really cool. Some of the growers even played on a softball team called the "Nahiku Gorillas" that played other teams at the Hana ballpark. These were the peaceful glory days before the government raids, rip offs, and other crap that eventually made growing a dangerous job about money. While I sold most of my buds, I also turned a lot of people on especially if they needed it for medical reasons. There was a certain amount of status and pride being a master bud grower back then.

I planted organically in 20 gallon bags and hauled every thing I used up the jungle stream beds, which left no trails. Sometimes it was a bitch, especially when the streams flash flooded, but other times it was a peaceful tropical paradise with waterfalls, sparking jungle, and no one else around. My Nahiku cabin had a big old metal shed that hid things and was perfect for drying buds. Growing in the jungle was difficult, but if you knew what you were doing you could harvest elbows (lbs) of tasty, da kine buds worth more than their weight in gold. I would have made a fortune if f%#king George Harrison hadn't bought my Nahiku stash house and kicked me out. The rich and famous were discovering and buying Hana. I did harvest all my patches down there after moving to upper Nahiku.

My buds quickly got a reputation for being "da kine" and were always in high demand. From locals to the rich and famous, my buds really kicked ass. One, two hits and done. Willy and Kristofferson bought a lot of my weed. I won the "best buds" contest between growers at our days long harvest festival one year and the quarter oz of coke prize. I was well known for the paper shopping bag full of buds I'd share with people. That got me a lot of "Aloha kokua, mahalo bumbai". I was always invited to best parties, concerts and luaus on Maui. I'd be invited whenever Elton John, Stevie Nicks and others music greats played at the Blue Max. My da kine gave me a rock star life at times.



View from My Stash House



Nahiku Garden of Eden



Copyright Sanford Hill 1975

Cooling off in the Office Pool



Nahiku Jungle Patch



Nahiku Jungle Flash Flood



Maui Wowie?



Browne wrecks the Drying Shed



copyright Sanford Hill 1976

Hana Harvest 1976

Pakalolo Poster Trip

One of the effects of growing killer buds is when you smoke them you come up with ideas that sound great when you're high. In 1977, me and a good friend figured we could make a fortune selling posters of our buds, which were better than anything shown in the new High Times magazine. We paid his brother in law and girlfriend to fly over from Oahu to model for us and I shot these photos. It was a real fun shoot that was totally off the wall, even back then. All the photos are posed and the models have nothing to do with the pot, which is why we used models. We harvested the buds as the photos were taken and they were smoked or sold a long time ago.

I wanted to capture not only the unreal buds, but the fantasy lifestyle of growing in Hana. My friend really did live in the jungle shack in upper Nahiku that's in the photos. The waterfall was near by. The bud hedge in front of his house was real, until the first helicopter raid forced him to pull them out. He hid the pot in a cave and replanted them days after the raid. They grew even bigger.

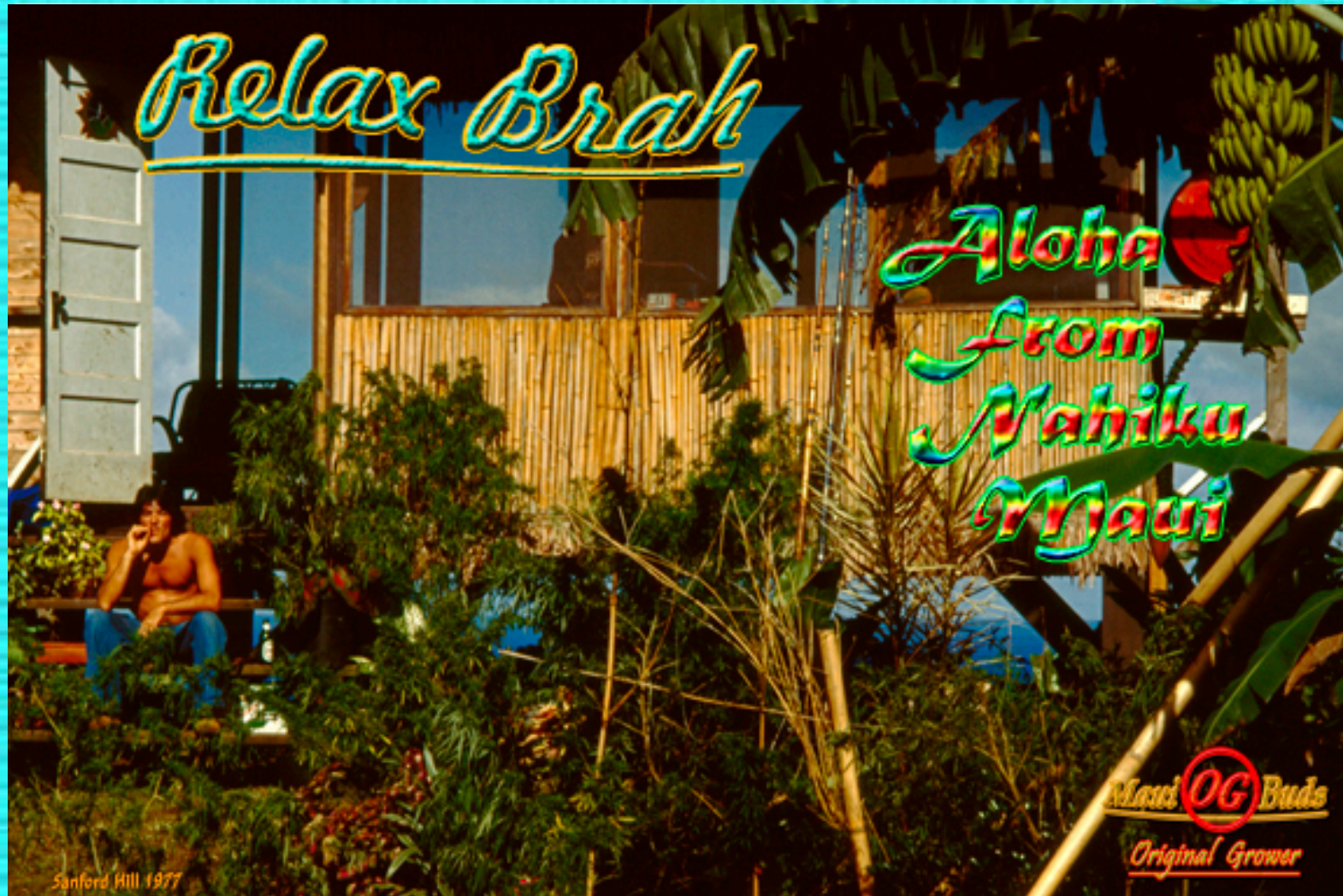
I lived in the jungle near by at that time and remember the first "green harvest" raid by the National Guard well. I was awoken by this racket and opened my back door to see what the hell was going on. There was a helicopter gun ship hovering over some trees close by with all its weapons pointed at me. I was naked and raised my hands in mock surrender. The raid was kind of a cartoon, total overkill, and didn't find any of my plants. The worst thing was the attention the raids brought to our secret little paradise. Soon everyone knew there was pot growing in Hana.

Back then no one really knew about our secret Nakiku Garden of Eden. You had to know one of us or stumble across it by luck to find it. It was like a version of the Leonardo DiCaprio movie "The Beach" but more exotic and real. I knew without dated photographs no one would image or believe it really happened. The myth of Maui Wowie is not as fantastical as it really was.

Luckily, we never got it together enough to actually make, and sell, the posters, which would have brought even more unwanted attention to our bitchen lifestyle. I found out later that someone I knew stole the idea, and took photos of some girls with Maui buds and began selling them. They were all promptly arrested. Karma?

Later I did make some Pakalolo poster from the photographs. I still sell limited series today. They are now rare collectors art and the only images of the beginning of the cannabis industry in Hawaii





Nahiku Jungle Shack



Maui Wowie Poster



Playing in the Garden



Jungle Love



Too Much Fun





Bringing Home the Goods



Monster Buds

Uncle Joe's Ripoff

This is a tale of what happened when I got to cocky and trusted the wrong person to grow with in 1977. Uncle Joe was a older Hawaiian man who lived in Hana and leased 20 acres of undeveloped land next to mine in Hamoa. He seemed like a nice guy who carried a deputy state sheriff badge and revolver. He was also well connected to the heaviest criminal syndicate in the state. Most people don't know how connected drug dealers and the government people really are.

I had made a lot of money growing buds in Nahiku, but it wasn't enough to pay for and develop my land in Hamoa. Knowing and selling to the biggest drug dealers on Maui and partying with a prosecuting attorney gave me a sense of power and over confidence. I figured with Uncle Joe's resources and protection I could grow enough to retire. I had a big head and got stoned a lot.

Joe tapped into the main Hana water line, we hauled up truck loads of mix , and used a cement mixer to prepare soil. We grew 250, 12ft tall, female maxed out Afgan-Thai plants. I was one of a very few people at the time who knew how to grow this kind of killer bud on a large scale. I didn't really trust Uncle Joe but knew he couldn't grow pot like this without my experience and skill. I didn't think he was stupid enough to ruin a such a profitable trip. Boy was I wrong.

Uncle Joe was greedy and dumb. He would have gotten half of the \$500,000. in 1977 dollars those plants were worth and we could have planted for years. But, that wasn't good enough for him. After we trimmed the first 10 lbs, all the pot was ripped off while I was partying on the other side. I found out later that Uncle Joe and his friends did it. I also found out later that he had killed my two German Shepherds that I really loved and was thinking about killing me.

I played dumb and told Uncle Joe that I quit growing pot, which was true. Growing was no longer fun and the price not worth the hassle. I concentrated on building the farm house above Hamoa and threatened to turn in anyone I found growing up my road. This story is about the lost of innocents as growing buds became dangerous. There was to much money involved and it was easier to rip off your friends than grow your own. People got shot, lost trust in each other, and our Garden of Eden was over. But I know there are still a few people around the world that remember that time and that piece of paradise we created.

Weed

"Uncle Joe's Ripoff"



Welcome to The Jungle

Weed

"Uncle Joe's Ripoff"



Going for Broke

Weed

"Uncle Joe's Ripoff"



End of Innocents

Tomato Rotten

In a few years I'd finished the Hamoa house and was living up there broke again. Things had cooled down and Uncle Joe was no longer a factor. So I tried growing pot on a large scale one more time with a good friend of mine who I'd been surfing and partying with since I moved to Hana. He had also been growing around Hana for along time and was as experienced as I was. He had developed his own strain of seeds and was starting seedlings in a hot house, planting only the females. It made growing a lot easier. Soon total indoor growing became the only way to go.

Moving the young plants from his hot house to our land became a comedy of errors. Our CB radio code for things going wrong was "tomato rotten". A week after we finished moving the plants up to our grow spot using my army truck and 4x4 tractor, the government began a large "green harvest" operation. I didn't think they had found anything until I saw a little scout helicopter slowly searching around the giant Mango tree were we had hidden our plants. We spent the night moving the plants off our land. My friends were not happy about that, but the government had started confiscating land pot growers owned. A few days later six National Guard helicopter came screaming up from ocean and search my land good. They found nothing. The cost of searching my land was far greater than we would have made from the Weed.

My friend thought I'd lost my nerve and he was right. We split the plants up and they moved their plants to other patches. I never grew again, and planted my share of the weed here and there. These are photos of that pot. My days as a bud grower were over.

In 1982 my photography was published internationally and within a few years I was doing video production on Maui and Oahu. By the mid 80's I was working in LA for a film studio. I returned in 1989 to sell my land as there was nothing for me in Hana anymore. I had a new dream making films and video. No one I knew was ever arrested for pot, or anything else, and I'm sure the statutes of limitations ran out a long time ago for anything illegal we may have done back then. This may be the only record of those times

Ironically, I now have a medical marijuana card that lets me grow 10 plants legally. If I can find a safe place to grow I'd like to recreate the Maui Wowie strain that I created 50 years ago cross breeding 10 plants. Maybe if I live long enough I can be a master bud grower again:).

Weed

"Tomato Rotten"



New Ways of Growing

Weed

"Tomato Rotten"



Taking Care of Da Babies



Jungle Tech

Weed

"Tomato Rotten"



Planters Moon

Weed

"Tomato Rotten"



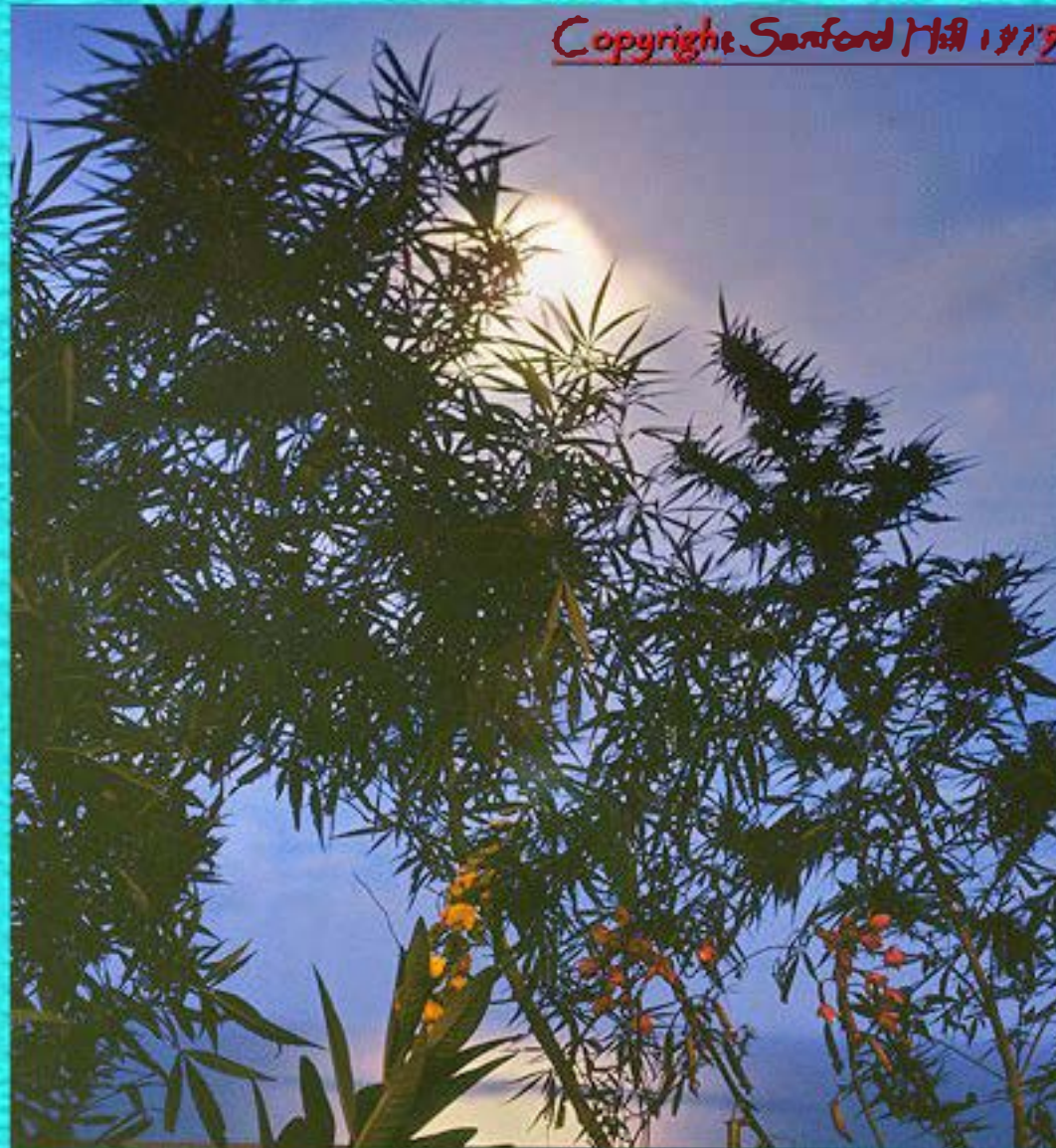
National Guard Green Harvest



The Survivors

Weed

"Tomato Rotten"



Harvest Moon

Weed

"Tomato Rotten"



High above Alau Is.

"Tomato Rotten"



We Created Buds Poster