

The Nairobi Mall Attack: Who is the “White Widow”?

Why is She being Targeted?

Who is Samantha Lewthwaite -- the "White Widow" -- and why is the media focusing on her when there has been no evidence of her connection to the Nairobi mall attack?

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Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Terrorism](#)

There is a massive international media focus on Samantha Lewthwaite, the British mother of four young children, in connection with the Nairobi mall bombing. Given the fact that Kenya's Interior Minister Joseph Ole Lenku claims that there are no indications that any woman took part in the Nairobi attack — and that ten men have already been arrested for it — the media focus on Lewthwaite is very strange. Interpol has an arrest warrant out for her on a relatively minor and unrelated 2011 charge.

Samantha Lewthwaite was the wife of Jermaine “Jamal” Lindsay, who Scotland Yard accused of being one of four “suicide bombers” in the July 7, 2005 London bombings. She, along with Jermaine’s family, were incredulous at the accusation that he could have been involved with the bombing; all claimed it was totally out of character. There was a problem with the police’s accusation, however: it was widely reported that police couldn’t find Lindsay’s body at the Piccadilly crash where they claimed he had died.

The Independent’s July 13, 2005

“The Suicide bomb plot hatched in Yorkshire”, noted — five days after the bombings — that: [Lindsay’s body] was only “thought to be” at the blast site at that point; Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke, head of Scotland Yard’s anti-terrorist branch, said: “We are trying ... specifically to establish whether they all died in the explosions.”[1]

The local The Bucks Herald’s October 25, 2005 article

“Aylesbury was ‘30 minutes from evacuation’” noted that: “Detectives believed that Lindsay, the Kings Cross bomber who killed 26 people, was, in fact, a fifth bomber, was still alive and posed an immediate threat to public safety ... What followed, said Chief Supt Chesterman, was the biggest police operation he had ever witnessed in 22 years on the force. He said: “On July 8 I arrived in my office to be confronted by a team from the anti-terrorist squad.”

Police provided Lewthwaite with unusual police protection for the first year after the July 7th bombings, which would have enabled them to see if Lindsay was trying to contact her. In 2009 she gave birth to third child, Jamal, Jermaine’s Muslim name, and did not identify the father. She subsequently married Habib Saleh Ghani and has had a fourth child.

The Interpol warrant is for a charge from December 2011, when police raided her Mombasa home to find “two of the key components of the terror attacks in London”: acetone and hydrogen peroxide. That charge is stunning and demonstrates that police were trying to tie her to the London bombings. Besides the fact that most households probably have acetone (in the form of nail polish remover) and the germ killer hydrogen peroxide, no traces of those ingredients were ever confirmed to have been used in the July 7th London bombings. The principal forensic investigator at the Forensic Explosives Laboratory, Clifford Todd, admitted at the 2010 Hallett Inquest that no trace of the supposed “homemade explosive” was found at any of the four blast sites [2]. Traces of the military plastic explosive C4 had been quickly identified at all four London blast sites [3].

This supposed identification of explosives at Lewthwaite’s home was the start of fantastic allegations that were used to fuel a terrifying manhunt. She was even accused of planning to mount an attack on a Mombasa jail and/or courthouse (accusations that were ridiculed by lawyer Chacha Mwita as “from the movies”). With no hard evidence, Lewthwaite suddenly became a major suspect – even a “mastermind” — of the London bombings, a “top rank Al Qaeda leader” and the “suspected chief financier of Al Shabaab”!

She has so far survived a reported shoot-to-kill manhunt, with “some of the toughest and most resourceful members of the special forces and intelligence community looking for her”, including Scotland Yard, the CIA, and Kenyan police with South African detectives leading the hunt.

Dozens of MI5 and MI6 officers have been in Kenya trying to track down British jihadists: Lewthwaite and those around her. Jacob Ondari, the deputy public prosecutor in Mombasa, was quoted in July 2012 that: “The police will shoot her if they find her and she tries to run.” “Too bad if she gets shot dead.”

It is apparent that Lewthwaite’s survival has become so threatening to a western power that they are using all of the intelligence and media sources at their disposal to ensure that whatever story she has to tell will not be heard.

Notes

[1] Bennetto, J., and Herbert, I. 2005. The Suicide bomb plot hatched in Yorkshire. 13 July. The Independent.

[Http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/the-suicide-bomb-plot-hatched-in-yorkshire-498616.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/the-suicide-bomb-plot-hatched-in-yorkshire-498616.html)

[2] Coroner’s Inquest into the 7 July London Bombings. Hearing transcripts 1 February 2011 – Afternoon

session.http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120216072438/http://7julyinquests.independent.gov.uk/hearing_transcripts/01022011pm.htm

[3] McGrory, D., and Evans, M. 2005. Hunt for the master of explosives. 13 July. The Times. retrieved June 26, 2008 at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,22989-1692033,00.html>

And: London explosives have military origin – Science Daily. LONDON, July 13 (UPI):

Scotland Yard has asked for European cooperation in finding how last week’s London subway and bus bombers obtained military plastic explosives. Traces of the explosive

known as C4 were found at all four blast sites, and The Times of London said Scotland Yard considers it vital to determine if they were part of a terrorist stockpile. C4 is manufactured mostly in the United States, and is more deadly and efficient than commercial varieties. It is easy to hide, stable, and is often missed by traditional bomb-sniffing detection systems, the newspaper said. Forensic scientists told the newspaper the construction of the four devices detonated in London was very technically advanced, and unlike any instructions that can be found on the Internet.'

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