

A South African's guide to moving to and making it in Malta: Sign 'O' the Times

By  Marcus 'The Maltese Falcon' Brewster

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This month's anniversary of Maltese journalist-blogger Daphne Caruana Galizia's assassination has undammed a flow of reportage, ruminations and reminiscences. Because she was a media worker, it's not unexpected that her industry colleagues are using their stock-in-trade - editorial exposure - to memorialise her passing: thought leaderships and opinion pieces dominate the local newspapers. The real fight, however, has been taken outdoors...



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More than just a fallen colleague, Daphne was an investigative reporter who had several tigers by the tail when her car was blown up. (Here in Malta, the go-to epithet when we talk about car bombs is 'Mafia-style'. Although there is no insinuation that the actual mafia were involved, the descriptor is likely to be a socio-geographic one determined by Malta's proximity to Sicily and a doorstep-familiarity with the Godfather culture).



A South African's guide to moving to and making it in Malta: The Daphne impact

Marcus 'The Maltese Falcon' Brewster 20 Apr 2018



Egrant scandal

Any of the stories Daphne was working on could have imperilled her and each expose, a likely front-page lead, has generated a different set of suspects who benefitted from her demise - a great premise for a whodunnit! However, the biggest scoop she was working on, the Egrant scandal, has touched the highest office in the land with a question mark over the identity of a mysterious third person who opened an offshore bank account. That person was so important that their name could not be written in an email and could only be mentioned telephonically. The first pair of accounts were in the names of Joseph Muscat's closest ministerial colleagues and the supposition is that the third account must be someone who shares the same surname as the Prime Minister.

Regarding the assassination, a trio of career criminals have been arraigned, and in a Mario Puzo-esque display of *omerta* have refused to name their employer.

Outdoor memory

Beyond the op-ed pages, Daphne's memory has been kept alive for the past 12 months in the sphere of outdoor media.

Apart from the makeshift memorial of flowers and candles on the Great Siege Monument, her supporters (or rather supporters of truth, justice and freedom of expression) have variously erected banners and placards all over Malta to draw attention to the case. These outdoor 'signages' are cleared with official alacrity creating a situation where more people become aware of the messaging through reading about them in news reports about their removal than would ever have the opportunity to view them on site.

Just as the Super Bowl in the US is a focal point for TV commercials, with Malta's car-crazy culture and rampant road-building, it's no wonder billboards here are the name of the game.



A South African's guide to moving to and making it in Malta: East of the sun (Part 1)

Marcus 'The Maltese Falcon' Brewster 10 Aug 2018



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In recent years, the illegal use of billboards has repeatedly made headlines, with the Planning Authority issuing hundreds of enforcement notices in an attempt to address the issue.

Times of Malta sought clarity on the matter from the Planning Authority after a billboard promoting the government's Central Link Project, a road infrastructure initiative, was placed on a central strip at Mdina Road in Attard a few weeks ago. No permits or any other notices were found in connection with this billboard.



Supplied

Although the Daphne hoardings have been vigorously policed, billboards advertising public works carried out by the government apparently do not require permits to be put up, as long as they are removed upon the project's completion, it has emerged.

And yet, a double standard exists when it comes to legality: the Labour Party and the Nationalist Party were last year found to have flaunted the law after billboards intended for the election campaign were also used by both parties for commercial advertising.

Although the authorities have been very quick to remove any Daphne-linked outdoor collaterals, nobody has yet attempted to whitewash a wall on the bus route underpass leading to Mater Dei Hospital and the University of Malta. Here, in graffiti letters, are Daphne's famous last words: "the situation is desperate, there are crooks everywhere you look".

ABOUT MARCUS 'THE MALTESE FALCON' BREWSTER

marcusbrewster is a brand synonymous with PR excellence in SA. An industry innovator, leader, and inspiration, Brewster affiliated his multi-award winning boutique firm with larger Level 1 BBBEE marketing/comms agency MediaRevolution for scale in 2016 and went on to launch Marcus Brewster International in Europe the following year. Marcus currently lives on - and actively promotes - the Mediterranean island of Malta. For African, S. African and European PR enquiries, contact marcus@marcusbrewster.com or WhatsApp on (+356) 9931 3322

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