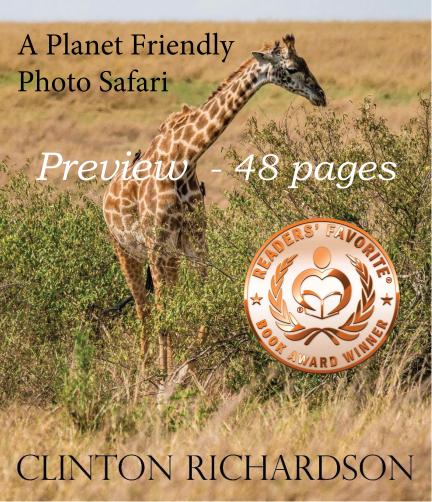
PASSPORTS IN HIS UNDERPANTS



Also by Clinton Richardson

The Venture Magazine Complete Guide to Venture Capital

The Growth Company Guide (Six editions)

Ancient Selfies (2017 International Book Awards Finalist) (2018 eLit Awards Gold Medal Winner)

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PASSPORTS IN HIS UNDERPANTS

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A PLANET FRIENDLY PHOTO SAFARI

CLINTON RICHARDSON

To the gracious Maasai and Gamewatchers Safaris for making eco-friendly safaris possible.

I never knew of a morning in Africa when I woke up and was not happy.

- Ernest Hemingway



If there was one more thing I could do, it would be to go on safari once again.

- Karen Blixen

JOIN OUR SAFARI

Take the trip of a lifetime without leaving your home. Join us on a Kenyan safari complete with tented camps, Maasai guides, and intimate encounters with Africa's wildest animals.

If you have not been on safari before, make our safari your first. If you have, join us and let us inspire your return.

Whatever your status, join our remarkable 12-day safari into the heart of Africa. Let my camera be your eyes on a photo safari like no other. Leave your inhibitions and preconceptions at home. They will be shattered on this journey.

Our trip will take us to eco-friendly camps on wild conservancies leased from the native Maasai. The animals will be abundant. And, with experienced guides in off-road vehicles, we will get closer, much closer, than expected to the wildest creatures on the planet.

Join us inside a pride of 28 lions as they surround and separate a herd of zebras. Follow us to a waterhole and watch a bull elephant confront four thirsty male lions with a surprising and fragrant rebuke.

Share our surprise as a massive cape buffalo leaps to mount a female only to land on top of a bull. And, help celebrate with a baby rhino who prances after zebras and warthogs on the Maasai plain.

We will puzzle over sleepwalking elephants and be enthralled as a mother cheetah trains her cubs to hunt. An adult leopard will get so close that our hearts will skip a beat.

The people will be memorable too. Like the seasoned traveler who keeps his passports in his underpants. Or, the young woman from Sidney whose hands shake as she describes a lion brushing against her tent the night before. Meet the Maasai who live in two vastly different worlds - a pastoral one of small, mud-house villages and a modern one with cell phones, motorcycles, and bush planes.

How many wives does it make sense to have in a changing world? Our Maasai guides will give you their answer.

Our travels will take us to some of Kenya's wildest conservancies. One, where we start, will be in a wildlife park near Nairobi. It may be the only place in the world where you can see wild zebras and rhinos with an urban skyline in the background.

After two nights there, a bush plane will take us to the Selenkay Conservancy near Amboseli National Park. We will camp in the shadow of Mount Kilimanjaro where elephants, lions, wildebeests, zebras, impalas, gazelles, hippos, ostriches, gerenuks, and giraffes abound.

Our outings will include night game drives and day hikes, one with Maasai guides to see their village. But the highlight of the visit will be a trip to the Amboseli wetlands, one of Africa's jewels.

Next, we will head to the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in the foothills of Mt Kenya where rhinos are plentiful. We will have two days and nights with game drives and walks while camping near an active waterhole.

From there it is on to the Olare Motorogi Conservancy for four days and nights with a chance to spot the elusive leopard. The area is also home to lions, cheetahs, zebras, cape buffalos, elephants, rhinos, hippos, hyenas, jackals, mongooses, and warthogs.

From here, we will also explore the Maasai Mara Reserve and take a full day to follow the Great Wildebeest Migration. Come with us and watch the herds approach the river, wait, and then race across. Be there when a lion jumps a wildebeest right in front of our vehicle as other wildebeest wait anxiously to race to the river and cross.

Would you like to see a male lion tricked out of its kill by his female companions? Or, a pair of male topi fight for dominance over their herd?

Join us. Take a safari like no other. And, do it without leaving your chair.



* Portions of *Passports in his Underpants* first appeared in the author's Venture Moola photo blog at www.readjanus.com/venture-moola

Additional images from our photo safari can be viewed at <u>www.trekpic.com</u>

SNEAK PEEK



Nightfall in the Selenkay



Rhino Grazing Outside Nairobi



Vulture High Step in the Olare Motorogi



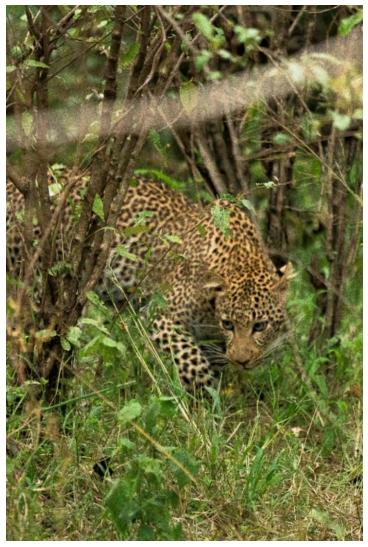
Landing Field Welcome Party



Amboseli Marsh



Reticulated Giraffe in Ol Pejeta



The Elusive Figlet

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PASSPORTS IN HIS UNDERPANTS

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THE JOURNEY BEGINS

1: THE HUNT



Lions on the Hunt

We begin near the end of our trip with exactly what you would expect from a safari – a hunt. Only this is a photo safari so the animals will do the hunting. In this case, the area's largest pride of lions is on the prowl for zebra.

We are 11 days into a 12-day safari spanning four camps, two national parks and three Maasai conservancies. We know the routine. Up at 5:45 for a 6:15 start with a breakfast packed for a 9:00 break on the plain.

This morning we start from the Porini Lion Camp in the Olare Motorogi Conservancy. We hop into our open Land Cruiser and head out. It is crisp outside with clearing skies. We bundle up. The openair design of the Land Cruiser provides a cold breeze as we drive.

There are four of us today filling six available seats. Our driver and spotter are in front. Both are Maasai warriors and dressed in the bright traditional style of the bush, only this morning they wear heavy green coats over their bright red tunics because of the cold.

Our drive into the conservancy finds us on wet roads after evening rains. We cross a small stream swollen and muddy from the rain and head onto open grassland. The vehicle slides in the wet muck as we drive down the embankment and through the stream.



Leaving Camp

Ahead of us is a gently sloping field with a small herd of topi, all of whom are standing upright and looking in one direction. Across the field is a stream and a grassy field on a gently sloping hill.

Immediately, our driver veers off the road and onto the field with the topi and heads for the stream. As we look across the field, we see what the topi are seeing - lions, lots of lions, dotting the hill on the other side of the stream. They are heading our way.

By the number of brown bodies, our guide knows this is the area's largest pride. Soon we are at the stream just as the first of 28 lions reach the other bank.

There is hesitation. Then the first lion jumps over the stream to the other side. Moisture from the night rains flies off his back.



Wet Lioness Jumps Over a Stream

Then another lion makes the leap. And, then another and another.

A second line of lions forms a bit upstream to make their aerial crossing from there. One large female misses her landing and slides back into the stream. She scrambles up the muddy embankment.



Upstream Crossing

Once the stream is forded, the group heads up the hill on our side. About seven or eight march single file near a path. The rest spread out in the grass. No one makes a sound.



Marching Single File

Several jackals gather behind the pack, yipping loudly. One charges toward the lions and then scurries back when a lion turns its head.

Our vehicle moves with the pride. Sometimes we are slightly behind most of the lions. Other times we move ahead, and the procession walks toward and around us.



Jackals Behind the Pride

Some pass right next to our vehicle as they walk by. Some come close enough to touch. These powerful creatures show no fear. They

control these grasslands. As they surround our vehicle and pass by, my pulse quickens.

Soon we crest a hill and the lions continue down toward a large open plain. There are trees but they are few and far apart. On the plain is a herd of zebra.



Spread out in the Grass

The lions continue down the hill, some move ahead, some spread to the sides, and others stop to watch or explore. One youngster trots along with a bundle of sticks in his mouth. Another stops to climb a termite hill.

The organization may not be clear, but the activity is certainly practiced. Some, particularly the young, are not as far along the learning curve as others.

The zebras stiffen as the lions make their way down the hill. Their ears perk up and heads turn toward the lions. They freeze in place and assess the threat.

The lions move closer. One darts into the center of the herd. The zebras bolt and break into two and then four groups.



Getting Close

The zebras freeze again as the lions reassess the situation. Some of the lions begin moving again, getting closer to the zebras.

We get ready to move on. Our goal was to watch the method, not see the result.

As we drive off, my gaze fixes on five zebras who are standing bolt upright behind a termite mound. Will they all survive the day?



The Hunted

Later, we learn that the zebras were spared that morning. Apparently, a warthog stumbled into the pack and immediately became breakfast. While the lions were distracted, the zebras escaped.

It all seems incredible.

In our open vehicle, we joined a giant pride of lions while they hunted. We watched them ford a stream, their backs still wet from the evening's rain. We followed them across a plain and watched them surround and divide a herd of zebra. At times, we could hear them breathe, they were so close.



Close to Our Vehicle

2: OFF TO NAIROBI



Nairobi Skyline

Our flight arrives in Nairobi at 9:00 p.m. local time. A bus takes us to a large hanger where we work our way through customs, gather our bags, and walk outside to meet our outfitter's agent.

It is cool and dark with just the hint of a breeze. We are not tired so much as excited to be in Kenya.

Traffic is light as we leave the airport. Life size metal statues of wildebeest and zebra grace the medians along the roads. As we drive down a freeway, we see people walking near the road.

When we reach our hotel, a large metal gate opens to admit our car to a staging area where a guard stops us and walks around the car. When we enter the hotel door, another guard takes our luggage and puts it through an airport-style screening machine. We are escorted to the front desk for check in.

The next morning the process reverses itself. We check out and are met by two young men representing our outfitter. They have a car waiting that takes us to our first park. We will start our journey with

a two-night stay at a tented camp in Nairobi National Park. It takes less than 10 minutes to get there.

We are later told that the Park is the world's only wildlife park that is adjacent to a major city. We are in a wild and unique place.

At the Park gate, we switch guides and load our stuff into an open top safari vehicle. Men in military uniforms man the gate.

Once through the gate, we drive on a one lane road with trees lining both sides. We think we are heading straight to the camp but soon discover that we will be taking a game drive through the park first.



Roadside Maasai Giraffe

As this news is sinking in, we turn around a bend and stop. A giraffe, 18 feet tall, is standing in the middle of the road eating the leaves off the tops of a nearby tree. We are shocked and delighted. He is large and colorful and totally unconcerned about us.

I am unprepared as I grab my small travel camera and stand up to take a photo out of the top of the car. The giraffe moves on as I fumble the shot. The adrenaline and surprise yield a shaky image and me wishing I had not packed the good camera for this leg of our trip.

But, photography aside, things just get better as we drive on. As we pull out of the woods onto a dirt road that leads into grasslands we are greeted by a mingled herd of giraffes and Thompsons gazelles.

Above in the treetops, go-away-birds are making a racket. A few minutes later, a herd of zebra appear on our right. I am beginning to wonder if we are going to see everything on this first drive.

Before we reach the camp, we also see ostrich, gazelles, wart hogs, impala, rhinos, hartebeests, and cape buffalo. Not bad for a first drive.



Ostrich in the Grass

When we arrive at our camp, we find it to be as advertised. A tented greeting area with sofas and tables, a separate tented dining hall, and large tents for the guests that feature a king size bed, writing table, and bathroom with running water, flush toilet, sink, and a bucket shower. A small porch outside each guest tent has two chairs and a table.

We unpack and get ready for lunch. The dining tent is open and inviting. The adjacent lounge has a large sofa and books about Africa.



Inside Our Tent

There is a small fire pit outside with chairs set around. Evenings in front of a fire before dinner will be a part of our routine for the next two weeks.

The food served is fresh and better than expected. We meet and talk with the other guests as they arrive. Most, like us, are just getting started so we exchange backgrounds and talk about what is to come.

There are no fences around the camp, so animals come and go freely. A small antelope greets us outside our tent. At lunch the next day, a warthog wanders in and then saunters off.

We are off to a good beginning.



The Dining Tent



Africa's Smallest Antelope, the Suni

3: TENTED CAMPS AND GAME DRIVES



Outside our Tent

Okay, it is only fair that you get to see the outside of a tent after seeing the image from inside. Here our guide is showing us to our tent at Nairobi National Park. It is your basic non-heated tent but with interior lights powered by the camp's solar batteries.

All the tents we stay in on our safari will be like this one. You zip yourself in when you are there and zip it closed when you leave. At night, you leave only with a Maasai warrior for an escort. Somehow, one always seems to be nearby when you need one.

With none of the camps being enclosed, animals wander through freely, especially at night. During our stay, the grounds near our tents will be visited by cape buffalo, hippos, elephants, and wart hogs. Lions and hyenas will make night noises that are loud enough to wake us.

This first night in Nairobi National Park is full of sound. The loudest and most constant is from a pair of screaming hyenas who are close enough for a ranger, dressed in her military uniform and toting a rifle, to patrol the area as we head to our tents for the evening.



Spotted Hyena

The next morning my wife is eager to speak with our host about the armed guard. Was she here to protect us from bandits or was it a precaution because of the hyenas? The thought of marauding bandits unsettled her.

Our host laughed when he heard the question.

"No" he said. "No one worries about bandits in the night. You'd have to be crazy to wander around here at night. With the hyenas, lions, and hippos around, something would surely get you."

The guard had come because of the proximity of the hyenas. Somehow, this was reassuring. After all, we were zipped into our tents and escorted when we went out after dark.

Our concerns addressed, we headed to the mess tent for breakfast and got ready for the morning game drive. We would be driving with a couple from Hong Kong and another from Toronto, all first-time safari goers. The mood is upbeat and expectant. Our drive the day before gives us reason to be optimistic.



White Rhino Calf



Female White Rhino

It was early, as it always would be before morning drives. Up at 5:45 with coffee and biscuits delivered to the tent, then a hot breakfast in the mess tent, and off in our safari vehicle by 6:30.

Before we were 200 yards out of the camp, we spot a lion in the grass, one of the contributors to last night's serenade. Later we get close to a pair of white rhinos - mother and child. It is surprising how close we get.



Hartebeest in NNP

The rhinos are followed by sightings of hartebeests, warthogs, gazelles, ostriches, and a pair of jackals. It is a short drive this morning which gets us back to camp by 10:00 so we can head out to the nearby David Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage.

Once at the orphanage, we gather with a crowd of locals and tourists around a roped off area of open dirt. Several handlers dressed in green lab coats and white hats wait patiently. Then from a distance, a host of baby elephants come running toward us.

They bound quickly into the roped off area and head straight to the handlers. Each receives a bottle of milk, which is quickly consumed. We watch the feeding and play that follows until the young elephants are led off and another, slightly older, group of young elephants comes running in to feed.



Feeding Time at the Elephant Orphanage

Our driver and Maasai guide are excited to visit the elephant refuge. The animals are revered for their imposing size, intellect, and gentle family ways. "Elees, we call them," our guide Jon tells us.

We return to camp for a 1:00 lunch, some rest, and then a 4:00 afternoon ride. As we make our first turn out of the camp we are forced to stop.

Dozens of baboons are walking down the road toward us. The leaders in the front of the group move off into the woods just before they reach our vehicle. They show no interest in us.

As we sit and watch, wave upon wave of baboons make their way down the dirt road, stopping here and there to inspect the ground, the bush, themselves, and each other. They are in no hurry.



Baboons on the Road



Crossing the Road

As they get close to our vehicle, they follow the leaders into the brush. Eventually they are gone, and we make our way up the road.

The rest of the drive yields viewings of cape buffalo coming out of the woods into the grasslands and later up close, standing in a herd, blocking our dirt roadway.

We also spot a serval cat at some distance on the side of our roadway. She disappears quickly into the tall grass when our vehicle approaches.



Serval Cat

And later, we see our first kill remains. Bleached bones beside the road. We will see bones repeatedly on the trip.

Toward the end of our drive, we head over to a pond and catch our first sighting of the African crocodile. As the sun begins to set, we catch sight of ibis in a pond feeding as night falls.



Crocodile Resting



Ibis as Night Falls

We leave the pond and head back to camp in the soft light just before sunset. As our road heads into bushier terrain, we hear a crash in the bushes to our left and then see a large rhino on the run.

Its speed and power are startling. Our driver tries to match its speed on the road to give us a chance to see it, but our glimpses are fleeting.

Is it a white rhino like the ones we have seen? Or could this be the black rhino with its distinctive back and beaked mouth? The terrain suggests a black, who grazes mostly on bushes.

Another crash and the rhino comes tantalizingly close to our vehicle at a gallop before disappearing into the bush. Then it is gone, and we slow down. Nothing. We come to a full stop and wait.



Black Rhino Ahead

Then ahead of our vehicle a giant black rhino walks out of the brush and onto the road. Once there, it stops and turns its head toward us. And then it walks away.

We start the vehicle and head back to camp. Once there, we clean up and gather in lawn chairs around a fire to share stories and to get to know one another. The cool evening air, dark skies, and blazing fire provide a perfect conclusion to the day.

The other guests are from London, Mumbai, and Hong Kong. The conversation is lively.

While we wait for dinner, a new couple from Melbourne joins our group. Both are in their 80s and expatriated from South Africa "to give our kids opportunities for a better life." He was active in South Africa's progressive movement leading up to the abolishment of apartheid.



Around the Fire

After the introduction, the conversation turns to Australian football, personal interests, and sightings of the day. Before long we were called to dinner.

4: PASSPORTS IN HIS UNDERPANTS



Roadside Lion

We were heartened to see this magnificent male lounging in the high grass on our second day at Nairobi National Park. And, we were tickled to watch the old fellow use his hind leg to scratch his ear.



Satisfying an Itch

We spotted him on the afternoon of our second and last day at Nairobi National Park. The next day, we would head by bush plane to the Porini Amboseli Camp in the Selenkay Conservancy.

A 5:45 a.m. departure was set to get us to the Wilson Airport in Nairobi in time for our early morning flight. It was while making these connections that we got to know the Aussie couple who joined us around the fire pit the night before.

He, at 84, was a retired barrister and businessman with an engaging conversational style that was peppered with pointed questions and good humor. He was an ardent fan of Aussie football and wore a baseball cap that had an Australian flag on the back. His intensity reminded me of eager students I had as law school classmates.

He and his wife were a comfortable pair but not well organized, as we learned on our flight to the Selenkay Conservancy. They were late and not certain about where they were going.



View from our Bush Plane

Outside the entrance to Wilson Airport he even disappeared for a while causing concern within the group. Was he lost? Would he return in time?

About ten minutes later he returned, passports in hand. It turns out, he confessed quietly, that he left to find a private place to retrieve his passports from his underpants.

As with all our travel, we were escorted by our outfitter's representatives from the camp until we were on our plane, a twin prop with twelve passenger seats. The flight to our next camp was uneventful and flew low enough to let us take in the scenery below.

We landed on a grass field near the Amboseli Camp in the Selenkay Conservancy less than 90 minutes after we took off. Our spotter and driver were waiting for us with an open-air Land Rover.



Nanny Giraffe and Young

After getting off the plane and learning our Aussie friends were headed, unbeknown to them, in a separate vehicle for a different camp, we unpacked our cameras and hopped into our vehicle for the drive to our camp.

We did not have to go far before we came to a full stop. Less than 50 yards from the landing strip, we found ourselves surrounded by a

tower of Maasai giraffe, more than a dozen spread out among the trees and brush before us.

It was breathtaking. There were dozens of these giants close and busy feeding in the upper reaches of the trees around us.

Our guides took us off road into the bush to get closer and we learned a critical difference between a conservancy and a national park. In the parks you stay on the roads but in conservancies you can go wherever your vehicle will take you.



Moving Maasai Giraffe

We stayed and soaked in the novelty of our situation. Blue skies, cool weather, and a most unusual nursery filled our senses. We watched adults grazing to our left while the young giraffes grazed together separately under the watchful eye of a single adult.

When the young moved, they loped ahead in a hurry to get to the next tree. The adults were more patient, grooming the trees as they walked from place to place.

We arrived at our camp before noon and were shown to our tents. After lunch we had our first hot afternoon while we rested in our tent. It was not Georgia summer hot but something in the 8os.

By 4:00 it was already cooling down. Our driver Julius and spotter Daniel, both Maasai, led us out into the conservancy in our open Land Rover. Our companions were an English schoolteacher who worked in a private school in Nairobi and a young married couple from Sydney. She was originally from Hungary and he from Brazil.



Amboseli Camp Accommodations

This afternoon's drive culminated with a visit to a waterhole full of elephants. Next to the waterhole was a raised platform for viewing.

We would spend the better part of an hour here watching the elephants and participating in our first sun downer, a safari tradition where you stop in the wild to watch the sun set and enjoy refreshments.

There were at least 20 elephants around the waterhole although it was hard to count because they came and went in small groups. They drank and splashed and rolled in the mud. The mothers interacted tenderly with the young and, of course, the young played.



Waterhole Gathering

The elephants monopolized the waterhole, paying close attention to approaching zebras and warthogs and running them off when they got close.

They did not seem the least bit disturbed by our presence. One adult male would stop and stare at the platform from time-to-time but most of the others paid us no attention.

The exception was a young male who seemed to delight in our attention. He would toss dust over his head and then run from the waterhole toward the platform. Before getting close, however, he would prance back to the herd.

For the most part, we were ignored while they bathed and interacted with one another. Adults wrapped trunks with one another and with their young. The young played and experimented with their trunks, frequently resting them on the backs of another.



Elephant Interaction



Mother and Child

We were witnessing the interactions of a close and tender family. This was our first encounter with elephants in the wild and, already, we were beginning to understand why they are so revered.



Prepping for a Mock Charge

WHAT'S NEXT IN PASSPORTS!

5: Night Lions and Amboseli

Out in the dark, gerenuks, an ostrich battle, and elephants march to a marsh.

6: Sleep Walking Giants

A surprising discovery, elephant abundance, and marshland birds.

7: Pooh on You

Four male lions, a waterhole transfer and a surprising rebuke.

8: Lion Roars and Bug Bites

Night fears, giraffes, weaver birds and a Maasai life lesson.

9: The Maasai

Our Maasai hosts, their village and a rapidly changing world.

10: On the Move

A bush plane flight to Ol Pejeta, an elephant attack and Rhino Camp.

11: Crash in the Grass

Rhinos in the bush and grass, an odd moment for a cape buffalo and joy for a baby rhino.

12: Sundowner Surprise

What you do when a pride of lions watch you standing in the grass?

13: Stalag Panzee

A chimpanzee center, black rhinos in the bush and reticulated giraffes on a rise.

14: Bump in the Night

Cape buffalo in camp at night, elands, secretary birds and pregnant zebras.

15: Dry Season Showers

A hard rain and a cool afternoon watching the activity at the camp waterhole.

16: How Many Wives Would You Like?

A guest gets answers to a question as we pass elephants and cheetahs on our ride to Lion Camp.

17: Distracting His Highness

The girls get to eat, but only after exhausting their male lion.

18: How to Eat a Tree

Imagine you are an elephant. How would you eat a tree or learn to use your trunk?

19: Hunting with Children

Spend quality time with a female cheetah and her cubs as they hunt for dinner.

20: Blue Jean Symphony

Blue-haunched topi, a dance for dominance and a satiated lion.

21: African Nights

Hippos and lions and elephants in the dark of night bring new meaning to an intimate safari experience.

22: Dinosaurs on the Wing

Dinosaurs are not extinct; they just took wing. See more dinosaurs here than anywhere on earth.

23: The Crossing

Take a full day to experience the Great Wildebeest Crossing, the buildup, the race and a kill.

24: Hippopotami for Breakfast

A pod of 3,000-pound hippos and a large crocodile cavort while we take in breakfast.

25: Joy and Sorrow

Just feet apart and with us between, a hyena and a baboon experience the best and worst of childbirth.

26: Searching for Figlet

Search with us and find the elusive leopard near a brush-covered river.

27: Sea of Grass

Celebrate five million square miles of grassland and an amazing diversity of life.

28: African Twilight

An ancient male lion and his companion search for their pride as evening falls on the African plain.

29: Under Foot

Living life in the moment with cheetahs, lions and more in the grass.

30: The Trip Home

A day in Nairobi pre-flight and a haunting drive-by of the largest urban slum in Africa.

After Words:

Elephants and English

A sign near a bridge raises interesting questions.

Plan Your Trip

Help in planning your safari in Kenya.

About the Images

How we captured our images.

Order your Kindle ebook copy from Amazon.com.

AUTHOR & PHOTOGRAPHER

Clinton Richardson is a husband, father, and grandfather who enjoys travel and photography.

A retired business attorney, Clinton is the author and photographer of <u>Ancient Selfies</u>, a 2017 International Book Awards Finalist and the 2018 eLit Awards Gold Medal Winner in History. *Ancient Selfies* uses ancient coins to illustrate a first-person history of the Persian, Carthaginian, Greek, Roman, and Celtic leaders who created Western civilization.

Clinton has also written successful business books including the *Venture Magazine Complete Guide to Venture Capital* (1987, out of print) and the critically acclaimed *Growth Company Guide* series, now in its 5th edition. Both titles help entrepreneurs succeed in fundraising.

Passports in His Underpants is Clinton's first travel book. Portions have appeared earlier in Clinton's Venture Moola photo blog, available to all at readjanus.com/venture-moola. The Venture Moola Safari Series also appeared online at www.porini.com, the website of Gamewatchers Safaris

