

DEAR MR. AND
MRS. KRUGER,

This is to inform you that as from 30 June
I resign from this family. As you know, I have
been unhappy about conditions for some time.
Namely:

1. Hours of attendance at family home
2. Rate of pay for household chores
3. Appreciation by other family members

This is very sad after a thirteen-
year association, but I cannot see any
other option.

Yours sincerely,
Todd Kruger
Son

Dear Son,

Thank you for your letter of
2 February. Until such time as your con-
tract expires in four years, eleven months,
and two days, you remain a member of this
family. So get that surfboard off the veranda
before I turn it into firewood!

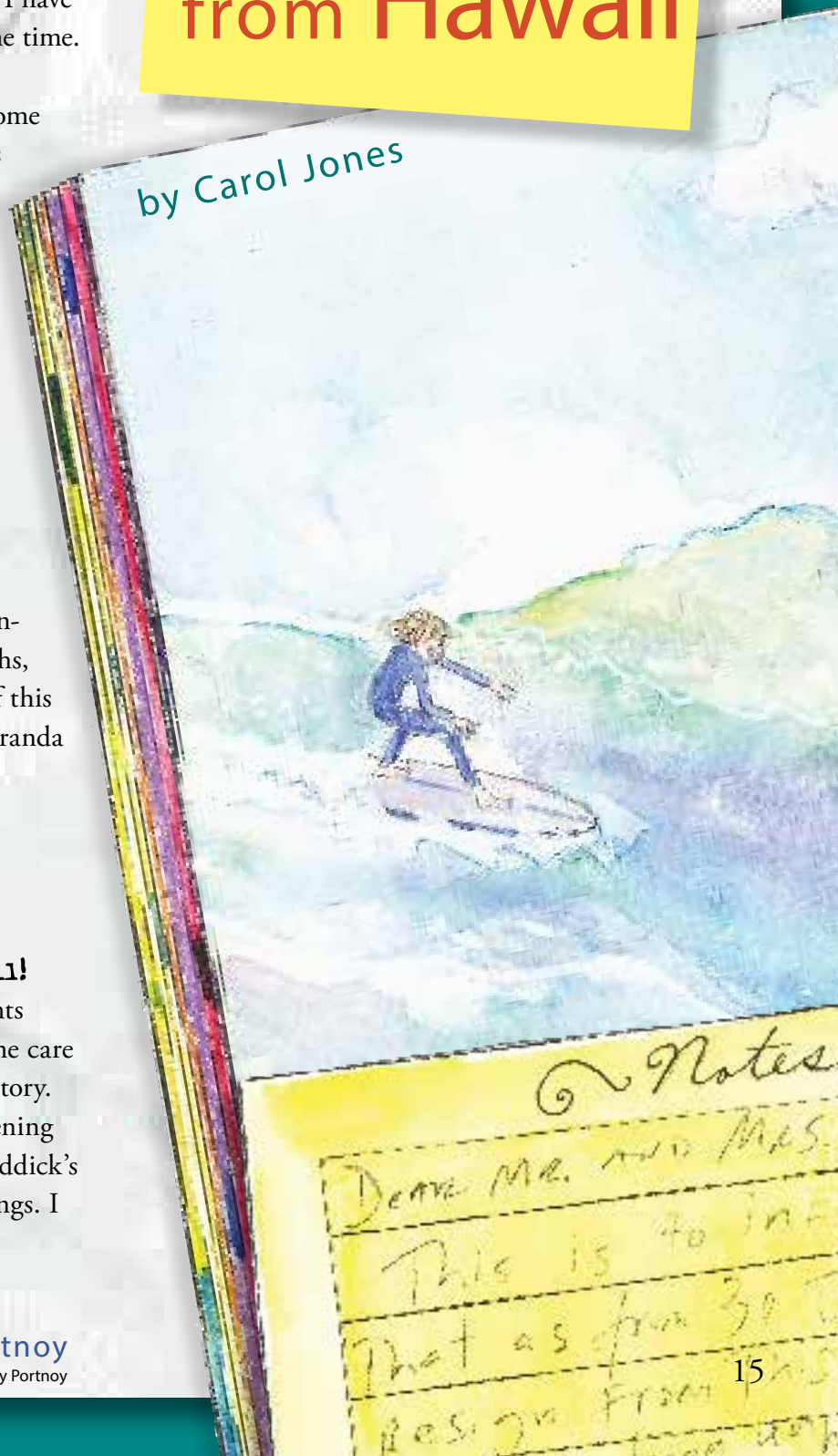
Yours sincerely,
Gary Kruger
Father

TODD'S JOURNAL Open at your peril!

Why do other kids have cool parents
who encourage them at sports? All mine care
about is useless stuff like math and history.
Imagine Allen Iverson's parents threatening
to puncture his basketball or Andy Roddick's
parents vowing to pluck his racket strings. I

Postcards from Hawaii

by Carol Jones



Illustrated by Amy Portnoy

art © 2010 by Amy Portnoy

bet that kid from Hawaii in the latest issue of *Surf* magazine didn't get to be that good without parents who encouraged him! But my dad is permanently tuned to the "Get that board out!" station, and Mum leaves brochures about college and careers on my desk. Even my brother, Dale, thinks I should be riding a Boogie Board. What can a lowly grommet do?

To the grommet with the best cutback in Hawaii
c/o *Surf* magazine

That photo of you on page 23 was awesome. I was so stoked I stuck it on my door right over Beyonce's poster. It gives me something to aim for when I take the board out. But hey, if I'm feeding you too many compliments, just throw one back!

Your fan,
"Tiny" Todd Kruger
Airey's Inlet, Victoria, Australia

Dear Son,

I'm getting the ax out. If you've got nothing better to do than waste time paddling about, I'm sure your math teacher can find a little extra something!

Your irate father,
Gary Kruger

Todd love,

There's a careers display at the high school tonight. I can give you a ride after supper if you like.

Love,
Mum

WAHOO!!! MAKEWAY
FOR A GROMMET,
A YOUNG SURFER.



TODD'S JOURNAL Open at your peril!

After school I dumped my backpack and raided the refrigerator. I was just heading for the beach when I spotted two notes from the parents. Someone should tell dear old Dad that they haven't made boards out of wood for fifty years. Mum is planning my life for me, too. Being a grom is like bottom-feeding in the ocean of life. So I ignored the notes, grabbed the board, and hit the beach. The surf was pounding, but just as I was about to slice the waves some guy dropped in on me. When I complained to Dale all he said was, "Go back to your Boogie Board, kid, and leave the real waves for the grownups."

Life stinx.

To: Tiny Todd Kruger
Airey's Inlet, Victoria, Australia

Dear Tiny,

Thanks for the kind words, "mate." (We get a lot of Aussies on the North Shore so I can speak the lingo.) My folks are still surfing (at their age!) and sometimes bring back an Aussie for a home-cooked meal. I've even tasted that thick black tar you call Vegemite.

I just turned twelve and I've been surfing since I was four. I started out standing on my mom or pop's boards while they steered from behind. It's not so bad being a grom when your folks surf, too. How's the surf going off in your front yard? You can see our neighborhood from the picture on this card. (The waves aren't always this big!)

JJ McGrath
Waimea Bay, Hawaii, USA
jj@waveweapon.com

YOU SURF,
MARTY?



From: "Todd Kruger"
 tiny@krugerhouse.com.au
 To: "JJ McGrath"
 jj@waveweapon.com
 Subject: Dumped
 Hi, JJ!

Just when I was feeling as flat as a beach without waves, your postcard arrived. Here's a bit about myself. Thirteen years old and can't wait to graduate to the lineup when the waves are glassy. While I wait for the big invite from the old guys, I'm practicing my moves and learning from the pros. That's where I want to be one day.

Meanwhile, the parents are dumping on me worse than a twelve-foot wave, and my brother, Dale, treats me like a three-year-old. Tell me, how did you get lucky enough to be born on the North Shore of Hawaii? You must get to watch the pros when they're really ripping. One day I'm going to surf Waimea, too. Maybe your folks will invite me around for a luau?

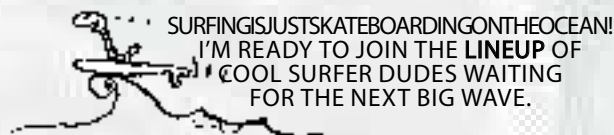
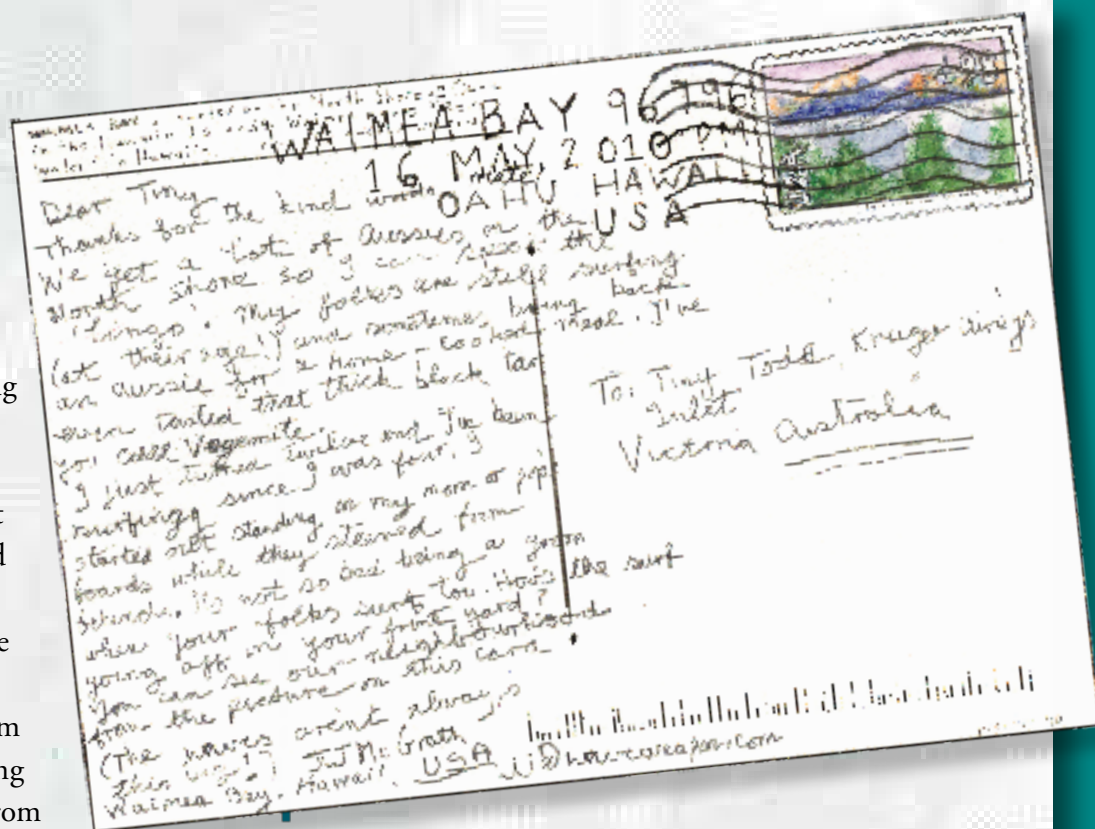
Your Aussie mate,
 Todd

TODD'S JOURNAL Open at your peril!

Whoa! It's another world down there. One minute I was sitting pretty, thinking I was God's gift to surfing, when I was smacked under by a gnarly old grandfather

of a wave. Wipeout city! Remembering my basics, I fell backwards into the water, kicked my board away, and found myself rolling in a milk shake of sand grit and salt water.

With my leg rope yanking my ankle, I tried to come up for air, but the next wave pounded me down again so that I lost all sense of direction. It seemed like I was down there for hours, but it was probably only thirty seconds before I found air. My head was above the swell, but I was still drowning on the inside, spitting and blowing and blinking water. With a weak, wobbly stroke I struggled to my board and paddled feebly to shore, wallowing in the shallows for a few minutes



before dragging myself onto the sand like a drowned surf rat.

I looked up to find Dale and a few of his mates clapping their hands in “appreciation.” “Nice wipeout, bro,” Dale laughed. Then he ruffled my hair with his hand. “Better stick to the toddler pool, Tiny,” said his mate Stevo. “Forget your bucket and spade?” Razza chimed in. They cruised off up the beach laughing. I put my hand up to my hair, and it came away sticky with gum.

From: “JJ McGrath” JJ@waveweapon.com
To: “Todd Kruger” tiny@krugerhouse.com.au
Subject: Dropping in
Hey, Todd!

You know I have an aunty who still brings me candy when she drops in? Luckily, my folks are smart enough to treat me as an adult—most of the time. They say they hope I’ll rise to the occasion.

I don’t know whether I want to turn pro like you, but one day I’d like to come to Australia and Bells Beach. I’ll drop in on you (at home!) and you can “throw a few shrimps on the barbie.” If you really want to surf Waimea, you won’t have long to wait. There’s a junior competition coming up this winter, and anyone can enter. It’s only a minor event, but the prize money makes my allowance look like I’m being drip-fed pennies. The best thing is—you could come stay with me! Think about it, pal.

Your mate,
JJ

Yo, little bro!

When you’re scraping the old wax off your board, do mine for me, and I’ll take you out with the big boys.

Dale

Son,

What’s this your mother tells me about you not doing your homework? You’d better stay out of the water for a while or you’ll be marooned in your room for a month.

Your irate father,
Mr. Kruger

Dear Todd,

Your father’s bark is worse than his bite, but he’s barking very loudly, honey. I’ll help you with your homework when I get home from work.

Love,
Mum

TODD’S JOURNAL Open at your peril!

It would be worth going to Hawaii just to get away from my family. They don’t understand anything. Not like JJ’s family. Staying with JJ’s folks would be cool. And surfing Waimea would be the coolest! Last night I dreamed I was shredding ten-foot waves at Sunset Beach. So who cares if I’m bottom of the heap if the heap is on a beach in Hawaii? Number one problem: where is the cash? Number two problem: how do I get it? Number three problem: how do I get the old folks to let me go? What I need is a fairy god-dude who can turn a

CAN YOU
HANG TEN?

I COULD—IF I
HAD TOES!



surfboard into a 747 and a bus token into a passport.

SITUATIONS WANTED

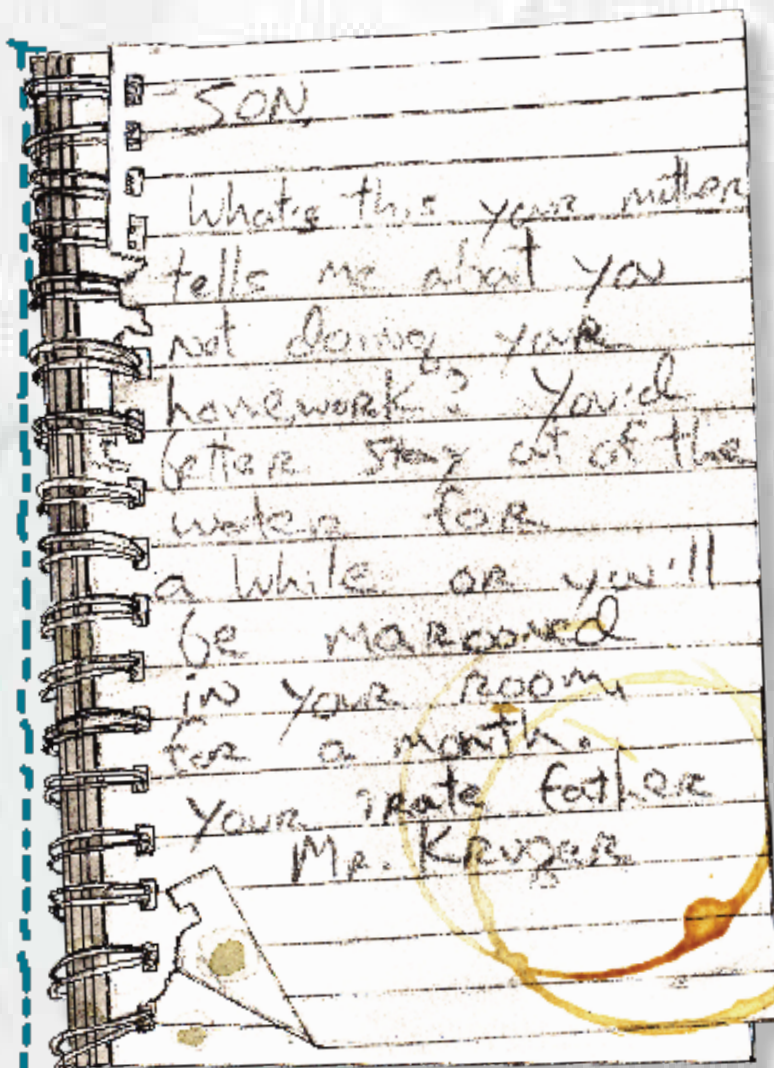
AAA. Anything. Anytime. Anywhere. Keen teenager requires part-time work. Not fussy. Not proud. Hardworking.
Telephone: 5361 781 443. Ask for Todd.

DO NOT TOSS AWAY! NOT YOUR ORDINARY JUNK MAIL! OPPORTUNITY IS KNOCKING!

Yes, you too can have a personal gardener, cleaner, dog-walker, cat-groomer, canary-minder, or baby-sitter. No job too small! No challenge too big! Reasonable rates. Reliable service. Satisfaction guaranteed.
Telephone 5361 781 443. Ask for Todd.

TODD'S JOURNAL Open at your peril!

Being a working man is harder than it looks. Old Mr. Clark gave me my first job walking his dog. Every night after school I pick up the pooch from his porch. Then it takes me on a tour of the neighborhood. I thought I was looking kind of mature and responsible, not to mention cute, when I spied Lola Perez out walking her great-granny. I see Lola out on the water sometimes. The other riders give her a harder time than they do me. Lola waved, and I thought maybe I'd talk to her at school tomorrow. Then the pooch took off, jerking me off my feet. I had to scramble after it in an undignified crawl. Lola giggled, great-granny sucked her teeth,



and I could swear that pooch sniggered. "Are you walking it or is it walking you?" Lola laughed. Oh well, just another episode in the comic book of my life.

Later I got busy washing decades of grime from factory windows when Dad walked by. "What's this?" he yelled up at me. "A son of mine working? I don't believe it. A Kruger never lifts a finger unless he's holding a surfboard or a fork."

ARE WE HAVING
FUN YET?



YOU BET!

"Thanks for the vote of confidence, Dad," I said.

"Your mother said you'd got yourself a job, but I had to see it with my own eyes." He walked off chuckling to himself. Very funny. Work is ruining my image, but at least I have the grand total of \$156 in the bank. Hawaii, here I come!

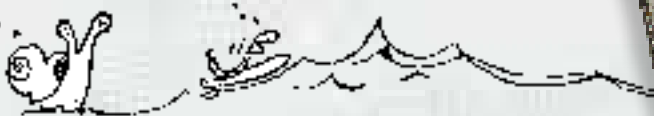
From: "JJ McGrath" jj@waveweapon.com
To: "Todd Kruger" tiny@krugerhouse.com.au
Subject: Big and Bubbly
Hey, Todd!

Dad has strung a hammock on the lanai, so you'd better not let us down. The waves are glassy, mate! And BIG! The word must have gotten around that the Aussies are coming.

Speaking of big, I'm going to the Big Island for a few days. We'll fly over the volcano in a helicopter. Did you know it's possible to walk on hot lava? A crust forms on the top, but it's still red-hot and runny underneath. Where the lava flows into the sea the water steams like a giant sauna. Hawaii is one of the youngest places on the planet, geologically speaking, and the Big Island is actually getting bigger. You too could see this marvel of nature!

YOU'RE
GOING OUT
AGAIN?

'COURSE! SURF'S UP!
NO TIME TO RELAX
ON THE LANAI, A
HAWAIIAN WORD
FOR VERANDA.



From: "Todd Kruger" tiny@krugerhouse.com.au
To: "JJ McGrath" Jj@waveweapon.com
Subject: Waimea Days
Hey, JJ!

If Hawaii is one of the youngest places on the planet, then Australia must be one of the oldest. Our mountains are worn down to pimples, and our volcanoes are as dead as road kill. Even our animals are escapees from the land that time forgot. So, Junior, expect me in three months and nine days! And if you ever want to visit the land that time forgot, a bed awaits in Airey's. Bells is just around the coast. But bring your wetsuit because the water is COLD!!

TODD'S JOURNAL Open at your peril!

Grommets have it hard, but girl grommets have it the hardest! At the Surf Life Saving Club Junior Comp this weekend, Lola Perez was in my heat. The other guys gave her a really hard time, but she stood



up to them. She deserved to get second place. Of course, yours truly deserved taking the first-place trophy. You should have seen me shredding those waves!

I came in feeling stoked and looked up the beach to see the parents sitting on their towels watching. Dad had unearthed his prehistoric swimming trunks while Mum had excavated a bikini circa 1974. "Don't let the sharks bite!" Dad shouted. It was so embarrassing. Dale tried to ruffle my hair, but I was too fast for him this time. So he and his mates buried me up to my neck in sand and left me for the crabs. I guess that was Dale's way of saying he was proud of me for my win. Lola wandered by my burial plot with her board tucked under her arm. "Nice ride!" I spluttered through a mouthful of sand. Maybe it's better to be ignored.

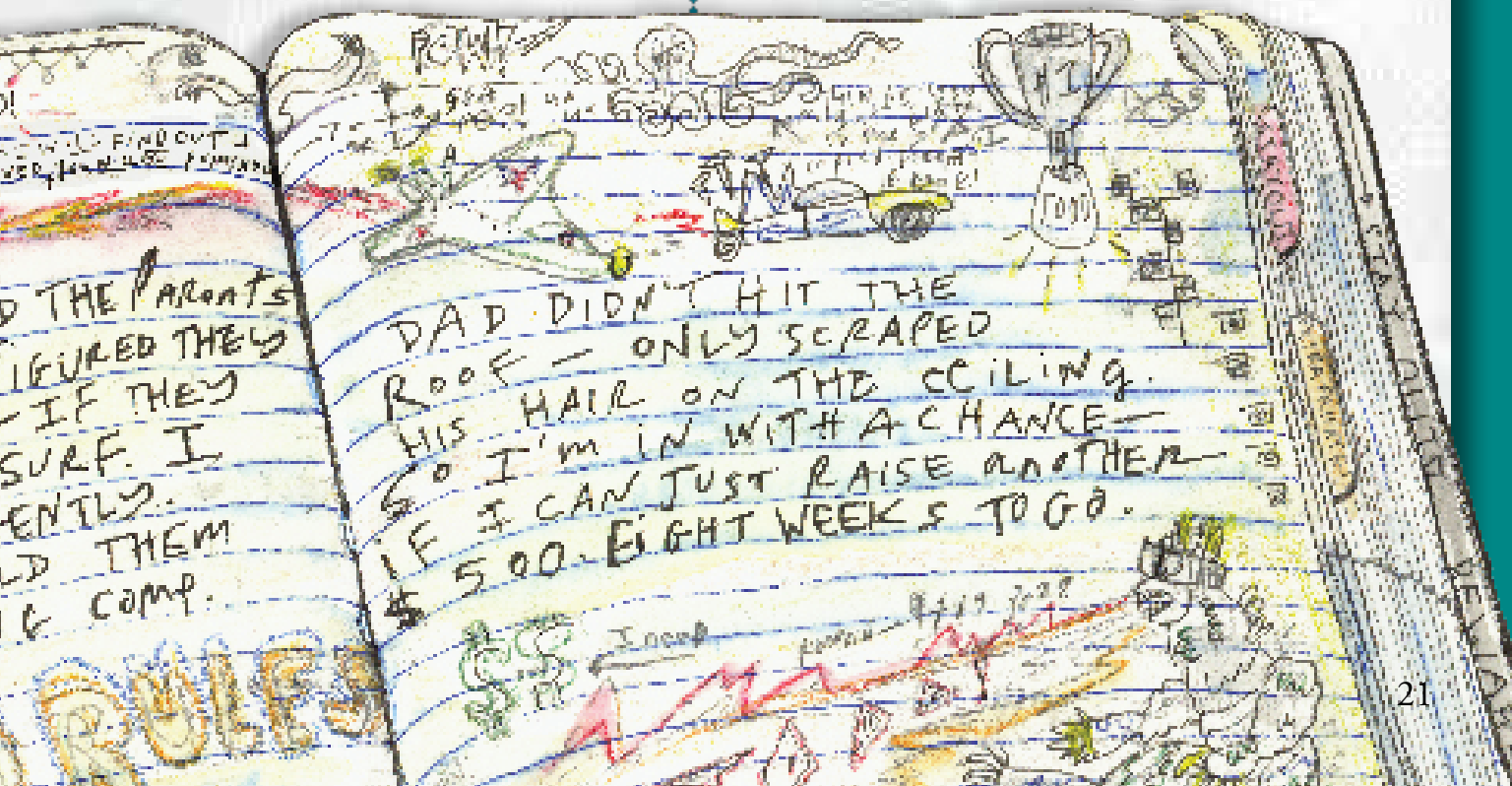
TODD'S JOURNAL Open at your peril!

Finally I informed Mom and Dad of the big plan. I figured they must be weakening if they came to watch me surf. I broke it to them gently. First I told them about the surfing comp. Then I told them about JJ and the spare room. Then I said that I wanted to turn pro one day (but I'd go to college first). Then I casually mentioned that the competition was in another hemisphere and on the other side of the International Date Line. Just a stone's throw away, really. Dad didn't hit the roof—only scraped his hair on the ceiling. So I'm in with a chance—if I can just raise another \$500. Eight weeks to go.

Dear Todd,

I found your trophy in the trash. How did it get there? I have relocated it to the mantle-piece. I think it looks rather nice.

Love,
Mum



Hey, Bro!

Razza reckons Viga's Garage needs someone to pump gas this weekend. Viga's son is away at camp. I'd lend you the cash, but I'm begging for gas money already. Sorry, mate.

Dale

From: "Todd Kruger" tiny@krugerhouse.com.au

To: "JJ McGrath" jj@waveweapon.com

Subject: Travel Plans

Hi JJ,

Just a quick note to tell you that surfing Waimea might have to wait a few years. The travel agent told me I have to pay for my ticket next week. Plus my parents haven't given the O.K. to get my passport. So tell your mom not to plan any luaus yet.

So long,

Todd

TODD'S JOURNAL Open at your peril!

One week to raise another \$400. Mr. Clark's pooch got its paw caught in the pizza van door, so he won't be going walkies for a while, and I haven't had any other odd jobs for three weeks. Why was I stupid enough to believe I could do it in the first place? Tiny Todd Kruger, thirteen, surfs Hawaii! Ha, ha, ha.

Dear Todd,

There's something you might need on the mantelpiece next to your trophy.

Love,

Mum

PS: How do you pack a surfboard?

From: "Todd Kruger" tiny@krugerhouse.com.au

To: "JJ McGrath" jj@waveweapon.com

Subject: Aloha

Hi, JJ!

Start digging the barbecue pit because I'm on my way! Look out for a short, sandy-haired Aussie grommet with megafreckles, a big grin, and a surfboard tucked under one arm. Oh, with parents attached. Yeah, my folks decided they couldn't let me go alone, but since they've always wanted to visit Hawaii, we'd make it a family holiday. Dad says his first crush was Gidget in *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, and he's had a soft spot for hibiscus ever since.


See you in three weeks,

Todd

TODD'S JOURNAL Open at your peril!

The first thing I noticed about Honolulu Airport were the flowers everywhere. Then I smelled the warm, wet air. Feeling a tap on the shoulder, I turned to find a girl beaming at me. "Aloha!" she said. I blinked, thinking she'd mistaken me for someone else. Then I noticed her grin, her tanned face, those powerful shoulders (for a girl!), and realized she looked vaguely familiar. She gestured toward an old surfer dude standing nearby, talking all the while as if she'd known me her whole life. Mum winked at me and smiled slyly.

"You didn't tell us JJ was a girl, Todd!"

Didn't I? 

WHAT A GOOD
SURPRISE! NO BUGGY.
KNEW JJ WAS A GIRL.

