

WHAT'S ALOHA

You can't own Aloha, but you can live it.

A SCREENPLAY BY
DONTÁ TANNER

LOGLINE

After a PTSD-triggered outburst, a high-performing real estate executive and retired Navy SEAL is placed on forced leave. Lured by a promising real estate deal, he returns to Hawai‘i with business in mind—but the islands have other plans.

SYNOPSIS

Michael, a trauma-scarred Veteran-turned-investor, returns to Hawai'i under the guise of a real estate deal after being placed on mandatory leave. Haunted by memories of a fallen teammate and the son he lost, he meets Maile—a talented architect who just walked away from luxury development and a stagnant relationship. As they clash over purpose, culture, and healing, their unexpected connection challenges them to redefine what it means to live with intention—and Aloha.



WRITER'S STATEMENT

As a retired Navy Veteran and long-time resident of both Hawai'i and Nevada, I wrote What's Aloha to explore the intersection of identity, healing, and the cultural complexities of Hawai'i today. This story draws from real experiences—of military life, of loss, of being both insider and outsider in a place as nuanced as the islands. My goal is to honor Aloha not as a brand, but as a choice to live with purpose.

TONE & STYLE

Naturalistic, intimate, and emotionally grounded. A blend of quiet visuals and meaningful dialogue. Think *The Descendants* meets *Manchester by the Sea* with the cultural heart of *Smoke Signals*.

CASTING VISION

- Michael – Sterling K. Brown, Michael Ealy: Grounded, emotionally layered presence.
- Maile – Auli'i Cravalho, Kelsey Asbille: Smart, soulful, culturally rooted.
- Jesse – Nico Santos, Jacob Batalon: Warm, witty, uplifting.
- Darius – Laz Alonso, David Oyelowo, Mekhi Phifer: Trustworthy, mature Veteran.
- Auntie Noelani – Tia Carrere, Tamlyn Tomita: Graceful, wise, and grounded.
- Ikaika Mahelona – Jason Momoa, Beulah Koale, Alex Aiono: Charismatic and emotionally resonant.
- Kainoa – Alex Wassabi, Jordan Rodrigues: Charming but stagnant.

THEMES

- Rediscovering identity
- Grief, trauma, healing, and belonging
- Cultural tension vs. community resilience
- What it means to live aloha rather than profit from it
- Veteran identity vs. civilian reintegration
- Romance grounded in healing and cultural respect
- Healing through cross-cultural connection

TARGET AUDIENCE

“What’s Aloha” resonates where identity, healing, and community intersect — reaching underserved but high-value audiences across cultural and Veteran communities.”

- Veterans and military families — a loyal, underrepresented audience with strong emotional investment
- Hawai‘i locals and Pacific Islander communities — culturally connected viewers seeking authentic stories
- Black and multicultural viewers — particularly those seeking healing, grounded masculinity, and cultural pride
- Midlife professionals and second-chance seekers — viewers drawn to redemption arcs, career reinvention, and mature romance
- Faith-based and values-driven audiences — due to themes of purpose, legacy, and living with intention

Funding Strategy & Timeline

(See full production budget upon request)

Funding Strategy & Timeline

- Mid-budget independent feature
- Eligible for Hawai'i film incentives and Veteran grants
- Private investment and product placement opportunities
- 12-month production cycle
- Community partnerships and product placement integration







MARKET POTENTIAL

- Ideal for platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, AppleTV, and Hulu
- Aligned with high-performing indie dramas: *The Farewell*, *Still Alice*, *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*
- Audience overlap with successful Veteran and redemption-themed films
- Hawai'i and Las Vegas settings allow for tourism and local partnership tie-ins
- Multi-market appeal: military, multicultural, adult dramas, and emotional storytelling

WHY NOW?

- High public interest in Veteran mental health and reintegration
- Surge in demand for authentic Pacific Islander and multicultural stories
- Audiences seek grounded, emotionally resonant redemption arcs
- Perfect timing for film festivals and streaming platforms seeking fresh narratives

STATUS & CONTACT

-  WGA Registered – Reg. No. 2304068
-  U.S. Copyright Filed – Performing Arts
-  Finalized Feature Screenplay
 - (95 pages, 3-act structure)
-  Filming Locations:
 - O’ahu, Hawai’i & Las Vegas, NV
-  Email: dontanner35@gmail.com
-  IG: @dontatanner
- QR code available upon request for secure script access