Travel Journal

Destination:	Solomon Islands – Honiara
Start date:	19th January 2006 – 11th May 2006
Traveling companions:	IDG Contingent 16/AFP & Police
Goal of trip:	Repatriation of bodies (murder victims)
	Exhumation of Bodies (murder victims)

26th January 2006

I traveled to Tasmania Village which is a very large area with several villages along the same stretch of beach on the weather coast of Guadalcanal and 5 -6 kilometers east of Isuna. Paul Harrison (Vicpol), Duncan Hall (NZ) and Robert Saoki (RSIP) were my companions for this leg.



We were well received by Chief Phillip who was aware we were coming to see him in regards to the exhumation of Peter Leku.

The villagers wanted a ceremony after the exhumation (which was not going to happen) we talked and came to an agreement that we would have the ceremony when we returned the body not during the exhumation. All of the villagers were happy with this outcome of 2 x 20kgs rice for the ceremony. They also added that they would like 1 netball 1 volleyball and a couple of soccer ball, 2 x 20kg rice, 3 bags sugar and 2 liters of kerosene for their church lanterns.

What they want

2 x 20 kilo rice
3 bags sugar
1 volleyball
1 soccer ball
1 netball
2 liters kerosene

What they will get

2 x 20 kilo rice
2 soccer balls

1 net ball or volleyball

The boys were pleased with the outcome from the meeting and we are ready to go ahead with the exhumation.

Next trip for the days was Chimba village east of Mbambamakira, we were dropped of at the airfield and picked up by High school (Hiskiula,Tongan) on the quad, it is amazing how many people can fit on one of those bikes we had the five of us and highschool is a big boy.

January 30th the exhumations at Village We got to the river; the river split into a secondary and took a good 10 minutes to traverse. Highschool took my backpack and put it onto his front with his own on his back and then held out his hand to take a hold of mine so I didn't fall over, much to the disgust of the others who had to do it on their own, secretly hoping I would go for a swim.





We then walked onto the village, where we were met by the mother of the boy that was murdered, 1 whole leg missing and no top on, she started with the upset hiccup cry they get when they are in mourning. The boys left me to it while they looked for her sons for talking. Funny how they whinge when you go on the jaunts but leave you to it when it comes to grief.

Present, Duncan Hall, Paul Harrison, Robert Soaki and Sue Curby. The family wanted 15,000 sol for compensation for digging up the grave. I would pull the boys aside and tell them loud enough to be heard that something wasn't going to happen this way or that. In the end, we told the family that we wouldn't pay any compensation for doing our work, we would just leave the body where it was, and the killers would walk free because the family wanted money from us to do our job. In the end the negotiations ended up with, us asking for help from the boss for 5 bags of cement and I told them that we would give them 2 bags rice for the ceremony when we returned the body (which they are entitled to but didn't know about).

We walked back to the river and Highschool held my hand and took me across, while the other boys continued to be little sookies because of my preferential treatment, and when we did arrive back at the quad, Highschool told the boys he would take me back to base and then would come back for them, boy didn't I cop some for that. I was sitting at base with a couple of blokes I know, when they arrived, sucking on a piece of fresh pineapple and getting my feet dry, and then to cap it highschool took my boots and put them into the generator room to dry. That did it for Harro and Duncan, they asked him why he was treating me like a princess, and he said very simply, that as an elder I should be shown the respect, the boys didn't start picking on me again until we got into the chopper and out of ear shot from highschool, I personally don't think either of them wanted to take him on, far too big.

Next week is going to be a very big week, we go back to Tasmania village for a dig, and because it is the weather coast we take all camping gear and food for 2 days in case we get caught, we then have

another dig on Tuesday at the back of China town, but that is another river crossing and it hasn't stopped raining for a couple of days, so maybe that one is off, then another at Bonegi beach on Thursday with the autopsies being done on Wednesday and Friday.

January 30th the exhumations at Tasmania Village

Present, Paul Chambers, Mark Chandler, Duncan Hall, Paul Harrison, Clifford, Richard, Robert Soaki and myself Sue Curby.

We arrived at the village and were accepted really well, I did notice that there were no women and children present on the beach this time, only the men. The forensics boys arrived on the Super Puma and we traveled on the Bell which is smaller, this should have been an indication of what the day was going to bring for us, the pilot was fiddling with all the knobs and delayed the take off for about 15 minutes before deciding he was right to go. The trip was not the most pleasant I have been on, we were being dropped from great heights and then thrown sideways, happy to say the landing went well, we off loaded and then waited for the other chopper to arrive.



The photographing and dig went well, and after only a couple of hours we knew we would be out before lunch, if we could get through to Provincial. What we didn't know was that the phone lines were down and there was a massive storm front coming our way. You can really see frustration coming through when you are trying to ring someone and get nothing for your trouble. Mark was starting to put the body into the bag when the storm started moving in,



it was moving fast and we really did have to get out of there, when the villagers are getting worried, you know you have a problem. We were able to finish off the exhumation and packed up most of the gear when the storm hit, we were sand blasted the coconuts were flying straight off the trees, that is if the trees weren't falling down around us, we had nowhere to run, up the beach and across a little river, then turn around and come back to the small shelter which was being held down by the locals, and then a quick dash through the bush to a little village where we sat the rest of the storm out, completely wet.




Duncan tried to call Provincial again with no luck, so he rang Canberra and was able to get through. Provincial told us to call again in an hour and a half, so we sat back and waited. Because I am a girl I have to be careful about what I do and I really needed to pee, and women can only go in certain places, and because I was already wet I stood under the communal shower and did my pee in there. The boys knew what I was doing and took the piss when no one was listening.



We had coffee and ate our sandwiches and gave the rest of the food to the village as it was only small. After a while the boys went off in different directions to explore, leaving me to look after the gear. Paul got the men and women together and started playing his tricks for them; they loved it and tried them all amongst much laughter and yelling. Duncan rang Canberra again and they put us through to Provincial who informed us that we would be staying the night, so there was a big discussion as to where we should sleep, one of the blokes suggested a hostel (go figure, where that would have been) we ended up at the church which was big enough but only just.



We were setting the tents up when we saw the next storm come across the ocean, The wave in front of the wind was roughly 4 meters tall and when it hit the land the wind decimated a couple of villages in the valley on a 65 meter front. This one was a lot more fierce then the last one and even in the church we got wet.



The locals built me a lovely toilet over a running creek with poles to squat on; problem was that everyone can see what you are doing, so I borrowed Chandler's bright yellow jacket to use as cover (much to his disgust). I also made him be my lookout. The chief came up to inform us about the damage to the villages and also to tell us that the waves were breaking over the coffin on the beach, so the boys organized the chief to have it moved higher up, wouldn't look good if we lost the body now. Harro kept asking us if we were having fun yet, and the usual comments about the travel agent lying about accommodation and weather. I must admit the boys were somewhat unmerciful as far as I was concerned they thought it good sport to ark me up until I swore in the church, not that it worried me too much. We had enough food to share and dinner was a long process because we only had the 2 trangiers. The locals also looked after the RSIP so no one missed out.

The chief came up for a chat and he sat next to me outside, he wanted to give me a live chicken to take back to my village as a thank you for my kindness, he reckons my heart is very good and caring, unfortunately I couldn't take the chicken so we negotiated and came the agreement he would catch me a nice fish when we bought the body back for burial, this was the only way I could get out of not offending him. Night came on really quick and we only had my light and although it was bright I had it set up wrong, so Paul set it up for everyone's use. The Problem was when the RSIP went to bed they couldn't turn it off and the light went into its second stage of continual blinking which drove everyone crazy. Duncan finally put it out, we were in bed by 8.00, I really have not seen darkness like it, and there was no light from anywhere. The night was long and a couple more wind and rain storms came through which kept us awake for most of the night. Morning came and we thought we were going to be staying for the day again, the wind hadn't eased much and the rain kept coming in, I really needed to pee again and took Mark's jacket and snuck out, half way through the pee I heard Mark calling me and turned around to see his head bobbing up and down looking in the direction of the bloody beacon I had on my back, another one of their set ups, I asked him what he was up too and he said simply that he was my look out, bastard.



The boys went down to the beach which was about a kilometer away to see how it looked for landing. I stayed with the gear again (I see a pattern emerging here) the pikinini's and women were curious about the white women sleeping in the church with all the men and started coming over to have a look, the youngest pikinini first while the others hid behind the bush and after they saw that I was able to converse in bad pidgin the others came out not to talk just to look. The little girl who came out first told me the chopper was coming before I could even hear it, a couple of seconds later I did indeed hear it, so dived into the church and started a mad pack of the tents and other gear.



The boys came running up from the beach and told us we had about half hour to get packed and down to the beach before the chopper came back for us. We did a runner for the beach with the locals carrying my gear yet again, the chopper arrived and there was a lot of thank you flying, we had our photo's taken with the locals and a fair well and off we went, the flight back wasn't as bad as the day before, I think that the pilot was more experienced and made it easier.



On our arrival at the airport we were greeted by Dean Gorrie who informed us that we had to do the other dig today because the family is waiting and it has been put off already, all we wanted was a shower food and sleep. The deal was to meet at 1200 for a game plan.

Duncan Hall (NZ) has now decided he wants to be an Aussie and is showing Igor (Harro) his impression of how Skippy goes – mind you Harro has also become an honorary brother to the Long White Cloud, wearing a Kiwi shirt and being proud of it.





Tuesday 31st January

China Town

We headed out to China Town for the next dig, we had the Forensic pathologist and his purple haired assistant it was raining and we had yet another river crossing to do only this one was dirtier then any I had seen because it was so close to town.



This exhumation was for Walter Tarai who was beheaded and buried at a place called alligator beach, the story the family told us was that they were told where Walter was buried and where his head was put, which one of the murderer's had taken and stored under his house with several other heads., the family went to the house and asked for his head back when they originally dug him up. We just hoped he gave them the right head. Anyway the exhumation went well we had 4 PS blokes guard us as the family thought they might have problems from the village next door because that is where the murderer lived. When I say next door I mean 30 feet away, not far enough if they attack.



It poured with rain for a good part of the exhumation (wet again, I was lucky because I spent the time under the shelter of a deceased person with the mami of Walter) but we were lucky, the body was in a body bag donated by the Red Cross. We found out after the autopsy that there were 5 different people in the bag, but predominantly one person, general consensus is that he was only in the grave for six months and would have been smelly, so when they took him out a couple of other poor people buried below him stuck to his body, hence the extras. The pathologist has said that what the family doesn't

know won't hurt them, so we are giving him back minus the extra bits. The exhumation over, we filled in the grave and was given a hand across the river, where we got a lot wetter, because of the rain it had risen. The pathologist and assistant love betting, generally on what might or might not happen, this time it was to see if the forensic truck could get up the hill with the weight in the back without being towed out, Malcolm won again. The truck got three quarter way up the hill before it got bogged.




As you can imagine we were pretty tired from the last 24 hours so it was straight back home for a shower a feed and then bed.

Thursday 2nd February

Haralabau Village – James KUKI exhumation

Exhumation 3 was held about 36 kilometers west of Honiara, and possibly the worst and hardest. As soon as I arrived at the scene Harro came over to the car and said Curbs, get out, wailing women needs attention, I cannot believe these guys are not able to handle these women; I had her quiet within 2 minutes.




We had a cement block 12" inches thick with reinforcement in it, we tried to pull the slab off with the truck but it wouldn't move so plan B was implemented, break it up. That didn't work too well either, all it did was ruin the slab, which we were suppose to put back onto the grave (because no one else can be buried there according to their culture) I could see this was going to cost us so spoke to the wailing

women's husband and negotiated 5 bags of cement and 2 bags of rice, if we had to break it right up.




One of our blokes decided we should try the winch, why we didn't do this earlier I don't know but it came straight off. So I had to go back to the negotiating table, we are down to 2 bags of cement and 1 bag of rice, and Felix will fix the grave himself. We got the body out after 5 hours of digging and dragging, when the boys were ready I stood next to the sister of the boy buried and held her because she looked like she was going to jump into the grave with the boys, I was glad I did because we were nearly both in there, wailing and screaming and straining to jump, I am strong but slippery muddy feet are no match for the things they call feet, one of theirs is two of mine wide and high, but sheer strength prevailed and I won. As soon as the body was out she stopped, and smiled at me (what's that!! was she having a funny joke at me).




The above photos are of the exhumation group, and the river we stopped to wash off in. Notice the little Toyota Corolla on the other side, the driver went through knee high water on the bridge backwards so that the motor wouldn't get wet, some of these people have a good eye and mind, it is just a shame they don't use it all the time.

After the day the boys made an executive decision and called at the bottle shop and bought beer, while I stopped at Panantina and got some cheese and bickies, we had our shower and had a few beers and then went out to dinner with the Pathologist and his assistant. What a day.

The last 2 weeks have been filled with just routine work and getting the next lot of bodies returned to their families, Duncan is now my sidekick because Harro has had to take over the Signify case and cant help me out, but the best thing to come out of working with Harro is that we are now friends and not enemies, his mission was to see how long it would take to give me the shit's, and it didn't work. All good fun of course and now our mission is to drive someone else crazy that would be the team leader Bob Tait. Harro received this office challenge by email, and you had to do stupid things for a day like for an hour call everyone Bob, or invite someone to see you in tights, or move the furniture around in the office so people couldn't find anything. It got us into a little trouble, but it is interesting

to see everyone having a good laugh because 2 idiots were trying to outdo one and other. I won, so Harro had to buy me a drink, it did lighten everyone up, some days the stress does get to people and this took their minds off their stress.

Wednesday 22nd February

Ghaliatu Village – Weather Coast
Duncan Hall, Wendy Anne McHale (WAM), Robert Soaki and Sue Curby




What can I say, this place was unbelievable, clean, well laid out and friendly. The problem with this place is that we have many targets that are wanted and the friendly villagers hide them knowing they are wanted. When we arrive in the helicopter most of the baddies do a runner, but they didn't worry about it this time. We weren't in any danger and when the families found out we were returning their loved ones we were inundated by villagers. After speaking with the family we still had 3 hours to waste, and in that time I had 1 woman come up and ask for help for baby who had the "squirts". All I had in my first aid was some gastrolite and that is what I gave her. Then another women approached me with a tropical ulcer on her hand which had eaten the flesh to a 20 cent piece and down to cartilage and bone, gross, I had some out of date bacterial cream and showed her how to use it. Then the chief's wife came to me and told me how she couldn't move her neck, so I massaged it and put some voltaren gel on it, she said it was so much better.




Above are the supreme chief Gibson and his wife Alice and their family, along with their home. While WAM and Duncan interviewed the family of the victims I wandered around the village with Alice. When the interviews were finished the chief went and got me a stretcher and told me to sleep (like that was going to happen) the others thought it hysterical. We had 3 hours before the chopper came back for us and it is normal for the villagers to have a rest mid morning. We just sat under the meeting tree and the chief got us some banana's to eat, and bit by bit the rest of the village just sat around us and talked and asked questions. I sang "I want to have a beer with Duncan" and they would

laugh and then someone else would join us and I would have to sing again, and we know how badly I sing, but they just thought it was great. There is a saying here which means g'day, it is Pongpongi and the response is Doh, well I would do a Homer Simpson "Doh", the kids would squeal and laugh and they kept saying it to me so that I would say doh back at them. It is just the simple things in life.




Notice the young girl to the back right, she is called a nuffy, not all there; there are plenty of nuffies here.

March 3rd 2006

Ghaliatu Village Return of Jimmy LASI and Christopher TOVA

We arrived early again, but the difference this time was that the villagers were really civilized, no rushing the helicopter to drag the coffins out, and no wailing.
We had 8 strong boys ready to take the coffins when I instructed them to, not when they were ready to.

We had everything off the chopper, and removed the coffins from the military caskets, and then the wailing started, one women being the look out for us moving into the village. They had placed themselves into a semi circle around a tarp over 2 tables where we had to place the coffins. It was probably the most well organized funeral I had been to, the chief had everything down to when the women could wail to the arrival of the chopper, and if anyone stepped outside of this then there was trouble.




The brother of one of the boys came up to me before anything started, he had written out a program for the day and discussed what they wanted to do and if there was anything that I would like to add to the

program. I said we would like to make a response speech to one of their speeches, which was added and agreed on. So we started with the formalities of the ceremony, which pretty well followed all the others I had done, except for the part where they wanted us to open the coffin's, we did tell them that it would not be good for the women and children to see what was in the coffin's, but suggested the chiefs and elder's look first before deciding. So Duncan and I did what was asked of us and started opening the coffins. People were pushing in on us and the chief had to remove everyone back so we could do the job.




We finally got them open and the kid's started to move in, and I had to be forceful about the kid's, the chief then told me the kids would not be allowed to look and after that they were pushed away by the women, the mother and father of both boys started their wailing again and touching the bones of the boys and asking why this happen, the rest of the villagers did the same one by one but en mass, chasing the kids away the whole time. I must admit that it was different, but then I cannot speak for the culture of these people, the mothers both worked themselves into a state where the other women had to wash them down and calm them so that they could walk to their houses and finish with the ceremony (which meant the coffins staying in their huts overnight).
Once the coffins were removed to the huts, everything went back to normal, the villagers who were not related or effected by the funeral just sat around the boys and myself and just watched what we did, and they also bought out refreshments, pineapple, melon, bananas and coconuts.

Chief Gibson's wife invited me back to her hut, and it became evident that she had something for me, what I was given is something which both horrified and honored me, it was a traditional necklace with what I first thought was dog's teeth, but later found out were in fact dolphin teeth, I also was told that it is not normal practice for the chief's wife to give such a gift unless the person is held in high regard, so I am a special person after all.




We lounged about while we waited for the chopper to come and reflected on the morning, Duncan did his usual Haka impersonation, that is slapping his chest and sides during his speech, I think it is a nervous thing, and it helps him think about what he is saying. Did I mention that I had the seat of

honor, they put up a tarp with a seat in it so I wouldn't get hot, look at the photo. Above the little bloke in traditional dress was just so cute, his pants were made out of home made bark/paper and rope.





March 20th 2006

I had a women seek me out about her son who was killed on the Weathercoast in 2002, her story is that she last saw him when he looked after her when she dislocated her leg for 3 weeks. After that she had been out at the garden and a child handed her a letter saying that her son was going to Honiara and that he would be back home in 12 months. That was the last she saw of him, She left her husband to come to Honiara to seek her son out and was told he had been killed not long after he left the village, so she started to look for his remains and didn't get very much information until she spoke to RAMSI in early 2004, and that is when we exhumed his body along with 6 other boys. What she wants now is for his return and she also wants to take one of his smaller bones for her personal reminder of her son. I am thinking of trying to clean up the bilum that he had on his body when he died, this was his mothers given to her by her grandmother from PNG and was the only way we were able to identify who he was, I think it is a nice gesture and will pursue it.

I also did and autopsy on a little girl who was only 18 months old and had mummified because of starvation from her step mother, there is some likelihood that the stepfather is actually the father, and the niece is the 02, normal for here, anyway the child had wet the bed and the stepmother whipped her and we believe she died of the injuries and a bit of shaking, but nothing conclusive, such is life

Tuesday 21st March

We have been requested by CPPF to do an exhumation for a film crew from SBS on Policing in the Pacific, so we organized to exhume a body we knew we wouldn't be able to do under normal circumstances. Cheating I know, but when the opportunity presents you take what you can.

So off to Simeraku village on the Marau Sound, most eastern part of Guadalcanal, and to be honest the most beautiful, they have white sandy beaches and the water to look at is pristine and the most awesome blue, down side is the sand flies, tiger sharks and crocodiles, there was a little girl taken about a week ago, they are still looking for her body and the villagers believe that she swept out to sea, they think the crocodiles are their friends and would never take one of their children, the crocodile is one of their tokens, and they have their customs around them. The trip was a helicopter ride for 40 minutes and then a 15 minute boat ride to the village. We then had to do a small hike to the grave. After checking out the area we decided it would be good to have forensics go around the back of the Island to get in closer and we would take the film crew through the village and walk in, nasty I know but they wanted to see the day in the life of the police, and they are going to get it. Did I mention we

had to have 2 ORT (operational response team) for our safety, the area is very sensitive and we have to be very careful and on our toes at all times.

We met with the Film crew and logistically it is going to be a nightmare, we have 4 film crew, 4 forensics, 2 body repatriation, 3 investigators, 2 ORT and 3 knobs who want to get into the film. We all have to look after ourselves as far as camping gear incase we get stuck, then we have to have 2 helicopters with one making 2 trips, 3 boats, and one helicopter to drop our camping gear at Avu Avu, which they will drop off if it gets hairy. After they were told what they could and couldn't do, we talked about how they would have to behave when in the village, I threw in that if they would like to make an impression they should buy some rice, which went over really well with the crew, and Sarah reckons that I am the most devious person she has ever met, why, because the son of the man we are exhuming asked for 2 bags of rice for the exhumation, and I told him that we would only give rice for the repatriation, this way he gets it or both, and he will know I organized it, but will save RAMSI face by having the television crew hand it over.

March 22nd 2006

Just on the woman that turned up last Monday, I found out today that her son was killed by her brother, and guess who that was, Harold KEKE. She doesn't know he killed her son, so it should be interesting, because the other 6 boys were also related to Harold Keke by either being direct family or prick relations. The more I read about him the worse it gets, no wonder these people don't trust anyone.

Saturday 25th March

Exhumation of Cedric HAIRIU from Simeraku Village, Marau Sounds. Early start, we had 18 people going to the dig. I had the GBR crew in my car, and the rest met us at the airport. We had 11 in one chopper and the rest with the coffin in the other chopper.

The film crew left before us so that they could get a footage of us getting out of the chopper, and then onto the boats, Sarah had already decided who was going with the coffin, that was Paul Chambers, myself, Salathiel Sau and smiley our ORT protection, and in Sarah's boat was the film crew and another ORT man, my sidekick Gino was left standing with the knobs to wait for one of the boats to go back for them. Traveling across the water the film crew filmed us all the way; it is really hard to pretend normal when someone is in your face with a camera whilst you are sitting on a coffin in a boat that feels like it is going to tip over. And if you even looked like you were talking then they would try and grab the sound. Paul and I were talking fishing so I guess anything on the sound would have been wasted.

We arrived at the village and the same thing, the crew wandered around the place filming, which was alright it meant we were left alone.

We had about an hour to wait for one of the family members to arrive along with our guys who were left behind. Once everyone was there we moved out, so Gino, Paul Sal and myself on the boat and the rest walking through to the grave.

It is amazing how many people want to get on the camera. We had ample diggers, generally the families want to help, but Paul was having none of that. Mark Chandler, who would normally run the dig, is being sent home for some tests, he was pissing blood, so Paul was running the site, and what he said goes. Graeme Arthur, who is my coordinator wanted to help dig, so that he could say he was filmed or that is how it seemed to me, fair bloody dinkum, there really are some wallies here. But the

funny thing is that when Graeme got into the grave they stopped filming.

By the end of the day we had had enough, it had been an extremely hot day, and with the dig over and done with we packed our body up and put him into the boat and left for the airport, we couldn't go back into the village with the body as it would have been bad luck. So we left the others. We got to the airport and unpacked the boat, everyone helping, a small wave caught the boat and it landed on my foot which pushed me over onto my arse into the water, Gino kept saying Curbs where is your camera, my reply was that it was safe in the bag, no I want to take a picture. Bastard, he said that was the highlight of his day. After an hour the others arrived and we settled down for lunch, which was at 2.00pm, then the film crew wanted to do an interview with Mark Townsend and then Paul Chambers. And this is when you can see jealous nature coming out., Graeme Arthur started harassing me about why Mark Townsend was being interviewed instead of him as the head of National Investigations, Mark was across the case and because Sarah is a Kiwi she couldn't go on TV for several reasons, the main being that she had worked 5 years as an undercover cop and cannot have her cover blown. So Graeme missed the boat, much to my delight, I think that maybe a few people lost a lot of respect from me that day because of their prima donna attitude.

The highlight for the day would have to be the helicopters, we were tired and wet, it had been a long day, and we heard the choppers before we saw them, they came across from the ocean with their lights on and they drove straight at us, their fly over would have been no higher then a coconut tree, the kids were ducking and screaming and running away, we just stood there with our arms up in the air yelling, the feeling and the noise of the choppers doing that was just the most unbelievable thing I have had happened here, they finished their fly by and did a total turn around in the sky and came back to pick us up, the head chopper pilot was Paul, our Vietnam Vet, mad bastard, we got in with him and he must have realized we needed some extra fun, so we buzzed a couple of villages, that we have a couple of boys we want there, that was to let them know that we are still watching them, and then Paul took us inland a little bit and we looked at the most beautiful waterfall, it was so high up, and dropped into a pool half way down and then continued down to the next level, and then he turned around for the other boys on the chopper to get a photo, it is one of those places that you will never be able to access, so it was special just for that.

Sunday 26th March 2006
TENARU FALLS

You would think that after a big week a person would take it easy, no way, there were 12 of us that headed out to Tenaru Falls; it was about 10 kilometers inland on a flat easy walk with 10 river crossings each way. Possibly the funniest/crazy day I had. We got lost, this was before we even found where to walk from, then the guide found us, we crossed what can only be described as a deathtrap, and I was the driver, the bridge was about 12 foot from the river, 6 foot across the middle with a 2 foot gap running down the guts, and a couple of rims stuffed into the larger holes for good measure, the bridge was also not level and had humps which could make you bounce over the edge. The boys (and I) just held their breath when I went over it. The second bridge was not as impressive to look at but was just as dangerous, it had loose wooden planks on it, so I just floored it. We finally arrived at our destination paid our 40 SOL for the walk and headed straight out. What they call the track over here would be condemned in Australia, there was a lot of erosion along the river and we had to step easily or fall in. we went alright for a while, I started to get stomach cramps and needed to go the loo, also a bad thing in the bush here as there are none, we got to the next village and started to cross the first river, when Phil fell in, I work with Phil in Sydney and he would have to be the fittest person I know, so we cracked up, when we got to the other side, I asked an old women where the women's area only was and slipped into the bush, I had no shovel and had to do it like a local except I had antibacterial wipes as paper instead of bark, god I hate crapping in the scrub, everything is wet and bugs always

crawl all over you. The others had a smoko while they waited for me. The guide then took us up through a village where we were stopped by the village elder and told to pay a fee for walking through the village. I told him no straight up; he argued that we walk through the village and look at his wantok and that they need compensation for the invasion. I told him no, we paid the guide for the walk and that the problem belonged him to get the money from the guide. Phil told him that we would spread the word and that RAMSI would not walk up there. I then just said to him, Olgeta disfela bai uimi go stap wakbout lo car, iu save, olgeta no getium moni, bai olgeta disfela wakem lo fall, iu fela save getium moni. Translated, we go back to the car and get our money back (inference) everyone misses out, or we go forward and maybe you get your money from the guide, but we will not talk about it, do you understand. We left them to it to discuss which is normal, they could see a double sting wasn't going to work, no extra money was handed out, so off we went, we walked to the top off the hill and found a mud slide to walk down, it was about 15 foot of rutted crevice that was slippery as all hell, I was behind the guide and could see as well as feel that the trip down was going to be hazardous, I nearly fell a couple of times and thought bugger this, I went down on my bum and just slid down, some of the others followed suit, except for Phil again, who fell, it was impressive and cracked us up again. Another crossing and the crux of the walk, we kept a pretty good pace and had 10 river crossings all up and 10 kilometers inland we finally hit the falls. It was so worth it, Twin falls in a massive pool, the spray was hitting us 100 feet away, the water was cold and refreshing and everything was slippery, for modesty we left our clothes on and no one took their shoes off, for safety reasons, all the boys, about 9 of them, swam to the other side after seeing Hightower (Jeff Hithorne or Jacko's little brother) climb half way up the falls, yelling take my picture, look at me. No way was I climbing up there, it looked like it hurt, so the kiwi chick Donna (who has a broken wing, a boy hurt her arm in netball) went and swam in the pools. We stayed for half an hour because it took us an hour and a half to walk in, and some of the group needed to be back to play sport or work, so we headed off.

The trip out was just a wrought with danger as the trip in, I forgot to mention the fallen logs with the little hot ants (smaller then fire ants and hurt more when they die on wet skin), which we had to climb over, and the closer we were to the falls the faster the current was in the river, Phil slipped again and then we lost Tony Shearer and Daniel Muscat, I was lucky, being the eldest I had them all looking after my welfare, some of the OST blokes would grab my arm or hand and held on, so no swim for me. When we got closer to the village that wanted money, we left the track and traveled downstream around it for about a quarter a klm, after such a long walk this is very tiring, but strangely refreshing, except for the fine sand and rocks in our socks. We made it back to the cars, and headed home, too late for lunch, so Dan said I have sausages in the fridge so we had a BBQ on the breezeway and stole some bread from the kitchen for sandwiches.

The dangers of Tenaru Falls

Getting lost before we get there
2 bridges that should be condemned second was just loose planks
Little mud pools to drive through and then big hills to go up on the other side, very slippery
Eroded tracks
No toilets
Being stung for more money
Slippery slide hills
Little brother fire ants
Fallen logs on track
Fast running water

The positives are the falls and how beautiful this country is at times, if people just opened their eyes

and looked.

After the BBQ I decided for a nanny nap, and knew I had a problem, it was about 1 ½ hours after getting back, my heart was missing a beat and I had chest pain, so I had a sleep for 2 hours and got up had dinner about 6.30 and spoke to Gino about my problem and told him I was going to walk over to Aspen Medical at about 8.30 and if I didn't come back, I knew they would keep me in, then he was to tell the boss the next day.

I was actually having an extra beat, not missing a beat, and they thought it was angina; so on goes the heart monitor, in goes the needle into the hand and let the tests begin. I stayed overnight and was told the next morning after I had been prodded jobbed and listened to that I was being repatriated back to Australia, they had no facilities for heart patients and that they needed to make sure there wasn't a blockage. I just cried, and jumped up and down and told them I was feeling alright, I went crook for not having the right to decide, and in the end I had no choice, I was going back with another heart patient (Allan Sutherland) a penis/kidney problem (Mark Chandler) and a torn bum hole (Graeme Blay our welfare officer) not a homo.

The staff at the hospital started to get the shits, I had so many people come in they made me sit outside; it was very emotional even the Commander came over to see me. When they released me on Tuesday so I could pack, I had people coming to my room every ½ hour to say goodbye and check on me, now I know how bad it is going to be when I leave in 6 weeks time, if I get back to Solomon's.

Outcome of visit to Brisbane I have inherited dad's genetic heart condition tachycardia, now on tablets, the condition was bought on in PNG by a flu / virus I had there for five weeks.

Burial of Miriam SANDY San Cristobal Island Makira Provine, OreOre Village - Back at work and straight into it, we organized the return of baby Miriam to Makira Province on San Cristobal Island. Miriam was murdered by her step mother; she whipped little 18 months old Miriam for pooing on the bed, and as a result Miriam passed away. When we arrived there the step mother was making the normal wailing noises but not heart felt like the eldest daughter who was truly distraught, the father (and yes I believe he is the true father) was also very distraught, so it was a hard day, but we made a lot of headway with the locals. We left the family to have their mourning and went back into OreOre village to talk to the locals there and exchange food stuffs and stories, Gino now has a pikinini named after him because the dad (I believe he was stoned, I could smell the dakka on him) like the sound of Gino's name, so the little bloke of 12 months old is now Gino.

Burning of Honiara Tuesday 18th April 2006

We started work as usual me at GBR with the intention of working from Rove after lunch. All went to plan. When I was leaving GBR I was told by JIG (our spooks) to avoid the area of Parliament House, but as that is at the back of Honiara I had no worries. Work went well and we started to hear that the natives were getting restless groups of so at 3.30pm I told Gary Williams, my new help that I was going back to GBR, he decided to come with me. We got to the prison gate and big Al told us that there was a rumor shots had been fired, to drive through town as fast as we can. You could see there was a problem brewing as soon as we got close to town, there were groups of 30 and more local youths running around or just standing and watching, they would move and merge, then when we got into middle town it started to get mildly hairy, they could see 2 police in an unmarked vehicle (our saving grace) they would run towards us but we were able to move on, we got to central market and the crowd in there was definitely ugly but again they only realized we were coppers when we were moving off, just as we gat past the big roundabout to take us out of town we heard a siren and allowed a troopie to fly past, we later found out it held 2 of our boys who were wounded (our boot camp

instructors to be precise) Dan had a brick hit him in the face, it pushed his jaw out of alignment his left cheek is swollen by double and he has 5 stitches in his face, but he signed himself out of Aspen and went back to work on Wednesday (that's tough, he is not even taking drugs) same for Ash, he has several stitches in his head and a really good black eye but he is also back on duty, their choice.

We heard a call for help and officer down just after the troopie past us, there was an injured police officer who had been ambushed by 30 (at the time of the call) rioters, when I saw young Sean at hospital that night he said they had 30 looters in front of them and when they turned to retreat, another 30 odd came out of the chemist and ambushed them, he had his shoulder dislocated after some of the rioters threw chunks of cement at him, Sean was repatriated home, along with another bloke in his early 20's who had his face smashed with concrete ended up with a broken jaw and no teeth.

The night was long and the stories horrific, we had acts of bravery which will never be recognized and leadership which will not be heard of by the bosses. The bravery consisted of several of our undercover police swimming in Chinatown river, with the sewerage and garbage to save a couple of Chinese stranded on the back of their houses over the river while the flames licked at the front and the rioters moved in, the whole of Chinatown was razed by fire, and the locals who stole everything will make living for the honest people hard because there is no rice or food left. We anticipate that when Parliament sits next Wednesday if the new PM doesn't resign there will be a vote of no confidence and the shit will hit the fan again. We had 5 blokes cornered at the Pacific Casino Hotel before it was torched, they were accidentally left behind, and they were actually saving about 15 expats that are visiting here, the mob cornered them on the beach and the boys pulled their guns, so the crowd backed away but didn't disperse, the boys hailed a boat and they got everyone into the boat and came back to GBR that way, not a shot was fired. With the rioters, the rocks were so big they used home made slings to throw with, very lethal and their shots always hit the mark, some of the boys had awesome injuries to the head, and funny as it might seem it was the tallest, Jason Edwards a kiwi copped one above the right eyebrow, he has the best black eye and about 10 external stitches with several internal.

Dan Finley who has now been sent back to Australia with a suspected broken cheek bone, and Ash Holmes also went back home for ex rays with suspected internal head injuries. My job at the moment is to look after the welfare of those that were in the muck of it from Tuesday though to Wednesday night, book them in to see the psych and just sit and talk through what happened, it is the beauty of this job is that they all know me and are willing to open up, and that is what makes the difference between talking to a friend and feeling like you are being analyzed by a psych, so I get more then she does, but I don't tell her because they talked to me as a friend.

The guys in PSII would probably have had the worst trip, they were surrounded from about 1500 and all they could see was looting and rioting even then, they watched as the rioters set light to one of the hilux's and then roll into one of the businesses, which made them fear for their lives because they were looking at doing the same to their office. The rioter's then surrounded the building, and was moving in, and this is the scary bit, PSII look into the Internal Investigation of corrupt Police, and no other business was targeted, so it makes you wonder who put them up to it. Some of the locals held the roller door down to stop the protesters from gaining entry and finally at 1600 help arrived for them (the help had been in different parts of Honiara and were either blocked or targeted by the rioters) the guys drove their car thru the roller doors which the locals opened the PSII guys jumped in and then the rock pelting started, they shook the troopie and showered rocks on them, there wasn't any windows on the troopie left by the time they arrived back at GBR and the boys and girls were very shaken.

It doesn't matter who you are in this situation everybody has a job and they work together, we have been going since Tuesday morning, up time was 5.00am for me, we worked through until 1.30am next morning and were up at 5.45 to start again, and that has been the routine since, we are tired,

overworked and starting to make mistakes, yesterday I booked 8 people into see the psych at 8.00am, it happens but shit happens. I have kept my sense of humor because I haven't been out in it, and it is amazing how much difference it makes to those that have, yeah we are tired, but we are here to support one and other and that is all that counts at the moment. Along with working from early until 7 at night I then work the bar selling soft drinks and smokes (we are dry at the moment due to the curfew imposed in Honiara) people want that sort of thing. We are getting a lot of flak from locals saying we were too tough and others saying we were too soft, we cannot win. We had more injuries then the locals because we were just overwhelmed by the pure force of the rocks and cement throwing. There are a lot of hero's and hopefully the will be recognized for what they did.

I floated around China town with forensics, we were looking for bodies of course, but to date there have been none found, there may be one or 2 in the river but we will never see them, there is a lot of garbage and also crocs, so if they are not reported missing we wont see them. There were 80 businesses burnt and looted and they would have been the major hirers of locals, the Chinese have fled and the businesses closed or just in ruins, the infrastructure is very weak at the moment, no jobs so the 10 percent who did have work have now lost it, there is no food suppliers, so food is a premium and there is the corrupt government that has yet to be elected, it is sad all way round. If the next chosen Prime Minister is not liked we will have the same problem as last week.
Sogavari was elected to the cheers of the locals, but his government elect includes the two we jailed for inciting riots, and Dausabea was put in as the Police Minister while Te'e was put in is a Tourism minister, what a crock of shit, both will do all they can to undermine the work we have done, we will lose the Commissioners job as well as be in line to be removed from the country, this country has now well and truly screwed itself.

My feeling on the Old and new Prime Minister Rini, being kept in GBR with their families pissed me of, we had no protection and if word got out we could have had a problem which Will Jamieson never thought of, we could have been hurt really badly, no guns and no help, stupid move on the commander's part.

The final days were tied up with farewells the airport was very emotional, I had the girls from PNG crying and holding onto me, and the RSIP I worked with were also there, along with some of my work mates. And so ended my trip overseas.