

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 than 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.



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