



# The SIXGUNNER

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CRAZYS MAN CHASES BLACK BEARS

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Kristin Alberts Bags a  
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# Black Death and a BFR:

## Chasing African Cape Buffalo with a Handgun

By: Kristin Alberts

When your eyes lock with those of a Cape Buffalo--one of the most dangerous animals on the planet--pulses race and the lines between hunter and hunted blur. The only thing separating us was a few yards of South African sand and a Magnum Research BFR.

Many months of planning, permits, dreams, nightmares, travel, and logistics would tick down to a few final moments of adrenaline. We'd practiced on the range, working that buttery BFR single action, practicing rapid shots from the sticks, moving and shooting, and even sending a few into the target off-hand. Though stout of recoil, the BFR proved both accurate and controllable, leaving zero doubt the gun would hold up its end of the bargain if its huntress did the same.

Permits secured and days of flights behind us, I went armed with my freshly built Magnum Research BFR. My chambering of choice from the many offered by Magnum Research? It was a no-brainer to grab a favored old-school round, the .45-70 Government. Having previously taken a Cape Buffalo with one shot of the same caliber from a Henry Repeating Arms lever action, I was confident in the round's potential; yet I was at once anxious about making the same well-placed shot under the increased challenge and adrenaline of my first time hunting dangerous game with a handgun.

I could also be described with a number of other words as the moment of truth approached: nervous, exhilarated, blessed, and focused. Though a hunter since childhood, my experience in pursuit with a handgun spanned only a few years. Yet, with that fine piece of American-made stainless steel, my personal trial of going head-to-head against Black Death with a handgun became an amazing reality.

Edginess aside, I knew PH Stephen Bann of SB Hunting Safaris had my back no matter the outcome. He mentioned many times prior on our pursuits how dangerous game hunters get into a zone during the hunt.

Perhaps it can only be experienced and not explained but make no mistake - it is certain. Senses are heightened, every hair on end. The rest of the world ceases to exist. There is only you, the quarry equally ready to kill you, and a small hunting party. Stephen, Jerry, Fish, and I - PH, hunters, and tracker - were ready. We'd spent many evenings around the African television - campfire, that is - planning for this very instant.

For several days, we had been tracking a specific bachelor group of bulls. Having glassed at length, we knew there were a couple old warriors, defined by their hard-bossed headgear, where the solid horns have grown tightly together, gnarled from years of sparring for dominance. Working into range of one of these grandest trophies without alerting the rest of the boys' club proved to be a challenge indeed. We trailed, spotted, stalked, were busted numerous times, but eventually, got ahead of the herd. Hiding ourselves in a makeshift blind would be the final answer.

A number of other bulls moved around unsuspecting, their grunts and heavy breaths surrounding us. We were so close and still, it felt that even our eyes darting around would alert them to our presence. After months, days, and hours of wishing, in a split second everything happened. A scarred dagga-boy stepped clear of the brush, moving to my right and quartering slightly away, well inside of 20-yards. This was one we had been watching, as we'd noted the bare hair-rubbed spots on his face. My heartbeat rattled my body and certainly he could hear the pounding. I was ready on the sticks and slowly inched the hammer back. The detail of his coarse ashen hair was visible in the Leupold scope. Instinct took over. The round broke perfectly, driving hard into his wheelhouse.

All hell broke loose as he kicked, threw up dust, and charged unsteadily into a thorny thicket not 50 yards ahead of us. Stephen was moving first and motioning me to follow him. We grabbed our essential gear and went quickly into the direction where pure aggression waited, having left a ragged trail of bloody dirt. I



struggled to make out the Buff's outline, but once we got close, I could see his eyes were locked. He was poised to come for us. Stephen was ready now with the rifle. If the charge came, he would fire.

That overused "he owes you money" stare was dead on, just as Robert Ruark described. Stephen whispered for me to step into an opening in the brush and fire once more. The shot would be offhand, head-on. The Buff was in the thickest brush, head raised. I hesitated a second and inhaled deeply, enough to draw a fevered glance from Stephen. Though I'd practiced it, shooting the weighty BFR offhand was neither my forte nor greatest confidence, but this certainly wasn't the time for second-guessing. Before Stephen could motion, I knew this was it. His rifle was raised and ready should I miss. Slipping into the opening, I raised the five-shooter, now holding four unfired rounds of heavy lead. With Black Death immediately in the crosshairs, I fired.



The entire hunt was over in a matter of minutes that seemed a lifetime. To say emotions ran high would be an understatement. The pent-up rush of adrenaline hit, bringing with it a choking back of tears along with an intense feeling of accomplishment. The hard-bossed old warrior Syncerus caffer and I were forever linked, and by handgun, no less.

There, in the sun-setting southern African sand, that Magnum Research BFR - along with each member of our hunting team - became a part of my life's story. As is common in a survival-based land like Africa, every piece of that animal would be utilized and valued; the coming taxidermy a continual reminder of the adventure; each second of the pursuit locked into the deepest recesses of memory with the knowledge and appreciation that perhaps only fellow hunters can share and understand.

**PH Stephen Bann cooks some buffalo loin for a post-hunt celebratory meal.**



*Kristin Alberts is an outdoor writer and videographer. Her work appears in many print and online publications, including Guns.com, Gun Digest Annual, African Hunting Gazette, and the Nosler 9 Reloading Guide. She also works as an outdoor adventure booking agent, so if an African Safari is on your bucket list, she'll help you live it. Follow her online as The Wilderness Woman.*