



Re: Wayne Lotter Tragically Murdered In Tanzania. A Statement From The International Ranger Federation & The Thin Green Line Foundation

Dear friends,

Wayne Lotter, who was a **PAMS Foundations Co-Founder**, a former Vice President of the International Ranger Federation (IRF) and former board member at The Thin Green Line Foundation (TTGLF), can only be described as a true champion of this planet. His tireless efforts to combat poaching amongst the severe challenges and threats in Africa, particularly Tanzania, are legendary. His devotion to the cause, in the face of huge obstacles and dangers, has enabled the education and training of hundreds of village game scouts, which has provided them a livelihood and most likely saved many of their lives. Countless elephants and animals also still roam this earth because of him. It was not just his passion, it was his entire being

At The Thin Green Line Foundation and International Ranger Federation, we are presented with sad and shocking news and images from around the world on a weekly basis. On average, a Ranger is killed in the line of duty every few days. The numbers are truly horrifying. Wayne knew this all too well and worked tirelessly to ensure these men and women had the skills they needed, to ensure they didn't end up a statistic, and that the animals and nature they served stood a chance. But these are, of course, not just numbers and statistics: behind each Ranger death lies a story of immense bravery and loss; of bereaved and broken families, children left without parents and care; of colleagues who've witnessed their team-mates come to an often-violent end, yet are obliged to carry on and once again put themselves in the line of fire. Sadly on this occasion it is Wayne, who cared for so many Rangers, that we now mourn for, and for his family and colleagues that we now surround with our support.

These stories of Ranger deaths are too frequent and often too graphic for us to share. However, this is one person's story we are compelled to tell: to honour him and provide a catalyst for action and change. It is that of our recently murdered friend, Wayne Derek Lotter. It is reported that Wayne was shot and killed while taking a taxi in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Although an investigation is underway, the conservation community strongly believes he was assassinated for his anti-poaching work.

In a moving obituary, Dr Jane Goodall cited Wayne as "a hero of mine, a hero to many". Dr Goodall described a man who, from a young age, was passionate about fighting poaching and knew the importance of involving the local people in this vital work. Wayne put it best when he said that "communities were the best protectors of the continent's animals."

Despite facing immense challenges from powerful and corrupt vested interests, from poachers, ivory dealers and high-level criminal networks, who tried at every opportunity to shut down PAMS, the organisation of which he is a founder, Wayne carried on, resolute in his mission to deploy an intelligence and community based approach to protect wildlife.

Wayne knew all too well that his work was hazardous. He knew that taking on the poachers and their syndicates as he did was to put himself in incredible danger. He often



told me of the threats and near misses. In an article in the LA Times, he was quoted as saying that “the more you go after them, the more situations where confrontation between poachers and rangers will take place. There are going to be risks.”

But still he forged on.

We are mourning the loss of a brave and big-hearted warrior, and also a friend. Personally, I will remember him for his determination, his tactical thinking on complex issues, his sense of justice, and yes his quirky sense of humour that often left others at a loss, but Wayne with a cheeky grin as if to say, “you’ll get it eventually!”

Wayne’s shocking murder was most likely intended to shut down and hinder the conservation cause he worked tirelessly for, and to scare off any who dare to follow in his footsteps. But what has become apparent since Wayne’s passing, is that the opposite is occurring, as Wayne would have done and wanted himself. The conservation community will not cower in silence. It has strengthened our resolve. Today and each and every day, we will continue to defend that which we all know needs defending. In the face of incredible dangers and hardships, Rangers will continue to lace up their boots and head out on patrol and stand resolute on the front line.

As Dr Jane Goodall has said, “If this cowardly shooting was an attempt to bring the work of the PAMS Foundation to an end it will fail. Those who have been inspired by Wayne will fight on.”

I urge you, as a supporter of Wayne’s work, of that of the Rangers’ work, to reflect on this sad loss. Let grief wash over you, let the anger steel your resolve, and let the inspiration of our friend, Wayne Derek Lotter, renew and strengthen your support for the critical work of Rangers and wildlife protection worldwide.

On behalf of all Rangers and our supporters- Rest In Peace Wayne- you will never be forgotten and your legacy will continue!

Yours in Solidarity,

Sean Willmore
President
International Ranger Federation
&
Founder and Director
The Thin Green Line Foundation