



"ANGRY BEAR" & ME: A D&P'S SUMMER SAGA

By BOB GAMBRILL

I met John ("Angry Bear") Lewis on a day that should have been full of worry and impending doom. It was early morning and I was standing outside of a little Wyoming town called Dubois with my pack slung low and my thumb awaiting the next car. I had come West again, drawn by the mountain's peaceful emptiness and freedom which seems to inhabit this part of the country. I had been travelling with some friends who thought it necessary to make a whirlwind camera trip, then speed eastward; I could have done as much with a couple issues of National Geographic back home. I left the speed demon travellers, or rather they

left me, in Grand Teton National park. Moaning for hot showers and soft beds, they drove off in the secure isolation of their car. They thought I was crazy anyway.

I spent around ten days in a place appropriately named Lake Solitude, 10,000 feet above sea level. I saw very few people there for it was a good six-hour hike from the main tourist campgrounds. My little nylon tent was propped against the side of a hill to protect me from the cold wind that blew down at night even though it was mid-August. From there I could watch the elk and moose wander down to the lake, leisurely escorting their

gangling offspring.

One morning I was awakened by a shuffling noise outside the tent, thinking it was just the magpies that flew down to pick up crumbs of food; I paid it little attention at first. But the more I listened the less sure I was about it being magpies, so I unzipped the flap and was hit in the face with a stinking blast of breath from a cinnamon colored black bear, inches in front of me. It must have looked kind of comical- the bear, belly flat, went skirting backwards, startled by my sudden movement. I also went falling backwards, too scared to cry aloud; I fumbled for my hunting knife not wanting the

experience of using it on the bear. As it turned out, nothing happened of severe consequence. We stared at each other for what seemed to be hours but was probably closer to seconds. It was up to the bear to make the move for I wasn't about to move out of the tent. The big she-bear finally took off bellowing in either dissatisfaction or disgust for I doubted if I smelled much better than she.

Several days later I left Lake Solitude; only out of necessity I should say. My pockets contained a lot of sand and not much more. I had less than seven dollars and 2,000 miles to get back home. I was still alone, this time standing

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