

# THE ONLY CONVICT WHO COULDN'T GET INTO AUSTRALIA

**This month I had planned to write a four-page feature about Australia's sex industry, since I was supposed to have spent last month's deadline way Down Under in Melbourne. An independent Aussie filmmaker was flying me there to act in his latest opus. As I boarded the first of a series of planes from Florida to Australia, the director still hadn't decided whether I was going to play the rapist or the Jew.**

After some quick scans of cheap-flights websites, my wily mind determined that it would actually be less expensive to first fly to Hawaii and board an Oz-bound plane from there. So I arranged with some friends on the Big Island for a fruit-filled three-day layover, frolicking amid pineapples and dried lava.

I am, according to most commonly embraced definitions, a bad man. I have two felony convictions and spent years in the Stony Lonesome. But I'd flown to Australia last year to speak on national TV about my crime. Customs detained me for four hours, but my charming mien, my irresistible scent, and a hastily written affidavit attesting to how I intended to think, speak, and behave while in Australia made them decide to grant me a green light. I spent six days in Melbourne without incident. So I figured I'd have no trouble getting in this time.

My last night on the Big Island of Hawaii, I commented to a friend that it seems bad things always happen at 5:03PM on Fridays so you have to wait all weekend to begin untangling them. When I returned to Honolulu on Good Friday morning and tried to check in for a Melbourne-bound flight, I was informed that I'd have to "contact the Australian Embassy" before they'd issue me a visa. What was worse, I'd have to wait FOUR DAYS before I'd even be able to speak with anyone. Even though I went to Catholic school for 12 years and the only day they gave us off for Easter was EASTER FUCKING SUNDAY, the Australian Embassy felt the need to take a leisurely *four-day* weekend to commemorate Christ's gory death and reputed resurrection.

So I tried to kill some time. I rented a moped and scooted my gay little ass all over southeastern Oahu. Then I snorkeled two days in a row. I took a bus up to the North Shore and stared at its legendary three-foot waves. Since no one threw any *Pakalolo* or Maui Wowie at me, it quickly became evident that the only remaining entertainment option was to get addicted to ice...NOT a good idea with my cardiopulmonary situation. Hawaii quickly got boring for me. I'm not much of a tropical dude.

After five days of waiting, the Australian authorities—which are located, for some reason, in Ottawa, Canada—informed me via email

that they couldn't process the electronic application which their goddamned website TOLD me to submit (it cost \$20) and that I'd have to fill out a NEW application, this one costing \$70. There was, of course, no mention of how long THIS fucking application would take to process, nor whether I'd have to wait out a four-day Didgeridoo Memorial Weekend or something this time.

I got tired of waiting for these faceless, droning, shrimp-on-the-barbie-chewing bureaucrats to decide that maybe it wasn't very likely I'd kill someone if they generously deigned to allow me passage through their hallowed nation's portals. Maybe they would have stamped my passport after another week...or a month...of idle, stranded waiting. But I ran out of patience. If they can't tell I'm a sweetheart merely by looking at me, then phooey on their stupid sunburned country.

What's most frustrating is that I STILL have no idea why they wouldn't automatically issue me a visa, especially since they let me in last year and I didn't kill anyone or commit any new crimes that they knew about. No one...not at the Embassy in Australia...nor Honolulu...nor godforsaken Ottawa... would utter a peep about the *reason* my visa was being denied. I mean, it PROBABLY had something to do with being a convict...maybe something as simple as a paper-pusher making a red mark near my name last year during my first go-round with Australian Customs...but the WHOLE FUCKING CONTINENT down there is descended from convicts.

Everyone knows that Australia, tucked as it is somewhere in planet Earth's posterior, was settled by The White Man as a convict's colony. Very few know that England only started sending its convicts to Australia after the American Revolution, which interrupted a flow of po'-white convict labor that had been coming to our shores for six decades.

Yet the passage of time has made Australia forget its roots sumfin' awful. Back when I used to publish a controversial magazine, it would routinely get seized by tight-assed Aussie authorities. Australia was the worst country for those kind of uptight, sphincter-squinched shenanigans.

*Please*, people. Ninety-eight percent of your continent is red dirt. And a similar quotient of you—those who aren't the lowly, lamented aborigines—are descended from England's dregs. There's really no need for you to up 'n' get an attitude with me. I'm a nice man, and now you've hurt my feelings.

*NOTE: At press time, I've been informed that rapper and urban-youth hero Snoop Dogg was also recently denied entrance Down Under. I did a quick search, and m'nizzle has a felony conviction for cocaine trafficking. I'm holding out hope that I remain the only white convict who couldn't get into Australia.*

