

And God Laughs...

The Arthur Jones Autobiography

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“Believe nothing that you read and very little of what you see.”

Anon.

Nine years prior to that first trip to the Natal parks, while I was capturing crocodiles in the Caprivi Strip, I was operating out of the city of Livingston, which was in the country then called Northern Rhodesia, later named Zambia. At the time of the Caprivi trip, that country was very wealthy, had enormously productive copper, gold and coal mines, and had billions of dollars in cash reserves and no debt; but by the time of that first trip to Natal, the situation had changed, most of the mines were no longer being worked, the cash reserves had all been pissed away and the country was by then in debt. Far from producing the paradise that most of the natives expected, black rule quickly produced a disaster; only a few of the politicians were better off than they had been under colonial rule and most of the people were barely existing on the verge of starvation. The few in charge were living like kings while most of the population were treated worse than slaves. Most of the natives had been convinced that Uhuru (freedom under black rule) would result in several immediate rewards: a white wife, a huge mansion, expensive cars, and the right to go to a bank and get money, ‘like the white men did,’ merely by asking for it and making their mark on a piece of paper; in return for all of which, naturally, they would not be required to perform work of any kind.

Almost all of Africa had already been handed over to black rule before we arrived in Natal, and efforts were already being made in the direction of forcing the whites out of power in southern Africa; both the Russians and the Chinese were stirring up as much trouble as they could, supplying natives with both weapons and money. And while I have never been one to go around expecting to find a Commie hidden under every bed, it did not take me long to realize that Player and one of his Senior Rangers were in sympathy with the Communistic inspired activity.

Not long afterwards, when I was back there on a return trip, Ian Smith, the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, announced UDI, a unilateral declaration of independence, renamed the country Rhodesia, and withdrew from the British Commonwealth of Nations; all in an attempt to avoid black rule. A move that was initially supported strongly by the government of the Republic of South Africa. Which outraged the liberals and most members of the media, who immediately started spreading some of the most outrageous lies that have ever appeared in print or on television. A man from Britain took a picture from a balcony of Miekle’s hotel, overlooking a large park in the center of Salisbury, Rhodesia, and this picture was published all over the world. According to its source, this picture showed hundreds of victims of the latest massacre of innocent blacks by brutal whites; but, in fact, a few minutes after this picture was taken, all of the supposed ‘victims’ got up and went back to work; they were workers from nearby offices and stores who were sleeping in the park during their noon break.

In 1967, ABC network ran a four-hour special program on Africa that was filmed while I was there, and if memory serves me correctly this film was narrated by Gregory Peck. It was nothing more nor less than four hours of outright propaganda. One sequence, filmed in a huge church, opened with a wide shot that showed literally thousands of people seated in the audience; the individuals being so small in this scene that you could have used an audience of gorillas and nobody would have noticed it. But then they cut to a series of brief but very close scenes of people’s faces, very carefully selected faces; giving the impression that you were seeing an audience consisting entirely of drooling monsters, some sort of sub-human beasts.

Given that same audience, you could have selected only beautiful girls, or only very intelligent looking men, or only happy children; but that would not have served their purpose; they wanted to convince the viewers in this country that all South African whites were stupid, ugly and brutal.

As a consequence of all this propaganda, the South African government was very suspicious if they believed that you were in any way connected with the media, and since I was filming for television they were very suspicious of me. As a result of this suspicion, when I first applied to the government in Pretoria for permission to film in Kruger park, my application was rejected; but, then, about a week later, I received a telegram that almost ordered me to go to Kruger

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park immediately, and gave me permission to land my airplane on a military airfield located inside the park. This at a time when any civilian flying over Kruger park was prohibited.

So I left most of the crew to continue filming in the Natal parks while Joyce, Bill Binnings and I went to Kruger. And when I got there I was welcomed like a conquering hero; they told me that I could do anything that I wanted to do and that they would cooperate in any way possible. We were provided with free housing, free meals, the free use of any type of vehicles that we might require and the services of several rangers to serve as assistants, including the services of the Chief Scientific Officer, a veterinarian named Dr. U. de V. Pienaar.

On that first visit we did very little filming, because I went there primarily for the purpose of trying to determine just what the filming opportunities might be, and because I still had a number of ongoing film projects that had to be completed in Natal before I could move the whole crew to Kruger.

Most of the officials in the Natal parks were British, but the people in charge of Kruger were Afrikaners, and there was very little love lost between the two groups. The Boar War might by then have been forgotten throughout the rest of the world but had not been forgotten in South Africa. Many of the people still living in South Africa then were survivors of the Boar War, and the British had treated the Boars very brutally during that war, had established concentration camps that were very similar to those established by Hitler later; and thousands of Boars died in those camps.

In general, I found the Boars to be very hard working, very serious and very religious people; and many of them were as tough as a boot. Some, of course, were crazy, but most were not, were instead very honest and honorable almost to a fault, if that is possible. The Director of Kruger Park, Andrew 'Dolf' Brynard, was one of the most honorable men I have ever met, although initially he did not always tell me the whole truth.

On the first night that we spent in Kruger we watched a film that was shown to visiting tourists and was narrated by a senior member of the staff, and it was immediately apparent to me that this film was an attempt to prepare the public for a forthcoming slaughter program of elephants. Not a word was said about any plans to kill elephants; quite the contrary, the narrator repeatedly stated that they were trying to avoid the necessity to kill any elephants. But then they showed scene after scene of damage to the park, trees that had been knocked down, pastures that were turning to desert, and many other examples of things that clearly planted the idea in the minds of an audience that the elephants were in fact doing a lot of damage.

So, the following night, when the Director, Dolf, invited Joyce and me to his home for the evening meal, I asked him when he planned to start the elephant slaughter program. And, for a moment, I thought he was about to have a heart attack. He said . . . "Where did you hear that?" With an utterly shocked look on his face.

When I told him I had seen the film, he asked me if the narrator said anything about killing elephants. And I told him that the subject was not mentioned, but that the editing of the film made it obvious to me just what they were planning to do. So then he told me their actual plans, which did include a large scale elephant slaughter program. He then told me that they did not want to kill any elephants, and knew that doing so would produce a great outcry from the public, but that there were far too many elephants in the park and that they were starting to destroy the park, and thus the numbers had to be reduced; then added that the film I had seen, together with stories that they were leaking to the newspapers and radio stations (there was then no television anywhere in South Africa) were intended to give the public the impression that they had no alternative, that a slaughter program was required to save the park.

So then I offered him an alternative: told him that I would capture all of the surplus elephants and then either export them to America or relocate them into areas where elephants were wanted, and that I would conduct the whole operation at my own expense in return for the exclusive right to film the project. Told him that for export purposes I wanted only either very large adults or small babies, but that I would relocate elephants of any size to other areas in Africa where they were wanted.

He was thrilled by my offer, would have accepted it on the spot if he had been in a position to do so, but was forced to go to a man named Rocco Knoble, who was the overall director of all National parks in South Africa, with offices in Pretoria.

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But Dr. Pienaar, when the offer was repeated to him, was not in favor of it; was convinced that it was impossible to capture and move large elephants, and was also convinced that it was impossible to keep young elephants alive in captivity. He had never tried to move a large elephant, although he had darted a few with M 99, but had tried to raise one baby elephant that died. He was not aware that a cow's milk is poisonous to a baby elephant, so had literally killed the little elephant because of his ignorance; but was convinced by his failure that it was impossible, and then refused to look at them when I offered to send him films of very young elephants being raised in captivity. As usual, it proved to be impossible to try to tell an 'expert' anything in regard to his field of work; and since Pienaar considered himself to be the leading expert in the world on the subject of elephants, while in fact knowing less than nothing about them, I could not communicate with him.

Later, after I had actually captured elephants in Kruger and was ready to ship them to America, one of Pienaar's assistant veterinarians insisted that I could not ship them until I produced a permit to import them into the United States. And when I repeated what I had been telling them for months, that no such permit was required or even existed, that there were no restrictions on the importation of elephants into the United States, he said . . . "Well, I am a veterinarian, and I am well aware of the laws, and I know for a fact that a permit is required to import ruminants into the United States."

Whereupon, hardly believing my ears, I asked him . . . "Since when, Fossy, is an elephant a ruminant (an animal that chews a cud, like a cow)?"

And he then said . . . "Well, I don't know how you classify them in America."

And again I was almost stunned by his stupidity, and said . . . "Fossy, being a scientist, did you ever hear of scientific terminology? You may call it a snake, but if it has wings and feathers then everybody else in the world will call it a bird. And an elephant is not a ruminant."

And he said . . . "But you still have to have the required permit."

So I said . . . "Look, you silly son of a bitch, there is no such thing as a required permit; so, just to keep you happy, I suppose I will have to forge one. And since you are the one who seems to need it, I will give you a choice of names. Would a permit issued by the East Saint Tammany Parish Undertakers Association be satisfactory, or would you prefer some other phony name?"

And he said . . . "No, that won't be necessary, just the regular permit."

And so on for about another hour.

Later, that same man went to Mozambique, Portuguese East Africa, with me in one of my airplanes when I went there to make arrangements for shipping the elephants through that country enroute to America, and while talking to the officials in Mozambique they told me that somebody from Kruger park had been there about a week earlier and tried to talk them in to refusing to permit me to ship the elephants through that country; but they did not tell me the name of the official from Kruger. And since all of the conversations were conducted in Portuguese, a language that Fossy did not understand, he did not know what was said.

Thus, enroute back to Kruger park with Fossy, I was very pissed off, and started to tell Fossy what I had learned, and also intended to tell him what I was going to do when I found out who was responsible; but then stopped, and asked him . . . "Wait a minute, Fossy, you were on that trip to Mozambique last week, weren't you?" And he nodded his head in agreement.

And then I asked him . . . "How many people from Kruger were on that trip?"

Whereupon, he hesitated, did not give me a verbal reply, but tapped himself on the chest; indicating that he was the only man from Kruger on that trip. Which, perhaps, explains why the Portuguese officials did not name the man who was responsible. Maybe did not want me to kill him in their country.

So I gave Fossy a look that would burn the paint off of a truck, and said . . . "Well, that narrows it down a bit, doesn't it?"

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I did not threaten to shoot Fossy, but at that time, all over southern Africa, I always carried a pistol, usually in plain sight, and nobody ever questioned it; in those days, prior to the first hijackings of airliners, you could carry a pistol almost anywhere without arousing comment. I passed through Customs and Immigration check points in Jan Smuts International airport near Johannesburg, South Africa, many times with a pistol in plain sight and it might as well have been invisible, nobody ever mentioned it.

As long as you did not wave it around and scare the other passengers, you could carry a pistol when traveling as a passenger on an international airline flight. U. S. Customs and Immigration officials paid no attention to armed passengers.

Later, when I moved to Southern Africa, I shipped hundreds of tons of equipment, including dozens of weapons all the way up from pistols to machineguns, together with hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition, and when all of this arrived at the dock in Durban they did not even ask me to open the shipping containers; we took the cargo directly off the ship and loaded it onto trucks and hauled it away with no inspection of any kind. Then, when I presented the Customs inspector with a full list of the weapons and ammunition that were included in the shipment, he told me that I would be required to register them at any police station any time within the next thirty days.

But, when I later went to a window marked 'Dangerous Weapons' at a local police station in Durban, and after the policeman on duty looked at the list of weapons and ammunition, which would have been enough to start a small war, he told me . . . "Oh, but Sir, you don't have to register these; these are merely firearms, and no permit is required."

Then, when I asked him just what a dangerous weapon was, he said . . . "Oh, things like a spear, or a machete, or a large knobkerry, something that a native might have." A knobkerry was a limber stick with a hard knob on one end, a native weapon that was legal so long as the knob was small enough for the native to put it inside his mouth.

Later yet, when I moved my filming operations to Rhodesia, after a seemingly endless list of disasters in South Africa, both in Natal and in Kruger, I checked out of South Africa through the port of entry/exit at the Petersburg military airfield in the northern part of the country that was usually under the control of a man named H. G. Wells (no relation of the author), but on that day Wells was on vacation and a much younger man, his assistant, was in charge. When Wells returned from his vacation the young man told him . . . "Mr. Wells, there were a bunch of Americans through here a few days ago, and you wouldn't believe what they had with them: trucks, cars, airplanes, trailers, a bunch of Landrovers, enough weapons and ammunition to fight a war, and a bunch of things that I couldn't even recognize."

So Wells asked him . . . "What did you do?"

And the young man said . . . "I didn't know what to do, so I didn't do anything; I just made them some tea and sent them on their way."

And Wells said . . . "It looks like you're starting to learn; maybe there's hope for you after all."

But, again, I'm getting ahead of myself; in this case about two years ahead. Joyce and I were not the only guests at Dolf's house that second night we spent in Kruger, there was a man there who was introduced as Dr. Sorrels Muller, who was, according to Dolf's statement to us at the time, his wife's personal physician, a man who had made it possible for them to have a child after years of failure; but a man who in fact was an agent for the South African Secret Police who was sent there to investigate me, who later became a close personal friend of mine, and who was eventually killed as a result of his attempts to help me.

It was obvious to both Joyce and me that Sorrels was not who, or what, he was supposed to be; he drank a bit too much that night, talked too much, and asked me questions that he would not have had any interest in if he was who he said he was. Secondly, he mentioned a subject that I had previously discussed with only one person, and that conversation occurred about nine years earlier in another part of Africa; yet he was aware of that earlier conversation. It took me nearly thirty years to figure out how he could have learned anything about that earlier conversation, but eventually I did: the man involved with me in that previous conversation was obviously another agent of the secret police, and had submitted a report on me that mentioned that conversation, a report that Sorrels had read.

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When we left Dolf's house that night, the first thing Joyce said was . . . "Who in the Hell is Muller? He damned sure is not who he claims to be."

Not that any additional proof was really needed, but it later turned out that Sorrels did not even know Dolf's real name; later I asked him if Dolf was an abbreviation for Adolf, and assumed that it was for two reasons: one, because I knew that Dolf's first initial was A; two, because, in Germanic languages, they use the last part of a name as the abbreviated form rather than the first part as we do in English. For Joseph we use Joe, but the Germans use Zepp, the last part of the same name; and I assumed that the nickname Dolf would be an obvious abbreviation under that Germanic system for the name Adolf. And Sorrels assured me that I was correct in that assumption. But I was wrong, Dolf's real first name was Andrew, and Sorrels did not know that.

A day or so later I took both Dolf and Sorrels to the northern end of Kruger park, a distance of about two-hundred miles, and the following day I took Dolf to Pretoria in order to present my elephant capture proposal to the overall Director, Rocco Knobel. My offer was accepted, in spite of Dr. Pienaar's objections, and a deal was struck. But my problems with Pienaar were not over.

Then we returned to Natal, having scheduled the start of the elephant capture operation in Kruger for several months later, since the time of the year, and thus the weather, was critical for such an operation.

In spite of a number of problems that I was aware of, I have seldom been happier than I was during that return flight to Natal; the opportunities in both Natal and Kruger appeared to be beyond overstatement; I believed I was off and running.

When we got back to Natal, Joel Wallach and his family had left, and nobody could, or would, tell me any of the circumstances. Previously, when he asked me for help that I did not provide, I did not tell him that I thought his stories were lies designed to trap me, instead told him that my budget was very tight and that I needed every cent that I had; which statement later turned out to be far truer than I thought at the time.

Within a matter of about forty-eight hours after Wallach left, and the rangers at last found themselves in control of the capture drug, M 99, the first near disaster occurred: returning by himself to his house late in the afternoon after a hard day spent catching rhinos, a ranger parked his Landrover, made contact by radio with Player's office and then suddenly broke off the conversation in the middle of a sentence and then did not reply to repeated calls from headquarters. It appeared that something was wrong, and it was; so another ranger was sent to investigate, armed to the teeth since the first thing that was suspected was an attack by a terrorist.

The ranger who suddenly stopped talking on the radio was nearly dead by the time the other ranger arrived on the spot, he had accidentally darted himself in the ass with a dart loaded with M 99, a dose of the drug intended for an animal that was at least fifty times as heavy as he was; would have been dead except for the fact that he had managed to grab a hypodermic needle and had injected himself with an antidote to the capture drug, but passed out so quickly that only about half of the required antidote was actually injected into his thigh. Normally the antidote was effective and very quick, but he had received a large dose of the drug and then did not get enough of the antidote. The antidote worked differently with different types of animals; some would be awake and very active within a few seconds, others did not recover from the effects of the capture drug for fifteen or twenty minutes, but nobody knew how the antidote would work with a man.

This accident occurred because the darted ranger had been carrying the dart in his beret, and when he stepped out of his Landrover he removed the beret from his head and used it to slap some of the dust off of his clothes; the dart contained a small explosive charge that was intended to inject the drug after the needle hit the target and the impact force created by the slap across his ass with the beret set off the charge and thus injected the drug directly into his buttocks. The darted ranger lived, but it took him several weeks to fully recover from the experience, if in fact he ever did recover fully; this man was a bit strange before that accident, and was even stranger afterwards.

Another incident occurred in the parks while we were away in Kruger, a crocodile killed a native child almost directly in front of the headquarters of the ranger in charge of Lake Saint Lucia, and this happened in broad daylight and was observed by several visiting tourists from Durban; so the shit hit the fan in the newspapers in Durban since

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crocodiles were protected animals. One immediate consequence of this affair being that a man from Durban went to the lake and then shot a crocodile in front of Nick Van Niekirk, the ranger in charge of the lake, then turned to Nick and said . . . “Now do your worst.” Turned away, got in his car and drove away; and there was nothing that Nick could do about it apart from filing criminal charges against him for violation of the game laws; and Nick knew that under the circumstances such a case would be thrown out by the court. The result being that Nick was very pissed off on the subject of crocodiles, since he loved them.

At which point we arrived on the spot, having been given permission by Player to capture crocodiles in that lake. Player was supposed to have called Nick on the phone to inform him that we were coming and that we had his permission to capture crocodiles, but failed to do so; so when I walked into Nick’s office and told him why we were there the shit really hit the fan. He read us the riot act, was practically foaming at the mouth, then about ten minutes into an insane tirade his phone rang. It was Player calling to tell him that we were enroute and that we had permission to do anything that we wanted to, and telling Nick to give us all possible assistance.

Nick appeared to be shrinking as he listened to Player’s instructions, said nothing until Player finished, then said . . . “Yes, Mr. Player, I understand.” And then hung up the phone.

Then he turned to me and said . . . “Well, that was Player, and I’m sure you know what he said; so I guess I have to do it, but I don’t have to like it.” Then he said . . . “And just how the Hell do you intend to catch big crocodiles; by calling them and throwing a sack over their heads?”

Which last statement on his part was an attempt to be insulting; but since that was exactly the method we intended to use, although he of course did not know that, I said . . . “That’s a Hell of a good idea and I’m sure Bill Binnings will like that a lot better than the method we planned to use; usually we tow Bill behind the boat with a rope as bait for the crocs and then catch them when they try to grab Bill.”

Both Bill and Donald Spence were standing inside Nick’s office with me when this exchange took place, while other members of our crew were still outside in a Landrover.

A bit later, in spite of this initial verbal exchange, Nick and I became close friends; he had a very short fuse and was as tough as a boot, but he was a damned good man in every way and I later developed a lot of respect for him, and vice versa. We were two of a kind.

Lake Saint Lucia is very large, but fairly shallow, and is separated from the Indian Ocean only by a thin strip of land, is really a bay that was cut off from the ocean by the build up of sandbanks; the water is quite salty and the waves become very high if the wind is strong, which it usually was. From Nick’s office to the place we intended to hunt was a distance of about thirty miles by water, and the spot we wanted to reach could be approached only when the wind was from the south; but when the wind was from the south the lake was very rough, with high waves, and crossing the lake in a small boat in such conditions was a very memorable experience. We intended to hunt in a small river that entered the lake from the north, but the mouth of that river was usually blocked by sand banks, and you could get into the river from the lake only when the sand banks were covered by waves produced by the wind from the south.

I knew that the crocs in that river had never been hunted, so assumed that we could capture them by blinding them with a bright light and then noosing them from a boat; and Nick, although he did not realize it, was right when he suggested calling the crocs; you actually can call a croc, get him to come up to within a few feet of your boat, by imitating the sound of a baby crocodile in distress. Adult crocs are very protective towards the babies and will go to their assistance if they hear this distress call, a call that is very easy to imitate. But crocs can be called in this manner only at night, when they are blinded by a light and cannot see you.

Nick provided us with two boats, a fairly large wooden boat powered by an outboard motor and a smaller, jet powered boat made out of plastic; then assigned a young ranger to go with us, having told him that I was in charge and that he would have to do anything I told him to do. As it happened, this young ranger was shit scared of crocodiles, and that led to a few problems; eventually I had to take his gun away from him in order to prevent him from accidentally shooting somebody as a result of his panic. Bill Binnings, of course, was in a constant state of panic, but it gets to be

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a bit much when two out of the four people in a small boat are in the midst of a panic and one of them starts waving a loaded gun around in a wild manner.

Fortunately, the weather was right the first night; that is, rough as Hell, and Bill Binnings was not only terrified during the trip across the lake but was also sea sick, spent about two hours trying to puke his guts up. It took us several hours to reach the mouth of the small river, but we were able to enter the river because the sand banks at its mouth were covered by the waves produced by a strong wind from the south; inside the river the water was much calmer, and the river was alive with both crocodiles and big cat fish, a fish that South Africans call a barbel. There were so many such fish that I believe you could have fired six shots into the water at random and hit at least five fish. The river was swarming with them.

We captured the first of several large crocodiles less than five minutes after we entered the river. Donald Spence had captured, and killed, hundreds of alligators, but had never before captured a crocodile, so I let him make the first catch. We called the crocs and they came by the dozens, Donald slipped a steel noose over the head of the closest one, yanked on the pole to which the noose was attached in order to tighten the noose around the croc's head, and the shit immediately hit the fan; the croc went crazy, started rolling over and over in the water and swinging his head from side to side at a blinding rate of speed. We were using the small plastic jet boat at the moment and the croc managed to bash a large hole through the side of the boat and we sank, found ourselves in the shallow water surrounded by crocodiles; at that point the young ranger also went crazy, started waving his gun around wildly while standing in water that came up to his waist, and was probably a greater threat to the rest of us than the crocs were. So I took his gun away from him, using the minimum amount of force that was required to disarm him; which happened to be quite a bit of force, because he was a strong young man.

Bill Binnings set off in the direction of the nearest bank of the river, moving as fast as he could; but you cannot wade through waist deep water very fast. And, in spite of this initial disaster, Donald and I managed to hang on to the first croc that he had noosed; eventually loaded it into the larger boat and then continued to hunt while sitting on top of the first croc and paddling the boat with a board that we found in the bottom of the boat. We could not use the boat's motor because it would probably scare the other crocs away.

Once the first croc had been blindfolded with a wet gunny sack tied around his head, covering his eyes, he remained perfectly quiet and gave us no more trouble. Donald was initially very proud of that first croc, which proved to be twelve feet and nine inches long, but which was very thin; in fact, all of the crocodiles that we captured there appeared to be starving, and this in spite of the number of fish in the river. But, as it happens, in spite of the opinions of many people, some crocodiles will not eat fish; none of the crocodiles that I caught in the Caprivi Strip would eat fish.

During the trip to the Caprivi, Earl Brockelsby sent me a letter telling me that he had a chance to buy about a hundred tons of so-called junk fish from the Game Department in his state at a very low price; planned to freeze them and thus believed he had found a very cheap source of food for the crocs that I had not then yet shipped from Africa. I immediately sent him a cable telling him not to buy the fish, that the crocs would not eat them. But, of course, he did not believe me; thus, later, he was forced to haul all of those frozen fish out onto the prairie and dump them.

Finally did locate another source of relatively cheap food that the crocs would eat, the frozen carcasses of beavers that had been skinned for their hides; which provided an almost perfect source of food for the crocs.

About twenty minutes after Donald noosed the first big croc I noosed one that was much bigger, more than fourteen feet long. Later, Donald said . . . "I was so proud of that first croc, but then Arthur caught one that made mine look like a lizard."

With two big crocs in the larger of the two boats, the smaller one then being useless because of the large hole in its side where the croc bashed it with his head, we had no place to put any more crocs; thus the first night's hunt resulted in the capture of only two crocs. If a place to put them had been available, we could easily have captured a dozen or more big crocs that first night. By that time it was the middle of the night, and we did not want to attempt to return to Nick's headquarters at night with a boat that was greatly overloaded by the two large crocs, four people and all of our

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equipment. So then we tried to sleep, but had only two sleeping bags available since two were lost when the jet boat sunk, so we were forced to try to squeeze two men into each of the two available sleeping bags; it was a very tight fit, and since the mosquitoes were eating us alive it was a miserable night.

The South African Department of Health officials were convinced that malaria had been wiped out everywhere in that country, but they were wrong; I caught malaria that night, for about the tenth time in my life up to that point.

Malaria is not a disease in the usual sense of the word, is a result of an invasion by parasites; can usually be prevented by taking one pill a week, or can be cured by taking a series of only six pills over a period of three days; but having been assured that there was no malaria in the area, we had not been taking the pills. Why Bill, Donald and the young ranger did not also catch malaria that first night I will never know; each of them probably had at least a thousand mosquito bites.

Shortly after that first crocodile hunt, George Bergin and I flew into the landing strip near the village of Hluhluwe, walked to an open-air restaurant near the landing strip that had a roof but no walls, planning to get something to eat. But as I stepped into the shade of the restaurant's roof, I suddenly felt very cold, in spite of the fact that the temperature was above a hundred degrees.

So I turned to George and asked him if he felt cold, and when he told he that he did not I immediately understood what had happened; so then I told George that we had to get to Hell away from there as soon as possible and fly to Durban, that I was very sick. The flight to Durban required only about forty minutes, but by the time we were ready to land in Durban I was almost helpless, and George had to help me land the plane; I would probably have crashed if I had been by myself.

They had to carry me out of the plane, stuff me into the back seat of a taxi, and then carry me from the taxi to a bed in the Park View hotel. By that point I was having alternating bouts of high fever followed by chills; one minute I was burning up and the next minute I was freezing, which is a typical reaction to malaria. We called a doctor and asked him to come to the hotel, and told him what the problem was; and he came, but did not come alone, brought several doctors from the Department of Health with him, doctors who were concerned because they believed that malaria had been eradicated in South Africa.

And my situation turned out to be worse than I initially believed; when they examined me they discovered that I was suffering from both malaria and Tick Bite Fever, a very bad combination indeed. My temperature was alternating from about 96 degrees to above 104 degrees, up and down quickly. If I had not been able to reach help as fast as I did I probably would have died.

What I did not realize at the time was that my real problems were just starting; what followed was far worse. Joyce was preparing to strike, intended to overwhelm me by her use of the Number Three Routine, which as far as she knew I was not familiar with.

Thus, four days later, at about midnight, while I was still very sick and was so weak that I could stand up briefly only with great difficulty, she came into my room, and her following actions made her intentions very clear. The next two hours was a nightmare out of Hell, cannot really be described accurately: she ranted and raved, cursed me with terms that would have put a sailor to shame, yanked all of the covers off of me, opened the window of my room on the seventh floor of the hotel, and the weather had changed and it was then quite cold so the wind through the window was cold, then soaked both me and my bed with cold water from the bathroom. All of which was an utterly insane attempt to seduce me, she wanted me to fuck her; believed that if she could force me to fuck her that she could then control me, believed this because she had used this same method in order to control several other people, and it had always worked when she tried it earlier.

But when it failed to work with me, because I clearly understood what she was trying to do, she really went crazy; yanked the door of my room open and stepped out into the hall and started screaming . . . "Help, help, somebody help me, my father is trying to rape me."

Just before stepping into the hall she said to me . . . "Alright, you son of a bitch, I know how to fix you."

"...And God Laughs"

The Arthur Jones Collection

And she was right, it really would have fixed me, just how in the Hell could I even hope to convince somebody else that I was innocent?

But I had a bit more strength than she thought, more than I had suspected; and I did manage to stand up and moved towards the door, grabbed her and yanked her back inside my room and slammed the door shut just as the door across the hall started to open in response to her screams. In the process of trying to get her under control, I hit her once, but was so weak that I could not hit her very hard; which weak blow later caused an even bigger problem with Joyce after we got back to this country, when she tried the same stunt again, then being convinced that I could not hurt her by hitting her.

I dragged her to the seventh floor window, which she had opened, shoved her out of the window, stopping her from falling only by holding one of her feet, then told her . . . "Alright, Joyce, just keep screaming and I will let you scream all the way to the ground." That got her attention, and she stopped screaming; but then I found that I was too weak to pull her back into the room. But, eventually, from somewhere, I was able to dredge up just enough strength to drag her back through the window, although it was touch and go for a while. Then I read her the riot act, the long version, told her that I would kill her if she ever pulled a stunt like that again; and, at the time, she appeared to believe me.

But as I have said repeatedly before, meaningful communication with people is difficult under any circumstances, and is simply impossible with some people; so my real problems with Joyce, far from being over, were just starting.

A few days later, when I returned to the Natal parks, I was still so weak that it was very difficult for me to raise a cup of tea to my mouth even when using both hands; but Player was very favorably impressed by the fact that I wanted to get started working again as fast as possible in spite of my weakened condition. Later, while speaking at a meeting of all of the rangers then working in the Natal parks, a meeting held in order to make them aware of our filming plans, he said . . . "We have met film producers before, but these are men."

Nick Steel had been accusing me of wanting to do outrageous things in order to produce exciting films, which was not my intention; because the capture operation itself was damned near too exciting, nothing else along those lines was required, or desired by me. But after Player's announcement at that meeting, several rangers started making suggestions that were outrageous; one ranger suggested shoving a rhino off of a cliff in order to film him falling to his death, and there were several other equally violent suggestions from other rangers.

These men had then been killing somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 animals a month, every month for nearly a year, so thought nothing about killing a few more animals. And these were the people who were supposed to be saving the animals in Natal.

That meeting of all of the rangers was conducted in the ball room of a hotel in Durban, which meant that the parks had to be left in charge of the native game guards for a couple of days; but they were more than qualified to carry out any required duties so no problems were produced. Many of the native guards were very good men, well trained and reliable. Which, to me, was somewhat surprising considering their working and living conditions and their very low salaries.

Nick Steel hated both cars and airplanes, and had never previously been inside an airplane, but was ordered by Player to go to Durban with me in my airplane; he went, but he damned sure didn't like it, and then as I was approaching a very small landing strip near the beach, just outside of town, Virginia airport, the airplane that was landing directly in front of us, and was only about a hundred yards ahead of us while we were preparing to touch down on the strip, touched down but then immediately turned sharply to the right and crashed into a high sand bank that separated the landing field from the ocean. I immediately applied power and then went around for another approach, but Nick almost shit in his pants anyway; later told Player that he would walk back to the parks if necessary but damned sure would not get back into an airplane.

The Arthur Jones Collection

By that point Player was trying to talk me into moving to South Africa, offered to sign a contract with me that would give me exclusive filming rights in the Natal parks; and, eventually, such a contract was drawn up, carefully worded by me. But first it had to be approved by the overall Director of the Natal Parks Board, John Geddes Page; so Player and I went to see Page, let him read the contract I had written and told him our plans.

Then Page sent Player out of the room so that he could talk with me in private, and told me . . . “It sounds great, but it won’t work; it will fail and you will end up losing your ass, or maybe your life.”

And I said . . . “But it can’t fail, it’s a perfect opportunity.”

Page then said . . . “I agree that it sounds like a perfect opportunity, but I also know that it is utterly impossible to work with these people, because they are scientists, and you cannot communicate with scientists, or work with them. I have been trying to work with them for years, and have failed, and I am supposed to be in charge; so if they won’t listen to the boss you can be damned sure that they won’t listen to you. I will agree to the contract if you insist, but I want it clearly understood in advance that you are in the act of creating a disaster.”

So the contract was signed; but it turned out that Page was right, I should have listened to his advice, and followed it. Page was a good man, and a very intelligent man, one of a very few truly sane men in the Natal parks.