

Trevor Coxy, uh, back with the letter , uh
Got the news yea, got the booze yea, yea

KEEN YAAA!



My family visited me and we had a trip. I was able to see a bunch of the country the locations are listed above. There's a map on the next page for better visualization. (Honestly, what's more insufferable than listening to someone's vacation? Listening to their dreams? Oh I know! Reading about someone's vacation. If you skip this one I won't blame you. But before you go please, I beg you, go to the Nairobi National Museum section and look at the photo on the left. Go ahead scroll down. I'm not telling you what the photo is!) \

Anywho, we went from Kakamega forest, to Lake Victoria via matatu, taxi, and tuktuk. Then we flew from Kisumu to Nairobi aka Nairobberry. None of us got robbed, but if you head the way Peace Corps HQ describes Nairobi you'd think it's the most dangerous city in the world. It reminds me of the way Fox News describes San Fransisco. Maybe it's a little dangerous, but it is cosmopolitan. Many NGOs and UN agencies are headquartered in Nairobi and it has all kinds of restaurants from mediterranean to pizza to sushi!

From nairobi we took two retrofitted Land Cruisers to Maasai Mara. We stayed just outside the Mara Triangle section of the Maasai Mara for four nights. The Mara Triangle is a national park that borders Tanzania's Serengeti National Park. The two national parks share an open border, which is the site of the great migration. Every year starting in July over 2 million wildebeests, gazelles, and zebras migrate. They follow the rains from the drying Serengeti to

the flourishing Maasai Mara. They move in search of water and food. They'll stay in the Maasai Mara until November when they move back to the Serengeti.

Maasai Mara is the site of the famous river crossings that you might have seen in Planet Earth or other nature documentaries. Wildebeests, Zebras, and Gazelles, are forced to cross the Mara river, which is located in the Mara Triangle. We fortunate enough to witness one of these crossings were we saw one unfortunate Zebra be killed by a crocodile. You'll see some photos of this later in the newsletter.

FIX REREAD THIS WHOLE SECTION

Anyway we returned to Nairobi then took the new Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) built by some Chi-Com firm. It is part of a greater plan to connect all major East African cities via rail. Three trains leave for Mombasa daily. We got tickets for the 8:00am and fortunately we arrived at the station over an hour early. The new Nairobi Terminus is more secure than Fort Knox. There were three rounds of security! This security process was more elaborate than JFK! First you go through a metal detector. Then everyone is separated from their bags and lined up in a metal atrium as bomb-sniffing (drug-sniffing?) dogs trot up and down inspecting each bag. Then you enter through another metal detector to the ticket office. Everyone is required to print their ticket at the station! After a 40-minute delay due to a ticket misprint in printing our ticket we went through another round of metal detector, bag scan, and ID check. Until we finally got into the main part of the terminal. Where we had to immediately make our way for the train. We boarded the 16-carriage serpent with only 10 minutes to spare!

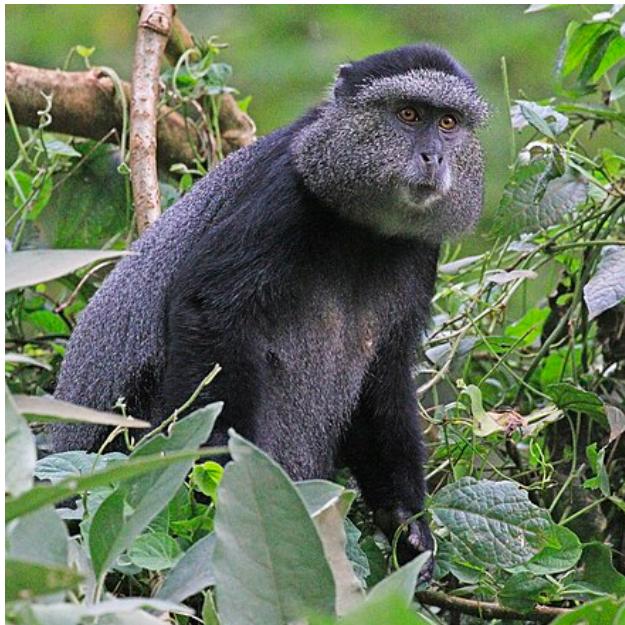
Our train was filled with a pack of Kenyan middle schoolers on a field trip. There was over 400 little mischief makers on train.

Through the windows we saw Mt. Kilamanjaro and Tsavo National park, which was made famous by the Man-Eaters of Tsavo. Over the course of 9 months in 1898 a pair of lions killed and ate between 28 and 135 people. YIKES! From the train we saw elephants, giraffes, antelopes, and zebras munching in that arid national park. 8 hours later we arrived at our final destination: Mombasa. Finishing off our trip with beach lounging, ocean snorkeling, and Indian Ocean wading. The warmest natural body of water I have ever been in!



So open that bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon, crack that Coors Light, drink that Jäeger, pull that Seagrams, shoot that Early Times, sniff that Vodka, delete that WhiteClaw and let this phantasmagoria pass you bye.

Map of our Travels. We started off going to the Kakamega forest which is right in my backyard. Photos on the next page. Much like a New Yorker who's never been atop the Empire State Building I've never been to this tropical rainforest even though it's only one mile from my house. I walked by it once and saw a band of young Kenyans carrying out a dead baboon for dinner. Yum! Sadly I don't have any photo of this. While there we saw blue monkeys, red-tailed monkeys, Da Brazza's monkeys, black-and-white colobus monkeys, and a forest cobra. It was hard to get a photo of those monkeys so here's some pictures from the internet:



Blue monkey
(*Cercopithecus mitis*)



Red-tailed monkey
(*Cercopithecus ascanius*)



Eastern black-and-white colobus
(*Colobus guereza matschiei*)



De Brazza's monkey
(*Cercopithecus neglectus*)

KAKAMEGA FOREST

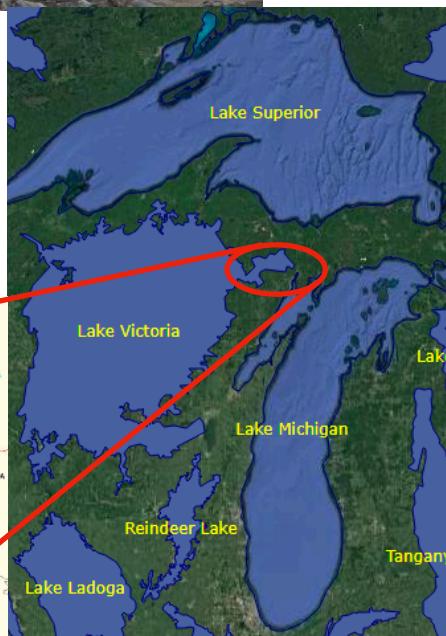


On the top left. Me negotiating the tuktuk price. All six of us were able to fit into one tuktuk! A quick 20 minute ride set us back 500 ksh ~\$3.37. On the right is a forest cobra that was blocking the entrance to the visitors center. The average forest cobra injects you with 570mg of a neurotoxic venom. That's enough venom to kill 65 adults. Death occurs 30-100 minute after the bite. Yikes!. On the bottom is my Jane (Mom), Vianey, Ryan (Cousin), George (Dad), Phoebe (Sister), and me. Then on the left we have the Kakamega forest overlook. I was shocked to find a ton of pine trees at this overlook! It felt like the Sierra Nevadas. Our guide told us that these pine trees were imported from Europe to control erosion. Then in the middle is some big ass tree I have no idea what it's called.

Lake Victoria



Here's a couple photos of Lake Victoria. We saw the Nina, the Pinta, the Santa Maria, cows, and birds, and a little sangria! Lake Victoria is massive. It's the 3rd biggest lake in the world by area. Just behind Lake Superior you can see a size comparison on the right. The part of Lake Victoria that is in Kenya is only this little inlet circle on the map. This inlet is about the size of Lake aTahoe. That's NUTS!



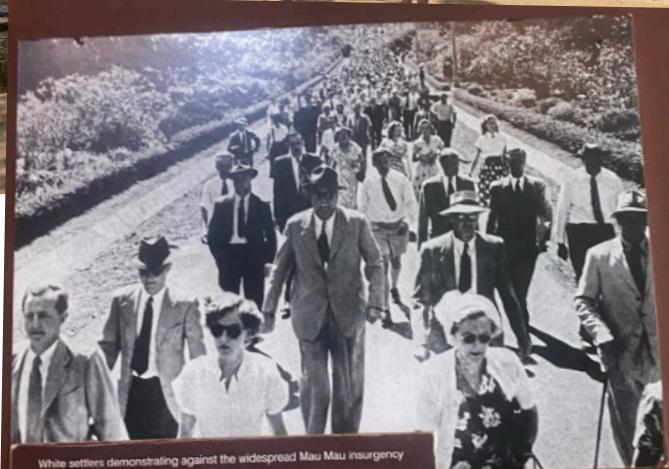
NAIROBI

Then off to Nairobi we went to the Nairobi national park, the elephant orphanage, and the famous giraffe manor. At the elephant orphanage we saw 1 baby rhino and about 20 baby elephants. You can see a photo of my Dad touching one. At the giraffe manor a giraffe's big blue tongue took food from our hands. You can see my sister attempting to feed below. In Nairobi we stayed in what seemed to be a Chinese hotel. Half the channels were in Chinese and we were the only Westerners in the building. In the hotel I watched an episode of China's got talent that had a white judge, an Indian judge, and a black judge all speaking perfect Chinese! Below you can see a photo of my sister, mom, and cousin with the hotel's guards.

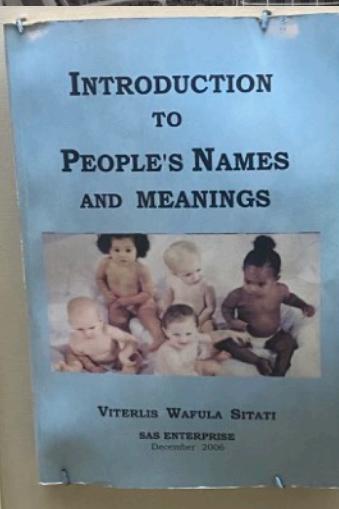


Ancestors

NAIROBI MUSEUM



Beer pot
Pokot people
Late 20th century
UN 1971-815 b



Above are some highlights from the Nairobi national museum. Top right we have a bunch of different masks. On the right we have a giant beer pot. I have yet to see one of these in the wild, but I'll find one soon! Then on the bottom we have the stages of life exhibit. From birth to death we all go through the *Circle of Life - the Wheel of Fortune*. And apparently we all play marble pool and meet giant pangolins. Then on the left is what I call the "Wazungu Wazimu" (White people crazy) exhibit. We've got George and Joy Adamson hanging out with lions. Apparently the two were famous for some tv show in the 1970s called Born Free? Also, later in life they were both murdered. One by a former servant the other by poachers. Maybe that's what the painting in the middle depicts? Lastly, we have my absolute favorite picture of the entire trip. We see a group of Kenyan settlers doing the settler version of MLK's march on Washington. The text attached to the picture states: "White settlers demonstrating against the widespread Mau Mau insurgency." When I first saw this photo I began to laugh uncontrollably. This caused numerous Kenyan middle schools to look at me cock-eyed. They must have been thinking, "Hii mzungu ana mzaha kabisa. Sijui kwa nini?"

of the white settlers protesting the Mau Maus. When I saw this photo in the museum I bursted into uncontrollable laughter. This laughter caused the many middle schoolers in the museum to look at me dumboundedly. They must have been think *Mzungu hii ni wazimu kabisa! - This white man is completely deranged.*)



MARA TRIANGLE Photos of Animals



Not much to say the photos speak for themselves. We saw everything besides a leopard. I'll just list all the animals that we saw along with their scientific names.

- | | |
|--|--|
| (1) Maasai giraffe (<i>Giraffa camelopardalis tippelskirchi</i>) | (14) Lion (<i>Panthera leo</i>) |
| (2) Common warthog (<i>Phacochoerus africanus</i>) | (15) Black rhinoceros (<i>Diceros bicornis</i>) |
| (3) Common hippopotamus aka hip-hop hippopotamus (<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>) | (16) Common zebra (<i>Equus quagga</i>), |
| (4) Kirk's dik-dik my favorite! I call these guys Trevor's Cox-Cox (<i>Madoqua kirkii</i>) | (17) African elephant (<i>Loxodonta africana</i>) |
| (5) Thomson's gazelle (<i>Eudorcas thomsonii</i>) | (18) Yellow-spotted rock hyrax aka bush hyrax (<i>Heterohyrax brucei</i>) |
| (6) Grant's gazelle (<i>Nanger granti</i>) | (19) Spotted hyena (<i>Crocuta crocuta</i>) |
| (7) Defassa waterbuck (<i>Kobus ellipsiprymnus defassa</i>) | (20) Cheetah (<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>) |
| (8) Coke's hartebeest (<i>Alcelaphus buselaphus cokii</i>) | (21) Side-striped jackal (<i>Lupulella adusta</i>) |
| (9) Topi (<i>Damaliscus lunatus jimela</i>) | (22) Olive baboon (<i>Papio cynocephalus anubis</i>) |
| (10) Blue wildebeest (<i>Connochaetes taurinus</i>) | (23) Bushbuck (<i>Tragelaphus scriptus</i>) |
| (11) Impala (<i>Aepyceros melampus</i>) | (24) Mwanza flat-headed rock agama aka Spider-Man lizard (<i>Agama mwanzae</i>) These guys are everywhere! |
| (12) Common eland (<i>Taurotragus oryx</i>) | (25) Nile crocodile (<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>) |
| (13) African buffalo aka water buffalo aka cape buffalo (<i>Syncerus caffer</i>) | (26) Trevor COX (<i>HOMO sapien</i>) |

We also saw a bunch of birds I won't list all of them but here are some highlights. There's the diabolic vulture that menacingly paces around carcasses along with his buddy the grotesque marabou stork that has a hideous pink gullet. There's the huge common ostrich. The grey crowned crane with its majestic headpiece. The tall secretary bird that stalks around looking for snakes. And lastly the most beautiful bird I have ever seen in my life: the lilac-breasted roller with its polychromatic feathers. This bird looks like it came out of a Deadhead's acid trip.

Lappet-faced vulture
(*Torgo tracheliotos*)



Some grizzly looking scavengers



Masai ostrich
(*Struthio camelus massaicus*)



Secretarybird
(*Sagittarius serpentarius*)



These two guys love fighting over carcasses



Marabou stork
(*Leptoptilos crumenifer*)



Grey crowned crane
(*Balearica regulorum*)



Lilac-breasted roller
(*Coracias caudatus*)



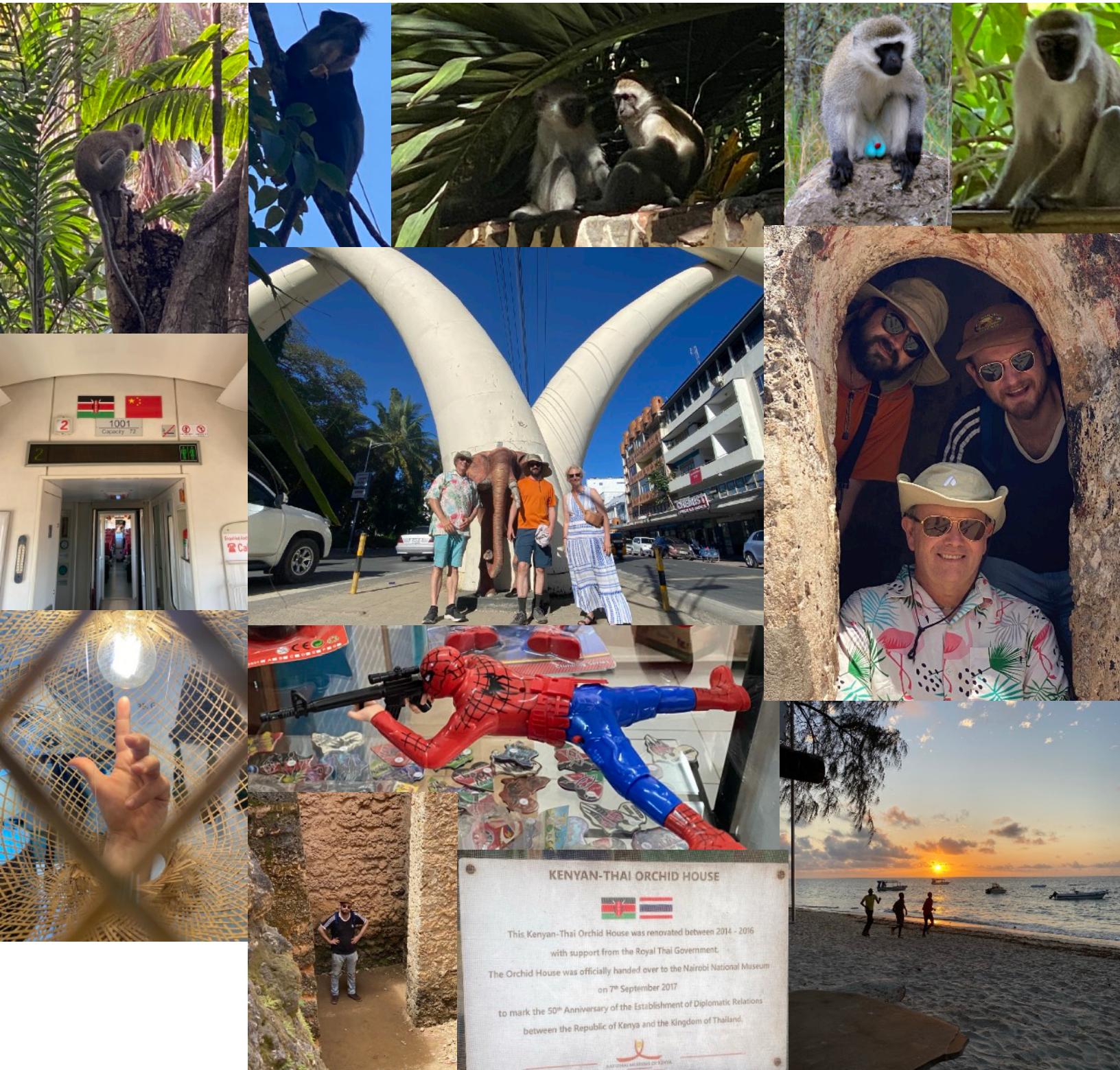
MARA TRIANGLE & MAASAI VILLAGE Photos of People



MOMBASA

Our final stop was Mombasa. As I said we travelled via train there's a photo of the train's interior below.

In Mombasa vervet monkeys (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus*) were everywhere. They remind me of a mix between squirrels and raccoons on university campuses. They're always breaking into garbage. If you leave your food unattended for a minute the vervets will have taken it. I saw one vervet snatch a muffin out of a German tourist's hand.



There's a park next to Mombasa's famous tusk gateway called Uhuru Gardens. It is inhabited by an estimated 3,000-10,000 straw-colored fruit bats (*Eidolon helvum*). When you look up and see this cacophony of roosting flying foxes it elicits a latent atavistic fear. These photos don't do it justice, but maybe they'll trigger your anxiety. ENJOY! (Shout out Vianey for these photos!)



Then here's a photo of a red-legged millipede (*Epibolus pulchripes*) that was chilling between our hotel room and the pool.



WORDS? IDK

In my next newsletter we'll do another lil Swahili lesson, some more presentations from the guidance and counseling committee a fashion report and I'm sure some other random stuff. The Kenyan School year officially ends October 27th then the seniors take their closing exams which lasts for three weeks. It's the only grade that matters in high school for college. None of their class work or grades from any years matter. Only the letter they get on these closing exams count. They'll be taking this exam in November then some teachers mark it in Nairobi in December. For the rest of the students and teachers school is closed from October 27th until sometime in January the national teaching commission has still not released the 2024 school calendar. Nobody knows when school will start until the national government releases that calendar. They'll probably let us know sometime in January when school starts back up. Anyway, I look forward to these 10+ weeks off of school. Maybe I'll write more maybe I won't. Maybe I can tell you about the 35 books (one of which was the entire bible. Oye Vey!).'