

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

MY FAMILY AND SLAVERY –
MEMORY, SHAME AND DENIAL

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A thesis in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of Anglia Ruskin University
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Finally I would like to thank all members of the Pinney family who met and spoke with me – those who were supportive of this research project, and those who would have preferred that it had not been undertaken at all. It is this latter group I particularly hope will read *My Family and Slavery: Memory, Shame and Denial* in the wish that it contributes to their understanding and acceptance of the shameful parts of our shared family legacy.

(iii)

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MY FAMILY AND SLAVERY –
MEMORY, SHAME AND DENIAL

CHRISTOPHER COCUZZI COX

Date: 07.01.2021

My Family and Slavery shines a light on uncomfortable aspects of Pinney family history and asks this question:

‘As a member of the Pinney family, directly descended from 17th and 18th century slave-owners who enriched and elevated themselves through exploitation of enslaved Africans – how can I acknowledge and atone for my forbear’s crimes?’

After years of avoidance I have chosen to explore this shameful legacy with as much honesty as I can in a multi-modal, practice led research project with a screenplay as its primary output, supported by photography and film.

I researched my own family history and that of other Pinney relatives; the historic archives known as the *Pinney Papers*; slave narratives and testimonies; the phenomenon of post-slavery trauma - and the critical discourse around race and white supremacy. Additionally, I collected photographic and other data in Nevis and the USA; considered narratives based on invented as well as factually based characters and events - then combined my research and imagination to write a fictional narrative inspired by historical facts.

Titled *History is Not the Past*, my screenplay has four main characters. An enslaved African boy OBI, first encountered in 1764 on a slave-trading ship in mid-Atlantic. An upper-class misfit girl called BETHANY, is a character based on my mother. Writer/photographer LEO is part fictional and part based on myself. His mother dies, and his Nevisian partner leaves him without revealing she is pregnant. GRACE is the daughter Leo knows nothing about, who later comes to England to study - and search for her father.

My research opened my mind. My creative practice changed it. The deceptively simple screenwriting discipline of writing strictly in the present tense obliged me to truly walk in my character’s shoes – and led to this:

Empathetic understanding is the path to acknowledgement and atonement.

Key words: SLAVERY, PINNEY, WHITE SUPREMACY, TRAUMA, DENIAL, SHAME.

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Notes:

Reading a screenplay:

My creative output, an illustrated screenplay titled *History is Not the Past* follows on page 1. My commentary starts on page 231.

Screenplays are not common outputs in the academy. To approximate how a script's narrative might unfold as a *film*, a first reading is usually done at a fairly rapid pace and if possible, in one sitting. A slower and closer reading then follows, if desired.

However, by placing images opposite each page of screenplay I have made this approach a little more difficult. In compensation, the illustrations add something new - visual context for my output's research *and* narrative – something not normally available in the conventional screenplay presentation.

Viewing the screenplay using Adobe Acrobat Reader:

The submitted version of *History is Not the Past* is best viewed as a book. If your computer screen is large enough to comfortably view two A4 portrait pdfs side by side, the following instructions explain how to set up Adobe's display to enable this.

- Open the *My Family and Slavery* pdf in Adobe Acrobat Reader.
- In the menu 'View', pull down and select 'Page Display'.
- Select: 'Two Page View' or 'Two page scrolling', according to preference.
- Then again in the 'View' menu, select 'Show Cover Page In Two Page View'

My thesis will then be presented two pages at a time, and after the opening title pages, all the screenplay's image pages should be on the left and all the text pages on the right.

The commentary following the screenplay can be viewed in either single page view or two page view, as preferred.

Intentionally blank

*My Family and Slavery: Memory,
Shame and Denial*

Creative Practice Output

HISTORY IS NOT THE PAST

A SCREENPLAY

by
Christopher Cocuzzi Cox

Third draft 2020.09.03
(word count: 30933)



Dorset (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



John Frederick Pinney MP. 1718-1762 (photo C.C.Cox 2018)

PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL DORSET - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS: The rolling hills and small farms of one of the most beautiful counties in England.

SUPER: 1747 DORSET

Ending on a prime spot offering an impressive view. LABOURERS mark the outline of a large house using pegs and twine. They are instructed by more SKILLED MEN, who work with a long tape measure, large set-squares and the latest technology of the day - a brass theodolite.

They are all closely supervised by an ARCHITECT, smartly dressed in the appropriate Georgian attire to set him apart from the toilers. He refers constantly to drawings and plans in his large leather folder.

Seen closely, the drawings reveal a large, impressive structure - and its name: BLACKDOWN HOUSE

A carriage draws up. When the architect sees who emerges, he hurries over to defer unctuously to his client, The Member of Parliament for Dorset - The Honourable JOHN FREDERICK SILCOX, MP - corpulent, arrogant and exuding a choice mix of entitlement and venality. His six year-old son CHARLES SILCOX follows his father out of the carriage. Despite his age, the boy is already displaying the superiority his birthright has granted him.

In the eternal tradition of building workers everywhere, the labourers cast subtle glances of contempt towards the client - and the architect sucking up to him.

Silcox in turn treats his architect with the perfectly judged amount of disdain necessary to maintain the rigid social hierarchy of the period.

Without looking at him, he passes to the architect a roll of paper, and barks his orders as he walks towards the pegging out.

JOHN FREDERICK SILCOX
Plans of my Estate in the West
Indies - I need a design for an
ornamental garden - as soon as you
like if you please. I'm sailing
next month.

The architect runs to catch up.



Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, South America. c.1697 (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.01)

(1)

Nevis July the 1st 1703.

A list and valuation of the Slaves, now living, left by John Frederick Pinney Esq.^r deceased (who died November the 11th 1762) on his Estates in this Island; and also of their issue and increase.

<i>Names</i>	<i>Current-money</i>	<i>Deaths & other occurrences.</i>
<i>Sewery</i>	66 0 0	
<i>Billery</i>	66 0 0	
<i>Yankey</i>	50 0 0	
<i>Paul a sugar boiler</i>	130 0 0	
<i>5 Robin Driver</i>	150 0 0	
<i>Caesar</i>	90 0 0	
<i>Dick</i>	110 0 0	

Pinney Papers, account book 27a. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo C.C.Cox 2017)

JOHN FREDERICK SILCOX
 Make them easy to follow if you
 please - my manager knows how to
 make sugar but isn't that sharp
 when it comes to reading plans.

ARCHITECT
 Of course Sir, of course.

The Honourable Member inspects the string on the ground as though he were a master builder himself.

His son Charles catches the eye of one of the workers nearby and stares at him with guileless curiosity. The worker stares back. The two of them might as well be from different planets.

The architect leads them through the outlines of the house, pointing out the ground floor rooms.

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)
 This will be the library... and
 here's the dining room...

He moves them on to the rear of the house where the garden will be.

ARCHITECT (CONT'D)
 An ornamental pond *here*... and I
 would suggest a balustrade *here* to
 frame the view... set off perhaps
 by some classical urns *here* and
here...

A loud whistle distracts them. It comes from the driver of a large wagon, pulled by strong cart horses. It's loaded high with building materials - and more WORKERS. Silcox's carriage is blocking the way. They watch as it's hurriedly moved and the wagon pulls up alongside the house outline. The unloading starts.

Silcox is easily bored. He pulls out an expensive pocket watch.

JOHN FREDERICK SILCOX
 Lunch. Come on Charles. (to
 architect) Carry on.

For a fat man, he can move fast. As he walks back to the carriage, his son runs behind to keep up.

EXT. PEGGED OUT HOUSE - DAY

Unseen by them as they drive away, labourers start to break ground for the foundations.

FADE TO BLACK.



Sculpted figure. Whitney Plantation Museum. LA USA (photo C.C.Cox 2018)

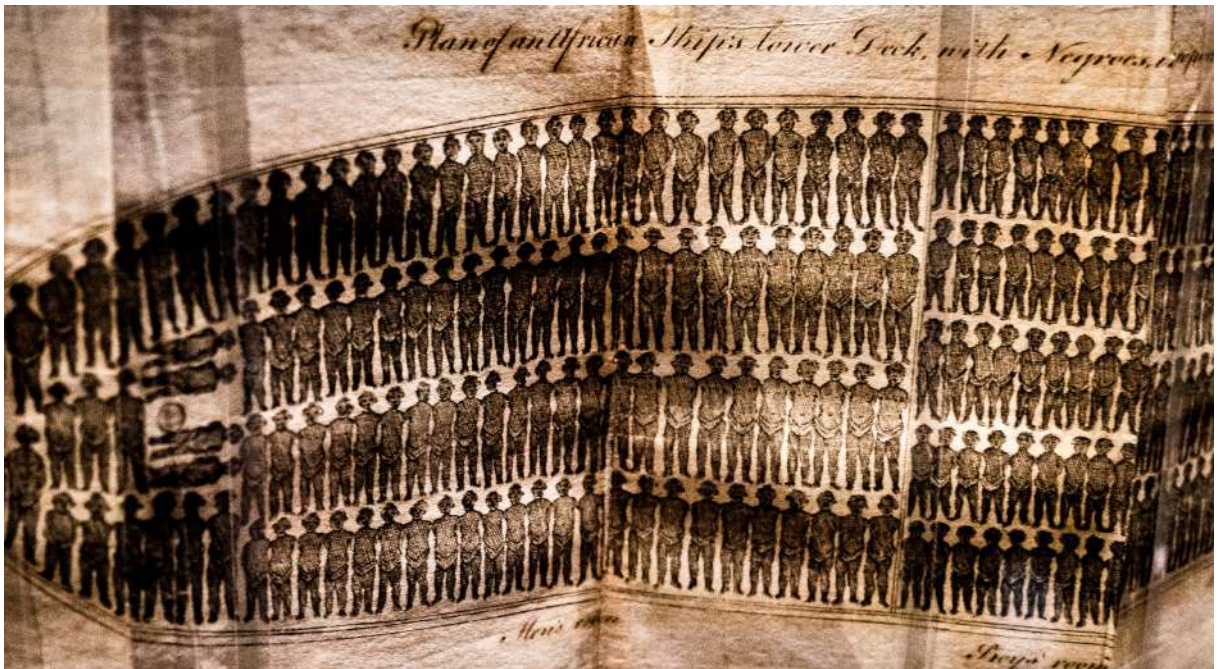


Exhibit. Smithsonian Museum of African American History. Washington DC USA (photo C.C.Cox 2018)

OBI₍₁₎

EXT. 18TH CENTURY SAILING SHIP, ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS: An albatross with its huge wingspan gliding just above the surface of the grey green Atlantic swell; the large sails of a full-rigged ship flapping in the wind; a ship's bow plunging into waves, with its name carved and picked out in white paint: 'BRISTOL QUEEN'

SUPER: 1764 MID ATLANTIC

Ending on the hatches that lead to the cargo being carried below.

INT. SLAVE HOLD - DAY

The 'cargo' consists of human beings with two features in common - they are from Africa and they are black. One of them is a ten year-old boy named OBI. He's fading fast, crammed in with many more grown MEN AND WOMEN, all chained down, barely able to move while a mixture of urine, faeces, blood and vomit sloshes around them. The atmosphere and heat are unbearable - and lethal. A few are already dead, more are in the process of dying.

Two tough looking CREW MEN with handkerchiefs over their nose and mouth go down into the hold. They release Obi, another BOY and two nearby men who look like they still have their strength. Using sign language, they instruct the men to bring one of the dead bodies up top.

The sailors grab the boys and get out of the stinking inferno as fast as possible.

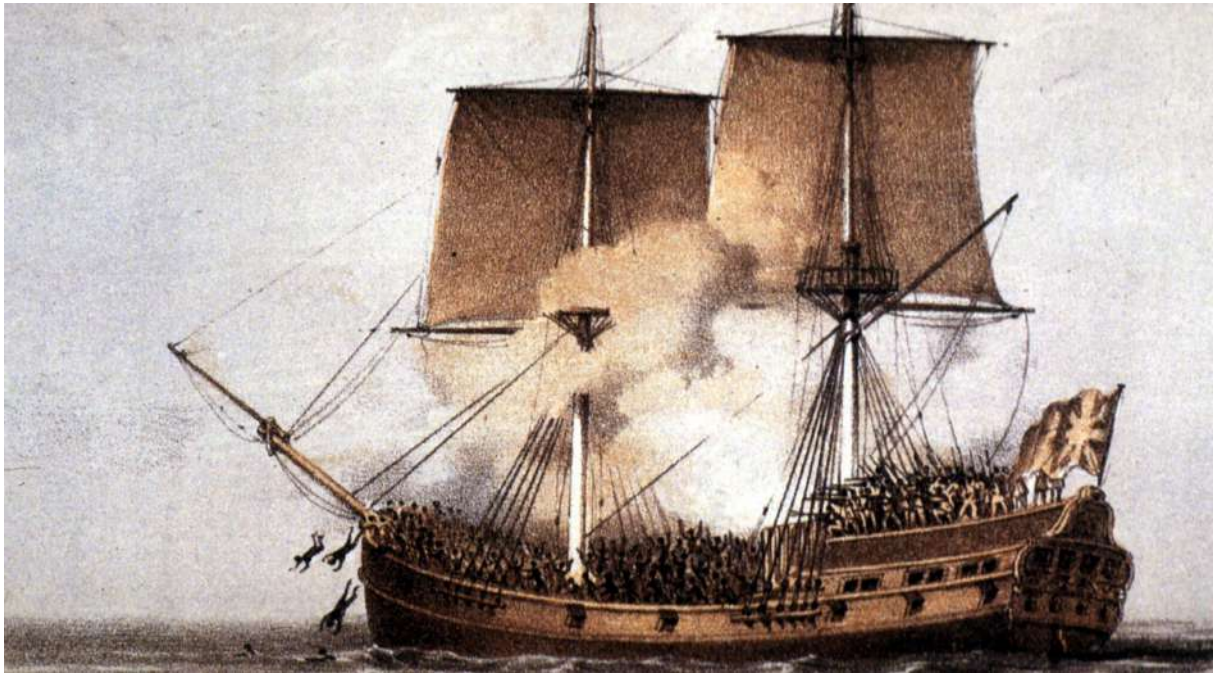
EXT. SHIP'S DECK - DAY

The sailors emerge, gulping fresh air. The boys are roughly pushed to a corner of the deck to join a young WOMAN with her baby. They watch as the two slaves emerge from the cargo hatch with the dead body. Following the sailors mimed instructions again, the slaves tip the corpse overboard.

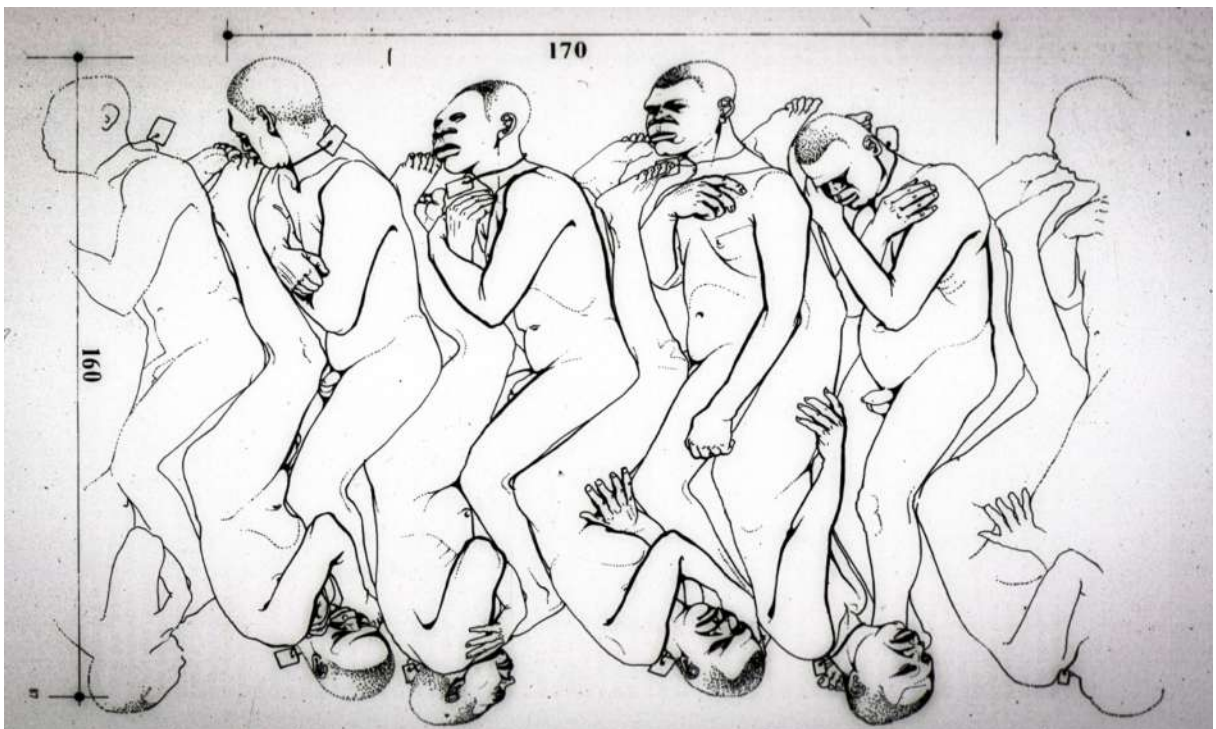
While the crewmen take a moment to fill their pipes, the two Africans lean over the side and watch as the body slowly sinks. It's a profound and instructive moment for them.

With their pipes now lit, the two sailors walk towards the Africans, pointing to the steps leading back down to the slave hold. One of them has a whip and gets ready to use it.

The two Africans exchange the briefest of glances, and without hesitation, jump overboard.



Revolt aboard slave ship c.1787 (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.01)



Sleeping positions. French slave ship Aurore c.1784 (slaveryImages.org accessed 2019.06.02)

The sailors run to stop them but are far too late. Furious, they watch them disappear among waves as the ship continues on its track.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

The Africans don't drown at once. The last thing they see before the ocean claims them is the ship slowly getting smaller as it sails on.

EXT. SHIP'S DECK - DAY (NEXT DAY)

Obi is chained up but feeling much better for being on deck. He's eaten and kept the food down. Leaving the cargo hold is like being born again. A curious boy, he studies the crew, intrigued by how they work the ship.

The woman knows a few words of his language and they make simple conversation. Her name is TOFAR. The baby is exhausting her. She hands it to Obi to mind - and instantly falls asleep.

Obi stares at the infant in his charge and remembers his family and his village.

EXT. WEST AFRICAN VILLAGE - DAY, FLASHBACK

Obi and his sister play with their baby brother outside their hut. It's not a chore - despite still being children themselves, they engage with their new sibling with pleasure and surprising skill.

After some time, their mother emerges from the hut and picks up the infant.

MOTHER

(in West African Language)
I'll be back soon. Mind the hut.

She joins the other adults from the village as they all head towards a nearby field where the community grows its food.

Obi watches as his mother walks away until she's out of sight. At that moment he hears a noise behind him and turns.

He is confronted by two fierce looking men he's never seen before. Obi knows at once they are bad - but the men are too quick. They grab hold of them both and stop them crying out. A few seconds later they are gagged and being hauled away into the scrub.

END FLASHBACK



Dr Rachel Pinney. London c.1994 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2019)



Dr Rachel Pinney. London (photo: C.C.Cox c.1978)

EXT. SHIP'S DECK - NIGHT (LATER)

Obi can't sleep. It's a clear night and the stars are so bright he feels he could reach out and touch them.

Tofar breast-feeds her baby. The other boy is asleep. It's a moment of peace - rudely broken when two sailors emerge from the dark. The walk unsteadily and one carries a bottle of rum. They have come for Tofar. No word is spoken. She detaches the baby from her breast and hands it to Obi - then wearily and with resignation, gets to her feet and goes with them.

The baby finally stops crying. Beneath the sound of the wind in the rigging, the slap of the sails, the creaking of the boat's timbers and the crash of waves on the hull - Obi hears another sound. It's a low mournful groan of despair from the hundreds of slaves below.

EXT. SHIP'S DECK - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

Obi watches as more dead bodies are brought up from below and thrown overboard as if they were rubbish - only now the sailors stand guard so no-one else can end their misery by committing suicide. He also notices that some of the crew are getting sick with similar symptoms to those chained up below.

With surprising maturity for a ten year-old, Obi has already decided that if given the chance, he too will chose drowning rather than go below again - it would be a far preferable way to die.

FADE TO BLACK.

LEO₍₁₎

EXT. KINGS CROSS, LONDON - DAY

The London skyline around Kings Cross.

SUPER: 1993 LONDON

A man emerges from the tube and heads up the Caledonian Road. His name is LEO CONSTANTINI(45).

It's a grey, polluted London morning. The buses seem to be pumping out extra thick diesel smoke as they grind their way up the hill.

As he passes Pentonville Prison, Leo thinks of those locked up inside and quickens his step.

THE KING & LOOP THE LOOP ^{AEROPLANE}

THERE WAS AN EVENT TO WHICH ALL US CHILDREN WENT. I DO NOT REMEMBER THE NATURE OF THE EVENT EXCEPT THE KING WAS GOING TO BE THERE.

WE WERE ALL STANDING UPON A WAGGON OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT AND A HUGE CROWD WAS EXCITED AND I COULDN'T SEE OR UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WERE EXCITED ABOUT. SUDDENLY I SAW AN AEROPLANE APPROACHING OVERHEAD. I IMMEDIATELY ENTERED INTO THE GENERAL EXCITEMENT.

LEG AND HAS IT THAT THE AEROPLANE LOOPED THE LOOP, BUT I SUSPECT IN THOSE EARLY AEROPLANE DAYS THAT IS ONLY LEG AND.

ALL THE GROWN UPS WERE SHOUTING WITH EXCITEMENT, WITH WHICH I JOINED IN REJOICING THAT I WAS FOR ONCE IDENTIFYING WITH THEM AND ACTUALLY BELONGING TO THE GROUP OF SURROUNDING ADULTS. MY ELATION WAS SOON OUT DOWN IN SIDE WHEN I SAW THAT IT WAS NOT THE AEROPLANE THAT WAS EXCITING THEM BUT A MAN SURROUNDING BY A CROWD OF SHOUTING PEOPLE. IT WAS KING, I FORGOT GETTING OUT OF A CAR - I ALONE AS USUAL WAS EXCITED BY SOMETHING ELSE.

THIS WAS AN EARLY START IN A LIFE LONG STRUGGLE TO PAY HEED TO MY OWN VALUES. THEY CAN HAVE THEIR KING, I'VE GOT MY AEROTRAIN.

MUST YOU HAVE A BATTLE

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Manuscript page, unpublished autobiography of Dr Rachel Pinney c.1990
(photo: C.C.Cox c.2019)

Next door to the prison is a grim, run down Victorian housing estate in the Peabody style. He walks through the central courtyard to the front door of a corner flat.

He takes a moment before ringing the bell. Visiting his mother is invariably stressful.

Just a few years short of 50, Leo has the look of a financially independent, creative individual who seldom, if ever has had to wear a suit. He has small well worn bag over his shoulder that has clearly been part of him for many years and is closely connected to whatever it is he does for a living.

He rings the bell. No answer. He opens the letter box flap and calls out.

LEO

Bethany?

He searches his pockets and finds the key and lets himself in.

INT. BETHANY'S COUNCIL FLAT - DAY

The flat is quiet. He walks straight to the bedroom, expecting to find her sleeping - not for the first time.

BEDROOM

Her bed is unmade and empty. The room also contains old green filing cabinets full of medical records which she has inexplicably kept, despite having given up general practice more than 30 years ago. He turns to check the playroom.

PLAYROOM

The playroom is where she conducts her unorthodox child therapy sessions. It is the largest room in the flat. Its main characteristic is a marked absence of toys. Instead it is fully stocked with junk - cardboard tubes, boxes, sand, broken anything that's not dangerous. Children love it.

She's not there.

BATHROOM

Finally he goes to the last possible place - and knocks on the bathroom door.

LEO

Bethany? Are you in there?



Dr Rachel Pinney c.1980 (photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)



Dr Rachel Pinney. London (photo: C.C.Cox c.1978)

He opens the door - and freezes. His 84 year-old mother, DOCTOR BETHANY CONSTANTINI lies in the bath - very obviously dead.

In his shock he notices details - her charity shop clothes on the chair; a book with wrinkled pages from having fallen in the bath too many times; a large bunch of keys on a long string that lived round her neck; a badge on her jumper that says, 'Hard of Hearing' - and floating in the bath, little pieces of shit.

Without pausing to consider ethics or propriety, he takes from his bag a well worn Leica that shouts 'professional photographer', raises it to his eye and takes a picture.

KITCHEN

Leo goes to the kitchen and picks up the phone. He looks around as he waits for his call to be answered.

Bethany's kitchen reflects her perfectly. It's dirty, anarchic, chaotic, lacking in any kind of domestic order or aesthetic expression. A few curling photographs are stuck on the walls with medical tape, along with some of her favourite aphorisms such as: 'I AM ANGRY DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE NAUGHTY' and 'OBEDIENCE IS A SIN' - hand-written in block capitals.

LATER

The call made, a thought comes to him and he returns to the bathroom.

BATHROOM

There's something he needs to do before they arrive. Using a plastic mug, he scoops out the pieces of shit from the bath and flushes them down the toilet.

Looking down at her, he can't decide whether to empty the bath-water or not. What the hell. He pulls the plug. He watches as the water goes down and then, quite suddenly has had enough.

KITCHEN

Nursing a cup of hot, sweet tea he sits at the kitchen table where they played chess or racing patience. His spirits return with each sip.

Everywhere he looks there are traces of her existence. Her broken spectacles, held together with the ubiquitous medical tape, hold his attention for a long time.

The door bell rings.



Sketch of Rachel Pinney by her mother Hester Pinney 1909 (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

GOLDERS GREEN CREMATORIUM,
HOOP LANE.
LONDON, NW11 7NL
TELEPHONE: 01-455 2374 (4 LINES)

Certificate

REQUIRED WHEN DISPOSING OF CREMATED REMAINS

Name of Deceased Rachel PINNEY

Cremation No. 293985

Certificate. Golders Green Crematorium 1995 (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

The UNDERTAKERS know their job. Leo just stands in the kitchen doorway and lets them get on with it. In short order they are at the front door with her body in a temporary casket. One of them hands him the firm's contact details - and a booklet.

UNDERTAKER

There will most likely be an autopsy which will have to be completed before you can make funeral arrangements. Call us in a day or two. This booklet should answer any other questions.

Leo's holding himself together well - but is without doubt in shock. He can barely speak.

LEO

Thank you.

UNDERTAKER

Sorry for your loss.

With these words, they are out of the front door and gone.

Before he too leaves, Leo undertakes a quick appraisal of the flat's contents. What, if anything should be kept and what is junk? It takes no time at all to confirm what he suspected - other than the odd sentimental object, there is nothing of value. Then he remembers the bedroom cupboards.

BEDROOM

In one cupboard there's an assortment of scruffy clothing - including a jumper he remembers her wearing not long ago. Another contains a reserve of playroom 'toys' - in other words, more junk.

The last cupboard is different. It's full to bursting with paper, exercise books, cuttings, diaries, photos, accounts and letters - and an old leather Gladstone bag. Leo is genuinely surprised - he had no idea his mother kept all this stuff.

He opens a notebook at random. It's page after page of memoir, all written in block capitals. Still reeling from the dramatic events of the morning, he knows one thing for sure - they must be kept.

FADE TO BLACK.



Vapour trail. UK (photo: C.C.Cox c.2012)



South coast. UK (photo: C.C.Cox c.2018)

GRACE₍₁₎

INT. LONG HAUL FLIGHT - DAY

The view out of a passenger window as the long-haul direct flight from the Caribbean island of St Kitts makes its approach to Heathrow airport.

SUPER: 2017 SOUTHERN ENGLAND

The person sitting by the window looking out at the view is GRACE SHAKIRA (23) - a mixed race Afro-Caribbean woman from Nevis, a small, round island just a short ferry ride from St Kitts.

Sensible glasses give the impressions of someone studious and serious - but behind them her youth and inexperience are evident. She's not so concerned about flying - her nervousness is about what might be in store for her in England.

CHIEF STEWARD (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, we will be landing in London in fifteen minutes. Please fasten your seat belts, make sure your tray tables are stowed and your seats are in the upright position.

The economy section of the plane is full. The passengers are largely made up of pink, sun-burned holiday makers returning from their up-market Caribbean break. The West Indians journeying to the 'mother country' don't look like the purpose of their flight is a fun filled holiday.

As the plane lands with a solid thump, there's a smattering of applause.

INT. PASSPORT CONTROL - DAY

Grace follows her fellow passengers down a seemingly endless corridor that eventually leaves her facing a large sign saying 'UK BORDER'.

Here the passengers split - most follow the sign saying EU/UK Passports. She joins the line for 'All Other Passports'. It moves very slowly.

Eventually it's her turn. She walks up to the young, white female IMMIGRATION OFFICER in her booth and hands over her Nevis passport, together with all the other painstakingly and expensively acquired documents that will hopefully allow her to enter the UK as a student.



St Kitts and Nevis Biometric Passport (photo: anon)



Pinney Papers, letter Book #1 Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo C.C.Cox 2017)

The officer scans her brand new Nevis passport and then carefully compares the photo with the person standing in front of her - and takes rather a long time over it.

There's an subtle but unmistakeable sense of hostility from the officer that confuses Grace.

Having checked everything twice and stared hard at Grace again, the Officer starts typing. Now it's Grace's chance to do her own close examination. She notices the officer's chewed nails, dirty cuffs, poorly applied make-up attempting to cover her acne.

She finally stamps the passport and slides it towards Grace.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER
Welcome to Britain. Enjoy your
studies.

There's a hint of resentment in her tone, as if she begrudges Grace somehow - and her mechanical smile doesn't soften the coldness in her eyes.

EXT. HEATHROW CENTRAL BUS STATION - DAY

The sun is shining. It's summer - but Grace is shivering. There's an hour to wait for the Bristol bus. She takes out her 'warm' coat that she had imagined would do for the winter - and puts it on. It makes very little difference.

She notices a sheltered waiting area and sits down next to a middle aged white English woman. In similar circumstances on Nevis it would be normal to exchange a greeting - but here she only dares a smile.

She gets the smallest possible smile in return. Then after a short pause the woman gets up to stretch her legs and check the timetable. She then casually goes to the other side of the shelter and sits in a different seat.

Grace stares at the woman - who now can't look her in the eye. It's a subtle but instructive moment for Grace that confirms what she had been warned to expect in England.

She takes refuge in her book.

INT. BUS - DAY

Grace has a window seat about halfway down the bus. There is no-one sitting next to her.

The bus starts to fill up. Each new passenger takes an empty pair of seats and then casually puts their bag on the vacant place beside them.



Palms. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Caribbean Sea. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

More people get on. Young and old pass her by. Once all the empty seats are gone and people have to double up, the bags are moved as if they'd been left as an oversight, not a deterrent.

The seat beside Grace remains empty. Grace notices.

The last passenger on before the doors close is a very large, middle aged black woman. She makes a bee-line for Grace, gives her a real smile - then sets her considerable bulk down on the seat beside her.

Grace smiles back and squeezes closer to the window to give extra room.

WOMAN

Thank you darling.

There's a hiss as the bus doors close and it sets off on its journey to Bristol.

INT. BUS ON MOTORWAY - DAY (LATER)

The woman beside Grace is asleep. Grace is close to sleeping too. Jet-lag has caught up with her.

She looks out at the countryside with its neatly divided fields. Everything is so tidy and organised - as though it has been that way for ever.

EXT. VIEW FROM NEVIS MINI-BUS - DAY, FLASHBACK

In her school uniform, 12 year old Grace rides the bus to school.

She looks out at the colours and vitality of Nevis' vegetation, the sun flashing through the palm trees with the deep blue Caribbean Sea behind.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BUS - DAY

Grace's eyes are closed. She sleeps and dreams of home.

FADE TO BLACK



Racedown, home of Major General Sir Reginald Pinney and Lady Hester Pinney c.1920s (photo: anon)



Sketch by Hester Pinney. Nurse bathing Rachel Pinney. 1909 (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

BETHANY⁽¹⁾

EXT. DORSET - EVENING

The house whose outline was pegged out in string 162 years ago now looks rooted in the landscape - as if it has always been there. A large extension has been added, along with some out-buildings.

The same impressive view that pleased John Frederick Silcox is now framed, just as the architect suggested, by an elegant balustrade and two large, classical urns.

SUPER: 1909 DORSET

A NURSE pushes a Victorian pram around the ornamental pond. It's getting cold and she reaches in to check the baby is OK.

The baby's wide eyes lock on to Nurse's smiling face.

NURSE

Who's a good girl Bethany?

Her hand touches the baby's forehead, then strokes her cheek. Time to go indoors. She wheels the pram and it's precious cargo towards the house.

INT. NURSERY, BLACKDOWN HOUSE - EVENING

Nurse multi-tasks as she moves around the nursery. Towels, nappies and bed clothes are hung in front of the fire; hot water poured into a baby sized bath, the temperature tested with an elbow.

She is about to undress Bethany, when the door opens and LADY RUTH SILCOX enters. She's a solid, rather plain woman in her mid thirties and Bethany is her fifth child. Elegantly dressed for dinner, she carries a small sketch book and some pencils.

NURSE

I'm sorry My Lady - I was just about bathe her. Would you like to...

Nurse has the fanciful idea that Lady Silcox might take pleasure in bathing her baby *herself*.

LADY SILCOX

No, no. Please carry on. I've come to do a few sketches.

Nurse nods respectfully - and tries to hide her bafflement at the ways the upper classes.



Hester Pinney's sketches of daughter Rachel 1909 (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Rachel Pinney. 1909 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)

Nurse bathes the baby, tickles the baby, dries the baby, puts on her nappy and night gown - all the while talking and engaging with the infant. While all this intimate contact takes place, Bethany's real mother sits apart, deeply immersed in making a series of well observed, skilful drawings.

From downstairs, the sound of the dinner gong can be heard. The Nurse brings Bethany over to Lady Silcox and holds her out - but instead of taking her, she gives her daughter a quick kiss on her forehead.

LADY RUTH SILCOX
Good night Bethany. Thank you
Nurse.

Lady Silcox turns and hurries out of the door. Her soldier husband might be in Egypt, but his dislike of tardiness rules the house even in his absence.

Nurse sets about the next part of her duties. She switches off all the lights except the night-light, settles in a comfy chair and opens her blouse.

Bethany latches on to Nurse's full breast and suckles with determination. Nurse lets her head fall back on the chair and for a moment her true feelings are revealed. Giving sustenance to another's baby, has awakened the still raw pain of the loss of her own.

EXT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

A farewell is taking place in front of Blackdown House.

Departing are Lady Silcox and her two eldest children EVELYN (8) and BASIL (6) - both very excited to be going on an adventure. Far less excited, in fact visibly distressed and crying, despite the best efforts of their GOVERNESS, are the two toddlers staying behind: ADAM (3), JANE (2)

Judging by the number of trunks on the cart, their trip is going to be a long one. Lady Silcox and her two eldest climb aboard the Rolls Royce Silver Ghost.

The servants dutifully wave farewell as they drive away. The two toddlers also wave - or rather their governess moves their arms for them.

Sound asleep, oblivious of everything and safe and secure in nurse's arms is the youngest of them all - newborn Bethany.



Hester Pinney 1875-1958 c.1910 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)



P & O postcard of SS Nyanza, boarded by Hester Pinney en-route to Egypt 1909 (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

INT. NURSERY - NIGHT

It's the small hours. Bethany wakes up and starts to cry. Nurse gets up from the camp-bed that has been set up for her in the nursery. Half asleep, she picks up Bethany and comforts her.

NURSE

There, there Beth. Don't cry. A year's not a long time - your mummy will be home soon - with your nice daddy.

Nurse's irony doesn't matter. All 'Beth' hears is the comforting sound of a familiar voice.

NURSE (CONT'D)

But I know what you want.

Soon Bethany is content. She has the loving embrace of the someone who effectively is now her surrogate mother - and a breast to suckle.

EXT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Images of Blackdown house and surroundings show the change of seasons from Autumn to Winter to Spring to Summer to Autumn again.

Ending on an image of the house with leaves falling and the same Rolls Royce entering the driveway. It pulls up in front of the house.

With shrieks of delight, Evelyn and Basil, looking tanned and a year older, jump out of the car and run to the front door - very happy to be home. They are followed by Sir Gordon Silcox, resplendent in full military uniform - and his wife Lady Ruth Silcox.

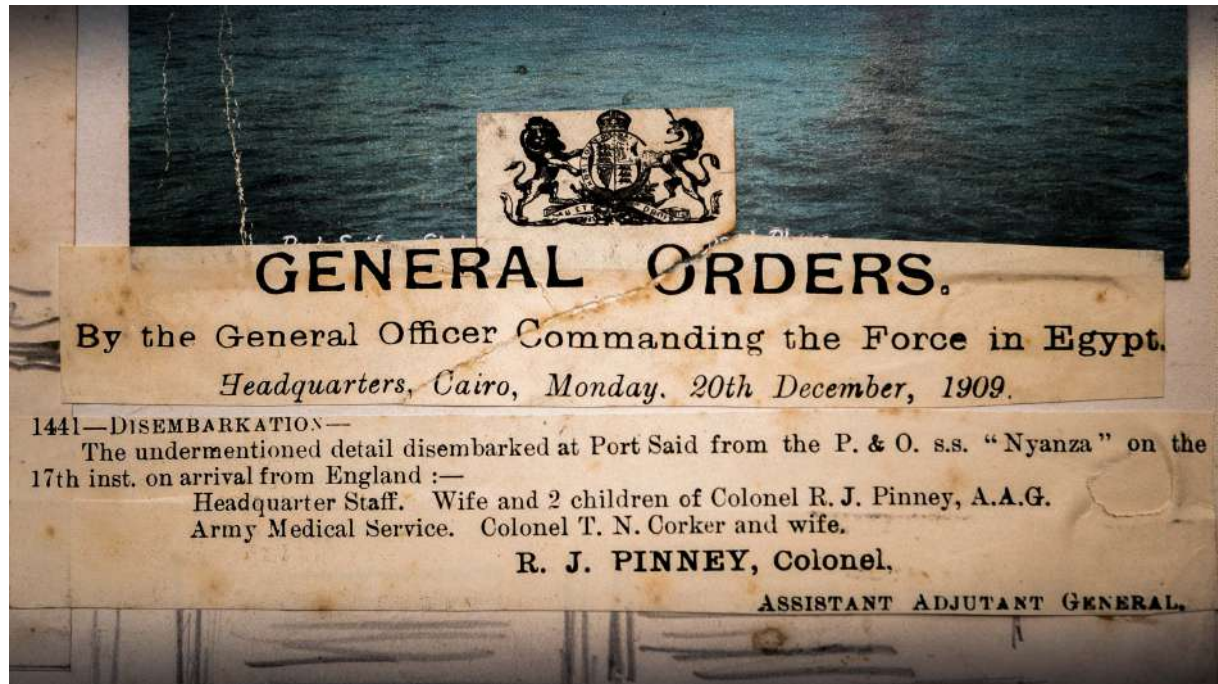
INT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

Sir Gordon Silcox is first through the front door and goes straight into his office. He slams the door behind him.

For her part, Lady Silcox is keen to see the children she left behind. She heads upstairs.

SCHOOLROOM

She enters the schoolroom. Adam and Jane are now 4 and 3 and stand to attention either side of their governess. There is an awkward pause.



Hester Pinney's scrapbook. 1909-1910 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Sketch by Hester Pinney of daughter Rachel Pinney 1909 (photo: C.C.Cox)

The governess nudges the children and Adam steps forward with his hand outstretched. He shakes his mother's hand. Jane does the same.

Lady Silcox can't avoid seeing that her children have been marked by her absence. She kneels down in front of them both and holds out her arms. Hesitantly and with nervous glances back to their governess, both children tentatively embrace their mother.

A hug is something, but it's clear their hurt will not be so easily repaired.

NURSERY (LATER)

Lady Silcox opens the Nursery door to be reunited with her baby daughter Bethany.

She is confronted by the sight of Nurse and Bethany on the floor. Bethany is laughing as she crawls around Nurse. They are having *fun*.

Unnoticed, Lady Silcox stands in the doorway and keeps quiet. She stares at the obvious love between the two of them. Again she can't help but see the consequences of her long absence - and is suddenly overcome by a visceral feeling of hostility towards Nurse. The loving, intimate attachment between a *servant* and her daughter is unbearable.

Finally Nurse notices Lady Silcox. She gets to her feet.

NURSE

Apologies your Ladyship. I didn't know you had returned.

Lady Silcox's face is stern at the best of times - now it is set like stone.

Anxious, Nurse bends down and picks up Bethany, who is still laughing.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Here is Bethany your Ladyship.
Crawling everywhere as you can see -
soon to be walking if I'm not mistaken.

She holds out Bethany for Lady Silcox - who a little awkwardly, takes the her daughter. Bethany has a strong will and is not happy to be handed to this stranger and lets her feelings known by screaming at the top of her voice.

This is more than Lady Silcox can bear. She thrusts Bethany back to Nurse, turns on her heel and leaves the nursery.



Nevis. (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Pinney Papers, account book #43. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

EXT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE - EARLY MORNING (NEXT DAY)

A woman walks away from the house carrying a small suitcase. It's Nurse. She's leaving - clearly for good. Anguish is written on her face and tears stream down her cheeks.

As if carried on the wind, the faint sound of a young child in distress can be heard.

Nurse glances back as if she can pick up Bethany's cry for help. She's left behind someone she loves unconditionally. She can't bear it - but somehow must.

INT. NURSERY - MORNING

Bethany grips the sides of her cot, like a prisoner holding the bars of a cell. With her head thrown back and using all the power she can muster, she howls for her lost 'mother' - but to no avail.

FADE TO BLACK.

OBI₍₂₎

EXT. BRISTOL QUEEN DECK, CHARLESTOWN, NEVIS - DAY

The 'BRISTOL QUEEN' is anchored off-shore. It's early in the morning and a majority of its cargo of African men, women and children are on deck, finishing their porridge. Since they arrived, their rations have increased in the hope they might fatten-up a bit and fetch a better price on the auction block.

Barely more than half of those who started the voyage are still living - and it's the fittest of those who are being prepared for sale. Included among them are Obi, Tofar and her baby.

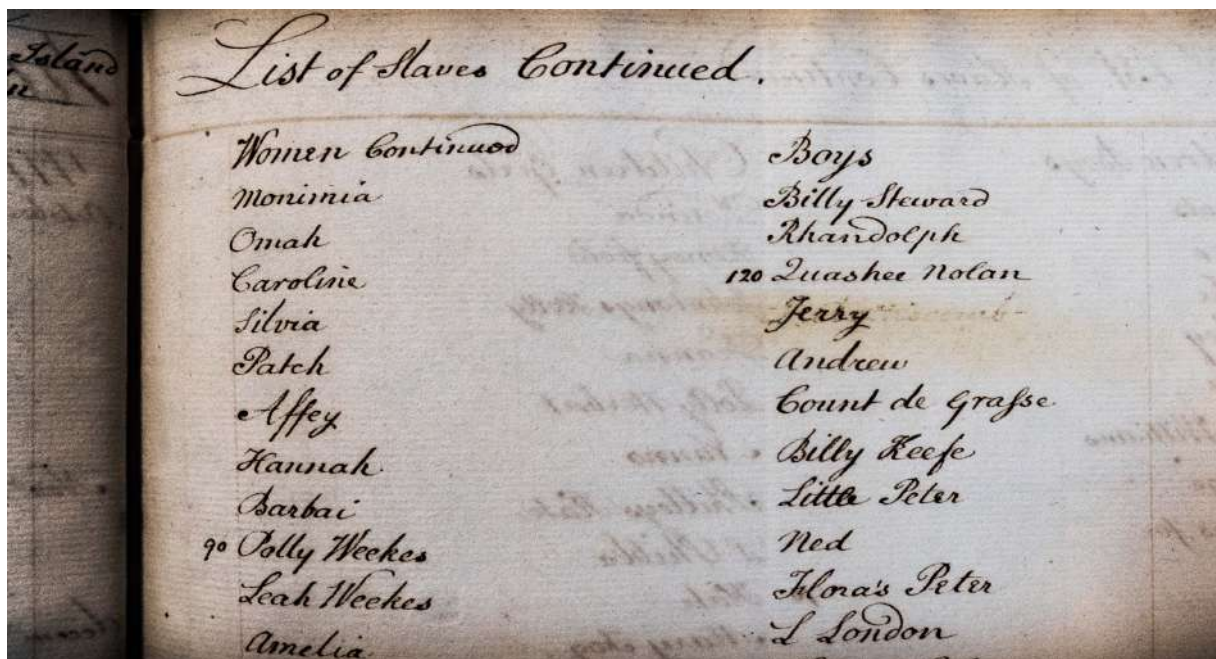
Soap and buckets of water are put in front of them. Encouraged by shouts and the whip, they quickly understand they are meant to wash themselves. Obi holds the baby while Tofar uses soap for the first time in months to clean herself.

Using the ship's pumps, the crew hose them down. They dry in the hot tropical sun and finally their skin is oiled in an effort to make them look healthier.

The crew are particularly vigilant when it's time to transfer them to the tender that will take them ashore.



Deck of slave ship. Jamaica 19th century (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.03)



Pinney Papers, account book #54. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

EXT. TENDER - DAY

In the boat transferring them to the quayside they are all chained together.

Obi, Tofar and her baby sit together as they approach Charlestown dock. Ever curious, Obi studies the approaching land.

EXT. BRISTOL QUEEN DECK - DAY

On the Bristol Queen, the remainder of the cargo are bought on deck. Some are not much more than skin and bones.

The crew go among them making a brutal selection. Those too sick to even move are taken to a far corner of the deck and left to die. Those who look like they might recover, are cleaned up. The few of them in between the two categories are forced below again.

INT. CARGO HOLD - DAY

The foul mess in the hold has been diluted with sea water and pumped out. The 'half dead' are given brushes and forced to start the grim task of scrubbing the woodwork in an attempt to remove the ingrained urine, faeces, blood and vomit. It's a lethal job - and few will survive it.

The cargo hold has to be as clean as possible before the ship's carpenters adapt it for its next use - shipping barrels of sugar back to the mother country that will satisfy its ever growing and insatiable 'sweet-tooth'.

When unloaded in Bristol, it will mark the completion of the ship's third leg of a highly profitable 'triangular trade'.

EXT. QUAYSIDE, CHARLESTOWN HARBOUR - DAY

A few young men have come to the quayside to watch the arrival of the Africans - their prurient interest in the naked females is obvious.

In ankle chains that only allow small steps, the enslaved shuffle past the sugar waiting to be loaded on to the Bristol Queen.

EXT. HOLDING PENS, SLAVE AUCTION SITE - DAY

Just like a livestock auction anywhere in the world, the enslaved are led to holding pens where prospective bidders can examine them. As they enter, a number is painted on them.



Site of Nevis slave auction holding area. Charlestown. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Display. Smithsonian Museum of African American History. Washington DC USA (photo C.C.Cox 2018)

Obi and Tofar are in a pen with other children and some of the women . Tofar holds her child closely. Fear at what might be in store for them is written on all their faces.

A succession of buyers - and a few pretending to be buyers - inspect the lots. They go up to the human beings they want to purchase - pinch their flesh, examine their teeth, feel their muscles - the children are treated the same way as the adults. Even Tofar's baby is inspected.

Obi, with the license of a child not yet fully aware that just looking at a white man is a whipping offence, stares in curiosity at the strangers all around him.

Two men approach the pen he's in. One is a tanned and experienced overseer named WILLIAM PARKER (35) He has been on Nevis for fifteen years and walks among the Africans being sold exuding confidence and superiority. Any empathy for their plight went a long time ago.

The man with him is much younger. Pale, clearly from a privileged background and untouched by hardship or hard work, he's new to Nevis - and it shows. His name is CHARLES SILCOX (18) - son of the recently deceased John Frederick Silcox. He tries to hide it, but the sight of human beings on sale is proving hard for him to deal with.

PARKER

Your father particularly enjoyed coming down here Sir. He had a good eye. The trick is to spot those who will adapt to plantation work. A quarter never make it.

SILCOX

Is that what they call seasoning?

PARKER

Yes Sir.

It's clear the older, experienced man is not only instructing the younger, but is also obliged to defer to him.

Silcox becomes aware of Obi staring at him. Parker notices also.

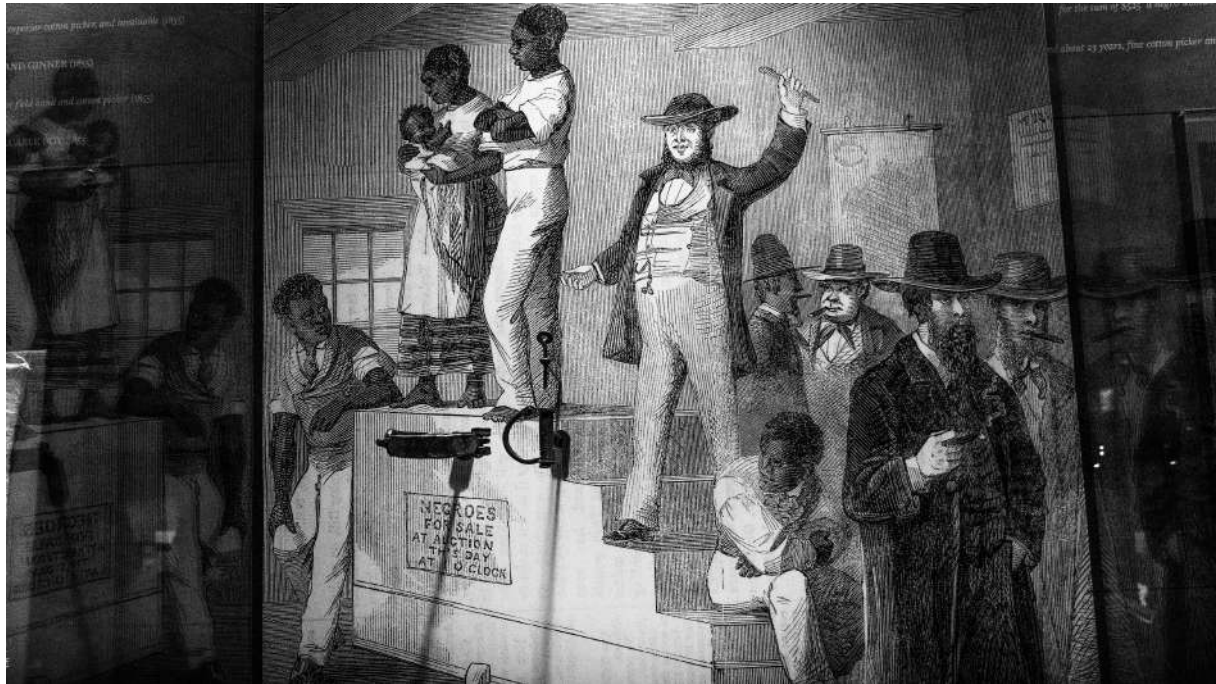
A thought comes to him.

PARKER (CONT'D)

You will be needing a personal servant Sir.

SILCOX

I will?



Display. Smithsonian Museum of African American History. Washington DC USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Site of Nevis Slave Auction. Charlestown. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

PARKER

I strongly recommend it - Sir.

Parker is finding it difficult to respect this naive, spoiled young man who - God damn it - is his new boss.

EXT. SLAVE AUCTION BLOCK - DAY

There's a buzz of conversation and anticipation from the assembled purchasers and spectators - it's popular event in Georgetown.

The person for sale is placed on a raised block so the bidders can get a good view, while the next 'lot' is prepared. It's a well practiced routine designed for the minimum of delay. No chances are taken - a number of tough looking auction 'assistants' with whips and clubs keep a close watch at all times.

Parker and Silcox take a prime spot at the front of the crowd, the better to catch the auctioneer's eye. Parker checks his notes.

A strong young African man from the Bristol Queen is placed on the block. There's defiance in the way he looks out at the bidders.

PARKER

I like this one Sir. With your permission...?

SILCOX

He looks... angry.

Parker is confident in his judgement and his methods.

PARKER

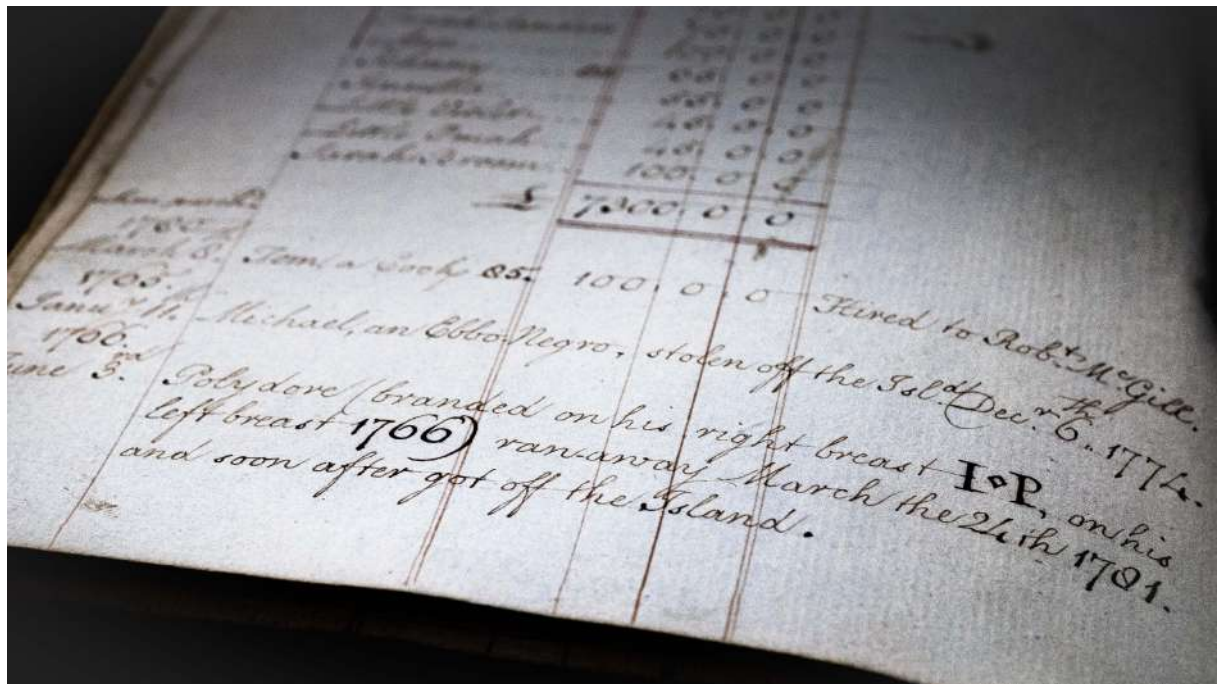
He won't be after I've 'instructed' him Sir.

AUCTIONEER

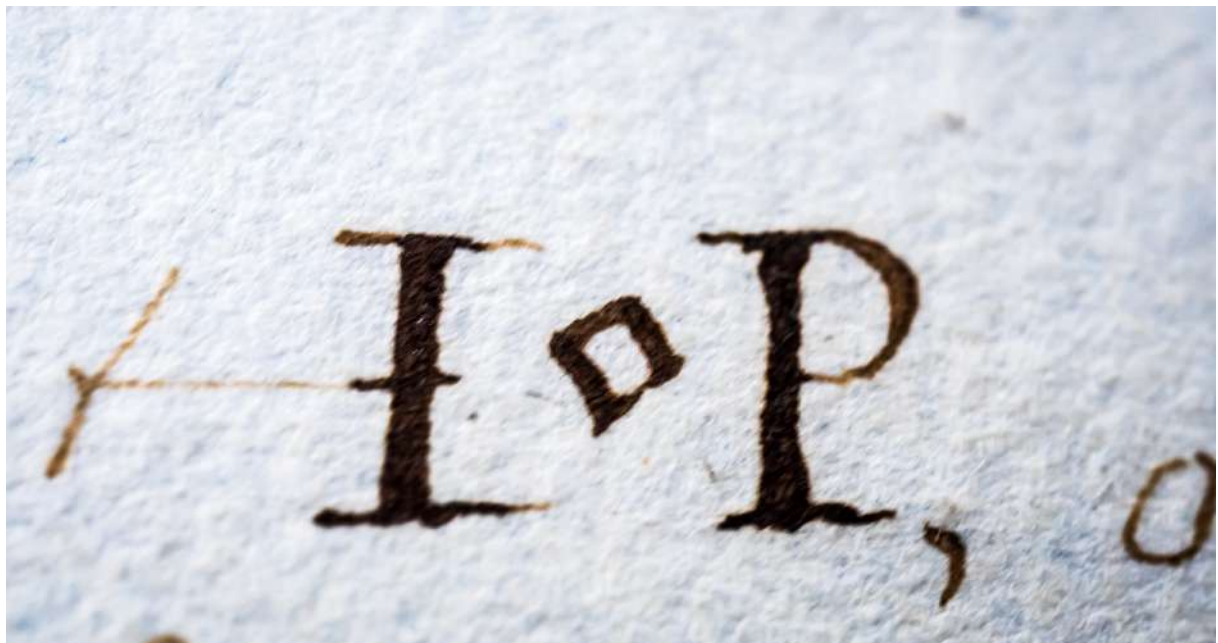
Lot 1. A fine negro specimen recently arrived on the Bristol Queen. About 17 years old. Healthy. I will start the bidding at £40...

EXT. HOLDING PENS, SLAVE AUCTION SITE - DAY

The penned Africans are helpless - they can do nothing but wait - as certain as they can that whatever is in store for them, it's going to be bad.



Pinney Papers, account book 27a. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney brand, account book 27a. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

EXT. CART, EN-ROUTE TO PILSDON PLANTATION - DAY

The twenty slaves bought by Parker and paid for by Silcox are crammed together in the back of a cart. Among them are Obi and Tofar, who by some miracle still has a firm hold on her baby.

Leaving Georgetown the cart draws a few, cursory glances from the inhabitants. Obi is as curious as ever. On the outskirts of the town he sees rougher housing and some of the poorer whites who live in them.

Once in the countryside, it seems to Obi as if the entire island is given over to one crop - sugar cane - which seems to stretch from the sea almost to the volcanic peak at the centre of the island.

They pass a field where the cane is being cut by a line of men, women and children. They are all black. A white man on a horse rides up and down behind them. He has a whip and uses it.

EXT. PILSDON PLANTATION - DAY

Parker and Silcox have made better time getting back to the plantation and are waiting for the cart when it arrives. A small fire has been lit - the tips of metal rods have been placed in the flames.

PARKER

Everybody down. Line up.

There is incomprehension from the recently purchased slaves as of course, they don't understand English. As if the problem were volume, Parker shouts louder.

PARKER (CONT'D)

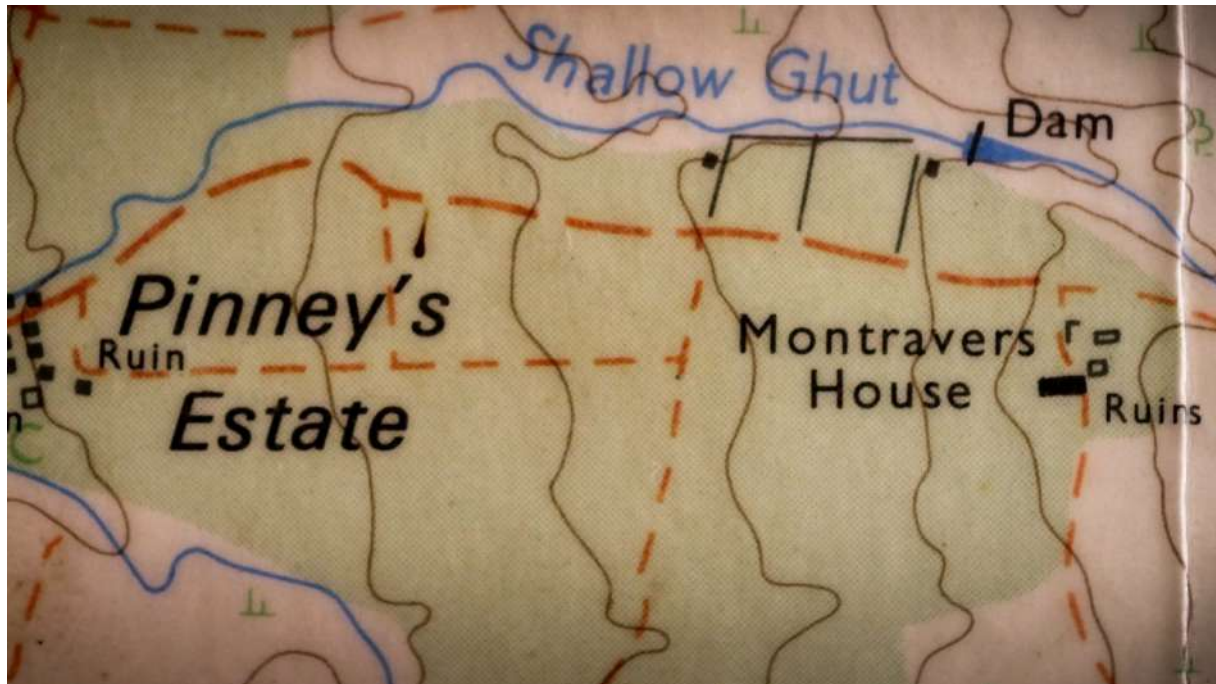
Down! Line up!

He crack his whip - then grabs the nearest arm and hauls it off the cart. It happens to be Tofar's. Unable to keep her balance because of the ankle shackles, she falls to the ground, desperately trying to protect her baby. Parker's lash lands on her back. She screams and the baby starts to howl.

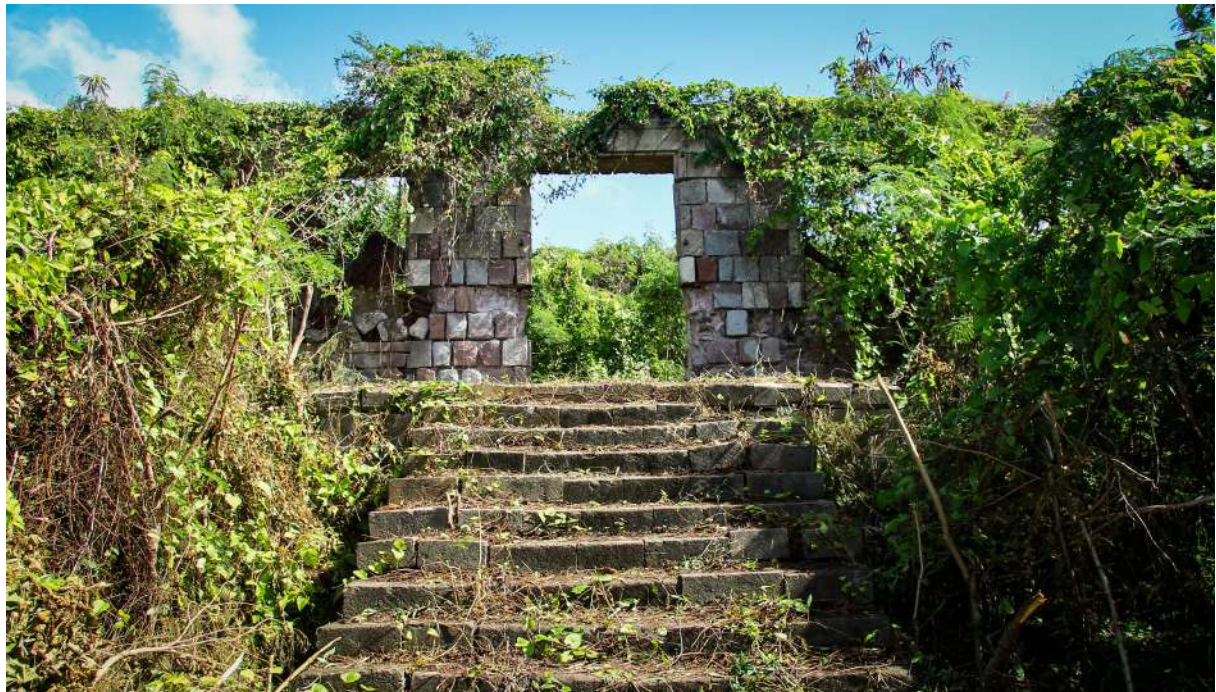
The others get the message and struggle off the cart. Their shackles make it difficult.

There follows a chaos of stumbling slaves in the dust with an angry overseer whipping indiscriminately.

There's method in Parker's 'madness'. It's a clear and immediate lesson for the newcomers - this is how things are going to be for them as slave-labourers on a sugar plantation.



Ordnance Survey map c.1950 Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Great House ruins c. 2015 Mountravers Plantation. Nevis (photo: anon)

And it's not only the enslaved who are being 'instructed' - the young Silcox, his mouth half open in shock, is meeting unvarnished plantation reality faster than he expected.

It happens that the first slave to be branded is the one who was first on the auction block, the figure '1' still visible on his chest. He is dragged towards to the fire. With the help of yelled insults and the whip, they get him lying on his back. When he's firmly held, the first branding iron lands on his right breast. The man screams. When the iron is removed, the year 1765 remains burnt on his skin. A second iron lands on his left breast. Another scream and this time it's the initials of the man's 'owner' - 'CS' for Charles Silcox.

Charles feels slightly sick, and not just for the pain the burning of his initials have inflicted.

He turns away and heads back to his home - the 'Great House' with its elegant ornamental garden.

The next slave is a woman. She too screams as the branding irons burn into her skin. It's noticeable that Parker is taking pleasure in the process. He glances up and sees Silcox walking away. The weakness of the new owner pleases him - revealed by his unpleasant, cynical smile.

At the back of the line, Obi and Tofar hear the repeated screams of pain - and catch the smell of burning flesh.

Tofar has red welts on her back and her baby can't stop crying. Fear and anxiety finally overtake Obi's curiosity.

FADE TO BLACK.

LEO₍₂₎

EXT. NORTH LONDON STREET - DAY

A street of terraced houses in North London.

EXT. LEO'S HOUSE, LONDON - DAY

A camper van is parked beside one of them. Its sliding side door is open and Leo emerges with a box. He sets it down on the pavement, closes the door and carefully locks the vehicle. It's a vintage VW - and his pride and joy.



Pinney Papers DM 2085. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers DM 2085. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

He picks up the box again and heads towards the nearest house - the one with its front door wide open.

INT. LEO'S HOUSE, LONDON - DAY

Leo comes in the front door and dumps the box in the hallway. It joins five others. He takes a break to catch his breath.

The boxes take up a lot of space in the narrow hallway but they don't totally block it. It's still possible to squeeze past them - just.

Leo picks up the nearest box and heads upstairs to his study.

INT. LEO'S STUDY - DAY

It's not a large room but it's full of books. There's also a computer with a large screen, posters, a light box, photographic equipment and a lot of other miscellaneous, idiosyncratic clutter - including an ashes container. The label on it says: 'Luigi Constantini 1905 - 1978'.

The room has the feel of nest - a place where the occupant spends a lot of his time.

He makes some space on his desk and starts to sort through the box. It's slow work - and there are five more to go.

INT. HALLWAY, LEO'S HOUSE - EVENING

Someone inserts a key in the front door, opens it and switches on the light. It's ISABELLA SHAKERA (38) - a woman of Afro-Caribbean heritage. On this day, as with every other, her work has left her tired and stressed.

She shuts the door and stares at the boxes. She shouts out angrily.

ISABELLA

Leo!

A door bangs upstairs and Leo comes down to meet her. The boxes literally come between them.

LEO

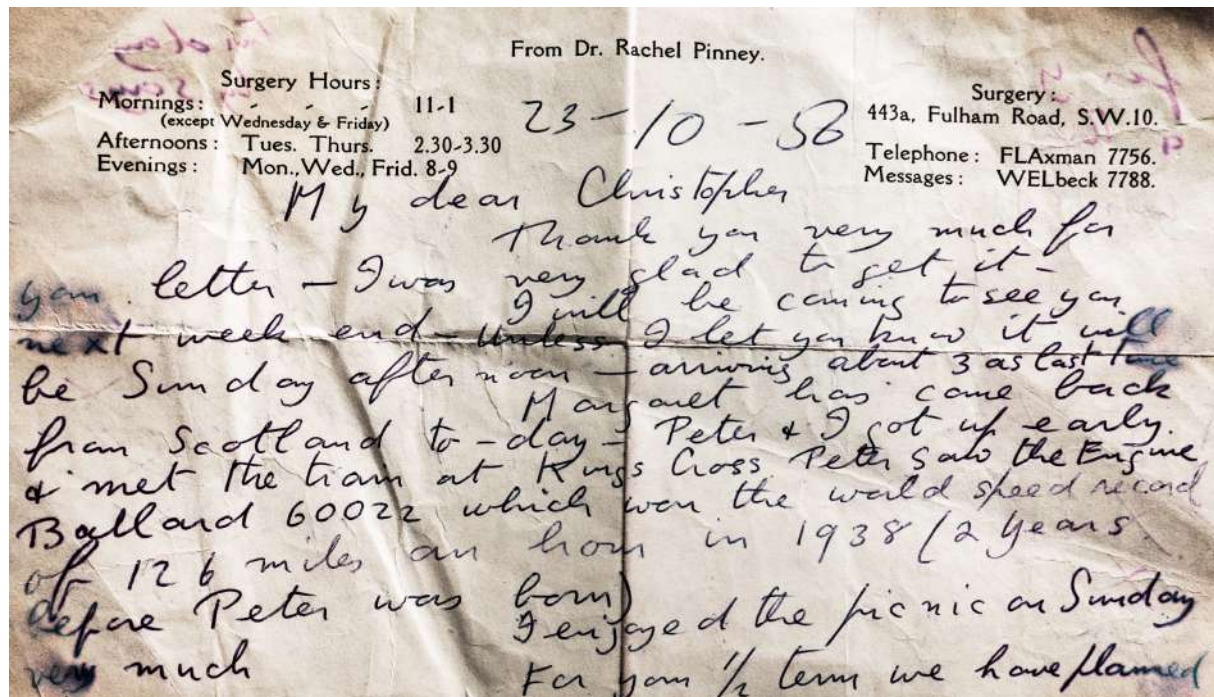
Hi - how was school?

ISABELLA

What the fuck is this?

LEO

Don't worry love, it's only for a few days.



Letter 1958. Rachel Pinney to son Christopher (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Pinney Papers, account book #43. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

ISABELLA

They can't stay here.

LEO

They're from Bethany's flat - I need to...

ISABELLA

I don't care. I'm serious. This is my house.

Leo winces at that last comment - it touches a sensitive nerve.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Your bloody mother was impossible when she was alive and now we have to live with her crap now she's dead? No thank you. I can't even get past.

LEO

If you go sideways...

Isabella gives Leo a look that could kill - then does as he suggests and squeezes past.

ISABELLA

And she hated me - always going on about '*the guilt*', whatever that was. As for her disgusting habits in our bath...

LEO

Be fair love - Faecal Impaction' is a difficult condition to deal with - and I'm going to have '*the guilt*' if I don't at least go through this stuff.

Isabella can't be bothered to argue further.

ISABELLA

One week. If they're not gone by then, I'm taking them to the dump myself.

INT. LEO'S STUDY - NIGHT

It hasn't taken as long as Leo expected. It's midnight and he has been through all the boxes and extracted the most important items. On his desk is a much more manageable pile of exercise books, some loose sheets and a few photographs. Bethany's attempt at an autobiography has been written out by hand, in capital letters.



Pinney Papers DM2085. Special Collections Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Locked gates. Clifton. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

The papers need a home. He looks around and realises they will fit perfectly in Bethany's medical bag - the old, scuffed Gladstone from her flat.

Careful not to make a noise, he takes the last box and puts it back with the others in the hall.

He returns to his study and opens the first exercise book.

INT. LEO AND ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's 2.30 am. Leo gets into bed without disturbing Isabella. He doesn't sleep straight away. Bethany's writings have given him much to think about.

INT. LEO AND ISABELLA'S BEDROOM - DAWN

The alarm goes off at 6am. Isabella's arm reaches out and presses 'snooze'. Leo snores - he is deeply asleep.

The alarm again. Isabella groans.

ISABELLA

Shit!

She shakes Leo awake.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

There's a problem with the buses today - can you give me a lift to school?

It's not a question.

INT. LEO'S VAN - MORNING

Leo is at the wheel of the camper van. The engine is running.

He watches as Isabella comes out of the house with bag full of marked books and a cup of coffee.

Tired after three hours sleep, Leo gives a huge yawn as she gets in.

ISABELLA

I'm going to be late.

The radio is on and the pips are sounding.

ANNOUNCER:

Good morning. It's 7 o'clock on Thursday 14th of September, 1993. The news headlines...



Pinney Papers W1 Box C1722-53. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Mary Pinney & Rachel Pinney c.1915. (original: anon/copy: C.C.Cox 2017)

LEO
Plenty of time.

EXT. INNER LONDON SCHOOL - MORNING

The camper van pulls up outside. It's quiet - no kids this early.

INT. LEO'S VAN - MORNING

Isabella doesn't move. It's clear she is not looking forward to another day in this place.

LEO
Have a good day love.

ISABELLA
Please - there are no 'good days'
in this nest of racists and
xenophobes who take pride in their
ignorance. Your country is fucked.

Leo leans over to kiss her.

LEO
You're a great teacher. They're
lucky to have you.

ISABELLA
(to herself, with feeling) I don't
know how much more of this I can
take.

Leo only half hears her - and anyway fails to grasp the significance of what she has just said.

Isabella takes a deep breath, gathers her strength for what lies ahead and gets out of the van. She'd dearly love to slam the door, but closes it gently out of respect for Leo and his precious vehicle.

INT. LEO'S STUDY - DAY

Leo is deeply engrossed in reading his mother's memoir. From his involvement and occasional reaction, it's clear he is discovering things about her that he knew nothing about at all.

He marks another important section with a post-it note.

FADE TO BLACK.



Pinney Papers storage vault. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Pinney Papers, account book 54. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

GRACE⁽²⁾

A SERIES OF SHOTS: Views of Bristol; the University campus; students moving between faculties - ending on students entering the building that houses the library.

Grace is one of them. It's a mild day. Others are wearing light clothing but she's got on every warm item she owns - coat, jumper, hat, scarf, gloves. She's been permanently cold since arriving - the English climate is killing her.

INT. LIBRARY CAFETERIA - DAY

Term has barely started and students are already forming into cliques. Grace sits on her own with a coffee. Aside from being black, there's a certain independence about her - she's older and more mature than the excited freshers just out of school, trying to be all grown up and cool.

INT. SPECIAL COLLECTIONS READING ROOM. - DAY

The pages of a two hundred year old book of accounts are carefully turned. The first impression is of elegant penmanship, inventories of property and profit and loss accounts.

The person turning the pages is Grace.

She and the other readers are monitored by a librarian working at a nearby desk.

A box beside her contains the volumes waiting to be looked at. 'SILCOX PAPERS' is written on the side in large letters.

The elderly man sitting next to Grace examines old etchings of Bristol churches. There's a leisurely, academic detachment in the way he goes through his archives.

Grace turns the next page - and is brought up short. What she's revealed are two pages covered in names, under three headings: men, women, children.

She carefully reads each name.

Seen closer the lists seem to go on forever - and none of them are their real African names.

The cruelty and injustice lying between every single line eventually overwhelms her and she starts to weep.

The librarian discretely looks at her - he's concerned.

Grace sits up and wipes away the tears - and out of the blue a long forgotten childhood memory comes back to her.

INT. GRACE'S CHILDHOOD HOME, NEVIS - EVENING, FLASHBACK

Grace is 6. She's in her bedroom. Story time is over and her mother Isabella stands at the door, about to switch off the light.

GRACE

Mummy - is Rodney my Daddy?

Isabella sighs. A perfect procrastination ploy by her daughter who daily is revealing her intelligence.

ISABELLA

No. He's your step-father.

GRACE

So - who is my real Daddy?

ISABELLA

It really is time you went to sleep
Grace - you have school tomorrow.

GRACE

Mummy?

ISABELLA

Yes?

GRACE

Why don't you want to tell me?

Isabella's next line of defence is to show a flash of irritation that threatens to turn into anger if a certain little girl doesn't stop asking annoying questions.

ISABELLA

I can't talk about this now.
Tomorrow.

Grace can see straight through her mother's evasion.

GRACE

I only want to know where I come
from.

This is something Isabella can use to steer away from the one topic she's determined to evade at all costs.

ISABELLA

We are descended from slaves who
were kidnapped in Africa and bought
here to work on the sugar
plantations here on Nevis.

GRACE

Slaves? Was that bad?



Memorial wall. Whitney Plantation Museum. LA USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

Seney	66
Billery	50
Yankee	130
Paul - a sugar boiler	150
Robin - Driver	90
Caesar	110

Pinney Papers, account book #27a. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

ISABELLA

It was awful. The English were cruel. You will learn all about it at school - maybe not tomorrow, but soon.

GRACE

Was my Daddy a slave?

ISABELLA

No. Slavery ended a long time ago. I was told by grandma that we are descended from two slaves who managed to escape. She taught me their names. Actually they each had two names - one given by the man who owned them, and other given by their family in Africa - their real names.

Grace sits up - this is really interesting.

GRACE

What were they? Tell me!

ISABELLA

Their real names were Obi and Ebele. Their slave names were Liverpool and Nelly. Now go to sleep.

Grace lies down again. The light goes off. The door closes.

Wide awake, Grace whispers the names over and over in the dark.

GRACE

Obi and Ebele, Liverpool and Nelly.
Obi and Ebele, Liverpool and Nelly.
Obi and Ebele, Liverpool and Nelly.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SPECIAL COLLECTIONS - DAY

Grace opens the book again and her finger moves down the list of men and finds a Liverpool. She moves over to list of women and finds a Nelly

Something makes her continue down the lists and by the time she's gone through them all, she's found two more men called Liverpool and three more women called Nelly.



Pinney Papers, account book #50. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

36 A List of Old, useless maimed and diseased Slaves. Manumitted
now living on the Estates of John Pinney Esq. July 30th 1794. —

Old Molly	Roses Jenny
Tyty	Abba
Old Milla	Bennuba
Old Yabba	Bettis-omb
Congo Flora	Old Yankee.
	10

Increase of Slaves since July 30 th 1794. —		Decrease of Slaves since July 30 th 1794. —	
1794		1794	
August 26	a boy by Molly called John-Peter	October 4 th	John Peter dead of a dropsey
Decem ^r 29	a girl by Sally Paden called Mary	8	Codando. drowned
1795		1795	
January 6	a girl by M ^r litta called Princeps	April 23	Nomoon died of the Kings-evil
Febry 7	d. by R. Quashaba called Nanny		
17	d. by Franky Vaughan called Ritta		

Mules 23
Vero ...
Madama
Jenny
Madam
John
Molly
Lango
Kempis
Jenny
Marote
Mickoy
Nancy
Quashaba
Penny
Patty

Pinney Papers, account book #50. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

She shrugs. Perhaps it's enough to know that Silcox *might* have owned her forebears - and if it wasn't him, then it was for sure some other bastard just like him. It's surprising how satisfying it is to know that they got away.

Grace puts the books back in their boxes and takes them over to the librarian.

The sign on his desk says: *STEPHEN GIBSON - Special Collections*. In his 50's, he's a sympathetic looking man wearing a well worn jacket with leather patches on the cuffs and elbows, baggy cord trousers and glasses.

He looks up from his administrative work.

STEPHEN

Ready for the next box?

He glances at Grace's library request.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

27a - Charles Silcox's letter books?

GRACE

Thanks, but I think I need a break.

Stephen has taken Grace under his wing and wants to do what he can to help her. Many people come to study the Silcox papers, but very few of them are descendants of the enslaved, who weep when they read lists of slave names.

STEPHEN

Are you still wanting to meet some descendants of the Silcox family?

GRACE

Do you think they will want to meet me?

STEPHEN

I don't see why not. I can ask those I know if they're happy for me to give out their contact details.

This is little too soon for Grace.

GRACE

That would be great - but I'm not ready yet.

Stephen thinks for a moment.



Racedown c.1920 . Dorset (original: anon/copy: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney children c.1918. (original: anon/copy: C.C.Cox 2017)

STEPHEN

They're not a homogenous group you know - take a look at the papers of Dr Bethany Constantini. She was a Silcox - but quite eccentric. We acquired them over 20 years ago.

GRACE

Maybe later

Stephen watches her go with a thoughtful expression. Every time he meets Grace he has the strange feeling he's seen her somewhere before.

FADE TO BLACK.

BETHANY⁽²⁾

EXT. FRONT OF BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

The front of the house, looking beautiful in dappled sunlight.

SUPER: 1920 DORSET

Bethany's two brothers and two sisters (all of them now eleven years older and teenagers) run out of the front door onto the large front lawn. They carry the mallets, hoops and balls necessary for a game of croquet.

Slowed down by her limp, Bethany, now aged 11, follows behind. By the time she arrives, her siblings have paired up and are playing.

BETHANY

Can I play?

No-one answers. Then her older brother BASIL (17) speaks for them all.

BASIL

No you can't. It's not a game for children. Go away.

Seemingly inured to their cruelty but underneath hurt and rejected, Bethany complies.

For as long as she can remember she's been different - the odd one out in the family, so being teased and excluded by her siblings is not unusual. And anyway, she has a secret - her own special place where she goes to escape them.



Pilsdon. Dorset (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Stream. Dorset (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

EXT. STREAM IN COPSE NEAR BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

A stream winds its way through a small copse. It's a magical place and her secret refuge.

She takes off her boots and paddles in the stream, then gets involved in building a dam. Fully absorbed in her play, she comes back to reality when she hears the striking of the hour on a distant church clock.

Bethany carefully counts number of chimes - there are ten. It's time to go home - she has an important appointment at 11 and can't be late.

Limping, she sets off back to the house.

EXT. REAR OF BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

The elegant balustrade and two large, classical stone urns frame the familiar view at the back of Blackdown House

Bethany emerges from a small copse and walks up towards the house. She crosses the 'ha-ha', goes past the urns, the ornamental pond and enters the back door of the house.

INT. BOOT ROOM, BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

Bethany takes off her muddy boots and puts on her house shoes. She brushes off the leaves and mud clinging to her smock, carefully washes her hands - then heads off into the house.

She has an important appointment and mustn't be late.

INT. HALLWAY, BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

Bethany goes up the stairs. Half way up she meets the housekeeper LOUISE SCOTT (30), coming down.

MRS SCOTT

Hello Bethany. Where are you off to?

Bethany responds with excited pride.

BETHANY

Daddy wants me to help him with the accounts.

She hurries on, desperate not to be late.

There's an anxious expression on Mrs Scott's face as she watches the excited 11 year old run on up the stairs.



Major General Sir Reginald Pinney KCB c.1920 (original: anon/copy: C.C.Cox 2018)



Rachel Pinney 1920 aged 11 (original: anon/copy: C.C.Cox 2018)

INT. CORRIDOR BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

Bethany walks down the corridor and stops at her father's study door. She knocks.

A military voice barks from inside.

VOICE

Enter!

Bethany does as commanded and enters. She closes the door carefully. Being in father's study is a rare privilege.

INT. GORDON SILCOX'S OFFICE - DAY

There's something about a Major General. In or out of uniform Gordon Silcox is a man in charge. He looks at the clock on the mantelpiece.

SIR GORDON SILCOX

On time, good girl Bethany. Hold out your hands.

Bethany was expecting this - it's why she washed them. Her father inspects them carefully, front and back.

SIR GORDON SILCOX (CONT'D)

Clean. Good. All present and correct.

BETHANY

What's the job you want me to do Daddy?

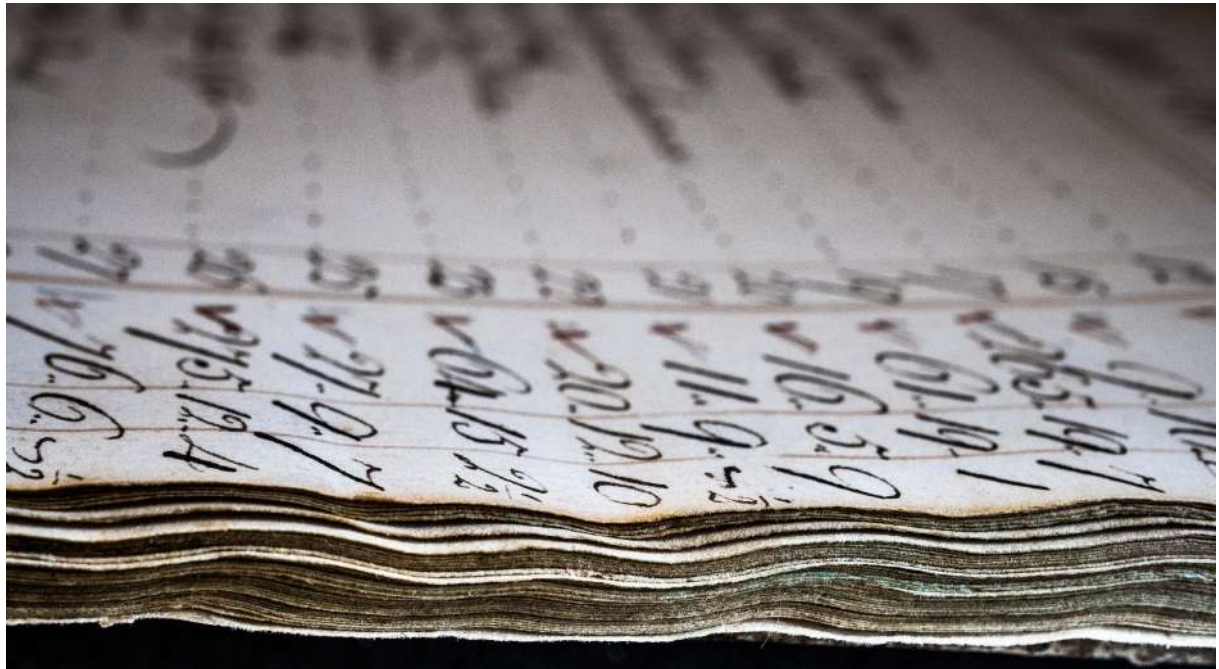
He leads her to the desk where there's a ledger and a small pile of receipts.

SIR GORDON SILCOX

I've chosen you over your brothers and sisters. You're good at adding up and have neat hand writing. Keeping proper accounts is very important and I'm going to show you how to do them. It will be your own, special job.

Bethany seems to physically grow as she hears this. For once, something special, just for her.

They sit and Gordon Silcox patiently explains the system and shows her what to do. Bethany's keen to learn and eager to please.



Pinney Papers, account book #43. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Norfolk. (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

SIR GORDON SILCOX

Put the amount in this column
here... Write what the expenditure
was for here... Blot as you go...
Keep going till this column is
full... Then comes the tricky bit -
adding it all up.

Bethany puts all her energy into doing the best she can. She longs for praise and approval from her father.

While she works he goes to the window. His wife, Lady Ruth Silcox is about to leave for a Women's Institute meeting. The chauffeur holds the door open for her. He watches the car drive away - and then shifts his attention to his other children, fully engrossed in playing croquet on the front lawn - and showing signs of being occupied for a while yet.

BETHANY

Finished Daddy.

He turns back to his youngest daughter - since her birth, the misfit and odd one out among his children.

He studies her work - which given that he has deliberately oversold her abilities, is as good as could be expected from an eleven year old.

SIR GORDON SILCOX

Excellent work Beth. Well done. Now
for your reward.

Major General Sir Gordon Silcox commanded a division numbering many thousands of men during the first world war. When he gave orders they were obeyed. What realistic chance does his eleven year old daughter have?

SIR GORDON SILCOX (CONT'D)

Lie down on the rug.

Bethany looks uneasy and confused - but complies.

LATER

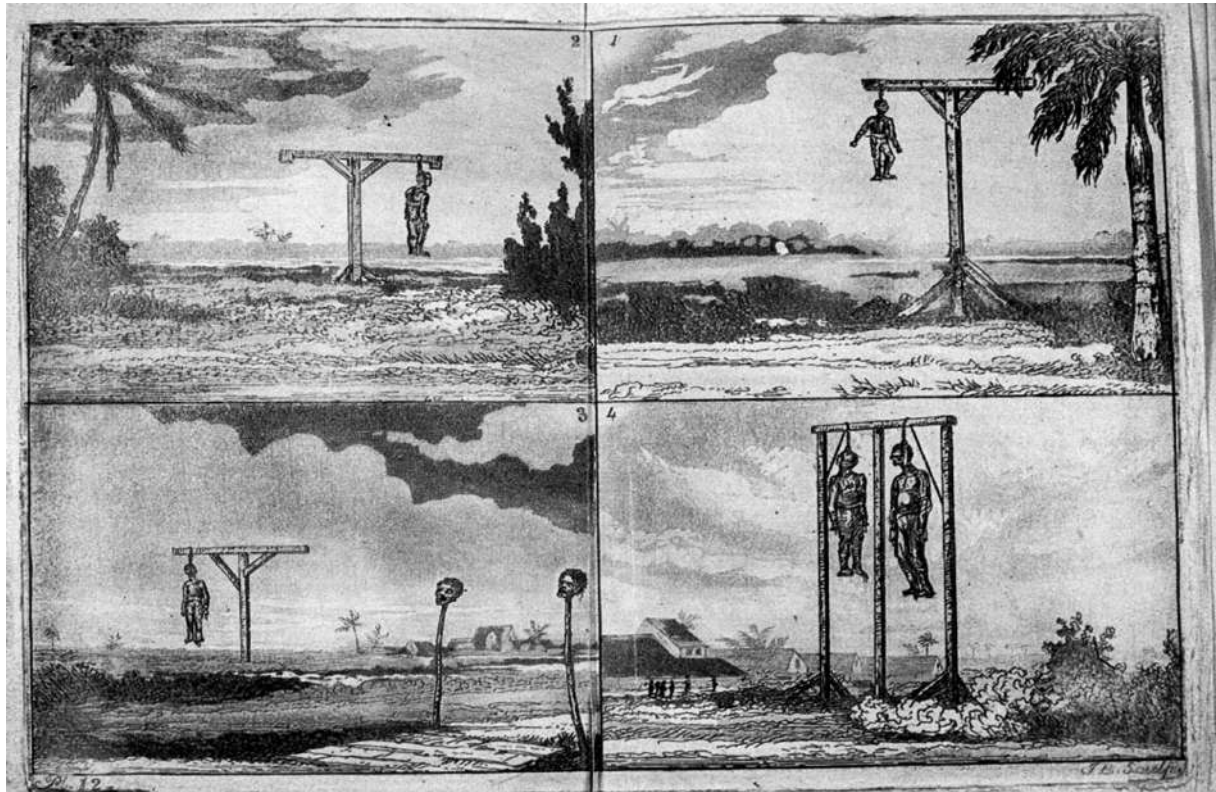
Bethany stands by the desk. She smooths her smock. She is confused. What has just happened makes no sense to her at all.

To the sound of a toilet flushing, Sir Gordon Silcox comes back into the room.

GORDON SILCOX

You can go now Bethany.

She's turning the door handle when her father comes up behind her. He puts his hand on her shoulder.



Executed Slaves c.1823 Demerara, British Guiana. (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.05)



'Coppers'. Whitney Plantation Museum. LA USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

SIR GORDON SILCOX
 What just happened is our little
 secret Bethany - and must never be
 spoken of. Is that understood?

BETHANY
 Yes Daddy.

EXT. CORRIDOR - DAY

A troubled and confused Bethany walks slowly down the
 corridor - unaware that her father's abuse will continue for
 years - and of the profound damage it will do her.

FADE TO BLACK.

OBI₍₃₎

EXT. PILSDON PLANTATION, NEVIS - DAWN

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

The growing sugar cane. The empty wagons used to carry it to
 the mill, the receiver and the line of coppers, the tache,
 the half constructed hogsheads (barrels) are all still and
 quiet, waiting for the harvest to start.

SUPER: 1765 NEVIS

Ending on a field gang on their way to their enforced labour.
 As they walk along a track, they pass one of their own
 hanging by his neck from a tree. His hands are tied behind
 his back. Some refuse to look, others snatch a furtive
 glance.

Arbitrary execution, terror, brutality, torture, rape - the
 'sine qua non' levers of control on a slave-labour sugar
 plantation.

The slaves are followed by an overseer on his horse with a
 whip in his hand. It's Parker.

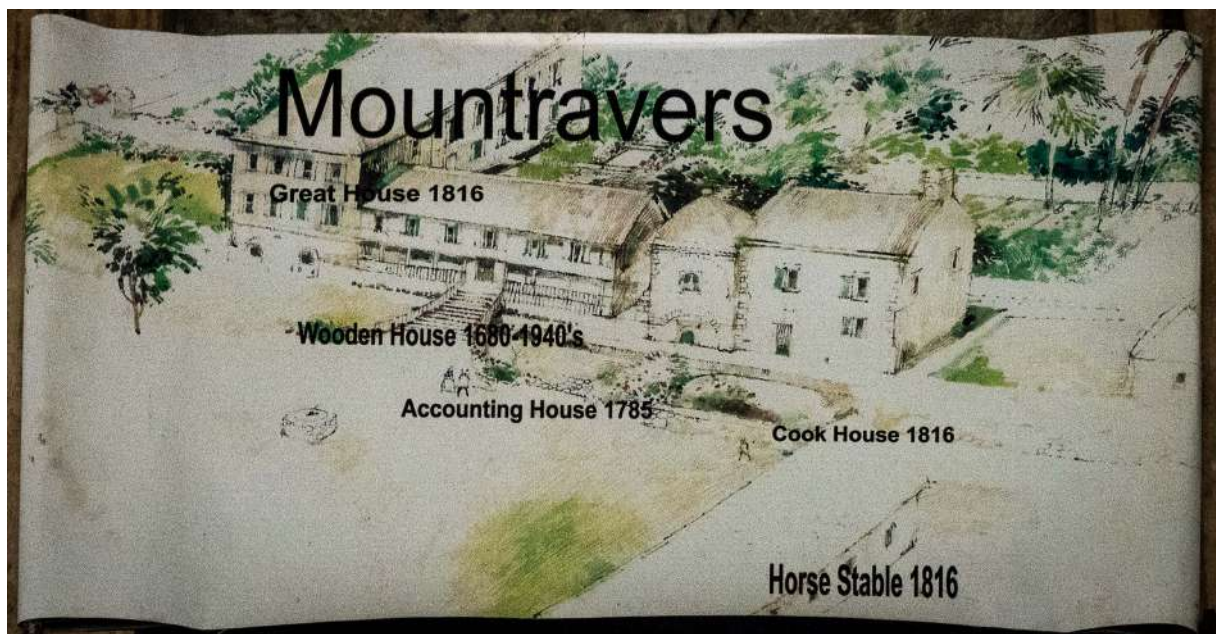
INT. GREAT HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Obi sleeps in a corner of the kitchen. As a house slave he
 has to be available day and night. As he turns in his sleep
 his blanket slips and the marks on his chest become visible.
 No longer raw burns, the scabs have gone and the brands are
 now a part of him.

Tofar, the woman who survived the middle passage with him,
 arrives for work. She shakes Obi awake.



Ruins of Great House c.2015. Mountravers Plantation. Nevis (photo: anon)



Artist impression of Mountravers Great House made c.1999. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

Her child has grown in the last nine months and is now on solid food, but still appreciates the comfort of his mother's breast.

Obi and Tofar help each other out. While the infant suckles, Obi does her work - he lights the fire, fetches water and prepares Charles Silcox's morning tea.

He lays the tray and then carefully carries it through the house to his master's bedroom.

INT. DOOR OF SILCOX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

He knocks at the door. A muffled voice calls from inside the room.

SILCOX (O.S.)

Enter.

INT. CHARLES SILCOX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Saying nothing, he puts the tray beside the bed, picks up the chamber pot and hurries to leave.

Silcox calls out just as he's at the door. He tries to sound friendly, always an ominous sign.

SILCOX

Come here boy.

Obi pretends not to hear him, and quickly gets out of the door. He knows to his cost what is likely to be on Silcox's mind first thing in the morning.

EXT. PRIVY - MORNING

Obi leaves the privy. He's emptied the chamber pot, and also relieved himself.

EXT./INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

As he approaches the kitchen he hears the cry of a baby in distress. He enters to find the overseer Parker holding Tofar's baby. There are scratches on Parker's face and Tofar lies on the floor, blood pouring from a blow to her head.

Without a second thought Obi runs at Parker and tries to retrieve the baby - but himself receives a blow that knocks him across the room.

Dazed, he watches as Parker leaves with the baby.



Mary Jane Pinney 1832-1922. Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Sculpted figure of house servant. Whitney Plantation Museum. LA USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

LATER

The kitchen is busy. Two other cooks are preparing lunch. Tofar's head wound is roughly covered with a blood soaked bandage - the injury looks serious and she's slumped in the corner where Obi sleeps, barely conscious. If the head wound doesn't kill her, despair at the loss of her child will.

EXT. REAR OF GREAT HOUSE - DAY

Obi, with a split lip and bruised face, has Silcox's shoes and boots around him and is engrossed in polishing them.

He looks up and sees Parker and Silcox having an intense conversation, occasionally looking in his direction. Silcox nods agreement and the two men walk away.

INT. SILCOX'S BEDROOM - DAY

Obi replaces the chamber pot, lines up the burnished shoes neatly, picks up items of dirty clothing from the floor and puts them in a bag for washing. Then he makes the bed and tidies the room - all as he has been instructed.

INT. GREAT HOUSE - DAY

On the way to the laundry, he passes the largest and most impressive room in the Great House - it's a mix of ballroom, library and drawing room. He is expressly forbidden to enter it.

The house is strangely quiet. Obi stands in the doorway. He listens carefully - there seems to be no-one about.

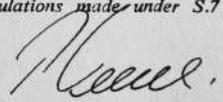
His curiosity gets the better of him. He drops the bag of dirty clothes by the door and steps into the room.

He picks up ornaments and examines them, he sits on one of the sofas, he examines the portraits on the wall - particularly one of a corpulent John Frederick Silcox, Charles' father.

Lying on a table is an atlas, open at a page showing a circular island. Obi can't read or write but sees the five letters N. E. V. I. S.

He turns the page and sees a lot of blue which must be sea, and many more small islands in semicircle. He searches for the island with same letters and finds it. He sees there are many other islands nearby - most of them bigger.

**Certificate for Burial of Ashes of a Body Cremated at the
GOLDERS GREEN CREMATORIUM**
pursuant to the regulations made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department 1930

Cremation No. 293985	<p>This is to Certify that <small>(a) The Registrar's Certificate for Disposal (after Registry of Death) = (b) The Coroner's Certificate in form E for Cremation</small></p> <p>of the late <u>Rachel PINNEY.</u> aged <u>86 Years.</u> who died on <u>20th. October, 1995</u> at <u>28 Wallace House, Caledonian Road, N7</u></p> <p>(a) registered by the Registrar of Births and Deaths on the <u>19</u> day of <u>19</u> Entry No. <u> </u> Registration District <u>Islington.</u> Sub-District <u>Islington.</u> (b) given by the Coroner for <u>Greater of London.</u></p> <p>has been produced to the Company's Medical Referee and filed in accordance with the Regulations made under S.7 of the Cremation Act, 1902 (2 Ed. VII, c.8).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">  P.A.N. Reeves Registrar. (Superintendent.) </p> <p>Dated <u>3rd. November, 1995</u></p>
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This Certificate is required to be delivered to the authority having charge of the cemetery, burial ground,
 churchyard or Garden of Remembrance in which the ashes of the deceased are to be buried or scattered.

L.B. Ltd. Issued by GOLDERS GREEN CREMATORIUM, HOOP LANE, LONDON, N.W.11

Cremation certificate 1995 (copy C.C.Cox 2018)



Rachel Pinney c.1934 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)

There's no noise, but something makes him look up. Standing in the doorway, holding the bag of laundry, is Parker. He has been watching Obi for a while.

PARKER

I've been looking for you boy.

The expression on Parker's face and his tone of voice, do not bode well.

FADE TO BLACK.

LEO₍₃₎

INT. KITCHEN, LEO AND ISABELLA'S HOUSE - DAY

A well used moka-pot splutters coffee and steam indicating it's ready. Leo gets up from the table to turn the gas off.

He brings the coffee over and pours two cups - one for him and one for Isabella. They are both dressed in sombre clothes and Leo wears a black tie.

He sips his coffee - then goes back to the A to Z he was looking at.

LEO

So how do we get to Hoop Lane?

ISABELLA

Don't ask me - presumably Golders Green Crematorium is in Golders Green.

LEO

You'd think so.

He finds the address and memorises the route. He looks up at Isabella with his sincere face.

LEO (CONT'D)

Thanks for coming - I appreciate it.

ISABELLA

Do I have a choice? Anyway, it's a day off school.

Von-dean - Here is a letter from down the Rabbit Hole
 I don't know quite what your place is saying to this
 week-end, but there is I think as much Hysteria in the
 streets here as the day was was declared - People
 here do seem to have just woken up to the fact that
 there is a war on - It certainly doesn't look too good.
 Lu is still ill - I went to see him last
 week-end & he had a bout while I was there -
 He ate some ordinary food on my persuasion &
 seemed a lot better but I had an SOS
 yesterday saying he was worse again - so I've

Letter c.1939. Rachel Pinney to Yvonne Burns (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

Supra
 ... 2 By Sugar Bitter 229
 Balance Due 171
 400 Aug 1724
 Nevill Cross Baptized July 1724
 Mary Pinney

Pinney Papers. Receipt 1724 Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

INT. HALLWAY, LEO AND ISABELLA'S HOUSE - DAY

The boxes in the hall are still there. Leo and Isabella turn sideways and with difficulty, squeeze past them.

ISABELLA

As you're conveniently bunking off tomorrow, I'm giving notice that I'm taking this fucking lot to the dump.

LEO

It's a job for Christ's sake - like yours. I'm not bunking off.

ISABELLA

But isn't it funny how your jobs always coincide with my holidays?

They leave, slamming the front door behind them.

The boxes sit in gloom, awaiting their fate.

INT. CHAPEL, GOLDERS GREEN CREMATORIUM - DAY

The chapel is packed with a crowd that couldn't be more diverse. Bethany had been a compulsive 'picker-upper' - when out in the street she approached anyone and everyone. All the places she had ever lived in were 'open houses' attracting lost souls and misfits of all sorts - and a good cross-section of them have turned up for her funeral.

A wide range sexual orientations and occupations are represented - among them peace activists, doctors, poets, experimental psychotherapists. A few upper-class types look out of place. They are the Silcox relatives who have come to do their duty now that Bethany is safely dead.

Her body is inside a closed, unadorned coffin that sits at the front of the chapel on hidden rollers. Behind it are heavy curtains.

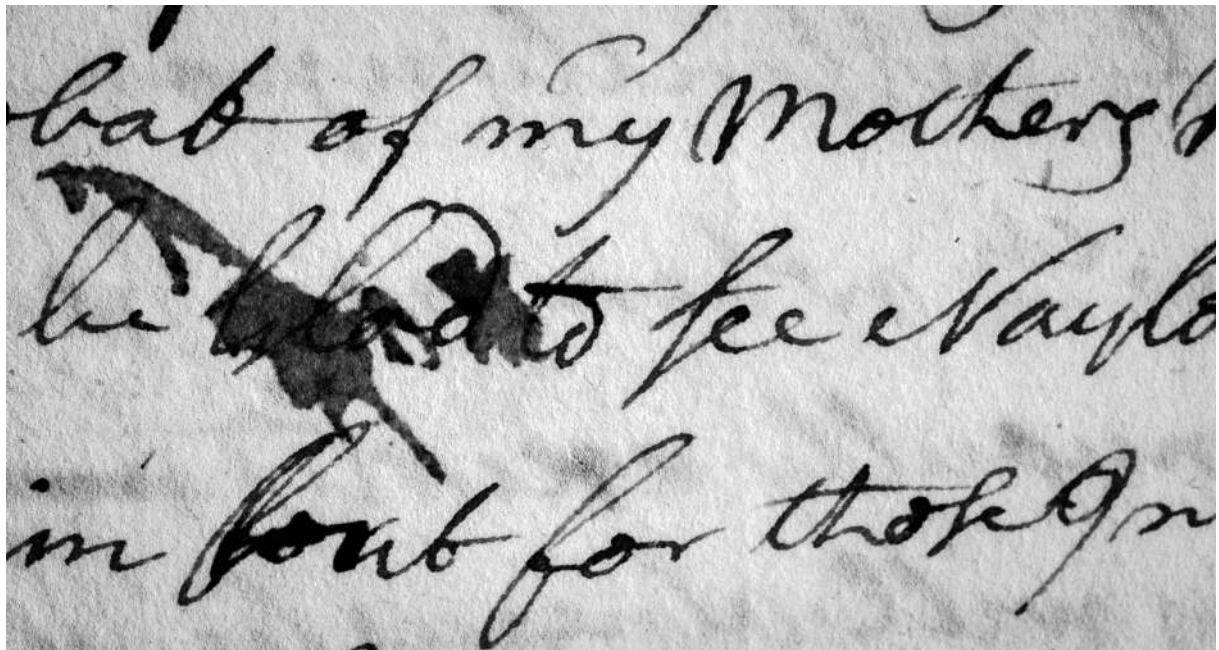
After a period of silence, an elderly man rises to his feet.

QUAKER ELDER

We are here today to mark the passing of our friend, Bethany Constantini. To those of you who have not been to a Quaker funeral, what we do is a little different. We will remember Bethany for a period in silence - and then if moved to do so, we invite you to share your memories and reflections about the life of this remarkable, pioneering, unique and at times, difficult and troubled woman.



Pinney Papers, letter book #1. Special Collections Bristol University Library (photo C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers. Letter book #1. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

The Elder sits and there follows a long silence.

Finally an frail old woman stands.

ELDERLY WOMAN

I wrote this poem about Bethany and
promised myself that if I lived
longer than her I would read it at
her funeral:

*Mad, bad, horrid old Bethany,
What have you done to me?
You screeched at me over the
mountain tops,
And suddenly, set me free.*

Pleased with herself, she sits down.

Leo glances back at those in the chapel and is struck by how many of them he has never seen before.

Leo only half listens to the contributions. For a person whose destructive instincts invariably left chaos and hurt in their wake, a surprising number of the remembrances of his mother are irritatingly hagiographic.

He shuts his eyes and fragmented episodes from his own childhood come back to him:

INT. KITCHEN, LONDON HOUSE - NIGHT - 1955, FLASHBACK

Bethany (46) sits at the kitchen table. It is covered in yellow Formica. She is playing her favourite game, 'Racing Patience' with lightning reflexes, ferocious concentration and considerable aggression.

INT. STAIRS, LONDON HOUSE - DAY - 1957, FLASHBACK

Leo (9) descends the stairs. The phone is ringing. Bethany (48) is in the bath. The bathroom is just off the stairs, one flight down.

BETHANY (O.S.)

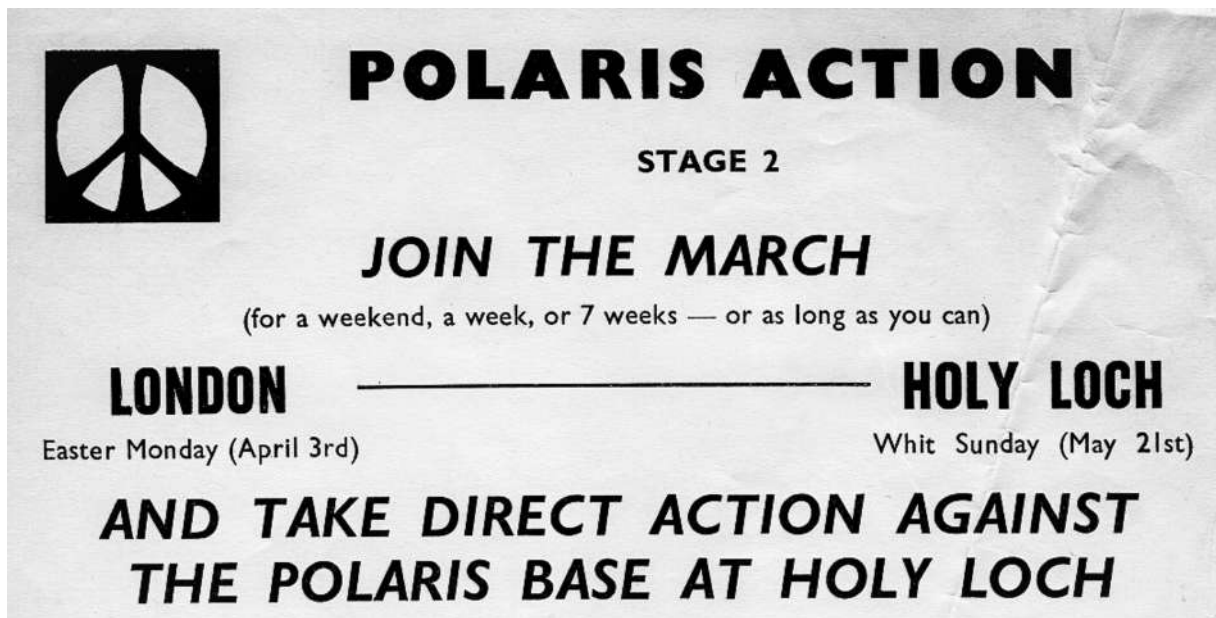
(shouting) Answer the phone.

It's an order - an unmistakable echo of the way her father 'asked' people to do things.

While normally a conscientious, well trained message taker, a stubbornness suddenly grips Leo and on this occasion he declines to do as he is told.



Aldermaston to London CND march c.1958 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2019)



Leaflet c. 1961. Direct Action Committee against Nuclear War (photo: C.C.Cox)

LEO
I don't want to.

BETHANY (O.S.)
Answer the bloody phone!

LEO
No!

Leo hears the sound of Bethany's considerable bulk heaving itself out of the bath, and water splashing on the floor.

The bathroom door bursts open and with bath-water still streaming from her, a naked Bethany comes up the stairs towards Leo - her large pendulous breasts swinging as she moves.

She grabs Leo by the hair and beats him around the head.

BETHANY
Don't ever defy me!

EXT. ROAD BETWEEN TWO NORTHERN TOWNS - DAY - 1961 FLASHBACK

A group of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament marchers walk across an empty moor. Cars whizz by, some of them hooting - whether in support or derision it's hard to tell.

The sheep watch them pass with mild interest. Among the score or so protestors, are Bethany (52) and Leo (11).

The banner at the front says: 'London to Holy Loch'. Further back someone pulls a canoe mounted on wheels.

Bethany is trying to hit on one of the other female marchers. Leo walks behind her holding a short pole with the round CND symbol at the top.

Seen from a distance, they are a tiny, forlorn group - on a futile mission.

INT. CHURCH HALL, MIDLANDS TOWN - NIGHT

Leo is in his sleeping bag, lying on his back with his arms by his sides. His CND placard is nearby. Bethany sits alongside. She is hypnotising him.

BETHANY
Feel you shoulders - relax your
shoulders. Feel your arms - relax
your arms. Feel you knees - relax
your knees.

Leo has become so accustomed to this routine, he can hypnotise *himself* if necessary.



Rachel Pinney 1909 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2020)



Dr Rachel Pinney with grandchildren Tomás and Nicolás Cox. (photo: C.C.Cox 1995)

When he is 'under', Bethany repeats the suggestion that has cured him of his bed-wetting.

BETHANY (CONT'D)
When your bladder is full, you will
get up and go to the toilet.

Then she brings him back.

BETHANY (CONT'D)
I'm going to count down from ten,
and when I get to one, you will
wake up. Ten, nine, eight, seven,
six, five, four, three, two, one!

END FLASHBACKS

INT. CREMATORIUM - DAY

After a final period silence, the Quaker Elder rises again and walks over to a small control panel. He presses a button.

The heavy curtains magically open and the rollers silently move the coffin towards the crematorium's ovens.

The curtains close. Leo has held it together up to this point - but now the tears flow.

Isabella puts a comforting hand on his shoulder.

INT. GOLDERS GREEN PUB - DAY (LATER)

A good number of those present at the crematorium have made it to the pub for the wake.

There's much conversation in the room. Common to most post-funeral gatherings, relief at not being dead animates the living.

Leo is exhausted both emotionally and physically - he turns to Isabella.

LEO
I've had enough. Do we need to
stay?

ISABELLA
You do. I don't.

LEO
Fuck.

443 Glossop Rd
Sheffield
10

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93 Oakley St
CHELTENHAM TERRACE
CHELSEA, S.W.3

ST. KINGS ROAD,
CHELSEA, S.W.3.
FLAXMAN 9970.

My dear Mother -

I'm awfully sorry I haven't written before - I was in London when your letters came & have been very busy since coming back -

Your cheque & cake were very welcome. As you say I am reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ the cheque for Peter & am contemplating laying in a stock of suitable food as no one quite knows what the winter holds in store - Van has done so for Kaim & I think I will do the same - I have strong memories of one of the happiest children's age 3 I have ever known who spent with his first 3 years in Barcelona - His mother had saved him from himself from her not letting him see her frightened & had managed to give him food & live on all the time - He was just bewildered at the Aeroplanes in England flying overhead & not dropping bombs - He kept asking why not? - Van is managing to do the same thing by Kaim - So many children have already been frightened by their parents before anything has happened - The child who lives in the same house as me in Sheffield is already afraid of the Germans - it is such a pity -

We had a grand Birthday tea round your iced cake - It all went at one sitting - I think people realized we won't be seeing much more of you! -

I am still doing Midwifery & liking it - I have to take things rather easy but I couldn't be working in a better place than a maternity hospital - Peter is due in 3 weeks now & I am fairly fit though nothing like you were by all accounts -

I am carrying on with my course as usual,

Letter c.1939 Rachel Pinney to her mother, Lady Hester Pinney (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

A much younger STEPHEN GIBSON (30) comes up to Leo. He of course doesn't know it, but the worn tweed jacket with leather patches, cord trousers and horn rimmed glasses he's wearing are destined to be his uniform for the next 25 years. He holds out his hand.

MAN

My name's Stephen Gibson.

Leo clearly has no idea who he is. He shakes the offered hand.

LEO

Hello Stephen.

STEPHEN

I'm very sorry for your loss.

LEO

Thank you.

Leo turns to Isabella and introduces her.

LEO (CONT'D)

This is Isabella. My... we live together.

Isabella and Stephen shake hands. There's a pause. Stephen fills it.

STEPHEN

I'm from Bristol University Library
- Special Collections.

Leo tries to look interested. Isabella doesn't.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I was wondering - did by any chance
your mother leave any papers -
diaries, records, photographs -
that sort of thing?

LEO

As it happens, yes, she did.

ISABELLA

They're going to the dump tomorrow.

Stephen is shocked at the thought.

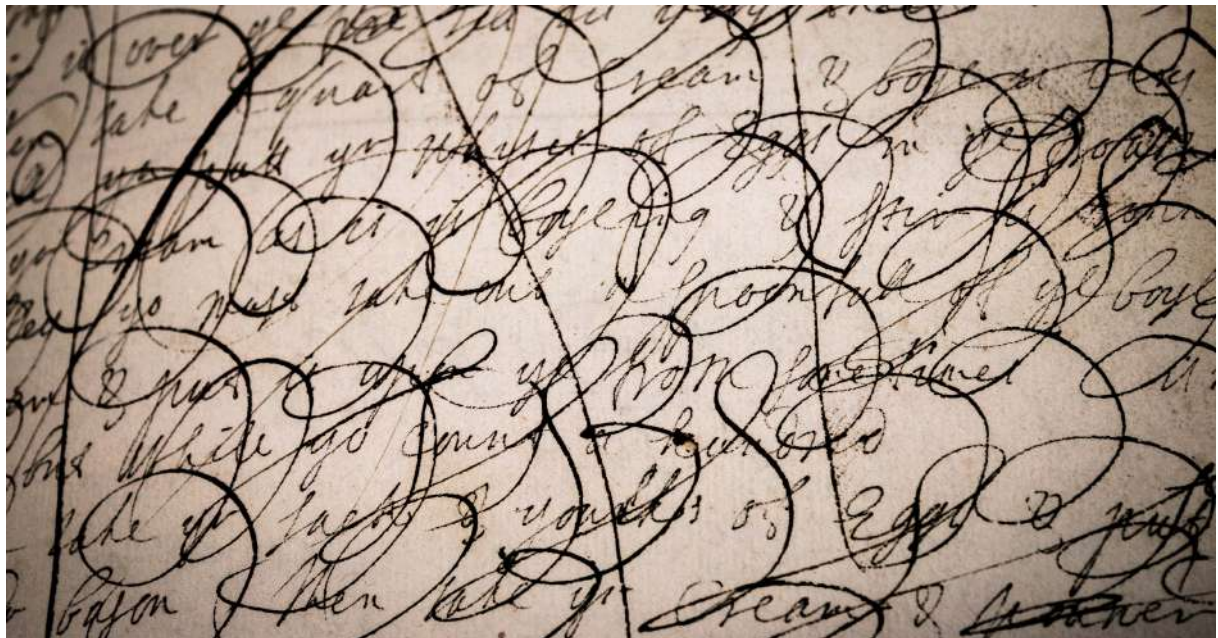
STEPHEN

Please, don't do that.

Isabella's capacity for diplomacy has been used up. She is desperate to see the back of the boxes. They are an offence to her in many ways, some of which she's not fully aware of.



Doctor Rachel Pinney (photo: C.C.Cox c.1990)



Pinney Papers, DM 2085. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

ISABELLA

I can and I will. It's hardly possible to get into *my* house for those bloody boxes in *my* hall.

Leo winces at the fact that now in public, she's reminding him yet again that it's *her* house, not *their* house.

STEPHEN

We might be able to help.

Now he has their attention.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

We already have a collection of records relating to the Silcox family - and would be interested in going through your mother's papers with a view to possibly adding them to the collection.

Isabella snorts in derision.

ISABELLA

You must be joking - why on earth would that fruitcake's papers be of interest to anyone?

STEPHEN

Well, the Silcoxes were a significant Dorset family - and for many years now, we've been holding a remarkable collection of their 17th and 18th century records relating to their sugar plantation on Nevis.

Isabella is stunned. This is a bombshell and hits her hard. Eventually she finds her voice.

ISABELLA

Are you telling me that Bethany Contantini was one of *those* Silcoxes? The slave-owning Silcoxes?

STEPHEN

Yes, of course.

Isabella turns to Leo.

ISABELLA

You knew this?

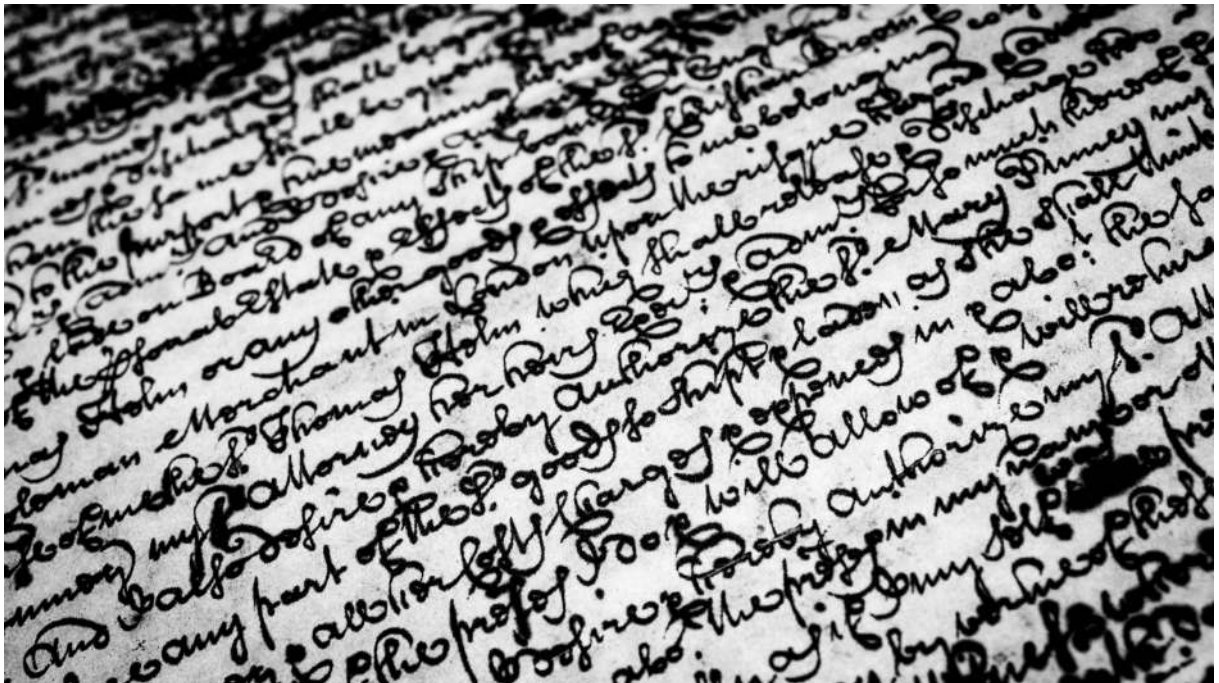
Leo is embarrassed - and ashamed.

STEPHEN

Sort of... I mean yes - I did.



Pinney Papers, letter book #1. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers, W1 box C1722-53. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

ISABELLA

And you kept this minor detail about your family quiet *why*? Didn't it occur to you that I, of all people, might be interested in knowing this? You do remember where I come from, don't you?

Stephen feels it might be wise to beat a retreat. He takes out his business card and offers it to Leo.

Isabella is quicker off the mark and grabs the card before Leo can take it.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

No point giving it to him Stephen - he off on some jolly for the next two weeks.

LEO

It's not a jolly...

Stephen addresses both of them.

STEPHEN

Perhaps you'd like to see the Silcox plantation archives first hand. I'm happy to invite you anytime.

ISABELLA

I accept - he can't come. I'll be there tomorrow - and will bring that bloody woman's crap with me.

Stephen pauses.

STEPHEN

I won't be back in Bristol till tomorrow evening. The following day?

Leo can only look on. Isabella has taken over.

ISABELLA

Day after tomorrow it is then.

Stephen leaves - he can't get away fast enough.

Angry and also hurt, Isabella stares accusingly at Leo. She's profoundly disturbed by what she has learned. It's as if a line has been crossed - the prospects for their relationship look bleak.

FADE TO BLACK.



Pero's Bridge. Bristol Docks (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Memorial Plaque. Pero's Bridge. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

GRACE₍₃₎

EXT. BRISTOL DOCKS AREA - DAY

A series of shots of Bristol docks in the rain - warehouses turned into museums, a cinema, bars and restaurants - and the ubiquitous heavy dock side bollards on the quaysides.

SUPER: 2018 BRISTOL

Grace walks in the drizzle. Despite the weather, bars and restaurants are busy. In one she recognises students from her faculty.

One of them waves through the window and gives a brief smile that manages to say 'hello' and 'stay away' at the same time.

She gives an equally ambiguous smile back and keeps walking.

At least she is warm. She now owns a full length quilted coat that's like wearing an eiderdown. Since finding it in a charity shop, she can now be outside for more than fifteen minutes at a time.

She walks across a modern footbridge which has two strange, large trumpet like structures that reach up to the sky.

At one end she reads a plaque that says the bridge is named after a slave that Charles Silcox brought back with him from Nevis in 1782 - yet another link to her home and a reminder of how slavery and Bristol's elegant infrastructure are connected.

EXT. GEORGIAN HOUSE MUSEUM - DAY

In a side street off Park Street, Grace stands outside the Georgian House Museum - built by Charles Silcox. She enters.

INT. GEORGIAN HOUSE MUSEUM - DAY

She walks around an elegant, perfectly re-created Georgian drawing room and then a dining room. In an upstairs bedroom she stands in front of a painting of Charles Silcox as a young man. Her reflection in the glass appears to add her to the portrait - an odd sensation.

She goes downstairs and in the entrance hall encounters a group coming into the house.

They're a mixed bunch - mainly elderly, all white and all with the confident, entitled manner of the upper class. They are led by a tall man with military bearing.



Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

MAN

This way - we're downstairs in the kitchen.

The doorway leading down to the kitchen has rope across with a sign saying 'Private Party'

The tall man moves the rope to let the group through. They troop past and before he follows them down, he puts the rope back.

Regretting now that she hadn't started her tour of the house in the basement, Grace watches as another group arrive with a large birthday cake. They also navigate the rope and go down.

Grace checks with the woman manning the desk.

GRACE

What's happening down there?

WOMAN

It's a private party - someone's 90th. In fact, a descendant of the man who built this house.

GRACE

A Silcox?

WOMAN

Yes.

On cue, a gaunt, elderly man in a wheelchair is manoeuvred through the front door and into the hallway by two strong young men.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(whispering) That's him.

One of the young men leans close to the old man's ear and speaks loudly.

YOUNG MAN

Hang on Granddad - the next part's the tricky bit.

At the door to the basement the rope is moved yet again and the two young men pick up the chair with the old man in it, and very carefully carry the whole package down the stone steps.

Grace goes over to the door and hears a round of applause announcing the arrival of the 'birthday boy'.

Two American tourists come in and block the view of the woman at the desk. The young men do not come back to replace the rope.



Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

Grace makes an impulsive decision - it's too good an opportunity to miss. She goes through the doorway and heads down to the Georgian kitchen.

She stands in the shadows, and at first no-one notices her because they are all gathered around the ninety year old singing 'Happy Birthday' as the candles on the cake burn.

The cake is cut and then distributed by two young waiters the museum have supplied. Perhaps it's not a coincidence that they're both black. Wearing their Georgian House tee-shirts, one does cake, the other champagne.

Holding a plate with a slice of cake makes Grace appear an invited guest. And to cement that impression, she is soon holding a glass of champagne as well. She and the two waiters are the only black faces in the room.

The assembled Silcoxs soon break up into smaller groups and the noise level in the room rises as different conversations battle to be heard.

Grace is aware of the odd glance in her direction - but no-one seems motivated to find out who she is.

The focus of the party is the old man in the wheelchair - but the alpha male of the gathering is the tall man of military bearing.

He radiates charm and leadership as he goes from group to group with consummate ease and skill. He appears to know everybody.

Grace remains a wall-flower. It's not her area of study, but she finds herself watching the gathering from the perspective of an anthropologist. The thing that strikes her above all is how supremely confident and self-assured the Silcoxes are.

The waiter with the champagne comes over to her. With a wink and an ironic smile he raises the bottle.

WAITER

More Champagne *madam*?

He's figured out that she's crashed the party and admires her for it.

Grace holds out her glass and smiles back - he's a nice looking guy.

GRACE

Yes, thank you.

WAITER

(quietly)

You got a name?



Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

GRACE

Yes.

He smiles. No flies on this one.

WAITER

I'm Milton. From St Pauls. Do you know Bristol?

GRACE

Not well.

WAITER

St Pauls is Bristol's black ghetto - or was till the property prices started going up.

GRACE

I'm Grace Shakira, from Nevis. Studying at the University.

MILTON

Nice to meet you Grace Shakira from Nevis.

The other waiter comes over and nudges Milton.

2ND WAITER

Glasses are empty man - do your job.

MILTON

See you another time Grace. How can I contact you?

She hesitates - then relents. What the hell?

GRACE

Grace-dot-Shakira at Bristol-dot-ac-dot-uk

Grace is quite pleased with herself - in one second she's gone from a lonely, isolated foreigner to having a potential date with a local. To celebrate she takes a long drink of her second glass of champagne on an empty stomach - and immediately feels the effects.

The tall military man has been glancing over at Grace for some time. When he sees Milton leave her he decides it's time to find out who she is. He excuses himself from his group and goes over to her, holding out his hand.

EDWARD SILCOX

Edward Silcox. Jolly nice to see you.



Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



John Pinney 1740-1818 (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

GRACE
Grace Shakira.

EDWARD SILCOX
Welcome Grace. You're with...?

GRACE
Nobody here, I'm afraid - but I do
have a very real connection with
this house.

Edward is momentarily distracted by someone leaving.

EDWARD SILCOX
(to departing guest) Thanks so much
for coming - super to see you. (to
Grace) Sorry - you were saying?

GRACE
I'm at Bristol University doing
research for my Doctorate.

Edward reacts to the word Doctorate. It means the young woman
in front of him is very likely to be smarter than he is. For
a moment he is almost lost for words.

EDWARD SILCOX
How super, jolly good - well done
you.

There an awkward pause.

EDWARD SILCOX (CONT'D)
... and what's your Doctorate in if
I may ask?

GRACE
Colonialism and Slavery on Nevis -
the case for reparations.

Mentally, Edward goes on full alert. Her words are almost a
declaration of war - but of course he carries on smiling.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I was visiting the museum and just
wondered down here. Someone kindly
gave me a slice of cake and a
drink. Fortunate really as I've
been wondering how I might get to
meet some of the current Silcox
family.

Edward dials down his friendliness a notch.

EDWARD SILCOX
Actually this is a private party
I'm afraid.



Jamaican Cane Cutters. Date unknown. (photo: anon)

GRACE

I can see that. Am I right in thinking everyone here is a Silcox?

Edward's pride in the family name can't be repressed.

EDWARD SILCOX

That's right - plus spouses of course. Silcox's go back to before the Norman Conquest.

He pauses - and finally remembers what she said earlier.

EDWARD SILCOX (CONT'D)

Did I hear you say you were connected with this house?

GRACE

Yes - the wealth generated by my forbears forced to work on Charles Silcox's slave-labour sugar plantation *built* this house. You might even say I own part of it.

Edward has got a long way in life being a smart man who doesn't show it. His smile doesn't waver, but the words '*slave-labour sugar plantation*' confirm, if he was ever in any doubt, that he is in the presence of hostile forces.

EDWARD SILCOX

Well, that's right, up to a point - but you're forgetting that my great, great, great grandfather Charles was a very successful planter - terrific attention to detail.

GRACE

And you're forgetting that without my forebears sweat and blood there would have been nothing - no matter how much 'detail' he attended to.

Edward knows when it's time to change the subject.

EDWARD SILCOX

So you're from Nevis - how super! I love the place. Charlestown?

GRACE

Gingerland.

EDWARD SILCOX

Do you know Pilsdon Plantation? - and Silcox beach?

GRACE

Of course. Everyone on Nevis does.



Memorial Wall. Whitney Plantation Museum. LA USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Memorial Wall. Whitney Plantation Museum. LA USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

EDWARD SILCOX

We had a *super* reunion there last year. Everyone was *so* friendly.

Edward's artificial charm has been irritating Grace since they started talking.

GRACE

And just what was it you were celebrating at this reunion? Surely not how your forebears enriched themselves by brutally exploiting *my* African ancestors?

EDWARD SILCOX

Come on now - it's a bit more complicated than that. I mean to say, the Silcox's treated their slaves well - they were happy and well looked after. We were *good* slave owners.

Since she arrived at Heathrow some months ago, a sense of outrage has been slowly building inside her. Aided by the champagne, it's now finally released - and Grace's full volume reaction brings silence to the room.

GRACE

SHIT! What kind of deluded fool are you? '*Good slave owners?*' '*Well looked after?*'. Even the most cursory reading of testimonies from all parts of the Caribbean and the Southern States of America reveal the slave system only functioned with ubiquitous barbarity, torture, rape and murder. Slavery was monstrous and you...

Grace realises she has the attention of entire room and speaks beyond Edward to the sea of entitled white faces staring at her as if she were mad.

GRACE (CONT'D)

... should all be ashamed of yourselves.

The only thing left for her to do after such an outburst, is to make a dramatic exit - and this she does.

The gathered Silcoxes treat Grace's full volume critique as if it were nothing more than a show of bad manners - an embarrassment.



Rachel Pinney c.1927 (photo: anon)



Rachel Pinney c.1933 (photo: anon)

Some mutter things like 'poor thing' and 'I wonder what's got into her' - and in no time the multiple conversations resume as if nothing had happened.

But while not prepared to admit it out loud, there are some present whose expressions reveal they have understood Grace's words - and are dis comforted by the truth in them.

FADE TO BLACK.

BETHANY⁽³⁾

EXT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE GARDEN - DAY

Bethany stands at the stone balustrade that as ever frames the view over the unchanging Dorset landscape.

SUPER: 1930 DORSET

She looks towards the copse where she used to play as a child - her refuge. Now twenty-one years old, she stares out and remembers the latest in a long line of trauma, mishaps and disappointments that have dogged her life. She's depressed and it is only increased by knowing how dysfunctional she is.

INT. HOSPITAL MATRON'S OFFICE - DAY, FLASHBACK

Wearing her uniform, Bethany stands to attention in front of Matron's desk.

Matron continues her writing. Bethany shifts her weight from one leg to the other, scratches her head, dislodging her cap - which was already awry.

Matron eventually looks up. She studies the nurse in front of her. No matter how many times she's been instructed how to dress, Bethany Silcox always looks a mess. It's as if clothes have a mind of their own as soon as she puts them on.

MATRON

You're a mess Silcox.

Bethany knows it.

BETHANY

I am trying Matron.

MATRON

I know - and your appearance, while far from acceptable, is not why I've summoned you.



Pilsdon Pen. Dorset (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pilsdon Pen. Dorset (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

Bethany scratches again.

MATRON

For God's sake, stop scratching.

BETHANY

I think I might have caught nits
from one of the children we
admitted yesterday.

Matron puts on her detached, officious voice - a sign of bad news to come.

MATRON

Nurse Silcox - we have reviewed
your progress over the last four
months and the conclusion of myself
and the board that oversees your
training is that you are not a
suitable candidate for nursing -
and consequently we are asking you
to leave.

Bethany's face crumples. Tears are close.

BETHANY

But Matron, I'm a good nurse. The
patients like me.

Matron closes her folder with finality.

MATRON

That's all Silcox.

Bethany turns her back and walks to the door - relieved that Matron can't see the tears that have indeed started to fall.

Matron has one more thing to say.

MATRON (CONT'D)

Patients are not the best judge of
a good nurse, Silcox.

As Bethany leaves the room she shuts the door with more force than she intended.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE GARDEN - DAY

Bethany walks around the ornamental pond and towards the house. The awkwardness and lack of coordination that marked her out as a child have persisted into adulthood - as has her limp.



Rachel Pinney & Mary Pinney c.1916 (photo: anon)



Sculpted figures. Whitney Plantation Museum. LA USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

INT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

Bethany shivers. The house is cold. She heads down to the basement where the cooks are preparing dinner.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The large busy kitchen is warm - in fact, the solid fuel range makes it the warmest place in the whole house.

It was the warmth and the easy familiarity of the cooks, their gossip and jokes that attracted Bethany to the kitchen when she was girl. She stands in the doorway watching them working.

FLASHBACK

A 12 year old Bethany sits at a table in the corner of the busy kitchen in the basement of Blackdown House.

The cooks like having her there and make a fuss of her. One of them takes her a glass milk and some jam sandwiches - and another finds some paper and crayons for her to do some drawing.

For a while, all is well - 12 year old Bethany is happy, warm, safe and occupied.

The atmosphere among the cooks changes when Lady Silcox comes into the kitchen. The jokes and chatter stop dead.

She's looking for someone - and quickly spots her prey. She goes over to Bethany.

LADY RUTH SILCOX

What on earth are you doing down
here Bethany? Come upstairs at once
- your father's looking for you.

If Lady Silcox were more observant and empathetic, she would notice Bethany's distress at the mention of her father - but Lady Silcox possesses very little of both qualities.

She takes her daughter's hand and drags the reluctant girl with her.

At the door she turns to the cooks.

LADY RUTH SILCOX (CONT'D)

Bethany is not to be welcomed down
here any longer. Return her
upstairs if she bothers you again.

END FLASHBACK



Dr Rachel Pinney. London (photo: C.C.Cox c.1980)



Dr Rachel Pinney. London (photo: C.C.Cox c.1980)

INT. KITCHEN DOORWAY - DAY

Bethany could really use a cup of tea and bit of mothering from the cooks - but something has changed in the servant's attitude towards her. While she was *always* a disappointment to her family - it seems now she disappoints the servants too.

BETHANY

Hello!

She doesn't wait for a reply but goes to the range and warms her hands.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

It's so warm here - lovely. Any chance of a cup of tea.

It may be warm in the kitchen, but the response is frosty.

HEAD COOK

Good afternoon Miss Silcox.

Bethany picks up at once that she's not welcome. She entered with a real smile - it vanishes with the hostile formality of that greeting.

HEAD COOK (CONT'D)

I'll get tea brought up to the drawing room Miss. The family are in Bridport. Were they expecting you?

Bethany is already heading for the door.

BETHANY

No, they weren't. I've changed my mind about tea. Please don't bother.

INT. CORRIDOR LEADING TO SIR GORDON SILCOX'S STUDY - DAY

Bethany walks down the corridor. Her limp seems to be worse.

She stops outside Sir Gordon Silcox's study door. She waits, as if for the command 'enter!' - but there's only silence. Bethany opens the door.

She doesn't go into the room, just stands in the doorway. Very little has changed - the same desk, the same chair, the same rug on the floor.

More memories come back to her - and they are not pleasant ones.

A change comes over her. She has arrived at a decision.



Gun dog. Oxfordshire (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Rachel's childhood retreat. Dorset (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Bethany walks around the room as if wanting to imprint its features on her memory.

She sits at the writing table, takes a clean sheet of paper, dips the pen into the ink - and pauses.

This is a serious communication and has to be carefully considered. Finally, she starts to write.

Bethany places an envelope on the mantelpiece where it cannot be missed. It's addressed to 'Mother and Father'.

INT. GUN ROOM - DAY

Guns of all sorts are ubiquitous in the house of a Major General. Bethany has grown up around them and knows her father's strict rules for their use.

She selects a standard Army issue revolver and loads it with six bullets, despite knowing only one will be needed.

INT. BACK DOOR HALLWAY - DAY

One of the family's dogs, a cocker spaniel called 'Darkie' leaps up in anticipation of a walk.

Bethany is about to order him back to his basket - then realises she would be grateful of his company.

EXT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE REAR GARDEN - DAY

She retraces her steps from earlier. She walks round the pond, stops at the balustrade and looks out again at the view, as if to imprint that too in her mind.

She goes down the steps into the field towards her childhood retreat - the small copse with the stream running through it.

EXT. COPSE - DAY

She knows every inch of her secret hideaway and heads straight for her favourite spot. She sits down beside a tree and leans back against it.

She holds the gun against her temple, then under her chin. Finally, with an ironic smile at the appropriateness of her choice, she puts the barrel in her mouth.

Just as her finger tightens on the trigger, Bethany's attention is drawn to the dog.



William Clark, planting sugar cane 1823. Antigua (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.04)



Old tools. Mountravers Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

He is curled up next to her and as dogs do (because they can), starts to lick his genitals. On this occasion, his thin red penis emerges from its sheath.

Bethany's interest is immediately piqued by the dog's physiology - and at her awakened curiosity, all thought of suicide vanishes from her mind.

She takes the pistol from her mouth.

The dog looks up at Bethany, oblivious of having just saved her life. They stare at each other for a long time.

Finally Bethany levers herself up and with the dog trotting beside her, sets off back to the house.

INT. GUN ROOM - DAY

The gun is unloaded and put back in its place. The bullets are returned to their box.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY

The envelope is taken from the mantelpiece and put on the log fire where it is soon consumed by flames.

FADE TO BLACK.

OBI₍₄₎

INT. BOILING HOUSE, PILSDON PLANTATION - DAY

The flames of another fire - in this case from 'mill-trash' (the dried remains of sugar canes after the juice has been crushed out of them) blazing under a line of six 'coppers', each one slightly smaller than the other, in which cane juice is evaporated and magically turned into crystallised sugar.

EXT. SUGAR CANE FIELD, PILSDON PLANTATION - DAY

Tall sugar cane stretches as far as the eye can see.

A long line of the enslaved, consisting of men and women advance slowly into the canes, cutting them at their base with a sharp machete.



New River Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



New River Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

Behind them there are others, many of them children, who gather the canes and pile them onto carts.

Behind them all are Parker and one of his deputies on horseback, both with whips in hand. They monitor everyone: the cutters; the children collecting the canes; the 'drivers' - slaves whose job is to whip their fellow slaves. The merest hint of leniency on *their* part results in them receiving ferocious, exemplary punishment.

One slave, a teenager of around sixteen years of age, has scarring on his back. He has clearly met the whip before.

When he raises his head to wipe the sweat from his face, he is recognisable as Obi - last seen five years ago about to receive Parker's 'correcting' attentions. Aside from his branding marks, there are also scars on his face from beatings and part of one ear is missing.

Obi hears a scream, turns and sees Parker whipping a child for not working fast enough.

Obi's 'problem' is the possession of a defiance and an intelligence that refuses to be dimmed - no matter what punishments Parker or the other overseers employ.

Despite now knowing full well that the first rule of survival for slaves is to adopt a submissive posture at all times and avoid eye contact with any white person, for just one second Obi inadvertently allows Parker to see the full extent of his hatred and contempt for him.

That's all it takes. Enraged, Parker forgets the child he's beating. He calls the other overseer and together they pull Obi from the line and tie him to a tree at the edge of the field.

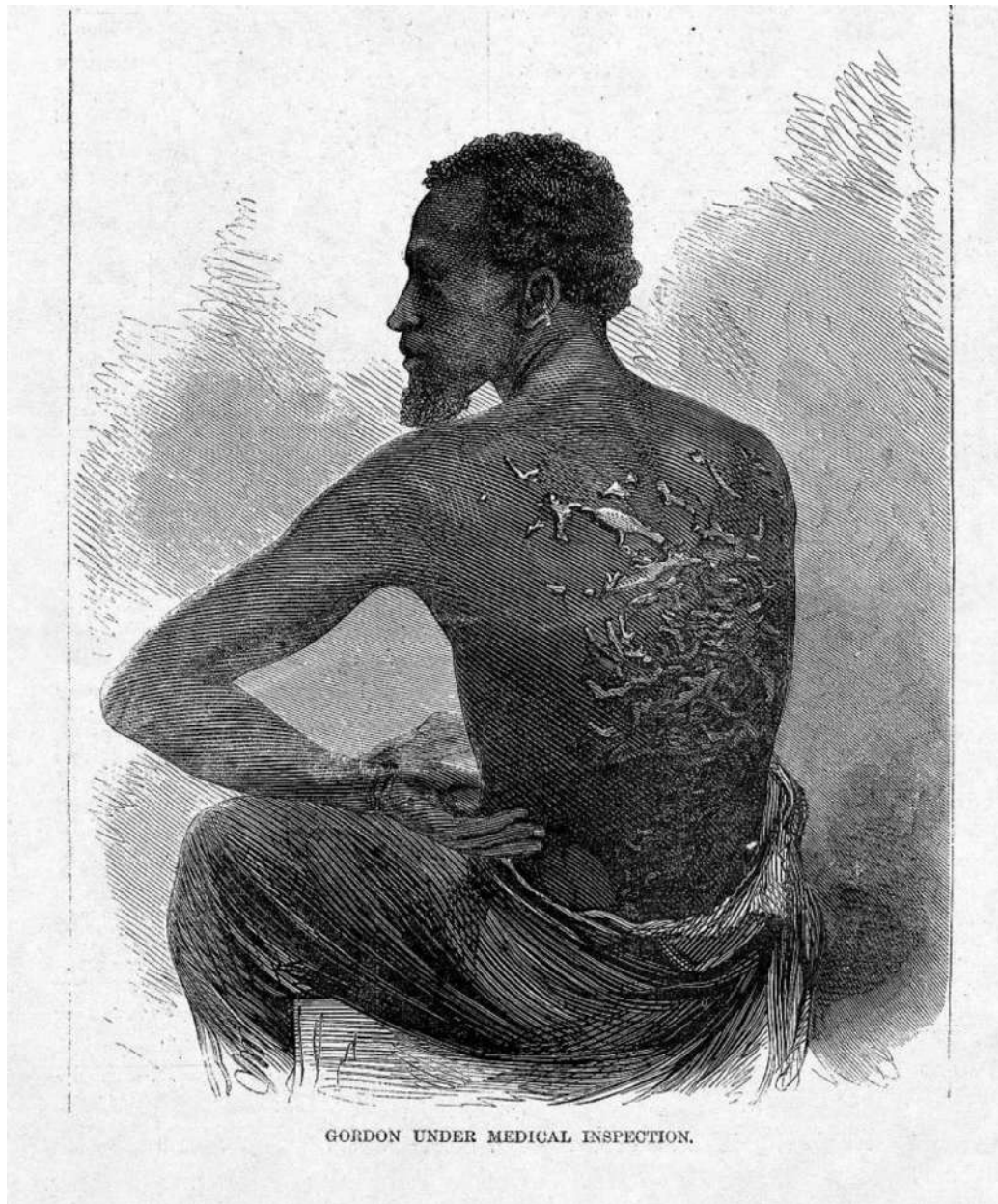
Parker is fired up and furious and for now torture takes precedence over productivity - and he isn't even concerned that everyone has stopped work to watch Obi's whipping.

Being unfit, overweight and suffering from a bad hangover from the previous night's heavy drinking session, Parker soon tires.

He wipes the sweat from his face and finally notices the long line of sullen faces watching him. He hides it well, but flash of anxiety passes across his face. Not for the first time he wonders what would happen if 'they' fought back?

PARKER
Get back to work.

He advances towards them, cracking his whip.



Results of Severe Whipping. USA 1863 (slaveryimages.org' accessed 2019.06.05)

EDGE OF FIELD - LATER

Obi is still tied to the tree. Parker's whipping has opened the skin on his back - there will soon be new scars on top of old scars. Flies buzz around the wounds.

Obi has a limited field of view and can't see Parker's approach. He's only aware of his presence when he speaks directly into his good ear.

PARKER

You're trouble boy. What are we going to do with you?.

Keeping your mouth shut is perhaps the second most basic rule of survival for a slave. Obi says nothing.

Parker puts chains on Obi's ankles, ties his hands behind his back, ties a rope round his neck - and only then releases him from the tree.

PARKER (CONT'D)

Time to sort you out once and for all.

He ties the other end of the rope to his saddle, mounts up and urges the horse into an brisk walk.

Only able to take small steps, Obi struggles to keep on his feet as he shuffles behind the horse.

EXT. PATH TO BOILING HOUSE - DAY

Parker stops at a tree with a low branch. Obi knows what is coming next. Executions by hanging are not an every day occurrence on Pilsdon Plantation, but happen at sufficient frequency to sustain terror among the enslaved. More often than not the victims are those like Obi who are hard to control, have qualities of resistance and the ability to inspire others.

But Parker has only stopped to take a drink. Obi's not going to hang today. The overseer has other plans.

They move on again - in the direction of the boiling house.

They pass the 'mill', where the juice is squeezed from the cut canes. A gutter carries the liquid to the inferno that is Parker's final destination.

INT. BOILING HOUSE - DAY

The 'boiling house' is an open sided barn - the fires under the line of coppers need oxygen - but even with no walls, it is unbearably hot.



New River Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



New River Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

The slaves working there are allowed unlimited drinking water. Such is the heat, perspiration pours out of them almost as fast as they can replace it.

In the perverted world of a slave-labour sugar plantation, to be sent to work in the boiling house is more than a punishment. For those not rotated, it can be a death sentence.

Parker hands Obi over the boiling house overseer.

PARKER

This is Obi - he's all yours. Work him hard.

The boiling house overseer doesn't need any further instructions.

Obi's ankle chains come off, his hands are untied and the rope removed from his neck.

Parker heads back to the fields - but has a final word for his colleague.

PARKER (CONT'D)

He's trouble - watch him.

The boiling house overseer prods Obi with his stick.

BOILING HOUSE OVERSEER

Trouble are you?

In a sudden, fluid move, he reverses the stick and hits Obi with the thick end.

Obi staggers, falls to his knees but quickly gets to his feet. As he does so he sees a familiar figure standing in some shade, just outside the boiling house.

Charles Silcox is monitoring every last detail of the plantation - particularly the process on which the entire enterprise depends - the mysterious transformation of concentrated cane juice into sugar.

The overseer's stick prods him in the stomach. He turns to the man, eyes on the ground.

BOILING HOUSE OVERSEER

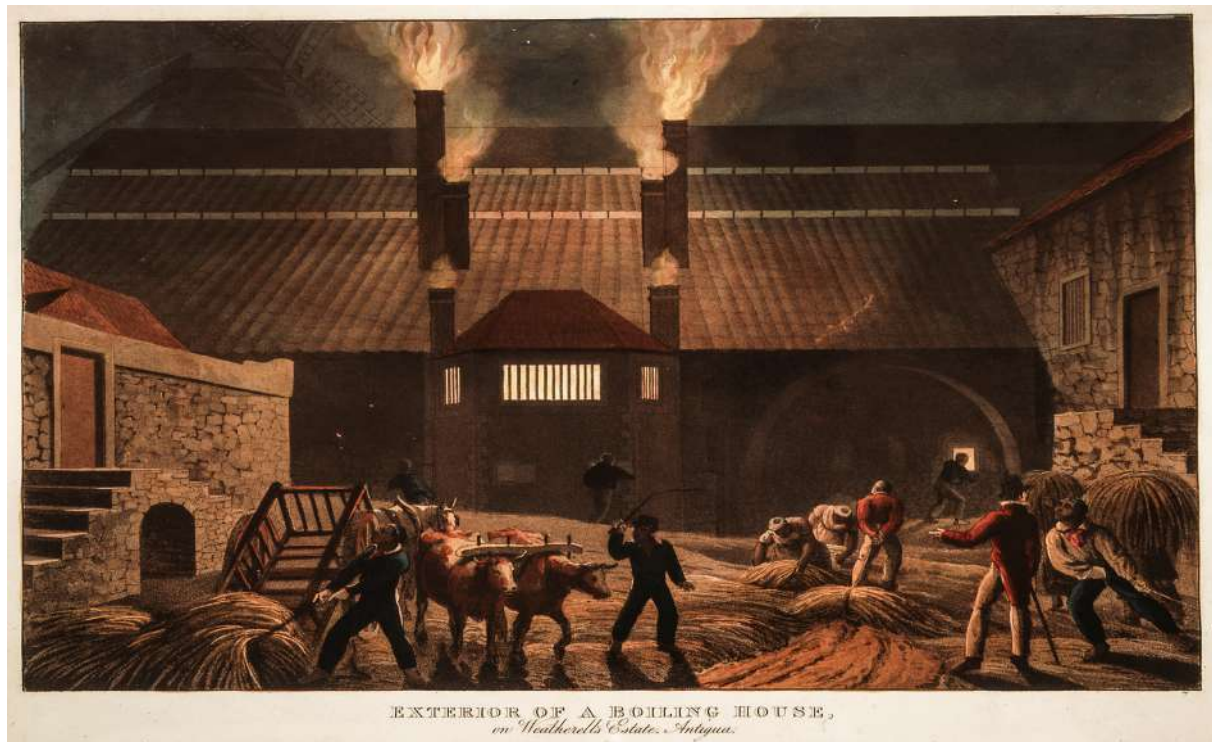
That's what making trouble gets you.

He pauses for a moment.

BOILING HOUSE OVERSEER (CONT'D)

Obi? We don't do African names here. From now on you are...

LIVERPOOL and don't you forget it.



William Clark, exterior boiling house, Antigua 1823. (slaveryimages.org' accessed 2019.06.05)



Pinney Papers account book #50. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

He points to a large pile of crushed, dried cane stalks.

BOILING HOUSE OVERSEER
Cut those up and feed the fires.

The unbearable heat of the boiling house means that anyone who can get out, does so. The boiling house overseer has already had enough and heads for his vantage point - a shady spot a short distance away that catches a sea breeze. From there he can observe all the coppers.

BOILING HOUSE OVERSEER (CONT'D)
I'll be watching you Liverpool.

Obi picks up the machete. He is already sweating and hasn't even started work. The wounds on his back are burning, his head throbs from the blow it just received.

He starts chopping - in a slave's life the unbearable must be borne.

But even as he works and sweats - he can't stop himself surreptitiously paying attention to the details of the process he is now at the heart of - particularly the work of the head boiler - an elderly and not very healthy looking slave.

FADE TO BLACK.

LEO₍₄₎

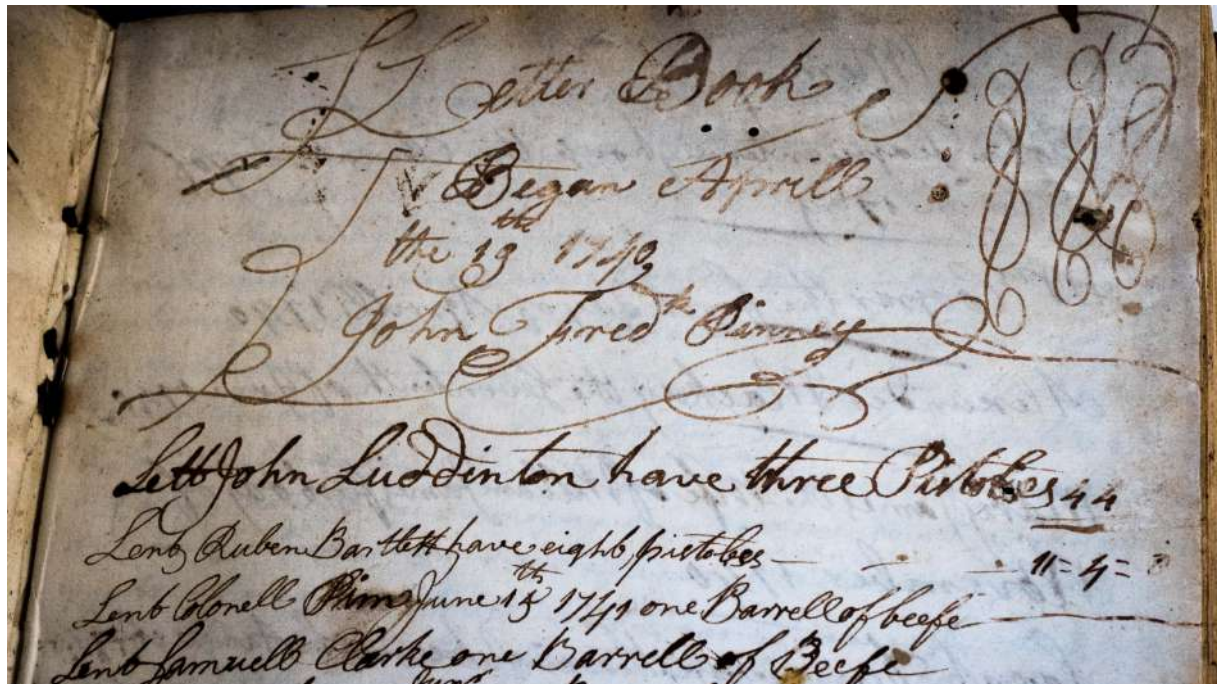
EXT. ISABELLA'S HOUSE, LONDON - AFTERNOON

A mini-cab pulls up outside the house where Leo and Isabella live - or to put it more accurately, *Isabella's* house

Weary after his flight, Leo gets out, extracts his luggage and equipment from the boot and pays the driver. He adds a five pound tip which the driver accepts, while making it clear he considers it derisory.

Such is his hurry to get inside, Leo fails to notice an estate agent's board leant against the inside of the garden wall. He opens the front door and calls out.

LEO
Hello!



Pinney Papers, letter Book #1. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Actor Colin Pinney. Born 1922 (photo C.C.Cox 2018)

INT. HALLWAY, ISABELLA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Leo puts his bags down and shuts the door.

LEO
Isabella, you back?

His words echo in a strange way. He instantly has the sensation that something is wrong. He notices a pale patch on the wall where a picture used to hang.

His first thought is robbery. He runs up the stairs to his study.

He opens the door and stands in shock. It's completely bare.

He opens the door to their bedroom. The same story. He checks the bathroom and the guest room - all empty.

He walks slowly downstairs, trying and failing to process the evidence of his eyes.

In the kitchen, there are empty spaces where the fridge, cooker, and other white goods stood. The cupboards have been cleaned out.

The last room to check is the one he should have looked in first - the large living room on the ground floor that goes the length of the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM, ISABELLA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

He walks in and the faint possibility of a robbery is killed stone dead. The room is also bare - except for the contents of his office which have been packed in cardboard boxes and stacked neatly in the centre of the room.

There's a large padded envelope on top of the boxes. He opens it and takes out a letter. Isabella's handwriting is unmistakable.

He sits on one of the boxes and reads. Every recipient of a 'Dear John' letter since the genre was invented must have looked like Leo at this moment, as he absorbs the painful fact that he has been well and truly dumped.

The letter tells him to ring an estate agent. He takes out his mobile and dials.



Norfolk copse (photo: C.C.Cox c.2015)



Self portrait (photo: C.C.Cox c.1974)

LEO

Courtney's? This is Leo Constantini
and I've been told to ring you
regarding 91 Russet Road (listens)
Sold! When? (listens) I see, so...
(listens) OK, how long will you be?
(listens) You don't have to repeat
yourself, I got it the first time -
I'll be here.

He rings off, then checks his watch. There should still be
someone there. He calls another number - he knows this one by
heart - and the school secretary's name.

LEO (CONT'D)

Hi Jackie, this is Leo - I've just
got back. Was Isabella at school
today?

He's silent while Jackie confirms what he already knows.

LEO (CONT'D)

Jesus... not coming back... no
address?

Jackie clearly has more to tell, but after listening for a
short while, Leo decides he doesn't want to hear it.

LEO (CONT'D)

I've got to go Jackie - Thanks.

Now at last he properly gets it. His partner of more than
twenty years has dumped him and done a disappearing act.

Suddenly he's anxious for his 'stuff'. He looks inside the
old Gladstone bag - Bethany's memoir is still there. He
checks some of the boxes. The contents have been packed with
care and consideration - including the now two urns
containing his parent's ashes.

Then it dawns on him that he's not only been dumped, but in
fact he *has* in a way been robbed. It might have been
Isabella's regular income that paid the day to day expenses
but most of his irregular earnings, usually arriving in
conveniently large lump sums, went into improving the house.

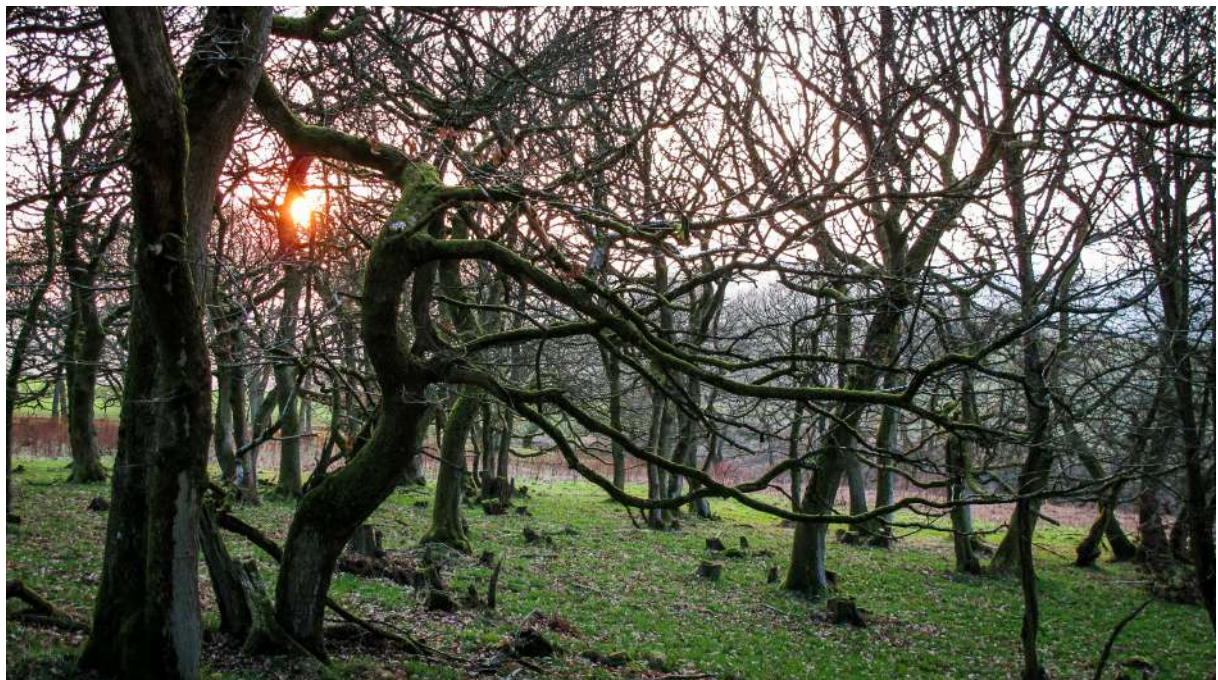
Wasn't there something else in the envelope? He looks - and
takes out the keys to the camper van - and a cheque.

He stares at the amount.

It's for £75,000 - and post dated by a month.



Actor Colin Pinney. Born 1922 (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Ancient woodland. Powys. Wales (photo: C.C.Cox c.2011)

INT. THE EMPTY ROOMS OF ISABELLA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON (LATER)

For as long as he can remember, Leo has used his photography to express his feelings - and occasionally in times of extreme stress, to avoid them.

He goes from room to room photographing the empty rooms - wide angles combined with close-ups of tiny, almost invisible details such as scratches, marks, indentations where furniture stood, stickers on windows, empty coat-hangers and other faint signs of their vanished life together.

INT. LIVING ROOM, ISABELLA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Leo is back in the living room. He photographs his boxes, the letter, and the cheque. No sooner has he sat down than the front door bell rings.

EXT. ISABELLA'S HOUSE - EVENING

The camper van has its sliding door open. Leo emerges from the house with the last of the boxes. Strange how the van has just enough space for his possessions - when the final box is squeezed in, it's brim full.

Standing nearby is a young man who doesn't look a day over fourteen and clearly hasn't started shaving yet.

He's got a ID round his neck to prove he is from Courtney's Estate Agency. He's not comfortable with his task.

Leo goes up to him.

LEO

That's it.

He drops the keys in the young man's palm. In return the young man gives Leo his mail.

YOUNG MAN

These are for you. I'm sorry it has to be this way Mr Constantini - we're just carrying out the instructions of our client.

Leo can't take any more - but the post in his hands reminds him of one last practical matter.

LEO

This is important. Keep my letters please. I will let you have a forwarding address when I get one.



Happisburgh beach. Norfolk (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

YOUNG MAN

Of course Mr Constantini. Could you wait a moment while I check the house?

The young man goes inside. Leo has no intention of waiting. He gets in his camper van and drives away into the fading light.

He has no idea where he's going.

EXT. CLIFF TOP, HAPPISBURGH, NORFOLK - DAWN

Leo is asleep in the driver's seat. He doesn't know it yet, but he is beside the Norfolk village of Happisburgh, on a cliff-top overlooking the grey North Sea.

He's never been to this place before - getting here was simply a roll of the dice. Any driver leaving London, uncaring of their destination but maintaining a slightly East of North direction and driving at night would eventually arrive at the North Sea somewhere along the Norfolk coast.

Leo wakes. He's stiff, cold and tired. He gets out of the van and looks around.

There's no-one about. He relieves himself.

He opens the sliding door and pulls out a few boxes to expose the van's small cooker.

The kettle boils and he makes himself a cup of strong coffee.

The hot drink brings him back to life. He looks around at the place fate has delivered him to. It's utterly bleak - a perfect spot for a rejected and humiliated man to hide away and lick his wounds.

EXT. HAPPISBURGH CLIFFS - MORNING

Leo walks back along the beach carrying some provisions in a plastic carrier bag. The rotten, decaying sea defences interest him.

Leo puts the bag down and takes some pictures.

Seen from below it's obvious that there is a serious problem of erosion. Large chunks of cliff are falling as the sea eats away from below.

He passes the remains of a house and several caravans smashed up on the beach - these too he photographs.

Another thing he doesn't know, but soon will, is that at the current rate of erosion, *all* of Happisburgh will eventually disappear.



Clifton Suspension Bridge. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Clifton. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

He eventually finds a path up the cliff and walks back along the top towards his camper van.

He passes some abandoned houses close to the cliff edge, and some set further back that are still occupied.

One of them is a large wooden cabin with about a hundred meters of land before the cliff edge.

In a window there's a sign saying 'FOR SALE' It's old and faded - a forlorn and desperate plea for a purchaser.

Leo stares at it - contemplating.

FADE TO BLACK.

GRACE₍₄₎

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

The elegant Georgian houses of Clifton, the Clifton Suspension Bridge, the mansions on The Promenade, dogs being walked on Clifton Down - then the run-down areas of Bristol where the majority population are black.

ENDING ON:

One particular house in poor repair with an abandoned and vandalised car out front.

INT. MILTON'S BEDROOM - MORNING

It's the morning after the night before. Grace wakes up. She's in a strange bed, in a strange room. The space next to her is empty.

Milton comes into the room from the bathroom. He's had a shower and is drying his hair.

MILTON

Morning.

Grace replays in her head the sequence of events that got her into Milton's bed. What seemed like a good idea last night now feels slightly less so.

GRACE

Good morning.

She looks at her watch.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I've got a seminar later.



Overseer and cane harvest. Date and artist unknown. St Joseph's Plantation. LA USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

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**RUN-AWAY, from
JOHN GREATHEED, Esq.
The following Negroes.**

P *AUL a stout tall negro man; he has his
country marks on each side of his face, and is
about 30 years of age: he was brought from the
Island of t. Vincent by the fleet under the com-
mand of Admiral Rodney, in December 1780, an-
carried to t. Lucia, and there employed on the
public works, from whence he made his escape,
was afterwards taken up in this Island, and af-
ter being punished, he again absconded early in
the month of June, 1781.*

JAMES, a stout well set, likely young negro

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St Christopher Gazette 1783. Pinney Papers. Special Collections. Bristol University Library
(photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

MILTON
That's nice.

Milton starts dressing.

GRACE
They're open to the public - do
you want to come?

Milton has a chip on his shoulder about education - and
doesn't like to be patronised.

MILTON
No thanks - too thick.

Grace has said the wrong thing and knows it.

GRACE
Sorry - I didn't mean...

There's an awkward pause.

MILTON
You're kidding yourself, you know.

Grace plays safe and waits for him to elaborate.

MILTON (CONT'D)
It's a waste of time.

GRACE
What is?

MILTON
Studying, qualifications. The whole
thing's rigged from the start - we
don't have a chance.

GRACE
But giving up...?

MILTON
I'm not giving up. I'm playing by
different rules - *my* rules.

He puts on his shoes, then his jacket. His phone beeps. He
checks it and reads the message.

MILTON (CONT'D)
Got to go Grace Shakira. Catch you
later.

He goes to the door.

MILTON (CONT'D)
Let yourself out - don't forget to
drop the latch.



Pinney Papers, account book #50. Special Collections Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers, account book #50. Special Collections Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

And he's gone.

Grace thinks about what he's said - and the possibility that he's the smart one, not her.

She shuts her eyes for a moment and soon slips back into a light sleep. What seems like minutes later she wakes to the sound of a door banging. Grace sits up. Milton must have forgotten something.

A female voice calls out.

WOMAN

Milton? Wake up you lazy bastard!

A young white woman - confident, working class and proud of it - marches in to the bedroom in a way that suggests she has some territorial rights.

She stops dead at the sight of Grace in the bed.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Who the fuck are you?

INT. DOOR TO SEMINAR ROOM - DAY

A hastily written sign is pinned to the door.

Post Slavery Syndrome - Reflections on Intergenerational PTSD Today. Dr Yvonne Taylor.

The door has a glass window. Inside a dozen students with an interest in psychology sit around a large square table. With a couple of exceptions, everyone else is black. One of them is Grace.

INT. SEMINAR ROOM - DAY

Standing before her meagre audience is a middle-aged Afro-Caribbean academic and psychotherapist.

Her sympathetic face reveals the cost of having spent much of her life empathising with distress and pain.

She stares at the half filled room, then looks at her watch and sighs.

DR TAYLOR

Thank you all for coming.

She looks in the direction of the two white women sitting together.



Reginald Pinney c.1890 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)



Christopher Cocuzzi Cox. London (photo: R. Brimson c.1971)

DR TAYLOR

Particularly you two. It's ironic that the people who need to hear what I've got to say, don't come - and those who already know because they live it every day, turn up faithfully.

She switches on the projector and starts her talk.

DR TAYLOR (CONT'D)

My talk today is about the role of psychotherapy in a Britain damaged by the legacy of slavery. The premise of my talk is based on the theory that through the mostly unconscious transmission of intergenerational trauma, we continue to perpetuate a destructive power disparity between today's black and white communities. We are locked into histories that we didn't create but which control our thinking - and need to be *challenged* in order for us to grow emotionally as a society.

Grace takes notes diligently. Then, quite unable to help herself, does her best to disguise a powerful yawn - the effect of her late night, not the lecture.

INT. GRACE'S DIGS - NIGHT

Back in her digs, Grace works on her laptop, writing up her notes from the seminar.

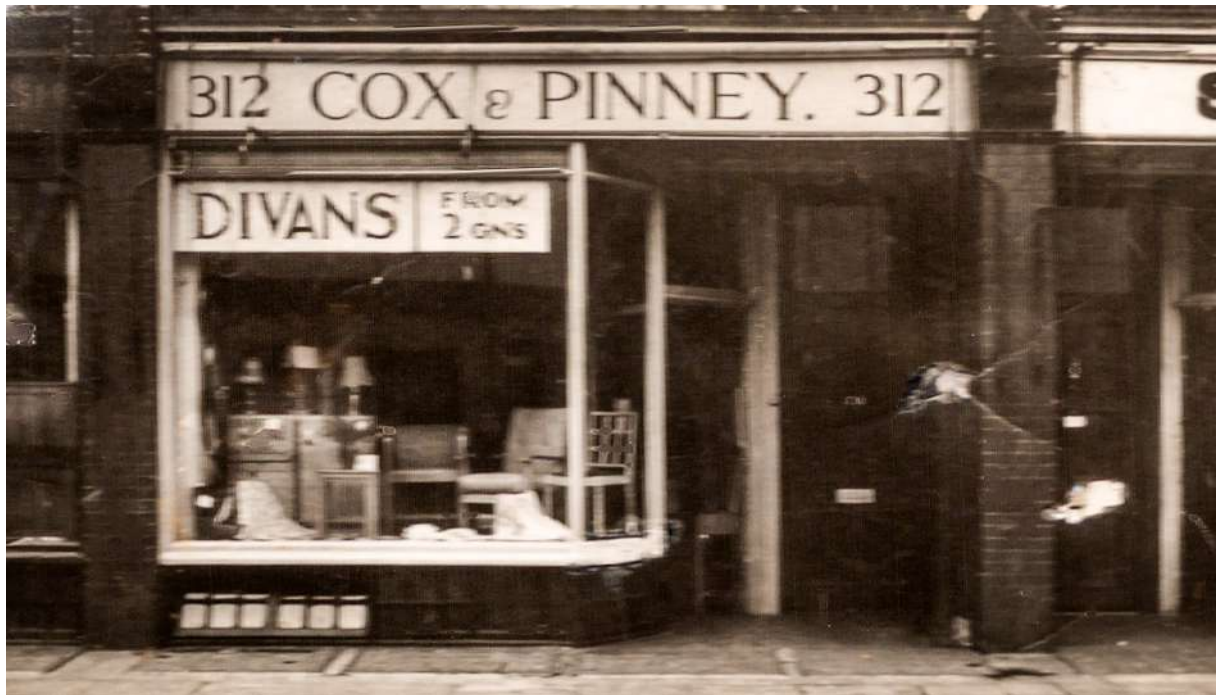
When that's done, she impulsively searches for images of the Silcox family.

She has already seen the original painted portraits in the Georgian House Museum. A photograph comes up of a younger version of the tall man she confronted there - along with his name, Edward Silcox. He's wearing the uniform of a senior officer in the armed forces.

She finds an image of Major General Sir Gordon Silcox in full dress Army uniform, 'hero' of the First World War - and beside him his wife, Lady Ruth Silcox.

This leads Grace to images of their children - including a shabby, eccentric looking elderly woman in front of a crudely written sign saying 'Obedience is a Sin'. The picture is captioned: *Dr Bethany Constantini, née Silcox*.

Reading that Bethany had children, she types '*Constantini*' in the search window.



Shop of Luigi Cox (formerly Cocuzzi) & Rachel Cocuzzi/Pinney c.1935 London
(original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2019)



Rachel Cocuzzi (née Pinney) and husband Luigi Cocuzzi c.1935 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2019)

She is taken straight to a well-designed website belonging to someone called Leo Constantini.

She explores examples of his writing around architecture, design and engineering. Then she finds examples of his 'art' photography - arresting, abstract images, many taken abroad.

There's a folder of images labelled 'miscellany'. She opens it.

Suddenly she's wide awake and alert. One of the images is of a young black woman looking intently at the lens. It's someone she knows very well - her late mother. It's dated 1990, about 5 years before Grace was born.

There is no doubt in Grace's mind, it really is her mother - and she can't take her eyes off her.

FADE TO BLACK.

BETHANY⁽⁴⁾

INT. BETHANY AND LUIGI'S FLAT, LONDON - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Details of squalor - unwashed plates with remains of rotting food piled high in the sink; pots and pans so long unwashed they have mould in them; milk bottles on the window-sill containing a yellow liquid - strongly suggesting that to avoid using the outside toilet, the couple living here have urinated into the bottles and left them on display.

SUPER: 1936 LONDON

Nappies soaking in a bucket, nappies hanging on the back of chairs, an unmade bed with dirty sheets, newspaper on the floor; a baby bath with dirty water in it - and in the middle all this - Bethany, now twenty seven years old, still in her pyjamas, trying to placate her hungry baby daughter.

Her husband Luigi is absent - he's either trying to start the revolution or searching for work - and not having much luck in either endeavour.

What the baby is really crying for is the one thing Bethany finds it difficult to give - simple, basic, maternal love.

Bethany holds her daughter awkwardly and tries to get her to suckle. Eventually hunger triumphs over discomfort and she starts to drink.



Racedown and Pilsdon. Dorset (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Racedown. Date unknown. Dorset (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)

LATER

The baby is asleep.

Bethany is dressed. Her hair cut short, like a man's - and the tweed jacket with bulging pockets, pleated skirt, thick socks ending in boots suitable for marching in, are not a 'look' - rather an ill-matching set of garments that someone might wear if they were not only indifferent to their appearance, but blind to it.

Mindful of the baby, she makes as little noise as possible while trying to remember where she hid the rent money. She finds it stuffed in the tea caddy.

She looks in the bread bin and takes out the remains of a old loaf. She sniffs it, slices off the worst of the mould, spreads what she can get out of the empty jam pot and eats. A swallow of cold, stewed tea washes it down.

Bethany packs. Not sure what is clean and what is dirty, everything that goes in the rucksack is, like the bread, smelt first.

Coat on, rucksack on her back, looking like some kind of eccentric explorer, she gathers up her baby daughter and leaves.

EXT. CREWKERNE STATION - DAY

Bethany emerges from the station, looking for the Silcox chauffeur.

Bethany's family have long been aware of her 'difference' - mocked her for it, laughed behind her back and bullied her. But albeit grudgingly, they have in their own way, accepted her.

The chauffeur is called Robin. He stares in dismay at the approaching rotund figure. The woman approaching him looks more like a tramp in sensible shoes than the daughter of a Knight of the Realm..

It's a curious feature of the relationship between the upper classes and their servants that despite the obvious disparities in power, the tail sometimes wags the dog.

Robin can't say it, but he feels that Bethany is disgracing *him* as well as her family.

BETHANY

Hello Robin. You got the message.

Robin is carefully formal.

ROBIN

Yes Miss Silcox.



Aug 15th
 1936
 { Rachel Cocuzzi
 Karin Cocuzzi

Rachel Cocuzzi (née Pinney) and daughter Karin Cocuzzi 1936
 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)

He holds the rear door open.

BETHANY

You've known me too long for all that 'Miss Silcox' business - and I'm a married - it's Mrs Constantini now. Here she is - her name's Susan.

She presents her daughter to him. The infant has a distinctly Italian look - and black hair.

Robin gives the baby precisely the minimum of attention needed not to cause offence.

ROBIN

Yes Miss.

Bethany rejects the back seat and gets in the front beside him.

Robin is not pleased to have his space invaded.

INT. CAR - DAY

Bethany tries to break the ice.

BETHANY

Did you hear about the coal mine explosion in Yorkshire? Fifty eight dead. We were at a meeting - there was talk of a general strike. Things have got to change - they're *going* to change. The working class won't stand for it much longer.

It's painfully obvious Bethany has only a tenuous grasp of politics.

Stony silence from Robin.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

I hope my family are treating you properly Robin. How much are they paying you? Are you in a union?

Robin has to put a stop to this.

ROBIN

Sorry Miss. I have to concentrate on my driving.

He grips the wheel and stares fixedly ahead.

Bethany finally gets the message. Disappointed, she turns away and looks out of the window at the familiar landmarks from her childhood passing by.



Lady Hester Pinney 1936 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2020)



Lady Hester Pinney, Major General Sir Reginald Pinney c.1930 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2020)

Susan looks up at her mother with wide, staring eyes.

EXT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

The Rolls Royce Phantom II turns into the driveway of Blackdown House and pulls up outside the front door.

Mother and baby get out.

BETHANY
Thank you Robin.

Robin touches his cap.

ROBIN
Miss.

He drives to the stables at the back of the house - very happy to get away.

Bethany hesitates for a moment at the front door. Before she can knock, it opens. Lady Silcox, now sixty one years old has come to greet her daughter.

She takes note of Bethany's appearance - but is unfazed by it.

LADY RUTH SILCOX
Bethany! Welcome.

She takes the baby from Bethany and calls into the open doorway.

LADY RUTH SILCOX (CONT'D)
Smith!

Mother, daughter and grand-daughter go inside.

INT. HALLWAY, BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

SMITH is standing by. She's an elderly, longstanding family servant. Lady Silcox immediately hands over the baby to her.

LADY RUTH SILCOX
Take this up to the nursery.

Smith can smell something - she discretely sniffs the nappy.

SMITH
I think I'm going to need some clean nappies madam.

Bethany hands Smith the rucksack.

BETHANY
They're in here Smithy.



Rachel's older sisters: Hester Pinney & Mary Pinney c.1936 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2019)



Rachel Cocuzzi (née Pinney) and daughter Karin Cocuzzi 1936. Racedown. Dorset
(original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2020)

She can't hide it - 'Smithy' feels the same way about Lady Silcox's eccentric daughter as the chauffeur Robin.

Burdened with baby *and* rucksack, the long suffering, arthritic servant labours up the stairs to the nursery.

Lady Silcox leads Bethany to the drawing room.

LADY RUTH SILCOX

Tea?

Bethany is conflicted. She's entering the house of the class enemy - but what a relief to have servants and cooks and be waited on.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING (LATER)

There are four round the table - Lady Silcox, Bethany and her two older sisters, JANE SILCOX and EVELYN SILCOX.

Bethany has eaten like a horse - and is just finishing her third helping of apple crumble and custard.

Her mother and sisters look at her in awe.

LADY RUTH SILCOX

Don't you eat in London?

EVELYN

You'll get fat.

JANE

She already is.

EVELYN

Fatter then.

LADY RUTH SILCOX

Now, now girls. Seriously Bethany, are you eating properly? Would you like me to send down a weekly hamper?

Actually, there's nothing she'd like more - but she is not prepared to admit it. She turns on her sisters.

BETHANY

It's tough in London - you've no idea how the working class are struggling.

JANE

But you're not working class - and you've never had to 'struggle'.



Wedding. Luigi Cocuzzi and Rachel Cocuzzi (née Pinney) 1934
(original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2020)

Before Bethany can respond to her sister, Smithy knocks, then puts her head round the door.

SMITH
Excuse me Your Ladyship. Miss
Bethany is needed in the nursery.

Based on her painfully full breasts, Bethany already knows what she's needed for.

She takes one last mouthful of crumble and follows Smith.

INT. STAIRS TO NURSERY - EVENING

Bethany adjusts her pace up the stairs to match Smithy's. The old woman's arthritis is clearly getting worse.

BETHANY
Actually it's Mrs Constantini now
Smithy.

Rather than answer, Smith give a quiet snort of disdain. Her life-time of service in the family gives her the right to speak her mind.

SMITH
That baby was filthy - you're not
looking after her properly.

Bethany can fight her sisters, but not Smithy. And she knows what the old servant says is true.

BETHANY
I'm trying Smithy - I really am.

SMITH
You need help. Hire someone.

BETHANY
We've got no money. My husband
can't get work. My allowance has
been stopped. I don't know what to
do.

SMITH
You should have thought of that
beforehand.

She mutters to herself the essential points of the husband's shortcomings.

SMITH (CONT'D)
Penniless. Italian. Communist.

Bethany is surprised, but shouldn't be - servants know everything.



Racedown. Dorset. Date unknown (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)

SMITH (CONT'D)
You've made your bed, Miss Bethany,
now you have to lie in it.

They arrive at the nursery door. On the other side, the baby is crying.

INT. NURSERY, BLACKDOWN HOUSE - EVENING

It's Smithy who picks up the crying infant.

Bethany sits herself down in the very same chair Nurse sat in twenty seven years earlier and gets ready feed her baby.

Smithy hands her over and notices Bethany's awkwardness - and realises she doesn't know how to properly breast feed.

SMITH
Try holding her like this... It's
easier for baby to latch on.

Her advice works. The baby connects to the nipple properly and sucks energetically. Bethany's head goes back on the chair in relief. Not for the first time, she wishes there was an instruction manual that explained how to do all those things that everyone except her to just 'knows'.

Smithy sits nearby. She watches Bethany and baby with a frown - but for once, keeps her thoughts to herself.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

A log fire blazes. A small delicate table holds the coffee things. The thick curtains are drawn. Jane and Evelyn are slouched in comfortable armchairs, Lady Silcox sits upright on the sofa.

Bethany comes in.

BETHANY
Fed and sleeping - thank God.
She's starting to go through the
night. Smithy will wake me if I'm
needed - she's put up a camp bed in
the nursery and is sleeping there.

Bethany pours herself a coffee and sits next to her mother on the sofa - relishing the warmth, good food, child-care and for the time being at least, the company of her mother and sisters. The squalid flat in London seems very far away.

Sisters Jane and Evelyn could not be more different from their younger, eccentric sister. They're both slim, well dressed, composed, confident - and deeply conservative.



Dr Rachel Pinney (photo: C.C.Cox c.1979)

Bethany's bohemianism and left-wing politics are wearily accepted by her mother, but they irk Bethany's sisters. Jane in particular is determined to take Bethany on.

JANE

What does you husband actually do?
What's his name again?

Bethany knows Jane only too well - they grew up together after all. The question is a provocation.

BETHANY

Luigi Constantini. He's a
carpenter. I've told you many times
- I wonder why you find it so hard
to remember.

JANE

Judging by the amount of food you
put away at dinner, he's not
exactly bringing home the bacon.

Bethany tries to not let it show that she is increasingly ambivalent about the working class Italian man she married and wonders, given her true sexual orientation which she's only just becoming fully aware of, what on earth induced her to tie herself to him - or any man.

But at this moment and in this place, he is to be defended.

BETHANY

If you must know, he's blacklisted.
They don't give work to communists.

JANE

Oh, he's a communist. Aren't they
the ones who want to eliminate the
'ruling class' - like in Russia?

Lady Ruth Silcox refills her coffee cup.

LADY RUTH SILCOX

Girls, do we have to talk about
this?

But Jane is like a dog with a bone.

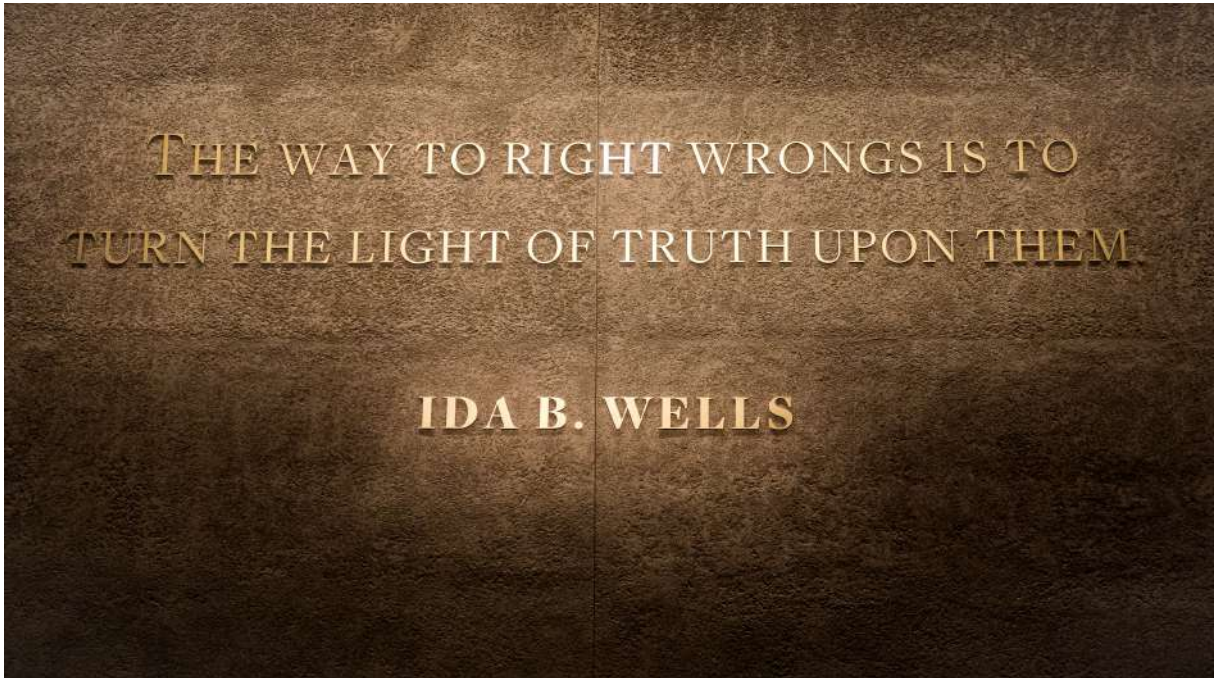
JANE

Aren't we the 'ruling class' Beth?
So you want to put your own family
up against a wall and shoot them?

Jane's question provokes the briefest of wry smiles - which she quickly hides.



Gallows Bay. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Display. Smithsonian Museum of African American History. Washington DC USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

BETHANY

Don't be stupid. It won't be like that. But I tell you this: the situation is critical, Capitalism is in crisis, the working class are rising up, the revolution is coming.

Her sisters can sense that Bethany is echoing the words of others.

LADY RUTH SILCOX

If he hasn't got a job Bethany, how on earth do you manage?

A very good question.

JANE

You don't know what you're talking about. Revolution - here? Don't be ridiculous.

More than anything, Bethany hates to be belittled.

BETHANY

I don't know what I'm talking about? You're the ones who are living in an ignorant bubble of privilege. This very house was built with the profits from the family estates on Nevis - and who did the work there - SLAVES! What about great grandfather's compensation for the loss of his 'property' when slavery was abolished? It's no different today - our illustrious neighbour over the hill - where does the money for his life of luxury come from? MINERS! Working underground for a pittance. Fifty eight died in one of his pits the other day because he wouldn't spend the money to make them safe.

Lady Silcox can sense the temperature rising and tries to change the subject.

LADY RUTH SILCOX

How is that nice Lieutenant of yours Jane? Is he going to visit us again?

Jane's blood is up. She's not going to be diverted.



Setting sun through glass (photo: C.C.Cox c.2012)



Dr Rachel Pinney c.1975 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2020)

JANE

What utter rubbish. You come down here, enjoy the benefits of being a Silcox, ride in a Rolls Royce, eat yourself silly, take advantage of Smithy - and have the gall to criticise our class and our way of life. You know what Bethany, you are a hypocrite.

There's some truth in Jane's words - and the truth always hurts. Bethany knows she can't cope - with her sexual orientation, her penniless husband, with poverty and squalor and a baby she doesn't know how to love.

And if that wasn't enough, behind it all lies a dreadful secret that since the age of eleven she's been indoctrinated never to speak of.

Something snaps in Bethany. She stands up and faces her mother and sisters.

BETHANY

And I'll tell you something else.

She pauses - but there's no going back now.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

The ruling class *fuck* their children.

Bethany shakes and starts to cry. She has their full attention.

It's her mother, rather than her sisters that Bethany turns to for the next bombshell.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Daddy made me promise. I was never to speak of it.

Lady Silcox is slow to comprehend what Bethany is saying - but something in her daughter's intensity alarms her - and she can see her distress is real.

LADY RUTH SILCOX

Speak of what?

BETHANY

I was eleven when it started.
ELEVEN!

Evelyn, the older sister, is also struggling to process what Bethany is trying to tell them. Of all of Bethany's siblings, she is the closest to her.



Exhibit. Smithsonian Museum of African American History. Washington DC USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

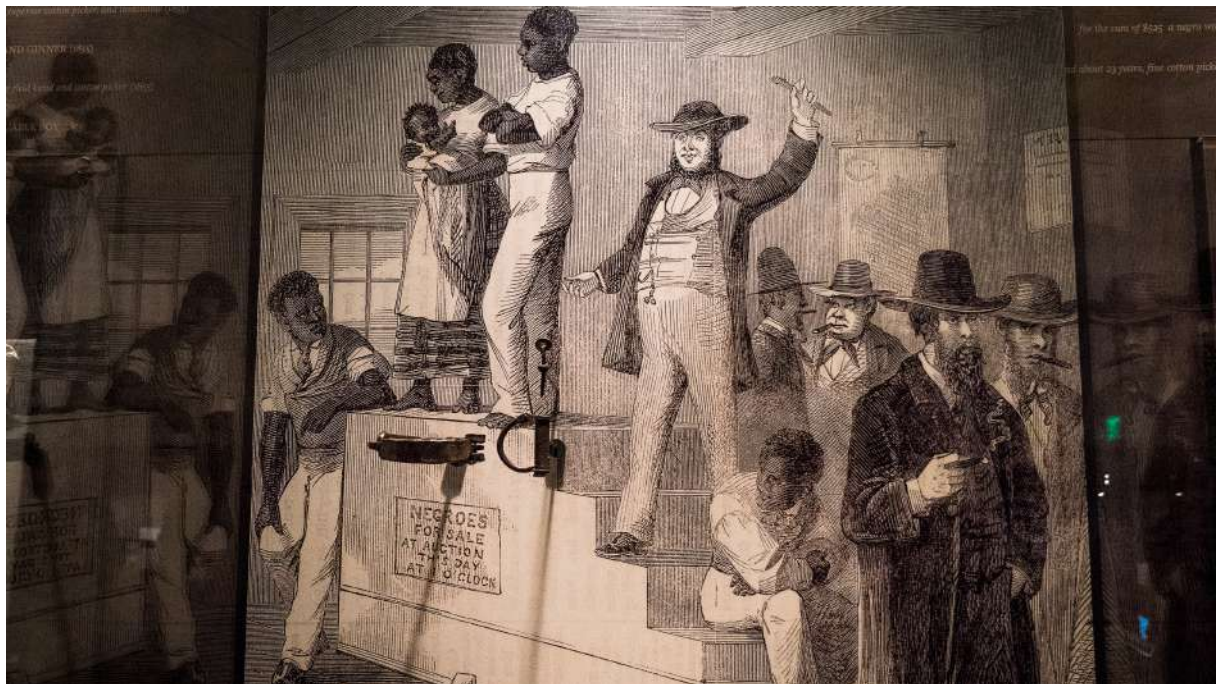


Exhibit. Smithsonian Museum of African American History. Washington DC USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

EVELYN

What are you saying Beth? Started
what?

But it's Jane who seems to know exactly what Bethany is
talking about.

JANE

How dare you talk about our father
like that! This is just more
communist clap-trap.

BETHANY

I'm telling the truth.

JANE

Liar!

EVELYN

Started *what*?

Bethany set this drama off, but suddenly she's no longer the
focus of attention.

Flushed and deeply agitated, Jane leaps to her feet.

JANE

Horrible ugly liar. Take it back!

The intensity of Jane's reaction is surprising. Evelyn and
her mother are now doubly confused.

Jane steps forward and slaps Bethany hard across the face.

LADY RUTH SILCOX

Jane! Control yourself!

Too late. Bethany instantly responds by grabbing a handful of
Jane's thick long hair.

Insults and screams fill the room.

LADY RUTH SILCOX (CONT'D)

Stop it girls!

Evelyn makes a futile effort to separate them but the red
mist has descended in both her sisters.

In the ensuing melee, the heavy curtains come down, they
crash into the coffee table, breaking it and the cups.

Eventually they separate and the two sisters face each other,
panting like wild animals. Bethany is bleeding from a series
of deep scratches on her face - and there are clumps of
Jane's hair on the floor.



Legitimate children of Reginald and Hester Pinney c.1925 Racedown Dorset
L to R: John, Rachel, Robert, Mary, Bernard, Hester (photo: anon)



Road. Bedfordshire. UK (photo: C.C.Cox c.1972)

Lady Silcox and her oldest daughter Evelyn stare in shock, stunned at the power and ferocity of the anger that seemed to come out of nowhere.

INT. BETHANY'S BEDROOM, BLACKDOWN HOUSE - NIGHT

Bethany is sitting on her bed with a blood stained towel pressed against her cheek.

There's a knock at the door.

BETHANY
Who is it?

LADY RUTH SILCOX(O.S.)
Mother.

BETHANY
Go away.

No-one bosses Lady Silcox in her own house. The door opens and she enters.

She has the expression of someone who has considered all aspects of the situation and come to a decision - a trait probably acquired from her soldier husband.

LADY RUTH SILCOX
I'd like you to leave first thing in the morning. Robin will be outside at six to take you to the station.

Bethany tries to speak.

BETHANY
Mother, please...

LADY RUTH SILCOX
You are no longer welcome here. The reputation of the Silcox family is at stake.

She looks down at her daughter - not entirely blind to the child-like pleading she sees in her daughter's eyes. For just a moment a flicker of doubt crosses her face. Then the 'realpolitik' behind her decision re-asserts itself, and her expression hardens again.

In truth, it's almost a question of physics. Her husband, Major General Sir Gordon Silcox, Knight Commander of the Bath, is both powerful and untouchable. Bethany is weak, damaged and a misfit. There can be little doubt who wins such a contest.

But in her heart, Lady Silcox knows that she will have to live with this act of betrayal for the rest of her life.



Yvonne Burns (née Collings) c.1914 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2011)



Half-sisters Elisabeth Holt, formerly Boyt, Garcia Lora (née Pinney/Burns) and Dr Rachel Pinney c.1994 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2020)

EXT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAWN

The Rolls Royce sits outside the front door. The engine purrs. Robin sits behind the wheel, watching the front door

It opens and Bethany emerges carrying her baby.

Robin is so focused on the scratches on Bethany's face and what looks like a developing black eye, that he forgets to open the door for her.

Bethany opens the door and gets in the back.

As they drive away, she leans forward so he can hear her.

BETHANY

Bridport.

ROBIN

Lady Silcox said to take you to
Crewkerne station.

Bethany is no longer making the effort to be at one with the workers.

BETHANY

And I say BRIDPORT! And if I tell
you to take me there, you damn well
will - and no questions asked!

Robin actually prefers this version of Bethany to the one who purports to be on his side in the class struggle.

ROBIN

Yes Miss Bethany.

BETHANY

And for the last time, it's MRS
CONSTANTINI now!

ROBIN

Yes... Madam.

EXT. BRIDPORT STREET - DAWN

Bethany gets out of the Rolls Royce, which looks very out of place in the modest back street.

BETHANY

Thank you Robin. I don't need you
any more.

There's more meaning in that simple sentence than either of them fully appreciate.



Rachel Cocuzzi (née Pinney) with daughter Karin Cocuzzi 1936
(original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)



Karin Cocuzzi (L) and Elisabeth Burns (R) Reginald Pinney's illegitimate daughter c.1937
(original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)

For Bethany, nothing will ever be the same again. While still reeling from last night's events, she sees with clarity that she's been sacrificed, is now an outcast from her family, and though she doesn't know it yet, is destined to live the rest of her life as such.

EXT. LOUISE SCOTT'S FRONT DOOR, BRIDPORT - DAWN

Bethany knocks on the door. Susan is starting to get grouchy - it's time for another feed.

She hears feet on a staircase and then the unlocking of the front door. It opens and LOUISE, now 40 and still half asleep, she takes a good look at the state of Bethany - and the crying baby in her arms.

Once housekeeper at Blackdown House, she has known Bethany since she was five and the normal niceties don't apply.

LOUISE
Give me the baby. Come in.

She takes the infant from Bethany with the confidence of an experienced mother who has raised two of her own, and fostered another.

They go in and door closes behind them.

INT. LOUISE SCOTT'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Bethany watches Louise bath her baby with skill and care, then dress her in some old baby clothes she has kept.

LOUISE
One last time then. I've got
formula for later. It will be
painful for you - stopping should
be done gradually.

She hands Susan over to Bethany - who feeds with grim determination - as if she also knows it's for the last time.

Bethany is close to the edge. She starts to cry.

Louise comes around the table and gently dabs her scratches with TCP - answering the age old question: who mothers the mother?

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Whose work was this?



Karin Cocuzzi and Dr Rachel Pinney c.1956 London (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2020)



Luigi Cox (formerly Cocuzzi) with daughter Karin Tetlow (née Cocuzzi) Whitstable (photo:C.C.Cox 1975)

BETHANY

Jane. We fought. She's missing some hair.

Louise nods as if that news makes perfect sense. She waits patiently for Bethany to carry on.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

I just blurted it out. They were mocking me - just like always.

LOUISE

About your father...?

Bethany is surprised.

BETHANY

Yes.

LOUISE

I wanted to protect you.

BETHANY

You knew?

LOUISE

Not for certain - but we knew *him*. The golden rule in that house: never be alone in a room with the man.

BETHANY

You left so suddenly.

LOUISE

He came into my room one night. I couldn't get him off me. It was just the one time - and I got pregnant. There was no way I could stay with an illegitimate child.

BETHANY

So your Beatrice...

LOUISE

Is your half-sister. Away at Boarding school. Your mother figured it out in the end. She pays the fees.

Bethany struggles to absorb this new information - and fails. It's too much.

The baby has drunk herself into a contented stupor.

Karin Tetlow's photo montage of her childhood. (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

LOUISE
Hand her over. What's she called?

BETHANY
Susan.

LOUISE
It's time she started on solids
anyway.

Bethany hands over her daughter - this is her act of betrayal, loaded with profound and painful implications for both mother and daughter.

EXT. LOUISE'S HOUSE, BRIDPORT - DAY

Bethany is leaving. She came with a baby and is going away without one.

Louise stands in the doorway, holding Susan.

LOUISE
So you'll send some money?

BETHANY
As soon as I get home. Lou and I
will be down to collect her in a
week or two.

Louise nods - but she knows Bethany too well and has already decided that as long as she has a say in the matter, the baby in her arms will be better off with her.

EXT. BRIDPORT STREET - MORNING

Bethany walks slowly away from Louise's house - then stops and looks back. She might be telling herself she will collect her baby in a few weeks - but deep down, in a part of her mind she's barely aware of, she knows what she's done is an act of abandonment - for which she will have to pay heavily. She also senses that this moment *now*, is the last chance to change her mind.

She stands in the street for a long time, frozen. Then she slowly turns and walks away, slowly at first, then getting faster. She gets smaller and smaller - and disappears.

FADE TO BLACK.



Coppers. New River Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Receiver. New River Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

OBI⁽⁵⁾

INT. BOILING HOUSE - DAY

The same fires, the same non-stop production line with enslaved Africans as the workforce: sugar cane transported to the mill and crushed, juice sent to the receiver, evaporation in coppers till crystallisation.

SUPER: 1771 NEVIS

But this year, it's others who cut up the dried mill-trash and feed the fires under the coppers - Obi has a new job. He is in many ways a servant again, but this time his master is another slave - the Head Boiler. It's an irony that the entire output of the plantation depends on the skill of just one slave - and so when the Head Boiler chose Obi as his new apprentice, Silcox indulged him - and Obi survived.

Obi takes the Head Boiler's arm and leads him to the smallest of the coppers, known as the 'tache'. The old man is not in good shape - he can't see well and his hands shake. He gives an order to another slave.

HEAD BOILER

Add the temper.

Lime is added to the boiling liquid.

He turns to Obi.

HEAD BOILER (CONT'D)

It's not critical when you add it -
about half way through is best.

The head boiler signals to the slave managing the fire beneath the copper that he's to add more fuel. Soon, with a hotter fire, there's a strong, rolling boil. The old man has commanded this process thousands of times and knows just by looking that the strike point is imminent.

HEAD BOILER (CONT'D)

Size of bubbles, change in colour,
increase in scum. It's close.

He puts his heavily calloused forefinger and thumb into the rapidly boiling sugar cane juice and pulls them out quickly - even for him, the heat is unbearable for more than a second.



Slave cabin. St Joseph's Plantation. LA USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Manager's House & Boabab tree. Mountravers Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

Then holding his hand up against the brightness of the outside, he slowly separates finger and thumb. The thread that forms between them tells him what he needs to know.

He turns to Obi.

HEAD BOILER

You do it boy.

Obi repeats the action - and screams in pain as his forefinger and thumb enter the super-hot liquid.

The old man laughs which turns into a cough - he's not sounding too good.

Copying the old man, Obi holds his hand up and separates finger and thumb to form a thread.

HEAD BOILER (CONT'D)

Any thicker, you've passed the point, thinner, or no thread at all and it needs more time - but only a few minutes. That (he points to Obi's thread) says it's ready.

He nods to the slave managing the fire who throws large wet leaves on the fire to dampen it. Using a pair of specially made poles that grip the copper, two other boiling house slaves lift it away and pour the contents into another container - the cooler.

And it's there, as if by magic, the liquor starts to crystallise into sugar.

The head boiler glances over at the overseer who's away from the heat of the fires. He's in the shade, lying in his hammock while a gentle breeze cools him. As usual, he's napping - sleeping off the copious amounts of rum he drank the night before.

The old man instructs the two slaves who lifted the copper.

HEAD BOILER (CONT'D)

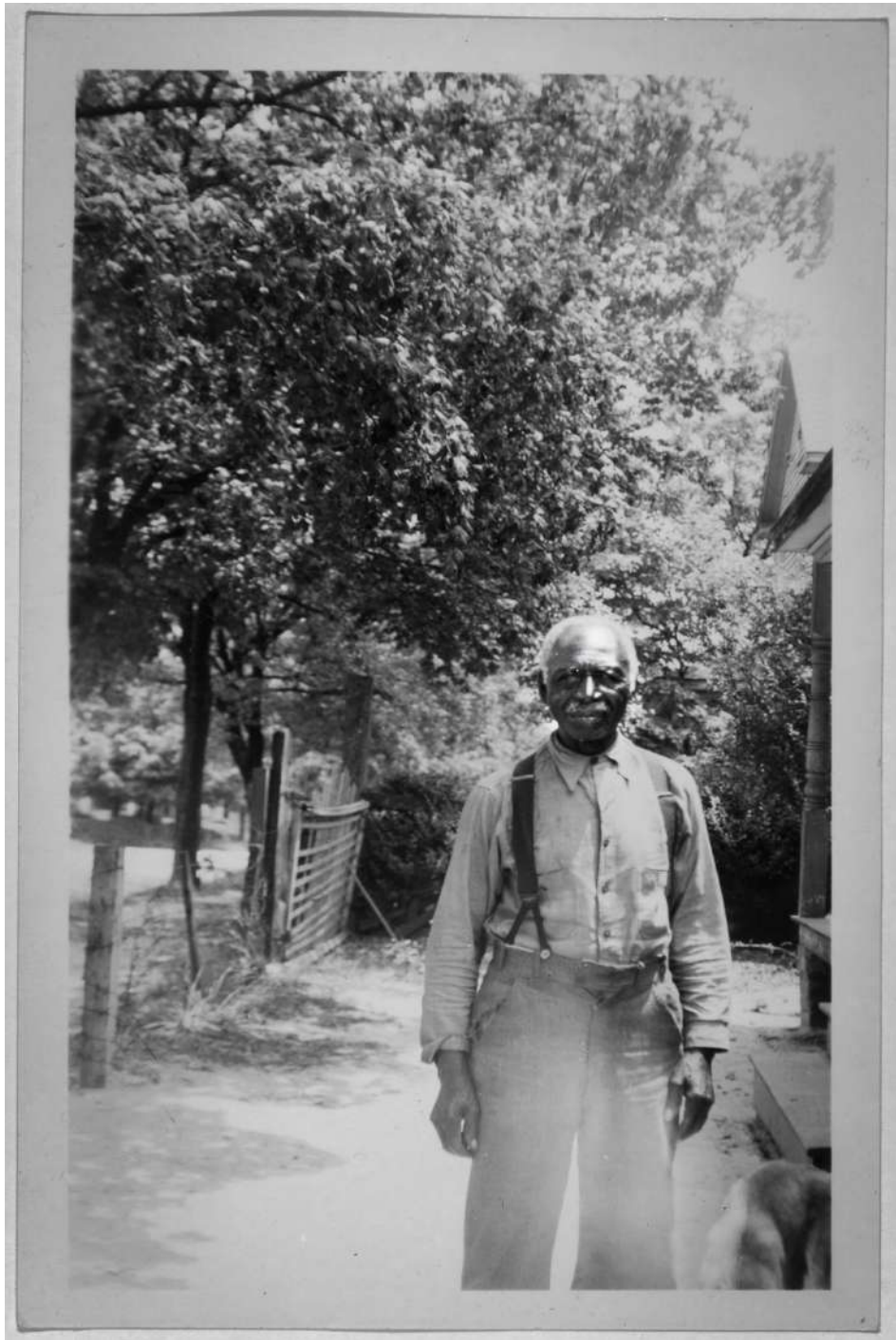
Take that outside and wash it out.
It must be spotless.

His skill and experience in making sugar is self-evident.

He points to his chair and Obi leads him to it. He gives a deep sigh as he sits. He gazes intently at the boiling house and all its activity, as if for the last time. It's the place he has spent virtually all his life.

His eyes close and his head falls to one side - he has taken his last breath.

It takes Obi a moment to realise the head boiler is dead.



Parker Poole, African American ex-slave c.1937
Federal Writers' Project slave narratives collections.
Library of Congress (www.loc.gov/item/99615431) 2017

What to do? Before he can think about answering that question, one of the boiling house slaves beckons him over - a decision is needed.

The boiling house cannot be stopped - it's a production line. With a last glance at his 'master', who looks as though he's sleeping, Obi goes over to inspect the cleaned out copper. He checks the condition of the boiling sugar cane in another copper and signals that it's ready to be transferred to the tache. Another worker calls him and he attends to a problem with the gutter that leads to the receiver.

At the of age of seventeen, Obi is running the boiling house. It's unheard of.

Occasionally he glances over at his old master, slumped in his chair and at the overseer in his hammock - but the non-stop production line demands his constant attention.

Soon comes the moment of truth. Temper has been added to the next batch of concentrated cane juice in the tache, the fire increased and the strike point is approaching. Obi puts his now blistered thumb and forefinger into the liquid - ready for the pain this time - and after consideration of the 'thread', calls it.

There's no respite. He immediately has to attend to something else - but a few minutes later he checks the cooler and sighs with relief - he got it right and crystallisation has occurred - he's made sugar.

LATER

The old man is still slumped in his chair. He was valued when alive, dead he's worthless to the plantation. Later, the boiling house slaves will use some of their precious rest time to bury him.

The last load of cane has come from the fields and has been crushed and the juice fed into the receiver.

It will take a while for this liquid to be reduced and end up in the tache. Then for a few short hours, the mill and boiling house slaves can rest - but not before everything is thoroughly cleaned.

Obi has been working flat out, focused entirely on his new, unexpected responsibilities. As the process winds down he has time to take a breather.

For the first time he notices that Silcox and the boiling house overseer are outside the boiling house watching everything going on. He wonders for how long they've been there.

He watches them enter the potting shed to check the sugar he has just made.



Sugar Works. West Indies. 1667 (slaveryimages.org' accessed 2019.06.13)



Cane cutting, date unknown. St Joseph Plantation LA USA (photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)

The next time Obi is able to glance at the potting shed, he sees the two men emerge. They seem to be surprised at what they've seen. Just then Parker rides up and joins them - cane cutting is over for the day.

As he works, Obi keeps glancing over at the three men as a debate between them starts - out of his earshot. It's clear Parker isn't happy. He's been overruled - and doesn't like it one little bit.

Silcox comes over to Obi.

SILCOX

Boy!

Obi knows the plantation owner - it may have been 7 years ago, but he was his personal servant for a year.

SILCOX (CONT'D)

They tell me you're now called
Liverpool.

Obi nods.

SILCOX (CONT'D)

How old are you?

Obi shrugs. Since his capture in West Africa a lifetime ago, he has lost track of time - and slaves don't have birthdays.

SILCOX (CONT'D)

Not yet twenty I'll wager.

Silcox takes a moment - a final consideration of the decision he's about to make.

SILCOX (CONT'D)

This is unheard of but it seems I
have no choice. You're to carry on
boy.

For a moment, Obi lets a hint of pride show.

Silcox notices and instantly reminds Obi of the status quo.

SILCOX (CONT'D)

Don't go getting above yourself -
this is just till the harvest is
over. Do this right boy - or God
help you.

Cursing himself for revealing his feelings, Obi lowers his head.

OBI

Yes Master.



Bittern Line train. Norfolk (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



North Walsham station. Norfolk (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

SILCOX

One mistake and you will be back in the field with Mr Parker. He's not happy with my decision.

OBI

Yes Master.

FADE TO BLACK.

LEO & GRACE⁽⁵⁾

EXT. NORTH WALSHAM STATION - DAY

The single carriage train from Norwich pulls into North Walsham - a market town that has seen better days.

Among the passengers getting out is Grace. Winter proper has arrived and she's wearing her down coat, warm boots, gloves, hat - and carries a small rucksack.

She transfers to the down side where her taxi waits. She ignores the inevitable stares.

She identifies herself to the taxi driver and gets in.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Grace stares out at the bleak North Norfolk countryside.

The driver keeps checking on her in his mirror. He'd love to ask her questions - but his passenger's armour of privacy and self-sufficiency suggest he should keep his mouth shut.

As they enter a village she sees a sign saying 'WELCOME TO HAPPISBURGH'

EXT. BLACK BOY INN, HAPPISBURGH- DAY

The taxi pulls up outside the pub. Grace gets out and waits to be told how much is the fare.

DRIVER

Twelve pounds love. They'll know in the pub where the person you're looking for lives.

He takes the money and gives her one of his cards.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Call if you need a ride back to Walsham.



Norfolk (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Black Boys Inn. Aldborough. Norfolk (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

GRACE

I might have to do that - thank
you.

The cab drives off and Grace takes a look at the pub board swinging gently in the wind. 'Black Boy Inn'. She sighs - it never ends.

INT. BLACK BOY INN - DAY

In the bar are three locals and the publican - all of them over fifty with the blotchy red faces of regular drinkers. Conversation stops when she walks in.

Four pairs of eyes stare at her - whether in curiosity or hostility, Grace can't decide.

GRACE

Good afternoon. I'm looking for Leo
Constantini, the photographer. He
lives on the cliffs near here.

The atmosphere changes slightly. They might not particularly like or approve of Leo, but they know him - and it's typical someone like him would have a visitor like her.

One of the men levers himself off his bar stool and walks outside with her.

EXT. BLACK BOY INN - DAY

The man points to a path beside the pub.

MAN

Take the path and turn right when
you get to the cliff. Look for a
wooden cabin painted black with a
deck out front - about half a mile.

GRACE

Thank you.

The man is weirdly over polite. Grace is unable to read him.

MAN

You're welcome.

Grace sets off down the path. Strange place, strange people.

EXT. CLIFF TOP, HAPPISBURGH - DAY

The first thing Grace sees when she gets to the cliff is a hand painted sign. 'DANGER! EROSION! STAY AWAY FROM THE CLIFF EDGE!'



Happisburgh Norfolk 2019 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Happisburgh Norfolk 2019 (photo: C.C.Cox)

She did a little research before setting off to this remote part of the Norfolk coast - and knows that the Lighthouse, Pub, Church, High Street and housing either side of it - will all be gone in an estimated fifty years.

Those in charge did their cost/benefit equations and decided to surrender the village (and a few other communities along the coast like it) to the sea. The remaining houses, cabins and caravans near the cliff edge are the front line of a war already lost.

She passes abandoned dwellings right on the cliff edge, other set further back have a little more time left. Many have vanished, their remains littering the beach below.

Eventually she comes to a wooden cabin stained black. She's walked about half a mile - and there's nothing else similar. It must be the place.

She stands and stares at it, trying to settle her thoughts and feelings. Calm and controlled throughout the long journey from Bristol, inexplicably her pulse is now racing at the thought that the man she's about to meet knew her mother.

She takes some deep breaths and tries puts out of her mind another, more disturbing possibility.

She steps onto the deck and walks to the front door. She knocks and after a pause it opens.

Standing before her is Leo Constantini, now 70 years old.

He stares at the young mixed-race Afro-Caribbean woman before him. He has no idea who she is or what she wants, but the face behind the glasses, looks familiar.

LEO

Hello. Can I help you?

GRACE

Hello. Yes. My name's Grace. Are you Leo Constantini, the photographer?

LEO

Yes.

There's a pause. It's cold on the doorstep.

LEO (CONT'D)

Would you like to come in... Grace?

GRACE

Yes. Thank you.

Grace follows him into the cabin.



Abandoned caravan. Happisburgh. Norfolk (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Self-portrait. Norfolk (photo: C.C.Cox 2020)

INT. LEO'S CABIN - DAY

If the outside of the cabin is austere, inside it is a creative mess of books and pictures. There is a work desk with a modern computer with a large screen, a small kitchen in one corner and the whole place is warm, thanks to log burning stove - in front of which is an old battered sofa and an armchair.

LEO
Tea? I've just made a pot. Or
coffee?

GRACE
Tea's fine.

LEO
Dump your coat over there. You're
certainly wrapped up warm.

Inexplicably, Leo finds himself a little nervous. He brings two mugs tea over.

LEO (CONT'D)
Sugar?

GRACE
No thanks.

Leo decides to stop fussing and wait for her to reveal what she has come for. For a moment he wishes he'd asked a few more questions on the doorstep.

Grace also takes her time. She sips her tea. Then she reaches for her rucksack and takes out her laptop.

LEO
Have you come far?

GRACE
I suppose I have - the Caribbean
via Bristol.

LEO
Is Bristol where you're living?

GRACE
For the time being - I'm doing
research for a PhD. But the reason
I'm here is this...

Grace finds the picture from his website and shows it to him. Isabella's face stares from the screen at them both.



House remains. Happisburgh. Norfolk (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Old sea defences. Happisburgh. Norfolk (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

GRACE (CONT'D)

I would have called - but couldn't find your number and you're not answering your e-mail. (pause) Do you mind if I ask you how you knew this woman?

Leo stares at Grace, at the image of Isabella, then back to Grace. There's an unmistakable resemblance. A crazy thought comes to him - and because it's so absurd, he banishes it at once.

LEO

She was my partner, We lived together for 20 years or so.

Grace's next question takes Leo by surprise.

GRACE

Did you love her?

Leo feels compelled to be honest.

LEO

Yes. But perhaps not enough.

GRACE

She's dead.

Leo sits back as though he has been physically hit by her words. For a moment he cannot speak.

They stare at each other.

LEO

I'm very sorry to hear that - when...?

GRACE

Nearly a year ago. (pause) She was my mother...

Leo stares at Grace for a long time. Then he gets up and goes over to the bookshelf and pulls out a thin book.

Sitting back down, he holds it close - as if protecting it.

LEO

Did she talk much about her years in England?

GRACE

Almost nothing. She came when she was 8 and had a tough time with her auntie who wasn't very nice.

LEO

That's all?



Self portrait. UK (photo: C.C.Cox c.1971)



Friends. Pett Level. East Sussex (photo: C.C.Cox c.1972)

GRACE

Just about. Oh yes, she said
England was a shit-hole.

Leo laughs.

LEO

That's her.

He offers her the book.

LEO (CONT'D)

I never published this...

For the next few minutes there's silence as Grace slowly
turns the pages, carefully examining every image.

Leo studies Grace, while Grace studies the book.

The book is a photographic essay - the story of a
relationship over 20 years. Most pictures are of Isabella,
who at the start of the book is roughly the age of Grace now.
A few of the pictures are of Leo and Isabella together.

Towards the end of the book, the pictures get bleaker. Leo,
perhaps not entirely unwittingly, photographed the decline of
their relationship. The last sequence of images are of an
empty house, traces of a vanished presence - and a pile of
boxes.

The final two images are of a letter and a close up of a
cheque.

Leo's crazy idea returns and the more he studies Grace the
more it takes root in his mind and the less crazy seems.

For her part, Grace is now focused on one tiny detail on the
last picture - the *date* on the cheque.

She does the calculations in her head - it's close but nearly
a month out.

GRACE

The date on the cheque...?

LEO

Post-dated. I had to wait a month
for the money.

GRACE

...so my mother actually wrote that
cheque on the 6th of *October* 1993,
not the 6th of November?

LEO

Yes.

In different ways, they have come to the same realisation.



Marta. Nicaragua (photo: C.C.Cox c.1982)



Friend. London (photo: C.C.Cox c.1973)

Grace speaks first.

GRACE

I think it's possible you may be my father.

With these words, Grace's closely controlled emotions can't be contained any longer but she's determined not to cry.

They stare at each other for a long time. For a moment, Leo is speechless.

GRACE (CONT'D)

We have to be sure.

Both of them are relieved to focus on something practical.

LEO

What's your date of birth?

GRACE

June 18th 1994. I was born on Nevis.

For over twenty years Leo has wondered where Isabella was - back on Nevis is so obvious that he realises that on some level he always knew.

He finds a pad and pencil and writes down the date.

LEO

Minus nine months...

GRACE

40 weeks.

Leo finds a calendar and counts the weeks back.

LEO

That would mean you must have been conceived around mid September 1993.

Leo recalls that period clearly. He shakes his head.

GRACE

I was several weeks overdue. Mum said they had to induce her.

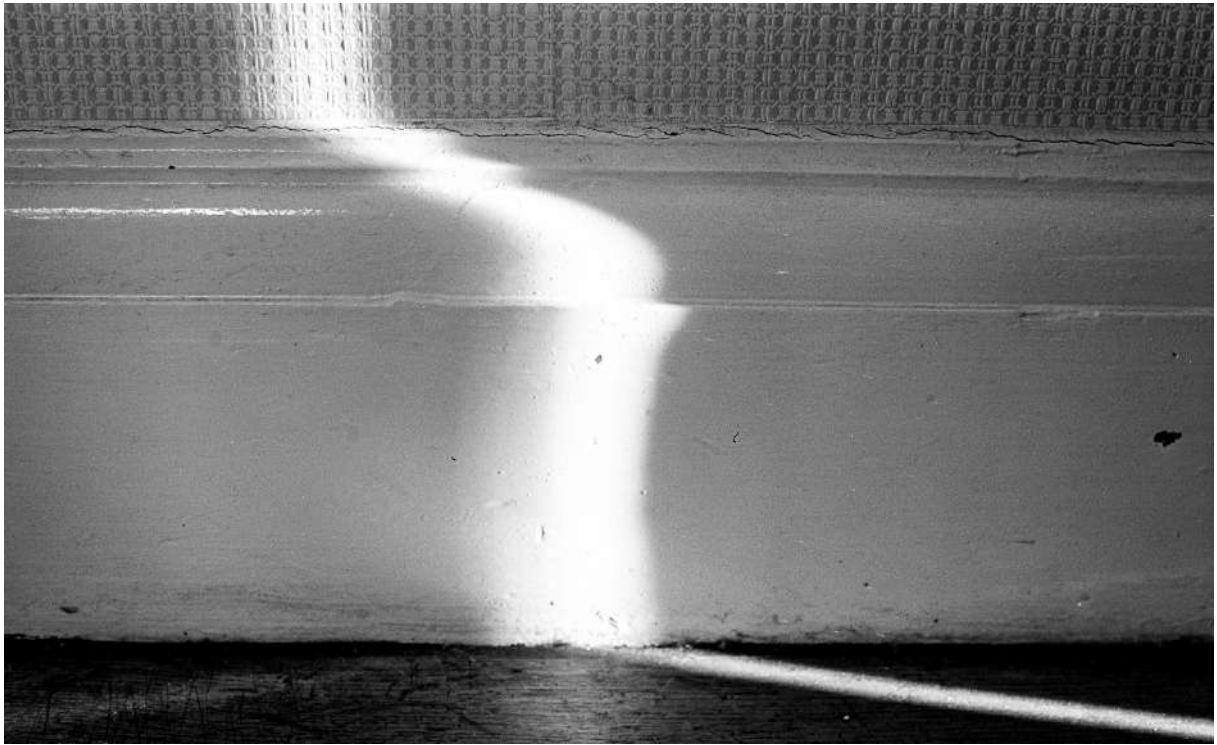
LEO

So add a few weeks - which would put conception around the end of August.

He thinks again.

GRACE

Well?



Light on skirting board. London (photo: C.C.Cox c.1972)



Detail. Manager's House. Mountravers Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

LEO
 We went to Cornwall in the camper
 van at the end of August that
 year...

He remembers that holiday - they argued a lot - and when they
 made up, they made love.

EXT. CORNISH CAMP SITE - NIGHT - 1993, FLASHBACK

Leo's camper van is parked in the corner of a Cornish camp
 site. The shape of a hut with primitive showers and toilets
 can be made out in the moonlight - as can a smattering of
 tents and the odd caravan.

Closer, the VW camper-van can be seen to be rocking slightly -
 there's some physical activity going on inside.

INT. CAMPER VAN - NIGHT

Leo and Isabella lie side by side in a moment of post-coital
 stillness.

Their faces are lit by moonlight that comes through a gap in
 the curtains. Isabella kisses Leo - they embrace.

END FLASHBACK

INT. LEO'S CABIN - DAY

Leo's next statement is made with a certainty that banishes
 all doubt

LEO
 That's when you were conceived.

Again they stare at each other. It's a life changing moment
 and neither of them have any idea what to say or do next.

Leo stands up.

LEO (CONT'D)
 I haven't been out today - how
 about a walk on the beach?

Despite the cold outside, Grace is happy to agree.

GRACE
 OK.



Happisburgh 2019 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Happisburgh 2019 (photo: C.C.Cox)

EXT. HAPPISBURGH BEACH - AFTERNOON

The two tiny figures of Grace and Leo walk along the beach. They pass the old, broken wooden sea defences - and the wreckage from the last storm surge.

They come to a path leading up to the top of the cliffs and walk back to Leo's cabin as it starts to get dark.

INT. LEO'S CABIN - EVENING

The remains of dinner are still on the table.

Grace shows Leo some other photos on her computer.

GRACE

This is me aged ten, and this is my step-father.

Leo stares at the man who raised *his* daughter - a stern looking Nevisian. Leo wants to dislike him - but can't.

GRACE (CONT'D)

He was also a teacher - a good man but strict. He never pretended to be my real dad - always 'step-father' - Mother insisted.

LEO

So what did she say about *me*?

GRACE

Nothing. You didn't exist. She got angry every time I asked. I thought maybe she had a one night stand - or God forbid was raped. The only thing I knew for sure was that you were white - obviously.

The anger and confusion he felt twenty years ago are stirred up again.

LEO

Bloody hell.

Grace picks up the book again.

She flips through to the last images. The pile of boxes in the living room, the envelope, the close up of the 'Dear John' letter.

GRACE

She says here, "...your family history is too much to bear" What's that about?



Portrait of John Pinney with reflection. Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)



Georgian House Museum. Bristol (photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

The question sounds faintly rhetorical - Leo senses he's being tested.

He hesitates. The same instinct that led him to keep quiet about having slave owning forebears when he lived with Isabella, surfaces once again.

He buys time.

LEO

How did you find me?

Grace takes pity on him and lets him off the hook.

GRACE

It's OK - I know you're a Silcox.
I'm studying their archives in
Bristol. The guy in Special
Collections told me about your
mother.

Leo lets out a deep sigh of relief.

LEO

I never told Isabella. We were not
getting on that well *before* she
discovered my lack of honesty, and
when it came out, it was the last
straw - she wanted nothing more to
do with me. The crimes of my
forebears and my silence about them
cost me dear. I lost a relationship
- and though I didn't know till
just now, I lost *you*.

Grace hands the book back. Leo refuses it.

LEO (CONT'D)

Keep it - it's yours.

GRACE

Thank you.

She pauses - and then adds with feeling.

GRACE (CONT'D)

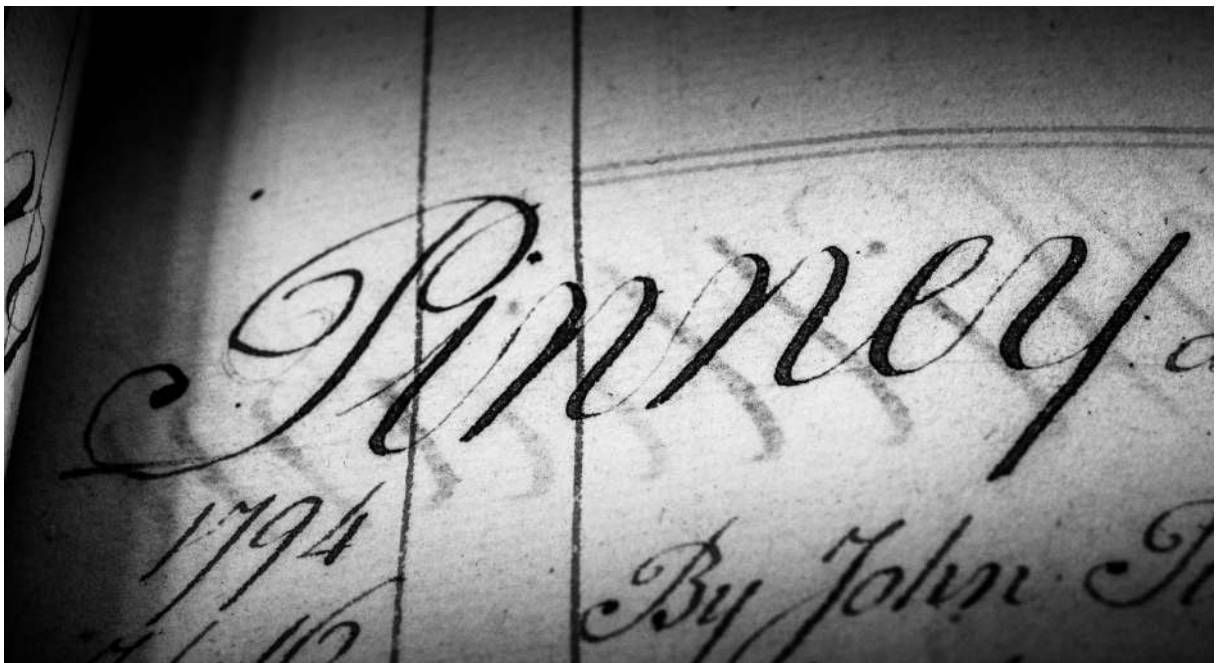
You're not the only one who lost
out.

Father and daughter each try to absorb the implications of
their new connection - and the shameful legacy they now
share.

FADE TO BLACK.



Racedown. Dorset (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Pinney Papers, account book #50. Special Collections. Bristol University Library (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

BETHANY⁽⁵⁾

EXT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE, DORSET - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS: Views of Blackdown House on a grey, late January day. The ornamental pond is clogged with algae, the windows of the house are dirty. The large front lawn is overgrown, the flower beds clogged with uncollected autumn leaves.

SUPER: 1958 DORSET

A taxi drives through the open gates and pulls up outside the front door.

Bethany gets out with her ubiquitous rucksack and something else - a well-used leather Gladstone bag. She pays the taxi and watches it drive away, then turns to face the house.

It's twenty-two years since she and her baby were banished. She hasn't been back since.

Bethany is now forty-nine. Fatter, and as inelegant as ever. She's the same eccentric character but with a new confidence and authority since qualifying as a medical Doctor.

She knocks on the front door.

After a long wait, a woman at least sixty-five years old unlocks the door and faces Bethany.

COOPER

Bethany?

BETHANY

Cooper? Was it you who rang?

The woman nods.

COOPER

It's good you're here - she keeps asking when you're coming.

BETHANY

It's not so easy to get away - I have a busy practice.

The woman gives the impression she has heard too many excuses from Lady Silcox's children.

INT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

The house is dark, cold - and empty.



Rachel Pinney aged 3 c.1912 (original photo: anon/ copy C.C.Cox 2020)



Light on a window sill. Isle of Wight (photo: C.C.Cox c.2011)

The woman leads the way up the stairs. Like Smithy years earlier, she struggles with her knees.

BETHANY

Is it just you here?

COOPER

There's three of us - two from the village, one from Bridport. We come on a rota. Your sister pays us. It would be nice if she found the time to actually visit as well.

BETHANY

Which sister?

COOPER

The one in London.

BETHANY

What about Jane?

COOPER

She comes once in while - always 'busy'.

INT. BLACKDOWN HOUSE, NURSERY DOOR - DAY

They come to a halt outside the nursery door. Bethany is surprised.

BETHANY

She's in the nursery?

COOPER

For years now. Given that the house is empty, it's the most inconvenient room possible. Funny - I used to be a cook here - now I change her nappies.

BETHANY

Why isn't she in a home?

The woman snorts.

COOPER

You've forgotten what she's like. Stubborn and gives orders like her husband - the bastard.

Bethany properly engages with the woman for the first time.

BETHANY

So you knew him?



Major General Sir Reginald Pinney KCB c.1920
(original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2020)

COOPER

The whole county knew him. He
fucked anything with a pulse.

Bethany smiles.

BETHANY

If you only knew how good it is to
hear him spoken of like that.

COOPER

He was a monster. When I worked
here it was a rule never to be
alone in a room with him. How on
earth your mother didn't find out
I'll never know.

Bethany responds with feeling.

BETHANY

It didn't stop with servants - and
she did know. - I told her about
what happened to me - eventually.

COOPER

You...? His own ...? God in heaven!

BETHANY

Come on.

Bethany opens the door and they enter the nursery.

INT. NURSERY, BLACKDOWN HOUSE - DAY

Lady Ruth Silcox is propped up in bed. She is gaunt and
exhausted - looking every one of her eighty three years. The
old nursery smells of urine and faeces.

COOPER

Bethany has come Lady Silcox.

BETHANY

I got your message mother - I'm
here.

Lady Silcox beckons her over with a hand that shakes and
appears to be just skin and bone.

Bethany opens her doctor's bag and takes out what she needs
to check her mother's blood pressure.

Lady Silcox submits passively to the process - while noting
the professional and competent way Bethany goes about the
task.



Dr Rachel Pinney c.1950 (original photo: anon/copy C.C.Cox 2018)

LADY SILCOX

You really are a proper doctor.

Bethany shuts her up by sticking a thermometer in her mouth.

She turns to the woman.

BETHANY

What is she eating?

COOPER

A few spoonfuls of consommé with
toast if I'm lucky - otherwise
nothing.

BETHANY

Fluids?

COOPER

Very little. She's so bloody
stubborn.

Bethany removes the thermometer and reads it.

Now able to talk, Lady Silcox barks out new orders.

LADY SILCOX

Cooper. Tea for my daughter.

Cooper faces Lady Silcox with her hands on her hips. For some time now, there's been a shift in the power relations at Blackdown House.

Lady Silcox pretends to be contrite.

LADY SILCOX (CONT'D)

Please.

COOPER

That's better.

BETHANY

I don't want any tea.

Lady Silcox is nonplussed for a moment - then gathers her wits.

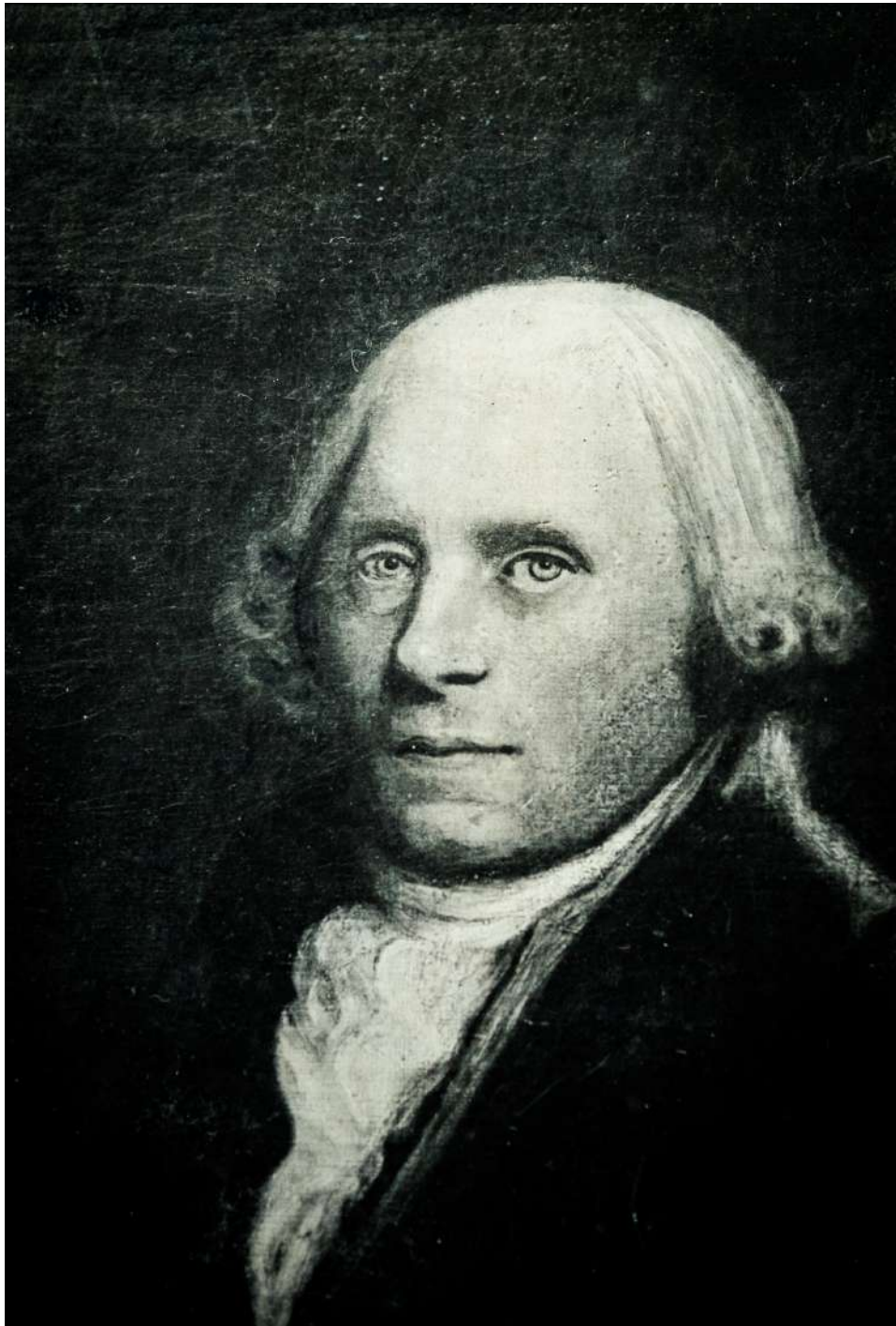
LADY SILCOX

I want to talk privately to my
daughter. Leave us Cooper.

Cooper is only too happy to comply. As soon as the door closes, Lady Silcox gets Bethany to lean close. She whispers to her daughter.

LADY SILCOX (CONT'D)

I don't trust her. She doesn't know
her place. No respect at all.



Great, great, great grandfather John (Pretor) Pinney 1740-1818
(original copy of painting: anon/ this copy C.C.Cox 2020)

BETHANY

She's not a servant Mother, she's a carer - and I suggest *you* treat *her* with respect.

A short silence ensues.

Lady Silcox banished Bethany from the house years ago. Now they are together, neither knows what to say.

LADY SILCOX

I've asked you here for a reason.

BETHANY

I guessed as much.

LADY SILCOX

I'm dying.

BETHANY

Excellent diagnosis.

LADY SILCOX

How long have I got?

BETHANY

You could go any time. Weeks, not months I would guess. It's not an exact science - but I did two years on a geriatric ward...

Lady Silcox takes Bethany's hand.

Amazed, Bethany sees tears in her mother's eyes. In all her life, she has never seen her mother cry.

LADY SILCOX

I want to die now - with you here. Can you give me something? Put me to sleep, like we always did with the dogs?

Bethany stares at her mother. Her mother stares back.

Bethany makes a decision. She reaches into her medical bag and takes out four large ampules of morphine and a syringe.

BETHANY

Are you sure?

LADY SILCOX

Yes.

Bethany scribes the ampules with a file, breaks them open and fills the syringe with their contents.



Aunt Alessandrina. Eastbourne (photo: C.C.Cox c.1990)

Bridport News, Friday, February 28, 1958 5

HUNDREDS MOURN LADY HESTER PINNEY

Service is relayed to overflow congregation at memorial service

MOURNERS from many parts of Dorset, as well as farther afield, filled to overflowing the picturesque village church of Broadwindsor on Saturday afternoon when a memorial service was held for Lady Hester Pinney, of Race-down, who died at her home, aged 83.

Lady Pinney, the widow of Major-General Sir Reginald Pinney, K.C.B., was a prominent figure in the county, having been identified with many movements for the social benefit of young and old.

She had made numerous broadcasts, one of them on the life of Thomas Hardy, whom she once entertained as a personal friend.

She had been a member of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society since 1933.

Bells peal

Before the service began a peal was rung on the church bells by Messrs. E. J. Crabb, E. Case, P. Bolgin, W. Dommett, P. Spiller and R. Crabb and Miss Dineen Crabb.

Col. and Mrs. G. A. Pinney, Mr. George Pinney, Mr. James Pinney, Miss Verity Pinney, Miss C. Pinney, Miss V. M. Pinney, Mrs. King.

The Hon. Mrs. Pinney (sister-in-law) and Miss Elisabeth Pinney were unable to attend.

Other mourners

Other mourners were: Lady Smith, Sir Aubrey and Lady Elwood, Mr. Humphrey Baker (Wayford Manor), Sir Philip and Lady Colfox, Sir James and Lady King, Mr. Clive Ponsomby-Fane, Lady Crutchley, Lady North (also rep. Admiral Sir Dudley North).

Col. and Mrs. D. Baxter, Cmdr. H. K. Mitchell, Col. and Mrs. R. A. V. Crawford, Col. and Mrs. Wenzel (also rep. Mrs. Wenzel).

Guest (also rep. Dorset British Red Cross Society and Mrs. Oliphant, the Centre Organiser of the W.V.S.), Mr. J. C. Shoo-bridge (also rep. Dorset War Pensions Committee and the chairman of the British Legion), Mr. W. W. Llewellyn (also rep. the Discharged Prisoners Aid Society).

Mr. J. Shum Cox (rep. University of Bristol and Professor C. M. MacInnes), Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Olett (also rep. University of Bristol), Mr. B. Brille (Beamster), Mrs. E. M. Griffin (Dorset county chairman) was also present.

Mr. F. Jenkins (also rep. Mrs. L. Pease, of Broadwindsor House), Mrs. B. Hoare, Mr. R. Watts (also rep. Mrs. Watts), Mrs. F. Wilson (also rep. Mr. Wilson), Mrs. H. M. Pidgeon (also rep. Mr. Pidgeon), Mr. and Mrs. N. E. Davies, Mr. and Mrs. A. Hann (also rep. Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Hann), Mrs. C. Howard, Miss S. Howard, Mr. and Mrs. C. Goodwin, Mr. E. Mrs. C. R. Pooley, Mrs. G. Frampton, Mr. W. H. Usher (also rep. Dorset Farmers Ltd.).

Mr. W. H. Knight (also rep. Drimpton Church members), Mrs. F. W. Ginter, Mrs. G. Furse (also rep. Capt. Furse), Mr. A. Frost, Mrs. Fred Elliott, Mr. F. W. Chisworthy, Mr. Donald Cox, Mr. Robin Wordsworth, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Dommett, Miss E. Dunham, Mrs. F. G. Case, Mrs. W. R. Rodda, Mr. H. S. Hardin.

bers of the Broadwindsor Girl Guides troop were also present, Mrs. A. Paull (also rep Mr. A. Paull).

The Mayor and Mayoress of Bridport (Ct. Miss M. G. Northover and Miss B. M. Parsons) were unable to be present.

MR. W. E. WOOD DIES AT BURTON

THE death took place at Burton Bradstock on Sunday of Mr. William Edward Wood at the age of 81.

Mr. Wood came of an Essex farming family and came to Dorset to take up a farming job at Marshwood in 1915, later moving with his employer to Burton Bradstock. He continued to work on the land until his retirement 11 years ago when he came to live with Mrs. Churchouse and the late Mr. Churchouse, then of Anchor House, Burton Bradstock.

Mr. Wood, who had been a widower for many years, is survived by one son.

The funeral took place at St. Mary's Church, Burton Bradstock on Wednesday, the Rector (Canon A. R. Dittmer) officiating.

MOURNERS

Chief mourners were Mr. and Mrs. J. Wood (son and daughter-in-law) and Mrs. E. Churchouse, and others present in church Mr. and Mrs. F. N.

Mourners at Broadwindsor Church on Saturday paid their last respects to Lady Pinney at a memorial service.

Bridport News. Friday February 28 1958 (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

She holds the syringe up to the light and squeezes till a globule of liquid comes out of the needle - a precaution that under these particular circumstances is not strictly necessary.

She takes her mother's arm and looks for a vein.

LADY SILCOX
I did a terrible thing.

BETHANY
Yes, you did.

LADY SILCOX
Do you think I would have left you
alone with him had I known?

BETHANY
You did know - on one level,
everyone knew - you just didn't
want to face it.

Lady Silcox's tears are properly flowing now.

LADY SILCOX
Can you forgive me?

Bethany carefully inserts the needle into the vein.

She slowly injects the morphine. The effect is rapid. Stress and tension fade from Lady Silcox's face. Her eyelids flutter.

Just before she loses consciousness Bethany leans close to her and whispers in her ear.

BETHANY
I forgive you.

FADE TO BLACK.

OBI₍₆₎

EXT. HUT, SLAVE COMPOUND - PRE-DAWN

In the pre-dawn gloom, nothing and nobody stirs in slave village.

SUPER: 1782 NEVIS



Marta and Tomás (photo: C.C.Cox 1991)

INT. SLAVE HUT - PRE-DAWN

Obi (now 28) has his eyes open - he has been awake for some time. Trying not to disturb the woman (EBELE, 25) beside him, or the other women she shares the hut with, he gets dressed.

Ebele has also been unable to sleep. She whispers.

EBELE
They're leaving straight after
breakfast.

OBI
I'll get a message to you. It could
be tonight. I've got to go or
someone will see me.

Ebele gets up and goes to him. It's obvious she's pregnant.

They embrace as if it could be for the last time - as indeed it might.

EBELE
Go.

EXT. OBI'S HUT (MEN'S SECTION OF SLAVE VILLAGE) - DAWN

A cockerel crows.

Obi emerges from his own hut pretending he's just woken up. He stretches and heads down to the boiling house.

EXT. BOILING HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

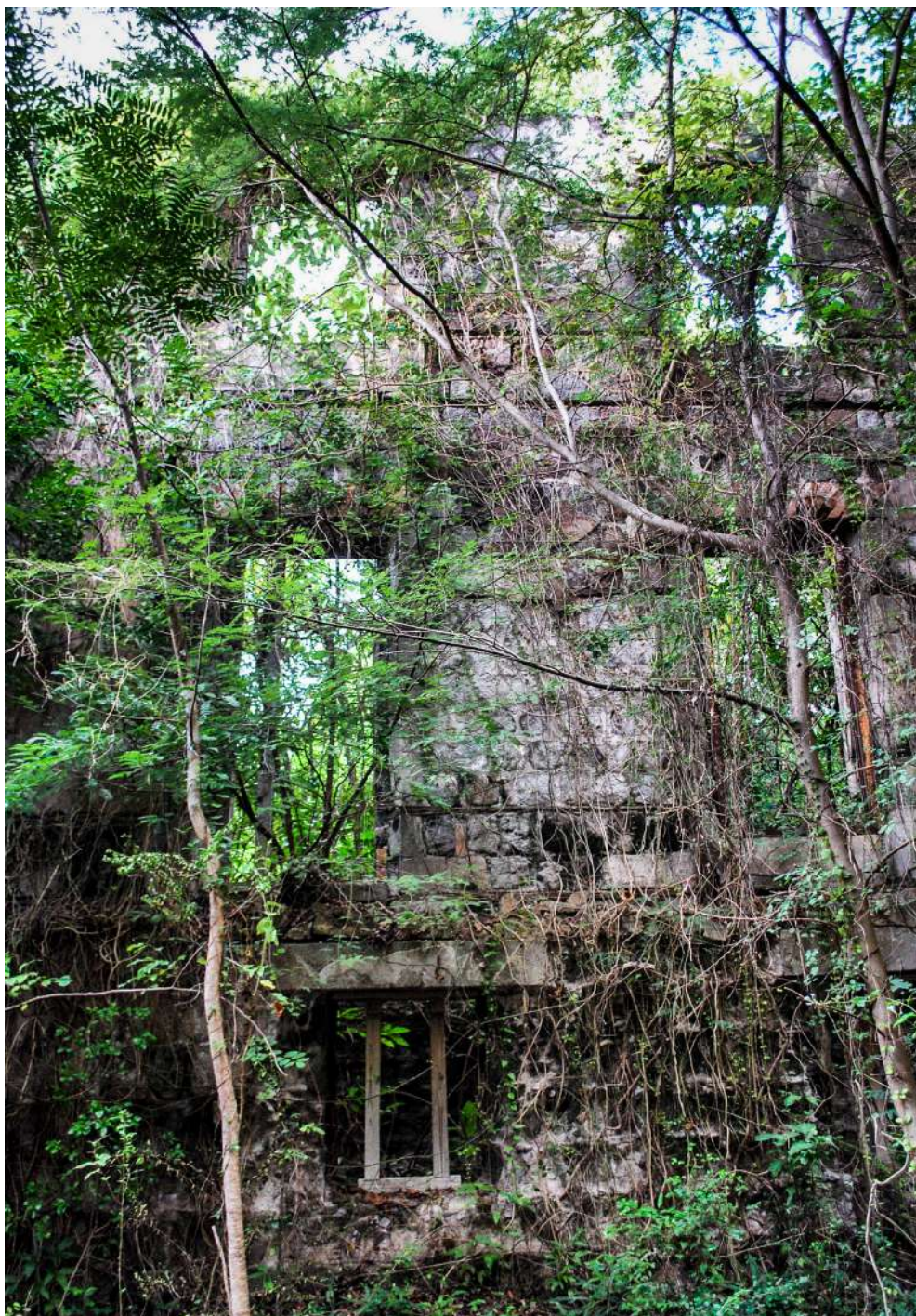
He checks the boiling house. All is ready for the moment the canes start arriving from the fields and cane juice starts to flow into the receiver from the mill - but on this memorable day work is starting late. The overseers and drivers have another event to attend to.

EXT. NEAR GREAT HOUSE, PILSDON PLANTATION - MORNING

Obi walks up towards the great house.

Slaves gather in small groups to witness the event - Obi joins them.

Eighteen years have passed since a young, naive Charles Silcox arrived on Nevis to take control of his inheritance - then a moribund, loss making slave labour sugar plantation.



Ruins of Great House. Mountravers Plantation 2015 (photo: anon)

He now appears every inch the hardened, veteran 'planter' - indifferent to the brutality, torture, rape and humiliation meted out to the plantation's work force

Obi watches as the last of the Silcox luggage is loaded onto a convoy of carts. The family are taking back to England vast amounts of furniture and possessions - including two young slaves, exotic trophies to impress their visitors in Bristol.

Silcox passes down the line of white workers and overseers and shakes each of them by the hand.

Obi watches as he pauses for a final conversation with Parker - the man he is leaving in charge. It was known weeks ago to the Great House servants that Parker was to be promoted to Plantation Manager.

The carts sets off for Charlestown Harbour where the ship to England waits.

As they pass him, Obi is surprised to see tears in Mrs Silcox's eyes. He can't believe she will *miss* this hell-hole?

Silcox waves as if he were royalty - but many of the enslaved have already turned their backs. Every one of them is full of foreboding for the life to come under Parker - a man they loath and fear in equal amounts.

As he turns to go back to the boiling house, there's a crack of a whip and shouts from Parker.

PARKER

Show's over - back to work.

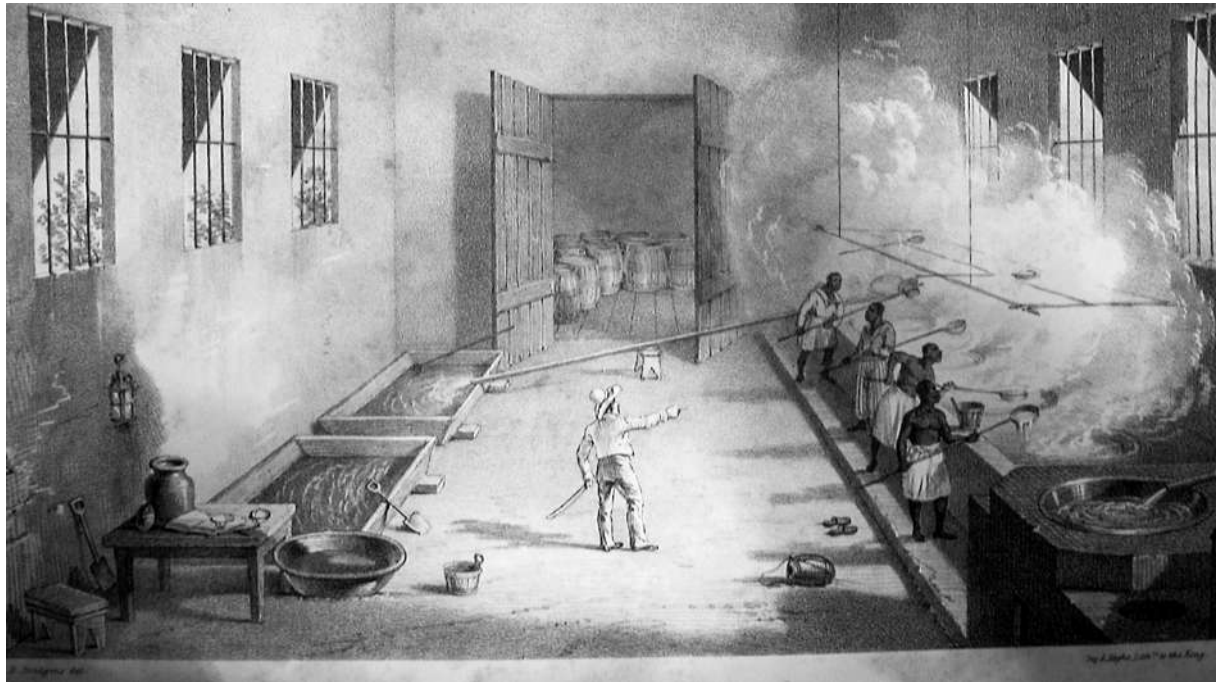
For a second, Obi and Parker catch each other's eye - and in that brief moment, Obi sees all Parker's malicious anticipation at the prospect of settling scores with Obi once and for all.

INT. BOILING HOUSE - DAY

The boiling house is working at full capacity. As ever, it's unbearably hot. As Obi moves from task to task, from decision to decision, sweat pours off him - but as the still 'acting' head boiler - he is able occasionally to slip away from the heat of the fires and the boiling sugar-cane juice and catch some cooler air.

EXT/INT. POTTING HOUSE - DAY

Obi enters the potting house. Two of the strongest slaves on the plantation work there: POLYDORE and CUDJOE. Shifting hogsheads is heavy work and only a handful of the plantations slaves are strong enough to do it.



Sugar Boiling House. Trinidad 1836 (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.12)



Pinney's Beach. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

As Obi checks the sugar, he briefly looks over to Polydore who gives him an imperceptible nod. Obi responds with the same. No words are spoken.

INT. POTTING HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

Parker looks on as Polydore attaches sacks of sugar, crocks of molasses and small barrels of rum to three patiently waiting mules.

Parker has for years been stealing small amounts from Silcox. With his new authority and the owner on his way home, now he can steal larger amounts - with impunity.

Despite Polydore's strength, Parker is confident and relaxed around him. In contrast to Obi, Polydore gives a convincing impression of being a slave without spirit who accepts his lot, keeps his mouth shut, is happy to undertake 'extra duties' - and very grateful for the occasional ration of rum.

EXT. PATHWAY DOWN TO BEACH - NIGHT

Three heavily laden mules led by Polydore head down the path to the beach.

With a lantern in his hand and a pistol in his belt, Parker follows behind.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Polydore waits with the mules at a respectful distance.

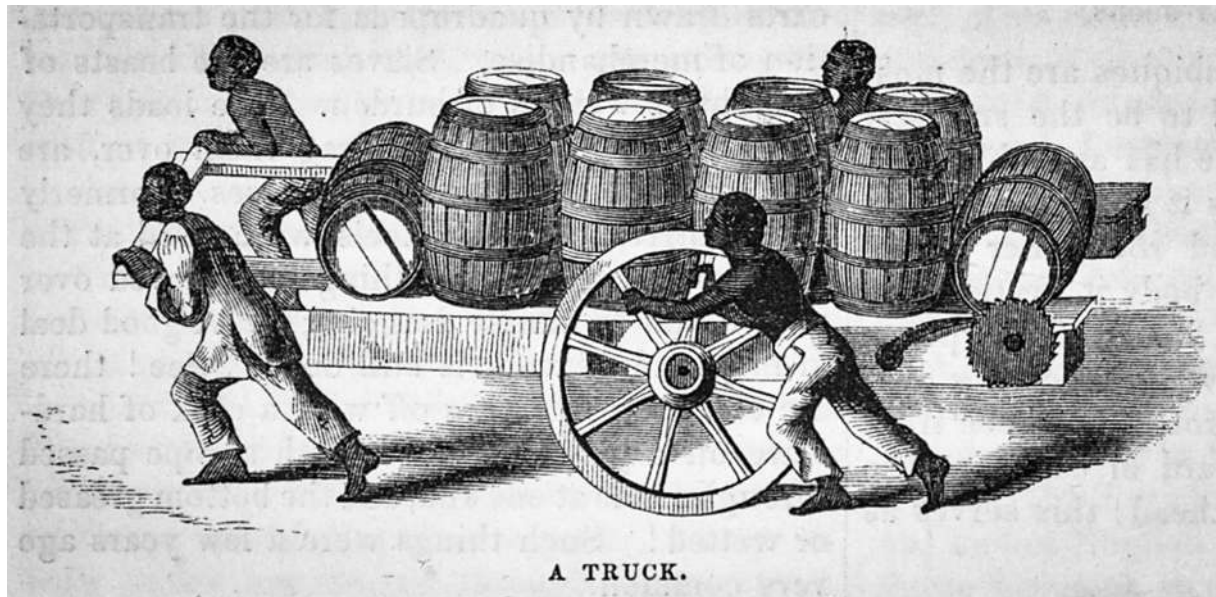
Parker makes a signal with his lantern and soon, from out to sea, an answering light flashes a reply.

Polydore also sees the light - and doesn't need to be told what to do next. Soon the sugar, molasses and rum are piled on the sand.

The mules shake their heads in pleasure at being relieved of their load.

There is the splash of oars in the water and out of the darkness, a skiff appears. The man who was rowing, ships the oars and holding the painter, jumps out and wades ashore. He has the look of a confident, authoritative sailor, and is in fact the Captain of a cutter that's waiting a few leagues off shore.

The captain hands Polydore the rope - and continues on to greet Parker - his partner in crime. Parker has a bottle of rum and uncorks it.



Hauling a loaded truck. Brazil 1853 (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.11)



William Clarke, 'Shipping Sugar'. Antigua. West Indies 1823 (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.11)

While Parker and the Captain toast their enterprise, Polydore walks with the painter to the nearby tree-line.

EXT. BEACH TREE LINE - NIGHT

Polydore ties the rope to a trunk. Before returning, he whispers into the darkness.

POLYDORE
Are you all there?

He can't see a face, but hears the whispered reply.

OBI (O.S.)
Yes.

POLYDORE
Wait till I'm close to him.

Without waiting any longer, Polydore heads back to the skiff.

EXT. SKIFF - NIGHT

He starts to load the boat, occasionally checking that Parker and the Captain are still drinking.

After a moment, he picks up a crock of molasses and studies it as if something is wrong.

Holding up the stoneware jug, he calls out to the two men who are starting to get mellow.

POLYDORE
Boss - problem.

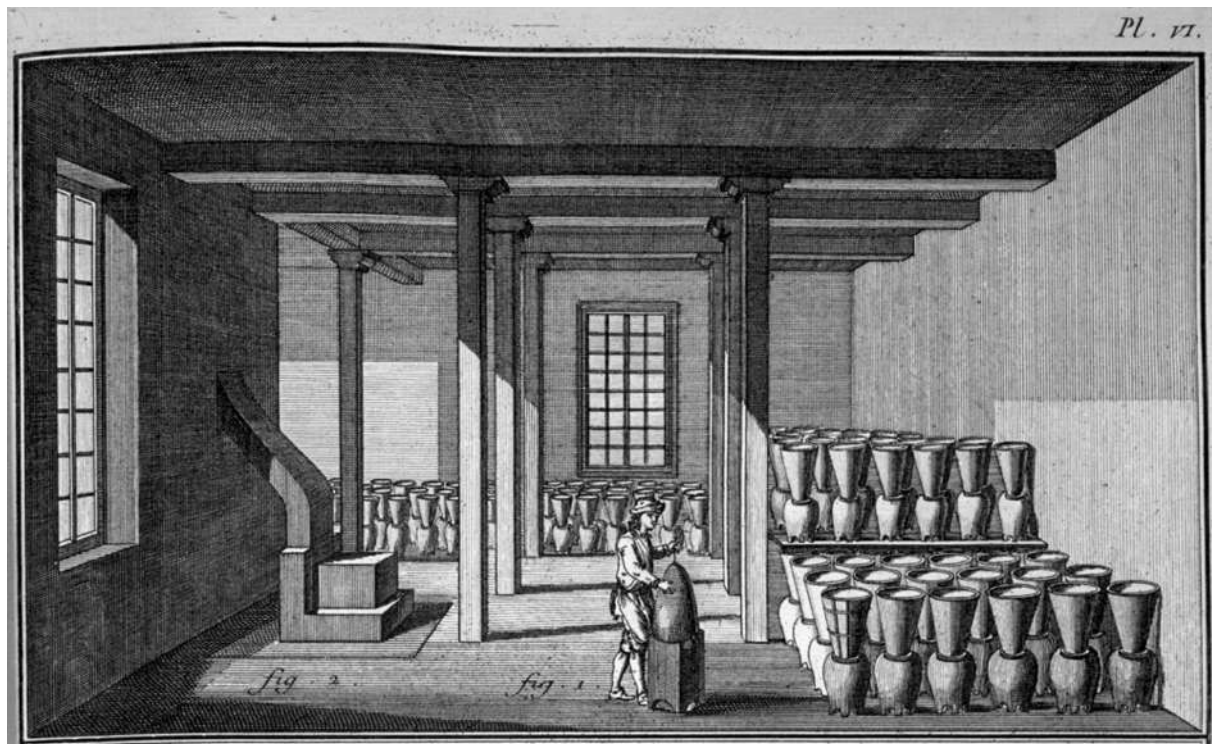
He knows Parker will call him over - and he does.

Polydore starts walking towards the two men. His heart is racing - this is the moment.

Both men have their gaze fixed on Polydore as he walks towards them and are oblivious of Obi and Cudjoe who have emerged from the tree-line behind and are running silently on the sand towards them.

Polydore, Obi and Cudjoe descend on Parker and the Captain simultaneously. It's over in an instant. Both men are overpowered, tied and gagged - and Parker's pistol is in Obi's hands.

Another figure emerges from the tree-line - it's Ebele. She joins them and for a moment all four struggle to grasp the magnitude of what they've just done.



Sugar curing house. 1762 (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.11)



Bum boat. Barbados. Late 19th century. (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.11)

Obi is the leader. He turns to Cudjoe.

OBI

The mules.

Cudjoe leads the animals into the trees and turns them loose.

Obi and Polydore finish loading the skiff. First the cargo, then the two trussed bodies of Parker and the Captain. Obi and Ebele sit side by side and push out the oars.

The skiff is heavily laden but the sea is calm. There's no room for Polydore and Cudjoe on board so they stay in the water, hanging on to the side of the boat.

The skiff heads off into the darkness towards the dim light the cutter is still showing.

EXT. CUTTER - NIGHT

The skiff pulls alongside the cutter and Obi climbs quickly aboard. The captain works with a mate who is surprised to see Obi with a pistol. Obi in turn is surprised to see that the mate is slave - just like himself, with extensive scars from whippings and other punishments.

They stare at each other. The slave-mate sees his Captain tied up and the gun in Obi's hand and instantly adjusts to the new reality.

The rest of them climb aboard. It's a struggle to get the Captain and Parker on deck.

The skiff is quickly unloaded then tied to the stern of the cutter. The mate takes orders from Obi, but as the only one who knows how to sail, is soon giving orders to Cudjoe and Polydore.

EXT. CUTTER - NIGHT (LATER)

The cutter is now several miles away from Nevis and in open sea. The escape plan has worked perfectly so far - it's now time to complete it.

Polydore and Cudjoe drag two sacks of sugar to the side of the ship - then bring the Captain and Parker over to them. They tie each man to a sack.

Both men's eyes widen as it dawns on them what their fate is going to be.

It's Obi's plan, he's in charge, and it's for him to finish off what has to be done.

But in the case of the Captain, Obi decides to invite the mate to be the one who carries out the 'sentence'.



Caribbean. 1662 (slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.11)

For a moment the mate hesitates - then remembers his years of abuse. He steps forward and gives the Captain a good shove. There's a splash - and his master and bag of sugar sink like a stone.

It's Parker's turn. Obi stares hard at the man who made his and every other slave's life on Pilsdon Plantation a living hell. No hesitation - there's another shove, another splash and Parker too vanishes into the deep.

The cutter heads West. The one thing Obi knows from the maps he saw all those years ago is that if they head in that direction, they have to hit land somewhere.

FADE TO BLACK.

EPILOGUE

EXT. SILCOX BEACH, NEVIS - MORNING

The brilliant blue of the Caribbean Sea lapping at a sandy beach. Coconut Palms lean out from the tree-line. A few up-scale tourists who have risen early are on the beach. It's hot already, and will be a much hotter later.

SUPER: 2019 NEVIS

Not far away, there's traffic on the principal road that circles the island.

Beside the road, a track leads away from the beach and up towards the extinct volcano - the highest point on the island. There's a low chain across the track to keep cars out.

Public transport on Nevis consists of mini-buses. One pulls up opposite the track. Two people get out and the mini-bus drives on.

The couple consist of a 25 year old black Nevisian woman and an older, white European man who's passed his three-score years and ten. They are Leo and Grace, father and daughter - and it's a year since they met for the first time in Happisburgh, Norfolk.

They cross the road, step over the chain and follow the slowly rising track inland.



Track leading to Mountravers ruins. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)



Gate to restrict vehicular access to Mountravers ruins. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

EXT. TRACK TO PILSDON PLANTATION - DAY

Despite the heat they are wearing boots and long trousers, hats and long sleeved shirts. Each rucksack has two bottles of water in the side pouches - and one has what looks like the hand grip of a machete poking out of the top.

They are clearly setting out on some kind of expedition.

Grace checks a map.

GRACE

It's about a mile up here. Are you OK?

LEO

As long as we take it easy I'll be fine.

GRACE

We need to go to the ruins first and from there pick up the trail.

Slow and steady, they walk towards the volcano.

EXT. PILSDON PLANTATION RUINS - DAY

Grace and Leo stand and take in the ruins of the great house, traces of the once elegant landscaped garden - and the spectacular view of the sea.

Grace has been here before - but not with the knowledge that she is a descendant of the owners.

For Leo to stand on this site is a visceral experience. Being present at this very spot, he feels that the slave owning legacy left him by his forebears is at last acknowledged.

They both spend a moment in silence, empathising with the plight of all those who were transported from Africa, sold into slavery and worked to death.

Eventually they head to the old stables. Grace studies the map again.

GRACE

The guy who led the slave village dig said we head due west into the woods. He put markers on trees all the way..

They stare at the wall of dense vegetation and trees.

GRACE (CONT'D)

It's close, less than a quarter of a mile.



William Clarke. Digging holes for planting sugar cane. Antigua 1823
(slaveryimages.org accessed 2019.06.12)



Overgrown cane fields. Mountravers Plantation. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

LEO
I hope so.

They split up and look for the first marker.

LEO (CONT'D)
Here!

Grace joins him and then checks the compass. She points the direction.

GRACE
This way - next marker in twenty
five meters.

She takes out her machete and hacks away some of the more obstructive branches so they can get through the undergrowth.

Leo seems to have the knack of spotting the markers. He points slightly to one side.

LEO
What's that?

Grace stands with her back to the first tree, faces the next marker and takes a bearing.

GRACE
It's a few points South of due
East.

They push on and are swallowed by the trees.

EXT. SLAVE VILLAGE SITE - MORNING

Grace and Leo emerge from the trees into an area that looks like it was cleared a few years ago. There are traces of excavations.

Leo finds a bit of shade and sits. He takes out his water bottle and drinks from it - then hands it to Grace.

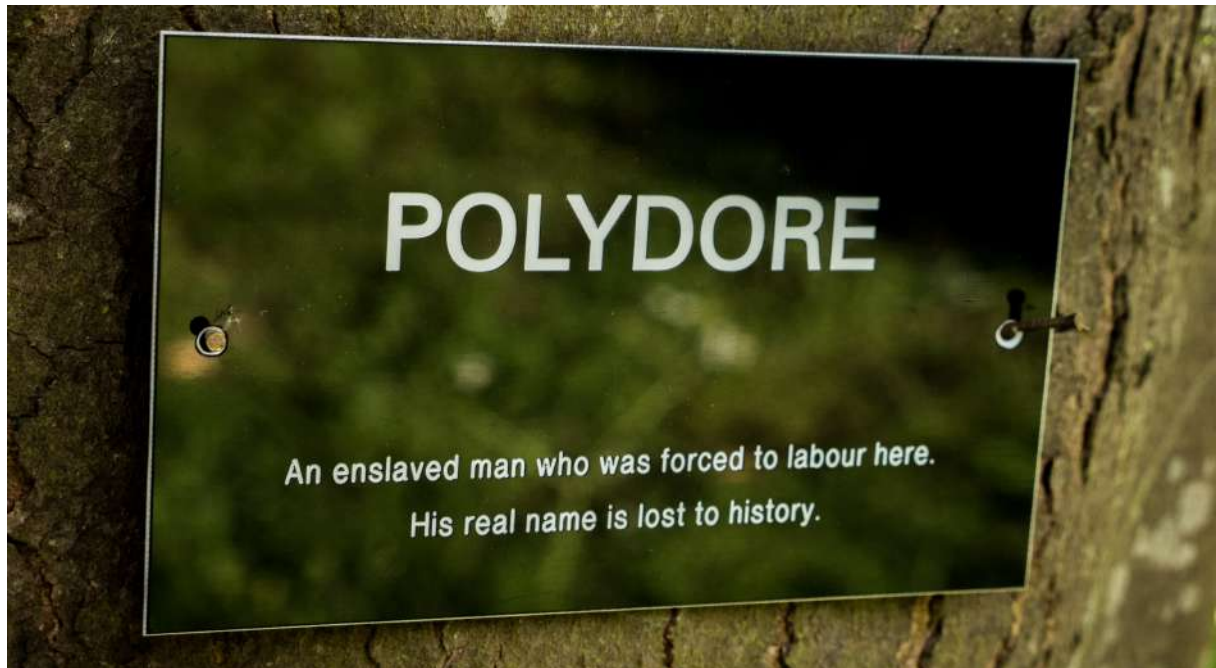
LEO
We made it - thanks to you.

GRACE
Thanks to UWI's dig, I'd say.

Leo opens a packet of sandwiches. Grace sits beside him and takes one. They eat and drink.

LEO
How long do you think it will take?

GRACE
Four hours?



Prototype of 900 proposed memorial plaques to the enslaved to be placed at Mountravers on Nevis.
(photo UK: C.C.Cox 2019)



New River Plantation Museum. Nevis (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

LEO

We'd better get started.

He opens his rucksack and takes out a hammer.

Taking all the rest of space in his rucksack is a large plastic bag. He opens it.

Inside are a mass of small rectangular pieces of laminated plastic. Each one has the name of an enslaved person engraved on it. Leo's bag has 450, Grace's the same number - 900 names in total.

Grace and Leo split up. Starting with the trees nearest to the cleared area, they nail the laminated plastic signs to the trunks - several to each tree.

The sound of their hammering is nearly constant. They go in and out of view as they work.

Seen close to, each sign says: 'In memory of (*name*), an enslaved African man/woman forced to work here. His/Her real name is lost to history'.

Name after name, laminated sign after laminated sign, till all the trees in the vicinity of the old slave village have been covered.

EXT. PILSDON PLANTATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Grace and Leo emerge from the woods at the same place they entered. They are shattered - and there's still the long walk back down to the road.

Side by side, they head off down the track into the fading light.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END



Sculpted figure of enslaved child - and visitors. Whitney Plantation. LA USA (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

*My Family and Slavery: Memory
Shame and Denial*

Commentary.

(word count: 39,429)

Introduction:



John Pinney 1740 - 1818 (photo C.C.Cox 2019)

In 1764, my direct forebear John Pinney (formerly Pretor) inherited a colonial slave-labour sugar plantation. As a young man he went out to the Caribbean island of Nevis and 18 years later returned to the UK with a fortune that would be worth millions today, every penny stained with the blood and sweat of the enslaved Africans who were forced to labour in its creation.

After years of avoidance and a reluctance to openly acknowledge this legacy, I have chosen now to explore this shameful fact and its implications with as much honesty as I can muster in a multi-modal, practice led research project titled *My Family and Slavery: Memory, Shame and Denial* – which has a *screenplay* as its primary output, supported by photography and film. My research is motivated by this question:

As a member of the Pinney family, directly descended from 17th and 18th century slave-owners who enriched and elevated themselves through brutal exploitation of enslaved Africans – how can I acknowledge and atone for my forbear's crimes?

In my search for answers, I delved into my immediate family history; located unknown Pinney cousins and more distant relatives for conversation and debate; engaged with the

historic *Pinney Papers*;¹ read first person slave narratives, testimonies and other texts related to slavery and the slave trade; explored inter-generational and trans-generational trauma and the evolving critical discourse around race and white supremacy; gathered images and data on a research trip to the Caribbean island of Nevis and the southern states of the USA.

I took these strands of enquiry and combined them into a multi-narrative, multi-character, multi-time period illustrated screenplay that while fictional, was built on historical evidence. The finished output layers the personal and the historical, the past and the present, the real and the imagined - and although written in the form of a working document for film production, is in its present iteration primarily a research artefact. My commentary is equally eclectic with some parts more objective and analytical – other elements more subjective and written in the form of a memoir.

Why a screenplay and not some other form? The telling of stories is one of the most important ways we learn about ourselves and the past. The historical ignorance and denial of many Britons - largely a consequence of the narratives they have, and have *not* encountered during their education – reveals not only a need for a more honest account of slavery and the slave trade – but also the necessity to challenge the fictive myths around race, colonialism and empire we have been drip-fed for generations.

In *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in Public Space*, (2012) Araujo writes how in Britain, the descendants of slave traders, merchants, owners and others who benefitted from the slave trade and slavery, have for a long time have managed to impose a kind of collective, historical amnesia – which has contributed to our long standing lack of scrutiny into the key role slavery played in the development of the UK. In a recent article, Afua Hirsch writes:

It should come as no surprise that centuries of amnesia towards Britain's own history has left us with a lot to learn. My personal school education during the 1990s contained a gaping hole between the Tudors and the Second World War. If you

¹ Account books, Letter books and other documents from the several generations of Pinneys who owned the Nevis slave-labour sugar plantation known as Mountravers, in the 17th and 18th century – today held at Special Collections, Bristol University Library.

wanted to surgically remove the period of colonial expansion and transatlantic enslavement, you'd struggle to beat it.
(Hirsch 2020)

Originally addressed to white Americans in 1965, James Baldwin's words resonate today, and demonstrate how little has changed since he wrote them.

... people who imagine that history flatters them (as it does, indeed, since they wrote it) are impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin and become incapable of seeing or changing themselves, or the world. This is the place in which, it seems to me, most white Americans find themselves. Impaled. They are dimly, or vividly, aware that the history they have fed themselves is mainly a lie, but they do not know how to release themselves from it, and they suffer enormously from the resulting personal incoherence. (Baldwin, 2018:43).

One of the principal reasons for writing a fictional narrative rather than one that declared itself to be 'true' was my understanding of how much invention would be necessary - however I chose to frame my story. I decided that telling a multi-generational narrative of a Dorset slave owning family and their slaves, as a work of *fiction* would potentially be the more honest and certainly the more liberating approach. I invented a family called *Silcox*, basing them loosely on the *Pinney* family. A key character called *Bethany Silcox* was based on my mother Rachel. A character called *Leo* was loosely based on myself. An enslaved African called *Obi* was an invented character, inspired by the writings of Equiano, Prince, Douglass and others. Characters inspired by real people I gave fictional names to and other characters were entirely invented. I found I was now able to tell the 'truth' in a different way, depart from 'what happened' to what 'felt true'. I took inspiration from Herzog's *Minnesota Declaration*:

There are deeper strata of truth in cinema, and there is such a thing as poetic, ecstatic truth. It is mysterious and elusive, and can be reached only through fabrication and imagination and stylization. (Herzog at Walker Art Center 1999)

My research project - both output and commentary - explores the *crime against humanity* that was the slave trade and the colonial slave-labour system. Combined,

those two horrors constituted a *holocaust*² by any other name and I am suggesting that my forebears' participation in that system created harms that have echoed down the centuries. The scale and extent of those harms were extensive and profound for the enslaved - and to this day can still affect their descendants. I am also suggesting that slave owners and their agents did harm to *themselves* by the act of visiting barbaric cruelty on the enslaved. While in no way equivalent to the suffering of the enslaved, those *self-inflicted* harms have also echoed down the centuries, to affect the descendants of the enslavers. Fletchman Smith puts it well:

By damaging others, people also damage themselves, and I suspect that if I were to focus on the children of former slave-owners, then I would discover traumas there too. In the making of empires, it is inevitable that crimes will be committed. (Fletchman Smith, 2003:15).

The African American journalist Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) was born into slavery and freed at the end of the Civil War. With considerable courage, she wrote about the systemic lynching of African Americans in the South – and as a result her Memphis newspaper office and printing presses were destroyed by a white mob and she was forced to move to Chicago. This quote of hers is both inspiring and empowering: “*The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them.*” (Wells, 2004)

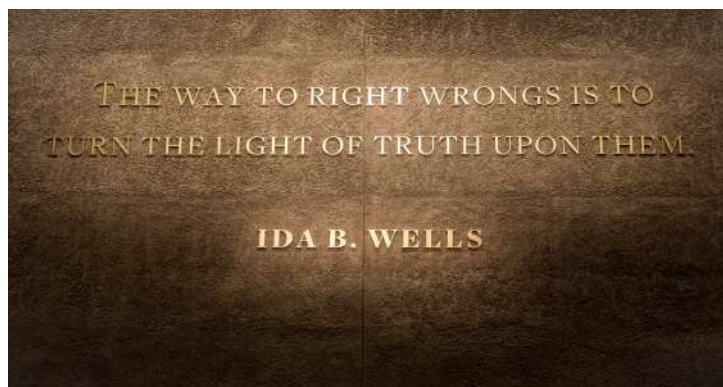


Exhibit: Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture.
Washington DC 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

² Estimates vary but there is general consensus that no less than 12 million enslaved Africans were shipped across the Atlantic. Approximately 10 million survived the journey – and of them, around a quarter died *adapting* to the work they were forced to do – a process slave owners chillingly described as ‘seasoning’.



Ida B Wells-Barnett c.1893
(photo: Mary Garrity. Restored by Adam Cuerden)

Beginnings:



'Blue Poles' (1952) www.Jackson-Pollock.org

As I write this, a virus is sweeping the world. Covid-19 is spreading through the world's population. When it's over, it will have killed millions – and it will be of no consolation to the bereaved that many, but by no means all of the deceased will have been the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

Along with everyone else on the planet, I have been affected by this pandemic. Lock-down initially led to a loss of focus and concentration, but after a period of adjustment, created the conditions that helped me write this commentary.

In the last four years I have learnt much about myself. There are things I have achieved that I didn't know I was capable of until challenged to attempt them - I also learnt to acknowledge and respect my limitations, both intellectual and physical. In no particular order, the journey I have been on has entailed hard work, getting lost, inspiration, confusion, fear, serendipity and instinct.

Early in my time at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) I was invited to present a ten-minute talk describing my intended research at the University's *CoDE Symposium*³,

³ <https://storylabresearch.com/events/code-symposium-story-lab/>

held in June 2017. To prepare for my presentation, I visited ‘Special Collections’ at Bristol University Library to read, photograph and ‘absorb’ a sample of the ‘*Pinney Papers*’, particularly those relating to the management of my forebears’ slave-labour sugar plantation on Nevis.

All the way through my research, I took photographs. The camera I was using was also capable of recording video, and I occasionally used that facility to record myself and my thoughts, what I was doing and what I was seeing. I had from the outset declared that my research would be ‘supported’ by photography and film – but it wasn’t until towards the end of my journey that I finally settled on the precise form the *film* support would take.

Interspersed throughout this commentary are links to short film clips. They are visual notes in video form, for the purpose of adding supporting context to my screenplay output and commentary. At the start of my research journey I experimented with different approaches to ‘auto-ethnographic’ film-making. Among the clips embedded in later chapters are some of the more successful of those experiments.

The film clip embedded here is titled *Pinney Papers* and can be viewed by clicking on the following link: https://youtu.be/SwQ_ywt0GB4 ⁴

Sorting through and evaluating the images I took of those records and account books, I noted that many of the details I had been inspired to photograph were of crossings out, doodles, and ink-blots. It became clear that these unwitting human marks were speaking to me as powerfully as the other valuable historical data also contained in the documents – and I came to a simple yet profound realisation that as a creative practitioner, I did not need to analyse the Pinney papers, others had done that infinitely better than I ever could.⁵ My job was to creatively respond to them.

So when I came to give my presentation, it was those images and my thoughts about them that made up a significant part of my talk. For the first time in my life I presented

⁴ It may be necessary to copy and paste the link into a browser

⁵ Pares’ *A West Indian Fortune* (1950) and Eickelmann’s *The Mountravers Plantation Community* (2016) have both extensively examined the Pinney papers and other documents relating to the Pinney’s Mountravers plantation.

to an audience of academics – and also for the first time in my life, I publicly acknowledged being descended from slave-owners. My opening words were:

Hello, my name is Chris Cox, I'm a new PhD researcher here at Anglia Ruskin University. There's no comfortable way to tell you this so I'll just come straight out with it: my great, great, great grandfather owned slaves. They laboured on his sugar plantation on the West Indian island of Nevis. (Cox 2017, presentation)

I believe it was a significant moment – it certainly felt like one to me. Unsure of what the implications of making such a declaration might be, or of what lay ahead on my journey, I had crossed a line – and there was no going back.



Pinney Papers (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney Papers (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

Having successfully given one presentation, I went on to do more. In 2018, I participated in *Story Lab's 'Interpret' symposium*⁶, the *ALSS Postgraduate Research Student Conference* and exhibited at *The Archive and the Contested Landscape* exhibition⁷. In 2019 I contributed images and text to the publication *Ways of Thinking*⁸, presented and exhibited at the *'Theorem' Doctoral Research Symposium and Exhibition of Research in the Visual Arts*⁹, contributed a 3000 word essay to their publication *Theorem 2019*¹⁰ - and presented at the *AHSS Faculty Research Conference* titled *(The Importance of) Being Human*. On each of these occasions, I re-evaluated my work, reconsidered what it meant and where it was heading. During the brief period for

⁶ <https://storylabresearch.com/events/storylab-symposium-interpret/>

⁷ <https://thearchiveandthecontestedlandscape.wordpress.com/peopleprojects/>

⁸ <https://artseventsaru.co.uk/ruskin-arts-book-launch-ways-of-thinking/>

⁹ <https://theorem-phd.org/portfolio/2019-exhibition-photos/>

https://theoremphd.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/symposium-schedule_2019_final_web.pdf

¹⁰ Cox, C., 2019. My family and slavery. In: J. Boyer, R. Hearle, and M. Alvarez-Astacio eds., (in press). *Theorem 2019*. Contributor's Edition. Cambridge: Ruskin Arts Publications.

questions after the presentations, my impressions were of peers appearing shocked at the barbarity of the colonial slave labour system, how theories of white superiority and black inferiority played important roles in sustaining the system – and at the extent those same theories are still with us today in a barely diminished form. On one occasion I recall being told I was being too hard on myself by taking the shame of my forebears crimes upon myself. On another, I recall being commended for my ‘bravery’, which I sensed might have been a subtle suggestion that by publicly declaring a family link to slavery, I might be making myself a focus for the anger of others.

“Researchers should declare their ontology.” (Kerrigan, 2018:17). Put in simpler language – they should state how they see the world. The purpose of this, she maintains, is not to *choose* a point of view, but to identify and acknowledge their *existing* beliefs and viewpoints.

Declaring one’s ontology or one’s understanding of what is out there to know is the first step for a researcher as it presents a researcher’s theory of ‘being’. This is not something that can be avoided as ontologies are like skin not a sweater, they cannot be put on and taken off whenever the researcher sees fit. (Kerrigan, 2018:18).

What is my ‘theory of being, my *skin*?’ Edward Ball, in *Slaves in the Family* writes that to contemplate his link to slavery and the ways it formed part of his identity was, “...a bit like doing psychoanalysis on myself.” (Ball, 1998:13). *Psychoanalysis on oneself* is of course an oxymoron. It takes the guidance and insight of a trained therapist to uncover the myriad ways the unconscious hides its intent from the conscious mind. Notwithstanding this caveat, my intention here is to be a truth teller – or at least a truth seeker. I am exploring as deeply as I can the multiple facets of my family and its history, to expose something of what lies behind the shame I undoubtedly feel – and then express my findings creatively.

Perhaps inherited from her, I share my mother’s naïve compulsion to tell the truth. I do not necessarily see this as a virtue. Combined with ‘over-talking’ – which like her I also suffer from – it can lead to trouble. And the troublesome truth that at this moment

I feel compelled to reveal is that the creative process I went through to make my output was not a careful, well thought out, logical series of rational decisions – and to suggest in any way that it was, would be a fictional narrative in itself. At the head of this section there is an image of Pollack's 1952 painting, *Blue Poles*. I have included it because it is a more honest, visual representation of my process - or more precisely, what my process *felt* like.

Texts:

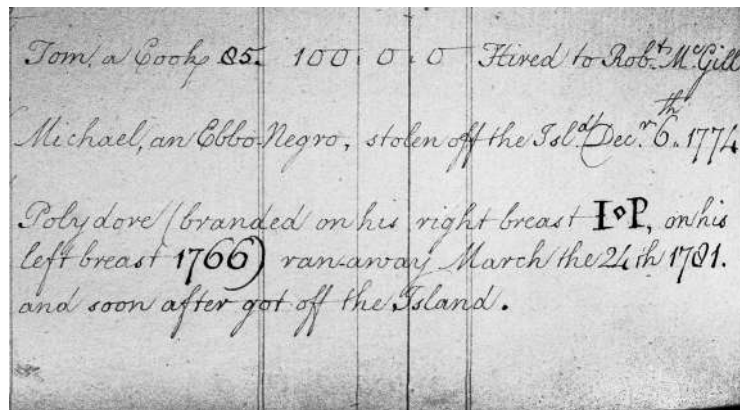
There were a number of texts I found particularly useful at the start of my research journey. The first one to mention is Pares' *A West Indian Fortune*, published in 1950, and reprinted in 1968. It focuses specifically on how certain members of the Pinney family acquired and then enriched themselves through ownership of a Caribbean sugar plantation. One reviewer in 1951 wrote: "He (Pares) has chosen to write a history not of a family or of a business but of a *fortune*." (Bailyn, 1951:112). It is a book of its time, in which owners of slave-labour plantations where Africans were worked to death, are referred to by the sanitized title '*planters*', and those engaged in the barbarous 'business' of slave trading are referred to as '*traders*'. Pares' skill as a researcher and historian is evident throughout, but he fails to empathise with the enslaved and shows little understanding of the violence and cruelty intrinsic to the slave-labour system – or of the daily sexual abuse enslaved females had to endure. Where for me where the book excels is in its forensic detailing of sugar production.

Pares tells how John Pinney was on Nevis for 18 years. He arrived in 1764 aged 23 and left in 1782, aged 41. An obsessive, penny-pinching man, he made a religion of his accounts and micro-managed his plantation. As he acquired experience, he developed a rigid set of rules governing every aspect of growing cane and making sugar – and his surviving records and letters have allowed Pares to write a detailed account of the production processes involved. At the centre of the entire enterprise was the boiling house.

The boiling house was specially laid out so that a single pair of eyes – the overseer's – could survey all the coppers from the same place. But although the overseer was responsible, it was the head boiler – generally a negro – who was the artist, and the quality of the sugar depended on him...by the practice of years, continued strike after strike and the observation that such unintermitted practice cannot fail of giving birth to, the negro boilers must be more perfect in their business, than any white man can pretend to be. (Pares 1950:118)

The prevailing ideology regarding ‘race’ decreed that Africans were beasts, not really human beings at all – and this was used to justify and encourage the horrific way the enslaved were treated. But at the same time, an uncomfortable truth for owners was that the entire enterprise of sugar production depended on the *skill* and *experience* of a single slave – the head boiler. This must have generated a certain amount of cognitive dissonance among the whites, as there was indeed: “...something in the manufacture of sugar which neither planters or merchants could explain or predict” (Pares 1950:118).

I came across one detail in the Pinney Papers that Pares failed to discuss. A slave called Polydore escaped and got off the island and in his accounts John Pinney made a careful note of his identifying marks.



Tom, a Cooby 25. 100 0 0 Hired to Robt. McGill.
 Michael, an Ebo Negro, stolen off the Isl^d Dec^r 6th 1774.
 Polydore (branded on his right breast I^oP, on his
 left breast 1766) ran away March the 24th 1781.
 and soon after got off the Island.

Pinney brand. Pinney Papers (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)



Pinney brand. Pinney Papers (photo: C.C.Cox 2017)

Pinney’s words in his account book #27a are: “Poldore (branded on his right breast I-
 P and on his left breast 1766) ran away March 24th 1781 and soon after got off the

island.” I took a great deal from this short sentence. Every time I read the words ‘ran away’ and ‘got off the island’ I cheered Polydore’s escape from my great, great, great grandfather. I chose to write a branding scene in my fictional narrative. I imagined a recently purchased ten year-old African boy standing at the back of a line. From the front of the queue he hears screams of agony, then a few moments later, the nauseous smell of burning flesh reaches him. He waits in terror for what is to come. At the end of my narrative, when the same boy has become a man, he engineers an escape and along with others, gets off the island.

My mother’s unpublished autobiography *Rachel*, currently lodged with the rest of the Pinney Papers at Bristol University Library, has been an indispensable text. I have had a manuscript copy since around the time of her death in 1995, but as evidence of how difficult a person she was and how reluctant I was to enter her world – even after her death - I didn’t sit down and properly read it from cover to cover until the start of this research project in 2017. Rather than summarise the traumas of her early life in *this* chapter, they appear later in a chapter dedicated to her story, also titled *Rachel*. The fictional character Dr Bethany Silcox in my screenplay is almost entirely based on my mother’s description of her life up to moment of my birth. After that I am of course able to include some of my own memories.

My mother’s mother was Hester Pinney (née Head). When her husband was knighted in 1916, she became *Lady* Pinney.

My mother was the only girl in a family with eight older brothers, two of whom were famous in their field.¹¹ She was agonisingly shy and sensitive; her great wish was to be beautiful and she never recovered from her mother telling her she was ugly. The only daughter of a near-millionaire, she was taken twice around the world on first class liners, always with her sketch book open, longing for love and beauty in relationships

¹¹ Dr Henry Head, Neurologist and Christopher Head, Lawyer

and uncomprehending of the sex/money hunger which she received in their place. (Pinney 1994:5)

In his book's dedication, Pares makes a special point thanking Lady Hester Pinney.

...Lady Pinney of Broadwindsor, without whose help, hospitality and enthusiasm I should never have written the book at all. I feel it is almost as much her book as mine, and to her I dedicate it. (Pares 1950:viii)

This tribute to my maternal grandmother, suggests another, somewhat overlooked strand to the Pinney story. It was in 1900, aged 25 that Hester Head, a Quaker, married Reginald Pinney, a soldier. It was not destined to be a happy marriage. There was little doubt in my mother's mind that Hester Pinney married in haste and regretted at leisure – *and* that the Head family were by far the better half of the Pinney/Head union. When her husband died in 1943 Rachel commented in her autobiography at her mother's relief at his passing.

Freed from the bondage of loyalty to a man she despised, she was able to spend 15 reasonably happy years being herself. One of her first acts on attaining her freedom was to have black guests in the house including Una Marson, the poetess she had met on her tour of the West Indies. (1994:5)



Sketch by Hester Pinney, possibly of Una Marson. (date unknown)

Lady Pinney died in 1958 surrounded, according to Rachel, by a selection of family photographs. They included her eight brothers, her three sons, 'sundry other males' –

but *not* her late husband and tellingly, *not* her three daughters. By my mother's account, the sole female portrait was of the child of her eldest son Bernard, who was killed in the Second World War without ever seeing his daughter.

In my fictional narrative I chose to write a deathbed scene for Lady Silcox based on something my mother told me when I was a child, now only half remembered. What I *do* still recall is her telling me it was a big secret. Over 60 years later I genuinely cannot be certain, but I think she told me she had 'ended her mother's suffering' by injecting her with a lethal dose of morphine. Whether this happened or not, I recognise the emotional truth contained in such an act and have used it in my screenplay. Fictional Dr Bethany Silcox is summoned to attend her dying mother after many years of being excluded from the family. Not only does her mother want forgiveness for casting her out 20 years earlier, she says to her doctor daughter: "put me to sleep – just like we used to do with the dogs". As written it's a powerful scene and could not have existed without the creative freedom that comes from choosing to write a *fictional* narrative.

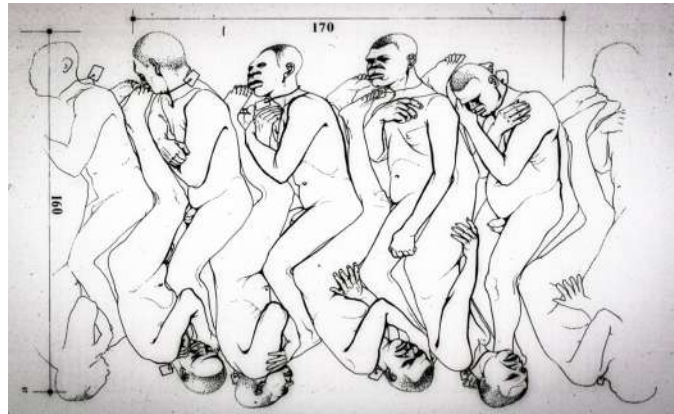
Between 1901 and 1920 Hester bore six children – three boys and three girls – my mother was the last girl, born in 1909. In her autobiography she recalls that her parents bickered constantly and that she usually sided with her father, seeing her mother then as: "...a punitive, bad-tempered, nagging potentate." (1994:7). Later she added to the portrait by describing her mother as: "...an over-talker, who trying to hear and understand other people, sadly drowned them in her own verbosity." (1994:5). As it happens, a description that perfectly fits my mother also.

It is largely thanks to Lady Pinney that the family's slave-labour sugar plantation letters and accounts are preserved today - and didn't suffer the fate I suspect befell the records belonging to many other British slave owning families – that of being quietly and discreetly destroyed. Anecdotally I have been told that it was when she heard a Pinney relative of her husband was planning just such a bonfire, she went to his house in Somerset, and stopped him. Not a woman to be denied, she took the papers back with her to her house *Racedown*. In 1939, when her husband was 76, four years before his death and with his authority presumably diminished – she took them to Bristol University Library, lodging them in the name of the man she got them from, Robert Wake Pretor Pinney.

The four best-known first-person testimonies of being enslaved have been brought together in one volume called *The Classic Slave Narratives*. Reading these and other witness accounts has been essential in gaining at least *some* understanding of what the enslaved had to endure – particularly the ubiquitous, arbitrary cruelty meted out by slave owners in order to maintain their hegemonic control. The four narratives are: *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*; *The History of Mary Prince*; *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*; *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Harriet Jacobs) While each covers a different period and location, the conditions of slavery described in each reveal a ‘system’ with remarkably similar characteristics operating throughout the Caribbean and the Southern States of America

Olaudah Equiano starts his autobiography by describing how in 1756, at the age of 11, he and his sister were kidnapped from their African village. Soon separated from her, he was to be sold on many times before eventually ending up on the coast of West Africa where he was put up for sale one more time and loaded onto a slave ship. He witnessed much brutality. Those who refused to eat or tried to throw themselves overboard were severely whipped. On one occasion he witnessed the punishment of a white sailor. The flogging was so severe the sailor died, and his body was thrown overboard like a piece of rubbish. That white men could treat one of their own so cruelly made Equiano even more fearful of them. More African prisoners came on board and when it was time to set sail, they were all put below, including the children. He writes that when everyone was in the hold, the stench was intolerable:

The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, being so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. (Equiano, 2009:67)

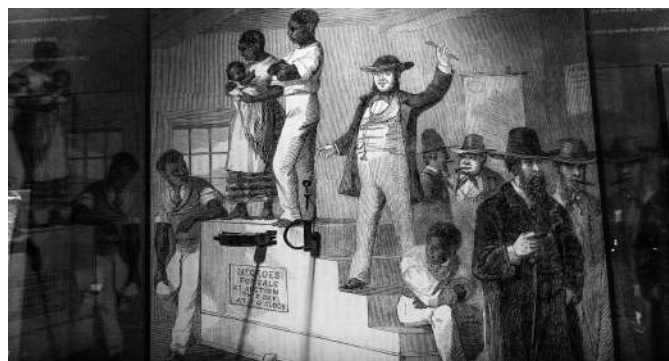


Sleeping positions of captive Africans on French ship Aurore c.1784
SlaveryImages.org accessed 2019.06.02

Equiano also became ill and was brought up on deck for fresh air. Being out of the hold for much of the rest of the crossing undoubtedly saved his life but it is safe to assume the gesture was made for commercial rather than humanitarian reasons. Eventually the ship reached the island of 'Barbadoes' and the human cargo was unloaded.

We were conducted immediately to the merchant's yard where we were all pent up together like so many sheep in a fold, without regard to sex or age. (Equiano, 2009:71).

He goes on to describe the noise and clamour of a sale, with eager buyers rushing into the yard to make their choices. No one bought him, and some days later he was put on a sloop for North America with some other unsold slaves.



Slave Auction. Smithsonian Museum of African American History 2018

Equiano published his autobiography in 1789, when he was in his forties. The early chapters covering his experiences crossing the Atlantic c.1756 as an enslaved child are

vividly written and convey his amazement at things seen for the first time – white men, ships and their sails, flying fish, a quadrant – which along with the savage cruelty of the sailors, persuaded him that: “...I was in another world, and that every thing about me was magic.” (Equiano, 2009:69).

The boy OBI in my screenplay is a fictional character – but like Equiano, he is kidnapped from his village by unscrupulous Africans supplying the insatiable demand of European slave traders. His experiences during the passage are of course invented - but built on the foundations of Equiano’s testimony.

In her autobiography *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave: Related by Herself* (1831) Mary describes being born into slavery in Brackish Pond, Bermuda. Her mother was a household slave and the property of a Mrs Williams who was: “a kind hearted woman who treated her slaves well.” Mary recounts how as a child, she was a pet of Mrs Williams’ daughter Betsy. “She used to lead me about by the hand and call me her little nigger.” and describes the first eleven years of her life as happy, being: “...too young to understand my condition as a slave, and too thoughtless and full of spirits to look forward to the days of toil and sorrow.” (Prince, 2017:1).

Everything changed when Mrs Williams died. The first thing her husband Captain Williams did when he came home from being at sea was to order the sale of Mary and her two sisters to pay for his wedding to his long standing mistress. Mary’s mother prepared her children to be sold by putting new ‘osnaburgs’ (coarse cotton shifts) on them.

See, I am shrouding my poor children; what a task for a mother.” She then called to Miss Betsy to take leave of us. “I am going to carry my little chickens to market” (these were her very words) “Take your last look at them, maybe you will see them no more. (Prince, 2017:15).

Mary, just twelve, and her two younger sisters were led by their mother to Hamble Town, arriving in the late afternoon at the market place.

At length the vendue master, who was to offer us for sale like sheep or cattle, arrived, and asked my mother which was the eldest. She said nothing but pointed to me. He took me by the hand, and let me out into the middle of the street, and, turning me slowly round, exposed me to the view of those who attended the vendue. I was soon surrounded by strange men, who examined and handled me in the same manner that a butcher would a calf or lamb he was about to purchase, and who talked about my shape and size in like words – as if I could no more understand their meaning than the dumb beasts. I was then put up to sale. The bidding commenced at a few pounds and gradually rose to fifty-seven, when I was knocked down to the highest bidder and the people who stood by said I had fetched a great sum for so young a slave.... when the sale was over, my mother hugged and kissed us, and mourned over us, begging us to keep up a good heart, and do our duty to our new masters. It was a sad parting; one went one way, one another and our poor mammy went home with nothing. (Prince, 2017:16).

I combined elements of Prince's testimony with that of Equiano's in the scenes set in the Charlestown slave market on Nevis – where the fictional characters Obi, Tofar and her baby, together with other new arrivals are auctioned. The man buying them is a young Englishman, fresh from the mother country, who I call Charles Silcox. He is loosely based on my forebear John Pinney.

All the testimonies I have read confirm that the individual the enslaved feared and hated most on the plantation was the *overseer* - a role that required a special capacity for cruelty and torture. Systemic violence was the sine qua non for maintaining white hegemony throughout the slave-labour system. A remarkably explicit account of how one man in Jamaica treated enslaved Africans, comes from the diaries of the overseer, later slave owner Thomas Thistlewood. He came to the island as a young man in 1750 and spent the rest of his life there, dying in 1786. Trevor Burnard's *Mastery, Tyranny and Desire* (2004) is a forensic study of his 36 diaries in which were recorded not only

his personally invented cruel, disgusting torture methods used on enslaved males¹² - but also coded details of his compulsive sexual abuse of enslaved females.

When he arrived in Jamaica he quickly found work as an overseer. The average life expectancy of white men seeking their fortune in Jamaica was 12 years. Somehow Thistlewood survived both climate and tropical disease to lead a long and relatively prosperous life. He had a long-term 'relationship' with a mulatta¹³ house slave called Phibbah, and with her produced a son. The boy accidentally drowned in 1780 aged 14. (2004:231)

Along with his raping and torturing, he had a passion for reading, gardening and kept meticulous records of meteorological data. He was a self-educated man with pretensions to be a gentleman of the Enlightenment. His garden – in its day considered to be one of Jamaica's best – was his most proud achievement. Close to the end of his life, two major hurricanes hit Jamaica, one after the other. The first did serious damage to the beloved garden – the second, as if in an act of divine justice, obliterated it. He died soon after.

After decoding, transcribing and closely studying his diaries, Burnard has no hesitation in describing Thistlewood as a quintessential *sexual predator* and *rapist* – and with his savage whippings and tortures, a *brutal sociopath*. How typical and representative he was of the majority of white slave owners and overseers on Jamaica is an open question – but Burnard makes this observation:

Slavery not only made Britons brutal – it made them self-indulgent, indolent and full of overbearing pride. (Burnard 2004:20)

Thislewood's diaries have recently been acquired by the *Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library* at Yale University, and on my last full day in the USA I took the train to New Haven to view them. Just as with the Pinney Papers, I was interested in the

¹² One of his tortures was called 'Derby's Dose': the offender was whipped, salt pickle, lime juice, bird pepper was rubbed into the open wounds, then another slave was forced to defecate in his mouth - which was then bound shut for several hours. (2004:31)

¹³ From Spanish and Portuguese. A term for someone with one parent white and the other black.

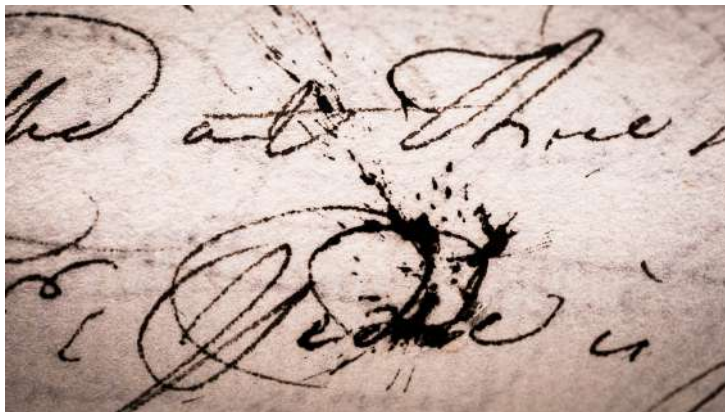
unwitting marks and crossings out as well as the difficult to read data the diaries contained. With the library's permission, I was able to take some photographs.



Thistlewood Diaries. Beinecke Library. 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Thistlewood Diaries. Beinecke Library. 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Thistlewood Diaries. Beinecke Library. 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Thistlewood Diaries. Beinecke Library. 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

In *Slaves in the Family* (1998), Edward Ball writes of his upbringing in the American South, as a descendent of the Ball family - one of the pre-eminent slave and plantation owning clans, centred on Charleston in South Carolina.

After university he moved to New York and became a successful journalist. Despite having left the South, the plantation and his family history were etched in his unconscious. Referring to his uncomfortable legacy he asks:

Did the plantations form part of my identity? By outward measure, no. The wealth created by the slave system was destroyed, and the latter day Balls had no inheritance from it. Some of the family had manners, others none; some had money and status, some neither. But inwardly the plantations lived on... Rather than responsible, I felt accountable for what had happened, called on to try and explain it. I also felt shame about the broken society that had washed up when the tide of slavery receded. (Ball, 1998:13).

Like the Pinneys, the Balls were also obsessive record keepers. They saved all their jottings, ledgers, deeds, correspondence, receipts - and kept detailed lists of the slaves they owned. These records are publicly available and known as *The Ball Family Papers*. The earliest date on them is 1631 and they go through to the start of the 1900s. Ball determined to look into the slave experience on the Ball plantations in as much detail as he could. Concluding his introduction, he writes:

The progeny of slaves and the progeny of slave owners are forever linked. We have been in each other's lives. We have been in each other's dreams. We have been in each other's beds. (Ball, 1998:14)

Ball's journey into his family's past was to expose a more honest and complete truth about his family's history, acknowledge the profound injustice and cruelty perpetrated by his forebears, and trace the descendants of those they enslaved. Given that the Balls and their slaves really had been each other's beds, some of those he found and talked to were not just descendants of slaves, but also kith and kin.

His latest book is *Life of a Clansman* (2020) is an account of another forebear named Constant Lecorgne, who this time came from his mother's side of the family. If *Slaves in the Family* was a difficult book for Ball to write, this one must have been an even harder undertaking. His maternal aunt Maud had been the genealogist in the family, caretaker of the Klan story and her grandfather Constant's part in it. Ball's mother inherited Maud's papers, which in turn came to him when his mother died in 2003. He had known about the Klansman in his family since childhood and writes that he had been afraid the story for most of his life – guessing, correctly as it turns out, that it would contain unspeakable horrors. Ball's great, great, grandfather Constant Lecorgne, participated directly in the race terror that spread through the South during the profoundly misnamed period after the Civil War known as 'reconstruction'.¹⁴

Lecorgne's forebears were French and in Louisiana he was a 'creole' – a loaded word that can be used as an adjective and a noun, and has different meanings at different times and in different places. In this context it is used as an identity for those descended from the inhabitants of Louisiana before it was purchased from the French by the USA in 1803.

Aspects of Ball's latest work echo with issues I am confronting in my own research project. Just as I suggest the Pinney family's denial is best summed up by the expression: '*Let sleeping dogs lie*' – Ball refers to an old Creole saying: '*On lave son linge sale en famille*' – which translates as: 'Wash your dirty laundry inside the family.'

¹⁴ 'Reconstruction' did not refer to rebuilding after the Civil War – rather it was a euphemism for the re-establishment of white supremacy by the many secret societies, which over time came to be generically referred to as the Ku Klux Klan.

(Ball 2020:5) I imagine there are as many in his family who are as displeased with his exposure of past horrors, as there are in mine. However, it's the following breath-taking revelation that puts his family's displeasure in whole other context:

Anyone who thinks that to have a Klansman among one's relatives is a strange and deviant thing may be surprised by the reality. In 1925 the Ku Klux Klan could claim five million members... let's assume the actual Klan membership stood at four million. Take four million Klansmen, people on the march in 1925, and estimate the number of their descendants. Count forward one hundred years to their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. By a good formula in demography, the four million Klansmen of 1925 have as their direct descendants in 2025 about one hundred thirty seven million living white Americans... composing one half of the white population of the United States... perhaps the gentle reader of these words is one. If not, someone near you.

White supremacy is not a marginal ideology. It is the early build of the country. It is a foundation on which the social edifice rises, bedrock of institutions. White supremacy also lies on the floor of our minds. (Ball 2020:11/12).

Writer Cal Flynn in her book *Thicker Than Water* (2016) describes how her forebear Angus McMillan, himself a victim of the Highland Clearances, ended up in New South Wales, Australia in c.1837 - and once there set about his own act of ruthless dispossession by ridding the Gippsland plain of its Aboriginal population – who had only inhabited the region for a mere 20,000 years. Her distant relative was recognized in Scotland and Australia as a prominent, pioneer settler – but Flynn made the effort to look beneath this hagiographic, fictive image and found a ruthless murderer of aboriginal men, women and children, known by those who have taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with a more accurate and honest version of Australia's history, as the '*Butcher of Gippsland*'. While not specifically about the slave trade and the colonial slave-labour system, her book connects with it in important ways. It reveals the barbarism that underpinned settler colonialism all over the Empire, the obfuscation of historical facts in the creation of self-justifying myths – sustained by ideas of white

supremacy and explicit racism. What one historian describes as, "...a past that was whitewashed." (Olusoga, 2019)



Angus McMillan, c.1860 aka: 'The Butcher of Gippsland'
Photo: The State Library of Victoria

Flynn could have been describing how I felt about my connection to the slave owning Pinneys when she wrote of *her* forebear:

I knew such men existed, but here was one right in the family tree, part of my story, part of my heritage, part of me (Flynn, 2016:31)

I feel a connection with Ball and Flynn. Like me, Ball is a descendant of slave owners. I suspect he felt that simply ignoring his shameful history was not an option - he clearly felt an obligation to do something – as do I. He returned to South Carolina to properly research his own family history as well as track down the descendants of those his forebears enslaved. His work may have resulted a career enhancing, prize-winning book, but to me it reads primarily as an act of atonement.

Flynn's determination to explore her great, great, great uncle's active participation in the extermination of the Gippsland aboriginies, also speaks me. One of my uncles was a

District Commissioner in Kenya during the Mau Mau emergency. Caroline Elkins' *Britain's Gulag – The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (2014), is well indexed but there is no 'Pinney' listed. I do not know if my uncle had a role in the so called 'emergency' – but *any* connection to the horrors the colonial authorities imposed on the Kikuyu people would be yet another shameful family legacy – and one much closer than slavery.

Elkins goes into great detail about a countrywide network of work camps known as the 'pipeline', where certain aspects of camp life echoed those described by Primo Levi in *Se Questo e un Uomo* (1958) – his account of transportation and incarceration in Auschwitz, the Nazi concentration camp with the infamous words, '*Arbeit Macht Frei*' displayed over the entrance. The *British* concentration camps in Kenya also had a message above the gates, chillingly similar: '*Labour and Freedom*'. Elkins writes:

Confession was the sine qua non for a detainee's release. The purpose of detention in Kenya was not necessarily to keep the Mau Mau suspects alive but to force them to confess through a punishing routine of forced labour and brutality... The British colonial government's works camps in Kenya were not wholly different from those in Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia; they functioned on what Wolfgang Sofsky called "the economy of waste."... The pipeline was a microcosm where the contradictions and antagonisms between Kikuyu and European societies in Kenya were brought to a boiling intensity, and the world behind the barbed wire rendered utterly transparent, for the first time, the dark side of Britain's colonial project. The hypocrisies, the exploitations, the violence, and the suffering were all laid bare in the pipeline. It was there that Britain finally revealed the true nature of its civilizing mission. (Elkins, 2016:152)

Many thousands were starved and tortured in those British concentration camps, and many thousands died. When the British finally left, they set about systematically destroying the evidence of what they had done. In a recent article, Monbiot comments on the British government's attempts to erase its colonial crimes:

The same deletions occurred across the British empire. We can only guess at what the lost documents might have revealed. Were there more details of the massacre of civilians in Malaya? Of Britain's dirty war in Yemen in the 1960s? Of the catastrophic

famine the British government created in Bengal in 1943, by snatching food from the mouths of the local people and exporting it? (Monbiot, 2020).

In January 2020, I attended an event at the Africa Centre in London called *Emergency: An Exhibition on the Mau Mau conflict and British Colonial Rule in 1950s Kenya*. It was organised by the ‘virtual’ *Museum of British Colonialism* (MBC), itself a member of the *International Coalition of Sites of Conscience*, founded in 1999.

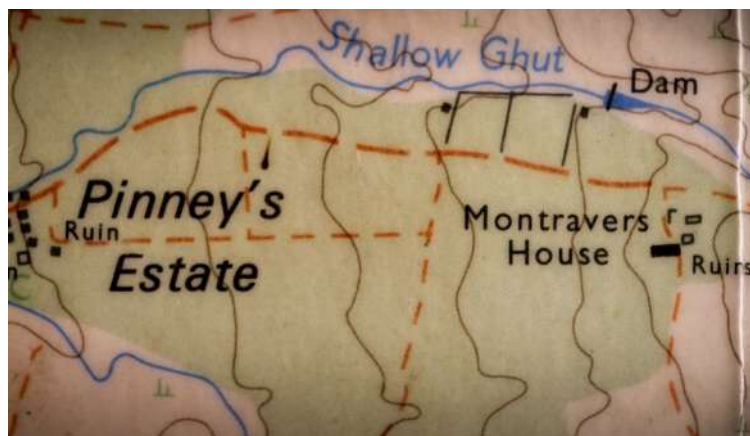
The MBC exhibition consisted of photographs, maps, displays, digital reconstructions - and prisoner’s testimonies. In one transcript, a single sentence stood out. In eight simple words, an elderly survivor of the camps distilled the essence of British colonialism in Kenya – and for that matter, all over the Empire:

The white man came and stole the land. (anon)

Forebears:



Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Ordnance survey map Nevis c.1960 (photo: C.C.Cox)

It was a distant cousin who first established the Pinney plantation on the Caribbean island of Nevis. His name was Azariah Pinney (1661-1720), the youngest son of a non-conformist protestant preacher, also named John Pinney.¹⁵ Azariah took part in the failed Monmouth Rebellion of 1685, was captured and imprisoned. Like hundreds of others, he was destined to hang. His family, led by sister Hester¹⁶, paid a 'ransom' of £65 that saved him from the noose - and the next alternative, the more lingering death of indentured penal servitude in the colonies. But he couldn't escape *all* punishment and

¹⁵ Pinney names such as John, Azariah, Charles, Hester are constantly re-used.

¹⁶ Azariah's sister Hester is now feted as an early, pioneer female entrepreneur – a lace dealer in London during the first half of the 18th century, whose success in the nascent stock market led her to accumulate considerable wealth. Credit to her for succeeding in a man's world, but I would not be surprised to learn that the makers of the lace she traded, worked for a pittance.

was transported, albeit as a free man, to the West Indies for a minimum of ten years (Pares 1950:10).

He arrived on Nevis at the end of 1685, worked as a factor (commission salesman) and over time, prospered. Forbidden to leave the tiny island, he became useful to plantation owners, working as their attorney during their often long-term absences. As he acquired capital, he began lending it to some of the perpetually cash-strapped plantation owners in the form of mortgages secured against their estates. The precise way he acquired his first plantation known as *Charlots*, is murky. He was accused by a Laurence Haddock, who also had an interest in the same plantation, of deliberately mismanaging it by, “...incurring unjustifiable expenses so as to prevent it from paying its way and getting out of debt” (Pares, 1950:37). It is not clear if this was true or not or how Azariah escaped the obvious conflict of interest – but eventually he *did* acquire Charlots - and of course the slaves that came with it. Thus was the Pinney involvement with slavery and sugar established, one that would last for nearly two hundred years, create considerable wealth and elevate the family.



John Frederick Pinney 1718–1762 (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

On Azariah’s death his plantation passed to his son John, who had already enlarged it through an advantageous marriage to Mary Helme in 1708. John’s inheritance was brief. His father died in 1720 and John died later in the same year. *Mountravers*, as the plantation was now called, then passed to John Frederick Pinney, the only one of John’s seven children to survive beyond childhood. John Frederick never married and though he spent some time on Nevis, he much preferred the life of a Dorset country gentleman - and for a while, Member of Parliament.

He built the Dorset house my mother grew up in - *Racedown* – in the late 1750s. With no direct heir, John Frederick decided to leave his Nevis plantation to a distant cousin, a young man named John Pretor, a descendant of Mary Pinney, one of his grandfather's sisters. A condition of the inheritance was that John give up the name Pretor and assume the name Pinney. He went out to Nevis in 1765 to turn around his newly inherited but much neglected plantation. After 18 years on the island Pares estimated his worth:

On the day he left Nevis with his family to live in England, he may have been worth about £70,000, without reckoning his Dorset estates. (Pares, 1950:320).

£70,000 then would be worth £10.5 million pounds in 2019¹⁷ – and while his obsessive attention to detail and extreme parsimoniousness played a part in its creation – more than anything else it was the blood, sweat and lives of enslaved Africans that made him a rich man. On his return he built a house in Bristol, now the *Georgian House Museum*. Together with James Tobin, described by Pares as: "...one of the most prominent and intelligent *adversaries* of the abolition movement..." (Pares, 195:121) – John Pinney set up a financial, trading and shipping business focused on sugar and the Caribbean plantations.

The movement to abolish the slave trade was growing, Quakers being prominent among the campaigners. The Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed in 1787, William Wilberforce being its leading light. William Cowper wrote his poem *The Negro's Complaint* in 1788 and John Newton's pamphlet *Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade* was published in 1789. Now an absentee owner himself, Pinney became increasingly concerned at the changing sentiment regarding slavery. "A note of panic crept into his (writing) style after the revolt of the French slaves at St Domingue (or Hayti)..." (Pares, 1950:121). Despite this, in 1800 he surprisingly gave permission for a Mr Wedgewood, understood to be a Wilberforce supporter, to stay at Mountravers while on a 'voyage' around the West Indies for his health. Aware of the possible risks

¹⁷ 'Present day' values quoted here are based on the Bank of England inflation calculator (<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>)

of letting an abolitionist loose on his plantation to see the reality of slavery for himself, he wrote to his manager on Nevis:

Do not suffer a negro to be corrected in his (Wedgewood's) presence, or so near for him to hear the whip – and if you could allowance the gang at the lower work, during his residence at the house, it would be advisable – point out the comforts the negroes enjoy beyond our poor in this country (Britain), drawing a comparison between the climates – show him the property they possess in goats, hogs and poultry and their negro ground. By this means he will leave the island possessed with favourable sentiments. (Pares, 1950:122).

I doubt this early example of 'image control' had little effect on Wedgewood's opinions – nor on the campaign to end the slave trade – which was abolished in 1807. But to me it suggests something else – John Pinney *knew* and very likely *always* knew - that slavery was something abhorrent, to be ashamed of. If it was so benign, why attempt to hide the fact that 'happy and contented' slaves had to be constantly whipped and tortured to encourage them to work for their 'kind and generous' owners?

When it finally happened, Pinney affected to not be overly concerned at the abolition of the slave trade. He didn't need to buy new slaves anyway, "... for his gang had maintained its numbers by natural increase for many years past." (Pares, 1950:122). But towards the end of his life, when the abolition of slavery itself loomed, Pinney spoke out more angrily, warning that the 'sugar colonies' would be ruined. However, for a man known for his parsimoniousness, the thing that really exercised him was the money he stood to lose: "If the Slave Register Bill was passed... I consider my property reduced in value upwards of £50,000, and all this by Mr Wilberforce." (Pares, 1950:122).

Despite his forebodings, at his death in 1818, John Pretor Pinney's fortune had increased to £340,000 – equivalent to nearly £30 million pounds in 2019. His wife Jane (née Weekes) bore six children: John Frederick, Elizabeth, Azariah III, Pretor, Mary, and the youngest *Charles Pinney*, who was my great, great grandfather.



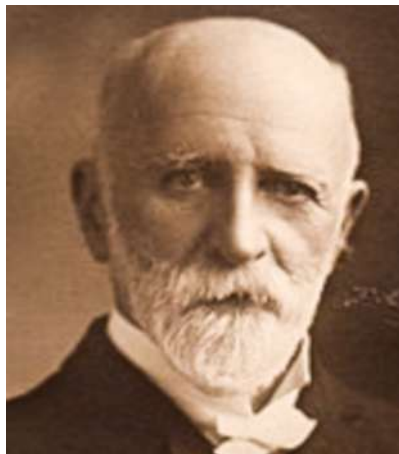
Charles Pinney (1793-1867) Courtesy of Georgian House Museum.
(photo: C.C.Cox 2019)

Azariah III died young, Pretor 'went mad' and was locked away in the countryside - and so presumably John Pinney's estate was divided up between his surviving four children though it is unlikely Elizabeth and Mary inherited the same amount as their brothers. Despite being the youngest, Charles was the one with a head for business and took over his father's merchant house. It is *his* name found on the records of compensation paid by the British government to slave owners for the loss of their 'property' when slavery itself was abolished in 1833. On the database, '*Legacies of British Slave Ownership*', it appears he received approximately £25,000 in compensation - £3 million in 2019. (UCL, 2020). The database has, as Bergin and Rupprecht write:

...provided an extraordinary resource for tracking the global reach of transatlantic slavery down the streets and into the houses and drawing rooms of Britain...(revealing how) slavery sutured the Empire, structured modern Britain and moulded British identities, but (tells) little about the enslaved who were registered in ledger books and assigned generic monetary value in scribbled ink. (Bergin and Rupprecht 2018:26).

At the time the compensation was paid out in c.1835, the Mountravers plantation had been out of Pinney hands for nearly thirty years. It had been sold in 1808 to a slave owner with a particular reputation for cruelty, Edward Huggins. However, the Pinney owned and Bristol based Merchant House had interests in a number of other Caribbean plantations in the form of mortgages and were entitled to - and were assiduous in claiming - a percentage of the compensation paid out to those estates.

Charles Pinney acquired additional notoriety as the Mayor of Bristol during the riots in that city in 1831, where as a result of tactical decisions – or the lack of - he was tried but acquitted for ‘neglect of duty’. He moved from the house his father built in Great George Street to a much larger one he built for himself in Clifton – a substantial property called Camp House (now a conference centre re-named Engineer’s House). He married Francis Mary Still and they had three children: Mary Jane, Frederick Wake - and my great grandfather *John Charles Pinney* (1835-1911).



John Charles Pinney (source unknown)

At his death in 1867, Charles Pinney left £60,000 – worth in 2019 around £6.8 million. A descendant of Charles’ daughter Mary Jane, told me that his great grandmother received only a small inheritance - her two brothers got between them the bulk of their father’s estate.

John Charles married an independently wealthy woman, Harriet Wingfield Digby and became the Vicar of Coleshill, near Birmingham. I know little about him. Being a man of God, I would be curious to know how he rationalized his ‘blood-stained’ inheritance. The only notable thing about his wife Harriet that my mother thought fit to mention in her autobiography was that she was a fanatical evangelical Christian. As a girl, my sister recalls visiting a house where she had lived and being struck by the numerous framed religious tracts in every room. Harriet bore seven children: my grandfather *Reginald Pinney* (1863-1943), William Digby, Frederick Wyldbore, John Charles Digby, Anne Elizabeth Mary Digby and Baldwin Frederick Still Wingfield.

Between her first child in 1863 and her sixth in 1870, the average gap between Harriet's children was under 14 months – a punishing schedule by any reckoning. She managed to avoid having more children for the next 6 years, but then became pregnant again with her seventh child – and a year later in 1877 was dead. I have not been able to establish the size of my great grandfather's estate, but I think it's safe to assume it was substantial, and on his death was presumably divided among his children.

My grandfather Reginald's entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography states:

Pinney entered the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, in 1882 and was gazetted in 1884 into the 7th foot (Royal Fusiliers); he entered the Staff College, Camberley, in 1889 and graduated in 1890. He was deputy assistant adjutant-general at Quetta, India, from 1896 to 1901, and assistant adjutant-general to the Egyptian army in 1909–13. In the period between his two imperial postings, he fought in the South African War as a major in 1901–2, and commanded the 4th battalion of his regiment in 1903–7, being promoted brevet colonel in 1906. In 1913 Pinney was appointed brigadier-general in command of the Devon and Cornwall brigade, and in August 1914 he was appointed to command 23rd infantry brigade in 8th division. (Foot 2004)



Reginald Pinney c.1898

He ended the First World War as the commander of the 33rd Division. In total, he spent 35 years in the Army. He was not always a popular General, particularly on the occasion he stopped his men's rum ration. There was presumably more than one event during the war when he distinguished himself in military terms – but the notable one I am aware of was at the very end of the conflict, between the 12th and 20th of April 1918

when the 33rd Division, "...sealed the gap in the British lines at Meteren, and brought the German offensive to a complete standstill." (Hutchinson, 1943). Lieutenant Colonel Graham Seton Hutchinson DSO MC gave the memorial tribute to my grandfather at his funeral, and in it quoted from the Division's official history, which coincidentally he had also written. Using sporting metaphors, he said:

The 33rd Division, as it was said, had 'played full back to forwards who had been worsted in the scrummage': according to all accounts, it was the resolute handling of its machine-gun battalion which contributed most to holding the Germans back from Meteren. (Hutchinson)

The First World War is a highly emotive subject. The extraordinary losses that came from repeatedly, year after year, marching men into machine guns, led critics of the war to describe the regular soldiers mown down in their thousands as 'lions led by donkeys'. I feel not a shred of pride in my grandfather, or the other high-ranking 'donkeys' who masterminded what amounted to a *culling* of almost an entire generation of naïve and gullible young men, led to believe at the outset that the war was going to a 'lark' – and on comprehending their mistake, found themselves trapped by rigid military discipline. Whatever they finally understood about the incompetence of their leaders and the folly of that particular war, there was no arguing with the choices they faced - a bullet in the front if they went forward, or a bullet in the back if they refused to climb out of their trench. This short, cutting, satirical poem called, 'The General' – said to be based on my grandfather - sums up him and the war neatly:

THE GENERAL

Good-morning, good-morning!" the General said
When we met him last week on our way to the line.
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead,
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
"He's a cheery old card," grunted Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.
But he did for them both by his plan of attack.
(Sassoon 2012:50).

Reginald's brother in law was Dr Henry Head, a pioneering neurologist whose work and research would help many of those who were mentally and physically traumatised

by the horrors of the First World War. I cannot imagine that he and my grandfather had much in common. Henry Head counted among his friends the poets Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves - and his research *benefitted* people. Reginald's skills were mainly focused on *killing* them.

Hester bore six children: Hester, Bernard, Mary, Robert, my mother *Rachel* and John. The first five were born between 1901 and 1909. The youngest was born in 1920 after a gap of 11 years. Reginald is to this day revered by a number of my cousins – a fact I find both curious and suspicious. Why it is so important to construct and then perpetuate an idealised, kindly image of Reginald? Few of them ever met the man – or if they did, they were very young and he was very old. In my screenplay I have chosen the name Gordon for the character loosely based on my grandfather. He is *not* a nice man in my fictional narrative. And as I will later reveal, nor was Reginald, my *real* grandfather.



Legitimate children of Reginald Pinney and Hester Pinney (née Head)
Left to Right: John, Rachel, Robert, Mary, Bernard, Hester c.1924

Reginald died in 1943, aged 79. His hagiographic memorial tribute is beyond irony - and contains this passage:

In the darkest days of battle casualties and in his private griefs, for Sir Reginald Pinney there was always a light over the horizon; and his firm Christian convictions were never troubled by doubt. His life is a challenge to those who would destroy the ideals and institutions for which Great Britain has stood. His work and character, both private and public, epitomise all that is best in our national life, and are a statement of the England which no tyranny can ever overthrow. (Hutchinson, 1943:9).

Reginald's military career illustrates the obvious fact that the British Empire was underpinned by military might. Who knows what barbarities Reginald witnessed, sanctioned or participated in while 'patriotically' upholding the interests of the British Empire in other people's countries?



Major General Sir Reginald Pinney (retired) 1863-1843 (c.1920)

He had been dead for five years when I was born but through my mother I had a sense of him. I met his wife, my maternal grandmother, on two occasions. Once was in a house in London where she screamed at me for wearing my school cap indoors. She pulled it from my head and threw it on the floor. I was probably five years old. The second time I was only a few years older, certainly under ten. She was living alone in *Racedown*, the family home – the house that features in fictional form throughout my screenplay under the name of *Blackdown*. My mother must have taken me on a visit. I recall that the warmest place in the house was the basement kitchen, which contained a large Aga. I have an image of Lady Pinney shuffling around in her dressing gown. She looked to me to be very old indeed - and was coughing up green phlegm, which she spat into a ball of tissue in her hand. Her false teeth were loose and looked like they might fall out at any moment. I am told she was a devoted grandmother to at least some her other grandchildren – but I regret that my only memories of her are of anger, decrepitude, an unpleasant odour and a distinct lack of warmth and empathy.

I was 10 years old when my grandmother died in 1958. I was not taken to the funeral but I do remember sometime afterwards Rachel placed a photograph of her mother by her bed. I suspect that the words she wrote below the picture were her opportunity to

finally have the last word – something impossible when her over-talking mother was alive: ‘*She tried to help, and succeeded more often than she knew.*’



Hester Pinney (née Head) c.1905



Bridport News Feb 28th 1958 (photo: C.C.Cox)

Trauma:

In March 2019 I attended a conference in London called: *'Post-Slavery syndrome – Intergenerational PTSD in the Consulting Room'*. Confer, the organisers, described the event's focus as:

...living and practicing psychotherapy in a society that is deeply damaged by the legacy of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The discussion is premised on the theory that through the mostly unconscious transmission of intergenerational trauma, affect and narratives, we continue to perpetuate a destructive power disparity between today's black and white communities; that we are locked into histories that we didn't create but which control our thinking and which need to be continually challenged in order for us to grow emotionally as a society. (Confer 2019)

Over 100 people attended, the majority of them practicing psychotherapists with an Afro/Caribbean heritage. Among the speakers were Dr Aileen Alleyne, Robert Downes, Eugene Ellis, Wayne Mertins-Brown, Judy Ryde, Foluke Taylor and Lennox Thomas. All of them sought in different ways to explore how we are positioned by our histories. For many in today's black community, I heard that this can mean a persistent feeling of being unsafe, devalued and misunderstood, and that for white people it can involve an emotional cocktail of shame, defensiveness and unwanted responsibility. Some of the black speakers said they were not only disinclined to calm the anxieties of white people, but were *unable* to do so. Speaking to those of us present who were not black, they said in effect: 'We have got our own problems to deal with - we don't have time or space to deal with yours too'.

There was only one speaker who didn't go down particularly well. Judy Ryde, author of *White Privilege Unmasked* gave a well-researched and well-intentioned presentation unfortunately based on a text primarily designed to inform white people of the many ways they remain oblivious to the reality of black lives and experience. As she elaborated on how just the words 'white privilege' on their own can trigger an indignant response from disadvantaged white people, I recall sensing discomfort in the audience. The predominantly black audience knew all about the many subtleties of discrimination,

having experienced them every day of their lives. They did not appreciate a white woman, regardless of her good intentions, telling them something they already knew.

The rest of the conference was made up of presentations from Afro-Caribbean heritage psychotherapists, who in different ways have explored the legacies of both the inter-generational and trans-generational transmission of the traumas of slavery, and how the damaging effects of both persist to this day. I heard just how complex and time consuming is the intimate work involved in trying to address these harms from the past, and how it leaves little time to hold the hands of white people at the same time. I understood, I hope correctly, that when it comes to struggling with *our* shame and guilt, we whites are on our own - black people are busy with their own issues. We built white supremacy, it belongs to us and consequently it's ours to dismantle - and we should do it for our own health and well being, as well as for the benefit of our fellow human beings.

Dr Aileen Alleyne elaborated on the origin and scale of the trauma the enslaved endured, and passed on to their descendants.

The components of that trauma are: shame, guilt and anger.
Unavoidable emotions that still lurk in our psyches. (Alleyne
2019 Confer conference).

She talked about how the systematic de-humanisation of African people was carried out by enlightened people with high civil values. Values that somehow deserted them when it came to Africa and Africans - and that it was those double standards towards a race of people that:

...makes the trauma so painful for black people to bear – seeing a
value system for one group of people not applied to another
group of people. (Alleyne 2019 Confer conference).

Another speaker - Lennox Thomas – was well known and loved by the delegates. He described the way slavery was talked about in a matter of fact way during his childhood growing up in the Caribbean. ‘Stay away from the silk cotton trees by the river’ was drummed into him as a young boy. He quickly learned that they were the same trees his enslaved forebears were hung from. ‘Me free paper burn’ was another expression he

learnt from childhood - used when people had to go back to work, and came from a time when there was a constant fear of being returned to enslavement.

When Lennox came to the UK he discovered that slavery was a taboo subject – not to be talked about or mentioned at all. Afro-Caribbean migrants to the ‘mother country’ had to suffer the sense of loss experienced by all those who leave one country and go to another – and a deeper loss. In *Mental Slavery* Fletchman Smith elaborates:

Firstly it involved the loss of important attachments to loved ones who might never be seen again. Secondly it meant the breaking of traditional ties of loyalty to a culture. The disruption of personal ties disturbed the individual’s whole being – which sometimes took years to repair – or sometimes was never repaired at all ... what was unique in their case, however, was the past they carried with them, of having their lives massively disrupted when they themselves were traded for worldly goods. Migration to Britain clarified the deeper meaning of slavery. (2003:23)

Several of the speakers at the conference touched on how slave owners could not avoid doing harm to *themselves*. Thomas put it this way:

... harm has also been done to white people. More than anything else is the blindness to the damage, the fear of stirring up a hornet’s nest – you know, if I as a white person talk about race, what on earth is going to happen? The damage that has remained for white people has been the vestiges of psychological superiority, white psychological capital and the inflated sense of European worth. In reality, white people are a minority on this earth – but you’d never believe it, would you? (Thomas 2019 Confer conference)

By conference end I had come to appreciate for the first time the extent that whiteness was invented by white people to create its opposite – blackness; how this ‘difference’ was ruthlessly exploited for political and economic advantage; how racism and white supremacy combine into a kind of malignancy, embedded primarily in the consciousness of white minds - and consequently are white problems. I also understood that addressing, and then ridding ourselves of these problems, is the responsibility of white people – and by accepting this responsibility, we will go a long way towards atoning for our crimes of the past.

The words of Fletchman Smith, already quoted earlier in my introduction, are worth repeating here:

By damaging others, people also damage themselves, and I suspect that if I were to focus on the children of former slave-owners, then I would discover traumas there too. In the making of empires, it is inevitable that crimes will be committed. (Fletchman Smith, 2003:15).

Most of my Pinney relatives have not even begun to acknowledge the trauma their forebears inflicted on the enslaved and on the colonized - never mind the traumas they themselves may have inherited. I fear many cousins of my generation will go to their graves clinging firmly to their denial, which seems to be intimately bound up with excessive pride in family – a pride that I do not share and find hard to fathom.

Afro-Caribbean descendants of the enslaved will, Alleyne predicts, overcome their external, and more importantly their *internal* oppressor, repair their identity, discover their true black selves, achieve true integration and arrive at what she calls a ‘state of grace’ (2019: Confer conference) The descendants of slave owners and whites in general, have an urgent need to undergo their own transformative process - and it starts by us finding the courage to free ourselves from the poisonous myth of ‘white supremacy’.

James Baldwin puts it succinctly:

I attest to this:
the world is not white;
it never was white,
cannot be white.
White is just a metaphor for power,
and that is simply a way of describing
Chase Manhattan Bank.
(Baldwin, Peck 2017:107).



James Baldwin (date unknown, photo: Amsterdam News)

Scriptwriting:

I came to scriptwriting relatively late in life. The essence of my job as a cinematographer was narrating stories visually from behind a film or video camera. In my 50s, for a number of reasons, some of necessity and some of choice, I started to transfer my creative energies to the written word - and script-writing was the form that came naturally to me. Perhaps this shouldn't have been a surprise, as at heart it is a conceptual process in some ways similar to cinematography, only telling stories with *words* to evoke images, rather than making images directly. The screenwriter's adage: 'a film is story told in pictures' is one of the most important principals for nascent screenwriters to bear in mind – and has its genesis in the early days of cinema, when films had only caption cards and live, improvised musical accompaniment to aid the narrative. The language of cinema was created in the *absence* of the spoken word. Of course directors today don't have to work under the same limitations, but that original visual language for telling stories is still the bedrock of the filmmaking art.

We have a deep, atavistic need for stories. In *The Seven Basic Plots*, Booker writes:

So deep and so instinctive is our need for them that, as small children, we have no sooner learned to speak than we begin demanding to be told stories, as evidence of an appetite likely to continue to our dying day. (Booker, 2006:2)

One of the first narratives I considered using for my screenplay output was inspired by the fact that John Pinney brought with him to Nevis a ten-year-old boy from Dorset - an indentured servant called Tom Peadon. Before leaving England he had been forewarned by his manager on the island about the poor condition of the plantation's slaves:

...nearly thirty men and women were old or very old, crippled, 'lame & useless', blind and 'dismembered', one man had 'but one leg', a young boy was 'ruined by lameness' and others were 'good for nothing'. (Eickelmann, 2016:249).

So when Pinney arrived, there was an urgent priority to purchase new, fitter slaves. Among those he bought at the Charlestown slave auction were three children, a twelve-year-old boy named Pero and his younger sisters: Nancy aged eight, and Sheba aged six. Notwithstanding the chilling thought of my forebear *buying* children, these facts suggested to me a possible narrative that would allow the reality of a Caribbean slave-labour plantation to be seen through the eyes of two traumatised and abused boys growing up together in servitude - one black, one white.

I felt this was a good idea - but I rejected it, and at this moment struggle to recall the exact thinking that led up to that decision. What I do remember is that it was instinctive, intuitive - and once made, final. I refer to it here because it illustrates how creative choices are often neither rational nor logical. In fact, I still believe it is an excellent narrative premise, which I intend to explore in one way or another in the future. As it happened, Tom Peadon worked out his indenture and became a plantation overseer – a job that would inevitably brutalize him. Pero was trained as a personal servant, hairdresser and extractor of teeth. He remained both slave and servant all his life, dressing his ‘master’ every day.



Pero's Bridge, Bristol (photo: C.C. Cox)



Pero's Bridge, Bristol (photo: C.C. Cox)

When Pinney and his family left Nevis for good, they took Pero with them to England where he spent the rest of his life, aside from two short trips back to Nevis, where he was made to accompany his owner. He died in Bristol, aged 46 in 1798. In 1999, 201 years later, as a result of a determined campaign by activists and historians to expose and commemorate the multiple ways Bristol was built on slavery, a new footbridge in Bristol docks was named after him.¹⁸

It is axiomatic in scriptwriting, that the writing of ‘pages’ - the actual screenplay - is left for as long as possible, until narrative, subtext, characters, themes and plot are as well developed as they can be. In *Story*, McKee advocates starting the script writing process by creating individual scenes or moments on index cards - calling this the *step outline*. (1997:412). For my screenplay, I chose to leave out this stage and started with a *treatment*, a document which describes in detail what happens, without dialogue but with subtext – and the moment in the scriptwriting process when a character’s interior thoughts are explicitly expressed. (1997:415)

I wrote two different treatments, one before my research trip to the Caribbean and the USA - and the other after. My first attempt - *Blood Lines* – can be found in *Appendix 1*. A welcome consequence of my research trip to Nevis and the USA was the renewed confidence I felt on my return. I soon started work on a second treatment – this time a multi-narrative, multi-time period, multi-character story titled ‘*History is Not the Past*’, a more complex structure allowed me to include more of my research and make a better *research artifact*. It can be found in *Appendix 2*. The title is taken from a quote from James Baldwin:

History is not the past.
We carry our history with us.
If we pretend otherwise, we are literally criminals.
(Baldwin, Peck. 2017:107)

¹⁸ In June 2020, protesters pulled down a long-resented statue of slave-trader Edward Colston, rolled him down to the dock and threw him into the harbour – just yards from Pero’s Bridge.

When it finally came time to start work on the actual screenplay pages I found, not for the first time, what an intense process it is to write strictly in the present tense while ‘living’ scenes both through the characters involved - and the camera’s unflinching eye. Particularly so, when the scenes in question include sexual abuse; the transportation of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic; attempted and actual suicide; the sale of human beings as if farm animals; the taking of babies from their mothers; torture – and more. In writing such scenes, I also tried – while being mindful of a director’s prerogative to be the arbiter of how a scene is staged - to subtly suggest a *mise en scène* that was both honest, avoided *gratuitous* depictions of cruelty - and bearable for an audience to watch.

When finished, a screenplay is printed out on single sided plain paper and traditionally held together with one or two brass brads. The film industry fetishizes over exactly how a script should be presented. The font will be Courier, the size will be 12 point, and the layout and spacing of dialogue and action could not be more prescriptive. The only justification for this obsession I have come across derives from the rough rule of thumb that one page of a screenplay equals approximately one minute of screen-time, thus allowing producers to rapidly judge the approximate length of any film by the thickness of its script.

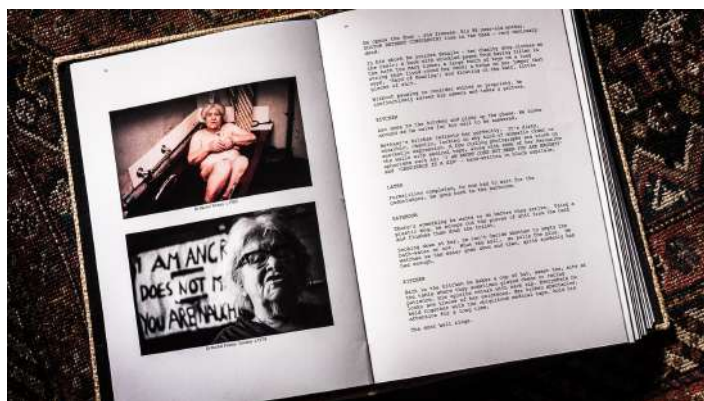
In July 2019 I was invited to present my research and exhibit my primary output at the conference and exhibition *Theorem*, to be held in ARU’s Ruskin Gallery – leaving me with the challenge of how to *display* a script in an art gallery. With input and encouragement from the curator of the exhibition, I eventually chose to present my script in the form of a book that integrated the screenplay ‘pages’ with a wide selection of my research photography. Like many creative ideas, this one was born out of practical limitations. My original idea had been to take a few individual pages of my screenplay, enlarge them to A3 and place A4 images that related to the text on each side. I liked the idea of isolated pages of script taken out of context as I was quite sure no-one would read an entire screenplay at an art exhibition – and I could choose only those pages for which I knew there were particularly apposite images available. Shortage of wall space meant this idea was not possible but the concept of adding images to screenplay text had been born and it wasn’t long before I was contemplating

turning my screenplay into a book with images on *every* page. At this point I naively believed that I had a plenty of suitable images already in my possession - I didn't. Additional photography and archive searching was needed to complete the illustrated screenplay. When it came to binding the book (which had a print run of *one*) it was the Norfolk bookbinder Judith Ellis who suggested traditional long stitch binding. Not only was it how books were originally made, this particular binding had the advantage of allowing the pages to lie flat when the book was displayed lying open.

Despite having written a fictional narrative, the combination of image and text left no doubt where the historical facts behind my story came from - there was a visual connection to the Pinney family on virtually every other page. Printed on the latest Xerox machine, hand stitched into a hessian cover, the finished book was a mixture of past, present, old and new and represented the transformation of a visually dull 115-page screenplay into a visually rich, 230-page, traditionally bound illustrated book – a *multi-modal research artefact*.



Illustrated screenplay: *History is Not the Past* 2020. (photo: C.C.Cox)



Illustrated screenplay: *History is Not the Past* 2020. (photo: C.C.Cox)

For academic researchers, the *Journal of Screenwriting* has since 2010 been publishing current academic and professional thinking on the screenplay. *New Writing* (the International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing) also has occasional articles on screenwriting - and in a joint paper for that journal, Scully asks how is it possible, "...to write an authentic creative work within an academic context?" (Lee et al 2017:91) He references Estelle Barrett who herself writes:

We propose that artistic practice be viewed as the production of knowledge or philosophy in action." and "...our exploration of artistic research demonstrates that knowledge is derived from doing and from the senses. (Barrett 2007:1)

I take comfort from Barrett's 'proposal' – and would like to propose in turn that my illustrated screenplay should also be understood as 'knowledge and philosophy in action – derived from doing and the senses'.

Sawtell and Taylor (in Lee *et al*, 2016) also consider the question of whether a screenplay written outside its normal place in the industrial chain, is able to have a life as a research artefact in the academy - particularly in the face of McKee's confident, characteristically dogmatic assertion in *Story*, that: "A literary work is finished and complete within itself. A screenplay waits for the camera." (1997:394). Batty and Baker writing in *Screen Production Research* argue – of course - that the screenplay *does* have a life in the academy and guide the screenwriter's choices by pointing out that when written as a research artefact, the screenplay uses of all its devices: form, format, structure, character, theme, setting and dialogue - to *tell* research (eds Batty, Kerrigan 2018:77) – and in doing so becomes, as Nanicelli puts it, "an ontologically autonomous work" (2013:68).

I have relished writing a screenplay in the academy. It has allowed me a different context in which to explore my creative practice – and it was as a direct consequence of working in an academic environment that I was able to create something different – a traditionally bound, *illustrated* screenplay that when exhibited at *Theorem*, demonstrated that what I had created could exist in its own right and hold someone's attention. People stood before the book I had made, turned the pages and took time to read the text and look at the pictures. The conclusion is inescapable. My illustrated

screenplay - a multi-layered creative output arrived at after much effort - is able to exist in the world in its own right. However, as it stands, despite being written in the *form* of an industrial document, my output screenplay in its present iteration cannot be sent out to film industry producers. Another draft of *History is Not the Past* is required for this purpose. The images will have to go – as will the small liberties I have taken with the ‘rule’ that the story must *only* be told by what a camera can film. The new draft will also further develop characters, narratives and plot. I am committed to start work on this draft as soon as I have submitted my thesis. When it is complete, I will do my utmost to have it read by people who might choose to promote or option it. After all, *someone* has to win the lottery.

In the final stages of writing this commentary I decided to ask for some independent appraisals of my screenplay – something quite difficult to arrange. I approached a producer, a director and a cinematographer, all with considerable experience in the film ‘industry’. The producer was willing but in the end far too busy. The director *Udayan Prasad* (<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/837829/>) and the Director of Photography *Richard Greatrex* BSC (<https://britishcinematographer.co.uk/richard-greatrex-bsc/>) both agreed, and have written honest evaluations of my output screenplay *History is not the Past* – and their brief reports can be found in Appendix 5.

Encounters 1 (UK):

I grew up knowing little about my mother's family. I don't recall on what evidence I based my early understanding that 'they' (at that time I naively assumed a collective identity) were posh, conservative and uncritical supporters of the status quo - but I do remember when I learnt of my mother's ostracism from her family. I was around nine or ten years old and we were walking along the King's Road in Chelsea, both of us probably looking something like the picture below.



Christopher and Rachel. Eastbourne c.1959 (photo: unknown)

We passed a large Rolls Royce parked outside the Town Hall with an important looking crest on the roof above the windscreen. I pointed it out and Rachel surprised me by saying it belonged to my 'Uncle Basil', the Lord Mayor. I don't recall being aware of *any* uncles at that time, let alone one called Basil (full name Basil Futvoye Marsden-Smedley) He was the husband of my mother's oldest sister - and mayor of Chelsea from 1957 to 1959. We walked on and Rachel told me that she was the baddie of her family and they didn't talk to her – and so that meant no, we couldn't ask Basil for a ride in his

car. I must have asked why, and I think she said, '*we are different*'. She didn't at that time explain the real reason for her ostracism - it was to be a good few years before I learned about that part of her story.

For most of my life I credited the Pinney family with an almost mythical status – largely because I didn't know them or anything about them. Physically they might have been distant and unreachable but in other ways they were far too close – they were inside my head. In response to their rejection of us, I directed contempt towards them - and that was the way things stood for many years. Not long after our mother's death in 1995, my brother received a round-robin e-mail from the self-appointed genealogist and events organizer for the Racedown Pinneys, notifying us of a gathering in Bristol. The invitation was unprecedented. Could it be that now my mother was safely dead, the door was opening - a crack?

My sister had many years earlier emigrated to the USA – the country of new beginnings – and she was busy living her life over there. My brother, who like me lived in the UK, had no desire to go – but I was curious. I drove to Bristol on the appointed day and found myself in the company of confident upper-class people, who all knew each other and were chatting and catching up like old friends. With the exception of the cousin who sent the e-mail, who I had briefly met some years earlier, I knew no one and no one knew me. I stuck around, feeling very much like a fish out of water. Eventually I left and on the drive home cursed my stupidity in having put myself in such a situation.

So while it's true that I had briefly been in the presence of some of my relatives earlier, it was not until I started this research project in 2017 that I made a serious effort to seek out and attempt to engage with my living first cousins, put aside my hostile mind-set and find out who they were, what they did and what they thought. Initially I focused on the surviving offspring of my mother's brothers and sisters – and then cast the net wider. What happened next is predictable. As soon as I started to actually meet and converse with them, like magic they became human beings with names and idiosyncratic personalities – people in other words. In my encounters I experienced something of that atavistic pleasure that comes from re-connecting with lost kith and kin. But it was also quite reassuring to discover that a few of my relatives *perfectly* fitted the image I had invented for them as a boy.

I found meeting my relatives difficult and emotionally unsettling. When we discussed the implications of having forebears who had exploited enslaved Africans to enrich themselves, I was frequently met with what I sensed were well-rehearsed denials – and resistance. I was told, confidently and authoritatively, that our forebear’s exploitation of enslaved Africans was *not* an issue for the family today and that in fact, there was no need to answer for anything in the family history – not only with regard to slavery, but also the actions of more recent forebears. I didn’t engage in a full debate with them about their denial at the time – but attempted to make it clear I didn’t agree. It was in my fictional screenplay that I was able to give a response to their confident denials by giving my feelings to an invented character called Grace - Leo’s Afro-Caribbean/Italian/English daughter, who in my story gatecrashes a private Silcox event in the basement of the Georgian House Museum.

The relatives I engaged with were aged between 27 and 97. Altogether I spoke to 23 members of the Pinney family. Seven were first cousins. Four were first cousins once removed. The rest were more distant relatives – other descendants of great, great grandfather Charles Pinney. The majority were suspicious of both me, and my research but were nevertheless prepared to let me cross their thresholds. The meetings were not really interviews, or even conversations. I now prefer to think of them as *encounters*. Most gave me the careful, measured welcome appropriate for a long lost relative appearing out of the blue. The more Pinney cousins I met, the clearer it became that with a few notable exceptions, there was little enthusiasm for a research project looking into the family and its slave owning history – and certainly not one conducted by the youngest son of *mad aunt Rachel*, whose motives might well be suspect. And as it turns out, they were right to be sceptical of me - although it must be said that at the time of meeting them, I had not finally settled on the views I am now expressing in this commentary.

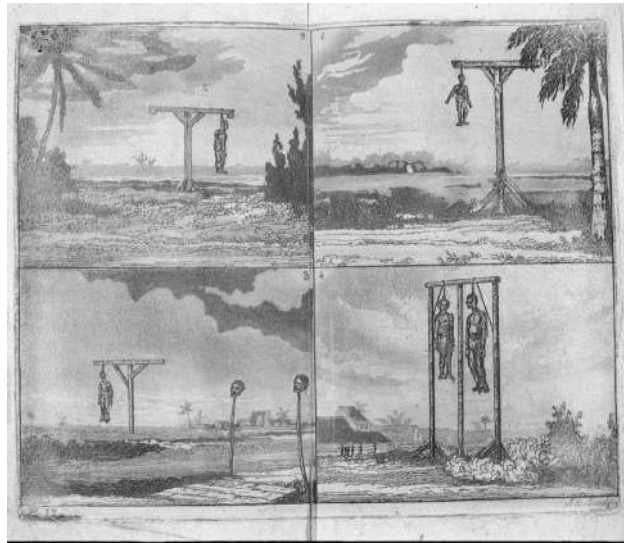
Spoken only days before her death, my mother’s last words to me were: “Don’t stop being my son.” She was at the time in the secure psychiatric ward of the Wittington Hospital – as a patient. I’m still not sure what she meant, but I resented the words - and still do. I am *not* fighting her battles, and have no intention of doing so. Nevertheless there have been periods on this journey when the pejorative image of my mother held by some of my cousins, has made me angry - not only at those who created it, all now

dead – but also at those who are keen to perpetuate it today. So, if not fighting her battles, what then are my motives? With the caveat that some are unknowable to my conscious mind - they are simple: to tell the truth about things that have been covered up and denied for far too long.

Most of those I asked, declined to participate in my research. There were others I didn't bother to ask, knowing full well what their answer would be. How was I going to convey the essence of my encounters with Pinney family members that were characterised in the main by *mistrust, denial and obfuscation*? My solution was I suspect the only one possible - keep everyone anonymous and paraphrase everything said. The things my relatives came out with during our meetings are in any event, based on my memory, rough notes written immediately afterwards, and the occasional 'aide-memoir' recording I was permitted to make. The absence of any identifying and contextual detail relating to living Pinney relatives is a conscious, deliberate decision.

One of my relatives appeared to think that because other slave owners were richer, the Pinneys were somehow less culpable. An odd thought - as though the harm done to enslaved Africans was related to how much wealth was extracted from their blood and sweat rather than the act of enslavement itself. A few others were clearly deluded – such as those who seemed to genuinely believe that the Pinneys were 'good' slave owners. In my fictional narrative it is when the fictional character Grace is told by a Silcox: '...but we were *good* slave owners.' – that she explodes and lambasts the whole room. Oxymoronic and nonsensical as it is, I suspect the notion of 'good slave-owner' comes from the fact that not all slave owners behaved in exactly the same way. While none could ever be called 'good', some were indeed 'less bad' than others. However, what this hopelessly naïve view exposes is something more fundamental - a total failure to comprehend the *sine qua non* of slavery – white hegemony could *only* be sustained through a rule of fear and violence. Constant whipping was ubiquitous on *all* plantations. Cruel punishments were regularly administered – as much to sustain terror among the enslaved as to punish any actual offence. And those of the enslaved that did resist – individuals with courage, spirit and the gift of leadership in other words – first had appendages such as ears, noses and hands chopped off, then if their spirit wasn't broken,

were executed. Their heads were put on poles or their bodies left hanging for all to see.



Executed Slaves. Demerara British Guiana c.1823
'SlaveryImages.org' accessed 2019.06.05

I heard many times that slavery was normal or at least *acceptable* in its day - and patronisingly reminded by many that it was quite wrong to judge the past by today's standards. If I heard that point once, I heard it a dozen times. Some wanted to make a distinction between slave-traders and slave-owners – implying I presume that the shipping of Africans across the Atlantic was a far worse atrocity than their subsequent enslavement, life of gruelling hard labour and then when 'useless' and 'worn out', their death and disposal in an unmarked grave. The question of apology is a sensitive one. One cousin, now dead, is on record in a published interview from some years ago saying he *refuses* to apologise for something he had not personally done. On the face of it, not an unreasonable statement – but one I know hid explicit racial prejudice which he had revealed to me in conversation. Others were adamant that there really was *nothing* to be ashamed of in Pinney history. And while I was repeatedly told that all the slavery derived wealth was long gone, several nevertheless seemed concerned for their money and property, which I presume they thought could somehow be at risk should they publicly admit any kind of shame, regret or benefit in connection to their forebears actions. My blood ran cold when I heard from one relative that they would have likely owned slaves themselves if they had been living then – it being so 'normal' at the time. Such a comment reminded me that modern day slavery exists right under our noses

today – and while illegal, is no doubt justified by those doing the enslaving with similar logic to that used by my forebears. In its most exploitative and ruthless iterations, contemporary capitalism subjects its workers to conditions that are slavery in all but name.

It's a risky business speculating how people vote – but I suspect the majority of my Pinney relatives in the UK are *tribal* Conservatives – the party of and for the wealthy and the upper-middle classes, largely sustained by rich donors – some of whom belong to a secretive organisation called *The Leader's Group*, open to those who commit to donating at least £50,000 a year to the party. The club is described by Goeghegan, Thévoz and Corderoy in an Open Democracy article published online in November 2019 as an "...an elite dining club behind £130m+ donations to the Tories." Many of these men – and at Group meetings between 2013 and 2018, 97% of those attending were male – hide their wealth in offshore in tax havens. What an irony then, that the island of Nevis, where so much wealth was created by the enslaved and then shipped to England as hogsheads (barrels) of sugar, is now one of the world's most secretive tax havens. In a Guardian 'Long Read' article *Nevis, How the World's Most Secretive Offshore Haven Refuses to Clean Up*, Bullough writes: "In the world of offshore, Nevis is a bottom feeder. It specializes in letting its clients create corporations with greater anonymity than almost anywhere on earth." (Bullough, 2018).

'Normal' – the word cropped up again and again. I suspect that even at the time, everybody on some level knew slavery was *not* normal. The enslaved certainly were in no doubt that what they were enduring was something grotesquely abnormal. The few, precious, first person testimonies that we can read today, unambiguously confirm this. Travellers and salesmen passing through the southern states supplied Theodore Dwight Weld of the American Anti-Slavery Society with 1000 testimonies of what they witnessed on plantations. The accounts of the barbarities inflicted on the enslaved expose the deeply disturbed, psychotic behaviour of plantation owners, managers and overseers – behaviour that even by the values of the time could be seen as perverted, inhuman and savage.

There were *always* those in the past who had the courage to speak out against slavery – but there were others, particularly those who stood directly or indirectly to make a great

deal of money out of it, who salved their consciences by resorting to self-serving, non-sequitur arguments – in essence, by lying to themselves. As it happens, a classic example of this kind of argument was made by my forebear, when he saw enslaved Africans being sold at auction for the first time. He wrote in a letter:

Since my arrival I've purchased nine negroe slaves at St Kitts and can assure you I was shock'd at the first appearance of human flesh exposed to sale. But surely God ordain'd 'em for ye use & benefit of us: otherwise his Divine Will would have been made manifest by some particular sign or token.
(Eickelmann 2016:256)

The only one of my uncles and aunts I met when growing up was my mother's sister Hester. As far as I know she was the only sibling who maintained some contact with my mother. I was told Rachel could occasionally visit her - but only when other members of the family were not present.



Hester Marsden Smedley (née Pinney) aged 26
(photo NPG 1927)

I was a teenager when my brother and I were invited for tea sometime in the mid 1960s. It was brief meeting - and never repeated. I wish I had known then of her exploits at the start of the Second World War staying one step of the German advance through Holland and Belgium, gathering intelligence while using her profession as a journalist for cover.

If she wasn't a proper spy, she certainly knew people who were. In *A Spy Among Friends* Macintyre reveals how, soon after the start of the war, a certain Hester Marsden Smedley was instrumental in recommending to her contacts in intelligence that Kim Philby be considered for recruitment. It's more than strange to learn that my aunt Hester both knew, and vouched for, one of Britain's most famous traitors. (Macintyre 2014:20)

A few of my contacts with Pinney relatives went no further than short phone calls. Others lived in London or the Home Counties. To get to the rest necessitated two excursions to the West Country, where the early Pinneys came from and where many still reside today. As I made my way to their homes, I was struck by how many lived off the beaten track. After struggling to find several such isolated dwellings, I began to wonder what they might be hiding from. Reviewing my rough notes after these visits, I realised that as well as seeking information, I was using the encounters to pass on something of what I had learned through my research about the *reality* of slavery – information I was sure they either didn't know or more likely, didn't *want* to know. Reactions were mixed. That the colonial slave-labour sugar plantation system in the Caribbean was far, far worse than most people appreciate, may have got through to a few. As diplomatically as I could, I tried to tell them that no matter how much they wished it otherwise, persisting with denial, left them on the wrong side of history – and the only way forward for them as individuals, and as a family in general, was acknowledgement and honesty. While few openly disagreed with this view, I got the impression that this particular point didn't go down well. I felt they saw me as a foolish, deluded idealist, naively stirring up trouble. But there were perhaps also a few others who were all too well aware of how fragile their privilege was – and the last thing they wanted was any kind of light being shone on how their class status was achieved.

I was surprised how keen my relatives were to hear about my mother. Their curiosity and thirst for information was undisguised and it became obvious to me that despite their undoubted disapproval of her, she occupied a very large place in their imaginations. It was somewhat ironic then, that in attempting to answer their insistent questions, it was necessary for me to dive straight into issues that in other circumstances I suspect they would have much preferred to gloss over - illegitimacy, kidnapping, prison, sexual abuse, and lesbianism to name but five. It was simply impossible to answer their questions about Rachel without addressing head-on the key events of her

traumatic childhood and later life. Some of my cousins admitted to having had a secret fascination with Rachel when they were young. What privileged teenager going through a rebellious phase, would not secretly admire an eccentric, mad aunt who was a rebel herself, a breaker of taboos *and* homosexual?

When hearing the view that my mother was first and foremost a *victim* and a *survivor*, I think I saw in the eyes of one particular cousin the glimmer of a realization that the narrative drummed in to them since childhood may have been at heart simply cover for the cynical casting-out of an odd-ball misfit in order to preserve the prospects of the other five offspring – and to protect the family reputation. When next I tried to visit this particular person I felt it significant that they declined to see me. On a visit to another cousin I discovered that a group mainly drawn from the Racedown Pinneys, had organized a reunion on the Caribbean island of Nevis – the very place where successive generations of our forebears made their fortune. On seeing photographs of prosperous Pinney relatives with their advantaged offspring enjoying a Caribbean Christmas, my first thoughts centred on the insensitivity of holding a reunion at the scene of our forebear's *crime against humanity*. And then there was something else - the images made *palpable* the rejection of our family. In a poor attempt to express something of my conflicted feelings, which included a disturbing mix of anger, envy and loss, I said to the person showing me the pictures that I would *not* have joined them for the reunion – but was unable to refuse because I had not been invited. Later I was to learn that the problematic significance of a celebratory Pinney reunion held on *Nevis* of all places was raised by some of the younger Pinneys present - and a debate of sorts on the topic took place. When I asked for details, I sensed a reluctance to elaborate on what had been discussed.

I can now see that in nearly all my encounters, I was never able to be myself. When I was with 'them' I felt the need to be careful of my words, on my guard – in a word, divided. It's in this commentary I find that I am at last able to distil my feelings - and express them. My research project and the writing of this commentary have been frequently unsettling and disturbing – but there is no doubt in my mind that the experience overall has been positive and cathartic. The Pinneys *are* a family I belong to, but am not a part of – and I have finally come to understand that my disenfranchisement from them is the best gift my mother ever gave me.

On the first of my two forays into the West Country to meet first cousins properly for the first time, I spent an afternoon on Pilsdon Pen, an Iron Age hill fort overlooking the house where my mother grew up. When she was a child the fort stood on Pinney owned land, but in 1982 it was bequeathed it to the National Trust. I sat on a bench and mused out loud about recent encounters and conflicted emotions. A short film clip of me talking to the camera, titled *My thoughts on Pilsdon Pen* can be seen by clicking on the following link: <https://youtu.be/LwGIjXZ9J8Y>

This section was to end here but as I approached the final months of my write-up year, something extraordinary happened. Out of the blue I received a phone call from the cousin I have described as the ‘self-appointed genealogist’ of the Pinney family – and who also happens to be one of three trustees of the *Pinney Papers*. He first asked how my PhD research project was going - then revealed that he was retiring as a trustee, and looking for a replacement – and would I consider taking on the role?

It’s no exaggeration to say that the offer put me in a flat spin. I thanked him and said I would give his offer some thought and get back to him. My first reaction was to feel flattered - and more importantly, to wonder if it might allow me to play a part in the important task of getting the papers digitized and made freely available to all on line – particularly those related to the Nevis slave labour sugar plantation?

I slept on it – in fact I slept on it for several nights. I spoke to my brother and my sister. We all acknowledged the offer was significant – but were unsure of exactly what, if anything, lay behind it. Despite me being the youngest, they both resisted telling me what to do – and made it clear that I should make my own decision. I sensed my sister was more positive about accepting, my brother less so. Gradually my feelings of gratitude faded and I was able to analyse the pros and cons a little more clearly. I considered how the screenplay I had written together with this commentary, had over time morphed into something much angrier and more critical towards the Pinney family than I had anticipated at the outset. I recalled that it was precisely being a detached,

disenfranchised Pinney that gave me the necessary distance to undertake this research project in the first place. Eventually I came to the conclusion that my research project and being a trustee of the Pinney Papers - with its stated and *unstated* obligations of 'protection' – were mutually incompatible. I wrote the following to my cousin and the other two trustees:

I was pleased and flattered to be asked if I would consider becoming one of the trustees for the Pinney Papers at Bristol University Library. But at the same time, the offer forced me to consider more deeply the implications of such a role, together with its stated and *unstated* responsibilities - and after much thought I have finally decided to decline. I believe I am the wrong person and when you get to finally read my PhD research project titled *My Family and Slavery*, I am fairly sure you will agree with this judgement. At the appropriate time – probably the end of this year or the beginning of next – I will of course be circulating a link to the finished thesis and look forward to hearing any comments that any of you may wish to make.

Notwithstanding (*****'s) hospitality over the years since my mother's death and his efforts to invite the children of 'mad aunt Rachel' to at least some Pinney family events – a few of which I even attended - my wing of the family have been outsiders pretty much since 1936, a situation I rationalise by telling myself that the Pinneys are a family I *belong* to - but am not *part* of. Interestingly it is precisely this status (together with a hybrid class and heritage background) that has given me both the right of access *and* the necessary detachment to undertake my research.

It is quite true to say I have a concern for the slave-labour sugar plantation documents at Special Collections and by declining your invitation I will no doubt regret losing the chance to play a part in their future. I have seen on multiple visits how they are very well looked after and will clearly last a while yet – but eventually they really *must* be digitised - and equally importantly, made *freely* available on-line. I would like to suggest that rather than looking for outside funding for this, it would be symbolically important (and a small act of atonement) if the wider Pinney family were to fund the costs of this digitisation from their *own pockets* - and of course that includes my pocket too.

Finally, I would like to caution against *any* attempt to 'police' who can use the papers and for what purpose. Aside from being in my opinion unconscionable and an academic offence, I have

no doubt that once it became known, it would lead to yet more damage to the Pinney family's reputation. (Cox email. 2020)

I received a polite reply acknowledging my decision.

Encounters 2 (Nevis & USA):

According to Hubbard, Christopher Columbus was the first European on Nevis. "...he anchored overnight on his second voyage to the New World on November 11th, 1493. He named it San Martin, as it was sighted on St Martin's day." (Hubbard 2002:20). As with his discoveries elsewhere in the 'New' World, the land he 'discovered' wasn't empty – it had inhabitants whose tenure went back many years. Arawak and Carib artefacts over 2000 years old have been found on the island.

From 1493 to 1671 the Caribbean was claimed by Spain. As Spanish hegemony waned, other powers (English, French and Dutch) moved in. The neighbouring island of St Kitts was first officially settled by the British in 1625. When Azariah Pinney arrived in 1685, Nevis was well established as a British possession producing a huge amount of sugar on an island less than half the size of the Isle of Wight – and of course, all grown, harvested and processed with the forced-labour of enslaved Africans. Like many others, Azariah had been sent to the West Indies as a punishment. Hubbard quotes a letter written by Robert Robinson to the Lord Bishop of London in 1727:

Our Mother Nation has indeed been liberally dispensing her Filth and Putrefaction (sic) in her Sugar and Tobacco colonies for the last sixty or seventy years; people (it seems) that were not bad enough for the Gallows, and yet too bad to live among their virtuous Countrymen at home... (Hubbard 2002:51).

I felt I *had* to go to Nevis – if for no other reason, to stand before the ghosts of those my forebears enslaved. There is no memorial to the many hundreds of Africans who my forebears worked to death – or until they were, as described in the Pinney account books: '*...old, useless, worn out, maimed and diseased*'.



Managers House and Boabab Tree. Mountravers Nevis 2018
(photo: C.C.Cox)



Managers House Mountravers Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

36 A List of Old, weak, and diseased Slaves, Maimed, now living on the Estate of John Pinney Esq. July 30th 1774.

Old Molly	Rosea Young
Old Nubba	Abba
Old Yabba	Bennet
Bongo Flora	Bellacomb
	Old Yankee
	10

Increase of Slaves since July 30th 1774.	Decrease of Slaves since July 30th 1774.
1774 August 26 a boy by Molly called John Peter	1774 October 1st John Peter died of a dropy
Decem 29 a girl by Sally Brown called Mary	8 Codrington, deceased

Pinney Papers, Bristol 2017 (photo: C.C.Cox)

I did my best to make an itinerary before I left for Nevis and the US – the places I would visit, the people I hoped to meet - but I also left time free for exploration and serendipitous encounters. I carried a small equipment bag everywhere I went. It contained a camera with a zoom lens that took moving images as well as stills, batteries,

a macro lens, a small tripod, a poor man's wireless microphone (a clip on microphone attached to a tiny digital recorder) and a more robust digital recorder.



Equipment bag and contents 2020 (photo: C.C.Cox)

It was a short, intense, exhausting trip - and it wasn't until I returned to the UK and had rested that I was able to properly digest all that I had seen and experienced.

Two short film clips, one called *Arrival Nevis* and the other *Mountravers 2* can viewed by clicking on the following links: <https://youtu.be/RPmjisjdi1M> and <https://youtu.be/RKtvoIsOm5I>. Both my photography and film-making creative practices are largely driven by intuition and instinct. I made these short film clips without knowing in advance their precise purpose or utility. As it turns out, I am pleased with the role they play in supplying added context to this commentary, my photography - and to my screenplay.

A distant Pinney relative from America called Bill Pinney owns the land on which the ruins of the Mountravers great house stand. I had been told he might be visiting the island around the same time I was due to be there - and so it proved. In his 60s, Bill is a descendent of Humphrey Pinney, who in 1630 departed England on the ship 'Mary and John', arriving in Dorchester (Boston) Massachusetts 55 years *before* the young Azariah Pinney from Dorset joined the losing side in the Monmouth Rebellion. Consequently, Bill is not descended from any of the UK Pinneys who owned slaves on Nevis – though many Nevisians assume he is and it seems Bill has given up trying to disabuse them.

Of all the Pinneys I met, Bill was both the most friendly, and the most opinionated. He signed a consent form without hesitating and was more than happy to tell me in no uncertain terms that my research project was pointless and a waste of time. I attempted to explain my thoughts on shame, accountability, acknowledgement and the persistent nature of racism and white supremacy - but he was insistent that slavery was in the past, everyone had moved on - and the issues I was concerning myself with were unimportant and self-indulgent. I was left in no doubt that Bill had done his thinking on these issues a long time ago and his mind was firmly made up.

However, my most critical observation of Bill was his woefully naïve conception of the reality of life for slaves on a Caribbean sugar plantation, illustrated by the following quote, taken from a comment he made while showing me Pinney's compting house.

He (John Pinney) loved the accounting part. He loved the managing and all the nitty-gritty details – and he was very effective. He got an ‘esprit de corps’ of his slaves. They all dressed up. He tried to make life fun for them – as much as you could I guess. In those days you could do something and he did. He got them working together in team games and this sort of thing to get a little bit of a competitive atmosphere going on – and a community. There were never any complaints, there were never any revolts, never any thing like slaves being whipped. (Pinney, 2018).



Bill Pinney in John (Pretor) Pinney's compting house.
Mountravers Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

I didn't challenge this statement at the time, other than to ask him how he could possibly know such a thing. Considering the ubiquity of violence and fear inherent in the colonial slave-labour system, Bill's comment is extremely unlikely to be accurate. In fact, *not*

punishing one's slaves was at one time a criminal offence on Nevis. The island's legislature also forbade white men to drink, play or converse with Negroes – and in 1688 proposed:

“Any negro threatening a white person was to be punished with thirty lashes. Any slave striking or throwing anything at a white person was to lose his hand. (Pares 1950:25)

As I have shown, John Pinney made explicit reference to the whipping of his slaves in his correspondence. I suppose it is possible Bill was spinning a sanitized version of Mountravers' history that he wanted me to take away – or perhaps he was sharing the image of contented Mountravers slaves that *he* felt more comfortable living with.

Bill gave me a personal tour around the ruins of *Mountravers* and with his permission I filmed him as we went round. When Pinney sold the plantation, his wooden house was demolished by Huggins - who in its place constructed a large, three-storey dwelling made of stone. When Bill purchased the land that house was in ruins and being overrun by nature.



Mountravers c.2015 (photo anon)

Over time, he and his sister cut back the vegetation, repaired parts of the stone ruins, stabilized and made safe other parts. They restored Pinney's tiny compting house that

had been built from stone so as to be a fireproof store for his precious records and accounts.



John Pinney's compting house floor, Mountravers Nevis 2018 (photo C.C.Cox)



Ruins, Mountravers Great House Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Unearthed tools. Mountravers Plantation. Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

It was over a month before I was able to synchronise sound and picture and study what I had filmed. At once, things I had only sensed at the time, became clear – principally, Bill's love - bordering on obsession - for the Mountravers ruins. He talked nostalgically

about the lost splendors of the great house and his dream to restore it to its former ‘glory’.



Mountravers Nevis 2015 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Mountravers Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

The ruins of Mountravers are inland from the coast. Historically, the plantation extended down to the sea and the long stretch of beach there is still known as *Pinney's Beach*. After so much evasiveness, unspoken disapproval and distrust from the English Pinneys, Bill's American directness, even as we disagreed, was a refreshing change. Despite differing on the merits of my research, I think (perhaps *hope* is a better word) we parted on good terms.

A short film of Bill and his sister showing me around, titled *Mountravers I* can be viewed by clicking on the following link: <https://youtu.be/fyOSIZseezw> During my research it is the nearest I came to conventional documentary filming - something I did professionally for the best part of 30 years. I was disappointed with my work. A small mirror-less digital stills camera is no substitute for a proper film/video camera when it

comes to this kind of observational filming. Nevertheless I am including a shortened, roughly edited version of Bill's 'tour' as it clearly adds useful context.

I managed on my last day on Nevis to meet Pam Barry, Huggins' direct descendant. Until recently she ran a boutique hotel built on of the restored ruins of another of her great, great, great, great grandfather's slave-labour sugar plantations, this one named *Golden Rock*. It is generally accepted that her forebear really *was* the cruelest slave owner on Nevis.¹⁹ I only met her briefly, but my impression was of a woman well aware of the shameful legacy left by her forebears. While many, but by no means all of the largely American, Canadian and British 'ex-pats' with homes on the island, live in their own bubble (as much a class and economic divide, as a racial one) as far as I could gather, people from all sections of Nevis society liked Pam, and while I cannot be certain about this, I suspect the secret of her popularity lies in the simple fact that she considers herself a Nevisian, likes her fellow citizens, mixes with them and helps them.



Mosaic workshop. Pam Barry Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

¹⁹ Pinney's former slaves (who were sold along with the plantation, and thus at once became Huggins' *property*) didn't like their new owner or his new regime – and rebelled. To restore his control, Huggins organised a public whipping of the ringleaders in Charlestown Square where at least one enslaved female was flogged to death. News of the incident made its way to England and may have helped advance the case for abolition.



Pam Barry Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Mosaic by Pam Barry Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

I was struck by Pam's artwork – small mosaics of Nevisian figures fashioned from 'found' china fragments. Something whole fashioned from something broken.

My time on the island was limited. While my main focus was the Mountravers plantation, I also spent time at the ruins of the New River Plantation, now an open air museum exhibiting abandoned, rusting sugar-processing machinery – some of it in use up to the mid 20th century. I visited the cemetery of Fig Tree Church where some of the early Pinneys are buried – but failed to find any trace of their gravestones.



Detail of sugar press. New River Plantation Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



New River Plantation Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Fig Tree Church. Nevis 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

I met Pauline Ngunjiri, head of the Nevis Historical and Conservation society – and had a wide-ranging conversation with her. She told me of her education in Kenya that taught her British history but not that of her own country; how in the minds of many Africans today, those who left as slaves are imagined to be ‘extinct’; how in Africa the full

history of transatlantic slavery has for a long time been ‘a story not told’, including the uncomfortable fact that it was often Africans themselves who captured and sold their fellow countrymen, women and children to the European slave traders; the nature of the divide between the wealthy ‘ex-pats’ who have second or third homes on Nevis and the local Nevisians; her history talks to local schoolchildren - and the imminent arrival of someone from UNESCO to talk to Nevisians about ‘touching their intangible cultural heritage’. Later I met Evelyn Henville, the Nevisian member of the UNESCO Committee, who told me about the plans for Georgetown to become a world heritage site, how they were progressing and how some Nevisians were beginning to question if it was such good idea after all.²⁰

Nevisians are busy getting on with their lives and on the face of it do not appear to be particularly obsessed with the past. They are friendly and like to talk – but when I mentioned I was a descendent of the slave owner John Pinney, there would usually be a palpable moment of awkwardness – and if left there, I can see why some might assume that slavery was a topic best ignored – or even perhaps that that Nevisians didn’t want or need to talk about it. However, I generally found that after having been open about my forebears and having expressed something of the shame I felt at my legacy – an interesting and honest dialogue often followed. This suggested to me that perhaps it wasn’t the *topic* of slavery that was an issue, rather the *context* in which it was discussed. I had a number of other interesting encounters where people spoke openly about their lives.

One young man I met told me about his mother’s mental illness and suicide – and the impossibility of ever discovering the identity of his white father. Another young woman told me about the travails of being a black teacher in England - and her new life on Nevis. I was told about two black boys from the UK who had been failing at school there, re-located to Nevis and were now doing not just well at school, but *very* well. The woman renting me her garden shed (much better accommodation than it sounds) arranged a long Caribbean lunch with some of her women friends, all of whom had extraordinary life stories. Sitting at the table eating wonderful food, occasionally joining

²⁰ ‘World Heritage’ status for Charlestown brings advantages, but also imposes restrictions and conditions, particularly on what type of housing may be built in the future. One requirement is restoration of the slave auction site – currently there is nothing at all to indicate where it stood.

in but definitely not the centre of attention, it felt a privilege to be included, listen to animated conversation and feel a measure of acceptance. Earlier in my visit, my hostess invited me to join her for the Charlestown Methodist Church harvest festival. I had no sooner taken my seat than I was handed a microphone, asked to stand up, face the packed congregation and introduce myself. Walking through Charlestown on subsequent days, I would regularly meet people who had seen me there.

It is not easy to quantify all the effects the visit to Nevis had on me and my research project – but it meant a great deal to be there, albeit for such a short time. The island became a real place and not an imaginary construct, and the Nevisian descendants of the enslaved who live there became real people - two simple and obvious outcomes that gave me new confidence when it came to writing my screenplay when I got back to the UK. I valued the time I spent alone at Mountravers. I also valued telling those I met on Nevis that I was a Pinney descendant and felt shame for what my forebears had done. It felt like a small, personal act of contrition - and meant something to me, if not to anyone else.

After Nevis, my plan was to visit some of the historic sites and memorials in the southern states of the USA that I had read about – and then spend a few days resting with my sister in Philadelphia. On arrival in New Orleans, I hired a car and drove west, following the Mississippi River to the *Whitney Plantation Museum* - a plantation with a difference. Its sole aim is to memorialize the enslaved and eschew the more typical focus of southern plantation tours – great houses, genealogy of ‘sophisticated’ slave-owners and ante-bellum grandeur.



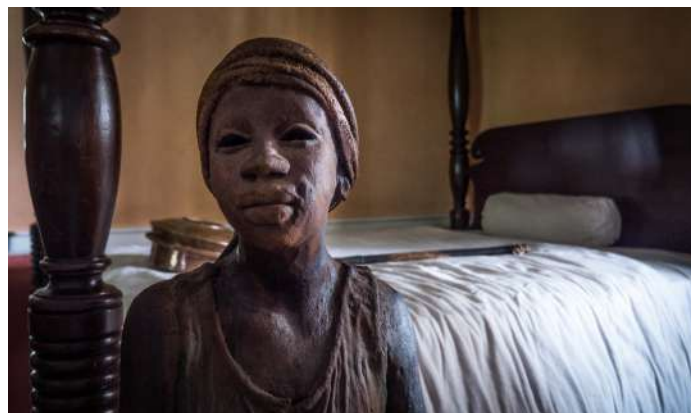
Tour group, Whitney Plantation New Orleans 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

All visitors to Whitney are required to go round in a group, led by a well-informed guide. My group was made up of African Americans of all ages and our guide pulled no punches in her commentary. The shock and pain on the faces of my fellow visitors was plain to see as they heard, some I suspect for the first time, the *full* extent of the barbarity of the slave system – leaving me to conclude that their American education had sanitized or omitted the worst of what their forebears suffered. I was to witness similar reactions by African Americans at the other memorials and museums I visited.

The Whitney has placed sculptures of slave children around the plantation. They are modeled on real people – the elderly African Americans whose memories of a childhood spent in slavery were recorded in the 1920s and 1930s as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s ‘New Deal’ They inhabit the plantation like ghosts.



Whitney Plantation Museum New Orleans 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Whitney Plantation Museum New Orleans 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

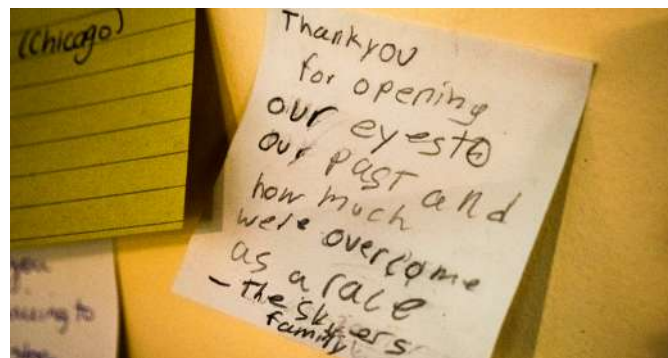
It also has a small museum and a wall where visitors have the opportunity to write their thoughts on post-it notes.



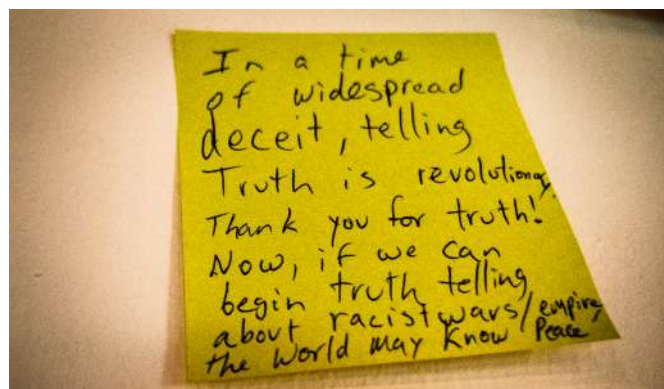
Whitney Plantation Museum New Orleans 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



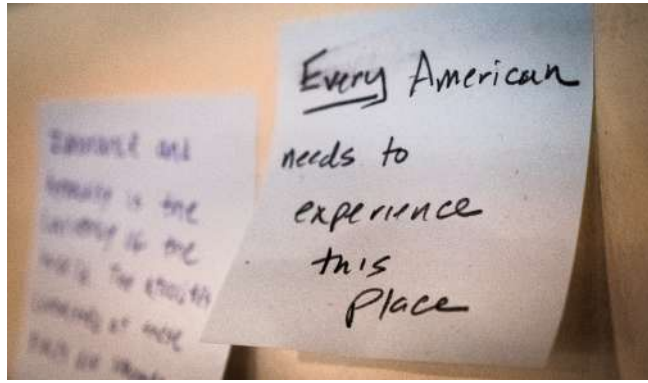
Whitney Plantation Museum New Orleans 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Whitney Plantation Museum New Orleans 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Whitney Plantation Museum New Orleans 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Whitney Plantation Museum New Orleans 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

When I visited the *National Memorial for Peace and Justice* in Montgomery, Alabama, informally known as the Memorial to the Victims of Lynching, it was at the final stages of completion and due to open in just a few weeks time. Much has been written about it since it opened to the public on April 26, 2018 – and an example is this guest Editorial from the Montgomery Advertiser titled: ‘Lynchings and Shame: WE. WERE. WRONG.’

We were wrong. As people from across the globe come to our capital city to consider the sordid history of slavery and lynching and try to reconcile the horrors of our past, the Montgomery Advertiser recognizes its own shameful place in the history of these dastardly, murderous deeds... We take responsibility for our proliferation of a false narrative regarding the treatment of African-Americans in those disgraceful days... (Montgomery Advertiser 2018).



National Memorial for Peace and Justice (photo courtesy of EJI)

On behalf of the newspaper, the anonymous writer of this editorial makes the first act that all white people have to do if they wittingly or unwittingly are in any way invested in the racial inequality buried deep in American culture. Acknowledge and own these words: *We. Were. Wrong.*

The city of Charleston, South Carolina, in stark contrast to the *Whitney Plantation Museum* and Montgomery's *National Memorial for Peace and Justice*, unashamedly celebrates a narrative of Southern, ante-bellum grandeur – and is a magnet for those Americans travelling their country in search of an elegant past, fine houses and a sense of history. That the impressive mansions and Georgian terraces of the city were the homes of slave owners and built on the exploitation of enslaved Africans and their descendants appears to be a second order detail.



Charleston SC 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Charleston SC 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

To be fair to the city, there is a small slavery museum housed in the old slave ‘mart’ and signs have been erected in the historic quarter that note where street slave auctions took place – but it’s inescapable that the principal narrative being peddled in Charleston is the passing of a lost, elegant way of life. It was also noticeable that much of the tourist ‘industry’, and presumably its wealth, appears to be in white hands.



Charleston SC 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Charleston SC 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Charleston SC 2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

I travelled to Washington to visit the newly opened and perennially booked out *Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture*. Fortunately several hundred tickets are reserved for people turning up on the day and I was able to get in after queuing for an hour or so. I have never been to a museum quite like this one.



Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
Washington DC USA 2018 (photo Alan Karchmer)

The majority of the visitors were African Americans from all parts of the United States - and from them in particular I picked up a strong sense of anticipation and excitement, which very quickly turned into shock and anger as we progressed through the exhibits. It became obvious to me that something significant was taking place. The journey through the museum echoes the painful, cruel, journey of African Americans – from the moment their forebears were wrenched from the land of their birth, shipped across the Atlantic like animals and sold into slavery. No less shocking were the exhibits that exposed the horrors that followed a civil war that was intended, at least in part, to end slavery. Ghettoization, racism and discrimination together with marginally better employment opportunities, was the future for those who migrated to northern cities. Southern ‘reconstruction’ - otherwise known as the restoration of white hegemony by terror, lynching and Jim Crow - was the destiny for those that stayed in the south. Thanks to clansmen like Ball’s forebear Constant Lecorgne, the white supremacy status quo *was* re-established and whatever post civil war gains freed slaves had achieved, lost. The civil rights movement of the 1960s was also heavily featured in the museum. If there are not yet exhibits marking its latest iteration, *Black Lives Matter*, I assume there soon will be.

It is clearly by design that at the end of the exhibits, visitors come out into a large, light, open space – making the journey through the museum one from darkness to light. I took a position at one side of this space and tried to read people’s reactions as they emerged. My observations were unscientific and subjective – but nearly every African American individual or group I saw seemed to be visibly empowered, walking taller, taking more space, confident. I was disinclined to disrupt their moment by asking banal questions about how they felt. I was as sure as I needed to be that the experience of having just seen on display the full range of black suffering over hundreds of years, not just acknowledged, but permanently exhibited in a vast museum on the Mall, was both profound and meaningful. As was the knowledge that as long as the museum stood at the heart of the country’s capital, the truth displayed inside could not be denied.



Smithsonian Museum of African American History (photo: C.C.Cox 2018)

A short film clip giving an impression of the museum, called *Washington Museum* can be seen by clicking on the following link: <https://youtu.be/VyACV3e2o1M>

I went next to Philadelphia, where my sister lives, intending to rest. On my second day she emerged from her basement with a large number of documents and photographs that I had never seen before. Much of the rest of my stay was spent going through them, making copies and photographing anything that looked like it might be useful. Among them were her childhood photographs. It was not until this visit when I was then 70 years old, that I got a proper sense of my sister’s early years growing up in the care of Yvonne Burns - her de-facto foster mother. Like my brother and myself, she also

experienced belonging to the Pinney family while not being part of it – though it has to be said that growing up in Dorset, she at least ‘knew’ the Pinneys in a way my brother and I never did. Among her archives was also an old sketch-book cum photograph album kept by our grandmother Lady Pinney, that documented the birth of our mother and also Hester’s year-long trip to Egypt to join her soldier husband.



Karin's montage of childhood photographs c.1936 – 1948



Rachel's bath, Hester Pinney's sketchbook c.1909 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Rachel, Hester Pinney's sketch book c.1909 (photo: C.C.Cox)

The drawings in particular proved useful in triggering ideas for my screenplay narrative. They helped me imagine my grandmother dressed for dinner, sketching her baby daughter being bathed by a servant. As she watches someone else having pleasurable, caring, intimate contact with *her* baby she feels deeply conflicted - knowing on some level at least, that it's she who ought to be enjoying that contact.

A short film clip of me going through my sister's letters and documents can be seen by clicking on the following link: <https://youtu.be/qCyzKNbeY5A>

Me:



Self c.1950 (photo: unknown)



Self portrait (photo: C.C.Cox 2020)

Complex emotions were stirred up when I started connecting with my Pinney family – they arose again when I struggled to find an appropriate *voice* to write about them. I identify as both an artisan and an artist, and as such find it difficult to write as if I were an academic or a scientist. I'm not sure if I have entirely resolved this conundrum – or even if it is resolvable. Writing - like any creative act - is a mysterious process that at heart defies prescription. We each have our own way of expressing ourselves and assuming I am successful in conjuring it up, the voice I use in this commentary is - for better or worse - my own. I intend it to be *both* factual, objective, rigorous *and* personal, anecdotal, emotional.

If there is a zone of invisibility and forgetfulness where disruptive and destructive family members are consigned, I suggest a similar place exists for those who don't *belong*. I don't feel fully English, but nor do I feel Italian. For most of my working life as a cinematographer in the film and television world I had more in common with a self-employed plumber than a qualified professional but I don't identify as either working or middle class – and on meeting my Pinney relatives, I'm quite certain I don't belong in their particular sub-set of the upper-class.²¹

The best term for my heritage and class identity that I can come up with is *hybrid*. On my father's side, my siblings and I are descended from Abruzzo peasants. On my mother's side we are descended from a land owning Dorset family with a 'history'. My wife Marta is from South America and her father came from a remote part of the Venezuelan Andes where the descendants of the Amerindian *Timoto-Cuica* people predominated. Her mother also came from the Andes, but with forebears who more likely included Spanish or other European settlers. Our two children are a mix of English, Italian, Amerindian, Spanish and African.²² As if embodying their mixed heritage and class legacy, they are both bi-lingual in English and Spanish – and one is a bricklayer, the other a composer.

There is a serious purpose in raising these identity issues. Being a detached, hybrid, disenfranchised Pinney is precisely what has given me the prerequisite qualities needed to undertake this research. Belonging to the Pinney family while not being part of it empowers me to address the family history because it is *my* history as well as theirs. The Pinney Papers in Bristol belong as much to me as they do to any other Pinney – they are my papers. John Pinney is my distant relative. Major General Sir Reginald Pinney is my grandfather as much as he belongs to any other first cousin. It has taken me some time to grasp the full significance of this statement: *I own the Pinney family story just as much as any other Pinney*. Considering these words now, it dawns on me

²¹ I am of course using these class terms in their everyday, conversational sense.

²² The largest number of enslaved Africans shipped across the Atlantic were destined for Brazil. The insatiable appetite of the colonial slave-labour system in the Caribbean drew the next largest number. A smaller number went to other parts of Central and South America as well as the Southern States of North America. Many Venezuelans and Colombians have forebears who were enslaved Africans.

how in nearly all my interactions with Pinney relatives, there was always the subtle – and at times not so subtle - inference that *they* were the authorised guardians and gatekeepers of the Pinney family narrative. As it happens, I believe my version, albeit incomplete, is considerably more honest – and arguably has equal, if not superior value to their obfuscated, whitewashed, sanitized version, riddled with unwarranted pride, denial and evasion.

There is however another aspect of ‘voice’ that I struggle with - it’s the voice of a privileged white man (me) prattling on about his guilt and shame and at the same time showing off, saying in effect: ‘look how clever I am conducting a research project about my shameful legacy’ – and then, should my efforts warrant it, gaining kudos and perhaps modest status for doing so. I sense that I cannot - and should not - even attempt to dismiss this alternative, less flattering self-image. Instead I prefer to think of it as a companion for my journey – there to remind me of the person I could easily turn into if I take myself too seriously.

I was born in Sussex but we soon moved to London and the first home I remember was in Fulham. We lived close to both Battersea and Lots Road power stations. Breathing in the greasy, sulphurous pollution that spewed from their tall chimneys gave me pneumonia multiple times and eventually a collapsed lung. That is why, at the age of six, I was sent away to cleaner air - a small Quaker boarding school in Saffron Walden, Essex. The house I came back to in the holidays was 443 Fulham Road, which no longer exists except in my dreams. The front door was always unlocked. Refugees from the conventional world came and went. My mother by then, if not ‘out’ in today’s sense, was nevertheless an unmistakable lesbian. Life was chaotic, but never dull.

Outwardly I was wild, unkempt and proudly independent, but inwardly I was disturbed - and wet the bed almost every night. It occurs to me now that I must have been one of those children who carried with them that tell tale smell of stale urine – a sure sign of neglect or disturbance. This type of personal detail about my childhood may not appear at first sight to be relevant to a research project titled *My Family and Slavery*. However, there is a purpose in exploring this type of detail of my chaotic, disturbed childhood. It

not only supplies some context for scenes that appear in my screenplay in the form of flashbacks - but may also hint at the more distant, trans-generational harms contained in the unwelcome legacy my slave-owning forebears have left me.

In 1960 my mother took me - then 11 years old - on a 500-mile long CND protest march from London to the American Polaris submarine base in Holy Loch, Scotland. Recently trained in hypnosis, she wanted to see if it might cure me of my 'problem'. Every night we slept in a different community hall or supporter's house, and at each bedtime, Rachel would put me into a hypnotic trance. Once I was 'under', she planted a simple suggestion that I can remember verbatim: "*When your bladder is full, you will wake up and go to the toilet.*" That's all it took. I stopped wetting the bed almost at once. There was only one more decision to take – should we delay my return to school so we could be sure the 'cure' was firmly established? Yes, of course we should - one of my mother's better decisions. I gave the memory of marching to Scotland and being hypnotised (among several others) to the fictional character Leo in my screenplay. They come to him in the form of flashbacks at his mother's funeral.

We marched, we arrived and we demonstrated – and after all that walking, it was over. Many years later I learned that while I was naively chanting 'ban the bomb', a Pinney first cousin was piloting a bomber in the nuclear strike force, ready to obliterate Russian cities when so ordered. At some point my mother learned of his role, and from then on referred to her nephew as a mass murderer. Clearly he wasn't any such thing - yet I wonder if there wasn't a tiny grain of truth in her accusation – before a crime is committed in deed, is it not committed first in thought? The aphorism my mother always quoted was '*obedience is a sin*' – and in doing so was no doubt thinking not only of people like her nephew, but also of her father and of what might have helped her to resist him. Even when young, the irony was not lost on me that as she pronounced in a loud voice, '*obedience is a sin*', she would without shame or embarrassment, demand that *her* orders were obeyed.

I went back to my new Quaker secondary boarding school – now as a boarder, not a day-boy. There was relief all round. My mother could get on with her attempts to save the world - and I could be 'normal'. Being away at school, I missed a lot of the subsequent madness that accompanied her life - and am thankful for that. Her influence

on me by now was pretty much non-existent – and perhaps that explains her last major intervention in my life. In 1964 when I was 16 and approaching my ‘O’ levels, she made me an offer - one that came out of the blue and I have never fully understood.²³ She told me I could have the last two terms fees in cash if I left my boarding school early - *before* my exams – suggesting rather than instructing, that I might like to broaden my mind by travelling. However, the real trick she played was to make the decision *mine* - one that I would forever have to own. I’m not proud of taking the money – it was one of those decisions that might have appeared bold and adventurous at the time – but I now suspect was at least partly motivated by a fear of being unable to live up to the high expectations my school had in me. One of the unintended consequences of dropping out was to leave me with a life long itch for education that since that fateful decision, I’ve been unable to stop scratching.

So in part living what I am now sure was more my mother’s fantasy than my own, I took the ferry to France and set off hitch hiking my way across Europe. I was an odd mix of street-wise and innocence - and in truth had little idea what I was doing, where I was going - or why. I struggle today to get inside the head of the 16 year old I was then. I can only surmise that I was at least partially invested in my adventure, but my memories, particularly of the first few months, are of being lonely - and at times, afraid. I soon toughened up, and in ways that my mother I’m sure hadn’t imagined, did indeed broaden my mind and get a different kind of education.

I was a photographer at ten years old. My first camera was the classic Kodak Brownie 127 on which I took this picture. I can recall the details of how I took it and still think the result is a triumph.

²³ I can only speculate. I may have mentioned an interest in the joining the Merchant Navy and perhaps she only heard ‘Navy’ – and was so determined I shouldn’t join the armed forces, she bribed me to drop out of school - but it was also true that she viewed much of education as brain washing. I challenged her on many things, but I never confronted her on why she engineered such radical intervention in my education – or if she ever doubted the wisdom doing so.



Bonfire 1 c.1958 (photo C.C.Cox)

To me it was inevitable that photography would be a part of my research project. I calculate I've been making images one way or another for over 60 years so it's hardly surprising that it's such an important part of my identity - and deeply connected to the way I think and the way I see. Photography illustrates my commentary and adds visual context to both the research and the narrative of my screenplay. *Not* using images would have been a curious denial – and also require some justification. Photographs were also the content of my exhibit at the 2018 *The Archive and the Contested Landscape* exhibition held in the Ruskin Gallery at Anglia Ruskin University – where I made a repeating slide show of 95 images, many drawn from my research trip to the Caribbean and USA earlier the same year. The images can be seen in *Appendix 3* – or by clicking on the following link: <https://youtu.be/6nwPSg7Kx0Q>

I used Adobe *Lightroom* to sort my photographs into 'collections' – and by a whittling down process, selected the ones I wanted to use. Then I modified them. I am aware that there is no such thing as a neutral act when it comes to altering the appearance of a photograph. As Gillian Rose writes in *Visual Methodologies - an introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*:

Visual imagery is never innocent; it is always constructed through various practices, technologies and knowledge. A critical approach to visual images is therefore needed: one that thinks about the agency of the image, considers the social practices and effects of its circulation and viewing, and reflects on the specificity of that viewing by various audiences, including the academic critic. (Rose, 2016)

I cropped and resized my pictures. I adjusted '*black level*' and '*white level*'. I altered *contrast, shadows, highlights, and exposure*. If the images were in colour I adjusted *colour temperature, tint and saturation*. I also used *clarity, vibrance, sharpening* and '*post-crop vignetting*'. My objective was to make any given image appear in its 'best' light - echoing the instruction given me when I was a young darkroom printer: '*Get the best out of the negative*'. My manipulations are born out of a deeply ingrained, instinctive practice that at my advanced age I seem unable to change or resist. A selection of before and after images illustrating examples of those changes can be seen in *Appendix 4*.

I doubt my instinct for the visual came from my mother - she was aesthetically blind. However, for the particular type of improvised, observational documentary that I specialised in for many years - now sadly out of fashion - an essential skill was the instinctive ability to read people and situations – and this is something I probably *did* inherit from her. She possessed a kind of 'emotional radar', but sadly was not always able to control this gift, and all too often ended up using it in a destructive way. There were many occasions while working as a documentary cameraman that I found myself responding to chaotic, unfolding events or behaviour using *only* my intuition and instinct – and I suspect that the confidence and ability to do this insightfully was one of the reasons some directors employed me. In my habitual practice of searching for subtext and expressing it visually, I now like to think I was re-purposing the screenwriter's commonly used but unattributed adage: '*If the scene is about what the scene is about, you're in deep shit*'

I have been involved in filmmaking one way or another for over 40 years. I made my first film in 1974, while a photography student. Leaving college, I started work as a freelance assistant cameraman for the BBC. In 1976 I applied to the National Film School. I entered planning to direct, but emerged a cinematographer. 'Career' isn't the best word to describe the precarious life I had working in film and television. My credits started in 1979 and went on steadily for approximately 30 years – though for the last of those years I was already focusing my energies on the written word.

If aspects of my practice regarding still photography are born out of deeply ingrained, instinctive habits I'm unable to change or resist - for a long time I feared the same went

for my cinematography. But when towards the end of my filming career I got round to making my own, personal films, they were in the ‘poetic’ genre. I found myself happily rejecting the default ‘*mission to explain*’ paradigm that so many documentaries unthinkingly fall into. My personal films could be characterised – or satirised - as the kind that start with an abstract, artful image which is held for an inordinately long time, followed by another long-held shot – and then another. These images are likely to be accompanied by an equally abstract and enigmatic sound track. After spending so many years putting my creative energy at the service others – I eventually discovered my own cinematic voice – and it was a visual, poetic one, more concerned with feelings than facts.

Close to my 68th birthday, I noticed a small lump on my neck. About a month after that I found myself sat opposite a senior Haematology consultant telling me that I had stage three, high grade, aggressive lymphoma in my neck, chest and abdomen. I had submitted my application for this PhD research project *before* any hint of cancer. Then for the simple reason that I didn’t know if I would survive the disease (or the treatment) I decided that rather than cancelling, I would *defer* my start. I had in mind that planting a flag in the future might help me get through what was to come – and so it proved. When I eventually started at ARU, I was still weak, but with a new sense of confidence and purpose – and a determination to make full use of whatever time I had left. I sensed that my research proposal was now no longer just an interesting idea, but something urgent and necessary, that *needed* to be done. Not many descendants of slave owning families are prepared to confront their legacy - I was. In the words of my mother, I had a job to do.

Rachel:



Rachel Pinney 1909 – 1995

My mother looms large over this research project. From the outset I was determined to limit her presence – focus my research project far more on slavery, guilt, shame, inter-generational and trans-generational accountability – and keep the contribution of my narcissistic, ‘crazy-maker’ mother to a minimum. No chance. She elbowed her way in, as if saying, ‘Don’t even think about leaving me out - if it’s about the Pinneys, it’s about *me*.’ And so it has proved. Masquerading as Dr Bethany Silcox, she is a key character in my fictional screenplay, and as my mother in this commentary, she also takes up a lot of space – exactly as she did in life.

Born in 1909 my mother began her unpublished autobiography with the words: “My mother... was son-favouritising, daughter rejecting, inaccessible, punitive and frightening.” (Pinney 1994:1) She claimed many of her problems began with the loss of two vital attachments. The first was a consequence of her mother following the typical practice of upper-class women and handing over all baby-care to servants – maternal abandonment by any other name. This was compounded when her mother departed on a long trip to Egypt to join her husband who was serving there, taking only the two eldest children with her and leaving two toddlers and five-month old baby Rachel behind – something I have dramatized in my screenplay.

No doubt all three of the children left behind suffered from their mother's prolonged absence. The second, perhaps more damaging loss of attachment for baby Rachel occurred sometime after her mother returned. A loving bond had formed between baby Rachel and 'Old Nanny' – who was effectively now her surrogate mother. 'Old Nanny' died suddenly when Rachel was two. In her autobiography she wrote that she never recovered from that second loss. (Pinney, 1994:2). Oral family history is notoriously unreliable – I had always understood that Rachel's mother *sacked* the Nanny out of jealousy when she saw the deep bond that had developed in her absence between a servant and her daughter – a version of events that I preferred for my screenplay.

Rachel believed the lack of a loving bond between her and her mother did lasting damage. What is unknown is whether her older sisters suffered similar harms from the emotionally blocked, distant Hester Pinney? Considering the deep antagonism that opened up between Rachel and her sister Mary when they were both in their late twenties, there is considerable pathos in my mother's description of her childhood relationship with her:

From the time I was five until the time I was ten, I was the constant companion of my sister Mary. I hardly ever made a decision for myself, but waited for Mary to start an activity and simply followed her. (Pinney, 1994:10)



Mary Pinney and Rachel Pinney c.1913

My mother wrote in her autobiography that as a young girl, she discovered that dripping warm water on her clitoris while in the bath was a pleasurable experience, but when sitting in a certain position while riding her horse, she felt pain. She asked her sister

Mary if she had similar sensations ‘down there’. Mary’s reply confirms that my mother’s problems with her siblings were established early. She ‘quotes’ her sister:

Of course not, Rachel. I don’t know what you are talking about. You are different; we all know there is something wrong with you. I don’t have to be like you. (Pinney, 1994:32).

Around 1916 a new governess arrived at Racedown called Olive Pilleau and Rachel adored her.



Olive M. Pilleau London c.1984
(photo C.C.Cox)

The most influential person in my life between the ages of seven and ten was Pilleo – or Olive M. Pilleau, to give her real name... the saviour of my life and sanity and probably the strongest influence I had during my formative years. (Pinney, 1994:26).

As she approached her 100th birthday, Pilleau went to live for a time with my mother - and their old roles were reversed - the pupil looked after the governess. It was during this period that Pilleau told Rachel the *real* reason she left the family all those years ago. It was not, as Rachel had been told at the time, that her services were no longer needed now her sister Mary was starting school – but, as Olive put it: “Your father was getting too fond of me.” (Pinney 1994:34)

Things started to go seriously wrong for Rachel around the age of 11. Her beloved governess left and she missed her sister Mary terribly. Around this time she attempted to run away from home, after being humiliated by her mother over a minor matter. She developed water on the knee and had to walk with crutches - and seemingly out of the blue, her mother produced a baby brother at the age of 45. Then she wrote this simple but explosive statement: "I was eleven when John was born and it is at this time I remember my relationship with my father starting to get sexual." (Pinney, 1994:36)

With many members of the Pinney family today determined to disbelieve that the General groomed and then sexually abused his own daughter, I feel a responsibility to quote from her autobiography the calm, precise and in my opinion entirely plausible and convincing description of what happened. As an *11 year old girl*, my mother describes going to her father's study to help with the household and estate accounts, apparently an established ritual for family members during the school holidays. Doing accounts was an activity taken very seriously by Reginald.²⁴ These are my mother's words:

When the operation was over, and the books were neatly folded and put away he would say, 'Now you shall have your reward, old Bachel' (he always said 'Bachel' not 'Rachel' on any intimate occasion). The ritual was always the same. We would both go to the rug in front of the fireplace, which in winter contained an open fire, and I would lie down. Without taking his trousers off or, I think, even undoing his fly buttons (they didn't have zips in those days), he would lie in the conventional 'missionary' position on top of me and perform the conventional up and down movements which would suddenly stop, followed by a pause while we remained in our positions. He would then get up and go to the lavatory and I would get up and go about my business. Nothing more would be said or done. I had at the time no other sexual experience and so far as I know, no knowledge about the sex act. I used to puzzle over the cause for the stopping of the up and down actions.

Later, she added: "... it was always quite clear that what happened after the accounts were finished was very secret and must never be spoken about" (Pinney, 1994:42).

²⁴ The connection between Reginald's obsession with his accounts and his great grandfather's equally obsessive focus on his slave-labour sugar plantation records, is so obvious it hardly needs making.

Using this testimony as the basis for a scene in my fictional screenplay was a difficult writing experience. I had to create some imagined details and add dialogue to the scene – but in essence, what happens in the fictional scene is as described by mother. It's worth noting that in her autobiography, my mother mentioned *two* initial incidents of sexual abuse by her father – both occurring around the same time. I chose to dramatize the one that took place in his office.

In her autobiography Rachel wrote about a favourite place to play, near her house. It was a small copse with a stream running through it. She played there as a child and I imagine it might have been where she found some refuge from the attentions of her father – and her older siblings. I was refused permission to visit Racedown by the current owner, so walked a public footpath nearby, that ran beside a stream. Quite by chance it led me to the very spot my mother had described. A short film clip of the place I call *Rachel's Dorset Retreat* can be seen by clicking on the following link:

<https://youtu.be/OL-Mtqipo60>

Rachel must have got some respite from her father's attentions when she went away to a nearby boarding school in Swanage, where she stayed from the age of 12 to 15. Perhaps that is why the General's attentions turned to Yvonne Burns. Recently widowed and with a baby girl, she had arrived at Racedown c.1914 to work. When judged unsuitable for outside work, she was moved inside the house where she eventually became housekeeper and general right-hand woman to Lady Pinney for the next nine years. My mother would have been five when Yvonne arrived and 14 when she left – and consequently must have known her well. The General's incestuous abuse of his daughter had been going on for approximately two years when at the age of 59 or 60, he 'had sex' with Yvonne, and she became pregnant. Of course, it's just possible that they had a genuine 'affair', based on mutual attraction – but there are multiple accounts confirming my grandfather's reputation as a sexual predator, a *taker* who focused his attentions on his social inferiors. This together with the disparity in power and status between the two of them, suggests to me that meaningful consent on Yvonne's part was a near impossibility. It's my view that a man capable of grooming and sexually abusing his own daughter wouldn't think twice about forcing himself on someone he must have viewed as a servant. Perhaps he *ordered* Yvonne to submit – and in his house, just as on the battlefield, his orders were obeyed.



Yvonne Burns (widow) date and photo unknown

When she knew she was expecting his child, Yvonne took the only course of action realistically open to her. She left Racedown and the Pinney family, taking the shame and responsibility for what had happened entirely on herself. Blaming the woman was after all the hypocrisy of the day – and she knew full well that nothing would ever stick to the General. He was invulnerable.

The illegitimate child was named Elisabeth and Yvonne left her for the first year of her life with the Rector of the nearby Hamlet of Bettiscombe, who along with his wife had agreed to be the child's Godparents. In an interview with me in 1998, Elisabeth repeated some of what she had learned about her infancy from her Godparents. It appears that baby Elisabeth's arrival in the Rector's house led to questions being asked in the local community about the paternity of the infant.

Rumours spread asking who was this child being fostered in their home. It must be his (the rector's) my mother left me there for a year – and the Bishop of Salisbury came down and said, 'Now tell me what is this I hear?' and my Godfather said, 'It's privileged, I cannot tell you.' The General heard about this fracas between the Bishop and one of his priests and he rode over on his horse and is alleged by my Godmother to have confessed to being my father. She put me in his arms – I was only a year old – and said, 'Give her a kiss, she is yours.' (Holt, 1998)

Five or six years later, Elisabeth was again at Bettiscombe, presumably visiting or staying with her Godparents. Rachel, 19 at the time, rode over on her father's hunter to see her half-sister for herself. She would then have been at Bristol University. In her autobiography Rachel wrote: "The paternity of Elisabeth was talked about in whispers at first and then firmly swept under the carpet and forgotten about." (Pinney, 1994:13)

My mother was proud of the fact that of all her siblings, nephews and nieces, she and her children were the only members of the Pinney family who publicly acknowledged Elisabeth as a relation. However, it must be noted that when Lady Pinney eventually found out her husband was the father of '*Mrs Burns' daughter*', she made a point of inviting the child to Racedown on multiple occasions and helped fund her education. But what I suspect Lady Pinney never knew was that Elisabeth and her half-sister Rachel had something else in common. During our 1998 interview Elisabeth (then *Holt*, but formerly *Gacia Lora* then *Boyt*) told me of her early memories of the General during those visits to Racedown as a young girl. .

He (the General) was never behind in looking forward for a kiss behind the dining room table – we got our tips that way. My older sister did not like the relationships in Racedown at all – it didn't really worry me very much. A kiss for half a crown was nice. Not the kiss, but the half crown old boy, in pocket money days. (Holt, 1998)

Elisabeth was born in 1923 – so assuming she was 10 at the time, then this happened around 1933 when the General, born in 1863, would have been 70. Not content with abusing his legitimate daughter Rachel, here is testimony that he was at least attempting the same thing with his illegitimate daughter. It begs more questions: How many other illegitimate children of his were there scattered around his part of Dorset, to be bought up in poverty and disgrace by their mothers? Were there other *children* he sexually abused? And critically, were Rachel and Elisabeth the only ones of his own children that he groomed and abused?



Half sisters: Elisabeth Holt (L) and Dr Rachel Pinney (R) c.1994

(photo: unknown)

A second, much smarter girl's boarding school called St Felix in Suffolk, was selected as Rachel's next school - where she found herself in the company of children of the 'nannied' class, many of whom she wrote, "...had been deserted by their mothers and received a 'replacement' at a disastrously young age." (Pinney, 1994:54). As ever, she was the odd one out and found it difficult to fit in. She was fascinated how normal and accepted were schoolgirl crushes – known as 'agogs'. A complicated ritual had evolved where older girls, or 'goddesses' as Rachel described them, gained status by the number of younger girls declaring their love. On the last day of term the reward for the 'agog' girl was a walk round the playing fields with the object of their affections, and at the end, to receive a kiss. Rachel was of course seriously 'agog' for a number of older girls but too shy to let them know, so never got her walk - or kiss. (Pinney, 1994:54)

She failed the Cambridge University entrance exam and went instead to Bristol University, where there she had the usual struggle to understand the rules of behaviour and how to fit in. It was at Bristol she had her first love affair.

Eisdell, I loved and she loved me. She was, I now realize a true homosexual. In those days I knew neither the word homosexual or the word lesbian, nor did I have any concept of who did what with what and to whom.
(Pinney, 1994:74)

Rachel at some point spoke to her girlfriend about Reginald's abuse. Also from Dorset, Eisdell knew of the Pinney family. My mother learnt from her that: "The General's sexual promiscuity among his social inferiors was well known in the County, and that folk were warned not to let their daughters go to Racedown as servants." (Pinney, 1994:75)

Out of the blue on her twenty-first birthday Rachel got a letter dismissing her from Bristol University. It appears she had never attended any lectures, believing - in a typically Rachel-like way - that knowledge was acquired at University by simply being there. She then attempted to become a nurse at the Middlesex Preliminary Training School in London and lasted six months. Critical of the hierarchical rigidity in nursing at that time, she nevertheless loved being a nurse and was distraught when sacked as unsuitable – an event I have used in my screenplay in the form of a flashback. When she got over that failure, she enrolled at Kings College, London University to study Physics.

In this period of her life, approaching her mid-twenties, Rachel wrote: "My father wanted a fishing holiday and I was persuaded to go with him to Scotland." (Pinney, 1994:87). By this time she was well established in what was to be a life-long habit of 'picking up' strangers. She noticed how it made her father jealous – unless the person she picked up happened to be from the 'public school' class. Part of the journey involved taking a ferry and on board, Rachel encountered someone her snobbish father approved of - Dame Ethel Smyth, composer, suffragette - and presumably unknown to Reginald, a lesbian. Rachel wrote that she and Ethel instantly connected, and they talked. "I did not understand what she meant at the time and it was to be about another ten years before I even knew what a lesbian was... but Ethel Smyth's encouragement did me good in those difficult days." (Pinney, 1994:88).

They arrived at the hotel where her father had booked rooms. Later, as Rachel was getting into bed, Reginald came into her room:

...he came in and tried to have penetration. He didn't try very hard, remarking as he got out of bed, 'Here at last we have privacy and can do it properly, but we can't because I am old and you, old Bachel, are a virgin.' (Pinney, 1994:88)

This, along with everything else about sex, confused Rachel. She had gone out of her way to lose her virginity a month earlier with a fellow student called Bill – an experience she described as rather like doing a physics experiment, conducted without any emotion or feeling on her part. (Pinney, 1994:88).

The end of that fishing holiday marked the end of Reginald's abuse of his daughter but what never ended was the profound and lasting damage he had done - it blighted the rest of her life. As she got older, Rachel would loudly proclaim to anyone who would listen that she was an incest survivor and sexual cripple. While some Pinney cousins still maintain they genuinely believe the abuse never happened – I have the suspicion that some have long known that it did – but are both afraid and unwilling to admit it. I suspect that protection of the family reputation has been the main consideration all along - and remains so to this day.

Not long after getting home from the 'holiday', Rachel met someone called Luigi Cocuzzi— the man who would be my father. They got engaged. My mother's lack of any emotional feelings towards him was evident in the way she wrote about him. Sex with Luigi was:

...just something that had to be done, rather like reading the directions for cooking on a packet of food, only rather more complicated. I had never before been an active sexual participant and Lu was pretty unpractised so we fumbled around and eventually I learnt to feel I had shared his orgasm by holding tight and receiving his feelings. (Pinney, 1994:92)

During this period, Rachel went into a deep depression. Her failure to master the point of Physics was the reason she gave in her autobiography, but it must have surely been more than that. I suspect the repeated failures and rejections, her still unacknowledged homosexuality, inability to function socially and of course her father's sexual abuse, had all coalesced into a major crisis. She wrote that she went down to the family home Racedown with the specific intention of killing her father - and then committing suicide. Luckily for him, Reginald wasn't at home – in fact, when she got there the entire family were out. She wrote one note to her family, another to Luigi, took a revolver from the gunroom and accompanied by the family spaniel, found a secluded spot in the surrounding fields. In my *fictional* account of this event I have Bethany Silcox closely

follow Rachel's testimony. Crying, she placed the gun to her temple and was about to cock it and pull the trigger when inexplicably, the dog became aroused.

...I noticed the dog showing signs of sexual excitement and that the outer cover of his penis was withdrawn. In spite of the odd sort of incestuous relationship I had with my father and my subsequent sex life with Lou, such was the strength of the Victorian era in sex repression that I had no idea of the mechanism of the sex act. So, as soon as I saw the dog being sexually aroused by my crying, my intellect took over and I was interested. As the interest took over, the depression ceased and the gun, still un-cocked, was returned to my pocket. (Pinney, 1994:92).

The crisis over, Rachel felt that in some way she *had* killed herself – which meant she now could start over, and put her old life behind her. Ever the fanatical cricketer, she felt she had been given, "...a very real second innings." (Pinney, 1994:92).



Bristol University Women's Cricket team c.1929 (photo: anon)
Rachel Pinney front row centre.

Her account doesn't give a precise sequence of events but soon after her suicide attempt - and aware she needed help, Rachel went to her mother and skipping some of the details, told her she had failed to kill herself. For only the second time in her life according to Rachel, her mother properly listened to her. Rachel's purpose was to ask her to pay for psychoanalysis - and Lady Pinney agreed.

For the next three years my mother saw Karin Stephen, for five days a week, a guinea a session.²⁵ Despite being advised not to make life-changing decisions while undergoing analysis, half way through, she and Luigi got married. Among her comments about therapy with Stephens was this truly shocking admission:

What I never did was tell Karin anything about my sex life. It is unbelievable but it is true. I never told her about my father either. It didn't strike me as important because he never did me any overt harm that either of us would understand. (Pinney, 1994:94)

Only a short time previously she had gone down to Dorset to murder him and then kill herself. To then write that Reginald didn't do her any overt harm is impossible to comprehend. I can't help thinking that the illustrious Karin Stephen and her ear trumpet may have been more interested in the five guineas a week than finding a way through Rachel's formidable defences.

I read with some satisfaction in my mother's autobiography that the General was terrified his incestuous abuse might be made public by my father. As it happens, I do not know if my father was even aware of the General's abuse.

When Lu and I got engaged, he asked my father for an interview at his club... and (my father) was in a flat spin lest Lu should spill the beans about the 'child abuse', as it is called these days. My father's relief can be imagined when he discovered that what Lu wanted was for my parents to go on paying for me to be psychoanalysed. (Pinney 1994:95)

It is salutary to note that in the same way I suggest our slave-owning forebears *knew* at some level that slavery was a heinous crime against humanity, it appears from this anecdote that Reginald also *knew* that his abuse of his daughter was abhorrent and deviant.

Rachel and Luigi got married on the 11th of November 1934. They stayed married for fourteen years but in fact only lived together for just over two: "...two years of endless,

²⁵ If she actually went to Karin Stevens five days a week for three years – which I doubt – Rachel's ineffective therapy was an extremely expensive undertaking. I like to think that given their poverty at the time, they found a way to divert some of the therapy money to other essentials.

unresolved rows.” (Pinney, 1994:96). They had three children - the first was Karin Cocuzzi, born in 1936. The second was Peter Cocuzzi (later Cox), born in 1940 – and the third was me, Christopher Cocuzzi (also later Cox) born in 1948.



Karin Tetlow (née Cocuzzi), Peter Cox (formerly Cocuzzi),
Christopher Cox (formerly Cocuzzi) c.1970 (photo:C.C.Cox)

We didn't grow up together - each of us had quite separate and distinct childhoods and we were each marked by our upbringings in different ways. Despite not sharing the experiences and memories of siblings that grew together, there is nevertheless a remarkably strong connection between us that has only deepened as we have aged. At the time of writing we have reached the respective ages of 84, 80 and 72.

For most of Rachel's adult life, she was a chaos generator – a destructive provocateur, stirring up trouble at any opportunity – one of those people who '*took up a lot of space in the room*' and around whom others had to orbit. It wasn't easy for me inhabiting her world when I was a child – and it's not easy writing about it now. This narrative of her early life, taken almost entirely from her unpublished autobiography, is approaching the point where I propose to significantly compress her story. There is a limit to how much of my mother's narcissistic madness I can take. But before I can do that, there are two significant, indeed life-changing events to mention.

In 1936 when my sister Karin was less than a year old, Rachel took a break from the poverty and squalor of her London flat and the husband she was incapable of loving - and went down to the family home in Dorset, taking her daughter with her. It turned out to be a momentous, explosive visit that would change Rachel's life forever, and have

consequences that reverberate up to the present day. Only her mother and her two sisters were at home:

We were all sitting round the big fire in the drawing-room, after dinner, as was the family custom. I was feeling at home round that fire and was sad they were so politically estranged from me. I was talking about Socialism, as I knew it and the unfairness of the privileged classes having more money than others. I remember being conscious of my dismal ignorance of political facts and not being able to make a clear case for Communism or Socialism – I didn't even know the difference between them! (Pinney, 1994:99).

I suspect that her sisters would have been merciless in their ridiculing of Rachel's political naivety – and her hypocrisy, given that she was at that same time as condemning privilege, taking full advantage of it – and their mockery would have pressed all Rachel's buttons:

I remember getting out of control and not being able to say why the upper class were so wicked. As I searched around for ammunition to attack the class system, I said something about our neighbours, who owned a coalmine, and then, adding to the awful things upper-class people did, I blurted out about my father and me. There is no way to recall what word I would have used in those days to describe the imposing of some sort of sexual contact on an unwilling victim who is unable to refuse it. But the content and meaning got over with a bang. (Pinney, 1994:99)

Mary, the sister Rachel used to faithfully follow around as a little girl leapt up saying, according to my mother: 'You dare say things like that about your father?' - and in no time, a fight ensued between them. Hair was pulled out, curtains came down—and the consequences were profound. Very early the next morning Rachel, I doubt aware of the irony, ordered the chauffeur to take her and baby Karin to the station. Before she left, she went into her mother's bedroom to say goodbye. Rachel wrote that her mother said these words to her: "*You don't think I knew and left you alone with your father as I did?*" (Pinney, 1994:42).

I have made much use in my fictional screenplay of the possible implications contained in these words spoken by Lady Pinney. To me they suggest that my mother's ostracism

from the family wasn't just reflexive victim blaming – but also a conscious, calculated, pragmatic choice. Every advantage the family enjoyed was based on the status, respectability and authority of Major General Sir Reginald Pinney. His eccentric, damaged, misfit daughter Rachel was both an embarrassment and expendable – to be cast aside in order that her brothers and sisters might prosper. A form of triage perhaps - a battlefield concept that Reginald would have well understood.

So when my mother exposed the abuse, it was *she* who got both the blame *and* the punishment for it. Ostracised, she became, in her own words, "... the baddie of the family from then on." (Pinney, 1994:100). I am writing these words in the year 2020, at least 100 years have passed since Reginald set out to groom my mother for abuse. It's 84 years since Rachel told her mother and sisters about it – and it's long past the time for it to be acknowledged.

The fictional scene I wrote based on my mother's outing of her abuse was the longest in the screenplay and the most difficult to write. The fight itself and the substance of the revelation that started it are very close to my mother's account. Virtually all the dialogue had of course to be invented – and I am pleased with the way I have captured my mother's political naivety as she recites communist ideology without really understanding it.

In January of the following year (1937) Rachel, still living in squalor and poverty with Luigi, was facing up to her chronic inability to cope with her daughter. She had no idea how to feed her or look after her. Yvonne Burns (the very same woman Reginald forced himself on and left with an illegitimate daughter) turned up at Rachel and Luigi's flat. Was she summoned, or did the word get to her that Rachel was in trouble? Von, as she was commonly known, was skilled in all the domestic and child-caring skills that Rachel found impossible. There's little doubt in my mind that her arrival was a huge relief to my mother – and also I have no doubt that Rachel's sudden, urgent 'need' to go on a walking tour in Southern Europe was an unconscious construction on her part, so she could ask Von to take Karin back down to Dorset with her – just for a short while, until she got back from her holiday, of course. Unsurprisingly, Rachel never went on the walking trip, and equally unsurprisingly, nor was Karin's stay with Von to be for a 'short while'.

... Karin went with Von to her rented bungalow near Bridport and never came back. We tried to get her back and failed. First Lou went down and came back without her. Then I went down and came back without her. Then we both went down and came back without her. Finally we gave up. (Pinney, 1994:101)

My sister paid a heavy price for Rachel and Luigi's abandonment – and I don't think Rachel herself ever got over the guilt of giving away her child and letting someone else raise her. Writing years later she suggested that Von had some kind of power over her: "I think probably Von decided she was going to have Karin right from the beginning, when she came to the birth." (Pinney, 1994:101).

I am left with the thought that something similar could be said of Rachel. Perhaps she too engineered – albeit not entirely consciously - to have her daughter raised by someone who did know how to look after and love a child. Is it even possible that Rachel's abandonment of Karin could be seen as a somewhat perverse 'act of care' – given the child's poor prospects if left with such a chaotic, dysfunctional mother? Perhaps - but regardless of motives, conscious or unconscious, it was an act of abandonment that created deep wounds and left painful scars.

By the start of the war in 1939, Rachel's study of Physics at Kings had turned into the study of medicine at Sheffield University. My brother was born in 1940. During a German air raid, mother and son survived bomb blast, which brought down their house. In the midst of her training, her father died. Rachel did not go to the funeral. The war came to an end and Rachel became a Doctor – but it took her nine attempts to pass all her final medical exams - something I presume that is not permitted today. Finally, despite not being able to: "...put on my socks, tie my shoelaces, cook a herring, let alone 'make love', as sex is euphemistically called." She was at last: "...able to do something" (Pinney, 1994:125). She opened a surgery on the Fulham Road and started working as a General Practitioner.

In 1948 Rachel and Luigi had been apart for 12 years – but weirdly, were living opposite each other on the same street. They were recently divorced or about to be. My mother wrote:

One day Lou dropped in and suggested sex. I think under the circumstances I was more willing than I usually would have been. Normally I would have said, 'Oh go away'. On this occasion I said, 'Come back in an hour, I must finish a job'. He did, and the result was Christopher. (Pinney, 1994:126).

I heard, maybe from my mother herself, that there may have been a little bit more to this bald account than she thought fit to put in her autobiography. My father was engaged and about to marry his second wife Mary. In an act designed I suspect to demonstrate she still had a hold over Luigi, Rachel ended up giving them both a wedding present they weren't expecting – me. And it turned out to be a particularly painful one for Mary, when it transpired she was unable to have any children of her own. I was at times a difficult stepson – but on all the occasions I stayed over with Luigi and Mary, she never failed to care for and mother me in a way Rachel was incapable of.

For the rest of her life, Rachel continued to court controversy and scandal – and in no particular order, some of her 'achievements' included: serving six months in prison for kidnapping (sending a 14 year old boy to Canada, albeit in the care of a chaperone, but without the mother's permission); devising a remarkably effective psychotherapeutic methodology for children called *Children's Hours* - versions of which are in use today; effectively sabotaging every possibility of success or recognition; disposing of her Pinney inheritances as fast as possible; declaring herself bankrupt, living more or less without money and happier for it; writing two books - one about her 'treatment' of an autistic boy titled *Bobby*, the other an autobiography titled *Rachel*; taking a vow of silence on every Wednesday till nuclear weapons were abolished and appropriately for a compulsive talker, inventing something called: '*Creative Listening*'.

My mother had an uncanny instinct for discerning other people's blind spots and then jumping on them. While I was growing up there was never any shortage of damaged people who drifted into our house seeking answers from a mad, bossy, upper class, eccentric Doctor they seemed magnetically drawn to – presumably in the naïve hope she could help them in some way. With almost no duty of care, my mother first exposed their vulnerabilities, then stamped on them till they couldn't stand it and left in tears of distress or fury or both. Amazingly, a few found this therapeutic. At her funeral

someone read out a short poetic tribute to her – an event I have included in my screenplay.

Mad, bad, horrid old Rachel,
What have you done to me?
You shrieked at me over the mountaintop
And suddenly set me free. (Butlin 1995).



Rachel Pinney c.1950



Rachel Pinney outside Caledonian Estate, London c.1990 (photo: anon)



Rachel Pinney c.1985 (photo: C.C.Cox)



Rachel Pinney c.1985 (photo by unknown friend)

The last place she lived was a council flat in the Caledonian estate, next to Pentonville Prison in North London. She turned the living room into a playroom and conducted her '*Children's Hours*' therapy sessions there. It was the place she wrote her autobiography – and where, in 1995, she died in the bath. For someone who gave the impression of being fearless in confronting difficult subjects, I don't think my mother ever properly engaged with the reality of slavery and the obvious - and less obvious - ways it benefitted the Pinney family.

As an adult my mother could be violent, destructive, irresponsible, manic, provocative, contradictory – to name but a few of her flaws - the list could go on. As soon as I was free to do so, I put as much clear-blue water as I could between my own life and the

chaos of my mother's - and I have no regrets for doing so. So to *some* extent at least, I can understand a little of why my uncles, aunts and cousins did the same thing – given that they were never going to take the simple but potentially status quo shattering action that might have addressed some of my mother's rage – *believe her account of Reginald's abuse*. From their perspective all they saw was someone full of anger, determined to wreck their upper class rituals at every possible opportunity.

It's sobering to think that I was only closely connected to her for just 16 of her 86 years. There is so much of her life I know little to nothing about – not only the years before she gave birth to me aged 39, but also the 31 years after reaching 16, when I was finally independent of her. And for 10 of those 16 years that I *was* connected, I was away at boarding school for three quarters of each year. It was only during my early years and then during school holidays (and not all of those) that I lived with her and got to know a little of her complex personality – the good as well as the bad. Her destructive rages I now understand are common among abuse survivors who are not believed, and whose abusers remain unpunished. Once – ironically for lack of 'obedience' - she grabbed me by the hair and beat me. In my encounters with relatives and friends, I heard testimony of similar hair grabbing and hitting. Doing such a thing to *other* people's children of course resulted in Rachel being shown the door. My mother was as prolific in terminating relationships as she was in starting them.

Rachel was always on a mission of one kind or another. "I'm on a job." was one of her frequent expressions. In spite of or perhaps because of her temper, the one thing that mattered to her above everything else was changing the power relations between adults and children. I suspect she was always returning to that 11 year old girl who, on a fateful day in 1920, walked into Major General Sir Reginald Pinney's study to help with his accounts. From the aphorism '*obedience is a sin*' – to the therapeutic methodology she devised, where for one hour the child is in charge of the adult (the only exception being in the case of danger, damage or impropriety) - putting the child first was her mission. And though often motivated by good intentions, her attempts to carry out her mission in practice invariably landed her in big trouble, and in one case, prison.

Luigi:



Luigi Cocuzzi c.1923

A fictional character based on my father is *referred* to in my screenplay output *History is Not the Past* - but he does not make an appearance. This is something I wish to address in my next draft, to be written after submission. The Pinney family have a compulsive interest in their genealogy and talk about it incessantly. Often during my encounters, I noted how the partner of a cousin or other relative would head for the door the moment Pinney history became the topic of conversation. The Cocuzzi family and elements of their story are included here for the simple reason I refuse to have them ignored. Just as my mother was the result of a union between the Head family and the Pinney family, half of me, possibly the better half, is *Cocuzzi*. Writing this chapter I have been forced to properly engage for the first time with my father's life – and take note of how traumatic events have, just as with the Pinneys, marked the Cocuzzi and the Rossi families.

What was it that drew Rachel and Luigi together? Marrying a working class man, son of Italian immigrants and a communist to boot was undoubtedly an act of rebellion by my mother – and also perhaps an attempt to deny her homosexuality. On my father's side I find it difficult to believe that he loved her – and if he did, what a folly to fall for

a lesbian, unwilling and unable to love him back. It's possible his motives may have had an element of both class, economic and maybe even political opportunism behind them. But there was something else they had in common – an identical void in their lives. *Both had 'lost' their mothers.*



Michelangelo (39) and Rita Cocuzzi (32) with children
Leonidio (7) and Felicetta (4) London c.1900

My father's parents were Michelangelo Cocuzzi (1861-1947) and Rita Cocuzzi née Rossi (1868-1944). They came to London from the Abruzzo region of Italy c.1900. They bought two children with them – Leonidio Vincenzo Cocuzzi (1893-1943) and Felicetta Everinda Cocuzzi (1896 - c.1986). The photo above was taken in London soon after their arrival. Two more children were born in England – Alesandrina Cocuzzi (1904 - c.1991) and my father Luigi Cocuzzi (1905-1978)

The family lived on the Bethnal Green Road in the East End of London. At some point after my father was born, his mother Rita left her husband and all her four children and returned to her village, *Civitella Alfedena*. I was recently told by relatives in the village that it was asthma that forced my paternal grandmother's return - she could not breath the polluted London air. Perhaps there is some truth in this explanation, but when at the

age of 29 I met my two maiden aunts for the very first time (then aged 81 and 73) they were notably evasive about why had Rita abandoned them – surely not necessary if the reason was something as understandable and excusable as chronic, life threatening asthma.



Rita Cocuzzi in Civitella Alfedena c.1914

After both aunts had died, I had the opportunity to talk to a life long friend of aunt Alesandrina - an elderly man called Len. I mentioned to him my curiosity about Rita's abandonment of the family and he told me he knew the reason, *but I never would*. It was an extraordinary thing to say and for me an unforgettable moment. I could not fathom why on earth he could be so invested in keeping a secret that didn't appear to be his to protect. But his words were prophetic – Len died suddenly soon after I spoke to him, and the real reason Rita left her family and went back to Italy has gone with him to the grave.

My father was born in 1905, and one of the very few details of his childhood he shared was that of being raised by his sisters. Throughout his life he used the expression '*I look after you like a mother*'. If Rita left when he was one or two years old, then his older sister Felicetta would have been 10 or 11 at the time. Was it she who raised Luigi and used that expression?

It's fair to assume that Felicetta had acquired something of the Italian language during her first four years in Italy. On the same basis, seven-year old Leonidio must have been fluent. How well their father Michelangelo spoke English is unknown. I recall Luigi telling me that they were encouraged to only speak English in the home. Aside from a few expressions and swear words in the Abruzzo dialect, the only language Luigi spoke growing up was east end cockney. Rita not only departed with her presence and maternal love – the precious gift of a mother tongue also went back to Italy with her.

Luigi's brother Leonidio, a qualified chemist and public analyst, had been the success and the rock of the family. He died from an infection picked up as a result of his work and it must have been a devastating blow to an already fractured family. Felicetta worked nearly all her life as a company secretary. Alessandrina was a local schoolteacher. Luigi was the youngest and the rebel. He was the only one of the four who married and had children. The instant I encountered the manic, controlling energy of his sisters, my father's rebellion made perfect sense. After leaving school at 14 he followed his father's profession and started work as an apprentice in a furniture factory - and it was there he became involved in politics and at some point, joined the Communist Party.



Leonidio and Luigi Cocuzzi, Bethnal Green c.1925

For his devoutly Catholic family, this was too much – communism for them was the work of the devil and the dichotomy between the two was the basis - or perhaps the pretext - for the break between them.



Chelsea Municipal Election Poster c.1944

I wish I knew some details of his life as a CP member. There are precious few clues – one is this 1944 election poster. It was during the war that my father changed his name to Cox – and shortened Luigi to ‘Lou’. Standing for the local council in Chelsea as a communist was of course a symbolic, political act undertaken with no expectation of actually winning a seat. But I remember him telling me with an ironic laugh that his vote was *so* low, it was evident not even all his fellow party members had turned out to vote for him.

When Luigi made his way to Chelsea and started mixing with a radical and bohemian set, among those he met was an eccentric upper-class oddball called Rachel Pinney. They married in 1934 and had their first child in 1936. Incompatible in every way, they soon parted to live separate lives but nevertheless managed to produce two more children. In 1948 they divorced - another sin in the eyes of his sisters - to allow my father to re-marry.



Luigi Cocuzzi and Rachel Cocuzzi (née Pinney)
Wedding day: 1934 (photo: unknown)

I don't know when Luigi severed *all* contact with his family – perhaps after his brother died in 1943, or his mother in 1944 (during the war with her Abruzzo village under German occupation) or his father in 1947. With the passing of the old man, the only remaining members of the family were his two sisters.



Michelangelo Cocuzzi. Kent c.1946

After a gap that could have been as long as 40 or 50 years, it was not until 1977 that Luigi and his sisters met again. That was the memorable year my brother, sister and myself, having only recently made contact with our aunts, picked them up from the same house in Bethnal Green Road – and drove them down to Whitstable for a reunion with their estranged brother.



Felicetta Cocuzzi Whitstable 1977. (photo C.C.Cox)



Alessandrina Cocuzzi Whitstable 1977 (photo: C.C.Cox)

Luigi had recently been operated on for stomach cancer and didn't have long to live. Bringing them together was undertaken with the confident but possibly naive conviction that we were doing a 'good thing'. When I saw my father's reaction as his sisters marched into his bungalow, I began to have some doubts about the wisdom of what we had engineered.

I will never know for sure if my father had been pleased to see his sisters again at the end of his life – I didn't want to ask him. A few months after the reunion, he went into hospital for the last time. My brother and I took turns to go down from London to visit

him. By chance it was I who ended up being there as he approached the end. A catholic priest appeared out of nowhere and asked me if I would give permission for him to administer the last rites. I hesitated. To the best of my knowledge Luigi hadn't set foot in any church since he was a child, never mind a catholic one. But I didn't ponder for long - I gave my permission on the simple premise that in his final hours, the rites *might* give some comfort. But I am still troubled by the idea that his last conscious thought on this earth could have been: *'Those bloody Catholics never give up - they get you in the end.'* He died on the 12th of February 1978. His last words to me were: "Chris, I've come to the end of the avenue." All traces of his false accent had gone – the east end cockney had finally come home.



Luigi Cox (formerly Cocuzzi) Whitstable (photo C.C.Cox c.1975)



Luigi in his shop, 207 King's Road, Chelsea c.1960

The following picture is the one that for me best expresses my father's trauma. It was taken some years after the end of the First World War, when travel to Italy from the UK was once again possible. Luigi, his siblings and their father Michelangelo went to visit Rita. It's possible that Luigi is holding the arm of a woman he last saw as a toddler, someone he can barely, if at all, remember. In fact, looking closely, he's *not* holding her arm – his arm is through hers but his fist is clenched - and his eyes are closed. Rita, with her hands hanging down as though they don't belong to her, has the expression of someone who's 'somewhere else' – and has been for a long time. Luigi's older sister Felicetta has a forced smile that only creates a sense of greater dysfunction – and is in stark contrast to the pain written of Rita's face, and the obvious discomfort on Luigi's.



Luigi, Rita, Felicetta. Civitella Alfedena c.1923

As I trawled through old family photographs, I came across many pictures of my Italian grandmother I had never seen before. Studying them, a thought took hold that gradually morphed into something close to a conviction – perhaps Rita had suffered a *breakdown*. She was *sent* back to the village, in the hope that she might recover and then return to London. Was it post-natal depression that deepened into post-partum psychosis – or given the level of understanding in those days, just old-fashioned 'madness'? In any event, it was long lasting. She never went back to her children in England - but remained in the family house in Civitella Alfedena, living out the rest of her life alone. I

look again at the pictures of Rita, Leonidio, Felicetta, Alessandrina and my father Luigi and I see in all of them the pain of losing the most essential of attachments – that of child for mother and mother for child. The echoes are deafening.



Rita Cocuzzi c.1930s

Ending:

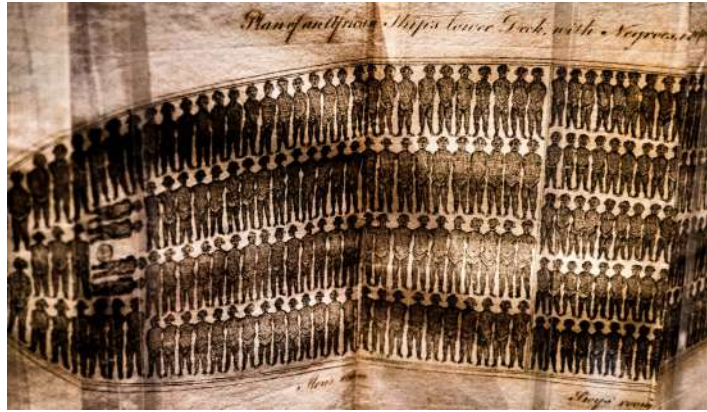


Exhibit: Smithsonian Museum of African American History
2018 (photo: C.C.Cox)

At the outset of this research project I asked a question: *As a member of the Pinney family, directly descended from 17th and 18th century slave-owners who enriched and elevated themselves through brutal exploitation of enslaved Africans – how can I meaningfully acknowledge and atone for my forbear's crimes?* In an attempt to formulate an answer, I engaged in multiple strands of enquiry. I knew that before I could speak in any way about my family today and my forebear's involvement in slavery in the past, I had first to acquire a deeper understanding of both. The more I learnt about my mother's experiences at the hands of her father and the colonial sugar plantation slave-labour system - the more it dawned on me that I was already answering my question. Atonement and acknowledgement were growing out of the very act of discovering the true, grim reality of both the distant and near past. My research and creative practice opened my mind – and it also *changed* it. With regard to my creative output, one probable explanation for how this occurred begins with the simple fact that a film-script is written in the *present tense*. If this deceptively simple screenwriting discipline is followed rigorously, the writer is de-facto, obliged to walk in their character's shoes – which if done honestly, becomes a sustained act of *empathy*. This has led me to conclude that *empathetic understanding is the path to acknowledgement and atonement*.

I am ashamed to be a Pinney. It is of little comfort that I am a detached, ostracized member of the family – the shame persists. When I set out to meet first cousins properly for the first time at the age of 70, I came to them as a stranger, emerging from that zone of invisibility and forgetfulness where disruptive family members and their offspring are consigned. In the process, the mythical creatures of my imagination became human beings – and much as I was reluctant to admit and accept it, I could not fail to recognise something of myself in them.

It's been four years since I started this research project. If I am able to accuse my Pinney relatives of denial, it is because I recognise in them an echo of my own denial. I spent most of my adult life pretending I didn't have a problem with my slave-owning forebears. During my career as a documentary cinematographer I never once mentioned my shameful legacy to my colleagues – among whom were a number of black producers, directors, production assistants, sound men, camera assistants. Only when I started this research journey in 2017 did I contact those I had kept in touch with and told them I was directly descended from a 17th century slave owner. It didn't destroy the relationships, but particularly with those who came from an Afro-Caribbean heritage, it did subtly change them. I now suspect this type of relationship 'reframing' is something *all* white Britons may need to experience.

Getting cancer did not motivate me to undertake this research – the proposal was written and my application submitted before that innocent looking lump on my neck appeared. But what injected urgency and a new commitment to my efforts after months of chemotherapy, was the sensation of being 'born again'. Once declared 'clear' (the word 'cured' is not used) of the disease, I knew with certainty that in the time I had left, I had to explore the very thing I had spent my life hiding from – the unwanted but unavoidable shameful legacy left me by my forebears.

My childhood was chaotic, thanks in large part to a damaged, dysfunctional mother. I think it is unarguable that a significant part of the damage done to her came directly from her father. God only knows what happened in *his* childhood to turn him into a man who not only sexually abused his social inferiors, but who could commit what has to be the ultimate parental sin – groom and sexually abuse your own child – and if that wasn't awful enough, persist in his abusive practices for 13 years. I cannot prove it of course,

but I suspect there could well be echoes of dysfunction in the Pinney family, going all the way back to the slave-owning Pinneys and the toxic, damaging combination of cruelty and sexual abuse that they - along with countless other slave owners, agents, managers, overseers, tradesmen - indulged in with impunity.

For the first three years of this journey, it seemed my research was perceived as interesting, useful - but not the red hot topic of the day. Then almost overnight, something happened that changed the situation dramatically. On the 25th of May 2020 in Minneapolis, an unarmed black man called George Floyd was asphyxiated when a policeman put his knee on his neck until he stopped breathing. In one sense it was an unremarkable event - white people in America, some in uniform and many more not, have been murdering black people without consequence for a very long time. But this death was caught on video and shared millions of times around the world. It turned out to be one killing too many. Support for the latest iteration of the perennial African American demand for justice, equity and civil rights, this time going under the name '*Black Lives Matter*' (BLM) - spread around the world. And as it spread, the forces of 'law and order' doubled down. Police invariably see their job as upholding the structure of society *as it is*. In both the USA and the UK, as well as other countries - the blatantly unfair and unequal treatment of black people suggests they are in fact carrying out another, more ancient role - employing violence and fear to keep black people *in their place*. In this context, they are acting as nothing less than a modern iteration of the plantation overseer. They view BLM as an existential threat and in this, they are not wrong. BLM demands have profound implications and require radical changes not only in policing – but throughout society.

A month later on a memorable day in June 2020, a statue was pulled down by a group of protesters, rolled to a nearby dockside area and tipped into the water. It was of slave trader Edward Colston, who had been perched on his plinth overlooking a busy street in the city of Bristol for 125 years. The historian David Olusoga wrote an article titled: *The toppling of Edward Colston's statue is not an attack on history. It is history:*

The historical symmetry of this moment is poetic. A bronze effigy of an infamous and prolific slave trader dragged through the streets of a city built on the wealth of that trade,

and then dumped, like the victims of the Middle Passage, into the water. (Olusoga 2020)

As a board member and later deputy governor of the Royal African Company, Colston helped oversee the transportation of around 84,000 Africans – of whom as many as 20,000 would have died due to the horrific conditions on board and thrown overboard. Over the hundreds of years the slave trade endured, the Atlantic Ocean became the resting place for at least 2 million African men, women and children. How appropriate then, that Colston's statue was dumped where ships of the triangular trade docked. And in another piece of symmetry, went into the water just yards away from Pero's Bridge, a new footbridge named after the enslaved African my great, great, great grandfather brought back with him when he returned to Bristol from the Caribbean with his blood stained fortune.

Both these events have changed the landscape and a new political awareness regarding black history has emerged which cannot easily be erased. Nevertheless there will be determined attempts by powerful forces to do just that. Albeit largely un-noticed given our current focus on Covid-19 and Brexit, those attempts have already started. In another recent article David Olusoga speculates about just who is being lined up to be blamed when responsibility for our ills can no longer be blamed on Brussels, and Britania fails, "...to re-emerge, 'buccaneering' and 'unchained' on to the world's stage."

Firmly in the crosshairs are black and brown working class people, who are to be stripped of their class identity so that their interests and their histories can be falsely presented as a dangerous threat to those of working-class white people. Hence the demonisation and deliberate mischaracterisation of the Black Lives Matter movement. But among the new enemies are academics and, in particular, historians whose work focuses on the histories of empire and slavery. They and the institutions that commissioned research from them have been subjected to a new order of hostility. Expect more of the same in 2021. (Olusoga 2021)

I have called this section *Ending* for a reason. While making full allowance for the tendency for those of us over 70 to project our impending demise onto the state of the world, there seems to me to be enough objective evidence to argue that humanity is in

an existential crisis – experiencing a perfect storm of critical issues - many of them intersecting – but all underpinned by climate change. There is after all, nothing more existential than the survival of the planet we live on.

At the end of my journey I have learned that the wounds from transatlantic slavery are still unhealed – and the ideological underpinning, structural injustices and fictive historical narratives that sustained and justified slavery are still with us. The transatlantic slave trade and the colonial slave-labour plantation system was a *crime* that stubbornly refuses to stay quietly in its historical context.

In *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, Kendi writes that African Americans are incarcerated at six times the rate of the white citizens of the USA – a simple statistic that exposes better than many others the structural racial inequality in America.

Racist ideas have done their job on us. We have a hard time recognising that racial discrimination is the sole cause of racial disparities in this country and the world at large... Fooled by racist ideas, I did not fully realise that the only thing wrong with Black people is that we think something is wrong with Black people. I did not fully realise that the only thing extraordinary about White people is that they think something is extraordinary about White people. (Kendi, 2016 p.11)

Britain is little better. An innate sense of superiority, invariably expressed in racial terms, seems to be embedded deep in the minds of many British citizens, persisting from generation to generation, like a stain that will not wash out. Brexit in any form is shaping up to be an irrational act of national self-harm – and has racism, xenophobia and delusions of national greatness at its heart.

Brexit ideology is contradictory. It simultaneously insists on pride in the British Empire (accompanied by the delusion that former colonies are eager for a close bond with their erstwhile masters) - and stokes harsh anti-immigrant sentiment. (Gopal, 2019).

Perhaps this is not surprising from a country whose prominent thinkers, among them the 17th and 18th century luminaries Locke and Hume, “...openly espoused their belief in

white supremacy...” (Akala, 2018:62). Another contemporary writer states that those same thinkers were:

...important proponents of racism, pouring the same intellect they used to such great effect in epistemology – the theory of knowledge – into crafting a theory of African inferiority. (Hirsch, 2018:78).

For 300 years Britain grew and prospered as it profited from the transatlantic slave trade and the exploitation of slaves in its colonies - and then effectively wiped this shameful involvement from the collective memory by declaring the slave trade, and later slavery itself, illegal. In many British minds, the story of transatlantic slavery begins and ends with the abolitionist Wilberforce.

Slave owners (my forebears among them) - their agents and their employees, empowered by notions of white supremacy, drunk from both an unlimited supply of rum and lack of constraint, inflicted such barbaric abuse and cruelty on the enslaved, they could not avoid harming *themselves* in the process - leading to this question: If post-slavery trauma echoes among the descendants of the enslaved, must not post-slavery superiority, denial and cruelty, echo among the descendants of the enslavers? Fletchman Smith in *Mental Slavery* writes:

Planters and their employees physically and sexually abused men, women and children. Relationships between slaves had to be kept absolutely secret, if the relationships were to survive, because to become a couple was one of the surest ways to be sold off. Then as now, it was thoroughly understood how powerful a well-functioning family could be. Relationships between slaves, therefore, were broken to ensure better control of them by the planters who, though powerful themselves, lived in constant fear of rebellion. (Fletchman Smith, 2003:151).

White people have to face the uncomfortable fact that white supremacy and racism are white problems – we invented them, we own them and we perpetuate them. It is our responsibility to do what it takes to rid ourselves of their toxic, malignant influence.

Not everything that is faced can be changed;
but nothing can be changed until it is faced.
(Baldwin 2017)

In her remarkable and extensive research, *The Mountravers Plantation Community 1784 to 1834*, (2016) Christine Eickelmann tells the story of that one plantation and the enslaved who laboured on it – that was Pinney owned for 84 out of the 100 years she covered. The names listed below are the mocking, belittling, patronising ones forced on the enslaved by their ‘owners’ - their true names have been lost to history.

THE ENSLAVED OF MOUNTRAVERS 1784-1834

+ BANDO + NERO + PETTER + A ‘SUCKLING CHILD’ + JACK CORRY + LONG WILL + CRATO + WILL
+ JILL / GELL + YOUNG JUGGY / JUGG + PHILLADA + MINNO NANNY + BESS + MADAM + HANNA
+ JASPSA + AN UNNAMED WOMAN + THOMAS THE TAYLOR + CAESAR + JENNY + FORTUNE
+ NANNY / NAANY + CRAN[JER + TOM + MOUSHELL / MOSHELL + NERO + CUFFEE + JAMES
+ DULL + CHARLES + DICK + TOMLYN / TAMBERLAINE + MALL / MOLL + NAIME / NAMINO
+ DINA + PRANSER / PRANCER + FFRANK + BETTY + SABELLA / ISABELLA / SYBELA + PPENDAR
/ PINDER + LANE / LAIN + SARAH + MAHREAH / MAREAH + DANIEL + JACK + NEW FRANK
+ CATALINA + FRANNI + LUWA + MAREA + SPORAMSE + CUFFEE + LUCY/LACE + CORI + MAMMA
ROSA + OLD WOMAN + ROBIN + JEMIE + MINGO + MOLY COOK + FRANSWAY + GRAME + TOM
+ ANDRA + BETTY + CECILIA + FFRAICO + ARRA + JEMIE + STOCKA/STAKA + CEDREE /
CHEGERY / CEDRIC + FRENCH HARRY + MARA COLA / MARGOLA + CATTERANA / KATHERINE
+ NANNY/PAPA NANNY + SARAH + CODELL/ CODELL / USHEE + CUFFEE + DAV / DAVEE
+ FRANSWAY / FRANSWAPE + JACK CASH / JACKLASH + PETTILL MOLY /PETTYMAL +
FRANKE/FRANCKIE + MARY CORY / MARYLONG + CRANNA ROBBIN + GUINYE JAMES + EBO
BESS + BENNY + MALLUCCA + JUGGIE + TAFFIE + ANDREW + BORNEBOUGH + SARAH + PHILLIS
+ CUFFEE + TONY + PEETER + ABASA + JOHN BOY + JACOB + ADMAN + SAMSON / SANSON
+ KATE + PEGIE / PEGG / PAGGY + ANDREW + HARY + GRITTA + HANNAH + SARAH + JACK
+ CATHRINA + LONDON + CROPEAR / CRAPEAR + ADENDO + MOLLY + EMELIE + SUSANNA +
BRISTOL + PIERRO + CHESTER + CATO + CATO’S UNNAMED DAUGHTER + DULL + FORTUNE
+ MANIPA + BISEORNE / BISCOME + ARA / ARRAW + JUDY + LINDIA + DASILT + RABIN + GORGO
+ LOUISA + DANA + DINDIA + ZOLINDA + OMA + DICK + CATTO + BETTY + JOHNNY
+ ORONOGUA + JUDY + AMI + PHIBBA + TOWERHILL + ABBOTT + CUTAR + SUSANNA ROLIE

+ ADDO + DICK + ANDREW + APUNG + BRISTOL / BRISTOLL + OLD QUAW + SLUBY + CLASH
 + ACHILLES + PETER / PEETER + QUASHEY + HARRY / OLD HARRY + QUOMINA + LONG WILL
 + IBINNY + JOHNEY / JOHNNO / OLD + ATTAW + DEE + CUGGAH + CUBBENA / COBENAH
 + GOVERNOR + CUNNIAL JACK + SANTEE + ROBIN / OLD ROBIN + KERSEY / OLD KERSEY
 + CHARLES + OLD GEORGE + LONDON / OLD LONDON + NEVIS + DORSET + TOM PUNCH
 + MERCURY + LONDON + TOM PINNEY + PRIMUS / OLD PRIMUS + LIMERICK + DEMPEY + BEN
 + JACK + FITTO / GREAT FIDO + TOM / LONG TOM + CAMBRIDGE + CUGGAH + CUFFEE +
 CUBENNA + OLD MAN + QUOW + PHILLIP / OLD PHILLIP + SAM + CUSHEW + PETER + QUOW
 + NED / OLD NED + SCIPIO + SAMPSON + CUBBENA + CATO + COREY + BILLEY + YORK
 + CUBBENNA + HANNIBLE + PAUL + PAWPAW / PAPPAW + PHILLIS + ONYLIPPO + GREAT AFFEY
 + SHABAH + BANIBAH + JIBBAH + FIBBAH + AGGREE + OLD LUCY + DENDO + OLD SUE + ABBAH
 + SPENCER + CUBBAH + MINNAH + HANNAH / OLD HANNAH + VENUS + SARAH + DILLAH + OLD
 FRANK + LITTLE AFFEY / GREAT AFFEY + OLD YANICA + BETTY + NANNY + JANE + MYRTILLA
 + JEMAH + TITTIBAH + KATEY + MOLLY / GREAT MOLLY / OLD MOLLY + GIBBAH + SAPPHO
 + SARAH + BELINDA + JUDITH + OMAR + SARAH + CUNDAL / KENDALL + ROSE / OLD ROSE
 + HETTEY + DAMSEL + MARY + FRANKEY + KITTY + GIBBAH / GREAT GIBBAH + KITTY + CELIA
 + FIBBAH / DUNG BELLY FIBBA + KATEY + SUE + SARAH / LITTLE SARAH / CONGO SARAH
 + DENDO + ARABELLA + FIBBAH / GREAT FIBBA / OLD PHIBBA + TITY / OLD TYTY + JUGGEY
 + BESSY / BESS + GIBBAH / LITTLE GIBBA + LUCY / OLD LUCY + GRETAW + PEGGY + GEORGE
 + DORSET CASH + CUGGAH + LITTLE JACK / JACK + CHARGE + WILTSHIRE + TOM + JEMMY /
 CREOLE JEMMY + MANDO GEORGE + LITTLE SARAH / BROOMS SARAH / OLD BROOM'S SARAH
 + CUBBAH / BROOM'S CUBA + SHEBAH / GREAT SHEBA + MARY / OLD MARY + SHEBAH / LITTLE
 SHEBA / OLD SHEEBA + NANNY + CUBBENNA + MIMBO / MIMBA + YABBA / OLD YABBA
 + ORANGE + CANCOO + GUY + JEMMY RICHARDS + MINGO + CAESAR / OLD CAESAR
 + GREENWICH + ACHREE + YANKEY / OLD YANKEY + PORTSMOUTH + RHADNOR + SCIPIO /
 ABBOTT'S SCIPIO / OLD SCIPIO + LITTLE ROBIN / ROBIN / OLD ROBIN + CONGO WILL + MINAH
 JEMMY / GREAT MINAH JEMMY + DOVER + LITTLE MINAH JEMMY + QUOMINA + CASTILE /
 CASTILL + CHESTER + HARLOW + RANGE + LEWY + TOM BOSSUE + OXFORD + GLOSTER + ESSEX
 / GREAT ESSEX + EPHRAIM + DINNEY + DICK + BOAN + QUASHEE + CHARGE / OLD CHARGE
 + ANDREW + LITTLE JEMMY / JEMMY + LITTLE HANNIBAL / HANNIBAL + CURSOE / 'CURSOE
 ALIAS POMPEY' / OLD POMPEY + CREOLE / CREOLE WILL / OLD CREOLE WILL + LITTLE FIDO /
 FIDO / OLD FIDO + JERRY + DUCKS JEMMY + CODANDO + CONGO PETER + KATE / OLD KATE
 + DWARFOE + YANNEKY / OLD + YANNIKY + BROOM (BROOM'S) SARAH'S KITTY + AGREE
 + PENDA / PÆNDA + SANTEE'S KITTY + PATTY / OLD PATTY + PHILLIS + PRINCESS / OLD
 PRINCESS + FLORA / CONGO FLORA + HETTY + MOLLEY / BANDER LEGED (LEGGED) MOLL
 + GRACE + QUASHEBA / GREAT QUASHEBA + JENNY / ROSE'S JENNY + TUSEY / TUSY + PENNEY
 / PENNY / OLD PENNY + LITTLE BROOM'S SARAH / BROOM'S SARAH + ABBA + SUSANNA /
 SUSANNAH + LENA + MOROTE + DUCKS JENNEY + SABELLA / OLD SABELLA + LITTLE PHIBBA /
 PHIBBA / OLD FIBA + LITTLE FLORA + LITTLE ESSEX + LITTLE LONDON / LONDON + LITTLE

KERSEY / KERSEY + TOM PUNCH + LITTLE JACK / JACK + LITTLE WILTSHIRE / WILTSHIRE / OLD
 WILTSHIRE + LITTLE SANTEE / SANTEE CUBBENA+ LITTLE PHILLIS / PHILLIS + LITTLE SHABBA
 / SHABBA + TUTTABAU / TUTTABAW + LITTLE BRIDGETTE / BRIDGET / OLD BRIDGET
 + LITTLE JOHNTONG / JOHN TONG + LITTLE MOLLY / MOLLY / MADGE + MARGO / MARGOT
 + LITTLE QUASHEBA + BENNEBA + PETER'S FLORA + LITTLE BESS + SARAH / LITTLE SARAH
 + NELLY / OLD NELLY + PHEENIA + FANNY/ 'FANNY ALIAS AFFEY' + LITTLE HARRY + DORSETT
 + BRIDPORT + GLASGOW / COOPER GLASGOW / OLD GLASGOW + CAMBRIDGE + CHESTER
 + CUDJOE + OXFORD + SALLY + NANCY / NANTZI + BETTY + LUCY CUBA / CUBA OR CUBBA + FOE
 + 'TOA ALIAS PEGGY' + FREDERICK + LITTLE AGREE + FRIDAY + WARRINGTON / OLD
 WARRINGTON + BETTISCOMBE + BRIDPORT + MICHAEL + ROMEO + PILLMARSH + AZARIAH
 + BLACK POLLY / POLLY / POLLY PINNEY + JULIET + TALLIHOE + HARRIOTT + PERO / PERREAU
 / 'PERO JONES ALIAS WILLIAM JONES' + NANCY JONES + SHEBA / SHEABA JONES + RITTA /
 GREAT RITTA / OLD EBBO RITTA + VIOLET + MONIMIA + DORINDA + DUCKS LEAH + LITTLE
 PRIMUS / PRIMUS + OMAH / OMAR + SUE / OLD SUE + GEORGE + JUDY + MOLLY / MOLLY
 (MARY) RICHENS + NOMOORE / NO-MOORE / NOMORE + DANIEL + HANNAH + LITTLE PETER
 + OMAR + CUFFEE + CHARLY + HARLESCOMBE + FRANK / EBBO FRANK + YORK / OLD YORK
 + DORCHESTER + CHARLOTTE + CAROLINE / OLD CAROLINE + DIANA + MYRTILLA + CORDELIA
 + CONGAW NEGRO BOY 1 (UNNAMED) + CONGAW NEGRO BOY 1 (UNNAMED) + SCIPIO'S LEAH
 + BILLEY / BILLEY COKER + DANIEL FOE + FANNY / GREAT FANNY + POLYDORE + HECTOR /
 OLD HECTOR + SAM / OLD SAM + VULCAN + WALTER + JOHN + OTHELLO + NATT + SCANDAL
 + JAMES + TOM MAYNARD + ANTHONY + OROONOKO / ORONOOKO + PRINCE + JOE + BACCHUS
 + LEONORA + MARIA + NOBODY + AN UNNAMED GOLD COAST SLAVE + CATHARINE + SCRUB
 + APUNG + WARRY + QUAW + WEYMOUTH / OLD WEYMOUTH + PRUE + PATCH / OLD PATCH
 + SILVIA / OLD SILVIA + LITTLE AFFEY / GRETAW'S AFFEY + NANNO + LITTLE MINGO + MOLL
 HENDERSON + FANNY / FRANCES (FANNY) COKER + ACREE + NANCY MAILLARD / NANNY
 + JOHN + RITTA / STANLEY'S RITTA / RITTA MAILLARD + 'VIOLET WELLS ALIAS SALLY'
 + HALLSTOCK + HANNAH + FREDERICK'S FANNY / FANNY FREDERICK + BETSEY ARTHURTON /
 MULATTO + BARBAI / BABA + MIAH + GEORGE WELLS + TOM JONES + POLYDORE + ABRAHAM
 + JACOB + PAUL + POLLY WEEKES + LEAH WEEKES + RANGE'S WILL / JACK WILL + GLASGOW /
 GLASGOW WELLS + JEMMY WELLS + PETER / PETER NEALE / MULATTO PETER + JOHN WILKS
 + DANIEL + SOONE + LAUREE + DAVY / DAVID + BETTY SCOLES + BETTY SCOLES'S UNNAMED
 DAUGHTER + BILLY / WILLIAM + CAESAR + JACK / JOHN + AMELIA / SARAH AMELIA + JENNY
 + JEMMY + 'TOM TROSS ALIAS TOM THRASKE' + PEGGY + LITTLE CUDJOE + JUDY / JUDY (JUDITH)
 ROSS + GRACE + PHILLEY + BEN / BEN WEEKES + MULATTO POLLY/ MARY (POLLY) PINNEY /
 MARY (POLLY) WEEKES / POLLY SCARBOROUGH + MARY + JILL / 'JILL ALIAS JUDY' / JUDY
 + RANGE + BILLEY / BILLEY (WILLIAM) JONES + TOM / TOM PENNY + LITTLE PHILLIP / PHILLIP
 + JUGGY + BESS POWELL / ELIZABETH POWELL + PERMOLIA + JAMES PEADEN / JAMES PEDEN
 + MINGO + DICK + CUBA + PEMBROKE / PEMBERTON + TOM / TOM VAUGHAN + NANNY
 + CUDJOE + NERO + TOM NORRIS + SARAH NOLAN + MULATTO CHARLES + MULATTO NANNY /

NANNY NOLAN + CUFFEE + AN UNNAMED CREOLE + CONSTANT + POLLY HERBERT + BILLY
 HERBERT + ALMOND / ORMOND + PEREEN / PAREEN + AN UNKNOWN PERSON, PREVIOUSLY
 OWNED BY EDWARD HERBERT + AN UNKNOWN PERSON, PREVIOUSLY OWNED BY EDWARD
 HERBERT + AN UNKNOWN PERSON, PREVIOUSLY OWNED BY EDWARD HERBERT + AN
 UNKNOWN PERSON, PREVIOUSLY OWNED BY EDWARD HERBERT + MARY PATH + MICKEY
 + FRIDAY + JAMES ARTHURTON + WILLIAM FISHER + SACHARISSA / OLD SACHARISSA + CUDJOE
 STANLEY + JOAN + SUSANNA + LÆNA / LENA + SALLY PEADEN + FRANCES + QUASHEE /
 YELLOW QUASHEY + FRANKEY VAUGHAN + FIDO + PÆNDA / PENDER + HAZARD + LITTLE NERO
 / NERO + LITTLE ROBIN + QUAKEY + LITTLE PATTY / PATTY + 'BILLEY SOCCO ALIAS KOOFF' /
 BILLEY KEEFE + LITTLE BRIDGET / BRIDGET + JEMMY OLIVER + LITTLE YANNEKY / YOUNG
 YANNEKY / YANNEKY PINNEY + DICK / NEVIS DICK + TOM MCGILL / TOM COOK / MCGILL'S TOM
 + HECTOR / HECTOR MCGILL + LITTLE QUAW + LYDIA / LYDIA MURRAY + CLARISSA + BESS
 + JEMMY JONES + CHRISTIANNA JACQUES / MARRIED NAME LEWIS + RANDOLPH + JIBBA /
 MOLLY'S JIBBA / MADGE'S JUBA / JUBBA PINNEY + CATHERINE / CATHERINE PINNEY (POSSIBLY
 CATY CLARKE) / CATHERINE CLARK + QUASHEE / QUASHEY NOLAN OR NOLAND + KITTY
 + WILLIAM + LITTLE BETTISCOMBE / BETTISCOMBE + HETTY + JOHN FISHER + EDWARD
 FISHER + SALLY FISHER + JOSEPH FISHER + JERRY + BETTY / LITTLE BETTY + ANDREW +
 GRANDISON + LUCY + TOM + POLYDORE + FOE + KATE + DICK RAYES + CATO + CATTO
 + FRANKEY / FRANKY WEEKS + LETTY + HARRIETT + LUBBO + LITTLE YABBA / YABBA + COUNT
 DE GRASSE / COMPTE DE GRASSE + BILLY KEEFE / BILLEY KEEFFE + JOHN BERTRAND + LITTLE
 HARRIETT / HARRIETT + SUSY + PHILIP WOODLEY + LEAH + LITTLE FRANK / FRANK SANDERS
 OR SAUNDERS + ANN + JOHNNY + JENETTA + LITTLE VIOLET / VIOLET + LITTLE OMAH
 + BROOM'S SARAH / SARAH BROOM / SARAH FISHER + TOMMY / TOM / THOMAS (TOM) FISHER
 / THOMAS CLARKE + LITTLE PETER / PETER NOLAN(D) / POSSIBLY PETER PENNY + PATTY /
 SARAH'S PATTY / PATTY FISHER + CHARLES JONES + FREDERICK JONES + BETSEY JONES
 + MARY + JEANETT + 'JENNY WHITEHALL ALIAS JENNY YOUNG' + PUSSEY / BESSEY + DICK NEAL
 + JIBBA / NELLY'S JIBBA / JUBA / JUBBA PINNEY + NED + PHOEBE / PHEBA + LITTLE CUBBENNA
 / CUBBENNA + FRANK FISHER + DICK + LITTLE POLLY / POLLY NEAL + FLORA'S PETER / PETER
 COOPER + ROSE + PEGGY RICHENS / OLD PEGGY RICHENS + BESSY RICHENS + QUASHEBA /
 RICHEN'S QUASHEBA + KITTY / KITTY CLARKE / KITTY WALLACE + JENETTA SCARBOROUGH /
 JENNETT (JANE) SCARBOROUGH + LITTLE LONDON / LONDON + LITTLE LEWEY + MIMBA +
 LISSY + FANNY COKER + BETSEY DREDGE + FRANKY / FRANKEY NEAL + WILLIAM COKER
 + MARY-ANN / MARY ANN PENNY / MARRIED NAME CLIFTON + CLARISSA + BLANDFORD
 + GEORGE VAUGHAN + JOHN FREDERICK + PAUL SCARBOROUGH / JOHN (JOHN PAUL)
 SCARBOROUGH + JENNY + HANNAH'S POLLY + LITTLE MOLLY / MOLLY / MARY / MOLLY PINNEY
 + MARY (MOLLY) NUGENT / MOLLY PINNEY + MARY MASON / MARY PINNEY + HERCULES
 + BARBAI'S FLORA / FLORA + TOM BOSSU + GOLIAH + JOHN FISHER + LITTLE JOE / JOE NEAL /
 POSSIBLY JOE HUGGINS + TOM CHAPMAN + DORINDA + HONEYFIELD / MARY HONEYFIELD /
 MOLLY HONEY FIELD + BETSEY / ELIZABETH SCARBOROUGH + WOODCOTS / WOODCUTTS

+ JACK COKER + FORBES / DR FORBES / FORBES PINNEY + JACK STEWARD (STUART AND STEWARD) + BILLEY STEWARD (STUART AND STEWARD) + BOLL + THOMAS PEADEN / TOM + CLARKE + LITTLE MICKEY / MICKEY / MICK / MIKE + PRINCE + DOMINGO / MARRIED NAME PROBABLY WILLIAMSON OR BAILEY + AZARIAH + PATTY + JOHNTONG'S HETTY / HETTY / HETTY SALMON + LEWIS WILLIAMS + GEORGE SCARBOROUGH + HANNAH'S DIANA + BESSY'S JOE + POLLY HERBERT / POLLY PINNEY NANNO / NANNO PINNEY + PHILLEY'S KATE / KATY (KATE) NEAL + LITTLE PHIBBA / PHIBBA PINNEY / PHIBBA SANDERS OR SAUNDERS + BARBAI'S KATE / KATE / KATEY LONDON + MARY FOG / MARY FORBES / MARY FLOGG / POSSIBLY MARY HUGGINS + PRINCE / OLD PRINCE + PEGGY + JOHN PETER + MARY + PRINCESS + RITTA + NANNY + MUSSEY / MUSSEY PINNEY + JOSIAH / JOSIAH PARRIS + JOAN + ANDO / ANDREW PINNEY + NANCY SEYMOUR / NANCY STEWARD / ANN (MARGARET ANN) SCARBOROUGH + PHOENIA/ PHANIA + FRANCES / FRANCES NEAL (NEALE) / FRANCES HUGGINS + HENRY WILLIAMS + DIANA / DIANA PINNEY / MARRIED NAME PROBABLY WILLIAMS + GEORGE / GEORGE SMITH + JOHNNY + MARY / MARY WEBBE / MARY PARRIS / MARY WEEKES + MILLE / MILLEY / AMELIA CLARKE / MARRIED NAME SCARBOROUGH + BETSEY / BETSEY ARTHURTON + CUBA'S PEGGY + MARTIN + SALLY'S BETSEY / BETSEY / BETSEY SAUNDERS + AZARIAH / AZARIAH PINNEY / AZARIAH PARRIS + GUY / GUY CLARKE / GUY PINNEY (PINNY) + MIAH + NANCY WILLIAMS / ANN WILLIAMS + PHILLEY'S HETTY / HETTY NELSON + JAMES FISHER / JAMES PARRIS / PROBABLY JAMES PENNY + BILLEY / WILLIAM NICHOLSON + RICHARD + CHRISTIANNA + SALLY / SALLY CLARKE + JAMES / JAMES PEDEN + CHARLES / CHARLES PEADEN + JEMMY / JIMMEY + ROBBIN + WILLIAM / WILLIAM JONES + CHARLES + PATTY + FELIX + LITTLE SANTEE / SANTY/ SANTEE HUGGINS / SANTY PINNEY + DINNY / DINNEY PINNEY + PHOEBE / LITTLE PHOEBE / PHOEBE PINNEY / PROBABLY PHOEBE CLARKE + JOHN PEDERO + SIAH / JOSIAH NICHOLSON + RITTA MAILLARD / LITTLE REETA + FANNY FREDERICK + WILLIAM DOUGLAS / POSSIBLY WILLIAM PENNY / WILLIAM CLARKE PINNEY + THOMAS / THOMAS PINNEY (PENNY) + JOANNA OR JOHANNA / HANNAH PINNEY (PENNY) / MARRIED NAME PARRIS + JAMES + POMPEY + CAESAR + AUGUSTUS + JUNO / JONEY PINNEY / JUNO CLARKE / MARRIED NAME JOANNA MARTIN + FANNY / FANNY JONES / PROBABLY FRANCES HERBERT + MARY SCARBOROUGH + FRANCES / FRANCES PINNEY + GREENWICH / PROBABLY GREENWICH HUGGINS / GREENWICH PENNY / GREENWICH WARD + PHIBBA + GLORY + MIAH + VIOLET + FLORA / FLORA RICHARDS / MARRIED NAMES HOBSON AND SHERIFFE? + TOBY / TOBIN + JOB / JOBE + SALLY / SALLY PENNY / SARAH PINNEY + ADAM + LITTLE LUCY / LUCY / LUCY PINNEY + BILLY / BILLY PALLAS + TALLIHO / TALLYHO PINNEY + ALFRED + BUNDA / BANDA + NASINO + DORSET + CASTEEL / POSSIBLY CASTILE (CASTIELE) HUGGINS / CASTEL PENNY + JOHN FRENCH + JOHN + PATIENCE + JOHN TYSON + LITTLE PATTY / PATTY PENNY + POLLY PUSSEY / PERHAPS POLLY HUGGINS / MARRIED NAME MARTIN? + KITSEY / KITSEY GREATHEAD / MARRIED NAMES CATHERINE SMITH / KITTY ELLIS OR ELLICE + PAUL + JOHNNY EBONY + STEPHEN + REBECCA / REBECCA PENNY / REBECCA PINNEY / MARRIED NAME TOBIN + BETSEY GREATHEAD + VIOLET / VIOLET PENNY / MARRIED NAME POSSIBLY HUGGINS / VIOLET PINNEY + MARIAH + WILLIAM PEADEN /

PROBABLY WILLIAM PENNY + WILLIAM / PROBABLY WILLIAM PINNEY OR PENNY + GEORGE
 + JOE EDWARD / PROBABLY JOSEPH HUGGINS + RODNEY / PROBABLY RODNEY +
 SCARBOROUGH + ANNE / POSSIBLY ANN HUGGINS + RICHARD GREATHEAD + MARTHA /
 MARTHA SIMPSON? / MARTHA CLARK ? / MARRIED NAME ILES? + CHARLOTTE + JACK + JOHN
 PEROE + WELLINGTON / WELLINGTON PARRIS + LITTLE NELLY + SUSANNA / SUSANNAH
 PINNEY / SUSANNA HUGGINS + BILLY JONES + VALENTINE + ORSON + JOSEY + AUGUSTUS
 + JOSEY + LITTLE PRINCE / PRINCE + JANE BROWN / JANE HUGGINS / MARRIED NAME
 BRIDGWATER? + TOBY + MARY + ROSEY / ROSE + ISAAC + DAVID SMITH + ELEANOR
 + PRISCILLA / PRISCILLA PENNY / POSSIBLY PRISCILLA MORGAN + CAMBERWELL + PEGGY /
 MARRIED NAME PENNY (PINNEY) + THOMAS / THOMAS MORE + NELSON + BILLY KEEPE + JOHN
 / JOHN KEEP + ELICK + NANCY + THOMAS '(CALLED TOM)' + JOHN FRENCH + LUCY + CLARAH /
 CLARE / PROBABLY CLARA WILLIAMS + JOHN TONGUE + PHIDO / FIDO + JACKY + INNIS /
 INNES / JAMES + NANCY JACKSON + ANGELICA / ANGELICA (ANGELIQUE) HENLEY? + SUSEY
 + WILTSHIRE / SHIRE / POSSIBLY WILTSHIRE BARETT + BOB + PRIMUS + JIMMY / JAMES
 + CHARLES / CHARLES PINNEY + EMMA + WILLIAM JOHN + AUGUSTUS + JOHN ONION +
 CHRISTIANA + THOMAS / TOM BROWN / POSSIBLY THOMAS HUGGINS + WILLIAM SPRINGET
 + BILLY WEEKES + GEORGE SANDERS / SAUNDERS + DIANA VERNON + ELIZA + WILLIAM
 BIRRELL + ELIZABETH + SAMUEL + JOSEPH / JOSEPH CLARKE? + ANN BROWNE + ROSWELL /
 PROBABLY RASBURN / RASMUS BELL + IVANHOE / ALMOST CERTAINLY ABRAM + CINDERELLA
 + NANCY JONES + JOHN HOBSON + HENRY WILLIAMS + PHIBBA CLARKE + JAMES WEEKES
 + FANNY PENNY / FRANCIS + JOHN GREATHEAD + ENEAS SMITH + JOHN + TOMMEY + RITTA
 CLARKE + EDWARD + LEAH + BRIDGET + EDWIN / EDWIN GEORGE SMITH + BETSEY + KITTY/
 CATHERINE + SALLY / PROBABLY SARAH PINNEY + NICK SANDERS (SAUNDERS) (Eickelmann,
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*My Family and Slavery: Memory
Shame and Denial*

Appendix

(not included in word count)

Appendix 1: first treatment

Blood Lines (written: 2018.02.26)

PROLOGUE:

Black hands carefully thread simple beads onto a length of twine to make a necklace. When it is finished, the hands place the necklace beside a primitive oil lamp and then set to work making an identical one – a twin for the first.

Both necklaces finished, they lie side by side on a rough-hewn table, lit by the yellow light of the flickering lamp.

PRESENT 01:

A couple drive through the back roads of rural Dorset. At the wheel is *JUSTIN PARKER*, a 45 year old white man, born c.1971. The passenger is *HANNAH WHEELER* (she doesn't use her husband's name), a 30 year old black woman, born c.1986. He drives, she stares out of the window at a green, pleasant and for her, alien land. Dorset is long way from the parts of the British Isles that contain a reassuring critical mass of those who share her dark black skin colour.

Along the road they pass the occasional sign announcing 'Vote Leave'. It's 2016 and there's a referendum taking place to decide on whether to leave or remain in the European Union.

They drive up to an old house with out-buildings that are in serious need of attention. Justin switches off the engine and stares. He seems to be looking less at the actual structures, more at the memories they hold. Hannah looks curiously at the man she has been married to for the last ten years. This is an aspect of his past she knows virtually nothing about.

Justin reaches into his worn briefcase and removes a padded envelope. He up-ends it and a bunch of old keys fall out into his hand. He walks to the front door. Hannah follows. One key fits the ancient lock. The door creaks as it opens, resisted by stiff hinges and several month's worth of post lying behind it.

Justin flicks a light switch - the power is off. They set off to explore. In this narrative, the house a character in its own right - old, mysterious, neglected.

Justin knows his way around. Hannah is more interested in her husband's reactions than the house. He gives out minimal information as they go round. "This was the library." "I used to play here." They enter a large room with a bed in the corner. "This was the drawing room. I'm told it's where he died."

They head upstairs. “This was my room.” They both take in an incongruous collection of faded and tattered posters on the wall. They include Billy Bragg, Woody Guthrie, images of Martin Luther King and the tragic photo of his aides pointing to where they thought the assassin’s bullet came from - and along with more images, some deriding Margaret Thatcher, others supporting the National Union of Mineworkers. Somewhat incongruously mixed among them are images of iconic modern buildings of the ’70s. Taken together they reveal the formation of a rebellious young man with an interest in social justice - and architecture.

They hear a knock at the front door and Justin goes down. A woman waits outside. They stare at each other, both taking stock of the changes twenty-seven years have wrought.

“Hello Rachel” says Justin finally.

Hannah joins them and knows right away that the two of them have a history. Justin introduces Hannah as his wife. The two women greet each other, smile and shake hands - while critically checking each other out. Black hand connects with white hand – and in the bucolic, archetypal English setting the contrast between their skin colours could not be greater.

Rachel’s face shows the wear and tear of a farmer’s life. Stress, long hours, early mornings, working outside in all weathers have all left their mark. It’s hard to believe she and Justin are the same age and grew up together.

Justin enquires about Rachel’s husband Frank - and learns he died eight years ago. That he had no idea reveals how little interest he has taken in keeping up with the people from this part of his past. Rachel on the other hand has closely followed Justin’s career as an architect. She mentions that everyone was amazed that Duncan left the place to him rather than one of his sons - and asks what he intends to do with his unexpected inheritance.

Hannah is as interested in hearing the answer to this question as is Rachel. Justin, who is still making up his mind, says: “Take a proper look - have a think - I might do something with it.” Rachel mentions that other members of Duncan’s family are not going to be too happy with that. Some of them have been sniffing around the place she tells him, and there’s talk of going to lawyers. (DEVELOP)

Before she leaves Rachel asks how long they are staying and on hearing they have to drive back in the evening, invites them both to the farmhouse for tea before they leave. Despite his uncertainty, Justin came prepared. He walks around and takes picture of each facade of the main house and the out-buildings. Then with Hannah’s help, he measures the outside of them and the sizes of the windows. It’s quick work using a laser-measure. Hannah holds up the clipboard at each corner and Justin shines a red

spot on it. He calls out the distances which Hannah writes down alongside her well drawn sketches.

They continue inside. They work well together - Hannah knows what she's doing and as they work, Justin picks up what is clearly an old refrain - she shouldn't have given up architecture - she is wasted on Caribbean History. It's good humoured banter and perhaps with some practical truth behind it. They work their way to the very top of the main house, ending up in a long attic that runs from gable end to gable end. They tread carefully but despite some signs of worm, the floor is sound. Justin places his measuring device against the wall and shines the laser beam the full length of the attic to the far end. He calls the figure out to Hannah.

"That's odd," she says. "Do that one again." The same figure is called out.

Asked what the problem is she tells Justin that it should be nearly a meter longer. Together they walk down to the far wall and see straight away that it isn't brick like the other end, but old wooden paneling. Hannah gently knocks on it. The echo suggests a cavity behind. They look at each other. "Tools are in the car," Justin says.

Using a large screwdriver, Justin prises up a corner of the panelling at head height and then with the claw end of a hammer removes enough to look through. Facing them is the real gable end - a meter from the partition. Hannah takes out her phone, switches on the built in torch and shines it to the left and right. Nothing. She shines upwards and then almost as an afterthought points the phone down.

"Oh!" she exclaims. Justin's head joins hers. They stare down at a very old and dusty chest.

PAST 01

The port of a small, Caribbean Island, not unlike Nevis. It's the late seventeen hundreds. A ship ties up at the dockside. Its cargo consists of human beings. Enslaved Africans emerge blinking from the hold after a voyage of indescribable horror lasting many weeks. Women, men and children, many sick, all filthy, gather on the deck under the eyes of the stony faced crew.

Pushed, prodded and whipped, they're treated exactly like animals, because that is the way their 'owners', together with the ship's crew, have in their self-serving way, *chosen* to see them. They are separated by sex and age. After weeks of horror and neglect chained up in the bowels of the ship, where close to a quarter died and thrown overboard, the task is now is to make them attractive to prospective purchasers. Whatever rags they might still be wearing are stripped from them. Two sailors man a pump and they are hosed down. Buckets of water are filled and soap provided. Notwithstanding the utter horror they've been through, they're relieved to wash off at least the outward stains of their unspeakable experience - the inner scars will not be so

easy to erase.

For the purposes of this narrative, one plain and ordinary young black woman is of interest. Other than the curiosity of her gaze there is nothing that distinguishes her from all the others who have survived the nightmare journey. Her name is EBELE (23)

Ebele is in the first group to be sold. Oil is rubbed on her skin to make it look healthy. Together with forty others - a mix of men, women and children - they stand naked in the centre of the port's slave market. White plantation owners, overseers, managers and no doubt a few window shoppers, wander among them. They prod, squeeze, even pull back lips to look at teeth. As with all auctions, an air of studied dissatisfaction and disinterest is displayed by the examining white men - to reveal an obvious preference for any particular slave could result in paying a higher price. But when it comes to the younger females, the prospective purchasers cannot disguise their prurient interest.

Ebele is purchased, and along with others, including several children, is taken in a cart to the interior of the island. They pass seemingly endless fields of sugar cane. It looks like the whole island is dedicated to growing just one crop. Further on they see a team of slaves cutting cane. A white man on a horse watches the work but it's an enslaved African whose job it is to whip the workers - regularly and seemingly at random. Ebele takes it all in.

After her arrival Ebele is taken to the slave compound and given a simple shift made of osnaburg fabric - a rough cotton. She can finally cover herself. Ebele doesn't know it, but as many as a quarter of newly purchased slave do not survive the process of adaptation to their work - known as 'seasoning'.

Luck plays a large part in survival and Ebele's good fortune is to be placed in a hut with an old woman - bent double, worn out by a life of gruelling work and waiting to die. On the face of it, not much to be thankful for - but this woman comes from the same region as Ebele and speaks her language. Her name is OLUJIMI. This simple fact radically changes Ebele's prospects and over next few months, before the old woman takes her last breath, the late night conversations between them give Ebele an essential insight into the nightmare world into which she has been sold, how it functions, what her prospects are and what strategies she might adopt in order to achieve at least a tolerable existence - and avoid the short, hard life of labour, torture, rape and childbirth that is the lot of most female slaves. Her best chance, Olujimi advises, is to try and form an attachment with any white man who is not a beast, have his children and if possible, get him to care for them.

The old woman's words stay with Ebele long after she passed away: "You may never be free, but if you get this man to love his children, one day *they* might be.

PRESENT 02

The old house, known since it was built in the 18th century as BETTISDOWN, is covered in scaffolding. The outbuildings and barn have been converted and are finished. Where once stood derelict structures are now an architect's office, a cottage where Jason and Hannah live and a studio for Hannah's new, substantial project - the contents of the chest.

For Jason, the transformation of Bettisdown into something modern and special, has become an overriding passion, almost an obsession. He has employed a small local builder called FRANK GATWARD, whom he pushes to work at a higher standard than he's accustomed to. Gatward knows which side his bread is buttered and appears happy to learn - as long as it's Justin doing the teaching. When Hannah has to stand in for her husband, Gatward struggles. Taking instruction on how to do his job from a woman, not just any woman but a young, smart, black woman, is more than he's comfortable with - mainly because behind his discomfort lies a strong attraction - which he is doing his best to ignore. (DEVELOP)

Hannah barely notices him. She has noted his antipathy to her skin colour and gender, and is more than happy to leave him to his own devices. She spends all her time in the studio with the documents. The contents of the chest have changed her prospects as a historian considerably and she's now the recipient of an advance to write a book. Both she and Justin were adamant the papers shouldn't be moved - so she also has a British Library grant to digitise them in situ. Pride of place in the studio is the scanning setup - a high end digital camera on a column attached to a baseboard onto which two soft led lights shine at exactly forty-five degrees. Beside this sits the chest from which the contents are slowly seeing the light of day for the first time in over 200 years.

Hannah has barely started, but the contents so far consist of letter books and inventories. Below them are many more volumes that look like they might be notebooks or diaries. Justin's family know little of their history - just that a forebear of Jason called William Parker made a fortune in the West Indies, returned to England and built Bettisdown with the proceeds. The documents promise to throw a whole new light not only onto exactly on how his fortune was made but on Caribbean slavery in general. Most of the papers are not in good condition - hence the urgent need to digitise them before even attempting to read them. It's slow, painstaking work. Hannah wears white cotton gloves and takes infinite care over each high-resolution scan. Once copied, the papers aren't returned to the chests, but interleaved in tissue paper and placed in special numbered boxes. It's only at the end of the day when the lights are switched off that Hannah can sit in front of the computer and for a few minutes get a sense of what that day's scans contain. At the current rate of progress it will be many months before everything is copied.

Hannah picks up the first of the diaries and places it under the scanner. The front is imaged, then the back. She opens it up to the first page, taking care not to strain the

spine. As she delicately turns the first few pages, a gradual change comes over her as it dawns that she has before her something quite different from what went before.

The copies of letters, the day to day notes on the running of a slave labour plantation, the lists of slave names and against them the punishments meted out, details of branding irons and their design were shocking enough - but the diary she is copying now contain a level of horrific detail that as far as she knows, is quite unique. She can barely believe her eyes.

PAST 02

SIMON JOINER (30) is a cooper who makes 'hogsheads' (barrels for the sugar shipped back to England). Like many tradesmen before him, he has ended up in the colonies because things went wrong for him in England. In desperate financial straights, he indentured himself to a ship's captain headed for the West Indies. Once in the Caribbean the captain sold him to a planter to recover his costs - and also make a tidy profit. An ordinary working man, Simon is not particularly attractive or virtuous, but possessed with enough innate decency to acknowledge the humanity of the enslaved Africans he works with. The other white workers on his plantation participate with enthusiasm in the ubiquitous brutality and torture meted out to the enslaved African men – and the daily rape of the enslaved African women. They take a dim view of Simon's decent behaviour - as if he is somehow letting the side down. Of all the white men on the plantation, the pre-eminent sadist is the overseer *WILLIAM PARKER* - a truly cruel man.

Simon is like his fellow white tradesmen in one respect - like them he turns to the female slaves for sex. But instead of the rape and coercion favoured by his colleagues, he finds a regular partner - and develops with her the approximation of a relationship, and after a while has a child with her. The female slave in question is of course Ebele, who with guile and a strong instinct to survive, picked out Simon and engineered their union.

By following Olujimi's advice, Ebele has achieved a measurably better life. She works in the great house kitchen and her duties are minimal. Simon treats her tolerably well. The relationship is sanctioned by Parker, albeit reluctantly as he had his own eye on Ebele. She has a home in which to raise the young mulatto daughter called Ngozi, fathered by Simon. Considering the alternatives, it's not such a bad deal. In the dysfunctional, un-natural world of a slave labour sugar plantation, where fear and violence is used to maintain the hegemony of a tiny number of whites over a much larger number of enslaved Africans, Ebele and Simon have carved out something remarkable. It cannot last.

The plantation has an elderly absentee owner, *CHARLES NORRIS* who lives in Bristol. He couldn't bear Nevis and left the estate in the hands of a manager - who has long since succumbed to the unlimited rum ration and is in a permanent state of intoxication. Between the absent owner and the drunk manager, the plantation is very far from

profitable or efficient. The person who actually runs it is Parker. He artfully fiddles the books and finds ingenious ways to divert much of the plantation's output to himself.

A letter arrives announcing the death of Norris senior, and the imminent arrival of his oldest son, EDWARD NORRIS. Sensing trouble, Parker prepares the ground to make sure all the blame for the state of the plantation will be pinned on the drunken Manager.

Sooner than expected, Edward arrives full of new ideas, determined to turn the plantation around and make his fortune producing sugar. He's young, obsessive and attempts to micro-manage every aspect plantation life. As predicted, the first thing he does is ship out the manager, and put his trust in the 'loyal' Parker. Edward has a fetish for lists and inventories, and accounts for all his property, down to the last nail - and his property includes his slaves. Edward is quick understand that if he is to make money, the profits from the sugar shipped to England and sold in England, must stay in England - and the plantation must pay for itself.

With Parker, he hatches a plan to save money by dispensing with his white tradesmen - but not before they have trained slaves in their skills so they can take their place. Not only will he have free use of them on his own plantation, but earn extra income from renting them out to his neighbours.

Simon is instructed to pick out three suitable slaves and apprentice them as coopers. He follows his orders and for a while takes pleasure in passing on his skills. Unsurprisingly, the slaves turn out to be keen and fast learners. Long before it dawns on Simon, Ebele realises that Simon is working himself out of a job.

PRESENT 03:

Progress on the house is slow - but it does now have a new roof. Being a grade II listed property, it's identical to the original but now with insulation - and doesn't leak. Other improvements can be seen behind the scaffolding. Individually built window frames are in place with cleverly disguised double glazing - exact copies of the rotten originals. In the studio, Hannah switches off the lights and carefully puts away the last diary from the first trunk - number 21. The last thing in the box is something wrapped in a cloth. She lifts it out and carefully unwraps it. Inside is a collection loose beads and the remains of a rotten thread, suggesting they had perhaps been a simple necklace. They have some dark staining - perhaps from having been in contact with something. She wraps them up again, puts everything in small cardboard box, and places it on the bookcase.

Hannah has changed. The enthusiastic, ambitious historian with her very own scoop is now burdened by the horrors revealed by the diaries.

Gatward and his crew pack up for the day as Justin arrives from London. His crew leave but he stays on to take Justin round the house, showing what has been achieved during

his absence. Justin is exhausted - but doesn't fail to pick up on the smallest detail. Gatward has gradually absorbed the way things need to be done and is now almost more of a perfectionist than his boss.

Hannah lays the table for dinner. Seven people are expected. Rachel from the farm; WING COMMANDER PHILLIP PARKER, one of Justin's uncles, retired on a gold plated pension; his wife ELEANOR and their son GILES PARKER, a wealth fund manager in the city with his sixteen year old daughter GERALDINE. Divorced, he sees his daughter only sporadically and this is one of his days with her. Jason has kept his uncles, aunts and cousins away from the house since Duncan's surprise decision to leave the valuable and historic property to a grandson he raised but who refused to bend to his will.

By its end, the meal will have become some kind of epiphany for Hannah. As the wine flows and tongues loosen, the frustrated Wing Commander, bitter that he never made it further up the RAF's greasy pole, vents about all those (most of the population it seems) who are betraying the country. While a little more sophisticated with his prejudices, essentially he's cut from the same cloth as his father Duncan. His granddaughter Geraldine, a freshly minted, privileged idealist at the same (now more progressive and co-ed) private school Justin went to, turns on both her father and grandfather with naive but also cruelly astute criticisms. Rachel the bitter farmer rails against the EU, convinced by blind faith rather than any evidence that the referendum result will make her prosperous and the country great again. When the focus of the conversation turns to his transformation of the house, Justin defends the changes he is making. Hannah, while not sharing Justin's passion for bricks and mortar, backs him up.

But these conversations amount to the hors-d'oeuvre - a warm-up for the more fundamental issues lying not too far beneath the surface. It starts when the subject of the documents comes up. Only Hannah knows what they actually contain but despite, or because of their ignorance, everyone has a view on the utility and purpose of digitising them and making them accessible for free to the whole world on-line. With the exception of Justin, the adult white faces round the table, blithely ignorant of the irony, lecture the only black person present about the realpolitik of the legacy of slavery, race and immigration. Justin jumps in to support his wife - but not fast or energetically enough for Hannah, who is left reeling at the hostility, ignorance, lack of empathy and barely disguised prejudice of her in-laws and neighbours.

The guests have left. A hard week in London, the long drive to Dorset and too much wine has done for Justin. He's not even made it to his bed, but snores on the couch. A sober Serena clears the plates. She remembers a quote from the late James Baldwin, "There's no black problem, what we have, is a white problem."

She covers her husband with a blanket.

PAST 03:

Simon has spun it out for as long as possible but he can no longer hide the fact that the three slaves he's trained are now competent coopers - one of them is better at making barrels than he is. Parker tells Simon that Edward Norris is ending his indenture. It's delivered as good news, with the added bonus that Norris is giving Simon free passage to England on a ship leaving the next morning - and the promise of a job in Bristol.

Ebele set out from the start to get her white man to love his child, and succeeded. Simon is distraught at the prospect of sailing away, leaving his 'family' behind. He seeks out a meeting with Norris. Despite having worked for nothing for years to pay off his indenture, Simon found various ways to make and save money and offers Norris all he has to buy the freedom of Ebele and Ngozi. Norris rejects it out of hand and goes on to explain the facts of life: the child Simon has produced is his property, as is her mother. They are part of the assets of the plantation, entered on the balance sheet. He reminds him of the immutable law of slavery which states that regardless who the father is, the child of a slave is a slave. This turns into a lecture on miscegenation and Long's theories of race. He concludes with the God argument. The first time Norris saw human beings being sold at the slave market he was shocked, but then realised that it had to be part of God's plan - or he would not allow it to happen.

Simon breaks the news to Ebele that he will be leaving and there is nothing he can do to help her. He knows he is abandoning his child to a life of hard labour and inevitable sexual exploitation - and the woman he has grown to love, to the attentions of Parker, the worst man on the plantation. Guilty and shamefaced, he packs up his few possessions. He and Ebele can't look at each other. When the cart arrives to take him to Charlestown, his daughter Ngozi runs out of the house to avoid a farewell. Ebele now sees nothing in Simon but his weakness and turns her back on him. The last thing Simon does before leaving is leave his savings on the table.

Ebele is devastated. The old woman's advice has back-fired badly. The family she created as a protection has fractured and she is as powerless and as vulnerable as when first sold at auction.

From a vantage point on the estate Ebele and Ngozi watch the ship carrying the white man she invested her hopes in head slowly towards the horizon

PRESENT 04

The documents have all been scanned, the imaging equipment returned and Hannah is well into the next stage of the process - the careful reading and analysis of what the diaries actually contain.

The first papers are not particularly ground-breaking, but will join the many other sets of accounts and records relating to slave plantations in the Caribbean, Brazil and

America and keep researchers and historians busy. Slave owners everywhere were nothing if not dutiful in keeping precise records of every detail involved in their business. Inventories of existing slaves, slaves born and slaves who died, those who escaped, those re-captured, punished. Taken as a whole, they paint a detailed picture of how the system worked and how ubiquitous were its characteristics.

But it's diaries that have caught Hannah's attention. There's no doubt they were written by Justin's great, great, great grandfather William Parker. With guileless candour they reveal all the ways Parker skimmed and cheated his absent boss - but they contain far more shocking details than that. Every single sexual encounter with female slaves over 20 years is listed as are the precise details of brutal tortures he inflicted on slaves to keep 'control' through a reign of fear.

Things are not going well between Justin and Hannah. She has long wanted to share with her husband what she has been learning - but Justin is away for weeks at a time - either at his London practice, or abroad where his firm has developed a profitable niche in the renovation of very old buildings. The need to pay for the never-ending work on the house requires him to work virtually non-stop.

Leading an increasingly solitary life, Hannah only leaves her studio to take long walks in the countryside around the house - invariably alone.

As an antidote to spending so many hours in the virtual company of Jason's grotesque great, great, great grandfather, Hannah's mind turns to her own forebears when she comes across an entry by Parker in one of the later diaries that mentions a woman called EBELE and a daughter called NGOZI. The names stand out - in all the lists of slaves she has come across previously, names were given by owners - often chosen with cruel irony.

Where had she heard those African names before? It comes to her almost at once - her grandmother. She reaches for the phone.

PAST 04

Ebele is cutting sugar cane. The line of slaves facing the tall, green topped plants contains both men and women. She pauses for a moment in the heat to wipe the sweat from her face. She looks across at her daughter Ngozi dragging the cut cane into piles - intelligent like her mother and far sooner than Ebele wanted, fast turning into a woman.

This gruelling work is their new reality since Simon's departure. A crack of a whip further up the line motivates her to turn back to the cane. The man cracking the whip is also a slave - but that doesn't mean he isn't applying himself to his work. The overseer on his horse watches the driver more than anyone else - and if he fails to 'motivate' his fellow slaves with sufficient enthusiasm, he will himself be on the receiving end of the lash.

A familiar white man rides up to check on the harvest - it's William Parker, the self-important, newly promoted Manager of Pilsdon Plantation.

Parker has come to collect extra hands for work at another part of the plantation. Ebele and her daughter are among those taken off the cane cutting line and led by Parker to the nerve centre of the entire sugar operation - the boiling house. As they arrive, they pass the mill. Circling mules turn the rollers crushing the cane to release the juice - which is then piped to a large container in the boiling house called the 'receiver'.

The juice is tempered with lime so not to sour, and ladled into the first of five coppers, each with fires beneath that have to be constantly fed with dry mill trash (the remains of crushed canes) This is the job that Ebele and her daughter are given. It's one of the hardest simply because of the heat. The slaves ordered to work there are usually being punished for something. No-one can bear it for more than a few hours.

From the receiver the cane juice is ladled into the first copper where it is boiled, skimmed and reduced by evaporation. The thickened liquor is ladled into the next, smaller copper and so on until it reaches the last and smallest copper known as the 'tache'. An extra hot fire is kept up under this copper and from it the sugar will reach the magic point of crystallisation - known as the 'strike'.

Of the three critical processes at the heart of the making of sugar - tempering, striking and potting - striking is the most mysterious. It's an irony not lost on overseers, managers and owners that the entire enterprise of sugar production rests on the instinct, skill and experience of one slave - the 'head boiler'. Protected only by thick, calloused skin from having done the same thing countless times before, the boiler inserts a forefinger and thumb into the thick, boiling liquor in the tache and judges the strike moment by the nature of the thread when he stretches finger and thumb apart. On his word alone, the fire is dampened and the contents of the tache emptied into the cooler.

After cooling, the contents are scooped out and put into hogsheads or barrels (known as 'potting') - and taken to the curing house. The process is not quite over - the barrels are raised off the ground, so the molasses can drain out into containers while the crystallised sugar remains inside the barrel. Along with the skimmings removed during boiling, the molasses is then taken to the 'still' house to be made into rum.

From the moment the cane is cut, to the filling of the hogsheads, the process is a production line - pre-dating a means of production thought later to have been an invention of the industrial revolution.

As dusk approaches, the process winds down. The cutters stop cutting. The millers stop grinding and the receiver isn't replenished with cane juice. When it's emptied, the fire under the first copper is allowed to go out. It is at this moment Parker instructs the boiling house overseer to take care of the last part of the process and make sure everything is shut down properly and the coppers and pipes thoroughly cleaned. He singles out Ebele and some other slaves to stay behind and do that work. He releases

the others, among them Ngozi.

Parker demanded sex with Ebele the day after Simon left. He was well known to have an interest in young girls and so each time she was raped by him, Ebele was only thankful that it was her and not Ngozi receiving his attentions. But she had a sense of foreboding when with several hours of work still left to do, she saw Parker on his horse, riding behind the slaves as they walked wearily back to their compound - his eyes clearly on Ngozi.

Two hours later and exhausted, Ebele enters the slave compound. The glances from some of the other women are enough to warn her. She enters her hut and her daughter is curled up in the foetal position on the simple cot that passes for a bed. Ebele looks down at her - there's no doubt what has happened. Tears roll down her face – she is overwhelmed by the combined emotions of anger and grief.

An older female slave enters the hut and kneels beside Ngozi to comfort her. Worked to death, treated like beasts, the simplest act of solidarity and compassion between one slave and another is a victory of humanity over barbarity.

It's night. Ebele and Ngozi walk along a deserted beach in the moonlight beside a calm sea. After some minutes they arrive at the appointed spot and wait. Ebele has long prepared for this eventually. At last the money Simon left her can be put to good use. Half of it is sewn into Ngozi's simple shift, the other half Ebele clutches in her hand. She only wishes she had acted sooner. A tall black man steps out from the tree line. He and Ebele know each other and whisper the briefest of words of greeting. The arrangement has already been made. Ebele hands the man the money. He briefly leaves, then re-appears hauling a small boat that had been hidden out of sight. It's simple dingy with one sail. All three of them help drag it to the sea.

This is the moment. Ebele embraces her daughter for what she knows will be the last time. The final thing she does for her daughter is take from her own neck one of a pair of simple bead necklaces and fasten it around Ngozi's neck. From now on, wherever they are in the world, they will be symbolically connected.

Emboli watches as the small boat sail away until it disappears into the blackness.

PRESENT 05

Hannah sits on the top deck of a London bus looking out at the city she grew up in. It's four in the afternoon, the time school children head home. A large group of energetic kids charge up stairs and scramble for seats, shouting, pushing and shoving. The mix of children is remarkable - the four corners of the globe are represented, in every ethnicity and skin colour. The noise level becomes unbearable. Hannah presses the bell. She gets off and walks the rest of the way.

She walks down a long residential street near Green Lanes. Despite only moving to the

country recently, London already feels like a different place. Dorset has woven its spell over her as it does to everyone who moves there. She grew up in this street and knows all the houses. Only a few years ago it was shabby and cosmopolitan, but the remorseless rise in property prices means that it's rapidly gentrifying - smarter front doors, neater gardens, better painted exteriors, wooden venetian blinds instead of net curtains - and more expensive cars.

She gets to her mother's house and rings the bell. A slightly overweight black woman PATIENCE (60) - an older version of Hannah, opens the door. No hello, just: "So you got here" "Hello Mum", says Hannah.

Infrequent phone calls and even fewer visits have built up considerable resentment in Patience. Hannah's grandmother, GRACE (90) is on the other hand simply happy to see her grandchild. She reaches out a wrinkled, unsteady hand and grasps Hannah's with a fierce grip. The bond between them only irritates Patience more. She goes off to put the kettle on.

For her age, Grace's health is good - but her mind isn't. There's not been a diagnosis but when it comes to large parts of her memory, there's nothing there. "Granny, tell me again what your grandmother told you." Grace just smiles. Realizing her gran has got much worse, Hannah is thankful that Grace even knows who she is.

Patience comes back with the tea. "How long has she been like this?" asks Hannah. Her mother is scornful. She tells her that a better daughter wouldn't need to ask that question. Then she relents. "She was fine before Christmas - it happened all of a sudden."

Grace suddenly speaks: "You still making buildings with that white man?" "No grandma. I'm writing a book." She decides it's worth a try. "Did your grandma ever talk about EBELE AND NGOZI? Grace's head lifts at the sound of the two names - they clearly mean something. "Gran?" asks Hannah. Slowly Gran's head slowly sinks again and it's clear that whatever the reaction meant, Grace has forgotten what. It's not long before conversation stops between Hannah and her mother. Grace is deeply asleep in her chair. Hannah says she will have to leave soon and gets up. Patience remembers something. She takes a small velvet pouch from her jewellery box. "I nearly forgot - Grace was insistent - you were to have this. I think she knew her mind was going and she would forget." Hannah glances at her watch - she's worried about the time. She puts the pouch into her bag. "She said was it was important." says her mother.

Hannah and Patience stand at the front door. They embrace. "Don't wait another year." "Bye Mum." Hannah walks away down the street she grew up on. This time she takes the underground. It's a long journey back to Dorset and she has a train to catch.

PAST 05

A slave escape reflects badly on Parker. When he finds out that it's Ngozi who is missing, he knows at once who is responsible and goes straight to Ebele's hut. Her calm refusal to say anything enrages him. He beats her with his stick. But something has changed in Ebele. For once she resists, and in the struggle gets the stick away from him and manages to land a powerful blow to Parker's head. He is stunned and staggers away, bleeding from a bad cut on his temple.

The next day, with his wound dressed, and full of righteous indignation at the temerity of a slave - a woman at that - to resist, he gathers all the slaves of the estate to witness Ebele's punishment. One thing he knows above all else - an example must be made.

Edward Norris is away on the neighbouring island of St Kitts, but as occasionally happens, he has left a guest staying in his house. The man is an early version of a travel writer, making a record of his wonderings around the West Indies with his words and his sketches. Edward Norris is wary of him, suspecting (correctly) that the man has abolitionist sympathies - but in his haste to get over to St Kitts, failed to mention this to Parker.

It would not have made any difference if he had. Parker's blood is up and such is his outraged, focused anger, he is oblivious that Norris' guest has left the house to enjoy the cool of the evening and smoke his pipe and is watching the slaves gathering with curiosity. Up to now the man's output has been anodyne, but he senses he might be about to witness something more newsworthy.

Ebele is led out by the overseer and tied to a tree. She spits in Parker's face - in view of everybody watching. Parker snatches the whip from the overseer and starts to administer the punishment himself. Whippings might for the most serious offences might go to 50 lashes - Parker is exhausted at 150 and hands the whip to the overseer who he commands him to continue until told to stop. The man administers another 139 lashes before the fury finally drains from Parker and the whipping ends. Parker orders that Ebele is left tied to the tree. She is unconscious and her back is a mass of bloody flesh.

Appalled at what he was witnessing, Norris' visitor had counted every one of the 289 lashes given to Ebele. With a fast hand, he also sketched of the scene. When the crowd disperses, he edges a little closer and sketches Ebele's limp body in greater detail. He makes sure to include the blood splattered necklace she is wearing.

The next morning Parker orders Ebele to be cut down. She is dead. She is dragged to the plantation's slave burial ground. A hole is dug. Before she is tipped into it, Parker orders a slave to remove the necklace and bring it to him. As her body is covered with earth, Parker walks away, the bloody necklace in his hand.

This event too is witnessed from a distance by the proto-reporter, and once again, Parker is oblivious of the fact his excesses have been witnessed.

Much later, when night has fallen, a number of the slaves emerge from their huts and sit around Ebele's grave. For many minutes they quietly sing a tribute to yet another among them whose life has been taken.

PRESENT 06

Hannah is in bed beside Jason. The alarm goes off - for her not him. Before leaving for the studio, she kisses her husband and whispers in his ear, reminding him to say goodbye before he leaves. Jason grunts and goes back to sleep. He's making the most of one of the few occasions he can lie in.

Hannah is in the studio working. Much of the book is written and she is editing and putting in images. The cover hasn't been done yet. She waiting for inspiration - and at this moment, it comes to her. It's been staring her in the face all along and it's so obvious she should have thought of months ago - the empty trunk.

She will need the skills of a professional photographer, but Hannah nevertheless decides to take some shots herself to show the publisher. She positions the trunk under the skylight and takes a series of shots with her digital camera. Until now she has only been concerned with what it contained, rather than the trunk itself. For the first time she takes a proper look at it. Beneath the patina of age and wear it is a very well made object, easily 300 years old.

After photographing the exterior and taking close up images of various details, she turns her attention to the inside. It's lined in a stained, torn cotton cloth that once was white. Casually she runs her hand over the material that also lines the inside of the lid. She immediately senses that there is something beneath. She feels around some more - then when sure she is not imagining things, carefully un-picks some stitching, and extracts an old abolitionist pamphlet.

The front page is about the death of a slave woman known by the African name Ebele on the island of Nevis. She was given 300 lashes in front of the slaves of Pilsdon Plantation - for the 'crime' of assault on a white man and the organising of the escape of her mulatto daughter known as Ngozi. The paper also reports rumours that the victim's daughter was recently violated by the Pilsdon Plantation manager - a Mr William Parker, who according to the plantation owner, Mr Edward Norris, is no longer in his employ and has been returned to England.

Having read his diaries, Hannah is not surprised Justin's great, great, great grandfather whipped at least one slave to death - but seeing his cruelty independently corroborated is something else. She studies the illustration. To see more clearly she uses a magnifying glass. She studies the necklace the slave in the illustration is wearing.

It's a ridiculous thought, but she takes down the box containing the beads she found at the bottom of the box and tips them onto the desk. Could this be the same necklace as the one in the illustration? Could the stains be from the blood of the slave Ebele?

Justin chooses this time to come in to say goodbye. The moment he walks in he knows something is very wrong. Hannah looks up from the beads. She points the newspaper, "Read that."

Justin goes carefully goes through every word and is speechless. The barbarity of slavery had till this moment been an abstract concept. But what he has just read has made it personal - his forebear had been monster.

Academic distance and intellectual detachment have deserted Hannah. She reeling at the force with which the past has crashed into the present. Then, without a word she rushes out of the studio, runs across to the cottage and upstairs to their bedroom. She pulls open a drawer and scrabbles around searching for something. She finds what she was looking for and slowly opens the pouch that her grandmother wanted her to have. What falls out into her palm is a necklace made of the very same beads as she found in the trunk - only these are clean, have been cared for and restrung with a modern fastening.

She can barely make sense of it. A coincidence? Two matching necklaces - one in Parker's trunk, likely taken from the neck of a slave whipped to death. Another given to her by her grandmother - presumably a family heirloom. A very uncomfortable thought comes to her. She walks slowly back to her husband. There's a difficult conversation to be had.

EPILOGUE:

The renovation of Bettisdown is complete - Justin has managed the difficult task of respecting the old and integrating the new. But what really makes the building a success is that it has found a purpose. With its ample parking, large grounds, cafeteria and study centre, it is the west of England's very own SLAVERY MUSEUM.

Each room is dedicated to a different aspect of the history of slavery from the Ancient Greeks to present day slavery and people trafficking - with a substantial focus on the Atlantic slave trade and how slavery was an essential part of the colonial project and the development of Britain. One room is dedicated to the story of the house itself and how it came to be built by Mr William Parker. In one corner of the room there's a display about the people who renovated the house and researched the history of the man who built it.

Beneath the photos of Hannah and Justin are the two simple bead necklaces, finally reunited. Below them the report of a DNA test both of them took. Highlighted, in case the implications are not clear, is the part of the report that says they *both* share the DNA of Mr William Parker.

END.

Appendix 2: second treatment

History Is Not The Past (written: 2018.12.16)

Dorset mid 18th century:

Under the supervision of an ARCHITECT and his ASSISTANT, WORKMEN mark out with posts and string the outline of a large house, positioned to offer views over some of the most spectacular Dorset landscape. The man who will live in the house arrives, The Honourable Member of Parliament for the County of Dorset - JOHN FREDERICK SILCOX. He's corpulent, arrogant and exudes both entitlement and venality. The tools and instruments of the day are in use to make sure the architect's grand plans are replicated in reality. Wagons arrive with bricks and timber. The first of the many LABOURERS who will be employed in the building of the house, start to dig out the foundations. It will be called BETTISDOWN.

London: 1995

A man in his late 40s, SAMUEL arrives at a council flat in a grim Victorian estate beside Pentonville Prison on London's Caledonian Road. His profession is hard to discern. There is something about his demeanor that suggests he's a thinker - perhaps an artist of some kind. He rings the doorbell - no answer. He has a key so opens the door. Calls out "Rachel?" No answer. Checks kitchen, bedroom, playroom - the only place left is the bathroom. Opens door to find his mother, DR RACHEL SILCOX, dead in the bath. Small pieces of shit are floating in the water. He stands there staring at her eighty-six year old naked body for a long time. He experiences a range of strong emotions - she had been a disturbed and difficult woman who caused much hurt to those close to her. Samuel turns away and picks up the phone.

The flat is dirty and chaotic and reminds him of the environment of his childhood. There's a 'playroom' for children with no toys - instead it's full of junk and cardboard boxes. He opens a cupboard and finds it brim-full of papers and notebooks he's never seen before. Everything appears to be hand written in block capitals. He picks a notebook at random, starts to read and quickly gives up. The doorbell rings - the UNDERTAKERS have arrived.

Samuel watches his mother's body being carried out of the flat and into a waiting van. He glances round the place and ends staring again at the papers. Clearing the flat out is going to be quite an undertaking.

The flat is nearly empty, ready to be handed back to the council. TWO DISGRUNTLED MEN from a local house clearance firm take out the last piece of furniture. Given that the flat was furnished with junk in the first place, this job won't be making them any money. As requested they leave the boxes containing the papers for

Samuel to clear.

Mid Atlantic c1765

A ten-year-old boy called OBI sits in a corner of the deck where he's not in anyone's way but can still follow the non-stop activity involved in keeping a large sailing ship underway. His wonder at the technological miracles around him is tempered by the horror he has experienced in the last four months. Behind the noise of the wind, the occasional slap of the sails, the endless creaking of the ship and the crash of waves on the hull, there is another sound. He knows what it is and tries to put it out of his mind. It's a low wail of despair and it comes from deep within the ship. He knows because he was making the same sound from the same place himself a few short weeks ago, crammed in with hundreds of grown men and women, each chained down, barely able to move while a mixture of urine, faeces and vomit swilled around them. The atmosphere and heat were unbearable - but by some at least, somehow borne. No-one said a word to him, but even a ten year old from a rural village could see that his fellow Africans are dying in numbers. The CREW start bringing some of the sicker ones up on deck, but stop the practice when the first thing one of them does when they emerge from the hell below, is throw themselves overboard. Now only he and some of the other CHILDREN are allowed on deck. The way the crew kick them if they get in the way makes it clear that they aren't doing it to be nice. Obi notices some of the crew are getting sick.

London, Samuel and Isabella's apartment: c1995

Stacked up against one wall are the boxes from Rachel's flat. Sam's wife ISABELLA wants them out of the house. Sam buys himself a week. He clears a space on his desk and opens the first box.

First, he works out his mother's system. She used A5 invoice books with numbered pages. The top copy could be torn out leaving a carbon copy in the book. Each book was numbered and any additional loose pages had the book and page number showing where they belonged. It was simple and effective - unusual for her. From amongst a mass of papers there emerges on his desk the first draft of a hand-written autobiography. He reads all night and takes his wife to school in the morning.

Bettiscombe House, Dorset: c1920

The house is nearly two hundred years old now and looks rooted in the prime Dorset agricultural land. It turns out to be substantial but a rather unimaginative in design. Inside an ELEVEN YEAR-OLD RACHEL SILCOX knocks on a study door. She's plain, walks with a limp and is described by her siblings as dumpy. A voice from behind the door barks 'enter' and the girl goes in. The door closes and for some time the closed door is all there is to see. A murmur of voices from the other side can barely be heard.

In the study the girl comes to the end of her job - writing up the estate 'accounts'. A MAN of military bearing and authority (in fact he's a knighted Major General in the

British Army) in his mid to late 50s stands over her with his hand on her shoulder. “Finished Daddy” the girl says. He takes the book and checks her work. He congratulates her and says, “Well done. Now you will have your reward, old Bachel” He leads the girl to the rug by the fire and tells her to lie down on it. Then, fully dressed, he lies on top of her, missionary style, and as the girl would write some seventy years later, made the *‘conventional up and down movements which would suddenly stop, followed by a pause while we remained in our positions. He would then get up and go to the lavatory and I would get up and go about my business.* Nothing more would be said or done but it had been made clear to the girl that what was done was very secret and should never be spoken about.

Nevis 1765

The ship carrying Obi and the other Africans who survived the journey arrives at Nevis. They are cleaned up and taken to the slave market to be sold like farm animals. A slave owner called JOHN SILCOX is among the planters gathered to bid. He comes away with fifteen men and women and three children - Obi and TWO GIRLS. They’re all loaded onto a cart and driven to his plantation, also named Bettisdown. It seems to the shell shocked AFRICANS that the entire island is covered in sugar cane. The first thing they have to endure on arrival is branding. “They’re all yours William,” says Silcox before marching off to his house. PARKER cracks his whip and gestures to the Africans to get down from the cart. He orders them to line up and then whips them for not obeying him. That they don’t understand English is immaterial. As the branding starts there are screams and the smell of burning flesh.

London 1995

A week has passed - Samuel has called the library in Bristol and they are happy to take the papers but he’s hanging on to the handwritten autobiography. Talking to the library he has learned about the rest of the Silcox papers – known for being an exceptional primary source on slavery. The historian in Isabella wakes up and she becomes interested in seeing them. Isabella’s got half term - they drive down to Bristol together. They drop the papers and the librarian lets them examine the slave lists and accounts. Isabella digs deep into the Silcox slavery papers - especially when it starts to look like there might be connection to her own family on Nevis. As it goes from a possibility to a probability that Samuels’s forebears enslaved Isabella’s forebears, a certain awkwardness starts grow up between them. They visit The Georgian House Museum, built by a Silcox, in Clifton see Engineer’s House, built by another Silcox. On the drive back Isabella is immersed in her own thoughts, unreachable. She turns to Samuel suddenly and says she’s pregnant.

Bettisdown House 1930

The eleven year-old Rachel, last seen doing her father’s accounts and getting her ‘reward’ is now 21 and studying nursing in London. She’s home for the weekend. The entire family is out at some event and Rachel is alone in the large house. As a child she was an ugly duckling, as a young woman, she hasn’t turned into a swan. She still walks

with a limp, has a stout, stocky build and her hair is cut short like a man's. Looking depressed, she wanders the house. In the kitchen the cooks are preparing dinner. A large Aga creates the only really warm room in the whole house. If she's looking for company or sympathy she doesn't find it here - it's obvious they want her back upstairs, where she belongs.

She wanders along the corridor leading to her father's study. She opens the door and remembers. The same rug is by the fire. She goes downstairs to the drawing room, looking around as if for the last time. She sits at a table and writes a letter. She puts it in an envelope, writes her father's name on the front and leaves it on the mantelpiece. Next to the boot room is the gunroom - its contents are never locked. She takes a revolver and some bullets, goes outside and walks down to a small copse at the bottom of the rear field. One of the dogs, a spaniel, comes with her. She finds a sheltered spot and loads the gun. How to do this, she wonders - under the chin, mouth, temple? She settles for temple. She looks down at the dog. As happens with male dogs occasionally, for no apparent reason his thin red penis decides to emerge. Her curiosity in the physiology of a dog's reproductive anatomy flicks a switch in her mind, her depression lifts and the determination to end her life disappears.

She walks back to the house, unloads the gun and puts everything back, removes the letter from the mantelpiece and never mentions the incident again - until writing her memoir sixty years later.

Nevis 1769

There are no birthdays for slaves - but if there were, Obi would have had four of them. He is now fourteen. Being in the regular company of the Silcox family and having a natural ability for languages, he has learned English quickly and thanks to stealing one the family's early reading books and secretly studying it, he can now read tolerably well - for all the good it has done him. John Silcox bought him as a servant and serving his master, in every sense of the word is what the boy has been doing from dawn to dusk for the last four years. Every few months, carrying drinking water, pen and ink and a small stool for the great man to sit on, Obi has to accompany Silcox as he goes to every part of the plantation, checking that things are done exactly as he has instructed - and taking inventories of everything, down to the last nail. By paying attention, Obi knows as much as anybody how the plantation works - knowledge that will stand him in good stead in the future. The very few precious free moments are when Silcox is engaged with his wife, in his office obsessively writing up his accounts or visiting town. Thankfully Silcox's sexual interest in him has waned now Obi is into puberty.

Silcox returns from Charlestown. He has been to the slave market. In an echo of a scene four years earlier, the men and women, traumatised by the same Atlantic crossing Obi endured, line up to be branded. Obi notices that Silcox has, along with WORKING AGE SLAVES, come back from the market with A TERRIFIED BOY who looks even younger than he was. A slave labour sugar plantation is not a place for empathy - but

Obi feels a wave of it as he sees himself in the youngster. He knows what is in store for the boy. And to confirm that on this day things are going to change for him, the overseer calls him over. Obi is needed to help hold the slaves down while they are branded - and after that he will be part of the field gang.

London, Samuel and Isabella's apartment 1996

Working on Rachel's autobiography has obsessed Samuel. His other writing has inexplicably dried up, and editing his mother's stream of consciousness, unstructured prose takes up all his time. Added to that, her story has led him into an enquiry into the rest of the Silcox family.

Out of the blue, something happens at Isabella's school that tips her over the edge. The drip, drip, drip of xenophobia and racism - not only from the students but also the staff triggers perhaps not a full-blown nervous breakdown, more final reaching of limits. It's non-negotiable - she can't teach any more, certainly not in England. She takes her maternity leave earlier than planned and drops a bombshell by announcing to Samuel that she's going to see her mother in Nevis.

Samuel who has been guilty of neglecting her, is getting a reality check. His partner is leaving, and with their unborn child. He pleads with her not to go. But she has no doubts of the rightness of her decision - and go she does.

He doesn't fully understand when she tries to tell him that it's not *all* about him - she needs her mother, and she needs to be in a place where every second of every day she is not forced to be reminded of the colour of her skin, and suffer countless micro-aggressions wherever she goes.

Sam takes her to the airport.

Bettisdown 1936

Rachel is married and has a baby called KARIN, nine months old. Since childhood, Rachel had been the odd one out - and in the way of families, mocked, occasionally bullied, but accepted. Even the calculated act of challenging their obsession with class and status by marrying a working class man with an Italian immigrant family from the East End of London and a member of the Communist Party to boot - had more or less been accepted, though not at all approved of by the family. She's told: 'You've made your bed, now lie in it' and her allowance was cut off - something that Rachel hadn't anticipated. 'My God, she's got black hair!' are the words of her father when she takes the baby down to Bettisdown - before going up to London for a Regimental reunion.

Present at the house in Dorset that weekend were Rachel, her mother LADY SILCOX, and Rachel's two sisters, MARY and HESTER. It's safe to say that Rachel is in a conflicted frame of mind. She was living in squalor and poverty with her husband Luigi. Both of them penniless, utterly useless domestically - and Rachel a terrible mother without a clue how to take care of a baby. She wouldn't admit it, but nine months into

motherhood she is desperately missing all the benefits of the home she grew up in - leisure, money, servants, cooks, nannies.

Nevertheless, sitting round the fire after dinner Rachel can't resist sounding off yet again about communism, socialism, injustice - calling out a neighbour who owns a coal mine and describing the conditions of the workers who make his money - and the more she goes on, the less her older, more conservative sisters are prepared to be polite. Albeit defensively, they return fire, and as siblings will, cross the line by mocking her and ridiculing her lack of basic understanding of what she is talking about. In frustration and spontaneously, Rachel blurts out that another thing the ruling class do is fuck their children - and tells them that from the age of 11, she was sexually abused by their father for over ten years.

A bomb goes off. Sister Mary leaps up saying, "how dare you say such things about your father!" And in no time the two of them are in a proper fight. Rachel has short hair, Mary is proud of her long hair and Rachel grabs it. In the melee, the curtains come down. Lady Silcox tries to separate her daughters. It eventually ends - as all fights do - with tears and insults and resentment. Everybody goes to their rooms, no apologies are made. At the crack of dawn Rachel goes to her mother's bedroom and wakes her up to say goodbye - then leaves with baby Karin for the station - and in the words of her unpublished autobiography: *'I was the baddie of the family from then on'*

Nevis 1780

Now 25 years old, Obi works in the nerve centre of the entire sugar operation - the boiling house. Until a year ago he had been the apprentice to the head boiler. Vastly experienced and crucial to the plantation, the elderly man had suddenly collapsed and died - and while not quite ready, the young Obi was promoted to his position. His job was to judge the exact moment when the concentrated cane juice 'struck' and turned into sugar - and on getting that moment right the success or failure of the entire enterprise depended.

The sugar mill and boiling house are an early form of production line, predating the industrial revolution: mules turn rollers which crush the sugar cane to release the juice - which is piped to a large container in the boiling house called the 'receiver'. The juice is tempered with lime so not to sour, and ladled into the first of five coppers, each with fires beneath them that have to be constantly fed with the remains of crushed canes. In each copper the juice is boiled, skimmed and reduced by evaporation. The thickened liquor is ladled into the final copper known as the 'tache'. An extra hot fire is kept up under this copper, where the much thickened juice will reach the magic point of crystallization.

Working anywhere in the boiling house is one of the hardest jobs on the plantation because of the heat - the slaves ordered to work there are usually being punished for something - in Obi's case it was for being smart. Overseer William Parker disliked any

slave who was more intelligent than him – which meant nearly the entire slave force. One of the things slaves learned very quickly with Parker was to play dumb and not playing dumb enough led to Obi being taken from the field gang (also grueling work) and sent to the boiling house. A stupid man, Parker's animus then increased when Silcox made Obi first an apprentice and then head boiler. No slave is safe from the drunken vagaries of the overseers or his underlings, but so important to the process is the head-boiler that owners instruct overseers to treat them carefully. In Obi's case, this serves to enrage Parker even further.

Of the three critical processes at the heart of the making of sugar - tempering, striking and potting - striking is the most mysterious. It's an irony not lost on plantation owners that the entire enterprise of sugar production rests on the instinct, skill and experience of one person who has the skill to judge the strike moment. Protected only by thick, calloused skin from having done the same thing countless times before, the boiler inserts a forefinger and thumb into the thick, boiling liquor in the tache and judges the moment by the nature of the thread when he stretches finger and thumb apart. On his word alone, the fire is dampened and the contents of the tache emptied into the cooler.

After cooling, the contents are scooped out and put into hogsheads or barrels (known as 'potting') - and taken to the curing house. The process is not quite over - the barrels are raised off the ground, so the molasses can drain out into containers while the crystallised sugar remains inside the barrel. Along with the skimmings removed during boiling, the molasses is then taken to the 'still' house to be made into rum. From the moment the cane is cut, to the filling of the hogsheads, the process is a non-stop production line - and everyone works till the harvest is in and the last hogshead filled.

UK 1996

Without Isabella's regular income, and the loss of writing commissions, Samuel soon finds he can't pay the rent on the flat. He writes to Isabella in Nevis and she instructs him in what to sell, what to dump and what of her stuff he should ship out to Nevis. Sam has very little money - Isabella pays the shipping company direct. The distance between them is growing. She has made a decision and acted, he's increasingly indecisive. He asks about the baby, due very soon.

With the flat returned to the landlord and the deposit lost, Samuel's home is now the second hand camper van that he and Isabella used to take holidays in - first around the UK and Ireland, then Europe. With the bare minimum of possessions, his laptop, his mother's unfinished autobiography, he tests the hospitality of all his friends who have driveways and large gardens. The speed with which his comfortable life has unraveled has knocked him for six. He's having his own version of a breakdown - and focusing doggedly on Rachel's autobiography is all that's keeping him together.

Waking up before dawn in a parking lot next to a desolate, out of season East Anglian

beach he has a small epiphany. Rachel's book reveals how she was betrayed and damaged by her father - and how her consequent behaviour, born out of rage at not being believed or acknowledged, led to her total ostracism from her family. But the image it portrays doesn't tell the whole story. It dawns on Samuel that what he has been struggling with is matching what *he* knows about Rachel with her own notes, and the perspective of the Silcox family themselves, so far conspicuous by their absence. Energised with this insight, he realises that there could be a *biography*, written by him that puts all aspects her story into context. He makes the decision to visit the family his mother had been estranged from for much of her life - and meet his uncles, aunts and cousins for the first time.

A surprising number of them live in difficult to reach farms and houses in the West Country, where the Silcox family originated. Some work in the media, some in banking, some in farming. One cousin was an architect, another an author specialising in psychoanalysis. With each of them he receives a nervous and cautious welcome - particularly when he freely admits that he's writing a biography of Rachel, based on notes that no one has ever seen. He asks about their views on Rachel, how they deal with something his mother was always on about the 'guilt', otherwise known as *shame* for having profited from slavery. They in turn ask him anxiously what is going to be in 'the book'. With those who can take it, he mentions the sexual abuse. Some refuse point blank to accept that it ever happened, preferring to cling to the idea that Rachel was a fantasist. Others hear of Rachel's accusations with a little bit more of an open mind - but all try to persuade him in subtle and obvious ways that there is nothing to be gained by bringing up old scandals - 'let sleeping dogs lie' is said more than once.

Bettisdown 1958

The year is early 1958 and Rachel is fifty-eight years old and practicing as a GP from her house on the Fulham Road, London. Samuel is nine and has been at a Quaker boarding school in Saffron Walden since the age of six.

Lady Silcox is very ill. Perhaps as an apology to her children, who in keeping with mores of the upper middle class of the day, she woefully neglected, she has made the old nursery her sick room. She asks Rachel to come to the house. Along with the rest of the family she has little faith in Rachel as a doctor, but her own doctor is not telling her what is wrong with her and how long she has to live. Rachel, perfect for this task, tells her she will die in one of three ways and in about two months time.

Her mother thanks her – sincerely. Lady Silcox takes Rachel's hand and says: "Do you think I would have left you alone with him if I had known?" It's the nearest thing to an acknowledgement or an apology from anyone for the abuse she suffered.

The last thing she does for her mother is something that was more common at the time than generally realised. Very close to death, Rachel injects an extra large dose of morphine to speed the frail old lady on her way.

Rachel didn't attend her father's funeral, but she was there at her mother's - half the county turns out.

UK 1997

Samuel has been living the life of a gypsy for nearly a year. On the dashboard of the camper van is a picture of his daughter taken when she was six months old. He has a final visit to make. After Lady Silcox's death, and some complicated family negotiations, Bettisdown House was acquired by one of Samuel's first cousins - GROUP CAPTAIN CHARLES SILCOX (retired)

A lifetime outside a family he *belongs* to but is not *part* of has meant that Sam has inhabited a different world from that of his conformist and conventional relatives - and none are more conformist and conventional than Charles. There's a reason Sam's left him to last. In all his conversations he never stopped hearing about the self-appointed keeper of the family flame. Charles is the ultimate Silcox, extremely proud of the family name - and very protective of it also.

Sam arrives at the gates of Bettiscombe House and rings the buzzer. There is a camera looking down at him. He is expected, the gates open and he drives in, parking the shabby camper van in front of the imposing main entrance. Group Captain Silcox (retired) emerges and with all the charm of a professional dissembler and greets him. Tea is offered - and then a tour of the house. Knowing all of the anodyne family history backwards, he can identify how the rooms were used: "the General made this room his private study" "I've knocked the old boot room and the gun room together" "this is and always was the living room" "this was the nursery where Grandma Silcox died" At each location Sam is able to image Rachel aged 11, 21, 27, and 58 - and weigh up what the reaction will be when Charles either hears from him, or from the pages of the biography itself, the 'alternative' version of family history - utterly at odds with the safe, comfortable myths Charles holds so dear.

Over a dinner of fish pie cooked by his mute WIFE, who long ago gave up trying to get a word in, Charles launches into a soliloquy for Major General Sir Reginald Silcox, first world war 'hero' and all round great guy. It's getting harder for Sam to keep quiet but he couldn't speak in if he wanted to - the man talks non-stop. The subject changes to Charles' RAF career. He flew with the nuclear strike force and during that time chose to completely avoid his aunt, who active in CND, and "trying to get on Polaris submarines in Holy Loch for goodness sake" - in order to pass his annual security vetting. Later he was seconded to the cabinet office as military attaché. At some point he was flying back and forth across the Atlantic with a briefcase handcuffed to his wrist. Something to do with nuclear weapons. As the monologue continues, it slowly dawns on Samuel that Charles is a monster, completely lacking in empathy. Somehow comforted by this thought, he pleads tiredness and retires to his room.

The next morning Samuel knows what to do. After looking at Charles' complicated family trees and visiting the local church, they finally sit down for a *mutual* conversation. Samuel tells him about Rachel's autobiography, and how from a chaotic

collection of notes, he has made a coherent book. Charles gets uncomfortable. He's obviously been contacted by the family members Sam's already visited. A party line is rehearsed. "Is it really necessary to dig up all this dirt now - no good will come of it - everybody involved is dead - maybe it never happened - let sleeping dogs lie". Despite being retired, there is real force behind Charles' words - it's much more than an opinion he's expressing. For the first time Sam gets a proper taste of what his mother was up against all her life.

Over lunch Samuel decides to tell the story of when Rachel took him out of school to join her on a 'Ban the Bomb' march from London to Holy Loch - the site of those very same Polaris submarines. He can't keep the pride out of his voice when stating he might be one of the very few people in the country who have walked from London to Scotland as an eleven-year-old boy. And in case that didn't get through, he told another story, that he only now realised was the quintessential anecdote that perfectly captured the contradictory nature of his mother.

Samuel was nine or ten, home on holiday from his Quaker boarding school. Rachel was in the bath. The phone rang. "Answer the phone" came the shouted command from bathroom. Normally a willing and efficient taker of messages, for some perverse reason, the young Samuel decided he didn't want to comply on this occasion. "No." "Answer the bloody phone." "No." The boy heard the sound of water pouring over the edge of the bath as the considerable bulk of his mother got out, too fast and in a fury. The bathroom door opened and with water still streaming off her naked body, pendulous breasts swinging, Rachel bounded up the short flight of stairs, grabbed Samuel by the hair and slapped him hard. "Don't defy me!" were her exact words. The significance of this story, Samuel explained to Charles pointedly, was that the number one aphorism, mantra, code for life that his mother lived by, that had evolved from her father's orders to her aged eleven years old, and carried forward to those like her own nephew Charles, who were prepared to drop nuclear bombs on millions of Russians was: OBEDIENCE IS A SIN.

The look on Group Captain Charles Silcox (retired) face was not at all friendly as he watches the shabby camper van drive away through the gates of Bettisdown House.

Nevis 1785

Obi has now passed twenty un-celebrated birthdays since his arrival on Nevis and is thirty years old. Yes, he suffered sexual abuse as a boy at the hands of Silcox - but his natural intelligence helped him to quickly learn to speak, read and write English - and accompanying Silcox round the plantation on his audits, enabled him to grasp nearly every detail of how the slave labour sugar plantation system worked - knowledge that gave him an edge.

He has been the head-boiler for five years - and successful at it. Never allowed to forget that he is and always will be a slave, Obi has notched up several small victories

that mean his life is a little more bearable. For a start, he has managed keep his real name, the one his mother gave him. Most slaves arriving from Africa are re-named by their owners and punished if they use any other. He has also been able to form something resembling a relationship. He and one of the cooks at the main house share a bed when they can - and at least one of her children is his. Her name is EBELE and she comes from near where he was born and knows enough of his mother tongue they can communicate in an African language. It was from Ebele that Obi heard even before the white workers knew, that Silcox was going back to England with all his family, and would be promoting Parker to manager. From that exact moment, Obi started to prepare an escape from Nevis. He had experience of Parker's long standing resentment, even hatred of him, and knew with certainty that the moment Silcox left, old scores would be settled - even if as a consequence it meant having to use a less experienced boiler and the output of the plantation suffering.

For some years Parker has been stealing some of the plantation's output. Not often while the obsessive Silcox was in charge, but now he is the manager, the frequency is increasing - during the sugar cane harvest, four large sacks of sugar a week are taken to a quiet beach near the estate, loaded onto a small, one man boat and sold privately on another island. Two particularly STRONG SLAVES who Parker thinks he has sufficiently terrorised to keep their mouths shut are necessary to load the mules and then carry the sacks from the beach to the boat. The OWNER OF THE BOAT is a creole (white, but born in the Caribbean) who lives by his wits. Of course there are few secrets on a plantation and Obi knows all the details of Parker's petty theft. The question Obi is asking is: How to steal the boat?

It's night. Parker leads the way and the strong slaves lead two mules loaded with two large sacks each down to the beach. The owner of the boat greets Parker - a bottle of rum comes out and they drink to the continued success of their nice little enterprise. At the moment they least expect it, they are overpowered, tied up and gagged. Watching from the tree line, Obi, Ebele and her TWO CHILDREN emerge and go down to the boat. Obi is the leader. He tells one of the slaves to lead the mules off the beach and set them loose in the trees.

When he comes back, they load the sugar, followed by the trussed body of Parker and the boat owner. It's a squeeze, but there's just room after that for everyone else. The last thing Obi does is brush away footprints and hoof marks from beach, before jumping on board himself.

There's very little wind so they row away from the island. About a mile off shore is far enough. There's no discussion, the next thing they're going to do has been long planned. A bag of sugar is placed at the stern of the boat and the boat owner is dragged over and tied firmly to it. He's still gagged so can't cry out but his eyes widen in fear at what he knows is coming next. Obi steps forward - it's his plan and he's the leader. He tips the bag into the water and it and the boat owner sink like a stone. Parker, seeing

this with wide, terrified eyes, now knows he has just minutes to live. The same process takes place – but before the second bag is tipped overboard, slave and overseer stare long and hard at each other. A push, a splash - and the man who whipped, punished, abused, tortured, murdered, and made the lives of so many enslaved Africans a living hell vanishes beneath the waves. The last two bags follow, and then Obi raises the sail. Now with more room for all, the small boat sails off towards the horizon.

Nevis 1997

Samuel looks out of the plane window as non-stop flight from London to St Kitts lines up for landing.

He walks out of the small airport and takes a taxi to the harbor, where the ferry to Nevis waits. On the boat he watches St Kitts get smaller and Nevis get larger. He sees the ubiquitous clouds surrounding its central peak and remembers that they led the Spanish to call the island ‘nieve’ - Spanish for snow. He smiles – snow is the last thing he’s going to see under this fierce Caribbean sun.

Following instructions, he walks from the harbor to the bus stop that says: ‘Towards Gingerland’ and boards a small minibus. When it’s full, the bus sets off. He looks out of the window, searching for a supermarket on the right and a school on the left. His stop will be the one after that.

The bus sets him down opposite a lane leading towards the mountain. He walks up for about five hundred meters, looking for a small wooden house on the left. He finds it. There’s someone sitting on the porch – it’s Isabella. They stare at each other for a long time – then Samuel walks towards her.

END

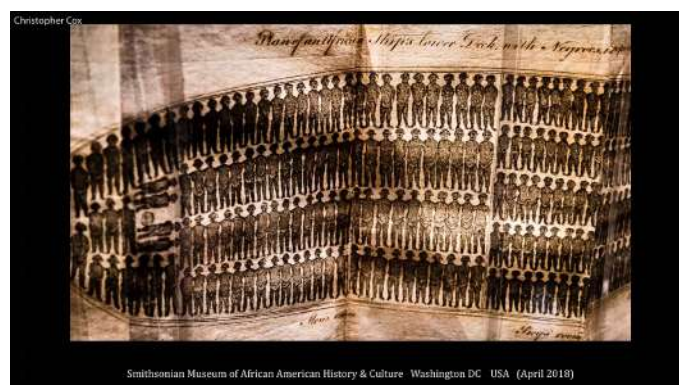
Appendix 3: slide show

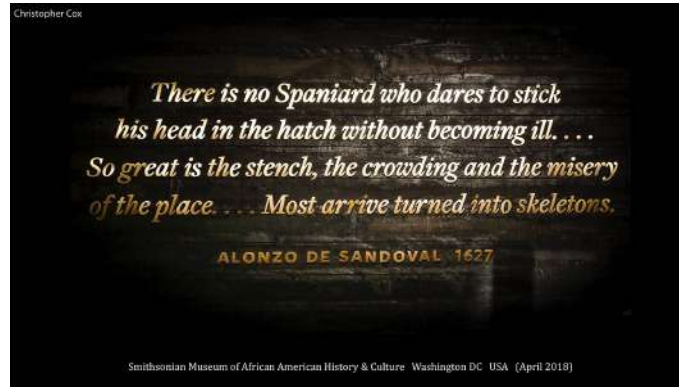
The following images were part of the exhibition *The Archive and the Contested Landscape*, held in the Ruskin Gallery, Anglia Ruskin University, October 2018.

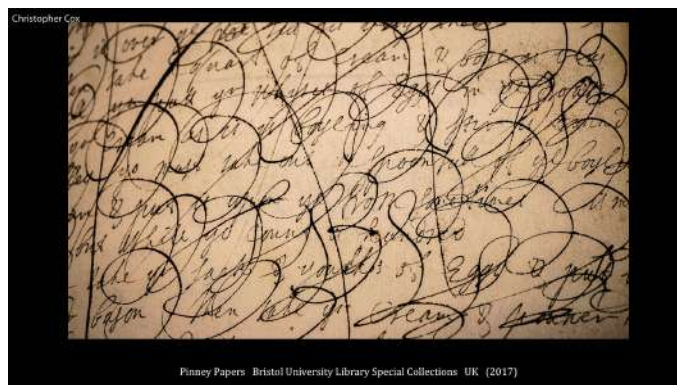
The images were displayed on a large computer screen. Each one was faded up, held on the screen for eight seconds, then faded down. There was no sound, the entire slide show lasted approximately 12 minutes - and was continuously repeated.

The slide show can be viewed below or by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nwPSg7Kx0Q>







Christopher Cox



Racedown House c.1915 Bridport Dorset UK (2017)

Christopher Cox



Manager's House Mountravers Plantation Nevis (March 2018)

Christopher Cox



Pimney Papers - Account book #54 Bristol University Library Special Collections (2017)

Christopher Cox



Manager's House Mountravers Plantation Nevis (March 2018)

Christopher Cox



New River Estate Nevis (March 2018)

Christopher Cox

A List of Negroes & other Slaves purchased by John Pinney Esquire, since his first arrival in Nevis December 28 th 1769, and which was living and on his Estate from this 21 st day of December 1790					
1769	March	Archard			
1769	January 11	Barrington	1774	January 18	• New
		Brown		May 8	Good Nelson
		Edwards			Henry Nelson
		Tolly			Mr Charles
July 4		Edwards	July 12	Tolly	Archard
		Henry Jones		Edwards	Edwards
		Black Jones			Edwards
November 7		Edwards			Edwards
		Tolly			Edwards
		Edwards			Edwards
December 25		Edwards	1775	July 17 th	Edwards
1780		Edwards			Edwards
January 29		Edwards	1776	October 31	Edwards
		Edwards			Edwards
		Edwards	1782	June 7	Edwards
		Edwards			Edwards
		Edwards	December 31		Edwards

Christopher Cox



Compting house Mountravers Plantation Nevis (March 2018)

Christopher Cox



Pinney Papers - Account book #50 Bristol University Library Special Collections UK (2017)

Christopher Cox

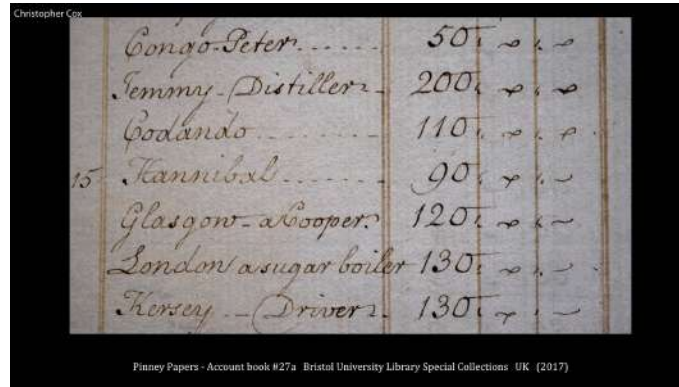


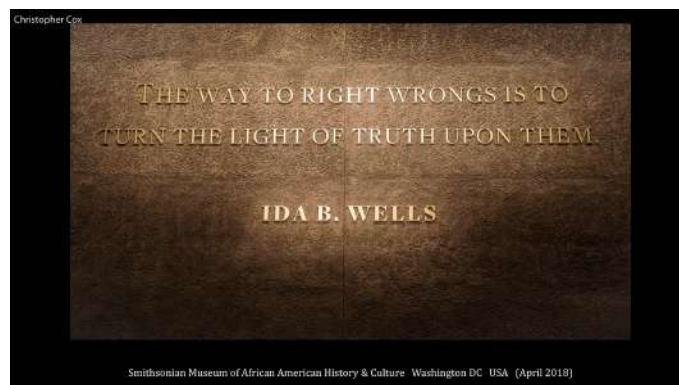
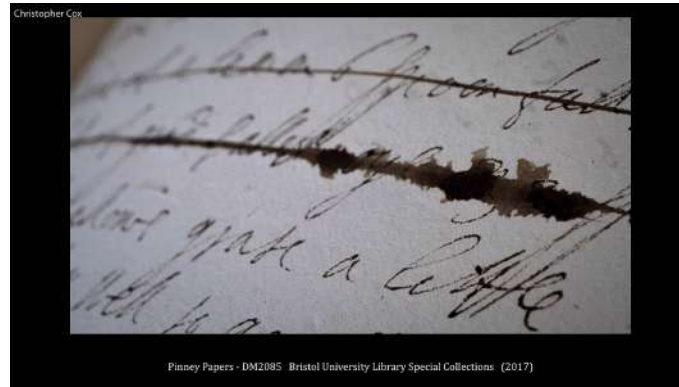
Mountravers Plantation Nevis (March 2018)

Christopher Cox



Mountravers Plantation Nevis (March 2018)





Christopher Cox



Pero's Bridge Bristol UK (2017)

Christopher Cox



New River Estate Nevis (March 2018)

Christopher Cox



Caribbean Nevis (March 2018)

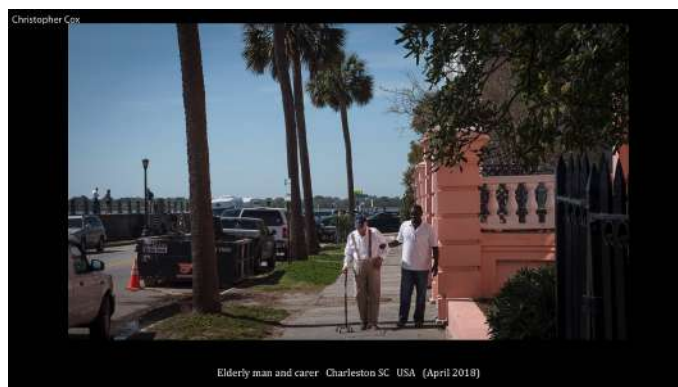
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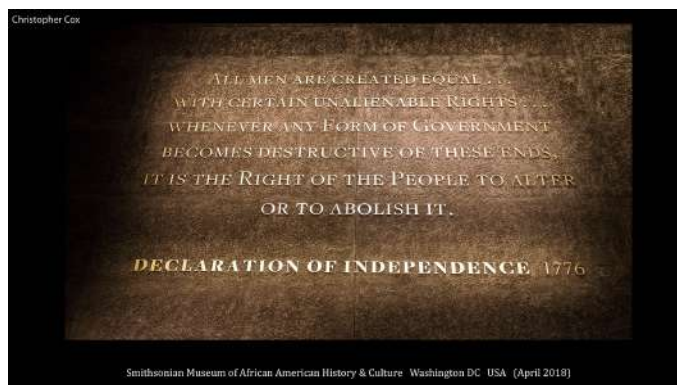
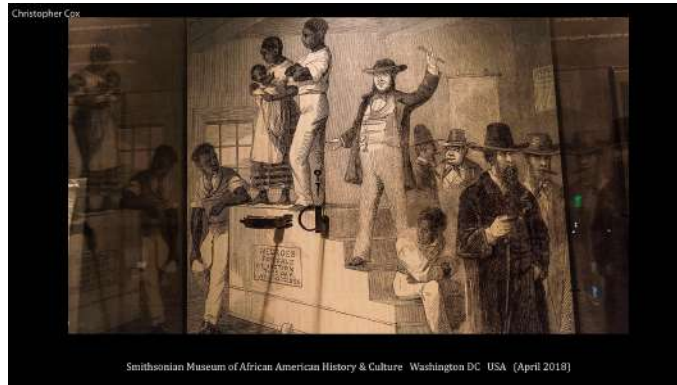


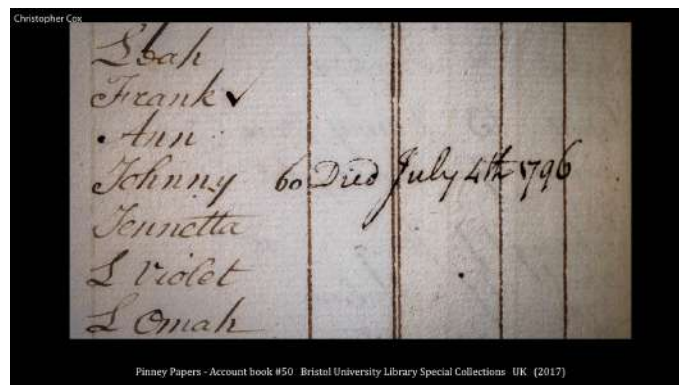
Great House ruins New River Estate Nevis (March 2018)







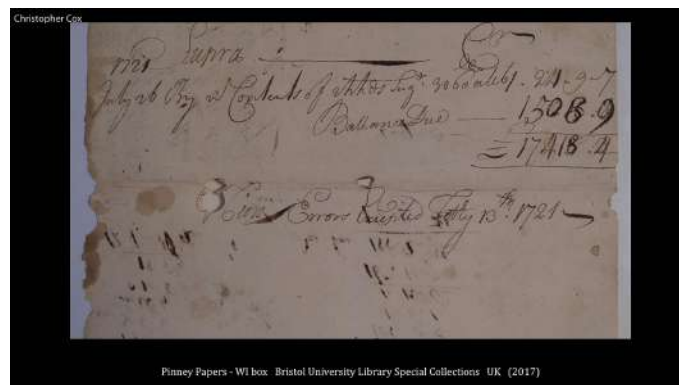


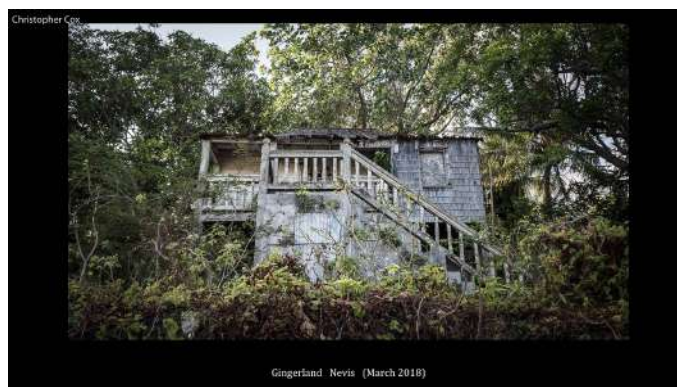




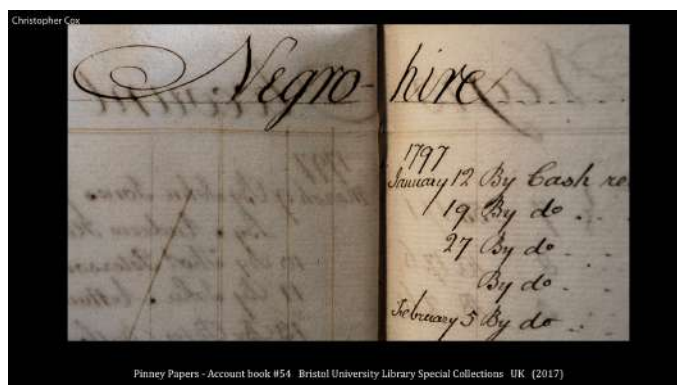
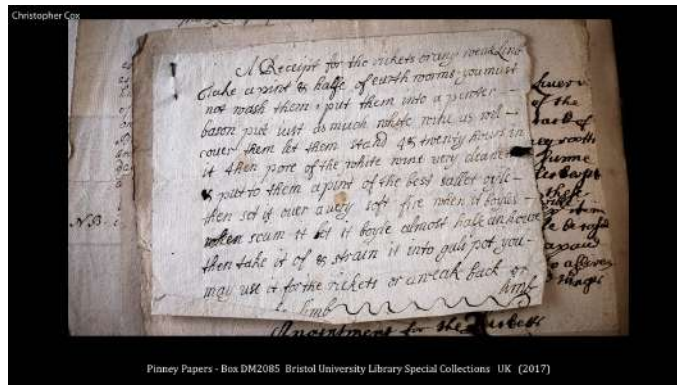


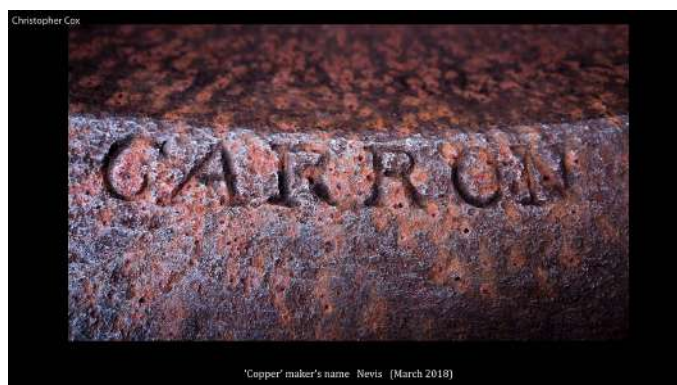
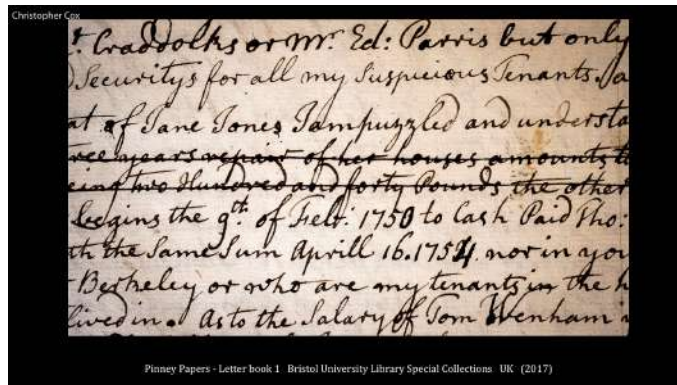




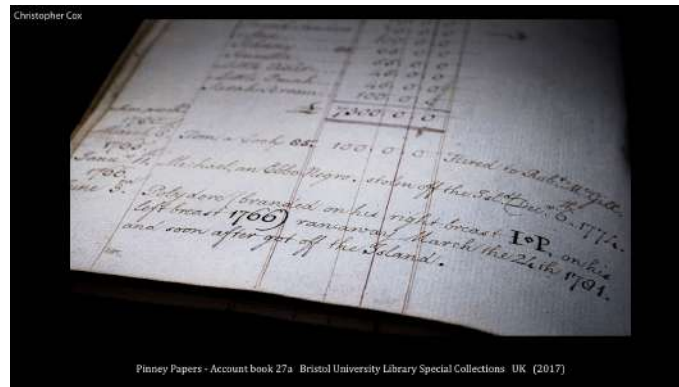












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Appendix 4: before and after



Rachel Pinney 1909 (before adjustment)



Rachel Pinney 1909 (after adjustment)



Rita Cocuzzi c.1925 (before adjustment)



Rita Cocuzzi c.1925 (after adjustment)



Rachel Pinney c.1959 (before adjustment)



Rachel Pinney c.1959 (after adjustment)



Pinney Papers (before adjustment)



Pinney Papers (after adjustment)

RATES OF FREIGHT, FROM LONDON TO THE WEST-INDIA ISLANDS,

For one Year, from MICHAELMAS, 1793.

Pinney Papers (before adjustment)

RATES OF FREIGHT,

FROM

LONDON to the WEST-INDIA ISLANDS,

For one Year, from MICHAELMAS, 1783.

Pinney Papers (after adjustment)



Picture, St Joseph's Plantation, New Orleans (before adjustment)



Picture, St Joseph's Plantation, New Orleans (after adjustment)



Sculpted figure, Whitney Plantation, New Orleans (before adjustment)



Sculpted figure, Whitney Plantation, New Orleans (after adjustment)

Appendix 5: Script evaluations

Response by Udayan Prasad (director) on the screenplay: *History is Not the Past*

A story about slavery and its consequences over two centuries or more, *History is Not the Past* seems to be about a seemingly disparate group of characters discovering their connection to each other. What connects them is the Triangular Slave trade; they are descended either from one particular plantation owner or the slaves he possessed. It looks at how they came to be the people they are and how fate/chance/luck (quite a bit of it, bad) played a part in the directions their lives and the lives of their predecessors took.

The story is told in several time zones; the 18th century, various decades of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century. And within these time zones we are also presented with flashbacks; largely exposition to ensure the audience clearly understands how some of the events/situations affecting the character whose journey we are following at the time, came about.

There doesn't seem to be a main protagonist although of the four, it's Leo and Grace who make a discovery that has a profound and very positive affect on their lives. Their journeys lead to the discovery that they are father and daughter. The film ends with them in Nevis at the place where the film begins, albeit in the eighteenth century.

The strength of the piece is that it is heartfelt and told with great passion. It is a hugely ambitious project that attempts to get to grips with the complexities of the situations the characters find themselves in as they deal with the devastating legacy of slavery. The writer's own family connection to the slave trade and his need to come to terms with his ancestors' role in it, is very evident. However, that is also, in my opinion, the script's main problem. Rather than focusing simply on dramatising the journeys of the characters, the writer can't help but reveal his personal attitudes and feeling about the slave trade. His perfectly understandable revulsion for those who profited from it, both at the time and for generations afterwards, along with his despair for the lives they blighted comes close to overwhelming the journey of his characters.

What I mean by that is a lot of space is given in the 'action' paragraphs to inform the reader how or why a character is thinking or feeling along with explanations, from a sociological point of view, as to why a character is the way she/he is. The problem for a director is that such things, motivations and attitudes simply cannot be put on the screen unless dramatised. We understand why a character does something or what she/he might be thinking, only through their actions. As a director, I want to show the whole spectrum of reasons why any character is the way she/he is, by showing what they actually do. And that reveal can take place over a period of time; it doesn't all have to happen in one scene or indeed one sequence.

Response by Richard Greatrex BSC (cinematographer) on the screenplay: *History is Not the Past*

My overall impression of this screenplay, is that it is a subject well chosen. It is a passionate and deeply felt script that chimes with contemporary concerns. The structure, while complex, is clear, easily to read and contributes greatly to its appeal. It is certainly helped by the use of chapter headings pertaining to the individuals involved, they should be retained in the final film, though I would caution about their overuse.

The script in this form is obviously not a shooting script. The requirements of the thesis have produced a hybrid version of a screenplay with much more detail, back story and comments than would normally be present. I presume this is to be expected if the script is part of a larger research project. I feel some affinity with this hybrid version as it so clearly indicates the intent of the writer and the depth of his involvement with the subject. I am happy to go along with this form of screenplay but have to note that it would require editing and the pictures removed for it to be a useful shooting script.
