

## Add water

ears, I let it go. But the shot was high, and the point clicked loudly against the coral behind the moray.

I yanked the spear out of the slot and swam 10 yards toward shore until I reached sandy bottom. I stood up and pulled off my mask to wash it out. I noticed the tourists eating breakfast at the Moana. Farther up the beach at the Outrigger, beachboy Noones had opened up the canoe shed. At the Royal, Chick Daniels was stacking towels by the entrance to the beach. I looked up toward Mānoa Valley, where banks of white clouds had formed over the green peaks. My home was up there, and so was Punahou School, but no one knew where I was or cared what I was doing. I had found that whenever I went diving, even for a short time, my everyday world seemed strange and far away.

I pulled my mask on and dropped back into the water. This time I made a circle and approached the slot from behind. When I was a few feet away, I dove close to the bottom and drew the spear back in the sling. Kicking hard, I glided forward.

The moray's head was there. I aimed quickly and shot. The spear entered high on the head, 2 or 3 inches behind the eye. Once again the head disappeared, and I took a breath and dove for the spear. The instant I began to pull, the moray came out.

It writhed violently, shaking me all the way up my arms and my shoulders. I held the spear as far away from myself as I could get it. The moray continued to struggle, then coiled itself in a tight ball around the spear, a foot behind the barb. Suddenly it struck like a snake, teeth grinding on the metal near the spear point. I felt the grinding up my arms.

When it coiled again I swam hard toward sandy bottom, the spear behind me, the point away from my feet. I reached the sandy spot and stood up. The moray remained coiled near the spear point. When I lifted it out of the water it stayed that way—a smooth, shiny, surprisingly heavy mass of twisted muscle bending the end of the spear.

I thought I could walk to shore, and once on the beach toss the spear away, far up the sand. So I started in, holding the spear out in front of me. But before I'd taken three steps, the moray uncoiled. Flinging silver drops of water from its writhing body, it tore loose from the spear.

It came straight at me, mouth open, eye glittering. I actually saw the jaws clamp shut as I spun to the side. It happened in an instant, but it seemed like slow motion in my mind. As I twisted away the moray turned too, changing direction before it

touched water. It hit my arm, slid hard and cold down my side and over my shorts. Burning pain hit my inner thigh, halfway up from my knee. Then I was running hard toward shore, churning through the shallow water in my panic.

It wasn't a bad wound, so a bandage and a tetanus shot were all I needed.

**W**e were growing up—or, more accurately, growing older.

Robert and I began trying to pick up tourist girls on the beach in front of the Royal. To our surprise, we had fair success. Chick Daniels didn't mind, and in fact let us know when pretty girls had arrived at the hotel. In return for the favor we gave all our fish to him whenever we speared.

We also began raising occasional hell at Punahou School, and around town too. One of Robert's most imaginative stunts

**NAKED EXCEPT for the mask and his wrist watch, he looked like an advertisement for *Mighty Joe Young*.**

is still talked about today. At 8 o'clock on a Saturday night, he ran down Kalākaua Avenue through the heart of Waikiki, naked except for an ape mask.

These were the circumstances: He needed at least a hundred dollars for repairs on his first car, an ancient, black, four-door Studebaker. Acting as business manager, I discreetly spread the word—promising only that the run would take place “on a busy street”—and collected a dollar apiece from interested customers. On the appointed Saturday I designated a place where everyone was to gather at 7 p.m. There I would check my list of those who had paid, take money from those who hadn't and lead everybody to the starting point.

We ended up with a crowd of more than a hundred high school boys, and things went according to plan—except for the police. Kalākaua was as crowded as usual that night. There were the tourists, mostly middle-aged and elderly, and many local young couples wandering in and out of bars, restaurants and night clubs. When the crowd I was leading hit the street, I noticed several curious looks,

but no one seemed to take special note of us. Robert and I had synchronized our watches, and precisely at 8, to the second, I heard someone yell, “Here he comes!”

It was a wild sight, even though I was prepared for it. Robert looked like an uncensored advertisement for the gorilla movie *Mighty Joe Young*. Dashing down the sidewalk, legs and arms pumping hard, naked except for the mask and his wrist watch, he was really moving. Thinking back, I realize how lucky we were that no one died of a heart attack or dashed onto the street in front of traffic. Most of the pedestrians were interested in one thing only—getting out of Robert's way as quickly as possible. Some looked frightened, some amazed. One old man tried to climb a palm tree.

Later on we decided that somehow the police had got the word and had followed our crowd to Kalākaua. It was no more than 10 seconds after Robert had emerged from an alley by Don the Beachcomber's to begin his run that they were after him with flashing lights and wailing siren.

I ran along behind Robert and, although I couldn't keep up, managed to see it all. He sprinted down the wide sidewalk, scattering pedestrians along the way. “What the hell was *that*?” I heard a rather distinguished-looking gentleman in a white dinner jacket ask his lady friend as I passed by.

The police car—manned by two officers—dodged in and out of traffic, trying vainly to overtake Robert. They never really had a chance, and he finally made a left turn off Kalākaua and ran down a dark side street toward the beach, where we had hidden him some clothes. By the time the police car screeched to a halt at the side street, he had disappeared.

The Studebaker would be repaired, and as soon as it was we could spear wherever we wanted to: Sandy Beach, Makapu'u, Portlock, Kailua, Lā'ie. That was the point. I turned and jogged the other way down Kalākaua, to meet Robert out on the beach in front of the club and pay him the money he'd earned.

**T**he Outrigger Club kept most of its six- and eight-man canoes out on the beach, covered with canvas and lined up neatly in rows. Robert and I sat there often at night to talk. The warm, humid air seemed especially fragrant then. Music drifted down from the dance floor at the Royal, and yellow and white lights from the hotel reflected off the dark water. Usually we had a six-pack of Primo beer that we had bought at Benny's Liquor Store on King Street. It was rumored that Benny paid off the police.