
JURASSIC TIME
THE MEMOIR OF
JOHN PARKER HAMMOND

Chapter 1 – John Parker Hammond

My name is John Parker Hammond. I was born on March 14, 1928. What follows is a record of certain events in which I took part, between the years 1980 and 1997, on an island I will call Site B. Site B was not to be a theme park, but a research station. This was where we did the real work.

By 1989, International Genetic Technologies had succeeded in their design, to genetically recreate the dinosaurs. It was an unprecedented accomplishment, the pinnacle of 20th century science; a work to rank with the achievements of Galileo or Einstein.

But it was not all so easy or all so simple as it appeared. Seldom hears the true history of such events. What happened at the place, where the world changed? How it began? What were the reasons? What was the cost?

Chapter 2 – Conception of the Century

A Nobel Prize or a financial empire awaits somewhere in a darkened room, in a dirty, derelict building, somewhere in the Pacific. It was the flowering of an ambition born fifty years ago. Fifty years struggle come to this. When I was little I dreamed of a time when the entire world was covered by an ancient forest. Great hunters stalked in the cool darkness, among the silent, huge columnar trees – oaks and sequoias.

I left home at fifteen, with the rather romantic idea of seeking my fortune. I remember the train ride south; in my best clothes, eating an apple, the entire world before me. When I came to London I had neither fortune, nor education nor connections – nothing. The mysterious John Hammond: shady investor, multimillionaire, jovial mad scientist.

An idea brought me awake one morning in New York, I almost didn't write it down. What if a mosquito sucked the blood of a dinosaur, one hundred million years ago? The insect is then covered in tree sap which, over the millennia, becomes amber. The insect is preserved, perfectly. But you see, and here's the clever part, wouldn't the dinosaur blood be preserved as well? The blood holds DNA, a tiny spiral of genetic code. Abracadabra!

Sunlight angled down through the dusty air in Norman's office and I leaned against a solid oak table, as I outlined my plans for International Genetic Technologies. The first task was genetic recovery: acquiring Jurassic or Cretaceous amber, extracting preserved DNA and reassembling the complete sequences. “Bringing it up the well” we called it. I spared no expense, permitted no failures. If we succeeded, the InGen technology would be historic. We were planning to conquer time's power over life, its power to extinguish and erase. It would change all our lives, as profoundly, as irrevocably as the atomic bomb.

Chapter 3 – Arriving at Isla Sorna

Isla Sorna. Costa Rica lay to the east, a quiet neighbour; to the west open water, and the shipping lanes of the Pacific.

1981. I stumbled out of the helicopter, already beginning to sweat and looked around at the lush forest, the wet leaves. A forest this wild, this unknown has not been seen by any human since the great hunters of the early Pliocene. The forest smelled of wet leaves, damp earth, rotting wood. Cameras and seismic instruments in yellow crates; they set them in the dust as the helicopter rose. A few weeks after we landed, we went to the summit to put up a crude satellite link. We went by helicopter. Young technicians scrambled to set up the dish as the wind howled. High speed uplink – state of the art.

In May the rains came, the smell of the jungle was everywhere. The jungle canopy hung over us, there was an utter silence. Far away I could hear a jeep engine idling. InGen standard safari vehicle – state of the art. As I journeyed south along the coast, the air grew moist and heavy. Metal and concrete lay rotting in the sun and the rain.

A failed coffee plantation of the 1860s. Fields were marked out by stone walls, and to the west, the ruins of the plantation house still stand. We took a shortcut south to reach the site, west along the stream until a tall tree shows itself, with a cluster of boulders at its base. Then walk northward, until the path appears. The buildings followed a scheme I only vaguely understood, marking seasons in the lunar year, and the movement of the stars.

The sky at noon was like nothing in Europe; hot, tropical, a new world. On the plain the heat was extraordinary, like a solid wall. I stepped out of the jeep and stretched my legs. The two guards attended to the wheel and just for an instant I stood alone, unprotected in the Jurassic wilderness. I felt the air currents around me, heard a single tree rustle. I stood on the lip of the cliff, the wind blowing my hair. It might have been a morning in the early Jurassic.

Chapter 4 – Where Our Secrets Lie

1982. Robert Muldoon I already knew. Dennis Nedry I found in Cambridge, and despite his idiosyncrasies, he was years ahead of his competition. Dennis fancied himself quite the hacker; he had his own locks for his doors. His office decorations were quite outside company regulations. Henry Wu was an only child from Ohio, a prodigy. He gained early attention for his undergraduate thesis at MIT. Doctor Wu's laboratory was a mystery to me. I never finished my schooling. I had a child's idea of science: test tubes, explosions, and miracles.

The main laboratory and administrative buildings; this was where we made our discovery, where the real magic trick happened. When they come to dig up our secrets, they'll come here. It was strange to move from the field, the hot sun, dirt on one's trouser-cuffs, into the cool, sterile darkness of the lab. The sharp tang of the preservative chemicals, the coolness and hush of the sterile chamber, the daily ritual of decontamination. The centrifuge whirred night

and day – the slow alchemy of genetic replication. The clear fluid held a cloudy layer of DNA strands. We worked long into the night, feeling at times as if the whole of the earth had fallen away outside, leaving only the darkness, the work, the endless questing into the past. Keyboards rattled into the early morning, ranks of green CRT screens displayed collated genetic data.

Three Cray X-MPs moved more data faster than any computer centre in the Americas. Site B was fully centralized and computer-controlled, the same design that became the Achilles heel of Jurassic Park. Diagnostics, communications, security, all ran through the computer. Accordingly computer security was paramount, the tightest on the island. Two German technicians were accused of conspiring to walk out with crucial research materials. They had planned to breach the main computer vault and remove some of the data stored there. No proof was ever found.

Chapter 5 – Bringing it Up the Well

It was in the last days of genetic recovery, and at this point, nothing was certain. Was the DNA there? Could we bring it back, up the well? In a quiet locked room, the extinction of species, the history of life on Earth, is being methodically reversed.

It was 3 A.M. The room was strewn with soda cans, and for the hundredth time we ran the extraction sequence. As Nedry typed, the world seemed to hold its breath, and for a moment we stood at the turning point between two great planetary eras: the million-year reign of man, and the age of the dinosaurs. “Dennis? What are we looking at here?” All my life I waited for something great, something extraordinary. And then… it opened up. The code read true. The barrier of time for an instant… opened. Nedry and I stared into the monitor, straight back through 65 thousand centuries. I began to have my first inkling of the seriousness of our work, how deep the well was. This was life from 65 or 100 million years before mankind. The greatest discovery of the 20th century.

Chapter 6 – Rulers of the Island

In eleven months, Site B became the most powerful genetics facility in the world. We were neither the only covert business to thrive in Central America, nor the most dangerous. By 1983 we held 13 new patents.

November, 1983. Test fertilization of an artificial ovum. My hand shook as I held the tiny eyedropper. One drop, two drops – there! The genie was out of the bottle. The raptor took shape inside its egg and I watched it on the ultrasound monitor. It looked like a ghost, or a puff of smoke.

Velociraptor, a small theropod native to China and Mongolia. Pack hunter, quite vicious and quite intelligent. We released the first raptor on April 22, 1985. It wandered back and forth near the wall for four minutes and twenty-two seconds, before hearing a noise, which drew it

further off into the brush. The raptor padded in towards sundown. It drank nervously, careful of the dangers of the Jurassic waterhole. The raptor preened itself, utterly confident of its right to be there, absolutely no consciousness that it was not the sovereign ruler of this earth. Several hours later we discovered that it had come in through the sewage pipes. For four months we'd monitored it while it preyed on herds in the southern forest. We never knew why it grew so large. In the summer of 1988, it began moving north.

Not all the original species survived, in the end only a few adjusted to the new world. These became dominant.

Brachiosaur, oldest of our recreations by 50 million years. The only true Jurassic native. One of the largest creatures ever to live, the Brachiosaur moved like planets among the smaller species.

Tyrannosaurus Rex – tyrant lizard. They reigned for 25 million years; we grew seven of them, the seven rulers of the island. Despite what we've been led to believe, the T-Rex was not a scavenger at all. We clocked one at 50 kilometres an hour.

Triceratops, with the Tyrannosaur, one of the last dinosaurs to live naturally on our planet.

Albertosaur, a loner, fast and strong; eking out a living between the seven Tyrannosaur and the three raptor tribes. The Albertosaurs took to the open fields like lions to the Serengeti.

In the jungle, the forest and the mountain, three raptor tribes staked out territory. Albertosaurs and seven T-Rex chose their dominions; uneasy borders drawn around forests, ridges and ponds. A third tribe of raptors took the mountain for their territory, a leaner, tougher breed; quick, living on birds and tiny lizards. We tagged the most dangerous animals with radio collars that transmitted a warning signal, and workmen carried little boxes that played a tone when a tagged animal came near, at which point they would panic and flee in terror. The battery would last at least 20 years and wear like iron. By 1987, the first of them had reached full size. The ecosystem of another era began to reassert itself.

Chapter 7 – Building a New Empire

Building the town was hard. Costa Rican contractors were competent people, but they had to be transported, fed, housed, and afterwards bound to silence. The biotechnicians were compensated for living in exile: high pay, luxury housing. Dennis wanted computer time and money, Henry wanted his state of the art entertainments. These were the elite, who could have gone anywhere to work; I had to keep them here. Left to itself the facility reverts to minimal power, chiefly battery powered security systems. It can sustain itself almost indefinitely. A pass code let us control access to the valley and the power station beyond.

The power station was situated on the western coast, residences were southeast and inland. A tank of greenish water, tinted by an algae-killing chemical, circulated through the massive cooling tower. This reservoir was filled from a pump in the valley, some ways away. The steam pipes hissed and spat; water pumped deep into the earth and came back superheated.

The pylons run for kilometres, one every hundred meters or so. I built them to last. Running east from the plant they climbed the valley before descending south into the plains.

1988. Workers from the mainland were pouring concrete supports for a rail system running north to the settlement. In the winter we began building supports for the elevated transit system that would unify the island. Concrete towers rose through the jungle canopy. Curving up out of the southern basin, the Atherton Causeway would bring visiting scientists north from the southern beach. May, 1989. We began laying foundations on the south beach for a hotel for visiting scientists and businessmen. A year hence, I thought, the island would be quite famous. InGen reception – I planned that someday visitor scientists and politicians would be welcomed here. The southern beach looked out over trackless ocean, down past Peru, all the way to Antarctica.

The main harbour for Site B. The docks were the lifeblood of Site B. Amber, synthetic eggshell and livestock came from all over the Pacific Rim. Chinese sailors singing in a curious keening falsetto, as they unloaded the synthetic polymer eggs. The smells of saltwater and gasoline. The “Emily” was a tug for bringing in the bigger freighters. Occasionally we took it out to observe specimens from offshore, or to sweep the tide for traces of our operation. Far out to sea we would sometimes glimpse the US Coast Guard units assigned to observe our activity. It was scuttled in 1989, as a quarantine measure soon after I gave the government my testimony.

Chapter 8 – Shattering of a Dream

In 1989, the park was nearly complete. Our investors demanded on-site approval and I, idiotically as it now turned out, believed we were ready. The debacle of August 27, 1989 is now quite well known, and the legal consequences were, as you may well imagine, rather extensive. I still believe Nedry left himself a back door, something about the hobbits or god knows what. On October 3, 1989, I sat on a wooden bench in the waiting room in Washington, D.C. A government panel put me on the stand. As my name was read out, the session room went silent. I walked up the isle towards the stand. I was being called to account, but I had no clear explanation to give. I'm sure you've heard the rest of the story on the television news or in the tabloids.

Bankruptcy! I leaned against the wall, my whole body shook. I dropped the mug, it shattered. I let it lie there, we would be leaving soon. When it became known that I was bankrupt, workers simply dropped their tools and walked away. Buildings were stripped of everything valuable. As we left, we vandalized our own locking mechanisms. InGen tolerates no trespassers. Technicians and workmen crowded around the docks, fearing they might be left behind when the security ring collapsed. Armed guards stood watch.

I can picture them, moving cautiously through the dusty rooms in bulky biohazard gear, clutching rifles, poring over our records, reading our files. We sealed off the town, safe for a few crucial gates: southward to the lowlands, eastward to the power plant, and laboratory. We sealed the eastern gate for the last time. Gazing from my study window, I hit on a simple

mnemonic for the pass code. Like Nedry, I felt like I needed to keep a back door open. I gave myself over to the strange, lonely discipline of the market. Investment strategies and profit… I stood apart. Master of codes and lost worlds, of heat and cold and the sleep of a hundred million years.

A lost world is a sort of scientific myth, an evolutionary scenario in which an ecosystem is isolated and preserved. The rest of the world changes, leaving a tiny, fragile pocket where ancient species survive.

Chapter 9 – Hunted Hunters

October, 1996. The InGen Corporation is taken out of my hands by a vote of the board of directors. My nephew dispatches his team. The hunters landed on May 13, 1997, deep in the island's southwest. Most of them had worked at my African parks for years. They never stood a chance. Hunting dinosaurs is quite a tricky business. I recommend helicopters, if you've got them. Lindstradt guns, by the way, Swedish-made, unbeatable for accuracy and rate of fire. American-made tranquilizer darts. The effect changes with the target's body mass, temperament, and mood. I believe the phrase is “results may vary.” The InGen hunting party carried the pass codes for our perimeter fences.

The hunters scattered, their prearranged hunting routes forgotten. Only a third of their number appeared at the rendezvous.

Marden, A.S. – still missing.

Karamcheti, V. – still missing.

Sullivan, R.M. – still missing.

LaSalle, P. – still missing.

Van Holn, S.T. – also… still missing.

Lystrata, A.L. – deceased.

I was unable to find any records whatsoever on Michael Sullivan, beyond the sole fact that his flight to the rendezvous originated in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. LaSalle was a disciple of Roland's; a sometime poacher, fancied himself a master hunter. An ex-policeman from South Africa, a sort of a… soldier of fortune character; known as “the Maharaja” to his fellows, highly skilled, but only works alone. He was meant to radio for picking up from the comm. station.

I first met Harold Greenwood in 1992; he was an American, introduced to me as a former Green Beret. He asked a number of questions about the disposition of the InGen technology. Harry claimed to be a friend of my former son-in-law, I liked him. He was confident, dashing. Greenwood carried some sort of electronic device which we were told he built himself, based on plans that he found on the Internet.

Chapter 10 – Looking Back

My work… My work lies where I left it. If there is anyone brave enough and clever enough to take it, and return the keys to time… Perhaps the foundation of a new empire.

As I write this, tiles are cracking, smeared with windblown dirt and animal tracks. Thick tree roots are pushing up through the asphalt. The island settles itself, beginning to erase all trace of us. Water seeped into everything. The technology, the real trick of it, is still in there. In a darkened room in an empty building with a dirty floor, it waits – the flashpoint, the origin of Jurassic Park. Creation is an act of sheer will, and next time it will be flawless.

On that last day I stood apart from the rest of them. The helicopters were setting down. Before me the jungle spread out and I saw that a savage, primal age had begun again.

“Come on son, get us out of here!”

Bonus Chapter – Hammond’s Diskette

Some of my personal papers have been transferred to diskette.

Lord Darley's charity luncheon, a society event; 200 pounds a ticket. A bit of a step-up for me socially. I was seated with this very pleasant young woman. I would gaze at her at dinner parties in moments when she was distracted. The hair on her upper lip, the way she exhaled the smoke from her cigarette. Save that in her voice, in her walk, there was a world of grace and sophistication that I knew I was forever barred from. She would not answer me at first, I asked her again. Partygoers glanced curiously in my direction, candlelight blurred my vision. I stammered. I was not certain what I should say. She laughed though, and seemed charmed. She asked me to call again tomorrow. 2 A.M. I called once again. She had still not come home, nor did they know where she was. I didn't leave my name. I'll never forget this, and I will never forgive. I swear it, this is the last time.

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

(Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley)

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