**WILD HOPE: RHINO OPS**

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|  | **Timecode** | **Visuals** | **Audio** |
| 1 | 00:00:02:22 | Montage rhinosDehorned rhinoGame Capture Unit at work | DUMI:Poaching has always been around but it was very seldom. All of a sudden, people were losing rhinos left, right, center.The carcasses that we were coming across... The numbers were not lying.Dehorning just became the thing to do to protect the animals.So for most of us at Game Capture Unit, we knew what was expected of us, but we have never done it on such a big scale. |
| **WILD HOPE: RHINO RESCUE (W/T)** |
| 2 | 00:00:44:13 | Rhino close-ups | DUMI:For me, what has always been distinct with a rhino, apart from the fact that it's big, it can hurt you, it’s the smell. Just knowing this is how the rhinos smells.That just got stuck on my head. |
| 3 | 00:00:59:00 | Dumi in the pen with young rhinos | **NARRATOR:****Dumi Zwane has a close connection with one of the largest land animals on Earth…****The Southern white rhino.****It’s a bond he formed at an early age.** |
| 4 | 00:01:10:05 | Young Dumi discovering rhinoYoung Dumi in the field | DUMI:I must have been 7 or 8 and I saw a picture in a calendarwith a rhino.They they looked so prehistoric and it was something that I had never seen before.I was used to cattle, goats, sheep. I'd never heard of a game reserve where wild animals are kept.From that day on, I was captivated. |
| 5 | 00:01:30:21 | Wildlife | **NARRATOR:****That single photo on a calendar triggered a lifelong passion. And steered Dumi to a career in wildlife management.** |
| 6 | 00:01:41:00 |  | DUMI:Everything was so big and so beautiful and special.I felt blessed that I was actually following up my dreams, what I've always wanted to do. |
| 7 | 00:01:49:24 | Dumi working with rhinos | **NARRATOR:****A highlight for Dumi was getting to work hands on with rhinos as part of an elite ‘game capture unit.’ His job was to help capture large animals for treatment, monitoring, or relocation.** **And he got to do it right here, in one of Africa’s most historic parks.** |
| 8 | 00:02:06:16 |  | DUMI:iMfolozi Game Reserve is known to be the oldest park in Africa. |
| 9 | 00:02:12:01 | Archive: HiP and rhinosMAP GRAPHIC: rhinos disappear from their range | **NARRATOR:****The reserve—now known as HiP—was founded because of the rhinos.****Uncontrolled hunting in the early colonial era took a huge toll on rhinos.** **By the end of the 19th century, Southern white rhinos had vanished from their range all across Southern Africa.** |
| 10 | 00:02:29:08 |  | DUMI:It was thought that the Southern White Rhino were all extinct.And then in the 1890s, it was discovered that there was still White Rhino in this area.It was the last existing population of White Rhino. |
| 11 | 00:02:44:14 | Archive: Rhinos and wildlife | **NARRATOR:****From a population that once numbered in the tens of thousands, fewer than 100 of them were left.** **Their discovery in 1895 prompted the colonial government to immediately set aside land to protect the rhinos—and create the first nature reserve on the African continent.** |
| 12 | 00:03:03:09 |  | DUMI:From then, conservation was born and the different conservation techniques, skills and people becoming aware of conservation. |
| 13 | 00:03:11:24 | Archive: Rhinos | **NARRATOR:****It was a turning point in the region’s relationship with nature.****And because of it, the rhino population began to recover.** |
| 14 | 00:03:22:14 | Dr. Ian Player working with rhinos in Operation Rhino | **NARRATOR:****By 1960, HiP’s rhino population had boomed, and Dumi’s predecessor—a famed figure in South African conservation—saw an opportunity not just to save the species, but to restore it.**  |
| 15 | 00:03:37:03 |  | DUMI:The late Dr. Ian Player started looking at means and ways of introducing these rhinosback to their former range.Then that's when the Operation Rhino was born. |
| 16 | 00:03:49:23 |  | **NARRATOR:****The ambitious project began pioneering methods to safely capture and transport these sensitive giants.** |
| 17 | 00:03:57:10 |  | DUMI:There was a lot of trial and error.They found what drugs they needed and how potent they were to the animals. They found the best way to transport the animals and designed the crates and everything.They were the pioneers. |
| 18 | 00:04:11:05 | MAP GRAPHIC: Rhinos redistributed across their range.Rhinos | **NARRATOR:****Over the course of 5 years, Operation Rhino moved almost 500 rhinos from HiP to reserves across Southern Africa.** **These efforts continued throughout the 20th century and as more land became available for conservation, Rhinos were flourishing.****By 2007, the total population of White Rhinos had grown to over 17,000 animals. And all of them had their origins in HiP.****But then, disaster!** |
| 19 | 00:04:45:10 | Poached rhinos | DUMI:Around 2008, it's where I really first experienced it.I was just blown away with the amount of poaching that just started.Before we knew it was already in HiP and before we knew it, it was everywhere. |
| 20 | 00:05:01:18 | Rhinos | **NARRATOR:****Rhino poaching was suddenly soaring.****The horns had become highly sought after in some Asian countries, where they were believed to have medicinal properties—or used for ornamental carvings.****The rising demand made poaching more profitable for criminal syndicates.** |
| 21 | 00:05:24:03 |  | DUMI:It’s a waste. I mean, you're killing almost a two ton animal for its horn. |
| 22 | 00:05:29:19 | Dehorned rhinosHorned rhinos | **NARRATOR:****As a counter measure, many parks across Africa began dehorning their rhinos, humanely removing the horns, making their rhinos less valuable to the poachers.****But HiP, the motherland of rhinos, resisted this measure to try and preserve the rhino’s unique silhouette—an important draw for tourists. Instead, they emphasised high security to protect their animals.** **For a while, it worked.** |
| 23 | 00:05:58:12 |  | DUMI:In Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park we were one of the very last big populations who still had horned rhinos while everybody around us had dehorned. So, we just became the prime target.I mean, the amount of incursions that was happening in the reserve just proved that we were the prime targets. |
| 24 | 00:06:19:12 |  | **NARRATOR:****In 2023, the park lost over 300 white rhinos to poaching, a number higher than their birthrate. If this continued, the population would collapse.** |
| 25 | 00:06:32:02 |  | DUMI:It's the worst worst feeling when you see a poached rhino and the brutality of it as well.I've seen situations where an orphan lying there next to their mother… because they are so lost.There's a feeling of… You’ve failed the animal. |
| 26 | 00:06:48:07 | HiP Game Capture team | **NARRATOR:****HiP was left will little choice but to dehorn.** |
| 27 | 00:06:52:06 | Dehorned rhinos | DUMI:I mean, we were not really sure whether we were doing the right thing or not.  |
| 28 | 00:06:57:12 |  | **NARRATOR:****Although most studies have shown no negative impact on the rhinos’ behaviour, some scientists suggest that the dehorned rhinos may actually command smaller territories, possibly causing them to eat or reproduce less.****But dehorning is the only method with actual statistical data that supports its effectiveness at reducing poaching.****So dehorning it was.** |
| 29 | 00:07:19:09 |  | DUMI:As long as you rather see a live rhino without a horn than seeing a dead rhino, then you’ve got to take a decision and that decision was taken. |
| 30 | 00:07:29:23 | Team briefing | CEDRIC:This park has managed to hold out for as long as we can. The poaching pressure is 10, 12 percent of total population now, so our strategy says, we’ve got to go there.So we’re here for a very important reason. |
| 31 | 00:07:43:12 | The teams move out | **NARRATOR:****The park holds roughly 2000 rhinos and the immediate goal is to dehorn at least half of them in a single operation over the coming months.****It’s an incredibly ambitious goal.****And Dumi is at the helm.** |
| 32 | 00:07:57:10 | The teams prepare | DUMI:We have to split people into four teams.So you would have team leader. You've got your animal attendants. They are responsible for different parts of the work.Everybody’s got his equipment ready. |
| 33 | 00:08:07:24 | Vet working with tranquilliserChopper takes off | **NARRATOR:****Dehorning even a single rhino is a monumental task and Dumi’s Game Capture Unit needs to run with military precision.****Rhinos are notoriously sensitive to anesthesia, so there’s a real risk of killing the animal they’re trying to save.****The team will need every bit of experience they have, to pull off not just one, but over a thousand safely.** |
| 34 | 00:08:29:23 | Ground and aerial teams communicating  | DUMI:You've got everything covered.You’ve got the vet the helicopter that is darting, you've got the vet with the ground team.So you wait for the helicopter to start giving information about, “Okay, I've got five rhinos in this area. Can the teams move to there.” |
| 35 | 00:08:46:21 | Rhino gets darted by aerial vet Dumi’s team chases down the rhino | **NARRATOR:****First, the aerial vet darts the animal with a tranquilizer.** **Then, one of the ground teams rushes in to intercept the darted rhino.** |
| 36 |  |  | DUMI:They tell the vets on the ground team that, “We've darted a big female.” They give you all that information.By the time you get to to the animal, you know exactly: She’s a big female. She has been darted with this amount of drugs. This is what you need to do to her and all that. |
| 37 | 00:09:13:03 |  | **NARRATOR:****The next challenge is to help it lie down safely.** |
| 38 | 00:09:17:06 | Dumi’s team get the rhino to lie down safely | DUMI:It’s a big animal. With all that weight, if he’s lying on the side, badly, upside down, he’s compromised. You make sure that that animal is lying correctly. Just make it breathe better.The health of the animal is paramount. |
| 39 | 00:09:32:15 | Dumi begins the dehorning | **NARRATOR:****Once the rhino is secured, Dumi’s team tries to complete the operation in less than 15 minutes.****They monitor its breathing to ensure there’s no negative reaction to the sedative.** **The team leader works quickly to carefully remove both horns. Though the chainsaw seems ruthless, rhino horns are made of keratin, like our fingernails, so there is no pain.** **The horn must be trimmed down as far as possible to eliminate all incentive for the poachers.** |
| 40 | 00:10:00:13 |  | DUMI:You know that it’s a very beautiful part of the animal, but here you are, taking it off. You tell yourself that it’s for the good of the animal. |
| 41 | 00:10:09:12 | Scientists at work on the rhino | **NARRATOR:****The operation isn’t only about the horns. It’s an opportunity for critical research, and Craig Mulqueeny, the scientific advisor of the park, oversees that part of the work.** |
| 42 | 00:10:25:13 |  | CRAIG:The dehorning operation provided a unique opportunity for us.We’ve collected tissue samples and blood samples, even fecal samples. This is the first time we will be able to actually get a quantitative indication of the diversity in the Hluhluwe population. |
| 43 | 00:10:41:14 | Dumi administers the wake up drug.Rhino wakes up | **NARRATOR:****As soon as the work is done, they mark the animal so it won’t be targeted again, clear the area, then administer the antidote.****The drug begins to work within seconds.** |
| 44 | 00:10:59:02 |  | DUMI:It's a nice feeling, you know, knowing that you have saved him. That's the main thing for the next generation of rhinos as well. |
| 45 | 00:11:07:08 |  | **NARRATOR:****But there’s no time to stop and celebrate.** |
| 46 | 00:11:10:12 | Dumi drives away | DUMI:When the word gets out that we are actually dehorning, the poachers come in numbers because they want to try and take as much horn as they can before we dehorn all of them, so it was a race against time. |
| 47 | 00:11:24:04 | Poached rhinos | HLENGIWE:When the dehorning started, more rhinos were just poached. In my section, I lose like 3 rhinos on the same day. |
| 48 | 00:11:34:00 | Hlengiwe at work with security | **NARRATOR:****Hlengiwe Nzuza is in charge of security in a section of the park that is the most vulnerable.** |
| 49 | 00:11:40:09 | Corridor road | HLENGIWE:Most of the time it’s not easy to catch the poachers because of the corridor road. There is a public road inside the reserve. So the rhino poachers have easy access to just go in and go out. |
| 50 | 00:11:56:19 | Dehorning female with calf | DUMI:We did have to change our tactics of operation. When we are dehorning now, even the females with the very tiny calves have to be darted.You can't just say no, we're leaving this one, we’re not catching him. Because you know, by leaving him, you might be pushing him in the hands of the poachers. |
| 51 | 00:12:15:24 | Dehorning montage | **NARRATOR:****The team’s commitment is total, and the pace is relentless!** |
| 52 | 00:12:22:12 |  | DUMI:It’s just a general feeling within the team that, the more you take off those horns, the more you’re actually keeping them safe.That was just the motto. That's how we operated. That is why we were able to do like 67 in one day. |
| 53 | 00:12:42:16 |  | DUMI:Make no mistake, it’s not a one man show. It’s a team effort. Everybody had to pull his weight in for us to be successful as a unit. |
| 54 | 00:12:51:16 |  | DUMI:We just started chasing those numbers. By such and such a day, let's try and get to 750. Got to 750. By such and such a day, let's try and get to 1000.So, it became a motivating factor for the team. Let’s go out there. Let’s make one more rhino safe. |
| 55 | 00:13:14:04 | Dumi transports horns to safe house | **NARRATOR:****At the end of each day, the team ends up with a pile of horns worth millions on the black market. Maximum security is essential, and precautions are taken.** |
| 56 | 00:13:25:03 | Horns being processed | CRAIG:There's always a risk of horn going missing. And hence the need to microchip them, to DNA - take samples. Because, if those horns are stolen at any point in time and they are recovered, we can then see exactly where they've come from. |
| 57 | 00:13:43:08 | Horns transported to a planePlane flies offDehorned rhinos | **NARRATOR:****Once processed, the horns are moved off-site to an undisclosed location where they are tracked and guarded by national agencies.****In just 4 months, the team has managed to dehorn over 1000 rhinos - a record rate for any dehorning operation.** **And the results are measurable and impressive.****After the initial spike, poaching numbers have dropped 80% from what they were before the dehorning started.** |
| 58 | 00:14:13:09 |  | CRAIG:It's just a matter now of ensuring that we keep those poaching losses low enough to allow the population to grow.  |
| 59 | 00:14:23:11 |  | **NARRATOR:****The battle will be ongoing.****Rhino horns grow back just like fingernails, so they’ll have to be trimmed again about every two years.** |
| 60 | 00:14:34:12 | Security at work | CRAIG:Dehorning is not the silver bullet, it's one of the tools we have. We have to continue with all of our law enforcement. Our patrols. Our boots on the ground. The technological equipment and so on that we are using. |
| 61 | 00:14:50:21 | Dogs, choppers and security all at work | **NARRATOR:****Every tool and every team must be brought into play. To protect the rhinos where they are - as governments and conservation organisations strive to stamp out the black market demand.** |
| 62 | 00:15:03:03 | Dehorned rhinosRehabilitated rhinos | DUMI:There is no place for complacency. We know that they are still there. We just have to keep doingwhat we are doing. If all that it could give us, the dehorning, is just a respite for a few months, those few months, we should be restocking our reserves and making sure that everything is covered. |
| 63 | 00:15:22:03 | Dumi in the pen with rhinos | DUMI:These beautiful lands wouldn't be the same without rhino.When we protect animals, it’s not for us. It's the pride of our country. It's for our future generationsthat we can actually show them that these animals, they mean a lot to us to look after them. |