

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/killing-mapepe-sex-and-death-in-cold-war-vieques/>

This video is a detailed narrative by cultural anthropologists discussing their research on a murder that occurred in 1953 on Vieques, an island municipality of Puerto Rico, during a time when the U.S. military controlled two-thirds of the island. The military had been conducting extensive training exercises on Vieques, which included the presence of a large number of troops. The story centers around the murder of a local bar owner named Pepe during a bar fight involving U.S. Marines and sailors, which was fueled by themes of race, sex, and military occupation.

The researchers initially found scant information about the murder and the subsequent court martial of the involved Marines, who were acquitted despite witness accounts pointing to their culpability. They uncovered an investigative report that revealed significant details about the events leading to the murder, including tensions arising from interactions between Puerto Rican sex workers and the North American soldiers.

The narrative discusses the integration of Puerto Rican servicemen into the U.S. military, the dynamics of race, and the broader implications of colonialism and military presence on the island. Through interviews with witnesses and familial connections, the researchers sought to piece together a more nuanced understanding of the events that culminated in the violent confrontation.

Ultimately, the anthropologists organized an exhibition based on their findings, aiming to shed light on the complexities of the murder case and foster a dialogue about the historical context of the interactions between U.S. military personnel and the civilian population of Vieques. They highlighted the need to address issues of justice and representation for the local community and the lasting impact of military occupation.