

INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURES

BRUCHKO

*The astonishing true story of a nineteen-year-old's
capture by the Stone-Age Motilone Indians
and the impact he had living out the gospel among them*

BRUCE OLSON



Used by Permission

BRUCHKO

*The astonishing true story of a nineteen-year-old's
capture by the Stone-Age Motilone Indians
and the impact he had living out the gospel among them*

BRUCE OLSON

YWAM
Used by Permission
P.O. BOX 55787 SEATTLE, WA 98155

YWAM Publishing is the publishing ministry of Youth With A Mission (YWAM), an international missionary organization of Christians from many denominations dedicated to presenting Jesus Christ to this generation. To this end, YWAM has focused its efforts in three main areas: (1) training and equipping believers for their part in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19), (2) personal evangelism, and (3) mercy ministry (medical and relief work).

For a free catalog of books and materials, call (425) 771-1153 or (800) 922-2143. Visit us online at www.ywampublishing.com.

To BOBARISHORA, who passed away while this book was being born.

Bruchko

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1993, 1995 by Creation House. All rights reserved. 1973, first printing under title *For This Cross I'll Kill You*. 1978, second printing, revised and updated edition under title *Bruchko*.

International Adventures Edition, 2005

Published by Youth With A Mission Publishing

P.O. Box 55787, Seattle, WA 98155

under license from Charisma House, A Strang Company

600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, FL 32746

Third printing 2013

ISBN-13: 978-1-57658-348-7

ISBN-10: 1-57658-348-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Olson, Bruce.

Bruchko / Bruce Olson.

p. cm. — (International adventures)

Originally published: Lake Mary, FL : Creation House, c1978

ISBN-10: 1-57658-348-1; ISBN-13: 978-1-57658-348-7

1. Motilon Indians—Missions. 2. Yuko Indians—Missions. 3. Olson, Bruce. 4. Indians of South America—Missions—Venezuela. 5. Missionaries—Venezuela—Biography. 6. Missionaries—United States—Biography. I. Title. II. Series.

F2319.2.M6O44 2005

266'.0089'982—dc22

2005005187

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

The names of persons have been changed where personal embarrassment might be involved.

Printed in the United States of America

Used by Permission

Contents

Foreword: The Beginning of a Miracle 7

Prologue: Ten Months in Captivity 11

1. Home to the Jungle 17
2. Who Is My God? 25
3. Conflict 31
4. A Missionary? 39
5. First Meeting with Indians 47
6. Last-Minute Help 57
7. Communists 63
8. Almost Killed 71
9. Bribery 81
10. A Terrifying Reception 87
11. In and Out of Civilization 95
12. An Impatient Wait 101
13. Discouragement 107
14. A Pact Brother 115
15. Mistaken for a Cannibal 121
16. Using the Witch Doctor 129
17. Jesus, the Motilone 137
18. The Night of the Tiger 145
19. Everyday Miracles 153

Used by Permission

20. Like David and Jonathan *161*
 21. Gloria *169*
 22. Almost Wiped Out *177*
 23. The Whirlpool *183*
 24. Beyond the Horizon *189*
- Epilogue *203*

Sample

Home to the Jungle

BOBBY and I found Ayaboquina, a Motilone Indian chieftain, alone in the jungle clearing at the top of the bluff. Green banana shoots and yucca sprouts already were breaking through the ground, and there was plenty of space for cattle grazing on the fifty-five acres. As we talked with Ayaboquina about the progress the Indians were making, we heard a motorboat on the river below. It was too close to the bank for us to see, but we heard it pull in. Usually it takes several minutes for someone to get up to the clearing, but well before we expected it, a swarthy-faced man appeared.

“Good afternoon,” he said roughly in Spanish.

He was out of breath and waited impatiently as I continued to speak with Ayaboquina. I saw out of the corner of my eye that it was Humberto Abril, one of the outlaws who had settled the area. I knew he had a bad temper and had threatened the Motilones. Now he obviously was angry.

When I concluded my conversation with Ayaboquina, I said, “Good afternoon, Humberto.”

He was sweating heavily, big drops falling from his hollow-cheeked face, which was contorted into a shape that made me uneasy.

"I've come to tell you to get off this land," he said. "This is my land. I'm a Colombian colonist. I have the right to claim land for colonization, and I claim this land. You can get off—"

He spoke to me, but Bobby interrupted him. "And I have something to tell you." He spoke slowly, calmly, but with great force. "This is our land. It has always been our land. It always will be our land. We have ceded enough land to you. Six months ago we ceded lands to you, at your demand, and what have you done? You have sold them, and now you demand more. But we will not give more. We will protect what is ours."

The argument was short. Humberto began to shake. His neck muscles stood out like steel cords; his face became bright red. He took Bobby by the shoulders and shouted, "These are my lands. They are *mine*. Anyone else must get off." Then he let go of Bobby and stood shaking.

Fear crept up my back like ice. But Bobby was sure of himself. "You are wrong. These lands do not belong to you. They will not belong to you," he said quietly.

"Shut up," Humberto screamed. "Shut up. You dirty Indian, shut up."

Spittle came out of the corners of his mouth and made little spots on his red face. Then he put his forefinger across the thumb of his right hand so that it made a cross. He held it toward us. His eyes bulged, and his hand shook so much, he could hardly hold it straight. He kissed his fingers.

"For God," he said, kissing his fingers again and spitting on the ground. "For the saints." Again he spit, his head jerking to the side so violently it looked more like a spasm than a conscious movement. "For the Virgin Mother." A third time he spit. "And for this cross." He spit again, and then—looking straight at us—he held his thumb and forefinger to his mouth and kissed them. His voice grew guttural. "I'll kill you!"

Then he screamed it. "I swear, for this cross I'll kill you."

He turned on his heel and walked down the bank. We watched the back of his neck until he disappeared. It was still crimson, and the

muscles and veins continued to stand out like cords. We were silent until we heard his boat start up, then fade into the distance.

I was trembling. "Bobby, he will. He will kill. I feel that he means it."

"You are right, Bruchko."

"And what can we do about it?"

Ayaboquina, Bobby, and I decided on some safety precautions.

"But, Bruchko," Bobby said, "there is no real safety in these things. Only God can help."

So the three of us bowed our heads and talked to God together. As we did, my fear was replaced by the joy that had seized me when I saw Bobby waiting for me that morning as my plane landed on a rough jungle airstrip. That joy crept into my soul, down into my stomach. Yet it was not the same joy. It was more profound, as though pain and danger and fear had been injected into it, making it deeper, warmer, more sensitive.

A LOT had happened in those few hours since my plane had circled the town of Rio de Oro for a landing. Beneath the plane I could see the jungle stretching to the horizon, a dense, heavy green mat. To the right, I caught my first glimpse of a dirty brown streak, like a misplaced string across a green carpet. It was the Catatumbo River. We flew over it at the ferry, and I saw the cluster of houses, all fairly new, that comprised the town. It seemed lost in the vast jungle.

But it is growing, I thought.

It occurred to me that just ten years before, there had been nothing but high trees blocking the sun, and dense foliage underneath. Perhaps a parrot had screeched at me. Now, in that same place was a town.

A flush of joy engulfed me, not because of the town, but because I was coming back from America and soon would be reunited with Bobby, my pact brother. I strained against the window, trying to see ahead of the plane, my emotions swelling from my stomach up my back in a shiver.

As the old, worn-out DC-3 lost altitude, the trees came so close to the plane's belly it seemed certain that our wheels would hit and send us spinning into the jungle. But suddenly the foliage broke and we were over a clearing—a narrow, long strip cut out of the jungle. We

touched down with a thump and a bounce, the brakes straining to keep the big plane on the small runway.

As we taxied to the end of the strip, my eyes hunted for Bobby among the figures standing there. I couldn't find him. But going down the ramp, I spotted him a little to one side, his short, heavysset torso looking powerful and agile even under his loose-fitting red shirt and dark pants. His face was browner than those of the other people waiting, but even from the ramp I could see his white teeth flashing. It was a smile that said, "You are back again, Bruchko, and it is good." He never used my American name, Bruce.

I broke into a run. When I got to him, I grabbed him and gave him a true Motilone greeting. We must have made quite a sight: a short, dark Indian embracing a tall, blond American. But that made no difference to us.

"My brother," I said. "My brother Bobarishora." I called him by his given name, as I always did in solemn moments.

I held him at arm's length. "You look fine," I said. "How is your wife? And your boy? Are they well?"

"My wife is fine," Bobby said. "She's very healthy and happy. And she's extremely pleased to be the mother of a fine, healthy son."

"Then he's all right?"

"Oh, yes. He's fat. You should see him. And he's already moving around the house like a little monkey."

As we walked back to the plane, where all baggage had to be claimed, Bobby asked, "And how was your business in America?"

I thought of the streams of faces and the endless hotel rooms, every one alike. I shook my head.

"I don't know, Bobby. I guess I got things done that had to be done. But I'm awfully glad to be back."

Bobby chattered about his family. He was as happy as I had remembered him. His dark eyes were bright. I had worried about him after his daughter had died; for quite a few weeks he had been moody, uncommunicative. Now he didn't seem to be able to stop smiling.

After we got the luggage, we decided to eat. We went into the town, which had been founded directly on the airstrip. Its narrow, gravel

streets were crowded with new homes, their unpainted sides still smelling like fresh wood, their tin roofs still bright among the older, palm-leaf housetops. They were spindly, rickety things, however, that looked as though they couldn't stand long.

I hadn't eaten any food on the plane, and Bobby laughed at the way I stuffed myself with Colombian delicacies.

"You'll have a full stomach from now on, Bruchko," he said.

I knew what he meant. For a Motilone, to have a full stomach means more than not to want more food. It means contentedness, satisfaction with life, happiness. He expressed so well the way I felt.

"Bobby," I said, "you now are the leader of your people. It is a great responsibility."

He shrugged. "Well, it's not really me. Lots of other men are able now to take my position. And besides, Bruchko, Jesus Christ walks our trails. He knows our ways, and He knows the things we need. As long as we don't try to deceive Him again, He will be our real leader."

I nodded.

"Bruchko," Bobby said, "you should see the schools. They're crowded. Most of the students have already read through the books we translated, and they want more. Especially more of the New Testament. They talk about the things they're learning as though they were discussing a hunt. The old people too. We'll have to get to work and translate more for them, or they'll give us no peace."

I laughed. "All right. We'll get busy on that as soon as we can. It should go more quickly now that we've gotten most of the difficult words translated."

The prospect of more translating made me happy. For one thing, I learned much from the Bible in doing it. I thought of the word for faith in Motilone, the word that meant to "tie into" God just as a Motilone tied his hammock into the high rafters of his communal home. "Tied into" Jesus, we could rest and sleep and sing from far above the ground without fear of falling.

"I am so glad to be back with you, Bobby," I said. "I missed you the whole time I was away. I guess I am just 'tied into' the Motilone people."

"And we are tied into you, Bruchko."

INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURES

AMAZING TRUE STORIES OF SPIRITUAL VICTORY AND PERSONAL TRIUMPH

ON EVERY CONTINENT, IN EVERY NATION, God is at work in and through the lives of believers. From the streets of Amsterdam to remote Pacific islands to the jungles of Ecuador and beyond, each international adventure that emerges is a dramatic episode that could be directed only by the hand of God...

BRUCHKO

"Jesus Christ has risen from the dead!" the Motilone boy shouted, so that the sound filtered far off into the jungle. "He has walked our trails! I have met Him!"

What happens when a nineteen-year-old heads into a South American jungle to evangelize a murderous tribe? For Bruce Olson it meant capture, disease, terror, loneliness, and torture. But what he discovered by trial and error has revolutionized missions. Living with the Motilone Indians since 1961, Olson has won the friendship of four Colombian presidents and has appeared before the United Nations. His story will amaze you and remind you that simple faith in Christ can make anything possible.

"An all-time missionary classic. Bruce Olson is a modern missionary hero who has modeled for us in our time the reaching of the unreached tribes."

LOREN CUNNINGHAM, FOUNDER, YOUTH WITH A MISSION

"This story is more fantastic and harrowing than anything Hollywood could concoct! But it is also an introduction to a daring man of awesome faith who is now building on a miraculous past with insight and vision."

RALPH D. WINTER, FOUNDER, U.S. CENTER FOR WORLD MISSION

YWAM
PUBLISHING
P.O. BOX 55787 SEATTLE, WA 98155

ISBN-13: 978-1-57658-348-7
ISBN-10: 1-57658-348-1



Used by Permission