



WORLD CUP BRASIL 2014

A travel blog by Steven F. Shundich

DAY 1

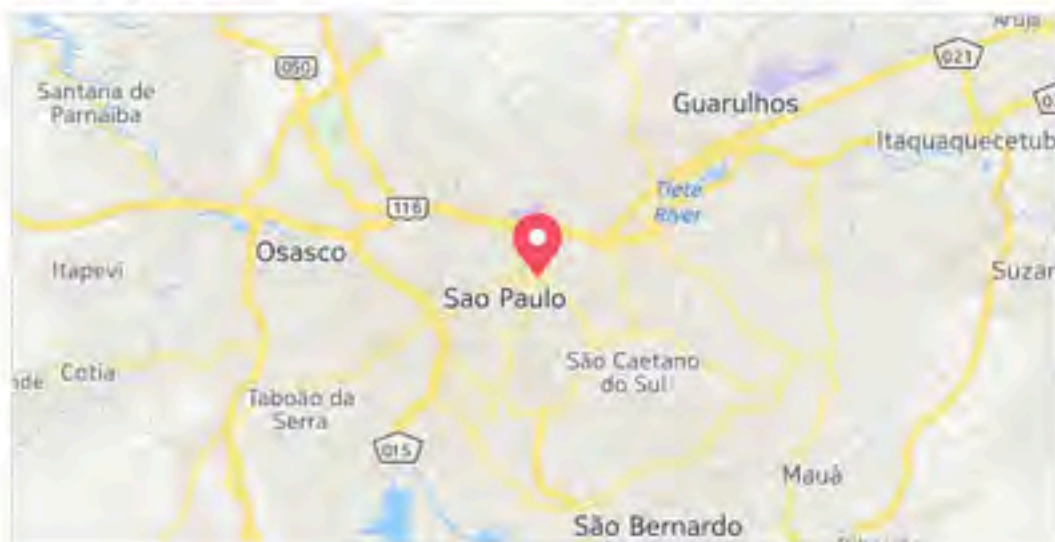


Steven Frederick Shundich is in [São Paulo, Brazil](#).

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June 5, 2014 ·

World Cup Trip 2014, DAY 1: Three Best / Worst Things About Flying to Sao Paulo thru Panama. BEST: 1) Frequent flier miles and business class on Copa Airlines; 2) Sitting next to an interesting Mayer Brown attorney whose client is the Panama Canal and learning that it costs between \$200,000 - \$400,000 per ship to go thru, that traffic goes in one direction one day and the opposite the next, and that Nicaragua is at least 20 years behind in infrastructure despite what that rich Chinese dude says about building a new canal there; and, 3) Catching up on B movies, including Labor Day (I cried), Robocop (I did not cry although I should have cried laughing) and 500 Days of Summer (which should have been a 3-minute short called The Dumbhead: Why I Wasted Two Years on That Girl Who Never Loved Me). WORST: 1) A day that started at 5:30 am Tuesday and ended at 3:30 am Wednesday; 2) The screaming, pooping business class baby across the aisle; and 3) Not getting the last piece of flan for dessert (they ran out), after not getting what I had been asked for three times for dinner (they ran out in both cabins), after not getting my Coca Lite (simply ignored).



São Paulo, Brazil

City · Brazil

Holly Seguire and 8 others have been here

Save



Marcos Luiz Del Carlo, Sylvia Stirsman and 36 others

DAY 2



Steven Frederick Shundich is with Luiz Henrique Del Carlo at Avenida Nove de Julho, 5623, Itaim Bibi.

...

June 6, 2014 · 22

WC2014, DAY 2 (Wed), Highlights: 1) You know the US\$90 official Nike Brasil WC jersey at Sports Authority? It costs US\$89.95 in Sao Paulo! Went to Rua Doze du Outubro to search the open markets for cheap knock offs, to no avail. I did, however, find a nice wig; 2) Buying Skol beer at, yes, Walmart. Who says there is no culture in Brasil!? 3) Watching a weird telenovela, Um Pedacinho de Chao, where the actors and sets are all Alice i Wonderland-cartoonish-like, with my friend Luiz Henrique (aka Kiki) and his dad, Aristol in Alto de Pinheiros, a beautiful suburb of Sao Paulo; 4) Coffee at Ofner, Av. 9 de Julho, in Itaim Bibi. Four underemployed middle aged white males discussing Elon Musk and lamenting the populist politics of Lula and his protegee, Dilma. The civil engineer, who spent 7 years in Finland, has a shop selling cleaning products; the dentist (who spent 2 years outside of Boston working at Sherwin Williams' paint factory) works one day a week because there are no patients; and the chemical engineer (who lived in Montreal) is learning how to develop for Android. When I first came to Brasil in 1987, all the talk was about Brasil as 'mais grand do Mundo' (Best in the World!). That sentiment is hard to find here.



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DAY 3

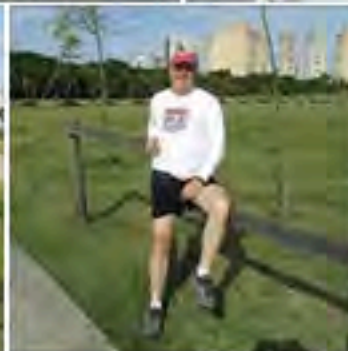
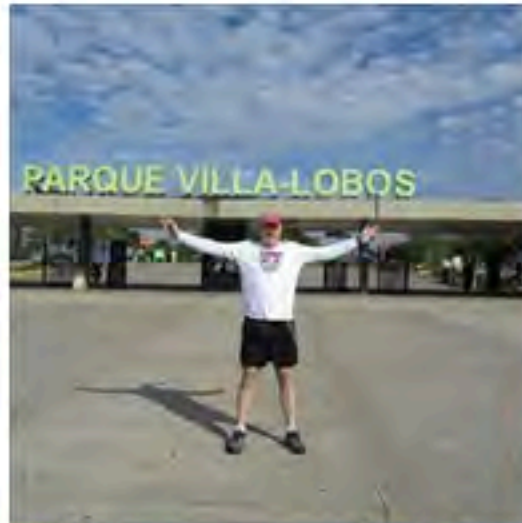


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 6, 2014 · 🌐 📍

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WC2014, DAY 3 (Thu), Highlights: 1) Walking thru the lovely Parque Villa Lobos, which is a short stroll from Kiki's house in Alto de Pinheiros, on our way to the Villa Lobos shopping mall, where after multiple trips back and forth between Claro and VIVO, I was able to obtain a SIM card and local telephone number. T-Mobile could not unlock my 1998 Nokia 3390 'beater' phone, for some reason, so I am using Kiki's old Samsung for the trip. 2) Much to my chagrin, I introduced Kiki ... See More



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👤 Sylvia Stirsman, David Bryan Mcavoy and 11 others

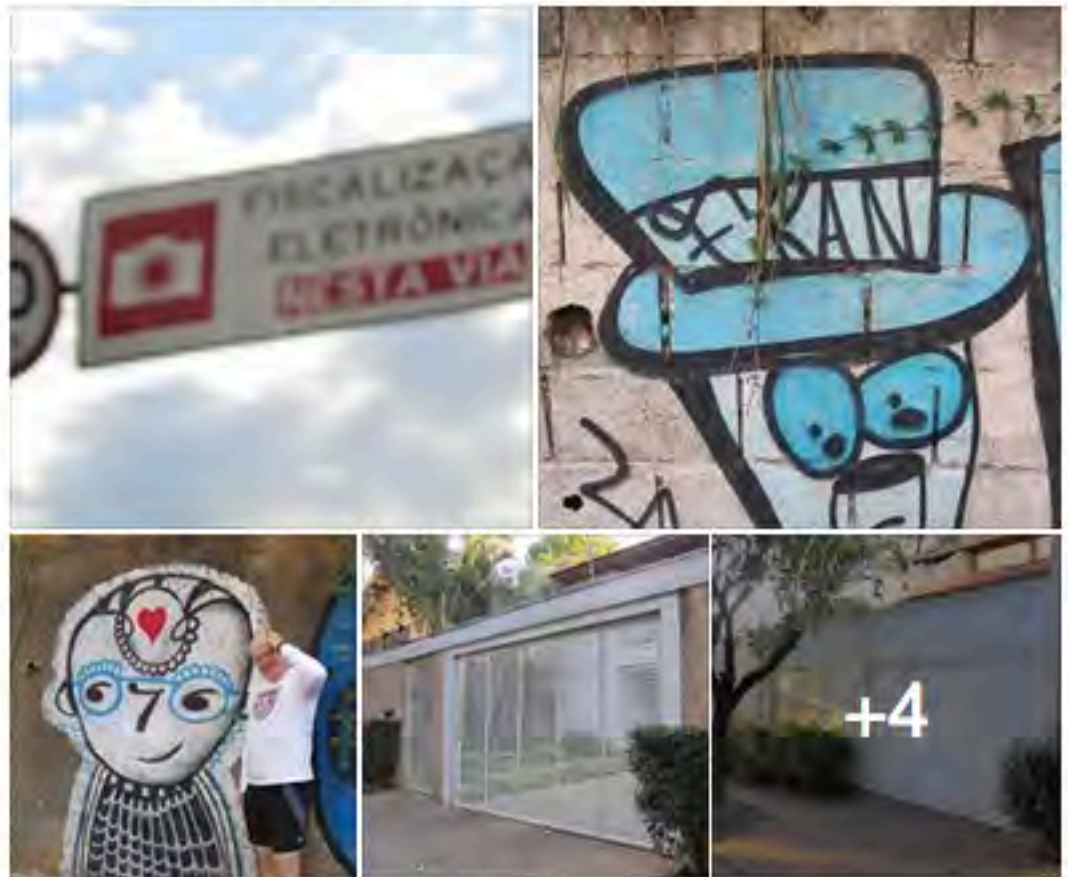
DAY 4



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 6, 2014 · 22

WC2014, DAY 4 (Fri), Social Commentary: Pouring down rain today. Just finished 'macarao' lunch with Kiki and Aristol in Alto de Pinheiros. 1) Thousands of homeless are marching again, blocking the entry to Arena de Itaquera (the futbol stadium) in their quest for more subsidized housing and food. Brasil plays Serbia today in its final tune up. The subway operators have joined the protests, affecting 4 million commuters yesterday -- and you thought traffic was bad before the greves / strikes? Will be interesting if these disruptions carry over to the real thing next week, or if the government will cave. 2) Rahm isn't the only one using photo enforcement to refill government coffers (see photo), as the practice is in full swing here. 3) Graffiti, most not as charming as this (see photos), is everywhere. 4) The residential walls of Alto de Pinheiros, where it's not so easy to know your neighbors.



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Sylvia Stirsman, Ruth O'Brien and 7 others

DAY 5

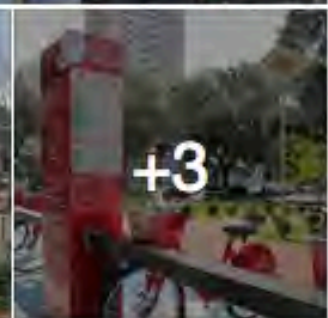
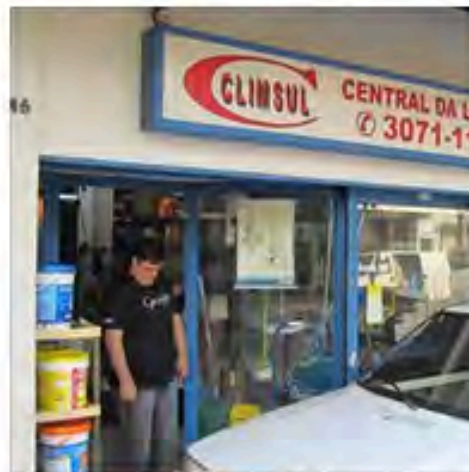


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 7, 2014 · 🌐 📍

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WC2014, DAY 5 (Sat), getting ready to watch USA v Nigeria, which I am now told has already been played! Highlights: 1) Nothing like Brazilian coffee and Pao de Queijo to start the day, then visiting Carlos Eduardo (aka DuDu (doo-DOO)) at his cleaning supplies shop and doing a little downtown sightseeing -- there are rent-a-bikes here too, just few place to ride them where you will survive; 2) Two hours of much needed exercise ralking the 3500 meter trail around Parque Villa Lobos, where Brasilians spent their Saturday playing basketball, futbol, tennis and volleyball, or running, biking, skateboarding, walking or rollerblading the park. There was even a dog park with the obstacle course (think dog show) where dozens of poor, old unsuspecting canines were forced to climb little mountains or jump (walk) over bars or crawl through tubes. The park also, apparently, is a GREAT place to make out 😊 and 3) US\$1 = R\$2.2, so X-Men in 3D was R\$60 for two tickets plus R\$16 for two medium Coca Lites. Not so cheap here, eh? And, is it not possible to put Rebecca Romijn AND Jennifer Lawrence into the same movie? I would pay another couple Reals for that. Celebrate the saving of mutant society with a Chokito McFlurry from a a portable McDonald's station in the Villa Lobos Shopping mall hall. Nothing like a good Chokito before dinner!



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👤 Sylvia Stirsmann, Pradeep Bhatt and 15 others

DAY 6



Steven Frederick Shundich is with Luiz Henrique Del Carlo and Marcos Luiz Del Carlo.

June 9, 2014 · 🌐

WC2014, DAY 6 (Sun), Highlights: A mellow day in Alto de Pinheiros, watching Formula 1 from Montreal (the Brazilian guy crashed while in 5th place on the second to last lap) and some preliminary futbol routs (France 8, Jamaica 0; Italy 5, Fluminense 3) and Lebron at night. Kiki's brother, Marcos, came over for a visit, with his wife, Fabiana, and 7-year-old son, Diego. I've been eating quite well, as you can see. Pork tenderloin, with fries and rice mixed with vegetables and lots of cheese. The dessert is called Sonhos: super buttery puff balls with vanilla custard. The style here is a very light breakfast, big lunch, and light dinner. We made another trip to Ofner for coffee in the evening. It was packed, with some great people watching. I'll be heading to Rio Wednesday, followed by Anavilhanas Lodge in the Amazon, then Presidente Figueiredo with its waterfalls and the Pousada das Pedras, followed by the USA v Portugal match in Manaus (which is flooded, by the way). Then on to Recife! It's a pretty ambitious itinerary, with 8 flights in all on the trip. I'm practicing self hypnosis.



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👤 Sylvia Stiresman, Judith Marquardt and 13 others

DAY 6


 **Steven Frederick Shundich** June 8, 2014 · 🌐 ▼

WC2014, DAY 6 (Sun), POLITICALLY INCORRECT RED ALERT! If you know someone with a drifty eye, the expression here in Brazilian Portuguese is: Frita o Peixe e olha o Gato ... which means they are "Frying the fish while watching the cat."


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 Judith McLean, Lisa La Fleur Peebles and 7 others


DAY 7

 **Steven Frederick Shundich** June 9, 2014 · 🌐 ▼

WC2014, DAY 7 (Mon), Highlights: KiKi had to be a dentist today so I went back to Parque Villa-Lobos for 3 hours of exercise and learning. The park is named for composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1958), the father of 20th century, uniquely Brazilian classical music. The park is also home to the Orquidario Ruth Cardoso, the deceased wife of ex-president Fernando Henrique Cardoso. It really is a beautiful place. Today it played host to an "inner city" tennis camp, as well as several school athletic programs. And the dogs, of course.



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 Sylvia Stirsmann, Carole McGillicuddy and 5 others

DAY 7

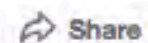
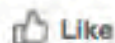


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 9, 2014 · 6L



WC2014, DAY 7 (Mon), Politics / Diatribe: 1) Three days before the World Cup opens, and the subway operators in Sao Paulo are in their fifth day "em greve." Only 34 of 65 stations are open today, snarling traffic (more than normal -- UPDATE -- 600 km of stopped traffic at 7 pm Monday, it is being reported on TV here!) and affecting 4 million commuters. They want 12.2 percent; the government is offering 8.7 percent. 2) Most of the people I meet (college educated upper middle / middle class) here despise the politics of ex-president Lula (4th grade education union boss), his hand picked successor, Dilma (weapons smuggling revolutionary who spent three years in prison here and had never run for any office) and the PT (Worker Party). I can't begin to understand the system here, but let's just say it very heavy on the patrimony side. Members of the PT tithe monthly, and their rolls (mostly the poor) have doubled under Dilma, according to today's paper. The people in the north (generally black) vote for the PT, while the people in the south (generally white) don't. Did George Bush (according to The New Yorker) really ask President Lula if any "blacks live in Brasil?" It's 50 percent of African origin, W.! Anyway, there are about 200 million people here, and about 50 million recently have moved out of poverty into the middle class, thanks mostly to huge government subsidies. The problem now is this larger, new middle class is eventually not going to want to continue to fork it all over to the government, which wants to keep doing what it's doing (and must continue to pay off all its cronies). Dilma is using the Chinese as a model (China is Brasil's largest trading partner, not the US). Big election in November. Rumor has it Lula may even run again, a comeback a la Putin. The people I meet like ex-President Cardoso (a sociology PhD, not an economist), who is largely credited with destroying hyperinflation when he introduced the new currency, the "real." Inflation is still 6 percent per month, but that's nothing compared with the 1000s it used to be. And this is about to become the 5th largest economy in the world, passing up France and the UK. 25% of the world's arable land. 50% tax on imported cars. 40% tax on appliances. Things generally are expensive for the locals, even during non-World Cup times (this month will be ridiculous!) Very interesting times here socio-economically.



Carole McGillicuddy, Marco Ottonello and 3 others

DAY 7

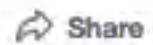
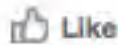


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 9, 2014 ·



WC2014, DAY 7 (Mon), From the "You're killin' me" file: Since I haven't posted to Facebook in years, and I know you just can't get enough of these noticias do Brasil, here's a local political joke: A Brazilian president goes to Africa, and meets the president of [INSERT ANY COUNTRY HERE]. They are admiring a fantastic new bridge that was recently completed. The Brazilian asks, "How did you get this done? It's awesome!" to which the other president replies, pointing to his pocket, "Twenty percent." One year later, the president from Africa comes to Brasil and meets the Brazilian president, who shows him around. The Brazilian says, "I liked what you did in your own country so much -- What do you think of our beautiful new airport?" The African says, "What new airport? I don't see anything?" To which the Brazilian president replies proudly, "One hundred percent." Bah-duhmp, duhmp.



David Bryan Mcavoy, Marco Ottonello and 6 others

DAY 7

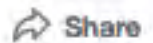
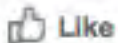


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 9, 2014 ·



WC2014, DAY 7 (Mon), POLITICALLY INCORRECT RED ALERT #2: When the discussion turns toward male masturbation here, as it inevitably does, they say "It's five against one ... unless you are a Jamaican, and then it's 10 against one!" I am learning so much here. 😊



Ruth O'Brien, Jeff Brooks and 5 others

DAY 8



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 10, 2014 · 11



WC2014, DAY 8 (Tue), o fim do Sao Paulo: I think I just had five donuts for dinner. Goodbye Del Carlo family and lovely, safe and secured-by-video-and-private-police-force (see photos) Alto de Pinheiros!



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Pam Fairchild and Holly McGuire

DAY 8



Steven Frederick Shundich



June 10, 2014 · 🌐 ▼

WC2014, DAY 8, On My Way to Copyright Hell: One more tribute to Pele and the beautiful game, from the movie "Pele Eterno." You've gotta love the song, "...the magic of Pele." Unbelievable. However, I don't see any backward heel passes 😊 -- the signature Shundich move! One more day in a rainy, cool Sao Paulo then it's off to Rio. Staying in Leblon.



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👤 Pradeep Bhatt, Pam Fairchild and 2 others

DAY 8



Steven Frederick Shundich



June 10, 2014 · 11

WC2014, DAY 8 (Tue), On My Way to Copyright Hell 2: More magic from "Pele Eterno," showing the King training and dancing his way through defenders.



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Patricia Roth and Pam Fairchild

DAY 8



Steven Frederick Shundich



June 10, 2014 · 🌐 ▼

WC2014, DAY 8 (Tue), Special to Marco Ottonello (even though this is the Brazilian Juventus): Supposedly there is no actual video of what everyone considers to be the best, most beautiful goal Pele ever scored, versus Juventus, so they made a video game out of it. Here is that version of the GOL-ASSO!



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👤 Pam Fairchild and Holly McGuire

DAY 8



Steven Frederick Shundich is in [São Paulo, Brazil](#).



June 10, 2014 · [Public](#)

WC2014, DAY 8 (Tue), Bonus: One of the benefits of being in Brasil is all the futbol on TV. Every day leading up to the WC, there are multiple matches or shows like, Almanac of Sports on SPORTV. This clip is from a qualification WC match in 1962 against Spain in Chile. Brasil won the championship in 1958 and 1962. Pele was injured prior to this match, so Amarildo substituted and scored the winning goal, 2-1. I'll try to post part of a Pele movie later.



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Chandlar Kirubakaran, Pam Fairchild and 2 others

DAY 8



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 10, 2014 · 🌐 ▼



WC2014, DAY 8 (Tue), POLITICALLY INCORRECT RED ALERT 3: A very helpful gas station attendant informed me that I could buy a woman down a nearby street for about R\$125. He also told me of a neighborhood massage parlor that "... is just like Sodom and Gomorrah." "And, if they do something to you that hurts," he said, "just tell them to stop and they will stop." Something about being a Gringo that brings out the best customer service in everyone -- even the gas station attendant!



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Sylvia Stirsmann, David Bryan Mcavoy and 13 others

DAY 10



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 12, 2014 · Gávea, RJ, Brazil · 🌐 ▼



Hello from Rio! Pub crawl last night in ipanema and Leblon. Astor. Veloso. Jobi. Belmont. Just offended 2 guys wearing Australia shirts by saying 1) did you qualify? And 2) Oh, I must have confused you with New Zealand. Going to Copacabana Beach to watch the opening match on the big screen. More later.



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Rocky Kristianto, Judith Marquardt and 25 others

DAY 10



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 13, 2014 · 🌐 📄



WC2014, Day 10 (Thu), Rio: There is only one computer in my hotel and no LAN shops (Internet cafes) in Leblon, so posts with pics will be a bit random. Opening match day was fun. We started at the Botanical Gardens, which was opened in 1808. Have you ever seen 30 story palm trees? That is what it was like. Every plant is dinosaur sized. After, we had \$75 soda water, ceviche and nachos at the Copacabana Palace, one of the world's most famous hotels for more than 100 years. The Rio Fan Fest line was literally a mile long, but about 30,000 of us stood to the side by the ocean and could easily see the big screen. Fred's flop was a debacle. Apparently there is a lot of history with that Japanese ref and the Brazilian team, as my friends all moaned a few days ago when they learned he would be in charge. I guess this was payback. After, the Croatian coach basically said something like "if this is how it is going to be then we might as well go home now. And play basketball." SAVAGES: The images of violent protests you may see on TV or in the paper IMO are a joke. Yesterday they did arrest 71 people in multiple cities, but it's, like, 1 dude with no shirt and 1,000 military police and 900 journalists with cameras. The cops in Copacabana we're wearing full body armor, with helmets, shields, and whatever rollerbladers wear x 10. This did not stop teenage vagabundos from stealing the drunken British lout's phone during the second goal. Right next to me. After a gol, everyone holds their expensive toys in the air. Perfect for snatching, which is what happened. Two kids. Grab phone. Run opposite directions into a crowd of thousands. No match. They were chased to no avail. But if that was the worst thing that I saw yesterday, then there's not much to worry about.



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Sylvia Stirsman, David Bryan Mcavoy and 22 others

DAY 10



Steven Frederick Shundich is in [Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro](#). ***

June 13, 2014 · 🌐

WC2014, Day 10 (Thu), Rio: With apologies to my Jewish brothers and sisters, it's hard to practice headballs with a yarmulke (spelling) on your head and a noisemaker in your mouth. 😊



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👍 Nathan Goldstein, Pam Fairchild and 3 others

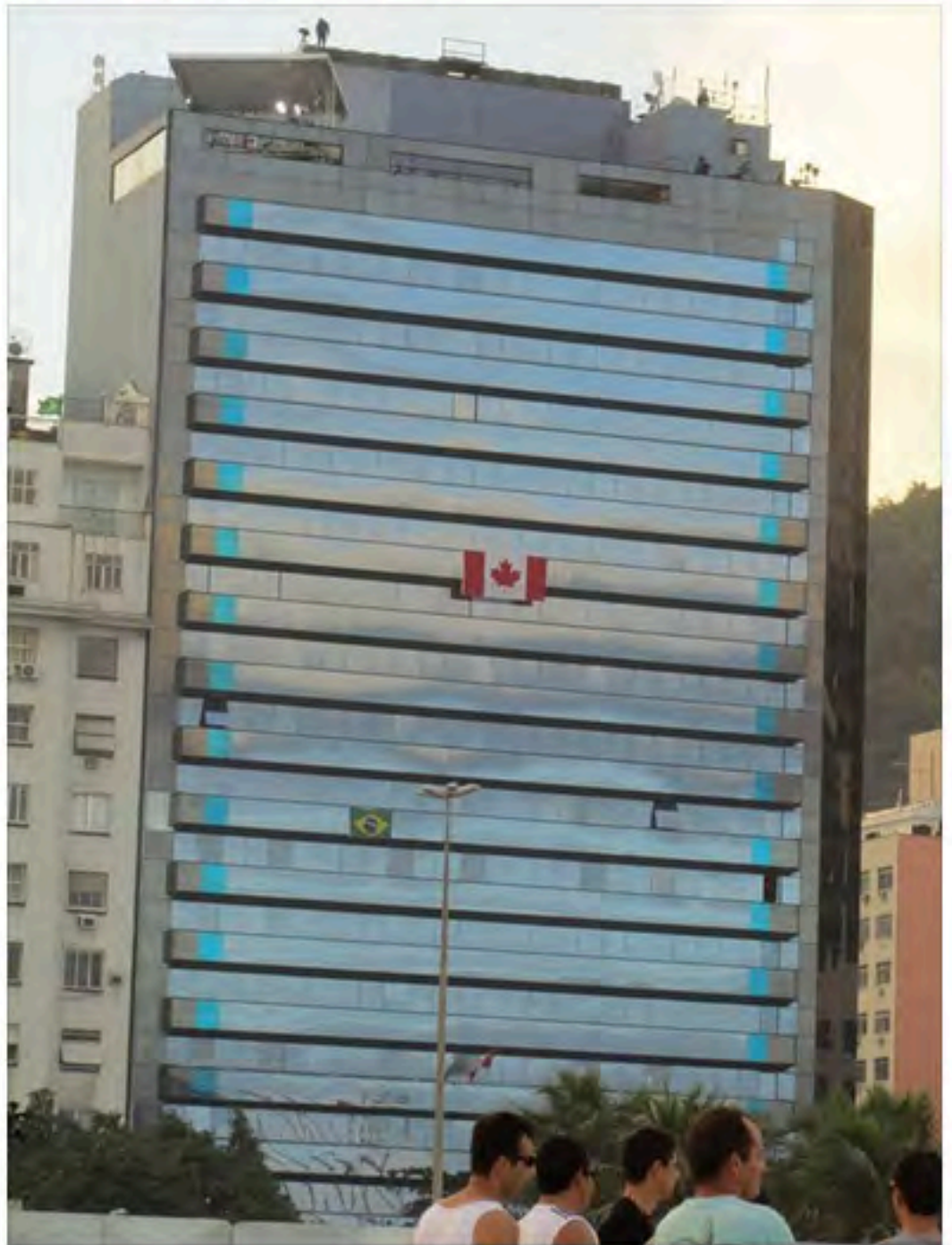
DAY 10



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 13, 2014 · 21

WC2014, Day 10 (Thu), Rio: Oh, Irony.



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Ruth O'Brien, Daniel Kopald and 4 others

DAY 11



Steven Frederick Shundich



June 14, 2014 · Gávea, RJ, Brazil ·

WC2014, Day 11 (Fri), Rio: Amazing, sensory-filled, eye-popping night in Lapa, downtown Rio. Started at Scenarium, a ginormous 3-level colonial structure filled with antiques, people and Samba. Finished with a stroll past the cathedral, aqueduct and. through thousands of sweaty, smelly, living on the street 20-something's to the artsy tiled steps by Selaron. In between experienced pepper gas for the first time, as a group of over zealous and over served Argentinians blocked traffic - so the police gassed them. Street cleared, problem solved.



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Ruth O'Brien, Todd Tritsch and 4 others

DAY 12

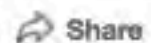


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 15, 2014 · 🌐 📍



W2014, Day12 (Sat): Started our day after the 4 am-er in Lapa (by the way, people who work in restaurants were playing matches at 2 am - full teams!) with a traditional Saturday feijoada at Boteca Informal in Ipanema while watching the Colombia match, then the cable car (R\$62) to Pao de Acucar. Clear, blue skies and spectacular views of Botofogo and Copacabana from above. Lots of international tourists of course. One Brazilian, just your run of the mill tourist, stripped down to her bikini and was posing for pics for her husband, running all over the place. Hilarious. There were also people who actually climbed the mountain, plus two helicopter tour operators at the top. Wild watching them land and take off. England v Italy at Fan Fest in Copa. Free entry, 3 beer special (Brahma in a can poured) for R\$16 (instead of 3@6 for R\$18) water for R\$4. You have to buy beverage tickets first. Very crowded up front. The world's slowest zip line. Holographic image of cup exhibit. Fusbol playing area. History of World Cup films. Italy and friend Marco Ottonello very happy! Then into Copacabana for a snack and part of the Japan match near Mud Bug (it was overflowing) and home by midnight. Up at 430 am for 657 flight to Manaus. We are not going to the USA Ghana match (at fun fest, met Ghana guy ... From Charlotte, of course!) in Natal. Instead to the flooded Amazon (Anavilhanas Jungle Lodge) for 5 days, the little town of Presidente Figueiredo (think waterfalls and caves) and THEN USA v Portugal here. Interestingly, most every USA American I have met did NOT win the ticket lottery, but rather paid through the nose via tour operators. So a huge shout out to my hero, the Chuckster, who we miss dearly on this trip. Chuck - you would love watching real Brasilians make caipirinhas. I will try to get some photos posted from the lodge, or experiment with Shane's fancy iPad memory card adapter 😊 BONUS: At the rooftop of the Marina Palace hotel in Ipanema / Leblon, ran into the McDonald's group who manages the children who will walk out with the USA and other teams, if you ever wondered where they come from. In the USA there is a lottery for 26 spots. No lotteries in most other countries, I believe. Cute gringo kids running their chaperones ragged pushing elevator buttons on already slow rides.



👤 John Daidone, Kevin Brereton Manning and 3 others

DAY 15



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 17, 2014 · 21


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WC2014, Day 15 (Tue), Anavilhanas Jungle Lodge on the Rio Negro: Sorry about the infrequent posts. It's hard to find a good Internet connection in the Amazon. Just got back from a second awesome night of creature spotting. In the massively flooded Rio Negro river basin, we have seen several 3-toed sloths, a porcupine, a pink dolphin, a tarantula the size of my foot, cayman, two tree boas, night hawks, river bats, frogs and piranha. The gigantic tarantula actually caught and killed a wasp before our very eyes. The tree boas were hunting too. We swam in the river earlier in the day. Interestingly, mosquitos can not breed in the tea colored, highly acidic water of the Rio Negro. And no fish swam up my you know what, to the best of my knowledge. One more day living and eating like kings, then it is on to more modest accommodations in Presidente Figueiredo and Manaus for the match. We have been watching what we can on TV here, like the Brazilian match today and USA match yesterday. Lots of gringos at the lodge. The owner suspects the Manaus game will have more than 30,000 USA Americans in attendance. We shall see. For today's match, the guides were pissed I wore my Cruz Azul shirt. They were disappointed in the tie, but would have been utterly devastated should they have lost. Both are now in excellent shape to advance.

TOURIST ETIQUETTE #1: If your day trip excursion is canoeing and you are, say, from Hong Kong and have never been in a canoe, you have two choices: Learn very, very, very quickly, so as not to annoy the other five pairs of canoeists or do something else, like, play mahjong or write an action movie. At all costs, DO NOT go on the canoe trip and then, unable to turn or paddle or control your vessel in any way, proceed to run into literally every tree or branch in the sunken forest as you "get lost in plain view" of the beleaguered non-German speaking German guide, who will be forced to apologize to everyone else repeatedly for your incredible lack of water craft management skills that he doesn't want to teach you. More etiquette tips later -- I have a LOT of advice to give some very annoying gringos! 😊 Like, "burp talking" to the frogs while we are supposed to be sitting silently listening to the glorious Amazon jungle night symphony may be moderately funny for a millisecond the first time you do it, but PLEASE stop after 19 times. That's the limit. At least Shane and I keep our sarcastic comments to ourselves (mostly), unless we are talking about Godzilla, which we now secretly pronounce like in a gravelly voice, "rah-REE-ruh." America! Fuck yeah!!!!

 Like

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Luiz Henrique Del Carlo, Roderick Low and 3 others

DAY 17




Steven Frederick Shundich


June 19, 2014 · 11




WC2014, Day 17 (Thu), Manaus: On way to pick up car for drive through rain and potholes to Presidente Figueiredo, land of waterfalls. I will say there is no shortage of water around here. Will post photos Monday when we are in the business hotel and have bandwidth. Go Uruguay! Soy Celeste! Celeste, soy yo!

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 David Bryan Mcavoy, Carole McGillicuddy and 5 others

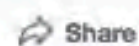
DAY 18



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 20, 2014 · 18

WC2014, Day 18 (Fri), Presidente Figueiredo: I am in the LANHouse for the first time in Presidente Figueiredo, 107 km north of Manaus. Shane did NOT kill us both in the car today, despite hitting 94.6 percent of the potholes on the raw, dirt road to some waterfalls around town. He did splash a girl with filthy pothole water (I heard a scream), sending her undoubtedly back to her village on foot, 20 miles away, to change her soiled tank top for her big Friday night out. Way to go Gringo! Our little Fiat is not made for this. I will say the highlight of the day was arriving at the end of the road after 34 torturous kilometers in search of the Boto and Moreno waterfalls. We are talking knee deep potholes extending across the entire, red clay road, with wood plank bridges and a variety of water obstacles. When we got to the end of the road, which ended at a gigantic river, by the way, we were told, "The waterfalls are closed. They are gone. The river is flooded." It took us over an hour to get there. I kept talking in my best Portuguese babble, and eventually one woman said, "You can still see Boto falls, but you have to go by boat. And there are only rocks." The only boat available was a wooden canoe half full of water with a lawnmower engine. An aluminum was coming later, I was told. But then one man, the one with the sinking wooden craft, reluctantly said he would take us there. I said we would pay. He said, OK, 30 reals. I said, we just want to take a look, 30 minutes, in and out. We got in the boat and headed out. 30 minutes later we were still heading away from the port, deeper into the flooded forest. Through narrower channels. I mean deep. Thoughts of Deliverance were dancing in my mind. Do you know how it feels to get into a sinking, dilapidated vessel with a stranger in a strange land and travel deep into a flooded jungle? It's pretty unnerving. Shane kept asking, "Are we close yet?" The guy kept reassuring us, but with my Portanol skills, who knows. Ultimately, around one final bend, as I was scooping out water with a plastic jug, there it was. Boto falls. Unbelievable. This was probably a 50-75 foot falls, but because we were in a flooded jungle, it was maybe 15 feet high and 50 feet wide, but raging. Water into water. I couldn't believe the amount of water. We made it back to the river port in one piece, engine sputtering the entire way. He was an electrician from the northeast of Brasil. I paid him 50 Reals. I will upload a video later. It was one of those great travel experiences, where humanity always comes through. Let your guard down. Live. Unforgettable. JUNGLE REDUX: By popular demand, I am trying to upload some images of animals we saw at the jungle lodge. The last day, we added a toucan, 3 iguanas and a gray dolphin to the mix. Epic upload fail. Will have to wait til Monday. GRINGO ETIQUETTE, Lesson 3: If you meet a Swedish woman during your travels, say, to Novo Airao, please do not ask her if she likes Swedish fish. Very embarrassing. Yes, this did happen. And, yes, one New Zealander's response to this was, "I LOVE licorice!" BEST LINE FROM OUR GUIDE: When describing the new church in the little village we visited, inhabited by 147 people and accessible only by boat, he said, "They are not Protestant. They are Catholic here. You know, they like to drink."



DAY 20



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 22, 2014 · Manáos, AM, Brazil · 11



WC2014, Day 20 (Sun), Manaus: After 3 weeks, took my first Cipro. Just in time for game day! Arrived in one piece at Cesar Business hotel, with lobby full of sleepy gringos. And some Portuguese. 2:44 pm. time to start walking the 20 minutes to the stadium, stopping for Kaisers along the way. Highlight of drive today was a homemade pitch that was at least on a 30 degree slope. They LOVE futbol here! Game on. Wearing my Chicago Fire shirt as usual, because I am cheap 😊 And no Boca Negra family members here to comment this time. Go USA!



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DAY 22



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 24, 2014 · 🌐 ↗

...

WC2014, Day 22 (Tue), Manaus: We spent Monday on a day trip to see the Ponta Negra, where the Amazon river meets the Rio Negro. It's pretty amazing, as one river is black and acidic while the other (Amazon) is brown. There is a visible line where they meet. We also saw what an importante shipping lane this river is, as there were lines of tankers heading up and down the river. It's incredible wide. Then, headed to the center town square to see the Teatro Amazonas, which was built buy a rubber baron in 1896 -- each piece imported from Europe. Manaus at that time was a super wealthy city. We watched Brasil v Cameroon at the town square, where it must have been 99 degrees and 90 % humidity. People only stood in the shade, so it was pretty hilarious seeing them fit into the shadow of a statue or tree. One woman stayed in MY shadow. Sigh. We were drenched in sweat. Took advantage of absolutely no traffic (no one dares miss a Brasil match -- except our taxi driver, who listened on the car radio) to watch the second half at the party by our hotel in an área called El Dorado. We must have talked with at least 30 people there. Drank a lot of Brahma beer in cans, for R\$3 each. A LOT. Danced wildly with women who enjoy dancing in the streets with large, white, blue-eyed bald men. You will be glad to know that Shane and I have a rule to NOT speak to any of the female gender who are: 1) Skipping, 2) Are wearing braces and 3) Are talking to dolls 😊 I mean, a 14 year old was serving us beer in Presidente Figueiredo! These are good rules for any traveler. 😊 I also think I was featured on local TV singing the Brazilian theme song, "Sou Brasileiro, com muito orgulho, com muito amor" which they sing repeatedly at matches and throughout the day. It means, "I am Brazilian, with lots of pride and lots of love." roughly. Stayed there til the military police kicked us out around 11 pm. Almost everyone from Manaus has asked, "Do you like Manaus?" or "Will you come back to Manaus?" or "Will you tell your friends about Manaus?" They feel a little like second class citizens here compared with the rest of Brasil. The receptionist in our hotel just told me that the rest of Brasil thinks "... that we don't wear clothes" and our, like, savages. World Cup is a huge PR lift for them here. Let me just say, it's friggin' hot. PS. Please join #freeourcayman, too 😊 . Time to head to the airport for our flight to Brasilia and then Recife. Three nights there, then five more 4 hours north by car at Pipa Beach, where we will hopefully be watching the USA (on TV) in the Round of 16.

DAY 22



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David Bryan Mcavoy, You Ming Lian and 21 others

DAY 22



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 24, 2014 · 11

WC2014, Day 22 (Tue), Manaus: Finally able to upload some images from the trip at the Cesar Business hotel in Manaus. Off to Recife this afternoon for the USA v Germany match. Carole McGillicuddy: Here is your gratuitous sloth shot -- not the ones we saw in the treetops but someone's pet. I'm starting a Twitter campaign #freeoursloths. Tree boa, pink dolphin, Cayman, sloth, frogs, piranha, tarantula, porcupine and all sorts of other interesting creatures abound in Amazônia.



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Sylvia Stirsman, Carole McGillicuddy and 7 others

DAY 22



Steven Frederick Shundich is in [Presidente Figueiredo](#).



June 24, 2014 ·

WC2014, Day 22 (Tue), Manaus: Just one example of the 8 waterfalls and 4 caves we visited around Presidente Figueiredo, 107 km north of Manaus on Route 174.



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Sylvia Stirsmann, Judith Marquardt and 6 others

DAY 22



Steven Frederick Shundich is in [Presidente Figueiredo](#).



June 24, 2014 ·

WC2014, Day 22 (Tue), Manaus: This is our adventure video from Presidente Figueiredo, in search of the Boto waterfall. As you can see, the falls is almost completely submerged in the river. It took about 40 minutes in our dilapidated vessel to reach this point.



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Sylvia Stirsmann, Judith Marquardt and 7 others

DAY 22

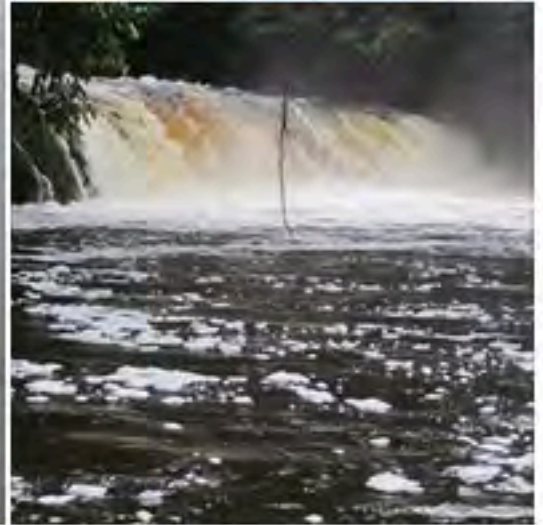


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 24, 2014 · 11



WC2014, Day 22 (Tue), Manaus: This was the man who took us to see the submerged Boto falls in his illegal water craft.



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Sylvia Stirsmann, Eric M. Scharf and 13 others

DAY 22

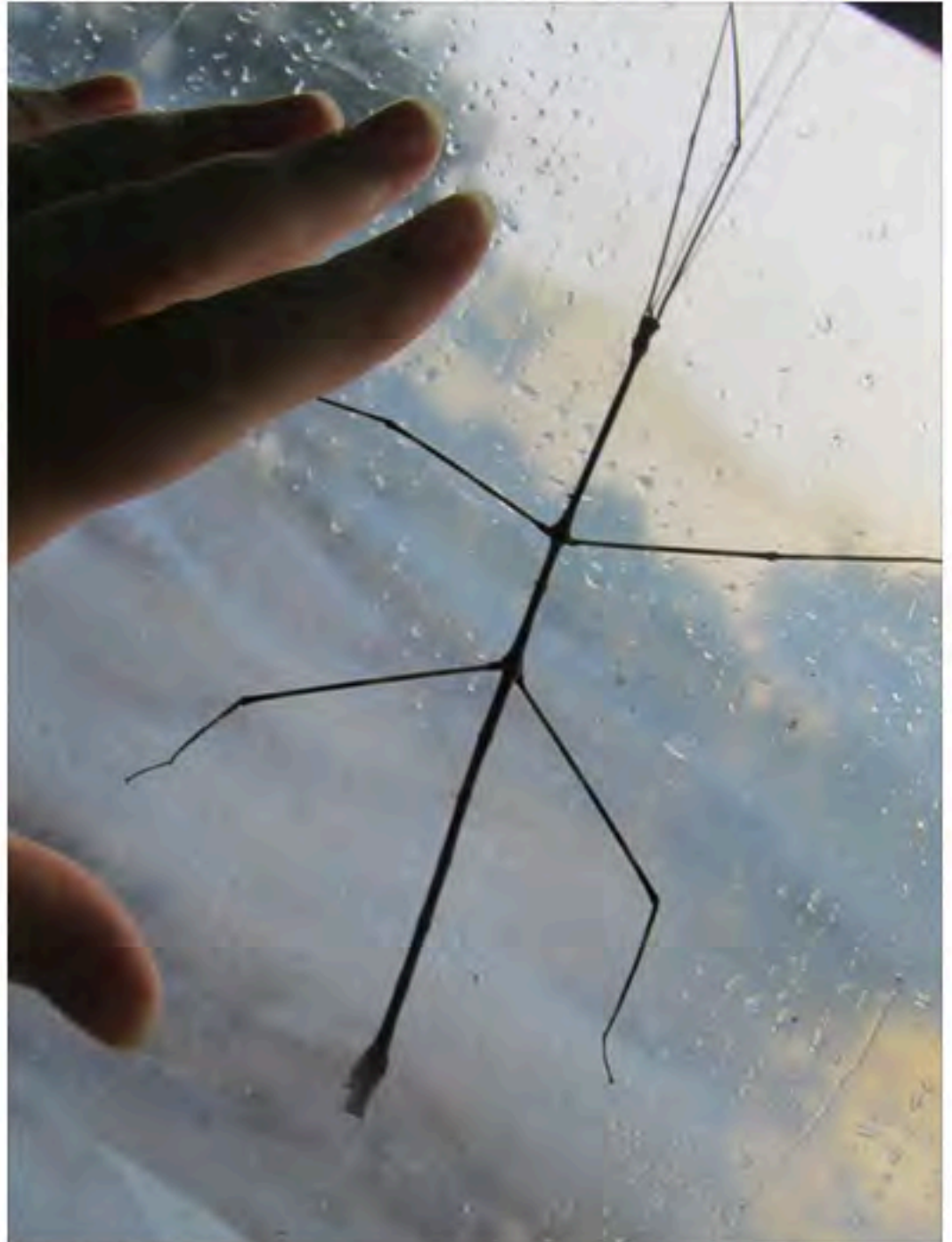


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 24, 2014 · 🌐



WC2014, Day 22 (Tue), Manaus: This was my favorite creature of all, a GIGANTIC walking stick. See how it puts it's front two legs together to appear to be even longer? It was a stowaway on our boat, clinging against all odds to the side of the boat for 45 minutes until we safely deposited it on land.



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👤 Sylvia Stirsman, Ruth O'Brien and 9 others

DAY 22



Steven Frederick Shundich is with Shane Tritsch.



June 24, 2014 · 🌐 📌

WC2014, Day 22 (Tue), Manaus: Here are a few images from the match. Yes, it was heart attack after heart attack. The process of getting to the match was very orderly. We had the good fortune, totally by chance, of staying in a hotel only 20 minutes by foot away from the stadium. There were multiple check points set up allowing only people with tickets to enter the area within 3-4 blocks. Thousands of gringos, and also quite a few Portuguese. We sat a few seats away from 3 Seattle Seahawks, including Mike Morgan and KJ Wright. And we invited our jungle guide, Haulys, and his son, Bruno, to sit with us, too. If we could only have cut the first and last 5 minutes of the match, we could have relaxed in Recife against Germany. Sigh..



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👤 David Bryan Mcavoy, Ruth O'Brien and 22 others

DAY 25

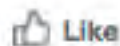


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 27, 2014 · Pipa, RN, Brazil · 🌐 📍



WC2014, Day 25 (Fri), Praia da Pipa: Four hours north of Recife by car to Pipa, where hopefully there are fewer drunk Germans. Missed the first 20 minutes of the match yesterday due to the rain and flooding. We were going to take a taxi but many main streets were impassable. Ended up being offered a random ride to the metro by a private citizen. Then huge line to get train tickets (both ways R\$7.50 ... This should have been a free day IMO), then 1 hour in packed train, to army of buses, to a stop about a half mile from the stadium, which was way out of town. Entrepreneurs selling ponchos for R\$5. Completely soaked upon arrival. Running to gate and the when in told we had to go all the way around because you can not get around the VIP section, which was empty by the way. Still fun despite absolutely dominant German defense. Others spent 4 hours in bus that ultimately was escorted by military police on road shoulder. Other paid US\$150 for 3 hour taxi. Whole excursion for day was about 8 hours for the 2 hour match. BEST / WORST POST MATCH LINES: 1) Best loss ever! By a US fan after learning we got thru to next round. 2) Old German dude walking through US fans saying "losers" to everyone, 3) German dude singing "Tomas Mueller ... Scores when he wants to!!" Lots of mud puddle diving by fans post match. Lots of Abe Lincolns and George Washingtons in attendance, and way too many American dudes in flag boner suits (and nothing else ... Imagine Alec Baldwin times two, I cant unsee it!) Also, random, of everything I had with me, I was not allowed to bring in a pen. In Manaus, dude was not let in because he didn't have a shirt, so his friend had to buy him one inside and come back out. We will watch Round of 16 from one of the 20 bars near our AirBnB house in downtown Pipa.



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Sylvia Stirsman, David Bryan Mcavoy and 11 others

DAY 26



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 28, 2014 · 🌐 ▼

...

WC2014, Day 26 (Sat), Praia da Pipa: Just came close to watching 200 million Brazilians have a heart attack, as they defeated Chile on penalty kicks. The party has started here in the streets of Pipa. Here are a couple of images from the game in Recife: The flooded street, the man who drive us to the train, the packed train, the rainy stadium and those two dudes I wrote about earlier.



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👤 Sylvia Stirsman, Nancy Allinger Comerford and 4 others

DAY 26

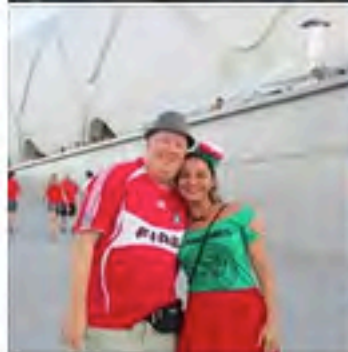


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 28, 2014 · 🌐 ▼

...

WC2014, Day 26 (Sat), Praia da Pipa: By request, these gratuitous shots of the Brazilian female are for Frank Bitzer, Steve Olson and Chuck Gramigna 😊
Love, Steve



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👤 Rocky Kristianto, David Bryan Mcavoy and 19 others

DAY 26



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 28, 2014 · 11

WC2014, Day 26 (Sat), Praia da Pipa: I thought I would lose some weight on this trip, given 9 days sweating in 90 percent humidity in the Amazon and the relative heat of the north. But just look at all this great food! Pizza from Loko do Pizza in Presidente Figueiredo, coconuts in Recife, tons of fish, cartola (fried banana tapioca with cinnamon) and the best meal, from Oficina do Sabor in historic Olinda (Recife), pumpkin stuffed with shrimp and lobster ... you eat the inside part of the pumpkin too. My efforts to develop a Brazilian beach body have failed ... miserably. Or maybe it's the beer?



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Sylvia Stirsman, David Bryan Mcavoy and 12 others

DAY 26

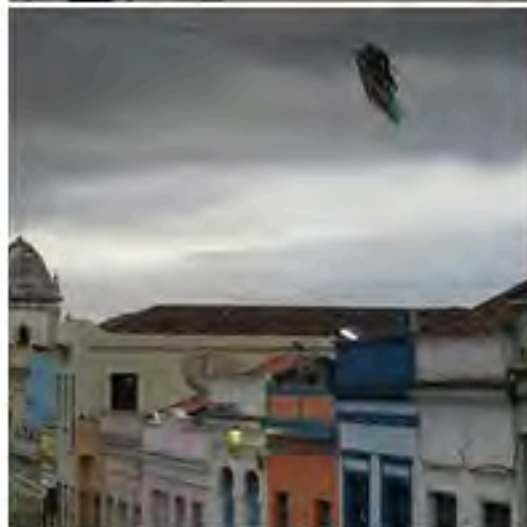


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 28, 2014 · 🌐



WC2014, Day 26 (Sat), Praia da Pipa: A few shots of Recife, from our hotel room at the Fator Palace (17th floor view of high rises), and of Olinda, the UNESCO World Heritage site. Three days in the rain was definitely not enough time to take in Brasil's 4th largest city, but we did get to see Antiga Recife, Olinda, Boa Viagem and the match in Pernambuco stadium. The sun came out the minute we left.



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Marcos Luiz Del Carlo, Sylvia Stirsman and 6 others

DAY 26



Steven Frederick Shundich

June 28, 2014 · 🌐 ▼



WC2014, Day 26 (Sat), Praia da Pipa: Here is a video post-Germany match. The mood was festive, as both teams qualified for the next round. As I said, the USA theme was "Best loss ever!" On to Salvador (not me!) Then Sao Paulo. Then Rio for the championship!



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Sylvia Stirsman, John Paulsen and 3 others

DAY 26



Steven Frederick Shundich is in [Recife, Para, Brazil](#).

...

June 28, 2014 · · ·

WC2014, Day 26 (Sat), Praia da Pipa: Although I strongly recommend shifting 1 percent of the USA GDP toward the development of better fight songs, I do enjoy the "I believe that we will win!" cheer. I also enjoy the "ooooooooOOOOOOHHHHHHHHHHHH PUTO!!!!!!!" cheer (by US fans) and the several "America fuck yeah!" T-shirts I've seen. As an aside, Homer Simpson is pretty huge here in Brasil, and I see his face on T-shirts all the time.



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Sylvia Stirsman, David Bryan Mcavoy and 5 others

DAY 26

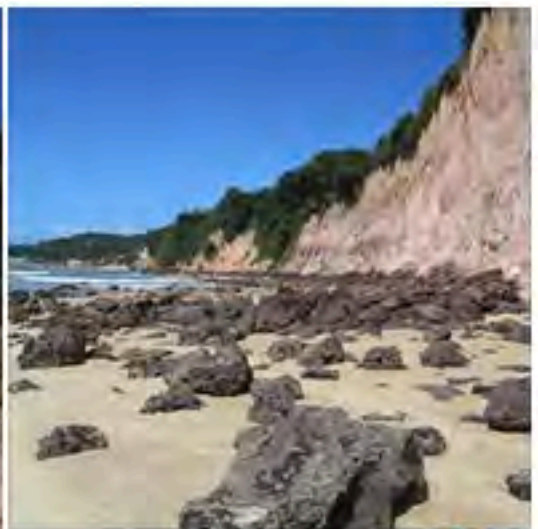
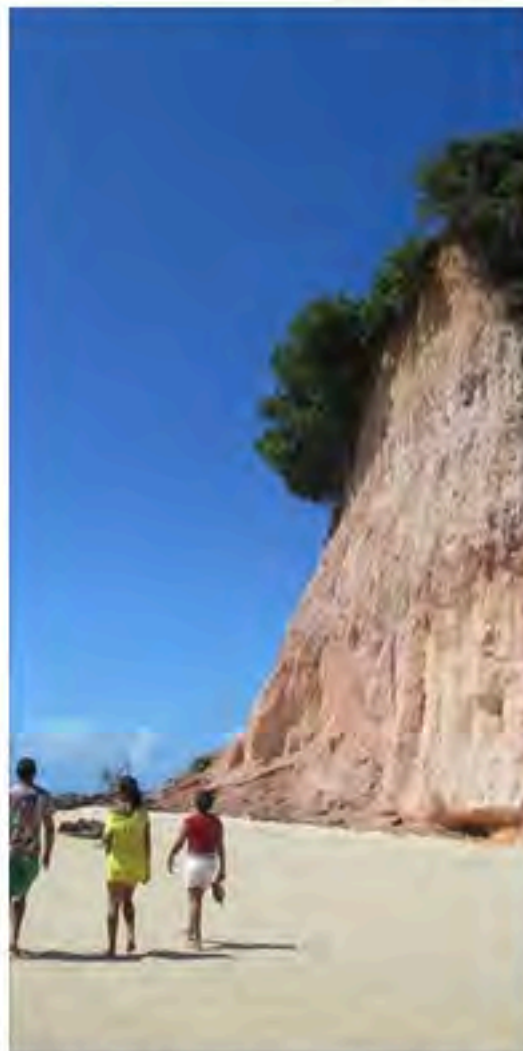


Steven Frederick Shundich

June 28, 2014 · 🌐

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WC2014, Day 26 (Sat), Praia da Pipa: And finally, some shots of Pipa beach, where I am thru Wednesday. Basically, it's a one street town full of pubs and restaurants. At night, around 8 pm, people fill the streets. About 1,000 congregate at one intersection, and there are street beer vendors to complement the bars. This goes on til about 4 am every night. There are tons of Argentinians and Uruguayans here, as well as a few Germans and US Americans. Today, before the Brasil match, I went to Golfinho beach, where you can indeed swim with the dolphins. There were at least five hanging around. Saw one chase a large fish that jumped out of the water, probably to no avail. And the dolphins were probably less than 20 yards from the shoreline. Will watch the second half of Uruguay v Colombia, and then rally for another night out. These long vacations can be very debilitating! 😊



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👍 Sylvia Stirsman, Nancy Allinger Comerford and 8 others

DAY 29



Steven Frederick Shundich

July 1, 2014 · 11



WC2014, Day 29 (Tue), Praia da Pipa: Saturday night was an all nighter, due to the Forro music that didn't START until 2 am at the local boite. Forro is distinctly a NE Brasil style, usually 3 dudes playing an accordion, triangle and big drum. It's very rhythmic and repetitive but gets the dance floor grooving in sort of a two-step, except that each partner has their knee buried deep into their partner's crotch -- that is, if you are doing it correctly and actually like your partner. The photos are the main street fest in downtown Pipa, for the pre-party; my favorite two bartenders from Micropunto bar (eclectic US / British beats like Arctic Monkeys); street food on the way to the Forro (chicken and beef and an everything on it hot dog); the musicians at the Forro and finally, the 5 am shot of the cove at the end of my street. I will post a video of Forro music from the following night (better quality video than what I was able to capture at the boite, where they had a hand held strobe light ... really a laser pointed at a disco ball, which drove my camera crazy).



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Sylvia Stirsman, David Bryan Mcavoy and 11 others

DAY 29



Steven Frederick Shundich is in [Pipa, Rio Grande Do Norte, Brazil](#).

July 1, 2014 ·

WC2014, Day 29 (Tue), Praia da Pipa: This video is from the Forro from Sunday night. Much smaller and more sedate, probably due to the fact that everyone in the town had been up until dawn the previous night.



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David Bryan Mcavoy, Ruth O'Brien and John Paulsen

DAY 29



Steven Frederick Shundich

July 1, 2014 · 21



WC2014, Day 29 (Tue), Praia da Pipa: The beaches here just get better and better. Golfinhos the first day, Amor the second and Madeiro the third, with dolphins in abundance on day one and three. Praia do Amor used to be called Drowning Beach until the marketers got a hold of it. It's pretty rough for swimming, with lots of surfers. You need to drive a few km to Madeiro, which is beautiful. That's the one with my friend, Mr Shadow. Shrimp at sunset over Tibau.



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Nikki Neumann Tritsch, Maureen Heide and 13 others

DAY 29



Steven Frederick Shundich

July 1, 2014 · Praia da Pipa, RN, Brazil ·



WC2014, Day 29 (Tue), Praia da Pipa: Crashing hard after watching USA 1 - Belgium 2 in a packed Pipa pub. Easily could have been 1 - 5 were it not for the amazing Tim Howard. Still, we had a chance in that last minute of regulation for a second "miracle." No regrets after a great run and the men gave it their all. Airplane ride number seven tomorrow.

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Sylvia Stirsman, David Bryan Mcavoy and 16 others

DAY 30



Steven Frederick Shundich

July 2, 2014 · 🌐 📄

WC2014, Day 30 (Wed), Recife Airport: Miraculously once again covered the 4 hours from Pipa by car back to Recife. Shane drives, I navigate (e.g. read signs, watch for children dogs, horses, carts, cavernous potholes, Alps-esque speed bumps, cars\trucks entering from either side of the road, bicycles, coconuts and the occasional child with binkie). Pipa drops from a 9 to a 5 due to theft at our AirBnB house the second to last night. Apparently someone (while we were at the beach in the afternoon) climbed onto the roof of an adjacent house and onto our balcony, where the sliding doors to our 2 rooms were ajar (for ceiling fan circulation at night). The ladrões (robbers) rifled thru my worthless stuff and took nothing. Alas, Shane stubbornly refused my expert, always-inciteful 😊 advice (so he could check Reds scores and stock quotes all day long) and lost his expensive sunglasses, brand new running shoes, Garmin GPS and several US\$100s in cash. Unfortunately, in 2014 (as it was in 1987, the first of several trips to Brasil), there is still at least a 50 percent chance you will run into some shenanigans during your stay. We watched kids at the Rio Fan Fest steal an iPhone. And I've been robbed twice previously (grabbed by 4 dudes on a Copacabana city bus - credit cards, which were then used for \$4,000 in clothes, discos and brothels - and robbed inside my Laguna hotel during Carnival - \$500 cash hidden inside a bag). There is no safe hiding place. The answer is, just don't bring anything of value. Most transactions can be made via credit card (and you get the added benefit of inflation currently at 6% a month), and cash comes when need from ATMs. No need for the hidden "emergency stash." So, Pipa's beaches, nightlife, music, restaurants and overall tourist quality (despite all those Argentinians!) is a 10, while the home invasion (stray dogs and cats, plus a few meddlesome street urchins and beach peddlers) is a 1. OK, really, it's about an 8+ 😊



👤 Sylvia Stirman, David Bryan Mcavoy and 6 others

DAY 30



Steven Frederick Shundich is at [Anavilhanas Jungle Lodge](#).

July 2, 2014 · Novo Airão, AM, Brazil ·

WC2014, Day 30 (Wed), Recife Airport: A few more of my favorite videos from the trip follow. Enjoy! This one I plan to set to some sort of music video. My favorite animal sighting in the Amazon: The gigantic walking stick. This beast was a stowaway on our river trip to a small village, and somehow managed to survive the downpour, wind and crashing waves for the 45 minute trip up and back.



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Sylvia Stirsman, David Bryan Mcavoy and 7 others

DAY 30



Steven Frederick Shundich is in [Presidente Figueiredo](#).



July 2, 2014 ·

WC2014, Day 30 (Wed), Recife Airport: A different look at our adventure ride in search of the mysterious and submerged Boto falls near Presidente Figueiredo. Maybe you get a better sense of the condition of the boat and how low in the water we were. I was bailing the whole way, but it was completely worth the payoff at the end: A truncated Boto falls in a submerged forest (see earlier post for image of the falls).



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Sylvia Stirsman, John Paulsen and John Schweig

DAY 30



Steven Frederick Shundich



July 2, 2014 · 🌐 ▼

WC2014, Day 30 (Wed), Recife Airport: This was our first night out in Anavilhanas. Turn up the sound and you can hear what all the frogs sound like. It was awesome, despite the teen punk from Detroit who burped for 10 minutes in response to every frog croak he heard. It was almost piranha time for him, believe me.



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Sylvia Stirsmann, Judith Marquardt and John Paulsen

DAY 30



Steven Frederick Shundich is in [Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro.](#) ***

July 2, 2014 · 🌐 ▼

WC2014, Day 30 (Wed), Recife Airport: The dancing Brahma boys at the Rio Fan Fest. Nothing else to say about this! 😊



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💬 Comment

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👤 Sylvia Stirsman, John Paulsen and Zane Hurley

DAY 30



Steven Frederick Shundich

July 2, 2014 · 21

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WC2014, Day 30 (Wed), Recife Airport: Best \ Worst from the Trip: This is what you get when you have 9 hours to kill in an airport waiting for a flight to Miami 😊 TRIP BEST: 1) The completely random boat ride through the submerged forest in a sinking, dilapidated wooden canoe with an egg beater engine in search of Boto falls in Presidente Figueiredo; 2) Consecutive nights of spotting sloth, tree boa, tarantula, caymen and anything else we could find in Anavilhanas archipelago; 3) Overall ambiance at the USA v Portugal match in Manaus, followed by the street party in El Dorado. Utterly wacko. TRIP WORST: 1) Imagining what this trip would have been like had I been 30; 2) The nuisance of street thugs and a home invasion; 3) Watching everyone reading their Sunday Times on iPads IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AMAZON JUNGLE! This probably should be #1. Photos below: 1) Sunrise over the Rio Negro; 2) That AMAZING soccer pitch on the road to Presidente Figueiredo, at a 30-degree angle! That is a LOVE OF FUTBOL! 3) Security, highly visible throughout all big Brasil cities; 4) The wild animals of Olida \Recife; 5) Those beautiful, smiling faces you see in villages around Brasil.



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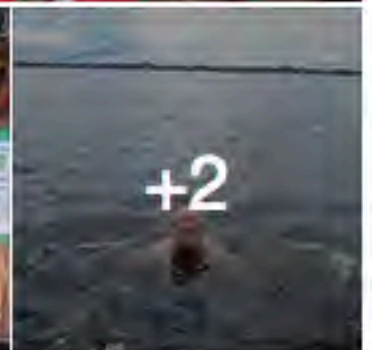
DAY 30



Steven Frederick Shundich

July 2, 2014 · 21

WC2014, Day 30 (Wed), Recife Airport: Final thoughts. I hope everyone enjoyed all these posts from Brasil, giving you a taste of Sao Paulo, Rio, Anavilhanas, Presidente Figueiredo, Manaus, Recife and Pipa Beach. As most of you know, I am NOT a Facebook person, preferring the anonymity of my cave dwelling rather than boring y'all with, "It's 5:26. I'm cold" and "Do you think I look fat?" I know I have posted more in these last 30 days than I did in all 10 years of Facebook. It's been a pleasure. Let's get reacquainted in Chicago, Cincinnati or wherever the next wind blows! Also, a special thanks to my hosts in Sao Paulo, Aristol and Kike Del Carlo; my personal valet, Mr Shane Tritsch, who hopefully will stop shaking soon from all the harrowing driving, and everyone new I met along the way. Life truly is a journey. BELOW: 1) Doing my best to support the Brahma brand at the Rio FIFA Fan Fest in Copacabana; 2) The AMAZING help at the Manaus airport FanZone, which we passed thru on three different occasions; 3) Do you want a little crab in your next caipirinha? From a little pit stop stand on the 4 hour drive to Anavilhanas Jngle Lodge; 4) Swimming in the Rio Negro, sans bleeding limbs; 5) Wild night beasts on the streets of Presidente Figueiredo; and, 6) Welcome Chicago Fire fans to Pao de Açucer.



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Eliana Mendes, Sylvia Stirsman and 29 others