



Press Release

THE TRACKER **Sunday, 16 October at 4pm**

The African wild has so much to teach us, but so few of us are afforded this amazing experience. For the next three Sunday afternoons we can look forward to a journey into the wild. This **Sunday** at **4pm** tune in to ***The Tracker***.

The Tracker portrays the extraordinary life, knowledge and experience of **Elmon Mhlongo**, the renowned Londolozi tracker and cameraman. It traces his struggles and victories, and brings to light the wisdom of the Shangaan people and their culture. It challenges our western views and reveals how essential it is to tap into the ancient wisdom and experience of indigenous people.

In the documentary, we learn how Elmon grew up as a herd boy looking after his father's cattle, their only livelihood. With no formal education, the bush was his school and the animals his teachers. The hamerkop bird, with its slow movements and patience in the water taught Elmon how to fish. Monkeys showed him what was edible and, like them, he avoided what was poisonous. From years of living in the bush, Elmon developed a sixth sense, that of intuition and foresight.

With the introduction of game reserves, Elmon's life began to change. It became illegal to hunt and live off the land. Using various clever deceptions, Elmon was able to avoid being arrested by the numerous game scouts and wardens patrolling the area. Eventually, his family was forced by the apartheid government to move from the land they inhabited for generations. Elmon's personal struggle began when he was forced to move into a township environment. However, his love for wildlife soon led him back to the bush, first as an illegal poacher and then to Londolozi Game Reserve where his views changed. That was the beginning of a life-long friendship and partnership with John Varty, international wildlife filmmaker.

Through his relationship with John, Elmon was exposed to once in a lifetime opportunities. He travelled to the Amazon to track and film jaguar, to the vast plains of East Africa to witness the incredible migration, he lived with Shingilana (the lioness) in the wilds of Zambia and got to star alongside a Hollywood actress in a feature film.

Elmon's experiences broadened his understanding of how nature conservation can bring prosperity to tribal people. With great depth of perception he recognises the vital role he and others like him play in educating the world with simple life lessons and important conservation messages.

As *The Tracker* will leave you wanting more wildlife experiences, e.tv will air another two nature documentaries by John Varty over the next couple of weeks:

Next Sunday, **23 October**, at **2pm** be sure not to miss ***The Silent Hunter***. This amazing documentary took cameraman **Varty** five years to make. It is the story of how he and his trusted friend and tracker, Elmon, developed a unique association with a family of wild leopards, one of Africa's most elusive predators, a silent, devastatingly successful hunter. Sequences include nocturnal leopard mating, the raising of several litters of cubs and interesting sights and incidents between leopard and other predators never previously recorded.

Then on **30 October** at **4pm** we bring you ***The Crossover***. Explore the Shangaan culture, traditions and daily lives when Varty and **Lynne Eayrs** spend a year with Elmon and his family. This docu-drama represents real life in the wilds of Africa with indigenous African people.

The **Shangaan's** are a splinter tribe of the Zulu nation and are hunter-gatherers. John joins the men and learns how to track, set traps, collect honey and how to hunt in the traditional way. The women of the village teach Lynne about their daily lives, collecting wood, making mats, fishing, collecting water and some of the natural remedies from their plant kingdom.

The Shangaan culture is rich in traditional beliefs and the film explores some of them as well as the vital role of the 'sangoma' or witchdoctor who is called upon when the village believes it is bewitched. This film will entertain and above all instil a new perspective on conservation and indigenous people.

Take a journey into the wild with Elmon Mhlongo this Sunday on e.

For pictures of Elmon Mhlongo and the leopards, please contact:

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