

TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett
Oral History Interview: November 20, 2005

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Wahi (<i>Location</i>)	Kailua, Kona, Hawai‘i Island
Kanaka Nīnauele (<i>Interviewer(s)</i>)	Maile Loo
Kanaka Ho‘opa‘a Mo‘olelo (<i>Videographer</i>)	Gene Kois
Nā hoa kipa (<i>Others present</i>)	Mamie Lawrence-Gallagher (HPS)



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QUEENIE VENTURA DOWSETT

Tape #: HPS 0643 (MV781)

Date: November 20, 2005

Location: Kailua, Kona, Hawai'i Island

Subject: Oral History Interview

Interviewer(s): Maile Loo

Videographer: Gene Kois

Also present: Mamie Lawrence-Gallagher

(01:03)

QVD: However, if that's the case, then there needs to be ... there needs to be ... a—just a checklist of—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Of—

ML: There needs to be some accountability.

QVD: Accountability.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Accountability.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: I was ... I was so impressed with these young dancers and their kumu's because they were very respectful.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: To each other, to their kumu, to the kūpuna's, and to the audience. As young as they were.

UTT

QVD: I did not see a lot of that on Maui.

UTT

ML: M-m; different.

UTT

MLG: Totally different.

QVD: Ho; Ho; that Maui group just ... Pugh.

ML: My way—

QVD: Made me—

ML: --or the highway. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Yeah; made me so—and everybody ... everybody made me feel like they were either Hiiaka or whatever.
[LAUGHTER]

QVD: You know? It's like ...

ML: Hiiaka—reincarnated.

QVD: --whatever.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Come on.

MLG: Yeah.

ML: Yeah. That's true; the flavor was very different.

UTT

QVD: The flavor.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: I was so ...

ML: Yeah.

QVD: I was so disappointed—

ML: Yeah.

MLG: [INDISTINCT]

QVD: --to see that.

UTT

QVD: And to see—to see that wonderful group of, what, three hundred pahu dancers, all the—all the dancers.

ML: Yeah, at least; yeah.

QVD: And they were like—they were like this. [DEMONSTRATES DANCERS' POSITIONS]

ML: [CHUCKLE] Not sitting up straight.

[LAUGHTER]

ML: Falling asleep.

QVD: You know, and—and like this. [DEMONSTRATES DANCERS' POSITIONS]

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: Ho. I thought to myself ... you know, if you were in your classroom, or even out a hotel, maybe you can get away with that. But when you have a kuahu—

ML: Yeah; sit up straight.

QVD: Right in front of you. [TELEPHONE]

ML: Yeah.

QVD: You're in trouble.

ML: Yeah; sit up straight. [TELEPHONE]

QVD: Oh, yes.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

QVD: For me, it's been wonderful the last three years. Thanksgiving, I'm giving all my su—my treasures to my daughters and granddaughters.

UTT

∞∞∞∞∞∞∞

ML: Okay; are you rolling, Gene?

UTT

ML: Okay; we're here in Kona. Auntie Queenie; had a wonderful night last night.

(05:00)

QVD: I had an absolutely ... wonderful night last night. The—the—the hula youngsters were ... surprisingly ... to my surprise ... they were just awesome. Uh, I was—I was so moved by their knowledge of the 'ōlelo. I was like, h-m ... I could not do that when I was nine. Uh, the hula, yes, but not ...

ML: 'Cause that wasn't—

QVD: --the 'ōlelo.

ML: --actually a part of what you folks learned—

QVD: No.

ML: --back then with Auntie Io. Was just the dancing part.

QVD: Just the dancing.

ML: Not the chanting.

QVD: And the chanting.

ML: So you had to—

QVD: We did that. But only what she taught us. And it was not as if you needed to—to speak to me in Hawaiian. Because she was the last person to do that in the class. All she—she wanted to do was deliver the art of the hula. And what she taught us was what she did last night. The kāla‘au, the lu—‘ulī‘ulī, and um ... uh ... and the ... and what is very important is the tone and the volume of the oli. We would sit there, and she'd go, Okay, what are we doing? Aia La O Pele. And she would go one, [CHANTS] ‘Ae. We'd go down. She'd say, Okay, down deeper, and deeper. And our voices would drop, and drop, until she heard that. And then she would say, ‘Ae.

UTT

QVD: And then we'd go on with our um ... and you know ... there is such a thing as ... the tone and the volume that moves that energy. It moves it. Um, and we learned that. We did not have to go into the ocean. Some do, to learn to get that sound. Uh, it was all done right there, behind closed doors. And she would get that from each of us. So ... doing ... doing an ‘ōlapa with her, for all—all of us, was almost not only spiritual, but it was like a prayer meeting. You know, you say whatever the oli is as if you were praying, as if you were delivering this ... this oli. And uh ... therefore, watching her last night on film was—was like a ... uh ... Okay, Queenie, listen; listen. Here I am. When the lights went off [CHUCKLE], I thought to myself, they're gonna come on in a minute. Well, they didn't come on. And uh, my head went right to the kai. And all I saw was [INDISTINCT], all I saw was the white waves. And so people will say, Well, that's your interpretation. But see, we—we are brought up that way. We look for signs. We look for these kinds of things. Why, in my mind, why would the lights go off just now? For me, she's saying, I'm here on the wall; I'm watching you folks.

UTT

QVD: Say the right thing. And I—uh, I even looked at Uncle George. And he looked at me like this.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: You know how he is.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And so we know. Kawaikapu, was looking over; he was watching us ... very carefully.

UTT

QVD: He would ask questions. And I'd say, Well, you were with Auntie Io. Did she not give you these things? He said, No. And I looked and I smiled. But he never told me what he told you. And that he never saw the other side of her.

ML: Different time of her life.

QVD: Different time of her life.

UTT

(10:00)

QVD: Different time of her life. Everything is different today. Um ... I know of the dancers that have been up to the Saddle Road, for instance. They take sickles with them. And they cut their lehua; they cut lehua. So where does that come from? Who is not teaching them to be responsible and be respectful? That's part of the hula. All of that is.

UTT

QVD: And when you talk about the limu, talk about the kai ... Kawaikapu said the same thing to me. She never took me to the ocean. I said, that's too bad. [CHUCKLE] You know?

ML: Yeah.

QVD: But he says, One day ... I said, What? One day we're gonna go down too. No, I don't think so.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: There's no more limu anymore.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: It's not clean anymore.

UTT

QVD: I said, but you know ... for everything that we did with nature, had to do with the universe. There was a reason. There is a reason. I think everyday people don't realize how alive—Auntie Io used to say, How alive all of these things are. They are.

UTT

QVD: You need to know that. So you need to mālama; very important to mālama. So growing up with all of these so-called ... almost commandments, if you will, uh ... has just made my life ... so full. Because ... if there's a point in our life where ... even my hula, sometimes I'm not comfortable, and I can sit. I can go sit in a room. And I will do what I have to do, and then I come out, like it's okay; it's okay. And I don't stew.

UTT

QVD: I don't give myself ... a chance to be not sure. I have no reason to do that. I come from the very best.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: And if I did ... then I have lost it somewhere. You don't say, ho, I did this and I didn't—oh, no. Don't say that. And I've—I've seen that; I saw that on Maui. We were so watchful to see ... even the—their Aua Ia, their—oh. That—I turned around like this, and I was looking straight at Pua, and she was looking at me like this; at all of us like this. 'Cause those two were sitting on the end like this. And I looked—I looked at her and I smiled. And she just smiled, and I smiled. And I looked back, and I purposely—hope I took her eyes right ... to what they were doing. And then I sat up. But ... [SIGHS] if they're gonna wear the pahu [sic pā'ū], then they need to be better aware of their surroundings and what they're doing. Uh, and there is no excuse for that. Otherwise ... there is no

room ... there is no room. Because if on the other side of this character, if you're a happy, wonderful, personable person, then you will influence this kind of behavior on the rest.

UTT

QVD: No; there is no room for that. So my ... my hula with Auntie Io was ... I think, I think she was very proud of us. Very proud of us, and how we performed. And there were many times we looked as one. We looked as one. Uh, and Auntie Io would tell us always; she would always gather us and hold us.

(15:00)

And she would say, Ho, we are happy. You know, we—I—I used to question her. We is who? No. When you start really into it, you know what she means is we are happy. But ... I look—I look at the film and I think of our hula days, and I think about all my guys, all my buddies that are gone. But ... I know that when my time comes, we're all gonna be doing it together. [CHUCKLE] We will be together. We were inseparable. And uh ... it'll be fine; it'll be wonderful. Especially now ... what you three are doing—four—

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: --are doing. Uh ... George, he says to me many times; he says, Oh, those girls and Gene, they're so wonderful. I said, Yup. And he says to me, And you so lucky to have them. I said, I know; and you too. [CHUCKLE] And you too.

ML: We're the lucky ones.

MLG: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah. Because ... hopefully, as those—when I was dancing, I was looking at our little dancers, and they were all so excited.

MLG: I know.

QVD: So excited. Hopefully, that this is what they can capture and this is what they're gonna come to. And there is—oh, there is so, so much room out there; so much room. And that little girl, Victor girl, that little one that won, besides that other—Fujimoto, for me ... watching her hula was like, wow, did I do that when I was young? Was I like that? You know? When you are so sure of yourself, and that you can move and oli like that. And uh, and you've got a whole audience of grownups and kūpuna's. You're not look—you're not doing this for a school class.

UTT

QVD: And she is just out there. And Kawaikapu and I were talking; look at that little one. He says, You know, and it's too bad, because she can't go into the Merrie Monarch and be Miss Hula whatever. Years will have to—

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: --grow on her before she can even get there. But—and the older 'ōpio's should watch those two.

ML: They should. Yeah.

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QVD: This is an example. We tried very hard to look at ... Miss Kona Coffee, because we knew that she was going away to college, we knew she was there for a scholarship. And she had won the contest in Kona. So I was comfortable with that, and I thought okay, you know, all you have to do is hula for us. Well ... she just didn't meet that ... criteria. So—

UTT

QVD: And I know I heard that she was very disappointed. But ... it's okay, uh, you know. I went to her yesterday and I said to her, Darling ... you know now how many more steps you can climb. But that's okay. You're going to college; do what you have to do, show the haole's how you can hula ... and it's gonna be fine. It's gonna be wonderful. You will get there. Oh, I know, Auntie, but I was trying to get the scholar—I says, you know ... you will get there. I said, You seem to be a very intelligent person; write for a grant. Go do these things. But you have to encourage them, get them going, and not say, Well, I didn't get it. 'Cause ... I don't know; I don't know how we do that. But um ... hopefully, there's more money next year.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And hopefully, they have learned not to leave ...

UTT

(20:00)

QVD: --one out. And I hope—I know Iwalani was so busy, but I hope that committee is gonna be able to—to do something for her, and not allow this ... to ... you know. Your—your teammates could be your—your partners could be gracious. But they're little and they're young, and the ... could hurt her. So I hope they do something about that.

UTT

QVD: Yeah. She was there for a reason and a purpose. So we need to—we need to just do nice things.

UTT

QVD: Nice things. So are we gonna look at the book?

ML: Yeah; do you mind? Um, we're getting a lot of noise from the pool. Is it okay maybe—

QVD: Oh.

ML: --if we close and turn up the—

QVD: Sure.

ML: --turn on the air?

QVD: Sure.

ML: And then uh, that might—

[BREAK IN TAPING]

QVD: --asked who this was. Papa Bray.

UTT

QVD: Even Kawaikapu; he didn't know who they were.

ML: Before his time.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: He's a baby.

QVD: Before his time. He is a baby.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: Yeah.

ML: So yeah; why don't we—we have all the pictures numbered.

QVD: Okay.

ML: And if we can just maybe start at the beginning.

QVD: Okay.

ML: Um ...

QVD: This is at Kea'au.

ML: Yeah; you can—

QVD: Shipman's place.

ML: --hold it on your lap if you want, Mom, I mean-uh-Auntie.

QVD: All right; okay.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And then I better go get my maka's here.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Okay.

ML: One of the things that would be nice too is just give us some background on how you came to be in the film, and also how Auntie Io came to ... you know, be the—

QVD: To be part of that. Oh, yes.

ML: Part of the team; yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: [INDISTINCT]

QVD: Well ... 19- ... I guess was beginning of 19- ... ending of '48 or beginning of '49. The movie industry and the—the whole uh, director of the whole group of people that were to be looking for sites and places were also putting together the cast. And they contacted Auntie Io, 'cause she was the most authentic Hawaiian hula ... dancer, expertise in Hawai'i. So she was asked to gather dancers. And they needed to be Hawaiians, part—just—but look a little bit Hawaiian. So she had a task. And she—and she did go to all of the um, hula ... uh, places, studios, and gathered a lot of known dancers, like Lois Guerrero, Kanoe Cockett. I think Mamo Howell was in this, and she was then quite the dancer. Um ... and who else – let me see these dancers. Anyway, a few good dancers.

UTT

QVD: And our—her team was Joseph, Henry, Hoakalei, and myself and Lani. So one day at the studio when we were there, she says, We have a big job; we have a very big job and um, I need all of your help. And of course, as young as we were, it was like, h-m, anxious; okay, what are we doing? Well, this movie company is—is here, 20th Century Fox, and we are going to be their hula group; and I want all five of you to be my hula people. And that was—that was wonderful. And we are to meet up at the old Kamehameha School Clubhouse. And that was up at Liliha; huge thing, beautiful thing. And she gave us the time to be there, on time, punctual; on time. She says, I have already gathered twenty kāne dancers and twenty wahine dancers. And I thought to myself, if anybody can do it, she certainly could do it. Well, she went down the beach [CHUCKLE] and gathered mo—almost all the Napoleons, Blackout, uh ... uh, Graham, the knife dancers. She just got all these handsome, handsome ... I mean, they had the body, they had good looks.

(25:00)

And they're gonna be there. And all the women were gonna be—some were hula dancers and others were either Hawai'i models, the women models. But they had to be—they had to have that little bit. So we get there, we arrive there, and Delmar Daves is there, Kent—Kent um—oh, gosh, I forget. He—he's the musical director. And uh, the second in command for 20th Century Fox; his—his name was Fitzsimmons, I guess, if I can remember. All three men were there, and their secretaries, and their whatever and whatever. And we get—Auntie Io and I, and—and all of us get there, and we walk in. And here are all these guys there. The beach boys, some with shorts and T-shirt. Auntie Io just says, come comfortable. And—and all the women, all the girls. And you know, if I can remember correctly ... every girl had a flower in her hair.

UTT

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QVD: If I can remember correctly. But that was—that was part of our dress, is to wear a flower in our hair. And that impressed Delmar Daves. So we all get in there, and we're sitting, and Auntie Io was giving us ... the 'ōlapa's, what to do. [SINGS] Kona Kai—the kāla'au, we did that. And um ... Hamakua, we did that. So she says, Okay; she says, Now, Hoakalei, I want you to oversee this. Henry, I want you to be the coordinator. Something about Auntie Io that was so ... for me, it was so ... incredible was she could plan something in this head, and visualize it. It was there. And she would just—Okay; and Lani, and you and Queenie; um, Queenie, you teach the girls; Lani, you teach the boys. And I said to her, I don't want to teach the girls; I want to teach the guys. [CHUCKLE] I don't want to teach, I want to ... teach the guys. And Lani; you know, Lani is like this; That's okay, that's nice. She's always ... she's—was my buddy. She was always like ... so sweet. I used to get a little upset with her and I'd say ... You know, you just gotta stop it; you're al—you're always so obliging, you're always so nice. Stop it. You don't want to do that, you just tell me. And Auntie Io was saying, No, that's good. Lani, you teach the girls.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: Queenie, you teach the guys. Now ... Auntie Io says, Okay, and Delmer says—Dave says, Okay. So we take the guys out on the lawn, out in the back, and I start with them. I says, And we're just gonna do ... I just want you to 'ami for me. And—and all the oli and all that stuff will come from us. Just pretend. Because he wants a dry run. Just 'ami. And Lani did the same. But see, the Joshua's were in there too; Lorraine, Gladys, they were there. So they knew the oli. So that was perfect; the volume was strong from them. So ... and just 'ami. Just make, you know, make sexy, make ... So we line everybody up in, and now we're back in—in the uh, clubhouse, and we're all lined, facing; we pair them off. And of course ... you know the Napoleons. Uh [CLEARS THROAT], can I exchange with da-da-dum? [CHUCKLE] Uh, can I exchange with da-da? And this was—uh, Stop; Auntie Io says, Just ... hold it. And she was always with her two things; Hold it, she would say. And then she would get up; she says, Now, you just stay here.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: And just go down, and then Hoakalei would pa'i that ipu. And when we started, it—either I, Lani—Lani was looking at me and ... and it was wonderful. Because Joseph Henry, myself, Lani, and the Joshuas; ho, the volume was incredible. And all you see were these bodies. Everybody had to take—the boys had to take off their shirts. And just the girls like that in there too. It was—look at me. It was just beautiful.

(30:00)

Delmer Daves was so impressed; he was so impressed. It was just wonderful. And he looks at Auntie Io and he says to her, You are a magician. [CHUCKLE] And the word magician. She says, I am not a magician. Yes, you are; yes, you are. Then he comes—Delmer Daves comes straight to me and he says ... My dear—he turns me around and he says, I want you to play the part of Noanoa. And I look at him, and I look at Auntie Io, and Auntie goes—

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: Her—like this. And I'm going, No, I don't think so. And he says, Do you know what I'm asking? And I said, Yes; I have seen the script, yes. Only with—part of dancing. But I see this name, Noanoa. Jeff Chandler, Noanoa. I said, No. [TELEPHONE] He says, And why not? I says, Because I have to help my mother and father [TELEPHONE] down at the lei stand. I—I cannot be here all the time. Yes; we can go and we can hula.

UTT

QVD: And I will fly. Auntie Io says, We will fly.

UTT

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QVD: But I cannot be. And he shook his head ... and I said, You know ... I looked at Lani, I says—of course, my—my best friend, she's—she's first. I says, This is Lani. And Auntie Io says, You're not the director. [CHUCKLE] Auntie Io—and she would always stop us. She says, You're not the director; sh-h-h. But always, sh-h-h. So ... he says, No; he says, I want you to go home and ask your mother and your father if they could give you a little time off. Then he says to me, There's an awful lot of money in this. And I looked at him and I said, I'm sure; I'm sure. He says, Doesn't that—No; no. I said, They need me down at the lei stand. So I go home. Auntie Io says, Oh, I call Mama. I said, No, no, no. [CHUCKLE] You're not gonna call; I'm gonna talk to Mama. So I went home. My mother was hysterical. She was laughing; she says ... You don't want to be a movie star? [CHUCKLE] I says, Mama, it's not the movie star. She says—I told her. I says, You know, you need help. I used to get up five o'clock in the morning with Mama, go down to the lei stand, open up the lei stand with her. Then Dad would take me and drop me off at school. All the rest of the kids, he would go get, take to school. But because I was the oldest, I was there, always to help Mama. And she says, No; she says, This is your big chance, go. And that's how I ... became Noanoa. But they were ... they were wonderful to me. But that didn't mean that my teaching stopped. It just meant that when it was time for Noanoa to be there, I would jump into this other thing, and they would put this big wig on me.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: And then I was Noanoa. But ... uh, I think this movie is a treasure. Kalaupapa—I mean, um ... what do you call, Kalapana is no more. Queen's Bath is no more. Several places; Keaau does not look the same, this place here. It has been washed away something fierce. I hear some of the ponds are gone. Uh, so it is a treasure. Because if you watch the movie—and by the way, 20th Century Fox sent me. I do have a movie. Besides that, um—and the movie was given to me recently. I have one—[POUNDING, KNOCKING ON DOOR]—oh, that's him.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

[BREAK IN TAPING]

(35:00)

ML: Wow, so you were picked from ...

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --twenty—

QVD: From—

ML: --plus gals there. You just must have stood out, huh?

QVD: Well, I don't—I don't know what he saw, but ... and then they—after the movie, they offered me a contract, 20th Century. And I did go. And what I saw, I did not like. So I guess I must have been there a week or so, and uh, I made my way to the head office to Fitzsimmons, and I just said, You need to send me home. He says ... We—are looking forward to this. In fact, the person that was in—they took me to the school; they had a school on set. And ... Natalie Wood was there, Katy Gerardo. I remember those two, 'cause they were just beautiful, just

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incredibly beautiful. And then the guys, I don't even remember. And I kinda just stood there behind, with uh, Ken Darby; that was his name, Ken Darby. So Ken was taking me around. He says—and—and he just watched me. And you know, Delmer Daves and Ken Darby ... I think, I do—and I'd like to believe that ... they ... found ... a different kind of spirit in Hawai'i. Ken said that; Ken Darby, the musical—he says ... Everything about Hawai'i and the people, he said, is like a never-never land, like it's something in—in ... like uh, like a—a fairytale, a story. He says, Your music is wonderful, your people are like the music, your dance is wonderful. He says, And life here is—of course, the beach boys, you know. He says, The way I see everyone—and I almost wanted to say, Oh, please [CHUCKLE], don't look at them and say you think this is the way. No. They're beach boys. But yes, their life is from ... from sunup to sunset, and that's all it is. Until they find what's real. I said, But yes, Hawai'i is lovely. But he took me around. Then we went to—after the school, we went to the uh, cafeteria, and then I met Gregory Peck. I met Bill Lundigan. I met all of these wonderful people. And Ken kept saying, She's our newest find. And I would look at him. 'Cause I had not said that yet. He was just taking me around. And I thought to myself—I called Mama, and Mama laughed. I said, Oh, she does. I don't know what—these Hawaiian women. She laughed, and she says ... And you don't want to be there? I said, No, Mama, I don't want to be here. I said, I think these people are crazy. And then they wanted—I was there for three days and they wanted to match me up with an—with a young man, to go to a dinner place or whatever. Puh, Puh [CAMERA TAKING PICTURE SOUND] I said, No, I don't have anything to wear. That's not a problem. See, we knew that, they said. I said, Please, I don't want to go anywhere. No. I don't know whether it's because I was a good Mormon or [CHUCKLE] what it—whatever it was. But no. So ... when I said no, they were all so very nice. So very nice to me, and they said, Okay, we'll send you home. Big old limousine, I packed my little clothes. This little kanaka girl getting on the Pan Am, going back home. And I came home. And I've never regretted it. But soon after that ... in '51, '51 I got married. Uh, still kept correspondence. And then they called me for the movie ... they came down to Hawai'i, they were on their way to—to um ... the Marquesas, I guess, somewhere down there. They were gonna make the movie Return to Paradise with Gary Cooper.

(40:00)

And there were two ... female leads in that movie. Uh, first it was a woman that was supposed to have been his wife, native woman; and that's the one they wanted me to play. And then there was a daughter. They were gonna make me look old—young, and then old. And then die in this movie, and this daughter was to be born. And I thought, oh, that really is nice, and I read the script, and they said, yeah. I found out I was hāpai; I never went. But you know, I think ... I think—I don't think it's too bad. I think that that's the way it was going to be. That was not gonna happen, you know. I think in my life—and I—I've tried to teach my children that—even disappointments, there's a reason for this. Down the road, there is a reason for this. Auntie Io has taught us that too. So besides the hula, there was so much wisdom. So much wisdom out there that she would just throw at us. Every time we went to hula, she would say something. And of course, because of her ... teaching us to focus ... to be absolutely disciplined, after a while, all the most important things ... you can always sort out, and it ... all the 'ōpala stuff, no matter how wonderful, colorful, gay it is or whatever, it doesn't mean that—anything. It all—you—you go back and you s—all of a sudden, this—this oh; all the most important things, hopefully—

UTT

QVD: --is there. And then the choice; you're always making choices, as Auntie Io would say. You're always making choices. There was a time we had to wear cellophane skirts. Auntie Io says, Are you folks gonna wear that shiny stuff? [CHUCKLE] Of course, we—with Auntie Io, we never wore it. But when we started to get out to hula;

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Are you folks gonna wear that? I said, I am. [CHUCKLE] She looked at me and she says, I know you would be the one to wear. I says, Yes; I told Mama to buy me a red one, and I want a blue one. And she says, That's nice. And she says, Lani? Lani says, I don't think so. Of course, her mama was Vickie Ii, right, so ... you don't step into that other dimension of the hula.

UTT

QVD: But I had a ball. I had a ball dancing, um, in the cellophane.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: It was ... I guess ... for me and my hula ... I had to get into all the different ... levels of the hula. And I think that made me ... complete.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: It made me complete. Um, and I'm ever so grateful to have met in my life people like Delmer Daves, Ken Darby ... so much depth. Um, so much passion. He had just ... Delmer Daves was just done with Broken Arrow when he came over. Uh, and he brought Jeff Chandler to me. Sat down with me, in this enormous, huge ... handsome man sat there with me. And he said to me—grabbed my hand—he says ... Just be yourself; don't even be concerned about lines or whatever. Which I never had too many anyway. He says, But just be yourself. However, on the other hand, Louis Joudan was so ho'okano. He was so—to everyone. He would go and eat by himself. And the boys used to say to Auntie Io; Auntie Io, give him the works. [CHUCKLE] And Auntie Io would say, You folks stop that.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: You stop that. [CLEARS THROAT] Because everybody thought she was that kind, right, she was ... And she would say, You stop that ...

[CHUCKLE]

(45:00)

QVD: --talk. But many scenes—

ML: Over what period of time did you shoot the film? How many months or ...

QVD: Oh, it was quite a while. We ... were in Honolulu for maybe two months. Then went to Kaua'i.

UTT

QVD: Stayed there for about—oh, I don't know; three weeks, maybe more. And then went to Hawai'i; here. And we stayed long time. That was quite a while. Because—

UTT

QVD: --we had ... we had the um, the honeymoon scene, we had the walking on the hot rocks, we had uh ... we had the uh ... jumping into the volcano, when she went and—ffft- and that was two o'clock in the morning. Very cold. Very, very cold. And you know, somewhere I do have pictures of those scenes. I don't know where it is. Other than what—and uh—and it's because the Nathaniel's; somebody from the Nathaniel's had a camera or got some pictures. And they have pictures of that.

UTT

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QVD: Um ... that was quite a scene. We must have had at least a hundred people. And it looked like there were more. But at least a hundred, and everybody was cold. They had these standing propane heaters; we would sit around those. And they would call us, and then of course we'd walk to the set and everybody would be in their kīkepa's.

ML: Yeah; it's cold up there.

QVD: Oh, it's cold. Two o'clock in the morning; oh. But uh ... we did those, and the—and the um ... and the walking over the hot rocks is real. That was real. That was not ... phony baloney. That was real. So ... and Daddy Bray was magnificent in this movie. Mrs. Nathaniel, who was the wife, the mother, she was just wonderful. And I forget his name who was the father, was from Los Angeles; Hawaiian, that had been born uh, uh, uh, in Hawai'i, then taken. His family went back to Los Angeles. So he was an actor from—from Los Angeles. And—and then of course, Maurice, who the kahuna is; he looked ... absolutely very kahuna-like.

UTT

QVD: But the sweetest man; just gentle and sweet. You know, I think all in all, there was no hukihuki. Everyone, everybody; cast uh, people of 20th Century, uh ... everybody was so one. I think that's why the movie was so good too.

UTT

QVD: We were all one; yeah. There was no uh ... no ... gossip.

UTT

QVD: No, well, I want that, how come he has that, or why she have that. Nothing. The only problem we had, I think, really problem we had, was when our boys went out for the night and came home [CHUCKLE] and were like ... just ...tsk.. hangovers.

UTT

QVD: And what do they do? They would go swimming in Shipman's Ponds. Catch the mullets [CHUCKLE], the fish. Oh, gee. And Delmer Daves says, I know what it's like; give me the bill. Give me the bill. And the pond keeper would say, It's not the bill; it's the fish. These things we raise; you cannot go down the store and buy a fish that—and bring it here. Well ... Daddy Bray took all the boys and just in no uncertain terms, told them, These are the rules. And you know what? They listened; they listened. It's not the money, not the bill; it's what you're doing. And what you're doing is doing to us, not to the haole's, and not to your lolo; it's doing to us.

UTT

(50:00)

QVD: So people like that, with the most wonderful logic ... are gone, are pau. Because we look at them as walking ... just walking dictionaries, if you will, or walking um—and they—they didn't have to be shrinks, psychologists, or whatever. They just told you the way it was. And it's too bad we don't have that ... anymore.

ML: 'Cause they were so respected.

QVD: So—

ML: By everybody.

QVD: --respected. Understood. They were not politicians.

UTT

QVD: They were just your kūpuna's who had lived for so many years.

ML: Right.

QVD: And could tell you in no uncertain terms, this is what you do not do. And why.

UTT

QVD: So—

UTT

QVD: I think from our vintage ... and I see that in you two ... uh ... very important; very important.

UTT

QVD: Even when we talked last night with our hula people, and Auntie Hilda, she was so wonderful. Oh; she talked about times I'd forgotten. She says, You don't remember, she says, but I used to watch you come to Kona and dance. I said, Hilda, I knew you as Hilda. She says, I know you knew me, but ... then ... she says, You know, I wish we could do that. We can't even have a hotel to do that anymore, to give a room. Sometimes I wonder where do we showcase these dancers; where? No more. Not like before.

ML: Yeah; that's true.

QVD: Not like before. So that's something that we have lost.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And maybe it will never come back.

ML: Yeah; it's hard to ... it's hard to see how it could.

QVD: Yeah; because ... we—we do have lovely dancers. And when I asked the question the other day ... Is your—is your hopes and desires to become a soloist? And she said to me, Yes, but where do we dance?

UTT

QVD: Merrie Monarch? No. As a soloist, where do I dance?

UTT

ML: It's a good question these days.

QVD: Yes; where do I dance.

UTT

QVD: She says, And Auntie Queenie, she says ... I think the Merrie Monarch is wonderful for us and our 'ōlapa's, she says, but ... I don't think that the hotels would even entertain that. I mean, she's—she's talking to me like this, and I'm going ... you're right.

UTT

QVD: You are so right. Even when I was a social director, and I was in charge of the entertainment ... I had to go to so many meetings to convince them that you're in Hawai'i. We don't need a magician, we don't need a trio or

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whatever; we need a show. But it took ... I mean, talking to them was like, look around you. Why do they come here? Not just for this; they want to see what makes this this. And that was in '65. And it's been ... literally now—

ML: It's worse now; yeah.

QVD: Pau. Not fair.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: It's not fair. And doing just an open thing like this is ... is not ... a soloist's dream.

UTT

QVD: You want to be in a room where the people come in to watch a soloist, to watch and hear that lovely music, to watch the grace of the hula. And it's pau. And it's pau. I thought about that last night too when I did my hula.

(55:00)

I thought to myself, you know, that's all I've been doing, is either the Alika, the Maunaloa, or the—or the um, Noho Paipai. But I have not danced the Mi Nei ... or the Manu Oo—

UTT

QVD: --or those hulas. That's another side of Auntie Io.

UTT

QVD: That is a totally 'nother side of Auntie Io. Because she has incorporated in these songs a lot of the 'ōlapa into this.

UTT

ML: So the routines that you do for those songs are ones she taught you?

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Wow.

QVD: Some of them; yeah. Yeah. And ... uh, for even—uh, we talk about the shows and the soloist. However ... we could—I could go to a wonderful ... lovely party, and you have a trio singing. You never see a kupuna there; it's always the young people. Well, beautiful music, and then uh, I—I will say, You do Mi Nei for me. Oh, Auntie, we don't know that one.

UTT

QVD: [GASP] You know. So they're killing us [CHUCKLE]--they're killing us out there.

ML: I know.

QVD: The few of us that are left.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: Because how do we show the other part of the hula?

ML: When they don't know—

QVD: You know?

ML: --the songs; yeah.

QVD: And they don't know the songs. And then sometimes I go and I say, I a kāhea. Oh, you're gonna call out the verse, Auntie? Yeah, I'm gonna kāhea. Those are simple.

UTT

QVD: Simple terms that they should know as musicians.

ML: Oh, yeah.

QVD: They should—

ML: Definitely.

QVD: --know. You know. But ... and—and all these—all these wonderful ... terms and all these wonderful ... uh, so-called uh, s—sayings and expressions that we have, uh ... we are gonna forget, because there is nowhere to—

UTT

QVD: --express this. Even our part—uh, especially we go to our haole parties and they say, Oh, Queenie, will you dance, please? Uh ... what recording do you want? I have Auntie Genoa, I have this and that. And it's lovely, it's lovely, but you know ... how do you start and how do you end?

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: It's so, so ... I see that slipping away. So does Kawaipu, and he was talking to me ... Kawaikapu; talking to me about that. And I said to him, Well, I've learned to live with it. What else do you do? I've learned to live with it. And he says, I fight with them every year, Auntie, at Merrie Monarch. Because ... it's so different; everything is so different, and there's so much hakakā. And I said to him, You know, sometimes we need to do the best we can ... and go on from there. Maybe it isn't worth sometimes. Maybe if you can reach a few, that few will reach whatever. But when you stand alone like that, and you've got the Merrie Monarch, how big is that. And you're looking at all these so-called people that are in control, and they're telling you that they gonna make changes. So ... what do you do? I says, Besides, Uncle George is in control. You tell him. Go to source; he's the source, go to him and talk to him. He says, I do, but he forgets.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: I do, but he forgets.

ML: Yeah; that's true.

UTT

ML: That—that's true.

QVD: So I don't know whether we're losing all around. However, last night was refreshing. It was wonderful. There was a lot of meeting of the minds.

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UTT

QVD: A lot.

ML: Yeah; yeah, that's true.

QVD: A lot. There was a lot of openness, talking. Which—which I saw very little of in Maui. In Maui, we talk about numbers.

(01:00:00)

Here, we're talking about ... people that are important; maybe not numbers, but people that are very important. And they see it, and they talk about it.

UTT

QVD: Like Iwalani says, We're gonna do this next year, Auntie. I said, Wonderful. Wonderful. If I can help in an—any uh, capacity, I want to. I would like to do that.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

[END]

QUEENIE VENTURA DOWSETT

Tape #: HPS 0644 (MV782)

Date: November 20, 2005

Location: Kailua, Kona, Hawai'i Island

Subject: Oral History Interview

Interviewer(s): Maile Loo

Videographer: Gene Kois

Also present: Mamie Lawrence-Gallagher

(01:04)

QVD: Look at this picture that was sent to me.

ML: Oh, neat. Who sent it to you?

QVD: This son; this is his mother.

ML: Oh, my gosh.

QVD: Mother. And he sent it to me, because she passed on or something, and he found that picture.

ML: Oh, how cool. Wow.

QVD: So sent it; yeah.

ML: Neat.

QVD: Yeah. I thought that was—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And I can't remember—even with her name, I can't remember. Apparently, we were pretty good friends.

ML: Yeah. Well, that's a long time ago.

QVD: Long time ago.

ML: Yeah. Neat.

QVD: You know what was wonderful about this company? They had gotten people that were the authority on building the thatch houses, on the canoes, to the point where the wrap of the canoe, the ama.

ML: Wow.

QVD: Uh, so many detail ... uh, aspects were looked at. They just weren't gonna do what—oh, that looks good, that's okay. No. He wanted everything to be perfect. So—

ML: So he tried to do it in the right way.

QVD: In the right way.

ML: Oh, that's—

QVD: And he would consult with Daddy Bray, with uh ... uh, Timothy uh, Montgomery, and he did all the nose flute.
UTT

QVD: Um ... Auntie Io, Lokalia, the Nathaniels, the Hilo people.
UTT

QVD: Uh ... did—asked, he asked questions. All the—look at the pond. Look at the fishpond. See that? How big it is.

ML: Is that—

QVD: It's in Kea'au.

ML: --the Shipman?

QVD: At Shipman's place.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: All of this was done at Shipman's place.
UTT

QVD: All of this. Look at Henry. Henry became Auntie Io's coordinator, yeah, choreographer. Here's Mamo Howell. See her?

ML: Yeah.

QVD: In fact ...

ML: Okay.

QVD: When I was asked, picked as Noanoa ... they were all—were all [INDISTINCT]. They were like ... little short, huh? [CHUCKLE] I said, Yeah, I'm a little short. I said, You know, all of you should go stand in front of ... we change you folks; reverse the line, and you folks stand there so ... so Mr. Delmer Daves can see you folks. Auntie Io used to laugh at me and she'd say ... You're not gonna do that; I'm the boss. [CHUCKLE] I'm the director. I said, Okay, Auntie Io; sorry. But ...

[CHUCKLE]

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QVD: --these girls used to give me a bad time; just a bad time. And after ... after the movie, and we had gotten together several times, uh, Lani and I were kind of ... and Hoakalei were kinda the only three that were always together. And for good reasons. You know, we had to sit with Auntie Io, she told us to change a step or do this, and we had to sit there. But um, another good friend was Lois Guerrero, 'cause she danced with Big Auntie at the time. And uh, Kanoe Cockett; she was the blazer, that one. And finally, we all—all got together and realized there was the— just one purpose here, and that was we were all hula dancers. And that one day, we would all be soloists. And sure enough, every one of us became a soloist. Not just Auntie Io's—

(05:00)

UTT

QVD: --but the Joshua's, Kanoe Cockett, Lois Guerrero. Uh ... I think we were the luckiest, however, because—not because we were just Auntie Io's dancers, but Auntie Io had the in—

UTT

QVD: --to everywhere. She was the one that was looked at. And we were all her little menehune's that followed.

ML: It's neat, because when you think about how old she was at the time of the film, she was about thirty.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: That's young.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: To be in such a position of importance in—

QVD: Importance; yes.

ML: --a project like that.

QVD: Yes.

ML: Because she was so outstanding.

QVD: Outstanding; yes. And you know ... Auntie Io was not one of vocabulary. She was simple, she was ... but her whole demeanor was captivating. She could sit with you ... and she could be talking about a popsicle, and you would be captivated by this woman. [CHUCKLE] Even if she said, [GASP] Oh, but I like orange. And I like orange because. And her eyes would go up. And then her hands would say—I'm only—she would probably say [GASP], And the paper; and there's two in this popsicle. This is Auntie Io. You know. I think I, myself and Joseph almost mimic her. Because she kept us in. Everybody would go home, and she would say to me, Oh, I need you two; come. Stay; I need you two. And that was just to give us a little more. She always said to me, I should make you a comic dancer. Just [INDISTINCT] And I'd say, Oh, Auntie Io, that's not—that's not very nice [CHUCKLE] to tell me that. She'd make you just like a comic dancer. But you know ... she was right. Because I

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can do the comic just like her. She made sure to that. She says, One day your life is gonna be so busy, Queenie, so busy. And you will have this.

UTT

QVD: You will have this.

UTT

QVD: And she was right. Because I did not have this ... part of feeling very free and very up, I think raising five children would have done me in. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Would have done me in. But ... I have much—even my mother, my Mama; she'd sit with me. My Mama was a kapu dancer. She came to Kawaihae in the 20s on—I don't know; I forget the ... ship. Hualalai or one of those interisland ships. I have a picture of them on the deck. And the three women, big women, pa'i those ipu's. And—and the dancers. And I told her, Wow; you folks wore—you didn't wear kīkepa. She says, No; we wore the fī leaf and a pā'ū underneath. She—and you know when they stood up—I have pictures—the skirt is so heavy, the skirt stick out. [CHUCKLE] I said, Mama. She says, Eh, we have our kīkepa, but that we love; we love that. But they came and they rededicated all the big heiau's. They went. She says when they came to Kawaihae, the whole beach was lit with torches. They put them in the little dinghy boat ... the dancers. There were three; three, I think, of them. And then the other boat ... the women with the pahu's coming in, and the ipu's coming in. And she says, As we got close to that Mano—there's one, yeah, heiau, below Pu'ukoholā—she says, our—the man that took us was part of the Laau family.

(10:00)

So he knew exactly where to row where the wall was in the water. And she says, And he says in Hawaiian to put our leg over and step on the wall, and we would be good. They stepped on the wall, they started to oli in the back. They ... they hula from there, up ... just to the start; they never went way up, just to the ... uh, to the beginning of that. And that's where they hula. She says to me, And you know what, she says, the Hawaiian people look just like the Lā'ie people; no different, just like the Lā'ie people. And they were all around us. And that's all we did. She says, We did our 'ōlapa, pau our 'ōlapa, we—we turned to them, and they gathered us. And they took us home with them. And we waited; the next day, onto the boat and off we went. We went to Maui. She says the worst place was Moloka'i. She says, Oh ... she says, that place is so ... is so—was so pihe with the kahuna's. Oh; that is—that island is—pow.

ML: So it was—

QVD: Even today.

ML: --hard for—

QVD: So they had—they had—they had a very hard time.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Very hard time. But they were sent to do what they had to do, and they did it.

UTT

QVD: She says, So when I came back, she says, I told Mama and Tutu Man; Tutu Man, you gotta huki this off of me, I have to go to—her—her master was—ooh, he was a Hawaiian man.

ML: From Lā‘ie side?

QVD: No; from Kaka‘ako.

UTT

QVD: And he lived in a thatch hut. Oh ... and he was angry with her. She was young; she says, I was sixteen, or whatever. Young. Oh, he was angry with her. She says, I went through a lot. She said, I was supposed to die.

UTT

ML: Why was he angry?

QVD: Because she wanted out.

ML: Oh.

QVD: Huki this off of me, I want out. She says, He told me I was gonna die; and my Tutu Man says ... I don't think so. Very powerful people at the time. So there's no question in my mind ...

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --that they were, and there still is.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: There still is.

ML: The—the—your mom was from Lā‘ie side, though?

QVD: Lā‘ie; yeah.

ML: So how—she had go long ways for hula, then. Or did she live there with the ...with the man who taught her?

QVD: She—she lived there with my—my Tutu Man Oli.

ML: But in Kaka‘ako?

QVD: In Kaka‘ako.

ML: Because of the hula?

QVD: When—she was born there, raised there, and the old—you know where the temple is now?

ML: Yeah.

QVD: The temple. Well, if you came down from the temple, straight down ... the road ... in their time, it was a rocky road. On either side, there were two huge lo'i patches that went right up to the temple. There's—no more all those gardens, all that fancy—no more; just the temple. And our house ... the Kalili house was right in front of it. Our lanai was sixty feet long ... faced the temple.

UTT

QVD: She was born and raised in Lā'ie. They owned a lot of property in Lā'ie. When the church came ... the church asked if they could exchange some property for my grandma's property; my Tutu Lady's property. They wanted to build a recreational spot on her property, 'cause it was close to the railroad tracks to wherever the—the uh, it was close to the—for the people. And she said okay; they became wonderful Mormons. Okay. They did build, but the exchange was never made. She was so brokenhearted. And that's when they moved to Kaka'ako.

UTT

QVD: And my grandma, and that's when they went up.

ML: And so your mom was—

QVD: And that's when she started.

ML: --raised in—

QVD: Yeah.

UTT

(15:00)

QVD: Kaka'ako.

ML: So do you remember the man's name at all?

QVD: Uh, you know, I ... I should remember. Uh, I'll ask my sister. She has most of the genealogy.

ML: Okay.

QVD: And um ...

ML: Yeah; if—if you can come up with it.

QVD: Yes.

ML: See if we've run across it before or not.

QVD: Okay.

ML: But I don't think so.

QVD: Okay. He kinda looked like almost—in the picture, he looked like um ... um ... Naluahine, down here.

ML: Oh, yeah; the one you—

QVD: Remember?

ML: --came to see.

QVD: I came to see.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Like that in the picture.

UTT

QVD: Yeah. M-hm. That was an experience for me.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Naluahine.

ML: A very moving experience.

QVD: M-hm.

ML: When um ... it's interesting that your mom would have ended up ... I think it's in here somewhere; it's one of these pockets. Either in or out. Um, when your mom um, ended up as a kapu dancer, I mean, you folks were, you know, coming from a Mormon background. And so did he choose her, do you know, or did she ... how did it come to be?

QVD: Because ... we come from that line of dancers.

ML: And he just knew that, and—

QVD: And he knew that.

ML: Okay.

QVD: They knew that. She was already having dreams. She—her—all of her ‘ōlapa was here in her dreams. Three men on a hill. You know, when she told—uh, she told me that story. When I went to uh, Mo‘okini ... I did that. I danced. And it looks almost like a dike on a manmade, small, little ... hill. Just before you get to the heiau. And Momi Lum brought—found three ... of the stones that they worshiped down in Mo‘okini. And I danced. I dared to hula in between. Only because ... I remember Mama saying that, and I thought to myself ... what better place to prove to me if I’m worthy.

UTT

QVD: If I’m worthy. And I did that. And it—for me ... it was like ... it’s not a challenge. It’s like meeting them; meeting ... these gods. Meeting and saying, Am I acceptable? Do I belong? Yeah.

UTT

ML: Had your mom gone there and danced?

QVD: No.

ML: In that circle of—

QVD: No.

ML: No.

QVD: No; and she was very angry with me. She was still alive. I told her. Very angry with me, and I said, I did what you didn’t do. I did what you thought. It was not appropriate. And Mom, I’m married; I have five children. I’m doing all of this. So what does that tell me? I think—I think sometimes not enough confidence, yeah. That’s where Auntie Io comes in. That’s where she comes in. She says, If your ... heart is good and your mind is open ... she says, nothing can stand in your way. And I think if we live by that, the hula dancers, I think it’s a good thing. But I did that. I did that because I thought ... like I said, it wasn’t a challenge. It was a matter of ... am I worthy; am I worthy. And if I am worthy, then my Mama is worthy. She elected to jump ship; but here I am.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: I—I don’t know; I think—I think ... not only me. There’s several dancers like me who have done exactly that. Who have made challenges, just like that. It’s a challenge; they think—they always tell me it’s a challenge. Henry did that. It’s a challenge. It’s not a challenge; it’s a matter of meeting. Am I worthy? Am I worthy?

(20:00)

UTT

QVD: I don’t know. I—my opinion of um ... Kawaikapu has certainly changed. It has changed tremendously from what I was telling Mamie and you.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: You know?

UTT

QVD: Because the first impressions are ... not what you should really say.

ML: It's—it's hard. Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Your first impressions are important, but you can't make a—

QVD: No.

ML: --major decision on—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --just that.

QVD: Just that.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And it may be that, you know, he—he did some looking around at us and said, Oh ... that old lady, she's not so bad. [CHUCKLE] She's good fun; she's like Auntie Io.

ML: Yeah.

UTT

[CHUCKLE]

ML: So—

QVD: Okay.

ML: --on to the book.

QVD: On to the book.

ML: The first page looks like a postcard.

QVD: Yes; it does look like a postcard. It's just beautiful.

ML: Is it a stationery from the movie or something like that, or ... what is it?

QVD: No; it's a real—it's a real picture, but not issued as a postcard—

ML: It's a real—

QVD: --or—

ML: --picture? It's not a painting?

QVD: It's—no, it's a—not a painting.

ML: Oh, it looks like a painting.

QVD: Painting? Looks like a painting to you? No.

ML: Maybe just the color and—

QVD: It's just a photograph.

UTT

QVD: Yeah. Photograph.

ML: And who signed it to you?

QVD: To Real Bird of Paradise Queenie, from Ken Darby, with aloha and appreciation, love. Auntie Io gave him the name Kalani.

UTT

[CHUCKLE]

UTT

QVD: You remember? Was it last night? Yeah. Kawaikapu says, And she renamed me, right? She's always doing that.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: She's always doing that.

ML: That was a nice story.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: And what is this scene? That's one of the sets from the movie?

QVD: This is a set from—this is the—this is the common house. This is where all those supposedly ... was part of the Hawaiian culture where ... if there was a—an attraction between two people, they would go there to find if this was ... going to be a good thing. I never knew that was—until this movie. [CHUCKLE] Not bad, but anyway, this is where the kahuna takes a snip ... of Louis Jourdan's hair.

ML: And this set is in Keaau?

QVD: In Kea'au.

ML: At the Shipman's—

QVD: Yes; at Shipman's place, Shipman Ranch.

ML: Great; so—

QVD: And I hear it's a disaster now.

UTT

QVD: I hear that ... the maintenance of this place has gone—it's very poor.

ML: Was that right where the house is?

QVD: The house is across.

ML: Okay.

QVD: It's quite—quite a ways across.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Across the pond, as a matter of fact. This is right on the beach.

ML: Right; right. So the house is back here?

QVD: Back there.

ML: Yeah?

QVD: Yeah. In fact ... one of the biggest questions was, How does this haole have this land right on the beach? How come the Hawaiians are not here? Why don't we have a right of way to the beach? That was ... that was quite—

ML: He's ha—he's mixed, though; he's Hawaiian too, huh?

QVD: I don't know.

ML: Shipman.

QVD: I never knew Shipment.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: I mean, I knew of him.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Okay; so we're gonna skip this one for now—

QVD: Okay.

ML: --'cause the numbers are—

QVD: Different.

ML: --later on.

QVD: Okay.

ML: So we'll start with Number 2 here.

QVD: All right.

ML: And if you can describe—

QVD: This is—

ML: --what's going on there.

QVD: This is us with our twenty guys, and the twenty women, and we're all from Honolulu. Not one of these dancers is from anywhere else but O'ahu and Honolulu.

ML: And those were the ones you described Auntie Io went and found them?

QVD: Yes.

ML: And brought them to the clubhouse.

QVD: And brought them to the clubhouse.

ML: So what number are you folks dancing?

QVD: Hamakua. I think. This is when we were pau. Oli one 'ia lā.

ML: The very ending.

QVD: Very ending; she had us. And he was always there. See, him ... here; the way he's ...

ML: Okay; so—

QVD: This is three—

ML: --this is number three. Who is this man?

QVD: This is Delmer Daves; this is the director.

ML: Okay.

QVD: And what he's trying to say to me is I must look ... with this—with this come hither look to Jeff Chandler. [CHUCKLE] And I'm laughing, and Hoakalei is laughing. [CLEARS THROAT] I don't know what we're thinking then.

ML: So that's—

[CHUCKLE]

ML: --you and Hoakalei; and who is that?

(25:00)

QVD: Lois; Lois Guerrero. And there's Lani.

UTT

QVD: That's Lani. This is Sybil Bright.

ML: Okay now; this is number four, yeah?

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Okay, so yeah; if you can name the folks.

QVD: Okay.

ML: Maybe start—tell where you're starting.

QVD: This is Hoakalei from the bottom. We start from the bottom. The hula girl from—

ML: Bottom right.

QVD: On the right; Hoakalei. And then this is a Napoleon, and I can't remember her name. Two Napoleons. This is Lincoln, Aliiloa Lincoln. This is Sybil Bright. The man behind her is Henry Pa. And then another Napoleon.

ML: And this is—let's see; you guys are wearing, what, tī leaf skirt—

QVD: We're wearing—

ML: --and—

QVD: --tī leaf skirts. Yeah.

ML: Printed top.

QVD: Uh-huh.

UTT

QVD: M-hm.

ML: Okay; who's that in number five?

QVD: Number five is Daddy Bray. And I think he's just looking on to us. I—I would assume that, the way he's looking. Just watching us. You know, that was the most wonderful thing about our kūpuna's; is ... they would always be there ... at the scenes. Mainly because if there was any problem, one of them would come there to help. That's what it was all about; to help. To try to resolve, if there was a problem. And not have this ... maybe that's why we never had any hukihuki. They would always be there.

ML: Yeah; he looks ... he looks like he's an older man then.

QVD: He is.

ML: Yeah; so he was ... kind of—

QVD: He was a kahuna.

ML: --the kupuna for the—

QVD: He wa—

ML: --for the group, and in terms of the group—

QVD: And in real life, he was a kahuna.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah. And he wore this ... like um, Kawaikapu, he wore these huge medallions.

UTT

ML: Okay; number six, we got lots of people, so—

QVD: Yeah; lots of people.

ML: --what do we want to start with so we can keep it straight.

QVD: Oh, I don't remember some of these people.

[CHUCKLE]

ML: Well, maybe the ones you do remember—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --just say, you know—

QVD: Okay.

ML: --third from the left in the back, or something like that.

QVD: The lady, the first lady on the ground here to the left is a Napoleon. And I can't remember—God bless her, I can't remember her name. I don't remember the gal to the right. And then we go to the very far right; I don't remember her. The guy in between, the guy next to her is—is—I think he's a sound man. Kenny—Ken Darby's sound man. Because right behind him is Ken Darby. And then to this man's right is Mamo Howell. Then behind her is Barry Napoleon. Behind him ... is—

ML: Two heads stacked on one another. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Yeah. Is Kalani, married to Ihilani Miller.

ML: Oh; Kalani ...

QVD: Miller.

ML: Miller.

QVD: He was a knife dancer.

ML: Oh, okay.

QVD: And then right on top of his head—

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: --is ... oh, gosh; who is that ... oh ... they're all from Honolulu.

UTT

QVD: But I can't remember his name. But then—and I can't remember this young man ... to Barry's right either.

ML: Giving his profile.

QVD: Yeah; giving his profile.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: And then Alan Napoleon. And then Sybil Bright.

UTT

QVD: My, my—

ML: Okay.

QVD: --my. Okay.

ML: Onto the next page; where's number seven? Okay.

QVD: Seven.

ML: Seven.

QVD: Okay. The gal is—m-m, she was a stand-in for Debra Paget. And I know her, and I can't think of her name.

ML: So she was—

QVD: We—

ML: She wasn't a local gal, then?

QVD: She's local.

ML: Oh, she was? Oh.

QVD: Born, raised in ha—in Hilo.

UTT

QVD: Oh, my. She and I flew together, Hawaiian Air. Oh, I can't think of her name. My goodness.

ML: And that's Ken Darby?

QVD: That's Ken Darby.

ML: He's a tall guy.

QVD: Tall guy.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: And then there is—

ML: Number eight.

QVD: Number eight. And that's us; all of us. Joseph, me, Henry; I think this is Aliihoa Lincoln.

(30:00)

And this is ... that doesn't even look like—I don't know who this is. Who could that be? That's not Hoakalei. And they're all very relaxed back there, because we did this for—for um, a tape, for the—for the tape.

ML: What number was it?

QVD: Uh, oh, gosh.

ML: You have ipu heke.

QVD: We have ipu heke; yeah. Gosh; I'm trying to think of all the numbers.

ML: It's in the movie, though, right?

QVD: Yeah; it's in the movie.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Where—who—who made your instruments? Was it Montgomery?

QVD: Montgomery.

ML: For all the instruments—

QVD: Oh, you know.

ML: --for the movie?

QVD: Yes; yes. Yes. And here's my darling Joseph Kahaulelio.

ML: Number nine.

QVD: Yeah.

[CHUCKLE]

ML: Oh, he looks—

QVD: And here—

ML: --so young.

QVD: --we are.

ML: Number ten.

QVD: Number ten. And we did a lot of rehearsals, as you can see. Because you can see all this going on business stuff in the back.

ML: Right.

QVD: That's all rehearsing. Yeah.

ML: Looks like an 'ōhelo number.

QVD: Yeah; yeah, we did that. I—I—I don't even remember. Terrible.

ML: And that's still the ponds in Kea'au?

QVD: Ponds; yeah.

ML: At the Shipman Estate.

QVD: Ponds; the Shipmant. Yeah. That—that ... estate was a huge one, a lovely one.

ML: Is—that's not their—the Shipman house, huh?

QVD: No.

ML: That looks like a—

QVD: No.

ML: Hut or something.

QVD: The Shipman house looked like an old plantation house.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Huge, like a uh, a plantation manager's home.

ML: Right.

QVD: What it would look like.

ML: Where—where is it in relation to—this, then, this view?

QVD: It's got to be back here.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Over here.

ML: So off—

QVD: Because he—that house, the big lānai overlooks all of this.

ML: Right; right.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Okay. That—yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: We've seen that house; it's still there.

QVD: M-hm.

ML: Okay; number—

QVD: M-hm.

ML: --eleven.

QVD: This is the—the crew, I guess. You can see all—and—and you know what was wonderful too? They hired all the grip, most of the grip was from ... O'ahu—I mean, Hawai'i. Which was very nice.

UTT

QVD: Very nice. And I—I think these are Ken Darby's children.

UTT

QVD: These two.

ML: So number twelve is—

QVD: Yeah; number twelve.

ML: --is the kids.

QVD: Ken Darby's children.

ML: Are they playing 'ili'ili's?

QVD: 'ili'ili's.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: And Auntie Io. All the children, whether it be children of the cast, children of the um ... of the—just—just people that are waiting around, she would take the time and go say hello. And she would leave such a wonderful ... a little bit of a thought of something. I think that was something unique about Auntie Io. She always left a kind word. You know? As if she was gonna go away and never see you again. Always a kind word.

UTT

ML: Okay; number thirteen.

QVD: Thirteen is Henry, Henry Pa, the extraordinaire.

UTT

QVD: He is so wonderful.

ML: Were—the five of you, were you around the same age? Within a few years of each other?

QVD: Except for Henry.

ML: Yeah; he looks—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --older than you.

QVD: Henry; yeah.

ML: How old—much older was—was he than—

QVD: I think he was almost ... ten, fifteen years older than we were.

ML: Oh, is that right?

QVD: Yeah. He was old; he was—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: You know. He was um—yeah.

ML: He—he was probably about forty; thirty-five, forty, around there?

QVD: No; he and Auntie Io are the same age. That's right.

ML: Oh; so—

QVD: So those two guys.

ML: --about ten years; she's ten years older than you.

QVD: She's- Yeah; yeah.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Yeah; about ten, then.

ML: And then cha—uh, let's see; fourteen.

QVD: Fourteen is um, Mamo Howell.

ML: On the right?

QVD: On the right. And then a Napoleon. And then these two ladies are from Hilo... by gosh, and they were the maidens. Our maidens.

ML: So they weren't in your dancing crew?

QVD: I don't think so, no; no.

UTT

QVD: And then Louis—oh, okay.

ML: Oh, let's see; let's go fifteen.

QVD: And this is fifteen.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Is—I don't know this man, but obviously he's one of those that ... I don't know whether sound. Uh, Gene could—

ML: Gene would know by looking.

QVD: --better tell. He would know just by looking at the equipment.

ML: Sixteen.

QVD: Yeah; and here is this very kind, huge, handsome man; Jeff Chandler.

(35:00)

ML: [INDISTINCT]

QVD: He would always ask me to come and have dinner with him. Queenie, won't you please come and have dinner with us? And I would always say, Well, thank you very much, but I'm with my group; I stay with my group. Yeah. So at lunchtime, he would come over and eat with us. He was just ... just always—not try to be one of the gang. He just wanted us to know him better.

ML: And he was a big star by then?

QVD: Oh, big; very big. He had just made Broken Arrow, and that was a smash hit. And he had done um ... a couple more, and he was very good at that. And what was sad was, I think five years after the movie, he died.

ML: What happened?

QVD: He went out on his yacht ... and he fell, and he broke his back or something. And he never recovered.

GENE KOIS: What year was that?

ML: The movie was—

QVD: I don't know. The movie was—

ML: --released in '51.

QVD: '51; so around ... I think, huh?

GENE KOIS: No.

QVD: No?

GENE KOIS: 'Cause Jeff Chandler was the original commander in the Star Trek uh, pilot.

QVD: No.

ML: Was that in the 60s?

GENE KOIS: Yeah.

QVD: Really?

GENE KOIS: Yeah.

QVD: Okay; so maybe for me it was—

ML: A little more time than maybe—

QVD: More time; yeah. But he—

GENE KOIS: He's in that yeah, then something happened to him and they—

QVD: Yeah.

GENE KOIS: --couldn't cast him.

QVD: 'Cause we got the news back in—in Honolulu.

UTT

QVD: That he had passed, because of falling down, breaking his back or something. So ... I forget what Hawaiian group sent huge flowers over to him.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

GENE KOIS: I may be wrong too; maybe that's not him. But I always thought it was Jeff Chandler was in the pilot.

QVD: Yeah; I don't know. Well, maybe; I don't know. But—

ML: I'm sure we can find out easily—

QVD: --that was a sad thing.

ML: Yeah. Yeah.

QVD: This gal was a makeup artist.

ML: Oh, in number eighteen. Okay.

QVD: That's who she was; number eighteen.

ML: Wait; I think we missed—

QVD: Oh.

ML: --seventeen. Go back.

QVD: Okay; that was Louis Jourdan; and again, that was a Napoleon, and this is one of the maidens and I don't know— she was from Hilo. I—Hilo? I—I don't know; I don't remember her.

ML: And was Louis Jourdan a big star like Jeff Chandler?

QVD: Very big; very big. May—maybe—maybe more so—
UTT

QVD: --than Jeff Chandler.

UTT

QVD: Yeah; he was huge.

ML: So he was a bit less—

QVD: And cocky.

ML: --friendly, huh? [CHUCKLE]

UTT

QVD: So ho'okano. [CHUCKLE]

UTT

ML: Sounds like it went to his head.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: How come we're missing nineteen?

QVD: Oh.

ML: No, no, no.

QVD: Nineteen? Eighteen?

ML: No, this is eighteen, but where's nineteen?

QVD: I don't know.

ML: Maybe Auntie Winnie skipped a number.

QVD: Oh; okay.

ML: Okay; well, I don't see a nineteen. We'll go to twenty.

QVD: Okay. Twenty is ... Delmer Daves—and I can remember this well—would sit with us ... just before shooting. And he would always say something gentle ... something wonderful ... uh ... He was very spiritual. Really, really very spiritual. And that impressed Auntie Io. I think she can connect with him, you know.

ML: Did they know each other prior to the film, or they—

QVD: No.

ML: This was what—

QVD: No.

ML: --brought them together?

QVD: No, brought them together. Yeah. Yeah. You know [CHUCKLE] ... she knew about this contract. And she looked at me and she says ... Baby, [WHISPERS] that's a good choice not to go. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Oh, the one they offered you after?

QVD: Yeah. And yet, at—at ... I'm sure I was ... at the time, who knows. It might have been a wonderful thing. But I'd be gone; I would not have done, completed my hula. I think that ... in early life was my focus. That was my focus.

ML: You had Auntie Io at such a important time in your life.

QVD: Oh. Important.

ML: As a teenager; yeah.

QVD: See, she—not just the hula ... in our family.

ML: Right.

QVD: You know.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And I could always count on her.

UTT

QVD: Never telling Mama anything about anything that went on. [CHUCKLE] Not... nothing.

(40:00)

ML: She wouldn't get you in trouble. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Nothing; nothing.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: And who's picking you up today from hula?

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: Oh, I don't know; I never see her leave. She's okay.

[CHUCKLE]

ML: Okay; twenty-one.

QVD: Twenty-one ... you see Delmer Daves, you see ... Debra Paget. And this is—look at her facial expression. And this is Delmer Daves. This is what he can do ... [TELEPHONE] smile so beautifully.

ML: Yeah.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

[BREAK IN TAPING]

ML: Okay; you want—we can finish this page then, maybe?

QVD: Yeah. Sure.

ML: I know we can't finish the whole thing—

QVD: Sure.

ML: --but at least we got ... part ways.

QVD: Debra Paget.

ML: So she—so this is the one with her head tilted?

QVD: That's her head tilted; yes.

ML: And everybody's just kind of waiting—

QVD: Yes.

ML: The other folks are just waiting.

QVD: They're just waiting. I mean, uh, we were—all of us, in awe of this young, beautiful actress. She was very 'olu'olu, very warm, very charming, very sweet. A "Good morning."

UTT

QVD: A "Good morning" all the time. And if they were shooting a scene and she needed something or whatever, she never hesitated. Whoever was local or what—person, she'd say, Could you get me a glass of water, please? Normally, they'd go find the person that was supposed to be catering to her. No. They were such—it's like she's right on, the boys would say. She is right on. So with that kind of—of ... trust ... uh, there was no reason to go around, like you know how local kids are. No, she was wonderful.

ML: So she was a kind-a big star too?

QVD: Big star.

ML: At the time.

QVD: Big star.

UTT

QVD: And she had two other sisters that were big stars.

ML: Wow.

QVD: Yeah; she was the youngest. She was sixteen years old when she made this. And her mother was right there. Poor thing. I mean, she couldn't look either way. I had dinner with them. I did go have dinner with her once. And we talked and talked. It'd be so fun, it'd be so fun if you were there. Like a—like a regular sixteen-year-old.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: You know? And I'm looking at her ... I said, I know it would be wonderful, but ... I said, I'm not going anywhere. Well, I think you have a surprise coming. So I guess talking, yeah—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --with Delmer Daves.

ML: Yeah. So let's see; twenty-two.

TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett
Oral History Interview: November 20, 2005

QVD: Yeah. Twenty-two is dancing. Auntie Io ... said, You teach her, Queenie; you teach her first. And I said to her, Auntie Io. No, you teach her. You ... kala mai, you teach her first. So a little bit, uh, we—I just basically stepped, and then she watched me and says—she says ... My goodness, she says, you folks have a lot of poise and stature. And I said, That's part of our dancing too. I says, We're doing what we call a haole hula. Haole meaning white to you. I says, And this is like ... totally different. But the movements are lovely. And so basically, I helped that Auntie ... see the arms and all that stuff?

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Before when we first started, she was like here. Like the Indians. [KNOCKING] Here.

UTT

QVD: I said, No; it's up here.

UTT

[KNOCKING]

QVD: Oh, she liked that. Oh, she loved the hula. Just doing Kalua; it was just wonderful. But I couldn't get her to—to move so that it's ... just smooth.

UTT

(45:00)

QVD: She moved, so the whole body went. And Auntie Io says, Never mind; just let her do it.

ML: Let her do it.

QVD: Because they're gonna watch her face, and not ... but if you watch carefully the movie, that's what she does; she steps big. We couldn't get her to bring those steps together. But that was all right.

ML: Yeah; you can only do so much.

QVD: Yeah; you can only do so much in a very short time.

ML: Anybody else you can identify around her in that scene? Or in that shot?

QVD: Um; yeah. We're all the dancers. This is ... this is Lois.

ML: That's on the far right.

QVD: And Napoleon. And I forget this girl became a very wonderful hula dancer, and this is another hula dancer. I forget these names. And these—there's Mamo. And here's another ... that's the other gal. I think maybe she was one of the dancers. I don't remember. And these people, all these are people that have just come to watch.

ML: So is this uh, actually—

QVD: This is—

ML: --during the shooting, or is just like a practice—

QVD: This—this is a—

ML: --again?

QVD: This is a uh, dry run.

ML: Dry run.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Oh, yeah, 'cause—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --this is, what, Ken Darby—

QVD: Ken Darby.

ML: The one next to Mamo.

QVD: Yeah. And there's Delmer Daves.

ML: Okay; I see.

QVD: See? Yeah.

ML: Looks like local people watching.

QVD: Lots of lo—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Oh, we used to have local people all the time.

ML: So they could come and—

QVD: They could come.

ML: It wasn't a closed set, it was—

QVD: Yeah. It was just—uh, it was um ... it was roped off, however.

ML: Right; right.

QVD: You know; yeah.

ML: Oh, neat. Okay; number—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --twenty-three.

QVD: And this is Ken ... Ken talking to them. 'Cause we had to all sing. [SINGS]'Auhea wale-- That's with the 'ukēkē's, yeah? So Ken would give us the pitch, and he would listen to us. And that's why the music sounded so beautiful. And now here's—here's Debra... again. It's a dry run.

ML: Yeah; looks like the same group of—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --people behind.

QVD: M-hm.

ML: As twenty-two.

QVD: And all the dancers; same dancers. Uh-huh. Yeah.

ML: How many takes would you folks do of something? Were they—

QVD: You know ... we did a lot of takes on the dancing; we did. Um ... Delmer Daves was sometimes ... was not satisfied with wherever he thought the position would be right, and the dancing. And he didn't like the way maybe a couple guys danced or whatever. And so he would change it. So that was another take. Plenty; plenty.

ML: So he had lots of angles he was working in—

QVD: Lots of angles; yeah.

ML: And what's the last one down there?

QVD: That's her.

ML: Twenty-five; there she is.

QVD: Twenty-five; there she is. And you know, this young lady ... had more gifts from the local people that is just unbelievable. I mean, all kinds; leis. She was so ... she always told me, she says ... Everybody's so kind. I don't understand; everybody's so kind. And they're bringing me all these gifts. I said, You know, it's because you're—you're ki—you're wonderful. I said, Believe me; if you were not nice ... you would not have any of these gifts. So ... you know. And if you—and if you like them, just a smile, a simple smile and thank you is all they need. They don't need for you to write a card. That's all they need. We're very easy people.

ML: Yeah. [CHUCKLE] Cute coconut hat she has on.

QVD: Yeah. Okay; twenty-six.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Is our master, Auntie Iolani. And there's ... there is Mona on the very tall pahu.

UTT

QVD: And there is Square. And these are the Kalimas; Kalima brothers.

ML: That's um, Iwa's dad, right?

QVD: That's Iwa's dad.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

UTT

ML: Wow. And then—

QVD: And there's the other brother. I forget his name. [CHUCKLE] Square. [CHUCKLE]

ML: And this is still at Ha'ena, at the Shipman—

QVD: Kea'au.

ML: Kea'au.

QVD: Kea'au. This is Mrs. ... Bray. That's Father Bray's wife.

UTT

ML: So that's twenty-seven. And she wasn't in the movie?

QVD: No. She was—

ML: She was just there.

QVD: She was—she was salaried, though.

UTT

QVD: Because she—they wanted her to be there as a—sort of as a um ... uh ... oh, what's the word?

ML: Advisor.

(50:00)

QVD: Advisor. And so was ... Clarice Taylor.

UTT

QVD: She was then the curator of the mausoleum.

ML: Right.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Twenty-eight and thirty-one—

QVD: She—

ML: --are both—

QVD: Yeah; Clarice.

ML: --Clarice Taylor.

QVD: She was incredible. She could give you history that would make your skin crawl.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: How is um ... she related to Emily Taylor? What is their relation?

QVD: I don't know. I only knew Clarice; yeah. Yeah.

ML: So the twenty-six and twenty-nine, the ones with Auntie Io, um—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --those ... what—what number are you folks doing with the—those big pahu? Do you recall?

QVD: Oh, gosh ... what are we doing... 'Cause our Hamakua was the um ... I don't know that we did the pahu with the Hamakua. I don't think so. I think we did the ipu. I mean ...

ML: Auntie Io wasn't actually in the movie, yeah?

QVD: What's that?

ML: Auntie Io. She was shown in the movie?

QVD: Auntie Io?

ML: Yeah.

QVD: No.

ML: She was just—

QVD: She was just—

ML: --backstage teaching the dance and—

QVD: Yeah; now that you—yeah. Now that you ... I recall, you're right.

ML: So this is just on the side, on the—

QVD: On the set.

ML: The—the—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --music that was for the dancing.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: But she wasn't ever shown. Yeah?

QVD: I have to get that movie to you folks.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Before it mildews too.

ML: Yeah.

GENE KOIS: How did they give it to you? I mean, when did they—

QVD: They s—when we opened the movie, that was three years ago in Hilo at the Hilo Palace Theater. And they called me and said ... We would like to show the Bird of Paradise, and we want you to be our guest and come. And I said, Oh, that's nice. The reporter comes out to the house ... and I get a front page ... damn near the whole front page of the Hilo Tribune Herald. In color. And I'm looking at this, and I said [CHUCKLE]--I said to Jamie, This is like ... Honolulu. Like this is a big theater, big thing. I mean, this has been years. So what I—why should I entertain that it's a big thing? It's not. So now we're getting ready and we drive to Hilo. And I know—we know the theater; it's a small, little thing. Capacity thirty-five. We make that turn around to come up to where the theater is, that block. And people are lined up around the block. And I'm thinking to myself, Jamie, look; it's almost five o'clock. And what the heck are these people doing? We come around the block.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: And these people are lined up to get into the theater. There is no parking, so Jamie says to me, I'm gonna drop you right off front so that I can go find a ... I open the door, and I have these people rushing at me. And I—

[CHUCKLE]

ML: Paparazzi. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I am—I'm almost so embarrassed, I'm like ... There she is, there she is. And I'm like—yes, yes. And I get out and I'm smiling. All these leis, and these gifts ... and then I have three people come up to me. One is a young man. I swear he's six-feet-five, gray at the temples, gives me a big—damn near picks me off the ground, gives me a hug and he says, Auntie Queenie, I'm the little boy that climbed the coconut tree.

UTT

QVD: And I used to play with him. He said, You remember? He says, You used to be so good to me, he says, so I'm gonna give you a big hug. And then I—this Japanese lady, and she comes to me and she gives me a big hug. She says, I've been watching you ever since you made Bird of Paradise in Hilo. You used to come to Hilo at the drugstore. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Oh, my gosh.

QVD: How wonderful is this? I ... they had to show the movie three times. They showed it and—

UTT

QVD: --turned people away. There were too many people. So they had it run for a week.

ML: Wow.

QVD: And I was so ... I was just so blown away. I was just like, oh my. For me, it was such a minor part, such a minor thing. But then I guess in those days, local girl ...

ML: Right.

QVD: --does big movie.

ML: Big screen; yeah.

QVD: Big screen.

ML: Yeah.

(55:00)

GENE KOIS: And so they got the film from the studio or ...

QVD: Yes.

GENE KOIS: I wonder if it's like real film or—

QVD: No; it's a V, uh, it's a—

ML: VHS.

QVD: VHS; yeah.

GENE KOIS: Okay. All Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Wow.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: I should have kept the package it came in.

UTT

QVD: Oh, and I didn't. But anyway ... so ...

UTT

QVD: That was um—

ML: Neat.

QVD: Yeah; that was my ... even today, I will go somewhere and there—some old guy or some old gal will say, Eh, I remember you. You still alive. I'm still alive.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: I was only a young woman when I made that movie. Somebody passed some remark; and I'm like, Hoo.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: Uh, it's a long time.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: It's been a long time.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Fifty—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --plus years.

QVD: Yeah.

UTT

QVD: Long time.

ML: Oh, terrific.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Well—

QVD: So—

ML: We can finish um, the next time.

QVD: Okay.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

QVD: 'Cause this is a fun part too.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: There's Auntie Io; see?

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Look at that.

ML: With the little—

QVD: Fun part.

ML: --doo-dads on her hair.

QVD: And her little—

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: Two little ...

ML: Yeah. [CHUCKLE] Cute.

QVD: Yeah. She had a name for 'em too.

ML: She did? Of course; you have to have a name for everything.

QVD: Everything.

[CHUCKLE]

QVD: Everything. But she was no doubt very special.

UTT

QVD: Very special.

ML: Oh, yeah.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

[END]