

Letter 11

Rent Boy: 27th: B.A - Bush Camp. Told not to start fires by a fire officer. Started a bonfire, put it out, only to be told that it was ok there. More steak & sweat corn.

A long days driving. We are told at numerous police checkpoints that we mustn't start any fires. Finally we find somewhere to pull up for the night, pitch camp and start a fire. 10 minutes later a fire truck pulls up. Helen, our brave and intrepid leader, throws a bucket of water on the fire and hides in the truck, leaving Brendan to explain the cloud of steam. The fire guys are really cool and tell us the fire is no problem if we stay out of the woods. We spend a pleasant evening gently mocking Helen.

Rent Boy: 28th: Bush Camp - Puerto Iguazu [ARG] via San Ignacio Jesuit Missions. Hot & humid. Too much beer for some. Iguacu falls and boat ride.

Another long drive. We stop at the Jesuit missions. Little Andy and I peer through the fence. It appears to be a derelict council estate. It's something extortionate like 50p to go in so we leave the others to it. Iguacu is fantastic. They say it is the most beautiful waterfall in the world. I certainly wouldn't disagree. We do a boat trip around the base of the falls and get good and wet. Some of the girls are in white T-shirts. I'm happy. We spend the day wandering around the walkways, seeing lizards, butterflies, jungle flowers and scantily clad tourist girls a plenty. We finish with a boat trip above the falls where we see a Cayman. Mark and I swim & I can't get back in the boat. It's a fantastic day.

Rent Boy: 30th: Puerto Iguazu - Foz du Iguazu [BRA]. More falls. Hot dogs.

The next day we do Iguassu from the Brazilian side. Its not as up close and personal as the Argentinean side but the views are incredible. We also do a helicopter flight over the falls. Breathtaking. That night the campsite has a pool. It is packed with children dropping ice creams and has a skin of sun tan lotion but we swim anyway. One little girl then proceeds to squat on the edge of the pool and pee into it. I get out at this point.

Rent Boy: 31st: Foz - "Bush Camp". Insect bites & humidity. Camped in the national park entrance.

Another day in the truck. We camp up in the entrance to a National park with very friendly rangers. A whole bunch of people decided to sleep out. I wake up alone. Everyone else has moved into the park office, apparently there was wind and rain and bugs. Passed me by.

Rent Boy: February:

1st: Bush Camp - Lake Camp. Sao Paulo province. Airport style motorway service station. Bombing off the jetty.

Another drive, another campsite. This one is really nice and by a lake. We all go swimming. There is a bombing contest off the jetty. I slip over and bend back my little toe but I am very brave. Actually it doesn't hurt too much but two days later it goes black. And stays that way. When I get back to blighty a nurse friend tells me its broken. What should I do I ask. Accept your too old to go bombing off jetties is the answer.

Rent Boy: 2nd: Bush Camp - Paraty. Set off in the dark. Laura fell over. Green scenery. Rubbish beach in Paraty. 5 million overlanders. Ice cream parlour. Boat cruise. Girls weighed themselves. Thai dinner & beers.

Paraty. It's the last stop before carnival in Rio and is full of overland trucks. We are still the prettiest group about. There is a chemist with free scales so we have a weigh in. I am a stone and a half lighter. Emily is not. Indeed, I think we have found my missing weight. I mock. Em sulks. (actually I quite like her with a bit of flesh but I see no reason to tell her that). There is a shop that sells ice cream by weight. I attempt to regain my stone and a half. Em sulks. Then comfort eats.

We do a 'pirate cruise'. Only three of us are stupid enough to dress up. See if you can guess who. It's a surprisingly good day out, lots of swimming, tropical beaches, fish and beer. That night we have a Thai (yes, Its not local but its good) and Em spends the evening making lewd remarks to the waiters until she finally realises they speak English.

We go to a grim pseudo-posh bar. The girls go off partying, the boys are staying out so I head back to the campsite. I spot Jenny walking ahead on her own so I walk behind her. She speeds up. I speed up. I walk along side her, she's desperately trying not to make eye contact. Finally she realises its me and gives me a good thumping for scaring her. Well, I thought it was funny.

So, almost at the end, Just Rio to come...