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COVER—JOHN DOMINIS 28—JOERN GERDTS for TIME 28A—A.P.—TONY GAUBA, JOERN GERDTS for TIME 28B, 28C—I. U.P.I. exc. cen. A.P.—A.P., U.P.I. 28D—A.P. 31 through 35—BILL RAY 54, 55—MICHAEL ALEXANDER exc. cen. PAUL KAYFETZ 56, 57—MICHAEL ALEXANDER 58, 59—IL P.&A. PHOTO—U.P.I.; L. cen. JAY FLORIAN MITCHELL; rt. ARTHUR SCHATZ, RALPH MORSE 61—LOS ANGELES TIMES 62, 63—DAVID MOORE from BLACK STAR 72, 73—BOB WILLOUGHBY from LEE GROSS, COLUMBIA PICTURES (2)—EVE ARNOLD from MAGNUM 74—COLUMBIA PICTURES 76, 77—LEONARD DE RAEMY from LIAISON AGENCY, REPORTERS ASSOCIES—VIZO (2), PICTORIAL, VIZO, PICTORIAL 78—JOHN RIDDICK for the TUCSON DAILY CITIZEN

## Eight Months Stalking the Great Cats

A color essay on the leopard in this issue is the first of a three-part series on The Great Cats of Africa—the leopard, cheetah and lion. The series is the work of John Dominis, and its pictures have already helped win him the 1966 title of Magazine Photographer of the Year.

In March, when we last reported on Dominis in this space, he was photographing lions in the Serengeti plains in Tanzania. He made three trips to Africa and stalked and photographed the cats for eight months. Instead of photographing at random in the game preserves, he devoted a special trip to each of the species. "I wasn't interested in the usual animal portrait," he says. "I wanted to learn as much as possible about how each one lived and played and hunted."

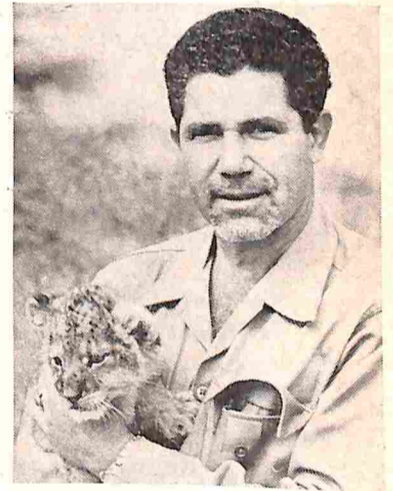
Dominis tackled the leopards first, and that trip was the roughest.

He assembled a safari in Lobatsi, Botswana, and struck off across the Kalahari desert. "We had two land cruisers and a truck," he says, "and we had to carry our own gas, oil and water. The going was terrible. We sometimes made less than 10 miles a day. When one cruiser broke an axle we sent the other back for parts—and by the time we got to the place where we made these pictures (pp. 36-51) we had five vehicles in various stages of collapse. Our safari was so strung out across the desert that I had to kill game to eat—and I'm no hunter."

He particularly admired the leopard for its courage, cunning and independence. "I drove within a quarter mile of one female to photograph her, but she spotted me and ran into a bush. I parked three feet from the bush and still couldn't see her. So I drove straight into the bush. I heard a sharp barking sound and she charged the truck, bit the tire and fender, scratched the side of the door and disappeared."

His second trip, to photograph the cheetah in Kenya's Amboseli Game Park, was more comfortable. "I had a cross-country car with a hole in the roof and camera mounts around it. I had an assistant, a cook and a camp boy, and water was plentiful." By his third trip, when he went to Kenya's Kekorok Game Preserve to photograph lions, Dominis' safari had shrunk to a truck and single driver named John Mbotu. This worked best of all. "The park officials would help us find the lions," he says, "and we'd simply stick with a pride from dawn until dusk. I needed some good pictures of a kill. White hunters said this only happened in morning or evening, but I think they say this because they'd rather have a cool beer in the heat of the day. I got my kill pictures at high noon."

John Dominis brings back these observations: The great cats are not infallibly deadly. More than once he saw a lion muff a chance to kill by approaching its prey downwind or, after a long stalk, by sitting up to scratch its chin. More than once he saw a cheetah charge into a herd of gnus and indecisively chase one calf after another until all had scattered. All his pictures of the cats were made in the wild—except one. He found it impossible to shoot a black leopard in the dark in natural surroundings. His picture of this animal on the cover and on page 37 was made in the Pretoria Zoo in South Africa.



DOMINIS WITH LION CUB

*George P. Hunt*  
GEORGE P. HUNT  
Managing Editor

