

# And God Laughs...

## The Arthur Jones Autobiography

[www.ArthurJonesExercise.com](http://www.ArthurJonesExercise.com)

**“Keep your clothes and your weapons where you can find them in the dark.”**

**Anon.**

Having extorted the money he wanted from the Parks Board in order to conduct the massive animal capture operation, Player then did not know what to do with the animals after he captured them; had managed to sell a few rhinos for \$7,000.00 each to several zoos in America and in Europe, but then could not find any more customers. So he asked me if I could help him locate customers for about two hundred more rhinos and several thousand other large animals.

He was also concerned about the meat resulting from the ongoing slaughter program, most of which was being wasted since the rangers could not begin to eat all of it; Player believed that the meat could be sold to the gold mines near Johannesburg as food for their native workers if it could be moved there fast enough to prevent it from rotting. I told him that I could bring a medium bomber, a B 25, to Africa for the purpose of transporting the meat from Natal to the gold mines. A plane that could carry at least 12,000 pounds of meat every trip, and that could reach the gold mines from Natal very quickly since it was a rather fast airplane. We carefully calculated both the expenses and the expected income from such a meat hauling operation and it appeared to be both practical and potentially very profitable.

I already owned the required plane, and since I then intended to move to South Africa as quickly as possible I decided to bring the plane with me. But that decision produced yet one more problem, because South Africa was on the proscribed list and you could not legally ship military weapons from the United States to South Africa, and a bomber was certainly a military weapon. But that problem did not crop up until later.

I had a very close friend named Louis Goebel in California who was one of the very few totally honest and honorable animal dealers in the world, and was one of the most successful animal dealers in the world; if anybody could sell Player's surplus animals, he could. So I invited him to come to Africa in order to become familiar with the opportunity in Natal; and he agreed to come, and later did come, a visit that produced yet another disaster; because, by the time Louis arrived, Player realized that in fact he did not have any surplus animals, had already killed damned near all of the animals in the parks, and thus refused to even meet with Louis when he arrived.

Initially, I had no reason to doubt Player's statements in regard to the number of animals in the Natal parks; but one day in his office, while looking at a map of the parks, I asked Player how big one of the parks was. And when he told me that the park contained a bit less than one-hundred square miles of land, and was effectively an island, I realized immediately that a terrible mistake had been made. Player believed that there were 86,000 large animals in that one park, including at least 6,800 Wildebeests, and they were then killing 1,500 Impalas and as many Wildebeests as possible every month in that park, intended to kill 1,800 more Wildebeests in order, he said, to reduce their numbers to a level of only 5,000.

At which point I told him . . . “I don't know how you tried to count those animals, Ian, but your estimates are impossible; if you had as many animals as you believe you do in that park the place would look like the stock yards in Chicago, the animals would have to take turns breathing, they would be piled up at least three deep covering every square foot of the park.”

Naturally he did not believe me, so I suggested that he, Page and I fly over that park and count the actual number of Wildebeests, which was very easy to do since the animals are black, the ground in that park was almost white and there was almost no vegetation apart from grass. And so we did count them from the air, and it turned out that he had a grand total of only 286 Wildebeests remaining in the park, rather than the 6,800 that he had estimated.

So I told him . . . “In order to kill another 1,800 Wildebeests, as you have been planning to do, you would have to start shooting them in the Cape Town zoo and work your way north halfway through Kruger park, and I don't believe that Dolf Brynard will agree to that.”

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Because of their much lighter color, it was not so easy to count the actual number of Impalas then left in the park, but it was obvious that the numbers were far lower than he believed. Both he and Page were stunned by the result of our aerial count, but could not question the accuracy of that count. Which really threw the fat into the fire.

Having extorted the money for his big capture operation from the Parks Board, how could he then go back to them and admit that he had fucked up? If he told them that instead of a surplus of animals he actually had a shortage of animals, a shortage created by his slaughter program, they might well try to get his ass tossed in jail; and since many members of the Natal Parks Board were both very wealthy and had powerful political connections, they probably could get him sent to jail.

But, of course, these facts did not come to light until it was far too late to do anything in the way of correcting the situation; and by then I was sitting out on the end of the same limb that Player had trapped himself on, having by then already moved everything I owned to South Africa.

Finally, having given the situation some very careful consideration once I became aware of the facts, I arrived at what I believed might be a solution, and went to Player with the following proposal: told him that we were both in the same trap, that while he might well go to jail if the facts came to light I would certainly be ruined, did not at the moment feel like being ruined again for about the tenth time in my life, and that he need have no concern on the subject of my telling anybody the real facts, that I would go to great lengths to conceal the facts, but since only three of us were aware of the facts it should be possible to keep the truth from leaking out. Told him that we could catch animals on the north end of the park and release them on the south end, that this would provide me the filming opportunities that I needed and would provide him an excuse for delaying the start of the planned capture operation. He could justify this activity on the grounds that it was providing training for his native game guards.

Then, I told him, we can drag the whole thing out for two or three years, by which time the animals will breed back up to something at least close to a desirable level; and the Parks Board members will never even suspect that anything is wrong. All of which Player agreed with, to my face; but I quickly learned that he was widely spreading the most malicious sort of rumors about me; was doing so just in case I might tell somebody the truth, was trying to discredit me in advance so that nobody would believe me if I did tell them the truth.

While not always easy to do, you can sometimes disprove false accusations, providing they are specific allegations; but it is utterly impossible to deal reasonably with generic accusations, where nothing specific is alleged.

Things like . . . “Well, I don’t like to talk about people, but if I were you I would be very careful dealing with him. A word to the wise, you know.”

Or . . . “I can’t prove this, but there is far too much talk about it for it to be merely a rumor; and while I don’t have the details, it appears that this is a man that cannot be trusted under any circumstances.”

The irony in this situation being the fact that I was probably the only real friend that Player ever had in his entire life, sincerely wanted to help him, tried to help him. But, by that point, Player viewed me only as a threat; after all, I knew where the bodies were buried.

So far, I have been jumping back and forth in time, over a period that covered several trips to Africa, but I believe that trying to recount the story step by step would be far more confusing. At the end of the first Natal trip, after filming quite a lot if not as much as I had hoped, we started a return trip to Europe, returning by a different route because we did not dare to fly over any black African country that we flew over on the trip south. One problem being the fact that I did not have any maps of the parts of Africa that I wanted to fly over, and none were available from any source that I could find.

When I told Zingie Harrison, the number two man in Piper Corporation in that part of Africa, what I needed, he said . . . “Hell, you don’t need any maps to fly from here to Lisbon, it’s only a little more than seven thousand miles.”

Then he took a blank sheet of paper out of a notebook, drew a very crude outline of Africa on it with a pen, started making cross marks on it in several places and said . . . “This here is Pretoria, that’s where you are now. This is Windhoek, from there you go to Luanda, in Angola, and from there to the next stop is an easy flight, it’s an island off the

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west coast of Africa, and I can't remember the name at the moment but you can't miss it. Then from there you can go a lot of places, and from there to the Canary Islands, and from there it's just a hop, skip and a jump to Lisbon. You can't miss, any damned fool could do it."

And I flew to Lisbon with nothing more in the way of a map; a map that I still have, one of my few remaining souvenirs from fifty-five years of flying.

But, years earlier, I made hundreds of flights over the interior of South America at a time when no maps of that area of the world yet existed; mapping of the interior of South American was not started until 1963, and the maps that existed for many years afterwards were based upon thousands of aerial photographs that were taken by the U. S. Airforce from B 50 bombers. Now, of course, with satellites, the maps are much better.

The only real problem on that trip occurred when we reached the Ivory Coast, a small country located below the bulge of western Africa. After we landed it took us several hours to find anybody to refuel the plane, and in the meantime could locate nobody from either Customs or Immigration, so finally left the airport and went into town without ever having checked into the country. Then found it impossible to find a room anywhere apart from a place that looked, and smelled, like a pig pen. Something to eat? Forget it, everything we were offered would gag a maggot.

Upon returning to the airport early the next morning we again found it impossible to locate anybody; so I finally decided to leave without permission and without filing a flight plan. But as we started to taxi out for takeoff, some guy came on the radio and asked me where I was going. When he asked me if I had checked out with Customs and Immigration, or had filed a flight plan, I told him no, that I could not find any of the required people. Whereupon he told me to stop and shut off my engines, that I could not take off.

So I told him . . . "Watch me, I'm going to take off, and I don't see anything on the airport fast enough to catch me, so fuck you." And I took off.

When we arrived at the next stop, in another country, I expected the shit to hit the fan, but it didn't; there had been no radio contact between those two countries for several weeks, so a flight plan would not have reached them if I had filed one.

Later, just before departing from the last stop prior to reaching the Canary Islands I was asked if I could land on a runway that was partly blocked by a large crashed airliner sitting on the airport about halfway down the runway; and when I said that it would be no problem they cleared me to take off.

Upon arrival at the Canary Island airport, and after landing, they told me that I should not have landed there, but I told them that I was aware of the crashed airplane on the runway and had been cleared to land there; so they did not give me any trouble about that.

On the last day of that trip I flew for sixteen hours and six minutes; and we averaged just over two-hundred miles an hour all the way from Pretoria to Lisbon. George Bergin was my copilot on that trip but was as sick as a dog all of the way, so I had no help with the flying. Got more than enough bitching and moaning from both Bill Binnings and Joyce, of course, but that helped keep me awake.

The six people on that flight into Lisbon split up at that point and returned to this country by several different routes, using commercial jet airliners; Joyce and I went first to Caracas, Venezuela, spent one night there and then on to Miami, Florida, the next day. Out of Miami for New Orleans I could get only one seat immediately, so I left Joyce in Miami to catch a later flight. Did not figure she could get into much trouble within a few hours: she was already pregnant, having been knocked up by somebody in Africa, probably one of the Natal rangers, was already crazy and, frankly, at that point I really didn't give a fuck what happened to her, was already beginning to regret that I did not drop her out of that hotel room window.

Kill your own daughter? If you knew Joyce you would not ask such a question; given anything to say on the subject would probably insist on it, might even offer to do it yourself. Some people need killing. But if I had killed all of the people that I have run into that needed killing the list would run into the hundreds. The only ones I now regret are the ones that I did not kill.

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At one point, somewhat later, Dolf Brynard told me that I could kill anybody that I wanted to out of a long list provided by him, and told me that he would help me do it, and he was deadly serious. But that situation, a disaster that did get some people killed, will be covered in a later chapter.

As they say . . . “Things can always get worse.” And they did.

When I got back to Slidell I had enough work for at least ten people waiting for my return, and nobody to help; not even Herbert, I had fired him in Africa and sent him back earlier because of serious problems he created there. I had a rapidly approaching deadline for the first film in the new series, had more than 100,000 feet of film that had been mailed back to the lab, had been processed and workprinted and was waiting for me to start work on it, had to sell everything that I did not intend to take with me when I moved to Africa, had to get permission to take a bomber to South Africa, had to locate and buy about a hundred tons of assorted equipment that I would require after a move to Africa, had to make arrangements for moving my three children to Africa, had to locate and hire some new people, and had to try to figure out what to do with Joyce.

During the next three months, leading up to my departure for Africa, I averaged about two hours of sleep a night, and sometimes went three or four days without sleeping at all. Impossible? Not quite, but damned close.

In the meantime the IRS decided to start trying to give me a bad time again, were pissed off because I refused to either file tax returns or pay income taxes; I tried to tell them that I had never bothered them throughout a period of about thirty years and did not see why they insisted on bothering me. But you know how they are.

The most pressing thing I had to do was to locate a doctor who would perform an abortion, which was illegal at the time; this had to be done quickly since Joyce's mother was insisting that Joyce come up to Arkansas for a visit as soon as she returned from Africa, and because Joyce was afraid to go home, was convinced that her grandfather could tell at a glance that she was pregnant.

I ended up taking her to a Mexican doctor in Nuevo Laredo, but he botched the job on his first attempt and I had to take her back for a second operation. Then I took her to Arkansas for a very brief visit; during which I told her mother nothing about my problems with Joyce.

Then I had to fly all over the country, California, Florida and several other states looking for people and equipment, and I had to prepare both the B 25 bomber and another plane for a trip to Africa; planned to ship the smaller plane by sea and to fly the bomber to Africa myself, which required the installation of long-range fuel tanks for the trip across the Atlantic Ocean.

But first I had to get a permit from the U. S. Federal Government to take a bomber to Africa, and that was not easy to do. Ex-military aircraft that were owned and operated by a private party required a so-called Temporary Sojourn Certificate, which was issued by U. S. Customs, before they could be flown outside this country. This certificate was actually issued under the authority of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) but was turned over by them to U. S. Customs because they had no police force.

The first model of the B 25 was introduced into service shortly before the Second World War, but the airplanes were modified repeatedly throughout the war, as ways to improve them were discovered and adapted, so that by the end of the war at least fourteen models of B 25s had been produced. These were distinguished by calling the earliest model the B 25A, the second model the B 25B and so on; the final model that I am aware of being the B 25N; which, being the last model produced, was the most advanced, was far superior to earlier models.

My airplane was actually a B 25N, but I told the FAA that it was a B 25J, because that was the latest model that they would issue a license for; as a result of pressure from both the airlines and several manufacturers of large airplanes, none of which wanted competition from ex-military airplanes that could be purchased very cheaply after the war, the FAA refused to license the later models, so the best of the lot were illegal.

Which presented no problem, I just located a crashed B 25J, jacked up the license plate and inserted a different airplane under it; I assumed that nobody in the FAA had enough sense to tell the difference, and I was right, most of them probably could not tell the difference between a B 25 and a palm tree.

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Not only the airplanes but the engines and propellers were illegal, but again they did not know the difference.

But, eventually, some asshole on the airport in Gulfport, Mississippi, where I was keeping two of my bombers at the time, ratted on me to the Inspector in charge of the FAA office in Jackson, Mississippi, and he came down on a Sunday afternoon in order to set me straight. Came down in a rented airplane on a Sunday because that way he could collect overtime pay. But he made the mistake of telling somebody, on the phone, that he was coming, and they told me, so I was prepared for him when he arrived.

Just in case he lied about what happened in his later statements, I taped all of our conversations without telling him that he was being taped, which is perfectly legal under Federal law, and I also had several witnesses on hand who could later testify regarding just what happened.

He did not have a clue about what he was doing, so I managed to get tapes of him making an utter fool of himself, which was not hard; I pointed to stripes painted around the tips of the blades of the propeller on one engine and asked him just what those stripes indicated, which was nothing since my mechanic had painted them on the blades just to amuse himself; but Carrier, the FAA inspector, assured me that he knew what they indicated, although he did not then volunteer to tell me just what that was.

Finally I pointed at one of the bombers and asked him what it was, and when he replied that it was a B 25 I asked him if it was legal to change a tire on the plane if it was damaged, and he assured me that it was. Then I asked him if it was legal to exchange a good wing for a damaged wing, and he said that it was as long as it came from the same kind of airplane. So then I asked him just which parts could not be replaced if damaged, and he told me that any part could be replaced.

So then I asked him why I could not legally replace all of the parts at the same time. And he said . . . “But that’s not legal, you are just jacking up the license plate and running another plane under it.”

And I said . . . “Exactly. Now be good enough to quote me the chapter and verse of the law that says I can’t do that.” Which he could not do, of course, since there was no such law.

Then he started mouthing threats and refused to issue me a ferry permit for the airplane that I intended to take to Africa; I needed a ferry permit since that plane was not yet licensed. So I told my mechanic to move the license plate from the other plane, which was already licensed, to the Africa-bound plane, to paint over the registration numbers on the fuselage and wings and change them to the numbers on the licensed plane.

By which time Carrier was almost foaming at the mouth, went too far, said some things that he should not have said, and ended up with his head stuffed down between the rudder pedals on the floor of his rented airplane while I read him the riot act, told him to get his ass off that airport within no more than two minutes or I would kick him up and down the runway like a dog. He made the first threats, and I had it all on tape; I was merely defending myself.

So I then moved the airplane to Lakefront Airport in New Orleans, where there was a shop that worked on big airplanes exclusively, Pan Air Corporation. Then I got in another, smaller airplane and went to Los Angeles.

The following day, in the early afternoon, California time, I placed a three-party conference call to General Hallaby, the Director of the FAA in Washington, D. C., Inspector Carrier in Jackson, Mississippi, and with me in Los Angeles. During that call I was sitting in the chair of the president of Magnasync/Moviola Corporation, a major manufacturer of professional motion picture equipment; I recorded my end of the conversation and am sure the other two parties did also.

By the end of that conversation, having heard only my end of it, the president was sitting on the floor and leaning back into a corner of the room, with a look of stark terror on his face. When I hung up the phone he said, . . . “My God, Arthur, you can’t talk to people like that on the phone; I kept expecting J. Edgar Hoover himself to come rushing in here in order to drag you out by the hair of your head, taking my phones with him. At the very least they will probably yank all of our phones out; and how in the Hell am I supposed to operate a big company like this without any fucking telephones?”

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I said . . . “Not to worry, you will never hear another word about it; General Hallaby almost agreed to try to kiss my ass over the phone, and probably would have if I had suggested it.”

Near the end of the conversation, Hallaby asked me just what I wanted to get off his back; told me that they would license the airplane with no engines, would license it with the wings dragging on the ground, or any damned thing else that I wanted them to do. And what did I say to him?

I told him that if he did not license the airplane within twenty-four hours I would destroy him, would make him the most hated man in history; told him that old women would make long trips in order to piss on his grave for ten thousand years after he was dead. Told him that I was going back to Africa with or without that airplane, but that if I was forced to go without it he would regret it for the rest of his life. Because, I said, I intend to use that airplane to save the lives of hundreds of elephants, but without that airplane I will be forced to kill them, and that if I do have to kill them I will produce the bloodiest film in the history of the world, bring it back here, run it on television and give him full credit, tell the viewers that he not only made it possible but made it necessary. Told him that he could kill all the damned Vietnamese that he wanted to, and that nobody gave a shit, but that people did care about elephants.

So now you know how the Number Three Routine works.

Donald Spence had liked Africa so much that he wanted to go back with me; so we made arrangements for his wife to travel by ship, taking his children and mine with her. We also crated the smaller of the airplanes, guns, ammunition, enough film editing equipment to set up two studios and a seemingly endless list of other things to go by sea on the same ship. Many of the things that I shipped could have been purchased in South Africa but could be purchased in this country at much lower prices.

My original home in Slidell had long since been turned into a studio, every room in the house except the kitchen had been almost filled with film production equipment, so I had leased a second house where I was staying with my other three children and with Joyce.

Just before midnight one evening, while I was working in the kitchen of the house where we were living, Joyce came into the kitchen and started in again; it was almost an exact repetition of the stunt she pulled in the Durban hotel, except I was not sick. So when she reached the point where she was going to run out into the front yard screaming that I was trying to rape her, I moved without hesitation; grabbed her by the shoulder and spun her around before she could open the front door and then hit her in the face eighteen times before she dropped to the floor. Eighteen hard blows to the face would have killed her, but that was not my intention, so the blows were just hard enough to accomplish my purpose.

Nothing was broken, and there would be no permanent damage or scarring, but she would not be able to see for at least two days and would have two very black eyes for a couple of weeks after she could see again.

When I was sure she could understand me, I said . . . “Apparently you did not learn anything in Africa, Joyce, and be informed that your scheme would not have worked even had I permitted you to run out into the yard screaming. I have already made arrangements with the officials at the State Insane Asylum in Mandeville, and all I have to do to get you locked up there is to call them. But I am not going to do so unless I have to, unless you force me to, because once it goes down on your record that you have been confined to a mental institution you will never be able to live it down; such a record will haunt you for the rest of your life. Do you understand me?”

I am not sure if she could speak or not, but she tried to nod her head.

So I continued . . . “When you are able to see well enough to walk around without bumping into things, which you should be able to do in two or three days, then I am going to drive you into New Orleans and drop you off, and after that I don’t want to ever see or hear from you again; but if I ever do see you again I’ll probably kill you, and I would rather not have to do that. When I drop you in New Orleans I will give you some money, not a lot of money but enough to get you anywhere in the country that you want to go by bus, and enough to pay for a room and your meals for a couple of months after you get to wherever you go. In the meantime, until you can see well enough to leave, stay in your room; and I will see to it that you are fed enough to at least stay alive. Now, since I know you cannot see, give me

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your hand and I'll pull you up on your feet and lead you to the bed in your room. And, one more point, I do not intend to mention any of this to your mother; what you choose to tell her is up to you."

Actually, I don't believe that her mother would have been surprised if I had told her the whole story; apparently Joyce had pulled a similar stunt on her husband, and he damned near beat her to death. I never learned just what occurred in that instance, but knowing Joyce as well as I did by that point I would not have been surprised by anything.

But, as I have said earlier, I seldom follow my own rules; so I let her stay. Did so only because my younger daughter, Eva, who was then twelve, begged me to let her stay. A request that almost cost Eva and the two boys their lives.

The next few weeks went by in such a hectic schedule of work that I had very little time to spend trying to figure out just what to do with Joyce; her eyes cleared up, the bruises eventually disappeared, and she did not give me any more trouble of any kind. I certainly did not trust her, but was no longer in a state of constant full alert; but I should have been.

There was only one telephone line in the studio/house, but two phones, one mounted on the wall above an editing table in a room that had been the master bedroom when we were living there and a second one in another room. From where I was standing, working, I could reach out and pick up the phone on the wall without moving my body, usually answered before the second ring; but when the phone rang one evening, about nine O'clock, Joyce rushed into the room and grabbed the phone before I even started to reach for it, which surprised but did not alarm me. I assumed that it was a boyfriend calling and that she was trying to make sure that I did not listen in on her conversation, thus did not answer the phone in the other room. She listened for a minute or so to whoever was calling, then said . . . "That's fine, I'll be right there, wait for me." Hung up the phone, walked out of the room and then left the house, and then I heard my car drive off. Did not say a word to me. To the extent that I had any emotional reaction to any of that, I was amused; assumed that she was just paranoid, which for her was normal.

Then, about thirty minutes later, the phone rang again; it was Joyce . . . "Now don't get excited, just stay calm."

So I said . . . "Don't get excited about what, Joyce? What the Hell are you talking about?"

And she said . . . "The house caught fire, but the kids are alright, and they put out the fire. There's some damage to the utility room but the rest of the house is not damaged."

So I told her . . . "To begin with, Joyce, you are the one who is excited, not me; secondly, since you took my car I have no way to get over there, so come get me."

There was very little damage, the wall on one side of the utility room and a large area on the floor was scorched, and a pile of Joyce's clothes that had been next to the water heater had been reduced to soggy ashes by flames and water used to douse them with. Joyce's housekeeping efforts had a lot in common with a pig, and I assumed that the clothing she had thrown down on the floor near the water heater had been the source of the fire; a fire probably started when an article of clothing contacted the pilot light of the heater.

I assured myself that no additional danger existed, sent the three younger children back to bed and went back to work; it never entered my mind that the fire was anything apart from an accident resulting from Joyce's sloppy habits. I did not discuss the fire with the three younger children at the time; they were apparently not disturbed and the fire appeared to have been a relatively harmless accident.

Then, three days later, Joyce suddenly disappeared; taking with her everything of value that was light enough for her to carry off: all of the money she could find, quite a bit as it happened as I usually paid for everything in cash because of my ongoing battles with the IRS and thus she was able to steal thousands of dollars. Additionally, a large and very valuable collection of gold coins from all over the world was gone, and that also represented a lot of money. Just what else she stole was difficult to determine because by that point the studio/house was almost filled solidly from the floor to the ceiling with stuff packed for shipment to Africa.



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But I still was not suspicious about the fire, still assumed it was a random accident. Then, two days later, a young man that I had hired told me that Joyce had said that I had accused her of starting the fire, which was not true. When I called Joyce's mother, to find out if she knew where Joyce had gone, she also said that Joyce said I had accused her of starting the fire. So then I talked to my oldest son, Gary, who was then nearly fourteen years old; asked him to tell me exactly what occurred on the night of the fire.

He said . . . "We were watching television when Joyce came over; it was still early but Joyce insisted that we had to go to bed, so we did, and I went to sleep. Then, later, I woke up, smelled smoke, woke up the other kids and we ran over to the house next door and called the fire department and then called you."

I said . . . "But you did not call me that night, Gary."

And he said . . . "Yes I did, but Joyce answered the phone; then she came over here, looked at the damage from the fire, which was out by then, and then called you. Then she went to get you and you came over."

Circumstantial evidence? Perhaps, but sometimes that's the most damning sort of evidence. Who but the guilty would have rushed out of my editing room without a word to me after learning that the other house was on fire? She was terrified when she got that call from Gary, rushed out of the studio/house in an attempt to cover her tracks; or, if necessary, if the evidence of her guilt was too obvious to conceal, in order to give her a chance to run before I learned what had happened.

Except for her later statements to my employee and her mother, I might never have suspected her; but once I learned exactly what happened that night her guilt was obvious. Which is why she stole everything of value she could lay her hands on and left; probably assuming that the truth would eventually come out, perhaps as a result of a casual remark by Gary.

I then assumed that I had seen the last of Joyce, and figured it was good riddance to bad rubbish, but again I was wrong; while her motive for the fire also appeared to be obvious, an attempt to kill the other three children in order to put her in the position of being my only heir, it turned out that the attempt on the lives of the other three children was only the first step in her plot to get her hands on all of my assets. She would not become an heir until I was dead.

In the direction of arranging that second step, she had seduced one of my employees and involved him in the plot; I later learned that he had also knocked her up, and then arranged for a second abortion. The plan then was for him to follow me to Africa, kill me, and probably kill the other three children as well, and then return to Joyce in this country so they could get their hands on everything I owned; which was, at best, an utterly insane plot; because, by that point, everything I owned would be in Africa and they could never have managed to get control of those assets.

Later, in Africa, I learned that this employee had a private box in a post office that none of the rest of us ever used, became suspicious and investigated; like many people, even post office employees are not always honest and it did not require much in the way of a bribe for me to start intercepting Joyce's letters to my employee who was involved with her in this plot.

So I took him to a house that we had rented on the far side of Durban from where our studio was located, sat him down and told him to tell me the whole story, step by step in great detail, leaving nothing out; by which point he was terrified, because he knew that he had been caught, suspected what the results would be and was not tempted to do or say anything that might piss me off any more than I already was. About an hour into his following confession, he asked me if I would give him permission to go into the bathroom and slash his wrists; but I told him no, that the results would undoubtedly be the same in the end but that I would decide just how and when.

He talked and I typed, and his detailed confession covered four legal-size sheets of paper, single spaced, a total of at least four thousand words. He told me everything that I already knew, everything that I had only suspected, and a lot of things that I had not suspected. He admitted his involvement in the attempt to kill my children, and also admitted that he had come to Africa only for the purpose of killing me. He told me where they sold the collection of gold coins, and how much they got for them; who performed the second abortion, and where; and a long list of other crimes that had not previously come to light. Since he did not then know just how much I already knew, he did not dare leave out

"...And God Laughs"

## The Arthur Jones Collection

anything; before starting to type the confession, I had clearly made him aware of just what would happen immediately if I caught him in a lie of any kind.

Later, back in New Orleans, I called the local office of the FBI and arranged a meeting with two Special Agents that took place in a restaurant close to Pan American Films. When the two agents sat down at my table in the restaurant I handed each of them a copy of the confession that I had typed in Africa. Having been clearly aware of just how such a confession should be written, I had made a number of mistakes while typing it; or so it would appear, because all such apparent mistakes were in fact not actual mistakes, were made only because they required corrections on the part of the party who was confessing. Corrections made by him in his own handwriting, so that he could not later claim that he had signed the confession without having read it first.

But, having read the confession, which included details of everything just short of killing JFK, the two agents told me that they were not interested. This in spite of the fact that several Federal felonies were clearly spelled out. Then one of the agents said . . . “If we were interested, we might be interested in you.”

Almost stunned by that remark, I said . . . “Me: what the Hell have I done?”

And he said . . . “Well, to begin with, it was illegal for you to have the gold that they stole. Secondly, you might be guilty of kidnapping.”

So I said . . . “Kidnapping; kidnapping who?”

Then he said . . . “This guy that dictated the confession; where is he?”

And I said . . . “I don’t really know, I haven’t seen him around lately; just where he is at the moment might depend upon your religious convictions; but not being religious myself, I don’t have any opinions on that subject. However, if I did see him again, I might turn religious.”

And he said . . . “Just what does that mean? We have a lot of friends in South Africa, you know; we can find out just what happened if we have to.”

So I asked him . . . “Your friends in South Africa, do they have crystal balls?”

He looked at me for a minute or two and then said . . . “And what does that mean?”

So I stood up, looked down at him, and said . . . “Africa is a fair sized island, you know; it might help if you knew where to look.” Then I walked out. What, if anything, they did later I don’t know; I never saw or heard from either of those two agents again. But, the Department of Justice being what it is, maybe they are still looking into it nearly thirty years later.