

The Beginning of the End

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29/5/84

3 weeks plus have passed. Life here has taken on an incredible pace. Especially the past two weeks. Seems like I'm keeping up with nothing as of late. Deb had a rewarding trip to St Lucia. The conference made her question her orientation to health care. The guest speaker was David Warner who wrote "Where there is no doctor". Basically, it's a community-based approach to healthcare. The community health team receives trainings in assessing healthcare problems and how to go about solving them. Most of the health needs are met by the team. A doctor is rarely consulted. As risky as it sounds, it's a quite successful approach and builds community cohesiveness and self-reliance. Deb wonders if she has made the position of physiotherapist indispensable in that she does all the work rather than training the staff & patients to care for themselves. Actually, it's not quite that one-sided. She does train the staff and patients to care for themselves but it's difficult to dispel the mystique of the trained medical person. Actually, the program should be 'working-with' oriented rather than 'working-for'. She's now redoubling her efforts to dispel the notion that only a physio can do it. The opportunity exists too, to pass that orientation on to the next physio.

Is there a next physio? Well, it seems so but nothing in the P.C. is for certain. Seems there is a physio coming in for July 1st training and Van is trying to get him/her to come to St Vincent to follow in Deb's footsteps. That would relieve a lot of our extension anxieties and simplify our year-end plans. Just about 2 years(!) ago we began this bizarre & convoluted journey and now we begin to plan for our re-entry into the U.S. life. I'm becoming anxious, for there is still much to do here to prepare for our departure and handing over the job as well as beginning to make outright plans to find work stateside. Development work gets into your blood. Now that the initial agony of settling in has passed. Now that we are comfortable and have made some tangible progress. Now that the opportunity for some real long-term progress has arisen. Now it's time to think of returning to 'home'. Our consciences are beginning to bother us. Our lives are part of St Vincent. St Vincent is a very large part of our lives. I begin to wonder if we can break free and not regret. Opportunities to serve God and our fellow men and women abound where once there was no hope. In some ways I'm angry for the

Peace Corps doing this to us. For wrapping our lives up so completely in the 'third world' that it's difficult to extract ourselves. Gads! Where did the change occur? I was so anxious to be rid of this place. Now, I'm anxious about leaving it. As for our travel plans. We got the special dispensation from P.C. and will be going to Europe in September and October. I'm even second-guessing that! The pressure will be off Debbie if her replacement comes but I need to think hard of continuing the unit. Our vacation will make this fall incredibly busy and I think I'll be wanting a slower pace to reflect and plan. We'll get back a mere 5 weeks (maybe less) before our C.O.S. conference. If we early C.O.S. the pace will be terrifying. On the other hand, we will have a chance to see old friends and experience new cultures and scenery. It will be the trip of a lifetime. I'm hoping that all things will go well, smoothly and will come back (to the U.S.) with an incredibly two-year experience that will shape our lives and bring us closer to the reality in the world. That will, I trust, ripple out and change the way others think, too.

Deb's brother was married Sunday. A reminder of family events we have missed in the states. It reminds us of how much we love and miss our families and adds a positive aspect to our return. Still, we do need to find a balance there somewhere. Find a way to satisfy our needs to be with our families and still serve those who need us. And that need is great on both sides.

4/6/84

Just read an entry from last year about this time. Wow! I can't believe how far we've come. It seems ages ago. But the past is still not settled. It was almost exactly a year ago that we first heard of Elizabeth's rape. I still have a bad taste in my mouth about that whole thing. It was absolutely amazing that how after P.C and the government of St. Vincent had assured us that justice would be done, that how little was actually done for Liz. What a tragedy and injustice was done to us all. I can't forgive and forget this one. If anything in St Vincent has marred my impression and respect for the system of justice (if there even is one in St Vincent), it is the horrible wrong that was done to Liz. Not just the rape (though I personally castrated 'Kelly' in my head several times) but it was the joke of the court system. Not only Liz but on other Vicentians, too. You can get away with murder here. Makes me want to become a revolutionary, form a hit squad and take out most of the Gov't people 'elected' into office. The people have no power here. What a hopeless situation to live in. No wonder people just give up. Gads, I'm still so angry. God give me patience and charity.....

On to other things. Mrs Douyon is in the hospital with some sort of heart ailment and I'm anxious for her to fly out of here and get some REAL medical treatment in the states. Even her mother and aunt are ailing. Someone once said, in reference to getting to know the culture of a foreign country, that you should attend a wedding and a funeral. Well, we did go to a wedding over the weekend but I have no desire to go to a funeral. Especially one of someone we love like Mrs Douyon or Lanie Duncan who is also having health problems.

The wedding was very interesting. It was N. Amer in most respects except that it started predictably late. It was due to start at 3:00 p.m. We showed up to an empty church at 2:50 and the bride arrived at 3:40. Of course at the reception the music was Calypso/Soca/Reggae and then there was the callaloo soup with a

goat's head and tripe base. I'm glad I didn't know until after I had had it. It was good though. It was a fun, fun evening. A real cultural event....

Next week I may be in Antigua for "Motorcycle training" a new P.C. policy. The only advantage is that it may give me a chance to pursue some training-employment opportunities at CHP and allow me to make a business stop in Dominica to see Mark Thomas at the M.I.U. there. But, I won't know until nearly week's end. Usual PC protocol.....

15/6/84

It's been a busy two weeks. The 'usual' but also I've been occupied with computerizing our data at the M.I.U. The reason for the computerization is that I'm trying to make the operation of the unit as simple as possible. The programs I'm writing make it easy to enter the data. Then the program will take care of the rest. It will also keep the data in a manageable form and easy to access. Hopefully, it will make things easier....

Lots of correspondence from home. Deb's side has been sending wedding pictures and descriptions of their big event. Mom and Dad Hein might even come visit in October. My side has been keeping us posted on my sister's progress into pregnancy and also kept us up to date on Mindy's father-in-law. Overall, lots of talk about our return to the states as we finish this 2-year odyssey (or oddity). Lots of plans need to be made yet, but it's still too far into the future for anything other than speculation.

Along the same line, we found out that Deb is getting a replacement. What a surprise! Therefore, our agonizing over an extension possibility is now moot. We already wrote to Irene Tarach (a Chicagoan) and she should be arriving in St Vincent on July 21st if I have my dates correct. This young lady is an '83 grad. I didn't catch where she has been working. Deb's initial excitement has changed to anxiety because now she wants everything 'ready' for Irene's arrival. [We'll be painting the physio dept. over Carnival weekend]. That arrival will signal the beginning of the end for us and once again we're forced to confront our destiny.

I don't know where we'll go or what we will do. All I know is that we have to somehow try to transfer our 'education' in this place to something 'real' in the states. Just as we had to transfer our U.S. culture into a Vincentian situation. The challenge is to scale up our experience here and make the changes in ourselves (which might be temporary if only tied to St. V) into lasting ones. I'm certainly more militant in that I see U.S. foreign policy as completely misguided and much too militaristic (precipitated by the Grenada situation and fixed by Mr Reagan's military aid to St Vincent in the form of guns, ammunition and training which, by

the way is being used against the population and fast turning St Vincent into a fascist state). (see I told you I was militant). But I'm equally determined to use myself as a humanizing force in America. That will be 'small scale', certainly. but I now am clearly aware of how dehumanizing a lot of what we do can be. Gads, it's much too convoluted and lengthy to go into now. But we as Americans tend to ignore the basic rights of being human i.e. self Self-determination, self-sufficiency, etc. We want too many things our way or not at all. I'm going to try to be open to other avenues. Next week we go to Grenada and Trinidad which should be interesting as well as (hopefully) restful. It puts a crimp in my schedule but I think I'll be able to get out my monthly report before the Carnival weekend cranks up.

13/7/84

I was almost afraid to look at the date of the last entry. It's been nearly a month now. I'm losing control of this journal. It is impossible to adequately relate the past months events and that is my fear and the defeat of the purpose of this journal. Hopefully, I'll be able to do a better job in the future. But, the 'race to the finish' has already begun and right now I'm lagging the pack....

Trinidad and Grenada were good experiences for us. Grenada was a pleasant surprise. We pulled into Pearls at the marvelous hour of 7:00 a.m. The airport buildings reminded me a bit of Canefield in Dominica: small wooden buildings with galvanized roofs and a 'well-worn' look. This is the place the U.S. first invaded, but it shows little signs of being molested. There is an 'Air Cubana' plane on the tarmac and a small biplane from Russia. If that is Soviet air supremacy, we have nothing to worry about. Leftovers from the golden days of the revolution. We cooled out there, waiting for the sisters who were to take us into St George's (connected through the sisters in St Vincent). The sisters did show up but we're only going as far as Grenville - about 10 minutes away. Since it was a national holiday (Corpus Christi) we couldn't find cheap, local van transport into St George's so we finally took a cab to the tune of \$50. But at least we got into town.

The sisters at the convent in St George's were wonderful. They showed us to a spacious but spartan room, got us a bit of morning tea and whisked us out on a tour of the south and end of the island. We saw the more affluent areas built up under Gairy then mostly abandoned during Bishop's reign. We also saw the well-bombed-out remains of the Cuban training camp at Calivigny where I did some shell collecting (gun shells...). We also saw some impoverished areas, the Cuban workers barracks, an asphalt plant and an impoverished American barracks (they occupy the two best hotels on the island). Then they took us back, fed us again and gave us a siesta. That afternoon we participated in the Corpus Christi procession with the Anglicans and had a casual after-procession cocktail hour with the sisters. Then off to bed.

Next day we scrounged up the PCV's on the island as well as paid a visit to the hospital so Deb could meet the physiotherapist and check out the facilities. We found two PCV's at the Ministry of Agriculture, who I had wanted to make contact with, and ran into a third on our way to lunch. Much talk about the current 'Grenada situation' and being PCV's in general. It was nice talking to our counterparts there. Gave a sense of continuity to the whole thing. That afternoon we caught a ride down to Grand Anse beach. A beautiful stretch of beach marred only by the barbed wire enclosed hotels that the soldiers occupy with sandbag gun placements 'protecting' the place. We walked down to the medical school 'true blue' campus. Buildings spattered by hastily plastered up bullet holes. That was enough for one brief visit to Grenada. The most impressive thing was the people. Warm, friendly and none of the 'Gimme dollah' obsession of Vincentian street people.

The next day took us to Trinidad, a mind-blowing change of pace. Like flying into New York (from our East Caribbean point of view). Cars, cars, cars. Big buildings, high rises and affluent living. We toured the Northwest end on several occasions seeing much beautiful greenery and topography. But what I remember the most was the horrendous traffic. We stayed at a very nice condo owned by Ron's late grandfather. And Ron's ordination was beautiful and moving too. I had a chance to check on some info at IBM and a Gestetner dealer and we spent a long hour filling out visa forms for some Vincentian who who needed visas for India. With business out of the way, we just kicked back and enjoyed it. Then suddenly, it was back to St Vincent.

20/7/84

St Vincent was abuzz with Carnival and election happenings. This made it very difficult for me to get on with work and the June report was still unfinished at week's end. Saturday was spent painting the physiotherapy dept ceiling as we prepared for the arrival of the new physio coming in on the 21st of July. We jumped on Monday with the National Commercial Bank and spent a long Tuesday afternoon watching the bands parade across the stage. Many beautiful costumes this year, much better than last. Enjoyed watching and participating in our last Carnival. Weds, the 4th of July, we had some Edinboroites over for our real American food. Hot dogs and apple pie. It was a very enjoyable evening. Again, with thoughts of it being our last in St Vincent. The following weekend we rested, trying to catch up on odds and ends and preparing for our every six week pilgrimage to Bequia. So Monday we went over to Bequia, spending a night at Keegan's and a night at the Catholic Presbytery with Mary Keogh (who was over for the BHC meeting). I spent the rest of the week trying to catch up on work that had piled up from our Trinidad holiday and Carnival and succeeded in getting it together by Friday. Saturday (14th) we returned to the physio dept to paint walls and Sunday spent with trim. Which just about brings me up to date.

The new physio has arrived on island and we had a chance to talk briefly at the airport. Next week she should get oriented to the hospital (Deb is anxious for her to see it). I'm going to Barbados for a quick two-day, one night business trip to share experiences with new PCV's in the M.I.U, business.

I'm feeling rushed now. Like the clock is started spinning out of control and the calendar flying. Rushing headlong into C.O.S. in December, just 4 1/2 months away. Many, many items to settle yet. We still have to put the finishing touches on our Europe plans which I'm now having mixed feelings about but, once made I should be able to relax and enjoy.

My request for a motorcycle has been denied on budgetary grounds which pretty much pulls out the rug on future plans to expand the unit. I'll try to broaden my scope but with only one person to run things, and no transportation for another

anyway, things will probably not go much further until the new PCV arrives in November. I'm okay with that but a bit worried about someone filling in while on holiday in Sept-Oct. I guess I'll have to deal with that as it comes.

30/7/84

Looks like these entries will get fewer and farther between. Time is passing so quickly, change coming so rapidly, that I can hardly keep up.....Elections last proved a great surprise. There is a new government now. The NDP took 9 of 13 seats which means a new set of ministers (yet to be announced) and a subsequent reorganization of most ministries, departments and statutory bodies. Nothing looking solid yet. One of the NDP's promises was to reorganize the Marketing corp. But how and when that will happen is anyone's guess. Once again I'm in limbo, looking at a very uncertain future. Work still goes ahead, moving very quickly but how will it change?....

The election came in on the winds of tropical storm Arthur which delayed my leaving for Barbados on Thursday morning. That was a quick trip filled with last minute meetings and errands that left me exhausted and glad to be home. Busy with many things now. A report to write for July, letters of thank you for the Barbados group who brought me over. Plans for Europe to complete. Plans to be made for our return to the states just 17 weeks away! Checked on Eastern's unlimited cost \$596 us from St Vincent. Not bad at all and good news for potential visitors. That is firm. Todd however would have to pay \$696 since he is traveling alone. Too much perhaps for him. So what's next? Gads, I need to take care of just the most pressing things at the instant once caught up, I can deal with the future. There is a bizarre array of details to clear up which will accelerate time as the end of our service draws near.

Phone call from home was great! It's always good to hear voices and get caught up with the most vital runnings at home - often forgotten in the rush to write an interesting letter. Back to back parties on Sunday, brunch at Doreen's (Sheila's sister) and a PC welcome party for the new trainees. Time flieth!

7/8/84

August already. Time flieth for sure. Pete & Alan from Dominica rolled in on Saturday. They were supposed to arrive Thursday evening but didn't show. So I returned to the airport on Friday, but still no show. Friday night we went to Dick Henley's for some chili and to watch a movie "Raiders". In fact it was quite a gathering: Dick and Anne Beinamen, Deb & I, Mary & Nancy, and Forest and Curt Hendricks and Mark a USAID guy here to meet the conditions precedent for the AG Dev programme. We all got together for chili & misc. other food items. A nice time. Except for the fact that I managed to dig up a cold or flu bug on Thurs night (I still have it). Well, Saturday Doreen comes over to tell us we have a call from someone in Dominica. Sure enough it was Pete & Alan at the airport needing directions to our house (they had never got the letter). About an hour later they showed up. And they've stayed these 3 days. It disrupted our schedule but it was nice to have them. Gives us a trial run on playing hosts to visitors.

During the weekend, Deb and I began to speculate about how best to organize our last weeks here. I was toying with the idea of staying with Dick Henley, maybe starting as early as the 8th of September so we could clean up and lock up Mrs Douyon's house and not have to bother with concern about it during our holiday, or last minute tidy up when we left on December 13th. Deb thinks a good compromise would be the 3rd of November. Maybe so. We need to talk to Dick. It would simplify our lives a bit.

Letter written to Westam but now no address so I'll have to write Mom and have her send it. Excitement and anxiety now. Things are moving fast.