

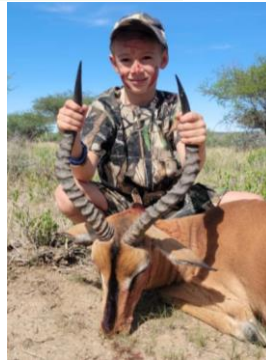
"Paid in Blood"

THE story began long ago, when Alex out of the blue decided to contact Byron Pace, a renowned journalist and videographer. Coincidentally, an elephant was curiously hovering around Alex' office during their very first telephonic conversation, and Alex quickly switched to video call to share the amazing view of the elephant. Little did Byron and Alex know that elephants were going to be the leading theme in a friendship and collaboration on a project that would greatly impact both their lives in the years to come. Byron was hooked. He came to visit Alex, looking for a story that would soon find him.

Byron embarked on the great elephant translocation in 2019, together with Annette and Rudie, joining a group of our elephants on their long journey by ship to the DRC. A terrible drought had struck Namibia at the time, and both Alex and Annette decided they would rather give away the massive animals to a parc that could sustain them. Rudie ended up getting seriously injured during the trip, being trampled by a distressed cow, but miraculously and against all odds and reasoning survived the terrible accident.

Byron skillfully showcases the fight for the survival for the largest land mammal, demanding the blood, sweat and tears by the conservationists on the ground. At the forefront is Annette, heart-wrenchingly authentic, courageous and beyond dedicated towards the cause that has been her life's story. She is the matriarch of the Okonjati game reserve, a gentle but steady, unwavering force pushing forward in a time where others lose hope, equally holding the great sorrow and the overpowering joy that working with wildlife brings. We are eternally grateful for the time and work that Byron has poured into this project, and for providing a platform for a story that was long due to be told. Thank you to all who supported this project!

"Paid in Blood" is now being submitted to several film festivals, but a pre-screening is available at the link below!



Top: Little Jan making us proud with his first buck shot in December 2023 at age 6.

NEWSLETTER January 2024

In this Issue

"Paid in Blood" is out!

Harnessing the Sun

Legacy Award recipient: **JUSTIN GORDY**

Visit from Ellen & Larry Bell



<https://www.byronpace.co.uk/paidinblood>

RIGHT: The new celebrity at Okonjati Game Reserve is a spotless giraffe! News of this individual has already spread across the globe, with only one other such individual known in a Zoo in Europe. A film crew travelled all the way from Japan this month to capture some footage of this special animal. Scientists have speculated increasing temperatures could have resulted in this colouration – but then, a giraffe in a European Zoo will experience much colder temperatures than our spotless giraffe!



RIGHT: Carola has found a new hobby, skull painting. Looking for an interesting way to display your skulls? Order your custom design with Carola!



Harnessing the Sun

Namibia is home to many riches, with a thriving mining and fishing industry, but the full potential of perhaps the greatest sustainable resource is now being realized: the Namibian sun. With South Africa (who provides a substantial proportion of Namibia’s electricity requirements) struggling more and more to produce sufficient energy for their own demand, and energy prices steadily rising, it seemed only wise to invest into solar power. Alex grasped the amazing opportunity to build a 10 MW solar plant close to a newly erected sub-station, spanning around 20 000 solar panels, supplying one of the close-by gold mines with energy. His investment into this massive project provides a stable income and the means to sustain our wildlife reserve, that will not depend so much on world politics. In addition, Alex has purchased and set up another 600 solar panels at the lodge, and recently also invested in batteries so that we may go entirely off grid! Struggling with Chinese instruction manuals, second-hand equipment and spending hours and days in the scorching sun, will finally pay off! Well done, engineer Alex, on your revolutionary thinking and relentless enthusiasm for technology!



Alex and his team preparing the ground for the solar panel plant!



Thank You!!! Ellen and Larry Bell, representing Amy Bell Charities, paid our school a visit in October. As always, they brought many gifts for the kids, including new pairs of shoes for all the kids, and some musical instruments. Next year, the kids will start music lessons with Carola, and also continue computer lessons on the laptops that Ellen and Larry so graciously gifted us with. Our community is extremely grateful for the support that the Bell family offers our school, enabling a few of our talented kids to attend a tertiary institution.

Two of the former scholarship recipients attended the ceremony, giving testament to the enormous impact that the scholarship has had on their lives. Lavinia is now a qualified teacher, whereas Albertina has obtained a degree in digital marketing. We are so proud of our students!



RIGHT: If you have not lived under a rock the past months, you will know that the BARBIE movie has been very popular in the main stream media... resulting in the development of an App that uses real-life photos to produce real-life barbies. Our PH Steve would definitely make an interesting doll (haha! 😊)



Award Recipient: Justin Gordy

Congratulations to Justin for being the second recipient of the Jan Oelofse Legacy Award! Here is an excerpt from AbleOutdoors magazine: *Justin is 39 and a certified welding inspector and avid outdoorsman. He hunts big game, mostly whitetail deer and hogs in Texas, and has also become an accomplished wingshooter post-injury.*

“My body was one of the biggest challenges to getting out. It still is. You have to deal with the heat, the cold and a lot of bumps and bruises along the way.”

One of the biggest things in Justin’s life now is helping other able sportsmen get back in the outdoors. He’s a mentor at TIRR hospital in Houston TX and has built and perfected a myriad of adaptations for hunting and fishing. “Now I’m able to show people what they’ll need to use,” he says. “It’s a lot of stuff similar to what I use, but we can make something for any type of disability. It seems like we’re always coming up with new ideas. I’m a welder so we can pretty much build anything.”

We can’t wait to meet and have you, Justin!!!

Special thanks goes to John Banovich, Mike Bredenhan and Betsy Searle for covering all of Justin’s airfare, taxidermy and shipment expenses!!!

RIGHT: Justin Gordy and Chad Waligura (editor of AbleOutdoors magazine. Justin will be presented the award at DSC on Friday morning! See you there!!!



Rhino Rescue

Had Rudie and Annette not driven past the big dam the other day, the life of a black rhino heifer would have surely ended in tragedy. Trying to get to the water, the young animal got stuck in the thick mud that surrounds it. Alex quickly came to the rescue, fastening sturdy straps around her while keeping away from the thrashing horn, and pulling her out with his Land Cruiser. While the crew was anxiously waiting for her to recover her strength, the rhino suddenly got to her feet and tried to attack, only to get caught in the clay a second time. Again, she was pulled out, but this time, adrenalin was already surging her mighty body and she stormed the car before the straps could be removed from her neck. But very fortunately, she got close enough for the team to remove the straps from the safety of the back of Alex’s car, which now has a few more battle scars to boast about!



LEFT: The kids got fishing rods for Christmas! Ever since their first successful fishing experience at one of our dams, where we have some big catfish, the kids are HOOKED! Both Jan and Keira enjoy being outdoors and going on adventures at every opportunity that they get. Thanks, Alex, for teaching our kids this amazing way of life and teaching them these important life skills!



LEFT: At first, we thought that one of our young male lions must have had an unfortunate encounter with a snake, but upon calling the vet to examine some very terribly severe wounds, we discovered that he must have bitten on an underground electrical wire (3300 V), probably connecting two of them together and causing a tremendous spark. "Sparky", however, is now doing much better, following a few long-lasting anti-inflammatory and antibiotic treatments.

The Icarus Project

BELOW: the European project, funded by the Max Planck Institute, aims to tag and track as many animals as possible, around the globe, doing important research on animal behaviour, migration patterns and the effects of climate change on our wildlife. We are privileged to be part of this project, which makes use of very small, solar-charged trackers that can be inserted into the ears of wildlife and have an incredible lifespan of up to 10 years. Although still in its infancy, the project has already tagged a great variety of animals, ranging from giraffe to even small birds. As the technology continues to develop, we might be able to consider these ingenious trackers for use in our wildlife populations.

<https://www.icarus.mpg.de/en>



Happy New Year and all the best from us!

VISIT US AT THE SOWS!!

Alex, Steve, Carola & kids will be at

DSC: Booth 3758.

The whole team including Annette and Rudie looks forward to seeing everyone in Nashville

SCI: Booth 1422.

