

Zimbabwe Elephant Hunt 2008  
Excerpts

Foreword –

Why do westerners find Africa so dog gone interesting? After some thought it seems to me that Africans are to humanity what pigment is to a Picasso or Rembrandt. Europeans and their derivatives are far removed from the fundamental survival instincts and skills that Africans still use along with cell phones, cars and computers. They are masters of the new world while still having to live by the same laws of survival humanity honed a million or so years ago.

Humanity is seen at its deepest level when I look into the eyes of the Bushman. One's interest only grows in their culture once you follow them as they track an animal over barren rock or soft grass. Or perhaps listen to those who believe the Bushman can go *makaikau* – or change into a lion as so documented in Dennis Blackbeard's book *The Hunting Blackbeards of Botswana*.

For these reasons we marvel in the presence of a specie that will survive when modern humanity dissolves back to the salt and water from which it came. We hope we will survive through the moment of truth but we know they will.

So here I go again to Africa to learn from the masters and find elemental humanity. There is nothing better for me.

On Travel –

Safaris require preparation and consideration of many moving parts. After you have been on a couple it gets easier. However, overlooking any one part can have adverse consequences many hundreds if not thousands of miles from civilization. The following pages are intended to cover all those areas that require planning and forethought so the safari experience is maximized with a minimum of unproductive time.

International travel with firearms requires your full attention. Advanced planning provides the basis for a safe, organized and productive safari. Careful execution of the plan will maximize your results on every level. Safaris progress from conceptual to actual when air travel is confirmed. Firm air travel dates will bracket the trip and establish timetables.

#### On Bullet Selection –

than the seat or headspace point for the cartridge. Why there? Well, have you ever dropped a cartridge in the heat of the moment while trying to reload? Retrieval of the fumbled cartridge includes grabbing any dirt and or grass near the cartridge. Next you jam the whole dirt/grass/cartridge mix into your action. Then you need it to go bang. Better have a belted case in your hand because the belted magnums are designed to allow “slop” in case this happens. The shoulder and cartridge wall are actually “loose” in the barrel so “debris” will not foul the firing process as often. Cartridges headspaced on the shoulder require a totally snug fit throughout. That snug fit becomes an overly snug fit if any debris like grit, dirt and sand is stuck to the cartridge. You might be able to cram the bullet into the barrel but the fouled tolerance will not allow the bolt handle to close thereby turning your dangerous game rifle into a dangerous game club...that you will swing as the bear or buffalo finishes its charge.

#### Lou Hallamore at the Firepit –

the bush. His stories around the evening campfire kept us dry and parched because nobody wanted to miss out on a single word to fetch another round of sundowners. Fortunately, Sabou, our camp charge d'affairs, was there to re-supply us with cold drinks when he noticed we were on the verge of sucking the river water out of our socks, rather than leave one of Lou's stories.

#### On Elephant –

Our first face to tusk encounter occurred on Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 10:30 am, after three ever increasingly hot hours afoot. It was our fifth day in the bush. We had logged well over 30 miles on foot by this point.

The crop raiders' tracks linked them to Nimbiri's devastated corn field and village like the faint smell of Saturday night's cologne on Sunday morning's pillow. The tracks don't lie. The government scout agreed that we were on the right track and they had not been confused with any other along the way. We

Our foes drug us back into the jess at the edge of the washed out and dried riverbed. The jess was thick and suffocating as there was no wind inside the jungle. You could hear tsetse flies and other bugs buzzing your ears as soon as you stopped for a listen to catch the position of the fleeing raiders. It was hot and dust stuck to the sweat on our neck and arms. We had been on their heels for almost four hours and last night's grog was almost finished leaching its way back to the atmosphere. We had been walking, jogging, and under constant stress, my clothes were soaked. The trackers carried our water and they were on point, which left us dough boys nearly dead from dehydration. The trackers wore full jumpsuits with a hunting jacket and they were not sweating, nor were they thirsty. We must have looked like real first class punks in their eyes. We stopped for a quick drink. Even the water tasted dusty, but it was cold. The trackers never stopped assessing the elephant's position verses ours, they were motionless...just listening. They followed their ears, as much if not more, than their eyes at this distance.

On Buffagedon –

We were in a flat, and it seemed like one of the many mini-swamps we had crossed along our way, but our feet were dry beneath us. We slowly followed the tracks, one step at a time. No talking. The unmistakable barnyard smell of the Bovine family drifted through the maze from our left to our right. As the smell hit our noses, we looked into each other's eyes. Our eyes reaffirmed what we already knew...once again, they have chosen the place and time and it was 100% in their favor. Our eyes continued their conversation as glances were darting from person to person. Be ready for anything...be careful...don't shoot in my direction if a buffalo runs between us. Are you scared? Nope. Not me. You? Oh, my lying eyes. In the silence, our eyes shot more glances than Lucas McCain's Model 94 Winchester. Mike and I carried