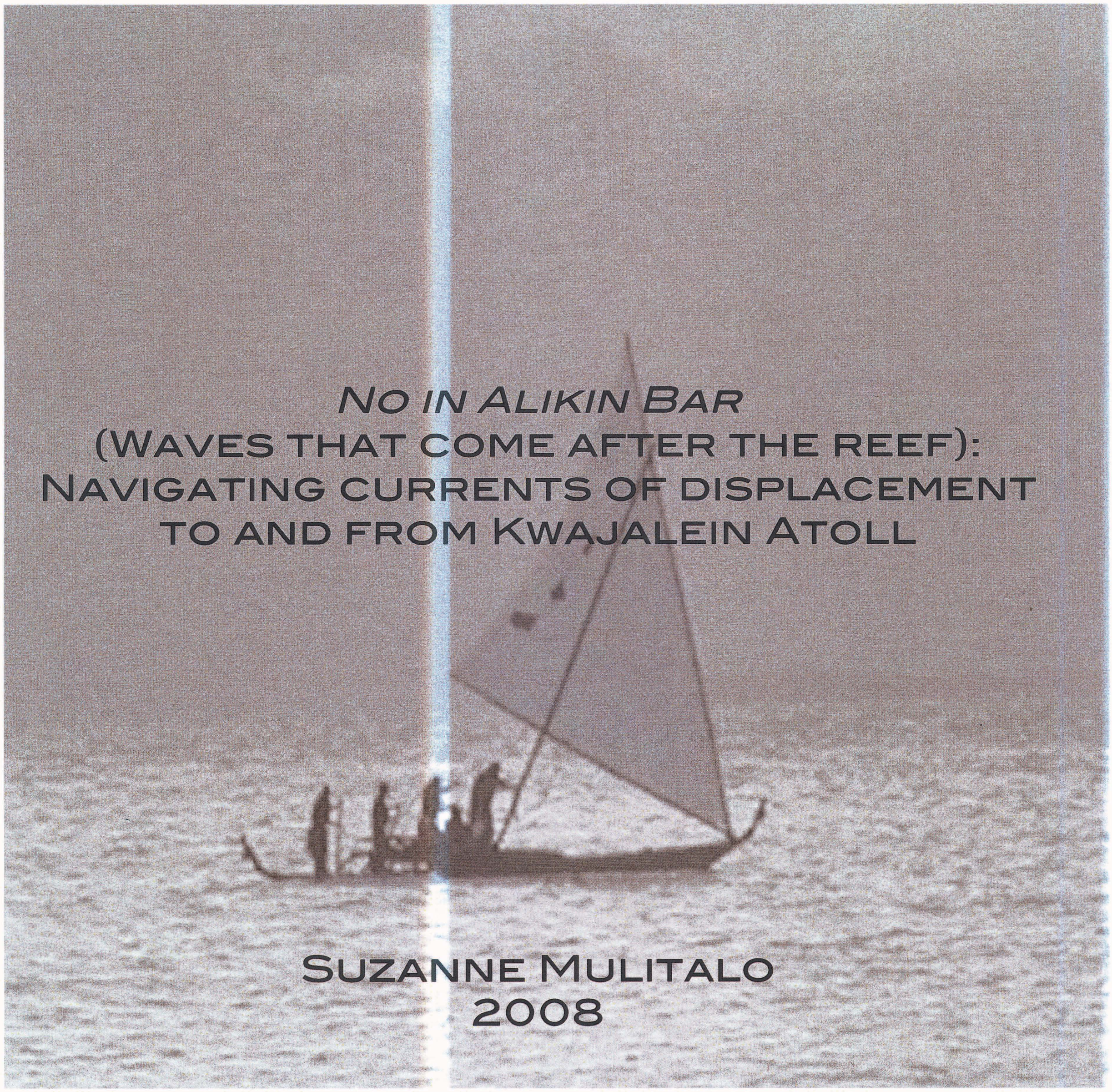

No in Alikin Bar
(Waves that come after the reef): Navigating currents of displacement to and from Kwajalein Atoll

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PREFACE

Although I did not know it at the time, my fieldwork began in October of 1990, when my family first arrived on Kwajalein. My father's two-year contract has turned into 18 years and counting. I lived on Kwajalein until I graduated from Kwajalein High School in 1999, and returned every Christmas and summer break for the next four years.

It wasn't until I used my experiences as topics in my writing class at the University of Southern California that my future was realized. A professor of writing was intrigued by my cultural experiences and my insight into the Marshallese culture. She encouraged me to continue writing about those experiences and to consider going into Anthropology. After much thought, I applied to the Center for Pacific Islands Studies program at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

I began this project as a second year Master's student at the Center for Pacific Islands Studies. Life however, interfered, putting more time and distance between me and my memories of Kwajalein and Ebeye. I married my boyfriend Time, who is from American Samoa in 2006 bringing into my life a stepson, Faoa whom I love and adore. In July of 2007, I gave birth to a baby boy whom I named Dwight after my grandfather. It is only now, 2008, that I return to conclude this project for consideration as partial fulfillment of my requirements to obtain a Master's in Pacific Islands Studies. This space of time and distance has allowed me opportunity for reflection, enhancing my insight with regard to the Marshall Islands, more particularly Kwajalein Atoll.

Genealogy has always been an important part of Marshallese culture and as more outsiders become members of the Marshallese social community, genealogy begins to go beyond the biological and into the social, placing people by their social connections. In

the process of research, a new connection between the Marshallese community and myself has emerged. The biological mother of my stepson, Faoa, is Marshallese and while I was always aware of the fact, I was not familiar with her family tree. I heard mention of relatives before, but it wasn't until I read the community survey of Ebeye by Jack Tobin, that I began to piece things together. A women named Aun was listed in the survey with an asterisk next to her name and a note stating that she was a major *alab* or landowner at Kwajalein. When I asked my husband about it, he told me that indeed this was the same Aun that Faoa called *bubu* or grandma. In fact, Aun and her husband adopted (by Marshallese standards)[1] Faoa's maternal grandmother. As we spoke more about her family, my husband told me of the biological family. Faoa's mom is an Anjain. Her father died of cancer from radiation exposure when he was on Rongelap. Faoa's grandfather was John Anjain, the mayor of Rongelap at the time of their relocation and an outspoken leader who stood before the United States Congress trying to get compensation for his community for suffering caused by the atomic testing and relocation. Knowing all of this gives me greater motivation to create a scholarly piece that can benefit not only academia, the Marshallese people at large, but now more importantly, my son. I want him to know of the legacy of his Marshallese ancestry.

In this project I will explore the multiple dimensions of displacement at Kwajalein Atoll. People have been displaced to and away from Kwajalein. People of the nuclear affected atolls including Bikini, Rongelap, Enewetak and Utirik were relocated from their

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[1] From my experience, due to the close proximity of the community, adoptions are very fluid. Children know who their biological parents are and quite often remain in contact and participate in family gatherings with both their biological and adoptive families. Adoption is not as permanent and rigid as in the U.S. where there are laws governing contact between the child and biological parents.

home islands in order for the United States to conduct atomic testing. Residents of the island of Kwajalein and Roi-Namur as well as from the islands that make up the Mid-Atoll Corridor of Kwajalein Atoll have been moved to allow the Kwajalein Missile Range to function. Even marine life and the water that circulates the lagoon has been affected by displacement as there are numerous World War II and nuclear affected vessels on the floor of the ocean. Often ignored are the people who lived on Ebeye before people from other atolls were coerced into relocating to there. Lastly, I suggest that (we) Americans who lived and worked on the Kwajalein Missile Range have also been displaced; from our home prior to moving to Kwajalein as well as when we relocate back to the United States after our tour[2] is complete.

As I have grown older, I have struggled with many realizations as to what the United States government has done to the Marshallese people and their islands, as well as my passive role in the continued displacement of Marshallese which has lead to the overcrowding of Marshallese inhabited islands at Kwajalein Atoll. It has taken distance and time coming to terms with my experience and issues about which I write. I expose not only my heart and soul, but also those of many of my Marshallese and American friends through the research and interviews presented in this project.

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[2] "Tour" is military jargon for the period of time spent on the installation or base. Although Kwajalein is made up mainly of civilian contractors and their families, many terms utilized by the Army are common.

INTRODUCTION

KWAJ-A-WHERE?

It was a nice weekend during the middle of the summer before my fourth grade year. We had lived in Cullman, Alabama all my life, going to my grandparents on weekends, playing sports with the same kids since we were small. My brother was a Boy Scout, took art classes and played baseball. I was a Girl Scout and enjoyed ballet, baseball and choir. Our life in Cullman seemed complete and we were happy, living in a large two-story southern home with a playhouse and sandbox in the back yard.

One evening, my mom and dad sat us down and told us that we were going to relocate for my dad's new job. They quickly pointed out the positive aspect of the move; my dad, who usually traveled a lot for work, would no longer have to travel. Even when my dad wasn't traveling, he drove about 100 miles round trip for work each day. At my dad's new job, he would finish work around 4:30pm every day and his commute would only be five to ten minutes. The thought of spending more time with my dad was exciting, until they told us where exactly we were moving.

Kwajalein, a small atoll in the Marshall Islands, was far beyond the realm of my imagination. What was an atoll anyway? I had never heard of the place and certainly couldn't imagine leaving everything I knew behind to go to a strange and far off place that I could neither pronounce nor find on a globe. There was no reason I would have voted to move to Kwajalein, but at the age of nine, I didn't get a vote. My parents had decided that we would be moving, and so we did.

HOME AS SITE OF RESEARCH

I did not travel to Kwajalein for the purpose of research as the traditional anthropologist or ethnographer does. Neither did I arrive in hopes of "changing the world," through ministry or education as do missionaries and volunteer teachers. As a researcher, I did not position myself in the locale to which I examine. I was positioned as a result of a financial, career, and family move that my parents believed was right for our family. Although Linda Tuhiwai Smith finds much of the contributions of outsiders to Pacific Studies as alienating to the native people, I feel that because I grew up in my place of study, adapting to local custom and culture, not just studying it, I am able to provide a unique viewpoint (Wesley-Smith 2003).

Having resided outside of the Marshall Islands for nearly 10 years, only returning to visit my parents who continue to live on Kwajalein, I have been able to reflect and analyze my experience. Now I find myself exploring memories and searching again or "re-searching"[3] my years growing up on Kwajalein as I develop a different perspective. I enter and exit my field of study under several guises; first as an outsider, later as a member of the community, afterwards a visitor, and lastly a researcher. I take note of the fact that each time I enter or exit the field, it is with a different purpose. By realizing the purpose, such as returning from college or vacation, I can frame the specific experiences of that time. I contend that as a child, I was displaced from my home and moved to Kwajalein. After graduating from high school, I was displaced from Kwajalein, a place that had become home. Because regulations do not allow dependents of the contract

[3] Because I am coming back home and examining not only a historically documented past, but my own, I have conducted a different kind of research, by searching again through memory, experience and such.

worker to reside on the island after high school, I was forced to move off of the island after graduation, though I had already planned on attending college regardless. After college, however, I was still not able to return to my "home," and therefore had to create a new home which I have done in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

As for those displaced to Kwajalein Atoll from elsewhere in the Marshall Islands, they traverse the boundaries of identity as Bikinians, as radiated victims, as residents of Ebeye—all different pieces that make up the whole. The idea that we are "always yet never at home and always yet never at ease" (Rapport and Dawson 1998, 6) is something that provides insight into the "survival on Ebeye" (LaBriola 2005) and on Kwajalein. Being on Kwajalein provided the comforts of home, but also uncertainty as to when it would cease to be my home. Although I don't live there anymore, I still feel actively connected because of my parents' continuing residence. Once my parents leave, it will no longer be my home with things in my room at my house . The place will still be a home to me, but more so in memory. If I were to go there after my parents leave, there will be no sign of our existence there. Our house would either be empty or someone else would live there.

My reference point for community is not limited to Kwajalein and includes both Kwajalein and Ebeye. As Renato Rosaldo points out, "Human beings cannot help but learn the culture or cultures of the communities within which they grow up" (Rosaldo 1993, 26). As I grew up on Kwajalein I included Ebeye as a part of my community. Many American children and adults isolated themselves on Kwajalein, allowing only for interaction with Ebeye through the Marshallese who commuted from Ebeye to work or

attend school on Kwajalein. I am a "Kwaj Kid," as former and current Kwajalein residents and Marshallese alike know us. It is important for me to differentiate myself from the average Kwaj Kid because of the extent of my relationship with the Marshallese community that I grew up over the years. The culture that guides me is not genetic; it is learned from my interactions, and my interactions with the Marshallese community.

Sharing my experience as not only a researcher, but also as a "Kwaj Kid" provides not a sole truth or reality, but an experience. My understanding of Kwajalein and Ebeye as they relate to one another and the implications of the existence of the Kwajalein Missile Range for Ebeye have developed from the innocence of adolescence to the maturity of adulthood. I do not wish to provide a romanticized *ribelle* or American view[4] describing the Marshall Islands as only "beautiful beaches strewn with breadfruit, coconut palms and pandanus" (Levy 2003, 68). In a way, I too am a victim of the American government. When we moved there, they didn't tell us that we would live in a beautiful suburban-like setting while the original occupants of the island would live next door in shacks and makeshift homes. I think we all fell for the "good of mankind" speech.[5]

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[4] *Ribelle* is used much like the Hawaiian word Haole or the Samoan Palagi. Although historically the word was used to describe foreigners because they wore clothing and possessed many material items. The term meant "having lots of things"

[5] In a number of accounts of the relocation of the people from Bikini Atoll for the purpose of the U.S. atomic testing, U.S. officials asked the people if they would move so that the U.S. could conduct tests for the good of mankind. Further description of those accounts follow later in this thesis.

METHOD

AN INVITING STORY

> *For anthropologists and other social scientists, the Pacific Islands area has often represented a giant laboratory to pursue the esoteric questions and concerns of their disciplines. While many become deeply involved in the affairs of host or subject communities, most of the knowledge produced from their research takes the form of scholarly monographs and papers destined to be consumed by a narrow circle of specialists whose material, cultural, and intellectual lives are far removed from those represented in these studies (Wesley-Smith 2003).*

I look to provide a qualifier to the above statement, through my knowledge growing up in my place of research as well as through the relationships I cultivated prior to my research. I accept that I will never be a Marshallese person or be able to fully see through such a lens. However, I will also never be able act as an unbiased outside researcher. As Vilsoni Hereniko expressed with regard to straddling two cultures, it is important to realize and accept both sides and form a "hybrid… and accept one's identity, and to embrace a multicultural self" (Hereniko 1995, 7). By understanding my hybridity, I validate my history with the place as an integral and necessary component of my research. My experiences are not only necessary but bring credibility to the various points I represent for they are based upon years of experience as well as years of reflection and analysis.

My goal is to provide something that can be understood, appreciated and applied by those in academia and those outside, especially for those I write about. Julie Walsh inspired me with her distinctive piece, *Imagining the Marshalls: Chiefs, Tradition, and*

The state on the Fringes of U.S. Empire (2003). She adeptly wove a narrative about her experiences with analysis that was both academic and inviting.

Following Walsh's lead, Greg Dvorak and Monica LaBriola, colleagues of mine from Pacific Island Studies, fashion their work with a narrative of their own as they deconstruct their experiences on Kwajalein and Ebeye. Dvorak's thesis entitled "Remapping Home: Touring the Betweenness of Kwajalein (2004) faces his feelings of "betweenness" as he relates his experiences on Kwajalein and Ebeye, and then New Jersey and Japan. His work takes the form of a guided tour, providing both physical and analytical maps of Kwajalein. He integrates film and photographs with his written piece, providing a cutting edge presentation of academic work. Experiencing his multi-media piece, especially for the "Kwaj Kid" (which I will explain later), evoked feelings of nostalgia, and a longing to recapture childhood moments. Dvorak provides keen insight into the social structure of Kwajalein as well as unmasking many of the euphemisms that make up the concept of suburbia on Kwajalein.

In her thesis titled, "*Iien Ippan Doon* (This Time Together): Celebrating Survival in an 'Atypical Marshallese Community'," Monica LaBriola relates her experiences of Kwajalein and Ebeye from the "other side" of the Kwajalein/Ebeye community. She resided on Ebeye first as a Jesuit volunteer and later a public school teacher (2005). LaBriola, examines survival, relating to culture and social interactions on Ebeye and with Kwajalein. She relays her work through processes of Marshallese culture such as *bwebwenato* (talking stories or conversation) and cultural events like the *kemem* (first birthday party of a child). LaBriola is able to bring to light an American perspective of

Kwajalein not from within Kwajalein, yet not as an outsider such a visiting journalist or the like. Her position is therefore unique.

Yet another former Kwaj Kid, Robert Barclay wrote a book entitled *Melal* (2002). Through fiction, he draws a picture of the experiences of Kwaj Kids and Marshallese and uses Marshallese legends to provide interplay between American and Marshallese cultures. As members of the Kwajalein or Marshallese community, our "interculturality" brings a unique flavor to our interpretation of the complexities of Kwajalein Atoll. We all reside in a borderland" somewhere between outsider and insider (Harrison 2008, 17).

Through my research and production of academic and creative work, I hope to complement the pieces mentioned above and continue to increase the growing collection of scholarly work about experiences on Kwajalein and Ebeye. I choose to use ocean navigation as my framework for an examination of Kwajalein Atoll. Jim Hess, produced a piece entitled *Wave and Reflection: Charting Marshallese Participation in Globalizing Processes* (2003) in which he utilizes the Marshallese concept of waves and their reflection off the shores of islands as illustrated by the curved pieces of a Marshallese navigational stick chart. While Hess focuses on the reflections between the diasporic community in Costa Mesa, California and the homeland, I focus on a different aspect of navigation; specifically the currents that approach the island. I utilize the structure of currents to relate different experiences of displacement in Kwajalein Atoll. The rendering of a Marshallese stick chart illustrates the zones of currents the canoe must travel to arrive at an island as well as to depart (Spenneman 1998). I imagine a canoe

making its way through the currents to the island, spending time there, and then journeying away from the island. Following from the example of the stick chart, each section of my thesis provides an examination of a specific group displaced within Kwajalein Atoll, as well as experiences on Kwajalein and Ebeye as all of these arrivals and departures take place.

LaBriola and Carucci (2006, 1997) utilized Marshallese words and spellings in a more traditional form. For example, Carucci spells Kwajalein as Kuwajleen. I chose to spell the Marshallese words the way I grew up knowing them, so for me, the island is Kwajalein. I use the word Marshallese when discussing the American part of Kwajalein, while I use the word Ri-Majol when addressing situations within the Marshallese community.

The option to integrate video into this project was decided upon after numerous visits to Marshallese events. When trying to describe these events to someone unfamiliar with Marshallese and their traditions and customs, it was not possible experience the "full effect." I wanted to bring a visual aspect through film and photographs to complement the text. The viewpoint presented is uniquely mine, and offers my own "vision of reality" (Banks 1998, 15). When dealing with many of the viewpoints of Ebeye, physical descriptions are given while few pieces provide photographs or visual evidence. I provide a window into the Ebeye and Kwajalein that I experienced, though it may not be the same for others. Marcus Banks describes the use of images in anthropology as:

> An exploration by visual; through the visual, of human sociality, a field of social action, which is enacted in planes of time and space through objects and bodies, landscapes and emotions, as well as thought (Banks 1998, 19).

Marshallese people are storytellers, leaving much of their history to be passed down orally. Since technology has advanced, it is important for me to advance the art of oral histories by utilizing video to capture audio-visual histories. These moments in time are captured through images and sound, allowing for a continuation of the oral traditions of the Marshallese culture.

KWAJALEIN ATOLL

Kwajalein along with many other islands make-up Kwajalein Atoll. Each island has reef that surrounds it, stretching out several hundred yards. During low tide some islands are connected by exposed reef. The Reef creates a habitat for marine life as well as protection from incoming waves.

Sci-Tech Encyclopedia provides the following description of an atoll:

> *The reefs vary in width from narrow ribbons to broad bulging areas more than a mile across. The structures form a most effective baffle that robs the incoming waves of much of their destructive power, and at the same time brings a constant supply of refreshing sea water with oxygen, food, and nutrient salts to wide expanses of the reef (Atoll 2008).*

Figure 1 The coral reef provides protection to the small fish (Photo by Dale Mayo)

A reef can be both protective and destructive in nature. The reef protects an island from being engulfed in high white-capped surf. It also can be dangerous; vessels often run a ground when caught over the reef when the tide goes out to sea, leaving the vessel damaged by the rough and protruding pieces of coral reef. Navigating to shore can be difficult and requires careful planning and consideration of the tides and weather. When the tide is high, the reef is a temporary ocean floor, but when the tide goes out,

sharks and other marine life, can be trapped in tide-pools on the reef.[6] They must wait until the tide returns allowing them to swim freely into the open waters. For some, living on Kwajalein is like being stuck in a tide-pool—trapped without a way out. They are not comfortable knowing that there are only three flights per week confining them to a small horseshoe shaped island. Growing up on Kwajalein, I always felt protected and sheltered. The most common crime was someone "borrowing your bike." The reason we called it borrowing was that usually someone would take it because they were in a hurry, not as a malicious act. You could usually go to a list of places and look, almost always finding it within a day or so. Whether protected or trapped by the reef, like the tide, people were always coming in and going out.

[6] Mostly man-made, tide pools are holes dug in the reef, usually be dredging. When the tide goes out, the reef surrounding the tide pool becomes like a pool deck, allowing for walking around, but the water is not deep enough for swimming.

NO IN ALIKIN BAR
(Waves That Come After The Reef)

When leaving an island, the same wave and current patterns are encountered as when approaching an island, but only the wave and current patterns of the approaching island are closely watched. For example, using the illustration, if a boat sailed from the island in the south, the boat would first encounter the jukae (first zone of currents-nearest an island), then dibukae (second zone of currents), and last jejelatae (third zone of currents - farthest away from an island).

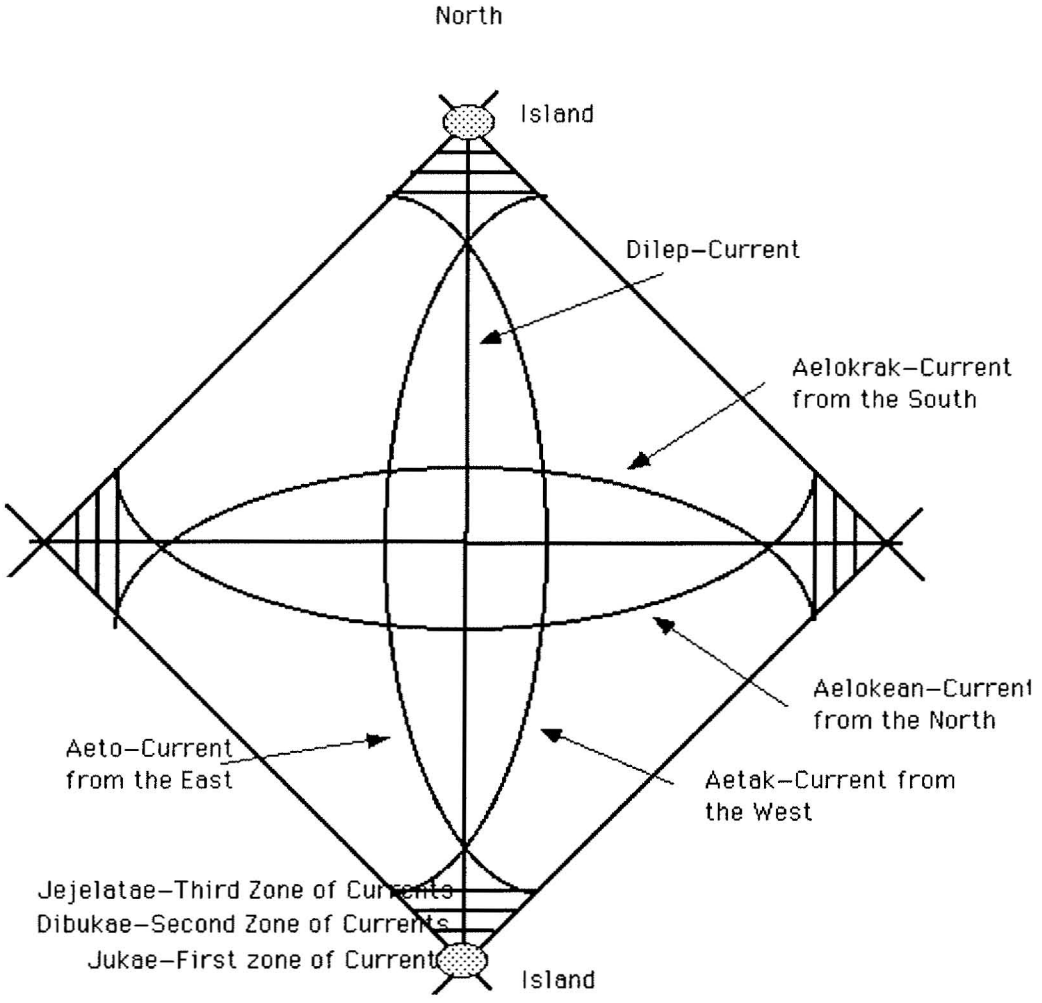

FIGURE 2 Wappepe (Marshallese Navigational Stick Chart (Spennemann 1998)

All three of these waves together are called no in alikin bar (waves that come after the reef). As the boat proceeds north it will encounter the place where the aeto (current from the east) and aetak (current from the west) meet. At this point the boat will roll back and forth from front to back with a harder roll to the back of the boat then the front. The type of ocean at this point is called limaajnono, which means

choppy seas. Then the boat continues northward and the captain constantly makes sure they do not cross over the aeto (current from the east) or aetak (current from the west), which would mean they were off course.

Next hits the aelokean (current from the north) and then is again in calmer water where the boat mainly rocks from side to side. Then the aelokrak (current from the south) is encountered.

At this point very close attention is given to the waves, for the people in the boat know they are now beginning to approach the new island although it is still very far away. The boat proceeds north and hits the place where again the aetak and aeto meet. At this point the boat rolls back and forth with the front roll of the boat being the strongest, for again the ocean is limaajnono (choppy). This signals that the island is getting close. When the jejelatae (third zone of currents) is encountered the people know they are on course and the island is nearby. Usually the island is visible by the time the dibukae (second zone of currents) is hit. Then the jukae (first zone of currents) appears and the island is very near. There is also a type of wave called dilep which the boat follows when leaving the island until arriving at the new island. All these currents can be seen and felt by experienced sailors. Many Marshallese sailors could lie in the bottom of a canoe and sail by the feel of the waves and currents. Today many of the older men and a few women can sail in this manner but since few tipnols (sailing canoe) and walaps (large sailing canoe) exist anymore, sailing between atolls is becoming rare (Spenneman)

Struggle is attributed to these currents, while triumph can be felt after weathering each one before tackling the next. This is true of the experiences of displaced Marshallese people who journeyed from one island to another, accepting the fate created for them. Somehow, through the struggle of displacement, the triumph of survival is celebrated through social interactions.

The sections of this project follow the patterns of currents beginning with the outermost current or *jejelatae.* This section signifies coming to Kwajalein and an introduction to the Kwajalein community. The second or *dibukae* explores "Kwaj Kid" connections to an atomic past, while the last current jukae examines the U.S. strategic goals of the Kwajalein Missile Range and the affects of military operations on the entire

atoll. While on the island, one must *jambo* or cruise the island, as I deconstruct my experiences on Kwajalein and Ebeye growing up.

The second half of my project begins with *dilap* or leaving, in which we again encounter three currents. This time, the *jukae* is first as I discuss leaving Kwajalein for college and experiencing the diasporic community in Costa Mesa, California. I struggle with the realization that I can no longer come and go on Kwajalein as I once had for I have been transformed into a visitor. I also overcome the stereotype that *ribelle* on Kwajalein "don't like Marshallese." The *ribukae* comes when I moved to Hawai'i to study and after getting married, realizing my stepson is connected to Rongelap. I also return for the first time as a true visitor with the role of researcher rather than returning resident. After *ribukae,* again comes *jejeltae* where I relate my struggle to "let go" of Kwajalein to the struggle of the people of Bikini, Rongelap and the Mid-Atoll Corridor as they yearn to return to their respective homes. I also look at the former "Kwaj Kids" who could not let go and returned under contracts as singles or with their spouse and children.

I conclude with the *Aelokean* (current from the North) and *Aelokrak* (current from the South) as they come together in the ocean. Here I consider those who search for connections to the past, through cultural activities or reunions.

JEJELTAE
(Third current from the island)

MOVING TO KWAJALEIN

As I recall, my elementary school grade level was made up of about 120 students at East Elementary School of Cullman, Alabama. The entire school was predominantly white as was the town of Cullman. I remember Rochelle, the only black[7] girl perhaps at my entire school, lived in the orphanage. The color of her skin was different from mine, but for me her more distinctive characteristic was that she was an orphan. I guess, other than the movie, *Little Orphan Annie*, I really knew nothing about orphans or orphanages. We used to pass by the large plantation style home where Rochelle lived and I always wondered what her life was like inside the orphanage.

I suppose then, when I arrived on Kwajalein, the distinctive characteristic of the Marshallese students on Kwajalein was not their skin color either, but the island they lived on and traveled to after school each day. I wondered what it was like on Ebeye, but only had to wonder for a few months. We moved to Kwajalein in October of 1990. That Christmas, we traveled to Ebeye with another American family to see the Christmas festivities; Marshallese are well known for their energetic celebrations.

Once when my family visited California, I crossed the border to Mexico. I remember the experience as depressing; seeing children younger than me (I was 7 then), singing and asking for money. Their faces were sad and dirty, a sad and somber life that

[7] I use the terms "white" and "black" rather than Caucasian or African American, because those were the terms used during the period when I was growing up.

made me sad too. Places like Mexico were described as "Third World." As we became oriented with Kwaj, some residents described Ebeye as Third World. When we stepped off the ferryboat that took us from Kwajalein to Ebeye, I half expected to hear children somberly singing and asking for money and for that sad feeling to come over me like it did in Mexico. After disembarking from the boat, the only feeling that came over me was queasiness in my stomach from the boat ride. The children we did encounter didn't ask for money or seem sad. They were happy and full of life, eager to show us the way to the churches, though they did ask for gum or the rest of our sodas. Neil Levy, in his tourist handbook describes them as "poor, charming, beautiful; they smile easily" (Levy 2003, 68). Though simplistic in nature, Levy's description seemed to illustrate my first encounter with the people of Ebeye.

In the United States, there are some who never leave the comfort and security of their suburban life, avoiding the inner city for fear of being uncomfortable, or simply to remain in a state of denial. Many Kwajalein residents went diving, participated in sports and led active lives in the Kwajalein community, without ever stepping foot on Ebeye. This avoidance has led to criticism and judgment upon them. For some, they felt no reason to venture onto the ferryboat to Ebeye while others experienced feelings of fear and discomfort at what they would find.

EBEYE

The island of Ebeye is situated about two miles north of the island of Kwajalein. Standing on the northernmost point of Kwajalein, the waves roar in from the ocean side

to the lagoon. From this vantage point only the outline of Ebeye is visible, slightly hindered by the islands of Little Bustard and Big Bustard. The two islands are inhabited by only a handful of people. They are very different worlds socially and economically. Ebeye houses nearly 15,000 people, with only about 1,000 of them working on Kwajalein. The rest of Ebeye's residents either work at their family's store, the bank, the hospital, teach at the schools, work for the government or are unemployed. By American standards, Ebeye is dirty, overcrowded, an urban ghetto, and an uncomfortable place to be. It's important to understand exactly how Ebeye became this "slum" in the middle of the Pacific.

Ebeye did not create itself, but was in fact created as a result of the United States' militarization. After the Trust Territory was first set in place directly after World War II, the American administration began centralizing secondary education in district centers and provided minimal services to the outer islands. The result was an educational incentive for families to move, thus creating urban centers (Allen 1997, 21). As the Kwajalein Missile Range was constructed, Ebeye magnetically attracted people from the outer islands and other atolls. They came to get jobs on Kwajalein, and were attracted by the free movies put on at the Coast Guard station, and the idea of a more glamorous life. From 1954 to 1972 the population of Ebeye grew from 981 to a whopping 5,500 (Tobin 1972 2). That is the reason Rose Capelle moved from Likiep after visiting her sister on Ebeye during the 1960's. The excitement of things like running water, electricity, stores, soda and other amenities brought in by the Americans attracted more and more people to

Ebeye. I conducted an interview with Rose Capelle during my fieldwork on Kwajalein in April of 2005. A portion of the interview is contained on the accompanying DVD in the section entitled *Home.*

Interacting with Marshallese who lived on Ebeye was both natural for me as I have many friends, but also uncomfortable at times. Sometimes friends would come over to my house and look around at the things we had; all the pictures, trinkets, and non-life sustaining things. I did not mind them coming over, but sometimes felt uncomfortable at the thought of all that we had knowing that they would return to Ebeye in the evening sometimes without power and to a home with only mats or mattresses for sleeping-- just enough to survive.

Figure 3: My mom and I boarding the LCM to attend a celebration on Ebeye (Photo taken by Sue Rosoff)

LCM COMMUTE (View DVD)

This section of the DVD shows the daily commute taken by Marshallese people from Ebeye to Kwajalein and back home at the end of the day. The LCM or Landing Craft Mechanism is a familiar sight. It goes back and forth between Ebeye and Kwaj taking

people to and from work and school, from one world to a completely different one. My Marshallese classmates who lived on Ebeye, would usually get up at 4:30 or 5am every morning to come to school. After school they would participate in sports and other activities and would return home by 9 or 10pm. During the late 1990's and even today, the power plant is not a reliable source of energy. For those arriving home after dark, they would crane their necks to see out of the boat as they approached Ebeye, to see if the power was on in their area.

USAKA (UNITED STATES ARMY KWAJALEIN ATOLL)

Kwajalein is a remote paradise, a country club in the middle of the Pacific. As residents, we did not have to pay rent or utilities. If something broke down in our home, my parents would call the "trouble desk." The "trouble desk" was an office that dispatched the appliance shop, plumber, or electrician to come out and handle the repairs. All of our government issued furniture had a barcode stuck to it. Every few years, the inventory department would make its rounds to every house on the island to make sure everything was still in place. I'm not really sure where they thought we would take the furniture. If one were ever locked out of the house, a call down to the Police Department would do the trick. Considering some of the characters who would come and go at the Police Department, it was a scary thought that they had a master key system that allowed them entry into any facility on the island.

Just like all aspects of life, school was unique as well. Elementary school consisted of Kindergarten through 6th grade, and high school was for 7th through 12th

grades. For the most part, no one skipped school. Those who did usually went across from the high school to a pavilion next to the beach. Inevitably, the school counselor would ride up on his squeaky rusted bicycle and tell the culprits that he was glad they were feeling better and that he would be happy to ride with them back to school. After school, we did not go to the mall to hang out because we had no mall. The usual spots for congregating included the CRC (Corlett Recreation Center) where the basketball gym was, the Namo Weto[8] Youth Center, Emon Beach (translates to Good Beach), or the baseball and soccer fields during game season. On weekend nights families would gather at the Richardson Theater.[9] The theater was built like a drive-in, but since we had no cars, we parked our bikes on the side and sat on benches or on beach chairs. The movie was usually a year old, but gazing at the stars was just as enjoyable as the film.

On the surface, Kwaj was a quaint place to live and a safe place to raise children. It was a comfortable life at the country club. Well at least that's how journalists like JoAnn Wipijewski (2001) described our lifestyle. She even interviewed a few intoxicated singles at the bar who were on Kwajalein for TDY or Temporary Duty. They, like Wipijewski, only experienced Kwajalein for a short period of time on a superficial level. One thing is certain; Kwajalein was not without its problems. There

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[8] *Weto* is the piece of land that runs from ocean to lagoon and *Namo* was the name given to the *We*to of land. The youth center was situated on the last original parcel of land to the north of the island. The remaining land to the north was dredged landfill to allow for a "new housing" section for families. The original housing on the island was cinderblock housing, which after the construction of the north end of the island, the cinderblock housing was called "old housing" and the north end was "new housing." A typhoon badly damaged several houses in "old housing" section on Pine Street. Since then, they've built new houses, which are referred to as "new-new-housing.

[9] The Navy built the Richardson Theater. Stars like Bob Hope performed for troops during the late 40's and early 50's.

were couples whose marriage was on the rocks, so they moved to Kwaj in hopes of spending more time together and saving their marriage. They usually left with a different spouse. There were the parents who brought their delinquent child with them in hopes that the confinement combined with a refreshing island life away from the hoodlums would help rehabilitate them. Those kids would inevitably end up before the Juvenile Review Board having broken a regulation and be barred from the island.[10]

Unaccompanied personnel life on Kwaj was also unique.[11] For the unaccompanied contractor, if he or she were to marry another unaccompanied contractor, they could then share a trailer or Bachelor Quarters (BQ). They would not, however be able to have a baby. If they did, then they would have to move from the island due to the single status requirements of their contracts. Situations like this were not all that common, but would provide a constraint on the freedom to have children. For some, the island community was not so inviting. Sue Rosoff (2008 personal communication) describes her experience moving to Kwajalein as a single adult:

> I felt very much alone when I got to Kwaj. When you come as an unaccompanied person, you have your one room you live in at the Bachelor Quarters (BQs), the Pacific Dining Room (PDR or lunch cafeteria) is the living room where everyone gets together and visits. The unaccompanied "club?" was never a place I felt comfortable hanging out. When we went back to our respective BQ's we were by ourselves for the most part. I often wondered why they didn't have common rooms

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[10] The Juvenile Review Board was made up of civilian and military adults who handed down community service, evening curfew, probation or even a bar from the island for getting into trouble. A bar, meant that the juvenile would have to leave the island either for a period of a year or two, sometimes permanently. In some cases, the parents would send them to live with family; other times the entire family would be forced to relocate.

[11] Contract positions on the island were either "single status, unaccompanied" or "accompanied." There were people who were married and had children who came alone because their contract was unaccompanied.

> in the BQ's like we used to have in the dorms in college with couches and a TV and a cooking area. Once the PDR closed at 7, we were booted out, so unless you wanted to go to a bar or to the beach - which we did. I guess if you went to a particular church you'd get to know people that way. I got to know a lot of women when I joined the Yokwe Yuk Women's Club eventually and as I got to know more Marshallese people I would be drawn into their families. That was my favorite part of being out there. I know in the 60's the unaccompanied people could not be in family housing after a certain time - and I think there was even a gate. (2008)

For many people such as Sue Rosoff, Kwajalein began not as an island paradise, but as a lonely place away from home. For some, there were feelings of dividedness among other island residents, especially the families. Life as an unaccompanied person on Kwaj was particularly unique because there was such a distinction made between the "Bachelors," and the family housing area. As a single, you could not have a family over to visit your room because one had to be 18 or older to enter the BQ buildings. Although there was much freedom on Kwajalein, at times, people like Rosoff felt confined and therefore very unhappy. For her, it was relationships with Marshallese people and participation in the cultural exchanges between the Women's clubs on Kwajalein and Ebeye that were most satisfying. She felt she needed to reach across the water to Ebeye. Others cultivated relationships on Kwajalein, and did not reach out to Ebeye. Some would leave Kwajalein, having never been to Ebeye. Perhaps they were afraid of feeling uncomfortable after hearing about the poor living conditions on Ebeye or maybe they just didn't care. I knew some residents who lived on Kwaj and never traveled to Ebeye. A few of them mentioned that they had no business going to Ebeye. They didn't have any

place to go there and felt there was no need. I suppose then, the relationships with the Marshallese they encountered, never went past the "Hi, how are you?"

For Patrick Lane, a Kwaj Kid of the 1970's and 80's, Kwaj represented an incredible flexing of the U.S. military muscle. He was awed, "witnessing enormous technological triumphs of mankind at a young age. It was a museum of human achievement littered with outdated and current military equipment." Lane, like many Kwaj Kids remembers a childhood of "adventure, mischief, pushing limits" (Lane 1996, 9). Perhaps all of the Army regulations surrounding almost every aspect of life led Kwaj Kids to push the limits, so stretch the regulations and defy the overbearing military rule that was forced upon us. Lane wrote a thesis about growing up on Kwajalein through the eyes of Casey, who one might surmise is the author himself. Casey suffered at the hand of something that tied Kwajalein and Ebeye together – alcoholism. He watched his mother drink herself to death, all the while drinking heavily as a teenager on Kwaj. As Rosoff alluded to above, going to the club for singles was a common pastime of the single people living on Kwaj where a lot of drinking was usually involved. There was never a shortage of alcohol on the island, though different Commanders of the island rationed it over the years.[12] The rationing was usually to keep liquor from going to

[12] The tour for a Colonel who served at the Commander for the Kwajalein Missile Range was two years. Sometimes, residents would count the days anxiously awaiting the new Colonel, while other times, we wished he would never leave. Some commanders would arrive on island and literally undo everything done or put into place by the previous commander. In some ways, it was an exercising of power on the part of the commander. It was always interesting considering there were only about 30 families who were actually military. Some commanders did not like the fact that civilians outnumbered them.

Ebeye and being sold on the black market or setting into the hands of juveniles on Kwaj who could find nothing better to do at night than drink and get into trouble.

RIBUKAE
(Second current nearer to the island)

BIKINI IS NOT A SWIMSUIT IN THE MARSHALLS

Nica, Nani, Junior and Anthony were siblings and *Kwaj Kids* from birth. I knew who they were, and had a class or two with Nani and Junior. Their dad was Hawaiian and moved to Kwaj in the 1960's on a single-status contract. Their mom was Marshallese and lived on Ebeye. They met at Macy's (the military exchange store) where she worked. After they married, he built a house on Ebeye for their family. Anthony and Nica both lived on Ebeye for a time. By the time Nica was one year old, their dad had made his way to a supervisor position that offered him accompanied status so he moved the family to Kwajalein. In 1994, their mother passed away from cancer; she was from Bikini. I didn't understand at the time that their mom had died because of Bikini. A year later, a week before Nica graduated from high school, their dad passed away. After the death of their father, Junior and Nani, were left in an awkward position as dependents with no sponsor. A close friend of their father, "Uncle Bear," and his wife, "Auntie Cindy" took legal guardianship of Junior and Nani. With the permission of the commander of the island, the two were allowed to reside with Aunty Cindy and Uncle Bear until they graduated from high school. Nica and Nani live in Hawai'i now and I have become close to them because of the bond we share as *Kwaj Kids*. They are painfully connected to the nuclear testing and on several occasions have talked about their loss and the affect it has had on their lives. Amazingly, they hold no grudge against

Americans, but rather disappointment with the actions taken by the U.S. in the past (Nani and Nica Rodrigues 2003-2008, personal communications).

Nica, Nani, Junior and Anthony's mom was part of a large group of victims of U.S. atomic testing and militarization. After dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in hopes of ending World War II in the Pacific Theater, "mankind was ushered into the Atomic Age." Robert Kiste points out that although devastating to the people of both cities, this act spurred the desire for the United States to further develop this technology. U.S. military and political leaders began discussing the need to test this technology in a controlled environment. He outlines the following factors used to determine the site for the testing would have to meet the following criteria:

- In an area of the world controlled by the United States
- Uninhabited or containing a small population which could be relocated
- Climatic zone free from storms and conditions of extreme cold
- Presence of a protected anchorage large enough to accommodate both a large fleet of target vessels and vessels in support of the operation
- Site must be at least 500 miles from all sea and air routes
- Quite distant from heavily populated areas
- Prevailing winds must be predictably uniform from sea level to 60,000 feet
- Water currents were not to be adjacent to inhabited shore lines, shipping lanes or fishing areas (Kiste 1968, 1)

Bikini Atoll was selected as the place to conduct what would become known as *Operation Crossroads*. The U.S., having taken control over the Marshall Islands in 1944, was designated to administer the islands by the United Nations. The U.S. Navy administered the islands providing authority to conduct the testing (Kiste 1968, 1).

Fashionistas credit Bikini Atoll for the name of the bikini swimsuit that only covers the most intimate of body parts. For Marshallese people, the event that gave the

swimsuit its name evokes memories of horror and devastation, not sun bathing and beach balls. On one swimsuit website, an explanation is given for the name of the famous "bikini" with the following historical context:

> During the summer of 1946, as the first bikinis were showing up on fashion runways, the first post-war atomic bomb was detonated in the South Pacific, near a remote reef called Bikini. The continued testing of the atomic bomb caused a panic throughout much of the world, sponsoring a flurry of "end of the world" parties. Not surprisingly, attendees of these parties often sported the new bikini-style swimsuits. These parties soon began to be called "bikini" parties, in honor of the Bikini Islands (Bikini 2008 www.moreswimsuits.com/bikini.html).

At that time, due to the lack of technology and access to the Marshall Islands, knowledge of the horrible effects on the people of Bikini was not widely available. Newspapers focused on the amazing military feat and glazed over the people of these remote islands when regular American citizens could neither imagine nor relate to.

Although the United States remained in the Marshalls from the time they defeated the Japanese (1944), the Trust Territory did not go into effect until 1947. By this time, the United States Department of Defense had commenced its Nuclear Testing program that would continue until 1954. At the time, the U.S. government's knowledge of the effects of nuclear fallout was limited—that is one of the reasons why they were testing the weapons. At the same time, the Marshallese people were living in a different technological age and with a lack of understanding of the English language; they were unable to comprehend technical terms like *nuclear* or *atom*ic. Juda, leader of the people of Bikini Atoll was asked if his people would allow the U.S. to conduct tests that were, "for the good of mankind." How could this man be selfish and say no to such an

honorable request, though he nor his people had any concept of what would follow. He submitted to the U.S. requests to relocate and from that moment the Marshall Islands would never be the same. Juda had no idea that the coming years would have major repercussions for future generations of Bikinians.

By 1946, the 159 Bikinians were relocated to Rongerik. Over the following decade, tests were conducted at Bikini, then Enewetak and Utirik. "Bravo," the largest and most detrimental test was conducted in 1954. A 15-megaton hydrogen bomb with five times the impact expected was dropped over Bikini. The bomb obliterated an entire island and the 20 mile high radioactive cloud spread radioactive ash like snow over the islands that had been evacuated for the testing as well as others that were not said to be in the danger zone. The medical problems caused by the bomb are still present in today's generation, 60 years later (Guess 2004).

At the time, the United States Trust Territory administration promised to provide for the needs of the people of Bikini. Upon arrival at Rongerik, they were "dropped off" with enough food supplies for two weeks. After the supplies ran out, they were expected to forage and live off the fruit of the island (Mason 1954, 5). It wasn't long before the people discovered why Rongerik was not previously populated—it could not sustain the community and after a short time, they began to grow hungry. Each time U.S. officials would visit the island, the people would ask when more food would arrive. They were indeed wasting away. Finally, during a visit, Dr. Leonard Mason, an anthropologist from the University of Hawai'i, he could see the people were suffering from starvation and recommended that the people be relocated. After a two-year stay on Rongerik, the people

were taken by boat, temporarily to Kwajalein, until a permanent location could be determined. The people just wanted to go home, where they had lived before without starvation and uncertainty. They could not understand this invisible killer called radiation and yearned to return to their homes. Community chief Juda returned with several U.S. officials, and although he was told that the islands were unsafe for human habitation, there were no visible signs of this "unseen condemnation." The palm trees still swayed with the wind and the sun still reflected off the surface of the water (Mason 1954).

Through the Compact of Free Association, the nuclear affected people were addressed with section 177. Known as the "177's," The people of Bikini, Rongalap, Enewetak and Utirik were visted on a regular basis to monitor their health. They were also granted compensation for the nuclear testing. In 2002, the Marshall Islands pushed for a reexamination of the current arrangement. They also requested an increase in funds because the effects were more far reaching than previously known (http://www.nuclearclaimstribunal.com/).

JUKAE
(Current nearest to the island)

Historically (pre-colonial), Kwajalein was a very fruitful island inhabited by *Irooj*. *Epja* (presently Ebeye), was an island where the *Irooj*'s commoner wives and their children lived. The island of *Epja* was strictly off-limits except for a select few, given permission by the *Irooj*. Over the last 60 years, the island has become overcrowded with people from every corner of the Marshall Islands. Ebeye has been created while *Epja* is no more (Carucci 1997, 12).

KMR "KWAJALEIN MISPLACING RI-MAJOL"

Although KMR stands for Kwajalein Missile Range, I use the letters to stand for Kwajalein Misplacing *Ri-Majol* (the word for Marshallese).

Kwajalein Atoll boasts the largest lagoon in the world. An atoll consists of a ring of islands enclosing a lagoon that is, at its deepest only about 300 feet deep, while the surrounding ocean is several thousand feet deep. For the scuba diving enthusiast, Kwajalein offers crystal clear waters—a window to an underwater wonderland of marine life as well as World War II relics. The only visible remains of bloody battles of World War II and the atomic testing are sunken vessels and aircraft that create an underwater museum. The tour is a silent one, diver (Delgado 1991). The marine life is exquisitely colorful with species that can be found nowhere else in the world.

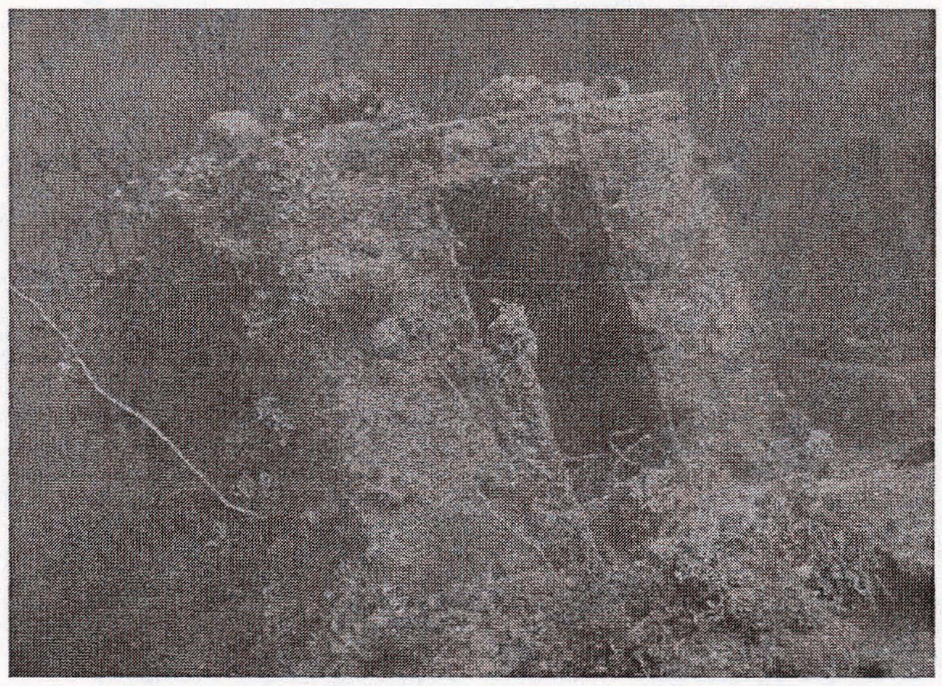

Figure 4: World War II Artillery Pillbox (Photo by Dale Mayo)

In 1960, the U.S. Air Force was going to use Enewetak to test intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) that would be launched from California. At the same time, the Army decided to set up facilities on Kwajalein. The Air Force and the Army worked together, testing one another's technology. The Air Force provided the target missiles and the Army provided the interceptor and tracking and a missile-testing program began. The six reasons given to use Kwajalein as a missile defense site were:

1. *Easy – even though it may threaten the safety and livelihood of people, the people who own Kwajalein have little power against that of the U.S.*
2. *To keep missile engineers occupied in the design group*
3. *Missile Research and the "iron triangle"; development, production & deployment creates a $5.2 billion dollar market*
4. *Strategic thinkers and policy makers exercise political and military advantages arising from the U.S. having perceived nuclear superiority*
5. *British and French nuclear forces – The U.S. must retain technological advantage to remain the alliance leader*
6. *Countervailing nuclear forces of the former Soviet Union and China (Wilkes 1991, 9-12)*

Upon establishment of a lease agreement allowing Kwajalein Island to be utilized for a missile defense installation, those living on the island were moved to neighboring Ebeye Island. In the 1960s Ebeye was said to be overpopulated with only 2,000 people; today Ebeye is home to an alarming 15,000 people (Hanlon 53). Shortly after the acquisition by the U.S. government of Kwajalein, the operations of the testing required a target zone within the lagoon that included islands across a middle section of the atoll, referred to as the Mid-Atoll Corridor. The islands lying in this zone needed to be vacated in case a missile were to miss the large lagoon area and make contact on land. This involved more ambivalence on the part of the Marshallese residing in the Mid-Atoll Corridor. In the end, they were relocated and every now and again some return to the islands during operation times causing a mission to be scrubbed and Kwajalein

authorities remove the Marshallese from the islands, sometimes forcefully. Throughout the last few decades, there have been periods of dissention amongst the Kwajalein landowners leading to sail-ins and other protests aimed at increasing lease rent as well as improving living conditions on Ebeye (Horowitz 1991).

(a) Outside Mid-Atoll Corridor

Island	Approximate Acreage
Kwajalein	748 (Includes 205 acres land-fill constructed by U.S. Government)
Roi-Namur	398 (Includes 40 acres land-fill constructed by U.S. Government)
Ennugarret	6 (of 24 total acres)
Ennylabegan	71 (of 124 total acres)

(b) Within the Mid-Atoll Corridor

Meck	55 (includes 18 acres land-fill constructed by U.S. Government)
Eniwetak	15
Omelek	8
Gellinam	5
Gagan	6
Illeginni	31
Legan	18

Figure 5[13]: Acreage utilized for operation of the Kwajalein Missile Range provided by the Military Use and Operating Rights Agreement (MUORA) between the U.S. and R.M.I. (MUORA 1986, 7)

[13] See APPENDIX A for MAP of Kwajalein Atoll

Migration by force was followed by migration by necessity. As the United States expanded their presence during the 1960s, a wage economy developed, destabilizing the economic subsistence widely practiced prior to the United States arrival. Household members migrated to the growing urban centers to obtain wage work to purchase food that was no longer being locally produced. As the influx of migrant workers continued, unskilled wage employment became less available, and skilled employment was also unavailable because the migrant workers did not possess the skills to compete for such employment. This led to an educational movement in the 1970s. There now became a push not just for employment, but better employment with higher wages. Marshallese realized that in order to obtain better employment, education was necessary (Grieco 2003). Many families figured out a way to get their children to the U.S. to obtain a college education. The emphasis on education led to the importance of the stipulation in the Compact of Free Association that would follow, for visa-free travel between the Marshall Islands and the U.S. for citizens of the Marshall Islands.

HOME (VIEW DVD)

The video segment entitled "Home" contains several interviews with Marshallese people who are living on Ebeye. They discuss their personal experiences as well as the experiences of those displaced from their home islands. *Iroij Michael Kabua* talks about the need for the Americans and Marshallese to work together as many Marshallese travel to the United States to settle down. He points out that Ebeye is not the *home* of many Marshallese residing there. Many still link themselves to Bikini, Enewetak, Utirik and Rongelap atolls that were contaminated by radiation in the 1950's during the nuclear

testing conducted by the United States Department of Defense (Niedenthal, Tobin, Barker 2001, 1954, 2008). *Julian Riklon is* recognizable for his appearance in Home On the Range, a film by Adam Horowitz.[14] At the time of this interview, he was the principal of Queen of Peace High School on Guegeegue. *Jason Sampson* though from Majuro, lives on Ebeye with his girlfriend and her family. Having been educated abroad and served in the military, Sampson sees the need for people such as himself to return to the Marshall Islands to build the nation using the skills they obtain in the United States.

Paul Labuon is the uncle of one of my classmates. Labuon's mother is half Japanese, born to a Marshallese woman and a Japanese Commander. Labuon attended Job Corps followed by The College of Marshall Islands where he studied Information Technology. His sister Marcella Sakaio is the PREL representative on Ebeye.[15] *Rosa Capelle* works at Macy's West, the department store on Kwajalein. Originally from Likiep, she is a descendant of Adolph Capelle, the German trader who settled in Likiep. *Joemi Keju* was a participant in the Ebeye exchange program in which four students each year beginning with my class attended school on Kwajalein. Joemi was part of the second group of students and graduated in 2000 from Kwajalein High School. He attended the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. The interview took place on Kwajalein. He now resides in Honolulu.[16]

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[14] Adam Horowitz with funding from the Marshallese landowners and other outside sources shows a sit in of Marshallese on Kwajalein and brings to light the continued suffering from the relocations caused by atomic testing and the Kwajalein Missile Range.
[15] PREL – Pacific Resource for Education and Learning is based in Honolulu, Hawaii: www.prel.org
[16] All of the interviews were conducted in April, 2004 either on Ebeye or Kwajalein. Permission was obtained from each person to utilize footage for this project.

JAMBO LO AELON KEIN
(Cruising The Island)

JAMBO (CRUISE) EBEYE'S MUSIC VIDEO (View DVD)

The music is by Eddie Enos with flashes of Ebeye from children fishing off the rocks to women weaving marmars.[17] The children walk the streets shuffling along just to *jambo* or cruise. Water taxis rush between Kwajalein and Ebeye, taking only 5 or 10 minutes each way. People dance and have fun at birthday parties. This video captures some of my experience walking around the island of Ebeye. On occasion, someone would yell something derogatory my way, but for the most part I was usually met with smiles and *Yokwe's* or hellos. The music is also of great importance to me. Having learned Marshallese language throughout high school by going over to my friends' homes, I decided to sing a Marshallese song at graduation. The song entitled *Kememej Wot Io* performed to the tune of Sting's "Every Breath You Take,' talks of always keeping you in my heart and the love that has grown. After that night, news spread of my song and I became known as the *Ribelle* who could sing in Marshallese. Apparently video even made it to Costa Mesa, where I later would visit.

ENCOUNTERS WITH CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

I once had a Marshallese friend who had done me a favor. She saw me lacing up some brand new basketball shoes. To my disbelief she asked if she could have my $60 pair of shoes. I uncomfortably, but politely refused, but offered a pair of shoes that I had at home instead. On another occasion, an acquaintance whom I had met in the *Yokwe*

[17] Flower leis to adorn the head

chat rooms (online forum) told me it was her birthday and asked if she could have my gold necklace and pendant. I laughed as though she was joking and quickly changed the subject. If I had indeed taken her seriously, I would have gone home with nothing around my neck except American resentment of a Marshallese custom. The monetary value placed on a gold change is much greater than that of a necklace woven from pandanus leaves and seashells. Though they both serve the same purpose, in American society, they would not be an equal trade. This idea makes it difficult to continue with the traditional reciprocity (Hezel Culture 1993).

Another example of the changes in cultural practices can be found in several interviews conducted by Laurence Carucci with his discussion of site significance at Kwajalein Atoll (Carucci 1997, 211). Carucci uses a spelling he explains to be more traditional and true to the pre-American times. He uses *Kuwajleen* to be the correct spelling of Kwajalein.

Before 1947, life was described as "free" because the people were free to share with one another from food, to cooking fire. *Irooj* (chiefs) did not own and operate businesses. Everyone worked together to feed the community and pay tribute to the chiefs.

Presently chiefs do own businesses, changing the relationship between the chiefs and commoners, thus changing their relationship with the land (Carucci 1997, 212). The purpose and value of the land has also changed. In pre-colonial times, the *rijerbal* or workers would sow and harvest the land. This land was owned by the *Irooj* (chiefs) and managed by the *alabs* (land owners). The *rijerbal* would pay tribute to the *irooj* and

alabs by means of the fruit of their labor. The U.S. proposal of leasing islands such as the Kwajalein Missile Range and islands associated with its function, restructured this system. Rather than the *rijerbal* working the land and bringing to the *irooj* food from the harvest, the U.S. government paid the *Irooj* and *alabs*. Through jobs at the missile range, *rijerbal* were able to earn money to then purchase food. Unable to purchase an abundance of food with limited money, *rijerbal* no longer were able to provide tribute to the *irooj* according to custom. At the same time, the *Irooj* had no system or tradition to be able to apply the monetary compensation given to them by the U.S. to the people. This changed wealth from being measured by the amount of food available to money. Monetary wealth was based upon land ownership. *Irooj* lost power but became wealthy, and the *rijerbal* were now just poor. The *rijerbal* really suffer because of this change because they no longer have the fruit of the land to offer and have little to sustain them. Kinoj Mawilon (elder on Ebeye) says that now people no longer have the freedom they once had. Bribery is common and money is used to get what one wants. It is difficult to find equivalents in Marshallese. In past times, when someone needed something they didn't have, it was given to them by their family or neighbors. Today, it must be purchased. In the past, land use and fishing rights were shared and freely given to those who asked (Carucci 1997, 212). Now a hand is outstretched asking for compensation in the form of money rather than fish. Some consider this bribery. If someone let you fish from their waters, sharing of the catch was payment enough. With the cash based economy of today, payment would be required in dollars and gas to fill the fuel tank.

TRAPPED BY THE REEF

American ex-patriates residing on Kwaj have a different perspective of Kwaj. Some people feel confined and with such a small community, forced to mingle with people whom they likely would ignore if space permitted. You really can't avoid or ignore anyone on Kwajalein. You will inevitably either see them at the single grocery store, chapel, school or beach. When I lived there, the island was predominantly Caucasian, with a few minorities represented, the largest of which was Marshallese. The mix brought out a few "racist white people."

There were only a handful of Marshallese families residing on Kwajalein.[18] A friend of mine who is half-Marshallese and half-Hawaiian recalls how she used to wait outside her American friend's house. She had never really thought about why she was never invited inside. One day, another friend of theirs came along and walked right into the house. Thinking nothing of it, she followed behind. Once inside, the American girl's mother became noticeably upset and scolded her daughter for letting her in the house. This was accompanied by a number of racial comments that I do not wish to repeat. My friend did the only thing she knew; she told her dad, so they both went back over to the house to straighten the woman out (Nica Rodrigues 2008, personal communication).[19] This and other situations regarding racism, are not confined to Kwajalein. Sometimes it is as though the people of Kwajalein are in a fishbowl for all to see and judge. Kwajalein is place where some find freedom and others confinement. They are forced to face, though not necessarily tolerate, people or lifestyles outside of their comfort zone. If the

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[18] Most of the families consisted of only one Marshallese parent. The contractor was usually the other parent who was either Hawaiian, Japanese-American or American. Over the last several years, more Marshallese families from Ebeye have been given accompanied contract jobs and have moved their families to Kwajalein.

[19] Nica Rodrigues now resides in Honolulu with her husband and child.

woman were living in the United States, I would assume she would likely steer clear of neighborhoods with minority communities in order to feel comfortable.

Just as there were many instances of race-based insult, there were also situations where Americans reached out to Marshallese kids. Perhaps, they saw the innocence of children who suffered at the hands of the U.S. military presence. One such story was brought to me a few years ago by one of my classmates. He was a very unruly Marshallese kid who lived on Kwajalein with his Marshallese mom and abusive American step-dad. For some reason, he decided to do something to get back at several officials on the island and in the school system. It was rumored that this unruly kid had committed the act, but it was a teacher who took the blame. This teacher was not my favorite teacher, as I remember him as being a mean guy. It wasn't until several years ago that I ran into that unruly kid, who happens to be in the United States Army and doing quite well. He told me what really happened. I was amazed that such an unfriendly man would give up so much to help this troubled kid. The teacher lost his job and was barred from the island as a result of the offense (Anonymous 1999, personal communication).[20] Though Kwajalein can bring out the worst feelings of fear and intolerance, it can also bring out the compassion of people. There were others like the teacher who took the fall.

In high school, everybody loved "Scholtz." Scarlett Scholte had taught school on Kwajalein since the 1960's and was an outspoken advocate for not just the Marshallese kids, but also any of us who she felt were treated unfairly. On one occasion she was assaulted for her efforts, though no formal charges were ever filed. Only around the time

[20] Kwaj Kid who wished to remain anonymous for obvious reasons.

I was in high school were the kids from Ebeye who attended school on Kwaj allowed to stay after school for activities such as dances and socials. Teachers always escorted them to the dock from the school. The students had their own identification badges and according to the rules, badge holders are to remain in control of their badge at all times. Well, kids are sometimes irresponsible, and since the students were all dressed up, Scholtz had collected all of their badges before the dance. She began handing the badges out to the students just inside the doors of the Dock Security Checkpoint (DSC).

For some reason, the contracted security companies who were known as the Kwajalein Police Department, always came with their fair share of power hungry "wannabe cops." At least it was always our rationale for why they worked as contractors, because they failed the test to become a real police officer. Many of these officers were usually rude and threw their authority around. It happened to be one of "those cops" that noticed Scholtz giving the badges to the students. He proceeded to yell at her that what they were doing was against regulation. Well, Scholtz did have a way about not letting people tell her what to do. She told the officer to cool it and of course he did not take it well. He responded by grabbing her by the neck and shoving her against the wall. Fortunately for him, he did this in a blind spot away from the surveillance cameras (Scarlett Scholte 1998, personal communication). There were countless other situations where these "wanna be cops," were rude to residents of Kwajalein and Ebeye. Many of the same companies contracted to supply security on Kwajalein also have contracts at other military installations around the world. I think it says more about the contracted companies and less about Kwajalein.

Needless to say, Kwajalein was not the perfect suburban neighborhood it seemed to be. Much of the folklore in the Marshall Islands involves demons and stories of their use of the islands as a playground (Barclay 2002). The legends of the Marshall Islands were not the only place with demons; many other demons existed on Kwajalein. Alcohol would have to be the worst. I think more liquor is consumed on Kwaj than any other installation in the world, or at least it seemed that way. One of my friend's dad would go straight from work to the Veteran's Hall, a bar set up by a veteran group. Even during the weekday he would spend his evenings there, and sometimes on the weekend would pass out on the side of the road going home. He had a permanent slur, so much so that it was hard to understand what he was saying. Every day of the week, either the *Yuk,* Vets Hall, or Snake Pit would draw a good crowd.[21] Once, on the Continental flight from Kwajalein to Honolulu there were several "big drinkers." The fathers of two of my friends spent the majority of the flight buying beers for each other. Before we made it all the way to Honolulu, the flight attendant informed them that there was no more alcohol left on the plane. Though comedic, it was actually very sad. I saw many Kwaj Kids watch their parents drink their life away, just as the character Casey did. And like Casey, many Kwaj Kids followed in their parents' footsteps (Lane 1996). A therapist would say that such high levels of alcohol consumption must be to make the person feel better about something. Perhaps that is why so many people on Kwajalein drink so much. Some of the singles sit at the bar in the same spot, like on the show *Cheers*. The difference is that there is no comedy, but rather a depressing scene. There is social drinking done at the

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[21] The *Yokwe Yuk* was a bar and restaurant.

beach barbeques and parties, but there are always far too many "sloppy drunks," who either stumble home, make a fool of themselves, or have to be taken home. Maybe they don't feel like Kwaj is a wonderful paradise, and maybe they thought that by coming to Kwaj they would leave behind their problems, only to be trapped by them.

The same can be said for Ebeye when speaking of drinking alcohol. For Marshallese, drinking is usually done at the bar or club, or in a backyard setting. If not at the bar, an attempt is usually made to conceal the drinking that is taking place. There is no open bar at weddings, birthday parties or other public social events. In recent years on Kwaj, regulations have been implemented to keep Marshallese people from drinking at the bar on Kwaj because so many become too intoxicated to walk to the dock to take the ferry boat home.

Mac Marshall contends that the act of drinking to a drunken state is an outlet for men to not only escape reality but act out their frustrations and feelings of inadequacy in a socially acceptable manner (1978). Marshall studied alcoholism in Chuuk, and discussed the social norm of men (especially) acting out through violence or emotional breakdown while intoxicated. If they were sober, such behavior would not be acceptable. In the past, the same exception was made for the warrior. As a warrior, certain behavior was accepted, allowing an outlet for feelings that would otherwise have no socially accepted outlet. In present time, unruly behavior is usually laughed off as a "drunken display," unless it was outrageously violent or harmful. For the man struggling to take care of his family, working on the suburban paradise called Kwaj, returning home each day to no electricity and poor sanitation alcohol becomes an escape and an outlet.

People on Ebeye do not sit around all day and complain about their situation. LaBriola (2005) argues that despite the living conditions on Ebeye, people continue to live there because they place a higher value on genealogies and relationships (12). Because of the emphasis on relationships, they celebrate with one another special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, and holidays like Christmas. I pose the question: where then, are they able to socially release feelings of inadequacy or frustration with the situation on Ebeye? Perhaps through intoxication, these feelings can be released. The problem with this approach is that sometimes entire paychecks are spent at the bar, leaving nothing to provide for the family at home.

As I have illustrated, there are multiple dimensions to Kwajalein and Ebeye, with distinct outward appearances of a "country club" or "slum," but also complexities below the surface that form uncomfortably comfortable communities. It is uncomfortable to live on Kwaj knowing the living conditions on Ebeye just as it can be uncomfortable living on Ebeye without reliable utilities. Somehow, each time the sun rises, a new day comes to be and we look for comfort in the place we call home.

JUKAE
(First Current Leaving The Island)

CONTINENTAL FLIGHT 956

Riding my bike down the road on the ocean side of the island, I pass several friends.

"Are you going to the airport now?" they asked.
"Yes," I replied. "Are you coming to see me off?"
"I'll be there, don't worry," they said.

I tried not to pedal too hard so I wouldn't be too sweaty for the flight. By the time I arrived, several of my friends were already there. One of them placed a *wut* (Marshallese headwreath) on my head. After a few more of my friends parked their bicycles, we gathered together to take a picture. I held back tears of sadness and fear. I was on my way to college and for the first time, I was going to be on my own, completely alone.

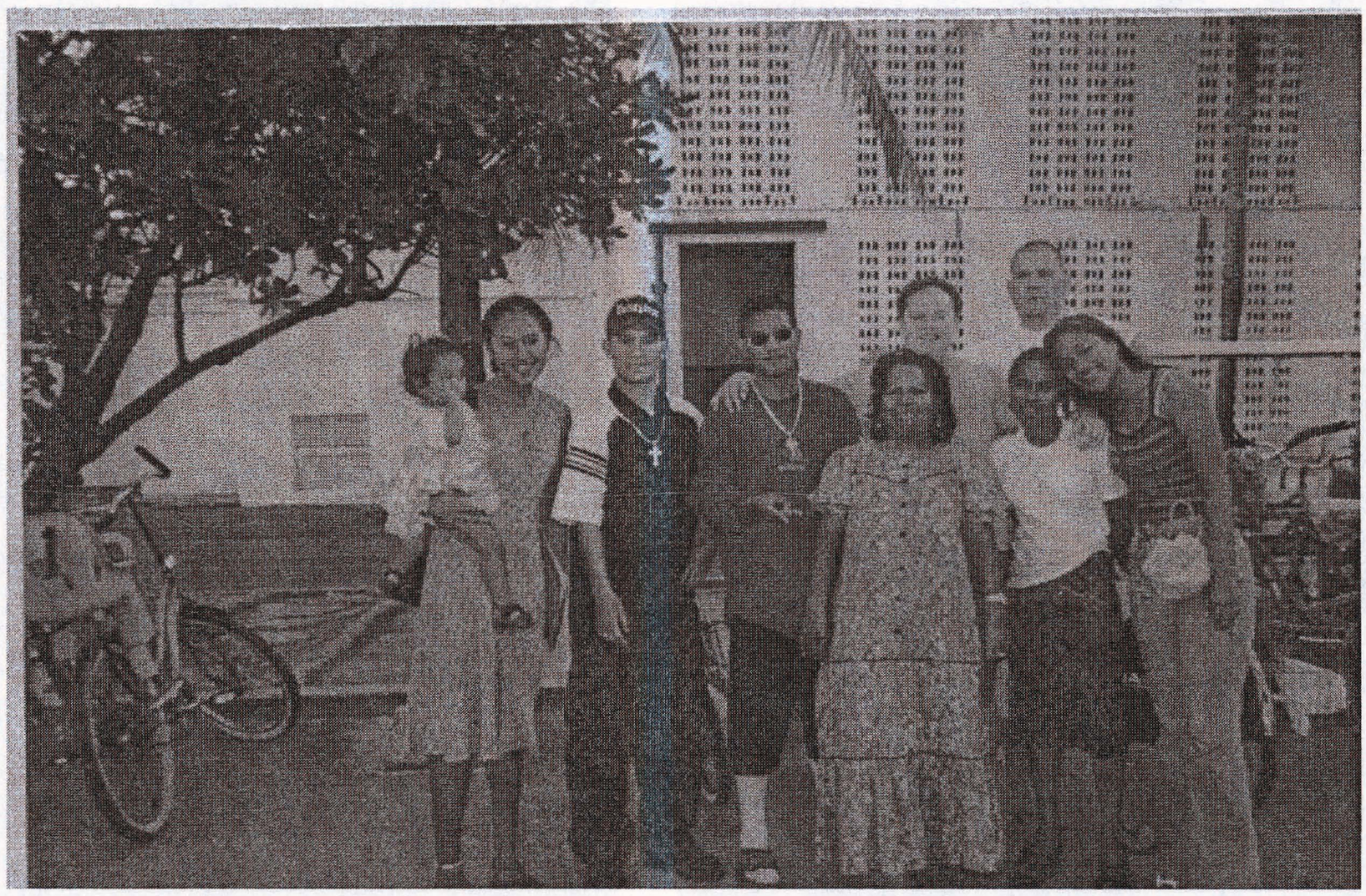

Figure 6: Photo at the airport on Kwajalein. My brother Matthew and I (back row) are leaving to go back to college. From Left: Krystal Ching, Nikki Lamug, Kris Ching, Jon Ching, Auntie Alfreda Ching, Doris Coleman & Melody Jorbal

There were also some Marshallese students from the Kwajalein Job Corps center at the airport. Job Corps is a vocational training program. Initially, the students commute daily from Ebeye to Kwajalein to attend English, Math and vocational classes. After finishing the beginning level, they transfer to various Job Corps centers in the United States. Some of the students were headed to Reno, Nevada, and the rest were going to Waimanalo on Oahu. I realized that most of them were probably more scared than I was. The majority of students had never stepped foot out of the Marshall Islands before. They were leaving with high hopes of completing their training and become successful. For some, their parents counted on them to go and gain work experience to be able to come back and support their family or remain in the United States and send money home.

We all boarded the plane, with mixed feelings of sadness and anxiousness for the future that awaited us at our destinations. Some of the Job Corps students would take advantage of the opportunity given to them and graduate from the program and go on to work. Others, perhaps overwhelmed by their new environment, succumbed to the temptation of alcohol and other prohibited activities, and would be sent home prematurely. As for me, I spent my first year of college missing Kwaj and trying to find something to fill the void left in my heart.

COSTA MAJOL, CALIFORNIA

Costa Mesa, California has become home to a large Marshallese population. I refer to the place as Costa Majol (means Marshallese). One day, I discovered this great webpage: *yokwe.net*. The headline on the homepage read, "Everything Marshall Islands," and indeed it was. There was even a chat room where Marshallese from all over

the United States, the Marshall Islands, and other places in the world would log in and *bwebwenato* (talk story or chat). I found myself logging on in the morning before I went to class, and then as soon as I returned home each day. I was known as *SueQueen* or *LiKwaj* (which means girl from Kwaj). I learned how to type Marshallese phrases, and made friends quickly. Most people didn't even know I was American. I even met people that I knew from Ebeye. A number of regulars to the chat room lived in Costa Mesa, California. They would tell me about the *kemems* (baby's first birthday party) that happened almost every weekend. I was so homesick, and knowing there were Marshallese so close made me miss home even more. After chatting for several months, a few regulars in the chat room invited me to the *kemem* on the coming weekend. They told me they would pick me up from Los Angeles and bring me down for the weekend. Another family even offered to let me stay at their house. Lori, Richard and Ronnie drove up from Costa Mesa and picked me up. Even though we had never met in person before, we felt like we knew each other. The birthday was to be the following day. I was so excited to finally get to hang out with Marshallese people that I could hardly sleep that night. The party was great and I even met some people from Ebeye who knew who I was or knew some of my friends.

Rather than deal with my separation from Kwajalein and the Marshallese community there, I tried to find a replacement community. I utilized Costa Mesa as an escape from daily life at school. I was drawn to the idea of recreating home in California, and finding connections through people to home. Spending time in Costa Mesa and in the Marshallese chat room, helped me through my first two years of college.

RIBUKAE
(Second Current Leaving The Island)

LETTING GO

There is something about the islands that tugs on the soul. Greg Dvorak longed to go back from the moment he left and didn't stop trying until he was finally able to return leading a Japanese delegation on a friendship mission in 2000 (2004, 53). Dvorak found much had changed just as I did upon returning to conduct my research. The idea of home, as it was growing up, no longer existed. Most "Kwaj Kids" who left long ago, are never able to return. Some however are like a "Peter Pan," who doesn't want to grow up and leave "Neverneverland." Integration for a Kwaj Kid to the U.S. can be difficult. Kids became so accustomed to life on Kwajalein, that dealing with things like cars, malls, strangers, and the hustle and bustle of the "real world" seem like too much. Cell phones, utility bills, cold weather, automobile maintenance, and overwhelming grocery store selections provide a more stressful life, than the one afforded them on Kwaj. For some, it was too much, so they found a contract job on Kwaj to be able to return. They could never escape the category of "Kwaj Kid," and were not able to step out of their adolescence. Instead of playing on the high school soccer team, they played on the team consisting mainly of other former Kwaj Kids. They continued living in a sort of denial that their childhood could end. If they stayed on Kwaj, they would never have to grow up.

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

As Marshallese become displaced to places like the United States, a level of disconnect emerges between the traditions as they evolve in the homeland and traditions

evolving in the diaspora. Evelyn Konou was part of the first wave of Marshallese to attend universities in the United States. She recognized the cultural differences between Americans and Marshallese. Expectations are different in each culture when it comes to reciprocity and payment.

> Building and then rebuilding thatched roof houses was important and involved the entire community. "Reciprocity is one of the valuable principles in our custom. When we had new roof to build or old roofs to replace, my parents always prepared lots of food such as pork which meant a couple of our biggest pigs had to be killed, fish, breadfruits and biro (preserved breadfruit) as well. Because the entire community would come and help in the building or replacing our houses my parents had to be well prepared. The men would work on the roofs and the women would prepare the thatches. Children would play and of course enjoy the food" (Konou referenced by McKay 2001, 53).

My brother and I went fishing with an *Irooj* or chief familiy. We experienced first hand, the reciprocal sharing that Konou describes. We traveled by boat to the island of *Enmat* in the northern part of the atoll. The catch of fish totaled more than 200 lbs. On the return, we met a small boat with several Marshallese fishermen.

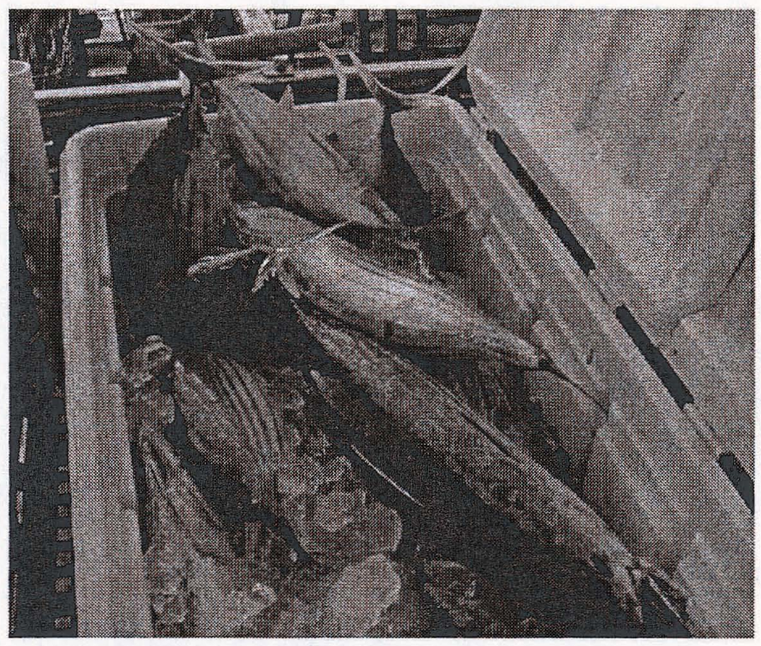

Figure 7: The cooler was full after a day of fishing (Photo by Dale Mayo)

Figure 8: The Marlin that my brother and I helped with but that our Marshallese hosts did most of the work reeling it in. (Photo by Dale Mayo)

They recognized the boat (the name of the boat was *007*), as that of the Irooj, so they approached to share their catch. They had been on one of the islands and had collected coconut crabs. They gave us coconut crab,

while our boat gave them a large amount of fish and some soda. This display of reciprocal sharing is part of the Marshallese tradition that is still seen today.

Christopher Leonard, a writer for the *Arkansas Gazette* probably found out about the Marshall Islands by running into a Marshallese somewhere around town. Unofficial reports show nearly 10,000 Marshallese in Springdale and the surrounding areas in Arkansas. Leonard took an interest and after traveling to the Marshall Islands, wrote a series of articles (2005). In his articles entitled *Traditions Kept and Lost*, he notes that:

> Impoverished islands are caught between the need for jobs and the loss of culture… they fear their Marshallese culture is slowly disappearing.

Laurence Carucci (1997) counters the idea that the culture is "disappearing." It is recognized that from one generation to the next, aspects of tradition are created as well as ignored.

> Content of custom is constantly changing, upper generation members universally value their own currently validated views of *manit* 'custom' or 'tradition' for it is through these views that they valorize their own lives in contrast to the younger generations (37).

Even in American culture, I hear my grandparents talk of the way things used to be and how the youth today have lost a sense of respect and so on and so forth. Changing generational views develop in almost any culture. Perhaps it's the inability to separate culture from force of habit. For example, people live in very close quarters on Ebeye because there is not enough space, so why is it that families in places like Springdale, Arkansas live in the same way, crowding some 23 people into a 4-bedroom home (Massey 2008).

The problem lies in an inability for certain aspects of culture to carry over into an American setting. The culture is not "lost" but not applicable in the new environment. On Ebeye, when a family hosts a *kemem* for the child's first birthday, the entire community is invited. This extended participation is inclusive of neighbors because of the close social ties throughout the island. Usually the night before the party, family groups come to the home of the child and sing. They are given food as smaller scale celebrations take place throughout the night. The day of the party, dancing and music may last again into the late hours of the night. For a family living in a place like Springdale, recreating this scenario is difficult. It is unlikely that the entire neighborhood is Marshallese. Some neighbors may not be accepting of loud music and large groups of people loitering outside of their residence. Because they do not participate in the event, they become an antagonistic toward such a cultural practice. It becomes a nuisance rather than a celebration. Inevitably, the gatherings at the home for most "mainland Marshallese,"[22] must now take place at a school auditorium or other public venue. This provides more restraints to the previously "free expression" that was socially acceptable in the Marshall Islands where are no occupancy codes and time constraints are placed on the event. This practice has therefore not been lost, but has adapted to its new diasporic environment. Birthday parties are still large, with lots of food substituting American foods for inaccessible island foods (Hess 2003). The clowning that LaBriola (2005,110) describes as part of celebration in Ebeye also takes place in diasporic settings.

[22] The continental United States is often referred to as the mainland, although in Pacific Studies the term is contentious because it excludes Hawai'i, therefore minimalizing its significance as a part of the U.S.

Aenet Rowa, the founder of *yokwe.net* wrote in a commentary the following regarding clowning at Marshallese birthday parties:

> In general, Marshallese are happy, reserved and certifiably nutty people. They are naturally "Holy rollers" - well maybe not so Holy at times. Just attend any kemem to witness this free-form dancing phenomena first-hand. This is one time that the word "reserved" is forgotten and replaced with the word "nutty." It's okay to make a fool of one's self in front of friends, relatives and even enemies. The "freer" the dance gets, the better it is. It's free and clean fun. I was reminded of this phenomena recently when I attended a kemem in Westminster, CA. I was very happy to see that it's still alive and well. What usually happens is a group (very unorganized) stands up to sing. You see, what's important is that you go forward to join. This night I counted some dances that I've never seen before. There was this: flying eagle dance, dancing chicken, barking dog dance, drilling (with a screw driver) dance, surfer's dance, old lady's dance, and even a man in woman's dress dance. Needless to say, all these dances brought down the house. I'm very happy to inform you that I did not dance, nor did I sing... I was praying the whole time that none of my relatives would pull me forward to dance. The prayer was answered (Rowa, 2003 www.yokwe.net).

CONNECTING TO RONGELAP

My stepson, Faoa, is blood related to the Anjain family. His great-grandfather who was indeed great was John Anjain. John Anjain traveled to Japan, Washington D.C., and several other places to speak of the nuclear fallout and how it affected the people of Rongelap. One can see the ignorance of a people in the U.S. with regard to Marshallese people and what took place on several atolls. In 1957, a U.S. newsreel described John Anjain and the others who came with him for testing in Chicago:

> To the AEC Argonne labs in Chicago last week came seven men, natives of the Marshall Islands. These are fishing people, savages by our standards… a cross section, a delegation, was brought to Chicago for testing. The first was John, the Mayor of Rongelap atoll. John, as we said, is a savage but a happy, amenable savage. His grandfather ran almost naked on his coral atoll. The white man brought money and religion and a market for his copra. John reads, knows about God, and is a pretty good Mayor (Quoted in Johnson 2004, 12)

If the people who wrote the newsreel had actually met Anjain, they would have printed something very different. He spoke before Congress, telling the story of his people and their suffering at the hand of U.S. nuclear tests "gone wrong."[23] For years, he rallied to provide compensation for his people for the illnesses and loss of life and home. He and the people of Rongelap were relocated to Ebeye after the fallout. The U.S. government had no intention of providing for the people although it was promised in press releases responding to the concerns of the people of Rongelap, "no stone will be left unturned to safeguard the present and future well being of the islanders" (Quoted in Barker 2008, 19).

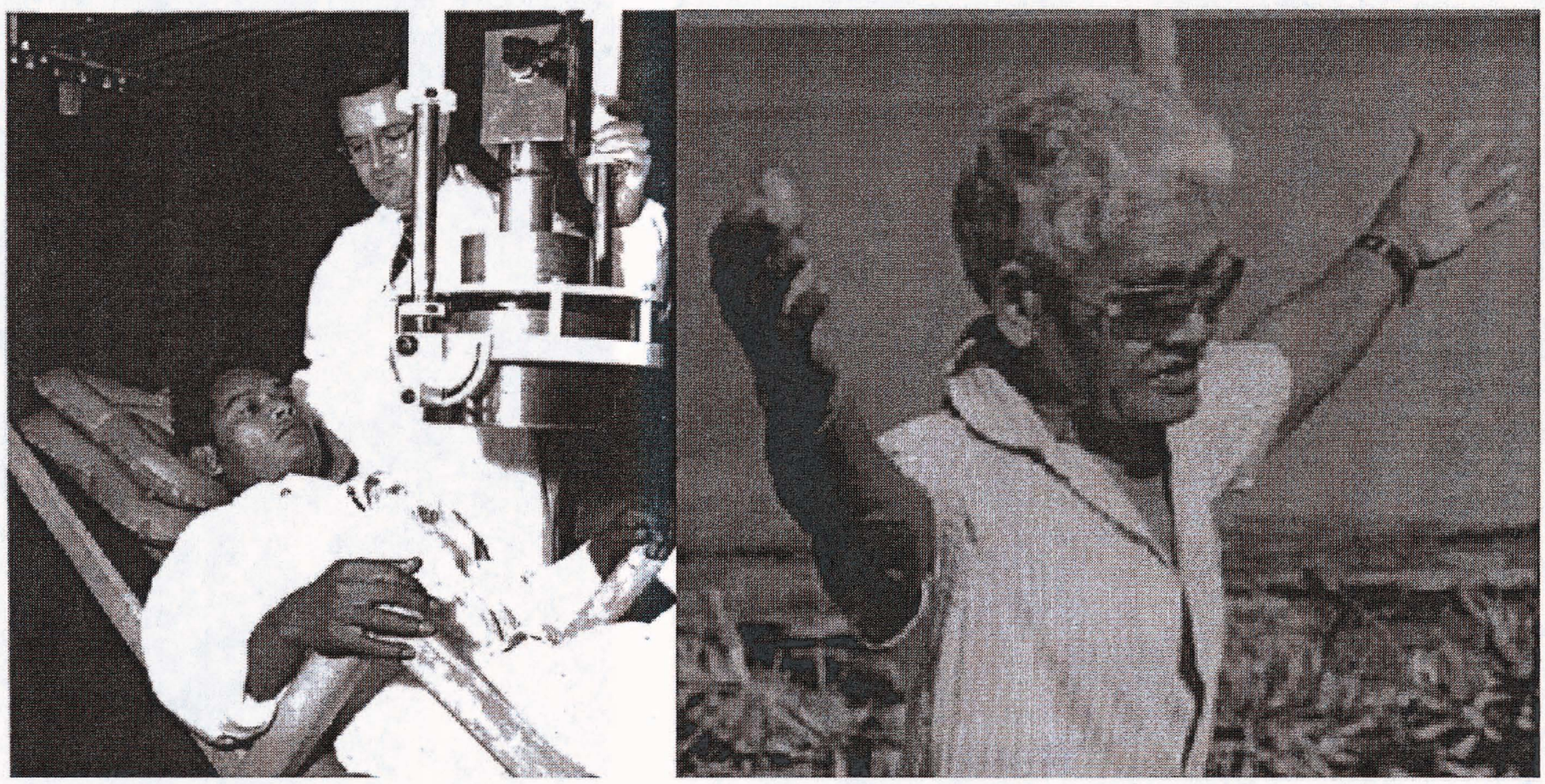

Figure 9: John Anjain
Left: Photo by Argonne Labs April 1957 Right: An older photo (date unknown) Accessed through Marshall Islands Journal Article July 30, 2004.

After being told that their island was safe for habitation, the people were moved back to Rongelap. Some began to get sick and life as it had been before was not possible. Neglected by both the United States and Marshall Islands authorities, in 1985 the

[23] Rongelap was not initially part of the testing area. In March of 1954, the test named Bravo created a much larger fallout than planned.

islanders called on the Greenpeace flagship to evacuate them to Mejatto, on Kwajalein Atoll, some 120 km away. It took four voyages for the *Rainbow Warrior* to move about 320 Rongelapese, their dismantled homes and belongings – some 100 tons – to their new atoll (Rainbow).

COL. David O. Byars Jr. in 1954 wrote to the Commander in Chief of the Pacific:

> It is a policy of the Trust Territory of the Pacific to discourage too rapid acquisition of wealth by small groups of natives…thus the subsidy of natives is to be held to the essential minimum (Barker 107).

Undoubtedly, COL. Byars and each commander after him continued to ensure that the Marshallese people were kept to the "essential minimum" as it was originally intended.

JEJELATAE
(Third Current Leaving The Island)

HOME, ONLY A MEMORY

Francis X. Hezel proclaimed:

> *The U.S. nuclear program helped secure America's military might on the international stage. But it came with a high price for the Marshallese. Their health status and land continue to serve as grim reminders of war and power. We must not forget (Hezel as quoted in DeSilva 2006, 80)*

To this day, many have never been back, though a successful dive operation ran out of Majuro taking divers to Bikini until recent problems with a the local airline caused of dive operations to cease in 2007. Jack Niedenthal, a former Peace Corp volunteer and current liaison for the Nuclear Claims Trust Fund married a woman from Bikini and became an advocate for the people relocated from Bikini, Enewetak and Rongelap. He authored the book entitled, For the Good Of Mankind, that chronicles the relocation, the atomic bomb and the lives of Bikinians after their exposure to the radiation. He has lobbied for an increase in the nuclear payments and presently the U.S. government has said that it has paid the amount previously agreed upon. Early in 2005, it was announced that 500 additional victims on other islands were discovered to be affected by the radiation fallout. The exposure is therefore, more widespread than researchers thought before, which could open a new case for an increase in the funding for the Nuclear Claims Tribunal (Stegner 1998)

LINKING PAST TO PRESENT (View DVD)

In the video you will see a segment showing photos scanned from glass plates that were taken by Joachim deBrum in the 1800's. Joachim, the son of a German trader who married a Marshallese woman on Likiep, realized that his Marshallese culture was in transition. He wanted to document this transition, so he dressed people up in traditional Marshallese woven attire as well as the clothing introduced by the missionaries which included mother Hubbard dresses, slacks, neckties and shoes. The photos he took captured culture in the way of his day. Today, the Marshallese Cultural Center on Kwajalein captures culture with displays of photographs, carved outriggers, shells, woven handicrafts and other items that signify the culture of the Marshallese people. The navigational stick-charts, and fishing traps are now artifacts in a museum; they are only used for decoration and no longer for survival. In diasporic communities, residents adorn their walls with these handicrafts as a reminder of home, while the museum holds these items as a reminder of the past. This place is a continuation of Joachim's work; I think he would be pleased.[24] The music that enhances the visual experience is that of Eddie, who regularly plays at Iroij[25] Michael Kabua's club called Mon La Mike. This song, entitled "Marshall Islands," was particularly fitting because Eddie sings that the Marshall Islands is the home that he loves and will be in his heart forever.

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[24] http://www.marshallese-cultural-center.org/ I worked for a few weeks with Sue Rosoff who scanned in the glass plates and traveled often to Majuro to discuss with Leonard (Joachim's son) the photos and family history. Leonard deBrum has since passed away and Sue has left her position upon completion of scanning to pursue other interests in the United States.

[25] Mon La Mike translates to "place of Mike"

AELOKEAN IM AELOKRAK
(North And South Currents Meet)

After leaving the place we called home, there is always a pull to recreate home or to remember it. When I run into people from Kwaj, we usually talk about the past as though the present is irrelevant. We cannot connect through current events, but we can by reminiscing about the past.

KWAJ REUNIONS

Every few years, there are several former Kwaj residents who begin to feel especially nostalgic for the "golden days." They email a few others, and before long, it's a Kwaj Reunion. The last reunion took place in Colorado in 2007. Kwaj kids from as far back as the 1960's all the way up to current Kwaj residents were in attendance. They got together bringing old yearbooks, photo albums and other mementos to share. There is always a lot of catching up to do; who got married, divorced, had kids or died. A reunion wouldn't be complete without picking up on the gossip from different time periods, filling in the "rest of the story" as it were.

MAJOL MAYDAY

May Day is celebrated on May 1st in the Marshall Islands, and is usually celebrated Memorial Day weekend by Marshallese in the United States. In the Marshall Islands, it's the Marshallese Constitution Day. Abroad however, it is more of a celebration of Marshallese culture and a reunion of sorts for Marshallese living in various parts of the U.S. Although many of the smaller communities host a May Day event for the people of that community, usually one of the larger communities will extend an invitation to the Marshallese communities from around the U.S. to come and participate.

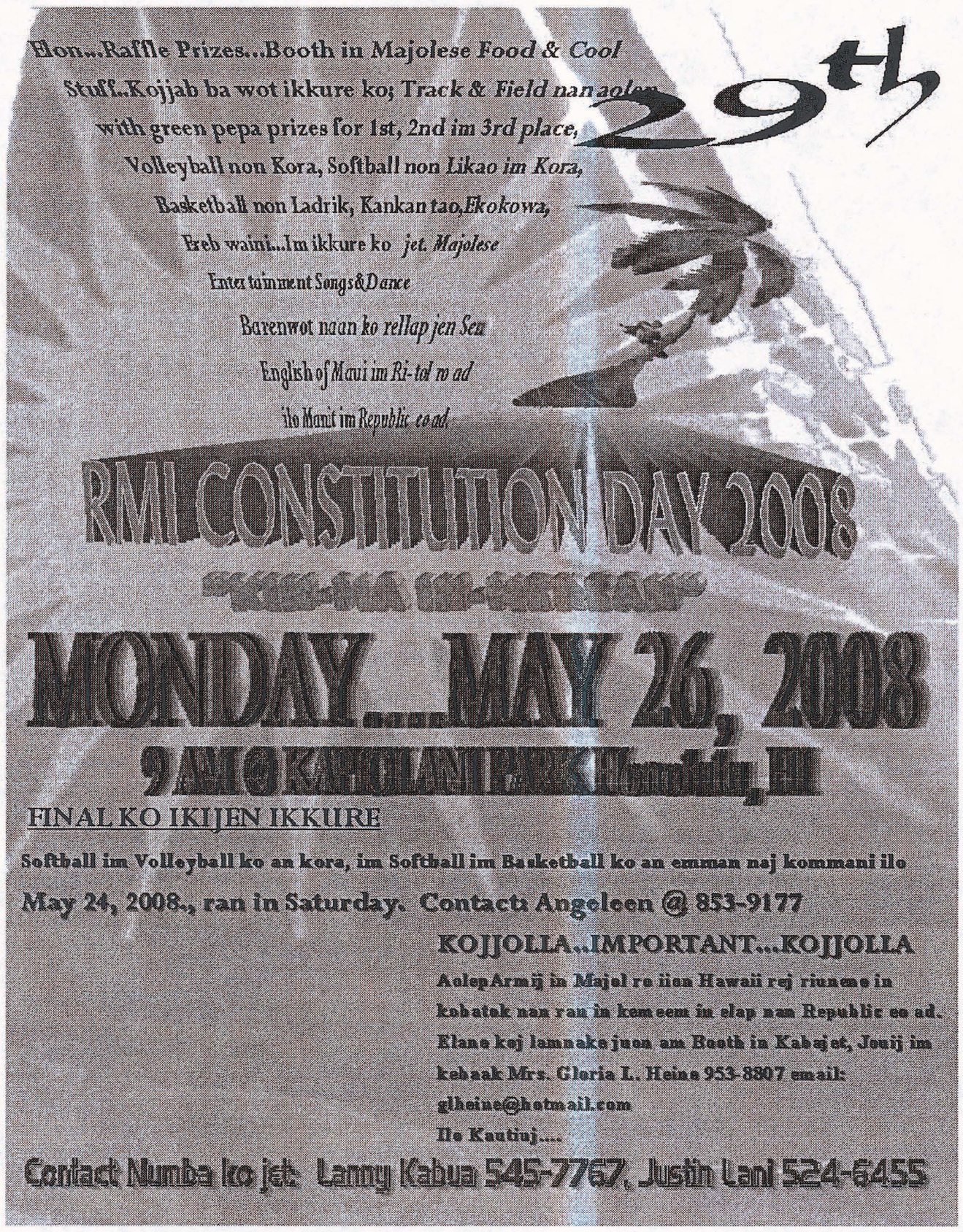


Figure 10: Flyer posted to www.yokwe.net advertising the May Day celebrations in Honolulu, Hawaii 2008

May Day in Honolulu in 2008 consisted of softball, volleyball and basketball tournaments over the course of several days, while during the event itself, running races and coconut husking contests were held. Over a thousand people were in attendance. In 2004, I played for a team *Lijinirnir*, and although I broke my ankle during practice after the first game, our team won and we all received trophies for our participation. The event is a time to reunite with Marshallese both from the community as well as from other enclaves and serves as a reunion of sorts. Although *kemems*(birthday parties) and church are ways in which Marshallese come together, because they are spread out across the island of Oahu, May Day is a chance for them to come together at a large venue. This type of gathering signifies the reconnection of community ties that are more easily sustained in the Marshall Islands due to the close proximity of people to one another and the day-to-day interactions.

CONCLUSION

The friendships I cultivated over the years on Kwajalein and Ebeye remain today. There are a number of Marshallese and Americans from Ebeye and Kwaj who live in Honolulu now. Our children play together and we reminisce about the days back home. I realize the significance that Kwajalein has had in my life as well as that of my friends. I am more understanding and tolerant having grown up on Kwajalein. I'm more intolerant of people's sheer ignorance as to what American militarization has done to some people in this world. I get frustrated with small-minded people who cannot see outside of their own existence. I gravitate towards those who feel marginalized, because I too feel marginalized by my existence on Kwajalein. That little island in the middle of nowhere will always be a place I call home and the people I knew will always be my Kwaj family.

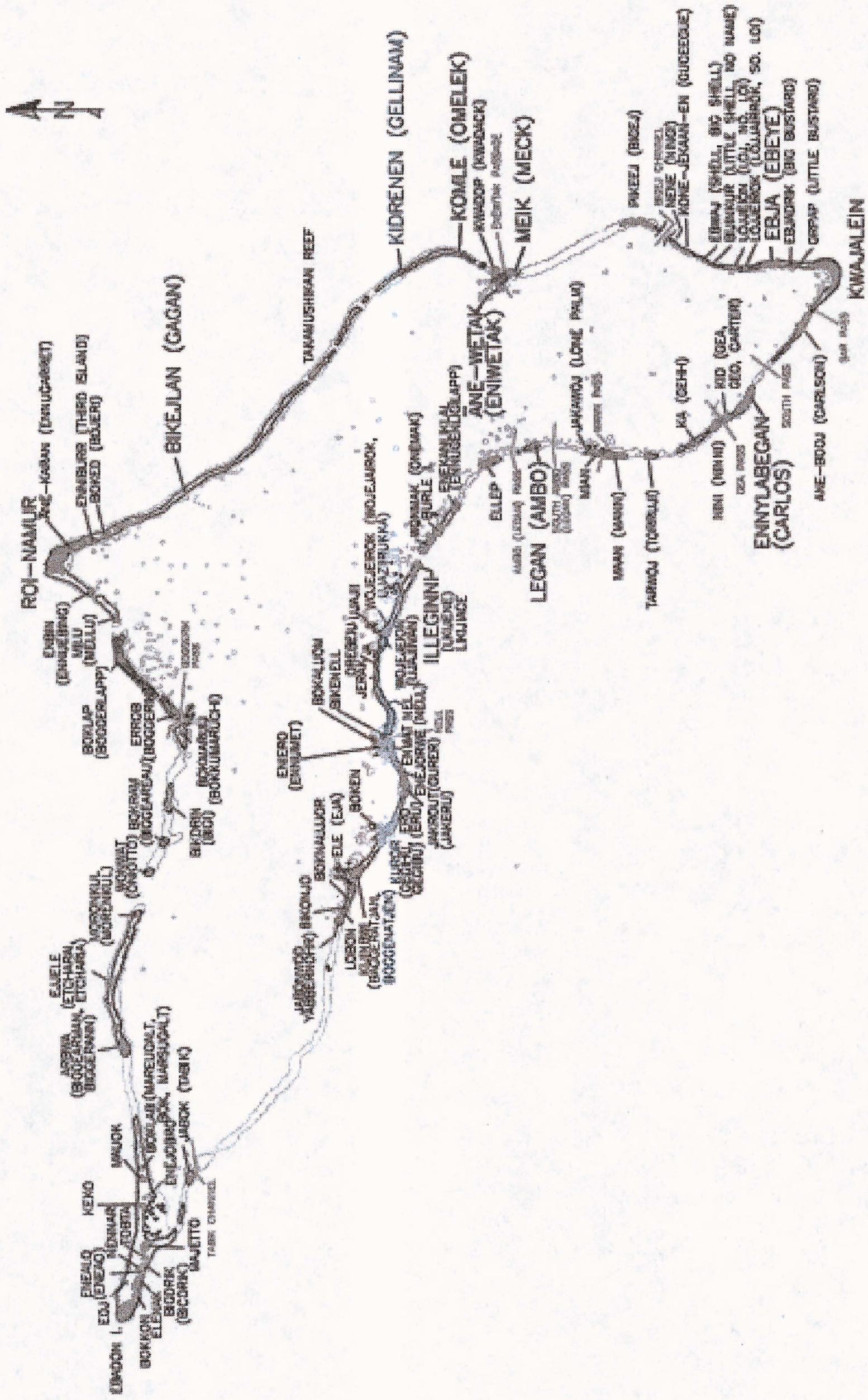
Kwajalein Atoll will never revert to a time of fruitful existence with a self-sustaining environment. The carrying capacity of the atoll has long been surpassed.

> *The traditional culture of the islands is gone and, without wholesale forced exile or mass slaughter, the human population will never again be low enough for the Marshallese to resume their way of life (Kali 2005).*

As it was perceived by Jack Tobin, even in 1954, the situation on Ebeye can only be alleviated, but not until the U.S. ceases operations of the Kwajalein Missile Range and returns the 11 islands to the R.M.I. for resettlement. Without such change, the population of Ebeye will continue to grow and the living conditions will continue to deteriorate. More people will start dying of illnesses caused by poor sanitation or they will either go to other atolls in the Marshalls or travel abroad. These waves of displacement will continue, with Marshallese traveling between their home islands and abroad, and

Americans contractors will continue to live on Kwajalein as long as there is a missile range. Each wave brings a new and unique experience.

APPENDIX A - Map of Kwajalein Atoll (Existing Facilities Report 2007)



GLOSSARY OF MARSHALLESE WORDS

Alab - Landowner

Bwebwenato - Talk story or conversate

Dilap - Leaving

Ebja – Older name for Ebeye

Jambo – Cruise around

Jejelatae – Outer most current from the island

Jukae – Current closest to the island

Iakwe – One of several ways to say Hello or Love

Kemem – First Birthday Party

Majol - Marshallese

Namo - a strip of land on Kwajalein

Namu – An island

Ribelle – American

Ribukae – Second current from the island

Rijerbal - Workers

Rimajol – Marshallese

Weto – A strip of land running from lagoon to ocean of the island

Yokwe – Another way to say Hello or Love

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