Chicken Attack

Sierra Leone West Africa 2001

Attack of the wild chicken

During one of my overseas duty assignments, I found myself in Sierra Leone in the middle of their bloody civil war. But from time to time during high-stress operations, something completely off the wall would step out of the shadows at the perfect time and break the stress. This story is a perfect example of one of those humorous occasions.

We headed for one of the outlying bush camps in our trusty British Land Rover when something completely unexpected happened. As we cut a path through the jungle along a typical small and very narrow jungle path, we came across a tiny village in our Land Rover. Now, when I say a small village, I mean little. There were only three bush huts, two on the right and one on the left. We were travelling at speeds up to 70 km an hour due to the

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country's ambush threat. Typically, on a road or trail like this, we would only go about 20 km an hour max, but that day it was 70 km. So we hit the village at 70 km, and out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a streak of white ripping out from the closest bush hut on an oblique angle heading for the vehicle at breakneck speed. Just seconds before impact, I recognized just what it was. I screamed, "chicken"! The driver slammed on the brakes, and the vehicle began its 15 m slide to its inevitable stop. Just as the chicken hit our vehicle's grill, there was this large puff of feathers arching across the front of the hood. I instantly considered the outcome of this incident. You see, to kill a chicken in the country was a big problem for the locals. That chicken would lay a hundred eggs in its lifetime, so it's a big deal. As we came to a stop, I started to reach for my wallet to pay compensation to the local villagers, knowing full well I would have to. But,

to my amusement, this time was going to be quite different. Instead, this possessed chicken popped its head over the front of our hood and locked its eyes on the driver. You could tell that this chicken was somewhat disturbed and downright pissed off. It came without warning and launched itself over the hood and began its attack on my driver through the window! The bird never took its eyes off of the driver. It had eyes that were narrow and downright terrifying and fixed on its intent. The bird now had one claw affixed to the windshield wiper, and the other talons scratched at the window! It was now beating the window with its wings and trying to break through the glass with its beak. I have never seen anything like this before in my life! This wild chicken was intensely focused on getting his talons around my driver's neck or at least scaring him out of his whits!

After about a minute, the chicken's eyes went back to normal from the bizarre state they were in and transformed back to

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normal. The bird then released our vehicle and ran off the hood, and hit the ground running. Once it was about 3 m away, it stopped, turned and look at us as if to say it's time for you two to leave, or do you want some more? We stepped on the gas and made our escape from the village of the suicide chicken. As we drove away, my driver, who was a British Non-Commissioned member with a heavy accent, looked at me with a confused look and said, "Ay, mate! What the hell was that all about?" We instantly both started to laugh until we thought we were going to burst. We knew we would have to travel through this village in the future, so we marked our maps 'home of the Wild Chicken!

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