



Mahu Vice

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Months have passed since Honolulu homicide detective Kimo Kanapa'aka walked away from the blaze at Wa'ahila State Park—and from his partner Mike.

Now, Kimo and Mike must work together to solve an arson-homicide while attempting to mend their relationship.

Neil S. Plakcy is the author of the Mahu series.

Mahu Vice Details

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From Reader Review Mahu Vice for online ebook

Linda ~ chock full of hoot, just a little bit of nanny ~ says

[Mike cheating on Kimo and giving him gonorrhea (hide spoiler)]

Drianne says

I didn't like this nearly as much as some of the others in the series. I felt like it was really kink-negative (perhaps unintentionally) and Kimo's angst was ridiculous. Also, there was no reason he should feel bad for breaking up with the boyfriend who cheated on him, but who passive-aggressively goes to the STD clinic where their ex's parents work to get tested? And then tells them said ex has a drinking problem (which magically resolves, just like the cheating problem)? And why does the Honolulu PD need to involve civilians in everything? And is everyone Kimo ever sleeps with except the fireman evil? The mystery was not one, either. Meh. I'll read the next one, but if they don't improve, I'll be done.

Liz says

I did like this story of Kimo - and I will look for the other Kimo stories, but sometimes Kimo rambles on and I wasn't always sure what the rambles had to do with the story - except for us to be in Kimo's mind. Which is sort of the point anyway, as he goes through live changing events.

And my epub copy of the story failed to recognize any of the Hawaiian dialects, so some of the words had multiple question marks - which was a distraction more than anything.

Mymymble says

Intricate mystery, great characters, old and new, although I'd like to have seen more of Ho.

Mike in particular came alive for me: his and Kimo's discussion about being mixed race finally made sense of him.

Kimo does make some very silly mistakes, even though his detection skills are as usual stellar. Having a relationship with Ho at all? Then apparently forgetting to put surveillance on him when he'd been given the budget for it???

Never mind, I love the guy.

Craig Sisterson says

Neil Plakcy has created a distinctive hero in Kimo Kanapa'aka, noble and flawed, searching for himself while also trying to solve the mystery of a deadly fire at a retail strip his father used to own. Who is behind the blaze? Is it an insurance scam, or a cover-up for something far darker? Kimo's investigation is further

complicated by the appearance of fire investigator Mike Riccardi, Kimo's ex-boyfriend. Their relationship ended when Mike exacerbated his refusal to come out of the closet by cheating on Kimo while at a conference on the mainland, sending Kimo into a self-destructive spiral even though he pulled the plug.

MAHU VICE is a very enjoyable book from a mystery standpoint, with several twists and interesting reveals. Plakcy has crafted a good storyline as we hunt the true villain alongside Kimo, but it's in his characters, along with the way he textures the tale with numerous, interesting aspects of Hawaiian life, where Plakcy's storytelling shines brightest. Kimo is surrounded by a cast of memorable and well-drawn characters, from his ex-boyfriend Mike to current police partner Ray, his brothers, his highly entertaining friend Gunter, and several other acquaintances who crop up during the investigation. In each case the character feels authentic and real, not mere window-dressing. Plakcy has a knack for evoking the conflicts we can all have within us as people, the inconsistencies and contradictions. He's not afraid of putting emotions on the page, even if they may make his 'heroic' characters seem far less than heroic.

A quick note: MAHU VICE is a book deeply entwined with sex, from that within a loving relationship, to casual sex ranging from 'what's your name again?' fun to kinky or dangerous hook-ups, then even further into the darker realm where sex and money entwine (massage parlours, human trafficking, blackmail, covert recording). So maybe this book won't be for everyone. For me personally, I'm not used to reading descriptions of gay sex in crime novels, and I don't really read romance or erotica (though I like love story elements within tales), so that was interesting to get used to (at times there are plenty of glistening chests and admiring looks at various body parts). But after feeling a bit wary at first, I like the way things Plakcy weaves everything together. It didn't feel overdone. To me at least - and I'm a neophyte to gay crime, so don't have much to compare it to - it seems the love/sex elements are organic and necessary to the crime story and the hero's character, rather than gratuitously put there in an erotica kind of way.

Stepping back, MAHU VICE is a very enjoyable crime novel. It grew on me as I read it, from 'okay, this is decent' to 'I'll definitely read more of this series'. It is book four in Kimo's series, but I didn't feel that I couldn't follow what was going on. Plakcy did a great job weaving in the backstory, particularly when it came to the interpersonal relationships of various characters, or how things had changed between novels (this one doesn't pick up right from where the previous Kimo tale, MAHU FIRE, left off). I felt I knew enough, without being overburdened by exposition. It is a very well-crafted tale, with lots to like.

Recommended.

This review was first published on *Crime Watch*: <http://kiwicrime.blogspot.co.uk/2016/...>

Edina Rose says

First book I read in the Mahu series and it was good! I am a romance addict and this book is more mystery than romance, but I was totally engrossed in Kimo's investigation, in Kimo's life. I found him interesting, I like his voice, and I could listen to him ramble and express his regrets about his past mistakes for a long time.

He is the kind of flawed character I like, the kind that is self-aware and can atone for his faults. He is also funny and kind of normal, he feels real.

Mike, Kimo's love interest, is a character I did not connect to. I found him immature and kind of fade. But I

guess Kimo has good reason to love him and I would probably learn them if I read the other books in the series.

I liked reading about all these guys on the downlow, about the exploitation of immigrant and about Kimo's family dynamics. Good read.

Yvonne says

3.5 STARS As we open Mahu Vice, we find detective Kimo in a deep personal funk. He's separated from hunky fireman, Mike Riccardi. It seems Mike wanted to remain in the closet, not out to his parents or at work, and as a consequence they had stopped going out together spending most of their times in their apartment. Also, Mike when he was at a convention cheated on Kimo. Kimo didn't realize this until he woke up one morning with the burning sensation of gonorrhea. After all this, Kimo broke things off with Mike without a discussion. Kimo feels guilty about the break up, because he thinks he may have overreacted. Huh?

Well he didn't trash Mike's car, Out him at work or throw all his clothes in the street. He simply walked away from a man who didn't want to be seen with him in public, who cheated on him (having unsafe sex) and gave him an STD. What I would call a perfectly sensible decision, breaking things off, is apparently an overreaction in Kimo's mind. Kimo's 'guilt' leads to him spiraling out of control & having punishing sex with everyone on the island. (Well not really. It just seems that way)

All that however, is just background. Kimo has a murder to investigate, and a fire is involved. This reunites him with arson investigator & former lover Mike. Besides trying to navigate his personal feelings for Mike & trying to solve a case, Kimo recent past slutty behavior begins to have consequences in unexpected ways.

The story is more mystery than romance. There's an easy going vibe to Kimo and the way he investigates. It's not edge of your seat suspense but interesting nonetheless. The book also has lots of characters. Some are from prior books (Since I've only read one prior book, I was probably at a disadvantage). Kimo has parents, grand parents, brothers, sister in laws, friends, partners, nemesis and people who want to set him up on blind dates and other guys interested in him. It's been a while since I've read a book with this many characters that come and go. I stopped trying to keep track and figured if they were important to the story, they would stand out.

In the end it all works out for the mystery and for Kimo & Mike. Everything gets solved except the mystery of why Kimo felt so guilty, while Mike, the one who cheated, didn't use protection, didn't tell Kimo and who tried to force Kimo back into the closet, never did.

Mackenzie says

Can I just say: **FINALLY!**

It took me a year, various emails to the (previous) publisher (of this book) and a few distributors, as well as the author Mr Neil Plakcy himself, for me to finally be able to read and enjoy this book. Granted, I only just read the e-book version of it and haven't got the print one, but this is definitely better than nothing. And as it turned out, this book was worth waiting and staying up all night to read it for.

By now I'm a fan of Kimo Kanapa'aka and there is very little that this character does that will turn me off him. And that includes the fact that he basically lost himself in a frenzy of dangerous sexual adventures due to a painful, not-so-clean break-up with the man he'd started dating in the third book, **Mahu Fire**, fireman Mike Riccardi.

The thing that I love most about these Mahu books is how Plakcy portrays Kimo's relationships with the men around him. I love how imperfect his and Mike's relationship is, which was also one of the biggest appeals of the third book for me, and that imperfections come in spades in this fourth book. I also love the subsequent admission by Kimo himself that he often got himself led astray by his dick, so to speak, because it further emphasizes Kimo's 'human'-ness as a character and instead of turning me off him, I feel like I admire him better for being able to recognize that problem.

And Mike has also become very interesting. I loved seeing him struggle as well, both with his sexuality and his relationship with his parents. Add those with the tension between him and Kimo, sparks really flew whenever this fireman is around. My usual reaction for these situations is gleeful delight because, well, who doesn't love seeing juicy drama like that? (I swear I'm not sadistic; I don't laugh over other people's suffering. But characters with issues are infinitely more appealing as a form of entertainment than characters with a smooth sailing beautiful life: yes or yes?)

Speaking of characters, I'm pleasantly surprised to see how Ray, Kimo's new partner, stole the attention for me. I was looking forward to read about Haoa (who became a full-fledged three-dimensional character for me in the last book and continues to be one in this book) but the one that really captivated me was Ray. He's like the best straight wingman every gay guy dreams to have... and should have! His lines are funny and his support for Kimo make for a very lovely 'bromance' between the two of them. I sincerely hope there will be more of Ray in future Mahu stories.

Unlike *Mahu Fire*, I'm also impressed by the mystery side of the story. The crime itself might not be anything big and it didn't immediately grab my interest the way the case in **Mahu Surfer** did, but it was certainly fun following Kimo to piece the puzzle together. As usual, the mystery lacked big, sensational twists that other more mainstream detective genre authors like to employ, but that's part of the charm of this series for me. It's nice for once not being made to guess who was the perpetrator of the crime. It's nice to just follow the process of investigation through the eyes of the main character and still be surprised at the denouement to see the answers revealed.

The fact that this time the mystery involved past characters from previous books is another plus point for me. Many times throughout the book I felt like watching a lengthier episode of **Hawaii Five-0**, the TV series starring Alex O'Loughlin, Scott Caan and the gorgeous Daniel Dae-Kim. It's the way the recurring

characters, like recurring cast members of a TV show, keep showing up that gives this book a proper 'serial' atmosphere. It's highly entertaining.

I'm having a hard time choosing a favorite book out of the existing books in the *Mahu* series now. Before I read this one, I would say that *Mahu Surfer* is my absolute favorite. But *Vice* is equally amazing in terms of character development and the mystery factor, so I think I now have another top favorite.

Actually, I don't *think*. I *know* I have one - the book deserves no less than a top position in my ranking of favorites.

Cassie Richards says

A suspicious fire at a retail strip previously owned by Kimo's father leads to Kimo and Mike having to work together again. Seeing Mike again forces to Kimo to realise that neither of them have weathered the break-up very well and maybe it's time to think again. Except that Mike has his own problems to deal with and Kimo seems to be intimately involved with the case yet again.

I had to check several times as I was reading this that I hadn't missed a book - this is the fourth book in the series and a lot seems to have happened since book 3 - including that Kimo has dumped Mike.

That said, there isn't really anything missing - it all gets explained within the context of the plot so it comes good in the end.

K says

4.5 stars rounded up

This is the fourth book in this very good gay mystery series about police officer Kimo Kanapa'aka. It opens some 18 months or so after the previous book, with Kimo's relationship with fire officer Mike Riccardi having broken down around a year before and Kimo is not in a good place. When a series of murder/arson attacks occur the pair find themselves working together to try solve the crime - which involves prostitution and trafficking and for Kimo is yet again a little too close to home as his personal life becomes tangled up with the case.

As always there is a real sense of place in these books, from the geographical references to the Hawaiian music details given throughout. There is a great cast of supporting characters, in particular Kimo's family and friend Gunter. The mystery plot is strong and the romance side of it is muted, but you can't help but want Kimo and Mike to pull through as a couple. Looking forward to reading the next book in the series

Jen says

A little harder to determine which categories to shelve this one under... police procedural or mystery? There's a bit more of a romance to this one. This plotline was more complicated than the other books in the series. I had a bit of a time trying to keep all of the characters straight. Kept thinking "wait, who is that again?" Still a good story, though. Off to read the next book in the series!

Marissa Culp says

This is the fourth installment of the Mahu series (although there is a book of short stories called Mahu Men which takes place between Mahu Surfer and Mahu Vice.) This was a hard book to start. When I read through the first few paragraphs I was in shock. Kimo and Mike had split up? WHAT???

Then something horrible happens - the very first building Kimo's father ever built on his own has burned down and arson is discovered. Now Kimo must work with Fire Inspector and ex-boyfriend Mike Riccardi to find out who set the fire and why.

In typical Plakcy formula, the plot thickens and twists throughout the book, as does the relationship between Kimo and Mike. While both of the men have their issues (and they are not necessarily easy ones to deal with), they still have to work together; but there is a wall of tension, anger, hurt, and humiliation between them. Even though I was heartbroken to find out they had split up, I couldn't put the book down as I read chapter after chapter into the night.

As I always remind you, if you're looking at this for a first Plakcy/Mahu read, go back to the first book in the series and read through them in order. That way you don't miss out on anything!

Plainbrownwrapper says

[he should have made do a lot of grovelling before hooking back up, and that Kimo took on much too much of the blame for their breakup (h

Ami says

Wonderful combination of family, friendship, romance, and murder investigation -- I find myself being engrossed with the fourth book of Mahu series. Somewhere along book #3, Kimo finds his way to my heart, better than the first two books. Maybe because the insertion of romance with that fireman, Mike Riccardi.

I was a bit surprised when the book opened with Kimo informing us readers that him and Mike had broken up after only six months of relationship. Then, I got excited. Why? Because the blurb implies that Kimo and Mike are finding their way together again. I'm ALWAYS excited for that. I love stories about ex-es (or the one that got away) because second chance is amazing. I like Mike, the first time he appeared in book #3. I think he fits Kimo well, EVEN if I'm not a fan of his mustache (yes, NOT a fan of Tom Selleck here :p).

Aside from the romance, I also enjoy Kimo's interaction with his brother and friend, Gunter (which is an entertaining character!) as well as new partner, Ray. I think once I find myself being interested with Kimo (including his thoughts, his feeling, and how he handles himself after being outed two years ago), I also accept his life better, including the mistakes he makes. It's like reunited with a good friend and gets an update of his life.

-- And as an Asian, the while Asian mix in the characters is a nice thing.

Suze says

Another gripping episode with Kimo and his family and many cohorts.

Whilst the mystery element is standalone, the best enjoyment comes from the development of Kimo and the other characters.

The mystery element this time dealt with the nasty underbelly of human trafficking, sex slaves and just horrid control freaks. Well written, though sometimes Kimo has to miss some obvious points to keep the story moving.

Mike and Kimo have obviously had issues since the end of book 3 so it was good to see a slow rebuild there. And Kimo's new partner Ray seems solid gold.
