

The Birth, Life and Death of “Mr. 60”

As a traveler, you end up buying plenty “on the road” but mostly to fill a void or replace something broken. Such was the case of “Mr. 60”.

Back in 2011 when I was beginning to empty my first “bucket list”, I began the travels in Turkey, my one European country. While there I received a checklist of things my African overland safari thought were necessary; and on the list were a pair of long pants. I had packed for every possible scenario, but had not included a pair of long pants. I figured a simple pair of pants wouldn’t be too hard to find since we were in Turkey and not some remote outpost.

I was with my friend Andy and we set out to visit the clothing bazaars...there were plenty of splashy belly dancer outfits to be had, but little in the way of men’s fashions. We eventually found our way to the clothing district and were directed to a tailor who might be able to help. Aamed scurried over and sized me up with the tape measure draped around his neck...he looked down at the measurement with silent resignation...”You sir” he apologized,”are a sixty” and then looked away. Being from America where anything is possible, I didn’t see the issue before me. Aamed continued. “In Turkey we have pants of all sizes, but they all stop at 58. You are a 60...custom size.” He went on to explain that with three days and \$50 he could tailor me a pair of pants... I didn’t have the 3 days and I sure wasn’t going to spend \$50 on a pair of pants, so we bade Aamed a good day and moved on. Andy and I walked outside and just around the corner was a market where a shop had large sized draw-string pants for \$3 a pair. I tried them on right there in the street and once I was sure they fit, I bought two pairs....”Mr.60” was thus born.

I wore those pants more than I’d like to admit and they were a great addition to my clothing array. Once I got to Nepal and finished trekking, I opted to “donate” one of the “60’s” at the hostel on the last night to lessen my load.

The remaining pair made it around the world, Australia, New Zealand, South America and back to Brookfield, where they were relegated to more casual occasional evening attire. When packing for this my second “bucket list”, “Mr. Sixty” were right there on the pecking order and packing list.

Through a month of camping in Iceland, “Mr Sixties” were called into play frequently with the variable weather. Then the same in the Faroe Islands, until tragedy struck.

My friend Jim and I were out taking photos on a beautiful day in the town of Saxon on the island of Streymoy. I was wearing the “60’s” and was busy taking photos when I thought to hike around this thin ledge which climbed above the shoreline. What I had thought was a goat trail was in-fact not a trail at all. I was probably 30-40 feet above the water when the clot of ground I was standing on gave way.

Usually I don’t recall what I was thinking when these sorts of things happen, but for this episode, I have complete recall. I was sliding on my left side, with camera and backpack on-board and I remember trying to keep my feet loose for the landing, whether on sea or shore...I stuck the landing, thankfully on shore...no cuts or bruises, but a later inspection showed this was not a victim-less incident...”Mr. 60” had

been mortally wounded. During the walk back to the car, I almost convinced myself that a simple tear could be mended....but once took off the pants, the verdict was final...My "Mr. 60" pants could no longer enjoy the ride.

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