

Shaken and stirred...

There are many realities to living in a developing country and some of them can be frightening.

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6/6/83

I'm sitting here like the usual vegetable that I am on Monday mornings. Not exactly sure why I am so 'burnt' today. It was a busy weekend and perhaps I am feeling the effects of that. Last night I had a rather rough time with some Montezuma's Revenge of unknown etiology. I still feel kind of 'bleah'. This is no way to be starting the week.

Good news and 'bad' news. Best part of the weekend was talking with Mom et. al. Actually we managed to talk to Todd for the first time in months and got caught up in the latest coming and goings in his life (and the status of my truck). Holly is going to be mighty busy with her wedding plans. She was hoping that Deb and I could move up our visiting date and come to the wedding. To complicate things further, my sister Jeni moved up her date to October 1st. With Deb's friend Vickie getting married on October 8th we could fly up and witness three weddings in 2 weeks. But that would be much too frantic a pace and we'd probably never see Debbie's folks in Meridian. So Hol will go on without us. Rats.

Also good news
people came
and a couple



in sight.

4s. As we counted them out, about 60
the VSOs, Vincentians, Canadians, French
of a party. They ate and drank everything

We didn't lose out too badly money-wise

because Mark went round and collected a 'free will' offering. It really was a nice time. We did have a dark cloud in addition to torrential rains. We learned that Liz Stephens had been raped. By no other than our Island tour bus driver, Kelly. After receiving conflicting counsel from Peace Corps, she has decided to prosecute. We are 100% behind her. But her rape, and that of Lisa, Marion and a couple of other PC women brings up a lot of questions. Like what kind of legal and other support can raped PCVs expect from P.C., what is P.C. doing to equip PCVs with the ability to defend themselves? What is the proper procedure in dealing with a rape? The more we talked about it, the less we felt P.C. was doing to act as our advocate in such matters. So we want to press the issue a bit. We are tired of being left in the dark and in receiving no or little support from the P.C. or the US government. I'm worried to death about Debbie's safety and we found out that the man who beat Guy nearly to death before raping Marion is still on the loose. After 2 years. Needless to say our security about living in Edinboro has been shattered and Debbie and I thought, and are thinking seriously of an E.T. Anyway, emotions are running high and people are looking for something to be done. Mostly we want Elizabeth to know that we support her.

13/6/83

We spent most of yesterday trying to assure her of that. Guy & Marion called a special meeting of a small number of concerned PCV's to talk with Elizabeth. Fact was that P.C. in B'dos received a letter from Lisa stating her concern over her safety in remaining here. Apparently (and stupidly I think, though I was tempted to do the same) she wrote "Rapist" across Kelly's van with red paint (watercolor). She also 'attacked' the van when it pulled up to Liz's house one afternoon. She hasn't reacted well to Liz's rape because I don't think she ever resolved her own. In Lisa's case, the man was a Gov't official (her supervisor) and P.C. never pressed prosecuting the man. I think that left Lisa with a lot of bad feelings that she still needs to express. Likewise for Marion. Anyway, Lisa's actions and Liz's lifestyle convinced P.C. B'dos that there was a real threat to her security. So they ordered her and Lisa off the island. Lisa is taking an early COS but Liz doesn't want to even leave St Vincent. That was last night's issue. Liz wanted to stay and we as a group of concerned PCV's had to decide if her decision was prudent and rational. If so, how were we going to support her? We decided, among other things, to support Liz in her decision to stay by threatening to 'walk' out of here if P.C. retaliated by issuing a 'field' COS (that essentially divorces you from P.C. on the spot no plane tickets, no help, no nothing..). Well after an hour+ (\$120) on the phone with Tom Ferguson (P.C. area director who is very persuasive, by the way) Liz decided to leave the island for a limited amount of time. 10 days. She is leaving her belongings and her sister (I think) behind to guarantee her return. Her fear (and our fear too) was that they would her get off the island, prevent her from returning and eventually get her stateside. That, in that way, the whole thing could be forgotten. Apparently, a similar thing happened with Lisa in Dominica. She was taken off the island, transferred to St Vincent and the matter was forgotten. I guess the bottom line is that no one trusts P.C. and we were not willing to risk Elizabeth on a vague promise to return her when things 'cooled down'. But in the end we had to trust them. But as Guy said "I barely trust them now. If they blow it this time I will have no trust for them". So now all we can do is wait. Wait until things cool down. wait until Tom Ferguson comes to visit.

I have a mixed response to all of this. First, I really have concerns about Debbie's safety. With carnival coming on and all this recent furor about P.C. women being raped it wouldn't take much for some loony (of which there are many here) to put 2 & 2 together and get 5 and rape somebody. That is my most overwhelming concern. For Debbie's and my (Guys assailant is still loose) safety. Second, I've got some reservations about P.C. sincerity. I just don't trust them. I can't really explain it. I just feel like something is being covered up (Watergate syndrome) or left out. Sure diplomacy is important in a case like this, but still we need some answers and some reassurances about our concerns and PC isn't providing any. I have trouble with that. I don't feel comfortable. We are going to press for Tom F. to come and talk to us. Soon. Meantime, we just have to hope and pray that nothing else happens.



24/6/83

Time to catch up. Deb & I got back yesterday from 4 blissful days sailing in the Grenadines. It was probably the most enjoyable experience I have had since we left the US 8+ months ago. More decadent than our overnight at the Pegasus in Kingston. Relaxing, peaceful. Ahhh what a life that could be.

We pulled out on Sunday afternoon at 12:30 p.m. Preparations were harried as we cleaned out the fridge and shut it off. Closed the house up tight. We brought enough food to feed an army and managed to stow it in the hold. We also brought by the other two couples. Then we shoved



off for Mustique.

We arrived about 3 hours later. The sea was pretty

rough, the winds, light, which made for a very rolling ride. I was uncomfortable but didn't get sick. Likewise for Debbie. But Judy Zerah, who is 1 ½ months pregnant, didn't fair quite as well. Her sickness didn't help me any. But we managed to get to Mustique without too much difficulty. Since I had been there before I didn't feel much like walking around that evening so Deb and I did some swimming and I snorkeled a bit. Dinner took forever to make and cook on the grill and we finally had to cook it in the oven. So much for an outdoor barbecue. Next morning, after wrestling with an overly warm bunk, rains and a few mosquitoes, Deb and I took a casual walk about Mustique. We then shoved off for the Tobago Cays.



The Cays were simply beyond verbal description.

Absolutely beautiful and peaceful. The reefs were many and each offered something different. I spent hours in the water that afternoon. Blue blue waters and searingly white beaches. It was paradisiacal. Idyllic. Just like the stereotypical scenes from a Caribbean cruise book. I brought up conch (ate it too) and the coral was everywhere! Again, it was so beautiful I can't describe. It was my



favorite stop. We didn't do much else but swim though

Deb and some of the

others visited the nearby islands (easy swimming distance). Dinner produced a passable spaghetti (even if the noodles turned the glue). Next morning was more swimming and snorkeling. The sleeping conditions were much more conducive with a strong steady breeze blowing all night, a sky full of stars, nearly full moon and very calm anchorage. I could use more nights of sleep like that.

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turned out to be a fairly decent resort.



Enroute we passed Sandy Island which is the

stereotypical deserted desert island. It was about 50 ft across and had one palm tree, one palm leaf umbrella and one lounge chair. Absolutely amazing! But PSV was much more substantial. The whole island is a resort and though this is the off-season, they had a few guests. Petite Martinique, just across a short stretch of water, is in Grenada's waters. So we got to see Grenada. I guess we could have bought a case of evaporated milk for \$25 EC. Bootlegging is a popular pastime down there. We pulled out of PSV after a few hours and made a short hop to Union Island. Union was totally unlike my preconception of it. I expected a flat dry island but the reality was a mountainous, lush country. It was beautiful. Granted we only



saw. We went to shore to gawk at the sharks,

and wander around

the combination marina and airport. The mosquitoes drove us out and back to the protection of the boat. Dinner went even better that night except for a brief interruption that came when we were driven up on the reef. Apparently the anchor never took a firm bite into the sand and it allowed us to drift into the reef. No damage though and Joe, our captain, got us quickly off and firmly tied to a permit permanent anchorage. We slept peacefully that night even if we did have visions of ending up on some beach in the morning.



island that I will always remember as having

enough but the mosquitoes were terrible. I was glad when we shoved off for Bequia. It was a pretty long ride to Bequia but it was uneventful. When we reached Port Elizabeth, Deb and I were visited by Mr Fray, one of Debbie's ex-patients who lives on a boat and does scrimshaw for a living. She was happy to see him so well recovered. Joe our captain, slept on Bequia that night (it's home for him) so Deb and I had relative privacy in sleep (we slept in the galley area midship



with Joe). We had another restful night's sleep. Nice swim in the

morning and another visit to Mr Fray aboard his boat "Prana" (all mahogany, beautiful).

Yesterday we got home. St Vincent looked more like the resort islands we had visited than we remembered. Somehow we managed to get all the finances organized and turns out it cost us \$560 EC per couple which was about \$25 US per day per person. It was unbelievable! I will always be thankful to Keith (Dr Harvey) for getting us such a good deal. So ends our story of the "Shawndarie". So now it's Friday and I'm back at work trying to get motivated to do something. My head is muddled with dreamy thoughts of our Caribbean cruise. The dogs and the next door neighbors kept me awake as I missed the solitude of the ocean and the soothing white noise combination of the wind singing through the rigging and the distant roar of the ocean crashing upon the coral. But there are things to be done and I must get to them!

6/7/83

Wow! time has flown. I'm still reeling from the intensely pleasurable sailing trip but also feeling a squeeze from the commitments I have made. The machinery is in place, I just need to get on with it.

The agribusiness training was interesting and may have some nice payoffs once I can get some other things out of the way (most notably the CIDA manpower project which is now a week late!) Basically, the training provided the analytical tools (a manual) to assess the feasibility of agribusiness projects. Biggest stumbling block to Third World development is not technical (most outside agencies are pounding at the door to supply technical expertise) but rather it is motivation & initiative that provides the bottlenecks to development. This however isn't given the regard it is due. People are so anxious to provide assistance that they don't look at the socio-cultural constraints. I have been preoccupied with just this issue. How do you develop entrepreneurial drive in a country where oppression rather than expression has been the rule? How do you educate Vincentians to take the responsibility and initiative in their own development? Especially in a situation where outside agencies are more than willing to do it for them. My stance of refusing to do anything for Vincentian development may be too pat, too naïve. A certain amount of work must be done initially in order to get the ball rolling. The problem comes when the expectation is developed to keep it rolling. Our role as PCVs falls in between. Initiating but also finding a local person to carry the project after implementation. To my knowledge, not much emphasis has been placed on this. Not many development agencies work toward their own obsolescence. PC is close and actually may succeed in this respect on a few projects but this new emphasis on CBI and small business (and technical) development may create some unforeseen problems. I don't want to perpetuate dependence, but on the other hand, a society that lacks initiative is not going to initiate much development on its own at the grassroots level. The Gov't may do so to appear concerned with development or just to get some dollars to help with foreign exchange. But essentially, we have a development catch-22. The agribusiness focus is the correct one but then we are faced with finding those folks who want to start small to medium-sized agribusinesses. That's the catch. And if my experience is any indication, disseminating that info to those who need it is a slow, hit and miss process. My idea, for what it is worth, is to centralize that small business development effort. A Small Business Development Center would be ideal but both DevCo & Min of Home Affairs deal with that type of development yet haven't been successful to any large extent. But this option, agribusiness development, is a new and exciting alternative to the frustration of working here in finance. I plan to explore some of the possibilities.

For some unknown reason, I suddenly feel better about being here and working here. There hasn't been any awesome changes in my daily routine, just the subtle change of attitude. More positive perhaps? It's been a long time coming. I'm still not gung-ho on this job description project. It's too amorphous and too dependent on others. But a more task-oriented approach to smaller things might make life more bearable around here. I'm still teetering on the brink of change and still too pessimistic about how this government and culture function to say that things will be smooth

sailing from now on, but I'm cautiously optimistic about my current feelings.



11/7/83

Monday first things first. Still riding the tide of optimism. My phobia about the phone calls I need to make for the CIDA project has passed but I still hate phone interviews. I remember when I did a similar type of survey stateside. I find it uncomfortable to deal head on with people I haven't met. I don't have that personable easy-going style that makes for successful 'field' people such as interviewers, door to door salesman & insurance people. It takes a certain knack that I just don't have. Which might be a liability for aspirations for a personnel job. I 'like' people, I just find it hard to be comfortable at the initial encounter. Anyway, the CIDA project is progressing even though it's not totally enjoyable. Doing things like this builds character.

Yesterday we had a hastily called meeting about rape and what to do. Also, the psychiatric social worker had a chance to debrief and defuse the situation a bit. We talked about feelings and communications gap. I got a bit too hung up on this lack of trust I feel for P.C. Paul, with the counselor's office, confronted me on that. Why don't I trust P.C.? Well, it's rather complicated. My trust has increased dramatically since the initial stages of this rape thing but because I have developed some philosophical grounds on which I base my development efforts which seem to run counter to the development strategies of P.C. I tend not to trust them. Actually the lip service that P.C. gives to development work parallels my philosophy, but the actual stand P.C. takes is different. So there is this lack of sincerity or coordination or intra-organization communication within P.C. Perhaps, and this is very possible, I don't understand the organization. It may be that we have a large, impersonal bureaucracy trying to deliver personal services. The bottom line is that I still don't trust them. Watergate paranoia? I don't know.

Back to this rape thing. We also got into confidentiality which is a non-entity within the Vincentian community and, to some extent, Peace Corps itself (reason for mistrust #2). How many women would go to the hospital casualty room for a rape exam, knowing that what happened would be broadcast throughout the community? It's a reality of living here but in uncomfortable one when you need secrecy to protect your peace of mind. For example, Judith Zerah told us about her pregnancy on the sailing trip. When we got home we told the Bienamens that Judith had been seasick but we felt that it was more due to her pregnancy then due to the rough sea (it was a passing comment too just a quick sideline in a conversation). They mentioned it to Dennis, a French CO who lives in Troumaca and he congratulated Mark Zerah when he saw them. Or, take the fact that we met a British VSO who asked us about our trip even though we never spoke to him or any other VSO about it. Amazing. News, particularly bad news, travels fast in this community. So, just getting someone to admit being raped, is tough. Turns out that five women have been raped here and one sexually assaulted in the past 10 years. Three have occurred in the past two weeks. One woman being raped twice in one week! Kind of blows the paradisaal aspects of Caribbean living.

We have another meeting specifically about what to do about rape. Rape victims support, etc. it'll probably be a long one. But a necessary one.



19/7/83

With the manpower inventory project behind me I once again face an uncertain future. I'm feeling more comfortable now. I feel I have made at least some contribution but now lacking any clear-cut assignment I again face the frustration of having nothing to do. For the next two weeks I'll be content to float. The new Deputy Financial Secretary will be busy with the budgeting process so I'll put off meeting with him until after I return from St Lucia and Dominica. Mr Gaines has also requested that I come over to MCW to help hammer out some problems, but that too can wait. Mostly I am content to rest. Then tackle whatever comes my way after August 8th.

It turns out the rape seminar was OK. It did more to relax my fears of indifference from P.C. Seems that in Washington DC at least, someone was concerned enough to act on our fears. The fact that the program was started at all seems to be an indication that P.C. Wash. is giving this more than just lip service. It's a step in the right direction. But my feelings of security have been shattered and I'll never be completely comfortable with Debbie being late or having a home visit to go to. Somehow though, we'll work this out. Liz is the one with the biggest challenge. Trials, lawyers, etc. Her hassles are just beginning.

I've been hassled lately with the resurgence of my smoking habit. I thought I had it licked and in a weak moment I relapsed. I haven't been able to kick it in the last 2 weeks, though I try. It's a wicked thing and hopefully I'll be done with it soon.



27/7/83

Still fighting but more in terms of boredom than anything else. The fact is, as it always is, that I suppose I could find something to do, yet I don't want to get involved with a project just to leave it next week while we are in St Lucia. The conference should be a good one and may well rejuvenate my flagging motivation. Many possibilities exist. In fact the possibility that I could change jobs completely and go into something dealing with marketing in agriculture. I also want to do some research in a couple of areas and I already sent out some letters, both stateside and in the region, seeking information and guidance. I'll just have to sit tight for a while and see what comes of it.

Having a lot of free time has allowed my mind to wander far afield. Mostly I've been back in the states. Imagining what I'll do when I return (job wise). Where will live or when we'll start having children. Memories of my own childhood have romped joyously through the summertime activities engaged in so long ago. Looking back, the experiences were so pristine and uncomplicated. Certainly more wondrous and delicious. Even my "heart breaking" adolescence is seen in a pure, naïve, puppy love light. Those glorious rushes of emotion that pass over me like sunlight through the clouds. The spine tingling sensation of being so free and unfettered by responsibilities. And those summer smells! The rich, earthy smell of that arose as the sun baked off the morning dew. The music of bird's twittering and singing open the day. All this and much more has returned in my memory. Then the realization of being here in St Vincent pushes through those unreal memories of long past realities. Just this suddenly, I'm back...

But my mental excursions have not been without merit. I've put a lot of realtime in stumbling through a mass of readings about development work. I'm trying to come up with some sort of consensus about my philosophy in doing development work. I'm melding the liberation theology of Freire and the Puebla document with the liberation philosophy of Galbraith and my own observations about the success & failure of development work here in St Vincent. Something that authentically liberates both in terms of spiritual and economic liberation, but also is of practical application to the nature of human beings. The "shoulds" are endless but the real question is "would?" Would such a scheme really work? What is the reality and how can they be acted upon in a real manner? What is the nature of man that has placed us in such a position and how can that nature be exploited (if you will) to turn around the current conditions? I don't want to invent a new strategy. I want to take an existing reality, stand it on its head if necessary, and utilize it to upgrade development here. You can appeal to a Christian's sense of charity but what will the appeal actually yield? You can hammer home biblically based doctrine about charity, love and authentic liberation and outgrowth of true love, but given man's inherent sinfulness, what will be the result? Can we teach that the risk of selfless love is a small one? Is it possible to tap man's deepest fear, that of his own mortality, and utilize that to produce a life of selfless giving to authentic liberation? My own heart is troubled by those questions because of my own shortcomings as a Christian and development worker. So much needs doing here. The process of liberation and from liberation to growth will take years. Maybe decades and I am anxious to go. Though Christ would want me to stay and give. This is my greatest sin: that I refuse his calling to

serve. That is the whole problem with man....

