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First Person

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First Person

I'm a professional photographer with a hobby of zoo photography (I consider 178 unique zoos visits a hobby; my wife thinks it's more of an obsession.). At the Philadelphia Zoo, I sprinted to the hippos (my favorite animal) to catch the feeding session. The hippos were chomping and splashing, people shouted with glee. I switched on my camera and immediately began taking photos, and heard the most horrible sound for the moment—a very slow shutter speed. My camera had been set from a previous assignment, and it was so wrong for the hippo encounter. Whether at a zoo, a political rally, a breaking news situation, or a sporting event, this picture reminds me to always check the settings on my camera. The photo was a horrible mistake, but it is my favorite mistake.

—Mary Schwalm '99