

...

After meeting with the county prosecutor, Koa asked Sergeant Basa to join him for the afternoon. "Where we going?" Basa asked as they headed toward the saddle.

"To see Aikue 'Ōpua."

"The big-shot native sovereignty asshole?"

As with all Hawai'i policemen, Sergeant Basa had been through community sensitivity training, but he was still a *haole*, and many Westerners had little patience for native activists, especially loudmouthed sovereignty types like Aikue 'Ōpua.

"That's him," Koa acknowledged before adding, "Some of his views about recreating the monarchy are a bit extreme."

"A bit extreme . . . hell, he wants to wind us back to the dark ages."

They drove up the slope into the saddle between the mountains before Koa turned off onto a dirt road. Stopping to open a gate, he drove through a pasture filled with grazing cattle and headed toward a weathered farmhouse. Aikue 'Ōpua stood on the *lānai*, watching as they parked the car and walked toward the house.

"You're trespassing, Detective." 'Ōpua wore the same boots with "1893" embossed on the shafts.

"It's official business," Koa responded evenly.

"Kaho'olawe's out of your jurisdiction, Detective, and, like I said, I've already told the Maui police everything I'm gonna say."

“It’s not about Kaho‘olawe. It’s about Pōhakuloa.” Koa saw a flicker in ‘Ōpua’s eyes. Surprise, maybe fear. A tell, in any case. “How about you show us a modicum of Hawaiian hospitality?”

‘Ōpua stared at them mulishly, and Koa thought he would refuse, but he finally shrugged. “Sure, Detective, even for a *ho‘ohaole*.” He stepped back, turning to usher them into his house.

Koa bristled at the slur. ‘Ōpua had denigrated the authenticity of his Hawaiian heritage, attributing to him the ways of a Westerner. Yet Koa had heard the barb before. The sovereignty types frequently demeaned Hawaiian policemen as lackeys of their white oppressors. He let it pass, focusing on his mission.

They entered a simple ranch house filled with Hawaiian artifacts—a feathered cape, stone *kukui* nut lamps, and *poi* pounders. One wall held a collection of old knives, including whalebone *pāhoas*, or daggers. But the room also sported saddles, ropes, spurs, and other implements of cowboy life. Koa thought it an odd mixture of native and *haole* objects for a native-rights proponent. Cattle weren’t native, and Hawai‘i’s *paniolo* cowboys had come from Spain.

‘Ōpua took a seat in a *koa* wood rocking chair, while Koa and Basa took the opposite ends of a wooden bench. As ‘Ōpua hooked one leg over the arm of his chair, Koa caught the glimmer of a horseshoe-shaped tap around the heel. Before Koa could begin, ‘Ōpua challenged his ethnicity more openly. “You know, you’re not a real Hawaiian, Detective. You’ve sold out to the *haoles*, and you’re out here doing their bidding.”

Koa wondered if the sovereignty activist's baiting was intended to distract him, and chose to respond with a hardball question. "Tell us how you discovered the body out at Pōhakuloa."

"What makes you think I discovered the body?" 'Ōpua responded coolly.

"Because you left boot prints before you made the 911 call."

'Ōpua looked toward his upturned boots, then chuckled. "There're thousands of cowboy boots with underslung heels on the island, Detective. The heel keeps a cowboy's foot from sliding through the stirrup."

"True," Koa agreed amicably, "but I doubt we'd get the same voiceprint match."

"A voiceprint. You don't have a valid voiceprint, Detective." Despite his nonchalance, what 'Ōpua intended as a statement sounded more like a question.

"Because you disguised your voice with pidgin? Guess again, Mr. 'Ōpua. We matched the words with your public statements. You seem particularly fond of the word 'devil.' You used it twice at Prince Kamehameha's, many times in your speeches, and four times in the 911 call."

'Ōpua tensed for just an instant before relaxing again. "What do you want, Detective?"

"To know what happened out at Pōhakuloa."

...