

Grand Canyon '94

Author's Note:

episodes I attempted of the This was written by Jim from his notes, and major did not witness may be missing. I've occasionally to avoid things that might offend or embarrass any group who may read this.

THE CAST

per commercial trips, wildly final makeup The National Park Service allows nine private groups week, numbering sixteen persons each. There are an additional 150 people per day permitted on both oar driven and motor driven. Our group varied in size as the launch date approached, with the determined in only the weeks before departure.

pool, this was Each party member had contributed \$500 into the trip which would hopefully be enough to pay all the group expenses, and even permit a small refund.

Tom - Having spent seven years on the waiting list, HIS trip. A part time Chemistry instructor at the

local
having done
well.

community college, Tom is an experienced rafter,
the canyon in 1982 and most North American rivers as

trips
expected

Jim - A recent friend of Tom, a rookie with three
experience. A part time electrical engineer with
"analytic" tendencies.

recent
Carpenter,

Jon - A many years friend of Tom from Seattle, with
rowing experience and lots of passenger miles.
and general entrepreneur. Quiet and thoughtful.

world
Corp.
(also at

Patricia - Jon's close friend for several years,
traveler, and high stress recruiter for Microsoft
Tends to be pretty direct. Alias "the Redhead"
work, "the Piranah").

experience.

Michael - Old friend of Tom, little rafting
Recording studio owner/operator. Very unusual (high)
metabolism (eats his weight daily). Also a
continuous
entire
group.

direct
marriage

Jude - Close friend of Tom and Jim. Spontaneous,
(sometimes rude) personality, in the midst of a

the problem. Probably most responsible for liberating group's view toward skinny-dipping.

trip in Roger - Close buddy of Tom's, shared same canyon French '82. He'll be the one to "die with the most toys". Horn player in the St. Louis Symphony.

with Patti - Roger's wife and Tom's good friend. Pianist portfolio of Jewish jokes and impersonations.

trip due Erica - Patti's close friend. Husband Gary missed laughs to European symphony tour. Bruises easily and constantly. Not shy about exhibiting bruises.

small Utah Joe - Friend of a friend of Roger's. Mormon from including town where he does ceramics. Lots of experience, a canyon trip two years ago.

The Lee - Joe's wife. Painter by trade, and rafting was able organization dynamo by hobby. World class belcher. story is that Joe asked Lee to marry him after she to say "I love you" ten times during one belch!

Salt Art - Friend of Joe and Lee. Electronics tech from (i.e. Lake, although most of life has been less structured experience. only one real job in 40 years). Lots of rafting

mother of Doni - Friend of Joe and Lee. Happily married three. Incessant talker and habitual do-gooder.

Roger. Keech - Step-brother (?) of close friend of Tom and One of the "kids" on the trip at 21.

Good Kelly Heather - Keech's girl friend of several years. Bundy act, but just an act.

artistic Tory - Third member of the "kids". Still exploring career, while listening to Rush on his Walkman.

THE SETTING

Colorado The drama unfolds on a 21 day float down the mighty River through the entire Grand Canyon. August in the canyon

like includes 100 degree days, 70 degree nights, monsoon-
at the thunderstorms, and hypothermic water of 48 degrees
calendar, start. The river descends through a geologic
trip uncovering earlier and earlier rock layers as the
progresses.

matter The sheer beauty of the canyon is overwhelming. No
day, which direction you look, no matter what the time of
the there are staggering wonders to behold. Although
basically occasional commercial trip motors by, you are
everything. alone as a group, dependent on each other for
hikes The rowing can be physically demanding, many of the
and involve difficult climbing, and spiders, scorpions,
a rattlesnakes wait under every rock. Dehydration is
constant threat, as is hypothermia to anyone unlucky

enough
moments.

to be caught in the water for more than a few

are about
countless
at even
something
have
main
often 15 to
Vegas, the
14,000
Glen
unheard of.

The Colorado is famous for its "big water". There
75 "rated" rapids (on a scale of 1 to 10) and
small "riffles". A boat can be flipped or damaged
the lowest rated rapids if the oarsman does
stupid. The toughest rapids (8,9, and 10) typically
impassable "holes" and the "haystacks" making up the
wave train (that you're supposed to follow) were
20 feet tall. Due to electrical demand in las
river flow was fairly high, with daily flows between
cfs at night to 20,000 cfs in the afternoon. Before
Canyon Dam was built 100,000 cfs flows were not

THE GEAR

The trip included five boats.

craft,
accommodations,
within is

Roger's "Jolly Roger" is an 18 foot (or so) older
with newly rebuilt frame and very stylish
all color coordinated in red and gray. Hidden
camera gear, inflatable animals, and at least one
cheesecake, in addition to a French Horn.

bailing
Tom was

Roger's "Tweeter Pup" 12 foot paddle boat is a self-
Avon, intended to be the thrill ride of the trip.
the intended paddling captain.

and
one rowed

Joe's 16 foot Domar is older, yet well maintained
rigged. It carried most of the kitchen gear. No
the boat except Joe with occasional efforts by Lee.

Art's 17 foot Havasu is also older, but well rigged. It turned out to have lots of nooks and crannies stuffed with exquisite treats for those at the right place at the right time. Art rowed the whole way except for a few spots where Jude did the honors.

The "white boat", an 18 foot self-bailing Sotar was rented from Canyon REO. Due to its lack of custom rigging, it somehow got designated as the cargo barge, carrying the majority of the food and communal gear. It's handling characteristics reflected its load. Jim and Jon were planning to share the rowing duties.

Beyond the boats themselves, the heavy use of the area dictates several special considerations.

First, the river water is heavily silted and badly polluted. All water must be filtered at least once to remove silt and giardia and again to eliminate the dreaded "virus". Bathing is scarcely productive, although the allowed rinse in clearer side streams can make one believe one is clean.

Second, human waste must be carried out. The toilet system

size of a consists of a 50 caliber "rocket box" (about the
It is small suitcase) which is filled directly with waste.
term from referred to as the "groover", which is a vestigial
enough its effects on the anatomy before someone was clever
about one to place a toilet seat on its rim before use. These
ground. groovers accumulate during the trip at a rate of
per five days. Great ritual is applied to the site
selection and amenities provided at each camp

PROLOGUE

in The Cave Junction contingent gathered at Tom's house
departure on Takilma on Thursday evening, to assure an early
pile of Friday. Jim and Tom started sorting through the
the gear, and with the aid of beer and pizza, finished
arrived by packing job by midnight. Michael and Jude had
then, so we all went to sleep.

doddle at In typical Takilma style, we managed to dabble and
the road, Tom's house till 11:30 am. After a short time on
eat we stopped in Grants Pass to change the Volvo's oil,
purchased lunch, and check on the insurance policy Tom had
for helicopter evacuation. We didn't manage to get
restarted till nearly 1pm.

towards The Volvo and Dodge PU caravan made steady progress
buy Reno, interrupted only by the incessant demand to
hurt gasoline for the truck. Michael insisted the stereo
wind. We his ears, so Jim was obliged to listen to only the
a wild stopped in Reno, and immediately proceeded to go on

insistence). goose chase for a seafood buffet (at Michael's
all. We ended up at a Sizzler, which was acceptable to

debate over After driving a few more hours, and after much
simply pressing on, camping, or finding a cheap motel, we

Having found a dirt road and camped in the desert at 1am.
coffee, Jim prepared for the "pressing on" alternative with
and spent a sleepless night watching the meteor shower
listening to Tom's snoring.

and we Sleeping along the road promoted an early 7am start,
and a headed on towards Las Vegas. Between lack of sleep
that the whole day with Michael, Jim threw a fit, demanding
noon, passengers rotate. Doing that, we arrived in LV at
minute stopping at a sporting goods mega-store for last
and had items (pillows, camp cot, sunglass tethers, etc),
spew his lunch at a sub shop. At lunch, Michael managed to
a entire mouthful of tuna all over Jim in response to
kidnapping). marginally funny joke (about meeting women via

waiting an Met Jon and Patricia at the airport, and after
brief hour for luggage, we proceeded to Flagstaff, after a

arrived at stop to acquire beer and booze at a Safeway. We
checked the Monte Vista Hotel in Flagstaff at 9pm, where we
the bar. into our bunk-bed dorm room which was directly over
pasta Some showered, and we eventually all met at a great
Tom restaurant, where we gorged ourselves on rich food.
wine all took this opportunity to spew his mouthful of red
joke. We over me in response to another marginally funny
terrible tunes returned to the rooms, lulled to sleep by the
of a local band.

the Canyon Roger, Patti and Erica joined us for breakfast at
each Cafe, where we ate, drank coffee, and got to know
us went other, or at least caught up on news. While some of
gear, others to Canyon REO to pickup the white raft and some
to cram went to Smith's Market for provisions. We managed
briefly at all the gear onto the truck, and after meeting
returned, the market, Jim went on to find propane. When Jim
again at Tom joined him to acquire ice. After rejoining yet
for free the market, Jude joined Tom and Jim on the search
miscommunicating, the range fresh eggs. After apparently
looking for party managed to split up, drive back and forth
Ferry. An each other, then simply start the drive to Lee's
afternoon thunderstorm struck as we headed out.

put-in at The three hour drive to Lee's Ferry put us at the
Volvo 3pm. We met Joe, Lee and Art, and waited for the
for containing Jon, Patricia, and Michael to arrive and
began Roger's Suburban including Erica and Patti. We

into
Keech,
us to
rafts
was
gear and

sorting the mountain of gear and organizing food coolers and rocket boxes. The missing people (Tory, and Heather) arrived around 10:30pm, which allowed complete most of the food packing. By midnight, the were rigged, the food was dealt with, and everyone exhausted. We abandoned the persistent mountain of rolled out our sleeping bags at the nearby campsite.

CHAPTER ONE Finally Off

the pile
larger than
transfer a
house

Starting with the dawn, we continued our assault on of gear. One of the problems that made the pile life was that Tom had taken this opportunity to lot of garage sale candidate gear from Roger's Mom's in Portland to Roger.

mandatory
and
"warning" about
other

We took a one hour intermission to attend the orientation given by the ranger. She showed slides discussed the "rules" about sanitation, the rattlesnakes and scorpions, and the "tales" about trips, water flows, etiquette, etc.

We finally managed to get everything packed (or

returned to
adventure at
chore,
started
trips had
sophisticated
contrast to
Roger's Suburban), and actually cast off on the
about 2:30pm. While we were finishing our packing
the next day's private trip had arrived, rigged, and
partying all within an hour! Several commercial
also arrived, with incredibly large rafts,
trucks, and efficient worker bees. Both quite a
the slow motion show we had provided.

than a
flooded a
paddled
encountered
(out of
there a few
had
the
incident
the eddy
beverage
rapid
Jon and Patricia made an outstanding stir-fry
dinner. Tom
and I sat up several hours making sure my Glen Livet
(scotch) was traveling okay, watching the moon
project
created
shadows on the canyon walls. One particular outcrop
a stegasaurus which we saw evolve into a marlin.

CHAPTER TWO
Learning the Ropes

I got up with the sun, and learned how to make cowboy coffee from Roger. Little did I know it was now my daily job! Everyone eventually crawled out of bed, and we had our first, and typical, breakfast (granola, yogurt, fruit, bagels). A whistle from above led us to four of our group high above us on the canyon rim. Jude, Art, Joe and Lee had left at dawn for the hike up to the cliff. After the foursome returned, we shoved off for what would become our typically late start.

We rowed and paddled through a few puny rapids, then stopped for lunch in a little sheltered alcove. As we ate, the rain and winds came up river, making us appreciate our spot under a rock ledge.

We rowed on to HouseRock rapid (7) which we scouted, then ran. I won the coin toss, so I got to take the white boat through first. We all missed the big hole, although Roger got pretty close. We were all still pretty gun-shy about doing anything risky, at this point, at least.

Jon took over the rowing duty on Whitey and we moved

on down
little
making
was able
the

the river. At Mile 21 Rapid Jon did deliver a
excitement by taking a haystack (big wave) sideways,
us at least wonder about the water temperature. I
to spend a little time reading the guide book about
geologic history of the canyon.

29. The
toll. Had a
"kids", and

Pulled ashore at mile 23, despite our goal of mile
late start and long lunch break had taken their
nice meal of Chicken Fajitas, complements of the
filtered our first river water.

only
Once
mysteries of

Roger and Erica played a series of duets, giving up
when the bugs got interested in their reading lamp.
again, Tom and I stayed up talking about the
life.

CHAPTER THREE Crocodile Wrestling

made the
and
Michael
cargo
(scorpions)
10:15am,
day

I was first up (it was always either Joe or I), and
coffee. We had our standard breakfast, broke camp,
packed the boats. After everything was buttoned up,
showed up with his gear, forcing us to undo all the
netting. Michael was the only one to use a tent
and was habitually slow in packing. Shoved off at
which though too late, was an improvement over the
before.

rapids.
experience a

Jon rowed Whitey all morning, hitting mostly minor
Erica rowed Whitey in the afternoon, getting to

at
a turn,
downstream,
us into

little panic as she failed to negotiate the landing
Vasey's Paradise. The other boats had hidden around
and by the time we saw them, we were way too far
and Erica spent a few tiresome minutes trying to get

it" while
awhile.
a large
land in
around,
with Roger.
beast.

one eddy after another, while shouting "I can't do
I shouted "yes, you can".
Arrived at Redwall Cavern (Mile 33) where we relaxed
The cavern is a huge sandy beach located entirely in
river created cavern. Roger, who had been towing an
inflatable crocodile entertained us when he tried to
a strong headwind, with the crocodile blowing
wrapping around his oar, and generally wrestling
He finally jumped out of the boat and subdued the
Alas, no camera!

the
the Ken
(by me)
sobs.

Roger and Erica again entertained us with music as
lightning flashed and rain poured. The theme from
Burns' Civil War (Algoquin?? Farewell) was requested
and was especially poignant, sending Erica into

horrendous
cavern with

We departed in the midst of the storm, battling
up river wind, going another mile to a smaller

Seabass room for the group. Roger & Co. made a delicious dinner with potato soup (not the original plan) and cheesecake.

with There was a torrential thunderstorm as we ate, with lightning in all direction, and the river filled floating debris and mud. Being in a sheltered cavern was a real blessing.

Patricia. I had a small scotch and sat up for awhile with Patricia is in limbo, waiting for her Microsoft stock options to vest (next year) so she can go on to something else.

CHAPTER FOUR Nautiloids

got off Making as much noise as I could as I made coffee, we clumsy, to a record breaking 9:20am start. I felt a little in the climbing over Jude and Art, who had decided to sleep kitchen area. It was a long rowing day with hardly any action, although my distracting him for camera instructions helped Jon go right into a rock at the top of Harding Rapid, spinning the boat crazily, and giving those below a scare. Hopefully the picture turned out.

Canyon We stopped early in the day for a visit to Nautiloid to check out the fossil remains of the same. It is a small intermittant side stream with rocks displaying innumerable 1 to 3 foot long nautilus' (in the "unwound" position, as opposed to the "curled up" position made famous by the "chambered nautilus".

fare
gorp. His
ovation from
driven by an
delicious
joined Tom
Gin&Tonic. It
stay, so
threat was a
hassle and
with

Roger serenaded us during our lunch stop. Our lunch was as usual, peanut butter, tuna, pringles, and rendition of Wagner's Valkyrie drew a standing ovation from a passing baloney boat (a huge commercial raft outboard, filled with pale, overweight tourists). We camped at Saddle Canyon early (3'ish). Had a barbecued turkey dinner thanks to Joe and Lee. I for some JD (Jack Daniels) and Erica for a Gin&Tonic. It looked like rain, and we were planning a two night stay, so most of us set up tents. Although the scorpion threat was a tempting reason to use the tents regularly, the heat gave most of us the extra courage to gamble with sleeping in the open.

CHAPTER FIVE

Some R&R

off at
could
returned
Patti and

Friday was our first "lay day" and many of us took dawn for the short hike to a lush grotto where we rinse off the river silt and collect good water. I to camp in time for a special breakfast thanks to

Roger.

grotto,
relaxed.
Roger and
the
After breakfast, the remaining troop hiked to the
while I did laundry, read some Edward Abbey and
People straggled in all afternoon, till 4pm, when
Patti started yet another luscious meal. I made up
the first batch of Marguritas.

CHAPTER SIX The Mud People

(9:30a) and
to some
grain).
which set
graineries
My day to row. We got another reasonable start
rowed the mile to Nankoweap Creek, where we hiked up
Anasazi Graineries (cliff structures used to store
I managed to trip and stuck my hand into a cactus,
me up for several weeks of infected fingers. The
were pretty unimpressive, but the canyon views were
spectacular.

heavy
for a
down the
and
days
mud on
Continued downriver to the confluence of the Little
Colorado, where Jude and Art were standing naked
mudpies at the arriving boats. Everyone joined in
hilarious mud bath. We were doing headlong slides
muddy beach, ending up with mud in our teeth, ears,
every other body orifice! The heavy rain we had two
earlier had deposited six inches of incredibly gooey
all the beaches.

looking for a We then continued downriver thru Tanner Rapid,
something campground. Fighting headwinds, we finally found
decided at 7pm. Luckily, the thunderstorm driving the wind
dinner to skip us. Art supplied a wonderful shrimp curry
another which Erica complimented with Apple Cobbler. Yet
by bloat! Everyone was exhausted, so we fell into bed
10:30pm.

CHAPTER SEVEN The Rip

after the We managed our typical mediocre river start time,
briefly, usual breakfast and coffee. Having rowed Whitey
redistribute Tom pleaded with the other skippers to help
an some weight, so we managed to trade two dry bags for
empty ice chest.

managed to hit Jon rowed and despite the guidebook warnings,
inch the left canyon wall at Uncar Rapid, leading to a 4
rapid stern gash in the bow tube of Whitey. We finished the
assault on first, then pulled over. Tom led the three hour
thorough the hole, resulting in what turned out to be a
work patch job. We'll see what Canyon REO thinks of the
Neville, when they return our deposit. Jon rowed on through
Grapevine, then it was my turn to row Hance, Sockdolager,
and a few smaller ones.

acceptable
rice
regime of
verge of no
Seagull only

Made a late camp at Mile 84.2, at a small, barely
campsite, where Joe and Lee prepared black beans and
with Snickers bars for desert. We continued the
water purification, as we were constantly on the
water. The pumping process is onerous as the
makes about five gallons per hour.

CHAPTER EIGHT The Paddlers First Flip

paddle
Hermit,
Before the
we hiked
cold beer,

Jon passed on his turn to row and moved into the
boat. That means I got to row Horn, Granite, and
three of the most thrilling rapids on the river.
rapids however, we stopped at Phantom Ranch, where
up to the ranch, where we made phone calls, drank
and sent postcards.

paddle boat
flipped
the
boat,
Tory nailed
which left

Roger decided to take over the captaincy of the
from Tom for awhile, and at Granite, the paddle boat
near the top of the rapid. As the boat emerged from
rapid, four crew were already reboarding the righted
Jon was swimming a few hundred feet behind, whom
with a throw line and brought him aboard Whitey,

one person missing. After a moment of terror, we spotted Erica on the shore of Forever Eddy. It took about 30 minutes for us to gather floating gear and for Erica to make her way down the rocky cliff to the eddy where we waited. Roger had the video camera rigged on the bow of the boat (pointing backwards), and we all hope it turns out as a great sequence.

After a tearful celebration, we continued through Hermit and made another late camp just above Crystal Rapid. Jude's Jamesons, Marguritas, and whatever put everyone to sleep early after a fine pasta/broccoli done up by Michael.

CHAPTER NINE Crystal

Woke up early, hoping to get through Crystal at low flow. We scouted the rapid for more than two hours, dealing with everything from rising water levels to terrified passengers.

As a run left had seemed obvious, I had returned to Whitey to catch a nap. When we finally launched everyone else had opted for a right "cheat" so I went along. Unfortunately, I didn't understand exactly what they planned. I went into the large right lateral wave bow first (everyone else went stern first) and the boat was tossed fifteen feet left, right into the jaws of the largest hole on the river (a large hydraulic reversal), where the boat tipped sideways

a few far enough to throw me out, yet not capsize. After
boat dozen feet of froth, I managed to get back in the
remaining (again, with Tory's help). Jon had grabbed the
rowed to try oar, we jointly re-set the other oar, then both
failed, to avoid the boulder garden below the rapid. We
minutes of ending up wrapped on the largest rock. After ten
on the pushing and pulling and Tory's jumping up and down
after stern, we managed to move onto another rock, where
moving another five minutes of prying and jumping, we got
again.

We continued down river through the "Jewel" rapids
to Shinumo Creek, where we bathed, swam, and lounged at
a wonderful grotto. We made an early camp (5pm)
where the kids provided a delicious spaghetti dinner.

CHAPTER TEN

Play Your Digeridoo, Lou

After our typical late start, we rowed to Elves
Chasm for a short hike and lunch, where there was a bit of a
ruckus, as someone finally instructed someone else that it was
poor

ettiquette to take seconds before everyone else had

firsts
Canyon
caught
digeridoo
jam.

(which was long overdue), then went on to Blacktail for yet another grotto. The following private trip up with us and our musical ensemble grew by a played by Walt, and we relished in a long, primitive jam.

Some
Tom)
paddle
Rattlin' Bog,
camping.
before dusk.
just
disappeared
paddling, my
down, and
line!

By the time we left Blacktail, and rejected a poor campground, tempers were flaring about camping time. blame was placed on the paddle boat (and its captain for rowing by some good campgrounds. I had opted to today, and we had been singing rounds and The and were having too much fun to even think about The paddle boat flipped in Specter rapid, just The recovery was quick, and we continued on to camp below Bedrock Rapid. Tom's emergency knife had from his lifevest during the flip, and as I was hand kept hitting something funny, so I reached there it was, it's sheath clipped onto the righting

macaroni.
of
by a

We ate our "emergency meal" of minestrone soup and Everyone got pretty drunk (except the non-drinkers, course) and we were all asleep by 11pm. Jon got bit scorpion, we think.

CHAPTER ELEVEN Helicopter Rescue

birth),
evacuation.

Woke up to find Lee in acute pain (worse than child and the decision was made to call for helicopter Michael and I hiked up 1000 vertical feet in order

to raise
request
hours
Canyon
somber as

a commercial airliner on our radio, who relayed our
to the Park Service. The chopper arrived about two
later, whisking Lee off to the clinic in Grand
Village. Needless to say, the group was a little
we launched that morning, with no prognosis on Lee's
condition.

incident, then

We scouted then ran Deubendorff Rapid without
pulled over at Stone Canyon, where Lee had wanted to
stop.

As the paddle boat pulled in, they nearly grabbed a
tree
root which, in fact, was a rattlesnake. Luckily,
someone
had sharp eyes. Joe and Art and Jude hiked up while
the
rest of us went on to Tapeats Creek. I managed to
miss the
landing, between a hidden boat, high flow, and a
fouled
stern line. Imagining the boat and gear going
through
Tapeats rapid, I intentionally pulled up to a large
rock,
hoping to buy time. Unfortunately, I had misjudged
the
current, and we promptly wrapped, swamping the boat.

Over
the next four hours, with me on the boat and
everyone on
shore, we tried to haul the tub in. We finally gave
up, and
I cut the lines, allowing the boat to slip past the
rock and

back to the rapid. I eddied out when possible and walked camp.

Cobbler Erica made Jumbalaya complemented with Art's Peach while I acted sheepish.

CHAPTER TWELVE Thunder River

layday, Due to my four hour wrap, we made Tapeats another
breakfast hiking up Tapeats Creek to Thunder River after a
that of french toast. Thunder River is a small stream
cliffs, simply pours out of a small hole in the sandstone
below.I beginning a several hundred foot fall to the canyon
Quinn's got to spend four hours of quite reading (Daniel
to take ISMAEL) and talking with Doni. Many people managed
as we a really gruesome trail (i.e. got lost) and arrived
were leaving.

struck, As we returned to camp, a tremendous wind storm
back to making even walking impossible. When we made it
packs, and camp, Joe had been running around securing tents,
re- gear. Hardly anything was lost, although much was
reclaim arranged. It took several days for everyone to
their gear from each other.

trout, Prior to the storm, Joe managed to catch six brook
(from which we put aside for breakfast. Tom made Lasagna
inflatable scratch!) which was delicious. Roger set up his
hot tub, of which most partook.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Another Miss

gear
unexpected) fish
Cave to
Deer
where
enough at
on,
boat
(simply
camp
made some
complemented

Got a 10am-ish start due to having to ferry all the
back down to Whitey after a delicious (and
breakfast. The musicians stopped at Christmas Tree
test the acoustics while the rest stopped briefly at
Creek (yet another spectacular waterfall and grotto)
most of us frolicked then lunched. Stopped long
Olo Canyon to drop Art, Jude and Joe off, then rowed
planning to stop at Matkatamiba Canyon. The paddle
managed to row right by Matkatamiba, as did Whitey
following the leader), but Roger managed to find it.
After some indecision, the two lead boats went on to
just below Upset Rapid at Ledges (mile 151). Doni
"Mexican stuff" that would have been burritos if the
swamping of Whitey hadn't spoiled the tortillas
by ready-made brownies.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Reunion

Awoke to Roger and Erica's music. Between the

beautiful
Everyone was
to our
stones had
hiked
through the
agreed
Whitey onto
till she
Lee, who
their
(they ran, I
swim,
gale-
we were
we were
that Roger
eventually
what
about
had
161),

music and the breathtaking canyon, I cried.
overdosed on the beauty, one way or another.
We rowed the five miles to Havasu Canyon, where much
amazement, Lee was waiting on shore. Her kidney
passed, and she had gambled on our timing and simply
down the 20 miles from the canyon rim, sneaking
Indian reservation (since she had no money). We all
that Lee must have sent a band of angels to push
the rock at Tapeats in order to delay our arrival
was there!
We all started up Havasu Canyon, except for Joe and
went on to snag a campground and maybe celebrate
reunion a little.
Tom, Jude, Tory, Patricia, and I made good time
walked fast) to Mooney Falls, just in time to snack,
and start back. I was able to fight my way through
like conditions to the rear of the falls. Thinking
all in trouble for violating our agreed return time,
hustling down when we found, much to our chagrin,
had fallen and broken his arm. The entire party
rejoined to finish the walk to the boats, wondering
Roger would require in aid.
We re-boarded, shoved off, and started worrying
darkness and rapids and camp. Luckily, Joe and Lee
anticipated our tardiness, and camped early (mile
saving our butts right at dusk.

delicious,
Michael
to bed
spent
for
the

Heather and the kids made pesto pasta which was although barely enough to sate us (except, of course who starved). Finished off the margaritas and went early. Lots of scorpions at this campsite. We all lots of time trying to remember how to tie a sling Roger's arm. The radius was protruding, just under skin, so we were all worried about it needing set.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Lava

reach
After
six

We needed to put in some miles today, in order to Diamond Creek for our meeting with Canyon REO. pancakes for breakfast, we got off at 9:30am. Rowed

hike up to
rewarded

miles to National Canyon, where we did the short a chasm, where after a short tricky climb, we were with a cascading shower and pool.

still
(10)),
began
planned. I

Re-boarded and "grueled" through "Lake Lava" (the water created by the yet to come Lava Falls Rapid reaching Lava Falls at 5pm. After a brief scout, we the assault. Joe went first, doing just what we

perfectly, rowed Whitey next, hitting all the laterals
train. executing a perfect run down the center of the wave
rocks. Tom followed in the Jolly Roger, bouncing off two
Tom then hiked back up to captain the paddle boat.
Upon Doni's suggestion, they deflated the floor,
partially swamping the raft. While Whitey eddied out just
below the big rock, the paddle boat rowed (a little
sluggishly) through without incident. Art then followed,
without mishap.
After re-inflating the floor, the paddle boat, under
the command of captain Patricia, promptly flipped in
Little Lava, just at dusk. The oar boats had all pulled in
at the campground, so a couple of oars and a helmet were
lost downstream.
Seeing how the campsite was called Tequila Beach, we
Doni had a polished off my remaining half liter of tequila.
entertain us few shots, and being a teetotaler, proceeded to
provided a bean with her nearly-out-of-control antics. Jude
Jude and casserole and corn bread, which tasted just great.
everytime I had needlessly worried about our simple meals,
we ate some elaborate feast.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Natives are Restless

Wash, Got a early start, and rowed non-stop to Whitmore
his hoping to find a free helicopter ride for Roger (and
and broken arm) but instead just got a bag full of sodas

lunch
find our
through
shoppers".

beer from an ended commercial trip. We had a quick
while talking with the boatmen. We also managed to
lost paddles plus two of someone else's while rowing
the afternoon. Joe and Lee were the best "eddy

my
Everyone

We rowed on to mile 202 for a 6pm camp, where I made
tortellini and Doni helped by making my brownies.
raved, as had become tradition.

paper
with a
us
The

The entire group stayed up late, as we burned our
trash in the charcoal ashes, chanting and drumming
little accompaniment by Erica on the flute. Most of
managed to find some sort of percussion instrument.

the

feelings of the trip nearing its end were nearing
surface for most of us.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN Thumbs Up

series of
into the
tweaking
thumb.

After a record 9:00am start, we rowed through a
moderate rapids. At Rapid 205, Patti was thrown
cargo box, as Jolly Roger negotiated a large hole,
her jaw and doing something serious to her right

blue, then
 than a
 a torn
 Over the next three days, her whole hand turned
 lightened. Being a piano player, there was more
 little concern over the damage. It turned out to be
 ligament, which will take some time to heal.

At
 directly into
 below,
 minutes
 Stopped for lunch at Pumpkin Spring, then rowed on.
 Little Bastard Rapid, Michael managed to row
 the rock at the top, throwing the boat into the hole
 nearly flipping us. He laughed for at least five
 afterwards. We camped at mile 220.

cleaned
 stayed
 her arm
 bothered to
 Since beer reinforcements were due tomorrow, we all
 out our drag bags. Michael made a lentil/pistachio
 casserole, which was delicious. The impending storm
 away. Jude managed to ignore a scorpion climbing up
 until it did it a second time, when she finally
 look, and flick it away.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Oareater

shape for
 Diamond
 Heineken. The
 water
 Canyon.
 rescue
 below
 We all slept in, knowing we were in pretty good
 our rendezvous. We got off at 11:00am, arriving at
 Creek at 12:15. Canyon REO was waiting with our
 cataraft/motor combination and three cases of
 plan was to use the motor to power through the still
 in Lake Mead.

Continued on, stopping shortly later at Travertine
 Roger missed the pullout, and despite our efforts at
 with the motor on the cataraft, both boats ended up
 the next rapid. The cataraft, with the motor rigged

in the center, was completely uncontrollable without a tow
load. It was hilarious to watch Art and Tom spin around
in circles as they went to retrieve Roger. After
refilling our water jugs from the spring, we moved on, stopping
for lunch. At Mile 232 Rapid, our river scout consisted of Art
yelling "start right, pull left, watch out for fang". I
managed to maneuver Whitey a little too close to 'Killer Fang',
which

promptly snapped off my oar. Knowing where it was
might have been helpful, but at least we just lost an oar.
The spare oars were really heavy, and not much fun.
We stopped at Mile 234 for camp, where Joe was
forced to excavate sleeping sites out of the sand dune to
appease Roger and a few other grouches. Jon and Patricia
provided a Mexican fiesta, including tortillas found at the
bottom of the wrong cooler.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Foot in a Bucket

Got a reasonable start, expecting three rapids
before the 'end' of the rapids. Much to our chagrin, the

second and
level of
together
completely
had room
and
competition.
forcing
Tom simply
stood
don't
up their
day and
cold water.
moving as
though
lagoon.
truly

third rapids were non-existent, thanks to the high
Lake Mead.

We floated an hour or so, then tied all the rafts
to party a little. Most of the campgrounds were
overgrown by Tamarisk, and we didn't find one that
to camp until mile 247, at near dusk.

Joe and Lee did up tomato soup, four bean salad, and
cornbread with peaches, which were both delicious
generated a lot of gas for the evenings'

A
short, but heavy, rainstorm struck at 11:30pm,
everyone to scramble for tents or ground cloths.
jumped into Jon and Patricia's tent, while Patti
(stark naked, holding a sleeping bag) saying "I
understand why I'm so cold" as Erica and others set
tent.

Michael had been bitten by a fire ant earlier in the
insisted he couldn't survive without his foot in
So he slept on the river's edge, in his rainsuit,
the tide went out. In the morning, he was missing,
found shortly sleeping with his foot in a small
Walking around camp with his foot in a bucket was
hilarious.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Full Speed Ahead

the boats

We hooked up the motor onto the cataraft, tied all
up, and began our exit march to the lake. We hoped

to camp

hike up

a

slightly below the Bat Cave, to permit some of us to
to the cave to see the nightly exodus of bats.
Unfortunately, we couldn't find anything resembling

she

and the

all,

"Tapeats

think a

campground, and ending up camped at mile 269 or so,
essentially sleeping on the narrow beach.

Doni made Liguini with clams, which was pretty good,
especially considering it got burned and some of the
ingredients were mysteriously missing. The red wine

provided made up for any other flaws.

We then held our "roast" while consuming the wine

remaining Heineken. Countless awards were given to

with some in poor taste, others in high humor. The

Rap" sung by Roger (to me) was especially clever. I

good time was had by all.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Too Bad Its Over

Pearce

noon.

Keech's, and

four hours

We got a late start, continuing our motor trip to

Ferry. After a little mis-direction due to shifting
sandbars, we found the boat ramp and landed at about

Canyon REO was waiting with all the cars except

ready to pick up their two rafts. We spent about

unloading, sorting, and packing the vehicles.
Patricia and I went up the road a few miles to deal with the five
groovers at the SCAT machine. This is a Rube
Goldberg device which is sort of a dishwasher for rocket
boxes. It didn't work very well, but it was certainly better
than using an RV dump station!
It was a sad time as each contingent took their
leave. The good-byes were tough.