

Fishtales
Saturday, September 29, 2012
Working Waterfront Festival

Interviewer – Markham Starr
Interviewee – Tom O'Shaughnessy

MS Ok. What is your name?

TO My name is Tom O'Shaughnessy. How are you?

MS Where are you from?

TO I live in Massachusetts. But my story takes place out in the Pacific Ocean off the island of Maui. And I just want to share it because you have to have so much respect for the sea and it went like this.

One morning I had signed up to take a scuba dive, a drift dive off the backside of Molokini which is a volcano that sits off of Maui and we had 8 people on the dive boat. We headed out on a nice morning and as I was riding out to the back side of Molokini I had talked to this young lady and I asked her "What's your purpose on the boat?" She said "Oh, I'm a spotter, what I do is I keep my eye on the divers and see that everything is going well." So I said "Oh, well nice to meet you. Who's your friend?" "Oh, this is my friend from California" So, I met them and they continued to chit chat. So, my diver partner was another gentleman, Joe, and a drift dive, there's a current on the backside of Molokini, the water goes down three thousand feet. This is an old volcano. As we, and the drift dive you go with the current and the boat will go further down and pick you up later on. So, we went in and I went down 80 feet. It was beautiful. Crystal blue water. As soon as I was in the water, I could hear the sound of the whales [makes whale sounds] bouncing off the backside of the Molokini cliff. I think I came back up to 80 feet and a manta ray swam by me underneath about ten feet below me. It was just, I was in heaven. Maybe another 20 minutes later a monk seal came by me within six feet. Looked at me eye to eye and I was just, I thought I was in heaven.

So after about 45 minutes of diving, we were running out of air, Joe and I, we're together but we had drifted apart from the group and we came up and we give a signal to the boat which is probably 200 yards away at this point and the signal is you put your two hands above your head and you know they look for you in the water and come get you. But we noticed the boat didn't really respond to our signal so we keep drifting and I had a BC and I was treading water but after a while I began to realize you know, they're not really coming by. So we kept givin' the signal and then at one point I said you know I'm really, I'm startin' to fade here. I can't stay afloat much longer, even though a BC does help. So I let my weight belt go. And then I thought I could go swim to the cliff on Molokini and maybe hold on, and that was a mistake only to find out that 6 foot waves pretty much slam you up against the coral, you know the backside of the rocks. So now my hand's bleeding and I swim back away from that. Joe's with me and we're tired. Finally the boat

does come by and pick us up. I'm choking on salt water exhausted. Crawl into the boat. And the purpose of the story is to realize the, it was human error, the girls that I had talked to earlier, they weren't doing the job. They were just chit chattin' about ex-boyfriends and etcetera, etcetera and we were out there and I could have met the maker that day. So you've got to respect the ocean. There's a great love for it, I love it, but that was my story of a drift dive off of Molokini. Thank you for listening.

MS Great. Thank you.