



Time, People, and Adventures: South Africa From My Perspective

By Ryan O'Neal | September 4, 2012

Time. As I stood watching the sunset during my last night in South Africa, I remember thinking, "this moment had to come at some point." My journey had ended but my life had been changed. Who we are is a reflection of the experiences had in life. The medical internship, the people I met, my travels, and the adventures I took all helped in the continuous shaping of the person I want to become.



My first week at G.F. Jooste was a bit lucky. I was placed in the Orthopedic clinic and was set to observe Dr. John Rowe, the lead consultant of the department. Dr. Rowe was energetic and loved teaching to those who aspired to become a surgeon. However, he believed that one without any previous knowledge wouldn't be able to keep up with him. Due to my experiences with anatomy and orthopedics, I had found a teacher who I could really flourish under. I knew where I wanted to be and who I wanted to spend my time with, so I made the most of my personal experience and staying in orthopedics throughout the duration of my internship. I was able to bounce questions off of him and quite frequently he would ask "what do you think is wrong?" He taught me the basics of diagnosing an orthopedic injury and how to go about fixing what was wrong. He allowed me into the operating theatre to observe surgery. The medical exposure I received was invaluable. However, the people in the clinic are the first thing that comes to mind when I reminisce about the clinic. Not only was Dr. Rowe influential, but Karhat and Carl, two orthopedic registrars, Semina and Ross, the two orthopedic interns, Mitchell, the P.O.P. technician, and Mary and Fazlin, the nurses in the clinic. I remember them and how they were the ones to make my experience because they were truly wonderful people.

People. I feel I learned an abundant amount about people in general while in South Africa. Not only did I live with a Zulu family that consisted of a single mother and her two children, I had the chance to live with an eccentric "coloured" family, a socially acceptable term in South Africa for a group of people who were not considered white, black, or



Indian. I also interacted with copious numbers of patients on a daily basis as well as people from all over the United States who were also interning in Cape Town. Extreme is seen every day in South Africa: poverty, wealth, scenery, people are all adjectives of extreme that I saw on a daily basis. For example, G.F. Jooste has one of the highest incidence of stab rates know and often are not from knives but rather household items such as screwdrivers.

Cape Town, South Africa is one of the most beautiful cities that you can imagine. My days were spent at the clinic but I was lucky enough to spend my free time with great people. My roommate Brook and I had many adventures together. We spent a lot of time exploring the city and doing things with the rest of the CFHI interns. One such example is going to a burger joint that was formerly a garage in downtown called the Dogs Bullocks. They served enormous burgers that were simply mouth watering. Hiking was



a must when you are in Cape Town and we did it often. Table Mountain is unforgettable; anywhere in the city you have a spectacular view of the mountain. We hiked nearly every route imaginable. Platteklip, Skeletons Gorge, Lions Head, and Nursery Ravine were all amazing with breathtaking views and scenic paths. We also visited many of the great beaches in the area. One of my favorite views was eating dinner in Camps Bay. We parked and walked toward the street with the restaurant, I will never forget the sun setting over the Atlantic Ocean and behind me I turned in astonishment to find a wonderful view of Table Mountain.

Adventures. I was fortunate enough to end my journey by traveling the country from Cape Town to Durban along the coast with another intern, Brook. I saw many hidden gems through out the country that gave me a greater appreciation of the country. One of my favorite places was coffee bay. The hostel we stayed at was right next to the ocean and had spectacular views. It was refreshing to schedule and travel on our own and meet friends that I still stay in contact with today. Add this to the many exploits I did while in Cape Town such as going to the wine lands in Stellenbosch, going to the Cape of Good Hope, which is the most south western part of Africa. Long Street was memorable and I enjoyed meeting new people and having a relaxing time there.

All in all this was a life changing experience that I will never forget. It will help catapult me into my future life endeavors and I will always cherish the events that made this adventure unforgettable.