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to see again
the informant

go through with Willie

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LEGEND OF NAMOSI

Investigator: Willie.D

INFORMANT: KOSITINO MATANITULAGI....VEIVATULOA, NAMOSI.

SUBJECT: A LEGEND OF NAMOSI.

Once upon a time the Vatulaa brothers went down to net fish. As they were fishing the youngest of the brothers speared a shark. He tried his very best to pull his spear out but in vain. So the second brother helped him but the spear wouldnt come out the third one also joined in the pulling but all were in vain. The spear wouldn't come out. The boys were all on the shark's back trying to pull the spear out when they felt hungry. The shark told them not to be scared and that he will bring their food. The three brothers were busy trying to pull the spear out and did not realise that the shark had been moving and they did not know that it had taken them into the deep seas. These brothers were on the shark's back and the shark took them to the island of Tonga. The Togan ladies watched the three brothers as they walked on the shores of Tonga they said that two of the three brothers were good looking but the third one doesn't look good. The two good looking brothers didn't like what was being said about their brother so they had a meeting between them and agreed to kill their dirty looking brother, Vesikobo. The two good looking brothers killed Veisikobo and burried him before they went and hid themselves. The people of Tonga searched for the

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- two brothers and they came to a couple's house asking them to show up the two brothers from their hiding place. The couple showed where the two brothers were hiding and the two brothers were taken and questioned. The people asked them where they were from and the brothers answered that they were from Fiji. In the olden days Fiji and Tonga were not in good terms so the two boys were taken and placed in the pigs stare. The two brothers had very hard time in there and bad meals in the pigs stare. Oneday their grandmother thought to go hunting for her grandsons. The old lady from Veivatuoa before the old lady went searching for her grandsons she killed three doves and took it with her. She arrived in Tonga and saw one of her grandsons burried on the beach of Tonga. The old woman dug the grave found her grandson's body and prayed and gave life back to him. She gave him one dove and they ^{continued} contied their journey. At that time people were preparing for a TIQA game in Tonga. Vesikobo heard of this and asked his grandmother to let him go and TIQA in Tonga. He was thinking to set his two brothers free from Tonga. Tui Tonga said that if Vesikobo comes and play TIQA in Tonga only than will he set his two brothers free. The first game was coconut race. Vesikobo was to race against thirteen Tongans and they ^{had} are to pick a coconut each. If he wins his two brothers will be set free, if he looses some of the people in Navutoka will be clubbed teadeath. Vesikobo won the first game. So the king of Tonga said the

- next game was for him to have a Yaqona Drinking race. This was how the first Yaqona was brought to Fiji. There were twelve tanoa of Yaqona and Vesikobo race with another man. Again he win. So he was again to play TIQA at Nukualofa. Twenty men also played in this game. Vesikobo threw his TIQA and it landed at the King's place so Tui Tonga promised Vesikobo that his people will make a bridge for him to Namosi. So ~~Tui Tonga~~ promised that his people will make a bridge for him. Tui Tonga ordered that one division of the people of Navutoka are to be killed since Vesikobo had win all the games. The two handsome brothers later stole two Tongan girls from Tonga to Namosi but Vesikobo didn't get any Tongan girl so the title of Tui Namosi was given to him and his two brothers were named ROVEDRAU.

- You mentioned that these three brothers went down to the sea to fish does this mean that they are fishermen?

- We people of Namosi we live in the interior that is why we do not know how to fish in the salt water. We only use bamboos plaited for fishing, in the bamboo plaited is a light, this is what we use for fishing. The Tui Namosi was right inside but because he wanted to bath in this pond that is why he came and built a BURE KALOU here at Vatuloa.

- Could you talk about the plaited bamboo?

- Bamboos are cut in very fine-long pieces, within another bamboo than it is joined together with plaited strings. The opening ends of the bamboo will look like a cave opening and fishmen would set his trap in the water waiting for fishes to be trapped in the trap.

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- Why did the boys couldn't pull their spear out from the shark?

- Before the boys went down spearing for fish that day, one of them hammered a piece of stone at Vatuboroboro Point. The stone was a forbidden one a taboo for anyone to touch.

When one of the boys did this their grandmother's hair started to get itchy at Vatuloa. She felt that her grandsons are up to something naughty so she warned them that fate will befall them on their fishing trip one of them will die because they have allowed the Taboo of Namosi. Vesikobo told his grandmother that nothing would happen to them so the three brothers went down fishing. When the spear can not be pulled out from the sharks back then they remembered what their grandmother had said.

- Could you talk on that shark?

- This shark was a Vu of the olden days. The shark is the Vu of the chiefs of Nabukavesi. This Vu is the ancestor of Ratu Jope Batilekaleka and the shark is known as KOMAIWAI or TUI NI WASALIWA: KING OF THE OCEAN.

- Could you talk on the old lady's character, her promise?

- This old lady was the first person to start ^{net} ~~net~~ fishing in the interior. She was from Lau but somehow she came to Namosi. She lived in a mud hut and everyday she would sit in her house trying to figure out ways to catch fish in the river. Now oneday when she was still thinking an old man appeared to her and told her that he knew she must be really wanting to some fish. The old lady answered that she is from Lau and now when she is here she doesn't know how to catch fish in

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- the river. This old man than cut a bamboo in long p*ieces* bind them together and gave it to her for her fish trap. The trap was four feet long. When the four feet fish trap is full with its catch it would feed the whole village.

- How did Vesikobo won all the games that he played in Tonga?

- The young man had the SAU of Namosi with him. In the old-en days Namosi was known for its SAU NI VANUA. SAU is the ritual magic or a place. The youngman had the SAU NI VANUA of Namosi following him when he went to Tonga.

- What kind of drink was used in Fiji before grog was brought to Fiji from Tonga?

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- Before grog was brought to Fiji from Tonga our ancestors had Rasari as their drink. You can be drinking this drink for one month and still you'r not drunk. Vesikobo when he was in Tonga he saw a mice chewing at a yaqona root and long the mice was drunk so Vesikobo brought with him a Yaqona Root and planted it at Namosi. This was the first Yaqona Root brought to Fiji. You'll see that the men of Namosi are very good in drinking Yaqona that is because Vesikobo was from Namosi.

- What happens to the magimagi that the King of Tonga gave to the brothers?

- The magimagi given to the brothers by the King of Tonga is known as the TAWALA to the people of Lau. It is used as a belt to hold the piece of wrap-around that is their typical Tongan clothing. That magimagi is a little bit different from ours. It was used to bind some coconuts together

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- the magimagi was used to bind the coconuts which they brought from to Malawe in Sigatoka.
 - Is there any link between Namosi and Tonga due to the two Tongan girls which was brought to Namosi by the two good looking brothers?
 - The two ladies stayed in Malewe with their husbands that is why there is a blood link between Malawe and Namosi. Because the two ladies lived in Malewa, there is a blood link between Malewe and Tonga.
 - How about the coconuts which was brought from Tonga?
 - That coconut was the first NIU DAMU brought to Fiji. This kind of coconut is similar to the one they have in Malasia.
 - Could you talk to me about some diplomatic technics used by the chiefs of Namosi in the olden days?
 - The word Bau comes from the Namosi dielect "BAUREVA" meaning RUN-AWAY. The Namosi warriors were ready for war with Bau and before the warriors went down to Bau, Tui Namosi went to Bau and told the people of Bau to run for their lives because a big army of Namosi warriors were coming behinde him. The people of Bau escaped since they were not ready and the Tui Namosi and only a few of his warriors burned Bau. So Tui Namosi claimed that he had conqured Bau by burning their huts and that the people had escaped for their lives.
 - Is there any difference between Namosi compared to some other villagers?
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- Change came to Fiji after Fiji had been ceded to Great Britain. People started to wear clothes but there was no change in Namosi. It was still the same no change. The chiefs of Fiji signed the treaty ^{but} ~~but~~ the Namosi decline to sign any papers because the chief of Namosi wanted Fiji to run by Fijians and he wanted all the land to stay in the hands of the Fijians. This can not happen because Fiji is given to Great Britain. Now we see that we land owners have been exploited and are poor.

- Is there any link between Namosi and other parts of Fiji?

- There is a blood link between Namosi and Nadroga because Tui Namosi's grandfather was from there. There is also a link between Namosi and Serua because the Tui Namosi's mother was from Korolevu in Serua. Nalawa and Nadarivatu are under Namosi during the War Period because Namosi captured this two places . Namosi was very strong and the only army he lost to was the army in Kadavu During battle Namosi people are not allowed to eat a particular dessert known as QALU. The Namosi warriors lost in the battle field againts Kadavu because some warriors allowed the forbidden dessert. A special tribe in Namosi use VIA leaves for their shield in the battle field. This are the tribe of Lobau. When the Lobau warriors go to war they will take with them VIA leaves as for their shield.Clubs, spears and arrows cannot break through this shield. When the Lobau warriors shake their VIA shield the enemy are struck dead.

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- When the Namosi warriors landed in Kadavu they went to the village of Yale. The village people had prepared a feast for the warriors and there was QALU too. When the warriors saw the QALU they retreated to their sleeping huts. This was the place where they were given rats to eat. The villagers of Yale slice pieces of mice and rolled it the cigar that was given to the warriors of Namosi. The place was then called Lawaki meaning tricked.

- What techniques did the Namosi warriors use conquering the Nadarivatu village and spreading that way?

- Before the Namosi warriors go out to war they will stay together in a hut with the priest praying for power and strength. When the priest felt that everyone has gained this power then he will allow them to go to the battle field. Before the warriors go in the battle field they are given a kind of leaf to chew. This leaf will give them a strong heart and after this they could eat anything that comes their way even stones. That is why the Namosi warriors were very strong and famous in the past.

which one?

- After they have captured a village what do they bring home with them?

- The people captured are brought and they are placed in a cold Navua River. The river is called the TONITONI NI BOKOLA. When the chief of Namosi wants to have a person for his meal he would send his warriors down to the TONITONI NI BOKOLA to bring home a person for his meal.

- How is this person cooked?

- The captive is brought and is clubbed dead in the vill-

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- village. It is left for three days before he is skinned sliced just like a cow and cooked in the earth oven. This was practised in the days of war. The people of Namosi eat this, Yavato, Snakes and rats too.
 - Why is the above mentioned food is known as the chiefly ~~to~~ food in the Namosi area?
 - Yavato, snakes rats and people are eaten by the people of Namosi because this give strength and power to the Namosi people during war. No one is to eat anything he wants he could be punished for this, because power will slip out if all kinds of food is eaten.
 - Could you talk about the Mission of Mr. Baker to your place?
 - The murder of Mr. Baker was because he pulled his comb from the hair of a Nadrau chief. The comb was placed in the chief's hair of Nadrau. When Mr. Baker saw his comb there he walked up and pulled his comb from the Nadrau chief. Mr. Baker didn't know that it was against our Fijian custom to touch anyone's hair. Because of what Mr. Baker did a messenger was sent up to Namosi with a tabua from Bau and Nadrau, asking the Tui Namosi for the death of Mr. Baker. Mr. Baker was then killed and his knife was used for butchering the BOKOLA of Namosi.
 - I heard that nearly all the Namosi area are Catholic. Why is this? Is there a reason?
 - Tui Namosi always wanted to be different. When he heard that the chief of Bau had accepted Christianity he said that

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-no one will force him to accept any religion. The Bauan chief accepted Methodists and the Tui Namosi took Roman Catholic because it was the first religion brought to Namosi. The people of Namosi peed from their huts when the first saw the white Missionary with black gowns. At first they thought the missionaries were albino. The people of Namosi are forbbiden to walkabout the village on Sundays.

- Did this missionary came to any villagers that is under the Namosi Province?

- During a meeting of chiefs at Bau the Tui Namosi stoad up and told the chiefs present in the meeting that during the war in the olden days his ancestors conqured every village that he went to battle with, so he told the chiefs present that they have no power to stop his people from fishing that areas because he had it under him during the war.

- Why was Tui Namosi very strong in the past?

- The Tui Namosi was strong in the olden days because he worshipped LUTUDRA. This was the strongest Vu then to this day. He had his cave for the BOKOLA at Yanuca. This is the place where people walk on hot stone. This place belongs to Tui Namosi.

- Is there any more that you would like to say?

- I just want to thank you for your visit, I feel that we Fijians are losing our tradition and we are to wake up and do something about it before it is too late.

Thank-You very much.

F I N I S H