2660-120-000-015.mp3

Producer [00:00:03] This is sound roll 15. It's the 13th of the third, 1992, Channel 13 WNET Travels Le Mal D'Afrique. Project number 401. Sound roll 15. Turns at neg eight.

Speaker 2 [00:00:31] One sec, innovation. Yes.

John Heminway [00:00:36] Change it around. So I thought that was an important meeting. Okay, Hillary, you say that you welcome foreigners to this country. Do you know what that could mean? Do you really welcome them?

Hillary [00:00:52] I welcome foreigners. As long as they come and have the resources to live on their own and not be a burden on the society in which they're going to live. I think, you know, we had, you know, quite a change from the old days of nationalism where Africans were so anti-European, anti-foreign, you know, foreigners and, you know, the troubles we have had suggest that we can't go it alone anymore and we need to build bridges with the rest of the world. The world is a small global village now, and I believe that most Africans, in this part of the continent any way, would welcome, you know, foreigners would like to come and live and make their home, here, as long as they have the resources to do this.

John Heminway [00:01:36] What ground rules would you offer foreigners coming to this country?

Hillary [00:01:41] Well, the ground rules are really not quite worked out yet. One one has to play by ear. The important thing is that, first of all, one comes with something to give to this society. And that means you've skills, you've got resources, you'r coming with some investment. And even if you're just coming to make this a home, you really not ending up a burden on society. The other one, of course, you know, old perenial issue, you know, being sensitive, you know, on ethnic, racial, militia grounds. We have problems of colonialism where anybody who was white thought he was better than anybody who was black. Well, the ground rules today that no, you if you want to come live in Africa. You've got at least jettison that kind of. What did you the call beef. Now feel free. If no one comes out here and, you know, feels that one is able to live on an equal footing with everybody around them, then I think that would be welcome. These are the two main issues one has to consider. Come with the resources, have something that you can give to this society and come to live with and give up on the baggage, which is to complicate the relations between white and black with in this part, part of Africa.

John Heminway [00:02:50] So this is a multiracial. Yeah,.

Crew Member [00:02:52] I have to change batteries.

John Heminway [00:02:53] Okay.

Producer [00:02:54] Wild, track buzz atmos to cover that interview. [background sound].

Producer [00:03:30] 1-30. Next. This is slate 1-3-1 coming up.

Crew Member [00:03:39] Ready.

John Heminway [00:03:42] Do you have any idea, Hilary, why so many Europeans want to come to Africa?

Hillary [00:03:48] I really wish I knew. You know, I don't have an answer to that at all.

John Heminway [00:03:53] Okay what is the second question?

Crew Member 2 [00:03:54] You don't mind seeing an invasion of whites?

John Heminway [00:03:56] Yeah. So, in other words, you don't mind seeing an invasion of whites into your nation?

Hillary [00:04:03] Well, I think the word invasion is a little strong, but I welcome the Europeans coming to them.

John Heminway [00:04:10] Next one.

Crew Member 2 [00:04:12] So you say you welcome foreigners?

John Heminway [00:04:16] So in other words, you you're really saying you welcome foreigners?

Hillary [00:04:19] Oh, yes I do, I do very much so.

Crew Member 2 [00:04:21] last one, what are the ground rules?

John Heminway [00:04:28] What are the ground rules for foreigners? For pale faces like myself coming and living in East Africa.

Hillary [00:04:36] On the ground was really have not been worked out yet. If I could sttle on two ground rules

John Heminway [00:04:42] Okay. Just once. Once again. Hillary, what are the ground rules for foreigners coming to East Africa?

Hillary [00:04:50] I don't think we have worked out the ground rules, but if I could think of two, I would say one is that they should be able to support themselves when they come, and they shold leave all the racial baggage that used to complicate relations between Africans and whites.

Producer [00:05:08] And a bit more atmos here in the garden where the just on this interview. [background sound].

Producer [00:05:53] The next state that comes will be 1-3-4 on the end. [background sound].

Producer [00:06:38] That was 1-3-4 on the end. And apologies on occasion I know with these bleeps you're not seeing the number as clearly as I'd like. The the button is actually a long way up on this little box, and sometimes my palm just goes over the number. [background sound]

Producer [00:07:58] Full stop. [background sound].

Crew Member [00:07:58] My fault.

Producer [00:08:36] Was running with camera to 1-8-5. Take one, mute end board. Unfortunately camera cut on that one. Apologies that was slated 1-8-5. It should have been 1-3-5. [background sound].

Producer [00:09:15] 1-3-6 on the end. [background sound].

Producer [00:09:44] 1-3-7 on the end. [background sound].

Producer [00:10:24] 1-3-8 on the end. And this is the next day. Now it's the 14th of March and the next slate is 1-3-9.

John Heminway [00:10:45] Kuki, can you recall whether you wanted to stay in it when you first came to Africa? How long did you think you were going to stay here?

Kuki Gallman [00:10:54] I leaped out of the plane pretty deep and thought I was home. I've arrived.

John Heminway [00:11:01] How do you know that when you when you hit the tarmac of an airport?

Kuki Gallman [00:11:04] It's it's a very strange feeling. The heat on my skin. It was the colors. Somehow the smell is different, even at the tarmac. When you arrive in Nairobi ages ago, when I did the first time, it was over 20 years ago, there was something there in that little airport that you might remember very well. That was different. We had definitely hit a different continent. This was another place, and it was my place.

John Heminway [00:11:28] You'd come from Venice. You'd come a million miles away. And in terms of culture, what had prepared you for this, for this way of life?

Kuki Gallman [00:11:39] Since I was a child, my father used to talk to me about Africa. He was in love with the Sahara Desert, very different from here. And I went with him a few times, sat with him around the fires, and I talked with the Tuareg. I love the space. I love this feeling of incredible freedom that you can feel there. But it was not my Africa. When I came here, there was something different, unquantifiable. Somehow I think we we're a bit like the swallows who go back now and again to the land that they came from. I was always intrigued by the swallows as a child. I always wondered, where are they going when they're not here? I looked at this nest in my grandfather housing the country. They always came back and after a while I realized it could not be the same swallows and it was an ancestral memory that brought them to back that nest in that corner of my grandfather house in the country, I felt a bit like a swallow when I came here. I come back.

John Heminway [00:12:30] Did you also feel a sense of recognition with the people?

Kuki Gallman [00:12:35] There is definitely a common denominator. There is a simplicity and.

John Heminway [00:12:40] Right.

Producer [00:12:41] 1-40 next.

John Heminway [00:12:47] Kuki. You talk about this, let's see if the dog goes away, but.

Kuki Gallman [00:12:51] Off!

John Heminway [00:12:52] Fact you talk about recognition of Africa. Did you also feel a sense of recognition with the people?

Kuki Gallman [00:13:00] I think there is a common denominator with the people here. They're gentle, they're quiet. There is an extraordinary feeling of belonging, they're good natured. Yes, definitely I did.

John Heminway [00:13:14] Now, what was your intention when you first came here? You were, did you know that you were going to end up buying land here?

Kuki Gallman [00:13:21] That was the aim, to finally get a chunk of Africa to look after. And we were very lucky we found it. Paolo drove me up the hill and said, What do you think? And my feelings were extraordinary. my breath was taken away.

John Heminway [00:13:39] Was it just near here?

Kuki Gallman [00:13:40] It was on the top of a hill here overlooking the Rift [sic] Valley. The feeling of height is extraordinarily. And you have this also extraordinary, how could I say, sensation that you are at the top of the world and you are on the top of the world? You know, we are rather high here. I don't know how many meetings, perhaps 2,000 plus meters. And it's just this extraordinary feeling that nothing has changed. When you look down at the gorge of the Mukutan [sic] and the distance and the wind and the breeze and the noises of the bush, it was all I dreamed about. But somehow, much more. It was overwhelming.

John Heminway [00:14:17] In owning a ranch in Africa. You really are owning Africa. Aren't you?

Kuki Gallman [00:14:25] Well, I can't own anything. You can't own Africa. How can you own something which has been here since time immemorial? Which is going to be here far after I've gone. I can only look after what has fantastically been my privilege to be the trustee of. I feel entrusted to this land. I can't be anything else.

John Heminway [00:14:43] And in being a trustee of what is your you, you've suddenly have a purpose. Now, let's just look back at your life in Europe. Did you ever have such a purpose in your life, apart from being a mother, a wife, and all those wonderful things? Have you ever had such a purpose as being a trustee of a chunk of real estate that is so valuable as this in terms of its ecology?

Kuki Gallman [00:15:09] I was a strange child in many ways. I was a curious girl. I wanted to go elsewhere. Venice was wonderful. The country and is is wonderful. But it was not enough. I felt Africa was my place. It's a very strange thing to say, but it is absolutely what happened. And when I came here, I felt somehow I can do something. I can make a slight difference. I can look after this place. It wasn't my destiny. But I think it is now.

John Heminway [00:15:37] Did Paolo think the same as you did?

Kuki Gallman [00:15:40] Yes. Paolo felt a great sense of guardianship as well. He always thought that we shouldn't use too much this land. We should use it to a point. We should leave the wild animals roam free. Rather than exaggerating with the domestic stock, which would have given more of an income naturally. But it would have interrupted that balance between the wild and the tame. So yes, I would think Paolo felt exactly along my lines, and so did my son, naturally, Emanuela.

John Heminway [00:16:11] Just to go back on one thing. 20 years ago, Africa was in a state of of acute nationalism, and all these nations were, were having a nationalist renaissance. Why did you come to this? It was a terrible risk taking on a big investment in a piece of Africa. Nobody was doing it.

Kuki Gallman [00:16:35] Well, friends told us you're mad. You come to this country, I give you ten years. Paolo and I looked at each other and we said, ten years of our life, at this stage in our life, it's forever. We gamble it. Of course we come and we never look back. I'm glad I did.

John Heminway [00:16:54] Now, Paolo died. How did that change your your attitude towards the land and towards this place? in Laikipia.

Kuki Gallman [00:17:03] Well, more so, somehow the fact that he was no longer here made me more sure that this was my right choice. And I now didn't have to do it with him. I had to do it on my own. Had nobody realy to help because I was pregnant when he died. And.

John Heminway [00:17:22] Why don't we just say that once again

Kuki Gallman [00:17:23] Realy sorry because those dogs.

John Heminway [00:17:25] Yeah. I don't know. Is that dog on the camera?

Producer [00:17:27] Well, let's cut then. 1-4-1 next.

John Heminway [00:17:35] Say again. When Paolo died, did you ever think about going back?

Kuki Gallman [00:17:40] Not for a second. I was pregnant when he died, and naturally, a number of our friends came over. And to a certain extent, my remaining family in Italy and said, You must come back. What are you doing there in the heart of Africa with an unborn baby, on your own and a son of 14? But I never thought about going back to Venice. Well I love Venice, I go back all the time, but not to live. I've got really nothing to do anymore in Europe. John, this my life, and I can do things here that I believe in. I if I went, what would happen to the land? And I'd never forgive myself for that. And Paolo's death made me more sure that finally this was my place and I had to be here and carry on.

John Heminway [00:18:22] Did you, in a sense, Kuki, sort of find yourself in Africa? I mean, find yourself ultimately when Paolo died.

Kuki Gallman [00:18:29] Well, in a sort of strange way, perhaps you're right, but I'm sure I came into myself. You know, when you are a wife in Europe and you're sort of rather sheltered and you arrange flowers in vases and you look after your guests and and things like that. A bit, sort of, not reality. It's never, you don't really face what you really are. And

dramas are in an absurd in an absurd way, really a way of looking at yourself and discovering who you really are. Can you cope? Can you do things? Who are you? What do you want? Why are you here at all? And somehow the drama of Paolo's death was one of the dramas which helped me to face the person I was and take responsibility for what I chosen.

John Heminway [00:19:16] Just let me have the dog go by. It's done. It's fine. Do you think that. I mean, do you ever think that Paolo sort of had this in mind for you, in a sense. This, this role in Africa and that he, I mean, he was the the instrument of your discovery of yourself, in a sense.

Kuki Gallman [00:19:38] Well Paolo is the link. Definitely was the link to Africa. I've been here before. He and I were here in a wonderful adventure together. And in a way, he knew he was not going to survive me. He knew he was going to die young. And he always thought I could make it. He always thought that was going to carry on here. He never for a moment thought I was going to let him down and go back and be tame.

John Heminway [00:20:06] And then Emanuela when he died, did you, at that point, think you've lost everything to Africa? I mean, you've, you've Africa's taken a big price on your heart.

Kuki Gallman [00:20:21] Well, you see, good things come at a price. And I've paid a lot for what I had. I came into myself, into my identity. I lost a lot along the way. I lost the man I love. I lost my family. But I still had a daughter, a chunk of Africa to look after. And certainly it was not Africa's fault. You see, tragedy happenes everywhere. There are perhaps different tragedies, but car crashes can happen elsewhere. Certainly the snake which killed Emanuela, it was extraordinary. But this is an extraordinary place with extraordinary people doing extraordinary things. It does happen, that people meet extraordinary deaths. And that didn't really I mean, that that was Africa's fault. In fact, it was Africa privileged to, to claim the prize. It was tragic. It was it was touching the bottom for me. But then, you know, there is a bonus in that. In the bottom, you can only go up. Or else you stay there. And if you stay there, you give up everything. It would be easy to give up in a way, because everyone would have understood. But on the other hand, I would have definitely betrayed Paolo and Emanuela, I would have betrayed this memory and is potentially would have been a complete waste. He was 17. He was gifted. He was a boy with an enormous potential. And there was suddenly nothing left. But I was still here. And I could still do something, even if he couldn't do it. That's why I decided to stay.

John Heminway [00:21:57] What is your dream for this place?

Kuki Gallman [00:21:59] I want to prove that you can actually live. We human, can live in a wonderful, still untouched piece of land, in harmony with what is around us. Protecting the wildlife and utilizing, on the other hand, the potential of the land. You see in Africa, animals, wild animals, are going to be mostly in national parks, in the not too distant future because there won't be room for them. People are growing too fast. Land is shrinking too fast. But if we can prove that man and nature can survive together for the benefit of one another. In fact, then it's the answer for Africa and for the wildlife of Africa. And this is what I want to do.

John Heminway [00:22:45] Do you think if it can be proven in Africa, it could be proven maybe throughout the world.

Kuki Gallman [00:22:50] Why not? I'm sure it can. Man is man, and nature is nature. We have the elephants here. They've got other things elsewhere They've got wonderful things in America. They still have quite the number of wild animals. Forest, beautiful, untouched landscape in the heart of Europe, in the heart of Germany or Italy. And it's work to protect that. You see, I do not believe that elephant belongs only to Africa. I don't believe that Venice is only Italian or the Amazons forest belong only to South America. It is up to us. It belongs to us all. The world is very small. The planet is shrinking so fast. I think it is a collective responsibility. It is.