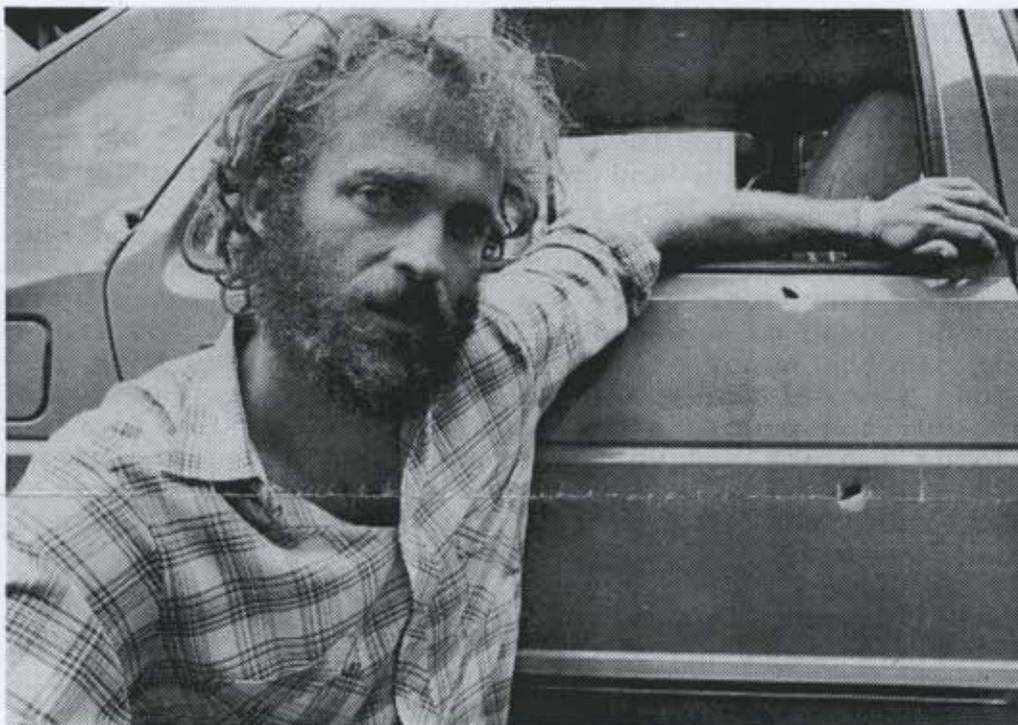




Impact Visuals

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ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON PHOTOGRAPHER IN NAMIBIA, FAILS



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John Liebenberg poses next to bullet holes in his car from assassination attempt on him in Katutura, Namibia.

Unknown persons attempted to assassinate Namibia-based photographer, John Liebenberg, in Katutura on May 7, 1989. John works with the South African photo collective, Afrapix, which distributes his work in North America through Impact Visuals. Following is his story in his own words:

"Windhoek has unfortunately not changed much, perhaps there is less of the familiar brown and sun beaten faces of the SADF around, (quite a contrast to the faces of red burnt Finnisa UNTAG forces, doing also what they believe is best.) Attitudes haven't changed and especially after April 1, the mood is sulky as people had forgotten about the war for some months, and the reawakening was rude, the sons in the army had been forgiven, and people waited for their sons, daughters, fathers and mothers to return from the Angolan wastelands. That has changed. The images recorded will not be forgotten easily, the boys jumped back on their casspirs, and went on a wild killing spree, involving not stats or figures, but human lives, and what went wrong should be debated, for us

as documentors, no words can tell the image in black and white.

Myself, I have lots of energy and when someone phones and says a bomb has gone off we grab the camera and run, and the last thing you think of is that someone is waiting with a big gun.

I got a call from an unknown person saying he heard this explosion. I dragged Heidi von Egidy with me (stringer for AP). She had also heard nothing but we raced down the highway. In Katutura a car overtook us, with guns blazing, ripping the ol' red to pieces. Ten CM and my pix would really have sold. I'm feeling a little gloomy and not at all into cowboy flicks.

I've been in Namibia for ten years, since the bombing of Kassinga in '78. I did social work for local government, for four years. Working with Namibia's labor class, and the silent-unrepresented.

Living under harsh, but well hidden laws, I developed the picture taking into a career and tried to highlight this harshness. I worked for The Namibian newspaper since its inception four years ago. I really got to know the north of Namibia and the war there. The images possessed me. I never had the opportunity of travelling on the back of a casspir [South African armored transport], I preferred not to, and stuck to the old Ford pickup--the people's car, and my red. So for four years now I have been doing a black and white document on the people of the north, the war, and life. I've also been documenting SWAPO, the labor movement NUNW, the students, and life. Further, I string for Reuters, doing the hype and the so-called "news."

For many years I grew accustomed to doing a story no one really cared to listen to. And now that its happening, it's going to be rough getting plugged. Anyway Namibia's north has been South Africa's hunting ground and the people (civilian life) must be protected, and one way is through the faithful ol' Nikon. And no government likes pictures, especially when what they are doing is wrong.

Sincerely,
John Liebenberg

Letters protesting the continuing climate of terror in Namibia and demanding that vigilante violence not be tolerated, can be addressed to:
South African Embassy
3051 Massachusetts Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Letters asking what is being done to insure the safety of journalists practicing their trade can be addressed to:
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street
Washington, D.C. 20520

Letters to John Liebenberg can be sent to him care of our office and will be forwarded to him.