

Rampaging rhinos, a tomboy lover and the prince with a death wish



CHRISTOPHER STEVENS LAST NIGHT'S TV

Edward VIII: The Lion King ★★★★★;
CSI: Crime Scene Investigation ★☆☆☆☆

SEX, royals, intrigue, charging rhinos — the story of Edward VIII's 1930 African safari has everything that Hollywood craves.

With Hugh Jackman as the Prince of Wales and Keira Knightley as his tomboyish lover, Toodles, any film of it would be a certain hit.

But even Hollywood can't conjure up what made **Edward VIII: The Lion King** (C4) so extraordinary: close-up footage of big game on the attack, filmed by Edward himself with suicidal daring.

In one sequence, the prince stalked towards a sleeping rhinoceros and her calf. The noise from his cine camera roused the beast and, panicking, she lumbered towards him.

The prince kept filming, and as the rhino gathered speed like an oncoming train, death seemed inevitable. But the picture didn't tremble.

Over the prince's shoulder, a shotgun barrel appeared. His friend, 'white hunter' Denys Finch Hatton of *Out Of Africa* fame, felled the rhino with one shot.

In a rage, the prince turned on Finch Hatton: 'I did not give you permission to shoot that rhino!'

'Your highness,' replied the hunter coolly, 'if you were trampled to death while under my protection, I should have no choice but to retire behind a tree and blow my brains out.'

Edward was not filming with a zoom lens. The rhino was just yards away, and the steadiness of the camera proves the future King was not about to leap out of its path.

The question hung unanswered: was the 36-year-old heir to the

throne, bored to distraction by his life of 'princing and kinging', looking for a heroic death?

On an earlier trip, he had nearly been mauled by a lion. The big cat had been shot and wounded, but as Edward approached it, the animal sprang up. Only a lucky reaction shot saved his life.

But it was the experience of shooting an elephant that turned the prince into a conservationist. The animal's magnificent gentleness touched him.

That night, he wrote in his journal: 'To want to hurt him seems as unthinkable as to want to hurt an old gentleman from the alms house.'

He started campaigning for an end to the slaughter safaris, where wealthy tourists roamed the Serengeti in cars, blasting away at everything with automatic rifles. One party killed 11,000 animals.

Life on the savannah was surreal in other ways. Edward's entourage had restaurants and ballrooms under canvas, drank chilled champagne from crystal goblets on daily picnics, dined on four-course, silver service banquets, and travelled with their own piano.

They also took a phonograph with a library of classical and jazz music: the prince filmed a group of solemnly bemused Masai tribesmen, listening to Mozart in the bush.

His mistress, Thelma 'Toodles' Furness, the wife of a viscount, slept in the tent next to his. Rare pictures, filmed by Edward, reveal her as a dark-eyed and boyish beauty.

But it was the animals that really roused the prince's passion. Whether it was high-speed film to capture galloping giraffes in slow motion, swooping in a biplane over a herd of wildebeest, or zooming in on beetles, he had an enthusiasm that would earn the respect of wildlife film-makers today.

Even the carnage of a Thirties safari would struggle to match the body count on **CSI: Crime Scene Investigation** (C5). But one thing is always sure: no murder is

what it seems.

Last night's episode opened with the sister of a Cuban pop star being savagely tortured and beaten. So, naturally, the cause of her death turned out to be poisoning.

This long-running crime drama, set in Las Vegas, now stars Ted Danson, best known as the Boston bartender from Cheers. He has white hair now, making him look like Eighties soap star and Dynasty patriarch Blake Carrington.

But he moves like a Thunderbirds puppet, in quivers and jerks. The wooden performance matches his dialogue, with lines like: 'The plot thickens!'

Since the plot involved Cuban music, there were plenty of black-hearted Communist secret police and Hispanic histrionics.

I spent most of the show hoping a rhino might escape from a casino menagerie, and trample the cast. Now that's a cause of death they've never investigated.

FAMILY REUNION OF THE WEEK: the long-dispersed Gallagher clan who starred in *Shameless* (C4) for so many years came back together to warm themselves round a burning car for the last-ever episode of the show. They won't be missed.

WELSH TV VARIATIONS

BBC1: 1.30pm BBC Wales Today; Weather. 6.30 BBC Wales Today; Weather. 10.25 BBC Wales Today; Weather. 11.05 Room 101.

S4C: 7.00am Cyw. 10.00 Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2013.

11.00 Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2013. 2.30pm Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2013. 3.00 Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd. 3.05

Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2013. Further coverage of the

day's events in Pembrokeshire. 5.30 Stwnsh. 6.30

Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd. 6.35 Pobol y Cwm. Mark

decides to go on strike. With on-screen English

subtitles. 7.00 100 O Blant. The Maher/Lewis family

versus the Morgans. 7.30 Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2013.

9.15 Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd. 9.30 Pobol y Cwm.

Macs confesses to lolo why he is unable to be a

donor to Arwen. 10.00 Straeon Tafarn. 10.30 Adar

Drycin: Waldo Williams. Profile of maverick Welsh

poet Waldo Williams. 11.00 Eisteddfod yr Urdd 2013.

(R) Repeat. (HD) High Definition. (AD) Audio Description. (b/w) Not in colour. (BSL) British Sign Language.