



The Browser

the world in a window

Search

[Home](#)

[Sections](#)

[Five Books](#)

[RSS Feeds](#)

[About](#)

Books recommended by Michela Wrong

[The Worst Date Ever: War Crimes, Hollywood Heart-throbs and Other Abominations](#)

Jane Bussmann

AWAITING
FRONT COVER
IMAGE

"Showbiz correspondent turned war reporter produces a funny and brilliant piece of journalism, taking a foul-mouthed and sarcastic style to the conflict in Northern Uganda. She looks for lip-plumping gloss in the chemists of Gulu, but also reports on the little known truth of the Lord's Resistance Army and its battle with

government forces who are happy to let the conflict go on indefinitely."

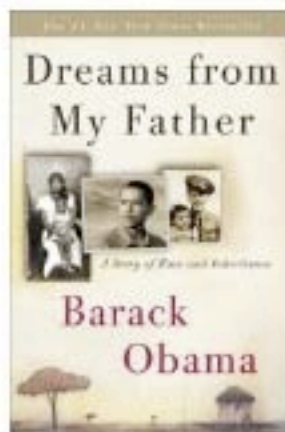
Africa | Michela Wrong

 [Printer-friendly version](#)



Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance

Barack Obama



"It came out in 1995 when he was a young man and it was reissued in 2004. The point he makes on Kenya is that corruption is not about personal greed, it's about compassion. It's about compassion for the extended family who put incredible pressure on you, who don't trust the state to do anything for

them and who rely solely on family. It's amazingly insightful."

List price: \$25.95

Edition: Hardcover



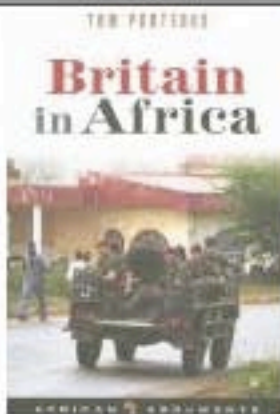
Britain in Africa (African Arguments)

Tom Porteous

Half-Italian, half-British, Michela Wrong joined Reuters news agency in the early 1980s and was posted as a foreign correspondent to Italy, France and Ivory Coast. She became a freelance journalist in 1994, when she moved to Zaire and found herself covering the genocide in neighbouring Rwanda. She spent the next five years reporting on events across Africa for Reuters, the BBC and the Financial Times. Her third book, *It's Our Turn to Eat*, has been described as reading "like a cross between Le Carre and Solzhenitsyn". She tells *The Browser* that aid is sometimes a necessity but it won't be Africa's salvation.

Q: Tell me about Jane Bussmann's book, *The Worst Date Ever*.

A: Jane Bussmann is a North London girl who moved to LA, planning to write the film script of all time, but ended up as a showbiz correspondent interviewing the likes of Britney Spears and Mischa Barton. She's staggeringly honest about the reality of being a celebrity journalist and how the most testing question you ever get to ask is: "You're in great shape. How do you do it?" She's pining for meaning when she sees John Prendergast on television – he used to be an adviser on Africa in the Clinton administration and is a kind of Africa-trotting troubleshooter – and she develops this massive crush. To impress him, she goes to Uganda to write about the Lord's Resistance Army, the rebel group that is supposed to be devastating Northern Uganda. So she goes from interviewing Britney to interviewing child soldiers and refugees and she does it brilliantly well. She doesn't change her tone of voice and there is no attempt to be earnest or worthy. She just transfers her sarcastic and foul-mouthed writing style direct to Uganda.



"Over the last 12 years the humanitarian imperative has driven British policy. It is an approach proposed originally by Jeffrey Sachs, and the theory is that Africa needs to be shocked out of the poverty trap with a massive injection of aid. It was part of the bubbling optimism of Blair and Bush who thought they could sort the world out. Aid is often necessary but it is not where Africa's salvation is going to lie."

List price: \$23.00
Edition: Paperback



The Antelope's Strategy: Living in Rwanda After the Genocide

Jean Hatzfeld



"It is easy to write movingly about victims, but it is more interesting and more important, if we want to stop it happening again, to talk to the perpetrators. This is about going back to a village, Nyamata, and talking to the people, both victims and

Q: Does she score?

A: No! She never does get off with him. There are some great moments where she's going round the local chemist's looking for a lip-plumping gloss for her upcoming date – not an easy item to find. But the point is that along the way she gets sucked into the Ugandan story in its own right. It's an excellent piece of journalism, because while the story presented to the world by the government in Kampala is that the Lord's Resistance Army is a terrible force destroying Northern Uganda and enormous amounts of aid are needed to stave off a threat to international security, people in Uganda know that the army is making a massive amount of money out of the conflict and is very happy to keep it going. Effectively, the Ugandan army is holding the population of Northern Uganda hostage in supposedly protected villages. These places are little better than concentration camps, where the girls, who have already been raped by the rebels, then work as prostitutes for the soldiers. Bussmann captures all of this. It's a story that doesn't often get told and because it's incredibly funny you have to keep reading. If you were presented with a serious work on the troubles in Northern Uganda you probably wouldn't get through it.

Q: You've gone for Barack Obama's *Dreams From My Father* next.

A: It came out in 1995 when Obama was a young man and it was reissued in 2004, when he'd just been made senator. I'm glad I read it after writing my own book on Kenya because it goes to the heart of something that I try to capture in my book but probably don't manage to do quite as well. My book is about corruption, his is about more than that, but the point he makes, and I agree with him, is that corruption is not about personal