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I THINK POLARIS

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



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As Thailand grows, so goes the FCCT. The continuing economic boom in the country is having incredible impact, both politically and economically, in neighbouring countries. This means more stories to cover, more journalists coming in to Bangkok. Our correspondent membership roster has grown considerably in the last six months. The new 1989 membership directory lists 11 additional overseas news bureaux represented in Bangkok. We welcome correspondents from the Asahi Shimbun, Asia Today, Australian Consolidated Press, Australian Financial Review, Guanming Daily, Jane's Information Group, Philadelphia Inquirer, the Publishers Representatives, Sae Gae Times, Sydney Morning Herald and the Tokyo and Chunichi Shimbun.

A special welcome also to the many freelance correspondents who are basing themselves in Bangkok to cover the region. Some of them are no strangers, back after spending some time in trouble spots like Afghanistan and the Philippines.

Let's hope this influx of journalists means more ideas for programs at the club.

Recently, the Executive Committee made one decision regarding the membership category of one particular member: Paisal Sricharatchanya. Having resigned as the Far Eastern Economic Review bureau chief to become the new editor of the Bangkok Post as of June 1, he has had to relinquish his correspondent status. However, in recognition of his many years of dedication to the club (two years as president and four as a board member), the board presented him with an honorary life membership. We may have lost a correspondent, but let's hope we've gained good contacts at the Bangkok Post. We also hope this may further improve our relations with our colleagues in the Thai press.

You may have noticed that our Wednesday night programs have improved somewhat, at least the video presentations. Thanks to the generous contributions from Banque Indosuez, the Hongkong Bank and the many individual members, we have new television monitors and will soon have brand new sound systems also. The new equipment has also attracted more people to the Monday night movies as well as to the Saturday afternoon news programs. We now offer two films on Monday nights: one regular feature film and the other involving some journalistic theme. In addition to news by ABC and CNN, the club is now showing weekly tapes of BBC documentaries.

(continued on page 4)

Note: All submissions to Dateline Bangkok should be mailed or hand carried to the FCCT, Club Office, Room 206, Dusit Thani Hotel, 946 Rama IV Road, Bangkok 10500. They also may be handed or faxed directly to the editors.

After weeks of negotiations, we managed to get a new menu, and the feedback has been quite good. In addition to the a la carte offerings and the daily buffet, we also have two specials every week. We know how hard it is to please everybody, so let's hope this additional choice in the menu will make more of you happy.

Having put upfront all the positive changes, it's now time to say something about the change in the annual dues. As we have said earlier, given the rent increase and rising cost of items and services used at the club, we felt it necessary to also hike our dues, something we haven't done in years. We trust it's been relatively painless and that you will continue to enjoy the club.



Russian Invasion: Gladsnost comes to the FCCT in the Form of H.E. Mr. A.I. Valkov. Cheers Gorby!

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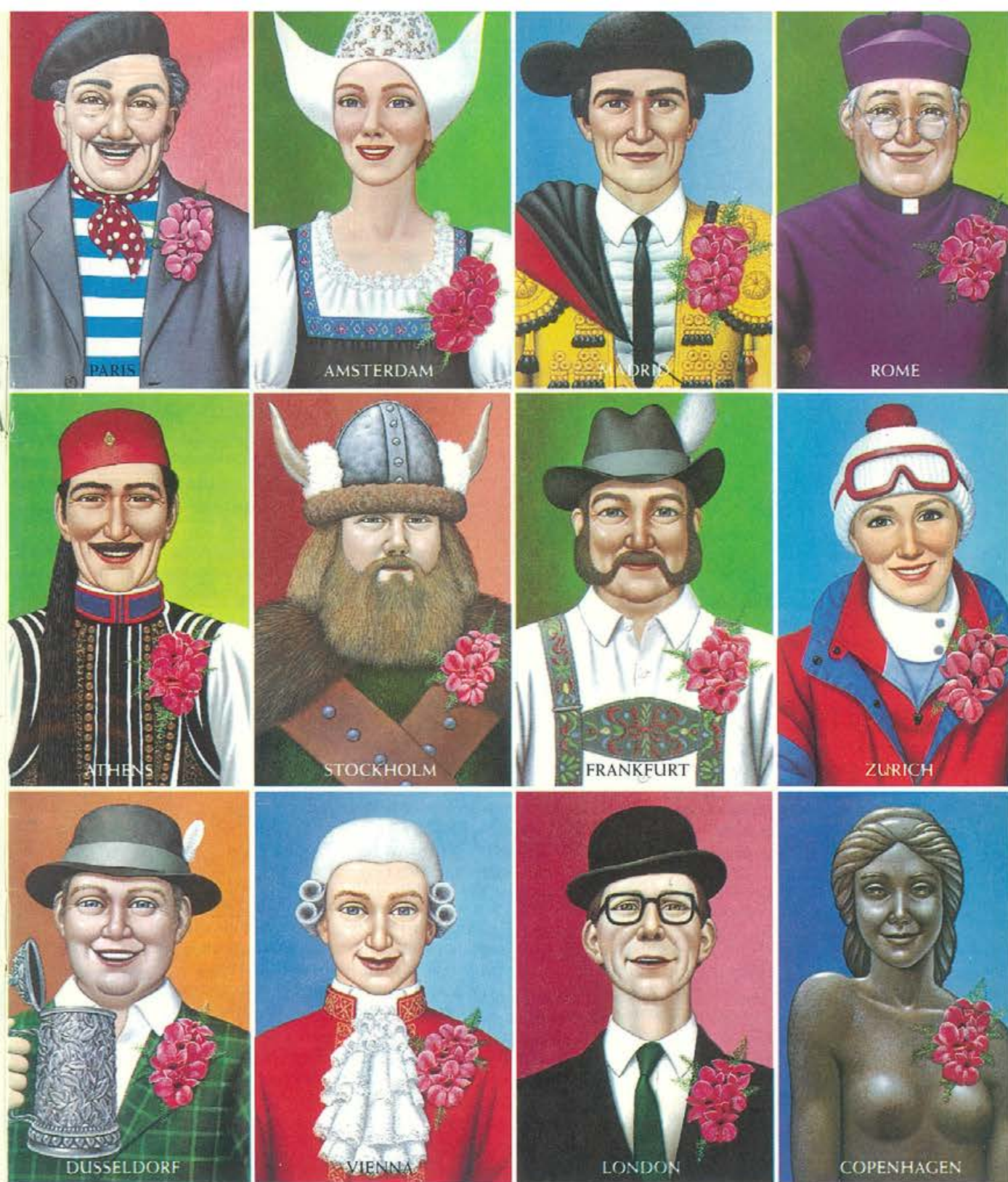
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PULITZER IN PARADISE

I am a freak. I think about it everyday of my life. Every morning when I get up I look at my dishonest face in the mirror. I have no hope anymore. My ideals are totally shattered. My conscience feels mutilated and bruised. I'll never be the same.

Hidden behind a garden of sweet hibiscus and shady palm trees in the sleepy Florida hamlet of Lantana are the offices of the NATIONAL ENQUIRER. Inside, typewriters hammer, taperecorders pop on and off, reporters babble with California sources about the latest Madonna - Sean Penn scoop. My editor, Paul Levy, a balding ex-White House reporter for the defunct Philadelphia Bulletin and a prime prospect for a "before" picture in an Enquirer weight-loss advertisement, gives orders and advice to his star reporter, David Wright, as he is headed out the door for a flight to Michigan on a "Baby Jesse" story. "Type out a \$1,000 check for the couple," Levy tells his secretary. "What is the story anyway?" he adds.

Fonda Had Breasts Enlarged — & Now She's Flaunting It!

Jane Fonda is busting out all over! The sexy superstar had breast implant surgery, but until her split with hubby Tom Hayden she kept her sizzling new shape under wraps.

"Did the baby get a new heart?" Wright, a short, slim and astute, silver-haired Englishman with the endearing habit of referring to all females as "love" is off to pay for the goods - that is, get a story from the parents in Grand Rapids, Michigan who donated their child's heart to "Baby Jesse." Wright is after sappy quotes like, "I prayed to God that our tragedy could become their salvation" or "Our baby's face was as calm as an angel's before they took him away." - the kind of lines that toy with the reader's emotions — keep them coming back for more, making the Enquirer a rag worth millions, consistently generating more profit than the New York Times or Playboy Magazine.

HOW I BECAME AN ACCOMPLICE:

It was a shocker, incredible, amazing — all the big new words I had learned in two weeks, fresh from the ivory tower and a graduate fellowship in journalism. Here I was working at the world's biggest scandal sheet, circulation over five million weekly. Sure I was one, like many, who prided myself as being a member of a literate milieu with standards above those of the National Enquirer. I didn't have a degree in "yellow" journalism. Still, I had glanced curiously at the glaring tabloid headlines while waiting impatiently to pay for my groceries.

It must have been that same, vague, unexplained curiosity that crept up on me when I was home glancing through the Washington Post classified listings for journalism jobs. There was one for a whopping 47.5 K a year with sunshine and travel to boot. I had the useful excuse of having studied literature at Berkeley and I was still only 24 years old. Take the money, see the world and run like hell, I thought as I sent a boasting cover letter: "I'm your man. I consider my best asset an ability to adapt to any situation and write action-packed copy."

The next thing I knew I found myself sitting in a \$500 a-night-suite on the 43rd floor of the New York Hilton, listening to my future editor tell me about ducking tear gas in Detroit, writing from the trenches of Vietnam and covering scandals in the White House. The best time he'd ever had though, had been with 16 Enquirer staffers in Monaco after Princess Grace went over the cliff. Apparently, the princess died in a

pauper's arms and Levy and crew had spent days bribing the pauper with money and alcohol to get her last words out of him.

I confessed that I had qualms about ruining my own credibility as a journalist by taking a job with the Enquirer. He tried to allay my misgivings: "Most people have the wrong impression. It just isn't true. We are the most accurate publication in America," insisted Levy. "We check and double-check everything and tape record every conversation."

We squabbled over a starting salary, but soon I found myself holed up in a quaint, beachfront hotel that featured a leather-clad motorcycle gang, a dentist named Dr. Looney, a number of Jewish grandmothers, too few bathing beauties, and an Australian writer who told wondrous stories about his year spent reading Balzac in the bush. It was apparent, however, that I had landed in a situation that would redefine for my naive mind the role of a writer as a participant in a tainted and twisted American dream.

Somehow, living on the Enquirer's high-salary and expenses, eating New York Sirloin for breakfast and dinner, just didn't seem fair to all those two-headed babies being born in places like Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

For two weeks I suffered from nightmares, awaking in a cold sweat as the surf rolled in like a rabid, foaming beast, roaring some ancestral disdain for my shattered ideals. Surely, there would be no Pulitzers in this neck of the woods unless, of course, I met aerobics queen, Roxanne Pulitzer in a sleazy Palm Beach Pub. Still, I kept the adventure alive, imagining that a fresh tan on my tormented

Flipper Committed Suicide!

... Other Animals Also Kill Themselves, Experts Say



Book Bonus

Elvis Was Dying Of Cancer When He Killed Himself With Drugs



brow and a taste of the rich and famous lifestyle would put to rest my Puritan code of ethics. Ringing in my ear were the words of Bernie, my old editor at FUR WORLD, a fur trade magazine in New York: "Once you realize it is all a lot of B.S., you can start making a living."

Afterall, I'd just read that Robin Leach, the host of the TV show, "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" had been an Enquirer reporter for years before being "CUT OFF" by the editors for a shocking but untrue story linking Walter Cronkite to U.F.O. reports. Leach had run up expense accounts in the thousands on any given weekend, hob-nobbing with Maggie Trudeau, The Rolling Stones, and now, of course, anyone he wanted to.

Inside the Enquirer my dream spun its course.

The newsroom had the mechanical sights and sounds of any large newspaper, but the atmosphere was distinctly different. The reporter sitting next to me took calls every few hours from a psychic in California who was predicting a major disaster in Florida because there had been a pattern of whales washed ashore in the Keys. The reporter behind me was directing a stringer to try to accost Madonna at a New York health spa. It was rumored that she had given her husband an ultimatum to "stop drinking or else." An occasional joke about Aids or gays was not uncommon. This relative intolerance was not alarming in itself unless one took a look around and noticed not one black face among the 200 plus employee pool.

All things were run by the high pressure, corporate policy of one man, Generoso Pope, an Italian media czar who built his scandal sheet into an immensely profitable business over the course of 30 years, moving from outlandish gore — "She looks like a fish, but I love my baby" to softer gee-whiz, yellow journalism designed to play upon the

whims and fancies of a middle class hypnotized by television personalities and quick fix medical breakthroughs.

THE UNSPOKEN ETHIC:

To reinforce the corporate notion of honesty and accuracy I was fed some propaganda upon my arrival. An article reprinted from *Editor and Publisher* in 1978 quoted my editor, Levy, saying, "Now this may sound like braggadocio, but it can be backed up. I'd say right now, we're the most accurate publication in the country" and "Today any reporter or editor at the Enquirer can say with justifiable pride that he works for the most accurate newspaper in the country." Hmmm. They made a point of piquing the curiosity and conscience. It was not a question of whether Pope produced a newspaper - few journalists would feign to defend such a claim — it was becoming a question of honest business practice - a question they insisted on raising.

Levy gave me examples of first-rate stories that had been done for the Enquirer. Concerning a story in the first person of a lady who had suffered an unneeded masectomy, Levy said, "If you

can get one like this in the first couple of months here, you've got it made." The story was 12 pages packed with classic Enquirer quotes: "...I'm a 47-year-old freak, with a scarred, ugly cavity where my left breast used to be, and a misshapen, out-of-place blob..." Levy wanted guilt and condemnation — that fascinating mix that sends shivers down the spine of the average Enquirer reader.

Out for a drink that evening Levy, bubbling with crass remarks about women and sex, supplied me with insight into the method for obtaining emotionally packed quotes. He suggested that most people articulate and just needed a little goading. The masectomy reporter spent a number of days winning the trust of his subject, explained Levy. It made you wonder if these people understood their audience when they spoke — intimacy with a reporter is not exactly the same as divulging one's soul to over five million grocery store shoppers. Slowly, I was learning that I would be required to adapt to an unspoken code of ethics or, as stated in Enquirer jargon, be "CUT OFF."

Suffocating in Brown Goo, I Prayed for a Miracle

Russel Diley and two co-workers were swamped and dragged about 100 feet by a raging 6,500-ton blob of molasses that gushed from a burst holding tank, destroyed a building and nearly killed them. Here, exclusively for ENQUIRER readers, 69-year-old Russel of Ger- ing, Nebr., tells his incredible story in his own words.

By RUSSEL DILEY

I felt like a dinosaur sinking to a horrible, suffocating death in a tar pit as I desperately fought for my life against a crushing tidal wave of molasses that swept away everything in its path — including my two co-workers and me.

There was nothing to cling to and no way to get my head out of the sticky brown goo to take a breath. It was like "The Blob," but this was no movie — and I was sure we were going to die!



Di Caught With Another Man — He Flees Startling Photos

To give Levy credit, he never actually stuck his foot in his mouth. I found, however, that his insistence on "accuracy" was a long-standing joke among the seasoned writers at the Enquirer.

I was working toward the punch line, as my first story assignment became a prime example of how the "system" would or would not work for me.

Given an intriguing story on a 90-year-old still driving a cab in Madison, Indiana, I started with the zeal of any new reporter. As it turned out the cabbie had a speech impediment that restricted him from giving adequate first person quotes for a story designed to let the cabbie tell it "in his own words." I suggested to Levy that the story had reached a minor impasse. He looked up in dismay and handed me a story on "How to choose quality fruit and vegetables," a story that quickly put me into a trance.

In a couple of days, after having been mesmerized by the ripening qualities of grapefruits and cantaloupes, I met Levy's star reporter, John Collins, a thoroughbred working out of England, who had recently flown into Florida. Straight-laced and in his thirties with a bushy mustache and a cockney twang, Collins told me how to get the goods through the system: "Just use the wife and son. Get the quotes from them and put them into the old man's mouth." That was easy enough, but suddenly I began to understand why the Enquirer had to pay 50 K a year. "But make sure you read it back for his approval," said Collins. "And offer him a few hundred dollars if he complains." That didn't sound too difficult. The next morning I got the same suggestion from two other reporters and Levy's assistant editor, a recent Harvard grad.

A con artist I was not, but I'd sold \$2 etchings in Harlem and on Wall Street

for \$70 a frame. I had encouragement from the reporter sitting next to me, an Italian impressario: "You're the writer, producer and director, man," he quipped in a voice like Jack Nicholson's. "You gotta get that through your head, kid."

Levy interrupted my work with another assignment. "Call this professor at the University of Chicago and get him on tape explaining the thousands he says he needs in federal grant money for studying hand gestures of chimps. I was the designated "hit" man on an Enquirer government waste story — a weekly genre aimed at the average reader who does not understand why a man would devote his life to studying non-verbal communication, much less why they should pay taxes to support this study. It was my job to make the professor look silly and maybe lose his funding due to public pressure. Professor "X" saved face and some vicious hate mail by refusing to go on tape.

Ethical questions aside, I still wanted one of my stories in every grocery store in America. I told Levy I'd get his story on the exploits of the 90-year-old cab driver. I spoke with the cabbie's son in Germany about the amazing feats of his father. Afterall, the cabbie did have a speech impediment. Didn't he deserve to have a story in his own words? — this was my flawed justification for violating a journalist's code of ethics.

I told Levy what I was up to and he gave me the go ahead. That night I battled my conscience, but visions of dollar bills in the sky obscured my understanding of the truth.

I did the story the next day, showing it to "top" Enquirer reporters who told me it was well executed.

But as all journalists know, if you don't please your editor you don't win the game. Levy was disappointed, he wanted more. "What about this time he drove Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin around?" asked Levy. "Didn't he take them to any brothels? They were famous for that." I tried to explain to him that I had milked the cabbie for all I could. Levy wanted more. He suggested I get the wife and son to make a guess at what happened. The story wouldn't fly without more fabricated anecdotes in the words of this cabbie. "We don't pay you good money to write something like this," said Levy, pointing down to my story.

Other reporters took it all with a grain of salt. They attempted to ease my anxiety. "There is such a thing as 'creative' journalism, you know," said an Englishman. I KNEW! And if I had been desperate for money or a washed-up failure I might have considered a life of creativity and prostitution. As it was, I'd had enough. Levy pointed to the holes in my story, goading and twisting me to fall in line. "You've been here two weeks now and you still don't know what we want," he said. "Don't try to drag me down to your level." I said, popping out of my comatose state and raising my voice over the clicking of the typewriters and chattering reporters. "Afterall, this is schlock journalism!" But that wasn't my judgement to make because in Enquirer jargon I was "CUT OFF." **DB**



GERALDO TV's Biggest Womanizer — He Cheated With Thousands of

REPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS INSTITUTE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY IN BERLIN, MAY 1989.

by U Sein Win

Associated Press Correspondent in Rangoon.

After a quarter century of patiently waiting — sometimes scooping his colleagues, othertimes counting the cracks in the wall of his jailroom, AP correspondent Sein Lwin left Rangoon to travel to Paris. Here he picked up the Golden Pen of Freedom Award which he won in 1963 (see picture) and left for Berlin where he addressed fellow journalists on the plight of Burma's press.

As this issue of DB went to press, the Foreign Ministry in Yangon had suspended the issuance of visas for foreign correspondents. (No one expected the honeymoon to last.)

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my experience as a journalist for over 40 years under various types of governments I always find the independent press as a suspect and victim of the governments. The colonial government regarded the independent press as a rebel. The national democratic governments treated us like their rival and the national autocratic regimes branded the free press as enemy.

Rulers of post-war independent countries, intoxicated with power, failed to accept the free press as an essential partner in establishing a democratic new state. This lack of cooperation led to confrontation between the state and the press, often sending both to the extremes, the government to autocracy, and the press to irresponsibility. In such a case the press loses, the government wins and the country suffers.

Experience in my country may be similar to those in many post-war independent countries where democracy ended in autocracy largely due to lack of cooperation between the free press and the rulers of the new nations.

After regaining independence in 1948, we inherited some repressive press laws from the colonial

government. To these were added many others by national governments in their eagerness to remain in power.

Journalists in Burma were subject to two sets of laws. One, the penal code which applies to everyone. The other, the repressive press laws. There were specific provisions that action under the press laws would not preclude action under normal penal code. So, contrary to popular notion that journalists are privileged, we in Burma were privileged only to be tried twice and punished twice for the same offence.

The penal code left by the colonial rulers includes sufficient provisions to muzzle the press. The Official Secrets Act, Emergency Powers Act, and laws of sedition and defamation are more than enough to check and punish the erring press. Not satisfied with these, national governments introduced new laws to punish the press which came in their way checking their abuse of power.

New press laws in my country authorised government to demand heavy security deposits from press owners to be forfeited at the displeasure of the government. The government can also seize a press if it considers that a particular press had printed any matter tending to incite



commission of crime, or cause disrespect to the state or disloyalty to government by government servants. The owner of a press can be sent to jail for three years in addition to a fine for mere technical offence, failure to report the change of address in seven days time. There were many harsher pieces which, if enforced with full rigour, would keep the press entirely at the mercy of the government.

repressive laws, hanging over our heads like the Damocles's Sword, was taken up in 1961 by the Journalists Association of which I had the honour to be the president for two successive years, 1961-62 and 1962-63.

Despite several representations by the Journalists Association, the civilian government under Prime Minister U Nu, who earlier claimed to be the champion of democracy in Burma, did not bother. Instead it responded with persecution of the press.

Heavy security deposits were demanded from critical newspapers, and editors and newsmen were arrested on the flimsiest of charges. A foreign correspondent was arrested and deported for filing a story which the government considered detrimental to public interest. A critical paper was forced to close

down for being unable to furnish excessively heavy security deposit demanded by the government.

Further representations and negotiations by the Journalist's Association failed to impress the government. It was at that stage that the Journalist's Association found itself constrained to take a drastic action. Sponsored by the Association, a meeting of editors, publishers and owners of newspapers was held on the line of action to be taken in protest against the government's repressive measures.

As decided at that meeting, all the newspapers in the country put out on November 5, 1961 an identical front-page appeal under the same banner headline urging the government to respect the freedom of press and desist from repressive measures. The front-page appeal was followed next day by blank editorials in all the newspapers. Absolute unanimity was shown by all the 26 daily newspapers in the country. Even the paper of the government party joined in the demonstration for the larger cause of the freedom of the press.

That unprecedented action by the entire body of the press must have given the government quite a jolt. But it tried to ignore and pretended to take no notice of it. Only when the front-page appeal and the blank editorials were repeated the following week, the government agreed to form an ad hoc committee between the Judicial Minister and the representatives of the Journalist's Association to draft a new press law.

After several meetings between the Judicial Minister and the representatives of the Journalists Association, the draft of a new press law without repressive provisions was agreed. The law was to be known as Printers and Publishers Registration Act, 1962.

The draft law was approved by the Lower House at the February session of the Parliament. However before the Bill was passed by the Upper House to make it into a law, U Nu's government was toppled by a military coup on March 2, 1962 and Parliament dissolved. The new press law was stranded half-way.

Ironically the law was passed by the military government by a decree in October 1962. But a liberal press law under the military government which has suspended the constitution and the writ of habeas corpus did not make much sense.

However there was some sort of truce between the government and the press in first year of military administration. The press exercised self-restraint and the government left us on a long leash. The then IPI Director, the late Mr. Rohan Rivette came to Rangoon the same year to open a short-term training course for district reporters sponsored by the Journalists Association.

The clamp down on the media began in 1963 starting with the arrests of four editors for reporting rumoured removal of a senior military leader.

(Ed: We jump ahead to last year)

I was thrown into jail in July last year for my association with a leading dissident whom I met often for news. It was my third sojourn as the guest of the government.

For about two months, September and August last year, when administration came to a stand still following a nation-wide demonstrations for democracy, over 50 unauthorised news sheets appeared daily, mostly for commercial motives selling a 4-page news sheet for one U.S. dollar, and some were Communist creations meant to destabilize

the government. These mushroom publications ceased on September 18 when military takeover, promising a multi-party system general elections.

The new military government took an unprecedented step in dealing with foreign press. About 50 Bangkok-based foreign correspondents were invited to Rangoon for a press conference with government leaders and also for a brief tour of the country. There had never been a press conference with government leaders in past 26 years. Visits of foreign correspondents and television crews have been allowed liberally in recent months.

Information Committee of the government holds a regular weekly press conference in Rangoon. Though local media is still under rigid control the foreign press seems to enjoy considerable freedom, some correspondents filing anti-government statements issued by over 200 political parties vying for elections next year. So far no foreign correspondent has been warned for the reports he filed.

Dusk to dawn curfew and ban on public demonstrations are still in force. The government promised lifting them as soon as security conditions improve.

The future of a free press in Burma is uncertain. In the light of profusion of political parties contesting in forthcoming general elections next year, no one party is likely to muster sufficient majority in the Parliament to form a government.

If the democratic parties join together to form a government in the Parliament, there is some hope for a revival of the free press. If on the other hand a leftist unity coalition between the pro-communist and communists parties comes into power, the fate of a free press is doomed again. DB

AFGHAN BLUES

Toronto Star correspondent, Richard Erlich has been beating around Asia now for nearly a decade. Recently, he fled from Delhi to Bangkok

by Toronto Star correspondent, Richard S. Ehrlich

In response to an invitation to relay some of the press corps' anecdotes from Afghanistan, here are some from a 25-day stint covering the final Soviet troop withdrawal:

Two weeks before the Russians' February 15 deadline for their last soldier to be out of Afghanistan, Kabul was reported to be a city near starvation, tormented by guerrilla bombardments, snowstorms, a panicked populace and scattered bread riots. As a handful of hacks boarded a plane in Delhi, word went round about who cleverly

brought what in terms of their own food (Indian peanut butter, sardines and the odds of being shot down as the plane infamously spirals down into mile-high Kabul, ringed by mountains and possibly guerrillas itching to fire a U.S.-supplied Stinger missile.

The ultimate worst-case scenario, which had everyone brooding, predicted that after the Soviets leave the rebels would rocket Kabul International Airport, preventing any escape (the press included) and all communication lines would be

sabotaged blocking anyone filing the seige and eventual overrunning of Kabul with scenes of sacking, etc. Graphic variations on these scenes included all remaining journalists with their "throats slit" by mobs hunting suspected Russians.

As a result, many of the male reporters began growing beards "to look Islamic."

Though Kabul always remained relatively safe despite the dire warnings, Western and many Eastern embassies evacuated their



Ehrlich quickly made friends with the winning side, though he was also reportedly prepared to put his gonads on ice if the time came.



FAR RIGHT. Richard Roth — Haas is pleased as peanuts after bidding adieu to U.P.I. and stringent deadlines. ZAK is now engaged in consulting work at the UN Family Planning Association. (He has five youngsters of his own.) Grapevine has it ZAK is building a resort in ESARN on a Lake. Lots of fishing, swimming and room to grow peanuts.

Dr. Dick Graham narrows the odds on his opponent, Steve Rothstein. Steve bites down hard on his right hand. The "Doc," who has been seen about town with a stunning Korean woman — a professor of reading and writing at Berkeley, has all the luck these days. He is also learning to read everyone's next move. "Drop in to get your teeth cleaned and palm read."



FAR LEFT. Former US Embassy press attache, Ross Petzing is toasted and given a send-off by CBS' Rick Frederickson and Bureau Bangkok's Dominic Faulder. Ross, who has reportedly turned down William Webster's position at the C.I.A. has promised to remain as "DEEP-THROAT" on all sensitive US issues.

"FERGIE," Sandy Ferguson lands a big date. Wife be warned. What's that smirk all about?



John Hail and Chris Moore swap plots. John has left for the US to flog "THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL" and Chris is headed for Kathmandu for inspiration. Hail's glow-in-the-dark undies and tops will be direly missed by club members and his Thai girlfriend(s).

Reunion of Celebrities. Paisal, Yuli and John McBeth swap tales of adventure and romance.



staffs. California-born U.S. Charge d'Affairs Jon Glassman — who kept a plastic replica of an AK-47 assault rifle in his office which he would introduce by saying, "You know what I think of the press?" and then wave it about while making shooting noises — solemnly lowered the flag amid a heavy snowstorm and said his farewells. But the U.S. embassy evacuation of about 14 people was delayed one day by snows. Glassman privately retorted, "I have a Harley Davidson under the U.S. embassy, so nothing is going to stop me from getting out of Afghanistan. If I can't fly out, I'll ride right through Mooj territory and out through the Khyber Pass to Pakistan. Every biker in America will cheer me."

It would have been an awesome sight, Glassman on a chopper hurtling down the road past Jalalabad, but they flew out the following day after the Marines drained as much as they could of the diplomatic drink stash, according to embassy ribbing that morning.

The Soviet press corps and Russian embassy staffers who were due to stay in Kabul long after February were the most torn by the suspense, intrigue and looming possibility of their being murdered by mobs. Amid glasnost and desperation, they sometimes opened their homes and military bases to reporters. Clamping on grimaced smiles while obviously drunk on too much vodka and Bulgarian beer, they would lament the needless "genocide" of innocent Afghan civilians being killed by Soviet forces and admit to having become anti-war during their years posted in Afghanistan.

One Soviet journalist, busily packing and calling for his pet Ger-

man Shepherd dog which was trained to sniff out rebel-laid land mines, glanced around his suburban-style Kabul home, which he stripped down to a few tables, chairs and cheap paintings. "I am only moving into the Soviet embassy for safety," he said. "My boss asked me if I wanted to leave Afghanistan but I told him no because I want to stay on and continue my work. It is my duty. I will stay one year more. It will be difficult for us."

"There are various predictions of how the situation will be. It may be awfully bad, moderately bad, not so bad or even good. So let us see. It is impossible to guess anything, so why be worried about it?" He was recently wounded in a rebel attack during a press trip in eastern Afghanistan, and he showed off horrible scars on his thigh where shrapnel ripped into him. Of course, his bravado thinned. "I have a whole arsenal, including hand-grenades which I hate," the Russian journalist said. **"But I need it because one day the rebels are going to come for me." Then laughing in an almost painful way, he raised his glass in a toast and added, "I have already cut off my balls and put them in the refrigerator so I can hand them to the mujahideen when they arrive!"**

The United Nations Staff House, meanwhile, were generous in a different way. They opened up their club for the press to dine at which was a welcome change from a stark diet punctuated by the Stalinesque, dilapidated Hotel Kabul's "chicken roast," and increasingly expensive bazaar-bought Russian caviar, orange juice from Florida (via the Philippines) and Soviet-supplied "Chernobyl cheese" — our nickname for what fortunately didn't glow in the dark and tasted fine.

The U.N. then dug a deep hole in the yard in front of the Staff House to hide in. Very ingeniously — "We learned this in Lebanon" — they dropped in an entire lift van which they filled with beds, electric heaters and telecommunications equipment and then buried it so the top was level with the surrounding yard. The only tip-off was a satellite dish on top and an approach lined with sandbags.

The one major press mishap during the withdrawal was when a French reporter was shot in the rear by an angry Soviet soldier apparently trying to scare him and two other approaching, camera-shooting French colleagues who accidentally stumbled on Russian soldiers illegally selling off some unidentifiable goods to an Afghan blackmarketeer. The journalists kept clicking off photos until a Russian soldier fired once, into a nearby snowdrift, followed by two other bullets as the reporters retreated to their car. The third bullet injured the journalist after apparently ricocheting off the inside of the car's door.

A worse fate may have been in store for U.P.I.'s Adam Kelliher who was later being led by an Afghan soldier through knee-high snowdrifts towards a hill where the press corps were gathered after a two mile hike to watch a demonstration of outgoing artillery. Suddenly, Adam's escort stopped in an especially deep snowdrift. "There are land mines here!" he told the startled reporter who could see he was being randomly led across an attempted short-cut. Eventually, the soldier coaxed U.P.I. a few steps further only to yell at him again, "Mines!" Nerve-wracked, they survived. **DB**

JAYA'S AUSSIE ADVENTURE

S. Jayakrishnan (Reporter, Crime Desk, Editorial Dept, New Straits Times) Balai Berrita, 31 Jalan Riong 59100, Kuala Lumpur.

I am a reporter attached with the NST's Editorial Dept for the past seven years and during this period have been employed by the company as a crime reporter with the head office in Kuala Lumpur.

I applied for the 1988 Neil Davis-Bill Latch award sometime in May 1988 after coming across a report on the award in the company's bulletin board.

Sometime in November 1988 I was informed by the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand (FCCT), under whose auspices the award was conferred, that I had been selected as the recipient for the award. I was also invited to Bangkok as their guest to receive the award from the Honourable Thai Prime Minister H.E. General Chatichai Choonhavan on Dec. 22nd 1988.

Apart from a cash award of approximately U.S.\$2,300 I was offered a six-week long paid internship with the prestigious Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) and an optional one week stint with the Age in Melbourne.

I left for Sydney on January 26th 1989 after receiving approval of two month paid leave from my employers, New Straits Times Press (M) Bhd, to start my internship and returned to Kuala Lumpur on completion of my stint on March 28th 1989.

The stint has polished my skills in drug reporting, particularly international operations of drug rings, and enabled me to understand

the role of various Australian agencies in tackling this scourge and their close cooperation with other regional governments and authorities.

Last but not least I would like to place on record my deep and sincere appreciation and thanks to the FCCT, particularly its professional judging committee, for having selected me for the award.

The experience I have gained is something I shall treasure for the rest of my journalistic career.

My recent stint with the *Sydney Morning Herald* offered me a kaleidoscopic view of Australia, particularly the workings of its media.

It also came complete with its fair share of culture shocks (this being my first visit to colourful cosmopolitan Sydney) as I grappled with the Aussie language, climate and food.

However, long after a foreign city's breathtaking sights and attractions are but memories, the most indelible impressions one is left with, are that of its people.

They are people whom you've come to know or worked with and inevitably those you leave behind as friends. They are the ones who, perhaps unconsciously, help shape and form the attitude you will have of their country and its people.

People like the *Herald's* administration officer Katherine Harper, its editor Max Prise and chief of staff Paul McGeough made me feel at home with their organisation.

Like the librarian (I think she is Italian) who was so helpful and always saying "Thank you very much ... have a good day" with every request for a file or news clippings. She obviously enjoyed her job.

People like the *Australian Financial Review's* Brian Parker who speaks fluent Tamil, Malayalam and I dare say even Sinhalese.

Having been brought up in a tea plantation in Cochin, India, it should not be surprising that he had a fair share of colourful Indian jokes that had me in stitches.

Then there were the "police reporters" like Lindsay Simpson, Paul Chamberlin, Darren Horrigan and Sonya Zadel, the *Herald's* tour guides Mary Alcock and Barbara Edmunds, and many others. Newspaper people are invariably "good sports" and all of them were fun to work with.

It was no different at the *Herald* and meeting their journalists and staff can inspire you. It makes you feel good in having chosen this profession.

But foreigners either find the way Australians speak the Queen's English either quaint or totally Greek. It takes a little getting used to. I also had a colossal problem getting the Aussies to pronounce my name.

Some just could not even get Jaya correctly (they cut it down to Jay) or worse they would call me Christian for Krishnan. Others even called me by names that I never thought I had.

However, getting information from officials proved to be rather easy, even on "sensitive areas" and I had the impression that they were particularly helpful to foreigners.

After two months Down Under, it would be too soon if I see another steak, pizza, chicken ravioli or meat loaf or another bottle of wine or beer.

The mass media is big business, with a handful of television and radio stations and hundreds of newspapers, ranging from huge metropolitan dailies to small provincial papers, spread all over the continent.

Newspapers are much bulkier, with numerous inserts and heavy advertisement. The stories are much more colour-oriented.

There are many more specialised reporters on major dailies (aviation reporter, medical correspondent, science writer, etc) and there is plenty of in-depth reporting.

The Australian Press is refreshingly free of restrictions and they give you the impression of being a power unto themselves, especially in interviewing politicians and other hot-shots.

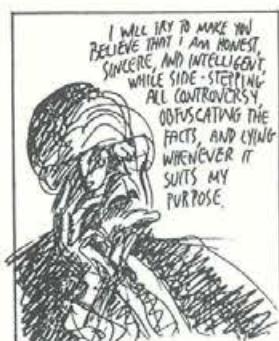
Practically everyone is on first-name basis and everything is very in-

formal. So much so that news and chat shows on Australian television are the top-rated programmes.

The way in which the news is reported is one reason for the popularity. Television personalities like Clive Roberston of *News World* make news so interesting for viewers that reading the day's "hot stories" may seem a boring and laborious task.

For Malaysian TV addicts, Australia may appear to be paradise. There are five to six television channels with one or two telecasting round-the-clock. **DB**

Malcolmtent



LIFE AS A PUBLISHER IN THAILAND

by club member Artcha Boongrapu

I was asked by Phil a few days ago to share my thoughts with the FCCT members and write about my present career as the Editor & Publisher of the *MADE IN THAILAND*.

Well let me begin by informing you that to become an Editor & Publisher in Thailand is not difficult the difficulties all begin after you become one especially if you expect a lot from yourself and your team.

In my organization we have to be very professional in our attitude towards work. Efficiency and effectiveness in converting practical initiatives to practical results are always on our mind.

Yet there are many ingrained Thai characteristics that both enhance and resist the creation of an organization that can provide "good", "cheap", and "fast" output to the society.

Usually you can only get 2 out of 3 and rarely all 3 at the same time. If it's good and fast it's never cheap. If it's cheap and fast it's never good. If it's cheap and good it's never fast and so on.

Let me explain further about what my job entails as an Editor & Publisher.

I have to manage a team of university graduates, train them the art & science of journalism as well as keep them with us.

Not that I pretend to know everything about journalism. Everyone in our organization can freely talk about their ideas to do the job better.

The boss doesn't always know best. Traditional Thai values may often take it for granted that the elder has more experience and therefore is presumed wiser. But in my generation I think many are be-

ginning to differentiate between "respect" and "blind" obedience.

If good ideas are not recorded in writing then they may be wasted or dissipated and action which followed from them would not be skillful.

The *MADE IN THAILAND* newspaper was created because we believe that a good publication serves as a link between thoughts and action.

MADE IN THAILAND is for local industries to tell the world as well as foreign expatriots living in Thailand about export products or general developments in Thailand which are of interest to people in business.

I must overcome many difficulties with what I'm doing. This is because the ideas that are being implemented are always unconventional, unfamiliar to both outside people and to our own staff.

Luckily, I have a very good and supportive partner, Khun Somphob A. Vorakul. We decided from the start that our strategy of cooperation must be based on reasons and far sightedness.

We don't want to create fireworks that just look beautiful and dissipate into thin air in a short time. Nor do we allow emotion and low instinct to get in the way of good sense and moral intellect.

This may sound all too serious, but many would understand when faced with a similar situation.

Some of you may know already that the price tag on printed media in Thailand is unrealistically low when compared to the publication cost. Especially so if your publication uses full colour on every page like mine.

Moreover, I discovered that if the readers don't like what you pub-

lish then the mass of printed paper that you have made is worth less than when they were still on blank sheets.

But recognising that I have developed an acquired taste for journalism... I would not be fulfilled to leave this career for something different which gives me only financial profits.

I, therefore, chose to publish the *MADE IN THAILAND*, which while helping to promote Thai products, can serve as an eye opener for foreigners to Thai ways and hopefully, be a means of living for me and my staff.

In retrospective I have always been the kind of person with ideas different from the majority. This forced me to stand alone many times and to learn to live with resistance from others. The anguish of having to endure ridicule or insults has also made me become more thoughtful even to the extent of being seen as an introvert.

So I would like to leave you with some anecdotes to think about.

To survive as an Editor & Publisher you must learn about human nature. You must see beyond the obvious expression and discover whatever lies hidden in people.

Be a good (fast & fair) judge of people and their problems. Remember Newton's 3rd Law of Motion:

"Every Action has an Equal and Opposite Reaction". This applies to mechanical force as well as people too. But a successful person always retains his self control and can direct his action/reaction to constructive targets even if it means fighting with dead... lines! **DB**



Book Review: A Bright Shining Lie

by Neil Sheehan. pp. 790

were abandoning their weapons and dashing like frightened children through flooded paddy fields, Vann managed to keep Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon convinced that victory was imminent. (Cambodia be damned.)

To understand how Vann's ego obscured reality, it is necessary to dissect the life of John Paul Vann from his birth to a prostitute to his marriage into the middle class. Sheehan took sixteen years of research to make the case that Vann was WHITE TRASH. Also predisposed to bizarre sexual habits, Vann obtained a college scholarship from a local priest who frequented the sleeping bags of boy scouts!

Using Vann as the protagonist in history was keen. In the US it is next to impossible to slander or libel a dead man. (Vann died in a mysterious copter crash in 1972.)

Vann was the son of a whore, one of the "condemned and desperate" whose family came to America in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries.

Though the author paints a succinct picture of a bawdy strumpet and the damage she inflicts on her children, he pushes ahead into historical generalizations that detract from his research.

Example: "These planter families prospered sufficiently over the generations to gain learning and manners and to mimic the British gentry who had cast out their ancestors. They became the Grandees of the Old South and the Cavaliers of the Confederacy."

Sheehan's point is essential to his case in the 20th century where a man of Vann's background slipped into a position of power undetected. It would give Vann's rise historical precedence.

It fails because in Vann's South — Virginia in particular where Sheehan focuses his research — the Civil War gentry and the commanders of the army of the Confederacy would have had nothing to do with WHITE TRASH. The lines of religion and family were a man's ticket to prosperity more often than not. Virginia, with its Anglo-American traditions and creative thinkers produced 13 Presidents of the United States, among them James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. Indeed, many of their relatives were the "Grandees of the Old South."

Vann, not his ancestors, did his social climbing in a 20th Century system devoid of morals and obsessed with imperial righteousness. This was a new America in love with power, overlooking background and rewarding ambition. Those in control were manipulated from the bottom up by patriotic mimicry and Oliver North like zeal for duty.

Sheehan is at his best examining the character of the men who fought this war — their disregard for culture and their quest for pleasure and power before peace.

"There's a lot of plain and fancy screwing going on around here, but I suppose it's all in the interest of the war effort," said Ellsworth Bunker of the sexual smorgasbord that the streets of Saigon became.

Sheehan depicts exploitation and disregard for the "pathetic creatures" who "flaunted themselves in makeup and clothes they did not know how to wear and swelled their Vietnamese breasts with injections of silicone to attract the bosom-conscious Americans ..." Sounds Familiar.

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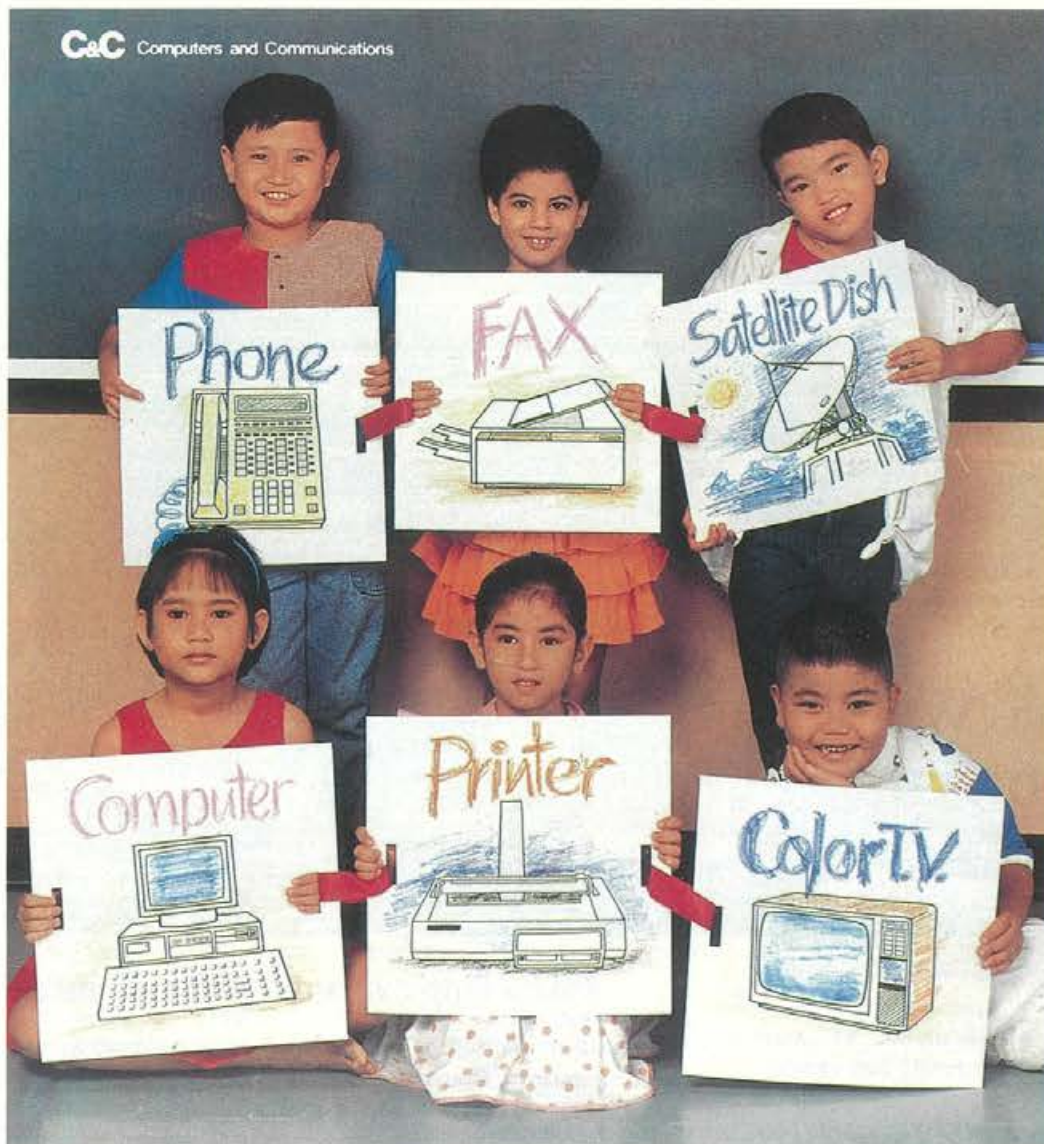
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But Sheehan stops abruptly as he hints at the emasculation of a race of people. Indeed, his case against Vann as a pervert and product of a twisted system might have been strengthened had he chosen to explore further the sexual abuse of Vietnamese women in the context of Vietnamese culture. We are left with a picture of Vann, the product of a WHITE TRASH background, less one of American ambition run amok in a Third World of pleasure, vice and visions of superiority.

One is tempted to ask: "How many journalist friends did Sheehan know who dated 16-year-old bar girls from the paddy fields?" How was Vann unique in the context of this world of sensual delights?

Sheehan won his Pulitzer (and deservedly so) not for any stream of consciousness descriptions of fighting with rock music pounding on the American psyche. He left that for Michael Herr and others.

He won it for his eye for the abuse of military strength against odds that US generals and foot soldiers never stopped to measure.

"Anytime the wind is blowing from the north, where the B-52 strikes are turning the terrain into a moonscape, you can tell, from the

battlefield stench that the strikes are effective," comments Vann after reaching the height to his command. His words echo a sordid, poetic metaphor for insane killing. Coming from Vann, they do not shock.

General Westmoreland, who came under public scrutiny during his libel suit against CBS's 60 MINUTES a few years back, digs his own grave in A BRIGHT SHINING LIE. The reader marvels at Westy's fearlessness of the Fourth Estate. Sheehan asks about excessive civilian casualties from air strikes and shelling:

"Yes Neil, it is a problem," he said. "But it does deprive the enemy of the population, doesn't it?" How many years did Sheehan keep that one safely hidden in his notebook before unloading it? What the radicals in Berkeley would have done with that statement!!

Sheehan is modest. Reporters in Vietnam were not heroes, they only pointed out the obvious when it was already too late. Sheehan makes that clear. They were shackled by editors and history.

"Reporters became habituated to a role that was characterized more by support than skepticism," comments the author. And then there

was "TIME MAGAZINE, whose editors, under Henry Luce's guidance, almost invariably portrayed American Generals in heroic dimensions...."

As for rewriting history, Sheehan may have waited too long for that — it really did take him 16 years to write this book. He does, however, spend needed time unravelling US involvement in the coup against President Diem. (South Vietnam)

"Kennedy asked only that Lodge guarantee him a successful coup, that he not be forced to endure the disgrace of another Bay of Pigs."

Though Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge never overtly supported the coup, he appears to have covertly sanctioned it.

Diem calls him on the phone and in a panicked voice says: "Some units made a rebellion and I want to know, what is the attitude of the U.S.?"

Lodge's reassuring words: "I have a report that those in charge of the current activity offer you and your brother safe conduct out of the country if you resign. Had you heard this?"

If only it was that easy in places like Burma today.... **DB**

Man with a Mission

by Ron Urbina

It was Nov. 18th or 19th 1970 - my first time in Bangkok.

I was in a state of tumescence from the moment we got off the plane - a girl was bending over sweeping the tarmac; I was excited.

People had been nice to me at good old Hurlburt Field Florida, "pulled strings" so I could get to Thailand; magic Thailand, Land of Mutiny on The Bounty — type girls, good herbs and spices and banana shakes.

I was, supposed to get a nice soft job as a supply clerk at Don

Muang RTAFB; but lo and be-hold, a sharp Sgt Major from J.U.S.-M.A.G. got hold of my orders and I ended up working for a strange assortment of gung-ho Army majors Navy Lt. Commanders and an Air Force Lt. Col.

Being geared up for the lax A.F. system it was quite a shock to come under the Army-run system. I actually was forced to remember the *real* reason any of us was over here -

there was a war going on nearby and quite a lot of support was expected to come from J.U.S.M.A.G.

"The Man with the Mission" was my nickname, my mission being to get back to an easy A.F. job. The gung-ho's knew I wanted to go and made it that much harder for me.

Every letter and memo had at least 5 drafts; top secret this, top secret that, make the coffee, xerox this, run this over to Navy, it wasn't just a job, it was living hell.



"I recall typing memos about the use of Thai soldiers in Laos ..."

A couple of memories stand out: I recall typing out memos about the use of Thai soldiers in Laos the same month *NEWSWEEK* asked Nixon about it: "We don't have any Thai soldiers in Laos," he replied. What a liar, I thought, I just typed that stuff. I began to become anti-war, not for any moral reason, but just because even in the context of all the "lifer bullshit" (career soldier responsibilities) they *still* weren't being honest with themselves, each other or the public at large.

You could sense that deep down inside everyday secretly knew that we really had no business being there anyway and wheels were constantly spinning as people tried to get any kind of grip on anything.

Later in '71 Capt Johnson of the Army Rangers on beautiful Soi Tonson, was in our office bragging to the Army Majors about all the "stuff we loaded on Air America from AngKor Wat *can* be fun! ha, ha, ha, ha!"

I didn't even know what AngKor Wat was at the time, and Capt Johnson was a "friend," — he later gave me a jungle camouflage parachute which I hung on the ceiling in our billets, the Villa Club.

The Villa Club, ah yes.

Located where the Villa Theatre and market are now on Sukhumvit, our place had to be as good as enlisted men's housing got — a swimming pool, football field, basketball court, an open air eatery and an air conditioned restaurant right on Sukhumvit, plus pool tables, of course.

There were about 20 "red-necks", 9 "freaks" and about 5 "aloofs". I was a freak sometimes and an aloof sometimes. Officially, it was against the law to have women or "ganjah" in the rooms, but you could hear girlish laughter and smell sweet smells from more than a few rooms. With my horrible job, it got to be where I'd get in the room, have a few puffs and be zonkers in 5 minutes, flat on my back listening to those fine PX stereo speakers. Buddha grass; 3 hits you know you're at one with the master.

Phetburi Road was the big thing then. The only surviving club, now a disco, is Thai Heaven across from the World Hotel, but that whole stretch of Phetburi was full of big hostess clubs for the resident and R&R GI's in '71. The Las Vegas (later the International) The San Francisco and 3 or 4 more. They all featured Thai girls dancing to the Stones and Aretha, fully clothed on a big dance floor, and you went up there and started dancing with them, or you sat down and grooved to the sounds. The clubs had built in TVs outside for the taxi drivers to watch. A nice touch.

Across from the Siam Intercontinental Hotel, where S.A.S is now, there was a club called the Red and Blue, still the best club I've seen my life. It featured a band called the Hunters with an American named Steve playing keyboards and glasses of water, two Vietnamese and two Malaysians. They played James Gang stuff and Crosby Stills and whoever. You could smoke right in the club without fear. *Everybody*

smoked or you didn't come to the place. War *could* be fun.

But alas, something happened which kind of took all the fun out of things; the clerk who worked for the head of J.U.S.M.A.G. found a listening device in his room at the Villa. He went to the Lt Col in charge who admitted that J.U.S.-M.A.G. spied on its own men!

Well, there was a giant meeting that night at the Villa and we bombarded the Col. with questions — for once everybody was united in their common hatred of lifers and for freedom of speech, or just to be left alone.

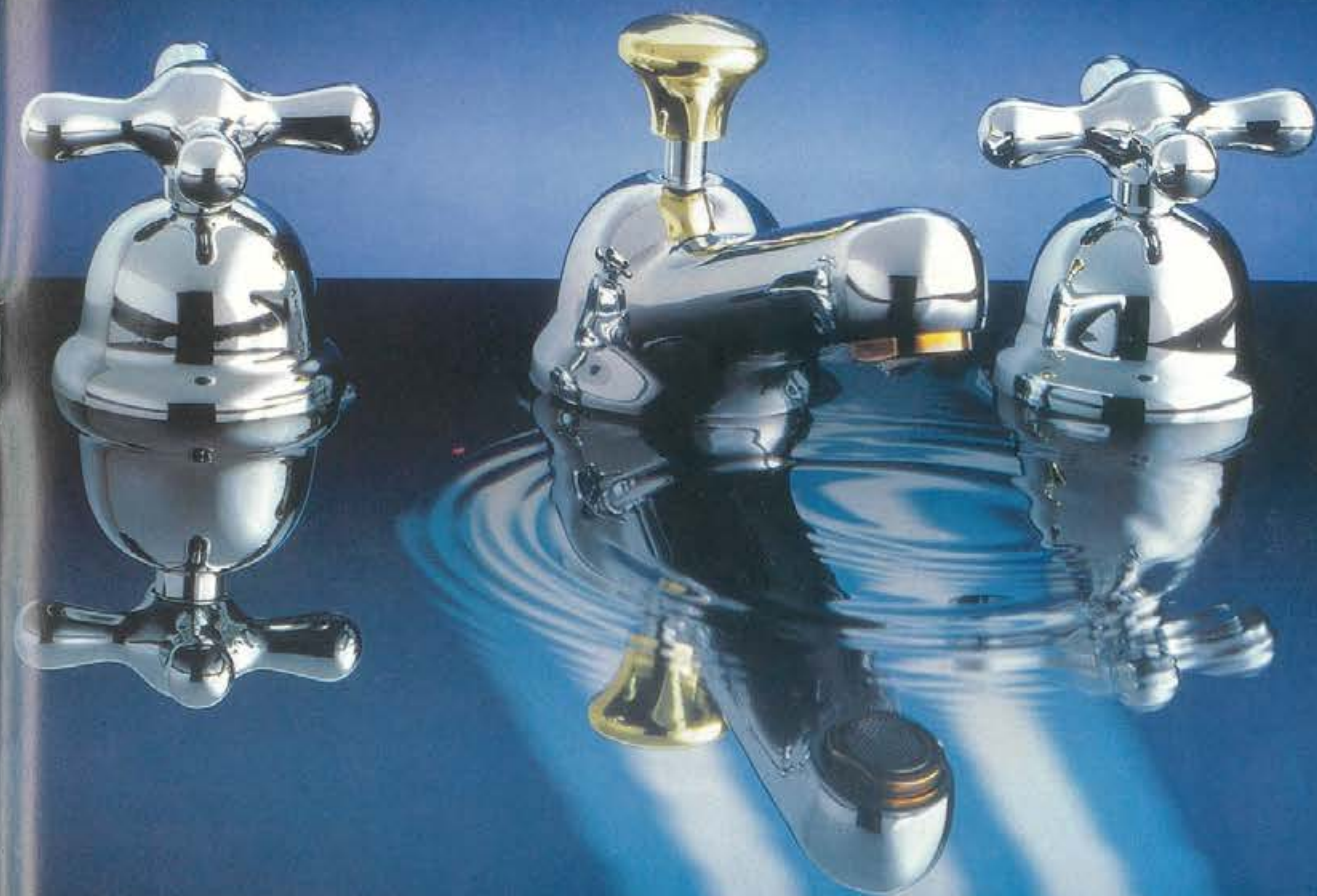
"What could we possibly say that could have us lose the war" we ranted. (Even the aloofs were foaming) "We *may* invade Cambodia, we *may* use napalm, we *may* send 500,000 troops — we've *done* all that. People here are into the war exactly as much as required, just like the lifers. We do our jobs and we do them well, SIR! We are willing to continue to shuffle papers and in some cases actually *do* something as long as you leave us alone where we sleep, SIR!"

"O.K. Sorry, sorry. Big mistake to bug you guys, big mistake. We'll remove all the bugs." **DB**



Ron Today: Rehabilitated "Those times resulted in a loss of innocence, but thanks to surgery and proper bed rest, I've had mine restored."

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