

# The shame of White Widow's father who fought terrorism as British soldier in Northern Ireland and whose daughter has become world's most reviled terrorist

- Andy Lewthwaite 'fears his daughter has tarnished him and his country'
- Samantha Lewthwaite's 85-year-old grandmother in hospital with stress
- Friend of pensioner says everyone 'shocked and distressed' over news
- Was born to British soldier father and Northern Irish Catholic mother
- Lewthwaite spent most of her early life in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

By [Damien Gayle](#)

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Just an average British girl: A photo of 'White Widow' Samantha Lewthwaite taken from her fake South African passport released by Kenyan police

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The father of White Widow Samantha Lewthwaite is appalled by the idea that his daughter may have masterminded the massacre in the Kenyan mall, neighbours have said.

Former soldier Andy Lewthwaite came face to face with the toll of terror attacks when he served in Northern Ireland at the height of the Troubles in the 1970s.

Now he is struggling to come to terms with allegations that his daughter - already the world's most wanted woman - was behind the attack that has killed more than 60 people in Westgate shopping centre in Nairobi.

A neighbour told the [Daily Mirror](#): 'Andy is aware of how appalling indiscriminate shootings are.

'For him to imagine his own daughter is involved in this is very painful.

'He has been very dignified... his daughter is apparently tarnishing both his reputation and his country's reputation.'

Their comments come after it emerged that Lewthwaite's frail 85-year-old grandmother has been admitted to hospital because of the stress of her granddaughter's notoriety.

Elizabeth Allen, from Banbridge, Co Down, was given a panic alarm to contact security services in case terror suspect Lewthwaite ever made contact.

Family friends say the pressure of the situation and Lewthwaite's now-global notoriety have taken their toll on the frail pensioner's health and mental well-being.

Joan Baird, a veteran Ulster Unionist councillor in Banbridge who knows the family, said: 'This is so distressing for everyone. Mrs Allen is 85 and she is in and out of hospital. It is just so distressing.

'Certainly, everybody in the town is shocked and distressed by the news.'

Lewthwaite from Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, who converted to Islam age 17, was married to Jermaine Lindsay before he blew himself up in the July 7 terror attacks in London in 2005, killing 26.

The 29-year-old mother of three is already wanted by Kenyan police over alleged links to a terrorist cell that planned to bomb the country's coast.



**Moody: Lewthwaite from Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, who converted to Islam age 17, was married to Jermaine Lindsay before he blew himself up in the July 7 terror attacks in London in 2005, killing 26**

Now it is suspected that she was the mastermind behind the four-day gun and bomb attack on Westgate Shopping Centre in Nairobi, which has led to a continuing siege in which more than 60 people have lost their lives.

However, Somali terrorist group Al Shabaab claimed today that no women were involved in the attack.

Born to English soldier Andy Lewthwaite - who met and married Irish Catholic Christine Allen while serving in Northern Ireland during the 1970s - she enjoyed an unremarkable childhood on Banbridge's Whyte Acres estate.

Lewthwaite was still at primary school when her family moved to Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. In 1995 her parents split.

Councillor Raj Khan, whose family knew Lewthwaite's family socially in Aylesbury, said he is surprised at speculation she is involved in the attack in Kenya due to how he remembers her.



**Read all about it: A Kenyan vendor sells a newspaper with an article on its front page about Lewthwaite's alleged involvement in the terror attack which began on Saturday in Nairobi and has claimed more than 60 lives**

'She was an average, British, young, ordinary girl. She had a very great personality. She didn't have very good confidence,' he said.



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**Lewthwaite at school aged 16 or 17: She is the daughter of a British soldier father and an Northern Irish Catholic mother who split up in 1995**

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After becoming a Muslim, Lewthwaite changed her name to Sherafiyah and married suicide bomber Lindsay, who she had met on an Islamic internet chatroom.

Mr Khan recalled a meeting with Lewthwaite and Lindsay regarding a housing issue which took place three or four weeks before the July 7 bombings, and he said she was just as he remembered her.

'Certainly when I was around her, she was the same person, lacking in confidence.

'She was not strong-headed. And that's why I find it absolutely amazing that she is supposed to be the head of an international criminal terrorist organisation,' he said.

Mr Khan said he was 'perplexed' that someone he knew, who was so 'empty in confidence', was being linked to international terrorism.

He said he prays that she is not involved, adding: '...and of course my worry is that if she is involved, is she under some kind of duress? Is there other factors involved?

'Or indeed, is it Samantha? I mean there are so many questions to be answered at the moment before one can make a view.'

Mr Khan said her family will be 'very upset' if she is involved.

'Of course like anyone else, they will be very hurt, very upset, very, very upset, but I think they too will be waiting for proof, not speculation,' he said.

Suspicion that Lewthwaite was in the attack in Nairobi were raised after the Kenyan foreign minister claimed

that a British woman who has allegedly been involved in terrorism 'many times before' was among the militants.



**The Aylesbury home of Andy Lewthwaite, Samantha's father: Lewthwaite was still at primary school when her family moved from Banbridge, Northern Ireland to Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire**

Amina Mohamed said the woman acted alongside 'two or three' Americans as security forces began a fourth day of fighting at the shopping centre where at least six Britons are known to have died.

#### **MET POLICE OFFICER TESTIFIES IN TRIAL OF BRITON LINKED TO SOMALI GROUP BEHIND NAIROBI ATTACK**

A British policeman has testified in Kenya in the trial of a Briton accused of plotting attacks and who has ties to al-Shabaab, the Somali group behind a weekend attack on the shopping mall.

Jermaine Grant (*pictured below today in court*), of East London, was arrested in December 2011 in a raid by Kenyan anti-terrorism police on his apartment in the Kenyan port city of Mombasa, along with a female accomplice, Warda Breik, who police said was his wife.



Police said a third suspect, believed to be Samantha Lewthwaite, escaped in that raid.

Grant and Warda face charges of being found in possession of explosive material recovered from their apartment, and a conspiracy to commit a felony, charges they both deny.

Robert Garric, a detective constable with New Scotland Yard police, working in the forensic management team under the counter-terrorism command, told the court he had been part of a team deployed to assist Kenyan police.

Mr Garric said he and his team were told by Kenyan police that 'they were looking at a plot to detonate explosives in parts of Kenya.'

He said he had been informed that a Briton, Grant, had been arrested using a false Canadian identity. The detectives were led to a government laboratory where they were conducting tests on chemicals recovered from Grant's apartment, Mr Garric said.

Mr Garric, a bomb scene examiner, manager and counter-terrorism investigator, said the kind of chemicals found, if mixed for a short time, could make explosives that 'could detonate easily when exposed to shock or flame.'

Earlier this month, Grant was acquitted by a Nairobi court of robbery with violence, charges that could have carried the death penalty, but remained in custody because of the trial in Mombasa.

Prosecutor Jacob Ondari said three detectives from Scotland Yard were among his witnesses.

However there was confusion over Ms Mohamed's comments - made while attending the United Nations General Assembly in New York - with no confirmation either from the authorities in Nairobi or the Foreign Office in London.

They directly contradict the Kenyan interior minister Joseph Ole Lenku who yesterday told a news conference that all the attackers were male - although he suggested that some may have been dressed as women.

The Foreign Office said only that it was aware of the foreign minister's comments.

'We continue to liaise very closely with the Kenyan authorities and to support their investigation into this attack,' a spokesman said.

After her husband Lindsay detonated his suicide bomb at on a Piccadilly line tube train between King's Cross and Russell Square stations in 2005, Lewthwaite had told how she was horrified by the massacre.

But the Jamaican-born Muslim convert, who grew up in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, had never made a secret of his extremist views, alarming teachers by attempting to radicalise younger pupils.

In 2009 Lewthwaite disappeared with her three children but resurfaced two years later after travelling to Kenya on a false passport.

The Kenyan authorities issued a photograph of a white woman in a veil who they said was wanted for

questioning about a bomb factory in the coastal resort of Mombassa. The woman was Lewthwaite.

It is understood she has had little contact with relatives in Northern Ireland since her conversion to Islam.

Mr Khan said he does not think the speculation surrounding Lewthwaite will cause divisions in Aylesbury due to the community's maturity.

'Of course if it is Samantha indeed, of course they'll be very hurt, very upset, as indeed any human being would be, but in terms of causing any differences in our community I think the community is far more mature for that kind of thing,' he said.

Stuart Osborne, who was until recently the Met's Head of Counter Terrorism Command, told ITV News that any role Lewthwaite has with Islamist militant group al-Shabaab is unclear.

He said: 'Lewthwaite has obviously been involved in terrorism or connected with terrorists for some considerable time now. Her role in al-Shabaab is very unclear or even if she has a role within (it).

'She is currently wanted by the Kenyan authorities in relation to an investigation for those who have committed acts of terrorism. But as yet she is untried and unconvicted for those offences.

'Traditionally she would be seen to be somebody as a sympathiser, a facilitator or an instigator of terrorism.

'She has certainly got a large media profile, certainly in the British media press in relation to her activities and her involvement in terrorist activities is still yet to be proven, but as I said she is still wanted for terrorist offences.'