

HAOLE

A Solo Show

by

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HAOLE

*(Pronounced: HOWL-ē)*

*(Hawaiian translation: White)*

“How did a nice Jewish girl from Long Island  
become a surfing Haole?”

Setting

An empty stage except for a narrow table center stage. Images  
and videos will be displayed on the back wall.

Time

Various times crisscrossing between 1919 to Present.

(IN THE DARK, HAWAIIAN MUSIC PLAYS. LIGHTS UP. CINDY IS CENTER STAGE ON A SURFBOARD PERCHED ATOP A NARROW TABLE, HER LEGS DANGLING DOWN. AN IMAGE IS PROJECTED BEHIND HER OF A HUGE OCEAN WAVE CRESTING. MUTED SOUNDS OF OCEAN WAVES CRASHING.)

I'm waiting for a wave. Because that's what you do. They don't just come one after another. They're in sets. In between sets, I sit, wait, dive under my board, hang out in the water, call out to the Kahunas (the Hawaiian Gods) to bring on the waves. I throw my hands above my head, giving myself a shower. Sometimes I'm alone. Just me and some strangers. Bobbing in the ocean can be very meditative. Looking out to the horizon, I become aware of the energy approaching cuz that's what waves are energy. You feed off of it. It's an adrenaline rush seeing mountains of water coming in as I'm scratching to get out. I gotta get in the right position to catch one so I don't get "caught inside." That's every surfer's nightmare. It's so funny cuz when a set starts to come through, the first one who notices doesn't want anyone else to see. So...they casually start paddling out...and then someone else will notice...and then this weird domino effect starts to happen. I feel my heart beating right through my chest, my arms paddling as fast as they can. If I don't get outside, I'm gonna get tossed around and held under like a washing machine spinning out of control, and I'm the sock. Just when I think the ocean is letting me up for air, BOOM! I get sucked down again! When the surf is big enough and I'm in the whitewater, I don't think I can hold my breath any longer, but...I do, obviously, or I wouldn't be here right now. The bitch is...you get through that wave, come up, look out, and here comes another one I'm in the impact zone, and until the set is over, I just gotta keep ducking 'em.

As I grew up, I discovered that Dad was in the impact zone throughout his working life. And he just kept ducking 'em. But right now, I'm still catching waves!

While out surfing, my goal is to keep track of the time because I have to be back on the beach in time for Dad to pick me up. And I have to time *that* to the 9th inning of the local baseball

game because my dad is always at the games. So, everyone who paddles out with me has to deal with me asking, "Hey, do you know what inning the game is in?" The hard part isn't finding out which inning it is so much as my being on the beach 15 minutes after the game ends! I am never on time. Inevitably, Dad is sitting there with his arms crossed waiting for me, and all he wants to do is to get home for dinner.

Countless times Dad would drop me off at the beach and go to work. That's the reason Dad was always at the games. He was the sportscaster for our local baseball team, The Hawaii Islanders. The Islanders were the Triple A Farm team of the San Diego Padres and the Pittsburgh Pirates. But when the team was out of town, Dad sometimes did "Recreates" from one of the radio stations in Honolulu.

(VIDEO OF DAD INTERVIEWED BY JACK PERKINS OF THE TODAY SHOW ILLUSTRATING DAD IN THE STUDIO DOING A RECREATE)

That's called a "Recreate," and no one did it better than Dad. His recreations were an amazing thing. People would really believe he was calling the game live, and not in a studio with just the stats of the game and sound effects. As a matter of fact, it was Dad's recreations of the Giants games when the team moved from New York to San Francisco which was just one of his extraordinary accomplishments that got Dad's autobiography inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame Permanent Library in Cooperstown. By the way, when Dad was interviewed about his recreations on "The Today Show," Tom Brokaw was one of their anchors\_and when it broke to commercial\_Tom said, "We didn't land anyone on the moon\_Les Keiter made the whole thing up!"

Sorry! I got a bit sidetracked! Where was I? Oh, yeah, right...Dad was picking me up from surfing and I was late. So, when I finally get into the car\_I put my surfboard in on a diagonal from the front seat to the back\_that's the only way it will fit. So, I'm sitting behind him talking a mile a minute about my surf session. "Daddy, I'm sorry I'm late, but you should see the waves today! I was ripping! I finally pulled off the most radical roundhouse cutback and I made it! Isn't that

cool? I'd been getting close, but today I did it on my last wave! So, what's for dinner?"

(CINDY PUTS HER SURFBOARD AWAY WHILE THE SCREEN ON THE BACK WALL FILLS WITH A BOB COSTAS SEGMENT: PATTERSON/JOHANSSON BOXING BOUT)

Dad's a beloved sportscaster. And he also happens to be my beloved father. He was born in 1919. In 1928, he was 9 years old and sitting around a campfire in Seattle when he pledged that he was "going to broadcast from Yankee Stadium! Little did he know that the first time he did broadcast from Yankee Stadium, it would be for a boxing match! (That was the fight we just saw.)

His brother George is 4 years younger than him. When they were little, Dad couldn't say the word brother\_ instead, he said, "Buddy," and it stuck. We've always called him Uncle Buddy. While they were growing up, they lived by Lake Washington in Seattle. Dad would put himself through rigorous training by "creating" make-believe baseball games in the bathtub. He'd throw in real teams, players, innings, fans, stats\_ the whole nine yards. Uncle Buddy would find scores and notes all over the house like unfinished crossword puzzles. One morning, Dad and Buddy went out to play tennis. A neighbor comes running up to them, "Hey, who won the game last night?" "What game?" "The Seattle Rainiers! I didn't get to hear the final score!" Uncle Buddy, "There was no game! That was Lester! He's making up the whole thing...recreating a creation! He does it every night!"

People see him on TV and hear him on the radio, and they think that's his whole job. But his hours were never 9 to 5. His work started at home before he went to the studio or stadium, depending on the situation. Even more specifically, it started in his chair. When Dad's in his chair, he's working. His hands are wrapped around Sports Illustrated, Sporting News, the daily paper, a sports encyclopedia, a pad, a pen, and next to him is a basket with more of the same.

Because of his grueling schedule and the constant use of his voice, he hated answering the phone at home with a passion. It drove me crazy! The phone was right next to his chair! It would

ring, and he wouldn't flinch. By the 2nd and 3rd ring, it's, "Dad! Answer the phone!" We've always had an unlisted number, but there's no way he was picking up. He wouldn't take a chance of some weird fan calling, or being forced into a conversation that he didn't care about or having to yell all over the house for one of us, and it wasn't even his call. His preparation was endless. He needed a lot of time alone to do his work. So when he was in front of a microphone or a TV camera, he could be seamless. It's all preparation. He's instilled that in me. "Cecil, you've got to be ready when opportunity knocks because you never know." Cecil has been my nickname in the family ever since I can remember. I'm Cec, Cecil, or Cecila.

It's never been easy to get quality time with Dad. Inevitably, people recognize him and feel compelled to approach him. They see Les Keiter, the sportscaster, and they have to ask a quick question about their favorite team or a player, or just need an autograph. This made it awfully difficult for him to be just my dad. There were times I didn't want to share him with anybody. We couldn't get two words out before someone came up to us. One day, I got to have lunch with Dad by myself. This guy comes up and he's being very abrupt. Dad's so polite and trying to answer his question and disengage him at the same time. I finally couldn't take it. "Hey! Right now he's my dad and I need to talk to him alone! So call the station on business hours!" "Cecil, they are the ones who listen and watch me every night\_you can't be rude."

I rarely got time completely alone with him because he was working and traveling all the time. Yet, when I did, it was special. When the movie "Straw Dogs" came out, my twin sister and I were about 12 years old. Oh, yeah, I have a twin sister, Jodi. I don't think my dad had any idea what the movie was about. Jodi wasn't even with us, so we were killing time before meeting up with Mom. He gets me Milk Duds and we sit down. It's a Dustin Hoffman film, which is fine. But it's a Sam Peckinpah film, which is not so fine. OOOOHHHHH, sex and violence! As that started happening, I'm eating my Milk Duds with a fervor--Dad leans over to me, "Don't you ever tell your mother I brought you to this movie!" I felt so special! A big secret between him and me. I know he felt nervous, but the cool thing was he didn't

make us leave we watched the whole thing, and I knew I was watching something I wasn't supposed to.

(A STILL IMAGE OF PEOPLE WATCHING A MOVIE THEATER SCREEN WHICH SLOWLY FADES INTO A KEITER FAMILY PHOTO)

Jodi and I are the youngest actually, I am because she's 2 minutes older. When we were born, they didn't know I was there until Jodi was out. The doctor turned away and the nurse said, "My God! There's another one!" And I came shooting out, feet first! Jodi looked like the adorable Carnation Baby, and I looked like a squashed grapefruit or Yoda with hair. I was yellow, wrinkled; I had more hair on my head than all 5 of us kids combined. I don't care what anybody says, there are ugly babies because I was one of them. Our family was living in NY when we were born, and Dad was doing a Knicks game when Mom went into labor. He comes racing from Madison Square Garden and the doctor greets him with, "They're fine Les, all 3 of them." "TRIPLETS?!" "NO, NO, NO!!! Lila and the twins! You have twins again! Two little girls! But they're fine. One is a little preemie, but she's all there. A little peanut." See, my sister Barbara and brother Marty are also twins. And Barb is 18 minutes older than Marty because they didn't know he was there either. And 2 years older than them is my brother Ricky who came alone. Therefore, we are 5 kids, 3 pregnancies, and 2 surprises. The wars in our house as to who was going to watch the babies us was the same tape played every weekend. They're all getting ready to go out on dates and Mom is in the kitchen yelling, "Well, toss a coin then because one of you has to watch the babies!!!" We were never Jodi and Cindy in our house we were the babies they couldn't call us the twins because we were 2 sets. Grandpa Jake, my father's dad, said after we came along, "Lester, you put your pajama pants on backwards and leave that woman alone!"

Daddy's always called me his "little peanut," and Jodi's always been bigger than me. People have thought she's my older sister...physically, emotionally, and mentally. We'd be standing with our doll, "Pattie Play Pal," and Jodi is about her size. Me, on the other hand, I'm looking up at both of them and crying my bloody eyes out. I look like the hobbit next to the humans.

(PHOTO OF JODI AND CINDY WITH PATTIE PLAY PAL)

In 1962, when I was four, WINS Radio, where my dad worked, was being sold to the Westinghouse Corporation and they were eliminating Sports. So...Dad was about to lose his job. But just when his career seemed to take a plunge, he gets a call from a Philadelphia TV Executive asking Dad to lunch. "We'd like you to be the Sportscaster & Director for WFIL\_for both the TV and Radio stations. We'd like you to move to Philadelphia." So...Dad heads off to start his new gig...Mom packs up the house and us 5 kids...and we move from Long Island, NY, to Philly.

All through Philly elementary school, Dad was doing the 6 pm and 11 o'clock sports. If he didn't have a game to announce, whether it be the 76ers or Big 5 Basketball, he'd come home for dinner in between the two shows. When the 6 o'clock show was on, usually Mom was preparing dinner with Barb, the boys would be futzing in their room playing "Men" or something. You know those little plastic men shaped like soldiers and baseball players that you end up stepping on because they are all over the floor? Jodi and I would be coloring\_trying to stay out of Mom's way\_and when Daddy would come on the TV, we'd start talking back to him. I continued coloring and at the same time realized he wasn't responding to me. I'd go run back behind the TV set to see how he fit in there. I don't get that he doesn't see me or hear me! I see him, so I think he sees me. He doesn't. I get more agitated because I can't comprehend what is going on. All I know is Daddy is ignoring me! "Mommy! Daddy won't talk to me!" When he did come home for dinner, Jodi and I were so mad at him that we wouldn't talk to him either. So, there!

The only way for my parents to explain the TV thing to Jodi and I was to take us to the TV station. Show us how "Les Keiter, the Sportscaster" did it. We're 6 years old, so the challenge to Dad was daunting. Jodi and I are being real quiet because we're in the studio itself. I couldn't believe how cold it was in there! I remember we were wearing our little matching yellow sweaters. Daddy is sitting behind the sports desk with his guest. And I'm concentrating on the Cameraman and the camera and how Dad can't see through it, just like we couldn't see through the TV set at home. On this particular night, his guest is this boxer, and



they're talking about his rival who is a local Philadelphian. Dad finishes the show and introduces us to this guy. Looking up, I see this gorgeous man towering over us, he takes Jodi's and my hands in his\_our hands completely disappear in his huge hands\_he bends down into our faces, and with the most beautiful, mischievous grin says, "How did two cute little things like you come out of such an ugly man?!?" Well, Daddy is cracking up, the Cameramen are cracking up as they're turning off the equipment, and Jodi and I are blushing and giggling. I mean this guy is so much fun that we totally forget to be mad at Dad for not talking to us. This guy turns out to be Muhammed Ali.

(PHOTO OF MUHAMMED ALI)

Not only is he the greatest boxer of all time, but arguably the greatest human being, and with those few simple, charismatic words got me to value what my dad did and not be mad at him for doing it. Dad went on to do 5 of Ali's fights, and they've been friends since he was Cassius Clay. In fact, Ali helped Dad out of another jam besides this particular evening.

(VIDEO OF DAD TELLING THE ALI/COSELL STORY WITH ROY FIRESTONE)

While in England for that fight, Grandpa Jake passed away. We were 8 years old. Now up to this point, I've seen Dad happy and angry and quietly reading. But I've never heard him cry. Mom was with Dad, and they called us every day from Europe. We would wait anxiously by the phone to have our couple of sentences with them. The phone was mounted on the wall, and I couldn't reach it. It had a long cord so once it was in my hand, I didn't have to strain. Now, Barb and Marty were already crying, and Ricky was putting on a tough front for Mom and Dad. Jodi and I don't quite know what's happening except that no one is happy. I hear Daddy, "How's my Cecila? Are you being a good girl?" I don't know what I garbled back because I could hear his voice cracking. "Cecil, Daddy is very sad because my daddy is gone, and I can't talk right now..." Then Mom is talking to me. "Cecil, Daddy can't talk right now, but we love you very much\_now put Ricky back on the phone." All of a sudden, Daddy is vulnerable. He isn't my Daddy. He's a son grieving. For my first time, we

kids aren't "Big Rick" and the two sets of twins but all bonded together in a big pile of pain.

(PHOTO OF ALL THE KIDS IN FRONT OF A 1968 CHEVY FASTBACK MALIBU)

You know those rental trucks with "Penske" on them as opposed to "U-Hauls? Roger Penske was a friend of Dad's and a fan as well. Roger owned his first big Chevy dealership in Philly. So, Dad drove a different Chevy every year. One time, it was the Camaro Pacing Car of a race Roger's team sponsored and Dad announced that car was really neat, it was white with two wide orange stripes. It was always exciting to see what he was going to bring home next. Another time, it was a red, fastback Malibu. Jodi and I are waiting for him in the driveway. He gets out and is so proud of it. We start walking around it we couldn't have been more than 9 years old and I don't know who I was imitating, but I throw my hands on my hips and say, "This is a nice Jewish car!" Slap! He slaps me hard across my face. Dad's shaking, looking at me with eyes bugging at having just slapped me. "Cecil! Where did you hear that? Who said that to you? Don't you ever say that!" I feel my upper lip quiver...you know, when you're about to cry. I can't form any words, and Daddy yells at me again. "Cecil, don't you ever let me hear you say that again." I don't even know what I said. I thought I was paying him a compliment what was the wrong word? "You can say it's a nice car, that's all, a nice car." We get in the car. I'm in the back seat behind Dad. Jodi's next to me I'm holding the spot on my face where he hit me, crying in that hyper-ventilating way you do at 9 years old. My stomach aches. Snot falls down my nose like a kid with no Kleenex, and I'm sniffing and trying to figure out, "What just happened?" It wasn't until I grew up and learned more about both my parents and about being Jewish that I realized the nerve I had touched in him. Professionally, he felt...along with Mom...that some job opportunities in his career, politically, went to someone else.

I was a tomboy growing up. I'd go to the Buckley's across the street to play. They had a big yard, the house that everyone in the neighborhood would gather at. One day, we're playing one of our big football games. Matt Donnelly and his brother Brian lived down the street. Matt was nice when not around Brian

because then he didn't have to prove anything to his older brother. Brian, who was built like a linebacker, could be a real bully. Well, I get a first down and Brian, playing on the opposite team, is pissed. He feels cheated in some way. But I'm not going to give up the ball or the down. I earned it. He winds up tackling me. He's holding me down with his knees on my arms. Our eyes lock because he knows that I know that he's wrong. But...he can't back down. He's frustrated because I'm a girl\_his manhood is on the line, so he blurts in my face, "You Goddamn Jew!" We share this moment of shock and awe. I yell back up at him, "You Goddamn Catholic!" I know it isn't the thing to say. I don't want to say it. I can't take it back. Brian stares into my eyes with tears in his. I meet him with his own shit. He's squeezing my arms so hard, struggling with what to do, and then he just lets go and slides off me. I can't take in the kids around us, the yard, the sky, anything. I want to eat my words, take them back, but it's too late. They're floating there amongst us. I pop up and run across the yard, down their driveway, across the street, up our driveway, hyperventilating. I can't tell my parents or even Jodi. I'm so ashamed of myself. Why did he say that to me? Here's this tough Irish-Catholic kid who I'm actually attracted to if he wasn't such a brat.

At this time, there is a lot of change in the air for Dad in Philly. Now WFIL-TV is being sold. He had just turned down an offer to be the General Manager of the 76ers because he felt he's a sportscaster, not a businessman. So...realizing that he wasn't going to be a sportscaster in Philly anymore, he and Mom have to seriously consider what their next move will be. That's when his old friend, Jock Fernhead, who he worked with in radio when Mom and Dad lived in Hawaii back when they were first starting out, calls with an opportunity. There is an ad agency for sale in Hawaii, and well...when opportunity knocks... So, this is taking them 6000 miles away, out of the big market, out of broadcasting, into a job he's not trained for, and hoping this is going to work.

Sometimes it takes more than courage to get off the highway and go down the little dirt road. One night when Mom and Dad were dating, he took her down a little dirt road in Yelm, Washington. With Judy Garland singing "Embraceable You" on the radio and a

full moon...Dad said, "Lila, what do you see on that moon?" Mom, "I see the moon." Dad, "Well, I see a man and a woman on a little dirt road and the man is proposing. I can't promise you much, but I can assure you it won't ever be dull."

So, they sit us down one day in Philly and say, "Kids, we're moving to Hawaii!" Moving??!! What do you mean moving? You don't move to Hawaii. You visit Hawaii. Who lives in Hawaii? Natives! They have spears and grass skirts! Pineapples and Ukuleles! It's a beach! That's not us!" I'm going steady with Dave Harrington! "What about our friends?" The scary thing is...the number one song on the radio is "Leaving on a Jet Plane." Jodi and I are 12. I'm supposed to be going to Radnor Junior High in the fall. Instead, "We're going to Hawaii School for Girls, wearing blue uniforms? Learning how to surf and play beach volleyball? Get out of here! Would we be wearing grass skirts? How do you clean them? Do people speak English there? Do we have to learn Hawaiian? Is it gonna snow? I mean Hawaii is another planet! Well, when do we go home??" We don't. Philadelphia is going to become a memory whether we like it or not. Rick gets to go back to Swarthmore College, and Marty gets to stay with the Buckley's who are my friends so he can complete his senior year. He got held back in 8th grade, but Barb graduated and is going to Penn State in the fall. They all get to go home, but not Jodi and I! Uh-uh. We're stuck in Paradise! It's not fair.

So, here we are, "HAOLES" from the mainland! Initially, we were "Malahinis" which means newcomers. After a while, we became "Kamainas" which means local. From the time we got picked up at the airport, I'm struck with how well-known Dad is here. In fact, that saved us from a lot of ridicule...see, when haoles white people come to Hawaii, the local folks tend to look at them as invading their home. Lucky for us, Dad's reputation as a former sportscaster here when he and Mom first lived in Hawaii, helped us pass that ridicule. The reason they moved to Hawaii in the first place was because of Dad's first sportscasting job. J. Elroy McCaw hired Dad right out of the University of Washington, and subsequently took our family to San Francisco and New York where he owned all these radio stations. He was a big fan of Dad's. Back in 1948, when Mom and Dad first got off the plane in Honolulu, Elroy tells Dad he has

a football game to announce in a couple of days. Well, that means Dad has to quickly familiarize himself with the teams' rosters. The Punahou team names are easy. A lot of English sounding names; Jones, Smith, Obama. But Kamehameha, the opposite team, is a whole different story. To attend that school, you have to have a certain amount of Hawaiian blood in you, therefore, the names got a bit more complicated. There were 4 brothers on their squad that year. They were the Kalaukakui brothers. Tommy was the quarterback. He threw 16 passes to Harry Kahuanui. Can you imagine calling that game? Not Montana to Rice, but Kalaukakui to Kahanui, 16 times!

(CINDY, CRADLING A FOOTBALL, DOES AN IMPROV OF CALLING THIS GAME TO THE POINT OF EXHAUSTION)

Dad's so well-loved back home because of his sense of humor and his sensitivity to the local community. Within the first year of our moving to Hawaii, Dad is offered to do a quick, daily sports segment on the most popular radio station in the islands. A disc jockey there by the name of J. Akuhead Pupule (which means "crazy fish head"), aka Hal Lewis, aka Herschel Laib Hohenstein, born in Brooklyn, is one of the highest paid disc jockeys in the U.S., and he's featuring Dad every morning on his "Coconut Wireless Network" radio show. Dad has to go do this show early in the morning even before he goes to work at his ad agency. Which means Daddy is now getting up even earlier for work. He is then offered the Hawaii Islanders gig. He'd be replacing an up-and-comer who just got the "Voice of the Cincinnati Reds" job back on the mainland. That up-and-comer? Al Michaels. Whatever happened to him? Next, it's the offer to be the sportscaster for NBC-TV. Here we are in this teeny, little market in the boonies of the Hawaiian Islands, and Dad at 52 is working his ass off. He's been a workaholic our whole lives. But there are only so many hours in the day. Something had to give. He sold the ad agency, Les Keiter & Associates, and is now a full-time sportscaster in Hawaii\_again.

Through the years at home, my father became more of an institution. Once, I got out of a speeding ticket because I was Les Keiter's daughter..."Could I get the nice police officer some game tickets in exchange?" Jack Lord was a huge fan of Dad's,

and Dad ended up doing a handful of episodes of "Hawaii 5-0." Jack would call him personally, and Dad played everything from a sportscaster to a businessman, to a general in the army. In fact, his nickname became "The General." (It's ironic—because Dad would say that he's a Navy guy—so, Admiral would've been more appropriate.) So...The General had triumphantly returned, and I wasn't getting out of Hawaii.

It's September, and Jodi and I are getting ready for our first day at Hawaii School for Girls. Oh, boy. We're having some fun now. NOT!! We're both freaked out! Mom drops us off, I'm wearing about six different rings. I don't know, it was my "wearing lots of rings" stage. One is this big mood ring—it looks like I could tell your fortune with it. This incredibly blonde, tan, gorgeous girl hones in on me, specifically, on my fingers. She grabs my hands and with amazing passion yells in my face, "BITCHIN!!!" This is how I met my new best friend, Lori. My rings let me jump through hoops of acceptance in an instant.

Both Lori and her sister, Jill, became friends with Jodi and me. She proceeded to teach me how to play volleyball, get into trouble, and surf—I mean really surf. She was an amazing athlete. She made me better at everything I did. For the next 28 years, she made me surf better, run faster, play tennis, and go out on a limb because that's where the fruit is. Speaking of fruit, summer is mango season in Hawaii. This particular summer, it was an amazing harvest. Mangos, mangos, mangos! Lots of houses have mango trees. They are tall, especially for this 5-foot 2-inch girl. But not for her friend Lori and a mango picker! Lori comes up with this brilliant idea, "Let's steal mangos and take them to the market and get some candy money!" We sneak into gates, climb walls, and drop the fruit into our box. When you pick a mango, there's this white sap that oozes out when you pick the mango from the stem. This sap has the same chemical breakdown as poison ivy. THIS Sap (POINTING TO ME) is allergic to poison ivy. I breathe it and it's all over me. When we lived in Philly, Jodi and I would play with our friends in the woods. I had to wear long sleeve turtlenecks, with long socks completely covered up. I got it anyway. Every summer I got it, in that bubbly, oozing, yucky kind of getting it. But back to the mango escapade with Lori...it was a 90-minute,

mango-picking process, and even though I was able to squirt off the sap with hoses at some houses, I got pretty sticky. Not knowing that I am in poison ivy goo, we take our mangoes to the market and buy oodles of candy. Within 36 hours, I am itching, scratching, blistering, bubbling, just oozing everywhere. Mom takes me to the doctor, and he takes one look at me and with a devilish smile, "Someone's been picking mangoes because we don't have poison ivy in Hawaii!" BUSTED!

Mom is so astute. She knew from the first moment she met my friend Lori that she was trouble with a capital T. I just thought she was fun and always looked good. Sometimes she could be so frustrating, like when the surf came up. We'd arrange to go surfing. I'd get dropped off at her house to sleep over or we'd meet at the beach. In order to make this work, I had to get my chores done so I could be gone for a chunk of time. I'd paddle out with Lori, and 20 minutes later, she's paddling by me, "Keiter, I'm going in on my next wave." "Lori! What are you talking about? We just got out here! Look at the surf, why are you going in? I'm not getting picked up till 5!!!" There was no way I was going to follow her.

But she always forced me to face my fears. One particular day, the south shore comes up so big and furious it looks like the north shore in winter when you see the big waves on TV. It's huge! The channel is completely closing out, white water to the horizon, mountains of water are flooding normal surf spots. "Come on, Keiter! Let's go! It'll be fun! We can make it out!!" I can't move. I want to. "Just pick up your board, Keiter, wax it up, put on your leash, follow Lori to the outer reef." My adrenaline is rushing. I feel like I'm wrapped in cellophane, I can see, but I can't budge. She punches my arm and heads out to sea. I grab the binoculars and watch Lori disappear. I'm pacing back and forth, trying to get up the courage to go out. "It's only water, Cindy, come on, you do this all the time!" No, I don't. Not this. I just reached my capacity. I was on pins and needles till she came back. She did. Two hours later, safe and smiling. I couldn't wait for the surf to go down a bit. I realize that I do surf. Lori daredevils.

It was my senior year of High School and I had seen Frank Shorter on TV run the marathon in the Montreal Olympics. On a whim, I thought, "That would be cool." I was already running 5 miles to keep in shape between volleyball and basketball season. Dad said, "You know, Cecil, if you complete the Honolulu marathon, I'll interview you as if you're just a typical girl running, and I won't acknowledge that you're my daughter." Wow. When would I ever be in the position to have Dad interview me professionally? Have him acknowledge me for my effort, not with my brothers and sisters, but me alone? When I hit the 20-mile mark, which was right at our driveway, Mom and Dad are waiting for me. "Hey, Mom! Hey, Dad! I feel great! No problemo! Only 6 more miles to go! See you at the finish line!" Mom told me later that after I went by, Dad said, "She has no idea what she is in for." Truer words were never spoken—I hit the wall at mile 23. I squeezed an orange on my head thinking it was a sponge to rehydrate until a seed slid down my forehead in slow motion. I had to use mind over matter to complete it. Plus, my ego kicked in because my whole family was going to be there and your picture gets taken when you cross the finish line, so I sprinted the last 50 yards so I could come across as a runner!!! Sure enough, Dad comes running towards me with his cameraman and he's going to do his professional interview—and it's with me.

(VIDEO OF THE MARATHON TAPE OF DAD INTERVIEWING CINDY FOR KHON-TV)

Here we are, keeping it anonymous, and I blurt out, "Thanks, Dad!"

I wasn't ready to leave the Islands for college because no need to spend all that money on requirements when I could go to the University of Hawaii and still surf. I needed one more class to complete my freshman credits. My guidance counselor suggested I take this beginning acting class—she said there wouldn't be a lot of homework. I grabbed it. It's my freshman year and my life changes on that first day of class. "Extra credit to attend the directing class auditions." I didn't even know what an audition was. Dad didn't audition for "Hawaii 5-0." Jack Lord just called him. I go. I get cast. Within the first week of rehearsals, I came home, "Mom, Dad, I'm going to be an actor." It was as if a



lightning bolt hit me with this thing, and it hasn't changed since. My parents embraced my dream, but they still wanted me to get my education. So, Dad gets on the phone with his long-time childhood friend Gene Reynolds, who was a TV Director and Producer, and I ask his advice on colleges with good drama departments. He says, "Cindy, after New York, everything else is Bridgeport." I got into NYU Tisch and I'm going back to New York. So, this opportunity is taking me 6000 miles away, back to my roots for my career as Dad's took him back to the start of his career in Hawaii. Now I've come full circle. Isn't life a kick?

I don't know why it is, and I have never been able to figure it out, but all through time, so many people have hated Jews. That being said, I've never been religious. Spiritual. But not religious. We were raised very ultra-reformed if Jewish at all. Being born in New York and then moving to Philadelphia at five for elementary school, my twin sister Jodi and I went to Sunday School at our local Synagogue, sporadically, in 3rd and 4th grade. None of my older siblings had been Bar Mitzvahed. They were confirmed when they were in 10th grade, but I didn't even know what that meant. Since we were born, we've had Santa Claus and Christmas trees. Depending which Grandma was visiting, we'd call it a Hanukkah Bush. We had a menorah and opened all our presents on Christmas morning. We went Easter egg hunting and then ate Matzo Ball soup. So, when we moved to Hawaii when Jodi and I were 12, the only other Jews I knew were my family and Bette Midler. We'd tell our teacher in High School, "We can't come to school tomorrow because it's Yom Kippur." They'd say, "Yom what?" So, when I transferred to NYU from the University of Hawaii following my sophomore year, it was a culture shock to say the least. All of a sudden, I became a tourist. I'm in my first week at NYU and they close the school for Rosh Hashanah! I call home, "Mom! Dad! They closed the school!" Mom laughs, "You're getting cultured!"

I'm in the cafeteria at Rubin Hall in the Village on 5th Avenue and 10th Street. I'm on a 10-meal, 5-day-a-week plan. I'm sitting at a round table, eating my granola, and drinking my coffee. Just minding my own business. I'm dressed in my aloha shirt and surfer shorts, big blonde surfed out curls, and a tan.

Sitting with me are five or six local NYU accounting students with thick New York accents. I'm a first-year acting student, and I must look like a freak from a galaxy far, far away. They start asking me who I am and what I'm studying, where I'm from, etc. I say, "Hawaii." They're stunned. "Really?! How far away is that and how long have you been speaking English?" I'm mortified. "Well, it's the 50th state." I bite my lip not to say, "And my bra is made out of coconut shells!" Anyway, we're chatting and after the 20-question routine, one of them says, "Well, Cindy, it's nice to meet you, but whatever you do, don't talk to those girls over there because they're Japs." I freeze. I'm in shock. In Hawaii, the Japanese are the majority of the population. Some of my best friends and their families are Japanese. To me, this boy just said the equivalent of the "N" word. Or "Kike" for us Jews. I mean this is the unspoken, sinful, derogatory word and never uttered! It isn't just the saying of the word but the casual, cavalier way in which he expressed it that shocked me to my core. I'm paralyzed. I look down at my bowl of granola and I don't know what to do. Those girls are more Caucasian looking than me. How could he possibly say that? I just grab my cup of coffee and try to breathe. We're all gathering our things and I feebly back away from the table. I go out on the sidewalk to head up to my first week of acting classes in Times Square on Theatre Row. Jesus. What could he have possibly meant? I am so embarrassed and ashamed for what, I don't know! But I can't bring myself to ask anyone. I'm the new kid on the block. It takes me a couple of months when I finally start to get close to a girl in class from Great Neck that I can get up the nerve to ask her what this boy had meant. She starts laughing hysterically and says, "Cindela! It means Jewish American Princess!" I don't know what that means either! I have since learned but to this day I'm not comfortable with it. Isn't it amazing how regional and cultural everything gets?

About this time, I'm going to some social engagements with classmates as I learn my way around the city. I'm at a party where everyone is talking about hip restaurants downtown. They mention a cool place called "The Odeon." (I'm dating myself here.) One of the people said it's a fun place and the restaurant is so shi-shi. "SHI-SHI!!!" At home in Hawaii, that means you have to pee!!! You go shi-shi. I have to go shi-shi.

"Where can I go shi-shi?" It took another two months to get that meaning and it still is odd to me.

In my first year at the Actors and Directors Lab on 42nd street, I was picked through a lottery to be an usher at the opening night of the Harold Clurman Theatre. They put a big tent behind it with a catered dinner. The people started traipsing in like it was a red-carpet Hollywood event. I'm handing out roses to the women as they enter. Maureen Stapleton grabs my hand, "Thank you, honey, I haven't had one of these in a long while!" Then in comes Roy Scheider, Arthur Miller, Stella Adler, Jules Styne, and Harold himself. It's cocktails first and we're passing out drinks. Maureen has had a few that by the time she gets up to speak, I'm praying she isn't going to fall down. So, I'm standing next to one of the tables, listening to the tributes to Harold, when all of a sudden, Jules Styne tugs on my dress and whispers, "Excuse me. My wife has lost her gold bracelet. Do you think you could go under the table and try to find it? I think you are a little more flexible than I am." So, I bend down and crawl under the table. I'm seeing the legs of Arthur Miller, Roy Scheider, Ellen Burstyn, and Maureen Stapleton. She is now two sheets to the wind. My only thought is, "Who would believe this?" There's the bracelet! I try not to bang into anybody, grab the bracelet, and shimmy back up. You would think I wrote the best song ever! They're ecstatic. They both hug me. He thrusts a bill in my hand—I try to give it back—it's 50 dollars! But they insist. What a night! I was under a table looking up Ellen Burstyn's skirt.

While I'm attending NYU, my friend Lori, the surfer, calls me in New York from Connecticut to come visit her. She was staying at her aunt's house which was near the prison her boyfriend at the time was being held. He had been busted for a lot of cocaine. Lori was 18 at the time, and he was a 40-year-old architect. When I got to her, her perfect skin had zits. Her eyes were strained, her hair was stringy, and she looked puffy. She was battling her illness of manic depression. She's also now caught up in this cocaine/alcohol loop. It was a Friday night, and I didn't know how I was going to get through the short weekend we had. It was the first time I wanted to leave her. It would be the first of many times in the next couple of decades that we'd

go through this. When she was in the depression stage, it was so hard to hear her speak in such a monotone, no hope, deadened voice. I felt so helpless to assist her in any way.

But no matter how hopeless I felt, I could always rely on my dad's optimism. He is the eternal optimist. He never feels hopeless. He embodies sunshine and light. I'm always amazed at what my dad was able to accomplish over the many years since the move to Hawaii. He'd get a phone call and come back to the Mainland for work. When it was over, he'd be back home to another day in Paradise. Working constantly. It's always the story of the game that matters most to him, not fame. I think at this point, Dad's career on the Mainland was, in his eyes anyway, waning even though his amazing work in baseball recreation was pioneering and a novelty. My god, "The Today Show" came all the way out to Hawaii because Dad was the only one really doing this anymore.

One time, he gets a call from Don King who is passing through Honolulu. "Les Keiter! You're here! How are you? We need you doing fights! You're Mr. Excitement! Will you come work for me again? We need your enthusiasm!" Dad never worked for King and following that meeting...no word. Then out of the blue, five years later, King calls again. "Les Keiter! Mr. Excitement! I need Mr. Excitement! I've had enough of Cosell! I need you in New Orleans in three days! Biggest closed-circuit broadcast ever! You'll be heard by millions, over a hundred million in Philadelphia, Paris, Africa, Japan, Addis-Ababa! It's the greatest closed-circuit fight of all time!" Truth is, Cosell was also calling that same fight for a tape-delay broadcast for ABC, so King needed someone to do the closed-circuit broadcast. Closed-circuit was before pay-per-view. It was carried in bars, clubs, restaurants, arenas around the world! What Don said was true, Dad would be heard in quite a show.

(PHOTO OF LES KEITER, DON KING, LARRY HOLMES RINGSIDE)

Don has arranged for all the announcers to be pulled up to the Superdome in a horse-drawn carriage surrounded by Southern belles. The plan is Don will stand up in the carriage and do one of his speeches welcoming the entire planet to the Dome. Larry

Holmes will then speak, and then Dad is supposed to get up and say something about the Fight, bringing some sanity to the whole affair. On fight night, they need him at ringside at 8 P.M. But the Fight doesn't start till 10 o'clock. It turns out there are 7 preliminary fights leading up to the main event. And Dad was gonna have to do the play-by-play for all 7 fights, with Larry Holmes doing the analysis. Dad keeps asking for the particulars on the preliminaries, and Don says, "Don't worry, Les, you'll be great. No problem with an old pro like you! Great to have you back!"

Getting to ringside was a nightmare with Dad leading Don and Larry to their table. They sit down and Cosell winks with a greeting from across the ring. Roger Penske stops by to say hello, and Richard Burton, the actor, is a few chairs away. One minute to air. The boxers climb into the ring and...3-2-1...they're on! The bell rings just as Dad is handed a scribbled note of names and statistics—at least it was something. As Dad recalls, it was one of the most amazing, disorganized, confounded broadcasts he's ever pulled off! It's a rematch between Sugar Ray Leonard and Roberto Duran. Duran had won the first fight back in Montreal, but Sugar Ray came to this fight with a whole new game plan. Duran finally quits in the 8th round, infamously screaming, "NO MAS! NO MAS!" to the shock of all who witnessed it! King is supposed to head into the ring to greet the winner but is too stunned to move. Dad climbs in ahead of Cosell to talk to the winner. But...the night's not over yet...there was one more twist to the night's activities. Unbelievably, in plain sight of thousands of fans, all the men at ringside were victims of a pickpocket! As they got up to leave at the end of the evening, Dad and Larry Holmes—the heavyweight champion of the world—noticed their wallets missing. "Don! We've been ripped off!" Don King smiled with more than a little irony in his voice, "You're not the only one, Kid, you're not the only one!"

A couple of years out of NYU, I got a job as a New York City bike messenger, and I have a delivery to a midtown townhouse. It's the offices of Don King & Associates. The sign is as big as his hair. I lock up my bike and I go in. There is the man himself standing in the reception area with people all around. They whisk me to the desk, and now I'm next to him. "Hi, Mr.

King! This package is for you, and I'm Cindy Keiter, Les Keiter's daughter!" "Les's daughter! Your father's fantastic! Mr. Excitement! NO MAS, NO MAS!!! Give him a big hello for me!"—and he pats me on the head.

(VIDEO OF TOM SNYDER'S INTERVIEW OF LES KEITER ON "THE TOMORROW SHOW")

I can't believe how humble Dad is. I just want to scream at him, "You aren't just doing Triple A in Hawaii! You are part of the show! You worked with Ali, Patterson, Sugar Ray! Tell Tom that! Tell him Don King comes to you! You don't have to go to him." But he doesn't say that because he's a consummate professional.

And I wanted to scream at Lori when she dropped out of college. But in her sober, healthier moments, she was able to get her massage therapy license and was working at our local hospital in Honolulu. In 1998, I had flown to Oregon to be a bridesmaid in a friend's wedding and then on to Hawaii for my parents 50th wedding anniversary. I flew back home to New York City and wasn't home for five days when Jill, Lori's sister, called me to say Lori had finally done it. She hung herself on the door of Queen's Hospital where she was on suicide watch. She knew that hospital like the back of her hand. The staff didn't have a chance. She was 39 years old. In less than 3 weeks, I had flown 24,000 miles and went through a wedding, an anniversary, and a funeral...and I was fine...handling everything right through scattering Lori's ashes out to sea at our favorite surf spot. I got back to New York City—and I was a wreck. That summer we all met up at Cooperstown at the Baseball Hall of Fame. Dad's autobiography, "50 Years Behind the Microphone, The Les Keiter Story" was being inducted into their permanent library. That trip helped me through my grief. Connecting with my parents and witnessing Dad's tribute in Cooperstown was an amazing, therapeutic few days for us all.

A few years later, I'm in a bookstore in Kips Bay, puttering around before going into a movie. Dad is featured in a book called "Sports on New York Radio, A Play-By-Play History" by David J. Halberstam. I hadn't received my copy yet, and there it is on a display shelf! I'm so tickled to thumb through it. I

immediately go to the index to see where Dad is mentioned. He's on a bunch of pages. So, I'm flipping all over the place. I came across a chapter entitled, "The New York Mets." In the middle of a page, I see Dad's name. New York is finally going to get a National League team to replace their beloved Dodgers and Giants. The sentence reads, "One fellow who was absolutely devastated when Schaefer Beer took themselves out of the deal for the Mets was Les Keiter. Dick Young had already reported in the 'Daily News' that Keiter had the job." WHAT??? Dad was gonna be the announcer for the Mets?! It goes on to explain that if Schaefer Beer had gone ahead with the bid, that Dad would have gotten the gig and Ralph Branca would be his partner. I flip the page to Dad saying, "The job I had always wanted to do was play-by-play for a major league baseball club, but it had always eluded me...and with the Mets. I was devastated. My disappointment overwhelmed me, it was the lowest point of my career." Standing there in public, reading this in black and white, made it so present and it was decades ago! I'm reading this in a bookstore 6000 miles away, and all I want to do is hug my father and thank him. I didn't know he hurt like that. He had wiped out, was dragged under, and rose to the surface. With a wife and 5 kids, he picked himself up and went on. That devastating moment is what led us to Philly and Hawaii and Dad having the next glorious years! At one time, I thought my lowest point was, "Kids, we're moving to Hawaii!" But, like I said, the bitch is...you get through a wave, come up, look out, and here comes another one\_and until the set is over\_you just gotta keep ducking 'em! Reading that about my father made me realize, if we embrace these devastating moments and ride the next wave that comes, these moments can be the most empowering. We've all had these moments... moments that define us... captured in our stories. Storytelling is one of our oldest shared traditions. We tell stories to remember... reflect... to make meaning of ourselves and our world. This is my story... of me and my dad.

(BLACK OUT. IMMEDIATELY, A HOME MOVIE "RECREATE" OF CINDY DOING A MOCK INTERVIEW OF HER DAD. FREEZE ON HER HUGGING HIM. WE HEAR "HONOLULU CITY LIGHTS" BY KEOLA BEAMER.)

END OF PLAY