

“Sea Monster” Author Max Hawthorne Saves Dad From The Jaws of a Hungry Alligator

Novelist Max Hawthorne talks about fighting off an aggressive alligator that tried eating his father during a recent fishing trip.

BUCKINGHAM, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES, September 12, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Max Hawthorne, the author of the popular [KRONOS RISING](#) series of sci-fi/thrillers, spoke out about some photos that surfaced recently: pictures of him defending his father from a surprisingly aggressive American alligator that came after the two while they were vacationing in Florida. “The incident took place a few years back,” Hawthorne recalled. “We had a rental property in a gated community in Kissimmee that had a twelve-acre lake behind it, Lake Berkeley, as I recall. We’d flown my dad in so he could stay with us and I had some rods so the two of us could shore fish as time permitted. My dad had suffered a heart attack a few years prior, and I figured it was a good way for him to relax.”



American alligator attacking KRONOS RISING author Max Hawthorne. The blurry image visible in the foreground is the landing net the author used to defend himself.

Unfortunately for the two men, the lake they’d targeted held a nasty surprise – a voracious American alligator. “When we’d first arrived a custodian for the development had warned us that there was a big alligator in there. But after a few days there and never seeing it, we’d forgotten about it.” They got a very sobering reminder. “It was our third day fishing, and my dad and I had found a real honey hole. There was a spot on the far side of the lake with a little inlet that ended in a wide storm drain. Just outside that inlet was a nice school of Blue Tilapia and we were catching and releasing one fish after another.”

According to Hawthorne, this was what attracted the gator. “I don’t know if it was blood from the fish we released or all the thrashing, but an hour into our session the alligator tried to sneak up on us.” When asked if he’d seen it before the strike, Hawthorne explained, “Actually, I saw it coming as I was casting. We were standing at the edge of the water. It was breezy, and all of a sudden, I saw something big and gnarly drifting toward me. My mind told me it was a log being pushed by the wind, but when it was about five feet away and I saw that the ‘log’ had teeth, I knew we were in trouble.”

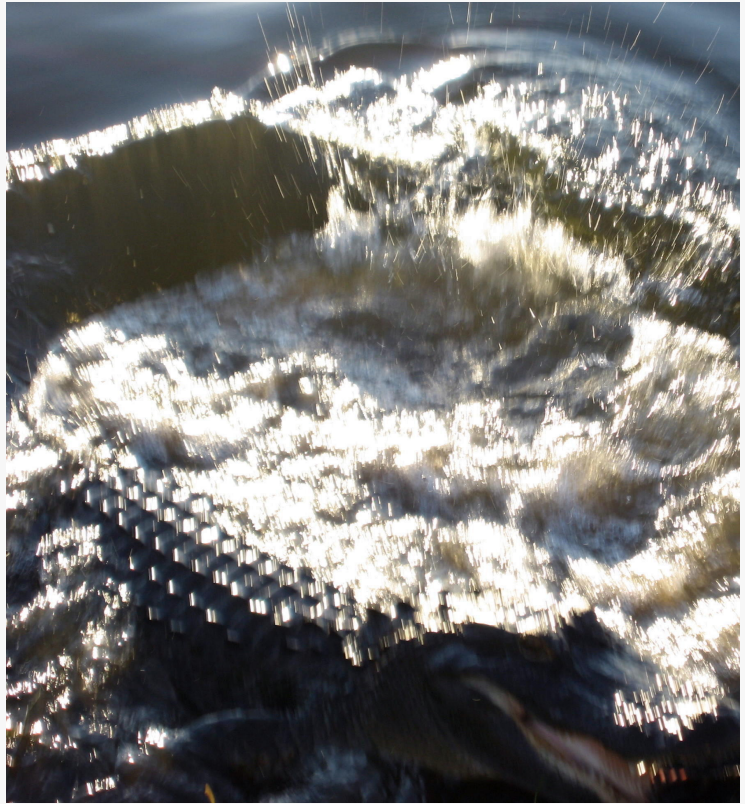
What happened next was frightening. “I instinctively sprang backward and simultaneously shouted, ‘Dad, watch out for the gator!’” As it turned out, Hawthorne’s warning put his father in the big reptile’s sights. “My dad’s movements must have attracted the alligator. It went after him

immediately," he said. "I think it realized he was old and frail and, positioned as he was with a very steep hill behind him and the open stork drain beside him, he had nowhere to go.

Hawthorne's actions at that point were ballsy. "My instincts were screaming to get out of there, but when I realized my father was cornered, I knew I had to fight. Once it grabbed him by the leg and pulled him into the water, it would've been over. I looked around desperately, but I had no weapons, so I grabbed the only thing I could get my hands on, our aluminum landing net." Without hesitation, the author went on the offensive. "The gator was about two yards from my dad and advancing hungrily when I leaped forward and hit it over the head with the net. It felt like hitting concrete, but I must've surprised it because it sprang back into the water in a huge splash."

The duo's respite would be short-lived, as the alligator was far from discouraged. "I saw its eyes pop up about twenty feet out. He was looking right at me," Hawthorne recalled. "Then I heard this deep rumbling roar and I knew we were in trouble. I tossed my dad my digital camera. I don't know what I was thinking, but I yelled, 'Take pictures of this, dad. This is gonna be good!'"

The alligator rushed forward and this time it meant business. "It came at me like a torpedo and hit the shoreline hard," Hawthorne said. "I remember it was all puffed up with air and I could tell it was really angry. I know how fast crocodilians are on dry land, and with the man-made lake having a bit of a lip, I didn't want to give it a chance to get all the way out. I met it in mid-charge and hit it with the net while it was still half in the water." He described the resultant battle. "The gator kept trying to bite me and I kept dodging his jaws and hitting him over the head. It was surreal, especially for someone that writes about prehistoric marine reptiles [devouring people](#)," Hawthorne said with a chuckle. "He was hissing and snapping, the net looked like a pretzel, and all the while my dad was calmly taking pictures and saying things like, 'That's it, Max. Take it to him. Watch the teeth!'"



A hungry alligator in Kissimmee, Florida, attempting to seize author Max Hawthorne.



Novelist Max Hawthorne poses with a Tilapia at Lake Berkeley. Shortly after this photo was taken, an aggressive alligator attacked the author and his father at that exact spot.

After a half dozen hits, one of which may have stung one of the reptile's bulbous eyes, the gator grew weary and retreated back into the water. It stayed there, lurking ten feet away and watching the two. According to the author, it was waiting to see if they'd let their guard down. "At that point, I think it figured we were more trouble than we were worth," Hawthorne figured. "Instead, it tried grabbing a neighbor's dog that kept coming down and barking at it."

Later that evening, as the two men recounted their misadventure over a much-needed beer, Hawthorne made light of what had happened, "You know, dad, we were lucky that gator only weighed like two-hundred pounds, instead of one of the eight-hundred pounders they have down here." His father nodded and replied, "Yeah, can you imagine?" Hawthorne grinned and said, "No, you don't understand. I love you, dad. But if it'd been that big, I'd have made tracks to Tijuana, and he'd have eaten you for sure!"

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