

STUDENT HAS EYE-OPENING SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

THANKS TO DSC PROFESSIONAL MEMBER JOE DA SILVA AND CAPE TOWN HUNTING SAFARIS

Editor's Note: C. Wallace de Witt was born in Chicago December 5, 1980 and lives in Flossmoor, Illinois. Mr. de Witt received his Bachelor's degree in International Studies and Humanities from Yale University; his Masters degree in Philosophy, Oriental Studies From King's College, University of Cambridge and he is in his second of three years at Harvard Law School working toward his Juris doctorate. He expects to work for an American firm's branch office in China and Japan, practicing securities law. He heard about Joe Da Silva's operation as a "result of hours and hours of painstaking study on the Internet, not via any commonly published guidebooks or Cape Town hotels, as these all pretentiously refuse to discuss hunting whatsoever."

Dear Sir,

I believe I cannot think of anything I have ever done on vacation that has provoked the ire of my Harvard Law School colleagues as much as my hunting trip with Joe Da Silva in South Africa this past spring (autumn, I suppose, for South Africans).

Needless to say, aside from the pleasures of a day spent in the great outdoors, the exhilaration of the chase, the bagging of my first animal of any kind (a springbok) and the pleasures of discussing one of the most peculiar nations on earth in fine company, I cherish the fact that from now on, anytime I wish to stick my thumb in the eye of a sanctimonious fellow law student, I can.

I will point to a picture of Joe and myself crouched over a beautiful wild beast and preach right back to my smarmy classmate about the necessity of preserving precious wildlife resources and explaining how we hunters—and I now include myself in *your* company, hence the plural pronoun, lead the way.

My experience with Joe began early in the morning, around 6 o'clock, when

Joe arrived at my friend's apartment in Cape Town to drive me off for a day of hunting under the South African sun. From the start, I felt as though I were heading off with an old pal, perhaps an uncle, for a day in the wilds.

But reflecting on the day, I realize that an enormity of planning, of experience in client

service, of first-hand knowledge of the veld lay behind everything that took place that day. Joe is a master of that great tenet of service-professions, including my own legal profession: Know what the client wants before he knows he wants it.

Once we arrived at the hunting grounds, Joe introduced me to his friend and business partner Steve, who drove while Joe chatted with me on the viewing platform of our vehicle. All morning we observed wildlife—both flora and fauna—and chatted about South African life.

When the time came, Joe and our local guide—with whom I could only communicate in Dutch, struggling to understand his Afrikaans—led me to the proper position and helped me line up my shot.

He whispered in my ear to steady my nerves: "Wait...wait...wait... NOW!" They were there to shake my hand and give me the beaming smiles and congratulations that everyone should have when they take their first animal.

It was a truly marvelous safari. (By the by, I think it is incumbent upon us hunters to retake this last word for our own use. Safari should be synonymous with hunting and all things Teddy Roosevelt and "Dr. Livingston, I presume." Let the photography set modify the noun with photo-. I am firmly resolved to avoid the absurd phrase, "hunting safari.")

Sadly, the attitude of the typical American, is to feel sorry for South Africans and to feel even more sorry for the animals they shoot from time to time. I cannot say that I myself have not been susceptible to such thoughts. If only Joe were there to pick up every American from the Cape Town Airport and drive them off for a day of safari, I believe that Americans would come away from South Africa with an image of a country without fear of past or present, reflective about its history but bullish about its future.

I can wholeheartedly recommend Joe as the professional hunter of the year. In fact, I am surprised that he is not the perennial victor. Win or lose, he can count on my business for years to come — and that of anyone I can convince to go with me.

Yours,
C. Wallace de Witt



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