

“She said she’ll have her doctor induce her if she needs to.”

“That’s ridiculous.”

“That’s what I thought. I’m just keeping my distance from her.”

“No harm in that. How about the gal on the other side next door? She seems to be a character too.”

“Oh, Deanne? Yes, she is. But, I love her to pieces.”

“That time we heard her and her husband fighting, I couldn’t tell who had the upper hand!”

It was true, at one point, we heard Deanne throw a couple glass jars. Jack came over to our place laughing because he had managed to duck and not get hit!

We both laughed just thinking of it. “I’ll admit, Deanne’s a spitfire,” I said. “And you should hear the things she says about her mother-in-law. She’s wonderful though. She lives on a shoe-string, but she’s so creative—an incredible cook, and her sewing is beautiful. I go to her place quite often, and we sew together. She’s a horrible messy housekeeper, but such a good mother and really funny. I can’t help but like her.”

I sighed. It was so nice to just be with Jim, talking and laughing, enjoying his company, and telling him about things that had happened while he was gone. It was so strange to think that we would have a baby when he got back from the next patrol. Sometimes we talked about it directly, but really not a word had to pass between us on that matter; whatever we were doing, whatever we were chatting about, that big thought

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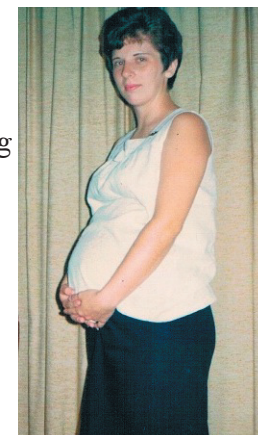
was constantly on our minds.

The night before he headed out, I lay awake thinking of our relationship, recalling how we got to Hawaii and the path we’d taken to this point in our life together.

We had known each other for many years. Jim first asked me out when we were only thirteen. Granny just loved him because he delivered eggs and milk to her. Our parents knew each other too, otherwise I doubt I would’ve been allowed to go to the show with him. We were really just sweet friends during junior high, but dated seriously during high school. We had our differences though and did break up once during that time.

Then, in the fall of 1967 I moved to Billings to study elementary education at East Montana College. Jim went with me that autumn and, during the first week of school, he asked me to marry him. We got engaged, but it was moving too fast for me. I was so young and wanted my freedom. We broke up the following spring. Then, Jim left Billings and joined the Navy. It seemed our story was over.

That autumn, I returned to school to finish my two-year teaching certificate. I was enjoying dorm life; a high school friend was my roommate, and I even had a date lined up for the Homecoming Dance. Then came a bit of a surprise: Jim showed up on Homecoming Day. The moment I saw him, I realized I still had feelings for him. I broke my date and went with Jim.



It took time to reconnect. He was in the Navy now, so he was gone often. I returned to Anaconda after graduating and began teaching in our old hometown. In December 1964, Jim was home on leave and gave me a ring. This time it was for keeps, though it would be almost a year and a half until we got married. Through it all, we were learning the rhythm of cultivating a relationship that had many stretches of time apart.

Now, here we were in Hawaii expecting our firstborn. My husband slept soundly next to me. He was leaving the next day. It was disappointing, but so goes military life. We had certainly had a lot of practice at maintaining our relationship and reconnecting after times apart. We could do it again; there would simply be another little person involved in the transition this time.



I saw Jim off, but the disappointment I had at saying goodbye was quickly swept away by the activity of having two houseguests: My Mother and Aunt Patty arrived at Thanksgiving. They came to help me out for a few weeks before and after the birth. I should clarify, my aunt came for the trip. My Mom was the one who helped with cooking and housework.

Aunt Patty was a bit unusual. She smoked a lot. Because I was pregnant, I didn't let her smoke in the house. She also had a habit of keeping used Kleenexes and hankies under her pillow. Finally, I'd had it.

"You know, we have a lot of roaches here because it's so warm," I said to her one day.

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"Yes, I know."

"I'm sorry, but keeping hankies under your pillow can actually draw the roaches into your bed."

Her face went pale. "Really?" she said.

I nodded gravely. Later I felt bad about the fib, but it was effective. As a soon-to-be new mom, I really needed to feel my nest was clean and tidy. Of course, we had fun times too while waiting for the baby to come. I took my mother and aunt around the island to see the beautiful landscape and visit tourist sites like the International Marketplace in Waikiki.



The baby was due on December 5<sup>th</sup>. That day came and went. Finally, on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1972, I went into labor. We were at home, and I began timing the contractions. Mom couldn't drive, so Sam and Carol were on call to take me to Tripler Army Hospital. Since this was my first, I called them perhaps a little prematurely.

It was a twenty-mile drive to Tripler.

"The contractions don't seem to be coming any closer together," I admitted to my mother when we arrived at the hospital.

"Well we're not having them drive you all the way back," she said. "Start walking up and down the stairs."

I did just that, and it did the trick.

Typical of military doctoring, I had never before met the MD who wound up delivering Josh. It was also this doctor's first delivery. But, with the help of other doctors, all went smoothly, and Joshua was born at 2:50 p.m. I had a seven-pound, fourteen-ounce son! Sam, ever the prankster, told the doctor that he was the father and so got in and managed to hold Josh before anyone else!



My mother was a great help back at home, taking care of housework and giving me advice on everything from diaper-changing to feeding schedules. Any little family tensions that were grating on me before the birth melted away as we took care of Josh together.

After Mom and Aunt Patty went back home, I had a few weeks alone with little Josh before Jim returned. Of course, we weren't entirely alone. During the days, I joined the other new moms on base and showed off Josh. There were sewing circles and Tupperware parties; there was always something to do. On base there was such a connection with the other wives. We were all in this together.

In the Navy, the men were divided into a Blue Crew and a Gold Crew. They alternated patrols at sea; Jim was on the Gold Crew. Family members back home were taken care of by the opposite crew—for us the Blue Crew. I always counted the days until the Gold Crew got back. The Sailors went to Guam

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first before flying back to the island. We were able to send them photos and correspondence in Guam, so they could know a little news from home before their return. What news and pictures I sent to Jim this time!

"Little" Josh was 17 1/2 pounds and almost three months old when Jim finally met him. The crew's arrival home was considered an international flight, so they had to go through customs and processing at the airport. I knew there was a point where I could see the men through a big glass window before they were released to us.

That's where I stood for about twenty minutes, holding up baby Josh for Jim to see him. I caught my husband's gaze. He had the most precious and concerned look on his face. Finally, Jim came through the doors. There were no words at first, just hugs and smiles and gentle caresses. Then, I handed Josh over and said, "Here is your son!"



Poor baby Josh had some allergies at the time, and I was a bit over-protective.

Despite the warm weather, I had Jim carry Josh all bundled up and covered so he wouldn't get chilled. Likely hot and uncomfortable, Josh cried the whole way home—not the greatest way to have a new dad meet his boy.

Fatherhood was a pretty big adjustment for Jim. My relationship with him didn't change much at all. But it took a