

## **Translation From Afrikaans To English Of An Article On Gareth Jones That Was Published In 5 South African Newspapers on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020**

### **On a mission for the wild animals**

Etienne Britz writes from Nairobi about the city's brave South Africans, about his instant friendships with Uber drivers and about Gareth Jones, a South African columnist and photographer. Jones says he refreshes his soul by devoting himself to Kenya's fauna, from the mighty rhino to the hard-working little dung beetle.

In December 2018, my wife (for her job) and our child moved to Nairobi in Kenya. Unsure of what to expect. Especially myself, used to the sheltered Stellenbosch, felt somewhat scared. After all, this is the land of the Mau-Mau! "Scaredy-pants" will embarrass him, though. Because once I was in Nairobi with its 4 million residents, I was amazed by the city's friendly, mannered, enterprising citizens. They are modest, but at the same time confident people. Armed with an ironic outlook on life, with a kind of British sense of humor. On almost every Uber ride, the driver seems to be a philosopher who likes to laugh at my jokes. An instant friend. Enough company for the whole day. I find out many Kenyans in Nairobi are the product of a strong family, with a present father. People are also shaped by Kenya's inspired church life, by the good school system and by the legacy of 60 years of independence, or actually self-reliance. It soon strikes me that the Kenyans are trying to master every kind of profession or skill that a modern state needs. They even lead the world in terms of digital money. The Kenyans have found a way to pay someone instantly for anything using your smartphone. Under the current circumstances, this means you never have to touch the suspected coronavirus-contaminated paper money in your wallet

Shortly after our arrival, we were invited to meet some South Africans. I say in one of these companies that Kenya seems to me to be a mature post-colonial country. The country has outgrown the hypersensitivity, the tendency towards retaliation and violence and the unpunished corruption of a non-mature post-colonial country. You will learn some more ugly things here, one of the men present warns me. Not long after that, someone grabs my brand new smartphone from my hand where I sit unsuspectingly in an Uber car and exchange funny words with the driver. My first ugly thing learned. That grabbing theft was actually my own fault because the Uber driver warned me twice against my open window. After this instructive incident, "scaredy-pants" soon embarrassed him about something other than his initial fear of the Kenyans. It is the practical presence of spirit, and the courage and deed, of his fellow South Africans in Kenya. I also discovered the craziness of the big South African companies that come to seek their salvation here. With my first, careful exploration of the city, Old Mutual's massive, modern tower building caught my breath. But a little further on I see their competitor. And this is another South African company, namely Sanlam! This insurer, born in 1918 from the struggle to get the Afrikaner financially up and running after the devastating Anglo-Boer War, erected a beautiful skyscraper in Nairobi. Sanlam's famous logo, two hands folded protectively around a

man's head, sparkles high above me in the sky. I lift my eyes to nothing less than a symbol of the fearless transformation of South Africa. In the end we square off within the large continent where we farm. Since then I have come to know other South African businesses in Nairobi. Names like Absa and Stanbic Bank are well known here. You buy the most delicious boerewors at Shoprite. Stellenbosch wines are also available for sale at this South African supermarket. For a car cleaning leather cloth, almost unprecedented in Kenya, I could turn to Game Store. I wish Game would like to bring my favorite South African product, Pratley Putty, too. At the private schools of Nairobi, women from South Africa man the fairgrounds that help fund charitable projects. Steadfast South African men, like my admonisher salted in the ways of continental Africa, run successful businesses. A large South African women's association provides interesting excursions. Even men like me are welcome to visit, for example, a farm that grows roses and exports to Europe. A powerful farm with a South African manager and 5,000 local employees. Meanwhile, the corona virus pandemic has also paralyzed Kenya. But fortunately, South Africa's DStv is available in this country. It makes our half-life, trapped in our living room, just as bearable as the half-life our family and friends in South Africa have to endure. Of all the South Africans I meet in Nairobi, Gareth Jones of Pretoria is finally making the most embarrassing impression on me. One moves to a foreign country in the hope of a better life. But this better life will not come to you. You will have to step into your future with something of value to the locals in your hand. Jones's contribution, and his particular courage and deed, are something special. What Jones does is unlock the rich wildlife of Nairobi's national park, a kind of mini-Kruger Game Park bordering the city, with its newspaper and magazine articles and photos for the city's residents. It is a remarkable wildlife park in the sense that the dividing line between the green jungle, the wilderness, and the concrete jungle, the city, can be clearly seen. You can see impalas or Coke's hartebeests pass by, perhaps running from a large cat, with the outline of Nairobi's skyscrapers clearly visible in the background. Jones crosses this dividing line with his reports out of the wilderness. The columnist earns his living as an engineer and business manager working for the South African firm PG Bison in Nairobi. But his almost daily visits to the world-renowned 117 km<sup>2</sup> wildlife park offer him his love work. After about 5,000 visits to the park, sometimes before dawn to see the nocturnal animals, Jones speaks to the Nairobi people on behalf of the animals. He also blows the whistle when something or someone, perhaps a stupid policy decision, threatens the wildlife. Actually, Jones talks to people all over the world, because you can read his articles and see his photos in the online magazine H&S ([kenya.hsmagazine.digital](http://kenya.hsmagazine.digital)) and in Nairobi's The Star newspaper ([www.the-star.co.ke/](http://www.the-star.co.ke/)).

Thanks to the respect he earned for his love of animals, he is now chairman of the renowned Friends of Nairobi National Park Association. He is sometimes called Nairobi's "Mr. Animal love". Jones looks like the meek and cheerful man he is. But, unlike "Scaredy-pants", he is completely fearless. He is much tougher than one would think or I could be. When he, his wife, Tarris, and their daughter moved to Nairobi in 2002, he turned down his employer's offer of an air trip. The family traveled their own Land Rover Defender through Botswana, Zambia, Malawi

and Tanzania for seven days without a GPS or other navigation equipment. Only a map and a copy of the Lonely Planet travel book at hand. After 5,160 km, including flood water and deep mud on a mountain pass in Malawi, they finally reached Kenya. As a young man, Jones, like his father, was an honorary ranger who volunteered for South Africa's National Parks Board. This was also the in era of the bush War. Jones had to attend army camps over a period of ten years and also helped patrol South Africa's borders on foot.

Near the border with Mozambique, Jones, along with his mates, escaped a pride of man-eating lions. The activities of fighters and poachers in the border area had given some lions a special taste for human flesh. His "wake up scare," as Jones calls the incident, makes him question why he was saved and did not lose his life. Why, for what purpose, did he have to live longer? This question caused him repent and seek God . He sees the wild animals of Kenya that he devotes so much time and work to as part of God's creation. The smallest bird or insect has value to him from this perspective. Jones partly serves the Nairobi National Park to refresh his soul. In addition to the peace of mind he experiences in this park, he is also scientifically interested in the animals. Through his reading and writing he gained much knowledge. In a recent column, for example, he explains how dung beetles were exported from Kenya to Australia to improve the quality of pasture and agricultural land there. Some South African residents of Nairobi are made of formidable upholstery. This is something I have begun to realize since our arrival.

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