

The DEAD WILDEBEEST That Stood Up

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #38 —

The safari car was coming in for the evening, just at last light, when they spotted a lone wildebeest bull, standing broadside about 200 yards off to the right. As Brenda needed leopard bait, she and the PH bailed out and found a good spot to shoot from; the sticks were set up and she took the shot – the bull ran off deeper into the bush and out of sight. With flashlights in hand, everyone walked to the spot where the bull had been standing and flashed around looking for blood; but they found none. Finally, the PH announced that the shot must have been a bit high and a clean miss, so the group loaded back into the safari car and continued on to camp. That's the way the story was relayed to me around the campfire that evening.



Brenda and her hunting team. Since the wildebeest looks alive, they are pretending to wrestle with it.

At 6:00 am the next morning, as we were ready to leave camp, our PHs asked if we wanted to go our separate ways, or join forces and spend a few minutes looking for the wildebeest bull of last evening. I looked at Brenda; she simply

said that it was a good hold and she should have hit it. So, since it was near, we decided to both go back and double check.

Over dinner the previous evening, we had discussed that even if we were able to find the wildebeest, the hyenas would likely have found it during the night and there wouldn't be a strip of meat or hide on its bones. "Nothing lasts overnight in the bush," the PHs said!

It was a short drive and walk; and with two sets of trackers and Brenda's confidence in the shot, I wasn't surprised when



Brenda with the wildebeest; what an unusual picture!

they immediately found the blood they hadn't been able to see with flashlights the night before. Dried blood is a lot harder to see than fresh blood, but we slowly tracked about three hundred yards and there was the dead wildebeest – and he was completely untouched by the predators.

But the most interesting thing was that the wildebeest was lying flat on his left side, with legs locked in the extended position and his head turned slightly to the right.

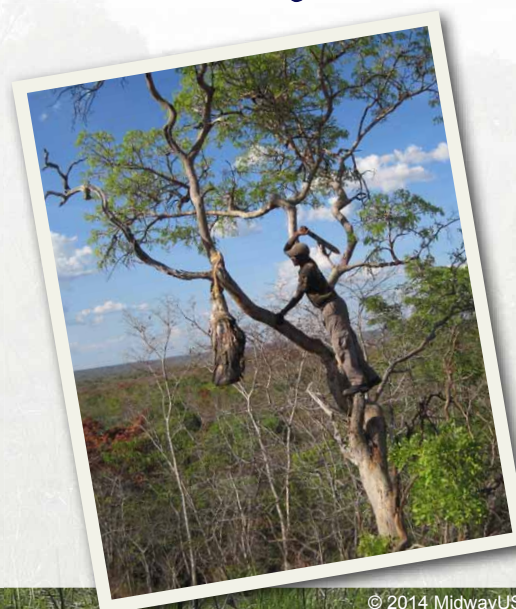
"...we slowly tracked about 300 yards..."

Since he was completely stiff, it wasn't possible to get him into the traditional trophy position, so we simply stood him up and took these pictures.



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Luwele Camp
Selous Game Reserve
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Leopard bait; a wildebeest quarter is often used for leopard hunting.