

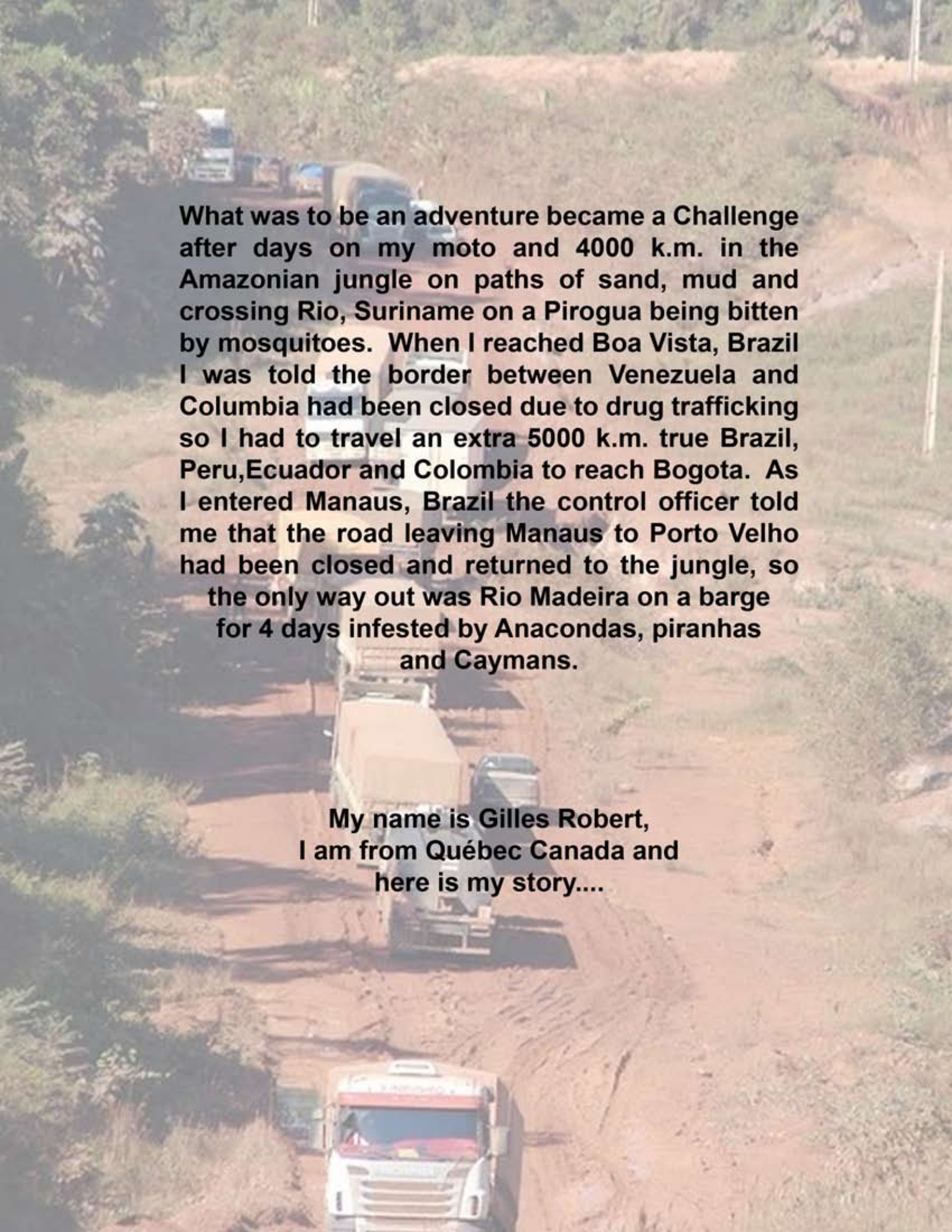


Moto Aventura

Trans-Amazonia

Gilles Robert

gillesleorobert.wordpress.com

A photograph showing a line of trucks on a dirt road in a jungle. The road is muddy and has deep ruts. The trucks are moving away from the camera. The background is a dense jungle with green foliage and a dirt embankment.

What was to be an adventure became a Challenge after days on my moto and 4000 k.m. in the Amazonian jungle on paths of sand, mud and crossing Rio, Suriname on a Pirogua being bitten by mosquitoes. When I reached Boa Vista, Brazil I was told the border between Venezuela and Columbia had been closed due to drug trafficking so I had to travel an extra 5000 k.m. true Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia to reach Bogota. As I entered Manaus, Brazil the control officer told me that the road leaving Manaus to Porto Velho had been closed and returned to the jungle, so the only way out was Rio Madeira on a barge for 4 days infested by Anacondas, piranhas and Caymans.

**My name is Gilles Robert,
I am from Québec Canada and
here is my story....**

I want to thank my amazing family for supporting me during this trip.



I dedicated this trip to Jo-Ann, loving friend, who passed away.



BMW Motorrad

Thanks to BMW for the profesional service I received in Montreal CAN., Lima, Peru and Bogota, Colombia.



Thanks to Alain Laliberté who did technical and service work on my motorcycle.





My motorcycle getting ready to leave from Montreal, QC.



Had a nice breakfast in Lima on my first day.



I had the chance to see the Sunday Flag ceremony in Ica, Peru. I left for Cusco the next day.



A local who wanted to check out my motorcycle.



I left Nazca to go towards Cusco; there was not much traffic. There was snow falling at 4700 meters.



A group of bikers.



On the road to Cusco.



The streets of Cusco are very narrow.



Diner in Cusco with a nice lady.



I had a great day in the impressive Machu Picchu with all the temples. It was a long day, I left at 4:00 a.m. and got back at 7:00 p.m.





I met a family from Montreal, which is 45 minutes from my hometown.



On my way to Machu Picchu I took the train.



Town of Machu Picchu.



There are propane carriers on the Ruta del Estaoues



Off to school!



Going to town with her animals.



They make bricks for houses with a mix of mud.



The Andes are simply beautiful.

On the route
Carretera Interoceanica Sur.





Gas is 6\$
a liter.



Lumber yard in Peru.



Leaving Puerto Maldonado.



Today was a good day! Life is amazing!
I left Puerto Maldonado heading to
Brazil. Roads in Peru are a real charm
just like the 17 to Ottawa or the 2 in
Lancaster. When I arrived at the
customs in Brazil, I was missing a paper.
No paper/no exit! Finally, everything got
organized. The custom officer told me to
be careful, the roads are very dangerous.
The roads are a real slalom trail. The
poverty is also unbelievable.

This nice man escorted me to a hotel
in Brasília as I was entering Brazil.





After 100km on the Brazilian route I stopped to rest: I treated myself to a nice Stella!



There are many fruits and vegetable stands on the road.



At the entrance of the real jungle. It is a shorter day than usual, I'm getting ready for Humaita to Itaituba, 1049 km of jungle



Ferry at Humaita.



A big day leaving Brasiléia to Porto Velho. This morning another slalom route at 50km/hr and then another at 100km/hr. I then stopped at a control center to ask for the route condition for the next 550km. Conditions were good, so I got to drive close to 130km. The North of Amazonia is better, has a lot of beef farm, just like the West of Canada. There is two classes there, the rich and the poor. I stop at another control station when I am told I can't continue on my route since it is a road only for trucks, so I took the chance and drove 1049 km in the REAL jungle!



Port in Humaita



National Police of Humaita



Took extra gas cannister for safety since there was no town for the next 1049km.

There was no actual town and only one route. The GPS doesn't work here but the Spot Tracker does.



Propane Transporter.



Ferry from Humaita to Route Amazone

24 08 2015 06



There is dust everywhere! It is really dangerous, that's not even talking about the bridges! The sand makes the motorcycle slide. You need to know your motorcycle and drive slow with precaution. There are also indigenous reserve in the jungle.





I stopped in a small village that wasn't even on the map.
They advised me to be careful because it was full of sand again.
I fell a few times, trucks don't get out of the way!!





I stopped at a Honda Dealer in Itaituba so they can lubricate my locks and motor which were full of sand, there is dirt everywhere.



A truck missed the bridge and fell in the river because of the route.



I broke off my lights and had to use duct tape to make it hold.



Here is another exemple of the horrible route conditions and another car that missed the bridge.





Another tough day of 7 hours and 30 minutes on 225km of route, but I'm closer to my goal; Altamira at 250km. After all this sand I will be reaching a better route. It is a real challenge when I have to drive in holes, loose sand and bridges that the wood hit the back of my motorcycle. My motorcycle and my suit that I washed the day before is all red again!



The route I have been using is 1500km long and only 500km of it is on asphalt. It is more tough on the body than my last trip in South America. I can now consider that past trip more of an ADVENTURE and not as a CHALLENGING as this one. I can't understand how my motorcycle is still holding strong while my body is hurting everywhere. I'm lucky that there is no traffic and the route goes quite smoothly.



A cattle crossing!



I got to take a break of my motorcycle to rest my bones. I took the time off to visit Belo Monté Dam in Altamira, the third largest dam in the world. The infrastructure is unbelievable, 40,000 people worked on the project! I counted two cement plants and over 80 transport vehicles for fuel, water and food!



After a nice break from the road, it was easier to drive 340km. I stopped in a small village called Marabá at 180km on the Trans-Amazon BR-230. The next day I went on the 222 towards South and then on the 10 toward the East to Belem. I left early in the morning because they said thunderstorms were approaching. I stopped at a lovely small hotel called Colinas, I didn't want to take any chance with this weather. When it rains the road becomes an ice rink!

This is the water reserve for the toilet and shower.





I took photos of equipment they are using to break the roads with the tough sand. I haven't seen any motorcycles on the BR-230, it is not an easy route. I will be heading in an Indigenous territory soon, but I can't stop there, they don't like intruders. I'm finally at 330km of Belem. I left at 6h45 a.m. since I had 100km to do in the sand and dust. It can rain up to 2000mm in the season. I was lucky that it didn't rain.



The locals wanted to take a picture with the Quebec license plate with the Moto International. And the prettiest lady on motorcycle... I found a coffee shop with perfect espresso; it was the best since the one in Cusco. In the countryside, they make coffee but they add sugar, which is not drinkable. The breakfasts in the hotels are good, with lots of fruits and fresh bread.



The first step of my challenge of 5000km is done!! There is still a lot to go! There are farms with herd of beef, soy farms, eucalyptus farm and Palm Oil farms. I've seen a few Federal Polices with 200 to 300 seized motorcycles. The town of Belem is beautiful and clean.





Port of Belem, Belem and my coffee



In Belem the homes are beautiful and the town is so clean!





02.09.2015 08:06

The ferry to cross the Amazon Jungle to Macapa takes 24 hrs.



02.09.2015 08:27



02.09.2015 08:27



02.09.2015 08:27



02.09.2015 09:25

Everything is ready for the day on the boat, my motorcycle had its air filter changed, my room and shower is reserved, off to a 24hr ride on the boat!



02.09.2015 09:25



Macapa where the center of the East is, The Equator.



02.09.2015 06:25

I am at 220 km South of Oiapoque in a little hotel called Boussada Gabriel. That's the only thing there is in that village after 330 km. I stopped at 3:30 p.m. since I don't know the route qualities and I don't want to take any chances in case it gets dangerous. Some cute kids selling pineapple on the road to Oiapoque.



The last 170 km of route weren't the best since it passes through the tropical forest, which means a lot of rain and mud! After a long day at the Federal Police Station, I was welcomed by a Canadian from Welland Ontario who is a custom officer. Everything was good with my documents.





The bridge has been done for 4 years but as formality states because the route isn't finished in Brazil we have to go cross to French Guyana by Ferry.



When I arrived in Guyane I met two custom officers, Adrien Leduc and Yusef on Main St. of St-George and since I am Canadian I had no problem whatsoever and they brought me to the Police Station to get my passport stamped. They wanted to know more about my trip so they ask me to go with them for a beer.







As I entered Kourou was looking for a room and I met a man called Philippe, who is also preparing a trip to Peru by motorcycle. He and his wife invited me for supper and for the night. The day before was a day of party and the next day I visited a ranch. I met two persons who visited the Lac St-Jean and the Laurentians mountains twice.



I got to visit the Europe Satellite Spatial Center where Philippe works and got an oil change in Cayenne.





In Kourou I went to visit the Devils Island and Papillon's history.



What's Happened to...

RENE BELBENOIT?

The modern-day man without a country finally has one he can call his own. After 15 years of trying, Rene Belbenoit—the man who escaped from Devil's Island 5 times—has won permission to reside permanently in the U.S. He'll apply for American citizenship as soon as possible—in 2 years.

Belbenoit's 2 books, *Dry Guillotine* and *Hell on Trial* are credited with getting the infamous French penal colony on Devil's Island closed. He's now writing another, *What Price Justice?*, which tells of his fight for a homeland and freedom.

In 1921, at the age of 22, a war veteran, disabled and unemployed, he was arrested for burglary, sentenced to Devil's Island for 8 years of hard labor.

He made 4 attempts at escape, but each time the jungle or tropical sea beat him back. For each failure he received an additional sentence.

In 1935, he escaped for the 5th time. Then began an odyssey of epic proportions. For 22 months, on foot and by stolen canoe, he threaded his way across the snake-infested jungles of South and Central America, up the continent to the U.S. He never abandoned his 30 lbs. of prison memoirs carried in oilcloth, never changed his name or tried to hide his situation as a fugitive from one of the world's worst prisons.

Immigration authorities, impressed by his saga, permitted Belbenoit to remain in the U.S. until his health was restored.

In 1938, *Dry Guillotine* was published, became a best-seller in 11 languages. But in 1940, he was ordered

After 15 Years, U.S. Accepts Belbenoit



to depart. Friends urged him to remain by concealing his identity, but Belbenoit refused. When *Hell on Trial* came out, he was in Mexico.

From Mexico he swam the Rio Grande to Texas in 1941, got a 15-month sentence for illegal entry. After his release he went to L.A., married a widow. With her he now runs a dry goods shop, "Rene's Ranch Store," in Lucerne, Calif.

In 1951, deportation proceedings opened in L.A. Belbenoit proved financially responsible, extraordinarily patriotic. In May, '52, permission was granted to re-apply for entry into the U.S. He legally reentered at El Paso.

His next fight is to get cleared as a fugitive by French courts. Then he'll go back to France—but only for a visit.

In L.A. court Belbenoit, now 53, looks young despite long ordeal.

08.09.2015 08.13

Jules René Lucien Belbenoit was born in Paris and abandoned by his mother, Louise Daumiere,[1] as an infant, while she went on to work as a teacher for the children of the Czar of Russia. His father, Louis Belbenoit,[2] who was Chief Conductor of the Paris-Orleans Express and seldom home, was unable to raise young René himself, so the boy was sent to live with his grandparents while a toddler. When René was 12, his grandparents died suddenly and he, again in need of a parental figure, went to Paris where he lived with, and worked for, his uncle at a popular nightclub, the Café du Rat Mort (the Dead Rat) in the Place Pigalle. During World War I, Belbenoit served with distinction in the French Army from 1916 – 1917, and survived the Battle of Verdun. After the war, Belbenoit began working in a restaurant in Besançon as a dishwasher for eight francs a day with room and board. After working there just eleven days, he seized a moment to steal a wallet full of 4000 francs and a motorcycle and left Besançon for Nantes. Belbenoit quickly found work as a valet in the Chateau Ben Ali owned by the Countess d'Entremeuse. Although a gracious employer, Belbenoit again, seizing an opportunity, stole the Countess' pearls and some money from her dressing table, after only working at the Chateau for a month. Belbenoit then escaped on a train for Paris. After being in Paris but two days, he was promptly arrested by two policemen for the theft of the pearls. This theft would be the crime that would send him to the French Penal Colony in French Guiana, also incorrectly known as Devil's Island. Belbenoit himself never served any time on Devil's Island.



I got to cross from French Guiana to Suriname, all the documents were in order, and my daughter Manon sent me my International Driver's License, otherwise I wouldn't be able to cross at St-Laurent de Maroni. I couldn't cross the river in between France and Suriname, all the barges weren't working so the nice French custom officer told me about a man who works once in a while and maybe he would be able to get me on Pirogua with the help of four people we manage to get the motorcycle on the pirogue.





Here is Paramaibo, the capital of Suriname with it's Presidential Palace, the Basilique and the Fleuve Suriname.



Fishing small piranhas.



I crossed to
British Guiana
Houses are built on stilts
since the country
is below Sea Level.



On my way to Georgetown, British Guiana, it was a long day; the ferry, the customs, the immigration and a lot of documents. The route is not as nice as French Guiana and Suriname. There is farm equipment for rice.



I met a Spanish couple, who brought their 4X4 to Uruguay, went down to Ushaia and were going back to Fairbank, Alaska, to finish in Halifax Canada!



A wall was built on the Ocean front to protect the city from the sea level.



Government building.



Beautiful Presidential Palace.



Small church on stilts.



Market place in Georgetown.



Heading to Lethem
going through the Tropical
Forest in British Guyana



My first stop after 120km in 4.5hrs was in Mabura Hill.
The route is very difficult, and I can't miss the control officers station,
otherwise they will stop me at the next one and make me go around and back.



I met indigenous people who once saw my card,
paid me beer, I was one of them!



Gas sold from 20 liters tanks in Mabura Hill.



After crossing the 1st checkpoint at Mabura Hill they told me it was going to be easy, to my surprise, it was not! For the first hour, I was afraid I wasn't going to make it, I was tired, I was shaking for a whole hour! Finally everything settled down, the route was hard, but I kept on going. I only met one pick-up truck during the whole trip and it was when I got to the next check point. I was able to see what was left of Jonestown, the American that had poisoned 900 his followers.



Not easy in the tropical forest, three check points, the police are watching the gold panner since there is a lot of thieves. There are many gold diggers in Tropical Forest!



I took the barge to cross another river.



I had to take the ferry once again.



The last 75 km of the route was made of ripples cause by erosion.



11.09.2



After leaving Boa Vista I did 780 km of route and headed to Manaus is a really beautiful town, but the only way to leave the town towards Porto Velho is by Barge. Manaus is Amazonia's capital. There is a B.M.W. car and motorcycle factory, Microsoft and Pioneer! There is a lot of history in that town, houses that are centuries old and a nice theater.



Today I get to relax and get to go to the theater at the Place des Arts built in 1896. Brazil is not expensive, there is a hotel downtown that charged only 53\$ canadian for the room, breakfast! 17\$ including tip, for pork filet mignon, 2 beers and fries (which are actually frozen McCain fries). Only 6.75\$ for a haircut! They only speak Portuguese, thankfully I can speak it.





I have to use the Barge since the normal route is closed. There is no way of communication with the outside world. I'm at 2500 km. of jungle and tropical forest! Just came out of the Amazon after 1 month. This was quite a challenge everyday of dust, sand, rocks and pot holes. At the end I was starting to fear if I would make it through. Finally I had to cross multiple wood planks used as bridges, ferries I did not believe could float and crossing the Suriname river on a pirogue and finally did 4 days from Manaus to Porto Velho on a barge with 150 passengers in a 20 x 20 deck sleeping on Hammocks.

Menu for the day on the barge:
Breakfast : sweet coffee with a cracker,
Lunch : rice, pasta, broiled beef,
Diner: fish or chicken.



Menu for the day, breakfast: sweet coffee with a cracker, lunch: rice, pasta, broiled beef, fish, diner: chicken. My beer partner was not as tough as my friend Goone



School bus on the Rio Madeira.



To spend time, I washed the floors.



Fresh fish of the day.





Transporting goods on the river.



Here's a few photos of the barge (Rio Madeira), there are two ways to leave Manaus Brazil, the barge or by plane. This zone is tax free so big industries settle there; BMW, Mercedes, Volkswagen, Mitsubishi, Microsoft, Pioneer and much more. There is also petroleum and soya.



Going back to the border, I crossed Rio Madeira for the last time on a ferry.
One lady and her son on a small Honda 175 or 200 cc comes talk to me.
She left Sao Paulo and was going to Rio Branco, 3900 km. on her little motorcycle!
She was going back home the same way as she left!

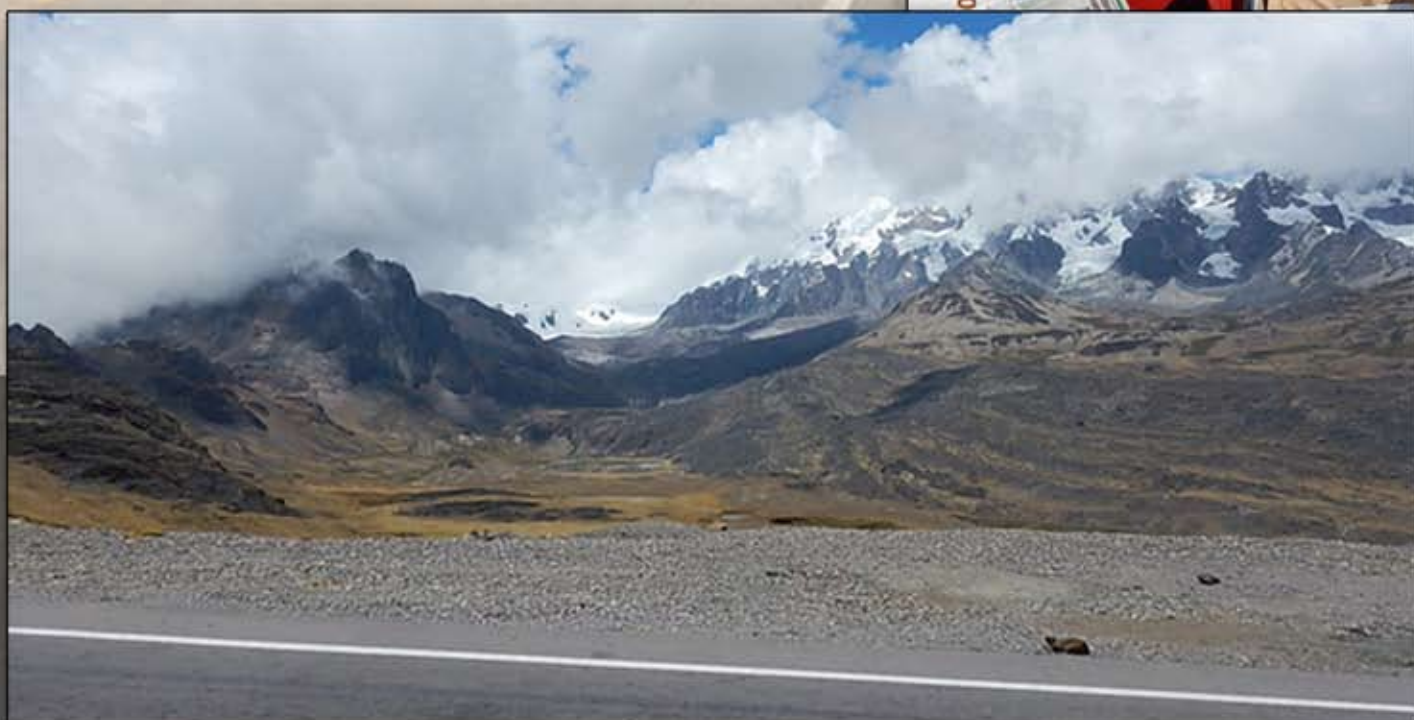


In Puerto Moldonado, short day so I can wash my clothes and fix my suitcase.

I stopped on the side of the road and a nice man who was building his own house came to see me to offer me pineapple. He showed me his mango and cacao plantations. There are a lot of speed bumps inbetween all the villages which are 3-4 km. apart, I know those bumps by heart!



I left Puerto Maldonado at 6h30 and at 9h00 I was in a small town close to the Andes, it was 30°C. At noon, 4700 meters high, I had to stop, I had a big head ache and the temperature was only 11°C, had no choice then to put on two shirts. I got to Cusco where I spent the night so I could get used to the temperature and height. I stopped to talk to people who were collecting papayas. Got to Starbucks and took my two Espressos!



On my way to Cuzco at 4700 meters.



Lamas crossing the road.



The roads were closed, the ground slipped and blocked the route.
A view from the road while entering Cusco.



21.08.2015



I left Chalhuenca, a small village known for kayaking in Peru, halfway between Cusco and Nasca. It's been the third time in one year that I sleep at the Zegarra Hotel, they have a good restaurant. The price for the night is 16.49\$ Canadian with inside parking. I left early so I could go on the road for breakfast and coffee with a restaurant owner in her kitchen since it was warmer. One coffee with a 103 year old lady.



21.09.20



Heading to Lima for a nice supper with a lovely lady I met in Cusco, I stopped at BMW in Lima to get my motorcycle checked with an oil change. I met the manager, Michael Mancilli, he speaks to me in French. I asked him where he's from; he explains that his parents have been living in Montreal for the past 8 years. He also studied at Concordia university and he came back to Lima to work at BMW.



Left Lima to go to Trujillo on the West Coast, approximately 600 km from the border of Ecuador. The West Coast of Peru is a desert with sand dunes and a oasis with a few towns and fishing/farming villages. There is hundreds of poultry farms. The route is really nice, pretty similar to the 401. I always had the Pacific to my left.





Hotel parking in front of my bedroom.



Sugar cane transport truck.



Taxi in Peru.



I'm at the Ecuador border. The landscape is pretty much the same towards Piura, where there is factory for animal food and rice. There is also a lot of rice plantations. Further North there is Oil Plants; as many on soil as on the sea! There is traffic on the Main St. in Tombes. Supper with the locals, 6.50\$ Canadian.



In Guayaquil, I saw Edwin Ortega, we kept in contact. He is a Commander Officer at the Naval Base. I was invited at the Naval Base, Officer's Club for lunch.





On the route to Guayaquil there is fruit vendors.



Ecuador is a nice country with green landscapes. The main products are Petroleum, bananas, cacao and flowers. All the money here is US currency.





Few photos of the valley at the North of Otavalo.



FRUTIMARI
*Indio y polifacético protagonista
de la gran historia regional*
PUEBLO RUMICOMA OTAVALEO

RUMICOMA
TERMINACION DE LOS TUNELOS Y MOLDES DE LA PIEDRA.
RELEVANCIA DEL CAYAMA EN LA PAZ PARA PUENTE DE LA VITALIDAD.
COMO NUESTROS MAESTROS ANDRÉS
ALTO PARA ENRIQUECER LOS PLAZOS DE LA ALFAMA.
ALTO PARA DARLE LA FORTALECERIA MADRE DE LOS PUEBLOS.
ALTO PARA ALCANZAR DE LOS EL MANANTIAL ENRIQUECER LOS PUEBLOS
DE AMERICA A LOS FUNDAMENTOS ESTABLECER LOS TUNELOS
DE TUNELOS DE LOS TUNELOS

28.09.2015





Greenhouses for roses which are an important product for Ecuador.
Statue in a traffic-circle. Downtown Otavalo and soldiers at
the border of Colombia.





On the road to Pasto, Colombia there is traffic and numerous accidents.



I stopped at a road side café when the police came in with the armored truck . There was a raid on a cocaine plantation operated by the cartel and the guerrillas.



Hotel Dunn in the city of Popayan.



Coffee factory in Popayan, Colombia.



Sugar Cane transporter truck.



Motorcycles don't pay any tolls.



Town of Arménia, west of Bogota.





Coffee factory in Popayan, Colombia.



From Armenia to Bogota the ROUTA DEL TRAVERSIA is 78 km in the mountains.



On the route there is 10 transport trucks to a car.



Cyclist train on a route shared with transport trucks.



Condor de Los Andes.



Little girl training on her roller-blades.



Country view in Colombia.



Cyclists having a break in Colombia.



Nairo Quintana at his parents residence.
Nairo is one of the top professional cyclist
of the world at the moment.

03.10.2015



With my friend Francois Bourdonnais at the Opera Hotel.



Lovely Karima who named my motorcycle Charisma.



Horseback riding.

In Colombia where I met an American living in Combita traveling by bicycle.





Opera hotel in Bogota.



Parliament in Bogota.

Government building.



Coffee shop in Bogota.



My next adventure: The Balkans in August 2016



ZABREB

CROATIA

BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA

Perucica
Forest

Sarajevo

Mostar

Zabljak

MONTENEGRO

Dubrovnik

Podgorica

ADRIATIC SEA

Hvar Island

Rovinj

Plitvice Lakes

Nadar