

INTRO: Since 2018 I have been interviewing today's most interesting world travelers every single week. And I just put together a special mixtape episode for you featuring short clips of travel stories from all over the world that were told by Maverick Show guests. Here it is.

Krystal Pino: I flopped down on the couch, like, soaking wet. And I look at the nightstand, and there's a sugar canister full of condoms. And I look at each side of the bed, and there are satin ropes. And I sit up, and I start opening cabinets around this room, and I find a minibar full of sex toys. I found various lotions and massage oils, and I found a karaoke machine. And I realize I'm in a sex hotel by myself in a typhoon.

Tarek Kholoussy: I flagged down a guy, had my big backpack and me and him on this motorbike and we're driving along and I'm like, oh my god, I'm going to cross a border by land two weeks after coming to Africa for the first time. And then all of a sudden, we get off the bike, he says to me, okay, you're you can get off now. And I said, well, what do you mean? I want to go to Uganda. He's like, what do you mean? You are in Uganda. Welcome to Uganda! And I was like, uh, excuse me? What about the border? Meanwhile, some police officers come up and are like, what's going on here? And now I'm freaking out because I just crossed a border illegally. I'm like, oh my god, I'm going to end up in African jail.

Dani Dirks: And like, of course you kind of want to chase after it. You're like, oh, I just saw a Komodo dragon. I want to chase it. And then they're like, if it bites you, you will die or you will lose a limb. Bad things will happen. And then my friends are in the background like, did you hear about the French guy who died like a month ago being eaten by a Komodo dragon? I'm like, is that true? And they're like, I don't know, but I feel like it is.

Nora Dunn: And the three of us met in Lisbon and we then went our separate ways between Lisbon and Moscow. So, we had 17 days to get from Lisbon to Moscow all by train. We met up again in Moscow and we took the Trans-Siberian from Moscow to Beijing, longest train ride in the world, 153 hours. We didn't get off. Most people get off somewhere along the way, right? To at least see something or do something. No. Yeah. Yeah. Why? Because we were on a clock. We needed to get from Lisbon to Saigon in 30 days, all by train. And that's 25,000 kilometers. So basically, we just had to keep going.

Joshua Stephens: I nearly got kidnapped in the Sinai and I was standing in the middle of the desert. Next to a barricade of flaming tires. I was the only foreigner on that bus. So, I knew if they came for anyone, it was going to be me. I had 50 to my name tucked in my socks so that if they took my wallet, I didn't lose my money. And I'm standing there and I'm not sure if I'm even going to live to see the morning and I'm standing there in the desert and it's the dead of night. There's not much to see in any direction. And I swear to God, out of sheer boredom, I just looked up and I saw the Milky Way for the first time. I mean, the night sky in the Sinai is one of those things where you go, Holy shit, this is why people invented gods.

Tue Le: I didn't tell anyone I was going. I had so many butterflies. I was so nervous and scared about going because in my head, I had this irrational fear that I was going to land at the airport. Everyone was going to look at me, point at me and say, oh, she's a fraud. She's not one of us. She's not really Vietnamese. I had this crazy fear of that. And the most beautiful thing happened. I landed; I went through immigration. I came outside to the taxi line, and I was trying to figure out what I should do. I'd never hailed a cab in Vietnamese before, but I ended up doing it, getting into the car, and when the driver sits down in his front seat, he looks at me in the rear-view mirror. And he goes, welcome back home, sister. It's so good to have you back home. And in that moment, I swear I saw my whole life flash before my eyes. And I felt for the first time, I'm Vietnamese. He called me sister. He said, welcome back home.

Zein El-Amine: When everybody leaves, the people that were serving food and the guard leaves, he says, give me a boost above the door. And I give him a boost above the door. And where there was an air conditioning system, an internal air conditioning system, it had been removed. So, they use it as an intercom system for the whole prison. So, as I'm giving this guy a boost and understand Matt that he has his hands behind his back while I'm doing this, because he's handcuffed. So, he shouts into this Then he says, there's a new prisoner. His name is Zein Muhammad Bakr El-Amine, and he is Shia. And you hear this; ha-hu-ha, hu-ha-he, ha-hu-ha and I'm like, I have no idea what's going on. I'm like, they're either angry or very happy, I don't know.

Becky Gillespie: It was around Christmas time, and I flew into Chennai, and I got there and was meant to meet two guys I'd never met before who were going to be my teammates in the Rickshaw Challenge. And we were going to spend 10 days together going a thousand kilometers on a motorized Rickshaw and we were going to do a series of challenges every day and finally reach the city of Trivandrum at the end, which is in the state of Kerala and we were meant to fly out from there. I mean, that's the only time I have done a Rickshaw Challenge. It turned out that one of those guys ghosted us and he never showed up. So, it was me and a 52-year-old Australian bricklayer from the bush that I'd never met before. He and I shared this 10-day journey.

Lydia Lee: And then I woke up because I heard my friend next to me kind of whispering through the pillow, you know, like Lydia, there's two guys in the room. And I think one of them has a gun. And just the whole sweat, just like, you know, I just woke up from a dream and then it was like, is this real? And I just remembered all the blood just like rushed, like it felt like it was draining out of my body, and I just started sweating. But I looked over and true enough, there were two guys and one of them had a gun, a black gun in his hand and something just came over me. And I just remember thinking, I am not fucking dying today. Like at all, this is not happening.

Marisa Meddin: And you go to this small town in the middle of nowhere, and it's filled with tens of thousands of people lining up these streets and you're just waiting. Everyone is wearing goggles for what's about to happen. And these garbage trucks come through with tomatoes that are the perfect ripeness that they're not so hard that if they throw them at you, they will not hurt. And they come through these thousands of people. So, you're even more packed in and they're throwing tomatoes at you. And I say, it's not like a tomato here and there. It is thousands of pounds of tomatoes, and you're covered in tomatoes. Your goggles are so tomato-filled you cannot see. And by the end of it, you're, I mean, imagine this in a town, the streets are knee deep in tomatoes. Like liquid tomato, like you never want to eat a tomato again. And people are just throwing them. It's a food fight. It's the biggest food fight in the world.

Tiffany Green: So, I pack my suitcase and drag it across the desert because in Africa burned, they have their manmade airport. And I said, you know what? I'm going to go to this manmade airport, which is just like a runway. Oh, they create it in the desert. And I'm going to see if I can hitch a ride. Right? You know, like, hey, let's try it. Let's just see what happens. This guy pulls up in his private plane. And he heard my story, and he was like, oh, you know what? I'll take you back to Stellenbosch, you know, Stellenbosch is a wine country in Cape Town. And I was like, yes, I can get an Uber from there. So, he puts me in his private jet, and then we landed in wine country.

Jimmy Naraine: There's a group of kids, they were having some problems in some shop, swearing at the shop owner, and they came at me afterwards. They're like, hey, hey, where are you from? Where are you from? And you can sense when someone has trouble with you. And those kids in particular, they had a

skateboard. So, I said, hey, give me that skateboard. I'll show you something and I did a kickflip and they literally flipped out, right? I did a kickflip and they're like, man, this is crazy. This is incredible and I'm like, do you know how to rap? And of course one of them said I know how to rap So, I started beatboxing and the next thing you know, they want to take pictures with me. They're like, yo Let's take pictures, ma. Let's take pictures.

Kristin Wilson: At the time I had a, a driver and so I'm sitting in the back, and I got this email from my business partner who was basically telling me that they were cutting me out. So, I'm like reading this email on my phone and I got stuck in a big riot during those municipal elections. And there are people throwing cherry bombs and they have fire on sticks and picket signs. And it was just crazy and hectic. And the next thing I know, the driver, he just gets out of the car and joins the riot. And so, I climb over into the front seat, the key is still in the ignition, and I just drive away.

Shakeemah Smith: And I decided to rent a bike, you know, like a motorbike and just drive over the border from Zambia to Zimbabwe. Everything was supposed to be Gucci, right? Y'all, while I'm in Zambia and I'm trying to get back into Zimbabwe and all of a sudden, I hear people going, no, no, throw the food down because, you know, I was, I had food on me. And I look and there is a wild elephant coming my way. And I realized, yo dawg, I'm about to be elephant soup. Like this is what it's come down to. This is how it all ends.

Sean Tierney: I climbed a 19, 700-foot active volcano, the largest one in South America, Cotopaxi. So, we leave at midnight, and we summit somewhere around 7am. Like right as the sun's coming up and you're not supposed to be on top once the sun is up. So, we really didn't have much time. We're like 15 minutes on the summit because there's dangers of avalanche. And you've got, you're like, literally we're hoping crevasses. I mean, it's legit dangerous stuff. And my crampons locked up, so the teeth in my boots gripped each other and locked up and I went over the edge.

Sharon Rosenberg: We were sitting there sipping wine. And we start to see people running outside, people pulling on ski masks, like, uh, maybe we should close these garage doors. And so, they, they bring down the metal doors and close those. And we start sipping our wines and she's describing the flavor notes and we're swooshing and tasting and we're hearing hoses outside on the metal doors and people banging on them. And the tear gas starts to leak up under the garage doors.

Nick Martin: We all went into this warehouse, and it was pitch black and I was like, holy shit, this smell is really bad, like really artificial. And as soon as your eyes, you know, getting used to the dark, I was like, what the fuck is going on? I was standing in front of like 500 people. And I was like, shit, they just brought me into this huge orgy. And I don't know if I had to cry or to smile, but, and then like the smell, it was really bad. And I was like, holy shit, what are those guys doing? You know, but literally everybody was spot naked, and they got body painted. So, they're going to celebrate the summer. And they were like riding a bike naked through Seattle, body painted. And I was like, fuck yeah, I'm in. So, I got body painted as the incredible Hulk. So, I was standing butt naked in that warehouse in Seattle. So, this one girl showed up, she was like, um, excuse me, do you want me to paint your balls? Fuck yes, I do want you to paint my balls. So just painted my balls blue. It's all about living life to the fullest. Yeah. So basically, I rode a bike naked through Seattle with amongst 800 other people.

Monique Lindner: And the caimans are the most aggressive version of a crocodile. But in this part of the Amazonas, they can grow up to like six, seven meters. We saw one of them. Its head was two thirds of my whole body. So, this river was full of them, and you would see them along the riverbed, like every two or

three meters, you would see like two or three hanging out. And I'm just getting my t shirt out and jumping in the water and I turn around and no one else is coming because the whole crew is freaking out. They're like Monique, there's a caiman right next to you. It's going down now. And I turn around and it's like two arm lengths away and I'm like, all right, well, the water is really dirty. I can't see anything, not even my own hand. So, I just pretend it's not there.

Eva Adongo: You could be going to work and the car in front of you just explode, or you could visit a hotel today and tomorrow you hear it was attacked by the Taliban. So, it was literally living one day at a time. Now on this particular night, we had an earthquake. It was an eight point something magnitude earthquake, but also because of what was going on around that time, the day after was actually an election day and the Taliban's were throwing rockets throughout. So, it's sort of like being caught between a rock and a hard stone. There's an earthquake. Your house is literally falling apart, but you can't run outside because you're going to get hit by a rocket.

Mujtaba Saifuddin: And as the night gets darker, we've got the sunroof open, we're peering our heads out, we're freezing, our eyes are watering, and we've got the heater on full blast in the car, and we're just observing what starts off as a small orb of light becomes a giant sliver of dancing light and it goes from light green to dark green to reddish, purplish and it starts dancing and we're like oh my god this is the most surreal most epic thing I have ever seen. We got emotional we're like oh my god the heavens are opening up and you know those of us who aren't spiritual all of a sudden became spiritual because like dude god is talking to us right now because it's almost like it was just a show for us.

Sarah Gregg: And then I look down the platform and I can see like this team of 10 people running down the platform, like these Chinese train guards and a doctor, I assume. Like with a wheelchair for me, like just racing down and the rest of them are kind of like staring at us like on the platform. And Chris just whispers in my ear, I'm going to count to three and you're just going to run. We just need to run away from this. So, he counts to three and we just run, and Chris has all the bikes. Like these two massive backpacks and we ran with like this wheelchair brigade chasing after us and we managed to outrun them and hide in a stairwell.

Juliana Rabbi: So, when I arrived, I asked if I could take a shower and they said yes and it was like, is there hot water? And the host, the owner of the house, asked me, do you need hot water? And then it was the first time someone asked me that. It was like, inside my mind, I was like, how do I answer this question? Do I need hot water? Is this a need? So, I told him, well, if it's possible. Yes, it was cold. And then he said, for how many minutes do you need hot water? And again, nobody ever asked me how many minutes I needed the hot water. Like nobody calculates my showering time. So, I didn't know again what to answer. So, I came up with like, I think three or four minutes, is that okay?

And he said up to five is okay. So initially I was a bit shocked. I was like, this guy's controlling my showering time. That's weird. But then I understood. Because the first day I had hot water, the second day there was no hot water. available. So, this was something that they don't have. So, it was winter time, high in the mountains and they didn't use hot water.

Bill Manassero: And he said to my wife, these guys are not cops. They were dressed like they were cops, but they were not cops. And so, he just kind of let the car in front of him go a little bit further ahead. They started to inch the car up. He said, okay, when I say duck, you guys duck. So, he starts to back the car up and he starts backing into the street and the guys see him and he says, whipping the car out in reverse and the guy comes out and he sees them and he goes, stop, stop. And he just stepped on the gas and reverse

swerving the car from one side of the road to the other, my wife and daughter and the other lady laying down in the car and they just opened fire on us like with AK 47.

Jesse Lu: And when their head passed my head and I followed their head, I saw the eye. I just turned my head around. I looked at their body past me, the body kept going. And I thought, oh shit, the tail is going to come hit me from behind because the tail is five meters wide. And as soon as I realized, I turned around, the tail was already right next to me, but the whale just did this very gentle lift of the tail and then put a tail back down over my head as if they knew exactly you are a little vulnerable being right next to me. I'm not going to hurt you or kill you. I'm just going to lift my tail over your head.

Travis King: We go into the garage, and he's got his assistant there, they have these four huge yellow basins full of coca leaves and all these mysterious liquids, and he told us he was like one of Pablo Escobar's top scientists in like the prime of Pablo's reign. And I'm just remembering like this is so like, what is happening in my life? I was in grad school like three months ago. I remember him being like, the only rule is you can't take a photo of anybody's face. So, like, we have photos of that night, but we're all like from the neck down, like, you know, but you can see I'm like in a Green Bay Packers T-shirt. It's like a thousand percent me, you know?

Agnes Nyamwange: They're like, just so you understand, you're not under arrest, but they start treating me like someone who is under arrest. They don't allow me to have my phone. All my luggage gets locked up in this other room. Then I get taken to this room that is written women's, which is literally a detention center. There is no windows and then they have cameras and the light there is so you can't even sleep and they never turn it off. You don't know whether it's day or night. And I remember they had two mattresses on the floor, and I'm looking at those mattresses. I'm like, I bet you there's bags on those mattresses. They were so dirty. And I'm like, they put people here until they completely go crazy.

Conor Walsh: They were a Syrian couple. They were driving from Khartoum to Damascus. They were in their sixties, I think. And as we're driving to the pyramids, they're just in guffaws of laughter at me. In between, they're asking me about my life story and everything. And then they said like, do you want any tea? Maybe, but how do you have any tea in this car? And then I looked down and in between the passenger and driver's seat, they had a full ceramic tea set with fresh mint tea, glass cups, everything, steaming hot tea. It's the kind of thing. This is what I love about like North Africa and the Middle East. Just, of course, they're just driving through the desert, drinking tea, picking up some rando on the side of the road and dropping him off at some pyramids.

Chantal Patton: So, we're trying to get out. And so, we're going a little bit faster than usual. And then all of a sudden, the sun goes down. Big massive elephant goes in front of me. And so, what you do is you kind of slowly back up and you're supposed to keep calm and maybe even shut your car off. But then all of a sudden there's one big one behind us. And I was like, oh my gosh, I felt like my heart was going to like to fly out of my skin. Like, and you're trying to keep calm for your kid's sake. You're like, it's all good. They're not going to sit in the car or anything. Are they?

Vivien Sansour: In Chiapas, when we arrived at the village, they put out this long table with delicious soup, and there was this elderly man the whole time carrying this bag. It was a little burlap bag, and it clearly had something bulky in it. And I was like, what's in that bag? So, the whole time, I'm like looking at this guy, like, what's in the bag? And then, finally, after we ate and everybody laughed and everything, he came up to us and he pulled out from this burlap bag that I've been so curious about, a big papaya. And he handed it to

me, and he was like, this is my gift to you. This is the papaya of my ancestors. And I thought, wow, I couldn't be more honored because he didn't give me a placard. He didn't give me a golden star. He gave me his papaya, like a gift for eternity.

Santiago Sosa: The hotel guy goes like, hey man, I'm sorry, but on your room that you reserved or that you had in your itinerary, it's no longer available, but if you want to, we have kind of like a library upstairs, but then my granddad sleeps there. And I'm like, okay. And it is middle of nowhere in the Himalayas. And then I opened the room and dude, it was like out of a movie, a world of Buddhist texts. And then I just remember meeting, I don't know, the guy had probably been in his late 80s or something, super cute Buddhist monk living up there. And then obviously, I mean, we couldn't communicate much because he had like very little English, but just waking up to the chanting of the Buddhist monk at five in the morning in the cold, looking out at the Himalayas. Initially, when you think that it might be a bad travel experience because you're not getting your comfortable room, it ended up being something that I could not even pay for.

Matt Bowles: All right. If you enjoyed that compilation, feel free to go back and listen to the full episodes. I will link them all up in [the show notes](#) and make sure you are subscribed to The Maverick show. So, you don't miss any episodes moving forward. Also, if you enjoyed this episode, it would mean a lot to me if you could share it. Sometimes short compilations like this are a great way for new listeners to get a quick overview of the vibe of the show. So, if you're a fan of the show, it would be amazing if you could help spread the word and it would also help the show out a lot if you could leave an Honest rating and review on Apple podcasts, even if that's not the primary platform where you listen. Thank you in advance for that. And thank you for being a listener of The Maverick show. I appreciate you and good night, everybody.