

## **\*\*INTRODUCTION\*\***

**Armando was a beautiful chestnut warmblood gelding** (he was shining orange!) that came into my life in 2015. At that time, I was a studying rehabilitation trainer that was looking for 'case studies' to expand my knowledge and experience. Armando's owner saw my advert and contacted me if I could help resolve a **tongue problem**. Due to circumstances the owner couldn't take care of Armando herself and as such had placed him in the care of a dressage rider. Unfortunately, the rider could not get the problem (tongue constantly out of the mouth) solved and as such the owner reached out to me.



I visited Armando in August 2015 for the first time and was immediately taken by his presence, but also saw that something was absolutely not right, and, in all honesty, I didn't have the qualifications for such a **complicated** case. However, the owner put all her faith in me and said that she wanted to DONATE Armando to me as a last resort. I am **grateful** to her forever – because I can now see it was all meant to be – and as such I took Armando home in September 2015 – not knowing this was the start of something **life changing**.

Long story short – the long story is for the series – Armando put me on the most amazing path. He brought me on the path of Sharon May-Davis and Zefanja Vermeulen from Equinestudies and I learned he had **ECVM. He had a unilateral malformation on C6 and a transposition to C7. Apart from the ECVM, some other biomechanical / anatomical issues were diagnosed by vets.** Devoted to try to help him the best way possible, I fully submerged myself into learning everything I could about Anatomy & Biomechanics and dealing with ECVM. Because I had never dealt with ECVM before – Armando was (unfortunately) my

guinea pig and as such I **made a lot of mistakes, but also booked success** in a sense that he became sound and happy for some years!



I started **attending a lot of dissections** (something I could have never imagined doing), I travelled the world to **learn from some of the most outstanding holistic veterinarians** and I completely re-schooled myself. All because of Armando.

He led on me on the most amazing path and now I am **one of the few trainers in the world** that has had hand-on experience with more than 40 ECVM horses worldwide in an effort to better understand the implications of this condition as well as developing possible management and movement solutions. He **changed my perspective on horses** in general and he helped me enormously in observing **biomechanics** – from normal to abnormal. The knowledge I have gained in the past 5 years is more than all the years before – and yet there is still so much I don't know.

From being a student attending dissections, I grew to actually become a part of the dissection team in some dissections. Can you imagine? From attending my first dissection in 2015 feeling totally overwhelmed afterwards realizing I knew nothing and how amazing and complicated the horse's body is – I grew to hold the dissection blade myself and Zefanja asking me to dissect some muscles and explain them to the participants. What a journey!



Unfortunately, despite the early success with Armando for the past 3 years – he was doing amazingly well – he **quickly deteriorated all of a sudden**. Despite all my knowledge and experience gained in the past 5 years I started to feel I was losing him and that I couldn't help him anymore. I felt like a complete **failure** – I had started to specialize in ECVI and helped many combinations across the globe – and now I couldn't seem to manage my own horse anymore. Armando's mental and physical health deteriorated so quickly that I didn't recognize my own horse anymore. This is when I knew that this was **the moment, I always dreaded...the moment I realized it was time to let my own horse go...the moment I realized that the next horse on the dissection table would be Armando**. The moment I realized I would be dissecting him myself.

Now please, don't ask "how can you do that" or "*why did you want to do that*" because it isn't a matter of wanting to, but it felt like my obligation. When I took Armando in, I took him in for life. **For better or worse**. And now we had the worse I sure as hell wasn't going to let him down in those moments. The reason I wanted to dissect him is **to be able to give him back his voice and to make sure his death wasn't in vain**. He had been an example to so many and I knew his dissection would be a great contribution to research and as such to help preventing other horses from ending up the same fate. I didn't want him to die and his body to be burned. **I wanted him to live on and to make sure his voice isn't forgotten**.

As such, in October 2020, **Armando went peacefully to sleep** and I dissected him together with Zefanja Vermeulen, Anne-Roos Bakkes and Tamara Dorresteyn. It was a very emotional tribute with **tears, but also smiles** about the beauty laid bare. His body unraveled the secrets of his life and it made me love him even more. He had been such a strong fighter. **Such a special horse**.

**The lessons he taught me, and the team were invaluable and as such, I am now ready to share his lessons with you so Armando can teach you as well. This way, he can live on through you and continue to help many horses around the globe. You will continue to carry his voice.**

Please read the information below on what to expect and how to join the journey of Armando and be amazed by him.

### **\*\*FORMAT\*\***

In this mini-series I will share the journey of Armando in progressive episodes – documentary style. From the beginning to his passing and far beyond – as his story will not be forgotten and is still continuing!

### **A listing of the contents:**

Episode 1: Welcome & Introduction 17.12 min

Episode 2: Armando's early years 14.55 min



Episode 3: How he walked into my life 10.47 min

Episode 4: The rehabilitation process 50.45 min

Episode 5: The deterioration 11.40 min

Episode 6: The process towards this death 16.09 min

Episode 7: The findings of his dissection 01.00.22 min

Episode 8. The aftermath of his passing 15.42 min

Episode 9. Lessons learned & celebration of his life 20.17 min

Episode 10. Word of thanks 5.27 min

BONUS WEBINAR #1: Functional Horse Training 101 02.43.30 min

BONUS WEBINAR #2: Basic Exercise Physiology 02.35.58 min

**So in total, you will get 7,5(!!) hours of footage**

Topics that will come across (just a grasp of things I will talk about)

The management of a rehabilitation horse:

- Paddock / pasture adaptations
- Medical diagnostics
- Treatments & intervals

Anatomy:

- Abnormal anatomy: ECVI
- Navicular problems
- Elbow lesions
- Rib problems
- Hip joint issues
- Confirmation vs Posture
- Genetics: DOD

Physiology:

- Heart & Lung functioning and pathologies

Biomechanics:

- Biomechanics: the story of muscle lines
- Biomechanics: lameness & assessment





## Mental health

- Mental expression: the story of the eyes

## The rehabilitation process:

- Dealing with multiple restrictions
- Dealing with past training damage
- The process and results
- The lessons learned, and mistakes made

## The process towards “the” decision:

- The rollercoaster of emotions: failure, doubt, acceptance
- The planning process and considerations

## Armando’s dissection

- Scar tissue inside out
- Rib cage trauma
- Elbow problems
- Scoliosis & kissing spines
- COPD (lung problems)
- Hip joint problems
- DOD & OCD
- The horse’s brain
- Gelding scar
- Roach back

## The aftermath:

- The reaction of the herd upon his death
- The emotions in everyone close to him
- His prepared bones (all of them)

## The celebration of his life:

- The closing of the circle
- The lessons he taught us
- The peace of it all
- Paying an homage to Armando



## **\*\*INVESTMENT\*\***

€124,95 for more than 7,5(!!) hours of content + supportive FB group

**If you register BEFORE March 25<sup>th</sup> you will get a discount and only pay €99,95**

Why? **This miniseries is not intended as a commercial product**, but as an homage to Armando as well as an invaluable learning experience for horse lovers worldwide.

As such, the investment for this mini-series can be considered as a donation to cover production costs and enhance future research. First, a part will be used to cover some of the

medical bills and dissection costs. Second, a part of the income will be used for further research. Dissections, research, developing rehabilitation and management techniques as well as preparing skeletons for learning purposes cost quite the investment. As such, part of the income generated by this mini-series will be used to support the progression of research.

### **\*\*ACCESS\*\***

The materials will be available for 6 months after which you will get a download link of the bonus webinars (so they will be available forever) as well as a beautiful, summarized file of Armando's life & dissection findings to keep with you forever.

### **\*\*REGISTRATION\*\***

If you want to be a part of Armando's journey, you can register here:

<https://www.thirzahendriks.com/plans-pricing>

YOUTUBE LINK FOR PROMO FILM: [https://youtu.be/q0\\_a-ZFo05E](https://youtu.be/q0_a-ZFo05E)

Registration closes March 31<sup>st</sup> at 23.59 CET

### **\*\*PRIVACY DISCLAIMER\*\***

The content of these miniseries is meant for private use only. It is not allowed to share any of the material on social media or any third parties. Due to the high emotional value of the content, we expect every horse lover will understand this and treasure the materials as if it were your own horse.



Of course, it is allowed – and even encouraged – to share your insights publicly. We would love to hear what Armando taught you and we sincerely hope that by learning his lessons, it enables you to help many other horses and horse owners worldwide.