



## Treatment: The Grosvenor Misadventure

Hermann has a dream. It's crazy, but he's spent decades on it and he's not giving up now. He wants to find R20m to recover a R600m sunken treasure near Port St. Johns. The Grosvenor was an East India Company treasure ship that sank in 1782, loaded with Mughal and Sri Lankan treasure from the early colonization of India. The tale folds in survivors, salvaged artefacts passed between tribes, dynamite, diamond-studded peacocks, a fraud that took in Arthur Conan Doyle, a legendary throne dumped in a pond, and much more.

Hermann is a rustic, sun-beaten Eastern Cape boytjie who grew up on the coasts watching shipwrecks wash up on his beach in the storms, building a lifelong obsession. Balancing his wild-eyed dreams is his dapper friend Chirag, a bumbling British Indian who escaped his upbringing at a 500-year-old school in England and came to SA looking for adventure.

The odds are stacked against them. Besides not having the money to explore the wreck, there is no guarantee of finding the treasure. A mysterious Hungarian even funded an expedition in 1999, but Hermann is convinced they found the wrong site. If it is found, it might not be salvageable; if it is salvageable, it might not be valuable enough to make their efforts worthwhile. If it is valuable enough, the Indian, Sri Lankan, British, and South African governments will all want first dibs.

Many expeditions have been carried out before. All have failed. Can our unlikely heroes make a plan, or is it all just a fantasy? Either way, it'll be a fascinating dive into South African history and culture, led by conversations between two men whose lives are stranger than fiction.

### Logline

This is stage 1 of a journey that will lead to the recovery of more than R600 million of treasure waiting for the right person to bring it up after many famous and failed expeditions. The aim is to get the story out there, and to explore how much of it is true. The documentary will explore the stories and then the facts behind them, developing a history of both Hermann and South Africa.

### Intent

Create a 3-minute Kickstarter video to fund documentary. Use Kickstarter/GoFundMe to raise approx. R300,000 for full documentary at SABC technical broadcast standard. Then use documentary to a) build additional local content b) raise awareness for salvage expedition c) develop format for possible syndicable/replicable TV series.

### Format

- Genre: Investigative documentary, news style
- Style: a more loving Herzog, Lost in La Mancha with treasure.
- Animation: Simple titles, core narrative of the Grosvenor's journey and wreck
- Audience: Those interested in hopeless quests / expert odd-couple conversations / treasure hunting. Broad historical interest both in national and international terms (SA, India, Sri Lanka, UK).





## The Story

### The mystery

- Exploring Eastern Cape history– Hermann’s tale involves treasure that passed between tribal and colonial hands, and which led to the great Bantu kings seeking the treasure.
- The history of the Pondo, the Sunburned Queen, and the pre-colonial period through to today. There are many related shipwreck mysteries, such as the Warrantah, which Hermann believes he knows the true resting place of.

### What's at stake?

- Is it even possible? Many legal and financial issues involved.
- It is worth it? Maybe it’ll cost too much to salvage– or be too difficult.
- Can Hermann be made to see sense? Will his grand dreams find their realization, or be dashed against the rocks of reality?
- Will Chirag be able to make the plan a reality without losing his hair?

### What’s the dramatic conflict?

- Every step carries project-ending risks, from a fair assessment of the information and Hermann’s perspective to the dive operation (which would be extremely difficult even for oil rig divers, aside from the physical risks of weight/buoyancy/the whole thing disintegrating when touched).
- Contrast between Hermann & Chirag; oppositional points of view.

### Main characters & Themes

- Hermann, an Eastern Cape character who grew up on the shoreline seeing wrecks wash up, has spent decades talking to experts about his dream of raising the Grosvenor.
- Chirag, a classically educated British Indian whose father was born in Uganda, who recently wrote a book about Grahamstown’s most famous son, Joshua Norton.
- The story covers Eastern Cape history, heritage sites, Pre-colonial era history, the East India Company, & previous expeditions.
- The history ties together India, Sri Lanka, England, and dives deep into the culture of the Eastern Cape. It is an exploration of South African history, and how it is different to history elsewhere.
- Shipwrecks and finds on the coast

### Potential employment and training

- We can provide training for video production and editing.
- We can mine the existing staff base at Graham Hotel, as well as Journalism and Digital Art students.





## The Production

### Production Team & Roles

- Chirag Patel– writer (including a recent book about an 1820 settler), narrator of 80+ audiobooks, exec. Writer, narrator, producer/project manager.
- Tim Gabb– Wagtale studios. Producer/director of award-winning documentaries and animations. Principal production manager/partner.
- Dr. Alette Schoon– lecturer teaching and producing documentaries. Wide expertise and contact base. Production advisor.
- Sven Christian - editor, organizer and curator who has experience working with museums, artists, auctions, local heritage and art scene. Content management.
- Max O’Keeffe– social media and content planning. Setup and engagement with relevant FB groups, etc.
- Lamplight Design [agency including Chirag, Sven & Max]– Marketing, design and content.
- George Kirkinis— Freelance film editor and animator, who specialises in underwater film.
- Advisory team: Hermann has had significant contacts with all of the local museums with a heritage interest, as well as people on previous recovery expeditions. These and others will be discussed/interviewed, such as Celeste Booth at the Albany History Museum; Profs. Kevin Cole & Gill Vernon [Museum name]; [late] Prof Lewis Matyhela at the Umthatha Museum.

### Principal shooting locations and stock sources

Most of this could be shot using a two-header interview format in an available location, mixed with a wide range of readily available visual material given below, and establishing/two-shot video of the relevant heritage and tourist locations.

- Two-header interviews, recorded in Graham Hotel conference spaces.
- Images of the coast between Port St. Johns & Port shepstone
- Many existing photos and paintings of the wreck, from the 1780s onwards.
- Saiab underwater wreck diving and similar footage.

### People to approach

There is a wide range of both national and international entities, private and governmental, that have some interest in the Grosvenor wreck. This includes Pondo and coastal historians; Tourism / Arts & Culture/ Heritage; Indian, Sri Lankan, and British governments.

Other bodies that could be approached include the East Cape film agency / national agency, NFEF film funding for development & production, and business and wealthy individuals.

