

# The Truth About Diving In the Cayman Islands

July 20, 2008

My first open water dive was August 15, 1949. I took off from Montego Bay, Jamaica in mid-June 1964 and came upon a water wonderland, with beautiful pristine coral reefs – and I believe that Bob Soto was the only local dive operator. Believe it or not, it was located under the Lobster Pot Restaurant. For one week, Chrissy, Eric & I snorkeled & dove these absolutely beautiful waters. Later on, I began routinely coming to the Cayman Islands, and in 1972 purchased a number of condominiums at the Villas of the Galleon. In the early days, if I left my boat in the water too long, it would develop a hard coral encrustation. By 1990, this was no longer true, as my boat became encrusted with obvious sewage slime (green algae). I have dived extensively in the Cayman Islands and have regrettably witnessed the death of her lovely coral reefs.

There are only 5 things that keep an island viable;

1. Towering mountains – Our tallest mountain is “Mount Trashmore” which is elutriating into the North Sound. All kinds of poisonous substances are leaking out and being dispersed into the water.
2. Rushing rivers – Oops, we have none!
3. Friendly people – Read the attached newspaper articles and listen to the daily talk shows, we don’t have them anymore.
4. Wonderful diving – I would rather dive in my own toilet if it were large enough, as it would certainly be cleaner!
5. Financial security and privacy – see various articles – taxes have increased by 500% since my arrival and you do not have ANY privacy.

**Score – the good guys 5, Cayman Islands 0.**

Regarding dive safety, if we had had as favorable a kill ratio in Vietnam as the Cayman Islands as the Cayman Islands dive fatalities in the last 30 years, we would have won the Vietnam War!

As strange as it seems, all of the people who have been ‘murdered’ by dive operators without any exceptions have died of “heart attacks!” How is this possible?? Can American & Canadian divers all come here and die of heart attacks? **ALL OF THEM??** I don’t believe so, as I believe it is criminally sloppy dive operators. One dive operator put fill tanks into service that were never meant for the pressure used, and was charged with manslaughter, despite putting them back into service after being warned that they were dangerous (hi Greg)! Since divers never die in Cayman from abuse from their dive-masters and instructors, it appears that all such deaths in the Cayman Islands are from “natural causes!” I vigorously disagree with this attitude and suggest that any operator that kills more than two people lose his license - FOREVER! If you want a safe, comfortable & enjoyable dive trip here, I suggest the only operator I could in good conscience recommend is **Jason Washington of Ambassador Divers – call him at (345) 916-1064** and you have a large chance of actually enjoying your dives. The experience will unfortunately be a mere ugly shadow of that which obtained thirty years ago when I first arrived.