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Enough shortgrassers are traveling abroad nowadays to prompt Doctor Chung in San Angelo to keep the vaccines the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta prescribes for primitive areas, or at least most of them. In other times, the county health department supplied yellow fever and such like for people determined to go to third world countries and expose themselves to diseases that send raging fevers up and down the spine and befoul the blood with infections so severe that the afflicted prayed to be knocked unconscious by a blow from a hammer.

In other times, protection by the anti-malaria pills and gamma globulin shots to prevent hepatitis A tied for the biggest wallop offered. The first time I took 12 pills in 12 weeks of the tropical drug chloroquine, it knocked me to my knees so many times, the kneecaps became as tender as those of a Moslem praying on a hemp rug. The body surface jerked and trembled in such traumatic tics and powerful spasms, the only way a malarial mosquito could make a landing would be with the help of an instrument pilot used to putting down in treacherous crosswinds.

But this time I was to prepare for Southern Africa. As soon as the information came of the lax health requirements of the different countries I was to visit (four in all), I realized they were not only indifferent about public health, they didn't care what foreigners tracked into the place. The pharmacist cashing in on the major portion of my growing

store of antibiotics, snake oils (miraculous herbal remedies), and oral vaccines expanded his role into prescribing a course of vitamin B1 and garlic tablets as a prophylactic against mosquito bites.

He claimed a doctor customer camped outdoors in the Florida Everglades without a mosquito so much as buzzing his cot after taking two tablets each of B1 and one garlic pill daily a week before his departure. The druggist waited until I loaded up on 250 gram Larium pills at \$10 a pop to reduce the throes of jungle fevers to push the much cheaper protection.

What we didn't know about African mosquitoes is that female mosquitoes pass on to their hatchlings how rich and well-seasoned the bloodstreams are from along the Mediterranean Coast in garlic, olive oil and oregano. Just as the tribes in New Guinea learned from blindfold tests around the campfire in the evening that Caucasians tasted salty compared to the slight ginger flavor of Orientals, the *Africanus beb-sangrias* took after visiting Spaniards and Italians with great gusto (the name means African blood drinker and is not a scientific term but purely a figment of my imagination).

Stateside mosquitoes, I knew beforehand, develop voracious appetites for the peppery, gumbo file-testing blood from Louisiana people. Hard to eat gumbo outdoors in New Orleans in the summer. Mosquitoes swarm so bad, waiters have to jerk off their aprons to fight them off the patrons.

However, luck was on my side. Once I reached Africa, winter drove all the insects into hibernation. The garlic odor drew a few to my tent, but like old Doc in Florida, they left me alone.

Garlic and B1 weren't the only things bloodsuckers needed to avoid. Four weeks before departure, the following boosters floated in my bloodstream: yellow fever, tetanus and diphtheria, typhoid in pill form, the first of two injections for hepatitis A, and coming up on a Saturday, the first of nine weekly doses of the anti-malaria drug, Lariam. Having wide experience with poor inoculation scores in livestock and worse experiences for positive brucellosis tests in cattle from improper calthood vaccinations, I decided to donate a pint or so of blood to the blood bank to see how my shots were working. Also, I figured plasma so rich in so many vaccines should be worth a lot of dough to an old boy flat on his back in the hospital, not knowing any minute who is going to be wheeled into the bed next to his.

The blood bank nurse lingered a long time on the part of the questionnaire where I said my only recent doctor's visit was "only as far as the nurse's station."

She asked, "What do you mean, 'only as far as the nurse's station?'"

I answered, "Oh, I have been getting a few little ol' vaccinations, like, you know, little ol' stuff to go to Africa."

"Mr. Noelke, blood banks can't accept such vague answers as 'little ol' stuff.' Where did you learn such corn pone language?"

"Glad you asked, Hon," I shot back. "All my folks are Southerners. But what I need now is to meet my civic duty by giving a pint of good ol' Delta blood as rich as the waters of the Big River."

I knew I'd failed when she started squinting her eyes, especially after her aide came in and announced, "You're right, Ellen. He is the Noelke who has been getting all those shots from Doctor Chung's office."