White Mischief re-publish foreword/postscript. July 17, 2013

By James Fox

When *White Mischief* was first published in 1982, one reviewer wrote that the murder of Josslyn Hay, Earl of Erroll, had been, until that moment, “one of the great unsolved crimes of the [last] century.” I was pleased that he thought I’d solved it. Certainly no evidence has emerged since, from all the volumes of print that *White Mischief* engendered, to alter my view of who did it. Some new, and quite startling material, unearthed in 1993 and included here, points the finger ever more decisively at the acquitted man, Sir Jock Delves Broughton. He’d escaped through the brilliant presentation of the ballistics evidence by his lawyer (and the prosecution’s inattention to detail) - which convinced the jury that Broughton hadn’t pulled the trigger. Nevertheless a chink of doubt remains, enough to keep the story alive, I suspect, forever. It allows the Hay murder to live on as a great unsolved crime. But the story further deserved distinction for its layers of context, its characters, and its time and place which unleashed moral outrage across the zipped-up world of the British imperium—which perhaps never recovered.

But however much scandal the murder of Josslyn Hay had generated in wartime Britain, very few people outside the white community of Kenya knew about it or remembered it even by the 1960s, when I first started looking at it with Cyril Connolly. Its greatness had been relegated to the occasional attention of true-crime aficionados, collective anthologies and the contents of one slim volume, laying out the facts.

The Hay scandal was a suppressed topic for journalists in Kenya, even three years after independence. Any reporter who tried to resurrect the story by doing some digging or asking questions would be swiftly warned off: I was told this, and I also experienced it when I suggested looking at the case for the paper I worked for. Such was the remaining power of the biggest white landowners, still in place, with whom Jomo Kenyatta had made a strategic peace at independence. Diana, by then Lady Delamere, the woman at the centre of the *crime passionel*, had been ostracized by the white colonials after the trial. 25 years later, having stayed on in Kenya, she had become rich and powerful through her marriage to the biggest landowner in the country at independence, Tom Delamere. Her survival in a black African country, and her ability to keep a hand on the story in those surroundings and shut it down, were what first got my attention, more even than the crime itself.

*White Mischief* touched a nerve, or several nerves, many of them to do with this misbehavior abroad, of being literally “out of bounds,” - a particular British fascination, grist to so many of its novelists from Somerset Maugham to Graham Greene to William Boyd. The book became a number 1 bestseller, and has remained in print ever since—something that I could never have imagined when, at the age of 35, thinking myself a seasoned reporter, I offered my first draft to Tom Maschler, a famous publisher of his time. Later Maschler said he couldn’t remember something so chaotic transforming itself into something, for him, acceptably good. It was a difficult structure, with its flashes back and forward to four different periods of time; technical challenges such as the need to make forensic evidence and legal arguments entertaining; the need to weave in a miniature social history of the whites in East Africa. All this would read effortlessly, with pace and suspense and moments of comedy—or so I hoped.

The title certainly gave the book a good start. It told the story well. “White Mischief” became the generic term for English bad behavior on the Equator; it served for fashion headlines, particularly for features on lingerie. It went tabloid. It became the tag for the Africa of the British imagination which, wrote Connolly “insinuates violence,… liberates unacted desires.” The latter, at least among the British upper classes relocated to the White Highlands, was not in doubt. As the critic Richard West wrote “Few of the women in Happy Valley had much to learn about sex. This book should put paid forever to the idea advanced by sex educationists that upper class English women before the war used to clutch the side of the bed and think of the Empire.”

But what has kept *White Mischief* alive and generated several further books and a movie is not the remaining chink of mystery alone. It is, perhaps primarily the decades worth of Kenya white-tribe lore and gossip, one of the most virulent strains of rumour known to social history, a word industry that had been fuelling itself during all the years the story lay dormant to the outside world. It took off on a new flight, of course, when the book appeared. The rumour mill never depended on new evidence, and ignored evidence which might have spoiled a good story. It was about ‘characters’ and their legends. To say that he or she is ‘a character’ in the Kenyan context was usually to claim reverence for some eccentric, stranded figure who told amusing stories, a figure with links to the old pioneer settlers to whom anecdotes or scandal could be attached, with which the white hunters could entertain their safari clients. Kenya was still full of them in the late 20th century. The book publicists for *White Mischief* came up with a lapel button which read, “Are you a character or do you live in London?” *White Mischief* caused annoyance in some settler circles because it was seen to have portrayed the ex-colony in a poor light. No good the several pages taken up in the beginning of the book describing the struggle of the early settlers, their courage and resilience, the immense difficulty of farming, the setbacks, and pointing out that the Happy Valley characters were a small minority within a minority. “Kenya inspired an almost fierce, possessive loyalty among these white farmers, many of whom had put into their land every penny they had and a lifetime of effort challenged by drought, locust invasions, slumps in world prices and other disasters. They were jealous of the country’s good name.” wrote the distinguished Kenyan born author Elspeth Huxley, reviewing the book. It was a problem the settlers had had since the 1920s when the gossip began about upper class hedonists making their home in the Wanjohe Valley in the Aberdares. And it lived on into the 1970s, with the added bitterness of the “white man’s country”—as they publicly declared when local rebellion began - being no longer theirs. But the bad name the story brought to Kenya it didn’t stop the locals having their own theories about who killed Lord Erroll. Forget about “that book.” Only locally grown information could be considered valid: there were many stories about some survivor promising to leave the details in their will, including Diana, but these details never materialized. There were those said to have slipped into a coma before they could utter the name of the murderer. “A woman” was murmured to have done it—or suggested in anonymous letters at the time: Diana, Alice de Janze, some other lover of Erroll. These rumours hardened often into beliefs and orthodoxies that were not easily given up: no amount of clear evidence could shift them. Many of those who challenged my version hadn’t read my book anyway, which helped keep the industry going. “Bloody book” said Hilary Hook, a very likeable army officer once of the Sudan Light Horse, about *White Mischief*, on the radio, in those clipped, David Nivenish tones rarely heard on the BBC these many years, as he promoted his own memoirs. You heard “Bloody book” a lot, and I took it as a compliment in a certain English way. At least it wasn’t patronizing and the book had seriously claimed their attention. It often came from non-readers in the tourism industry, some of whom had been forced to skim the contents in order to converse with those safari clients. If they hadn’t read it, they always could bluff by saying it was all nonsense anyway.

A small shelf of books came in the wake of *White Mischief*, managing where possible to include my title on their cover. The best was *The Bolter* by Frances Osborne, about her great-grandmother Lady Idina Sackville, daughter of Earl De La Warr, “the woman who scandalized 1920s society and became *White Mischief’s* infamous seductress.” She had also been married to Joss Erroll, though they had parted 15 years before he was murdered. It is true that Idina almost single-handedly gave Kenya its scandalous reputation, by fleeing from marital scandal in London and then practicing a sexual libertinage in the Aberdares that I underestimated in *White Mischief*. Sex for Idina, its introduction to her as a young woman was, says her great-granddaughter, “an activity for which she not only discovered she had a talent but which she clearly found so intensely enjoyable that it rapidly became impossible for her to resist any opportunity for it.” It was the tales of Idina’s house parties that drifted back to London that made Kenya infamous. I had written merely about her after-dinner game of “blowing the feather’ across a sheet—sexual partners were allotted by where it came to rest. But Frances Osborne describes “the sheet game” she presided over, as another way of selecting a partner. “As cocktails were sunk, the game developed further. Holes were cut into the sheet. Hands, feet, elbows noses were stuck through for identification. More cocktails were drunk. A new sheet was pulled cross the room. New holes were cut. The men unbuttoned their trousers.” But Osborne’s book is a well-written and serious account of Edwardian and ‘20s London, as well as a highly readable description of an earl’s socialite (and chinless) daughter setting up in what was then the pioneering wild of East Africa.

Five miles away from the house Idina shared with Erroll, Slains in the Aberdares, was the Wanjohe river, where Alice de Janzé, also Erroll’s on and off lover, had set up with her husband Frederic de Janzé. Thus, as *White Mischief* describes, the Wanjohe valley became the imagined epicenter of abandon. The river was said to run with cocktails. By some extraordinary coincidence, as my key source Juanita Carberry revealed in her own memoir, *Child of Happy Valley*, “njohe” in Kikuyu means “booze,” local brew; “wa” means “people of” making Alice and the Wanjohe crowd “People of the Cocktail River.” All the women characters have featured as suspects in various works; Diana herself in a book called *Diana, Lady Delamere and the Lord Erroll murder*. But, as ever, no evidence emerges to enlighten us. According to Paul Spicer in his book *The Temptress*, Alice de Janzé—a friend of Spicer’s mother—was the murderer in “the White Mischief mystery.” When Diana came along, he says, Alice felt “ferociously jealous of Joss’s relations” with her. He had no evidence against Alice. He relies on syllogisms—illogical deductions—and a kind of nudging rhetoric. Alice had a pretty cast-iron alibi: she was sleeping with her lover, a man called Dickie Pembroke, at Muthaiga. “Is it possible that Dickie slept through Alice’s departure and her return on the night of the murder?” (I would say no). “That night Alice could easily have taken her revolver from the bedside table,” he writes, then “soundlessly” climbed into her car and “sped away.” She went to the crossroads, he writes, and waited. “Checking her revolver she would have made sure it was fully loaded.” And so on. (She might have done that before she went to all the trouble, one reflects). In fact Alice’s moving and forlorn letters, published in *White Mischief,* written before she committed suicide, are proof if any was needed that she didn’t shoot Erroll. Spicer was not able to include these in his book.

Spicer’s book draws on the limitless Kenyan verbal gas reserve. Different rusty guns have been dug up from streams or waterfalls and are undoubtedly the murder weapon. Someone knows someone who saw a confession with their own eyes, but the attorney general didn’t act on it, or knows that a confession was left in someone’s will and suppressed, The secret is contained in someone’s diaries that never materialized. A woman promised to tell but “slipped into a coma before she could reveal her secret.” These are repeated with reverence and confidentiality to this day and handed down the generations. They will always be told.

Many such tales are included in the most bizarre of these accounts, *The Life and Death of Lord Erroll* by Errol Trzebinski, who has been a friend for many years. Trzebinski is an arch researcher—and has written previous books about Kenya. All the more peculiar that her final 70 pages suddenly embark on a thesis that Erroll was murdered by MI6, the British secret service, because of his former connection to Oswald Mosley and the British fascist party, because he knew too much about a cabal trying to do a deal with Hitler. There’s no evidence for that or anything else in the thesis or, for example, that the ‘beautiful’ female agent assigned to kill Erroll at the crossroads was Cambridge educated., polylingual, a crack shot, and “sexually highly aware.” Despite this the assassin “had been made up to look like an attractive middle-aged lady by Schouten’s (the Nairobi hairdresser) and a make-up artist from Nairobi amateur Dramatic Club.” In all the years nobody, black or white, remembered or heard of this small army of special forces buzzing around the Muthaiga Club, radios crackling, motorbikes revving up. According to Trzebinski, even Broughton had been *recruited by* MI6, and Diana too. Trzebinski says she got it all from a man in the Isle of Wight who got it from someone else, not named. Not surprisingly one reviewer wrote, mildly, “I think someone’s been having a word in her ear.”

The writer Julian Fellowes, creator of *Downton Abbey*, had no doubt in his television feature, *A Most Mysterious Murder: The Case of the Earl of Erroll*, that Broughton was the culprit. For me, the study of the slightly deranged Broughton has always been the key to the mystery. It is Broughton’s motive, his state of mind, a study of his actions and what he said at the time, including the confessions he made, which brings the murder into focus. His very palpable dual personality, the calm and controlled exterior and the insane rage underneath, comes so vividly to light in the last letter he wrote to Diana, which appeared after my book was published and is included below. It shows that Broughton had lied consistently in court about his feelings—a convincing, masterly performance of which, as Diana told me, he was proud. She said that Broughton had boasted to prosecutor Walter Harragin after the verdict, “I’m a very good actor.” Broughton minded that Erroll had taken his wife away, he said in court, but he had to stand by the pact he had made with her in Durban when they were married, that if she fell in love with someone younger, he would stand aside and give her £5,000 a year.

He was asked by the prosecutor, “Can you explain why you took so placidly this robbery that was taking place under your very nose?”

His response was “What is the use of a pact if you do not honour it?”

Broughton, above all a vain man, was being publicly humiliated in a place he couldn’t escape from. His only hope of protecting his vanity and his pride was to pretend he had accepted defeat and “cut his losses.” Otherwise he wouldn’t be able to lunch with the gang at Muthaiga every day—he would be alone. Diana regretted to me that she hadn’t seen through Broughton—she might have been more careful. Because in fact Broughton’s rising anger, his refusal to be pushed aside, can be seen in his ill-tempered confrontations with Diana and with Erroll before the murder . With Diana he started arguments late at night about jewels. Thanks to this letter, the significance of those incidents becomes clear.

Broughton reveals his real feelings about the pact and about Diana in a letter written in October 1942, 15 months after his acquittal. The letter came to light in 1993. It is among others things, an attempt at blackmail. It was shown to filmmakers Livio Negri and Warwick Hembry for their documentary about the case, *Alcohol, Altitude and Adultery*, by Peggy Pitt, who was secretary to the prosecutor at the trial, Walter Harragin. Pitt held onto the letter until 1993, hoping to write her own account. I had heard of this letter from Diana. In my interview with her at the end of the book she said of Broughton, “He was the most evil man. He sent me a letter trying to get me to return to England with him. It was appalling. I took it straight to the attorney general.”

Context is required to understand the letter’s contents. Broughton wrote it in Mombasa, as he waited to return to England as a deck passenger on a troopship, feeling almost insane with depression. Between the trial and October 1942 when he wrote the letter, Broughton had subjected Diana to a miserable partnership while travelling to Sri Lanka, then living in Erroll’s house on Lake Naivasha, which Broughton purchased. And yet, in his usual disturbing, remote style, Broughton had written to his friend Lady d’Avigdor Goldsmid, “I decided the only thing to do was resume our life, as if nothing had happened.”

In the letter he tries to make out that Diana was “perfectly happy’ with him on these trips. He was asking Diana continue her marriage with a man she was sure had killed her lover, Erroll. She is trapped in Kenya, her reputation ruined, not knowing how to get rid of Broughton. She had latched onto Gilbert Colvile , their neighbour at the Djinn Palace, as described in *White Mischief*, and moved him in as her lover—a clever move worthy of a skilled courtesan. Broughton accepted only partial defeat and moved to Nairobi.

The last time Diana ever saw Broughton was in front of a lawyer in Nairobi where Diana, in a formal move to make a legal break with her husband, had said to his face that she thought he had murdered Erroll. Broughton said nothing and left the office. He never denied the murder, nor showed any curiosity about the identity of a killer close at hand.

The letter begins:

Diana, I am determined to punish you for ruining my life in the way you have done. Up to the time we left England, universally popular, respected, millions of friends and welcome everywhere, I worshipped the ground you stood on and got divorced in order to marry you. On board the boat you became a stranger to me and a completely different human being. You started a fuck with Tony Mordant under my eyes and I discovered the copy of a letter you wrote to your Italian; the most violent love letter written when living with me on ‘Doddington’ writing paper. This was the first time I knew you had double crossed me.”

On the boat you were regretting the whole time that you had not stayed in England and married Rory More O'Ferrall. We got to South Africa where at Cape Town you were bloody to me most of the time. When being thoroughly fed up I said I should like to return to England in front of the Bailes family, you said, ‘I shall stay in South Africa, why don't you return to England?’ Charming for me. You made such a farce of our marriage that the Registrar almost refused to marry you. If I had not adored you I should not have been fool enough to marry you but I worshipped you. We came up to Kenya where for about six weeks I was happy. You then started double crossing me with Erroll. Do you think any woman has ever treated any man as badly as you did me? Letting him be divorced from a wife he has lived with not unhappily for 25 years and then telling him she was leaving him 2 months after she had married him because she let herself fall in love. Millions of people fall in love, but they have feelings of decency and do not behave like you did. If you had returned to England you would, of course, have got over it. Erroll was murdered. You say yourself it never even occurred to you to connect it with me, till the Police put it into your head. You then in your evidence did all in your power to get me hung. Later you say yourself you were convinced I had nothing to do with it.

Like much else in the letter the accusation that Diana wanted Broughton convicted was a manipulative and unfair taunt. Diana never gave evidence in court. It was she who went to South Africa to hire Harry Morris Q.C, who got Broughton off. Juanita Carberry, to whom Broughton confessed hours after the murder, also overheard Diana screaming accusations at Broughton that he had killed her lover the following day and later Broughton contradicts himself: “Can you realise what it is to live with someone who is always telling you how much they were in love with someone else and that you often thought I murdered him.”

The letter goes on:

After the verdict you were charming to me and were perfectly happy in Ceylon and India. We came back and were quite happy till we went on safari with Gilbert Colvile. Since that moment everything has gone wrong. You knew he was the richest settler in Kenya, could be useful to you, was easy money and laid yourself out to ensnare him, quite regardless of how you knew how unhappy and miserable it made me. You never said you did not want me to go on safari and I went. During the safari you made it clear you hated me and never took the slightest notice of me and to rub it in, made the most frightful fuss of Gilbert Colvile all the time. I began to hate you for this but took it all lying down without reproaching you."

“We have never been anything else but unhappy since we went there on March 1st. I never objected to you having people to stay but when we had rows you always dinned into me how you were still in love with Erroll. This and your very fervent friendship with Colvile and your obvious dislike of being ever alone with me made me depressed, unhappy and hating the place, people, country—everything connected with it.”

I thought things were going better when you had Hugh Strickland to stay, liked him and enjoyed having him ... Like the poor fool I was I had no idea of what was happening or why you put him in a room with no lock on the door opening straight out into your rooms till Chappy Bailes told me that he was seen kissing you in your bedroom at the Stanley by a highly amused crowd from Torr’s hotel. Even then, thinking you had always told me the truth about your ‘cold temperament’ I didn't suspect what was going on till you were so anxious to get me off to bed one night with a sleeping draught. I watched through the window of your bathroom and saw you actually go and fetch him and return to your bedroom with him, and then listened to him fucking you through the gauze in you bedroom window not more than three yards away. By the way the whole bed rocked you evidently enjoyed it, like you used to with me.

For the next two nights the voyeur Broughton waited and watched “but you both had chills and I saw nothing. The next night I asked for a sleeping draught and went to bed early and watched and saw him walk into your bedroom and get into bed, and you followed and got into bed with him. I then took action.” Diana’s reaction was to “have the cheek to suggest” that Strickland stay another four days. “Like the fool I was, still loving you, I forgave it, but since that moment you have been more vile to me than anyone would think possible. It was of course because you were furious at being caught out red-handed.” What “maddened” Broughton, he said, “was you telling me [sex] was bad for you and hurt you when I wanted to have you and going to bed night after night with a vigorous man who certainly made your inside so bad that you had to have another operation.”

Then Diana moved Gilbert Colvile into Oserian. “I notice you changed his room to the one with a clear run to your bedroom and do you really expect me to believe he was never in it? What still astonishes me is that you would go to bed with a man you didn't particularly care for. You are certainly as you say devoted to Colvile and would go to bed with him whenever he wanted.”

Broughton knew that Diana had a last ace up her sleeve, a letter she found from Broughton to Vera, his ex-wife, asking her to take him back and saying that he hated Diana. Broughton was trumped. “There was only one possible course left to me and I left,” he wrote. Victim, cuckold, self-pitying wreck that he was, he added, “You never even said ‘Goodbye’ to me.”

He accuses her of ruining him financially—“the trial cost me over £5,000”— and adds pathetically “You have been consistently selfish in every way, and I have given in to you because you made yourself so absolutely bloody when I did not. You have frequently made me lose my temper with you, but I have always said I was sorry.”

He then moves to the blackmail and here he shows his true wickedness. He tries to frame Diana for a crime she didn’t commit. The mechanics of the blackmail can be summarised. In 1939 Broughton, feeling hard up, persuaded her admirer Hugh Dickinson, to “steal” Diana’s pearls. Diana received an insurance cheque for £12,000, double their value. Dickinson put the “stolen” pearls in a deposit box in his own name or in Diana’s—but almost certainly without Diana knowing—and eventually returned them to Broughton’s solicitors. Dickinson was still in Kenya, in uniform, at this moment and Broughton tried to blackmail him along with Diana. Dickinson refused. And Diana was not blackmailable.

You can imagine how I am nearly dead with depression by now, and all my thoughts have been centered on how I can really punish you for what you have done to me. You have double crossed me so many times that I am going to double cross you properly if I find my suspicions justified ... I have always been suspicious as to what you had inside the deed box you gave me to give George Green (his solicitor) to keep for you.

Diana could already see from this sentence—a wicked distortion of the real events—how he intended to frame her. If Diana didn't start for England in ten days, he wrote, he would have the box sent to Scotland Yard.

You will then be sent home for trial. If you were only an accessory it would be exactly the same thing and make no difference. The penalty for this ‘offence’ is 14 years hard labour. You are now nearly 29 and by the time you were taken home for trial and sentenced it might take 9 months and this would keep you from double crossing me and popping into bed with any strange man until you are 44, and prison is very ageing and I don't think you would find men so easy then. I am wondering how your ‘Tigie darling’ [her name for Colvile] would react to your confession. At any rate he will have died of old age before you get out of jail. I could moreover divorce you for having committed a criminal offence. However many accomplices you may have had would be equally involved (if my suspicions are justified).

You have changed me into a fiend thirsting for vengeance. I think of nothing else day and night. I never sleep for thinking of it. I am determined to see you in the dock where I was last year because of your love affair with Joss Erroll. I get bloodier minded every day.

In another paragraph he added, “I have not slept for nights, and my nerves have gone to pot from misery and depression and I am only just sane and I am only buoyed up by the thought of revenge at any cost.”

As I say hate and love are very akin, and I still love you. I hate you sometimes like you do me, but I miss you every hour of the day and night, and want you back and am determined that swine Gilbert Colvile who is the cause of all this shall not have you. When you told me that you and he were going to share Oserian which of course means that he would have to keep you, I thought how I could punish you both and this is how I am going to do it.

Broughton’s conditions for lifting the blackmail were that Diana should come back and live a “normal” life with him - offering her, in effect, a miserable form of human bondage.

I would take a house, I think, just outside London and we should both have to do jobs of work like everyone else in England. We shall both have lots of friends and I would never have anyone in the house you didn't like, and you would do the same, but I won't have you getting out of bed with other men. Once again in England among your friends you would soon forget and be happy. But if you do show signs of hatred or annoy me when you return I shall act at once ... I am not double crossing you nearly as badly as you have me. It is moreover quite useless coming back to me as a stranger or knowing that you hate me, but as my wife.

Broughton had underestimated Diana, and overestimated his power over her. The descriptions of Diana's betrayals and affairs, carried out with little attempt at secrecy, before they went to Kenya and after Erroll’s death; her humiliation and mockery of him were completely new to the story. So was the confirmation—originally provided by Hugh Dickinson—that Broughton was highly sexually attracted to Diana. At one point they had had a sexual relationship. But what also stands out starkly to me is that Broughton’s overriding desire, from the time Diana took up with Erroll, was to punish her. It was this that drove him to murder Erroll, not male jealousy. His desire to punish Diana drove out any sense of guilt about the murder. He continued to punish her afterwards, as the letter shows. He was relieved when he felt he was able to do so. It made him feel powerful, in control again. This is, perhaps, why he told so many people he had killed Erroll.

Diana took the letter to Walter Harragin. Dickinson made a confession to the police about his role in the pearl thefts and was never charged. News of the blackmail attempt was wired ahead of Broughton’s arrival in England. Broughton committed suicide a few days later in the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool.

I don’t know how things would have played out if I’d discovered the letter while Diana was still alive. It is a damaging and libelous letter, and Diana could have stopped the book had I published it or forced me to leave it out.

Reading back on my book I was struck by the glaring fact that the murder weapon was—according to the expert firearms witness at the trial who Connolly and I spoke to thirty years later—undoubtedly the gun used for target practice at Soames’s farm. It was here that the bullets were found, in the earth, that provided the forensic evidence against Broughton. One of them matched the murder bullet. Only three people shot that day: Broughton, Diana and Soames and there is no evidence against the last two. Broughton was astonishingly lucky to get away with it. Today, with DNA testing, I believe he wouldn’t have stood a chance.

I paid a visit to my old acquaintance Juanita Carberry, who had first told me about Broughton’s confession to her soon after the murder—the crucial clue that seemed to end the quest. It was one of three confessions by Broughton, the last of which was on the day before he committed suicide, But “Juanita’s confession” had the added veracity that it was made to a 15-year-old, when Broughton was in a state of desperation, very soon after the murder, when he thought he was about to be arrested.

That visit in the Spring of 2013 was the last time I saw Juanita. She was living, aged 86, in a council flat overlooking the Thames on Chelsea Bank in London. She was almost blind, and her memory was still perfect, but she didn’t let on that she was fatally ill. She died three months later.

Juanita had left Kenya some years before when her failing eyesight made it difficult to live in her house Likoni, near the port of Mombasa. On our way out to lunch she talked from her walkway to a fellow Kenyan in the courtyard below, in Kikuyu, about the forthcoming election. Juanita’s Kikuyu name, always used in Nairobi, is Nyawera, the word for a sacred herb. . We sat in a nearby restaurant.

“Do you want to see the stowage list?’ she said, referring to the menu. Juanita had spent 17 years at sea in the merchant navy, soon after leaving home, after the final beatings by her governess and her father, John Carberry. She ran away to initially enlist in the army’s First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, and marched each year in the Cenotaph Parade in London on Remembrance Day with the FANYs. Juanita’s is a life of remarkable self-sufficiency and survival after she turned her back on all family ties. After her years at sea, she returned to Nairobi and drove clients on mostly photographic safaris in Uganda, Tanzania, the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi.

“In the bush I can always find my way,” she said.

Juanita gave me one interesting new piece of information about her stepmother, June Carberry, who had given Broughton his alibi for comings and goings to her room on the night of the murder—Broughton’s only alibi. “I didn’t realize until much later that Broughton must have told June Carberry as well that he’d done the murder. She didn’t know he’d told me and I didn’t know he’d told her.” Juanita was on a live radio programme from South Africa, in the mid 1980’s, talking about the murder. A man contacted the producer to say that his uncle had leased John Carberry’s workshop at Malindi in exchange for doing maintenance on Carberry’s hotel. The nephew, who knew all the details of people and places said he had found a shoebox in the rafters when he was cleaning it out, which contained a revolver.

“He showed [the gun] to Carberry,” said Juanita “who, he said, freaked out and grabbed it and took it out in his boat and dropped it beyond the reef.”

June had gone to the Chania Falls on the same trip they all made there after the murder, sent a shamba boy down to retrieve the gun that Broughton told her he’d dropped there—as he also told Juanita he had done. June took the weapon to Malindi, knowing the Carberry house at Nyeri was being watched. Such is Juanita’s surmise. Another tale of a hot revolver. But I always thought that June Carberry knew Broughton to be guilty. It was June who gave Broughton his alibi that night. Walter Harragin the prosecutor told several people over the years that he’d met June in South Africa after the trial and she had admitted to him that her evidence had been false. She told him that she had heard Broughton walking past her door on the night of the murder. “Couldn’t let the old boy hang,” she told him.

I returned to Kenya many times after writing *White Mischief*, to report for newspapers and magazines, or just to travel. I came back in 1987 to watch the feature film being made., starring Greta Scacchi. Diana and I ended on friendly terms. She had me to lunch at her house on the coast, to the slight embarrassment of her friends—such was her fiercely independent way of carrying on. We looked at each other, I remember, each at an end of the table. She gave me a wink, across the silver pheasants and grouse, from that bright blue eye that had charmed and seduced so many men.

The Delamere estates, huge areas of ranching land, still survive in their owner’s hands, despite the arrest and brief imprisonment of Tom Cholmondeley, son of the present peer, stepgrandson of Diana, for shooting poachers on his land on two different occasions. The survival of white-owned farms of many acres is one of the peculiarities that distinguishes Kenya from almost any other former colony on the African continent, with the exception of South Africa.

The continued presence of white farmer or landowners is surprising too because there was, from as early as the 1930s, a struggle over land. The Kikuyu felt crowded by the whites and began to squat on the land. It was a squatters movement that eventually triggered Mau Mau and the rebellion against the British government. In the 50 years since independence, land inequality has increased. The subdivision of smallholdings and a quintupling of the population has led to mass poverty and the growth of the horrendous Kibera, the Nairobi slum where the unlanded congregate; one of the largest and worst slums on earth. The political elite did acquire large amounts of land cheaply at independence, and have gifted to their friends and supporters even larger amounts of government land since. The Kenya time bomb, according to the historian Charles Hornsby, is the estimated 200,000 fraudulent or disputed land titles.

The white landowners themselves, the ones who have survived, have learned to adapt to this tricky situation in remarkable and surprising ways. Kenya was always the country that attracted settlers looking for adventure, the risk takers, those who came for the sheer love of the landscape and what it and to offer. Kenya attracted aristocrats, the second sons of earls, people like Gilbert Colvile, Diana’s second husband. Neighbouring countries like Uganda and Tanzania, or further south like Rhodesia, were characterized by a different settler attitude, and perhaps a more ingrained racism that persuaded many, as it did in Kenya too, to sell up on principle at independence. Some of the Kenya settlers, however, actually bought more land at independence. One of these, who purchased 16,000 acres near Nanyuki then, now has the premier Boran cattle stud in the country. There is a new breed of young white settlers, often the third or fourth generation descended from settler farmers or colonial government officials, who are flourishing often in partnership with or employment by the African owners of the land. In many cases they are, in a nice irony, renting or leasing land from the descendants of their former colonial subjects, often farming in the same difficult conditions as their forebears. In Narok, in the Rift Valley, and towards the Masai Mara, these farmers are leasing land from the Masai to grow wheat—profitable and in huge demand for the exploding population—or to make tourist camps. They rent in some cases from absentee African landlords, be they Samburu or Kikuyu or Masai. Some are wealthy businessmen from Nairobi who acquired the land and aren’t interested in farming it.

“It’s easier to turn it over to a European who pays a check at the end of the month,” said one farmer I talked to. Fiammetta Rocco, editor at The Economist in London whose family have lived and farmed on Lake Naivasha for four generations said, “If they’ve stuck out the land requisitioning, the bad economics, the pilfering and the fear—they have reinvented themselves; they are often young and very adaptable, very organized, finding their way around the bureaucracy and the politics.”

Of those that I know about, their backgrounds are somewhat different to the second sons of earls that started out at the turn of the century. One is a graduate of Balliol, Oxford, another has a degree in Agriculture, another a degree from Edinburgh in economics. All of them are cattle experts and trade cattle with their African neighbours. Some help their tribal neighbours, for example, to set up tourist ventures, and offer expertise. Some of the larger landowners sell parts of their land for conservation projects to overseas companies and manage them on their behalf. Anything not to be vulnerable like the early settlers to fluctuations in meat prices.

This community on the Equator keep together, as ever. They still meet at the Muthaiga club. They congregate for Race Week in Nairobi as they did in the 1920’s. They hold a cricket festival every year at the Olerai Cricket Oval in the Masai Mara; an annual rugby festival in the Rift Valley. Tom Sylvester, aged 44, whose grandfather was district commissioner in colonial times, ranches beef cattle in Laikipia. Sylvester told me, “There is a very strong feeling among us that we’re Kenyans and we’ve got everything invested in it. We run our businesses here, bring our children up here vote in elections. We get involved with party politics at local level.” That certainly is new. In previous years whites wouldn’t take part in local politics. What made Sylvester return from university and stay, he said, was “the freedom, the beauty of country, the lifestyle and the passion I feel about the place. You can really make a difference in your life; it’s a growing economy, you’ve got these challenges. The crucial thing is you must make the land work. You can’t be a king in a grass castle.” The pull of the land of the kind Elspeth Huxley described, means that generations later the descendants of colonists aren’t going to tear themselves away. They intend to stay until they’re told to go. Kenya is a tough school of reinvention and a risky one, but as Diana Delamere found out, it offers exhilarating prospects.

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