



Carr surveying Gorongosa
in April 2008; right, some of
the park's recovering wildlife

A photograph of a savanna landscape. In the foreground, a gazelle stands on a patch of green grass. The background is filled with dense, tall palm trees, their fronds creating a textured, layered appearance. The lighting is natural, suggesting a bright day.

THE GARDENER OF EDEN

When GREG CARR decided to help restore the greatest wildlife park in Mozambique, he didn't just send a check. He traded his suits for shorts and Boston for the savanna. And what he's accomplished in just four years at Gorongosa is one of the unlikeliest—and most hopeful—stories in Africa. BY BOB SHACCHIS

ON A SUN-BROILED morning

in central Mozambique, we headed 19 miles into the bush, our destination a shrinking stretch of soupy pool, one of the last remaining catchments in the withered river, where the hippos had hunkered down during the wasting days of a dry season that refused to end. Afterwards we would be chopping to other sites—remote wonders, unique to the area—although my attention had drifted when the itinerary was explained. The limestone gorge, perhaps, where Africa's Great Rift Valley arrived at its southern terminus? The lacy cascade of waterfalls off the westward escarpment? The cathedral-size grottoes housing countless hordes of whispering bats? Not that it mattered—bad luck, you could say, since we would never get farther than the hippos.

Because of the heat, and I guess for the breezy fun of it, Segran, the young pilot up from South Africa, unhinged the front doors off the R44, a Robinson-manufactured helicopter aviators call a “little bird,” and we strapped in, the four of us, and ascended skyward from the small grass airstrip at Chitengo, the headquarters of Gorongosa National Park, considered among Africa's premier game preserves until it was destroyed by decades of unimaginably brutal war and savage lawlessness, its infrastructure blasted to rubble, its bountiful population of animals slaughtered, eaten, reduced to gnawed bones and memory.

In the copilot seat, with the panoramic sweep of the continent expanding out my open door—loaves of mountains rising like a time-lapse video of Creation Day, the veldt ironed out into a haze of plains spread east toward the Indian Ocean—I adjusted the mike on my headset and joined the conversational squawk behind me: the park's American co-director, Greg Carr, and his Portuguese director of communications, Vasco Galante, stuffed into the rear seats, already sweaty between doors that could not be removed, although they were dressed much more sensibly than me for the tropics, or what would have been sensible if the word *malarial* were not so lethally affixed to Mozambique's ecology.

Carr and Galante, it was becoming clear, were fearless, a matching set of *muzungos*—white guys—with a true affinity for the bush. Like Carr, the Boston philanthropist who's committed his time and considerable energy and \$40 million of his foundation's money to the restoration of Gorongosa, Galante too was a successful business entrepreneur, a former pro basketball player who'd slammed the brakes on the life he was living, thrown away

his map of old assumptions, made a U-turn, and gone to Africa.

Many of their sentences began, “During the rainy season,” and I would be directed toward something that was not as it should be this deep into December—the evaporated Lake Urema, shrunk from 77 square miles to four; a wilting Gorongosa massif and its depleted watershed; the cracked and burning floodplains of the savanna. What now expressed itself as terra firma would require boating skills during the approaching summer, when the park's bottomlands swelled with watery overabundance. Awed and exhilarated, I leaned out into the rush of air, watching the scatter of antelope below.

At Carr's instruction, Segran dipped the helicopter down into the high-banked channel of the Urema River and we roared along its downstream course at treetop level, my companions remarking upon the bed's sorry condition—black patches of dampness embroidered with a fringe of hoofprints, scum puddles churned by expiring catfish, and weed-clogged runs where the absent flow



had encouraged a vibrant bloom of flora, the greenest thing in sight.

A year earlier, when *60 Minutes* came to Mozambique to produce a feature on the 49-year-old Carr and his turnaround of Gorongosa—only three years into its 20-plus-year course and already the hottest conservation story in Africa—they had filmed the river from the air as scores of Nile crocodiles flipped one after another off the banks into its robust current. Maybe there were some crocs down there now, nestled in the mucky over-

growth, but we couldn't see them. Reedbuck and the occasional impala bolted across the golden sand into the cover of the jungle, but it was Africa's flamboyant birds that owned the desiccated river. Egyptian geese, grotesque marabou storks showcasing the ass-bald head and plucked neck of carrion eaters, graceful herons and lanky crowned cranes, majestic fish eagles. Then we were hovering over the upstream edge of the pool, the squiggle of crocodiles visible in the khaki-colored water, and Carr pointed to a grassy bar about a thousand feet back where he wanted to put down.

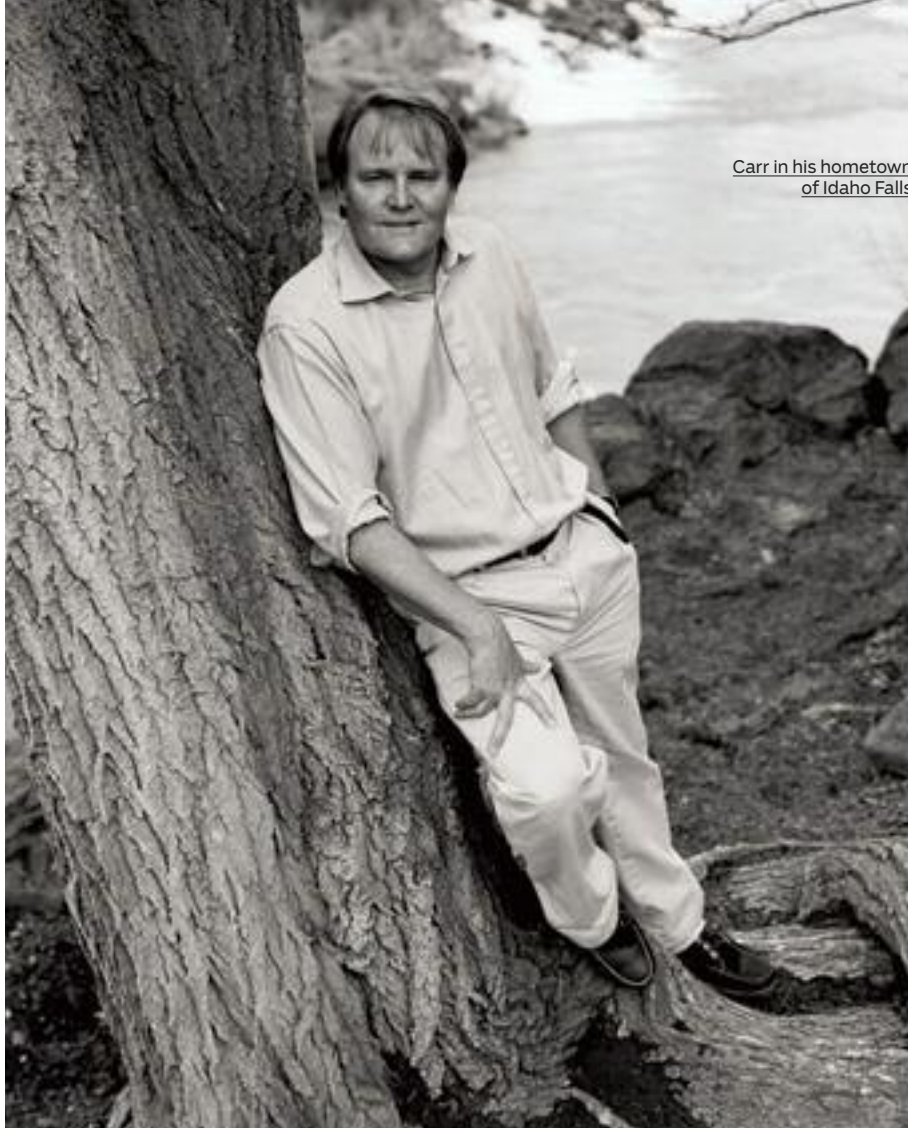
ON THE GROUND, Segran announced that he would stay with the aircraft and keep the engine running, and we climbed out with the rotors thumping over our heads and began walking through the high grass at the base of a steep bank. This was my first time in Africa, but even before Galante's warning I realized we were in elephant country, their rampant footprints postholed shin deep in the hardening cake of fertile soil, an ankle-twisting hazard. I'd also registered Galante's sudden intensity of manner, the heightened alertness, his head rotating as he scrutinized our surroundings. “OK,” he said, trying to sound lighthearted, “this is a place where elephants

come. If you see an elephant coming from the north, you go south. Turn and go.”

Although more people are killed by hippos than any other wild animal in Africa, the elephants—of Gorongosa are unforgiving. For generations now they have been engaged in a kill-or-be-killed war with humans, the once prolific herd decimated by rebel soldiers harvesting ivory to finance their insurgency or just gunning down the giants for the wicked hell of it. By the end of Mozambique's civil war, in 1992, only 108 of an elephant population 20 times larger were left alive, and though their numbers had since grown to 300, they were “skittish and aggressive,” according to cinematographer Bob Poole, who'd

been filming in the park on and off for a year for National Geographic Television. If you were on foot, as we were, walking into an elephant's sight or range of smell could be justifiably categorized as suicidal.

But as we approached the pool, crocodiles underfoot in the soggy weeds or a land-foraging hippo spooked by the sudden appearance of humans between it and the water were more immediate concerns. Carr and Galante traversed the bankside, climbing higher for a better vantage and, I suspected,



Carr in his hometown of Idaho Falls

as shadows, back to the helicopter, which maybe had a problem. But, dreamy and high with hippo love, we didn't much care.

We climbed into the chopper, Segran muttered something about weak batteries, we climbed out. "I don't think I'd let my mom ride in this helicopter," said Carr. He and I walked upriver and sat cross-legged across from baboons collecting on the far bank, remarking on what we could figure out about the tribe's hierarchy and habits, occasionally extrapolating our insights into opinions about the primates half a world away on Wall Street, the two of us content and carefree.

Then Galante walked down the bank to tell us what we already suspected: The helicopter, with a dead starter, wasn't going to get us out of here.

HAD I COME TO GORONGOSA in the sixties, I would have experienced "the jewel of southern Africa," a Rhode Island-size safari expanse of 54 distinct ecosystems—from the park's predominant savanna to miombo forests, thickets, montane woodlands, and dry jungle—with Lake Urema expanding and contracting at its center and 6,112-foot Mount Gorongosa guarding its northwestern flank, high enough to create its own weather system. Protected as a private hunting reserve since 1920 and designated a national park in 1960, Gorongosa was romantically known to hunters, photographers, and wildlife tourists as the place where Noah must have unloaded the ark. What other conclusion was there?

to be better positioned in case of a charge.

In the wild, the pittance of what's left of it, the ancient primal verities still apply. (Extreme) caution and (mild) anxiety translate as ingrained virtues, rational responses to the perilous unknown, yet once Carr and Galante trained their binoculars on the water, I could feel the tension in the air undergo a euphoric collapse. Hippos! Exactly where they should be, according to their birthright, at peace in their own habitat after 3,000 of their kin were wiped out during the seemingly endless war.

As my companions dialed the aquatic spectacle into focus, I began to share the joy, unpuzzling the strange visual logic, a rippling logjam of glistening tubs of chocolate flesh, googly-eyed and agitated, clustering down below in the muddy water, choreographed by paranoid shifts and rearrangements that never really changed the tight composition of the jam until a bull slide-paddled forward to calculate the threat of our presence. Saucer-size nostrils flared and exhaled spray, a wet snort like the release of hydraulic brakes in the fragrant stillness, now absent the distant background thrum of rotor blades.

The pilot, for reasons known only to him, had shut down the engine. Occupied by the

IT WAS NOT YET NOON AND WE HAD TO BE SAFELY BACK TO CIVILIZATION BY SUNDOWN, the commencement of people-eating time. The helicopter, with a dead starter, wasn't going to get us out of here. "WANNA WALK?" ASKED CARR.

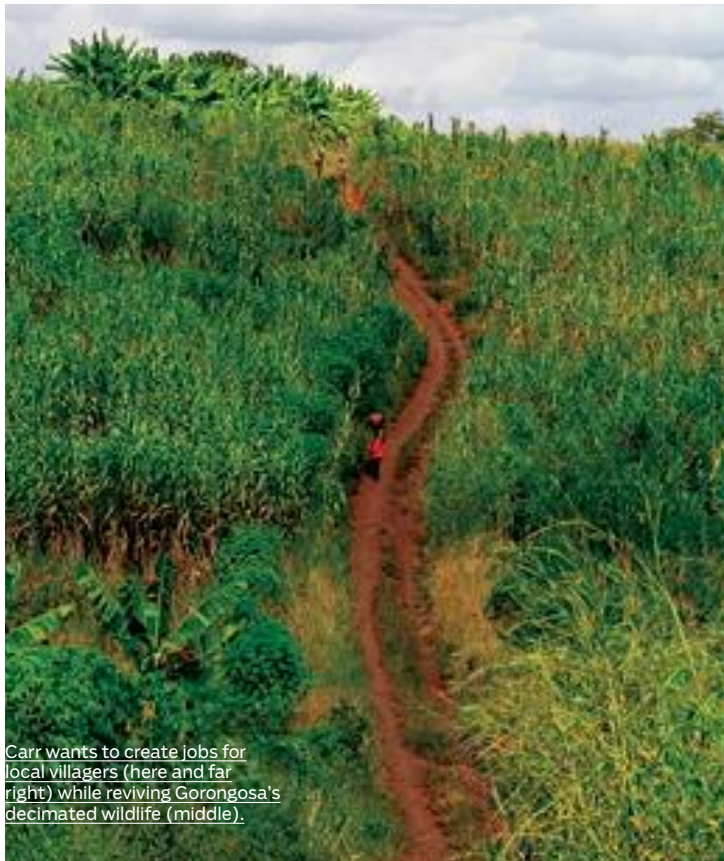
marvel of the half-submerged pod, we simply noticed an improvement in the depth of the silence around us and made no mention of it. There we stood, spellbound and revering, allowed by the moment to believe in an Edenic world so harmoniously, benevolently perfect one forgets to remember that the most readily available dish on the menu might very well be you.

The glory of the hippopotamus seems shaped by hallucinogenic juxtapositions—the utility of its rounded amphibious design packaged in the exaggerated ugliness seen elsewhere only in cartoons; its blob-like massiveness adorned with undersize squirrel ears and stubby legs akin to a wiener dog's; bullfrog eyes that are nevertheless beady; pinkish, peg-toothed jaws like a steam shovel's attached to the compressed porcine features of its face. We were enthralled, flies on the wall of hippo heaven. Then we withdrew as gently

The 1,540-square-mile park once hosted more predators than South Africa's 7,523-square-mile Kruger National Park, denser herds of elephants and buffalo than the Serengeti, and thousands upon thousands of plains animals.

All of that, gone. In the three decades of war that began with Mozambique's struggle for independence from Portugal in the sixties, the park was transformed from Eden to wasteland. The lions and hippos were extinguished; the elephants reduced from 2,200 to 108; 3,000 zebras nearly gone; 2,000 impala gone; rhinos, gone; buffalo, gone; a herd of 5,500 wildebeest reduced to zero; 129 waterbuck left from a herd of 3,500; the ubiquitous warthogs nowhere in sight. Cheetahs, wild dogs, hyenas, and jackals, apparently exterminated. Leopards, no one could say.

But to arrive in December 2008 was to see a place being reborn. Since 2005, when the nonprofit Carr Foundation first started



Carr wants to create jobs for local villagers (here and far right) while reviving Gorongosa's decimated wildlife (middle).



working in Gorongosa, Carr and his biologists and consultants had rebuilt the park's headquarters at Chitengo, constructing the open-air restaurant in soaring rondavel style and putting up new air-conditioned cabanas with hot showers. They'd trained local guides to take tourists on photo safaris and up Mount Gorongosa, and begun offering incentives to help the park's 15,000 villagers, along with some 250,000 more living in the surrounding buffer zone, move from a livelihood of clear-cutting and poaching to one of planting trees and protecting wildlife. In 2006, park workers fenced off a 23-square-mile sanctuary and began reintroducing animals, brought in from other reserves around southern Africa. By the end of 2007, the numbers were modest but rising: 4,930 waterbuck, 3,830 warthogs, 580 impala, 200 blue wildebeest, 160 hippos, 300 elephants, 35 lions, and 1,300 of the world's largest crocs.

Similar efforts are happening elsewhere. "Public-private" and "multinational cooperation" are the buzzwords in conservation management today, and Gorongosa's sister parks—Limpopo, Banhine, and Zinave—are getting outside help. But rarely has a country basically handed the job to a private citizen. In June 2008, Mozambique and Carr made their four-year relationship official, signing a \$40 million agreement for the Carr Foundation to restore the park—and then give it back, in 20 years.

How that marriage came about is one of the unlikeliest stories in Africa, and it begins with the two men who will administrate the park's future together: Greg Carr and Lieutenant Colonel Bernardo Beca Jofrisse. It seems implausible that some lives might ever intersect, separated by every divide destiny can thrust between two people, yet should their story lines somehow twist together, they form a single braid of near mystical affirmation of unlimited possibility. Say, for example, an American tycoon and an African warrior. One a former Marxist-Leninist freedom fighter, the other a capitalist swashbuckler who made his fortune in information technology.

A genuine introduction to Jofrisse's country begins with the unsettling sight of an AK-47 assault rifle emblazoned on its flag. And the story of modern Mozambique—its tyrannies and bloody struggles, its transformation from the planet's biggest nightmare into one of the very few nations in sub-Saharan Africa where hope and stability are not delusions—can be found in the proud generation of woefully scarred and stoically victorious people like Jofrisse, a gentle, statuesque man whose frozen stare into the whirlwind of the past is regularly broken by embracing smiles.

In 1968, at 19, Jofrisse began his long walk north, across the length of Mozambique to the border with Tanzania, to join the *luta*

armada—the armed struggle for independence from Portugal, which had inflicted a 500-year-long battering of the mainland's indigenous populations since 1498, the year Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and landed at Ilha de Moçambique. The white man's ravenous enterprise had many appetites—in the 17th century, gold; in the 18th, ivory; in the 19th, slaves—and in the 1880s, during the European powers' Scramble for Africa, Portugal established formal control over four colonies—Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde—each of which would erupt in rebellion 70 years later.

The battle here was waged by the Mozambican Liberation Front—Frelimo—from its headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. When Jofrisse enlisted in the revolutionary army, he could scarcely have imagined that more than 20 years later he would be fighting on, his country still a raging war zone, his enemies his own misguided people.

In Tanzania, the literate Jofrisse excelled as a student of military basics, which earned him a trip to the Soviet Union for more advanced training and an indoctrination into the tenets of Communism. Returning to Africa, he was deployed back into the fray and, in 1972, ordered to cross the Zambezi



WHAT CARR SAW AT GORONGOSA WAS YELLOWSTONE. “When Yellowstone was made a national park,” he says, “the bison, the elk, the bears were mostly gone. THE POINT WAS TO RECOVER IT, AND A HUNDRED YEARS LATER IT’S BACK. I look at Gorongosa that way.”

River; his unit battled their way south into the province of Sofala, the home of Gorongosa National Park, which was forced to close in 1973, engulfed in combat and the scorched-earth campaign of the colonial military.

By 1974, Portugal’s trifecta of wars in Africa had proven to be a losing ticket, and a new government in Lisbon quickly agreed to hand over Mozambique to Frelimo. The independent Republic of Mozambique was proclaimed the following year. The Portuguese—250,000 of them—pulled out in an orgy of sabotage and vandalism, leaving behind an infant nation with too little infrastructure and too many guns.

Out of this maelstrom of “peace,” another monster was born: the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo), a disorganized but homicidal insurgency assembled by its sponsors—first white-ruled Rhodesia and then apartheid South Africa—to ensure that black majority rule in Africa was synonymous with disaster. Renamo’s objective was to sow havoc, wreck everything, and paralyze the country, and the civil war that ignited in 1976 between Renamo and Frelimo would bathe Mozambique in blood for the next 16 years. Gorongosa itself became a shooting gallery, a shifting headquarters for both armies, the area swarmed by destitute refugees, the foot-

paths rigged with land mines, the animals serving as a type of ATM machine to fund and supply the combatants.

In 1992, Frelimo disavowed its Marxist ideology and signed a peace agreement with Renamo, forming the current multiparty democratic government. Mozambique was alive again, though not by any measure discharged from the intensive-care ward of the underdeveloped world. But for the first time in memory the country seemed to be sitting up and smiling. Its near-death experience had imbued Mozambicans with a laid-back joie de vivre balanced by a sustaining sense of civility, the correct antidote to fratricidal madness.

Like the soldiers on both sides, Jofrisse had lost scores of friends in a conflict that had left more than a million Mozambicans dead and millions more wounded or maimed. He retired from the army, pursued an engineering degree, and dedicated himself to the reconstruction of what had been lost. The war had left him with an unrequited love—a passion for nature and the forests of central Mozambique, the beauty of the thousand-year-old baobabs, the surreal haunted groves of yellow fever trees in the provinces where he’d fought as a young warrior. Wildlife conservation was back—Gorongosa itself had reopened for good in 1995, with a new staff of 50 former

soldiers and aid from the African Development Bank, the European Union, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature—and in 2007 Jofrisse’s friends in the Frelimo government sent him to study natural-resource protection at the Southern African Wildlife College, across the South African border.

A year later, Beca Jofrisse would become the ministry of tourism’s representative and oversee Gorongosa’s radical transformation, he and Greg Carr now partners in a pas de deux between a nation and an outsider, quite unlike any heretofore performed in the continent’s jungles.

WE WERE IN NO-MAN’S-LAND, the great bloodthirsty Darwinian free-for-all, probably 20 clicks beyond the Chitengo compound’s cell-phone range. The VHF radio on the little helicopter was of no use, and we had to assume that our chances of being rescued before tomorrow were zero.

There was a boyish brightness in Carr’s eyes when he suggested we go for the full unadulterated experience, seize the rare opportunity to traipse (illicitly) in the park, cross the river and hump all day through the forge-hot primordial jungle into the happy zone of cell-phone reception, and text-message the cavalry.

“So what do you guys think?” Carr asked as we stood on the wrong bank of the croc-infested river. “Wanna walk?” Galante and I looked at one another and shrugged. We were not bound to see much indecisiveness from Carr, a man whose permanent optimism exceeded only by his irrepressible, well-aimed, and sometimes kooky enthusiasm. Anything could happen tramping around in the jungle, but we faced one certainty: It was not yet noon and we had to be safely back to civilization by sundown, the predatory commencement of people-eating time.

When I’d arrived at Gorongosa the night before, Carr had told me, “I was hoping to show you a lion tonight”—the first thing he ever said to me, yet I had arrived too late to enter the locked preserve. The lion Carr had in mind, however, had roared throughout the evening, and this morning we’d driven out looking for it but found only vultures convened at the skeleton of its kill. Less than 24 hours later, Carr’s desire to hook me up with a lion was quickly losing all of its appeal.

I asked Carr and Galante if either one of them had the foresight to bring along a sidearm—you know, just in case. Carr said no, and Galante said, “Yes, this is my pistol,” showing me the miniature penknife he carried in his pocket. I was the only one with any gear, a shoulder bag crammed with nothing useful except our water bottles, and to lighten the load I removed a book, **continued on page 104**

William Finnegan's *A Complicated War*, a chronicle of Mozambique's years of civil strife, and tried to give it to Segran, who had chosen to remain behind, but the pilot did not want it. "What else have you got to do?" I said, frowning. The book was staying.

For several miles, we hiked upstream along a game trail flattened through the grass, the riverbed still glazed with stagnant water beneath a lush carpet of weeds—an ideal habitat for lurking crocodiles, as advertised by the warthog carcass we hurried past, its hind-quarters shorn off as it had tried to flee. Farther on, the channel's vegetation began to get mangy, exposing islands of muddy skin, their crusty appearance more to our liking as we walked ahead, the bed drying out until Carr had convinced himself conditions were favorable for a clean and effortless crossing. "Let's try it," he said, and I watched in horror as he and Galante took six steps out into what I assumed was quicksand, their legs disappearing in a steady downward suck.

I responded in the manner most typical of 21st-century Americans, grabbing my camera to record the flailing of their last astonished moments.

CARR'S PREDICAMENT WAS in some ways reminiscent of the scene that had first lured him to Mozambique.

High in a tree in Africa a desperate woman clutches a baby, her feet submerged in floodwaters. For Carr, like most people watching CNN's footage of the devastation caused when Cyclone Eline slammed into Mozambique in 2000, this wretched image blipped the African nation onto the screen of their awareness, however momentarily. Even then, like Carr, many of those viewers would be hard-pressed to articulate a single fact about the country beyond a general announcement of its condition: hell on earth.

Two years later, in New York City, a friend introduced Carr to Mozambique's ambassador to the United Nations, a congenial diplomat who asked, "Why don't you think about helping us out?" It was a question Carr had come to expect. What else would you ask a philanthropist sitting atop a stack of money? In this case it was \$200 million, an amount that for Carr served as the answer to the question "How much wealth is finally enough?"

By the mid-eighties, at age 27, Carr had already morphed into an über-capitalist. A history major at Utah State, he'd left his hometown, Idaho Falls, exchanging the mountains of the West for the manicured quads of Cambridge and enrolling in Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where he began an intensive study of the breakup of AT&T's monopoly on telecommunications, smelling opportunity in its divestitures.

Carr convinced a friend, Scott Jones, a 25-year-old MIT scientist, to go into business with him, maxing out their credit cards for startup funds. In 1986, their new company, Boston Technology, started selling voice-mail services to the emerging Baby Bells. Four years later, Boston Tech was the nation's top voice-mail provider, and by the mid-nineties Carr was chair of both that company and Prodigy, an Internet-service pioneer. In 1998, Carr—by then a very rich man with, he says, "a pretty bad case of ADD"—walked away from it all to create the Carr Foundation to focus on three philanthropic areas: human rights, the arts, and conservation.

Visionaries resist typecasting, but with a pince-nez and Rough Rider garb, Carr could pass, in stoutness of physique as well as spirit, for a young Teddy Roosevelt. To explain how he thinks or to illuminate his moral universe, he quotes Buddhist philosophers, Nelson Mandela, and David Foster Wallace, cites the authors he considers seminal to his swooning love of nature—Darwin, Harvard biologist E.O. Wilson. Were Carr a more conventional businessman, when he took a powder from his fortune making at the age of 38, the temptation to describe his action as a midlife crisis would have been irresistible, yet for him it was a long-awaited chance to shift gears.

Behind the change was a lifelong conviction that the span of a career should contain a yin-yang of profit and nonprofit, an exuberance for

lowed you to cut to the front of the line as an agent of meaningful change, and by 2002 Carr was inundated with projects: turning the former headquarters of the Aryan Nations, in Hayden Lake, Idaho, into a peace park; donating \$18 million to establish Harvard's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy; starting a radio station in Afghanistan. He was conducting a marching band of altruism, on fire with intellectual stimulation yet yearning for something with "a little vision to it, some mystery, some romance, some difficult problems to solve," something to satisfy his lust for immersion.

Intrigued by the Mozambican ambassador's invitation, Carr began to research conservation projects in the country, visiting for the first time in 2002. Two years later, he climbed aboard a helicopter with government officials to tour six potential sites. The second was Gorongosa, the park in shambles, long forgotten as a destination, a lost cause. Nothing there anymore worth bothering with, Carr heard often, a sentiment that collided with his intolerance for cynicism. But when he first set foot in the park, "it was—boom—let's go!" Returning home to pace around the house and think about it would have been antithetical to his tally-ho style.

What Carr saw at Gorongosa, with a historian's perspective, was Yellowstone, which he'd grown up near, in eastern Idaho. "When Yellowstone was made a national park, in

UNTIL HE MOVED INTO A SPACIOUS CAMPAIGN TENT, CARR SLEPT IN THE BACK OF A PICKUP TRUCK, high enough off the ground to keep safe from lions (he hoped), a stargazer's preference that landed him in the hospital with the first of three bouts of malaria.

making money married to a passion for giving it away. Passively giving back, just checking the do-gooder box, wasn't the point. The point was unleashing happiness, animating your value system with injections of old-fashioned fun, which is precisely what he thinks rich guys without a sense of largesse are missing out on. Darting an elephant to replace the batteries in its radio collar ranks high on Carr's list of neat things to do after breakfast.

On a deeper level, though, he saw capitalism without a conscience as a socioeconomic steroid, proving itself no more useful to humanity and its huddled masses than other abused ideologies. Rise alone, fall together. The selfish detachment of cowboy capitalism from the welfare of a community, he believed, created mayhem, a danger not only to itself but to the planet, plundering the resources of an ecology with the same rapacity as soldiers pillaging a national park.

Ideally, making a boatload of money al-

1872," says Carr, "the animals had been extirpated. It wasn't this pristine thing and the government said, 'Oh, we better protect it.' No, no, no. It had been hunted out. The bison, the elk, the bears were gone or mostly gone. The point of Yellowstone park was to recover it, and a hundred years later it's back. I look at Gorongosa that way. This was the first national park in the Portuguese-speaking world. Both parks are the flagships of their respective nations. Both of them have big charismatic fauna, including carnivores. Both are dangerous places."

The first contract he signed with Mozambique, a 2004 memorandum of understanding, essentially stated, says Carr, "Look, this is one day at a time, toss me out whenever you want, and let's just get to know each other." He wasn't buying Gorongosa or leasing it or taking it over as a concession but, instead, agreeing to manage the park on a provisional basis. It was by any measure an unusual

arrangement—an auspicious foreigner assuming control of an iconic sovereign asset—and Carr hoped it would provide a template for saving stressed-out national parks throughout the developing world.

Gorongosa's business manager, Joao Viseu, calls Carr's approach "the new philanthropy—not just giving but doing," a paradigm splitting the difference between two more-recognizable models. One is the Paul Farmers or Greg Mortensons of the world, who start with nothing but a calling (providing health care to Haitians, educating Muslim girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan) and gradually accumulate resources because people believe in them. The other, says Viseu, is "the rich guy who has his billion dollars and then says, 'There you go.'"

At age 40, Carr rode the elevator to the ground floor, the place where everything looked and felt different—where he looked and felt different. "I didn't sit in Washington, D.C., and mail checks," he says. "I came here and said, 'I'm going to be here for 20 years, and I'm going to wear these silly cutoff shorts.' To make things work in rural Africa, you've got to be hands-on, and you run a real risk of making things worse if you intervene from a distance."

ONE NIGHT AT DINNER—grilled prawns, gin-and-tonics—I'd listened as Carr and Jofrisse, Gorongosa's two lordly silverbacks, got to know each other better. In practice, the work will mostly be Carr's: Jofrisse will remain 750 miles away in the capital, Maputo, work with Carr to perform quarterly reviews of park operations, and basically serve as the government's representative. But partners they would be, and currently they were discussing an issue of vital importance: the forthcoming annual soccer game between management and staff. Carr suggested that, as co-administrators, he and Jofrisse should be the goalkeepers. Or, given their age, together they'd make one goalkeeper.

"Maybe," said Jofrisse. "I'm not good."

"Or maybe we should be somewhere else," said Carr, who'd hardly ever played soccer, and the two of them leaned into each other like brothers, laughing.

"But we can," insisted Jofrisse.

"*Sim, podemos,*" Carr agreed. Yes, we can. The game, with Carr and Jofrisse on the field against the youthful staff, would end in a crowd-cheering tie.

From where we sat in Chitengo's new restaurant, Chikalango, gazing out into the beast-filled wilds just a minute's walk away, I found it difficult to imagine the devastation Carr had encountered three and a half years earlier. When he first drove in with his multidisciplinary team (scientists, engineers, economic advisers, tourism developers), there

was barely running water, and only a small generator for electricity. The few walls left standing in the rubble of what had been the park's post office, banquet hall, shop, and first-aid clinic were riddled with bullet holes; bomb casings were lying around. Carr hired a labor force from local communities, former Frelimo soldiers and Renamo rebels who required occasional lectures on the rewards of playing nice. Slowly, Chitengo's infrastructure—reception center, mechanic shop, two new swimming pools—began to rise from the ashes, its reincarnation adorned with Internet satellite dishes.

Until he moved into a spacious campaign tent, Carr slept in the back of a pickup truck, high enough off the ground to keep safe from snakes and (he hoped) lions, a stargazer's preference that landed him in the hospital, semi-comatose with the first of three bouts of malaria.

An intrepid hiker back home in Idaho, he quickly became an obsessive explorer of the park, gleefully "discovering" thermal springs, waterfalls, caves, species. The animals were not entirely gone, as he'd been led to believe, but hiding, still harried by rampant poaching. A revitalized team of rangers—their numbers are now up to 135, many of them former poachers themselves—began to patrol Gorongosa, its dry season plagued by wildfires set by illegal hunters to drive game into snares. In 2006, with the completion of the new fenced sanctuary, the park reintroduced its first large number of grazers—54 buffalo brought in from Kruger—to the overgrown grasslands and began to supplement the antelope populations with blue wildebeest that hadn't been seen in years. In 2008, more hippos and elephants were trucked in from South Africa, but the zebras remained unavailable, trapped behind the Zimbabwe border by political turmoil.

Tourists trickled back, 30 or so camping out the first year, fewer than 1,000 in 2005, 8,000 (a mix of tourists and other visitors) in 2008—compared with 20,000 in Gorongosa's golden years, in the sixties and early seventies, when big-game hunters swam in Chitengo's two swimming pools and the restaurant often served 400 meals a day. From day one, Carr understood that the fate of Gorongosa depended on ecotourism, a tricky proposition for an unfamiliar destination so distant from the world's centers of affluence. Still, in ten years, Carr's team believes it will be able to easily accommodate 100,000 tourists a year—an egalitarian mix of self-drive campers and luxury-addicted adventuristas—and even at four times that capacity Gorongosa would still maintain the same "tourism density level" as the famous Kruger without damaging the character of its wilderness.

Yet before more tourists can be seduced back to Gorongosa, the project's near- and long-term success depends on its ability to cultivate the support of the 250,000 villagers living in the buffer zone—a 1,900-square-mile Sustainable Development Zone—surrounding the park. The overwhelming majority are subsistence farmers, living in a sprawl of mud-and-thatch villages and scattered homesteads, vulnerable to disease and famine, too poor even to generate garbage, which explains the remarkable litter-free cleanliness of the countryside's roads and footpaths.

Humans and the environment invariably compete with each other, yet without synergy between the two, Carr believes, both are doomed. The Gorongosa project lies at the center of a controversy in conservation science, positioned between a movement called Back to the Barriers—basically, turning the resource into an off-limits fortress—and a more porous, community-based management approach. Barricading Gorongosa from its swaddle of communities, Carr told me, was both infeasible and perhaps morally arrogant, an artificial separation between integrated ecosystems and social patterns that would have minimal effect on the three practices that most endanger the park: slash-and-burn agriculture in the watershed, charcoal production, and hunting. The key to all this, of course, was to galvanize everyone with a financial stake in conservation.

One day, we waded hip deep across the Pungue River to visit Vinho, the community closest to park headquarters. As we scrambled out of the flow, I mentioned that Gorongosa's head safari guide, Adolfo Macadona, had told me that a week earlier a villager had been eaten by a crocodile while fishing at this same spot on the bank. "I think about it as getting hit by a car in Harvard Square," Carr said. "It happens." Drying off as we toured Carr's work in Vinho—a brick-and-mortar school with a WiFi computer lab, a clinic and nurses' residence, a bore well drawing potable water—Carr told me he had promised to improve or construct dozens of schools and additional health clinics throughout the district. Gorongosa already employs 500 newly trained locals, and an additional 5,000 people benefit from those paychecks.

When Carr reached out to the villages dotted across the Gorongosa massif, many locals had rarely seen a *muzungo*, and certainly not one bearing swag—cloth, wine, tobacco—to appease the resident spirits. Near Nhatsoco, a settlement on the mountain where people were clear-cutting for charcoal, Carr was rebuffed by the area's *curandeiro* (spiritual leader, witch doctor—take your pick) when his team arrived in a flurry of bad jujú: Their helicopter was a sinister color, a village chief wore inappropriate clothes, and an unhappy



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ancestor—a snake—chose to make an appearance. Carr apologized but persisted, eventually gaining the priest's blessing. By 2006, locals were being paid to guide tourists up the sacred peak, build tree nurseries, and replant hardwoods across the slopes.

Everywhere Carr goes in the district these days, he's treated like a rock star distributing goodwill and golden eggs. In return he asks the villagers to stop setting fires in the park, give up poaching, quit hacking down trees. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the bad habits carry on, though a shift in attitudes is palpable. Carr, with no illusions, says, "It starts somewhere"—a more felicitous life, a less destructive way of doing things—but by the time he hands Gorongosa back to the Mozambican government, no one doubts that its human and ecological landscapes will have undergone a mind-boggling transformation. The project's staff, 98.5 percent Mozambican, already light up with the feeling that that future, with its attendant sense of triumph in their remaking of a war-torn country, has pulled into the station.

IT WASN'T QUICKSAND after all but a bog of liquefied silt. Carr and Galante bottomed out crotch deep and eventually extracted themselves from the goop, and we continued our march upriver, though in a matter of minutes Carr, undaunted, had plunged into another bog. This time as he struggled free he began to notice that wherever a plant with tiny yellow flowers grew, the bed would support his weight, and farther on we came to a place where the flowering zigzagged across the channel. Heedless to my admonitions, Carr race-walked toward the far shore as if he were trying to beat oncoming traffic. Perhaps he worried about crocodiles hidden in the weeds, though I had begun to learn that Carr's momentum was an indomitable force, at times imprudent, and uninhibited by ambivalence. Certain now that what we were doing was a variation of crazy, I looked across the river at the opposite bank, the feral tangle of thicket, vine, and scrub palmetto roasting in the feeble shade of blanched trees and spiked ilala palms, and resigned myself to the crossing.

We scrambled up a natural drainage chute carved into the bank, found the seldom-used safari track we'd hoped was there, and followed it back downstream for two miles, a stretch where several days later Galante and I would find elephants coming up off the river and a hippo cow and calf napping in the bush not 30 feet away. Then the track turned away from the river into the windless, stifling heart of the jungle, and we were soon inhaling intense fumes, the unforgettable leathery piss odor of wild Africa.

For the first half-mile, the trees were

stripped, toppled over, the smashed aftermath of leaf-eating pachyderms passing through like a tornado, and we became instant students of their mounded dung, studying the color and relative dryness to determine the herd's proximity. "Just keep talking," Carr said hopefully, and whenever our conversation flagged I would loudly announce to the jungle that we were, in fact, still talking.

We walked with relentless determination. With the sun overhead, there was little shade on the track, the sauna-like ferocity of the heat as threatening as the thought of lunging carnivores or slithering black mambas, and after an hour it was evident that we lacked sufficient water to stay hydrated. Magically, my shoulder bag filled with rocks, and we began to share the punishment of lugging it. Sweating profusely in jeans and leather boots, I envied my companions' bwana shorts and minimalist footwear—Jesus sandals for Galante, preppy sockless boat shoes for Carr, the current *muzungo* styles for a jaunt through the goddamn jungle.

The second hour, Galante and I began to drag our feet ever so slightly, the monotonous slog of the trek contradicting its urgency. Carr, on the other hand, was having a terrific time, supernaturally energized to be shipwrecked in the middle of nowhere, an opportunity flush with the thrill of rule-breaking, and by the third hour, as my need for two-minute breaks became more frequent, he would shuffle restlessly, unable to stand still as Galante and I squatted in the shade, parched and mindless. Our slowdown finally summoned Carr's inner (antsy) child, and he suggested we stay put while he went on alone searching for the elusive cell-phone signal. No way, Galante and I protested. Our pride would not allow it, and we stuck together for another mile or so until, on the verge of heatstroke, it became painfully obvious that our pride wasn't quite the virtue we had imagined.

We shook hands, wished Carr godspeed, and watched his blithe disappearance around a bend in the track, wondering which body parts he might be missing if we ever saw him again. The late-afternoon sun had begun to splinter into golden beams, planting shadows in the jungle. Unable to depend on the success of Carr's mission, we began walking again, our pace marginally faster than zombies. After a ways, Galante snatched up a long stick. "What's that for?" I asked a bit dubiously.

"Just in case," he said. "For animals." Minutes passed in silence and I kept thinking I should pocket one of the occasional rocks I saw in the track.

"Vasco," I said, "what kind of animals are you going to hit with that stick?"

"You never know," he said, and we both laughed at this absurdity. He told a safari joke

that ends with a hapless fellow preventing an attack by throwing shit at a lion, which he scoops out of the deposit in his own pants.

BY FOUR O'CLOCK, we arrived at a landmark that Galante, for the past hour, had expected to see any minute now: an old concrete bridge spanning a dry wash. "This is it," he said, removing his shirt and collapsing flat on his back. I pulled off my boots and socks, rolled up my pants, unbuttoned my shirt, and lay down as well, dazed and blistered and generally indifferent to what might happen next. We had walked ten miles from the near side of the river, plus another three or four trying to find a crossing. It was unlikely that Carr would be in phone range yet, four miles farther on, and so we were puzzled when we heard a search plane overhead, flying out toward the hippo pool, unaware that our failure to return had set off an alarm in Jofrisse that had now reached the highest levels of the federal government, or that a large herd of elephants was nosing around the disabled helicopter while Segran, engrossed in Finnegan's book, read the first eight chapters.

Barking signaled the approach of baboons, challenging our right to recline on their bridge. The jungle dimmed toward twilight, its harshness replaced by a counterintuitive sense of abiding peace. I closed my eyes, remembering the quizzical eyes of the antelope we had seen throughout the day—oribi, waterbuck, nyala—poised to flee but not in any rush as we passed by in quiet admiration. What a shame, I dared to think, that we had not seen a pride of lions or trumpeting elephants. A sun-stricken fantasy, akin to a death wish. When Galante asked what time it was, I told him 4:30. They'll come for us by five o'clock, he predicted, and, as night fell upon Gorongosa, they did.

We found Carr blissed out, up to his sun-burned neck in the cool blue water of Chitengo's new swimming pool, eating a bowl of fresh fruit cocktail, a full moon rising behind the happiest philanthropist on earth. The safari guides would call us damn fools for our reckless misadventure. Fair enough, and we would have to live with the mischievous glow of that assessment, persuaded that our bad luck—an outlandish privilege, a backhanded gift—might never again play out with such serendipity, marching across Africa in league with just the sort of heaven-sent fool a better world could thrive on. A world, I would expect, where standing around waiting to be rescued is not an option. ○

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