

## THE PEOPLE OF THE BLUE-GREEN WATERFALL

When Marissa Kennedy of Martinson, Bettencourt & Cable called Jackie at Atkinson-Baker with the request for the court reporter, it made Jackie think of the Indian ceremonial dance scene in Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves*.

She picked up the phone and called the first court reporter that came to mind.

Rochelle Brookside had been a deputy sheriff before she married, had two children, and had turned to court reporting for a life with a little more peace and calm while she raised her kids. Still Jackie thought she might enjoy the challenge.

“Hi, Rochelle. Jackie Douglas from Atkinson-Baker.”

“Hey, girlfriend. I usually hear from you digitally these days. To what do I owe the honor of a call?”

“It's a bit unusual and you'd be out of town for a couple of days. Is that something you can consider with the kids?”

“My mom lives two blocks from me and the kids love grandma. How unusual?”

It was four days later that Rochelle found herself standing next to a helicopter pad called the Hualapai Hilltop situated on the edge of the Grand Canyon. Helicopter was one of only three ways someone could get to Supai, Arizona – one of the most remotely inhabited locations in the United States. Supai is an Indian reservation located on the floor of the Grand Canyon.

The other two ways were to either hike the eight miles down the canyon or by pack mule.

There are hundreds of Havasupai natives in the canyon and about 200 currently on the reservation, but the Havasupai have lived there since 1300 AD.

*Makes Jamestown and Plymouth Rock seem modern by comparison,* Rochelle thought.

There had been a lawsuit resulting from a car crash. One of the natives had witnessed the auto accident in Flagstaff on a trip to see her son at the Navajo Army Base in Flagstaff. Rochelle and Betsy Wang, an attorney from Martinson,

Bettencourt & Cable, were flying down to the village to depose the woman. The opposing counsel was already on the ground in Supai.

Betsy helped Rochelle get her equipment into the chopper when it arrived and the two held on for the breathtakingly gorgeous dive into the canyon. Four minutes later, the chopper settled with a thump on a concrete pad near the center of Supai, Arizona - the centuries old ancestral home of the Havasupai Indians.

Rochelle and Betsy were met on the edge of the grassy landing field by a member of the tribal council named Marada. Betsy had contacted the tribal council, the seven-member body that governs the reservation, to help arrange the deposition of one of the residents. After introducing herself, Marada explained that she would serve as their guide to the home of the deponent and then back to the helipad for return up and out of the canyon. The last helicopter flight out was at 1:00 p.m., she explained.

“We may not be done by 1:00,” Betsy said.

“I believe the lodge is full tonight,” Marada said and pointed to a sad brown building down the dusty road in front of them that looked like a small motel. “If you don’t finish your interview of Loretta Morningcloud before 1:00, you can fly out and -- do you have a car at the hilltop?”

“Yes,” Betsy said.

“Good. You can fly out at 1:00 and drive to Peach Springs, which is about an hour and a half. There are two motels there -- try to stay at the Hualapai Lodge. You can drive back in the morning and catch the 10:00 a.m. chopper back down,” Marada said.

Loretta Morningcloud was a soft-spoken woman in her fifties with the high cheekbones of her ancestors and who spoke perfect English. The deposition proceeded apace but was interrupted frequently by Loretta Morningcloud’s grandchildren, 5-year-old twins, who periodically interrupted the depo with high-pitched displays of sibling rivalry that Loretta had to referee.

At 12:30, the deposition incomplete, Rochelle and Betsy concluded for the day and made for the helicopter landing pad. Once up and out of the canyon, the women jumped into Betsy’s rental and headed south into the Arizona desert.

Peach Springs, Arizona, sits on Route 66, the highway immortalized by a popular television series of the same name in the 1960s and in song by everyone from Nat King Cole and the Rolling Stones to Glenn Frey. It has been renamed as part of the US Interstate Highway system, but remains a landmark across the southwestern part of the county.

There was no vacancy at the Hualapai Lodge and Rochelle and Betsy would end up with rooms at the only alternative, the Frontier Motel and Café. The accommodations were -- to be kind -- rustic, but a bed was a bed, Rochelle thought. Well, yes and no. The problem was that the motel was situated next to train tracks along which trains rolled on through the night. It wasn't so much the noise of the train on the tracks as it was the sound of the trains blowing their whistles as they rolled through Peach Springs. Sleep came in 30-45 minute spurts. Rochelle had experienced worse on stakeouts, but it was a night she'd remember.

The blurry-eyed women had rubbery eggs and sausage for breakfast and chased it with cold coffee. They made it back to the Hualapai Hilltop for the 10:00 a.m. flight back down to the reservation.

They happily finished the deposition at 11:15, and then Rochelle and Betsy rushed down the trail out of the reservation to the mystically beautiful blue-green waterfall at Havasupai Falls. Rochelle had never seen such magnificent natural beauty.

The surreal splendor of the canyon and the falls more than made up for the Frontier Motel track side sleeping experience. It was all the women talked about on the trip home.

We hope your depositions don't take you to the country's most remote locations. But if they do, we've got you covered.

(A story note: We hope you enjoy the stories from the annals of Atkinson-Baker Court Reporters. We do change the names and locations of the stories, but the basic plots are true.)

Here's what our clients say:

*"I appreciate all of the available options and the trust of getting it done right the first time. Atkinson-Baker is the BEST in everything. We love you!" D.L., Houston, TX*

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