

George/Ova:

10 July 1976
Taveuni
Fiji

Didn't really have much time to say goodbye in all the rush.

Thanks for looking after the poor homeless flat.

We finally arrived 'on location' after a miasma of confused bookings, torrid tropical heat, flu, and endless waiting for light planes schedules. The site is on Taveuni Island east of Vavua Levu, living in a new Fijian bure owned by the host and part/co-director of the film who is a transplanted kiwi. The others involved with filming are also NZ people just up from a filming session in Tonga for the NZ television system. This film is about a young couple who are fugitives from urban living who've decided to spend some time in Fiji learning to SCUBA dive. We've been a week filming already and have a few more days here to finish the underwater stuff off. Thence to Auckland for sound studio work and editing.

The weather/flora/fauna/life style very similar to Hawaii, but the reef life and water clarity much much better. The reef where we have done most of the filming is 15 miles away on Vavua Levu and we travel by broken down launch piled high with flippers, tanks, weights, masks, snorkels, lights, generators and cameras not to mention coconuts and bananas for lunch. The Fijians have a delightful food which is called 'vasoa', which is raw clam, and after filming each day we scrounge around and capture some for sustenance on the long haul home. A light touch of lemon and a kingy meal accompanied by coconut milk and meat.

Today we did some shooting in an underwater fresh water spring just bubbling up from a hole in the coral beds. As the fresh mixes with salt water, little whorls and curls appear making the whole area a complete blur. The fresh water much cooler than the sea and surprisingly the fish don't seem to worry about the difference.

Nicky has ~~been~~ taken to diving with a vengeance and has become instantly enraptured with the scene. She still raves at the end of each dive with saucer eyes and smiles. The tiny multicoloured reef fish are her favourite subject, a subject which abounds here.

53
We've seen a few sharks but they are so well-fed (one hopes!) that they are not interested in mere human meat. The numerous barracuda are more worrying to me because they are more dangerous and feared in Hawaiian waters but the Fijians ignore them too! Have seen a number of turtles as well, huge things which sun themselves on the surface and disappear with a fin's flick when disturbed.

The island here fairly well populated (10,000 bods) but for some reason one gets the feeling of absolute isolation. One plane flight a day brings mail, food, goodies and spares. Real island living. Tonight there were two flights - an event!

We are all off to a village dance this evening, the Fijians helping with the filming and in the bure say it's a "terrific band" - one guitar, a one string bass, and harmonica, plus much singing. The hachelors in the crew getting all revved up for it and luckily we've a doctor among them to treat various "tropical mishaps" that may occur.

Heard a few horror stories of American developers trying to copy the Pacific Harbour concept here on Taveuni and going bust in all directions recently.

Hope all is as well as can be expected with USC - don't let it get you right down.

Cheers Mulu

