



Sunny Skies, Shady Characters: Cops, Killers, and Corruption in the Aloha State (A Latitude 20 Book)

By James Dooley

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For thirty years starting in the mid-1970s, the byline of Jim Dooley appeared on riveting investigative stories of organized crime and political corruption that headlined the front page of Honolulu's morning daily. In *Sunny Skies, Shady Characters*, James Dooley revisits highlights of his career as a hard-hitting investigative reporter for the *Honolulu Advertiser* and, in later years, for KITV television and the online *Hawaii Reporter*. His lively backstories on how he chased these high-profile scandals make fascinating reading, while providing an insider's look at the business of journalism and the craft of investigative reporting.

Dooley's first assignment as an investigative journalist involved the city housing project of Kukui Plaza, which introduced him to the "pay to play" method of awarding government contracts to obliging consultants. In later stories, he scrutinized bloody struggles over illicit gambling revenue, the murder of a city prosecutor's son, local syndicate ties to the Teamsters Union, and the dealings of Bishop Estate. His groundbreaking coverage of the forays by yakuza into Hawaii and the continental United States were the first of its kind in American journalism.

As Dooley pursued stories from the underside of island society, names of respected public figures and those of violent criminals filled his notebook: entertainer Don Ho, U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, Governors George Ariyoshi and Ben Cayetano, Mayor Frank Fasi, and notorious felons Henry Huihui, Nappy Pulawa, and Ronnie Ching. Woven throughout is the name of Big Island rancher Larry Mehau?was he the "godfather of organized crime" in Hawaii as alleged by the FBI, or simply an ex-cop who befriended power brokers in the course of doing business for his security guard firm? The book includes a timeline of Mehau's activities to allow readers to judge for themselves.

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Editorial Review

Review

Dooley's a born storyteller. Many reporters are, but the requirements of daily journalism usually leave out the back-story that tells, or amuses, or frightens. The memoir of a career sets the writer free. And Dooley uses that freedom here. [He] also provides every journalism teacher in the state with a first-rate textbook that teaches the hard slog required to do investigative reporting.--Dan Boylan "MidWeek"

[Dooley's] greatest hits were darned impressive, and it'll likely be enough for *Sunny Skies, Shady Characters* to join the short list of books considered must-reads for those seeking to understand Hawaii.--David Shapiro "Honolulu Star-Advertiser"

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Sunny Skies, Shady Characters by James Dooley?Hawaii's bravest investigative reporter?recounts the secret history of Hawaii that all of us have been waiting for: a book of shocking revelations, featuring a cast of thieves, heavies, enforcers, and yakuza thugs and sneaks who have so intimidated the islands that the truth of their villainy has been suppressed?until now. At last, we know where the bodies are buried, and who buried them. (Paul Theroux)

The stories recounted here were once front-page news and they lose none of their timeliness in the translation into a book. For those who lived through those times, the book is an opportunity to recall the scandals and scoundrels that infested Hawai'i, and for those too young to remember, it is a reminder of why a vigilant press is an essential ingredient to an informed public. (*Gerald Kato, University of Hawai'i at Manoa*)

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