THE AUTHOR

Killers in Africa

THE TRUTH ABOUT ANIMALS LYING IN WAIT
AND HUNTERS LYING IN PRINT

BY

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even touch him, the baboon I'd thought dead atop the rock leaped upon my back, knocked me heels over head, and at the same time ripped my forearm open from wrist to elbow with one of his fangs.

I remember seeing my bared forearm muscles sticking out like the picture of a skinned arm in a doctor's book. At the same instant I noticed that the baboon, reaching for me again, had had the top of his head blown off just above his eyebrows by my first shot.

There wasn't time to shoot, although miraculously I was still holding my rifle near the end of the barrel. I swung it like a club. The baboon crumpled. It was then I noticed I'd been using my ripped arm as if it were uninjured.

Charlie and I were a bloody mess. I wiped Charlie partially clean with my shirt, saw that he had a badly mauled shoulder and that one of the baboon's fangs had gone completely through his left hand. Apparently Charlie had shoved his hand into the baboon's mouth in an effort to keep his own throat from being torn out.

He sat up as I examined him. He must have been out of his head, for he kept repeating in M'shangaan: "I have no bowels. I cannot be cut in two."

We walked ten miles to the farm of an Australian named Ross. He hitched up a Cape cart and took us to the hospital in Pretoria.

When able to hunt again, I found I didn't want to kill baboons any more. Something about them had got under my skin. They're not human, but they sometimes seemed mighty close to it. Ugly, fascinating devils! I made up my mind that some day I'd study them as a friend—not as a hunter.

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RHINOS

RHINOS have given me more bad moments—and more laughs—than all other big-game animals together. They're nervous, fretful, itchy, dim-witted creatures with extraordinary hearing, a keen sense of smell, and eyesight so poor that they can see but a few yards beyond their front horns; and half the time those horns interfere with what little vision they do have.

To the average sportsman-hunter, a charging rhino appears to be a thundering demon. To the average professional hunter, a charging rhino is just a big, dull-witted brute making a fool of himself.

I know the viewpoint of the greenhorn, for I've acted as support gun for all kinds—from sadistic blood-spillers to regular guys who know what trophies they want and go after them as sportsmen should.

There are only three reasons for getting killed by a rhino or by any big game—ignorance of their habits, carelessness, or plain foolishness.

I know one old professional hunter who boasts that he's been tossed three times by a rhino. A greenhorn could be tossed once without losing face. After all, he's got to learn. A professional could be tossed once and be

credited with a mental lapse. But to be tossed *three* times proves a man more stupid than a rhino.

Tossed by a rhino! Sounds pretty deadly. Yet five out of ten who are tossed get up and walk away. Four require considerable doctoring. The tenth man takes off for the Happy Hunting Grounds.

It's different when they trample you.

One of my first professional encounters with a rhino ended in the death of a man. Mario Galli was an animal buyer for a game contractor. He brought me an order for two live baby rhinos for the Jardin des Plantes zoo in Paris. Ubusuku and I went to the Uaso Nyiro country in northern Kenya after them. Galli had a yen to get himself a rhino and came along. He wasn't the easiest man in the world to hunt with. He was touchy and hot-tempered. At first he refused to let me watch him try out with his .303, but when I told him I'd act as guide for no man until I knew how he could shoot, he consented.

I set up a battered eight-inch pot-lid at one hundred paces. Galli missed it offhand. He missed it kneeling. He missed it sitting, elbows on knees. He missed it prone. I took his rifle, got the front sight into the back V until it made a perfect W and let the shot off at six o'clock. The bullet went through the lid one inch above dead centre. It had been nicely zeroed for two hundred yards.

I adjusted his sights for one hundred yards and worked with him for two hours. He got so he could put his shots into the lid from a prone position. Standing, he was hopeless. I said: "Ordinarily I wouldn't guide a man who shoots so poorly as you do. But if you'll promise not to shoot unless your rhino is in short grass so you can lie

down to it, and if you'll take no shots unless the beast is broadside to you so you can aim at a spot half-way between the base of his ear and his eye—okay."

He promised.

I said: "Remember, you're shooting a .303 with a 215-grain bullet, so if you're going to drop him, you've got to hit him smack in the temple."

"You don't have to draw a map," Galli said.

I was pretty green myself at that time or I'd have seen we were destined for trouble and would have sent Galli about his business. Instead we left the Model T Ford flatbed at Archers Post and headed up river.

One morning about eight o'clock as we climbed out of the dry river bed, there was Galli's rhino under a clump of dome palms in short grass about seventy yards out from heavy brush. He'd been wallowing in a river pool and was covered with red mud.

Rhinos are easy to stalk in the open from down-wind. They can't see you coming, and you can get within yards of them. Chances are their tickbirds won't bother to squawk if you move up slowly and noiselessly. I've often had a rhino spot me before his birds did. It's all in moving cautiously and placing your feet carefully. Grass clumps sometimes hide dry sticks. Might as well shoot off a pistol as to step on one. Don't kick pebbles. Might as well throw stones.

Galli was pretty good on the stalk but was nervous and kept swallowing. When we were fifty yards from the big fellow, I motioned Galli to lie down. He took a good position, laid his face along the rifle butt—and coughed. The rhino lifted his head. His birds rose in a startled

flurry. The rhino's ears flipped erect. He raised his snout and sniffed, then started toward us at a hesitating trot. Galli fired, hitting the beast in the flank. The rhino turned with a wheeling snort and broke for the bush. I didn't want him to get away, for I would have to trail him. Can't leave a pain-maddened beast at large to kill some unsuspecting devil.

I had about six seconds to get in a shot before the brute would disappear into brush—and the only target I had was his backside. I was about to try to place two fast ones on his back knees, but Galli fired from behind me. The rhino slowed to a trot, circled as if bewildered, then, turning toward the brush, broke into a snorting gallop. For a moment as he wheeled I had a chance at the side of his head, but Galli, yelling and waving his arms, jumped in front of my gun. Before I knew what was happening, he had galloped after the rhino, and the two of them were swallowed in a tangle of dwarf thorns.

Ubusuku, who had been standing behind us like a big black statue, jerked the American hand axe he carried from its holster and bounded after Galli. I ran along the edge of the bush looking for an opening that might lead into a clearing. No soap. I heard the rhino snorting and crashing about; heard Ubusuku yell a warning; heard Galli shoot.

It took me a couple of minutes to break through to where Galli was lying. He was dead. Not tossed. Stepped on.

That's hot country up there east of Archers Post. Next to the Danakil country of northern Ethiopia, it's the hottest territory this side of hell. This particular area hap-

pened also to be ant country. We wanted to bury Galli right then, but the ants had already gotten to him—millions of them. We left them to finish their job and went after the rhino.

There was blood here and there shoulder-high on the brush on the left side of the trail he'd made as he banged his way through the thorns. That was from Galli's first shot. There was blood on the right-hand bushes, about three feet from the ground. There was blood, lots of it, in a pile of fresh dung.

Ubusuku said: "He is shot through the bowels, O *Baas*. Even now he is thinking of dying. He wants to lie down. We will find him on his side. There will be no fight in him."

The big Zulu was almost right. We came upon the poor beast two hours later. He was sitting, forelegs braced, his head hung low. I put the muzzle of my rifle in his ear and squeezed the trigger. His front legs collapsed and he lay face down in a monstrous, crumpled bundle.

Ubusuku chopped a circular gash in the skin around the horns, tore the skin loose, and lifted it off—horns and all.

We camped on the red sands of the river bed that night beside a hot, salty pool. In the morning the ants were gone from Galli and we buried his fresh white bones. We marked the grave with slabs of lava rock, then went after our two baby rhinos.

Galli's death makes a messy story and sheds no credit on me. If I'd been a licensed hunter of to-day, I'd have lost my licence permanently. Everything I did was wrong. Galli couldn't shoot. He was nervous and erratic. I took

up a position that permitted him to jump in front of my gun when he went berserk. I should have killed the rhino when Galli's first shot didn't drop him. The episode has all three characteristics of a big-game fatality—ignorance, carelessness, and damn foolishness.

The rhino is normally timid and easily flurried. He's intensely curious. On the plain when he sees something strange, like a man, his curiosity and timidity combine to make him uncertain, nervous, defiant, and flustered. He first gazes in astonishment. Then his eyes twinkle; his ears flip forward; his tail comes up. He starts toward the object at a trot. He stops. Stares. Trots forward again. Stops. Tilts his head from side to side to get the front horn out of his line of vision. He trots closer, finally stopping within a few yards. Up to this point he usually can be turned aside with shouts and waving arms.

Usually when he turns away he breaks momentarily into a gallop but slows again to his cocky trotting. Sometimes he trots in a circle and comes back for another look. Ordinarily, however, he keeps on going.

If he decides to charge, he breaks into a gallop. He can do thirty miles an hour, but as a rule his charges are at a twenty-mile-an-hour clip. He comes snorting. Nine times out of ten a shot in the foreparts or the head will send him wheeling away, and he isn't likely to stop until he's well out of range. About as often as not he changes direction in the midst of a charge and goes thundering off at an angle. If, however, he determines to carry his charge through, he lowers his head for the thrust at about twenty yards. From that moment he is blind; can see only the ground in front of him. Anyone who isn't dead on his

PLATE V. A baby elephant takes cover beneath its mother, a particularly enormous specimen.

PLATE VI. A wonderful action picture of a rhinoceros in full charge.

feet can step aside and watch the big chump flounder past.

If a bush happens to be in his line of charge, the rhino sometimes rips into it, snorting like a grampus. Then, thinking he's eliminated his enemy, he trots off, tail up, ears perked, every movement of his body expressing fatuous self-satisfaction. He makes you think of a weak-minded baseball player trotting to the bench after unexpectedly batting out a home run.

Don't kid yourself that you can hit a big-game beast just anywhere with a .600 Nitro-Express and drop him cold every time. It's true that many support gunners use a .375 Magnum or a .475 High Velocity bullet when backing up a sportsman-hunter. But don't think for a moment that they just blaze away. They place the heavy-calibre slugs just as carefully as I'd place a .303—preferably in the temple.

More rhinos are dropped in their tracks by a well-placed .303, .38/.56, 8 mm., or a .348 than are ever dropped by a .450, .475, or .600. A thousand times more big game is killed with rifles costing less than $200 than with rifles costing more than $400.

There's little point in arguing about rifle calibres. If a man's convinced he needs a .600, you aren't going to argue him into switching to a .220. There's a psychological need in some men for a heavy shooting iron. A novice should have all the confidence he can muster. Some men feel "naked" with a small-calibre rifle in front of an elephant.

At least ten of Africa's best-known big-game hunters, however, preferred a .256 for all game. Those hunters are Buxton, Hodson, Littledale, Loder, Lyell, Millias, Selous,

Stigand, Sheldon, and Vanderbyl. W. D. M. Bell, professional elephant hunter, usually used either a .275 or a .256 for bagging the big tuskers.

Personally, I prefer a military Lee-Enfield .303. If deprived of my .303 I'd be perfectly happy with a 6.5 mm. Mannlicher-Schoenauer and a 160-grain bullet; with a .270 Winchester and a 150-grained soft-nosed bullet; or, for that matter, I'd be satisfied with any good modern rifle of comparable size.

I once acted as guide for five "sportsmen" who hailed from California. They'd stopped in England and picked up rifles costing in the neighbourhood of $1500 apiece. Smallest calibre they had was .450. One day in the Congo they poured fourteen .450 slugs into an old cow elephant. She barged off, bellowing and shrieking. She ran almost a half mile before she collapsed.

Two shots in the muscles of either shoulder would have killed her almost instantly from shock. All five men swore they were shooting at a shoulder. To make the story more disgusting, the cow was a *poenskop*, without tusks.

It isn't how hard you hit them; it's *where* you hit them.

A rhino will run a hundred feet with a .450 through his heart. He may live for hours with a .600 through his guts. He'll travel miles at a good clip with one leg practically shot off.

On the other hand, a .303 through an eye, ear, or through the temple will drop him in mid-stride. Three .303s in the shoulder muscle will kill him before he's gone twenty-five yards. The bullets smash the concentration of

big nerves and blood vessels in the shoulder, and the shock kills within two or three seconds.

I have no quarrel with heavy-calibre guns if a man can handle them. Few men can. No use shooting at game with face puckered up and both eyes closed. It happens that although I hunted Africa from end to end I never found a spot where I needed a big-calibre rifle. If I couldn't have placed a .303 in the temple of a rhino barging past within ten yards, I'd have quit hunting.

One time I took a Frenchman named Villeneuve out after rhino. He was a reasonably good man with a rifle; didn't mind finding lizards and tarantulas in his boots in the mornings, nor spiders dropping from tree branches into his coffee. He did a good job on antelope, zebra, and giraffe. But every time a rhino came galloping toward him he'd lose his nerve and either throw down his gun and run, or stand frozen, leaving me to turn the brute.

One night back in camp I cranked up the Ford flatbed, called Villeneuve out into the veld, and, yelling at him to run, took after him with the truck. He stood in ludicrous unbelief as the truck lumbered down on him, but when he saw I really meant to run over him if he didn't get out of the way, he jumped. I made a skidding turn and came roaring back at him. He dodged clear, and I heard angry curses as I jolted past him. I circled wide and came at him again. This time he ran, keeping ahead of me for a short distance. But he tired quickly and I closed on him. He stopped and faced me, a rock in his hand. I hadn't seen him pick it up. When I was within a few feet of him, he let that rock go. It missed my head by inches.

When I stopped the truck and grinned down at him, he sputtered so hard he couldn't talk. I've never seen an angrier Frenchman.

When I explained that if he could evade a Ford at twenty miles an hour he could certainly keep away from a charging rhino, his face lighted and he clapped his hands. Suddenly he threw his arms around me and kissed me on both ears.

I said: "You even had time to pick up a stone, duck me, and throw the stone. Why can't you side-step a rhino travelling at only twenty miles an hour and as he passes stick your muzzle in his ear?"

"Ha!" he said, and tried to kiss me again.

Villeneuve evaded the next charging rhino like a dancing master and put his bullet smack under the beast's rear horn—the perfect spot for an instantaneous kill.

Rhinos that live in brush or haunt the high-grass areas are no different in temperament and habits than rhinos of the plains. But hunting them is something else. The same rule holds good, however, that a man killed by one has displayed carelessness, ignorance, or stupidity.

A man who goes alone to stalk rhinos in high grass is either simple or has a suicide complex. It's safe enough hunting them if you place your trackers in trees to overlook the terrain and spot the big beasts as they shoulder through the grass. Sometimes a grass rhino will charge on getting a man's scent. But your scent is widely diffused, and the best the rhino can do by smell alone is to barrel in your general direction. Two-thirds of the time he'll charge off at right angles to you, anyway.

If he's heading for you and you don't feel like sticking

around, beat it if you can push through the grass. If you get away safely, give yourself a talking to and see if you can't persuade yourself to stay out of high rhino grass in the future.

The biggest danger from rhinos in the brush is in getting into a spot where the bush is so heavy you can't dodge a charge. This won't happen if you send your trackers ahead to smell out the touchy animals. The chances are that the mere smell of your trackers will be enough to send the rhinos lurching toward safety. Should a brute be feeling like a scrap, your natives can warn you in time for you to choose a clear spot for the encounter—or to climb a tree. But remember, if you climb a wait-a-bit thorn, you'll be about as bad off as if you'd let the rhino get you. Those thorns are like a million tiny swords.

The place to get bush and grass rhinos is at the water hole. Rhinos feed every hour of the day except during their midday siesta. They'll travel a long way to water, sometimes fifteen miles, and prefer hitting the water holes at dusk or during the night. However, if their skin folds are full of ticks and biting bugs, they'll head for the water holes at any time, day or night. They drink, then wallow in the mud, smothering their insects and filling their armour cracks with cool, healing slime.

Don't get between a rhino and the water if he's thirsty. That's the only time, except when wounded, that the brute will actually be savage. They stand for no interference with their drinking and will attack anything—elephants, lions, buffalo, oxen, or man.

In the brush, the moment the rhino gets suspicious, he stands concealed, motionless and alert. Sometimes he'll

stand for an hour, his head up, his only movements the twitching of his ears and the turning of his head from side to side as he "feels out" the air. When his legs get tired, he sits down, forelegs straight, and goes on with his sniffing and listening. When his suspense gets too great, he lurches away. He'll attack only when noises and smells get him so puzzled and nervous that he explodes into panic. Ordinarily, a charging rhino is a frightened rhino.

No matter how clearly you think you hear the rustling wings of death as a rhino thunders down upon you, *keep cool and shoot straight*—and you'll get out of it. Remember that a shot will always turn him and that a wounded rhino, once turned, will seldom come back.

I realize that a sportsman facing his rhino for the first time isn't going to jerk a book of rules from his pocket and start reading. I know that when he sees a ton and a half of prehistoric dynamite bearing down on him at twelve yards a second he's going to wish he were back home reading about the whole thing in a magazine.

It's a terrific experience in his life and he's going to see it that way as long as he lives. You'll never convince him that the rhino wasn't angry but was in a panic. Anyway, he can't see that it makes any difference what spiritual or psychological mood the snorting, thundering beast was in.

Well, he blasts away. The brute turns. The sportsman lets fly at the side of its head. The beast goes to its knees. Another shot, right behind the eye. The rhino topples on its side. That's fifteen seconds of powerful excitement! What if he *could* have waltzed to one side and let the brute

barge past? He didn't. He stood up to it. He's a sportsman.

He'll forget that an old hand was standing by, looking along deadly accurate sights every second—just in case. But what's the difference? He *thought* he was at death's door. So far as his emotions are concerned, he had the narrowest squeak of his life. He faced it—and won. And he's got a head with a twenty-five-inch horn to prove it.

Silly as it sounds, if a bullet hits the tip of the rhino's front horn, he'll go down—knocked out—for about six seconds.

That horn rests on his skull in such a way as to prevent heavy, violent shocks *from the front* from jarring his brain. But it doesn't protect that brain from shocks that are hard and *sharp*. Furthermore, if you were to give a rhino's horn a hefty bang *from the back* with, say, a baseball bat, he'd go out like a light—momentarily.

Why do people shoot rhinos? Sportsmen kill them for trophies. Natives kill them for food—and there's no tastier ham in the world than rhino ham. I killed rhinos to fill orders from taxidermists in Pretoria, Johannesburg, London, and Berlin. What do taxidermists want with rhino heads? Trophies for sportsmen; the same sportsmen who, when skunked on a fishing trip, stop at a market and buy a catch to take home.

There's a big, profitable market for the horns too. East Indians buy them, powder them, boil the powder in wine, and sell the concoction as an aphrodisiac. Rhino hides are used for sandal soles, native shields, camel buckets, and anything else that must stand up under hard usage.

But the most valued part of the rhino is the penis. From

it is made the sjambok, the most vicious whip in the world. It's a slender, tapering whip, as pliable as whalebone, as tough as steel. One cut lays the flesh of a man open to the bone. I'd as soon shoot a man as to hit him with a sjambok.

Some sjamboks (also called *kibokos*) are made from the hide of the hippo, rhino, or giraffe. But the most brutal, the most desired, are the sjamboks made from the stretched and sun-dried rhino penis. Prussian and Belgian army officers in Africa delighted in them.

To make a sjambok, a flat-iron or any two- or three-pound weight is tied to the small end of the penis. The "meat" is hung in the sunlight from the big end. It stretches from day to day, growing more slender all the time. When thoroughly dried, trimmed, oiled, and polished, it's as sleek and deadly as a three-foot green mamba. A lighter but just as savage sjambok is made from the penis of an ordinary bull.

Stupid is the word for rhino. In certain seasons the males fight each other sometimes for hours. One always dies. They snort, puff, blow, and crash about in the brush, slashing one another with their horns. Finally one gets his horn up into his opponent's guts and pulls and tugs to get it out. Sometimes the vanquished collapses on the victor with the horn still buried. Then the winner wrestles and pushes until he turns the dead one over. He stands looking at the corpse, steps back a few paces, and gives it another two or three bangs with his horn.

One moonlit night I witnessed a battle royal among five rhinos, each gashing, slashing, and puncturing the nearest to him. On and on went the struggle. One was dead by

the end of the first hour; three at the end of the second; the remaining pair continued the uproarious duel for another two hours. Then they withdrew and stood making whining snorts, gathering strength to go on. Abruptly one collapsed. The other turned and wandered into the brush. When I approached the corpses, I saw that every square foot of the body of the last one to die was gashed, gored, and bleeding.

Next to humans, I think the rhino is the least "civilized" of the animals.

Before I forget, I want to mention the "white" rhino. He's black, of course. He's not the "white" rhino, but the *weit* rhino, pronounced *wite*. It's a Dutch word meaning *wide* and refers to his wide, square nose. He's larger, slower, and dumber than the black rhino. His neck is longer and he can really plow a furrow in the ground. Where the black rhino is a simpleton, the "white" one is completely *non compos mentis*. That's why he's practically extinct. He's so nearly extinct that a live one to-day is worth from $20,000 to $30,000. I don't know where to tell you to look for one. Perhaps up along the Kenya-Ethiopia-Somaliland border.

If you like baby pigs, you'll like baby rhinos. While the mother watches fondly—and I mean fondly—the little rascals slide on their bellies in the dust, chase leaves blown by the wind, and run squealing after wind-blown feathers and blades of grass. Male rhinos are not permitted near the little ones. They sometimes eat them. However, when the babies are grown, the old man and the old woman get along fine. Fact is, he's pretty nice to her. Likes to lie with his head on her belly.

Back in 1920 I acted as gun support for Wanda Vik-Persen, the most beautiful big-game camera hunter I ever saw. Copper-haired, grey-eyed, with a smile that made a fellow want to go out and get scalps for her. We took pictures of rhinos at Lake Natron, at the base of Mount Kenya, along the Uaso Nyiro as far as Lorian Swamp. She was strictly an amateur photographer, and the only game pictures I ever knew her to sell were a few shots to Sir Abe Bailey, a Johannesburg mining and racing man.

Mrs. Vik-Persen would stand looking into the viewing plate while the big beasts approached, sometimes at a gallop, until they were within fifteen—yes, ten—yards of her. Then she'd snap the shutter and skip out of the way. She drove me almost crazy. Lots of times if I'd shot when she bulbed the shutter, the beast would have fallen on top of her. But there was never an accident. She'd watch the big brutes trot off with their silly tails straight up and say: "Look at the old darlings!"

For sheer guts, give me camera hunters instead of blood-letters every time. After working with Cameraman Bob Schlick, I've never been the same. Still, we never had serious trouble. I think God must have a fondness for camera hunters.

During my 1937 trip to Africa, while I was shooting rhino specimens on the fringes of marshes around Lake Natron in Tanganyika for a scientist, a bull rhino gave me one of the biggest laughs I ever had. We had made camp not far from a game trail, and occasionally rhinos and elephants would meander past without giving us a glance. The scientist was a Dr. Watrous from Memphis. He was studying the internal organs of animals. He would dig

into a carcass, extract the liver, kidneys, and almost everything else he could remove, weigh them, measure them, then put them in big jars containing preservative fluid. When he did his work out in the open, it wasn't so bad, but sometimes he would have livers and lungs all over camp. We finally persuaded him to put up a bell tent not far from the game trail and to work in there.

One afternoon we got the tent up, carried his specimens to it, and helped him stack the jars in neat piles. He went about his work, humming happily. Just before dusk a bull rhino came along, saw the tent, decided to investigate, and walked up close, sniffing and snorting. Doc Watrous went out under the flap on the other side.

The rhino approached until his nose was almost touching the canvas. Nobody wanted to shoot him, and anyway, we figured he'd take himself off after he had satisfied his curiosity. Then the breeze got in under the flap where Watrous had come out. It bellied the tent with a sudden puff and a sort of clapping sound.

Snorting in alarm, the rhino backed away, got on his mark, and attacked the tent like a bulldozer. He took out the centre pole in his rush, and the canvas collapsed on him. The camp was suddenly a bedlam. Kaffirs shouted; Doc Watrous jumped up and down, screaming. The tent heaved and bounded and rolled as if filled with explosions. The rhino, strangely enough, made no vocal noises. I guess he was too scared. He seemed to fall on his side. When he got to his feet, he popped right through the canvas. He had liver and kidneys all over him and was sprinkled with glass.

He trotted off, changing his direction every two or

three jumps. He was so bewildered he didn't know where he was going.

Doc Watrous was like a man struck witless. He stood there in his white butcher's robe, looking first at the wreck of the tent, then at the disappearing rhino. He picked up a short stick and scratched his chest. Then he picked up a campstool, sat on it, and looked at me.

"Son of a bitch," he said.

This Doc Watrous figured in another funny incident. That is, it was funny to us. Not to him. It was way back in off the Congo River, not too far from Yambuya. We had shot him an elephant. Doc had sawed a big hole in its side and after taking out a couple of hundred pounds of organs had crawled inside the carcass looking for something or other that elephants have inside them.

We had set up a big balance scale a few feet from the dead beast's rear. The scale hung from a tripod about ten feet high. While Doc was crawling about inside the carcass, one of the Kaffirs fell against a leg of the tripod and the whole contraption fell across the elephant just as Doc shoved his head up into the open. He saw it coming and ducked back into the bloody interior. The top of the tripod fell across the hole in the beast's side. When Doc ducked down inside, he must have buried his face in a pool of blood, for now as he stuck his head up between the legs of the tripod his face was a bloody mess. As he sputtered and spat, the two tripod legs closed gently on his neck, pinning him neatly.

We rescued him, and as I finished wiping blood from his face he looked at me with a worried expression. "You know," he said, "I believe I'm accident-prone."

Doc Watrous did seem jinxed. I've never been charged by a rhino except when I deliberately pestered one for some camera hunter or for a sportsman who wouldn't shoot a "sitting duck". But Watrous was charged three times on three successive days, each time escaping by some high-powered dodging. The last time this happened the rhino had his choice of coming after a Kikuyu gun-bearer, me, or Watrous. He chose Doc. As I watched the man and beast race around a mimosa tree, it suddenly came to me why rhinos picked on Watrous. He always wore a white jacket or a white helmet, or both. When he began wearing khaki, the rhinos passed him up.

A man learns—if he lives long enough.