

“A true-life story so rife with melodrama,
exotic lifestyles, sexual intrigue and suspicious deaths
that it’s surprising no film has been made about it until now.”

—Todd McCarthy, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

The Galapagos Affair

Satan Came to Eden



A film by DAYNA GOLDFINE and DAN GELLER



Featuring the voices of
CATE BLANCHETT SEBASTIAN KOCH THOMAS KRETSCHMANN
DIANE KRUGER CONNIE NIELSEN JOSH RADNOR GUSTAF SKARSGÅRD

GELLER/GOLDFINE PRODUCTIONS presents THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR: SATAN CAME TO EDEN
casting by MARGERY SIMKIN music by LAURA KARPMAN edited by BILL WEBER written by DAN GELLER DAYNA GOLDFINE CELESTE SCHAEFER SNYDER
executive producer JONATHAN DANA producer CELESTE SCHAEFER SNYDER produced and directed by DAYNA GOLDFINE and DAN GELLER a ZEITGEIST FILMS release

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THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR

Satan Came to Eden

Darwin meets Hitchcock in this true-crime tale of paradise found and lost. *The Galapagos Affair: Satan Came To Eden* is a fascinating documentary portrait of a 1930s murder mystery as strange and alluring as the famous archipelago itself. Fleeing conventional society, a Berlin doctor and his mistress start a new life on uninhabited Floreana Island. But after the international press sensationalizes the exploits of the Galapagos' "Adam and Eve", others flock there—including a self-styled Swiss Family Robinson and a gun-toting Viennese Baroness and her two lovers. Things would never be the same.

To bring this extraordinary story to life, filmmakers Dayna Goldfine and Dan Geller (*Ballets Russes*) nimbly interweave newly unearthed home movies of these original settlers; testimonies of modern day islanders; stunning HD footage of native flora and fauna; and powerful voice performances by Oscar® winner Cate Blanchett, Diane Kruger, Connie Nielsen, Sebastian Koch, Thomas Kretschmann, Gustaf Skarsgård and Josh Radnor. Macabre yet inspiring, *The Galapagos Affair* is a gripping parable of *Robinson Crusoe* adventure and utopian dreams gone awry.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Darwin meets Hitchcock in this murder-mystery documentary. *THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR: SATAN CAME TO EDEN* is a gripping tale of idealistic dreams of paradise gone awry, set in the brutal yet alluring landscape of the Galapagos Islands. Featuring the voice performances of international stars Cate Blanchett, Diane Kruger, Connie Nielsen, Sebastian Koch, Thomas Kretschmann, Gustaf Skarsgård and Josh Radnor, this film explores an unsolved 1930s murder mystery that occurred on the Galapagos Island of Floreana.

In 1929, Berlin physician Friedrich Ritter (Thomas Kretschmann) left Germany with his lover Dore Strauch (Cate Blanchett) to make a life on the uninhabited island of Floreana. He envisioned a paradise of solitude in which he would write great philosophical tracts while carving out a rudimentary existence based on Nietzsche's doctrine of the Superman. What Ritter and Strauch did not count on was being discovered by the international press, who rapidly trumpeted their exploits as "The Adam and Eve of the Galapagos."

With this fame others flocked to the shores of Floreana, each seeking to realize his or her own personal ambitions. The first "intruders" on Ritter's solitude were the Wittmer family: Heinz (Sebastian Koch), his pregnant wife Margret (Diane Kruger) and teenage son Harry, who left Cologne, Germany, in 1931 determined to become "The Swiss Family Robinsons of the Galapagos." Then, shortly thereafter, the Austrian Baroness Eloise von Wagner Bosquet (Connie Nielsen) arrived, toting a revolver, a pair of handsome, much younger lovers and a grandiose plan to build a luxury hotel catering to billionaire yachtsmen. These three groups, each with their own personal mythologies and visions of what paradise might be, quickly discovered that the island of Floreana would never be large enough for peaceful cohabitation. *THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR* then becomes the tale of disparate dreams colliding in a harsh environment barely capable of supporting human life: it is a portrait of mysterious disappearances and likely murder for some, of survival and triumph for others. As the story unspools, Josh Radnor voices the observing eye of John Garth, a young American scientist, and Gustaf Skarsgård is the Swedish journalist, Rolf Blomberg, who comes to investigate the Island's disappearances.

In addition to the richness of this real-life mystery (a mystery that rivals what Alfred Hitchcock or Agatha Christie might have dreamt up), *THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR* also skillfully interweaves the stories of a handful of present-day Galapagos pioneers (Europeans, Americans and Ecuadoreans who settled idiosyncratically on the Islands between the 1930s and 1960s). Interviews and verite scenes with these modern "characters" touch upon many of the myriad reasons that the original settlers left civilization behind to take up permanent residency on the Galapagos.

Through a mixture of contemporary footage and archival stills we meet: Jacqueline De Roy (who, with her husband and young daughter, left Belgium in search of a way out of the post-war rut); Teppy Angermeyer (whose father, Gus, fled Hitler's Germany with his three brothers in pursuit of a paradise made of fresh air, love and sunshine); Carmen Kubler (whose family migrated to the Galapagos in 1934 after her father "smelled war" brewing in Europe); and Steve Divine (whose hardy, individualist parents established a farm in the Galapagos highlands).

THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR features newly-discovered vintage "home movie" footage of the protagonists in their Galapagos surroundings and other extraordinary archival material not seen in over 70 years. Stunning present-day HD footage evokes the unique atmosphere and natural beauty of the Galapagos Islands while portraying the inner lives of those who chose to make these Islands their home.

By turns macabre, humorous, inspiring and profound, *THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR* is a murder mystery but also an adventure story of the sort that make *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Swiss Family Robinson* so timeless.

FILMMAKERS' STATEMENT & PRODUCTION NOTES

In the summer of 1998, we were hired by a friend of ours as cinematographer and sound recordist for a National Science Foundation-funded project in the Galapagos Islands. Little did we know that a two-week shoot-for-hire would result in a deep passion for a place and a story, a passion that would take us on a 15-year journey resulting in THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR: Satan Came to Eden.

At the time, we had no idea that people lived in the Galapagos. Like most travelers going there for the first time, we believed that the Islands' only inhabitants were exotic species of tortoises, birds and iguanas, and that their history consisted entirely of scientific exploration related to Darwin and his followers. It was a wonderful surprise then, when early in this shoot, we pulled a book called *The Enchanted Islands: The Galapagos Discovered* out of our boat's one-shelf "library" and began reading with growing excitement about the Islands' little-known human history. One chapter in particular captured our attention. It was called "Murder in Paradise" and its scant twelve pages introduced us to Dr. Friedrich Ritter, his companion Dore Strauch, the Wittmer family, the Baroness, her lovers and the mysterious events that took place on Floreana Island in the early 1930s.

Our excitement grew when Miguel, our Galapagos guide and naturalist, told us that one of the key protagonists, Margret Wittmer—then 95 years old—was still living on Floreana. From that moment on, we were determined to somehow meet Margret before we left the Islands. Although our itinerary did not include Floreana, toward the end of our shoot, through some odd coincidence, our boat ended up breaking down right in front of that island. Luckily for us, there was nothing to do but clamber ashore and have tea with Margret while the crew repaired the boat. Before meeting her, our guide sternly warned us not to utter a word about the Baroness or any of the strange details surrounding her disappearance. Taking his warning to heart, we instead listened as Margret regaled us with stories of Franklin Roosevelt and other famous visitors to her island. As expected, she never uttered a word about Floreana's more notorious history. But just as we were getting ready to say goodbye, Margret looked closely at us and made a statement that would haunt us in the years to come: "*En la boca cerada, no entran moscas,*" or "A closed mouth admits no flies."

When Margret uttered that phrase we became obsessed with the Floreana story and knew immediately that there was a great film inherent in it, but we were stymied about how this story could be told in a documentary. With the exception of Margret (who wouldn't talk about it), all the protagonists were dead and we aren't the kind of documentarians who use re-enactments in our work. So we left the Galapagos and continued to mull over this fabulous yarn as we began instead to work on BALLETS RUSSES (2005).

Then, years later, as we were finishing BALLETS RUSSES, the friend who'd taken us to the Galapagos in 1998 called with some extremely exciting news. He'd heard about a hidden archive at USC, which had been donated decades earlier by Allan Hancock, a wealthy Southern California industrialist. Rumor had it that this archive contained 16mm film footage from the 1930s featuring all of the protagonists in the Floreana mystery. Knowing that we were still consumed by a passion for this unsolved whodunit, our friend made the introductions necessary to get access to this archive and, along with our fellow producer Celeste Schaefer Snyder, we made a trip down to Los Angeles to check it out.

At USC, each film can we opened smelled strongly of vinegar, a sign of decay, and the reels were in varying states of disintegration. Not knowing anything about the quality of the images or the real content of these films, but realizing that it was only a matter of time before they would be completely unsalvageable, we worked with USC archivist Melinda Hayes to come to an agreement with the university: in return for the right to use the footage as the basis of a documentary, we would cover the cost and take responsibility for transferring it to a more stable medium.

As the fragile celluloid unspooled at Monaco Labs in San Francisco we knew our gamble had paid off. There in front of us were Friedrich Ritter and Dore Strauch building their homestead on Floreana, the Wittmers up in the highlands in the old pirate caves, and the Baroness vamping with Philippson, her favored lover. The images offered up an incredibly privileged view into the long-vanished people and events that had filled our imaginations for so many years. With great excitement we realized we could finally tell this story as a documentary.

After transferring the footage to tape and cataloguing it, we began what would be a year's long research phase. This included many trips back to USC to pour through their Allan Hancock Collection—which in addition to the 16mm film footage, includes hundreds of photographs and negatives, letters, journals, books and manuscripts all related to Floreana and the events of 1931–1934. It also involved countless eBay searches that unearthed magazine articles from the period, more photos and an extremely rare copy of Dore Strauch's book, *Satan Came to Eden*.

Along the way, we befriended John Woram, one of the most avid investigators into the human history of the Galapagos and creator of the website Las Encantadas <http://www.galapagos.to/> John generously introduced us to Jorge Antonio Mahauad, the great grandson of Margret Wittmer. Jorge Antonio had spent the years since Margret's death in 2000 trying to piece together and preserve the Wittmer family history and he was quick to embrace our plans to make a documentary.

John Woram also made email introductions to Octavio Latorre and Jose Machuca, the two Ecuadorean historians who have each spent much of the past several decades uncovering the human history of the Islands, and who together serve as quasi-guides through the narrative of our film. Finally, our location production manager (and naturalist/guide on our original trip to Galapagos), Miguel Mosquera, arranged for us to meet Claudio Cruz, who grew up on Floreana Island on the old Ritter/Strauch property.

With these introductions in hand, we travelled back to the Galapagos on a research trip in the spring of 2007. Initially we thought we would spend the bulk of the trip on Floreana, visiting the locations of the 1930s incidents and meeting Margret Wittmer's daughter Floreanita, who still runs the hotel there. But before sailing to Floreana, we stopped on the nearby (and much more populated) island of Santa Cruz to visit Jose Machuca and meet Margret's son Rolf Wittmer. While on Santa Cruz, we were introduced to several long-time settlers and their descendants: Jacqueline, Tui and Gil De Roy, Carmen and Teppy Angermeyer, Steve Divine and Daniel Fitter, among others. In talking with these original "Galapagueños," as Island settlers are called, we discovered that their experiences in many ways reflected the experiences of our protagonists on Floreana. We saw that their stories could both provide context for the murder mystery and amplify many of the themes that had come to the fore during our research. In short, our film was expanding beyond a "whodunit" and into an exploration of humanity's perennial search for paradise. And indeed, it was going to take on the same sort of multi-character narratives that had worked so well for us in *BALLETS RUSSES*, *KIDS OF SURVIVAL* and other earlier documentaries we'd made.

In September 2007, we returned to the Islands with our camera, microphone, a permit from the Galapagos National Park, and our crew (largely made up of friends who had volunteered their services to our cause). We spent more than a month filming at the Floreana locations related to the murder mystery, shooting interviews with more than two dozen people, and traveling by boat to the surrounding islands in order to capture the atmosphere and wildlife that make the Galapagos so unique.

That trip was only the first of what would ultimately be five to the Islands, and our production work would also include travels to Norway where we interviewed Jacob Lundh and Friedel Horneman, and Germany where we interviewed Friedrich Ritter's grandnephew, Fritz Hieber, and filmed in Wollbach, Ritter's childhood home.

Back in San Francisco, we tapped the extremely talented editor Bill Weber (WE WERE HERE, THE COCKETTES) to wrestle the tangled stories that make up THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR into a dramatic whole. Throughout the editing, we, along with Celeste, continually wrote and refined a script based on the prolific writings of the protagonists in the Floreana story. These writings would serve as the first-person voicings of dreams and resentments against which the vintage archival footage would play.

As the script came together, we knew we were going to need first-rate actors in order to successfully bring to life Friedrich, Dore, the Baroness and the rest of the Floreana protagonists. When Cate Blanchett came to San Francisco to film BLUE JASMINE we were introduced by a mutual friend. On a break from filming with Woody Allen, Cate was kind enough to come up to our house and watch a cut of THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR. We were completely in simpatico with her take on the film and especially by the way she perceived the many layers of the character of Dore Strauch. Having seen Cate in THE GOOD GERMAN, we knew she was more than capable of delivering a knockout performance with a German accent and so when she generously agreed to voice the role, we knew we could truly bring Dore to life.

With Cate on board, our Executive Producer, Jonathan Dana, introduced us to casting director Margery Simkin (BEAUTIFUL CREATURES, AVATAR, TWELVE MONKEYS), who brought to us the rest of the amazing cast: Diane Kruger as Margret Wittmer, Sebastian Koch as Margret's husband Heinz, and a truly dark and menacing Thomas Kretschmann as Friedrich Ritter. Margery also brought on board the fabulous Connie Nielsen as the Baroness, Josh Radnor as the young American scientist John Garth and Gustaf Skarsgård as the Swedish journalist Rolf Blomberg.

For the original score we turned to Laura Karpman, who had worked with us on our last documentary, SOMETHING VENTURED. Laura understood that the music needed to be something a little off-kilter and weird to reflect the Galapagos atmosphere, but also expansive enough to embody the hopes and dreams of the many characters featured in the film. As luck would have it, we began working with Laura just as she was heading off to teach at the Valencia, Spain campus of the Berklee College of Music. While there she discovered a collection of unbelievably talented young musicians who in addition to playing the conventional violin, guitar and cello, also were adept at more unusual instruments including the chromatic didgeridoo, Indian singing bowls, and the Latin American *cuatro*. Laura's brilliance as a composer and orchestrator inspired these talented musicians and resulted in what we feel is a truly beguiling score.

THE CHARACTERS

Floreana Mystery Protagonists (in order of appearance)

Dore Strauch (voiced by Cate Blanchett):



Dore Strauch was born in Berlin, Germany. She was 28-years-old when, in July 1929, she left Berlin (and her husband) behind in order to migrate permanently to the uninhabited Galapagos island of Floreana with her lover and physician, Dr. Friedrich Ritter. Ritter and Strauch called their Floreana homestead “Friedo”—a melding of their first names—and were dubbed “The Adam and Eve of the Galapagos” by the world’s press. In 1935, Dore published her book *Satan Came to Eden* in which she provided her version of the events on Floreana.

Friedrich Ritter (voiced by Thomas Kretschmann):



Friedrich Ritter was born in the little town of Wollbach near Germany’s Black Forrest. He was a respected physician in Berlin when, in July 1929 at the age of 43, he left his flourishing practice (and his wife) behind to follow a life-long dream of renouncing civilization for life on an uninhabited island. Ritter chose to settle in the Galapagos along with his lover and patient, Dore Strauch, after reading William Beebe’s popular book, *Galapagos World’s End*. A devout follower of Nietzsche, Ritter hoped to become a great, published philosopher in his own right while emulating the Nietzschean doctrine of the Superman on the island of Floreana. Ritter and Strauch called their Floreana homestead “Friedo”—a melding of their first names—and were dubbed “The Adam and Eve of the Galapagos” by the world’s press.

John Garth (voiced by Josh Radnor):



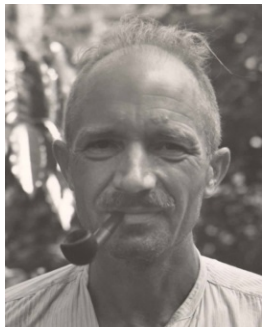
Biologist John Garth was only 21 years old when, in the winter of 1931, he boarded the research vessel *Velero III* for its first expedition to the then-largely uncharted Galapagos Islands. The *Velero*’s captain was Allan Hancock, Southern California oilman, banker, philanthropist and patron of pure scientist. Hancock was a gifted cellist who never sailed anywhere without his own personal chamber orchestra, and he tapped Garth because, although Garth was not yet established as a scientist, he was already an extremely accomplished pianist. Nicknamed “Bugs” because of his focus on entomology, Garth was a careful journal keeper. His writing (which covers the period of the *Velero III* annual expeditions between 1931 and 1935) provides an observational perspective on the Floreana people and events.

Margret Wittmer (voiced by Diane Kruger):



In the summer of 1931, 27-year-old Margret Wittmer left Cologne, Germany, with her husband Heinz and her 14-year-old stepson Harry. The Wittmer's were middle-class Germans who sought a new life in the Galapagos both as a way out of the grim economic and political realities of 1930s Germany, and as a healthful place in which they hoped Harry would recover from what was probably rheumatic heart disease. They were inspired to migrate to the Islands by articles that were written by and about Friedrich Ritter in the German newspapers, and fancied themselves becoming "The Swiss Family Robinsons of the Galapagos." The Wittmers chose Floreana in particular because Ritter was a physician and Margret, five months pregnant with her first child when they landed on the Island, hoped the doctor would help her through her impending labor. In 1959, Margret wrote her version of the Floreana story in her book *Floreana: A Woman's Pilgrimage to the Galapagos*.

Heinz Wittmer (voiced by Sebastian Koch):



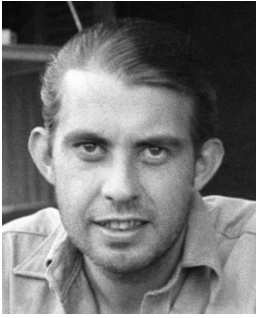
41-year-old Heinz Wittmer was working as personal secretary to the mayor of Cologne when, discouraged by the grim economic and political realities of 1930s Germany, and concerned about the fragile health of his 14-year-old son Harry, he read a series of newspaper articles written by Friedrich Ritter. These articles inspired him deeply and he soon convinced his new wife, Margret, to leave everything behind and move permanently to the Galapagos. The Wittmers landed on Floreana in August 1931 and from the beginning fancied themselves "The Swiss Family Robinsons of the Galapagos."

Baroness Eloise von Wagner (voiced by Connie Nielsen):



The Austrian Baroness von Wagner landed on Floreana in October 1931 along with two much younger German lovers, Robert Philippson and Rudolf Lorenz. Having read reports of the wealthy yachtsmen who visited Friedrich Ritter and Dore Strauch, the Baroness came to the Galapagos determined to build a grand luxury hotel for these passing millionaires. The hotel was to have been called Hacienda Paradiso. Although it has never been proven, the Baroness claimed to be related to the composers Liszt and Wagner, and also to have spent time as a spy in Constantinople during World War I. She and Lorenz owned a boutique together in Paris, which they gave up in order to seek their fame and fortune on Floreana. It is believed that Lorenz provided the money for their trip and that Philippson had been a salesman in the Paris boutique.

Rolf Blomberg (voiced by Gustaf Skarsgård):



Rolf Blomberg was a 22-year-old Swedish journalist and photographer who visited Floreana, along with Norwegian fisherman Trygve Nuggerud, in the summer of 1934. Blomberg had come to the Island intent on meeting the Baroness and was the first outsider to learn of her disappearance. He then became the reporter who broke the story to the international press. After World War II, Blomberg settled permanently in Ecuador and, with that as his base, produced more than 30 documentaries for Swedish television. Some of his footage appears in THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR.

Modern Characters (in order of appearance)

Octavio Latorre:



Historian Octavio Latorre lives in Quito, Ecuador and has written extensively on the human history of the Galapagos Islands. His first and most well-known book is *The Curse of the Giant Tortoise: Tragedies, Mysteries and Crimes in The Galapagos Islands*.

Fritz Hieber:



Fritz Hieber is the grandnephew of Friedrich Ritter. He grew up in Brombach, Germany—not far from Wollbach, the childhood home of Friedrich. Throughout his youth Fritz was told countless stories about Ritter, Dore Strauch and other Floreana inhabitants, and he eloquently relates some of these stories in the film. Hieber now lives near Frankfurt, and like his granduncle, is a physician.

Jacqueline and Gil De Roy:



Belgian expatriate Jacqueline De Roy immigrated to Santa Cruz Island in 1955 along with her late husband Andre and their two-year-old daughter Tui. Her son Gil was born on Santa Cruz in 1958. Both of them still live on the Island.

Tui De Roy:



The daughter of Jacqueline and the late Andre De Roy, Tui moved to Santa Cruz Island from Belgium when she was two-years-old. Tui is a world-renowned wildlife photographer and writer whose books include *Galapagos: Islands Lost in Time*; *Galapagos: Islands Born of Fire*; *The Andes: As the Condor Flies*; and *New Zealand: A Natural History*. She now makes her home in New Zealand.

Teppy Angermeyer:



Born in the Galapagos, Teppy Angermeyer is the son of Gus Angermeyer—the eldest of the four Angermeyer brothers who immigrated permanently to Santa Cruz Island from Hamburg, Germany, in 1935. Gus and his brothers—Karl, Hans and Fritz—all fled due to the rise of Hitler.

Steve Divine:



Steve's father, Bud Divine, was a rough and tumble rancher from Arizona who, along with his wife Doris, migrated permanently to the Galapagos in 1949. Steve was born on Santa Cruz in 1952 and still lives there today.

Carmen Kubler Angermeyer:



In 1934, Carmen Angermeyer was six years old when she emigrated from Spain to Santa Cruz Island with her parents Carlos and Marga Kubler. Carmen refers to herself as “a housewife in Galapagos” and married Fritz, the youngest of the Angermeyer brothers. Shortly after Carmen married Fritz, her mother Marga divorced Carlos Kubler in order to marry Fritz's brother Karl Angermeyer.

Jacob Lundh:



In 1932, when he was eight years old, Jacob Lundh moved to Santa Cruz Island from Oslo, Norway, with his mother and father. His father, Captain Herman Lundh, ran a cargo boat around the Galapagos Islands and knew all of the protagonists of the Floreana mystery. He even spent a weekend at Hacienda Paradiso with the Baroness and her lovers. We filmed Lundh at his home in Oslo.

Daniel Fitter Angermeyer:



Born on Santa Cruz Island in 1970, Daniel is the third-generation of Angermeyers to live in Galapagos. His mother Mary was the daughter of Hans Angermeyer, who along with his brothers Gus, Karl and Fritz, emigrated from Hamburg, Germany, in 1935.

Rolf Wittmer and Jorge Antonio Mahauad:



The son of Margret and Heinz Wittmer, Rolf Wittmer was born on January 1, 1933, only four months after his parents landed on Floreana. Rolf's delivery took place in one of the Island's old pirate caves, which is where the Wittmers lived at the time. Jorge Antonio Mahauad is Rolf's oldest grandson. He was born in Ecuador, but now lives on Santa Cruz Island.

Floeanita Wittmer:



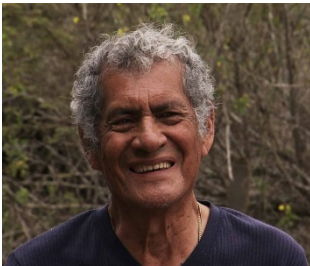
The daughter of Margret and Heinz Wittmer, Floeanita was born on Floreana in 1937. By the time of her birth, the Wittmers lived in a house and the old pirate caves were used only for storage. Floeanita still lives on Floreana and runs the family's hotel there.

Friedel Horneman:



The daughter of a Norwegian father and a German mother, Friedel Horneman was born in the Santa Cruz highlands in 1940. Friedel describes her childhood in idyllic terms, but as she grew into young womanhood, she dreamt of leaving the Galapagos and began looking for a way out—especially when her parents tried to marry her off to Alf Kastdalen, the son of neighboring Norwegian immigrants. Friedel now makes her home with her second husband in Kirkenes, Norway.

Jose Machuca:



A retired ship's physician from Guayaquil, Ecuador, Dr. Jose Machuca moved to the island of Santa Cruz in 1993. Since then he has become known as an amateur historian and scholar of all things related to Galapagos human history.

Claudio Cruz:



The son of Eliezer and Emma Cruz, Claudio is one of twelve Cruz children born on Floreana Island. He grew up on the property that had formerly been known as Friedo and was owned previously by Friedrich Ritter and Dore Strauch. In fact, Dr. Ritter's grave remains undisturbed on the Cruz property to this day.

THE FILMMAKERS

DAN GELLER & DAYNA GOLDFINE (PRODUCERS/DIRECTORS/WRITERS)

For over twenty years, Emmy-award winning directors/producers Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine have jointly created critically-acclaimed, multi-character documentary narratives that braid their characters' individual personal stories to form a larger portrait of the human experience. Their most recent film, the award-winning SOMETHING VENTURED (2011), premiered at SXSW, went on to play at festivals internationally, and was broadcast nationwide on PBS. Geller and Goldfine's work also includes: BALLETS RUSSES (2005) which was recognized as one of the top five documentaries of 2005 by both the National Society of Film Critics and the National Board of Review and appeared on a dozen critical "10 Best Films" lists, including those of *Time Magazine*, *the Los Angeles Times*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *the San Francisco Chronicle* and *Slate*; NOW AND THEN: FROM FROSH TO SENIORS, which premiered theatrically in October 1999 and aired on PBS in October 2000 as the lead program of the *Independent Lens* series; KIDS OF SURVIVAL: THE ART AND LIFE OF TIM ROLLINS + K.O.S. (1996), a feature-length documentary about the South Bronx-based art group Tim Rollins & K.O.S., which aired on Cinemax in September 1998 and was the recipient of two national Emmy Awards; FROSH: NINE MONTHS IN A FRESHMAN DORM (1994); and, the award-winning ISADORA DUNCAN: MOVEMENT FROM THE SOUL (1988).

BILL WEBER (EDITOR)

Bill Weber cut his editing teeth with a broadcast Emmy, an MTV Music Video of the Year Award and a successful career in commercial work. He soon discovered his love for documentaries by editing and co-directing THE COCKETTES (2002), which premiered at Sundance and Berlin and won the LA Film Critics Documentary of the Year award. Most recently Weber edited and co-directed WE WERE HERE: THE AIDS YEARS IN SAN FRANCISCO (2011), which also opened at Sundance and Berlin, screened theatrically and aired on PBS' *Independent Lens*. Other work includes the Academy Award-nominated documentary, THE FINAL INCH (2009), the Emmy nominated films LAST LETTER HOME (2004) and ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVERS (2009) for HBO, the Telluride premiering documentary feature HATS OFF (2008), and numerous specials for HBO and The History Channel.

LAURA KARPMAN (COMPOSER)

Four-time Emmy award-winning Laura Karpman has been named one of the most important women in Hollywood by *Variety*. In addition to creating and recording the original score for Geller and Goldfine's documentary SOMETHING VENTURED (2011), Karpman's other credits include the miniseries TAKEN (2002) executive produced by Steven Spielberg, ODYSSEY 5 (2002–2003) for Showtime, MASTERS OF SCIENCE FICTION (2007) for ABC, CRAFT IN AMERICA (2007–2012) for PBS, MAN IN THE CHAIR starring Christopher Plummer (2007), THE ANNIHILATION OF FISH starring Lynn Redgrave and James Earl Jones (1999) and THE TOURNAMENT (2009) for The Weinstein Company. Equally at home in the concert hall, Karpman has received commissions from The Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, The Juilliard School, The Czech National Symphony Orchestra, among others. Her multimedia opera ASK YOUR MAMA (2009), commissioned by Carnegie Hall and written for Jessye Norman, The Roots, Nnenna Freelon and d'Adre Aziza, from a text by Langston Hughes, premiered to critical acclaim.

JONATHAN DANA (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER)

Jonathan Dana has been a pioneer in the independent film business since 1971. He served as President of Motion Pictures and Television at Atlantic Releasing Corporation and as President and CEO of Triton Pictures, supervising such films as A WORLD APART (1988), STORMY MONDAY (1988), TEEN WOLF (1985), PATTY HEARST (1988) and HEARTS OF DARKNESS: A FILMMAKER'S APOCALYPSE (1991). Dana has also served in a production capacity on over 26 fiction and non-fiction films, including STANDING IN THE SHADOWS OF MOTOWN (2002), THE SPITFIRE GRILL (1996), TOM DOWD AND THE LANGUAGE OF MUSIC (2003), YOU KILL ME (2007) and KILL THE IRISHMAN (2011), and directed the ground-breaking documentary SANDSTONE (1975). His recent credits as producer's representative include the 2012 Spirit Award nominee WE WERE HERE and 2013 Oscar nominee THE INVISIBLE WAR. Dana was an initial investor and supervised the launch of indie film community Withoutabox.com, now an operating division of IMDB. This is his third collaboration with Geller Goldfine, having served as consulting producer and producer's representative on BALLETS RUSSES (2005), and as production consultant on SOMETHING VENTURED (2011).

ROY WALDSPURGER (SOUND DESIGNER/MIXER)

Roy Waldspurger has been a sound editor, designer and mixer for nearly 20 years. His most recent credits include Sophia Coppola's THE BLING RING (2013), SOMEWHERE (2010) and MARIE ANTOINETTE (2006), David Mamet/HBO's PHIL SPECTOR (2013), and Curtis Hanson's TOO BIG TO FAIL (2011).

MARGERY SIMKIN (CASTING DIRECTOR)

Over the past thirty years, Margery Simkin has cast films for major directors such as Guillermo del Toro, James Cameron, Steven Soderbergh and Terry Gilliam. Among many others, her credits include: BEAUTIFUL CREATURES (2013), AVATAR (2009), TWELVE MONKEYS (1995), MARLEY AND ME (2008), ERIN BROKOVICH (2000), FREEDOM WRITERS (2007), FIELD OF DREAMS (1989), TOP GUN (1986), and most recently, PACIFIC RIM (2013).

CELESTE SCHAEFER SNYDER (PRODUCER/WRITER)

Celeste Schaefer Snyder also co-produced and co-wrote SOMETHING VENTURED (2011), and associate produced and co-wrote BALLETS RUSSES (2005).

THE ACTORS

CATE BLANCHETT (DORE STRAUCH)

Currently receiving rave reviews for her performance in Woody Allen's BLUE JASMINE, Cate Blanchett is an Australian actress, who has received several accolades, including a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, two Screen Actors Guild Awards, two Golden Globe Awards, two BAFTAs, and an Academy Award. She came to international attention for her role as Elizabeth I of England in the 1998 film ELIZABETH for which she won British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) and Golden Globe awards, and earned her first Academy Award nomination for Best Actress. Blanchett appeared as the elf lady Galadriel in Peter Jackson's THE LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy from 2001 to 2003. In 2004, Blanchett's portrayal of Katharine Hepburn in Martin Scorsese's THE AVIATOR brought her numerous awards, including an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Blanchett's other films include BABEL (2006), NOTES ON A SCANDAL (2006), INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL (2008), and THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON (2008). Blanchett collaborated with director Peter Jackson again for THE HOBBIT (2012–2014). She will star in George Clooney's upcoming THE MONUMENTS MEN.

SEBASTIAN KOCH (HEINZ WITTMER)

On stage, television, and the big screen, Sebastian Koch is undeniably one of Germany's most multi-faceted and successful actors. He starred in the Academy Award-winning THE LIVES OF OTHERS (2006), for which he received the Globo d'Oro for Best European Actor from the Italian Foreign Press. Koch also starred in Paul Verhoeven's BLACK BOOK (2006), which premiered in Venice and Toronto and was The Netherlands' Oscar submission for the Best Foreign Language Film. Most recently he appeared in A GOOD DAY TO DIE HARD (2013), and is starring in the upcoming Showtime production THE VATICAN, directed by Ridley Scott.

THOMAS KRETSCHMANN (FRIEDRICH RITTER)

Kretschmann is a German actor best known for his performances in Academy Award-winning THE PIANIST (2002), DOWNFALL (2004) and KING KONG (2005). His prior voice work includes the voice of Professor Z in CARS 2 (2011). Kretschmann's many other credits include major roles in TRANSSIBERIAN (2008), SEA WOLF (2008) and VALKYRIE (2008). Currently he is co-starring as Van Helsing in NBC's DRACULA, debuting this October.

DIANE KRUGER (MARGRET WITTMER)

Kruger is a German actress best known for her role as Bridget von Hammersmark in the Academy Award-nominated INGLORIOUS BASTERDS (2009) and her performances of Marie Antoinette in FAREWELL, MY QUEEN (2012) and Helen in TROY (2004). She also starred in JOYEUX NOEL (2005), which received a Best Foreign Language Oscar nomination, and played leading roles in UNKNOWN (2011), MR. NOBODY (2009) and NATIONAL TREASURE (2007). Currently Kruger is starring as Detective Sonya Cross in FX Channel's THE BRIDGE.

CONNIE NIELSEN (BARONESS ELOISE VON WAGNER)

Danish actress Connie Nielsen is best known for her portrayal of Princess Lucilla, opposite Russell Crowe's Maximus in Ridley Scott's *GLADIATOR* (2000). Nielsen's many other leading roles include: *THE HUNTED* (2003), *BROTHERS* (2004), *RETURN TO SENDER* (2004), *THE ICE HARVEST* (2005), and *LOST IN AFRICA* (2010). Most recently she starred as Meredith Kane alongside Kelsey Grammer in *BOSS* (STARZ/Lionsgate Television).

JOSH RADNOR (JOHN GARTH)

Radnor is an American actor who made his writing and directorial debut with the 2010 comedy-drama film *HAPPY THANK YOU MORE PLEASE*, in which he also starred and for which he won the Sundance Film Festival Audience Award. His second film, *LIBERAL ARTS* (2012), which he again wrote, directed and starred in, also premiered at Sundance. Radnor has co-starred as Ted Mosby in CBS's smash hit *HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER* since 2005.

GUSTAF SKARSGÅRD (ROLF BLOMBERG)

Named one of European Film's "Shooting Stars" in 2007, Skarsgård is a member of the renowned Swedish Skarsgård acting family, which includes his father Stellan, and his brothers Alexander and Bill. His most recent credits include leading roles in *KON-TIKI* (2012), *HAPPY END* (2011) and *TRUST ME* (2010). Skarsgård is currently co-starring in History Channel's *VIKINGS*.

Trouble in Paradise by Scott Foundas

Aug 30, 2013

This interview with Dayna Goldfine and Dan Geller was published during the 2013 Telluride Film Festival in <http://www.watchnewspapers.com>

The “Galapagos Affair,” as it is commonly known, refers to two unexplained disappearances and a series of mysterious “accidental” deaths that occurred in 1934 on and around the tiny island of Floreana, in the Galapagos archipelago—a bizarre case made all the stranger by the fact that, only a few years earlier, Floreana lacked so much as a single human inhabitant. The first to arrive, in 1929, was Friedrich Ritter, a German doctor who fled the Fatherland with his mistress Dore, intent on living a neo-primitive existence far from the materialism and pettiness of conventional society.

And such might have been the case, were it not for another family, also German, who followed two years later. These were the Wittmers—father Heinz, mother Margret and son Harry, soon to be joined by a baby, Rolf, who would become the island’s first native-born resident. But the real trouble in this would-be paradise arrived in the form of the “Baroness” Eloise Wehrborn de Wagner-Bosquet, an outré specimen of uncertain origins and questionable repute, who might have been an aristocrat or a spy or, perhaps, just a two-bit actress who lucked into the greatest role of her career. Before long, everything the Ritters had sought to escape was flourishing on Floreana like some insidious weed—class warfare, jealousy, power struggles, even murder. They did not all live happily ever after

*These events are the subject of a fascinating documentary, *The Galapagos Affair: Satan Came to Eden*, by the husband-and-wife team of Daniel Geller and Dayna Goldfine (*Ballets Russes*, 2005), who are drawn to sprawling epics and like to dig in deep.*

SCOTT FOUNDAS: How did you first become aware of the “Galapagos Affair” and decide to make a film about it?

DAYNA GOLDFINE: Well, way back in 1998, a dear friend of ours hired us to do camera and sound work on his educational film project. Dan and I waltzed into the Galapagos not really knowing anything about it, but assuming—as I think a lot of people assume—that there weren’t any human inhabitants and that it was going to be all iguanas and tortoises. When we got down there, our tiny little ship’s library included a book about the human history of the islands. We opened it to the most intriguing-sounding chapter, which was called “Murder in Paradise,” and read the story. Then we discovered that Margret Wittmer was still alive—she died in 2000—so we spent the rest of those two weeks begging our director-producer friend to let us go to Floreana to meet her. He kept saying, “No, no, it’s not on our itinerary.” Then, lo and behold, our boat broke down in front of her island.

DANIEL GELLER: To this day, our friend has strong suspicions that Dayna caused that to happen. Somehow, she got into the engine compartment and pulled a spark plug or something. But we did get to meet Margret Wittmer. But what really propelled us into making the movie, which didn’t start until a couple of years later, was finding out that there was an archive of incredible vintage film footage of those people on Floreana—four or five years worth of footage—and that the archive was in danger of disintegrating. In fact, a lot of reels already had bitten the dust. We swooped in and asked if we could try to save the reels. When we saw what was on those reels, we thought it was the core of what could be a really interesting movie.

It seems like an incredibly tricky film to structure, with all of the contradicting, Rashomon-like versions of events.

GELLER: We knew early on that we wanted the characters to tell their own stories, and we were fortunate enough to have primary-source documents left by the people on Floreana that we used to create a script that, in some ways, feels like the characters are in dialogue with each other. But the question was, “How do we prevent the film from feeling too claustrophobic if it’s completely encapsulated in this black-and-white footage from the past?” What we also didn’t anticipate, when we first went down to do more research, was being introduced to people who were the descendants of the Wittmer family and other people living on the islands of Santa Cruz and Galapagos. Their stories were also fascinating and provided context while also opening up the visual and conceptual space of the movie.

GOLDFINE: Even once we realized those were going to be the elements, it was still a two-year editing process, and we made many wrong detours. The first question we had was how much foreshadowing to use. We spent a lot of time talking about foreshadowing and how Alfred Hitchcock and other mystery/thriller filmmakers use it or don’t.

How much do you tell the audience about what's going to happen? That took a lot of time to figure out.

Were the people of the Galapagos eager to participate in the film? Because one tends to think of such remote communities as being suspicious of outsiders, especially filmmakers!

GELLER: Some immediately opened up their doors. Others were more reticent and took some persuading. Understandably, they'd been through the mill before with film and TV crews. Once we explained ourselves and what we were really after, eventually everybody came around. Nobody that we wanted to interview ultimately said no.

GOLDFINE: Rolf and Floreanita Wittmer literally grew up with random tourists showing up on their island asking them what kind of stew their mother had cooked the Baroness in. So, these two people, who are now in their 70s, were over it. Fortunately Jorge Antonio, who's the grandson of Rolf and appears in the film, believes deeply in capturing history. Once he got his mind around what Dan and I were trying to do, he provided the entrée to the whole Wittmer clan. He brought us to the island and made the introductions. That really eased the way.

The film references Adam and Eve, Robinson Crusoe and Swiss Family Robinson, but reality ended up closer to Lord of the Flies. Are those who try to escape the problems of civilization doomed to replicate them?

GELLER: I don't think the enterprise itself was doomed to failure, but I do think that if you put people together whose conceptions of life on an island are so radically different, and put them more or less cheek-by-jowl and with a scarcity of resources, that probably is doomed to failure.

GOLDFINE: They didn't set out to form a community, and that was probably the biggest reason it became so disastrous. They each were trying to live this idealistic version of whatever mythology they had adopted. Of course they were going to clash. As a unit, the Wittmers hung together and cooperated in a way that allowed them to survive. The others just tore at each other. One of the minor characters in the film says island life is just a microcosm of what happens in the greater society.

Will we ever find out what really happened on Floreana, or did Margret Wittmer take that secret to the grave?

GELLER: You never know what little bit of evidence might turn up on that island, but no firsthand adult eyewitness remains, so it would have to be a forensic investigation. But some of the fun of it—I don't know if "fun" is exactly the right word—but some of the intrigue is not knowing.

GOLDFINE: When we started this project, I really did hope to solve it, whatever that would mean. As it went on, I ultimately decided that, sometimes, when things are solved they become less interesting. Maybe it's better to leave it as an enigma and let the audience discuss it among themselves as they walk out of the theater.

Scott Foundas is Chief Film Critic at Variety. Read more: [Watch Newspapers - Trouble in Paradise](#)

THE GALAPAGOS AFFAIR

Satan Came to Eden

Directed by **Dayna Goldfine & Dan Geller**
Produced by **Dan Geller, Dayna Goldfine & Celeste Schaefer Snyder**
Executive Producer **Jonathan Dana**
Edited by **Bill Weber**
Original Music **Laura Karpman**
Casting **Margery Simkin**

Featuring Performances by
(In alphabetical order)

Dore Strauch **Cate Blanchett**
Heinz Wittmer **Sebastian Koch**
Friedrich Ritter **Thomas Kretschmann**
Margret Wittmer **Diane Kruger**
Baroness Eloise von Wagner **Connie Nielsen**
John Garth **Josh Radnor**
Rolf Blomberg **Gustaf Skarsgård**

Written by **Dayna Goldfine, Dan Geller & Celeste Schaefer Snyder**

Based on the books, journals, articles and letters of
Dore Strauch, Margret Wittmer, Friedrich Ritter, Heinz Wittmer and John Garth

Associate Producer **William McComas**
Cinematography **Dan Geller**
Location Sound **Dayna Goldfine**

2013 • USA • 120 mins • Color and B&W • In English and Spanish
Dolby 5.1 • 1.77:1 Aspect Ratio • Not Rated
Formats: DCP, Blu-Ray and HD-CAM



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