

## BUSH PIGS

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By Richard Dooling

It's not easy coming back to this country. It's not like any other country in the world. Most of you don't know that, because you live here, and you've never been anywhere else, except maybe the Caribbean, which is like a big beach, or Europe, which is like going to an old museum. Europeans sit at tables with knives and forks. They have beds and sheets, toilets and garbage cans. Africa is different. The expatriates there will tell you that the reverse culture shock of coming back to America can be worse than the shock of going Third World in the first place.

For three years I was in the Peace Corps, and I lived in a village in the south of Sierra Leone, West Africa. I'd like to say that I stayed so long because the villagers needed me, but that would be a lie. I owed a lot on my college loans, I heard that jobs back home were scarce, I didn't want to go to law school, a certain village girl prepared my meals for me and took care of me in other ways, and for a long time a couple of diamond diggers and I were smoking the very best Nigerian jamba every night and listening to Bob Marley and Lucky Dube, King Sunny Ade and Johnny Clegg Savuka. Time passed. I used to drink with a white missionary at Sulima Beach—twenty minutes by footpath and the most beautiful place in the world. One night we laughed over beers about how a local witch-finder had put a swear on him. Four days later his body washed up on the beach in front of the thatched *baffa* where we had



watched the sun set.

The U.S. government sent me to Sierra Leone to help starving Africans, but at least half the time, the starving Africans took care of me. For every week I was able to hobble out of my hut, I spent two more curled up on a tick mattress with dysentery or malaria. When the fever was upon me, soothsayers called "looking-around men" came and washed their eyes with lotions made from magic leaves; then they threw stones on a mat and told my fortune. The prognosis was always bad, the cures and propitiatory sacrifices were always expensive.

There was no protein anywhere, only rotten vegetable matter. It was hard to keep weight on—even American money couldn't buy better food. I had wounds, simple nicks or mosquito bites that became suppurating tropical sores. The Peace Corps provided

a manual called “Where There Is No Doctor,” and it said that my wounds were not healing because the body needs protein to make new cells and repair itself. Oh.

The war in Liberia, to the south, started spilling over into Sierra Leone. Food became even scarcer. The rice farms went untended because people were afraid to go out in the bush. The villagers were dropping concentrated insecticides into ponds and eating the fish that bobbed to the surface. Even bananas were scarce, and the ones that the groundnut girls sold to me were stiff and green. When I ate them, they came back up, and all the water I had boiled that morning went out the other end.

Fevers came, and nightmares that I woke up and lived in. I suppose I should have left, but I was too sick to travel. Instead, I sat in my hut and listened to tales of witchcraft and bad medicine, told to the villagers by refugees streaming in from Liberia. All along the border, the forests were teeming with bush devils and Liberian warriors, cannibals who made something called Liberian Stew out of slaughtered women and children and ate it before going into battle. They made medicines from the flesh of human beings, and these medicines gave them so much power that they could not be killed in battle; bullets bounced off them. They could change themselves into elephants, leopards, baboons.

This “shape-shifting,” as it is called in Africa, is very common. The villagers all believed this was absolutely true: that certain human beings could change themselves into animals at will. All over Sierra Leone, hunters quickly cut the ears off the animals they killed for just this reason. If a hunter killed a witch or a sorcerer travelling in the shape of an animal, the animal would change back into its human shape, and the hunter would be accused of murder—unless he had the

animal’s ears to prove his innocence.

I dwell on this only because the animal stuff becomes important later on, and I think I was ambushed from the inside. I had forgotten that the American unconscious is inside. In Africa, it’s outside the body, in the bush. Supernatural spirits roam in both places, take on the shapes of men or animals, and go on killing rampages. Human blood gives these devils great pleasure. Does it matter that the American spirits appear inside the mind of a guy who likes to plan the day his spree of violence will be covered on the six o’clock news, whereas the African ones come rampaging in from the bush? One way or another, they show up, and I was ready only for the outside kind.

The civil war got worse, and hordes of fleeing Liberians streamed through our village. Breathing skeletons in rags putting one foot in front of the other, children carrying other children. Some of them gave up and collapsed in the clearings of our village. I saw a beggar dying on a mat. Flies were swarming in his eyes, crawling in and out of his bleeding sockets, and he was still alive, and holding out his hands to me.

The villagers had long and earnest discussions about leaving their homes and the land their ancestors had farmed for centuries. They were desperate for news that soldiers, any soldiers, were coming to restore order, so the families could go back to their farms. The more educated people among them prayed that *poo-muis*—white people, Europeans or Americans—would hear of their plight and send soldiers and doctors and healthy relief workers to help, as had happened in Ethiopia and Somalia.

One night there was great excitement in the village because travelers in from Freetown had heard that an American film crew had arrived in West Africa. Now

there was hope. Maybe the film crew would make movies of the slaughter in Liberia. Maybe they would make movies about starving people. Maybe, after the pictures were sent back, the U.S. Marines would come. Maybe food and medicine would come. But a week later we learned that the American film crew was making a movie about female circumcision. People in America did not want to see starving people or slaughtered Liberians. The people in America wanted to see pictures of the women's secret-society initiations.

Finally the Peace Corps program director came with a Land Rover and stuffed me in the back. He tried not to be nervous about being out in my part of the bush. I gave away my food and most of my stuff to the villagers. I gave my books to an old ma who sold food on the highway; in better days, she had used book pages to wrap five-cent orders of groundnuts. I tried to give a half bag of rice and a tin of palm oil to two skeletal kids, but they were too weak to lift either one.

Before I left, I told everyone to get out, because the Liberian rebels were going to burn all the villages in the southeast and seize the diamond pits. The villagers said they were staying. There was new hope: five white nuns had been killed in Liberia—maybe now American soldiers would come.

The American doctor in Freetown told me my blood work and my stool specimen would get me free medical care back in the States, because I was full of bugs the infectious-disease people paid tuition to see. I was medivacked out of Freetown and flown home for the first time in three years.

\* \* \*

When I got off the plane in Omaha, my family and a few friends met me at the airport. I watched the excitement evaporate from their faces when they saw how much weight I had lost, how malaria had drained the color from my face. The lights made me blink and sweat. Metal and glass glared at me from everywhere and lit the pained expressions of people who wanted me to be three years and a few diseases younger.

"We were so worried about you!" they said.

"I was cleaning the refrigerator when I heard you couldn't get out," said my mom. Her face was caked with something, and there was paint around her eyes. Her hair was all stuck together and heaped on top of itself in weird, stiff swirls, frozen in time like sculpture. "The phone rang and the State Department people said you were being held hostage in Sierra Leone," she continued. "I was so worried!"

"I was trying to finish my thesis," said my brother. "Mom called me and said that cannibals had captured you. Totally abnormal, or what?"

My old girlfriend was there. She was putting herself through veterinary school by working at a dog beauty salon. The day she heard the news, she was so distracted she fell three dogs behind and almost got fired when the owners had to wait for their dogs.

One by one, they described in idiotic detail exactly what they had been doing when they heard that I was trapped in rebel territory in Sierra Leone. For some reason, what *they* were doing at the time was extremely important to them. But now that it was over, now that I was not dead, they were all so glad they didn't have to worry anymore! Wasn't I glad, too? They had a big celebration all planned. They had a long list of things we were going to do, all in one night: steak, ice cream,

cold beer, movies, a hot tub. Everything they just knew I had been missing.

My buddy, Kurt, handed me an open beer, right there in the airport. I hesitated, just for a second, because lately I had been worried about certain African enemies of mine trying to poison me. And after all this hell happened, I wondered if somebody *had* poisoned me and turned me into somebody else.

I had to be hungry—starving!—they decided, so they took me to the restaurant first. We had to drive several cars, even though we didn't need them, because there were people with beepers and fold-up telephones who might be called away at any moment. I went with my girlfriend in a truck.

"Why are you driving a truck?" I asked.

"Sport utility," she said, without explaining what that meant.

It had automatic seat belts. Freezing air gushed out of the dashboard. A water-bed commercial came out of the radio, human voices speaking English words too fast to make any sense.

She had two dogs, and they were riding in the cargo area, lap things with bows in the hair around their ears. Bert and Ernie. They were purebreds of some kind. They looked like small creatures from a movie about another planet; they belonged in the lap of an evil intergalactic dictator who was about to destroy earthlings and all of human civilization by pressing a channel changer. She said she loved me and had missed me very much. There were two separate dishes in the back, because she used the Cycle Plan from Ken-L Ration. Bert ate Cycle Lite for overweight and less active adult dogs. Ernie ate Cycle Senior, which contains easily digestible protein for older dogs with slowing metabolisms. She said she wanted to make love to me

but didn't want to catch whatever was making me sick. She wanted to put Ernie in a dog show, but there was something wrong with his teeth; she had to send him to a dog orthodontist, so she could win prizes with him and recoup the money she had paid for his lineage. She wished she could tell me just how worried and upset she had been about me being trapped behind rebel lines. Bert vomited every time he ate, so she had sent him to a pet psychologist, who said it was because she left her dogs alone all day while she was at school and at the salon, and then came home smelling of other dogs. That was also why he soiled the pillow at the head of her bed every day after she left. That's why she had the dogs in the back. She didn't want the bed to be full of shit when we went home. Between the dog problems and me in rebel trouble in Sierra Leone, she had been really upset. She was taking some pills called—Prozap?—that made her feel really, really wonderful and really great, and these pills had absolutely no side effects, and the studies had shown they were absolutely not addictive, so she could take them all day, every day, forever. I should take them, too, she advised, especially if seeing terrible things in Africa had made me sad.

The truck merged onto an interstate—a vast, empty expanse of smooth cement. No cars in front of us, no cars behind us. We could go as fast as we wanted. Every now and again another person drove by in a huge new car, driving right down the middle with vacant lanes on either side. The cars floated like glass-and-steel bubbles in outer space—beautiful spaceships with no passengers or goods or animals in them, just drivers driving in wide-open lanes and going as fast as they wanted, their windows rolled up, even though it was summer.

I had to stop at a gas station. I spared my girlfriend the full story of my intestinal woes by telling her I'd had

a few beers on the plane. The toilet paper was very nice, but for just a second I forgot whether I was supposed to sit on the porcelain or just squat over it like the holes in the floor in West Africa.

The billboards were spectacular works of art, but I had trouble remembering why they were there. They were orange and yellow and red, with products and overblown human faces. Half-naked women in swimsuits and underwear fondled cigarettes and held them just so in front of their parted lips. They were very beautiful women, with swollen lips painted red and half-open. I had not seen pictures of such women in quite a while. For three years, I had seen only village women, whose teats were sucked flat by the age of sixteen, and by twenty-two they had nipples banging against their bellies as they hulled rice.

These billboard women in dishabille were absolutely captivating. I knew that people had blown up these huge glossy photographs of half-naked women and had mounted them on billboards with spotlights because they knew that the instant I saw them I would want to make love to them. It was so obvious! Why else would they put those huge photos there? Why else would the breasts be so large and firm, and straining at the seams of flimsy garments? Global corporations had spent huge sums of money creating these images for me. They wanted me to look at them and think, *I'm ready now*.

But I had forgotten what all of these breasts and lips and provocations to make love had to do with cigarettes. I was on the verge of sorting it out, when the dogs started barking in the cargo area. Bert had thrown up his Cycle

Lite—which, frankly, had the attractive aroma of surplus protein.

We got off the highway and drove up to a building

with a massive, plastic bull's head—bigger than the umbel of a full-grown palm, and lit from within by powerful beacons or searchlights. It was a glowing Angus steer's head mounted on a huge sign out front. This was some kind of advertisement for the steak house; I knew that, but again I had trouble making connections. I kept wanting to think it was a totem thing, like maybe Hindus were worshipping cows inside. Was I supposed to think that cattle were being killed and eaten in there? No, it was just an ad, a cute symbol, like the women getting ready to perform fellatio on a cigarette. I dwell on it only because this may have been the beginning of my disorientation and the start of the weird animal thing. Before I went in, I almost had myself all straightened out: *Sure, it's a big, glowing cow's head, because they serve cow meat inside*. But what if a horse's head were up there instead? Would that mean they served horse meat? No, that would probably mean it was a Western store selling boots and saddles. And what if it were a pig's head? I remember thinking that, and given what happened later, it may have been important.

Inside was a dark, crowded restaurant, blissfully cool, and lit by candles in ornate red bowls. A blood-colored glow rose from the bowls and flickered off the walls. Dishes clattered, silverware rang, glasses tinkled after toasts. The smell of food seared my belly with hunger. My skin thrilled to the blasts of cool air, but then I got cold and shivered.

We were seated at an altar that was covered with white cloth and set with chalices, gleaming silverware, and sacramental plates with gold inlays. All around us, very large pink people in evening dress were laughing, bowing over tables heaped with food, ice buckets, bottles of wine wrapped in towels and nestled in

silver coolers, baskets of fresh-baked bread, and plates smeared with half-finished entrees.

My visual disturbances started with a huge round guy at the table next to us. He was talking about a woman who had cut off a man's penis. In fact, everybody was talking about a woman who had cut off a man's penis. People had been watching a program about this on TV while we were waiting for my bags at the airport. It had been on the radio in the truck. My girlfriend told me about it. And then she told everyone at the table that she had told me about it. Millions and millions of Americans were talking about a woman who had cut off a man's penis. What did I think of that, they wanted to know.

"So, wild man, tell us about Africa," they said next. "Were you living with savages or what?"

I was really hungry, eating all the bread, and wondering how square pieces of butter had fallen into my dish of extra ice. I wanted to order food, but everyone wanted drinks first, because we were celebrating.

The big guy at the next table kept laughing through his nose. Snorting, really. He was pink and puffy and swelling right out of his clothes. His laugh sounded like a holler at hog-killing time. He had jowls that cascaded over his collar. I heard the snorting again and looked over at him. Suddenly, everything was breathing, seething with too much light and texture. The carpeting, hair, and artificial plants in the room started growing. The snorting noise came from a pink snout in the middle of the man's face, with tufts of hair bristling out of the nostrils. His eyes were beady and veined in red, set close to the snout. He picked up a corn cob and gnawed on it furiously. That's when I noticed the pink hooves. They were sticking right out of the sleeves of his coat.

I knew he couldn't really be a huge pig in a sports coat eating corn on the cob. But he was! A huge fucking bush pig, just like the ones I had seen in Sierra Leone, and that set me off on shape-shifting—maybe this was some kind of freak bush creature coming at me from the outside, the way they do in Africa. Or maybe someone had put a swear on me before I'd left my village, or put some hallucinogenic poison in my rice chop. I just needed an explanation for the visual disturbances, because they were happening all around me.

"Somebody said your country was invaded by cannibals. Are there really cannibals?"

The pig grabbed silverware in his pink hooves and sawed off a piece of meat, stabbed it with a fork, and stuffed it into his mouth.

"I love pork tenderloin," he said.

I tried not to look at the bush pig, or talk about anything until I got myself under control. I looked at another table, across from me and behind my girlfriend. The candlelight wasn't very good over there. But then I heard squealing, and I got scared.

"But you have lost weight!" It was a woman's voice coming out of a lard-type Poland China swine, a speckled one in an evening gown. She had a collar of jewels on. "You have lost weight," she squealed again. "I told you that when I first saw you!"

"I'm heavier than I've ever been," insisted her companion, pushing aside a plate heaped with bones, gristle, and sauces.

Don't ask. Yes, she was one too. A warthog with a pair of bifocals perched on her snout. Their mates were hefty, bacon-type males in tailcoats. My teeth chattered because of the air conditioning. Hair grew out of the goosebumps on my arms and formed windrows on my limbs. I held on to the table, rifling my mental files,

desperately searching for possible causes of spontaneous porcine hallucinations.

A pig waiter swept through the crowd with a dessert tray. A wild boar in a turtleneck waddled unsteadily among the tables in search of the rest room. At another table, four bush pigs in formal attire whispered behind their hooves and shrugged, then sipped from globes of wine and turned their attentions to another waiter, who bowed and politely waited for the attention of everyone at the table.

"I'll take just a moment to tell you about this evening's off-the-menu specials," this waiter said. "First, for our appetizers, we are featuring a warm potato-and-goat-cheese terrine with baby beets and spinach greens, Irish-bacon vinaigrette, and hog headcheese. We also have a pancetta-wrapped, grilled loin of suckling pig with creamy polenta and pignoli-tomato-and-basil sauce. Finally—a personal favorite of mine—we have rillettes of pork with organic arugula salad, plum vinaigrette, Gorgonzola, walnuts, and prosciutto."

"That's mine," a male bush pig said with a wobble of his jowls. "I can eat prosciutto by the pound."

I was hoping that if this was a psychotic break, some kind of advisory would pass across the bottom of my screen. The waiter wasn't done yet.

"For our entrees this evening, the chef recommends Jamaican jerk-marinated and grilled tenderloin of pork with red beans, marjoram corn, tamarind sauce and fried green plantains. We are also offering grilled paillard of pork loin with porcini mushrooms, smothered in a roast-shallot-rosemary-zinfandel sauce, and accompanied by English peas, cumin gnocchi, and bacon gratin. We also have medallions of pork tenderloin served on a bed of sage linguini, black beans, chilis, roasted corn and peppers, tomato, cilantro, and annatto oil. Finally,

we are serving pork Wellington stuffed with foie gras, truffles, and honey-orange-glazed wild-boar sausage."

I was really, really hungry. I couldn't find any crackers, so I started eyeballing the sugar bowl.

What did I think about all the violence here in America, they wanted to know. Had I been reading about it?

At another table, four huge Herefords and a couple of Berkshire swine had clearly had too much to drink and were laughing riotously at each other's muzzy attempts to order desserts, which were being displayed on a tray and lovingly described by an officious bush pig waiter with a stylish hog ring in his snout and a braided pig tail. He spoke with a lisp, while shifting his weight, and fanning the air with his free hoof.

It was a homosexual pig. I mean, a gay pig. I don't want to offend anyone. In Africa, I'd gotten wind of how sensitive people here are becoming about language. You have to be very careful and say things a certain precise way, unless you are talking about a woman cutting off a man's penis.

More tropical storms rumbled through my hollow bowels, and I excused myself to go to the men's room. When I walked by the kitchen, a porker in a white apron was shoveling platefuls of food into the huge steel maw of a garbage disposal.

"Hey!" I cried. I looked around the place for somebody to help me notice what was happening.

Plates of food steamed on shelves. Blocks of slotted wood bristled with butcher knives and two-tined forks, bread knives and meat cleavers. A thicket of utensils hung from the ceiling like stainless-steel vegetation. The sides of the pass-through were studded with magnets suspending a single huge carving knife as if in midair. It looked like the cutlasses the villagers had used to clear their farms.

A big Tamworth boar in a butcher's apron streaked with blood smiled at me and waved.

"Howdy," he said cheerfully.

Behind him, a skewered shoat rotated over a vented broiler.

"What?" said the porker at the disposal, emptying another plateful of steak down the drain.

"Don't throw that food away," I said. "I'm really, really hungry. I would eat that. Really, I could. I bet I could find people for you who would eat that."

"Fuckin A," said the porker, and looked over his shoulder.

I decided I would explain it all to him after I explored another First World latrine. This time the toilet paper was as thick as linen, and it had designs embossed on it. I knew some African tailors who could make shirts out of the stuff.

There were pigs in the stalls next to me, snorting and rooting, stamping their hooves, and making water.

When I came out, the porker was shoveling more platefuls of food into the steel drain.

"Hey," I yelled.

"Hey, what?" somebody said.

A big black bush pig in a security guard's uniform was leaning against a cigarette machine.

"Hey, what?" he said. He had a gun in a holster. He kept talking, but the gun scared me so bad I couldn't understand what he was saying. Wait! What am I saying? He was not a black pig. He was a colored pig—I mean, a pig of color. Never mind, he was an African-American pig. I was having trouble because he was not speaking Sierra Leonean Krio, and I knew that if I made a mistake and started talking Krio to him, maybe it wouldn't go over very well.

I hadn't seen a gun in three years. Only the

Liberians had had guns. The only guns in Sierra Leone were carried by the president's special forces in Freetown. The other policemen carried truncheons for beating people. Why did this pig have a gun? Maybe it really had become much more violent here since I had left. The talk at the table was a warning. Maybe everybody had guns, except me. Maybe you even had to watch out in restaurants. Maybe this pig would use this gun on somebody like me, who was having trouble. I wanted to let him know that I was having visual disturbances. That I was probably very sick, or somebody had put a swear on me, or poisoned me; just let him know that it was my first night back and parts of me hadn't finished the trip yet.

He was speaking a language I couldn't understand. And I noticed that the little leather band that snaps over the hammer and keeps the gun in the holster was unfastened. I realized that the security pig had unsnapped it before he came over here, because he knew he might have to use it on me. This pig of color was going to shoot me!

When I looked up, pigs were standing in a chute and hollering at me. Back in the kitchen plates of food were still being thrown into the garbage disposal. More pigs lined up, staring at me with beady eyes. A swear had followed me home to America! I was afraid that if I moved, the African-American pig would charge, just the way bush pigs do, in which case I would need an ear to prove my innocence. If I ran away, this pig would think I was prey. He trotted over and took me by the arm. Instead of running, I grabbed the carving knife.

\* \* \*

A face appears at the little rectangle of chicken-wired glass in my door.

"We are coming in to give you your medication and

assist you in using the personal-hygiene facility,” says the face’s mouth.

My second dose. My parents and my girlfriend have hired lawyers, doctors, and psychiatrists, who will be paid thousands of dollars to clean up this mess. It seems there’s nothing wrong back in this country that can’t be explained by scrambled brain chemistry. These well-groomed professionals don’t know the first thing about pulling the swear that somebody put on me; instead they keep chanting something that sounds like “post-automatic hex disorder,” which the medication is supposed to fix, by dipping my thoughts in mud before I think them.

The door opens and six guys fan out around me, some pink, others black. Faces are still dangerously volatile, so I focus on the linoleum beneath my feet. A black hand and a paper cup of green liquid move into my peripheral vision. Voices come at me from different directions—a geek chorus of psychiatric attendants.

“You can use the personal hygiene facility with two male staff in attendance,” says one.

Time passes. A throat clears in a low giggle.

“Seen your picture in the paper, man. You bad.”

“That means I’m good right?”

“Too good. Took sixty-eight stitches to sew that cop’s ear back on. Why you wanna cut off a cop’s ear?”

Another one says, “If you don’t use the facility now, you will not be able to use it for another hour.”

“Why’d you cut that cop, dude?”

Somebody else hisses, “Don’t get him going again.”

“Your lawyer called and said he will be back to see you tomorrow,” one says, taking the cup after I drank the green stuff.

“I told you don’t want a lawyer,” I say. “A lawyer can’t make sense of this. Only God can make sense of this. I

told you to get me a priest. I want a Roman Catholic priest, who knows about Hell!”

“A priest is coming this afternoon,” one of them says.

“Yeah,” says another. “We got you a priest.”

They walk backwards out the door and lock the bolts. They call this “the quiet room.” In here it’s perfectly smooth and white. No surface in all of West Africa is as smooth and as white as the walls of this room.

THE END

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## Afterword to Bush Pigs

I am a fan of free, Open Source software, especially the [Vim](#) text editor, the [Linux](#) operating system, the [Python](#) programming language, and the [Open Office](#) software suite. As a rank amateur programmer, I’m still unable to contribute code to the general good, so I am contributing some open source fiction, instead—code for programming humans instead of machines.

*Bush Pigs* was originally a chapter in the first draft of my second novel, *White Man’s Grave*. I cut it just before finishing the book, because I couldn’t fit the pig story into the West African setting, and I didn’t want my main characters to return to America (how dull!). So out came the hallucinatory bush-pig sequence.

In 1992, just after *White Man’s Grave* was completed and submitted for publication, my good friend, Michael O’Neill (African name, Lahai Hindowa), was working for the Red Cross in Sierra Leone. While conducting an internal investigation for the Red Cross near Koidu, Mike was captured by rebels led by the notorious ‘Moskita’ ([Sam Bokarie](#)) and taken deep into the bush where he was held by the rebel leader, [Foday Sankoh](#) (see the movie *Blood Diamond*, or visit [Wikipedia](#)). What I had merely imagined in *White Man’s Grave* (my friend vanishing into the bush) now came true.

Mike was held for 35 days before he escaped by trekking across 52 miles of bush—a no-man’s-land among the rebel forces, armed ‘Kamajo’ vigilantes and the Sierra Leonean army. Eventually Mike reunited with his family and was flown back to Buffalo, New York (his hometown), and I spoke with him by phone shortly after his return.

Mike’s immediate impressions upon returning to the land of the planet’s most voracious consumers reminded me of many other tales of reentry that I had heard over the years from aid workers and returned Peace Corps

Volunteers (RPCVs). When we go abroad we steel ourselves for the coming culture shock, but the trauma of coming “home” often takes us unawares. G.K. Chesterton said it best: “The whole object of traveling abroad is not to set foot on foreign land; it is to set foot on one’s own country as a foreign land when one returns.”

Out of Mike’s momentary reverse culture shock and my own memories of returning home after a year abroad came a new purpose for the extracted Bush Pig sequence.

### Derivative Works

I love mash-ups and the like, so if anyone wants to throw this material up on a site or rebuild it in some other medium, please drop me a line (humans only please) : rpdooling at gmail dot com.

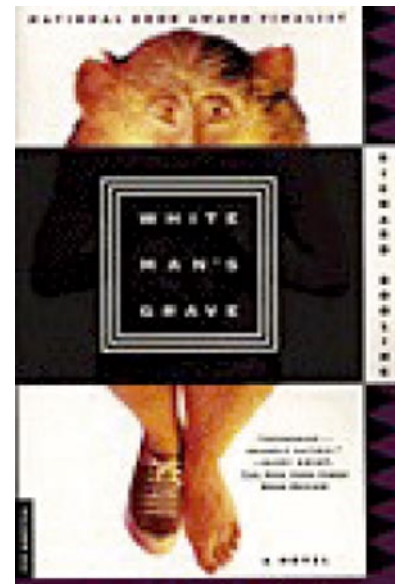
If I like your idea, I will waive the prohibition on derivative works.

Thanks for looking.

</rd>

### Audio Bush Pigs

Actor Mark Nelson performed Bush Pigs live in New York City at Symphony Space as part of the renowned Selected Shorts program. The reading has since been featured on NPR stations across the country as part of the Selected Shorts broadcast. The audio version is available for purchase on [Amazon](#) and from <http://www.symphonyspace.org>.



White Man’s Grave was a finalist for the 1994 National Book Award, and a New York Times Notable Book of 1994.

Read [chapter one online](#) at dooling.com. Or buy the book at Amazon: [White Man’s Grave: A Novel](#).

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If you find a typo or have a design suggestion, please advise:

[rpdooling@gmail.com](mailto:rpdooling@gmail.com).

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