



# Hawaii: A Novel

*Mark Panek*

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## **Hawaii: A Novel** Mark Panek

WINNER of the 2014 Hawai'i Book Publishers Association Award for EXCELLENCE IN LITERATURE

"Mark Panek's 'Hawaii' is ambitious, darkly comic, and possibly prophetic--a behind the scenes look at practically everything going on in our islands today. Every absurd and selfish impulse is on the page, no politician or ethnic group goes unflayed, and, despite this being a novel, we read convinced that the real-life counterparts of Panek's characters walk among us. We recognize them, and we also recognize ourselves in them. For this reason Hawaii leaps out of a very fine class of books and into its own category. Because it dares to ask the hardest questions and examine the most uncomfortable conundrums of life in these incredibly diverse, increasingly congested, and economically fragile islands of ours, 'Hawaii' is one of the rare works that, if enough people read the book, could actually have a positive social impact."--HBPA Excellence in Literature Award Selection Panel Statement

A nine-term U.S. senator and political patriarch is dead, leaving Hawai'i at a crossroads: crumbling public education at all levels, a crystal meth epidemic, Native Hawaiians getting shipped to Arizona prisons, and class divisions so deep that even State Senator Russell Lee has to scramble to avoid eviction from his family's dream home. When an illegal gambling debt puts him even deeper in the hole, Russell's only way out is to go all in, joining forces with an up-and-coming young developer, an underworld kingpin, and a Chinese casino magnate. Their goal? To sway an electorate easily distracted by a local media obsession with football into rolling the dice on the most unlikely legislative ambition in the state's history. Russ lays it all on the line in a battle that pits him against the "anointed" Democratic party favorite, an entrenched environmental movement, and the long-lost righteous Hawaiian blood-brother he must convince to join him in the name of helping his people. From the summit of Mauna Kea to the shores of Waikiki, from the State Capitol to the seedy backstreets of Honolulu, Mark Panek leaves out nothing in this scathing portrait of 21st-century paradise.

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