

12-foot, 1,800-pound crocodile that killed boy, 6, is destroyed

MIAMI — A 12-foot African crocodile which killed a 6-year-old boy was shot and killed yesterday by a team of hunters. It took the 1,800-pound crocodile an hour to die.

Owner Bill Haast, still shaken by the boy's death Saturday, would not talk to reporters. But his wife, the crocodile, Cookie, was killed and buried in the same pit where it killed young David Mark Wason of West Palm Beach.

The Serpentarium, a research facility and zoo for reptiles, remained closed while the Haasts discussed what additional safety precautions to take. It was the first such incident in its 30-year history.

"He didn't do it (kill the animal) out of anger because the crocodile is just doing what comes naturally to him," said Clarita Haast.

The boy and his father, David Wason, 42, were throwing seagulls at the crocodile, hoping to get it to move, when the youngster fell from a retaining wall and

fell into the crocodile pit. His father had turned away to pick more seagrapes.

The crocodile lunged from 10 feet away and clamped his jaws around the boy's chest. Nicholas Calineau of West Palm Beach jumped on the crocodile's back four times while Wason ran screaming for help.

Wason returned to the pit, jumped in and straddled the crocodile, pulling at his jaws and screaming, "Oh, my God!"

The crocodile shook his head violently, smashing the boy's head against the wall, then wheeled and bulled his way across the 50-foot pit, dragging Wason and another man, Charles Burroughs of Big Pine Key.

a hospital of a combination of his wounds and drowning.

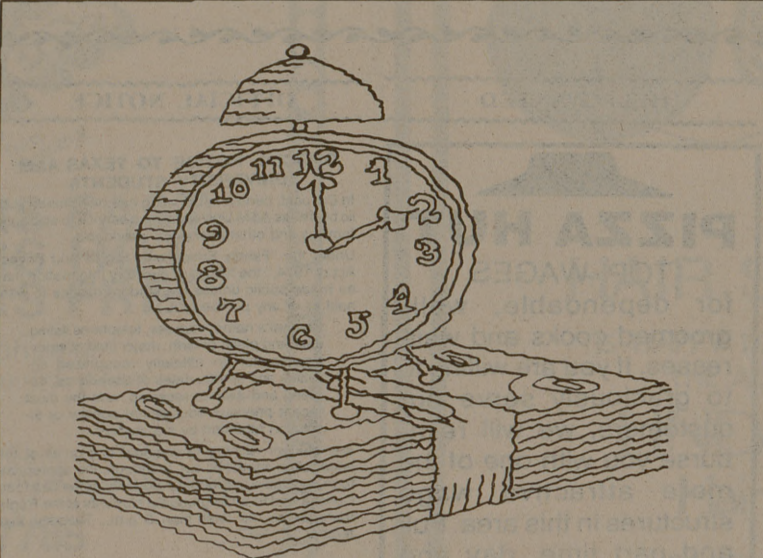
Witnesses were critical of safety precautions around the pit, and Calineau said there should have been a gun nearby so the crocodile could have been shot. Mrs. Haast said the fact it took an hour to kill

the reptile Sunday illustrated that shooting it would not have helped. Serpentarium employees also pointed out that all visitors are lectured at length on safety before they enter the attraction and there are several signs admonishing parents not to leave their children unattended.



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Chinatown gunmen kill 5 and wound 16

SAN FRANCISCO — Three masked men burst into a crowded Chinatown restaurant yesterday and opened fire with automatic guns, killing five persons and wounding at least 16 others. Four of the dead were men and one a woman.

It was the most deadly incident to date in a wave of Chinatown violence, which police believe involves gang warfare and extortion.

The scene of the shootings was the Golden Dragon restaurant, on Washington Street in the heart of Chinatown.

Bars had just closed at 2:40 a.m. more than 100 persons, including some tourists and many Chinatown residents, were in the restaurant eating.

Witnesses said a masked man entered the front door carrying an automatic gun. He confronted another man at a table and shot him in the head, then emptied his weapon into the victim as he fell.

As those shots were being fired, two other men, also masked, walked into the restaurant and sprayed automatic fire indiscriminately at diners as the patrons screamed and ducked under tables. One of the gunmen dashed to the second floor and fired at people in booths there.

After emptying their guns, the trio fled without having said a word.

"We don't know what the motivation was," said Police Chief Charles Gain. He said the investigation would concentrate on known gang activity in Chinatown. Some witnesses said the gunmen were orientals, and the restaurant was frequented by members of Chinese youth gangs.

Thirty-nine persons have been killed in recent years in what police believe is warfare among Chinatown youth gangs, competing with each other in extortion of local businesses. A number of the previous killings were bold street attacks in which a victim was accosted in daylight and shot dead.

Police investigations have been hampered by reluctant witnesses.

Rescuers dig way

to miners

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Rescue teams digging their way to 21 gold miners entombed more than a mile underground yesterday had to use hand tools to cut through fallen rock and said "it could take days to find them."

A sharp earth movement that triggered cave-ins at two gold mines in the western Transvaal early Friday killed at least 16 men and injured several dozen others.

Rescuers found nine survivors and worked feverishly to find the 21 others trapped by tons of rubble more than 6,000 feet underground.

"They are unable to use mechanical tools and are removing the fallen rock with hand tools," said a spokesman at the Blyvooruitzicht mine 50 miles southwest of Johannesburg.

"Work has slowed down because the rescuers have come against large banks of rock."

The spokesman said there was "extremely confined" working space available for the tunnelers, with only 24 inches of headroom in some places.

"Work will go on until all the missing miners are accounted for — it could take days to find them," he said.

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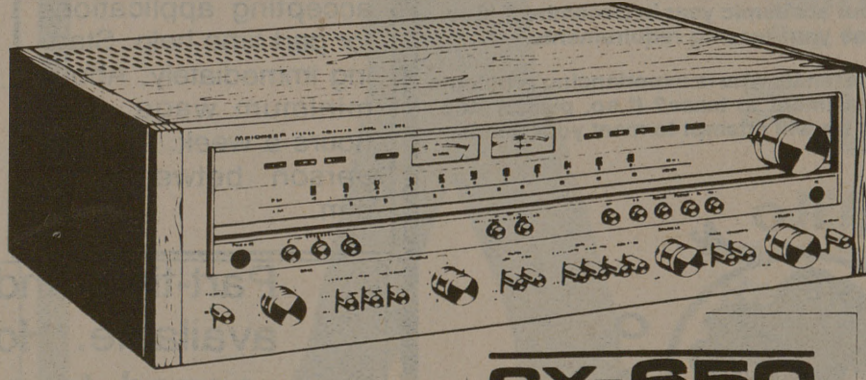
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