

Kaieteur Falls, Guyana

Elaisha Stokes, Story/Creative Producer
Life in Crisis: Schad Gallery of Biodiversity
Royal Ontario Museum

[Podcast starts with animated ROM logo and sound sting]

[Video fades from black to reveal a close shot of a woman standing in darkness. Title screen reads Elaisha Stokes, Video Producer.]

Elaisha Stokes: Hi. So here we are, we are at the opening of the cave, the sink hole, *[Video footage of Elaisha and the team crawling down tree roots into a large hole in the ground. They are using climbing ropes and harnesses for the descent.]* and we are about to crawl way down, way down into St. Clair Cave in order to try and find the roost. *[cut back to close shot of Elaisha standing in darkness]* Now, the roost is where the bats sleep during the day, *[hear voices talking in the background]* and at the St. Clair Cave they actually call it the inferno, because it is so hot due to all the bat activity. So we are going to go down into the cave. I'm really not sure what to expect, but I think at the very least it's going to be a great adventure.

[Music begins. A series of quick edits shows people climbing down rocks with hiking gear and wearing helmets and masks including close ups of cockroaches and the cave formation.]

[Close shot of Elaisha standing in darkness with a helmet on. A light attached to her helmet shines brightly.] **Elaisha:** Ok so here we are and we are about to go into the big part of the cave where all the bats are on...hanging. *[A hand reaches to adjust the light on Elaisha's helmet]* It's called the Inferno...and uh. Yeah. I don't know what we are going to see in there, *[hear the sound of water dripping in the background]* but it's going to be pretty amazing and I think it will be a big part of what makes the actual Bat Cave a success.

[Cuts to a shot of a man standing in the cave adjusting his face mask.]

Elaisha: Are you guys ready?

Burton Lim, ROM Curator: Yep. We're ready.

[Camera pans to show another man with a helmet and headlamp.]

Cave Guide: Into the Inferno we go.

Burton Lim, ROM Curator: I've got my mask on.

[Camera pans back to first man and pans to show the back of a third man walking in water.]

Cave Guide: This water is actually fairly clean right now.

[Cut to show a person wading in water up to their thighs. The sound of water can be heard in the background. Cut to the group wading through the water as they squeeze through passageways in the cave.]

[Close shot of Elaisha standing in darkness and wearing a face mask. Squeaks of bats can be heard in the background] Elaisha: Here we are, we've made it into the Inferno. It was a long hike down into the bowels of the earth, *[Elaisha looks around the cave she is standing in]* but now we are in this amazing place. The cave has just opened right up and *[She looks up]* above me there are thousands and thousands of bats and *[Cut to show the ceiling of the cave. Shadows can be seen fluttering against the rock.]* uh this is where they roost...and uh I guess they call it an inferno for a reason because it is boiling hot down here. *[Cut back to close shot of Elaisha]* I'm sweating, it's smelly, it smells like a zoo. *[Cut to show a shot of cockroaches climbing on the rocks]* There are cockroaches everywhere. We had to wade in through water up to our waist. *[Cut back to close shot of Elaisha]* Um, but it's a pretty amazing place and it's particularly incredible to think *[Elaisha gestures behind her]* that this kind of stuff is going on beneath our feet all the time. There's this whole other kind of universe that we are not aware of and it's an incredible ecosystem. So, definitely worth the trip down.

[Camera pans to darkness] **Cameraman:** Would you like to come back soon?

[Camera pans back to Elaisha] **Elaisha:** I would love to come back! *[laughs]* I think I'll build myself a little house right here. *[gestures to space beside her]* A little tiki bar. Maybe? No?

[Music starts. Cut to a open car door with a logo that reads: JCO Jamaican Caves Organisation www.jamaicancaves.org. Fade to black.]

[Podcast ends with animated ROM logo and sound sting]

