

EP 03: Neelam Rattan – Liquid State

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	VIDEO	AUDIO
1.	EXT. FIJI, UNDERWATER	
00:00	Neelam floating peacefully at the bottom of the sea. <u>ON SCREEN:</u> <u>White Corona Studios logo.</u>	<u>Just the silence of the depths.</u>
2.	EXT. FIJI, UNDERWATER	NEELAM RATTAN
00:00	Neelam floats peacefully at the bottom of the sea while the camera goes around her slowly. <u>ON SCREEN:</u> <u>"PRESENTS"</u>	When you go into the water, you are the water. Some days it's easier, some days it's harder. And basically how you are reflects when you are in the water. And being in the water is very profound.
3.	EXT. FIJI, UNDERWATER	NEELAM RATTAN
00:00	Neelam swims upwards and leaves the frame. <u>ON SCREEN:</u> <u>"NEELAM RATTAN: LIQUID STATE"</u>	I feel like some days when you are feeling good, feeling happy, when you're in the water, you <i>become</i> the water. You become <u>liquid state</u> .
4.	EXT. FIJI, UNDERWATER	
00:00	We are left alone at the hypnotic landscape of the bottom of the ocean. <u>ON SCREEN:</u> <u>"A FILM BY DAVID SCHURMANN"</u>	<u>Just the silence of the depths.</u>
5.	BLACK SCREEN.	Ambient sounds.
00:00		
6.	EXT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI	NEELAM RATTAN
00:00	Aerial, establishing shot of <u>Savusavu, Fiji.</u>	My first memory of the water is not on the ocean. It's on the river. I grew up here in a farming community, a very poor farming community, and we did not have running water. So as a child we used to go to the river to bathe and to do your laundry and stuff like that. I remember you come back from school and then you pick your stuff up, you go to the river. That was my life. Every day.

7.

EXT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI / BEACH / NEELAM'S OFFICE

Neelam walking around the beach.

Neelam shows us some pictures that highlight her lifelong relationship with the ocean.

NEELAM RATTAN

And I remember as a child, my mother would say, "Neelam, you are going to die". "You are definitely going to die", because I had this obsessive need to be in the water, always be.

And I remember one incident when I was a child. I had this brilliant idea that I should put a bucket over my head and walk in the water thinking that a bucket would have enough air for me to breathe.

Little did I know you can't do that.

NEELAM RATTAN

My first interaction with the ocean was when I was a teenager. I went out with my friends and we had a little snorkelling trip and a whole new world opened to me.

NEELAM RATTAN

I remember I cried. I'm like, This is it. This is it. This is what I have been always searching for.

This is what I've always been looking for, to see what's down there. And yet for me, being in the ocean, like I said, it's like coming home. It is. It is beautiful. It's perfect.

NEELAM RATTAN

It is an amazing experience where your heart slows down. I find the world stops being in the water.

8. **EXT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI / OCEAN / BOAT**

NEELAM RATTAN

00:00 Different shots of Neelam getting ready to freedive – breathing exercises, putting on the wetsuit, the weight belt, etc.

I have this beautiful deck that overlooks the water and I sort of go down and sit there for a few minutes, close my eyes, meditate, basically *feel*, have feelings of gratitude, accept my situation, accept my happiness, accept everything that is there.

And I do a few breathing exercises. Before I get in the water, I sit on the edge of the boat on the ladder and I just breathe.

Prolonged shots of her doing breathing exercises. It looks peaceful.

NEELAM RATTAN

I tell everybody, all my students: freediving is about breathing, not about breath hold. It is about breathing.

9. **EXT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI / BEACH**

NEELAM RATTAN

00:00 Neelam walking at the beach, staring longingly at the ocean, as if she wants to be there – but can't.

I am Fijian of Indian descent. I'm fifth generation. My family came here as indentured laborers during the British colonial era to work in the cane fields and stuff like that. So generally we've had generational fear of the water.

The episode 'pauses' for a second, breaking away from all the positives, for a moment of somber reflection.

That's why my mother was a neglect. "You will die, Neelam will die," and I think that has really helped me understand people who are afraid of the water.

NEELAM RATTAN

So that really helps with me teaching freediving, connecting with people who are not very comfortable with the water. Because I *understand*. I understand how it is, how it is to be afraid of the water.

10. **EXT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI / OCEAN**

NEELAM RATTAN

00:00 But this is a happy story! Neelam smiles for the camera and dives into the water (this is the follow up to scene 8, in which she is getting ready to dive).

After that I begin my dive on the stillness, the quietness. This amazing feeling of everything stopping. Time stops, the world stops, the silence stops, *everything stops*.

* It would be interesting to have all ambient sounds silenced here, and insert heartbeats, as Neelam relaxes underwater.

NEELAM RATTAN

Usually in the beginning of my dive and the first few dives, I like being so quiet that I can hear my heartbeat.*

NEELAM RATTAN

I feel like I'm no longer someone who is entering the water. I feel like I'm someone who belongs there. Someone who's one with the water.

11. **EXT./INT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI**

NEELAM RATTAN

00:00 Shots of Neelam teaching the crew about freediving (as she would do with her regular students).

I used to be a scuba diver. My husband is an underwater photographer, so we used to sail around the South Pacific.

We dived and we took pictures. And generally when you're swimming with the animals, like slightly bigger animals, it is not very easy

with scuba diving equipment because you can't go up and down fast. So then I started swimming and started getting rid of all my scuba diving equipment.

And that's how I started freediving.

NEELAM RATTAN

I felt I was more intimate with the water. I could feel my body reacting to the water a bit more than I would when I was scuba diving.

12.

EXT./INT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI

00:00

Different shots of Wilhelm and other members of the crew getting ready to freedive with Neelam's aid, mirroring Neelam's own preparation at the beginning of the episode.

NEELAM RATTAN

We lived on a yacht for seven years and we sailed around. Every island I went to, uninhabited islands, there was plastic rubbish. On the windward side there was always plastic rubbish, always plastic on the beach.

People don't live there, but plastic is there. Plastic is littered on the beach. What you see on the surface is just a small number. What you don't see is what's in the water, what's at the bottom now.

NEELAM RATTAN

In August 2000, Fiji did a ban on single use plastic bags. And in January 2021, they did a ban on disposable styrofoam takeaway boxes.

And I have seen a great decrease in plastic rubbish on the beach. The single use plastic has all gone and you see very little of those in the water or on the beaches and stuff like that. So initiatives like that actually do have a positive impact on marine life in the water.

13.

EXT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI / OCEAN / BOAT

00:00

Neelam and our crew ready to freedive.

NEELAM RATTAN

I would say from where I'm standing right now, the outlook is positive.

People are getting aware and there is still rubbish in the water, but there's a lot less compared to a lot more than you see when you're scuba diving as opposed to freediving.

14.

00:00

EXT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI / OCEAN

The boat stops and everybody dives into the ocean.

This is the visual climax of the episode. The images should convey a sense of wonder.

NEELAM RATTAN

You feel the water a lot more when you are freediving.

And it's also a more spiritual journey when you're freediving because— they say scuba divers dive to see the world outside, freedivers dive to see the world inside.

I also tell this to my students, is if they have a problem, the water will tell you. The water will always tell you, if you have something.

15. **EXT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI / BOAT / BEACH**

On the boat or at the beach and with our crew still wearing at least part of the freediving gear.

We catch snippets of their excitement after diving.

16. **EXT. SAVUSAVU, FIJI / BEACH**

Neelam and the crew sitting on the beach at sunset with Corona bottles beside them.

They celebrate a beautiful day at sea with a classic CORONA toast.

NEELAM RATTAN

If more people went freediving, a lot of people would actually understand the water. They would be able to appreciate the water more, be in one with the water.

A lot of people would be a lot happier.

17.

00:00

THE SCREEN FADES TO BLACK.
