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John Heminway [00:00:04] [speaking quietly in the background] He is an old boy and. I get the feeling about.

Producer [00:00:07] This is sound roll 11. It's the 12th of the third, 1992 Channel 13 WNET Travels Le Mal D'Afrique project number 401. Sound roll 11, turns at neg eight.

Speaker 3 [00:00:19] WNET, hu.

Speaker 1 [00:00:35] John's okay.

John Heminway [00:00:36] Okay. This is going to be a wild track with Rick and Brianey Anderson and at the Giraffe Manor. And it's just to cover some of the GVs and then dialog we've already had.

Brianey Anderson [00:00:50] Expects.

John Heminway [00:00:52] Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Oh, we're running. It's kind of hard isn't it though, to look back and say what it is that struck you about anything. I can think of about five different things. I can, you know, think of that freedom. And it's kind of hard to remember. You were 13 wern't you were when you first came here.

Rick Anderson [00:01:15] 13. 1930. Yeah.

John Heminway [00:01:17] Same here as me. And and you certainly knew that you were on a different planet when you get off the ship and.

Rick Anderson [00:01:27] Immediately sure, it. And we got off the ship and Dar es Salaam and then took a four day train up to Mwanza and Lake Victoria. And that was certainly different from America, to say the least.

John Heminway [00:01:39] Do we talk about the freedom out here? And this is something else. I found that almost from the start I felt very much at home in Africa.

Rick Anderson [00:01:52] I think the people made one feel at home because you don't, when you first obviously when you first come to the country, that, accept that if you come to the Giraffe Manor first thing, you meet giraffe right away. But generally people coming here meet people before they go out on safari. And then the first feeling you get is not being in a foreign country. You know, you're in a foreign country, but it's, you've done, you're surprised by the friendliness of the people. They're very welcoming. So even though, you know, you're in a foreign country, you feel at ease because the people make you feel at ease. You don't have a language barrier too much in this country, and the people are extremely friendly and welcoming.

John Heminway [00:02:30] I was once embarrassed to tell African friends that I have this feeling of being very much at home in their country. I kind of bottled it up and kept it to myself, thinking that they would be mightily offended by a pale face, saying that he felt very much at home in Africa. But when I did try it out, did summon up the courage to say it, they smiled. They thought it was wonderful. They were very happy that.

Brianey Anderson [00:02:56] It's a compliment.

John Heminway [00:02:58] Yes, it was really a I was paying homage to Kenya and Tanzania to East Africa. They liked it.

Brianey Anderson [00:03:03] Mhm.

John Heminway [00:03:04] Have you found that? Is it? I think I mean, I don't want to make it sound patronizing, but I think that if you really offer something and if you are really ready to accept the African program of life, you are accepted out here.

Brianey Anderson [00:03:23] Yes. You don't want to be impatient about, you know, something that doesn't work as quickly as you might expect it to at home. And, you know, there's definitely the sort of third world mentality, if you like, of, well, 'tomorrow is just as good as today for something to happen." And I think if you can relax into that mode, then, then you know, you're going to do a lot better than if you're sort of rushing to do something. I mean, time is is enormous.

Rick Anderson [00:03:55] Maybe that's another factor of freedom, is there's the time factor in the states and in the developed world, our time factor, we have to get things done on time and this, that and the other. By the fact that you have time wide open, that does give you a lot of freedom just in itself. You're not pushed to move from here to here to here. According to the time schedules that we've set for ourselves here, it moves at a much more free space.

Brianey Anderson [00:04:20] I always remember one time coming by train from Mombasa to Nairobi with my mother, who had to catch a plane at sort of 10:00 in the morning. The train is meant to get in at about seven and the train broke down and she went to the conductor and she sort of saying, I've got a train, I've got a plane to catch, I'm playing catch. When is this going to get fixed? And he says, I have no idea. He said, But there's another plane tomorrow and it is the whole you know, if you think of it that way, it's.

John Heminway [00:04:52] You know, it.

Brianey Anderson [00:04:52] Is another plane.

John Heminway [00:04:53] It does take the time to learn that. And you have to learn it every time you set foot in Africa because you cannot bring it back to the Western world. You can't very well say, well, I'm going to live in New York or London or San Francisco on African time. Now you're going to look like an awful slovenly human being. However, when you come out to Africa, it's the only way, I think, to survive. And in fact, you discover something wonderful in yourself if you can slow yourself down.

Rick Anderson [00:05:24] I suppose, to the people that that's one of the big comments we get from people that come here at the end of their safari. In the telling us about their experiences of their, their two or three or four week safari out here and. Was the fact that they were able to get away from the pressures and totally forget about their their lives, you know, in their lives back in America, they were able to slow down, enjoy peace and quiet, quiet, not worry about the political economic pressures.

Brianey Anderson [00:05:52] No telephone, no fax, no newspaper. You know.

Rick Anderson [00:05:55] All those things that they considered very important in their lives and very necessary in their lives back in the States. And so they came here and they totally forget about it. And then it's a total rest and relaxation.

John Heminway [00:06:09] Don't you now get impatient with people who come here and complain? Doesn't it bother you that sort of Mensab [sic] attitude of, Oh, nothing works in Africa, nothing is on time? My gosh, how can we live out here? And you still occasionally hear that. And I've found that that's the most intolerable behavior of all.

Rick Anderson [00:06:34] And it's totally unacceptable. And those people that feel that way should never have left the United States or England or wherever in the first place. They shouldn't be here and they don't come back fortunately.

John Heminway [00:06:44] So we all have something to learn from Africa at the end. At the end of the day, we can come away from this continent and be, we hope, a little deeper.

Brianey Anderson [00:06:55] Mm hmm.

Rick Anderson [00:06:56] Well, I think that if. If it weren't for Africa, I hadn't been moved. If I hadn't moved here in the early sixties with my family, I'd be a very different human being. And not as good a one.

John Heminway [00:07:05] I don't think I would have liked you very much now.

Rick Anderson [00:07:09] I don't think I would like myself too much.

Brianey Anderson [00:07:11] True.

Producer [00:07:16] Wild track atmos. [background sound] Cut.

Producer [00:08:00] That was a wild track atmos through the mikes there with the wind rushing, hissing through the trees in the background as it was during all that sequence in the breakfast room. Here's a wild track atmos outside the Giraffe Manor. In the garden. [background sound]

Producer [00:08:55] And the next one is 1-1-0 front board.

Crew member [00:09:01] Yeah. I'm rolling. Very good.

[00:09:03] [background vehicle sound]

Crew member [00:10:11] Okay. I'm cutting.

Producer [00:10:13] Unfortunately, that was stated as 2-1-0. And so the next one is 1-1-1.

Crew member [00:10:22] You have beep? Okay, rolling.

Unidentified [00:10:25] [background sound]

Producer [00:10:57] 1-1-2 next.

Crew member [00:10:59] Okay. Okay. Any time.[background sound].

Crew member [00:12:17] Okay.

Unidentified [00:12:17] [background sound]

Producer [00:12:18] And the next bleeper is 1-1-3.

Crew member [00:12:21] Cut. Okay. [background sound].

Producer [00:13:01] 1-1-4 next.

John Heminway [00:13:01] Now what? [break in tape]

Brianey Anderson [00:13:07] You get all these noises, but.

John Heminway [00:13:09] It's okay.

John Heminway [00:13:12] God, I cannot believe the treasure trove of stuff that you have here. I hate to think what this article is all about. Did. I see you. You wrote this article. Did write it? About Latham.

Brianey Anderson [00:13:27] No, the reporter from Standard wrote it.

John Heminway [00:13:30] Oh, my gosh. And there you are. Now, that was in 1966.

Brianey Anderson [00:13:35] Yep.

John Heminway [00:13:36] And you? Well, you've told me this before, but I cannot remember. How did you ever get to the island and meet the old man in the first place?

Crew member [00:13:45] I'll have you cut right here. Okay.

Producer [00:13:47] 1-1-5. Next.

Crew member [00:13:51] Everyone's. Ready Here.

John Heminway [00:13:56] So how long has it been since I've last seen you?

Wendy Griffith [00:13:59] Oh, too long, John. I can't remember it so long ago.

John Heminway [00:14:02] Oh, God. Well, you told me how you first met Latham. But, for the life of me, I can't remember. It's probably all in these articles which I'll read. But how was it? How did you meet Latham? How did you get on the island?

Tony Griffith [00:14:15] Latham wrote to Wendy's Boss in 66. And wendy start? Started up correspondence with the old man and. No beautiful letters. So we got an invitation to go down and stayed on the island in three weeks.

John Heminway [00:14:35] How was it.

Wendy Griffith [00:14:35] Wonderful.

John Heminway [00:14:38] Just wonderful.

Wendy Griffith [00:14:39] Best holiday we've ever had.

Tony Griffith [00:14:41] Well, it was, I think, the evenings with supurb. The old man, wealth information on the stories. And house full of books wind up gramophone, you know, and wind up in the evenings with that.

John Heminway [00:14:55] What kind of music when you listen to.

Wendy Griffith [00:14:58] He had what could be called pop records, but old ones.

Tony Griffith [00:15:01] Old pop records. Right. But all.

John Heminway [00:15:06] Waltzing Matilda?

Tony Griffith [00:15:06] The evenings in the old days, he used to he said that you should rest for dinner, but we didn't. And then the old key coy [sic]. relax.

John Heminway [00:15:16] I'm. I'm my mad. To think this old boy was was unusual or was he of a type? I found him the most extraordinary individual I'd run across at the age of 22 when I first met him. I must have just, in fact, come with Marianne. Just seconds after you had been.

Wendy Griffith [00:15:36] Yes.

John Heminway [00:15:37] And and we'd heard I heard about you. My impression was that he was extraordinarily lonely and he was very proud of his life and very proud of his island.

Tony Griffith [00:15:47] Yes. Right.

Wendy Griffith [00:15:49] And he was just a very different person to anyone we've ever met before, wasn't he?

John Heminway [00:15:53] Or since.

Wendy Griffith [00:15:54] Or since, yes.

Tony Griffith [00:15:55] Yes. Right.

John Heminway [00:15:57] Yeah, I see. But his take on the world, was he angry with the world, do you think?

Wendy Griffith [00:16:04] I think he liked. He loved writing letters and telling everyone his opinions. And he also was a big tease. Didn't you find that?

John Heminway [00:16:14] Oh, yeah. He had an un he had an un, undefeatable sense of humor.

Wendy Griffith [00:16:21] Yes.

John Heminway [00:16:22] Even in the darkest of his days, he was always able to turn it to a joke. But on the island, I mean, he loved to sort of think of himself as a as a private mentor of of standards.

Tony Griffith [00:16:37] And the establishment.

John Heminway [00:16:38] Of an ombudsman of values.

Wendy Griffith [00:16:41] Yes.

John Heminway [00:16:42] And and he was very quick. I mean, if he'd heard a piece in the on the BBC, for instance, and he and he objected to it.

Wendy Griffith [00:16:49] Yes.

John Heminway [00:16:51] He would fire off letters, wouldn't he?

Wendy Griffith [00:16:53] Yes.

John Heminway [00:16:54] So what kind of things did you talk about in the evening?

Tony Griffith [00:16:59] He was telling us about when he was in the States. Is that.

Wendy Griffith [00:17:03] ANNOUNCER [sic].

Tony Griffith [00:17:04] Astounding stuff.

Wendy Griffith [00:17:05] Astounding stories

Tony Griffith [00:17:05] Thanks to an excellent accent. In fact, he used to just sort of touch on things. One reflects he didn't really talk too much about his his real background. Never told us his family. Never talked about his parents. Not that we tried to dig. We didn't. But normally people do. They bring this up. In their conversation.

John Heminway [00:17:30] There was a secret. There was.

Wendy Griffith [00:17:31] Yes.

Tony Griffith [00:17:32] Yes. I think there were a number of secrets with with Latham.

John Heminway [00:17:35] And why did he live by himself on an island? It was paradise.

Wendy Griffith [00:17:41] Yes.

[00:17:41] I think he, although he enjoyed his own company, he did enjoy his own company. And then, as you said earlier, he did like to show off his island a little bit to people.

John Heminway [00:17:56] But how many visitors would he have in a year? I mean, you must have been the, perhaps the, well there were two in 1966.

Wendy Griffith [00:18:03] Charles Miller.

Tony Griffith [00:18:03] Charles, Charlie Miller.

Wendy Griffith [00:18:04] Once I knew and Mary and.

John Heminway [00:18:06] Tony Miller was the only other living American he knew. Apart from myself.

Tony Griffith [00:18:10] He was lucky then, wasn't he?

John Heminway [00:18:12] I don't know about that.

Tony Griffith [00:18:15] I suppose it was the year that we went, I suppose, is when a lot of people visited. There were some photographs.

Wendy Griffith [00:18:23] Yes,.

Tony Griffith [00:18:23] We saw some photographs with one of them.

Wendy Griffith [00:18:25] We had some lady visitors.

Tony Griffith [00:18:26] Scrapbooks of lady visitors.

John Heminway [00:18:30] Dam hard to get to, wasn't it? Still is today. It's probably more difficult to get to the island today than it ever was in the past. Yeah, that's what happened. That's what happens to parts of Africa too, isn't it?

Wendy Griffith [00:18:43] That's right.

Tony Griffith [00:18:43] But when we we drove and we had a Dahr flew from Dahr to Maturary, overnighted at Victor Bobit's Southern Cross, and then got the government launch, took it over. And then we said, come back in three weeks.

John Heminway [00:18:57] So what was your first impression when you saw him? Oh, when.

Wendy Griffith [00:19:02] It was wonderful. He was on the beach.

Tony Griffith [00:19:04] The big man with the big hat.

Wendy Griffith [00:19:06] Of the big tall hat. And the big stick. And little shuker [sic].

Tony Griffith [00:19:11] They looked like he had just come out of the sea.

Wendy Griffith [00:19:12] Yeah, right. He looked wonderful. And you jumped over the side of the boat and dissapeared under the water.

Tony Griffith [00:19:19] It was a great sight. Great sight, because we had two young children with us. Eldest daughter then was five. And the son three and.

Wendy Griffith [00:19:32] Yeah. We were a little apprehensive until we'd actually met him.

Tony Griffith [00:19:36] Yes, but he was pretty good. You see, the we had one hiccup there. The boy had a very bad toothache, but Latham pulled up something out of a jar and put it on there. Better the next morning.

John Heminway [00:19:48] Solved the problem.

Tony Griffith [00:19:49] Solved the problem.

John Heminway [00:19:52] Were the kids scared of him? Were they a little bit intimidated first.

Wendy Griffith [00:19:59] No. I think as all the children are, it was just part of what was happening to them, you know. Children are like that, aren't they? When they're little. They didn't know any different.

Tony Griffith [00:20:14] Well, they can put up with me or they can put up with most people.

John Heminway [00:20:18] Was Latham the consummate Englishman? You're all of English stock. And yet I would think that you have become something else in the interim. He always remained the absolute, ultimate Englishman. And yet he would have nothing. Nothing. Nothing to do with England?

Wendy Griffith [00:20:37] No.

John Heminway [00:20:37] How do you account for that? There are lots of English eccentrics we've all known about.

Tony Griffith [00:20:41] I think.

John Heminway [00:20:41] But this one's little different.

Tony Griffith [00:20:44] I think that the Brits overseas are more British than the Brits, when it comes to royalty, standing up for the national anthem, you know, we still sort of. Part of us. Strange.

John Heminway [00:21:03] Finally. Do you look back on those days on Msimbati as a sort of a fairy tale right now?

Wendy Griffith [00:21:11] Oh, yes.

Tony Griffith [00:21:13] It's just that is something that we're we're so pleased we did because, okay, we still have a lot of things to do in our life. But I don't think we'll ever have something as exciting or an experience like that. Three weeks on a superb island with a character.

John Heminway [00:21:34] All right. Would you ever go back to the island or do you think.

Tony Griffith [00:21:38] Yeah, I would go back? Yes.

John Heminway [00:21:39] I don't think I think it's finished. I mean, in your mind. And so that chapter is closed.

Tony Griffith [00:21:48] I would like to go back to the island for memories. Yes. I'm one of these people that do like going back to places I've been to, even if they are spoilt.

Wendy Griffith [00:21:58] But you couldn't ever spoil the beach, could you? What could you do to spoil that wonderful beach?

John Heminway [00:22:03] Well, I don't have a clue what I'm going to find there, but I'm going to go back and it'll probably be a bit tragic and it'll probably be a wreck, probably built up or some awful thing will be there. But I really feel as if I have to go back to this place.

Wendy Griffith [00:22:19] Yes.

John Heminway [00:22:20] And for no greater reason than maybe just to report back to his two or three remaining living friends like yourself.

Wendy Griffith [00:22:28] Yes, we must. Yes.

John Heminway [00:22:30] But I just want to see that that island once again for the last time. It was heaven, you know? I mean, it was just a total heaven. Yeah, when we cut therer Hary?

Crew member [00:22:42] Okay.