



By early April of 1991, Hawaii had written off the home in Royal Gardens because it was surrounded and isolated by lava. The eruption had continued non-stop for eight years, and there was no sign it would stop. I then wrote the home off with the IRS – or tried to. The IRS gave me the finger. One of my neighbor friends, hearing about my problem, told me that her CPA was outstanding, and introduced me to Carol Sue Werner, a petite blue-eyed blond. Carol Sue and I talked for only a minute before she said, “I can work you in during lunch tomorrow, and we can talk about your problem. Is that OK with your schedule?”

“I prefer a little more privacy when I talk taxes,” I said. “How about a salad for lunch at my home tomorrow?”

“Fine, I’ll see you at 12:30 at your home.” We exchanged business cards, and she was gone. Over lunch at my home the following day, Carol Sue made a fast study of my overall tax situation, and it was obvious she had a keen eye for facts and their implications. I retained her to represent me with the IRS.

### *Diagnosed with cancer; marijuana becomes my medicine*

My hopes that coming home would cure my ills were dashed in mid-June, when my doctor told me that I had cancer, located near the prostate gland. The surgeon, Dr. Elboim, recommended I have the tumor removed as soon as possible. I didn’t want surgery if I could avoid it, but after a second opinion I accepted the test results and the proposed treatment.

I checked into the Sonoma Valley Hospital for surgery on June 20, 1991. Afterward, the pain was excruciating. The nurses were injecting me with morphine every hour to control it. It felt as though my skin was crawling. When I went home, I was on two Vicodin painkillers every four hours, but at times the pain was so intense that I started to pass out. Carol Sue frequently came over and gave me a massage, cooked meals, and provided TLC. I found myself intrigued with this lady. I cared deeply for Trudy King; but Trudy wanted permanency and I didn’t. I felt that I was holding her back. It was painful giving Trudy up. It was also painful to learn that I had cancer and to recover from the surgery.

After regaining some strength, I felt a strong desire to visit my children and my grandson in Hawaii. Carol Sue joined me on the trip. I was apprehensive about my health; I didn't know whether I could stand more surgeries or whether I even had a future. Carol Sue always had a smile, and would say such things as "I'm almost as tall as you are." (I'm a little over six feet tall and she's 5' 2".)

On July 26, the children joined us at a secluded beach on the Kona side of the Big Island of Hawaii, where we were camping. Swimming, camping, and visiting with the children and grandson eased the pain for me; and Carol Sue was very taken with the little one. She and I spent several days in that exotic paradise, where the sunsets were like melting gold. The water was warm and gentle; the waves friendly and soothing. Riding over bumps was very painful, though. A premonition told me that the surgeries were not over.

On August 21, back in Sonoma, I was admitted to the hospital for a another operation. Again, I was in serious pain after the surgery, and unable to sleep; the morphine doesn't always do its job.

This time, though, I had come prepared. Still connected to the IV and to a urinary catheter, I struggled out of bed and almost collapsed from weakness. I made it to the closet where my jacket hung, and after a bit of fumbling pulled out a joint. I hauled the IV tower into the bathroom with me. By now I was dizzy; sweat dripped from my face, and pain and nausea almost overwhelmed me. I thought I was going to pass out but I was afraid to press the call button on the wall.

I lit the joint and took a puff. Good Lord, I thought, how embarrassing if I pass out in here and they find me with a joint in my hand! I was scared stiff: would they call the police? I took another hit. Then the miracle came to pass. Peace enveloped me. I stopped sweating. My body relaxed. The pain faded and I felt drowsy. My trip back to bed was easy and almost painless. I fell into a deep, restorative sleep, and awoke three hours later as a food tray was placed before me. I ate ravenously.

All the hospital medications were helpful. They were also toxic and addictive. Again I was released from the hospital and returned to my own bed. The grass was in some ways better for easing the pain and relaxing my muscles than those prescribed painkillers. I now understood why the Chinese, thousands of years ago, used marijuana as an anesthetic for major surgeries. They mixed the resin of the cannabis plant with wine, administered it to the patient, and within an hour they were able

to begin cutting. In the months following I had four more surgeries, and I continued to medicate myself with marijuana. I still have an unfilled prescription for Vicodin.

*In New Zealand baby lambs are better known as lamb chops!*

In case the cancer couldn't be stopped, I wanted to make sure David met his New Zealand relatives. I was living one day at a time, enjoying each sunrise, and I also hungered for a closer relationship with my son. I invited him to join me on a three-week visit to New Zealand. We left on February 11, 1992. It was my second visit to the country. I wanted David to see for himself where his grandfather had lived as a boy; to enjoy, as his granddad had, the magnificent white sand beaches that stretched for hundreds of miles around these very special islands; and to revel in the sight of the lush rolling hills, trimmed as neat as golf courses by sheep and lambs. It's a beautiful country – seventy million sheep can't be wrong!

One evening early in our visit my cousin Ken said, "I'm going to kill a lamb for dinner."

"Isn't it hard to kill those cute baby lambs?" I asked.

Ken replied, "I don't see them as cute baby lambs. I see them as lamp chops!"

It was a fine visit with loving cousins. David and I hiked Mt. Maunganui, in Tauranga. We visited the Karangahake gold fields, and crossed the Owharoa Falls of the Ohinemuri River on a flimsy-looking suspension bridge, about three feet wide and at least a hundred feet above boiling rapids and jagged rocks, held up by a single tenuous little cable. It swayed crazily with the wind. When David and I were halfway across, Ken's wife Nola, with a well-developed sense of rough Kiwi humor, began jumping up and down on the makeshift bridge. David and I crouched and held on to the cables, and tried vainly to laugh.