

*By the same author*

The Lost Americans  
Hunting American Lions  
Hunting American Bears  
Prehistoric Man in Europe  
Treasure in the Dust  
Digging up America

# HUNTING IN AFRICA

by

FRANK C. HIBBEN

ILLUSTRATED



LONDON

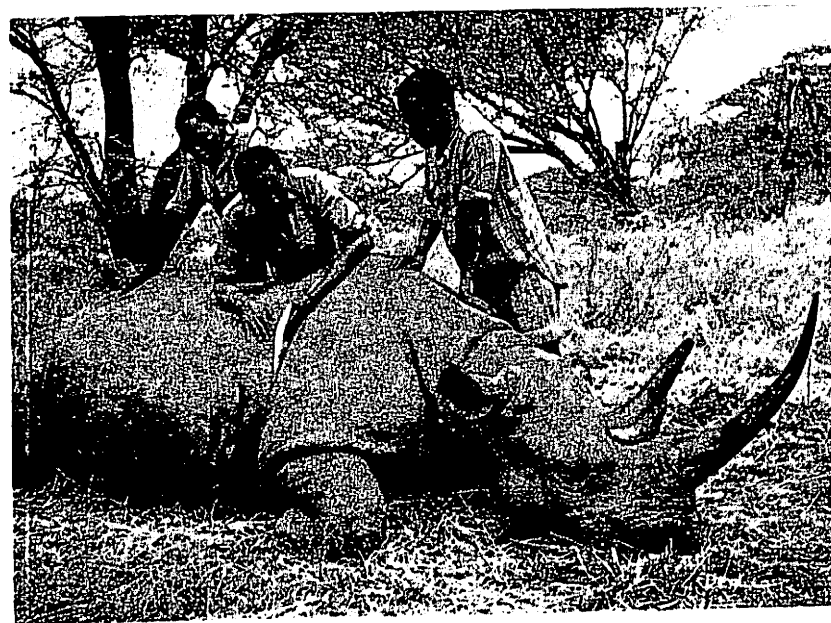
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proved to be fairly short. He had looked awfully big coming straight at us out of the dust and confusion. Nick was picking up the parts of his double rifle, to see if anything could be salvaged. "I think," he said ruefully, "that this is the wrong way to get a big elephant."



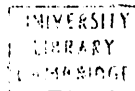
Our safari camp in Kenya.



This rhino from western Kenya has a 30-inch horn. Ngoro shows the thickness of the hide on the cape.



The blond-maned lion of Ikoma was considerably longer than I.



## Walk Around a Rhino

A GREY BODY heaved out of the brush before us. Two red-billed tick birds danced up and down on its folded skin. Their shrill *tchick, tchick, tchick*, had done the damage, warning of our approach. The rhino whirled, his little eyes glaring straight at us.

Andrew Holmberg was already pulling me backward by one shoulder. "Poor quality horn," he whispered in my ear. "Only fifteen inches."

While he was speculating on the horn's length, I was thinking that both of us were likely to be impaled on that horn in the next second. Sure enough, the rhino snorted, lowered his head, and came rumbling toward us. Apparently he was charging in the general direction of our sound and scent, however, without having a good visual fix on us. At any rate, he went pounding by to one side, and kept on going.

This was a typical blind rush by a rhino, and Holmberg was no more disturbed by it than a city dweller would be by a careering taxi. It seems you're usually fairly safe from a general-direction charge if you step behind a tree or bush. Only when a rhino gets you lined up in his short-sighted eyes do you have serious trouble to contend with.

Holmberg, who started shooting African rhinos as a boy on his father's Kenya coffee plantation, almost invited the brutes to come at him. "The best way to judge the length of the horn," he blandly assured me, "is to get the rhino to look straight at you."

This proved to be true, but there were difficulties—even for a man as experienced as Holmberg. Only a year before, Andrew was seriously injured while reviewing rhinos from his favourite head-on perspective. He had taken a client to within a few yards of a female feeding with her small calf. The cow charged, as usual, and Andrew stepped behind a bush. As he watched the cow gallop past, the calf crashed through Holmberg's screening bush and knocked him flat, breaking a couple of his ribs.

A grown African black rhinoceros will weigh two tons or more,

but its brain is smaller than a human's. Yet low mentality is precisely what makes the rhino so dangerous. He'll charge an elephant, another rhino, a safari car, or even the sound of his own dung dropping. Rhinos have tipped over trucks, spilling the people out and trampling them to death. Charging rhinos have stalled trains on the Mombasa railroad and crumpled cars on the highways.

Because of his witless willingness to charge, the African rhino has been purposely killed off as new roads and farms are established in his habitat. Kenya is practically the last area of all Africa where the black rhino can be hunted at all. Since the rhino is a slow breeder, as well as a menace to settlers, there seems little question that his days are numbered in most parts of Africa. In Kenya and northern Tanganyika, the normal range of the black rhino, it is already difficult to find one with a good head and a long front horn. The bush rhino, which lives in the low scrub country, generally has a short, stubby front horn. The long, graceful horns, so much sought after by hunters, are almost always found on animals living in mountain country, such as the slopes of Mount Kenya. One such animal met a military patrol in single file on a narrow game trail in the Mount Kenya jungles, and spitted the first two men on his horn before they could avoid him.

Mount Kenya was closed to our party, however, because bands of Mau Mau terrorists were again operating there, so we turned instead into the mountainous country to the south and west. Here, beyond the famous Rift Valley, Andrew had located a good rhino range while acting as military scout some years earlier. There were no native villages within miles. Our only difficulty was in getting a wheeled vehicle within striking distance of a particular isolated valley, in which Andrew had located several rhinos with trophy-sized lengths of horn on their snouts.

Our truck, the second vehicle in our entourage, never did make the grade across the rocky escarpment which blocked the entrance to "Holmberg Valley," as we called it in honour of our white hunter. But we finally got our safari car up an old elephant trail which crossed the Rift escarpment and into the valley beyond. This valley, surrounded by thorn-tree-covered mountains and broken by lava cliffs, is as wild as any in Africa today.

We spent three weeks there and saw about fifty rhinos. The first we sighted as our car topped the last rise of the trail beyond the Rift Valley. Andrew had stopped the car to look at some fresh buffalo tracks, and a pair of dik-diks suddenly skittered in front of us. These tiny antelope were frightened of something beyond a screen of bushes.

Sungura, our second gunbearer, pointed beyond the bush. There we saw a horn on top of an ugly snout. An ear with frayed edges

tipped backward and forward, as though to catch sound. The head that showed above the brush looked like a prop from a Hollywood movie about dinosaurs.

The head swung toward us, and an explosive snort funnelled through the two nostrils below the menacing horn. "If he charges the car, we've had it," Andrew whispered in my ear.

We had walked a few yards from the car, following the buffalo tracks. We bent low and sneaked back. Ngoro, our Masai gunbearer, silently handed down a pair of .470 double rifles. Then Andrew and I crawled toward the brush again, followed by our two gunbearers. We moved rapidly in a quarter circle, keeping perhaps fifty yards from the rhino. The beast snorted from time to time, swinging his head back and forth. He'd heard us but hadn't spotted us—yet.

At a break in the bushes I saw another form, standing quite close to the flank of the first.

"Calf," breathed Andrew in my ear. "I thought that first one was a cow. She has a good horn, though, About twenty-five inches." Although it is legal to shoot female rhinos, most sportsmen won't do it, especially if the cow has a small calf.

Gunbearer Ngoro was now trickling dust between his fingers, watching a faint breeze drift the stuff in the direction of the animals. I heard the cow stamp her feet. Brush and branches crashed. Andrew and Ngoro stood up.

The rhino charged in our direction, but not straight at us. She pounded past us, the calf keeping pace at her flanks. A cloud of dust boiled up behind them. Then they were gone.

"Our first rhino, and a twenty-five inch horn," Andrew said enthusiastically. My own reactions were different. I was not only learning about rhinos, but also about white hunters.

On this safari we shot elephants, buffalo, lion, and a fine leopard. In all of these encounters we moved in close. Even when it was possible to shoot from one hundred yards or so, these professionals practised the theory that one accurate shot at close range is worth several poorly placed ones at a greater distance.

I argued that I could place my shot as well at a fair range. Then, if something should go wrong, there'd be time to form a different plan, or at least to sprint for a tree. My words were lost on Andrew. I had to hunt his way—easing up within twenty or thirty yards in an effort to make the first shot count.

I also learned that a white hunter joins in the shooting only as a last resort, and Andrew's idea of a last resort was nothing like mine. It seemed to me that dangerous animals came within a hair's breadth of

doing me in a dozen times in the course of our safari. At one point, I explained to Andrew that if something had me down and was chewing on me, he should feel free to shoot.

"You'll make out all right," he shrugged.

Andrew was no doubt trying to build up my confidence, but the rhinos kept tearing it down. If the brutes charged the car, as they often did, it took a wild ride through rocks and trees to get away. On one or two occasions we had a rhino huffing and puffing right at our rear wheel.

On foot the situation was even worse—especially in Holmberg Valley. Here the rhinos were concentrated along a small stream that was flanked on both sides by a solid mass of junglelike vegetation. Rhino trails, worn deep, led down from the hills into the area. Apparently the rhinos spent a lot of time on the mountain slopes.

Some rhinos, especially cows with calves and younger bulls, stayed in the valley most of the time. We would often sneak up close to these to get a good look at their horns. Their usual response was to lower their heads, and snorting like donkey engines, come charging our way.

"You know," Andrew observed one morning, "there are a lot of rhinos here that we haven't seen. I think we'll try that heavy cover right over there."

We'd already seen a dozen rhinos that looked good to me, but Andrew was more particular. "Somewhere in these mountains there's a record-size rhino," he said, as we started out. "He may be in that heavy cover along the stream."

We drove the car to one of the open parks near the middle of the valley. Then we took the first game trail that led toward the creek in the centre. Sungura and Ngoro followed us, each carrying an extra double rifle.

The open grassland was like a sunny park. Entering the jungle growth was like going into a darkened room. Every leaf, fern, and circling vine was struggling for light. When our eyes became accustomed to the gloom, I saw great woody vines hanging like serpents above our path.

I noticed that Ngoro and Andrew paused at almost every step, looking intently into the shadows ahead and on both sides. At no time could we see farther than twenty or thirty feet.

We pushed along as silently as ghosts for perhaps an hour, encountering nothing larger than a flock of dark-coloured partridges. Then, in a particularly dense place, Ngoro stopped—so suddenly that I bumped into him. He stared intently to the right. I'd noticed that Ngoro had seemed to be following the track of one particular

rhino, turning from one trail to another as the distinctive track followed the stream's bank.

I stared in the direction Ngoro seemed to be looking, but I could see nothing. Ngoro turned and looked at Andrew. They both nodded knowingly. Andrew beckoned for me to move forward, and put his finger against his mouth.

We now redoubled our efforts at stealth. Ngoro carefully leaned over and moved small sticks from the path, so that we might make no unnecessary noise, and at every step he stopped to listen. I heard the piping of a faraway bird, but that was all.

We tiptoed forward a few yards more. Ngoro pointed. Two small birds were perched on a rounded boulder in the dense shadows. They were excited, and ran back and forth calling *tchick, tchick*.

The boulder beneath the two birds quivered. Then it was still again. Andrew made motions to Sungura. Slowly, with great caution, Sungura began climbing a tree at one side of the trail. He reached the first big limb and looked intently over the screen of bushes just before us. He stared for a moment, shook his head ever so slightly, and started to ease himself down the trunk. As he dropped lithely to the ground, a twig snapped.

The grey bulk heaved up before us. As part of the same movement, it whirled to face us, and I clearly saw the snout and the curved horn. It wasn't thirty feet away. Automatically, I brought up the .470 double.

"Poor horn," muttered Andrew behind me. In that second the rhino charged, and we plunged into the brush.

The brute passed us like a truck out of control, flattening small trees and brush in its path. We could hear the thud of its feet far up the trail; then all was silent.

"The wind from that thing almost took my hat off," I said.

"Poor horn," Andrew said again. "We didn't want him."

A few minutes later and a few yards farther along the trail, Ngoro again spotted a huddled form beneath a tangle of low-growing vines. Once more we tiptoed forward. There were no tick birds here, but we saw a flick of motion.

Ngoro peered ahead, then got to his feet. There was a look of disgust on his face. Andrew stood up. "It's no rhino," Andrew said to me. "It's a bushbuck—but a good one."

Sungura silently handed me the .300 Weatherby, and I gave him the .470 double rifle. My hands were sweaty and none too steady. I stood up and saw that the bushbuck was lying flat with his back toward us. Occasionally he flicked his white-fringed tail, and that was the movement we'd seen. I shot him through the shoulder.

"Well, that shot ends the rhino hunting in here for some time,"

Andrew said. "It's hard to pick out a good horn in this thick stuff anyway." I readily agreed to return to open country.

For the next week we tried to catch the rhinos as they came down from the hills to water. We saw perhaps ten in that time, one of them a bull with a horn about twenty-five inches long.

"That one would look awfully big where I come from," I said as we studied the bull.

Andrew wouldn't compromise. "Ngoro has seen the tracks of one particularly large bull that comes down to water at night. That's the one we want to get."

We started out before dawn to inspect the baits we had hung to attract the lion we had heard roaring every night, over on the other side of the valley. As we drove up to the first, Sungura, who was perched on top of the car as a lookout, pounded on the roof. Andrew stopped the car.

We looked ahead, expecting a lion, but Sungura was pointing behind us. There we saw the head and shoulders of a rhino looming above the brush fringing the river. Even at a distance—the rhino was about three hundred yards away—we could see that the horn was long and pointed. Andrew didn't even raise his binoculars. He just handed me the Weatherby .300.

"You're so eager to shoot something big with this," he commented. "You can try it out."

I slipped some cartridges with solid bullets into the .300 and we walked forward. Ngoro tested the wind with a piece of grass. The rhino apparently had watered at the stream, and was now on his way back to the hills. After a moment, he moved out of sight among the scattered bushes.

We trotted in a wide half-circle, so that we might come up in front of the rhino on the downwind side. At the place where we hoped to meet the animal, there were several rhino trails with patches of brush in between. It was certainly no place to try out my long-range theories. There was enough brush to permit the rhino either to pass us unseen, or to charge from a few feet away.

We stood there wondering if we'd gone too far or not far enough. Something moved in the brush to one side of us. We whirled around. The horn looked enormous, and it was pointed straight at us.

"Shoot him under the chin," Andrew said.

I raised the .300 centred the crosshairs of the scope below the chin, and squeezed the trigger.

At the shot the rhino seemed to shrink backward. Then he turned sideways. Frantically I centred on a point on his shoulder, and jerked the trigger. The rhino went down.

"Flattened him," said Andrew behind me. But when I started forward he pulled me back. "Never head straight for a rhino," he cautioned.

Ngoro thrust the .470 double into my hands, and impatiently I let Andrew guide me in a half-circle.

Suddenly the brush shook. The brute was on his feet, the great horn aimed at us.

"Shoot!" Andrew snapped.

As in a dream, I raised the rifle and fired at the base of the neck. The rhino swerved under the impact of the heavy bullet. I fired the left barrel into the shoulder as he swept by not six feet from the gun barrel.

The rhino lurched to a stop and stood still. Then he turned his great head toward me. I fumbled for the extra shells in the loops at my waist. Ngoro pressed another rifle on me from behind. Dropping the empty one, I snatched the loaded one, and whirled around. The rhino sank forward on his face.

"That was sticky," Andrew commented. "I didn't even see this second rhino till he was right on us."

"Second rhino?" I asked, still in a daze. Andrew pointed, and I saw the great carcass of the rhino I'd shot with the .300 in the brush ahead of us. The second rhino had charged out of the same patch of brush, giving me the impression that I was still dealing with the first animal.

Our original rhino had a front horn measuring thirty inches. The pioneer African hunters took rhinos with much longer horns, but a thirty-incher is a remarkable trophy these days.

Andrew was both elated and dejected. Pleased about the trophy, he was nonetheless upset because it had been necessary to shoot two animals. The second one weighed about as much as the first, but its horn was only eighteen inches long.

Later, when we explained the double kill to the game warden, he agreed that it had been necessary. "Had an experience like that myself last month," he said.

Tangling with two rhinos is exciting, I'll admit, but I confess that I would never do it on purpose. I'm more loyal than ever to my notion that rhino hunters would live longer if they picked out lone bulls, and used scoped rifles to shoot from much longer ranges.

## 6

*Rhino Versus Bulldozer*

THE RHINO hurtled out of the bamboo like the battering ram that he was. He struck the half-raised blade of the dozer at one side. The machine, labouring up the steep grade, stopped dead. Ndege, the driver, frantically worked at the controls to start the engine. The rhino whirled on stubby legs, and charged again. Ndege saw a trickle of blood from the flaring nostrils. The rhino came from the side. Just before he struck the bulldozer again, he lowered his head, then jerked his snout upward as he struck. The sharp-pointed horn caught the dozer under the top plates of the track. There was a sound like a bullet hitting hard steel. The whole bulldozer tipped precariously under the impact, and Ndege and his helper were thrown out of the far side of the driver's seat. One of the plates of the track ripped away.

"A rhino charge a bulldozer and stop it dead?" I asked incredulously. "An automobile, yes; maybe even a truck if the rhino hit it on the side; but a bulldozer . . ."

David Ommanney, the white hunter, shook his head, and stuck his pipe in his mouth at a belligerent angle. "Couldn't believe it myself till I went to look. They're repairing the bulldozer now. That driver, Ndege, is still the colour of wood ashes."

David Ommanney, my wife Brownie, and I were at that moment in a wet camp well up on the slopes of Mount Kenya in East Africa. We had been there for two weeks, hunting bongo, that elusive, forest-dwelling antelope considered by many sportsmen to be Africa's top trophy. As secondary prizes, I hoped to get a forest leopard and a wide-horned, forest-dwelling buffalo. During our bongo hunt, we had been charged by forest elephants and snorted at by buffalo. I had shot one buffalo bull just above our camp on a forest road. The buffalo turned out to have a very disappointing head of horns. We used the carcass for leopard baits, up and down the same road. After three nights of vigil, we finally surprised a mongoose eating the

buffalo meat. While looking at the mongoose, I bagged a giant forest hog, which looks like a cross between a bacon pig and a black bear. We wanted bongo, forest leopard, or at least a good Mount Kenya buffalo. We had everything else but. All of this is to say that our hunt was not the most successful African safari in the records.

Not that Mount Kenya isn't about the most interesting country in all of East Africa. Camped as we were well up on the slope of the 17,040 foot mountain, we found ourselves in another world as far as Africa was concerned. Even in our camp the weather was wet, cold and dark. We had pitched our tent in a small clearing, formerly occupied by a sawmill. From the sawmill radiated forest roads along which the foresters had hauled in the saw logs before World War II. Farther up on the mountain, the forest roads enter the bamboo zone. Here, most of the roads stop. Some of the Mount Kenya tracks up the main ridges were extended by Army bulldozers during the Mau Mau emergency, so that truckloads of scouts could more easily get at the terrorists. Our white hunter, David Ommanney, was one of the scouts. He showed us where he and his men had surprised a camp of Mau Mau, killing sixteen in a hot fire fight. We could still see the ashes of the old fires, and the remnants of the brush shelters where the terrorists lived.

We had spent most of our time in the bamboo, as that is where the bongo lives. We had found the bamboo forest wet and nasty, and bongoless as far as we were concerned. Finding one of the rare forest antelope in that monotonous stuff was like trying to find a flea on a hound's back when you are the size of the flea. So when David heard that the men at Keith's sawmill, some thirty miles north around the base of the mountain, had sighted a big bull mountain rhino, he took the safari car and drove around to find out.

"See a mountain rhino!" the foreman of the sawmill exploded. "We've done nothing else but see the bloody beast. He's disabled my only dozer, kept two of my men up a tree all night, and charges every time we go up there. The bloody thing lives there."

Next morning, David and I went to see for ourselves. Native mechanics were fitting a new plate on the broken bulldozer track. Even when the machine was repaired, however, Ndege claimed that he would not again go up on the ridge where the rhino lived.

"We'll go up there and shoot him for you this afternoon," Ommanney said confidently.

Confidence is a good thing in a white hunter. As a matter of fact, I was very confident myself. Shooting a three-ton rhino was going to be a cinch, compared to the elusive bongo. But four days and a hundred

miles of mountain trails later, we still had not eliminated the bulldozer rhino.

He was there all right. The foreman had said that he lived there, and we found tracks to prove it. He was a bull, too. The print of his hind foot was as wide across as my hand from outstretched thumb to extended little finger. This is a big track, even for a mountain rhino. We followed some thousand of these distinctive tracks every day, but the bulldozer rhino seemed to be as retiring as one of the rare Mount Kenya orchids that Brownie was always looking for. With a guide from the sawmill, Ommanney's gunbearer, Longolo, and a second gunbearer, Kwakai, to carry lunch and ammunition, we tracked, rested, and tracked again. As we rested, David told me about mountain rhinos.

"The mountain rhino is a lot different from his lowland cousin, the bush rhino, although they both belong to the same species. The mountain variety of the black rhino, like this one here,"—David indicated one of the deep three-lobed footprints in front of us—"has a bigger body, a lighter colour, and a long, slender horn compared to the short, blunt snout of the bush rhino. These mountain beasts are usually shyer than bongo," David added with a wry smile.

Apparently our mountain rhino bull had reverted to type. We hadn't even got a good look at him, much less a fair shot. I did have one glimpse the second morning of the hunt. I saw the rhino's eye and his front horn, about five feet from my face.

David and I had found tracks on our first reconnaissance, which showed that the bull usually bedded down very close to the spot where he had effectively stopped the bulldozer from scraping a road up his home ridge. A hundred yards above the gouges in the earth where the bulldozer had been working, a thick stand of bamboo began, extending upward into the sodden clouds that always hung on the flank of the mountain. On the second morning, we went directly to this bamboo thicket, after driving our safari car as far as we could along the unfinished road. At the edge of the bamboo, where the tunnel of a game trail showed like a black doorway, was a dollop of dung, fresh and wet. Longolo stuck his bare toe into the dung, and grunted in a whisper. David translated the Swahili: "Dung's warm. We'll find your rhino in there." He gestured with the barrel of his .470 double rifle.

We followed the fresh tracks and droppings into the darkness of the bamboo. I was third in line. We went a few yards, then stopped where three game trails came together. Just to my left I thought I saw a dark form. It certainly wasn't the matted stalks of several fallen bamboo. At a crouch, I moved off several yards to the left, and stuck my head

around a corner of the game trail. I could see a bright eye with wrinkles around it. Above was the base of a horn, brown and shredded like a coconut husk.

"Come back, you fool," Ommanney hissed behind me. The bamboos crackled as the rhino heaved to his feet and lunged. I threw up my Weatherby. The barrel caught on a bamboo. I could see nothing. The noise of breaking bamboo was deafening. Just to my left, the stalks jerked and splintered. The crashing died away.

"That was sticky," David commented as we got to our feet. "If he had charged straight at you, he would have stepped on your head." I gathered from his tone that at the moment David wished that the rhino had done just that. Longolo was taking the wind by shaking a little bag of wood ashes. He muttered something in Swahili. "That bull circled on his own trail and had our wind," David commented, shaking his head. "Can't fathom why he charged a bulldozer but didn't take on four men on foot."

Just when the bulldozer rhino lost his nerve, I do not know. The natives at the sawmill told us that, as far as they could remember, the bull had lived on that ridge for the last three or four years. He had systematically charged and driven off every native who came that way, and ultimately even the bulldozer which had invaded his domain. For some reason, he figured we were different. That night he left his bamboo ridge, crossed a deep canyon to the south, and disappeared. It took us a whole day of tracking to find where he went. When we did follow the sliding tracks in the mud, I could not comprehend how a three ton beast could go down that muddy track, across the volcanic rocks in the canyon bottom, and up the other side. The terrain would have tried the ability of a mountain goat. Late on the third day, we jumped the rhino in a thick clump of bamboo, and he ran again.

During the fourth day of tracking, we were tired, wet, and discouraged. The belligerent bulldozer rhino had turned into a running coward. We had jumped him twice on the bamboo-covered ridges, high up on the flank of Kenya. Each time he had smelled us or heard us, and galloped off through the bamboo like a frightened rabbit. Each time he ran, he circled wide, and headed back to the north. Late in the afternoon, we figured he was going back to his home range, and we would all be just where we had started, which was nowhere.

We stopped in a little opening where the spreading limbs of a giant cedar had stunted the bamboo. In the sodden mess at the base of the tree, we built a fire with great difficulty (and a lot of Boy Scout lore), and ate a late lunch. The cold mountain mists were already beginning to roll down Kenya. The tree hyraxes were tuning up, as though night had already fallen. The tree hyrax, an animal about the size of an



American groundhog, makes love to his mate in the next tree by screeching, a noise that sounds like a woman having her throat cut. A group of louries, with their brilliant red underwings, fluttered and settled for the night in the tree above us. Longolo and Kwakai stretched out on the wet ground with their feet to the fire. Even Ommanney seemed discouraged. "We're either going to have to get cracking and head for the car, or spend the night under this damn tree," he remarked sourly, as he sucked at his dead pipe.

I nodded glumly, but added, "Let's track old bulldozer a little farther. It's almost in the direction we have to go anyway."

David shook his head, prodded the two gunbearers into life with his foot, and motioned Kwakai to carry his double rifle. While David was stamping out our sputtering fire and knocking out his pipe. I stepped along the game trail on the tracks of the bull. The tracks had never been hard to follow. In the mud of the bongo trail, the rhino had sunk two inches at every stride. I saw by the splayed-out imprints that old bulldozer was still running. "Probably be clear on the other side of the mountain," I thought glumly.

A couple of hundred feet beyond our fire, the bongo trail ended abruptly in a tangle of half-broken bamboos. This was to be expected. We had passed a hundred places like it on that day. Bushbuck, bongo, buffalo, and other animals using the forest track had made a detour around the windfall. As I stepped into the side trail, David was at my shoulder. I crouched down to crawl beneath a couple of bamboos, and then stopped on one knee. Just ahead, in the open trail, were four tree trunks. They didn't look natural. The closest one moved a little. A leg! A grey head moved from behind the bamboo. There was a rasping snort. A bamboo cracked. Old bulldozer charged straight through the bamboo.

Apparently the old bull had decided to run no more. Why he had taken his stand just there can be explained only by another brainless rhino. Behind that windfall in the trail, it was easily possible to hear our voices as we had stood by the fire and talked for over an hour. Certainly the old rhino could smell the smoke. But when he made up his mind, he made up his mind. He didn't take the detour around the mass of fallen bamboo, but came straight through. Bamboo stalks as big as my arm snapped like straws. David yelled something, and grabbed for his rifle. Kwakai, at the sudden appearance of the rhino's horn through the bamboos, turned and ran, carrying the double rifle with him. David matched him, stride for stride, screaming like a madman. Meanwhile, it was up to me.

I was still on my knees in the mud. The rhino had apparently seen me. He came straight at me. I saw him lift his ugly head in a vicious

uppercut, to toss away the bamboo stalks. Automatically I raised the Weatherby. There was no time to sight. There was no need. The rhino was twenty or thirty feet away. The solid bullet struck the rhino on the shoulder. He squealed and whirled, and he ran in a complete circle. Bamboos splintered and cracked as the great body cut through them like a scythe. Here he came again. Ommanney was running up the trail. He had snatched the double rifle from Kwakai.

The rhino saw the movement, and charged again. The bull was in the open trail now. I cranked in another shell, and fired at his shoulder as he passed me. David, crouching and running, fired the first barrel, then the second. He and the rhino were running at each other, and only a few feet apart. David would never have a chance to reload. At the impact of the 500 grain bullets, the rhino fell to his knees, and slid in the mud. I bolted in another shell and fired blindly. My gun barrel was not ten feet from the flank of the rhino as he heaved again to his feet.

Ommanney was frantically trying to reload. Usually, a hunter with a double rifle carries two extra shells between the fingers of his left hand, but David had not been carrying his own gun and was not ready. None of us were ready. Now he was trying to dig two shells out of his belt loops, and stuff them into the breech of his gun. I was trying to reload, too. I could not remember whether I had fired two or three times.

But old bulldozer was through. He got to his feet shakily, turned, and ran back through the swath of destruction in the bamboo which he had made seconds before. David and I reloaded, and followed him with our rifles thrust forward, the safeties off. Just ahead, we heard the bamboo crash again. A heavy body rolled down a little slope. There was a gasping snort—and then silence. As we came up to the bull, he raised his head and glared at us with his little pig eyes. I shot again at the base of his neck. He quivered, and then was still. We left him there in the wet bamboo, and started the long walk back to the road and the safari car.

The next morning, with cameras and extra bearers, we walked back to the spot where old bulldozer had made his last stand. In the soft ground, just beyond the bamboo windfall, we found where he had fallen, got up, and fallen again. He had waited for us at that particular place. It was no accident. "More like a buffalo than a rhino," was David's comment. The rhino had been fifty feet from us when I had seen his four stubby legs and he had started his charge. My first bullet from the .378 Weatherby had entered at the base of his neck. We found the bullet beneath the skin of his hip on the opposite side. David's shots had struck the rhino in his chest. Any of these

would have been fatal, but perhaps not quickly enough. Outside of a skinned place on one side of his flank, and the broken tip of his horn, the bulldozer rhino had come off better than the bulldozer which gave him his name.

## 7

*Three Bad Buffs*

A RUMBLING SNORT exploded in our faces. I saw the polished tips of black horns, and dark, evil eyes beneath. A glob of frothy saliva whipped away from the open mouth. As the vague grey body behind surged toward us, the widespread horns dropped suddenly and came forward.

"Shoot!" yelled Andrew Holmberg in my ear. "Shoot low!"

I held the .470 double rifle at an awkward angle. Those awful horns, only a few feet away, seemed paralyzing. My muscles would not move. The muzzle of the gun would not come up. "Don't shoot at the horn!" Andrew had told me before. "The bullet won't go through."

When we had first started this safari. I had wondered if I would stand up under the charge of one of the Big Five. A man never knows until he has actually tried it. To shoot a deer, or even a bear, across a canyon is one thing. To face a charging African Cape buffalo a few feet away is another.

When Andrew first met my wife Brownie and me in our room at the Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi, I could sense that he was sizing me up. He had had many clients in the past. He told me afterwards that he had taken out some hunters who had nerves of steel, and others who threw their guns away and ran when a dangerous animal attacked. Professional hunters do not like to take an unreliable client close to dangerous game. This is the way white hunters get killed.

"Any one of the Big Five can kill a hunter—and often does," Andrew said in his slow, meticulous manner. "Of all these animals, the Cape buffalo is probably the worst. We'll go after buffs first."

"What do you mean 'the worst'?" Brownie wanted to know.

"The cemetery on the edge of Nairobi here," said Andrew as he waved his hand vaguely, "has more customers put there by buffs than by all the rest of the Big Five altogether." With that comforting thought, Andrew got up rather abruptly and left.