

# LION with a 416

– LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #103 –

We were driving down the middle of a big ‘sand river’, looking for sign, about mid-way through a 21 day safari. Lion was on the top of the list, but we hadn’t seen any evidence of lion on the dirt roads running through the bush. The riverbed was just another place to look, when all of a sudden there were fresh tracks – a large male. We followed; interestingly, once on the bank, the lion started running. The trackers said he had been laying there and moved off quickly at the sound of the safari car.

We had a hippo quarter tied on the back and decided to hang it on the broken-off stump of a tree. The strategy was to return at first light the following morning, so we built a small grass wall to conceal our approach.

Way before dawn, we parked the safari car a mile or so away

and walked in; getting close, we heard the lion roaring about a half mile from the bait -- and he was moving away. Upon inspection, he had only

eaten a little and the PH was sure he would come back the next night. We built a blind about 12 feet up in a nearby tree, then proceeded straight back to camp and returned with bedding material about 3:00 p.m. – prepared to spend the night. If the lion came early, we would shoot him; if he came in after dark, we planned to shoot at first light the following morning – before he moved off into the bush.

He came early; we heard him roaring from a mile away and he made a steady advance just at dusk – roaring every few minutes. The PH had me keep down until he got a



*Not a lot of mane, but a very big and old lion.*

chance to look the lion over and decide if he was a shooter. When I got the go ahead, the lion was about 60 yards out, near the bait and quartering away; I fired once with the 416. There was a big muzzle flash and the lion was gone. “Was it a good shot?” asked the PH. “Of course” was my response. When the safari car arrived, it was full dark. We lit up all the spotlights and with guns at the ready proceeded in the safari car on the lion track, not knowing what to expect. But after only a hundred yards we found him dead. It was a happy drive back to camp.

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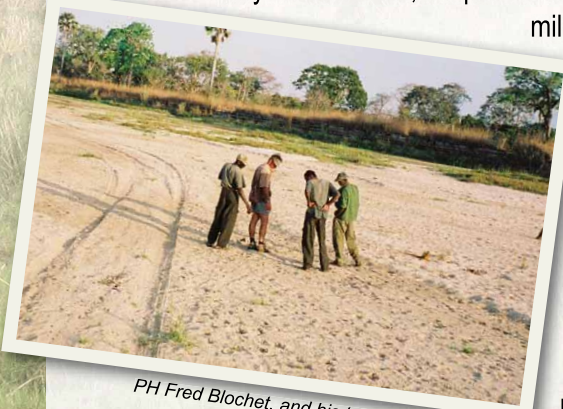
**"...we heard him roaring..."**

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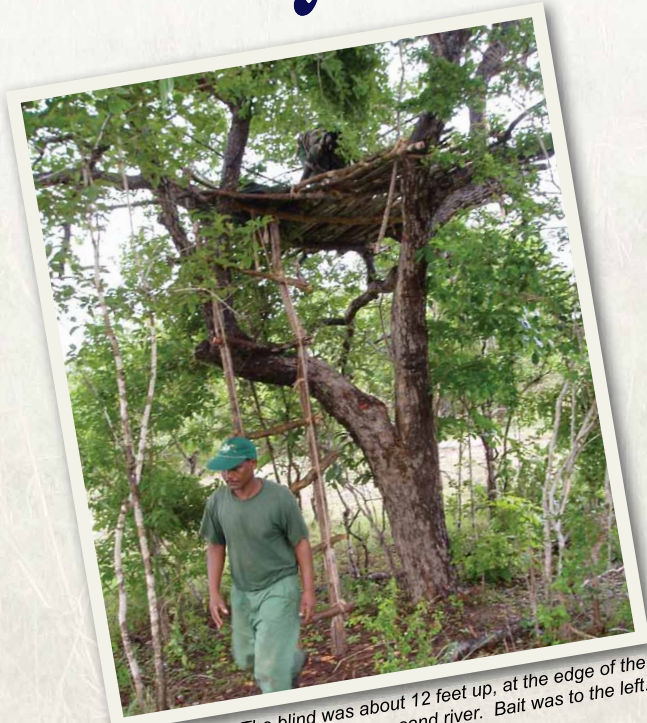
Larry Potterfield

Mkuyu Camp  
Selous Game Reserve  
Tanzania, Africa  
6 October 2000

**USA**  
**Midway**



*PH Fred Blochet, and his trackers, looking at the fresh lion tracks in the sand river.*



*The blind was about 12 feet up, at the edge of the sand river. Bait was to the left.*