

STORY ORIGIN

Following a performance of MY FATHER'S COAT in London in late January 2020, I was approached by a South African from the audience, enquiring whether I was aware of the story of Ian Player and Magqubu Ntombela. I responded that I knew who Ian Player was.

The short pause that followed provided a less-than-subtle hint that there was a story waiting to be told. I was intrigued. However my little business was just taking off. And facing a busy schedule, the best I could do was to make a note to explore his suggestion when my schedule allowed.

That moment would arrive sooner than expected. Even from my London hotel room that week, came news of a curious new virus wreaking havoc in Wuhan, China. A pandemic, which was about to provide a potent remedy to my busy schedule. And with my speaking pipeline wiped-out within a month, I was blessed with something which had eluded me for years: time.

In May of that year I was approached by an existing client to tell a story in the bush in northern KwaZulu Natal. It was short notice, but they were looking for a story which was suited to a team who had been working under immense pressure through COVID, but which was suited to the bush.

With the phone pressed to my face, I thought back to my conversation back in London. I requested 24 hours to make a proposal.

The product was a 25-minute short story on Magqubu Ntombela and Ian player told around the fire, with my slides projected onto a game-vehicle draped in sheets. It was a fantastic break from lockdown, but more than that, I had come to learn of a story which had some beautiful human ingredients. An untold story which deserved much wider appreciation.

Over the months and years which have followed, my eyes would be opened to a wealth of human insights, as I gradually pieced together two interwoven lives of great consequence.

The story was launched online, given COVID, but has subsequently been told across South Africa, London and the United States.

Few South Africans recognise the full gravitas of Ian and Magqubu's contribution to conservation, globally. I have developed a deep connection to these two men. I have learnt so much from them and consider it a privilege to play a small role in reviving their teachings and considerable legacy. Here is an untold South African success story layered with lessons for the present.

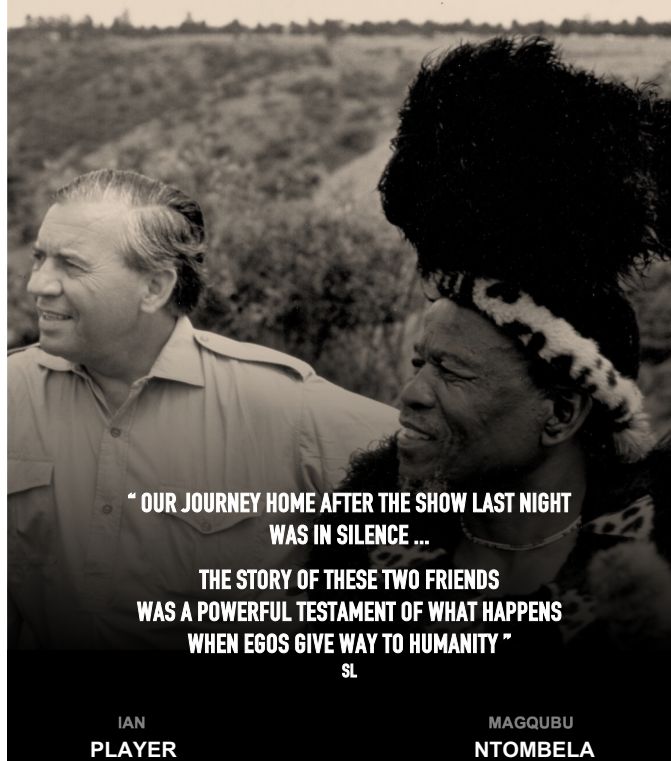
CORE THEMES

- Human Connection:** The story explores how two men, from very different cultural backgrounds (and who spoke different languages) managed to break down those barriers through a shared sense of humanity. The product was a relationship, both personal and professional, which underpinned the success of these two men.
- Power of Small Teams Bound by Purpose:** In saving the white rhino, a small team was assembled around a clear purpose. To quote Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
- Moments of Inspiration:** The story involves several moments of inspiration, which have a dramatic impact on the lives of Ian and Magqubu. I invoke Plutarch's assertion that the human mind isn't some vessel waiting to be filled, but rather, it is kindling waiting to be sparked.
- Value of Nurturing Networks:** Much of Ian and Magqubu's success hinged on their ability to build and then leverage a network. One which opened doors and ultimately enabled their success.

LEAVE SOME FOR THE

HONEY BADGER

THE HUMAN STORY BEHIND SOUTH AFRICA'S GREATEST CONSERVATION TRIUMPH



"OUR JOURNEY HOME AFTER THE SHOW LAST NIGHT WAS IN SILENCE ...

THE STORY OF THESE TWO FRIENDS WAS A POWERFUL TESTAMENT OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EGOS GIVE WAY TO HUMANITY "

SL

IAN
PLAYER

MAGQUBU
NTOMBELA

TESTIMONIALS

I am wiping away tears as I finish this story.

I feel it in my solar plexus.

It is beautiful, it's strands cleverly woven, its ending message, imperative.

CS

It was a tour de force: so many intertwined and important themes.

They have been working through my mind ever since.

GR

What a magnificent story. I couldn't have imagined it possible to enjoy anything even more than MY FATHER'S COAT.

You had us in tears!

DE

It was quite brilliant - thank you for sharing your extraordinary talents with us once again.

... The standing ovation said it all!

FG

I was blown away by your talk ... The powerful delivery, the imagery, even birdsong, the sublime message and the way you wove it all together.

You are a master.

DC

You hit home run after home run. The entire talk was truly fabulous.

CB

Our journey home after the show last night was in silence.

Not only were you incredible (not one pause, not one mistake), but the story of these two friends was a powerful testament of what happens when egos give way for humanity.

SL

A powerful human story, driving a conservation message and respect for ancient wisdom.

SS

There is little that truly touches me so instantly or deeply than content creators at the top of their game, putting themselves out there for the world to critique.

You are right at the very pinnacle of people that I have heard speak.

Honestly. Fact.

RH

I found LEAVE SOME FOR THE HONEY BADGER so original, intensely moving, sincerely presented and worthy of a wider audience.

PR

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & DETAILS

In 1952, Ian Player and Magqubu Ntombela were introduced on the Umfolozi Game Reserve. A chance encounter between two men from very different backgrounds, which sparked a legendary new partnership. One which pulled the southern white rhino back from the verge of extinction, while revolutionising wild-life conservation around the world.

LEAVE SOME FOR THE HONEY BADGER is an untold story about friendship and the transformative powers of discovering connections between ourselves; our environment; and the animals with whom we share the planet.

LENGTH	60 minutes
AGE RESTRICTION	>16 (Nothing crude, but concepts are nuanced).
INTERVAL	Optional.
IMAGES	Yes. Good size screen is important.
SOUND	Musical soundtrack plays through PowerPoint.
PREVIEW	https://youtu.be/zkFUgQamhsl

TARGET AUDIENCES

- Leadership Teams:** Leaders looking for a nuanced product, where inspiration is discovered within the story, rather than pushed-out by the speaker. The story provides a baseline for important conversations within any organisation (refer to the CORE THEMES). Michael can adjust his talks to focus on specific requirements of the client.
- Client Events:** Where business have a sophisticated client base (e.g. wealth managers; professional bodies; brokers) who are less inclined towards inspiration from adventurers and celebrities, Michael's stories are a popular alternative. They offer the joy of learning and connection, while providing conversation points for meaningful client engagement.
- Conservation Charity Events:** The underlying theme lends itself towards events intended to support wildlife and conservation initiatives.
- Safari Tourism Groups:** The story outlines both a human story, but also the history of conservation in South Africa. For tourists heading on safari, this story provides both an emotional attachment to the bush, as well as high-level context, so enhancing the wilderness experience.