

*Diary of a Tanzanian Safari*



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## **Diary of a Tanzanian Safari**

September 11, 2001 will be remembered by all Americans as the terrible day terrorists attacked the United States, killing thousands of innocent people, outraging the civilized world, leading to a full alert of the U.S. military, and bringing the country into a rare state of horror, sadness, anger, and rekindled patriotism. It was also the day the FAA cancelled all air flights in, out, and within the country. It was also the day I was scheduled to leave for Tanzania for a sixteen day safari in search of lion, an event I had been planning actively for months and dreaming about much of a lifetime.

The events of the eleventh were worse, by far, than a series of disturbing personal events that popped up a few days before my scheduled departure: our TICAM budget was drastically cut, our PET 2 research projects were put in doubt, and a few other unpleasanties. A pessimist would easily conclude that luck was against him; with all of this bad fortune, with worldwide unrest and with plans to travel to a country in which serious hostilities toward Americans had recently occurred, it was easy to conclude that this was a time to cancel everything and try again another year.

I must admit, my spirits on the eleventh, and thereafter for a few days, were very low. The excitement and anticipation of the adventure before me had waned, and on more than one instance, I thought that cancellation would be the smart thing to do.

But I am not a pessimist. I believe that, like the stock market, things eventually even out and improve. Like the stock market, one never knows when this will happen, but it does. So I figured that good luck was well overdue. So I decided to go, six days later, on September 17, when the first overseas flights were available.

There were other dues to pay. I could no longer get connections leaving Austin and I had to rent a car, drive to Houston, and fly out the next day on a KLM flight to Amsterdam. I could have postponed the trip another month or two without losing my substantial deposit, but then the rainy seasons engulf Tanzania and hunting is difficult if not impossible. Besides, I was not getting any younger.

I got to the airport terminal seven hours early, with heavy luggage and waited for the word that the flight would indeed leave on time. I spent many hours on the phone talking to Lorraine Sanchez, Jay Boisseau, Larry Faulkner and others about problems and obligations I was temporarily leaving behind.

I was then to receive my first shocker: I was told by a KLM ticket clerk that I could not take my guns aboard the flight: a new KLM regulation. After this shocking news, I was told no, it's okay to bring guns through Amsterdam, provided their final destination was not the Netherlands and, oh yes, you cannot bring your guns back from Africa via Amsterdam. My response was, "Okay, I'll leave them or take my chances; I'm going onward". Then they (KLM) had to weigh my ammunition: no more than five kilograms allowed, all in original boxes. I passed this test with well over 140 rounds of 375 H and H Magnum and 300 Winchester Magnum and think that I had secret help from a very nice KLM ticket agent named Jeane. Anyway, lose my precious guns or not, I was going.

I passed through Security without much trouble and eventually met in the departure lounge two other Texas hunters on their way to Tanzania: Pierce McGrath, around 65, from

San Antonio, and his son Hunter, from Dallas. Both were in the real estate mortgage business. We hit it off well immediately and swapped a few hunting stories before boarding the Boeing 747-40 right on schedule. In Amsterdam, I would meet another hunter, Branko Turkovich, from New Jersey, who was supposed to share the cost of an airplane to fly into the hunting area with me. Pierce and Hunter were going after cape buffalo in the Selous Game Preserve on a ten-day hunt. Branko was off to somewhere after lion and other game, but I didn't know where.

Finally, after days of uncertainty, hours of apprehension, hours of waiting, and months of preparation, the big plane lifted off the runway at around 4:00 p.m., off to Amsterdam and then to the dark continent of Africa and to the country of Tanzania.



*Africa - Tanzania*

**T**he country of Tanzania is located in eastern equatorial Africa, below the equator, its eastern boundary being coastline bordering the Indian Ocean. In 1880, Germany purchased the continental part of the country from the Sultan of Zanzibar for L200, 000 and it became known as German East Africa. It bordered British East Africa to its north. After

World War I, the country came under British rule and was called Tanganyika. In 1961, it was given its independence as part of the Commonwealth. On December 11, 1963, Zanzibar became independent as well, but one day later the sultan was disposed. On April 26, 1964, Tanganyika, together with the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba off its east coast, became the United Republic of Tanzania.

The 1960's being the peak of the cold war, Tanzania became a target for influence by China and the Soviet Union. A socialist system of government, very left leaning for some time, emerged. Today there is only very slow progress towards a more democratic system and old socialists seem still in control.

Tanzania covers a land area of 375,000 square miles, making it over one and a half times the size of Texas. It borders Kenya to the north, Mozambique to the south, and its western border touches Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, and Malawi. Major cities are Dar Es Salaam, a city of over two million, on its eastern coast, and Arusha, with a population of around one million, located in northern Tanzania near Mount Kilimanjaro.

Tanzania is the quintessential safari hunting country in the world. Within its borders are Mount Kilimanjaro, the great Ngorongoro Crater, the Serengeti Plain and National Park, and the Selous Game Preserve. Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika share waters with Tanzania and neighboring countries. It is the area of Africa made famous by the writings of Hemingway, Ruark, and others. Today wildlife still abounds, with large populations of plains antelope, elephant, lion, and leopard. Black rhino can be found in the protected national parks. Poaching, however, remains a serious problem. The Tanzania government has instituted a vigorous program of game management, conservation, and "anti-poaching". Up to 250 leopards can be legally taken per year in Tanzania, and many more lions, attesting to the fact that the population of big cats is stable and, for the present, under control. Big game hunting provides an important source of revenue to the country. One thing is certain: were it not for managed big game hunting, and the conservation practices it brings, the wonderful wildlife resource of Tanzania would have little hope of survival.

In recent times, Tanzania and its neighbors have experienced much violence, crime, and human conflict. In 1998, terrorists bombed the American embassy in Dar Es Salaam, killing 12 Americans, and over 200 Tanzanians. In the October 2000 riots in Zanzibar, around 30 people were killed in protests over the results of elections, which some say were won fraudulently as usual, blaming the self-styled "Revolutionary" CCM party that has controlled the country since it was established in 1964. In Rwanda and Burundi, bordering Tanzania on the southwest, wholesale tribal wars have occurred in the late 1990's, resulting in the death of over 500,000 people and causing hundreds of thousands of refugees to flee to Zaire, Zambia, and Tanzania for their safety.

It is dangerous to drive the rural roads of Tanzania at night. Many areas are roamed by gangs of bandits, who set up roadblocks to stop motorists, whom they rob, beat with clubs and hack with machetes. A man and woman from Austin were attacked in such an ambush last year. The woman died, but the man, while injured, survived. If one is injured in the bush, or taken ill, evacuation to a hospital or clinic is difficult, sometimes taking days. If one is evacuated to the better African hospitals in South Africa, the evacuation costs can run \$60,000 or more.

Most of the better known serious diseases of mankind occur in Tanzania and many others not so well known occur as well: cholera, yellow fever, typhoid, typhus, malaria, hepatitis, polio, plague, diphtheria, tetanus, as well as black lung disease, river blindness, and

many more. High incidences of HIV and AIDS exist. Before leaving for this trip, I was vaccinated against yellow fever, hepatitis, polio, typhoid, tetanus, and diphtheria and began a regimen of pills to avoid malaria. Visitors are advised to drink only bottled water and to avoid open market food and fruit provided by rural sources.

As noted earlier, Tanzania is home for all of the Big Five of Africa's most dangerous game: black rhino, cape buffalo, elephant, leopard, and lion. Large crocodiles and hippos are found there as well, the hippos accounting for more human deaths annually in Africa than any of the Big Five and of crocs as well. Since the beginning of hunting season this year, July 1, 2001, I am told that 5 people have been killed in Tanzania by elephants alone, generally while coming close to a watering hole at night. Tanzania is also home to some of the most deadly poisonous snakes in the world: black mamba, black cobra, spitting cobra, boomslang, and puff adder. Without immediate application of aggressive anti-venom treatments, bites by these creatures are almost always fatal.

With these conditions prevailing in Tanzania, it is easy to understand why my wife helped me get my Last Will and Testament in order and my life insurance paid up before departing on this trip.

**I** arrived in Amsterdam 20 minutes early and worked my way to the gate of the flight to Dar Es Salaam. I met Pierce and Hunter McGrath there again and, as we were boarding, Branko Turkovich came up and introduced himself. I also discovered we were in for an intermediate stop in Kilimanjaro next to Arusha; let's hope it's not too dark to see the famous peak.

Around eight and a half hours after leaving Amsterdam we arrived at Kilimanjaro, the airport a few miles from Arusha and next to the great mountain. I can't see anything; it's pitch black outside. We stayed there 45 minutes and then flew to Dar Es Salaam, another 45 minutes away.

I arrived at Dar Es Salaam around thirty minutes ahead of schedule. The airport is spartan with a high-roofed canopy of shells in the shape of flower-like fluted-inverted cones. I went through customs with Branko, Pierce, and Hunter. It was fairly easy: they inspected my guns and then literally counted my ammunition. I had probably overdone it: carrying 189 rounds of 375 H and H and 300 Winchester Magnum – "nine too many". So they kept nine rounds. What they will do with them God knows. I was met by a representative of Usungu Safaris and a driver of a jeep land rover, who loaded my luggage and Branko's and whisked us off to the hotel.

Dar appeared dark and dirty, though I've seen much worse; people in front of stores asleep on the sidewalk, little fires outside houses with people milling around, very few stoplights or streetlights. Our vehicle was stopped by police a block from the hotel and questioned. Our driver seemed terrified; we progressed onward and arrived at the hotel, The Royal Palm, a really nice beautiful four-star (maybe five) hotel, an oasis in the middle of primitive Dar. Branko and I checked in, had a snack at a fancy bar, and finally retired to our rooms at around midnight around 57 hours after awakening Sunday morning in Austin and beginning this journey. I flicked on the television set in my room for a minute to see what was on in Africa and got the Jerry Springer show. I was happy to see that the highest levels of U.S. culture are being exported to Africa.

Wednesday morning Branko and I met for breakfast in the hotel restaurant, a fancy buffet with exotic juices and a woman preparing eggs to the specification of each diner. While eating, we were approached by a man who had overheard us talking about hunting, who introduced himself as Philip Dubois from Florida. Dubois had been in Tanzania since June, and he hunted there each year. He was obviously a wealthy man who spent much of his time and money in pursuit of big game. He was approximately 60-63 years old. He quickly got into where Branko and I were to hunt, and to my joy, confirmed that Lwafi Game Preserve, my destination, had plenty of lions and leopards. Dubois has hunted worldwide, killed a big elephant in Tanzania last year, and regularly spends several months each year big game hunting. His business? He operates a plant nursery in Florida.



*Dubois and Turkovich*



*Ahmin and Oden*

We were picked up at the hotel and transported to what was called Terminal 2 of the Dar Es Salaam airport, mostly single or double engine privately owned planes. There I met Ahmin, the owner of a private air shuttle located in Zanzibar, the beautiful island off the coast of Tanzania. He informed me that instead of the \$1950 one-way fare quoted, my fare to the Lwafi Preserve would be \$2,510! Why? Because Branko's flight was to an intermediate destination and therefore, instead of half the fare, I should pay my share in portion to the miles I traveled, which were substantial.

I said "Fine – but you cannot pull this on me now. You quoted me a price, stick to it." Branko only commented that he had not been quoted a price. I was adamant, Ahmin was rigid. We finally struck a compromise, mostly in his favor, and I coughed up \$2,200 for my one-way fare to the hunting site.



*Oden at Dar Es Salaam*

We took off at 11:57 a.m. Wednesday September 19, and were in the air eight-ten minutes when the plane turned back and re-landed at Dar Es Salaam. Why? The attendant had left the cap to the gas tank half off. We landed, Ahmin cursed him out, screwed on the cap, and we left again.

Two hours later we dropped Branko off at a remote landing strip in the bush. He was met by his P.H. (Professional Hunter) and staff and we said goodbye. While refueling at the

landing site at which Branko was picked up, Ahmin complained openly about the cost and scarcity of gasoline for his airplane. The supply is controlled by a single, government-approved supplier, who keeps the price up and makes refueling inconvenient.

“They need competition,” I said, “nothing better to control prices and make products more readily available.”

“Yes, competition, that’s what we need,” he said. I mulled to myself, “No one needs competition more than you, Mr. Ahmin.”

Another hour and a half flight brought us to the little town of Sumbawanga, where we landed and were met by a driver of a land rover of the safari company. It was around 3:30 p.m.

Ahmin then turned to me and said, “Give me a couple of days notice and I will come and pick you up and fly you back to Dar Es Salaam; \$3,450 cash.”

“I think I’ll drive,” I said.

Ahmin replied, “Okay, but you know there are gangsters on these roads.”

I thought to myself, “Yes, and gangsters in the air as well.”

All the time, Paul Horsley, my guide, had been flying as co-pilot from Dar and was helping refuel the plane when we landed. I then learned we had an additional two-three hours of driving on backbreaking dirt roads to the hunting camp, Paul driving.

I should add that along the way to Sumbawanga we crossed the giant Lake Rukwa: it is enormous, and took a good five minutes to cross it in the airplane.



*Sumbawanga Airport*

Paul drove us countless miles (actually 100-120) down red, dusty roads, covered with people carrying various goods (charcoal, sugar cane, onions, beans) to various little auctions (markets) along the road. Paul is around 35; his pale skin belies his mixed ancestry. His father was English, his mother Tanzanian, coming from the Southern part of the country, near the border of Mozambique. His father, who died ten years ago, was also a P.H. He was born in Arusha, is married and has a three-year old boy. We were to become good friends in the days ahead.

I should record a couple of interesting things I observed on this bone-crunching, mind-numbing rumble down winding dusty roads. First, there was the strange event in Sumbawanga in which a uniformed police woman stopped our vehicle and made us wait 15 minutes until an important convoy, a parade of government vehicles with uniformed soldiers, came through town carrying a “torch,” symbolic of the great independence Tanzania acquired in 1961. It was then I was brought into sudden reality that I was, after all, in a very left leaning country that must keep its population at bay as much as possible. It seems that when independence was established in 1961 (independence of British rule), a torch was lit atop mount Kilimanjaro, and this symbolizes the independence of the nation. The problem is that the country, with big help from the former Soviet Union, took the opportunity to set up a communist regime, nationalize all farms and businesses, and essentially rob the new country of any chance of emerging from its lower echelon-third world status. The wonderful ‘torch’, which was a gas burner with a two-foot flame rising from it in the bed of a government truck, was not a symbol of freedom and independence but, according to Paul, a reminder that the government was watching its citizens and that all were expected to observe the law. No one applauded, no one cheered as the pitiful convoy came through town.



The second thing I should mention is the people and the countryside. The road was packed with people, many children under ten and women, wrapped in African robes with the high buckets, tubs, and other loads balanced delicately atop their heads. The better homes aside the road were rectangular mud brick structures with thatched roofs and others were grass huts with dirt floors. Dogs, chickens, goats, pigs, guineas, and cattle were crossing the road frequently.

I was struck by the large number of idle people sitting or standing by the road and doing nothing. Those that were active were transporting some sort of goods from one village to another along the road; charcoal, cane, plastic buckets, onions, etc.

Finally, around 6:30, more than six hours after I left Dar Es Salaam, we arrived at the Lwafi (“Lu-waffy”) Game Preserve, my hunting headquarters for the next couple of weeks. We drove into the area and I was aware that the terrain had suddenly changed from the mountains and sparsely-treed areas we have been traversing to a darker, wooded area with more primitive dirt roads, some covered with head-high grass.

We eventually found our hunting camp, and it was a wonder. By Tanzanian law, there can be no permanent hunting camps in the game preserves. So each year, the safari company having access to the site must completely dismantle their hunting camps and rebuild them from scratch into accommodations that can handle hunters comfortably for the entire hunting season. When we drove up to the remote camp, there were twelve people waiting on us, my camp staff: a cook, game scout, tracker, skinner, waiters, etc. All shook my hand and smiled broadly, knowing, I presume, that if I survived the hunt, they were due some tip, for which they seemed to be thanking me in advance most sincerely.



*The Mess Tent & Brie*



*The Kitchen*

The camp was something to behold: there hidden in thick forest and high grass, 1.5 kilometers from the main dirt road, was an enclave, surrounded by a thatched fence with a walkway built from an entrance gate connected a series of tents and other sites. One was my tent, two beds, table, bookcase, private shower (made possible by a water tank up above the roof, into which one of the staff poured five-ten gallons of heated water whenever I gave the word that I wanted a shower) and a private toilet (a hole in the ground under a toilet seat). There was a dining tent, with a serving area and dining tables, where our cook and waiter worked. Then there were tents for Paul and separate tents and grass huts for the other staff. There was also a little alcove close to the dining tent in which a pit for barbeque (or brie as it was called) was situated and there was always a fire there or smoldering remains of an earlier fire. Lights were on in each tent, driven by generators that were turned on by nightfall and shut down around 10:00 p.m. each night. One could then carry on using kerosene lamps or

flashlights. We had a good supper in the “mess tent”: cape buffalo steaks. A little tough, but tasty.

I went to bed at 10:30, but couldn't sleep. A hyena coughed outside the compound all night and with the help of a noisy owl kept me awake until 3:00 a.m. The hunt was to begin at daybreak.

I awoke at 6:00 a.m. It was pitch black. After breakfast in the mess tent (cereal, toast, coffee, fruit juice), we struck out on the first day of the hunt, six people in and on a very tough Nissan land rover, Paul and I in back on seats next to a bar from which one could shoot, and below it racks for the guns. The Game Scout, a government employee assigned to accompany us on the hunt, and Driver were in the cab, and behind us were the Tracker and the Game Spotter, six including Paul and me.

At first light, we began the serious business of sighting in my rifles. A paper target was set up 90 yards from the truck and I shot first my 375 H and H magnum and then the 300 Winchester Magnum. I was very disappointed in the 375 shooting Remington 300 grain Safari soft points: I scattered shots all over an orange circle nine inches in diameter; 300 grain solids were much better, two holes near the bull's-eye. But I was concerned. The 300 was dead-on: one hole in the center and I was ready to go. In my mind, however, was the bad performance of the 300-grain soft points; and I eventually went back to this problem and fixed it.

We drove through mountains and valleys and eventually came to a great Serengeti-like plain where we drove for several hours. We saw giraffe, reedbuck, roan and topi, stalking the roan and topi unsuccessfully and taking some photos of the rest. We trolled around for many miles, seeing warthog, klipspringers, some monkeys, but nothing suitable for lion bait.

We stopped to eat lunch around noon. My box lunch consisted of a tomato and cheese sandwich, a boiled egg, a piece of buffalo meat, and two thumb-sized bananas, plus a coke, bottled in Tanzania in an African-style coke bottle: long, graceful, 350 milliliters. Everyone then whipped out a face net and took a nap: everyone but me, who fought tsetse flies for almost three hours. Yes, I had bug repellent, even 95-percent Deet, which would take the paint off the truck, but every 10-15 minutes I would have to re-Deet myself or be carried away by the stinging swarms of flies.

We then set out for the Katavi National Park, which borders on the north border our hunting area, the Lwafi Game Preserve. Both are in the Southwestern part of Tanzania, around 45 miles from the great Lake Tanganyika. You can hunt in Lwafi but not Katavi, and our plan was to find and traverse some of the Southern border of Katavi touching or just inside Lwafi. It was a long, hot, bouncing, dusty drive.

We hit a stretch of public road, a red dirt one, and drove past a small truck parked along side the road on our left. In the bed of the truck was a woman giving birth to a baby. She was attended by two women both wrapped in bright purple robes. A fourth woman sat in the cab of the truck. Why they chose this place to deliver a baby is a mystery. Maybe they were transporting her elsewhere and the baby decided not to wait. I told Paul that she should name the baby “Toyota” in recognition of its birthplace. He said, “No, call it African Bush Baby”.

We entered a long primitive bush road that went many miles into an open savanna. After an hour or so, it was around 3:30-4:00 in the afternoon, we spotted a small herd of roan antelope in the distance, some 200-300 yards to our right and front (at around 1 o'clock). The

roan is a big handsome creature, tan with a black and white face marks and sweeping curved horns like a sable, but generally larger, tipping the scales at 350-500 pounds. We glassed them for ten minutes when a big bull appeared, out about 200-250 yards. Paul asked if I wanted to take a shot at him and I said, "Not particularly".

He then gave me three reasons to change my mind: 1) This was a real good one, 23-24 inch horns, maybe larger, a trophy-book animal; 2) we needed bait for the lion and roan was perfect; and 3) they are good to eat and we need camp meat. Reason 2 was enough. I squeezed off a shot with my 300 Win-Mag and he tumbled down like a sack of wet sand. After handshakes and photos, we loaded him in the truck. It required all six of us to do the job, as we weighed around 450 pounds. Oh yes, the horns? Twenty-six inches and nine-inch bases, a record book animal.

We then struck off for a special tree some 10-15 miles away, near a creek bank where we intended to hang the remains of the roan and leave it for a hungry and curious lion. The tree was classic: mostly bare, with stains of vulture droppings on it from previous hunts, and a ready-made blind to hide the hunters some 75 yards up a gentle-sloping hill. It smelled like old carrion. We caped the roan, took his head, cape and horns and put them into the truck, plus the liver and backstraps for camp meat. We partially disemboweled it and left the stinking grass that had been in its stomach on the trunk of the tree. We tied heavy ropes to the hind feet and, using the Nissan, pulled him high in the tree so that his forequarters were about six feet off the ground. We then covered most of him with freshly cut mopane branches and sat back and admired our work: a perfect set up. All we needed was a lion.

It took almost two hours of uncomfortable driving to get back to camp, secretly tucked away in a thick forest off the main Lwafi road. I took a shower, had a Jack Daniels, ate supper with Paul (we had roan steaks, as you might expect) and went to bed. It was cool, almost cold. I slept under a blanket until almost 6 a.m.

**T**he next day was Friday, September 21, the second hunting day. We drove in some highland plains from dawn until almost 11:00 and saw very little. We did spot three or four eland at a long distance, and could not locate them later. We also saw monkeys, baboons, duikers and a couple of klipspringers, but game was scarce.

We stopped once again, at my request, to sight in the rifles one more time. I decided to abandon the Remington 300 grain Safari loads; they simply didn't shoot well in my rifle. I tried two shots with the 375, one with 300-grain Federal solids and one with 270 Remington grain soft points. Both perfect at a target 75 yards away (one inch high). Then I drilled the bull's-eye with the 300 Win-Mag. My confidence returned and we carried on.

Our next objective was to check our bait, a site some 10-15 miles away. On the way two things of interest happened: 1) we came upon a porcupine in the road. It had been hit by a car and was injured, but still alive and very agitated. I took some pictures. Then one of the boys killed it with an axe. Why? It was mortally wounded anyway and, most importantly, it is considered a delicacy, so the unlucky porcupine was a combination of road kill and camp meat. 2) The second point of interest is that we took a short diversion into a beautiful shady valley to check a spot where leopard bait had been hung a month ago. It was eaten by a "very large" leopard, and would be a prime site for another bait, if we could find some game. This dark valley would become an important place later in the hunt.

We went on to the lion-bait site. Hyenas had come during the night and had eaten some of it (what they could reach hanging down from the tree), a very good sign. We drove on for a couple of miles and ate lunch under some huge shady trees near a grove of tall palm trees. Lunch? Mine was roan sandwiches, a boiled egg and two little bananas. Everyone took a nap but me; I sat in the truck behind the cab and wrote these words.

At around 3:00 p.m, we set out again looking for game. At exactly 3:44, we spotted a group of roan, all female. I shot one at 60 yards for leopard bait. We cut it in half for two leopard baits, one at the site mentioned earlier and another at a closer location.

We drove around six or eight miles and came to a ravine containing a stream, a creek, or better, a bayou. On the bank of this stream, we jumped a huge flock of guinea fowl, maybe 200 – and a warthog, which darted out of the place with tail at full mast.

To me the guinea is Africa's turkey. Like the turkey, it likes to roost in trees near water, preferably moving water; it can fly but prefers to run from its enemies; it has white breast meat, and, according to some, is good eating. These particular guineas were "good-eating" to a good-sized leopard, whose tracks and claw marks on a tree nearby suggested he tried to dine on guineas while they roosted near the stream each night. We hung half of the cow roan in the tree for bait and took off for the next bait site.

On the way we jumped a trophy-sized reed buck antelope, which I nailed with the 300, and now we had bait for three leopard settings.

We traveled to the site we visited earlier in the day where leopard bait had been hung the previous month. This was the place deep in a wooded area mentioned earlier, a "hollow", also near a stream, but mountainous and a little spooky. We hung the remaining half of the roan cow in a great gnarled tree there, and headed home about dark. We would hang the reed buck tomorrow.

We arrived at camp at around 7:30. I showered, changed clothes, chatted with Paul near the campfire, and ate a great dinner prepared by Smart, our wonderful cook, and, served by John, our smiling waiter. The meal: roan steaks – chicken fried, grits, rice, potatoes, biscuits, salad, and a crème brûlée for dessert, then to bed. Tomorrow, we revisited the savanna in hopes of getting one more lion bait.

Before retiring, I looked at the bookcase in my tent and there were all of the dirty clothes I had left in the morning, cleaned pressed and neatly folded. Boy, this is roughing it.



*Oden's Tent*



**S**aturday September 22: I am awake at 4:30. Every morning a camp helper brings a bowl of warm water and sets it on a little table outside my tent. There is a little mirror hanging above it. I wash my face, shave, and dry off there. Then up to the mess tent for breakfast. We are off well before first light. It is black as coal. The sky is overcast and the prediction is rain. It turns out this prediction was wrong, but it was overcast most of the day.

Our destination is the big savanna we visited the first hunting day in hopes of taking a zebra or a buffalo for lion bait. It is a long drive, 25 miles or more, through high hills and a few hairpin turns. We arrive at the destination before sunrise, it is just getting light.

What I call a savanna is really a flat plain a mile or two across and many miles long, stretching perhaps as far as Lake Rukwa. It is mostly grassland with trees spotted along its edges. Near its Southern end, small villages of grass huts with outdoor earth kilns are seen with many dirty little children playing or watching herds of goats and cattle. The woodland surrounding the valley consists of acacia, mopane, palm, marula, sausage trees, and an occasional mahogany in the higher levels. The acacia is, to me, the African equivalent of mesquite: both trees have nasty thorns, both grow in poor soil without much water, and when you cut one down, it grows right back if the roots survive -- at least the mesquite does, and I saw acacia sprouting from cut stumps. The marula is famous for its intoxicating fruit and the sausage tree dangles its absurd sausage looking gourds, slightly smaller than a football, high up in its green canopy. Higher up I see African violets sticking up out of the ground, their leaves nonexistent or invisible, so they appear to be dropped out of some mystical bouquet waiting to be blown away by the first breeze. Up close the terrain is an ugly, parched cracked earth, dried grass, brown thorn bush, intertwined by dusty paths of various animals.

In June, the local people, and especially the people planning for the arrival of hunting season, set fire to vast areas to clear it of the high grass -- often reaching ten feet high or more and an impenetrable thicket for humans to traverse. What was amazing to me was that no serious forest fires resulted from such burning. The grass simply burned away, the fire line stopping at various points when the density of the grass was insufficient to sustain the fire. The trees with their canopies high off the ground are virtually undamaged. Throughout Lwafi, one finds many areas of one or two thousand acres of burnt grass, with a healthy forest of mature trees interspersed. This grass burning appeared to be practiced over most of the country I saw, and one result was a constant smoky haze in the air that hung over everything. It would be eventually cleared away by the rains in November.

While in the savannah, I shot a young bull hartebeest for lion bait. We loaded him in the truck and began the long ride to check baits set the day before and to hang two new ones: the hartebeest for lion and the reedbuck for leopard. We visited all three baits, a chore that took around four hours. No luck, only hyena signs again at the lion bait. We hung the hartebeest for lion and then finally had our customary lunch and nap (or diary work for me), this time not beginning until nearly 1:30 p.m. The boys had taken the back straps out of the hartebeest. They made a makeshift grill out of rocks and branches, and grilled hartebeest steaks on the spot for lunch (I tried some, it was not completely cooked and a little stringy). There remained the task of hanging the reedbuck for leopard. The tsetse flies are a constant nuisance. I brought three little spray bottles of 95 percent Deet and a spray can of OFF. Both work, the Deet lasting sometimes as much as an hour, the OFF fifteen minutes, before a new application is necessary. The Deet is tough stuff. I smear it on my neck, ears, forehead and wrists and spray it around my socks. When I touch the truck with Deet on my hands, it literally takes the paint off. The bug repellent should be washed off every night. Still, one

always gets bitten. My arms are covered with fly bites, each a purple little circle slightly smaller than a penny. By the time they begin to disappear, two days later, they are the size of a half dollar. Am I making money?

We drove for another few hours toward another stream in a ravine that Paul knew about. Bouncing along in the bush, my rifles beat against the racks violently. I kept the magazines loaded with the chambers empty so I could be safe while driving, but could jack a round in if needed. We stopped several times to check tracks in the dusty road. One very important ritual that very much affects hunting strategy is to check for fresh tracks on the tire marks made the previous day. If present, the tracks, of course, reveal that the critter had been through since our last visit to the place. After a while, I could identify the tracks of lion, hyenas, leopard, elephant (easy) and a few other animals.

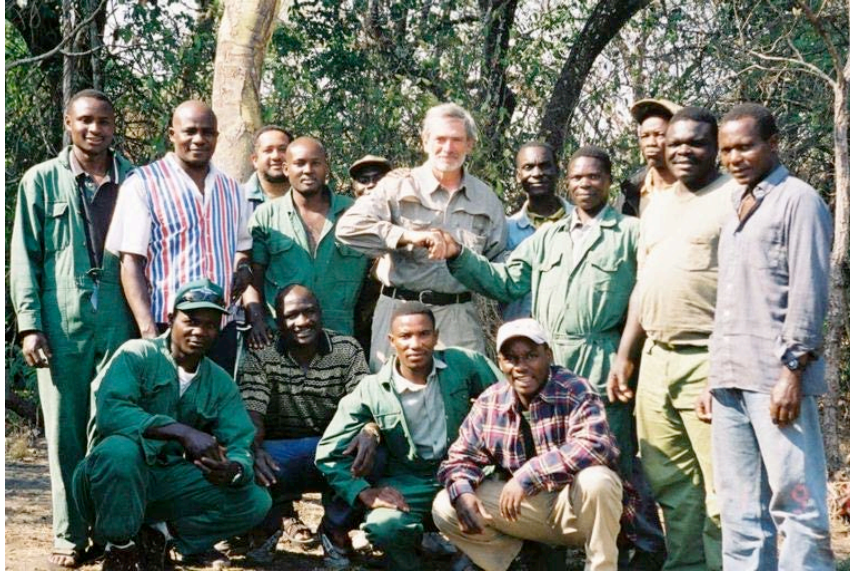
What's the difference between a lion bait setting and leopard bait? First of all, the lion bait is heavier, a full roan antelope or most of a zebra, so the lion will not finish it too quickly. It is hung high enough that the lion can barely reach it, and must stretch to full body length to touch the front quarters. The leopard bait is smaller and, since the leopard is a climber, it is hung high, above the reach of a lion or hyenas, generally on a straight limb sticking out from the tree, parallel to the ground or slanted upward at an angle that permits the leopard to stretch out and dine on the bait when it is hoisted up on the limb. When the leopard first visits the bait, he usually cannot reach it easily as it is hanging under the limb. The plan is to then attach the bait to the limb so that, upon returning, it can be accessed by the cat (or hang it so that the cat can hoist it up on the limb). When the leopard comes to the bait, it is fair to say he is "out on a limb". In either case, a blind is constructed near the bait as soon as it has been discovered by a lion or a leopard, generally 75 yards or less away from the bait.

For either lion or leopard baits, a canopy of green branches is placed on and above the bait so that it is difficult to detect by vultures cruising the area. This wouldn't work in Texas: the Texas black vulture (and, I think the turkey buzzard, too) hunt by smell: they can detect a few parts of carrion scent per billion in the air, and find dead animals with amazing quickness and accuracy. The African vulture, the whitish Nubian, is similar in size to the Texas variety, apparently hunts primarily by sight rather than smell, according to Paul; hence it pays to hide the bait from keen eyes up above.

We now have five baits in place after three days of hard work, three leopard and two lion. To travel from the first to the last is a trip through 15-20 miles of bush road. It took the coordinated help of a team of six people, including an acrobat who could climb trees like a monkey. The hunting team is:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| * Paul Horsley – Professional hunter  | * Lazerov – Tracker                                 |
| * Ludovic Lyowa – Game scout<br>(employed by the government game authority) | * Anthony – Tracker (monkey-like climber)           |
| Smart – Cook  | Mohammed – Tent Boy                                 |
| John – Waiter   | Joseph – Tent Boy                                   |
| Abuu – Skinner  | Godfrey, Hangel, Mg, Kapufi – General waiters/staff |
| * Lynn – Driver   | * Tinsley Oden – me, the hunter                     |

*\*The actual swat team in the bush*



*The Team*

We arrived at camp at 7:00 p.m., a record. I took the usual shower and then had an interesting conversation with Paul before dinner. Dinner was good: now my hartebeest steaks (actually quite good, much better than roan or buffalo). Paul told me of the rampant corruption in local government. All of the poor villagers who barely own a thatched hut are heavily taxed. Whenever one passes through a police barricade, which is often, you pay something (a bribe?), even if you just go fishing. The federal government is, apparently, not much better.

What about the rumors of armed bandits on the highways? Paul confirmed they are true. Don't travel at night – you will get robbed, and maybe killed with machetes. He was driving just behind a pirate attack on a rural highway some weeks earlier and spent the night in his parked car rather than driving further in the dark. The police do nothing except take a bribe now and then.

“What about snakes? Do you see any?” I asked Paul.

“Yes”, was the answer, “frequently (black mambas, black cobras, boomslangs, puff adders – all deadly).”

“And do you carry an anti-snake venom in the truck?” I asked.

“No”, Paul said. “If a black mamba bites you, you are dead anyway.”

I explained that that was not true: if treated quickly with a shot of anti-venom serum, one did have a chance of survival. He did not seem to believe me.

Many of these snakes live in the huge abandoned ant mounds one sees scattered about the bush. Squirrels and other rodents dig holes in the soft earth built around the anthill and snakes live there to benefit from a steady supply of rodent dinners. Of course, mongooses go in the holes after the snakes. Another animal that preys on snakes is, believe it or not, the baboon. A baboon will chase a black mamba into a hole in a tree or in an anthill and hold one of its furry hands at the entrance coaxing the snake to strike. When it does, the baboon will grab the snake behind the head with its other hand and bite it's head off, quickly, whereupon he will proceed to eat the whole snake: mamba sushi!

We were out at 6:30 on Sunday, September 23, to check our lion and leopard baits. We took a side trip to look for eland and saw a few cows. These are the Livingston elands, a beautiful subspecies of the largest antelope in the world.

We checked three baits: no luck. Then, with Paul's encouragement, I shot a young bull hartebeest "for camp meat"; thus far, camp meat had meant cape buffalo, roan, and a little hartebeest. The buffalo tastes like the tough, old, leathery oxen it is. The roan tastes like a mule with horns, which it looks like, but the hartebeest tastes like a graceful African antelope, which it is. Actually, it tastes remarkably like good tender beef. Whitetail venison may be better, but hartebeest is very, very good. I'll comment more on this later.

We checked bait four – nothing. Then, five hours after leaving camp, we finally made it to the fifth bait, a lion bait 10-12 miles off of the main road through Lwafi. To our disgust and disappointment, the vultures had found it and, with the help of a pack of hyenas, had pretty well messed the place up. The big white-gray Nubian vultures flew off to high trees a hundred yards or so from the bait and watched contemptuously as we inspected their work. I made a joke about shooting the critters and Paul brightened up immediately. Of course, they are protected, but with a game scout's permission, we could perhaps leave the carcass of one of these ugly birds in the bait tree as a warning to its other brethren to stay away. The game scout, Ludovic, cheerfully gave us permission to carry out this assassination attempt. I am beginning to like this guy, not that he had the authority to do such a thing. Now the challenge: Paul and I stalked into the brush in the direction of the sitting vultures. A few flew away. Two remained atop a naked tree 120 yards up a hill from us. I rested the 300 in a tree fork, held my breath, and touched off a round. Thump. He fell like a stone to the ground. Lazerov climbed the hill and brought him to the bait tree. He had a good six feet in wingspread.

Anthony looked at the big hole the 300 had made and said in Swahili, "Not much left to eat!"

Paul laughed and told him, "If you eat him, you'll die."

They cut his head off, for some unknown reason, and hoisted him into the bait tree, where they tied his feet to a limb so that his full length, hanging beside the bait, could be seen from afar. This done, we left the place, trekked on until around 12:30, and stopped to eat lunch and have the daily siesta, me writing some more of this diary.

Some time later I asked Paul why Lazerov had cut the head off of the Nubian vulture. "To make African viagra," he said. Apparently a secret potion can be made of vulture heads and/or warthog tail and the penises of impala, the purpose being to bring virility to aging men. According to Paul, "It works." Anyone care to gnaw on a vulture head?

It is hot and dry and game is scattered out over large areas. Yet, when I reflect on the last few days, I realize that we have seen many species of big game: roan, topi, reedbuck, hartebeest, giraffe (lots of them), warthog, baboon, monkey and a fleeting glimpse (by Anthony) of elephants disappearing over a far hill. The giraffe is Tanzania's national animal, like our bald eagle, and is protected. As a result, they are plentiful.

There are lots of elephant, but I had not seen them yet. They spend the day hiding deep in Katavi and mostly venture out for excursions in Lwafi only at night. But their spoor is everywhere, hundreds of trails, tracks, dung; they are there. To see a big tusker with heavy ivory would take a superhuman effort: camping in the bush near a trail and many days tracking through the bush. I actually had in my possession a permit to hunt elephant. The minimum shootable size is one with 44-pound tusks on each side and tusks 175 cm. long.



These are fairly hard to find. The issue was a theoretical one only: I did not intend to shoot an elephant, even if I saw one of legal size.

On the way back to camp, we had a flat tire and changed it to a slick Dunlap in minutes. Near camp we spot a trophy waterbuck and, a few minutes later, a trophy bushbuck. I pass on both.

We arrive at 7:07 – quite dark. Will I ever see the camp in daylight? The nightly pattern begins: met at truck by camp staff (valets), who carry everything to my tent. Hot water shower, clean clothes, whiskey, dinner (hartebeest steaks and trimmings), light conversation with Paul, and off to bed. I take a few minutes to write these lines. The generator is broken, so no electricity tonight. Everything is done by light of kerosene lamp. It's cool, 9:15 p.m., and time for shut-eye.

I awakened at 5:45, dressed, and took a malaria pill- my fourth, and a ritual I am supposed to do each Monday for six weeks. Two more to go. But I actually haven't even seen a mosquito yet. It's too dry here this time of year for them.

Little could I imagine what lay in store for me this day.

A quick breakfast and we were off before sun up to check the baits. An hours travel brought us to the number one leopard bait site-the spooky, shaded ravine mentioned earlier with the crooked tree on which we had hung half a roan. We stopped on the dusty road 400 yards from the baited tree. There in the dry sand were the unmistakable tracks of a huge leopard, which had slipped through the night before.

"He's a monster," Paul said, "a real old tom."

We had high expectations he had hit our bait, but to our surprise and disappointment, the bait was untouched.

"We can get him," Paul said, "we may need to get more bait, such as a warthog, and drag it through the area."

We left the place quietly, no one leaving the truck, and headed for our number-one lion bait, over an hour away, maybe two. On the way we spotted two warthogs, perhaps 80 yards to our left. Lynn backed the truck up slowly for me to get a shot, and the hogs jolted and ran. They stopped 100 yards out behind the thick brush and tall grass. I could make out a patch of rusty-colored hair through my riflescope, but did not shoot because I wasn't sure what I saw. Was it the hogs, what part of them was I actually seeing? Too late, they bolted again, disappeared in the brush, and then reappeared running at full speed 150 yards away across a little opening. Stupidly, I fired a shot in frustration or desperation, the shot tracing slightly high, and the game was over: warthogs 1, hunters 0, and no fresh leopard bait.

We progressed onward to lion bait number one, the one some 10-12 miles off the main road where I had adorned the Nubian vulture as a Christmas tree ornament the day before. When we finally arrived at the site, a few vultures were in the neighborhood, but the vulture- scarecrow seemed to have worked, at least partially. The hyenas had been here again, but no lion. The bait was "ripe", putrid with maggots literally pouring out of it. "Looks good," Paul said.

We backed the Nissan away and Paul, Ludovic, and I walked toward the little stream in the ravine some 250 yards away from the bait tree. Anthony carried a plastic gasoline can, which he expected to fill with water to put in the radiator of the truck if needed. Paul, ten

yards ahead of us, froze and held his hand up motioning us to back away. I didn't. I moved up closer to the ravine, looked down, and took in the absolutely mind boggling sight as a small herd of African elephants, their huge ears flared out like slate gray parachutes as they lumbered up the far side of the canyon. A dominant bull was on the bank across from us with two to three foot tusks on each side. Then, from down in the ravine near the pools of green water that were still present, came charging a tuskless young bull elephant, ears flared out like two black awnings and his head and trunk swinging rapidly from side to side. My swat team flushed like a covey of quail, racing as fast as they could back to the truck.

"You better get to the truck, Tin," Paul shouted, and I didn't hesitate to take his advice. Paul himself backed slowly away; we were completely unarmed, the rifles resting safely in the racks behind the cab of the truck. Then the bull stopped. It had been a feint charge, designed to make us keep our distance from the waterhole, and had worked. He turned, lumbered down into the ravine and up the other side and joined the rest of the herd, which had trotted to a hundred yards or so onward, away from us.

As we pulled away, everyone was understandably excited.

"Were the big bull's ivory any good?" I asked.

"No," Paul said, "He was a young one." It would have made no difference to me.

The elephants fiercely guard their water holes. Sometimes the hole, generally in a creek bottom, appears to be dry, but a few feet under the sandy surface water is still present. An educated elephant will dig a small hole three feet deep with its trunk and wait for it to gradually fill up with water seeping through the sandy soil. The elephant will drink from the hole and then carefully fill it back with sand to hide it from others, including other elephants. When humans stumble onto such watering holes at night or in the late evening, they are very much in danger of being attacked and sometimes killed by elephants protecting their treasured water supply. Paul informed me that five people had been killed in this way since the season opened on July 1.

We launched out toward lion bait number two, the hartebeest we had hung a couple of days earlier. It was still early, around 9:30, and we had at least ten miles to go to the next bait.

We moved slowly and quietly through a thicket of dead mapone sticking upward out of the rusty and burnt clay some 300 yards from the hill on which we had hung the antelope. This too was near water: down the hill another 300 yards was our second leopard bait, hung within 25 yards of a creek bottom with intermittent ponds of still green water.

As we approached the lion-tree, Lazerov said "Simba, Simba!" And Paul, nearly in shock, said "Simba: Tin, there's a lion. Shoot quick,"

I looked at the tree and there not ten feet from the bait, sat Mister Metro-Goldwin-Mayer himself, a huge black-maned King-of-Beasts, lazily looking at the landscape to our left and, I assume, prepared to leave in a hurry, probably down the hill side to the stream, but maybe our way instead when he finally detects our presence. He was around 70 yards away, sitting with his front paws stretched out in front of him, a slightly arrogant look on his face as if he were full and didn't want to be disturbed.



*Simba and the Swat Team*

I grabbed the 375, jacked a 270 grain soft point into the chamber, rested the stock on the crossbar, placed the cross hairs behind his left shoulder, took a deep breath, and squeezed the trigger. At the impact, he rolled over on his right side, clawed at the air, and began to get up and turn toward us for a possible charge. Wham, I shot him again in the engine room, and he rolled over flat on his right side, still clawing and still alive, but mortally wounded. On Paul's suggestion, I put a third one in him for security. We did not come close to him for a good ten minutes, and then very slowly and carefully.

We finally climbed out of the truck and approached him, Anthony touching his eyes with a stick to detect any remaining life signs. None. He had a black mane, beautiful coat, 450-500 pounds, 10 feet 2 inches long from his nose to the tip of his tail. We were jubilant. Lots of hand shaking and back slapping, and then picture taking-four cameras, two of them mine, taking pictures of me, Paul and others in various combinations with the great trophy. The old boy had come there early in the morning and had gorged himself on the hartebeest until we had arrived. The limbs we had draped above for bait had been dislodged and laid on the ground around the tree before Lazerov spotted him.

Paul said that this was by far the largest lion bagged here this year, maybe in several years, and that it represents the largest that are produced in this preserve.

There would be no more hunting today. We loaded him into the truck, no easy feat. Ludovic and Paul got underneath his shoulders, and Lynn climbed up on the bed and pulled the tail and hindquarters onto the tailgate, while the rest of us grabbed a handhold and heaved him in. We covered him with branches to keep the sun off and began our 40-50 mile journey back to camp, this time hitting 70 miles an hour in some stretches.



*Simba in camp*

Around 100 yards from camp, Lynn stopped the land rover and all got out but me. They each cut a long mopane branch, stuck branches in the grill and cab of the truck, and on the side panels. Then Ludovic climbed up next to me, on my left, with Paul on my right, all began chanting “Ameleta simba mkubwa, bombay-bombay” (“Have brought lion, big, decorate-decorate”), “Amelate – bombay-bombay”. This was the simba parade; the great bwana has arrived with the lion. The camp crew poured out of the thatched huts behind the camp waving mopane branches, dancing and shouting, chanting to Paul’s direction. When the vehicle stopped next to the skinning tent, they lifted me out of the truck, put me on a green folding chair, picked me up in the air and paraded me around camp, all the time laughing, dancing, and chanting.

Everyone wanted to shake my hand, touch me on the shoulder and say “congratulations” (those who spoke a little English) the merriment went on five to seven minutes, but it seemed like half an hour. Finally, they put me down, dragged the lion out of the truck, and eight men hoisted it over to a concrete slab, some 8 X 8 feet square, where they propped him up for more pictures. Everyone had to have his picture taken with the fallen beast. Finally, the excitement began to die down and Abuu, the expert skinner, came on the scene and began his work,

Paul and I left the staff to their work and walked to the dining area, the “mess tent” I have been calling it. John served lunch: spaghetti and hartebeest meat sauce with pineapples, bananas, and tangerines for dessert.

Afterwards, I loaded my camera and, for the first time, took a tour of the camp in daylight. I visited the actual cooking hut, met Smart the cook, took some snapshots, visited

Paul in his tent, went to see how the skinning was going (almost done) and took photos of a clothesline full of **hartebeest** jerky (“biltong”) drying in the sun outside a thatched hut in which some of the staff stayed. “Camp meat” was no understatement of the animal I had taken two days earlier.

I then went to my tent, wrote these words, and prepared to rest for the remainder of the day. Before returning, I did reflect on the few Swahili words I’ve picked up by trial and error. Here’s a sample:

- lion – simba (of course)
- leopard – chui
- hyena – fizi
- hunter – mwindaju
- left – kushota
- right – kilia
- backup – numa
- come – njoo
- slow down – polee polee
- straight away – mojak wamoja
- creek – korongo
- buffalo – nyati (or mbogo for a bad one)
- roan – korongo (same as creek)
- track (of an animal) – nyayo
- has (have) brought – ameleta
- big – mkubwa
- decorate – bombay

**I**t was Tuesday, September 25. We left camp at 6:45, after the standard breakfast. It was getting light, but the sun was not to rise for another 20 to 30 minutes.

An hour and fifteen minutes later, including a diversion of a few minutes when we tried unsuccessfully to track and get a shot at a group of bush pigs jumped in a swampy wooded area, we arrived at “spooky hollow”, the site of leopard bait number one. It was in a blond-colored gnarled tree that stood in a shallow ravine that cut through a wooded area within the shadow of a tree-covered hill that rose 1,000 feet above the valley floor, a half mile away. We held our breath as we slowly rolled up to the gnarled bait tree. A quiet giggle came from Anthony, and Paul smiled, “It’s been hit!” Sure enough, sometime during the 24 hours that had passed since we were last here, the big cat had pulled the 200-pound bait up on the limb from which it hung and had eaten a section of the hindquarter about the size of a ten-gallon Stetson. Whew! The place smelled of rotting meat, and flies were everywhere.

The next job was to make a blind, and this proved to be an amazing undertaking. First, Paul, Anthony and Lazerov scanned the area and located tracks that revealed the direction and path that the leopard had accessed and left the bait. Then, in a direction roughly perpendicular to the leopard path, Paul chose the site of the blind: atop a little mound, 44 yards from the bait, and next to a small mopane tree. With the tip of a machete, he marked off a rectangular floor plan, 8 feet by 6 feet, and positioned a folding chair in the corner from which I would presumably perform my sniping. He marked seven places for posts, the columns of the little hut, the mopane tree providing the eighth post at one corner position. Then the work began. Anthony began digging posts holes with the machete at the locations Paul had marked, Ludovic took an axe and went into the woodland to cut mopane posts and cross beams and Lazerov and Lynn took the truck to travel several miles to the other side of the hill to find tall grass for thatching the walls and to make a door to the hut-like blind.

The whole process took two hours, and the result was a marvel to behold: a perfect little 6 X 8 thatched hut with a thatched door and no windows, except two little peepholes that had been painstakingly thatched into the side of the blind facing the bait tree. Then the crew cut green mopane branches and stuck them in the thatched sidewalls. The final blind looked like a mopane bush with tall grass growing around it. Finally, we (Anthony, the acrobat) climbed back into the bait tree, re-secured the bait, and removed some branches that might deflect or obscure a shot from the blind. We left the site at around 10:20; very proud of the job done and with high hopes the big tom would return soon.



*The Blind*

Over the next three hours, we stalked unsuccessfully a group of baboons (fresh leopard bait) and a group of eland. We went on to check the last leopard bait, the one we missed yesterday and the one we used the reed buck carcass for bait, set two days earlier. Another surprise! It had been hit, too! But further investigation revealed that the “hit” was a small female and not worth the trouble of blind construction. We then sighted in the 375 again, an action I appreciated because the incessant bumping of the rifles in the gun racks had caused some screws to loosen and the point of impact to move a few inches. Then we followed our daily routine: stop for lunch, nap, write. The day wore on, the moment of truth awaiting us and the leopard of spooky hollow.

We left the area where we had lunch around 3:15 and arrived near the bait site a little before 5:00 p.m. Paul, Ludovic, and I were in the blind by 5:20 and Lazerov, Anthony and Lynn took the truck away to parts unknown to wait on our results. We waited and waited. Nothing. When it got so dark I couldn't see the cross hairs in my rifle scope, it was over for the day. Chui had won this one. We drove home somberly in the dark. A quick dinner of “range chicken” and rice, then I had a shower and was off to bed, a disappointing day behind me.

**W**ednesday, September 26, the seventh day of the hunt. Up at 5:30, breakfast, and off again, this time heading for the savannah valley in search of eland. Tonight we would try for chui again.

Not five minutes from camp, we jumped the same bunch of bush pigs we had seen the day before, running through grass and thick brush in a swampy wooded recess.

“Fresh leopard bait,” Paul said, and handed me the 300. I led one running out at 100 yards and rolled him with one shot. We drove up to the black ugly pig, long snout with tusks and a thatch of gray hair on its back. The remarkable similarity of this pig and the big black feral hogs I have shot on my ranch was evident. I am certain that our feral pigs, at least the ones we’ve been hunting over the last few years, are relatives of these bush brethren and not the European boar you hear about. This poor creature had been unlucky earlier: it had a wire snare wrapped tightly around its chest, the cruel reminder of poachers at work in the preserve.



*Bush Pig*



*Hanging the Bait*

With fresh leopard bait in hand, we abandoned the eland hunt and went straight to spooky hollow leopard bait, arriving around one hour and fifteen minutes later. We cut down the putrid roan quarters that were hanging there untouched during the night, and hung the pig in its place

Over the next four hours, we drove to each of the four remaining baits, all now essentially ruined in decay, and cut each down, leaving the grisly remains for the hyenas, the living garbage disposal units of the bush. At lion bait number one, we also cut down the hanging vulture, swinging in the mid-morning breeze. Lazerov took it and clipped off its long talons. Why? To make a necklace for his girlfriend. Romantic old fellow, this Lazerov. We actually left one bait hanging, as there was evidence it was still being visited by a smallish female leopard. Let her have another meal there.

We saw a fairly large herd of elephants out 200 yards from us, making a dusty retreat toward the mountains three miles or so in the distance. We also saw more roan, baboons, giraffe, reedbuck, warthog and duiker.

Our major spotter was Anthony. He truly has superhuman eyesight. I used to fancy myself a good game spotter, but I couldn’t hold a candle to Anthony. He frequently spotted game at great distances in thick brush that would take me and Paul minutes to find with the help of 10X binoculars. If 20/20 is normal vision and 20/15 exceptional, Anthony must have 20/10 or better. I mused at an imaginary scenario in which Anthony is at the eye clinic and

the doctor says, “Anthony, can you read the bottom line on the chart”. To which Anthony replies, “Sure boss, ‘Printed in U.S.A.’” (if he could speak and read English, which he cannot).

By 12:30 we made our way to the sandy bottom of a small dry stream, damp potholes here and there where elephant had been digging for water. The place was owned by a large colony of baboons, which objected noisily to our presence. We parked the truck, ate lunch, and the crew took naps while I jotted things in my diary. The baboons slowly came back to their waterhole and watched us cautiously at a distance of 60 yards.

With only one bait now active, it occurred to me that our chances of getting a leopard were diminishing quickly. Paul actually asked me if I was ready to end the hunt. My answer for the moment is “No, let’s go forward.” If the big bait is not hit tonight, we are in trouble and essentially must start the baiting process anew.

I ask Paul if he is getting discouraged, and he says, “No, I am encouraged!” This positive response gives me new energy for a while, but I fear we are putting all of our eggs in one basket.

We dragged pig intestines over a five-acre area at spooky hollow to bring the big guy in. Then we head home, arriving in camp before 6:00 p.m., a record.

I shower, change clothes, chat with Paul, and dine once again on hartebeest – still delicious. We are joined by a fellow named Sultani, a friend of Paul’s from the nearby village, who comes better dressed and with a more Western appearance than most around here. I had met him briefly the first night in camp and had asked him what he did. “Business” was his reply. “Hmm” was my response. Tonight, I extended my hand to shake his and was presented with his right wrist. Obviously he didn’t want to be touched by an infidel before eating. I shook his wrist. He looked like something between Bryant Gumble and Tony Dorsett. I didn’t trust him. He and Paul chatted in Swahili. I excused myself and went back to my tent before 8:30. Early to bed tonight. Early to rise in the morning.

**I**t was cold last night: rather, more chilly than cold, in the low sixties I would guess. I woke up with a headache, took a couple of Advil’s and went to the mess tent for breakfast. Paul was there, and a few minutes later Sultani entered and joined us at the table. He didn’t sit close to me, but catty-cornered off one corner close to Paul. The conversation was all Swahili. I left and went back to my tent. Sultani was here ostensibly to fix the generator, which he did not succeed in doing. We were to fall back on a secondary battery operated system tonight for a while.

We left camp at 6:20, Thursday, September 27, the eighth hunting day. We headed east, toward the main road, and then I saw again the awesome sight I had seen there the day before: the morning sun peeking over the horizon, magnified two or three times by the thick atmosphere, the rays cutting through the purple haze. As Peter Capstick said, the sun “hemorrhaged” in the African sky. It was a big blood-red ball with tinges of orange and yellow, with silhouettes of the flat acacia’s black against it.

We arrived on the main road and began our trek to the last remaining leopard bait, the one in spooky hollow, over an hour away. Paul and I chatted along the way, the formalities now long put aside and a more personal and friendly dialogue began to emerge. I asked Paul what his relation was to Usangu Safaris, the safari company that had arranged my hunt? He



informed me that he was a freelance Professional Hunter, under contract with Usangu, and hired on a daily basis. His compensation was \$150 per day plus meals, accommodations, travel expenses. Not much for the backbone of the operation. I booked a 16-day hunt. If I hunt only ten, he's out \$900. I offered to cover the difference, but he declined. Half the difference? No, he said, the terms of his contract were not my fault. Still I planned to compensate him in some way if I leave early. Paul also has to pay \$1000 per year for his P.H. license and many other types of taxes. He owns a 2000-acre farm near Arusha where he raises maize and other produce and also hunts for meat for his family. As a matter of fact, he killed a huge elephant on his farm last year as it raided his crops: 80 pounds of ivory a side. The government, of course, confiscated the tusks.

"This road," he told me, "was built for the country by China." I thought; what a wonderful gift by the benevolent Chinese: this pock-filled, pot-holed, dirt-gravel, one-lane, rutted excuse for a highway, a gift of one communist nation to a left leaning one, as an invitation, I presume, to join its circle of friends. Paul said that the Chinese foreman at the road construction had asked if he could bring them some lion or leopard meat? Paul obliged, and a few days later brought them the leg of a leopard killed on one of his safaris.

"They cooked it and ate it," Paul said in mild astonishment.

"Chinese viagra," I explained,

"Oh yeah," Paul said, now getting the picture.

**W**e traveled along the Chinese superhighway until we finally arrived at spooky hollow, around 8:00 a.m after a rather slow journey. We all were very anxious to see what had transpired overnight. Our faces dropped in unison: the bait, the big brush pig hanging there on the crooked limbs, had not been touched. There had been one visitor however: a very large hyena had come and ravaged the putrid remains of the roan carcass we had cut down the day before, and had strewn bones and gore around the area. Perhaps, King Chui didn't show up in disgust.

It was now decision time. Paul still said he was optimistic, but I could sense that defeat may be near. We had one viable bait, a very smart non-cooperative leopard, and a little time left to find and set another bait. Also, I was beginning to fret about possible crises back home. When I am away two days, something needing my attention invariably happens. With an absence of ten days now approaching, God knows what calamities have occurred. We decided to give it a couple of more days. If the bait is hit tonight, we have a chance of seeing King Chui tomorrow or the next night. In the meantime, we would hunt the mountains for klipspringer and the valleys and slopes for trophy eland, and, if we found signs of another big leopard, we would, if possible, set another bait. This would put my approximate time of departure of the camp on Sunday. All of this was still rough and imprecise. Much depended on King Chui.

We hunted all morning. One of our old leopard baits, now lying on the ground after we had cut it down the day before, had been visited by a small female leopard. We saw very little game, even after venturing into completely new territory. We did find the fresh tracks of another big leopard, but were unable to get bait for another set. We toiled on back to camp, spotting a duiker, two trophy bull hartebeests, and a trophy roan, no bait. We saw one

warthog, but it was a female with young. We arrived at camp at 1:40 p.m., had some leftovers for lunch, and retired to our tents for a snooze, and for me to jot down these words.

After some quiet time in my tent, I met Paul for coffee at the mess tent at 4:00.

“Get any sleep?” I asked.

“No” was the reply, “I found a snake in my tent as I was lying down. The boys killed it. I couldn’t sleep after that.” We couldn’t identify the species in an old incomplete book available in camp. Paul thought it was some kind of adder.

At 4:30, we met the rest of the swat team and began a long trek in search of eland. We saw very little game: a few roan at 600 yards and then around dusk, we jumped a boar warthog that was running full throttle at 70 yards, its tail straight up as it quickly expanded the distance between us in its tippey-toed gait. I grabbed the 300, chambered a round, dialed the score down to six power, and led the fleeing critter like I would morning dove on the opening day of dove season. And, like I often do while shooting doves on the opening day, shot behind him, maybe two inches. He literally high tailed it into the bush, thereby, putting the finishing touches on a rather disappointing day of hunting.

We arrived at camp at seven something. Shower, change clothes, meet Paul at the brie. Then to my surprise, two unexpected things happened: 1) John serves me a 0.5 liter bottle of Safari Lager, a very good beer brewed and bottled in Tanzania, and 2) Sultani arrives on the scene with his two and a half year old son Alfani, a real cutie. To my surprise, Sultani extends his hand and shakes mine, I am no longer an infidel and Alfani comes and sits in my lap. Maybe Sultani is okay after all. I take a few pictures and we move up to the mess tent (by now it should properly be called the dining area) and we are treated to a wonderful dinner of hartebeest shish kabobs and all the trimmings. I will now correct something I said earlier: there is no better meat than hartebeest. It is better than anything I recall eating, ever. If we could import a herd of hartebeest to Texas, the beef industry there would be in trouble.

Swahili conversation after dinner encourages me to retire early. I shake hands with Sultani again, to be sure he’ll do it, and with little Alfani, and bid everyone a goodnight.

**I**t is now Friday and our options are limited. At breakfast I discuss with Paul our strategies for the coming days. The immediate plan is to check the bush pig bait at spooky hollow. If it has been hit overnight, we will have a chance at King Chui. If not, the site is simply not working and it’s unlikely to produce a cat this trip. As a fall back plan, if we could get fresh bait we could hang it near a river bed we had crossed yesterday where Paul spotted the tracks of another large leopard. If neither baits are hit by tomorrow, the hunt is for all practical purposes over, as sufficient time would not remain to set new baits, assuming we could acquire them.

We launched out of camp at 6:40 and arrived at our remaining bait at around 8:00. It was untouched; King Chui had outsmarted us again. We now went to plan two: get bait for another site, if we saw a usable bait animal and I could bag it.

We set out for the area at which we had set the first lion bait some days ago, a good 10-12 miles of bush road away. We had seen warthog there on two occasions and considered it a good place to look for leopard bait. We approached the place after a drive of one and a half hours, and as we neared the stream that cuts through it, we spotted the elephant herd again at a distance of 250 yards from the truck. There was one baby frolicking around and

trumpeting loudly, an adolescent a few feet taller, and several big adults, including a couple with visible ivory. Still more were down in the ravine getting water. We watched them from afar for ten minutes or so and then slowly drove to the creek as the herd lazily climbed the bank and drifted away into the forest. When they began their departure, we were within 100 yards of the largest tusker.

We continued onward to the tree where we had hung the half of the big roan antelope, as our first bait; the place we had decorated with vulture carcass, and the very same place we had cut the bait down and left it on the ground the day before. There was virtually nothing left of the bait or the vulture under the tree, save one lonesome black and white feather, laying motionless under the bait tree. Hyenas had come during the night and had eaten everything; I mean everything: bones, skin, hair, maggots, rotting meat, the vulture, feathers, feet, and all. Never had I seen a more thorough and efficient garbage disposal system. Only the single feather remained and the tell-tale tracks of finzi, the hyena.



*The Wart Hog*

Five minutes later we were moving slowly through tall grass near the elephant stream and a big boar warthog raised his ugly snout up over a turret some 70 yards away. This time I did not shoot behind him. He went down with a single shot through the brisket, and now we had leopard bait to carry out plan 2.

We drove on for what seemed like two hours, arriving at the beautiful rock filled river bottom we had crossed the day before. There were deep pools of olive green and brown water, alive with small fish awaiting the November rains that would wash them into Lake Tanganyika. We stopped and rested and looked for tracks in the sand. Sure enough, this place was too perfect for there to be no cat sign: Paul and crew found fresh tracks of a big chui in the sand downstream from our cross point. We drove up to the path around 150 yards from the riverbed, beheaded the warthog (the crew wanted hogs head for dinner), cut its tail off and testicles (for Lazerov for reasons discussed earlier), and partially disemboweled it to maximize the spoor – the blood, bile, and intestines, as an attraction to chui. We then dragged what was left of the carcass behind the truck, back to the riverbed, and tied it high in a tree overhanging the water some 100 yards upstream of our crossing point. We now had two baits set and around 24 hours to wait for one of the chuis to hit one. In a lapse into

wishful thinking, we discussed what we would do if both were hit. Fat chance. We spent the next couple of hours on the riverbank, eating lunch and taking the daily siesta. I wrote these words.

We left the riverbed at 3:00 p.m. and got back to camp at 5:30. Paul jotted down my flight information and later that night radioed Arusha to get someone working on the flight plans for Monday. I gave him the original flight numbers and connections to Austin via Minneapolis from Amsterdam. If that were impossible, there was a flight from Amsterdam to Houston, but then my wife or someone would have to drive three hours to pick me up. "She drives?" Paul asked in astonishment. It was then that I realized the depths to which western man had fallen. Imagine: letting women drive!

After the usual hot shower and change of clothes, Paul and I sat by the fire outside the mess tent and chatted about the day. We then had supper: beef cube soup, hartebeest steak, rice, potatoes, beans, homemade bread, and Safari beer. Then while eating some fruit for dessert, Paul informed me that last year some remote tribes were found to have been in the practice of killing humans, skinning them, and mounting the skins as a taxidermist, this done by medicine men in some type of voodoo practices of black magic. This has been going on for some time. The police in the area, investigating a car accident, found that one person had a human brain in a sack, apparently carrying it to some secret black magic ceremony. Talk about full body mounts for your trophy room.

Paul asked me how many lions I wanted to kill in my lifetime. "One", I said, "and I've already done it." "And you?" I asked.

"Aside from those taken on safari, just one; I already killed it, too, but it was a man eater!"

He explained that in 1993, in a village around an hour's drive from his farm, a little duplex grass hut was the home of a family on one side of a clay wall (man, woman, and some children) and a bachelor friend on the other. The latter poor soul stepped outside one night to relieve himself and was snatched up in the jaws of a huge lion, who picked the hapless fellow up and carried him back into his dwelling where he killed him and began eating him to the horror of the folks in the neighboring room. The family finally worked their way out of the hut and sought refuge on the high roof of the structure. Screaming to the other villagers, the surviving man of the household instructed someone to get help, and hours later a representative of the village showed up at Paul's farm. Paul had no car at the farm. They waited several hours until one of Paul's brothers showed up in an automobile. It was dark by the time Paul arrived at the village with his 458 Winchester. The lion was still in the hut, sitting on top of the mangled remains of its former occupant. With the help of a spotlight, Paul peeked through openings in the thatched walls of the hut and saw the tail of the lion resting flat on the floor. He spotted its mane through another crack, and surmised where its body must be. Then he fired the big gun right where the chest would be, through the thatched grass. The lion bolted through the door and collapsed within ten feet of the hut. After police arrived and paperwork was done, they buried the remains of the poor fellow. The lion, it turned out, was old and sick and unable to survive on its usual fare of wild animals, so it resorted to easier human prey.

I woke up early, feeling great and ate a big breakfast, Saturday, September 29, the tenth day of the hunt. We left camp at the first peek of sunlight and approached spooky hollow an hour and a quarter later. On the dusty road above the hollow, we stopped to look for fresh tracks. Yes indeed, King Chui had been there during the night, his huge prints clearly visible in the red silty ruts of the road. This was a great sign, and our hopes were high that the bait had finally been hit.

To my joy, we soon discovered that the big bush pig bait had indeed been visited by the King. Huge chunks of flesh had been gnawed from the rump and pieces of skin and hair dangled limply in the morning air. But Paul was less enthusiastic. “He didn’t eat very much, and the bait is too old and rotten. I should have put a fresh bait here yesterday.”

He then informed me of some interesting observations. “This leopard circulates through his territory around every three to four days.” (It had been over three days ago when he first hit the roan bait.) “He may not be back here for another three or four days. If a fresh bait is not here when he does arrive, he may move through without stopping to visit the bait site.”

There was one important thing in our favor. The tracks on the road did not indicate he had backtracked across during the night. He was still in spooky hollow.

We decided to make the long drive to the remaining bait, the warthog hung in the river bottom, and to see if it had been hit overnight, an unlikely possibility. If it were hit, we would write off King Chui and go after this river bottom cat, Prince Chui I called him. Not a mile from the river bottom bait was the bait site we set days earlier that we concluded was visited by a small female leopard: Princess Chui perhaps?

No, the warthog had not been hit. This left us with only one option: bring all or part of the warthog back to spooky hollow and “freshen” the bait for the King. If he didn’t come and had moved on, as Paul feared, the hunt was over. With his three to four-day cycle and bait hard to find, it was unlikely we would get another chance at him.

Anthony climbed the bait tree, chopped the warthog carcass in half with a machete, and we loaded the mess of pig flesh, guts, and other unmentionables in the truck. A little over an hour and a half later we had hung the warthog remains adjacent to the bush pig for one great pork banquet for King Chui.

The constant bouncing and high frequency chattering due to driving on very rough brush roads literally shook the screws out of my rifles. The sling on the 300 fell off, the screws bouncing on the truck bed, as they had worked loose after sustained vibration. The grip plate on the 375 worked loose and almost fell off, had not Paul caught it. With this kind of environment, it would be a surprise if the scopes were still fixed and on target. Fortunately, we did take time to sight the rifles in periodically. We then sighted in the 375 again. We arrived back at camp at noon. We would eat, rest, and travel back to our final rendezvous with the King around 5 p.m.

We left camp a little before 5:00 p.m. We spotted a huge roan bull on the way out, bigger than the one I took last week, and to my surprise, we also saw a herd of kudu, which included a couple of small bulls. To me, these graceful spiral-horned animals are the most beautiful of all of Africa’s antelope.

But my mind was not on antelope, but on chui. We arrived at spooky hollow in record time and Paul, Ludovic, and I were settled in the blind well before 6:00 p.m. Lynn, Lazerov, and Anthony took the truck back high on the road to wait a mile or so from the bait site. We settled in for a long wait. I coated my arms and feet with Deet bug repellent and

passed the bottle to Ludovic and Paul. Paul tied a piece of hemp rope to the scope of my rifle so it was suspended near my shooting shoulder. The front of the stock was resting on a horizontal limb in the blind, so that the rifle was pointing in the general direction of the bait and would not have to be shouldered clumsily if the King arrived. We waited quietly, the tsetse flies at bay thanks to the Deet. I checked my watch every ten minutes or so. Time was moving ever so slowly. It had begun to get dark and I had great difficulty seeing the cross hairs in my scope or the black baits hanging out there in the darkness. The moon, about three quarters full, supplied some illumination, but not enough to see a leopard at 44 paces. Then clouds moved in and the night grew darker. Two hours painfully passed.

Then I heard a faint thump and rustle of leaves, off to the right. Paul looked up and gave me a “thumbs up.” Within seconds we heard the unmistakable crunch of teeth sinking into bone and sinew up in the bait tree. The King had arrived.

Then began one of the most intense, fretful, and downright nerve-wracking 20-25 minutes of my life. My heart was pounding and my hands were so clammy that they stuck to the pistol grip of the rifle. Paul was trying to see the big cat through his binoculars. I took several big breaths and began to settle down to the situation unfolding before me. After at least five minutes, Paul flashed his little dime-store flashlight at the bait tree and we got our first look at King Chui. He was indeed a King. He didn't seem to mind or notice the light at all, but Paul was afraid to keep it on him for too long. The next time he flashed the light on, we could see that the leopard had pulled the warthog up on the limb and was feeding with his back turned to us. I whispered that I could try to hit his spine, but Paul felt it was too risky. We waited, every two minutes or so turning on the little flashlight to see if the leopard had moved. Finally, the big cat turned and began to move down the branch, broad side to me, but very hard to see in the dim light.

“Now!” Paul said. The leopard was moving quickly now. I planted the cross hairs behind his shoulder, squeezed the trigger, and fired; the report was deafening.

The big cat jumped and let out a growl as he hit the ground. We did not move. Not two minutes after the shot, we saw the lights of the truck winding down the hill toward us. Only when the truck was next to the blind did we leave it and quickly boarded the idling vehicle. Everyone was tense, maybe a little scared. Had I hit it? Did it get away? Was it out there waiting to come our way? What is worse than hunting a leopard for ten days and not seeing him? Answer: seeing him and wounding him. The pages of African hunting history are filled with tales of wounded leopards attacking gun bearers or hunters, often with fatal results.

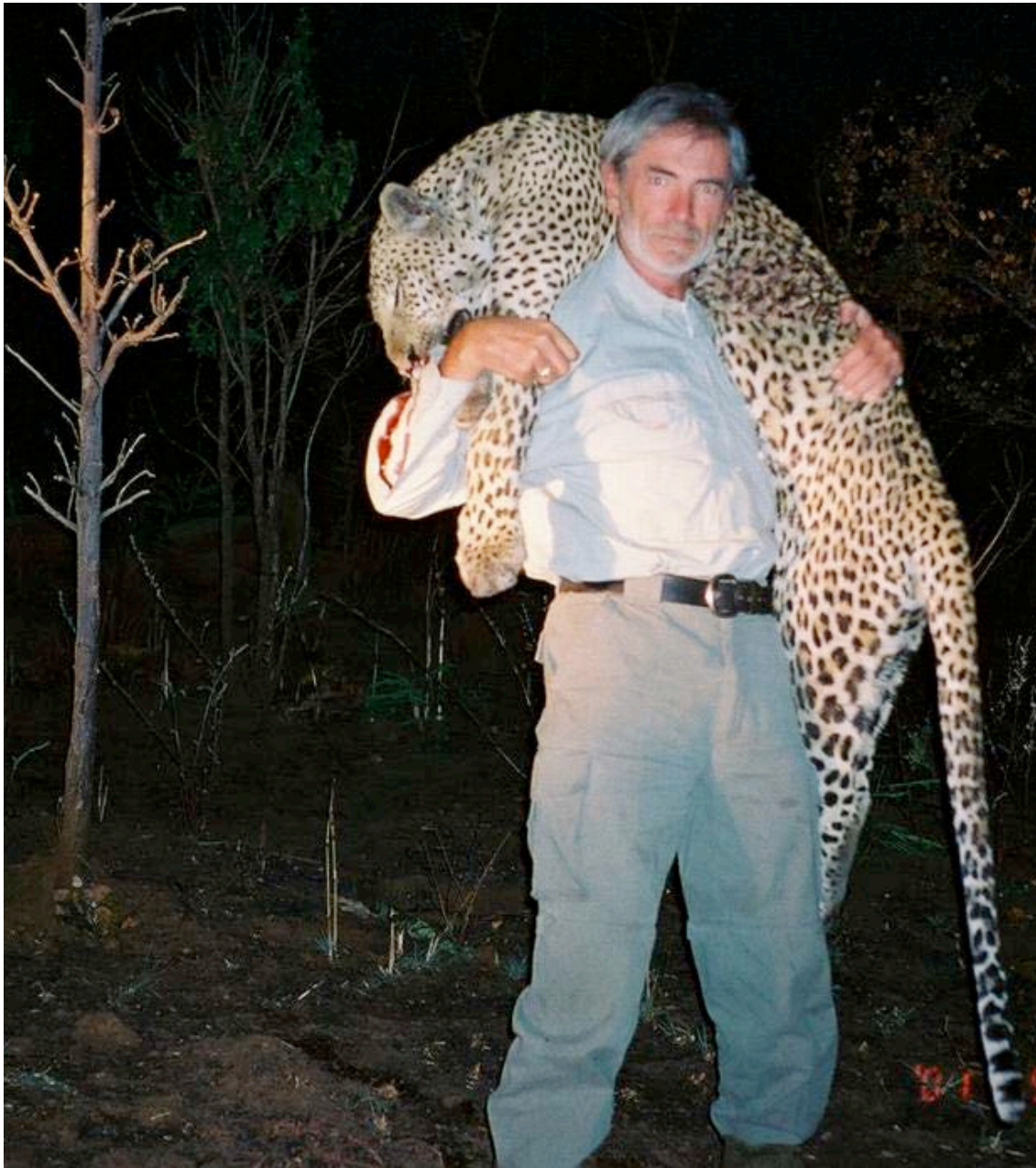
No one left the vehicle. It was like an armed tank, a refuge from a possibly wounded and dangerous beast. You could cut the tension in the air with a knife – everyone, especially me, was high on adrenaline and worried about what the next few moments would bring. Lynn maneuvered the truck in one gully after another within 50 yards of the bait tree as Paul and I searched the countryside with our flashlights. I saw two red eyes beaming at us at 100 yards, but we quickly concluded it was fizi, the hyena, who had come by to see what all the commotion was about. Time was ticking away and no leopard was in sight. Paul climbed on the hood of the truck, his 458 Winchester loaded and ready, as he scanned the area around the tree where the leopard had jumped – blood, lots of it. “You hit him,” he said. But was he wounded lying in wait?

The truck then edged up the far side of the ravine with Paul balanced on the hood and me in the bed looking over the cab with my 375 loaded, safety off, ready to shoot quickly if

necessary. Then Paul said, “There he is. Can you see him, Tin? He’s lying right over there.” And there he was, piled up dead just 50 yards from the bait tree, his green eyes shining in the rays of our flashlights.

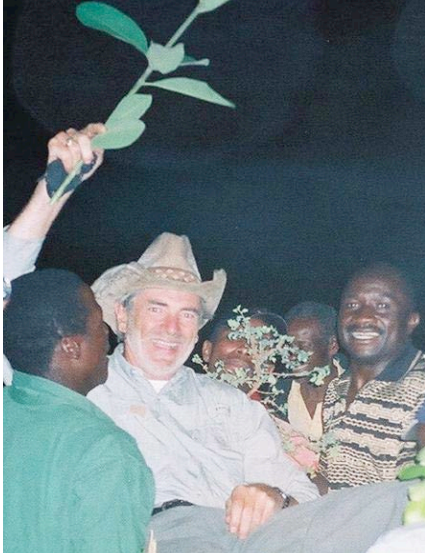
Pandemonium broke loose. Ludovic grabbed me and hugged me. Stoic Lazerov slapped my back and grabbed my hand in an exuberant shake. Anthony and Lynn grabbed me and shook my hand and Paul grabbed my hand in both of his and shook it happily.

We gathered around the King, and King he was. A huge old leopard, beautifully colored, over eight feet long from the tip of his nose to the tip of his tail. We couldn’t stop looking at him and celebrating. They draped the King around my shoulders, and took some pictures, spilling blood all over me. I didn’t mind.



*King Chui*

We loaded the dead leopard in the back of the truck and I climbed into the cab, an unusual place for me to sit, and we headed home – it was only 8:40. The trip home seemed to take no time at all; by 9:20 we were rolling into the outskirts of the camp.



*Chui Parade*

Then, as I should have expected, Lynn stopped the truck 100 yards from our destination, and the crew got out and adorned the truck with mopane branches. The parade was on again: “Ameleta, Chui, mkubwa, bombay-bombay. Ameleta, Chui, mkubwa, bombay-bombay.” Have brought big leopard, decorate – decorate. The night exploded with other staff, dancing, turning somersaults, chanting and waving branches. Some people I do not recall seeing before joined the celebration.

When we finally worked our way to the skinning hut, they escorted me out of the truck, put me on a small chair, hoisted me in the air, and carried me jubilantly around the camp, some dozen or so people bouncing me around and chanting happily.

Finally, the merriment subsided and I was allowed to get my feet on the ground again. Sultani was there among them and he hugged me and shook my hand vigorously. We took a few more photos, but decided to leave the major picture taking until tomorrow in sunlight. The group gradually dispersed. Paul and I went to our tents for quick showers, then we met Sultani at the dining hut, where John served a late dinner and we recounted the amazing hunt for King Chui.



*King Chui, the mighty leopard of spooky hollow is dead.*





*Horsley, Oden & the King*

During dinner John served a special cake Smart had baked on which was written Safari Njeme – good journey or bon voyage. After we sampled the cake, I went back to my tent to dream of the day and get ready for the journey tomorrow.

**S**unday, September 30: after breakfast, three ceremonies took place. The first was the ceremony of photographing the leopard. Everyone turned up at the skinning hut at daybreak and the rigid corpse of the fallen King was carried out and positioned on a big ant mound in a way that respected as much as possible the dignity of the great beast. We waited patiently for the sun to lift itself over the acacia canopy and illuminate the scene, and then everyone got his picture taken with chui in a variety of dramatic poses. This went on a good 45 minutes or more.

Then ceremony two began: tipping the staff, the payment of gratuities by the hunters for special services rendered. I had been dreading this a little as I did not know what to expect, but I had figured this expense in my budget for the hunt. Paul produced a handwritten list of suggested tips for everyone but himself and the government game scout, Ludovic. For the swat team, he suggested \$100 each, for the cook and skinner \$120, for John the waiter \$80, \$70 each for Mohammed and Joseph, the tent boys, something for the rest of the crew, a total of \$900. I paid it gladly and added a little extra for Anthony, without whom a single bait would not have been hung or a dozen animals would not have been seen. I gave Paul a traveler's check of \$1,000, his tip, for a total of \$1,900. I had originally budgeted \$1,500 for tips, but was not unhappy with this slightly higher sum. Then came Ludovic. It turned out that all of the camp meat and lion and leopard bait I shot did, in fact, have a trophy fee after all. Instead of listing these on the government list as trophies, Ludovic produced his own list with the understanding that he would personally receive a discounted trophy fee for each animal on his list. As Paul suggested, I gave him \$740. With Paul acting as master-of-

ceremonies, each staff person was called in, one at a time, and handed his tip, and each shook my hand, smiled, said “Thank you sir,” and left, all happy to a man. So was I and so was Paul.

The third ceremony was packing the truck and saying farewell. Everyone seemed happy. There were handshakes, many more photographs, and lots of smiles. We climbed into the truck and departed the camp for the last time. Paul drove with me in the cab, and Lynn and Joseph in back, along for a ride to Rujewa, our destination for the first day of the two-day trip to Dar Es Salaam. I waved once more to Lazerov, Ludovic, Anthony, Sultani, John, Smart, Mohammed, Abuu, and the others as we began our trek onward to the main road to Sumbawanga.

The drive to Rujewa took ten and a half hours, a rough drive over dirt and gravel roads for six hours and rutted tarmac the rest. After dark we arrived at the farm of Hussan Mulla, father of Abdull, who ran the Safari company, and Zahir, with whom I had communicated while planning the safari. He was a nice gentleman, around 70, and he welcomed us into his home. I met Mrs. Mulla and Hassan’s daughter Sangi and his granddaughter. They served us some dinner around 10:00 p.m. and I was given a room with a private bathroom. I slept under a mosquito net.



*Mr. Mulla*



*Sangi, Oden, Mr. & Mrs. Mulla, and granddaughter*

I was up by 5:30 and packed, ready to go onto Dar. I met Mr. Mulla in the dark dining room and chatted with him over a cup of black tea. Later that morning, after a light breakfast, he gave me a brief tour of his farm. By sunup, there were already workers in his fields planting rice and managing the flow of water from a nearby river to irrigate the rice fields.

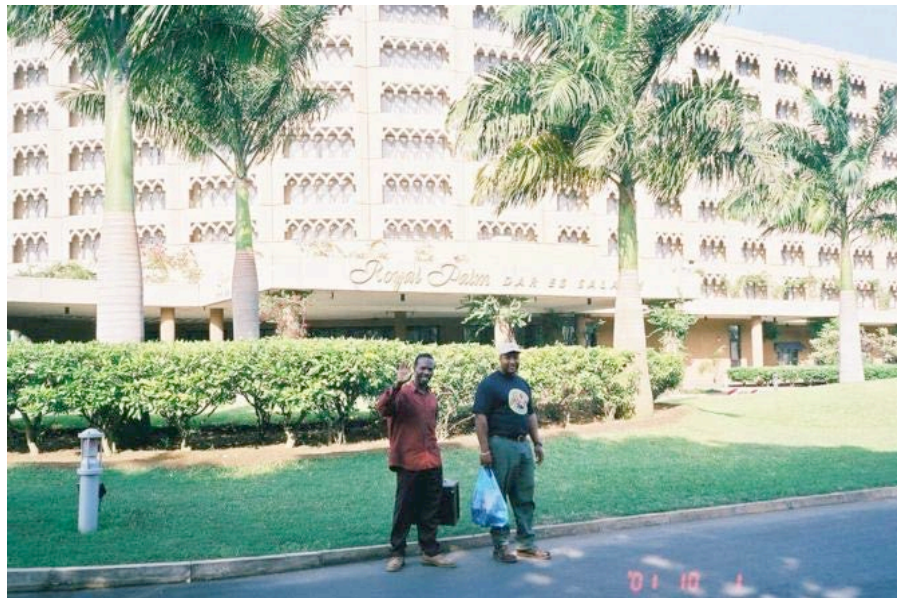
“We do everything by hand,” he said, “No farm equipment.”

Each worker made around 1,000 shillings per day, around \$1.17, a lot by Tanzanian standards.

A new vehicle, another Nissan I believe, rolled up to take us to Dar Es Salaam, driven all night to Rujewa by a company driver. We packed the car and headed out by 7:00, two drivers (always good to have a spare), Paul and me.

We were on the main road again by 7:20 a.m. and pulled into Dar Es Salaam at 3:00 that afternoon. We drove straight to the KLM office near the Royal Palm Hotel to see if I could get a seat on the first flight home that departed for Amsterdam at 11:40 p.m. Luckily I did get a confirmation and had my ticket updated. We then went to a small hotel in which Paul had reserved a room for the night, and I paid the rest of my bill for the safari, mainly

trophy fees and \$400 for the 18-hour drive from camp. I had dinner with Paul at the hotel, and we headed to the airport after a hurried half hour shopping for gifts for people back home in a gift shop near the Royal Palm.



*Royal Palm Hotel*

We arrived at the airport at 9:00: me, Paul, two drivers and another employee of the safari company, and two Spanish hunters we had picked up from the hotel on the way. There was a minimum of hassle and I made my way toward the boarding area on schedule. I said goodbye to Paul, giving him a handshake and a pat on the back, and telling him I hoped to see him in the states sometime, maybe in the Spring, when hunters meet at the SCI meeting in Las Vegas. He bid me farewell and I entered the boarding area and waited for over an hour before boarding. Oh yes, I was able to get my guns on board and checked through to Austin with no trouble. The Boeing 767 lifted off the ground at 11:40 p.m, on schedule, and I left the enchanting country of Tanzania behind me and flew into the night toward Amsterdam and then home.

