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Pink River Dolphins

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Myself
Logan, Utah, USA
October 2018

Pink River Dolphins
Brazilian Legend (Supernatural Non-Religious)

Informant:

My name is Gianna Patchett. I am from Las Vegas, Nevada and am currently a Sophomore at Utah State University double majoring in Music (Cello Performance) and English. I am the third of six children.

I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and returned from a mission to the Brazil Manaus Mission in February 2018. My mission covered the Brazilian states of Amazonas, Roraima, Rondonia, and Acre. These states cover a large portion of the Amazon Rainforest. Because of my mission, I am fluent in the Portuguese language. I have dark curly hair, brown eyes and olive skin (I have strong Italian heritage) so a lot of people mistook me for a native Brazilian.

Context:

I heard this story multiple times throughout my mission in Brazil. I think it might be the most told legend in the Amazon because of the amount of times it was told and because all of the other missionaries I knew (both American and Brazilian) had also heard it. I heard many different versions from other people (such as clothing and location) but whenever I tell it I use these details because they are the ones that stuck with me. I think it might be because I didn't understand all the other details when I first heard the story because my Portuguese wasn't fluent yet. I may have also simply forgotten some of the details and got used to telling the story this way.

This is one of my favorite stories to tell my friends when they ask about the Amazon Rainforest.

Text:

In the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil they have a legend about Pink River Dolphins (Bota Cor de Rosa). It is believed that they sometimes turn into men who seduce unsuspecting young women from the tribes and get them pregnant. When a girl gets pregnant out of wedlock, she blames the dolphin. I have heard from some people that children of the dolphins are those of fair skin and hair (blond or red).

Texture:

I tell this story to get a reaction from the person I am telling it to and I like how weird it seems from an etic perspective. I always get a little embarrassed and talk a little softer when I mention that the dolphins usually get the girls pregnant. I think it is funny that the dolphin is a scapegoat for getting pregnant out of wedlock because I can imagine someone going to their Dad and saying, "It was the dolphin." When I tell this portion I usually laugh. The final part about people with fair skin is something I experienced firsthand. I remember a couple times walking on the street and having the person with me lean over to me and whisper, "Filho de boto," (Dolphin

child) when we would see someone with fair skin or hair. I don't know if they actually believed it or if they were making a joke but I was always glad that I'm not a blond. I never believed in the story but I think it is really interesting.

Gianna Patchett
Utah State University
Introduction to Folklore/English 2210
Dr. Lynne S. McNeill
Fall 2018