

Father Meletios Christoforou

The American Café, Sault St. Marie, Michigan

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Start of Interview

(FM) [Greek]

(I) Ok I'm going start back to where we ended last time... here he had the letter which gave him the choice of two jobs and he said he couldn't make a choice... I guess I'm curious to why the...the job why was he chosen as a missionary... why the patriarch then did not appoint him to the original positions...?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said in his letter he called he told them appreciated the offers that he had but he felt that he shouldn't make the decision...that Father Meletios should not make the decision and that he would be willing to go and do whatever was best for the church. He said what I think I need you as a representative of our church in these various African nations.

(I) I see where the first two positions were kind of honor giving him honor... this was more response to where.... Placing him where he was needed.

(T) I believe that was the reason for it, the basic reason.

(I) Did you first go to Belgium Congo and how did you establish yourself in Africa?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He left Port Sudan...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) ...and he went to Khartoum Sudan.

(I) That's where the famous British general...

(T) ...Kapital

(I) There was a very famous British general from there too.

(T) Does it start with a K?

(I) I think there was a movie about it... Charlton Hesston playing the general... I think Khartoum was the maybe name of the movie. Anyway that's why it's familiar.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He spent 12 days aboard a ship going down the Nile until he came to Victoria Tanganyika.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Jupa is another city in the nation of Sudan.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) When it got to Jupa ... that a man who he had known for 22 years a man who was establish in Cyprus but decided to find greener pastures by going to this Jupa in Sudan. He wined and dined him he stayed there, he was president of the Greek community but didn't have a priest. So he stayed there for about eight days... he answered their needs. He baptized a child there had services there and then he got on a truck. A commune. A French word "commune" meaning truck. I didn't know that.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said the trip down the Nile a fantastic trip. All of sudden herds of elephants many wild animals he said it was just a panoramic just beautiful.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said there weren't a single of each of the animals. There were cows... hundreds....just herds of them all along the Nile.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) His first stop after leaving Jupa in his truck in his vehicle...

(FM) [Greek] ...Aba.

(T) ...was in this British colony Aba. A.b.a. in the Belgian Congo excuse me.

(I)Aba is in the Belgian Congo?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said there was a man that was traveling with him and he was to meet his bride at Aba. And he was going to marry them.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Anyways he was to meet this driver of this vehicle was to meet his bride who was from Cyprus from another community. As they were traveling they were going to make a turn, this man apparently had done this...was part of his job I guess I don't know.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He was buying supplies for his (word unknown). And he would use his vehicle for supplies and he had Father as a passenger. But they were going to make a large turn around a road. He told Father "don't be frighten I have come through here many times but you are going to see lions in this part of the road. They are going to be sleepy some will be stretching just moving around. And we may have to slow down but the windows aren't closed don't be frighten they are perfectly harmless". And sure enough the Father says it took them quite a while to get through 'cuz they'd be laying out on the road, on the side of the road just basking in the sun. Then they

came across a herd of elephants. About 200 of them. And they too were sorta ambling along but completely harmless. He said that the animals he never feared them for some reason.

(I) That's good.

(T) They were very very docile. The only ones he feared he says was mankind. They were the most unpredictable. The animals are predictable but man, man is most unpredictable.

(I) How long was this journey was this this trip?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) One month.

(I) In the truck?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) And he'd sleep in the truck...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) This took long too was that they stopped for a couple of days or so in different communities. They didn't have churches...they didn't have any...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He would perform services as he went along in these different villages because he inevitably he would run across a few Greeks here a few Greeks there who had left their own country and come there as I said looking for greener pastures. And he would perform their services for them and that would delay the trip he would be there for two or three days.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) And many of them haven't seen a Greek priest, especially the young children who were born and raised there and as a result there was no one there to baptize them. So he must have baptize, he says between 15 or 16 children as he went along.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) What's that mountain that Ernest Hemmingway had wrote about?

(I) Oh yes Mount Kilimanjaro.

(T) Kilimanjaro he was saying it...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) There's a mountain rang which is just beneath Mount Kilimanjaro and he was located in that vacancy.

(I) And this Aba now right?

(FM) No!

(I) This is after you left in the truck then...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) This is 600, 700 miles from Aba

(I) Ok after the months journey. And was there a settlement there?

(FM) Bunia. B.u.n.i.a

(T) Bunia he says this community of Bunia had almost 40 Greek families there.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He mentioned many many villages that he went through. I didn't get them all...

(I) That's alright.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Whenever he hit these various places there were people would say don't leave us stay there too. We have someone to be baptized, we haven't received Holy Communion, we haven't had (???), services period! So they were just pleased and tickled that he was able to perform these things for them.

(I) Was it at Unja that you first established a church and school?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He says the church and the school comes a little later but in Unja he met an 80 year old man who had an inn or hotel this 80 year old man had a father who was Yugoslavian, his mother was Greek, anyways he stayed there. Anyways when I say hotel don't think of hotel as we know it. There it was just a little building the walls are interwoven bamboo and with mud. And they white washed the exterior and it just glistens it's just very very white and the ground was plain bare brown and he slept on... the natives made these things, they wove them out of wool or hemp. And that's what you slept on.

(I) kinda like a hammock?

(T) Like a hammock.

(I) No running water? [Laughs]

(FM) [Greek]

(T) That night or that evening the owner... this little old man who owns this inn gave him this flash light you have to venture forth tonight. He said "Take the flashlight with you and keep it lit because the animals the wild animals... they fear light they won't bother you". Anyways little village just one little road about half mile long and that was about the extent of it. The next morning the owner of this little inn told the Father I'd like to take you to two gentlemen who are

partners and they were merchants. They would... from the native they would buy... tea, coffee, coco, rubber, all kinds of grains very very rich fertile soil. And the grains they are able to grow twice a year they would harvest this crop but these two Greek fellas were merchants they would buy it from the natives or buy it from the surrounding farmers and they would... it was like a trading post I guess. But this little gentlemen that had the inn took the priest and he said "I wanna take...I wanna introduce to very successful men". So went they went down the road they came to this tiny little office...excuse me two rooms. The rooms were divided by this bamboo curtain. The little old man introduced Father to the first partner and they sat there. The little old man went to the other office and told him that we have in our midst a priest! Very fortune and blessed to have this priest with us because we never had one. Father could hear it through the wall which was made up of bamboos and the gentlemen said we don't need one in this part of the country. So the little gentlemen came out took the priest by of course the Father heard this and went out. And the little old man said "you heard what he said?" The Father says "yes". He said I guess the little old man said Father I guess they are more interested in the making their franks. Making their money rather than they are anything else.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) I guess they had been there for so many years I guess they just...lost touch.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) These people were very distressful too. These people... well many of the people who had established themselves in these little areas many opportunist coming through. They'd be fleeced by various schemes and so they were very very cautious.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) The good man felt bad about those remarks that they made.

(I) The little man the 80 year old.

(T) Yes, he told Father at supper I'm sorry this came about but don't worry we straighten things ...things will turn for the better.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) After supper the man said we will straighten things out don't you worry be patient... the Father went to his so called room.

(I) [laughs]

(T) And he thought to himself I have a tremendous territory to cover he thought what am I doing here in this little place? With this rejection that he had. I'm an unknown amongst unknowns. Now he uses the words agnosto like the word agnostic. But he didn't mean it in that respect. Then he thought well he'd sleep on it. He got up the next morning and it had rained and the road the single road they had that went to jungle was just a bunch of mud. But he went anyways. He went for this walk through this swamp this muddy road and he was heading for this office where these two gentlemen were. And under heaving he saw a figure coming toward him. And as it got

closer they recognized each other they knew each other. This other gentlemen says “Father Meletios what are you doing here of all places!?” Father Meletios answers him “what are doing here of all places!?” Well this gentlemen that he met was the bookkeeper for these two men these partners these merchants.

(I) ...and he had known him from...

(T) I guess he had known him from other... I asked him about that. He said I will come to that.

(I) Before can you ask if we can back track I have two questions one whatever happened to the truck driver and the young woman he was going to marry?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He married them when they reached Aba...

(I) oh ok.

(T) ...and two baptisms he married them and he also performed the two baptisms.

(I) Now I'm getting confused because how did he get from Aba... see from now we are 600 700 from Aba and I was thinking that was in the truck but apparently not. How did he get there?

(FM) [Greek]

(I) Same truck driver or no? Ok different other...

(T) A like kinda relay station it accommodated to a certain village. Stayed there for a day or so then until another vehicle take him to another area.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) These are villages that he is going through...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Six different villages that he went through with this relay from Aba to 600 miles...

(I) Yes well I miss the fact that the trucks kind of changed as he went that's why I thoughts we were back in Aba I remember earlier.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Whenever he worked these villages they were just amazed and pleased at long last they had a Greek priest and they'd keep him two or three days before he would continue.

(I) Until he got and this the other question I had I was just wondering how he felt when he heard that merchant say “we don't need a priest”, how did he feel right in that moment? When he heard that?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Very very disappointed because he had been received by so many open arms all along the road and all of sudden to have this rejection he felt extremely disappointed. But he overcame.

(I) Now we are to the bookkeeper again.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Who was this man that he met ok?

(FM) [Greek]

Side B

(T) He said it's a very long story and he doesn't want to go back to World War Two. But when the Germans occupied the Greek... Greece many of the professional people, lawyers, accountants, doctors, professional people left Greece. They felt they could do more, some of them felt they could do more by staying there and fighting, under the ground many of them could do better for their country by getting out of there not become under the German rule.

(I) Right.

(T) Perhaps they could do something for their country by being... what excommunicate from their land? They wound up in Sudan but when they got to Sudan they were confined to an area almost like a concentration camp. Here they were, all these Greek professional people. He had heard about them being in this camp and confined there and he told his friends about Sudan that he heard about this. I want to go and visit them. What you do you want to do there? What you want to do what you want to go there for there is nothing but prisoners. Yes but they may need me. So he jump on a train and I don't know how long it took him to get there a day or so. And he got there and the area was surrounded or maintained by guards and they were from the Greek army. Like he says doesn't want to go into a lot of detail about this but he informed them that he was a priest from Port Sudan and wanted to come and perform any services that they might want or any need, any spiritual need. And the soldier said now I'll have to ask my superiors. So they went into the office and the superior came out, most happy to have them. Nobody had come to visit these people. Almost 2000 UPIs and they wined and dined them and he performed services for them and they kept him there for almost three whole days but in the mean time they also entertained him with own groups they sang for him they put on skits...

(I) Now these were the people who were confine?

(T) Yes! Yes the ones who were confined.

(I) Now I don't understand why the Greeks would be guarding these Greek people?

(T) I don't know.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said many of them were they were and now I hope I got this right. As I understand what he is saying they refused to fight they felt they were better off away from their country and do

what they could do for their country but the why they were imprisoned I don't understand that portion of it.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) They were what you call "Draft dodgers".

(I) Oh for conscientious objectors?

(T) Conscientious objectors. Here I had misconstrue...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) They had just gotten into their ships and took off. But why they would be imprisoned there in the Sudan I don't know.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) They were Allies and I guess the Greek government were able to use the Sudan land or their facilities for imprisoning these conscientious objectors.

(I) And was it in this camp that he met this bookkeeper? One of the people who was in the compound?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) That's where he met him at this camp. And they were given freedom. They were able to leave this camp periodically, small groups of them and they would go back to the bigger city and then come back to camp. Apparently it wasn't as confining as I meant to believe I don't know. We get back to...

(I) ...Way back in the boonies. [Laughs]

(FM) [Greek] Dakar

(T) Dakar?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He met with this man and went and had coffee, informed him that I am the bookkeeper for these two merchants. He says don't worry cause he told him about his rejection about his disapproval. Don't worry he said I am the bookkeeper but I also have a little bit of ---- I may be their employer, erhm, employee but he went and spoke with them and told him that this man was not an opportunist he was there to service the people, he was sent here with a mission. They said we'll think about it. Well that evening he took the Father and he went 15 miles to where his ranch was or planation, wined him and dined him and brought him back to little hotel. The next day he got up early in the morning and he went walking down the same dirt road and he said coming towards him on the opposite side of the road was this huge big beautiful automobile. Now he calls it a Baker, now I said what is make is, what is this B.A.K.E.R? He said it's in the Cadillac category and it was driven by this, one of the two partners. As the car approached him it

stopped the driver got out who was one of the these partners and went up to the Father who said “we have things to do together”. He said, “Come and see me in my office. We have a need for you”. Apparently the bookkeeper got through to these fellas. So that same day he met the bookkeeper and he said, Father was noticed that a lot of the little boys, the children of the Orthodox people were not speaking Greek at all! They had picked up the Swahili and the native tongues very freely and flowing which was part of their environment and brought this fact out and said your children don’t speak Greek! You are going to lose the ethnic and culture that they were brought up in. He said I think we should do something about it. He said you need a church you need a school here. How will we do this, so the Father said, all I need is a vehicle of some kind, whatever it is, and a man who knows the area knows the language and knows who these people are because they were scattered all over. There be two three families in a plantation over here, another three or four families in a little plantation over there. Distances apart. Not too long after he was given this huge beautiful automobile to use, the one he saw this wealthy man drive and was given a guide. Gave him a Greek fellow who been there for many years and knew his way around so the two of them made the rounds. Through the different jungles, the jungles.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He took a whole month with this automobile and this Greek translator and also one of this Aba trucks, commune. And whoever could give him money, gave him money, whatever they could afford and many of them gave him things from their land: palm oil, tea, papayas, quinine, coffee, just about anything they could afford to give. And he it took him a month for this particular tour.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) They took this merchandise that was donated and then they sold it on the market and they wound up...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) ...they collected after they sold his merchandise, close to 600,000 franks which was... a dollar was equivalent to 30 franks. And he had collected 600,000 franks.

(I) 20,000 dollars.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He got it all together, ----he wanted to see them all together and he wanted to see as many come. He developed a committee.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Then a home, a house that had six rooms...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) One room he slept in that.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) The large living room he converted into a church.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) And the other room he, the rooms that were available to him use it as a school. And his first class was number 20. There were 20 youngsters there.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He was a teacher and a priest...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) The school accommodated these children for just about a full year and he had a Greek lady there that would cook for the children. They ate there they, slept there.

(I) Did he teach them other stuff besides Greek?

(T) He said the distance was too great for him to come in the morning and go back home so they...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He found a lady who was able to teach the children French, he taught them the typical Greek education with the history, the geography and the grammar.

(I) and the math

(T) ...and the math and the whatever, just as if they were back in Greece.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He did this for three years straight and they finally found another teacher who came to them from Greece. In that three year period, the group of youngsters grew. And they had to have another house to accommodate them.

(I) How many then...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) About 50

(I) Oh large!

(FM) [Greek]

(T)---1941 all of a sudden these people, the refugees were coming from the islands because of the war in the Mediterranean there? Came from Greece various islands, and they were just seeking refuge, and many of them wound up in the area where he was at. Almost 4000 of them. He intimated with them he didn't know what to do with them.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) ... a Monsenior a friend of his was a...Monsenior his name was Mathew.

(FM) [Greek]

(T)... he had a monastery about five miles from where he was located.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) This Monsenior, this catholic Monsenior he went to visit him and he said can you help me accommodate these people? They had these little mashed huts many of them and they built many of them and the Monsenior said yes I will help you as best I can. So he accepted many of these people and they set up housekeeping in little places. And he said he was performing marriages five or six marriages a day! All these people I don't know just a way of life...

(I) [Laughs]

(T) It was almost like mass production.

(I) [Laughs]

(FM) [Greek]

(T) They managed to buy a factory, a tobacco factory that made cigars. I guess it had gone out of business or whatever happened I don't know...

(I) Now when he says they managed does he mean the Greek community?

(T) The Greek community. So they bought this factory and the this factory had many many offices rooms of that nature and they made it into a dormitory to help many of these people these refugees and in time over a period of time they also managed to get six teachers they had cooks and these people slept there they ate there and they were taught.

(I) ...and he said this was 1941 that's what you told me?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Two or three years later.

(I) Oh I see. This paper here has him arriving in Butana September of 1941 I think that must be wrong then. What year did you first arrive in Butana? That's what I want to know.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said in 40 in he arrived in 1940.

(I) Ok good because I thought this must be wrong and this says, oh ok. Well I think we better just whatever. Can we never end?

(T) He usually just goes on and on

(I) That's fine by me but I don't know about you. Could we meet again, how's Tuesday a week..

(T) Sure sure.

(I) Well when he gets back we will make some arrangements yea because I want to continue to hear more about Africa and also his years here too. He came here when?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He came in 1960 to the United States but he made four trips to Africa and back within a period of two, three years finally in 65' he came and he has been here ever since.

(I) I know I heard epigram before that about the animals he cared most about was mankind. But I wondered what he specifically meant by that is referring to the uprisings or to something else?

(T) I think he meant in general.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Man in general, this is funny when he came to visit his sister whom he hadn't many many years we are going to take you to a very interesting place they said. So where did they take him?

(FM) to the zoo!

(I)[Laughs]

(T) And he said here had lived next to these animals walking along the road beside them and they won't bother him never, but here they said they were very wild in these cages, he'd walking past he'd be walking past the lions with the tigers what they would roar and make all kinds of noise but there, there they were very mild, very meek.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said in this little home that he had eventually a little house there he had a monkey, a deer, a partridge, a cat, and a parrot. And he said all four of these animals got along just beautifully there was no, total harmony.

(I) mm ok.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He had chimpanzee and he called him Joseph and he'd say, "Joseph bring me a beer". And it would go bring him the beer and it would pop the bottle the cap with its teeth and present it to him and then the Father would say, "get yourself a lemonade!" I guess the lemonade was in bottles and I guess the chimpanzee could go get himself a lemonade. And at night before they would to go bed the chimpanzee would give him a nice big hug and he had his own little courters and he would cover himself with his sheet or blanket.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He had a parrot and early in the morning the bird would get up and go where he was sleeping and it would say "Bonjour senior". And he would refer to him and say, "Bonjour Coco bonjour Coco" his name was Coco and then he would...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He had a boy servant a boy...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He would call for the boy he had a native boy that would help him and the parrot would call "Boy! [Swahili] Boy!" and that would be for the boy to start things rolling make the coffee or whatever.

(I) [Repeated Swahili phrase] is that Greek or...

(T) No that's Swahili. And if the boy didn't come, the boy probably want to sleep a few minutes longer the parrot would get pecking until the boy got up.

(I) [laughs] what was the parrots name again?

(T) He said there was a paradise there and he said it was a physical paradise a natural paradise. So he had no entertainer so you had to make your own entertainment so you had your pets and your little animals they had no cinema, no television.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Gramophones you wind up the gramophone that was about the only thing for music records.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Gazelles...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said there's in those years when he was there Africa was loaded with game. It was just a paradise a hunter's paradise. The man he used to go village to village with had a double barrel shot gun and it was the season for turkeys, wild turkeys. Well he shot at two or three of them and missed. It was raining and drizzling about that time and these wild turkeys had a habit of getting up to this little known trail and they would feed on the gravel and the dirt they just loved that. So as they got into their little truck the man was disappointed because he didn't have any turkey but as he drove down this little trail up ahead they saw 50 to 100 of these turkeys just bubbling at the gravel. And the chauffeur the driver who just step on the gas I guess he eventual wound up with 15 of them.

(I) Just ran into them with the vehicle.

(T) Yeah and they put them in the truck took them to a native friend of theirs who was down the road and they man was very happy to see them he said I will kill my best goat and we will have a nice goat dinner. And as the hunter, the companion of the priest said never mind we have our own food. The man was a gasp when he saw all these turkeys. So the natives got the turkeys and they cooked them and they had a real feast and in the meantime his foot began to itch. And it bothered him to the point where had to take his shoe off and his sock off and his guest say what's the matter what's the trouble. He said my foot itches.

(I) Now this is Father whose..?

(T) Maybe his guest the host said maybe you have Tukutu. The father said what is a Tukutu and he hadn't been there long enough to know it is some type of a... insect that burrows itself under the skin and within a very short time it will lay its eggs there and once those little eggs are hatched it really raises havoc with your... usually they embed themselves...get into the base of your foot. And it can be very dangerous, very painful. If this condition is allowed to go on so the host called one of his natives a lady and she came and looked at it to verify that yes she said it is Tukutu. So they got real hot hot water and they had to put his foot in it and then they took a needle and the native lady I guess she was sort of a midwife or...

(I) a nurse...

(T) a nurse took this needle and...

(I) Public health nurse.

(T) Public health [laughs] and then the needle all the way around the circumscribing this area where this Tukutu was and eventually gouged it out in its entirety but they wanted to be very careful weren't to disturb the eggs that had been planted there. Then she got some hot Vaseline and...

(FM) [Greek]

(I) Petroleum!

(T) Petroleum period! I wondered. I thought it was petroleum jelly but just regular petroleum. And heated it and poured it in this little area where she had removed this Tukutu

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Start of Interview

(I) Ok the birds would come down start from that the birds.

(T) The birds would come down and be very very close cat but the cat would pay no attention.

(I) And they would lay on the cat I heard you...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) There were all types of... one day he took a little walk down this trail or path and his little, his pet partridge went along with him. All of a sudden this wild cat, a wild cat, spotted the partridge and went after and went to jump on the partridge, the partridge leaped sensed this danger, leaped from the ground and flew up on the Father's shoulder. The cat continued, jumped

on the back of the Father and its talons got ahold of his robe and there were natives nearby, that natives came with sticks and killed him, the wild cat right there.

(I) How large of the animal was this?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) The hit it on the head...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) A little larger than a house cat.

(I) What about a size of our lynxes then?

(T) Probably but he referred to it as a wild cat.

(I) Yeah ok.

(T) His little partridge his pet was saved. Needless to say his robe was torn. [Laughs]

(I) [Laughs]

(T) But the animal wasn't after him it was after the bird! Sorta antitheses to the harmony with his home with his cat and the birds.

(I) Looks like tame cats got along wild birds but not vice versa.

(T) He said some other time he will tell you about the boa. The boa constrictor.

(I) The Boa constrictor?! Now you can't just leave me like that!

(FM) [Greek]

(T) It was a Sunday they went to celebrate. Oh they brought the gramophone I don't know where they were going. He and the president of the community and several other people...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) They went to this village where there was a lot of Greek fisherman. The lake was called Abler Lake. And they had the, not the kerosene lamps but the ones with the little mantel.

(I) Yeah those are carnosine lamps. Or the modern one is Coleman which is a gasoline lamp but would have been a kerosene lamp.

(T) They would suspend them on tall poles but they would lead them far well where the light had been diminish. Because they would be left alone to eat without problem and troubles of the flies. The flies would gather around the big light and they would never eat in peace. Anyway after they ate and they listened to the music and talked the presidents' wife said I'm very tired I'm going to lay down and sleep. Well they had these little huts so she went to sleep...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) The lady went to lay down on this woven like a hammock. She just wanted to rest. And she felt the movement underneath this...it began to shake so she got up and looked down and beneath this so called hammock was this huge boa that had coiled itself and was sorta resting there. She was actually laying on top of that on just a hammock between them. She got up and screamed and hollers and ran out of the little hut towards where the rest of the people conjugated. The natives came running, the natives came with spears and killed it.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He stayed there overnight and they gave him a flashlight in case he wanted leave the premises for the night. So he got up in the middle night opened the little door where the steps to the ground and as he shined his light to see where he where was going he saw another huge boa. He said it was...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) Fortunately he did not step on it because all you had to was step on something like that and it would crushed you. So he let out a holler before he went any further hollered for the native host...

(FM) [Greek]

(T) I think like 250 pounds. He said when he hollered for his host who in this little hut. Come come. What is it? He told him there was a boa constrictor on the front step so he immediately went the center of this little are, this little village and there was this huge bell. And that bell was used to waking up the fisher early early in the morning to go fishing. This was 1'oclock in the morning when this bell went off so the natives jump up all the fisher came and he told them what was wrong so they all came there with their spears and he felt very very bad that they had to destroy such a animal this reptile. He said its skin was beautiful thing to see but it was pierced with about 50 different spears had he step on it by accident it would have coiled around him.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said they are quite a commodity as far these boas. They do destroy them, kill them they do it by the head, the head of the animal because they like to save the skin for commercial purposes.

(I) I wonder why boas is there some special reason why they came into that area?

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said this particular area was known for many wild animals. Hippopotamus, lions, crocodile he said beyond the imagination.

(FM) [Greek]

(T) He said it's a sight to behold to see a crocodile resting on a sandbar with his jaws wide open! And a bird or two would be there picking the meat from its teeth and the crocodile won't touch the bird or just it's a natural sequence of events apparently.

(I) One of those symbiotic relationships.

(T) And the birds feed off of the crocodile's teeth or the food that has lodged there and not even both the bird.

(I) I'm going to have to go...

(End of tape)