

A man with a beard, wearing a black tactical jacket, a black baseball cap with a logo, and black gloves, is crouching in a forest. He is looking down at a map or a piece of paper he is holding. The background is a dense forest with green foliage. The text "LIVE BOLD CAMP SMART STAY READY" is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters.

LIVE BOLD CAMP SMART STAY READY

Not a Manual. Just the Field Notes We Wish We Had.

REAL STORIES, REAL ADVICE, REAL GEAR, REAL MISTAKES, YOURS TO BORROW.

by Frank van Rooijen

INTRODUCTION

This Is For The People Who Want
To Go But Haven't Quite Yet.



It's not written by elite survivalists or so-called experts. These are just field notes from folks who had no clue what they were doing, but went anyway.

We froze. We failed. We learned the hard way. And we still kept going. We're city kids with country blood, chasing firelight, open skies, and stories worth telling.

From the Highlands of Scotland, rain-soaked Ardennes, and

frozen Lapland, to the jungles of Thailand, shooting choppers from choppers in Sri Lanka, ocean sunrises in the Maldives, and dusty streets of L.A., we packed light and lived wide open.

Along the way, we crossed paths with real pros, bodyguards, medics, marines, survival experts, filmmakers, and mixed their knowledge with our chaos.

These notes are what came out.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Raw stories, wild wins, and mistakes we owned

Outdoor gear lists that actually work, from budget setups to dream rigs

How to keep your camera running in desert storms, freezing snow, and soaking jungles.

Tactical tools, mindset shifts, and backcountry hacks

Recipes, checklists, what to pack, what to skip and why

How to build your own Blackout Bag, from compact setups to the full 20Kg Blackout Vault

And a full-on Outdoor Lookbook: 25 Field-Ready Fits That Go the Distance, photographed on vintage glass from the Japanese Contax era. Style-tested, mission-approved.

Whether you're planning your first trip, driving your van into the sunset, chasing storms with a camera, or sitting through a city blackout, these field notes have your back.

Because it's better to be ready and to have a story worth telling after.

You only live once. Take the trip. Buy the cabin. Make your life the story you want to hear.

Life, uh... finds a way. And so could you.

—Frank



WHO

CITYBOY

COUNTRY BLOOD



NOT THE PLAN, BUT A DAMN GOOD STORY.

I'm Frank van Rooijen. Born in the Netherlands, I'm 40 now, but deep down, I'm still that kid who wanted to build huts, light fires, and live a little wilder. These days, you could label me a filmmaker, close protection operative, or outdoorsman, but titles never really mattered to me.

As a kid, I was always searching. Restless. A Dreamer. Drawn to the wild. I grew up with loving parents, an amazing brother, and a warm, supportive family, but I still often felt out of place. Like I was wired a little differently. At 17, I spent a year in America with a host family, where I learned to hunt, fish, and navigate the outdoors. That year changed everything.

When I came back, I enrolled in technical film school, where I met lifelong friends, including Rick de Graaff. Together, we moved to Brussels to study directing at the Film Academy. But pretty quickly, we realized school wasn't the place for the stories we wanted to tell. So we dropped out and started making our own series: Making Hollywood. Shot on our 200 bucks handycams.

We came back, sold it, twice, and suddenly the doors opened. We got offered jobs, made wild ideas happen, and shot shows all over the place. Many of them never made it to the screen, but that didn't matter. We learned to keep moving, keep creating, keep pushing forward.

Today, I'm still that filmmaker and adventurer. I've traveled the world capturing high-end video productions and plenty of random low-end projects no one ever watched. But one of the biggest turning points came closer to home. I joined a Dutch TV program where teams had to walk and navigate across the country. I trained hard, survival courses, first aid, navigation drills. When I commit, I go all in. My teammate and I ended up winning the whole thing, and walked away with €50,000 to split.

But the prize wasn't the money. It was a spark. A sign to chase

something deeper.

I used it to follow a long-held dream: becoming a Close Protection Operative. I enrolled in a private security training program in Poland. From day one, it felt like everything I'd done had been leading to this. I kept going into Private Military Contractor modules, tactical training, urban warfare and hostage rescue. Step by step deeper into a world that demanded discipline, grit, respect, focus, presence. And I loved it.

What kept me going, and still does, is hard to put into words. It's the people I've met, the people I've lost.

The trust they had in me, even when I didn't fully believe in myself.

My first girlfriend. My lifelong friend who got sick. Piet, always told me, "Jij flikt het gewoon." My legendary, fun, inspiring Uncle Ad. They all believed in me, especially in moments I didn't.

Not even sure if I do now. But I keep moving. Keep creating. Keep telling stories. Maybe one day, one of those stories helps someone else believe. And go for it.

Because the stories you collect, that's everything.

My biggest fear in life is not experiencing enough. I measure my life by the idea that if I'm lucky enough to hit 85, sitting at a long wooden table with my loved ones, it'll all come down to the chances I took... and the stories I get to share.

And I am lucky enough that despite myself, I found a brotherhood of friends around me who live by the same rule: "Fuck it, lets go!"

These days, my life is a wild random mix. One week I'm behind the camera directing, shooting, creating something new. Next, I'm on the range or somewhere remote, chasing the next idea with a backpack and a plan.

But no matter how far I go, there's one place I always return to when I need to clear my head, out there, where it's just me, my friends, the fire, and the silence. (Or very little silence, if Rick and Laurens show up. More on that later.)

Pack on my back. No signal. No noise. Just the rhythm of the wild, and the reminder of how little you need to feel free. With all the gear options in these notes, this might be hard to believe, but honestly, I just like lists and options. And when the time comes, let it all go.

These field notes are a piece of that story. A collection of hard-won lessons, wild recipes, gear that holds up, and the kind of stories you only get when you step off the path. I'm not an expert, just someone who keeps showing up and figuring it out along the way. And maybe something in here inspires you to do the same. To head out more. Try something new. Or maybe you already do, and you just want to share your stories and experiences with me. I'd love that!

Thanks for being here. Thanks for supporting the dream. And thanks for choosing to live bold.



FIELD

How to Keep Your Gear
Alive, Your Lights On, and
Your Mission Rolling.

No juice means no map, no light, no camera, no comms. Not dramatic. Just facts. This is not just for content creators, van lifers, solo campers, or off-grid freaks. It is for anyone who has ever had their phone die at the wrong moment. If you have lost your torch when you really needed

it or watched your drone battery blink out before the perfect shot, you already know why power matters. Let's break down how to stay ready with the right off-grid energy mindset.

MANAGEMENT

POWER

POWERBANKS

Powerbanks are your new best friend. Bring one. Or two. Maybe three. Start with a solid unit with at least 20,000 mAh. USB-C PD is essential. It charges fast and recharges fast. Water-resistant is smart, but always store them in a ziplock or waterproof pouch. Dust, moisture, and direct sunlight will damage them over time. I keep a small one in my chest rig. A bigger one rides in the pack. Sometimes a third is in the glovebox or camera case just in case.

More power usually means more weight. Lighter weight and higher power usually cost more. Look for USB-C PD and charge-through capability. Stick with trusted brands. Avoid cheap unreliable models or only for backup. Choose based on your mission, weight limit, devices and budget. There are also options that perform better in extreme temperatures, like the NiteCore Summit.

NITECORE®

INTERVIEW / PORTRAIT

Laurens van de Werfhorst

Laurens and I met at an airport heading into our exchange years in the USA — two young guys chasing something undefined. That one meeting turned into a lifelong friendship. Today, he's one of my best friends, and I'm the godfather to his child. He's not just a part of Cityboys Going Wild, he's part of my chosen family.

Unlike Rick, Laurens doesn't need convincing to pitch a tent or head off the grid. He lives for the outdoors. He's the guy who actually knows how to start a fire, fix gear, or find his way in the woods. But don't let that fool you, he's just as much about the laughs, the chaos, and the stories that come out of it all.

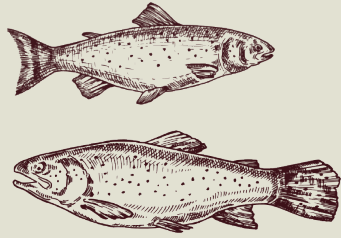
BROTHERHOOD
OF THE WILD

BORN

PREVIEW
ROAM

TO





What makes you want to be part of Cityboys Going Wild?

The mix of brotherhood, simplicity, and being offline. It's not about escaping life, but about stepping into it. Leaving the comfort of home and familiar surroundings to face nature with nice gear, clear minds, and plenty of laughter. I really like that we switch up the group almost every trip, it brings a new dynamic both on and off camera. That keeps it fun for us, and hopefully more interesting for the viewer too.

What does "adventure" mean to you, not as content, but as experience?

Closing the door on normal life, leaving responsibilities behind for a while, and losing track of time. Just going out to have fun. Adventure means being fully present living in the moment, whether I'm out in town chasing the best bar experience, trying to start a fire in the rain, or sharing a bottle of Jack under the stars.

Where do you feel most alive: camping in the wild or in the middle of a festival?

Wild camping, without a doubt. Festivals are fun, but nature strips everything back to who you are when no one's watching. Plus, who says you can't throw your own party when you're out there?

Do you remember the best and worst experience you've had on these trips?

Best: Hard to pick just one, honestly. But in my mind I keep going back to that trip in Sweden with Rick and Frank, when we canoed to a remote island loaded with all our brand-new, flashy

We fished for 3 days straight, from the shore, from the canoe, sunrise to sunset and caught absolutely nothing. Not even a nibble... I laughed so hard I nearly pissed myself.

fishing gear, feeling like absolute kings of the wild. We had huge expectations: fresh catch over the fire, survival mode with a gourmet twist and great content.

We fished for three days straight, from the shore, from the canoe, sunrise to sunset and caught absolutely nothing. Not even a nibble. Then, on the very last afternoon, maybe an hour before we had to head back, we finally caught something... a tiny, pathetic fish. I laughed so hard I nearly pissed my pants. Still, I was weirdly proud. If anything, for our blind persistence. Someday that episode deserves to air. The effort alone was cinematic.

Also, that was the trip where we stayed in the infamous "spider hotel," a wooden hut crawling with eight-legged locals. I ended up sleeping with a mosquito net over my face, not for bugs but because I was convinced they would become part of my overnight all-you-can-eat buffet. Peak discomfort, peak comedy. One of the best trips ever!

Worst: Has to be one of our very first trips, April 2016, deep in the Ardennes. The guys were already setting up camp, but I had to join later because of "important" work obligations. So, we jumped in my brand new BMW, very shiny, very slick, very not-built-for-forest-roads and set off on a four-hour mission through the pouring rain.

They dropped a Google Maps pin, but navigating pitch-dark forest tracks in Belgium while it's dumping rain is a whole different story. We took what looked like the right road into the woods. It was steep, muddy, narrow, and of course, absolutely the wrong location. There was no room to turn around, and at some point we just fully... sank. Stuck.

There we were: two city boys, in a BMW, in the middle of the woods, barely any cell reception and a very real chance of sleeping in the car. After a few SOS calls and some heroic forest navigation (including crossing a freezing river), the guys found us and literally pushed us out. True brotherhood. When we finally arrived at camp, soaking wet, cold, mildly traumatized... it continued to rain for the entire weekend. I still can't believe we didn't quit right then and there.

Also, one time, I drained the car battery of Frank's Range Rover trying to charge my phone overnight. HAHA. Luckily Frank brought a jump starter on battery since we were in the middle of nowhere in Denmark. Could have been bad. :)



THE MIX OF BROTHERHOOD, SIMPLICITY,

AND BEING OFFLINE.

LAUF



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