



**GREGG ARTHUR**

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### **ANTELOPE, WIVES AND COMPOST PILES**

A Game warden's job is one of many contradictory emotions. Happiness and hopelessness, fun and frustration, adventure and adversity, delight and despair.

I prefer to remember and reflect on the positive, good and often times, humorous aspects of the job. And so it is that I reflect on Antelope, Wives and Compost Piles for your pleasure and time.

Late one fall night, I received an anonymous telephone call concerning a wildlife violation. This is not an uncommon occurrence with game wardens. This anonymous caller advised that earlier in the day, Mr. Cee had killed two antelope on one license, an obvious overlimit. Both antelope were reported to be in Mr. Cee's garage and he was presently trying to give the extra antelope away to a coworker at his place of employment. I dragged my weary body out of bed, game wardens are always weary in the fall, contacted a city policeman and requested that he watch Mr. Cee's garage.

I drove to Mr. Cee's workplace, arriving around midnight. I found his pickup truck parked in nearby parking lot. His antelope license was lying on the dashboard and there was fresh blood in the bed of the truck. I found Mr. Cee shortly thereafter and he promptly confessed to killing both antelope and failing to tag either of the antelope with his license. Mr. Cee told me both antelope, a doe and a fawn, were in his garage. He agreed to let me in his garage and turn both animals over to me. It looked like the crime would be quickly solved and I might get to sleep at least part of the night. Little did I know!

When we arrived at Mr. Cee's house, we met the policeman who advised all was dark and quiet at Mr. Cee's house and garage. Imagine everyone's surprise when Mr. Cee opened the garage door, turned on the lights and only one antelope was hanging in the garage. Mr. Cee was quiet for a moment, then exclaimed, "My wife!" He went into his house and brought his wife to the door dressed in her nightgown. She appeared to have just been awakened from a deep sleep. When she asked what the problem was, Mr. Cee told her that he had confessed to shooting two antelope and now one had disappeared. Mrs. Cee instantly transformed from drowsiness to panic. She screamed at her husband, stamped her feet and finished by breaking into tears.

After she calmed down, although still frazzled, Mrs. Cee was able to tell me what happened. She had received a phone call from one of her husband's co-workers. He told her that her husband had been arrested by the game warden and for her to get rid of one of the antelope. She then looked outside, saw the police car parked across the street and panicked. Barefoot, dressed only in her nightgown and without any lights, she went out the back door of her house and pulled the fawn antelope out the back door of the garage. She dragged the antelope down the alley for two blocks, threw it over a fence into a stranger's back yard and buried it in a compost pile. She then returned to her

house, sneaked in the back door and got into bed. All this activity was unseen by the policeman who was watching the front of the house and had not seen any movement or lights. Mrs. Cee directed me to the antelope and I retrieved it from the compost pile. Mr. Cee was subsequently cited and convicted in court for his violations. I finally got to bed before daylight, another crime solved.

To this day, however, I often wonder what the occupant of that house would have thought if they had looked out their back window at 2:00 am on that cold October night. They would have observed a game warden climb over their fence, dredge through their compost pile, dragging out a dead antelope and throwing it into the back of a Game and Fish Department truck. They would have also seen the truck drive off down the alley occupied by a somewhat frantic lady in a bathrobe, her chastised and humble husband and a very weary game warden.