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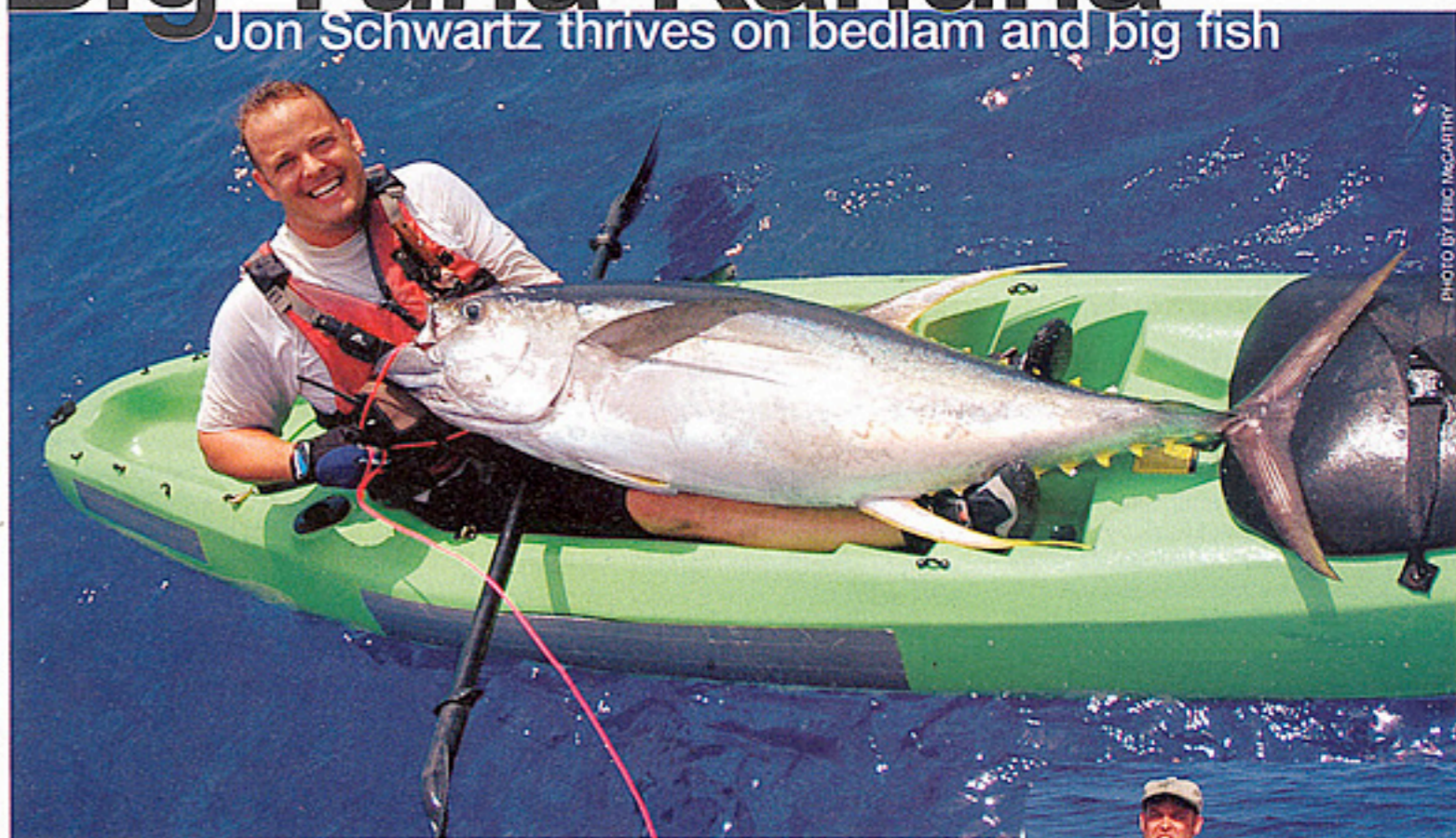
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## Big Tuna Kahuna

Jon Schwartz thrives on bedlam and big fish



**JON SCHWARTZ** is done fishing from sportboats. "God forbid you get a fish less than 200 pounds," he says. "On that gear you don't even feel it. It's like having \_\_\_ with four ru...s on. That's not for me. I want the most 'unprotected' fishing I can get. I want craziness and barely controlled bedlam."

So Schwartz fishes from a sit-on-top kayak. "It's as close as you can get to the fish other than swimming," he says.

Schwartz's quest for the ultimate kayak fishing adventure took him to Hawaii's fabled Kona Coast, a place he calls the land of the giants.

And those giants are what? Marlin? Great white sharks? Don't believe the hype, says Schwartz. "If you talk to fishermen who go after the toughest battles, they'll tell you that, pound-for-pound, tuna are the more efficient fighters."

Schwartz, too, is an efficient hunter. When he got to Hawaii, he loaded his kayak onto a powerful motor-yacht, which whisked him miles offshore.

Isn't that cheating? No way, says the crew-cut Schwartz, who teaches elementary school in suburban San Diego.

"I'm only there once a year for a couple of days. I have to even the odds of hooking a tuna." It's like surf-god Laird Hamilton taking a tow into a huge wave, he says. Who cares anyway? Fishing isn't some lame competition. Not to Schwartz.

When the big tuna took his bait, Schwartz knew he had connected with a true giant. He settled in for a long, hard fight. "To land a tuna that size you have to take away his will to live," explains Schwartz, who blogs about paddling and fishing at bluewaterjon.com.

When, after 25 minutes, the big yellow-fin finally rose to the surface and thrashed the water into a froth, the angler realized he could be in trouble.

"It was like being lashed to a bull, and there were two huge hooks about to tear into my hand. The fish could've pulled me down and drowned me. It was wild!"

He held on until the fish's tremendous energy finally ebbed. When he put it on a scale it pegged out at an impressive 111 pounds. "It was the perfect size," he says. "Any more and something would have had to break in my favor. Now a 300-pound tuna, that'd be like an earthquake!"

*"IT WAS LIKE BEING LASHED TO A BULL, AND THERE WERE TWO HUGE HOOKS ABOUT TO TEAR INTO MY HAND. THE FISH COULD'VE PULLED ME DOWN AND DROWNED ME!"*