

5 Nov 65

I think maybe I should get this down on paper - soon!

This will make an interesting beginning because I thought it would be a very final ending.

I woke up this morning when Larry, George, Mac, and Morris came in from Panama. Theirs was undoubtedly an auspicious beginning to a very large hangover since they, too, are flying to Quito.

After making sure the cameras were all on board I had breakfast - or rather, I gulped down an assortment of rolls and coffee. This was to be my day - in charge of all the equipment. And it was on the plane too -

so I thought there'll be no problem.

We boarded at about 0700 hrs, taxied to takeoff position.

This is my own point of self-examination.

10 minutes of rearing the engines and we rumbled down the runway -

100, 500, 1000 feet - the motors roaring - and suddenly dead silence! Huh?

The plane was 2 feet airborne. I had condemned the entire business as usual - and suddenly - blap! - we're grounded?

Naval officers sitting next to me commented he'd gone through worse forced

landings in better planes -?
I didn't even want to start
such a collection of
memories of doubtful value.

Airborne now - after 10
more minutes on the ground
following the near-
heart attack stop in
mid-stride.

Over water - sign on back
of chair to my front
proclaims confidently that
the fuelge contains life
vest and exposure suit.

I haven't bothered checking.
They're drinking coffee -
placid, calm, confident.

I wish my heart would
start working properly.

9:20 a.m.

Seat belts on now for over 40min. Rough weather - we left it behind 20min ago.

There is a precarious subtlety of life made evident to the air traveller during 'rough weather'. He knows suddenly his total dependence on a machine - hanging ~~on~~ high on the fickle strength of a guy wire that "ought to be good enough for one more trip".

I hope the old man, George, and Morris made their flight. Morris would have had a seizure had he been in my boots for takeoff.

Quit - probably to go down as the lustrous

sitting for a clash of
egotistic personalities -
mine and the old man's.

And 10,000 ft - I've not
been higher than 7,000 for
the past few years - except
for a few brief encounters
with my own bouncing
ticket to fear and the
reality of sudden ends -
the airplane. I might have
been happier in the old west -
but I don't care for horses
either.

Since I've not been entirely
faithful to my project - this -
the following notes will cover,
probably in a disjointed manner,
6 Nov and 7 Nov 1965.

6 Nov 65

Survived plane flight - now
ensconced in a "pension" - Hotel
Ancron. Army pays me \$16
a day in Ecuador - Ancron
cost \$4 a day - includes
meals - taxes anyone?

Went on the Town in Quito
tonight - started at the Vally - Ho
ended up at some dive Morris
aptly termed a slice of old
Panama girls created out of
bottles, hopes, and hopeful
imagination. The Capt. Morris,
and I totalled out our

mind in bottles. George made a doomed play for a young lady. Said next day she pulled superior attitude and he got irritated.

My trees for only decent possible price in drive also doomed. After Capt & Morris stalked home (3 a.m.), all went well until she went to eat. Didn't show for 10 min. I got irritated, departed in huff. God, but such a body she had!

Nov 7. The Long Trail to Santo Domingos - 80 miles, 3 hrs - half-paved, horribly mountainous road.

Morris & I in back of $\frac{3}{4}$ ton Army truck - rattled and dusted beyond reach

of either smile or reality -
neither being much desirable
in this business.

sitting by pool watching
girl swim L Morris: must be
rough in Army - just think,
right now there are guys
eating in the mess hall, guys
sloshing thru the jungle and
mud - and one minute we're
in the wilds of nowhere, the
next, we're sitting by a
swimming pool watching a girl.
me: get me another beer, huh?

Nov 9

Have spent two relentlessly uncomfortable days climbing up/down what must be a cruel parody of Ho Chi Minh trail - the heart of Ecuador - near Santo Domingo / town of extremely dubious value to anything but multitudinous flies.

Trail was $\approx 2\frac{1}{2}$ mile each way - all up and down; plus 3 days deposit of water. In jungle water just sits - permeating sufficient surface to mire down even donkeys not to mention photographers.

Climbing trail sock marked by years of steady, consistent, exact stepping by horses, mules.

donkeys pure hell. at least resembled a gigantic washboard. Mud & water between lumps 6" to 2 ft deep. Morris sank to his knees twice in them.

George slipped twice, one firmly planting motor of Arri in goo. Cracked ribs poss.

Boots, fatigues look like 6 months of jungle warfare.

most of operation disconnected and disorganized. Consistent fog fouled planned supply drop to main patrol plane later spotted us along trail, dumped package in 40 ft ravine - 1/2 hr to pull it out.

SFG people disenchanted.

as usual - Latinos show
slowness in learning - same
as usual.

Otherwise interesting experience
mud, ambush (got no film -
guerrilla force "shot up" the
patrol - faded into jungle)
good footage - dramatic -
otherwise. TOC may not
be bad, after all.

Sum of 2 days - parody on
Descartes - "I feel discomfort
therefore I am alive."

The day of the Playboy Episode -
Nov 10th - or Morris' Revenge.

Morris and two "not entirely
all there" girls sat under straw
thatched bahio in motel
gardeny skipping thru Playboy
all at once these events noted by Mr.

- The girls saw the center fold
- 6 visiting projects struck up
- revival charms in back-ground
- The dog drank out of pool.
- Morris lost his cool
- The sun sank in disgust!

And against a fire-red
sunset, a small monkey
bounces down a telephone
line towards a fruit tree -
part of us, Sin. beginning
to think.

11 Nov 65

Drove Major Price back to Quito today in Ecuadorian Batt Commander's (ABN) jeep.

Trip routine - encountered one dynamite blast, one overturned truck, one road grader doing damage, six - some landslides being cleared, 20 million nerve racking lumps, one loose cow, one equally loose burro w/ hair, 2 army vehicles struggling towards St. Domingo, several bottomless cliffs to our left, innumerable greenery (fantastic scenery) Morris' 90" flowers, ended with one tired PFC. Capt. George & Morris came back on Army's best yet rolling torture - 3/4 on truck.

Morris still groggy 3 hrs
later - rode in back.

Hotel Zaracay - Sto Domingo de los
Colorados - \$12.00 per man
for 5 days.

Hotel Ancron, Quito - a "Pension"
costs \$4 a day including meals.

Thus ends "Operación Nada"

Nov 13, 1965

In retrospect on MTT/Fairth
- officially admitted (word via
capt) that it was a mess.

Troubles many - Ecuadorian
last minute changes of plans
screwed everything up - our
film pieces - totally without
continuity. Inclement weather
also hindered work. Messy.

· vast night - George was
out for revenge. Took
him to Moulin Rouge where
this Viking last shield via
efforts of well-built
prostitute.

During St. Dom trip G. had
set on May Firth's knapsack.
G. got chewed out. Determined
last nite to take majors
female from him at all cost.
She not worth it. "40 yds
of tank track, barbed wire, &
dead cockroach" G's description.
Revenge was wanted, though,
whether thru bold attack or
lacking virtues or subterfuge
and blackmail.

M. L. hangout for work-by-
day scribbles by night broods
of, dulcet, looks, alcohol
alone could cast a veil of

Temporary beauty about
their gold filled teeth,
puffy waists, bulging breasts
squat bodies. Alcohol makes
the ugly face and only
beauty of womanly virtue
and desirability remains for
the single G.I.

Today went shopping - most
stores closed. Need myriad
items - glasses, earrings,
women, booze.

Nov 14, 1965 The Morning After.

Socio-contact barrier in Ecuador broken last night with our attendance at private party - only source of "real" nightlife in Latin America.

The scene: 20 minutes drive into country - back room of typical charming farm house. Woven straw or cane mats on floor, pillows, girls, booze, homemade brew (Corn - not potent); rusty nails in adobe walls, white-washed - for coats, shaky floor, low ceiling, hastily installed naked light bulb in center of ceiling - later covered by brown paper bag. Girls near beautiful. Mine (after much self-examination along usual lines and much scotch) must have measured

~ 38-22-36. Short - 5'7" black
hair, dancing eyes - teacher
of 2nd grade - subject of
Culture & General. Date Monday
to teach english. To meet in
park. L.A. girls will go
with gringo but parents
must not know. Mostly
no limits - well see. Speaks
little english. (Photo in album)
Name Marsilla - I think. It
was a little drunk out
last night. Got home at
4:30 a.m. Small hangover -
breakfast in bed - 3 cups
coffee - etc. laced with aspirins.

Party itself swinging - Capt
loaded - George bawling
cracked ribs doing slow
burn at others constantly
trying to run off with

his heartnik type. Morris
as usual disbelieving entire
situation. Marcella has kiss
of strawberries and cream
on a warm summer
evening. (Club Plucha (playboy)).

Host member of old
rancher family - runs local
Rambler dealership in Quito.
Worried over changing social
status - growth of new middle
class to which girls belong -
called them "hics" and said
you'll never make them -
next week, promised girls
for good "piece of tail" -
speaks English fluently - too
fluently, maybe. But proposition
sounds promising.

21 Nov 65

Yesterday covered opening of
V Juegos Olimpicos Bolivarianos
(5th Bolivarian Olympic Games)
in Estadio Olimpico "Atahualpa"
in Quito for USIS. Colorful
exciting pageantry including
folklore dances of ancient
Ecuador. Almost like being
back in news business
except for cumbersome tripod.
Finally went handheld with
400' mag on Arri.

2 dates past week with
Marcela Aguirre, my lovely
non-English speaking 22-year
old school teacher. Mother
today. My Spanish is
improving a trifle - somewhat
discouraging but must learn
- both for social reasons

and for reasons of personal conviction. In the visitor — were they in the states, I might expect them to speak English. People, however, very tolerant of broken Spanish will go out of their way to help and try to understand. Not all hold poor image of "gringo" from north. Although still see a few trying their best to storm impudently over very courteous and friendly Latinos.

23 Nov 1965

12½ hrs on the treacherous road to Cuenca, Ecuador from Quito. $\frac{2}{3}$ not paved - 90% mountainous - up-down.

Shortly outside Quito pavement ended - became cobblestone. Inevitable comparison of road and similar countryside. The Romans built their ~~app~~ Apian Way as a chain of bondage across conquered lands. The Ecuadorian highway south from Quito is direct opposite in effect - a road of progress and freedom, re-confirming and solidifying necessary communication which are necessary for economic development and unification of interior mountain Indians.

part of highway near Cuenca
named simply "Suca" a
name carrying implications
of greatness, of fame, of
riches. Today, colorful
ponchos cover the bare-worn
backs of Suca and
Spanish descendants. These
campesinos dot the roadside
like carelessly spilled spots
of paint. Their friendly
smile-wave, humble faces
give no outward proof to
the burdens they bear -
forgotten descendants of the
once great and powerful
Incas - rulers, not human
waste wandering the edge
of tomorrow - the
Ecuadorian Apian Way.

Also viewed another

pioneer for progress —
the steam RR engine high
in the mountains. Saw it
at RR station located
literally in midsts of
nowhere. Odd buffalo and
West would be won again.

Scenery magnificent —
~~but~~ blue-hued mountains
neatly divided by farm
plots up and down all
available sides — houses
clinging to sloping,
continually sloping hills
like so many carelessly
dropped blocks of many
colors.

Valleys deep — road
hangs as if suspended by
prayer only.

all deep, so beautiful,
somewhat secretive holding
knowledge of past
greatness. I watched in
awe the progression of man
and how this part seemed
still, but only for a while.

Whole trip ended at hotel
which last Sunday lost water
tank - no water. And truck
had flat $1/2$ after we
parked it.

27 Nov 65

Drove back from Cuenca on Thursday - that night, sick as dog. Might have been amoebas - dysenteric types or just ride over bad roads in $\frac{3}{4}$ ton. Again Way not improved one bit. Some interesting fotos of local Indian grass huts taken along way.

Today new record - 3 dates - or more - to include Georges, Larrys and mine.

One - Lenore (?) "girl on Phone" showed up at 8 a.m. - us? still in bed. Other two tried to deal her off on me - I merely looked for escapes - all routes closed. 3 supposedly grown men cowering in room, hiding from 2 fair damsels - chee!

My next date - 2 p.m.,
probably not going. Can't
understand Marcella - not
only language barrier but
her mother. Only able to
make it out during day. Either
she's looking for husband or
merely a slight touch of
hard-to-come-by freedom
from old ways. In any case,
I'm tired of park meetings,
not understanding each other,
not knowing where to start
or how I might end it -
in the middle of the day
yet!

And last date tonight with
two Venezuelans living in
Philly, Pa. no less. Put them
this afternoon - both cousins of
loaded host at Beatnik
party earlier this month -

they include one winner, two
sure losers. But might be
good time. We'll see.

Went shopping today. One
wool blanket (need another!)
bottle corks of silver, cocktail
spoons of silver - most for
Chlo. Never run shopping
type import again. Too much
fuss - never know if you
got exactly what people
want. Still nice to have
people indebted to you.

"collecting people" as security
against needs of tomorrow.

- also, trying for chess set
for dad - May settle for
expensive one but lug if they
"go home" or to Canada. No
no se! Vodka begins to
cloud mind. Esta muy bueno.

6 Dec 1965 - Día de Ouito -
city holiday - city-wide drinking
and dancing in streets.

- Recollections of past four
wild Latin days:

Friday night - Marco, Carol,
Helen, I, etc at party at
España Comñ, nightclub &
restaurant. In small room - bar
intense fan of Hemingway
watches pictures on walls of
the men he admired and wrote
of - the enigmatic breed, Bullfighter -
Torero! Met one relative
unknown - but according to
many destined for fame in the
Plaza de Toros and in eyes of many-
fold Latin aficionados. Party -
dancing (in best Latin tradition)
Spanish wine, fried oysters, rice,
shrimp (excellent) - broke at
2 a.m.

Saturday morning - Puerto's
Plaza de Toros - realization of
one long-standing wish - the
shadow of Hemingway in my
mind as I saw first Corrida
de Toros (word "bullfight"
considered bad here - implies
crudeness) - one of truly few
artistic sports. US doesn't know
what it's missing.

Impression on me excellent -
color excitement, drama, spine-
tingling recognition of things
I read about in books for
years on the Corrida. Sheer
brute force, yet artistic manners
surrounding arena (plaza).

No guards or ill feelings - I
think only appreciation of
all that Corrida de Toros
really implies. Saw El Verdole,
S. M. El Viti, Palacios. Viti's day.

Saturday night - Vodka
and Sleep - early.

Sunday - filmed 3hr long
Dia de Oculo parade - most
colorful, confusing, interesting,
and spectacular sight yet.
Thousands jammed street
route in best Latin tradition
of togetherness.

Sunday night - party at
Soyannas - wild! This is
where people know how to
have fun - dances till legs
threatened collapse. Fell in
love - didn't get her name or
phone - must work on language
more. My god she was the
most beautiful — curious, yet
inviting eyes, slightly pouting
lower lip, built far long —
about 38-22-37. Black hair,
tall, long, stender legs — ^{I can't go} on —

Monday - My second Corrida
this time to shoot 35 color film.
Day belonged to famed El
Cordobes - much-gored
beggar-boy turned showman
and daring torreador (wears
gold suits averaging \$10,000 per).
His fight near perfect - 2 ears.
7 other torreadors including
SM El Viti, El Fureo, etc. Overall
not good day, but Cordobes
carried it. Viti second. My
love of this traditional sport
with its attendant color and
excitement grows by the day.
Not sure why.

Add: Saturday Cordobes tossed
twice, Palacios gored but
finished fight. El Viti tossed.
V & C not injured. Viti had
near instant kill.

And Monday JD shot from
behind guard inside arena.
One bull leaped fence - JD
said later he was never so
scared. He was later run
out by officials because he
was not registered with
them to be there. First he
got 500 ft of hopefully good
close-ups. He also loaded -
chugged his way through the
crowd to our seat - spilled
beer over 3 people, wet their
seats - disturbed at least 30-40
around us. Childish the way
he drinks - not fit for
leadership - continually in-
gratiating himself on people - has
no sense of S. Am. politeness
- is capable of offending merely
met people within 5 min
and usually does. Has to be

babied and constantly agreed
with or becomes petulant,
childishly aggravated, vengeful.
Been told to do what he says
and forget it or he's likely
to punch me. Somehow not
worried - he's usually drunk
and thus incapable of landing
good blow - has come in Army
but doesn't belong. Phony
sentimentality for home while
in field - probably rationalizes
that as excuse for abundant
drunks, fights, scenes, show
of power, behavior like
typical, loud-mouthed tourist
chanting and swearing at
people. They probably understand
but he's too stupid to credit
them with anything but the
stupidity of which he is

the true landlord.

Thursday 7 Dec 1965 Putumayo
- waiting for plane back to
Quito - now 2 hrs late.

monaña, more than likely.
Worked in colonization area
of Palma Riza last two
days. Town of block houses,
electricity, no water. Built
and supported by U.S. - waste.
houses too close according to
way these people live - also
too enclosed for so humid
an area. No air support
after two crashes of US planes
w/ supplies.

2 Sgt (still Irish) only
contact with wives for 6 mo.
was Transceiver. "Love, kisses
and all, and I'll see you by
Christmas" Click!

Monday 13 Dec 1965

No work except captions today. Tomorrow, Saturday - home to Canal Zone Friday.

Yesterday attended Ecuadorian Grand Prix sort of sports car race. (See clippings & pictures. One boy killed and no wonder. Race held in fashionable suburb of Quito along streets - no guard rails - people continually lashing across "race-track".

Yesterday afternoon 3 girls in room - drank, played games. Anna Marie (at least 38" bust, age 19 or 20) took pictures. Also 8mm of us cavorting. Greatest sport of mankind.

P.S. to Palma Rosa trip -

flight back to Quilo
horrible at least 3 layers
of clouds over city - only
small opening into which
we dropped from almost
19,000 ft. Scared without
doubt. Competent pilot with
Instituto Lingüístico de Verano.
Group translating bible into
native indian dialects -
fly charter to help support
program. \$80 an hour into
trackless jungle of Oriente
province.

Returned CZ 17 Dec 65.

Planning stay on San Canal RR
otherwise nothing until
next trip, God and Ballinger
only know where.

7 Jan 66 - Friday

Christmas - nothing but good
dinner and drinking mom's
egg nog at Captains house.

New Years - returned to post
almost at stroke of midnight
- MP guard wearing hat of
celebration - feeling low,
missing companionship of
Omaha New Year's party - went
to bed - asleep by one a.m.

Today conducted briefing
for much brass including

Brig-Gen Shay at Quamby Hts.

Film shown was MTT/Firth - the
Santo Domingo Tour de Farce.

Re-edited and properly scripted
film - will do narration for
USARV-50 Commanding General
-Porter (★★★★) on 17 Jan.

10 Jan 66 Arrived today for 1
wk stay at Ft Sherman, Atlantic
side. Film to be at JOC
(Jungle Operations Course) of 38th
Div Natl Guardsmen. Semi-
secret - seems we're not
supposed to train Troops in C 2
except for defense of same. 38th
apparently slated for Vietnam
activation.

Program looks SNAFU
so far.

Historical notes for future truth:
9 Jan 66 - 2 year anniversary of
anti-US riots in Panama came
and went with only minor
demonstrations & dragging of
Old Glory on street.

Learned that US had sent
in, during '64 riots, group of
highly inconspicuous NCO's who
are extreme marksmen &
extreme pro killers to act as
counter-snipers from gunnery
across from burned out
Pan-Am Bldg. These NCO's used
custom made rifles like
competition weapons. Apparently
are scattered throughout Army
on alert for service to fight
snipers in similar cases.
US not exactly angle in
such situations.

also learned men who replaced flag pole during riots in Triangle were not Pan. Canal employees as advertised but members of crack Corps of Engineers in civilian clothes. US is guilty of suppressing news. I do not deem above items, as concerned, to be outside area of public right to know. The position as I see it now without further research as to Gov't reasoning for ~~not~~ withholding above info (if true) is totally indefensible.

And why (in light of above) weren't civilian newsmen allowed on front line of rioting? Interesting, et al.
