

Skeleton Coast

• based on an incredible true story •

ONE LINER

When a naïve farm boy follows a daring backpacker on a surf trip up the war-torn coast of Africa, he is falsely imprisoned for terrorism and must find the courage to become his own man if he is to ever make it home.

TAGLINES

To find themselves... they went looking in the most dangerous place on Earth

A rite of passage gone wrong

SYNOPSIS

This is a thrilling, coming-of-age adventure about Lydon (21), an impressionable South African farm boy who aspires to explore the world, but lacks the courage to take the first step. Until he encounters the magnetic Mozzie (21), a death-defying Australian backpacker who convinces Lydon to tag-along on his quest to surf every country up the war-torn west coast of Africa.

On the road, Mozzie's western entitlement sparks backlash from authorities, culminating in their false arrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo for plotting to assassinate the President. Detained indefinitely in a corrupt and inhumane Intelligence Agency prison, Lydon suffers the cost of blindly following others. So with the help of a South African Diplomat, he secures their release on the condition they are deported home.

But Mozzie breaks out of the embassy safe house to continue on illegally, triggering Lydon to confront him by the crocodile-infested Congo River and ultimately turn the tables... becoming the shepherd for Mozzie to follow.

GENRES

True Story • Thriller • Coming of Age • Adventure • Drama

TARGET AUDIENCE

Males 15 - 35

Travellers

Surfers

Anyone with the spirit of adventure

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CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY

We envisage Skeleton Coast to be a truly international film, with languages including English, Afrikaans, Portuguese, French and native dialects. The cast will be richly diverse. And the cultural landscape the film traverses is far-reaching; from a South African farm to the never-before-seen holding cells of the DRC's intelligence agency.

We shoulder the responsibility that comes with this.

The cultural details in the story need to be incredibly well researched and deftly threaded into the narrative.

It's important to us that in building the team around the project we are fostering relationships with people and entities who have knowledge of these distinct and unique cultures.



*"I wanted to travel, get out, see new things, go on an adventure.
To tell you the truth I had Europe on my mind.
Not Africa. Definitely not Africa."*

- Lydon



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LYDON ALVES • 21 • SOUTH AFRICAN

A Brits boy, Lydon was brought up in a very traditional patriarchy - three generations under the one roof - with his strict, well-meaning grandpa at the helm. This meant he was raised a devout Catholic who did as he was told.

It also meant his entire life was mapped out for him. Since his grandpa was a farmer, and his father was a farmer, Lydon was destined to continue their proud legacy. Having lived a very sheltered life, including being homeschooled through his secondary years, Lydon found no reason to question the status quo or look beyond his insular existence.

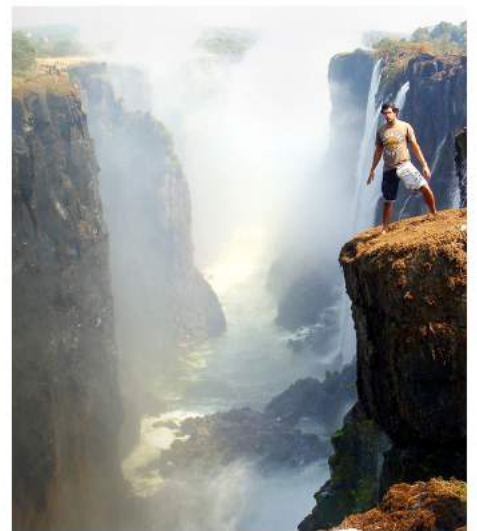
After a lean year, Grandpa realized the family needed to diversify, so he instructed Lydon (then 20) to study a Ranger course and found him a position at a nearby game park; only ever meant to be a fallback. Lydon flourished, as he encountered tourists from around the globe who expanded his mind with their cool accents and even cooler travel stories. This experience gave birth to a wanderlust. A fuse waiting to be lit...

Enter Mozzie, a young, irrepressible Aussie traveller who takes Lydon under his wing, sweeping him off on an unexpected adventure.

On the road, Lydon discovers there's fun to be had in going with the flow and comes out of his shell. The rite of passage inspires, delights, and tests him like nothing before; ultimately pushing him within an inch of his life and putting him at odds with Mozzie.

In the end, Lydon comes to realise that he deserves whatever life *he* chooses. Blindly following others is not only the coward's way, it's potentially dangerous. For as long as he can remember he'd been a sheep... throughout this journey he becomes his own man. Even if it means charging towards confrontation, breaking the rules, and defying others' expectations.

Ironically, what Lydon learns about life is that people are more likely to respect him for speaking his truth. If they don't, at least he will respect himself. And isn't that more fulfilling?







*"So I think from travelling with Mozzie, I became a lot more reckless.
I was opposite to him, and became more like him.
Mozzie would challenge my ideas. Then I'd start to challenge myself."
- Lydon*



"I would not give up my Congo experience for the world. I learnt so much about myself on this trip. Even though it turned out to be a fuck up, it turned out gold. I came back thinking: I'm going to do something with my life. I'm not just going to chill here, and do what's expected of me. I'm going to go and have an amazing life. Why not? It's possible."

- Lydon





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JAYDEN "MOZZIE" IRVING • 21 • AUSTRALIAN

Mozzie grew up in the Victorian surfing mecca of Phillip Island. As a child, he dreamed big and showed little regard for authority. Just ask his teachers. But his silver-tongue kept him out of any serious trouble. When he turned 12 his idyllic existence was thrown into turmoil upon learning his brother had cancer. Fortunately, his brother got better. Forever the survivor. But where did that leave Mozzie?

Determined to make something of himself, he devised an expedition to hitchhike up the West Coast of Africa - from South Africa to Morocco - surfing every country along the way. All the while, hinging his self-worth on the success or failure of this death-defying endeavour... a recipe for disaster. And that's when we meet him in the story.

Mozzie wants someone to tag along for validation, and Lydon takes the bait. He is charmed by the magnetic Aussie - who effortlessly projects self-assurance and reckless abandon - everything Lydon lacks. But there is a dark underside to Mozzie...

One that reeks of entitlement. You see, Mozzie is accustomed to getting his own way and strives to control situations. But as the proverb goes: "Africa doesn't adapt to you, you have to adapt to Africa". And so Mozzie is constantly at odds with his surroundings. His quest quickly becomes an unhealthy obsession... that spirals into addiction. For someone who preaches "Life's a journey" he is hell-bent on reaching the destination at any cost; even if it means knowingly breaking the law, or putting both their lives at risk.

Surprisingly, Mozzie's reckoning doesn't come in the form of gun-toting Military Police, or time spent in a top security prison... it comes from Lydon. Who imparts that it's good to follow your own path (something he's recently learned) but not if it disregards the needs of others.

If Mozzie accepts that, he might even come to appreciate that his worth has nothing to do with finishing the trip... It has everything to do with the quality of his heart.



*"I'd been to New Zealand, America, Europe,
but a lot of people do those main places, you know.
I wanted to get further and further away from home,
both culturally and physically."*

- Mozzie



*"I asked all my friends to come along. And all of them were like,
'You're an idiot. You're gonna die. I'm not gonna die with you'.
But the way I thought of myself, I was a surfing travel genius.*

- Mozzie





"It's the silver lining... The trip opened Lydon's mind. His world isn't just South Africa, or farming, or his heritage. It's wherever he wants to go. And I do feel a little bit of pride when I think back to moments when he was like, "No, I can't do this anymore! I have to go home!" Or when he was physically sick with dysentery in Angola. And I think some of the things I said helped to keep him going."

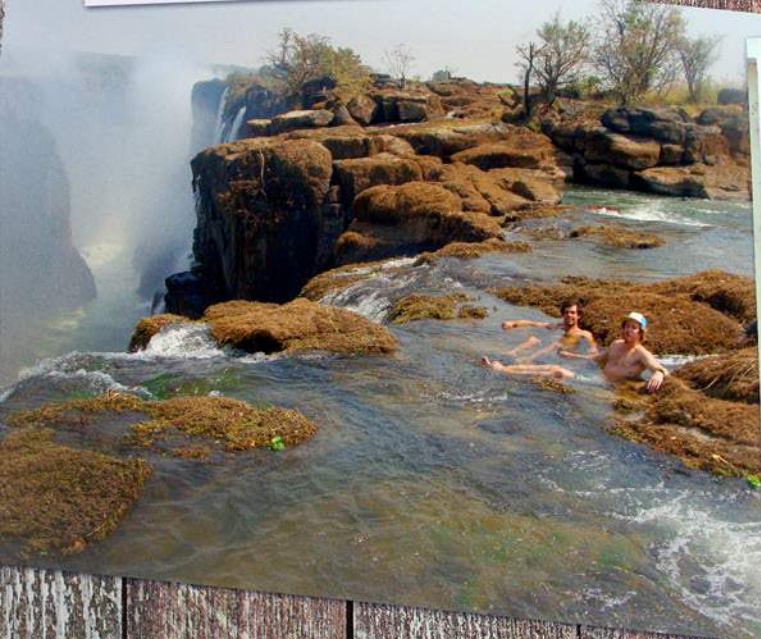
- Mozzie

Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*, Spotted Eagle Owl *Bubo africanus*, White Headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*, African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*, Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*, Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*
ILLUSTRATIONS CHRIS VAN ROOYEN, POSTCARD DESIGN SHALETTE KESTING

PHILATELIC SERVICES PRIVATE BAG 3



Postcard



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BRETT • 50s • LYDON'S FATHER

When he was in his late 20s, a travel opportunity came knocking... but it wasn't the adventure he hoping for. Conscripted to fight in the Border War, Brett travelled to Angola where he experienced horrors he would never forget. No matter how much he'd hit the bottle.

Upon his return he closed down. That fun-loving part of him was gone. All he had left to keep him going was his wife and newborn son. And so he put all his energy towards caring for them, the only way he knew how... By caring for the family farm.

Years later when Lydon confronts him with his passion to travel throughout Africa, it brings up a kaleidoscope of emotions: regret, shame, but above all, fear of losing the thing that matters to him most... Lydon.

LIS • 50s • LYDON'S MOTHER

Going to war was Brett's duty. Staying loyal to him in the aftermath was hers. As the cool-headed parent, Lis expertly played the role of mediator in the household. She believed Lydon needed space to grow into who he is supposed to be. Her husband believed Lydon needed direction and discipline. So she treaded lightly, softly encouraging Lydon to find himself; a quiet allie.

When her son has the opportunity to travel up the West Coast of Africa, she sees it as a chance for him to self-realise and lends her full support. Yes, she worries about him when he's gone, but for the most part her heart rejoices for him: he's finally living his life on his own terms.

LYDON'S GRANDPA • 70s

Grandpa migrated from Portugal for a better life and found one on a small farm in Johannesburg, South Africa. He bought the ticket, took the ride, and fate rewarded his leap of faith and tireless work ethic with a loving family and a sustainable business. Grandpa didn't amalgamate easily to South African culture. He brought his Latin tendencies and traditional values with him. But age has softened him.

When we meet him he is in the twilight of his life, segueing from tyrannical dictator to supportive Grandpa. And time is precious... A cancer is growing inside him. So when Lydon expresses his desire to go on an adventure - as he himself did by flying to South Africa - Grandpa gives the taut nod of approval.



s 47 F(1)

REDACTED

Created by Keara Shaw (HA)

Summary:

Attachment: HA612042L - Irving was released to travel to ROC but was then re-detained. Immigration authorities claim they have been instructed by intelligence agency and the navy to detain Irving because bombs were found near where he was camping in Bas Congo.

CHARLISE | 40s | S.A. DIPLOMAT

Throughout her 20s Charlise learnt French as a second language and daydreamed about becoming a diplomat stationed in Paris, sipping cocktails by the Louvre. But life had other plans.

Every young diplomat is given a hardship post, where they are sent to a 3rd world country. It's a proving ground. During her placement, a light bulb went off... it's places like this where she can do the most good.

And so from that moment on, if there was ever an assignment that had other diplomats running in the opposite direction, she would accept it with open arms. Such was her compassion.

But don't for one second mistake that for softness.

She's anything but: strong, brave, manipulative and ruthless in her pursuit of justice. A pitch-perfect judge of character, in an instant she will know you better than you know yourself. And if the job calls for it she won't hesitate to use that information against you.

Given her fluent French and laudable results she was the perfect diplomat to send to the DRC. Navigating the civil war. Negotiating South African miners out of a Rebel hostage crisis. Bring it on. This is what she signed up for.

And then she gets a call about an incarcerated 21-year-old South African, who is apparently on some surf trip with an Australian backpacker... the hell!?

Better than anyone, she understands the corruption and hostile political climate of the DRC. But she also sees beyond that. To the individuals. Who are caring and compassionate.

So the thought of two privileged westerners selfishly traipsing around their country, flaunting their wealth and devil-may-care attitudes, doesn't sit well with her. If that is in fact why they are there in the first place.

One thing's for sure, she'll get to the truth.

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CONSULAR-IN-CONFIDENCE

s 47 F(1) said they had evidence against Mr Irving that they needed to examine further. He said it was strange that the two had chose to camp next to the house of a well known company president which was also where the Congolese President stayed when in Muanda.

He said ANR had a witness who had said the two boys had asked him about the frequency of the President's visits and then warned him to be careful of his safety if he attend an event at the house.

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CAPTAIN ZEUS • 50s • DRC

The Democratic Republic of the Congo was locked in a decade long civil war until 2003, and is still plagued by violence from Rebel Groups. So it's little wonder that war is Zeus' life.

A grizzled, career military man, Zeus worked his way up the ranks to become a feared and well-respected Captain. In his world, corruption and extortion runs rife. And he is not immune. Zeus doesn't see it as wrong. He sees it as getting his deserved slice of the pie. The West sure takes their piece. Zeus is very aware of Africa's past. And carries the pain of it.

Zeus works for the Agence Nationale de Reseiignements (ANR), a government intelligence agency of the DRC. It has 11,931 employees, organized into three departments, sub-divided into directorates, divisions, sections and offices.

And it is notorious for human rights violations.

Officially their role is to ensure security of the state. Unofficially, it's to do the bidding of their dictator, President Kabila. This means eliminating threats to his regime. Their method? Spying on the people.

Undercover operatives are everywhere; watching journalists, opposition politicians and university lecturers. They even pose as taxi driver's, and if locals speak ill of the President they lock them up... or worse.

At ANR Detention Centre they beat, starve and psychologically break prisoners. They're known to force inmates to stare at the sun until they go blind.

Too often, prisoners are kept in endless purgatory: never given a trial date, nor hope of release. ANR are Judge, Jury and Executioner, and they trade on fear and intimidation. Families of those who have died in ANR custody stay silent, for fear of persecution.

Their prison cell structure is hierarchical, separated into three tiers. The poor are kept in an overcrowded cage. The white-collar criminals are in a "2nd class" cell, where they are given more food and exercise per day. And the "VIP cell" caters to one or two high profile criminals.

Zeus works within The Department of Homeland Security (DSI), and is responsible for internal intelligence and state security, working with the relevant prosecution services: the Navy and the National Police.

Within the department, he is part of the Special Branch Investigations and Research unit, involved in the arrests of journalists and opposition politicians.

Zeus is based at the ANR Detention Centre, but often travels to Banana Naval Base to conduct business.

• • •

This is where he first encounters Mozzie and Lydon. They represent everything he loathes about the West.

Will he condemn them for what they represent?

Or learn to put aside his deep-seeded prejudice and treat them as individuals?







LOCATIONS





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LACHLAN RYAN • WRITER/PRODUCER



When not cutting social content for his fellow countryman Chris Hemsworth, Lachlan Ryan is writing and directing up a storm.

At 23, Lachlan wrote, produced and directed the theatrically released sporting comedy REVERSE RUNNER, executive produced by Stephen Herek (director of MR. HOLLAND'S OPUS). It was distributed nationally on all home entertainment platforms and was the highest grossing film of all time... at Colac Cinema, which may or may not be Lachlan's home town (pop. 12,457).

Lachlan most recently wrote, produced and directed the short DOG DATE AFTERNOON, a family comedy that screened at Heartland's Indy Fest, Flickerfest and Top Dog Film Festival.

He previously directed the Screen Australia funded BIG CITY, which moved hearts and minds at Tribeca, LA Shorts, Urbanworld, Short Shorts, Austin Film Festival and MIFF (as part of the prestigious Accelerator Lab for emerging directors), winning Best Drama and Audience Choice at Freshflix.

Lachlan also co-wrote and directed the season finale of ANTISOCIAL, a high-concept lowbrow web series that amassed more than 10 million views online.

During his time as Drama Development Manager at The Film Company (LITTLE FISH), Lachlan associate produced the Australian family comedy ODDBALL, working closely with Practical Pictures' Craig Perry and Sheila Hanahan Taylor (FINAL DESTINATION, AMERICAN PIE) to create a box office hit. He has been a shooter-producer at WTFN Entertainment (one of Australia's largest independent production companies) and has won multiple festival awards for his shorts.

Alongside his film projects, he has three chickens, two golden retrievers, and one daughter in development.



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JAYDEN IRVING • STUNTMAN



Jayden Irving is a Creative Arts graduate of La Trobe University. Whilst studying, Jayden was headhunted to join broadcast media and livestream company MY SPORT LIVE, shooting events such as State sports, Motocross Nationals, and the Arnold Classic Exhibition. Jayden quickly moved up to Broadcast Producer and Livestream Director for NRG TV. However, his dream was always to be a stuntman...

Now, Jayden has been a graded stunt performer for over 7 years with a myriad of International credits. He is currently working in Thailand as the lead stunt double to Charlie Hunnam in the TV Adaptation of the international best selling book, SHANTARAM.

Jayden AKA Mozzie also happens to be the real life subject of this film, and as such, has incredible first hand knowledge to share with the production.

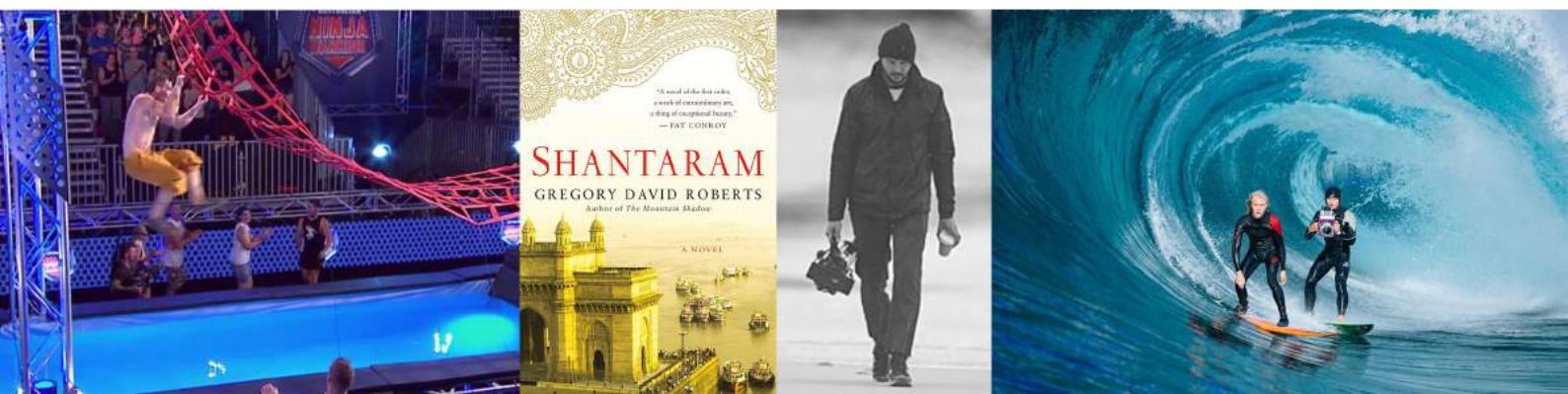
TYGE LANDA • DOP/PRODUCER



Tyge Landa began his journey in the film industry over 10 years ago after the passing of his father Bob Plasto; a daring politically focussed director and producer.

Tyge launched himself into the surf/travel industry as a producer and cinematographer. He quickly garnered attention after his debut film BENEATH made waves across the surf community. His unique visual style became sought after for campaigns by leading brands Redbull, Billabong, Audi, Mercedes and Adidas. CHASING THE SHOT was the biggest production Tyge produced and directed, as well as working on a film clip for Sir Paul McCartney.

Tyge resides in Melbourne with his young family and has a strong desire to help true stories come to life on screen.



Selfishness is putting the wants of yourself over the needs of others.

Self-respect is putting your needs over the wants of others.

One is disregarding others; one is taking care of yourself.

-Tsumiki



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TIMELINE

June - Dec 2021	Re-drafting script Assembling the team Financing
Dec - Jan 2021	Pre-Production
Feb - March 2022	Production
March - Dec 2022	Post-production
2023 onwards	Release





THEORY

P I C T U R E S

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