

LINKING THE WORLD ON AIR IS NO EASY FEAT...
NOT UNLESS YOU HAVE BEEN
FLYING THE SKIES SINCE 1929



LOT POLISH AIRLINES

For booking and information call our reservation office:
140/8, 9th Floor New ITF Bldg., 140 Silom Road Bangkok 10500
Tel: 233-0347 to 48, Fax: 231-6223

Or our Thai Polish Travel Agency.
485/11-12, Silom Road, Bangkok 10500 Tel: 235-2223 (8) Fax: 236-6538



IN THE HEART OF BUSINESS TOWN

Hofbräuhaus in Munich is one of the most famous beerhouses in the world. In Bangkok you can enjoy the authenticity of Bavarian beer which is as fresh and full-bodied as the real taste of Munich. HB beer is brewed in house by our Bavarian brewmaster, according to German beer-law. The beer mixes well with the varieties of Bavarian cuisine on offer which are beautifully presented by our chef. You can try many delicious dishes in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere, it soon becomes your second home.

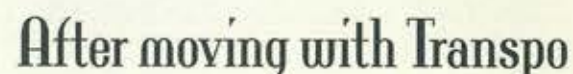
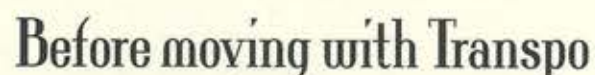


Quick Lunch Buffet
Only Bt125++ Plus Free Soft Drinks
Lunch: 11.30 a.m.-14.00 p.m.
Dinner: 17.00 p.m.-01.00 a.m. With Live music
Capacity: 400
Beverages: Freshly brewed beer,
Wine, Liqueur and Mixed-Cocktails

บริษัท รอยัล ฮอฟบราอูเฮาส์ กรุงเทพฯ จำกัด
5 อาคารตลาดทอง ถนนศาลาแดง ซอย ร่มเกล้า 10500
Royal Hofbrauhaus Bangkok Co., Ltd.
5 Saladeang Place, Saladeang Road, Silom, Bangkok 10500

Drop in check over Bt500
and your address to win!
1st prize - Return ticket for two to Germany
'Oktoberfest in Munich, 1999'
2nd Prize - Weekend in Pattaya for two
3rd Prize - Bicycle
4th Prize to
10th Prize - Voucher worth Bt500
Drawing: August 31st, 1999
Tel: 636 0015-18 Fax: 636 0019





We guarantee that while your surroundings may change, your possessions will not. Whether it's an antique vase or your most comfortable clothes - if you're moving around the world or just around the corner - you will experience the care you deserve. With 25 years as Thailand's only Move Managers, Transpo offers you the same comprehensive care in everything we do. To find out about Transpo's complete list of services call customer service (ext. 222) at:

259-0116 • 258-1110



134 Soi Athakrabi 3, Rama IV, Bangkok 10110 · Tel: 258-1110 · 259-0116 · Fax: 258-6555 · E-mail: free_survey@transpo-intl.com

13. SUPRANEE

ADDRESS: 1/10-11 SUKHUMVIT SOI 11, BANGKOK, THAILAND
TEL: 651-1800, 662-2202, 651-0049, 253-6069 **FAX:** (662) 255-4518
FOR TAXI: โทร โทรกรอสเซอร์ 1/10-11 ซ.สุขุมวิท ซ.สาวยุคลูนิค 11 (อยู่ใกล้ซอยประมาณ 200 เมตร)
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 1211, NANA POST OFFICE, BANGKOK 10112, THAILAND

ACALA

... a gallery of unusual ancient arts
now showing a collection of
Tibetan furniture and carpets



17th century Tibetan treasure chest

Room 312, River City, 23 Yotha Road
Bangkok 10100, Thailand
Tel: (66-2) 237-0077, ext 312
Fax: (66-2) 639-5788, Email: kanittha@acala.com
URL: <http://acala.com>

International School of the Regents (ISR)

Located at Km7, Hwy 36, near the new Pattaya Interchange.
(A Truly International Boarding School)
Day pupils from 2 years old; Boarders from 8 years old.



- A truly international student mix - 480 plus students representing 28 nationalities, with a foreign mix of 61%, giving students exposure to a rich variety of different cultures.
- The best of British and International Education - IGCSE, GCE, A Levels, with a full programme of ESL support.
- A highly qualified and experienced teaching staff - 67% British, 96% native English speakers
- The most modern and impressive boarding facilities under specialist caring houseparents who are 97% native English speakers.
- An emphasis on traditional values of respect, discipline and cooperation, and on outdoor programmes and community service.
- A spacious, secure and pollution free countryside campus, with a world class gymnasium/auditorium, and comprehensive sports tuition.



School : (038) 734-777 (10 Lines) Fax (038) 734-778
Website : <http://www.isr.ac.th>
E-mail : inquire@isr.ac.th

HEADMASTER: Mr. Simon Leslie,
the former Head of GEELONG GRAMMAR TIMBERTOP
where Prince of Wales (Prince Charles) used to board.

relax. WHEN LIVING ABROAD, don't let the unexpected worry you. **Thai Zurich Insurance** gives you the peace of mind that comes from international experience and solid financial strength. And with our new **English Language Help Centre** you can be assured of fast, convenient service 24 hours a day. Call us at (02) 860-8001 or e-mail us at tz@zurich.com to learn more.


ZURICH
ไทยซุริช



THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS
CLUB OF THAILAND
Penthouse, Manecya Center Building
518/5 Ploenchit Rd., Phatumwan, Bangkok 10330
Tel.: 255-5915 Fax: 255-5919
email: asiaaccess.net.th

President
Heather Kelly
AsiaWorks Television Ltd.
Tel.: 255-5915 Fax: 255-5919
email: asiaaccess.net.th

1st Vice President
Nate Thayer
Far Eastern Economic Review
Tel.: 251-1139, 01-834-5711 Fax: 254-4843
email: nate.thayer@feer.com

2nd Vice President
Evgeni Belenky
Izvestia Newspaper
Tel.: 241-0867, 01-812-6004 Fax: 241-0867
email: belenky@loxinfo.co.th

Immediate Past President
Philippe Decaux
French TV.
Tel.: 255-4652 Fax: 255-3040
email: foghorn@asiaaccess.net.th 01-845-3654

Correspondent Secretary
Charlotte Bevan
BBC
Tel.: 652-0500 ex 106 Fax: 679-3435
email: bevan@loxinfo.co.th

Recording Secretary
Michelle Cheung
CNBC-Asia
Tel.: 255-6800-1 Fax: 255-5919
email: mcheung@loxinfo.co.th

Correspondent Director for Publicity
Thomas Crampton
International Herald Tribune
Tel. & Fax: 866-2142, 01-824-7827
email: crampton@loxinfo.co.th

Correspondent Director for Membership
Kate Gunn
ABC
Tel.: 254-8325, 01-254-5861 Fax: 254-8336
email: kgunn@loxinfo.co.th

Correspondent Director for Programs
Jeanne Hallacy
AsiaWorks Television
Tel.: 255-6800-1 Fax: 255-6840
email: hallacy@loxinfo.co.th

Treasurer
Douglas M. Logan
Tel.: 255-7090, Fax: 255-7090

Associate Director of Publicity
Gary Carlson
Tel.: 398-5768
email: garcar@loxinfo.co.th

Associate Director of Membership
Annie Phrommayon
BBC
Tel.: 652-0500 Fax: 652-0666
email: anniephr@hotmail.com

Associate Director of Programs
Philip Cornwell-Smith
City Media Co., Ltd.
Tel.: 679-4652-5 Fax: 679-4629
email: philcs@loxinf.co.th

DATELINE

Editor: Thomas Crampton
Associate Editor: Gary Carlson
Media Update Editor: Dennis Coday
Copy Editor: Charlotte Bevan
Photography Editor: Jeanne Hallacy

Marketing & Production
Advertisements: Finn Balslev
Layout: Phaisan Nangnoi
Publisher: Gregers Moller
Scand-Media Corp. Ltd.
4/74 M. 3 Thanyakarn Village,
Ramintra Soi 14, Ramintra Rd., Bangkok 10230
Tel.: 943-7166-8 Fax: 943-7169
email: scandm@mozart.inet.co.th

The opinions expressed by writers in *Dateline Bangkok* do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand or the editors.

Contents

SECOND QUARTER 1999

COLUMNS



9 CLUBBING

Reuters and Asiaworks cameramen punch it out while BBC and ITN duel over office signboards. Plus, a reader complains about *Dateline*.

10 THE BUSINESS

Secrets that drive news editors and what they have in common with *Hustler's* Larry Flynt. Also, Arnett is banished into cyberspace.

32 MIRACLE CURES

A journalist tests one cure for jetlag that is almost certainly worse than the condition.

34 NEWS QUIZ

Find out if you are a Foreign Correspondent.

FEATURES



11 REPORTING VIETNAM

A former Hanoi-based correspondent lashes out at parachute journalists who can still find nothing but war in Vietnam.

12 RESURRECTION

The saga of Sondhi Limthongkul's regional business magazine *Asia Inc* and the journalists who saved it from the brink of bankruptcy.

COVER STORY: CANNIBALS

16 Two correspondents tell of meeting man-eaters in West Kalimantan.
Photos by Philip Blenkinsop.

22 BANGKOK BROTHELS

Sex reviewer Bernard Trink exposes the dirty little secrets of his trade.

24 INDOCHINA LEGENDS

Denis Gray shares the insights of several decades in Indochina.

26 PORTFOLIO

Hand tinted photographs from Asia along with a cartoonist's view of the economic crisis.

30 KICKING BUTT

A hack's conversion into health Nazi.

Join Us

You don't have to be foreign and you don't need to be a correspondent to become a member of the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand. Membership has its privileges: The club frequently hosts news breaking panel discussions with the leaders of government, private sector and non-governmental organizations. Each month the club exhibits work from a different photographer and every Friday there is live jazz music at the bar. Each member also gets a subscription to this magazine for absolutely free. So why aren't you a member?

Don't forget that the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand is one of Bangkok's most prestigious addresses for press conferences, social gatherings and product launches. The club is outfitted with all the latest techno-gizmos, from wireless microphones to remote control television cameras, and can provide all types of catering, from light snacks to full meals. Impress your guests with the well known hospitality of the Foreign Correspondents Club.

Got a tale to tell?

This is your club's magazine and we welcome letters to the editor, articles, photographs, drawings, poetry or just about anything to help us fill up each issue. Submissions should address journalism or the story behind getting the story. All ideas considered, but please contact Thomas Crampton before doing too much work. Submissions are paid for with glory and bar coupons.



16

INTERNET ★ YOUR TAILOR IN BANGKOK ★ INTERNET ★

SAVE MONEY
DEAL DIRECT
PAY LESS

Website: <http://www.smartfashion.com>
E-Mail: satvin@mozart.inet.co.th

INVITATION
SALE

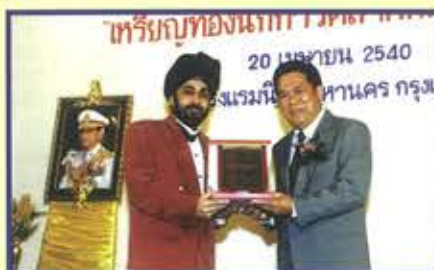
SMART FASHION®

GOVT. RECOGNIZED TAILOR HOUSE OF THAILAND
AWARDED BEST TAILOR OF THE YEAR

Exclusive Ladies & Gents Custom Tailors

★ HIGHLY RECOMMENDED ★

"SCHNEIDER DES JAHRES"



"OUTSTANDING SERVICES AWARD"

BOSS, UOMO & ARMANI CUTS
ARE OUR SPECIALITY

★ TAX FREE ★

24hrs.

For Free Pick up service !!
(NO OBLIGATION)

+662-651-0304
or 253-2993

within 15 minutes
we will be there!

WORLD WIDE
MAIL ORDERS
ACCEPTED

FAX:
+662-255-4518

GENTS

1 Cashmere Suit
2 Silk shirts
2 Extra Pants
2 Silk Ties

150

FROM
US\$

SMART FASHION
1/10-11 SUKHUMVIT SOI 11
BKK THAILAND

1/10-11 ซ.สุขุมวิท 11
เข้าซอย 11 ประมาณ 200 เมตร
(และให้ค่าจอดรถด้วย)

amazing 1998
THAILAND 1999

NOTE:

We also visit our customers in Europe/USA/
Australia three times every year to take their
measurements. So you can ask us to meet you
in your country also.

MEMBER OF THAI SILK ASSOCIATION OF THAILAND

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. BOX 1424, NANA POST OFFICE, BANGKOK 10112, THAILAND

SOI WHISPERS

Pre-election violence in Indonesia: an enthusiastic AsiaWorks cameraman working for TV Tokyo got in a punch-up with a Reuters still photographer during a scum at an election rally in Jakarta. Supporters of the United Development Party (PPP) had to pry the two apart (turns out they're both Australians). It's presumed the AsiaWorker got the best of his opponent because he was seen doing high five's with other journos after the fight. ● Mine's bigger. Check out the wall on the Penthouse floor with all the media signs. Timing is everything, according to ITN, who made damn sure their shingle was hanging high and mighty for the grand opening of the BBC bureau, their domestic competition right across the hall. ● Whatever happened to Bangkok as a media hub? Plans to have Wan Azziza Ismail interviewed in Bangkok by Riz Khan for CNN's Q & A were scuttled when an overly earnest CNN producer called the foreign ministry to see if that would be okay. The foreign ministry wasn't exactly jumping with joy, which was reported back to CNN editors in Hong Kong. Never wanting to offend, CNN moved the interview elsewhere. ● The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has relocated to Bangkok from New Delhi. Correspondent Patrick Brown, a veteran of the CBC and Asia, has set-up his office at the Maneeya Center and is sharing space with the ABC. ● The incorrigible ABC reporter Evan Williams resurfaced in Bangkok last month, ostensibly to produce a story about ya-ba. Before the story was completed a gunman shot down Michael Wansley, the Australian businessman who was restructuring a sugar mill in Nakhon Sawan. Evan changed gears faster than you can say: 'bloody good yarn' and turned around a 15-minute piece for the ABC flagship show, Foreign Correspondent. ● Spinductor this! Hey, who's getting media smart? It simply can't be a coincidence that during the week of the Indonesia elections, Khmer Rouge Nuon Paet goes on trial in Phnom Penh for the brutal killings of three foreigners in 1995, a trial that would normally attract a lot of attention. And in Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim starts his second trial involving sodomy charges. Who's missing? Perhaps the Generals in Rangoon are planning another SPDC tea party with NLD MPs? ● Fleet Street scribe Andrew Drummond scored big with his Channel 4 documentary about a gang of Thais and farangs trafficking young Thai women to brothels around the world. But the undercover program revealed more than Drummond bargained for. The producers, safely back in the UK, showed more than they had promised in what were supposed to be silhouette interviews, putting some of the participants at risk.

Did EU Go?

The METRO-sponsored EU Film Festival Launch Party at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand was a great bash made all the better for the flagons of ale provided by Brauhaus Bangkok and food from the Fortune Hotel. As usual when trying to slake the thirsts of hard-working journos, there wasn't quite enough to go round and the free micro-brew dried up an hour early. Still, it was so sanuk the party kept going until 2am.

The Festival was opened by German Ambassador Hermann Erath, representing the Presidency of the EU, and Michel Caillouet, EU Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Commission.

METRO wishes to thank the EU, the FCCT, Paul Rene Lee of President Park Group and Andrew Wood of the Fortune Hotel for sponsoring the party, and all the festival sponsors: United Artists, Vista, The Nation and Melia Hua Hin. The Festival continues in Chiang Mai this month.



COMPLAINTS, ETC.

Honest Praise

Dear Sir or Madam,

Normally I only write letters to praise Metro Magazine, but for the new Dateline I will make an exception.

The new layout, design and editorial style of Dateline make it the best publications available in Thailand.

Not only did I spend hours revelling in your excellent articles and admiring your fantastic photos, but I found the paper can be folded into sturdier airplanes than flimsy publications like The Economist. Thank you Dateline.

Yours, etc

PS: Please don't publish my name or Metro will kill me.

Re: "Cocktail Zone Survival Tactics"

Dear Sir or Madam,

I read with disgust Ian Crawshaw's article in your last issue.

In my many years in

Bangkok attending functions and events, the one person I was always warned to avoid was Ian himself.

I guess from reading his recommendations on how to totally take advantage of others reinforces what an expert freeloader he is. I have witnessed his lack of manners, tact and what might be refreshing dignity, class and graciousness.

Ian's tackiness doesn't belong in such a magazine as the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand magazine and reflects a terrible image for local Thai correspondents.

Yours, etc

Disgusted in Bangkok

Ask a Question

Dear Sir or Madam,

Will people stepping up to the microphone during the Q & A sessions of the Wednesday night panels please ask a question instead of pontificating for 15 minutes? We're here to

listen to the panelists' views, not yours.

Please formulate a question in the form of a question.

You Know Who You are!

Yours, etc.

Alex Trabec

Financing Alcohol

Dear Sir or Madam,

I do not know many journalists responsible enough to own such an august financial tool as the American Express card.

The correspondents club, however, only accepts American Express. Does American Express have a monopoly on club transactions? What does the club get in return? Was this an arrangement dreamed up by the now defunct Bangkok Bank of Commerce?

Yours, etc

Editors of Dateline Bangkok welcome letters and comments. Please send faxes, e-mail or post to the addresses found on the table of contents page.

What Makes a News Editor Happy?



What drives a newspaper editor? "The grand vision of journalism's influential role in shaping public life" keeps editors at their desks daily, according to research completed by Roya Akhavan-Majid, a senior vis-

iting professor of journalism at the University of Minnesota. Akhavan-Majid's survey of 258 editors of US newspapers looked at what contributes to editors' job satisfaction. (See "Role Perception as Predictor of Editors' Job Satisfaction" in the winter issue of Newspaper Research Journal.)

"Editors who see their role as disseminators of information, as well as those who seek to interpret complex problems and shape government policy, tend to be more satisfied with their jobs than editors who seek to function as adversaries to big business and government and/or watchdogs of people in positions of power," Akhavan-Majid says.

For Sale: America's Opinion Pages

For US\$30,000 you can buy a quarter of the New York Times op-ed page. There, you can espouse your views on any topic, as long as, according to the Times advertising guidelines, the ad deals with a grander commentary than that of the promotion of a specific company, its product or service.

Rebuttals are welcome for US\$30,000. If the rebutters don't have the money, they're not going to see their arguments in the Times. It's a case of "Pay Up or Shut Up." An article in the media review journal "Brill's Content" tells how Joanne Doroshov, executive director of a consumer group, tried to rebut a series of ads running on the Times's op-ed page. (See, "Free Speech, If You Can Afford It" at www.brillcontent.com)

The ads, sponsored by the Washington Le-

gal Foundation, sounded the alarm over greedy plaintiffs' lawyers and what one of the ads called "tyranny by litigation." Doroshov disagreed with the policy being advanced, and she also took issue with many of the factual claims about abusive litigation that were cited in the ads. She set out her objections in a letter to the editor, and that's when she was told "that if we wanted to reply, we had to buy an ad."

The Times's vice-president for corporate communications explains: "The editors don't have anything to do with ads, so therefore they don't run letters to the editor about ads."

It's a catch-22: The editors won't run her response because the article in question wasn't theirs. But the advertising department won't give her free space because, well, that's not what advertising departments do.

Arnett Reports from Cyberspace

Peter Arnett, award winning print and broadcast journalist (and recently canned by CNN), will try his hand in a third medium. At 64, Arnett is set to be a Net-caster, supplying video interviews with world leaders and other international reports via the internet.

Arnett has signed on with newly launched Web operation foreignTV.com. A visit to the site on May 14 found it still under construction, but sample clips (apparently all from Reuters) were available for downloading.

A notice at the site explains: "... foreign

TV.com proposes to develop a network of Internet websites, utilizing geographic location-specific website addresses (ie: Paris TV.com).

"We propose to offer original foreign content programming, in English, about local events, news, politics, entertainment and culture. We are still in the planning stages of our development and have not as yet created any of the content to be offered on our proposed network or establish any of our contemplated network sites."

Take It Elsewhere, Mother Goose

A new publisher of children's books in France, Kiwi Enterprises Sarl, has been soliciting manuscripts for story collections aimed at children 5-6 years, 7-8 years, and 9-10 years.

In the message explaining its publishing needs, the company states it will consider fantasy, real life based fiction and educational material of high quality that appeals to the

targeted readership. But then the message ends: "All stories must have a happy ending and all stories will be read by a child psychologist to insure that they do not contain damaging messages of a racial, gender or psychological nature."

Old Mother Goose, not to mention The Brothers Grimm or Lafontaine, wouldn't stand a chance.

When Editors Pay with Cash



When Penthouse publisher Larry Flynt offered US\$1 million to anyone who could prove a member of Congress had an adulterous affair, the American Journalism Review (AJR) called it "one of the most brazen moments" in the history of checkbook journalism.

The AJR examines the ethics of paying sources in a recent issue. (See "Paying For It" at www.ajr.org). Historians say paying for news is not as long-standing a taboo as many think.

The New York Times paid the Titanic wireless operator a \$1,000 for an exclusive interview. In the 1930s, Hearst newspapers paid the legal bills of the defendant in the Lindbergh baby kidnapping case to ensure scoops. Life paid the Mercury astronauts for their stories. CBS News paid Nixon White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman for his story. Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger signed million-dollar contracts with NBC to serve as exclusive "adviser-consultants."

"Newsgathering is a business. I'm not sure it's unethical to have to pay sometimes for the information to put together, package and sell," says Lorna Veraldi, an associate professor of journalism and broadcasting at Florida International University.

Bob Steele, director of the ethics program at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, disagrees. "The standard line is news organizations don't pay for information ... [because] ... The public perceives that the information is tainted." He also says journalists who pay sources are in the minority. Heath Meriwether, publisher of the Detroit Free Press, says the situation isn't always black and white. "We buy lunches and dinners for sources," he says.

"And foreign correspondents ... it's part of the culture almost that you are going to pay people off as a foreign correspondent. It's a business expense," says Meriwether.

Don't Mention the War

A waspish reviewer recently accused correspondents working in Vietnam (or more specifically me) of becoming unduly cynical, departing the country in a state of bitterness that clouded their view. While I'd admit to a certain lightness in my heart as I led a champagne-drenched conga line through the cabin of the THAI Airbus taking me away from Hanoi, the accusation is a little harsh. Most of us in Hanoi reserved our real cynicism not for Vietnam but for our visiting colleagues.

It is a complex relationship between resident correspondents and those who parachute in for a few days. On one hand, living in a city where whatever restaurant you eat in, you'd know 80 percent of your fellow diners, can become a little claustrophobic. Starved of contact with the outside world, we relished these sophisticated visitors who would bring news of exotic locales such as Bangkok or Hong Kong. We were as wide-eyed and awed as Amish farmers as we heard for the first time of newfangled inventions from distant lands - the Internet, Starbucks, democracy, constant electricity. Were these the devil's work or the way of the future? It was a question that dominated debate when we weren't discussing which of Hanoi's two restaurants to eat in.

However, we also sniggered behind our hands at the syrupy tone visiting journalists used to describe Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and at the swaggering wartime wannabes with their photographer's vests who talked about being "in country" or earnestly told you they were heading "a few clicks" out of town. We mocked the almost obsessive descriptions of bicycle-riding Vietnamese women in clinging white ao dais (who, by the way, are mostly schoolgirls if they are dressed in white. It is hard to imagine editors allowing such panting prose over European girls in gymslips and knee socks).

We rolled our eyes at the endless Hanoi Hannah features, at the queries about "what was going down at Khe Sanh?" (Answer: nothing, maybe a little farming), at the inability of most American journalists to mention Hanoi without the phrase "Christmas bombing" appearing in the next sentence.

The worst offenders in this count were those we called the "war bores" who, despite their lavish use of the hackneyed observation that "Vietnam is a country, not a war," were incapable of seeing the place except through the prism of the conflict. We listened patiently to their stories of riding Tank 843 when it crashed through the palace gates in Saigon in 1975 (who knew a tank could carry more people than a 747?) and nodded at their earnest admiration for the North Vietnamese ("the idealistic revolutionaries of the rain forest" as Neil Sheehan described them in 1995, as if battle-hardened Stalinists like Le Duan were actually busy growing organic crops for the Body Shop).

Nostalgic for their youth, for the sex, drugs and rock and roll of the Sixties and for what, for most of them, was the high point of their careers, they pro-

duced some of the most ludicrous, inaccurate reporting ever on Vietnam when they made their pilgrimages back in the 1990s. Reporters who cut their teeth questioning every comment made by a US official, would unquestioningly lap up the most blatant lies told to them by Communist Party apparatchiks in Hanoi. Namstalgia short-circuits skepticism.

Few of these visitors could understand our frustration at a bureaucracy that made such mundane tasks as collecting monthly economic figures an unbelievable Sisyphean chore. If one complained about this to visitors, they'd say "Well, it's very bureaucratic in Washington as well," displaying a fantastic lack of understanding of the situation in Vietnam.

Most visitors have their paths eased by the Press Centre, one of the more amenable parts of the system and generally more relaxed than the Barbarian Handlers in the Foreign Minister Press Department who dedicated their time to obstructing resident correspondents. Visiting journalists are much preferred by the government, which particularly favors those who want to relive the past than examine the country's troubled present. They also know less and rarely have unofficial contacts who might not stay on message.

Visitors also rarely experienced other journalistic joys of Hanoi. For example, the obliterating torpor of Foreign Ministry briefings (no questions allowed until recently but no useable answers given anyway) with their interminable recitations of the minute-by-minute itinerary of the "friendly official visit" by the Deputy Assistant Under Secretary of the Irrigation and Sewerage Ministry of the Central African Republic.

Reading the Vietnamese language press day after day, something visitors don't generally do, opens one's eyes to a distorted world of official fantasy (Vietnam to build nuclear power plant by 2000), ranting doublespeak and rancid xenophobia. It is a place where debate is stifled and peaceful dissent punished harshly. In this world intellectual and artistic life has calcified. Vietnam is indeed more than war, it is a country with deep political, economic and social problems. What is cynical?

The attempt to examine this situation and its impact on Vietnamese or the glib acceptance of the party line?



Stalinists, as described
by Neil Sheehan,
sound like the Body
Shop's organic farmers.

ROBERT TEMPLER, who worked for Agence France-Press in Hanoi from 1994-1997, is author of *Shadows and Wind: A View of Modern Vietnam*.

Saving ASIA INC



But Asia Inc's survival was a close call. And the reason the magazine is alive today is due entirely to a core of loyal and talented professionals who decided that even when their owner ran out of money, the magazine was too good to die.

Let me briefly recap. After building his Thai media group, Sondhi in 1992 went regional, launching Asia Inc in Hong Kong amid much fanfare. The founding Managing Editor was Anthony Paul, now Editor-at-Large for Fortune magazine, who did a superb job in building Asia's first world-class regional business magazine. By the time I succeeded as editor in 1995 we had already won the Citibank award three years in succession.

At that time, advertising sales were also going well and we seemed on target to break even within the planned seven years (not bad considering it took Asiaweek almost 20 years to become profitable and the Asian Wall Street Journal 15).

Soon, Sondhi became even more ambitious and launched the Asia Times. But with his satellite and telecom ventures and countless other entrepreneurial initiatives, it was clear he was expanding at a very risky rate.

Sondhi has never made any secret that his management skills come a poor second behind his entrepreneurial zeal. "Sondhi, you're a terrible manager," one of several transient financial advisers once remarked. Sondhi's response: "You're absolutely right."

By mid-1996, Sondhi's Manager group was bleeding money and Sondhi responded by hiring someone who was weird even by the standards of the Manager group.

Palestine-born Ned Kennan claimed to have worked for the Israeli intelligence service Mossad before moving to the U.S., where he graduated in psychology and set up a company that specialized in market research and political spin-doctoring. Kennan once told me he had worked for narco-dictator Noriega in Panama and usually claimed to have briefly held the position of Panamanian Secretary of State. Fat, jovial and bushy bearded, he reveled in his Thai nickname - Khun Sa-ta.

At about the same time, it was announced Asia Inc would from the following year increase frequency to bi-monthly under a new editor and publisher, Jim Rohwer, a former Executive Editor of the Economist and author of the then-newly-published Asia Rising.

Ensnared on a separate floor of the Asia Inc offices in Hollywood Road, Hong Kong, Rohwer set about building a new team for the planned bi-weekly, which would be launched to co-incide with the Hong Kong handover. Meantime, my colleagues and I continued to put out the monthly edition of Asia Inc.

But by early 1997, it was clear things were not going as planned. Summoned to Bangkok to attend a dinner Sondhi hosted for Christopher Forbes, Steve's younger brother, Rohwer was informed by Kennan that the launch of the bi-weekly would be delayed. In early May, however, Sondhi and Kennan decided to abandon the project entirely and instead continue to publish Asia Inc as a monthly with Anne Lim as publisher and me as Editor-in-Chief. Rohwer and his team de-

parted after less than six months having never put out a single issue.

Confused? The advertisers certainly were. So Anne and I set about trying to restore confidence by giving the magazine a handsome face-lift and a sharper editorial focus. But by then, the company had suffered more bad publicity when the Asia Times "suspended" publication, never to reappear in print form.

Almost simultaneously, Asia Inc's payroll dried up and Sondhi suddenly began making himself inaccessible. Kennan and his team, which included a very decent American named Gary Knell, kept promising us the check was in the mail. Why did we believe them? We weren't alone.

Regional papers were reporting as fact that Sondhi was selling his satellite and telecom interests to save his print empire. At one stage, Knell informed us in good faith that it was "a done deal."

More dramatically, during a crisis meeting in our Kinwick Centre offices in early August, Kennan had sworn blind the staff would be paid by the middle of the month. He had then flung a box of matches onto the conference room table and declared: "If you're not paid by the 15th, you have my permission to burn the building down."

Come the 15th, he was forced to send out a very unfunny e-mail to say sorry, but the payroll wasn't coming after all. And could he please have his matches back.

While this was going on, the staff were busily preparing for Asia Inc's relaunch. It was like trying to renovate the front of the house while the back was on fire. Yet the team reacted to the crisis by working harder than ever. Nine of those people - five of them journalists - stayed the entire course and today are at the core of the new Asia Inc.

By September 1997, with the staff unpaid for more than two months, Anne and I proposed that if Sondhi couldn't find a buyer for the magazine, the staff should be given the chance to try and save it.

We set off for Bangkok with no guarantee of seeing the by-then very elusive Sondhi. Worse, hardly had we boarded our flight for Bangkok than bailiffs, acting on behalf of the unpaid landlord, entered our offices with a distress warrant and tagged all the equipment. From then on, staff were working with security guards scrutinizing their every move and knowing their desks, chairs and computers could any day be auctioned from under them.

Anne and I arrived in Bangkok with no guarantee of seeing Sondhi. And when we learnt his sister had sadly passed away that morning, a meeting seemed less likely still. But to his credit, he agreed to see us, not in Ban Phra-Thit headquarters but at the "safe house" off Sukhothai Road.

Anne did most of the talking. Asia Inc staff, who were the major creditors, should be allowed to buy the magazine with the back salaries owed to them, she argued. The team would then seek to find a major investor to secure Asia Inc's future.

We talked for an hour before a somber Sondhi adjourned the meeting. He had a funeral to organize. The following morning we met again for breakfast. This time Sondhi was more upbeat. Yes, he would sell. The deal was done on a handshake and Anne and I returned



to Hong Kong to try and secure a backer.

As expected there was no shortage of interested investors. But none could move fast enough to solve our most urgent problem. Staff, unpaid for up to three months, had to get cash as quickly as possible. And the magazine, soon to be homeless, needed offices.

We decided to take on a strategic minority investor who was prepared to put some money into the kitty instantly. That day, 30 Asia Inc staff were paid for the first time in three months.

Next came the problem of securing the equipment required to put out a high-quality magazine. Our computers and desks were being sold off by the landlord and when we tried to buy them back at auction we were outbid.

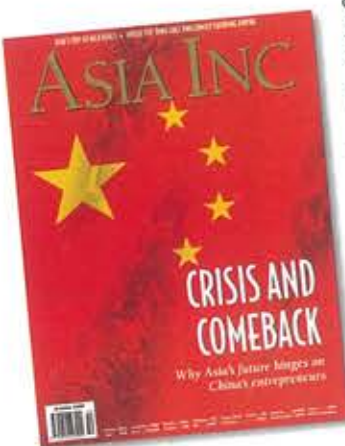
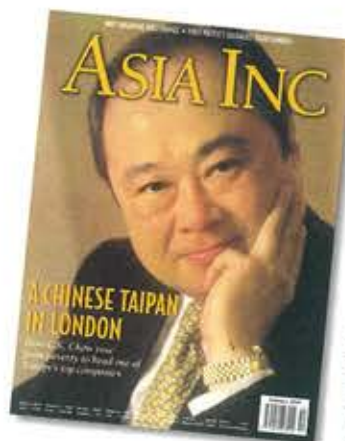
But the following morning the successful purchaser - clearly a professional in these matters - started selling off our equipment piece by piece. We began negotiating with him for a list of essentials and after an hour of tough bargaining had procured all we needed for less than we would have had to pay at the auction. Things were indeed looking up.

But there was still the problem of finding an office. Asia Inc and other Manager companies had occu-

Sondhi responded to the fast drain of money by hiring someone weird even by Manager Group standards.



WILLIAM MELLOR is Editor-in-Chief of Asia Inc.



pied three floors of the expensive Kinwick Centre. At Shau Kei Wan, near the eastern end of the island MTR line, we found the Eastern Commercial Centre, where we could rent equally good office space for one-third of the price.

However, we weren't able to move in immediately and there was an edition to put out. What to do? Anne Lim came up with a solution. A long-time resident of Shek O, a charming fishing village on the southeastern tip of Hong Kong island, she was in the process of moving from one village house to another. A landlord had given her one month's free rent on the new place while she decorated it. Instead of the renovators, in moved the Asia Inc editorial and art departments.

And it was from the cramped confines of number 299 Shek O that the October and November issues of the new-look, staff-owned Asia Inc were put to bed.

However, with hindsight, our hopes of a swift and simple transfer of ownership were astonishingly naive. For one thing, any deal involving the sprawling and now crumbling Manager group could never be simple, especially when it came time for due diligence. For another, the crisis rapidly enveloping Asia made it the most difficult of times to find an investor.

Then there was antagonism from some people close to Sondhi. Even before the Manager group could be certified dead, there was an extraordinary rush to pick over the bones. Some former Asia Times executives in particular were enraged that the Asia Inc team had been allowed to take over what one of them referred to as "the jewel in Sondhi's crown".

Perhaps swayed by these acolytes in Bangkok, Sondhi began to prevaricate, threatening to call off the deal if we didn't get a backer soon. His legal counsel was calling me constantly to say Sondhi was "furious" about the latest rumor he had been fed about what the Asia Inc team was up to.

Fueling that rage was the publicity we were getting from papers such as The Asian Wall Street Journal and South China Morning Post, which had heard large media groups were considering buying us.

And it manifested itself most starkly when someone close to Sondhi anonymously leaked to the Journal a copy of a letter from Sondhi's lawyers threatening to call off our deal. The tactic misfired. The reporter who received the letter regarded it as another example of Sondhi's poor treatment of his unpaid former employees and didn't write the story.

Meanwhile, several companies were indeed showing interest in acquiring Asia Inc, notably The Economist, which scrutinized us for weeks before deciding at a pre-Christmas board meeting not to buy us. Others also eventually shied off - unwilling to meet our condition that they pay several hundred thousand dollars in back salaries to existing and former staff.

Things were once again getting difficult, but still the remaining staff were determined not to give up even though we could only afford some months to pay a fraction of normal salaries.

Sondhi began to prevaricate, threatening to call off the deal if we didn't get a backer.

The crunch could have come the month we were unable to pay the office rent. The Sondhi approach of ignoring the problem in the hope it would go away would clearly result in swift eviction.

So I fronted the landlord and told him our story. We still believed in our magazine, I said, but needed more time to get an investor. In the meantime, would he mind cutting our rent by 50 percent. If not, we would vacate the premises at the end of the week and he could keep our deposit. To my surprise, he agreed. "I've been reading about you in the South China Morning Post," he said. "I'll give you a chance."

More luck followed. After machinations too long and complex to go into here, we had finally closed our deal with Sondhi and owned the title outright. I had also written to one of Asia's leading tycoons whom I had once interviewed and he had made an offer to buy the magazine. But as we became bogged down in the minutiae of the deal, another Asian company, DKH Bhd, arrived on the scene.

DKH and its affiliated company, George Town Holdings, are both listed on the main board of the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange. The group, which traces its roots to the tin-smelting industry in 19th Century Penang, is best known for its 1992 acquisition of United Malayan Banking Corp (UMBC), then Malaysia's fourth-largest bank in terms of assets, but a poor 14th in earnings.

Although DKH had no previous banking experience, it turned around UMBC with great speed, increasing earnings tenfold in three years. In 1996, the group sold its entire holding in UMBC before buying Geneva's Banque Financiere de la Cite, thus becoming the first Southeast Asian company to own a Swiss bank.

A true Asian multinational, it also owns the Leavesden film studio in Britain, where the James Bond movie GoldenEye and the first of the Star Wars prequels were filmed. Meanwhile, it maintains extensive interests in Malaysia, operating department store, supermarket and pharmacy chains.

Now, it wanted to buy Asia Inc. And it was prepared to repay a substantial portion of back salaries - more than any previous bidder.

After lengthy negotiations in London and Geneva, where DKH executives were spending most of their time, a deal was struck. Asia Inc would survive. Junior staff - past and present - would receive all their back pay and the more senior ones a substantial percentage, to be paid in four installments over the next year. To date, three of those installments have been paid. The last is due before July 31. To show our continued faith in Asia Inc, the six-strong core management team took most of our back-salaries in shares in the new company, Markus Ltd.

Then we got down to relaunching the magazine, which we had put on hold earlier in the year while we sought our blue-chip investor.

At first, I feared Asia Inc's enforced absence from the news stands might affect our credibility and prevent our journalists from getting the top-level access they had been used to in the past. But I was soon proved wrong. Rushing off to China to report the cover story for our relaunch issue last October, I was granted a one-on-one interview in Beijing with Liu MingKang,



Deputy Governor of the People's Bank of China. And by the time our second issue came out, we had been chosen as the official magazine of the APEC Leaders' Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

For our third issue, Managing Editor Peter Comparelli and I interviewed President Habibie in Jakarta. In January, I got access to Shanghai's economic supremo, Huang Qi Fan, and for our May issue we interviewed Thai Prime Minister Chuan. Our June cover story will feature a rare interview with Malaysia's First Finance Minister, Daim Zainuddin.

Most satisfying for me is that Asia Inc has been able to retain the most important members of the editorial team. Managing Editor Comparelli, a senior editor at Asiaweek before he joined Asia Inc in 1994, is one of the region's most respected journalists. Editor-at-Large Allen Cheng has been a stalwart of the magazine since 1992 and his outstanding reporting and analytical skills were recently honored in the most recent Citibank awards.

News Editor Graham Lees, a former correspondent in Germany for the London Sunday Times and other British newspapers and an author of several books, contributes not only editorial skills but vast depths of experience.

And we shouldn't forget Sondhi. While many of his former employees understandably feel deep bitterness towards him, no-one can deny his vision and money enabled Asia Inc to become the first business magazine that was both Asian-owned and world class.

Now, Sondhi's largesse is long gone. Asia Inc today is a much leaner and hungrier organization and in my view much the better for it. But while the culture has changed, the original esprit-de-corps remains.

And in the crowded English-language magazine market, I believe we have retained our exclusive niche as the only publication to tell the story of business in Asia through people - the entrepreneurs and executives who make it happen. And to tell that story from an Asian perspective.

In July, we celebrate our seventh birthday. With Asian economies at last appearing on the upturn, we're anticipating an auspicious eighth year.



The Bits That Failed

By Howard Winn

Other arms of Sondhi Limthongkul's media empire could not be severed off before they died.

Asia Times, Sondhi's attempt to launch a regional daily newspaper founded in June 1997, days before the collapse of the Thai baht kicked off a global financial crisis.

Six months later, a story appeared in the local press drawing parallels between Sondhi's difficulties in repaying the pension fund to the staff and Robert Maxwell's well documented problems in that department. This produced a highly indignant response from Sondhi who claimed that such a comparison was outrageous and damaged his reputation.

However, despite the huffing and puffing and promises to the staff, Sondhi to this day still has not repaid all of the money which was deducted from salaries on the pretext that it was a company provident fund. In fact, the company exaggerated in calling it a provident fund since such funds are legally supposed to be registered with a finance company. This was not and was therefore just a forced loan to the company.

Those of us on the Bangkok staff - I was Business Editor of Asia Times - are also owed a mandatory three months severance pay together with half a month's unpaid salary. Correspondents and freelancers are owed considerably more, in unpaid taxes, expenses and fees. Commercial vendors were also unpaid. As one letter writer to the Nation observed, Sondhi is not quite the 'full Maxwell', but close.

One myth perpetuated by the former management is that the paper was a victim of the Thai financial crisis. But Asia Times was on its knees well before the crisis struck. Thailand's financial meltdown simply turned off the life support machine.

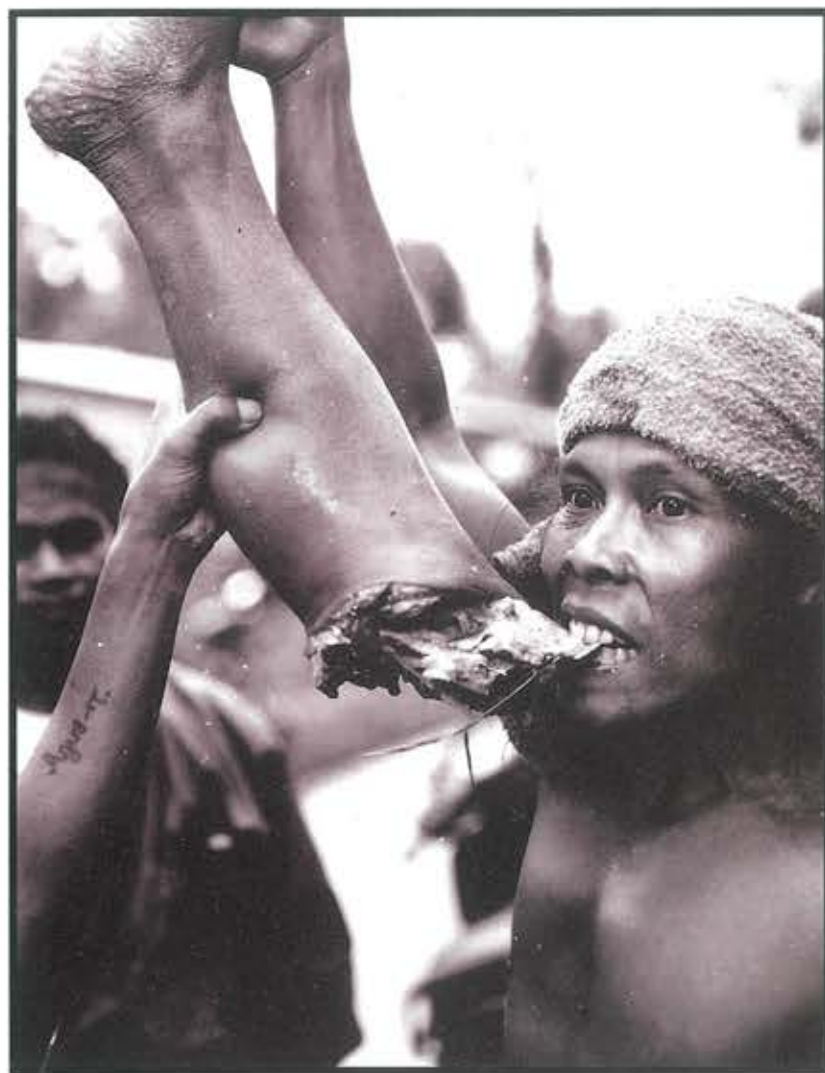
Company management was shambolic. Successive teams of business manager came - took the money - and left as the paper edged ever closer to the brink. On the editorial side although the cash shortage had become increasingly evident during the latter part of 1996, the management continued to squander it with expensive bureaux in glamorous but pointless locations (eg: Paris).

Overpaid cronies were kept on despite being either incompetent or unproductive as journalists. This Nero-like approach to management was a source of increasing frustration and friction between senior and middle management in the last six months. Given the increasingly tense internal environment, it was a miracle the paper appeared on a daily basis and that it maintained a reasonable standard. In the last few months before the crash, the company belatedly started to look at ways of cutting costs. It was too late.

The paper has risen phoenix-like as an online version on the web. Cynics have suggested that this is how he paper should have been in the first place. People involved with the new version say it is funded by Sondhi but through a new company. This avoids complications with the debts of its previous incarnation.

Oddly, the online version is produced by three former staff members of Asia Times who say they still have not been paid for their work on the printed edition.

Eat Thy Enemy



Dayak bites a madurese leg.



PHILIP BLENKINSOP is a Chiang Mai-based freelance photographer.

Madurese homes smoulder in testimony to the rampant torching and butchery that has prompted the exodus of terrified settlers.

Dayaks pick through charred ruins, heads bent down as we pass.

Some isolated shooting aside, things are quiet. The main square in the town of Sambas is all shuttered up, people are hanging around cautiously on corners, waiting and watching where only days before, men played football with the head of a Madurese settler.

Things are either returning to some form of normality or I am in the wrong place or perhaps the eye of the storm. Whichever the case, I appease my driver by having him head back to Singkawang, the smile back on his face and me with a snap of an ABRI machine-gunner and his monkey friend in the can.

A call from a Jakarta based friend and colleague wakes me from an eleven-hours-on-the-road-induced coma-esque sleep. Work out which way is up and head down for a beer and some info.

Assorted scribes and VDO people litter the Makhota's dining room like they are wont to do anywhere anything nasty is about to go down. Heads are craned between tables and the CNN box so that at a glance it is near impossible to tell who is sat at which table.

I glean the low-down from Richard, the London Independent's man and his Beeb colleague who have been here for few days already. The consensus is that the story is winding down, which in layman's terms means a dwindling body count, with many hacks set to head back South at daybreak.

But, as we sit, somewhere out there in the darkness, Dayaks roam the forests, Mandaos drawn, hunting down their human quarry like wolves, and a convoy of open trucks rumbles past streetlit emptiness outside, just visible through cheap cockroach eaten drapes, headed out of town to Pontianac. A military escort protects the Madurese refugees, packed to capacity, fear and unknowing masked by the same darkness that shrouds their flight.

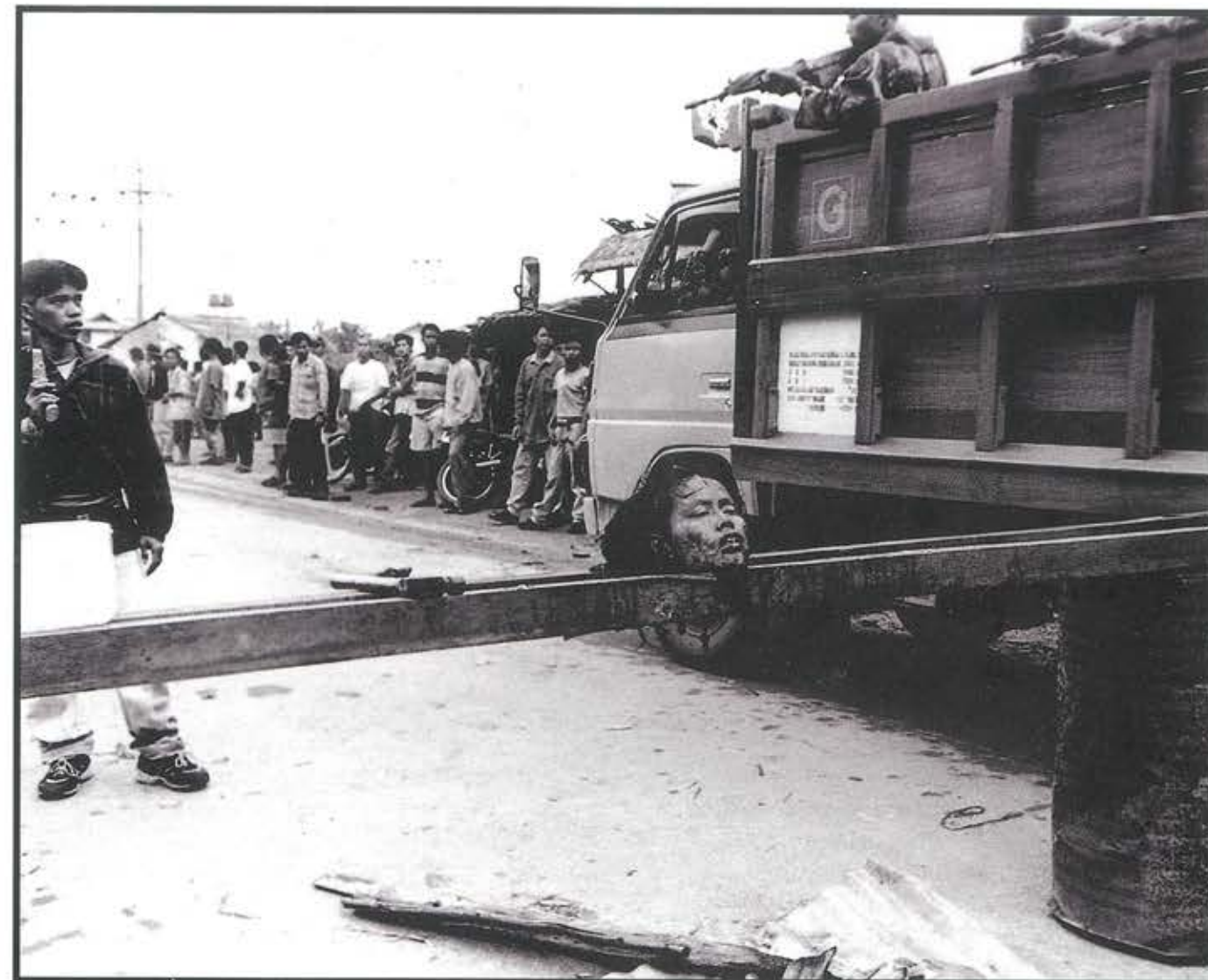
Sleep beckons. Early morning, take up an offer of a ride with Andy, Associated Press' Jakarta based cameraman. He has had enough of heads and leaves the directions to me.

We decide to head east. Untrodden paths. And the driver points the nose of the Kijang 4WD out of town.

We navigate a lazy ABRI checkpoint exchanging waves and putting Ks between us and Singkawang. Flat coastal tropics and hot paddy greens give no inkling of the horror that lies ahead.

We should have realised then and there that the day was to hold far more than our Kijang windscreened roadscapes as we approached a group of Dayak men on the road shoulder. Our car slows, moisture-corrugated, greying flesh following my gaze through the legs of the unlikely congregation and past the occasional dull glint of a long blade.

We roll to a stop. Doors swing open. Clammy heat embraces; its phantom hands all over you and the smell of dead meat pervades like those airborne scents on a department store perfumery floor, choking, clinging



Passing a Dayak road block.

to your skin and throat in a thin film as you pass through it, itching.

The focus of the gathering lies on its back, disembowelled and minus all appendages, flattening the roadside grass. An old man stands bent over it, a single 'evil' eye glaring distrustfully out from its sunken socket aside another, empty and closed, further satisfying his craving for blood by repeatedly skewering his 'Mandao' in and out of the lifeless chest cavity.

From the group, a 'warrior' comes forward like some nightmare-born Olympic torch bearer holding high a severed leg and tearing at the flaps of flesh with his perfect white teeth.

I try to still my hands, breath deeply to steady myself and trip the shutter on my camera.

We realight before things can become awkward and return to our removed-view through the Kijang's cinemascope glass as the road and its dark secrets unfold before us.

Carl Bock, the Norwegian naturalist, writes on the importance of the Mandao and its place in Dayak culture in his 1881 book, "The Head-Hunters of Borneo". The principle weapon is the Mandao, literally, "head-hunter", of which each Dayak has from four to six.

"It is a rule among all the tribes that no youth can

regularly wear a Mandao, or be married, or associate with the opposite sex, till he has been on one or more head-hunting expeditions.

"A Mandao is presented to him, probably at birth, or when he receives a name; but not till he has washed it in the blood of an enemy can he presume to carry it as part of his every-day equipment."

Five minutes further along the road, the severed heads of two Madurese men garnish a roadblock at the fork to Monterado, eyelids drawn shut blocking out the horror of their last moments for an eternity.

Men and almost-men-about-to-become-men gather like mobs do, long-barrelled, home-made muzzle-loaders shouldered or gripped, fingers tight around the neck of the stocks.

Strips of red cloth tied tight over serious brows, expressions that feign confidence that give the feeling of a people trying to come to grips with a practice that has become foreign to them with time passed and not understanding their conflicting emotions.

Mandao sheathed in their intricately carved wooden scabbards hang slung over shoulders on lengths of string and rope.

A steely eyed Dayak, demons dancing over breast, holds still as I appraise him. He offers himself for my

A warrior held up
a severed leg and tore
at the flaps of flesh
with his perfect
white teeth.



Disarmed Dayak men after the convoy attack.

lens with the confidence of a man whose status and respect in the community is unquestioned.

Fingers, long nails beautifully manicured, try to claw their way out of his jacket pocket like some wing-clipped bird yet to come to terms with its imprisonment.

Numbers swell constantly. Dayaks arriving piled high on minivans from miles around, squatting on roof-racks, gripping rifle barrels in both hands for balance as they draw to a stop at the fork and clamber down, enlarging the shadow already darkening the road.

Thoughts of an uninvited witness to this open mobilisation of 'head-hunters' return often to one's own nape. I imagine my own head severed and sat on a wooden beam, light rain washing splattered blood from my face in gentle rivulets.

It is clear that the Dayaks are massing for an onslaught on Singkawang. As our wheels roll east past more smouldering ruins, the flow of 'warriors' is constant to the west. Charcoaled frames sit in blackened patches of field, sick-sweet scents hanging occasional

and heavy in pockets that drift through our open windows and rape the nostrils.

Sheltering from the elements under a large umbrella we near, a man's head sits, eyes closed, smoking a cigarette.

To continue seems pointless and not without its trepidations. My biggest personal fear is for my film. The chances of Indonesian Military Intelligence Operatives taking offence at my presence and seizing it are very real.

With this in mind, coupled with the fact that the party is definitely starting at the fork where the Dayaks are massing, we decide to swing around and head back towards Singkawang.

Back at the hotel I stash my film and head downstairs

for a bite, although the menu seems even less appetising than the previous evening.

Carl Bock, *The Headhunters of Borneo*, 1881: "The barbarous practice of head-hunting, as carried on by all the Dayak tribes, is part and parcel of their religious rites. 'Births and 'namings', mar-

'The Dayak needs no other incentive to his murderous work than the example of his fellows.'

riages and burials cannot be properly celebrated unless the heads of a few enemies, more or less, have been secured to grace the festivities or solemnities.

"To the ordinary horrors of head-hunting – the simple murder of their victims for the sake of their heads as trophies – add the tenfold worse practices of cannibalism and offering of human sacrifices; not only killing their enemies according to the Dayak reading of the maxim "live and let live," – "kill or be killed," – but taking captive those that they do not put to the death and eat on the spot, and reserving them for slavery and ultimate death by torture.

"Every Dayak is a born warrior. From his earliest youth he is trained to the use of arms, and to take his part in the defence of his native home, and in raids on those of his neighbours. Not that "military service" is compulsory. The love of war, the desire to emulate his neighbour in deeds of valour, the anxiety to gain a reputation as a head-hunter, is innate, and the Dayak needs no other incentive to his murderous work than the example of his fellows."

Early afternoon, the morning's film safely hidden, I head back with a young freelancer stringing for AFP. Our driver this time is cursed with a rather unfortunate affliction under the circumstances, his clutch control in need of serious attention.

Each time we approach a roadblock, the car starts to lurch and jump about, and, refusing to change down a gear or two, our man employs his tried and trusted technique of pumping the clutch and accelerator in unison, giving anyone ahead the impression that we might at any stage be about to run the roadblock, taking whoever is in front of us along for the ride.

Dayak numbers at the fork continue to swell. We head on to the village of Monterado, passing yet more armed Dayaks headed to the fork and take a right to double back in a loop to the fork.

Along the way, several Dayaks decide to 'commandeer' the car and pile in for the ride, Mandaos tucked awkwardly at their sides.

At a rubber plantation we slow... men visible through the gaps between scarred trunks, blades in hand and more gathered ahead.

Two Indonesian soldiers turn to face our oncoming vehicle, hands out to block our lenses "No Foto!" and we roll past slowly... bloodied men with Mandaos drawn.

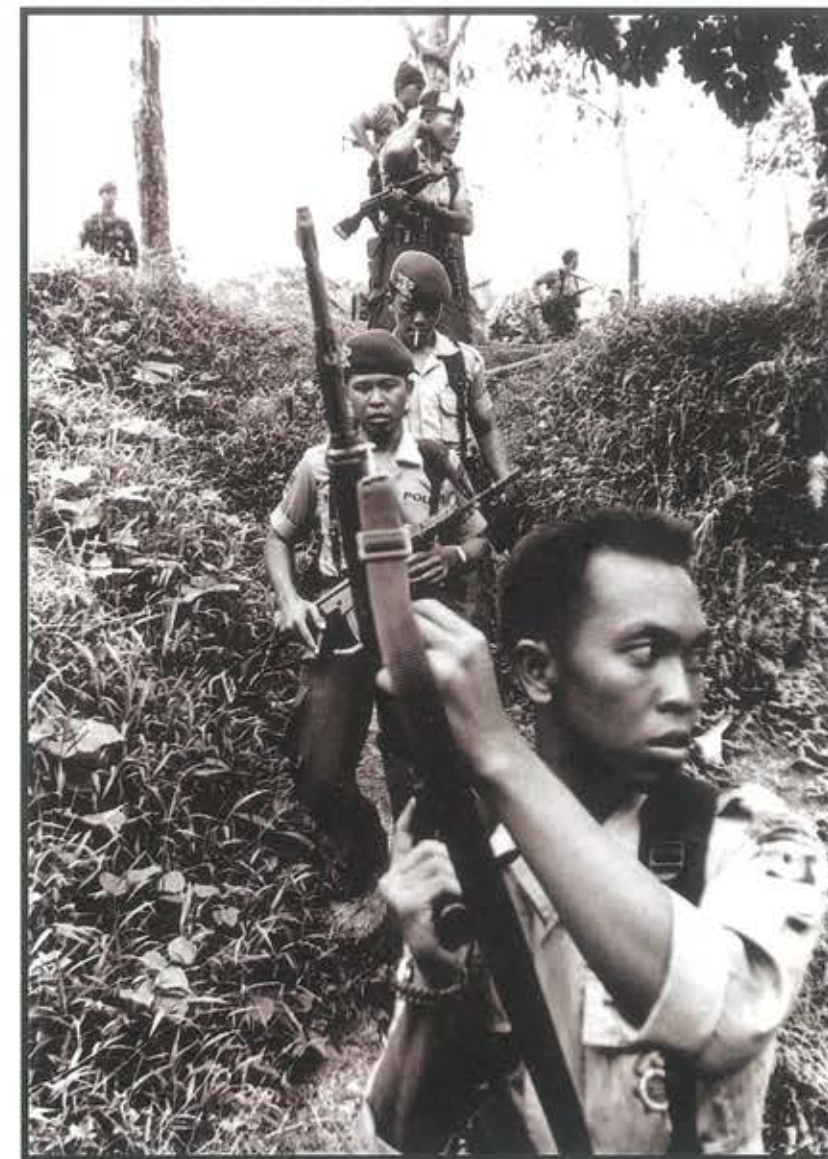
Another headless corpse, chest down and opened up along the spine for its liver, and a youth I photographed hours earlier wearing a spotless white Playboy T-shirt walks towards our moving vehicle, bloodied, hands dripping liquid-red-life down the hilt of his Mandaos.

Keep moving and roll slowly through the last checkpoint, snapping through the open window as we do, the fresh replacement head of their most recent victim, the Madurese flushed from his hiding-place in the forest by the gang of head-hunters we have just left behind.

The tension is mounting. It is just a matter of time before something happens. The trick is not to be in the wrong place when it does.

The atmosphere is not conducive to stopping for a chat and we keep rolling.

Not five minutes out and we pass an Indonesian troop convoy, thirteen or so trucks with twelve men a piece, automatic rifles at the ready and an Armoured Personnel Carrier with turret mounted 50 calibre machine gun at each end.



Troops and Military Police patrol the forest for hiding madurese.

Pull over and wait for them to pass. Following on their tale is the CNN crew from the night before that it transpires were asked to stay on.

A wave and a three-point turn further on where the road shoulders are wider sees us on the tail of the convoy over a hundred metres long moving in stops and starts towards the first Dayak checkpoint where it halts long enough for me to leg it to the fork as they start rolling again.

Soldiers and military police alike, faces in shadow. Apprehension descends like a cloud and where before moods were light and bodies stood relaxed with guns slung; now muscles tighten, furrows dig themselves in on brows and heads and rifles poke wearily from over the wooden truck-box sides as they pass....

The mood has swung severely. A Dayak comes at me protesting the presence of my camera. I manage to squeeze two frames from the waist as the troops come through before I am bundled off with a push and a shove.

Indonesian troops' faces register disbelief at the human gargoyle on the roadblock, as if it was the guardian of some unknown hell into which they are headed. And the convoy rolls through without to do, en-route to Monterado. Scores of armed Dayaks following on motorcycles.

On arrival in the Dayak village we stop, locals keeping their distances. By some miracle, half a dozen Madurese appear from a shop and are bundled and



Madurese escorted out of a Dayak-controlled area.

thrown, literally, into two of the trucks under the gaze of the Dayak community.

It transpires that they were half Madurese and the village chief had been able to protect them in spite of constant death threats to his own person.

With the rescued Madurese 'safely' on board we pull out again, stopping at the scene of the earlier killing at the rubber plantation where men alight and take to the forest with their automatic rifles to search for more survivors.

The convoy sits blocking the road. Nothing can pass bar the minutes that crawl sluggishly towards dusk.

All the time, more Dayaks are arriving at the end of the convoy brandishing their rifles and Mandaos, taking to chanting and raising the tension.

Standing between the Dayaks and the APC at the rear you can sense them trying to work themselves into a frenzy, all the while, the sinister black barrel of the 50 cal moving from left to right picking out targets, ready in case it's on.

The wait is a long one. Another of those occasions where you just have to sit and wait to see what fate has to deliver. The sun arcs low in the sky through charged air and the forest's evening perfumes spill over into the fading balmy night.

That five minute burst of neon tropic light that signals the end of the day and the coming of night arrives and fades away as the troops return and the convoy snakes its way towards the fork in the enveloping dusk.

As the lead vehicle reaches the fork, a wailing almost inhuman fills the air.

Shrill and piercing pure sounds broken by tongues. I spin my head to look at the Dayaks closest to me.... two women stood near the road, but their lips remain still. It takes little more than a second to realise that

the war-cry issues from the unseen and in that instant the shooting erupts.

Screams and shouts of Indonesian soldiers bellowing orders compete with volleys of semi and full automatic fire directed at both flanks of the convoy.

Out and running at a crouch to the front of the convoy I see several Dayaks running away, silhouetted on the high road, one in the rear looking like some awe-inspiring demon, half man half bird, the huge curved beak and wild plumes of his war-mask dominating the horizon.

The shooting continues, ABRI troops spinning around in the half light from inside their truck beds to fire at targets on our left flank, the sharp cracks of their rifles splitting the air above my head as I continue to the fork.

Four Dayaks lie dead, at a glance one seems to have fallen on his short knife, disembowelling himself in the process, another lies, neck skewed around dark and wet with his spilt blood where a bullet has punched its way through.

A soldier takes a knife off the body and throws it to one side, out of reach of even his spirit, should he have the strength to return.

Still, the pops of home-made muzzle-loaders mingle with the sharp cracks of the assault rifles and two soldiers emerge from a hut escorting a Dayak woman and child away from the melee while others round up Dayak men, shirts stripped from their backs, eyes of fear, wide and white, fingers splayed, terrified,

running at a crouch.

An Indonesian intelligence agent who had tried to corner me several hours earlier turns his attention to me, thrusting his video camera into my face and screaming a torrent of questions and abuse, his anger at his own impotence acting as a brutal catalyst for aggression and, still with shots being fired around us, he lands a flying kick square in my back as I turn to walk for the rear of the convoy.

Seeing this, a soldier comes forward and intervenes, leading me back along the convoy. The 'Intel' agent seems satisfied and I thank the soldier who gives me a conspiratorial grin and leaves me to walk.

From the rear of the convoy we can see thirty or so Dayak men suddenly running away towards the high road, white shirts in hand. For a split second I fear that some

of them are about to be executed, but the ensuing volleys of semi-automatic fire are aimed well above their heads and designed only to lend swiftness of foot and sharpness of mind to their flight.

Two Dayaks run down the convoy past our vehicle and get a boot in the backside from a soldier who obviously didn't take kindly to being shot at before. As suddenly as it began, the storm passes and the only sounds to be heard are those of truck engines as the convoy pulls away into the night, past a handful of Dayaks sat, consoling each other at the fork to Monterado.



One Dayak lies disembowelled on his short knife, another has blood dripping from the hole punched through his neck by a bullet.

Keeping Your Head Among Cannibals

I saw my sixth and seventh heads on Tuesday afternoon in a Dayak village an hour's drive from the town.

They were visible from a few hundred yards away, standing on oil drums on either side of the road, with a crowd of about 200 people milling around them. Most of the onlookers were men, but there were young women and children there too. "What do you want to do?" said the man who was accompanying us, a Dayak leader in his fifties. I said that I wanted to have a look.

We walked up towards them, past the warriors with their spears and red headbands and hunting rifles. Even in big cities in Indonesia, people shout greetings when a foreigner passes by, but these people looked at me with indifference. The heads had been taken just a few hours before, and they looked ... they looked like all the

other heads I had seen.

They were a middle-aged couple, a few years younger than my own parents. Their ears and lips had been shaved off with machetes, giving them a snarling, sub-human look. The wife's nose had also been removed, and a cigarette had been pressed into the cavity. Her eyes were clenched tight shut, and above them an atrocious wound had been cut deep into her forehead.

Why did I take photographs of the heads, knowing perfectly well that no newspaper could ever print them? Was it really in order to document the event and gather evidence? Or were there baser, more prurient motives?

I have never worked in such conditions before, and nor has anyone I know. The experience produces two contradictory reactions. The first is relief, along with secret pride, in finding oneself able

to confront horror without being overcome by fear or nausea. The second reaction takes the form of troubling questions, which nag at you at odd moments. Why am I not more upset by this? What is wrong with me? I don't know what to call such an emotion, but it is something close to shame.

Two years ago, when a similar war broke out between the Dayaks of Borneo and the hated settlers from the island of Madura, few people outside the island realised the scale of what had happened. I visited Borneo more than three months later, and spent a week searching for evidence of cannibalism and headhunting. I found several witnesses, some grisly photographs, and a few skeletons in the jungle, but not the proof that I secretly knew I was looking for.

Afterwards I wrote two long newspaper articles, and a thirty-page magazine account 20,000

words altogether, all about failing to find a severed head. In the past six days I have seen seven of them, along with a severed ear, two arms, numerous pieces of heart and liver, and a dismembered torso being cooked over a fire by the side of the road and I find myself at a loss over what to say. The most devastating thing about cannibalism and headhunting is not the fear and the blood, but the terrible, profound banality.

There were 2000 Madurese living in the area around the village of Monterado when the violence erupted after the murder of a Dayak boy last Tuesday. Along the coast, killings had been going on for a month, and more than ten thousand people were evacuated. But unlike those who lived close to the main road, there was little chance for the inlanders to evacuate, and their only choice was to flee into the jungle in the hope of reaching the town of Singkawang. This is one of the most isolated parts of Indonesia, but the narrow roads through it are thronging with

people, Dayak warriors gathered from scattered parts of West Kalimantan. Every couple of hundred yards you come across another road block or a patrol, and you have to slow down and hand out cigarettes, and reassure them that there are indeed no fleeing Madurese in this car.

An hour or so after seeing the heads, just after the human barbecue, we are waved down by a group of young warriors on the road. My Dayak friend is nervous. The local leaders and civil servants - Christians, like almost all their people - know that they have lost all control here, and are wary of squandering what little authority remains to them. A few minutes earlier, I found myself parting with a 10,000 rupiah bill (about 75p), a "loan" as it was called, to a tall young man carrying with a transparent bag of liver tied to his belt. Now, as our jeep slows, another warrior opens the door, smiles apologetically, and jumps into the back of our jeep. Great, I think, to myself. First, I gave a cannibal a

tip - now, I am giving them taxi rides.

Our cannibal is a teenager. He is shirtless, and wears neat denim jeans and worn trainers. In his hand he carries a sheathed mandau, a hacking machete, with a red-painted handle carved into the shape of a horse. It appears to be brand-new, the kind of thing you would buy from a tourist craft shop. When the Dayaks are on the trail of a flagging victim, they wail out "Whoo-woo-woo-woo-woo!" like Apaches in a western. My new friend looks like nothing so much as the participant in a giant game of Cowboys and Indians.

He is chattering with excitement about the things that he has seen and done. He tells us that the man whom they are cooking on the road was caught this morning. "We killed it and we ate it," he says, "because we hate the Madurese." He has taken part in four killings himself. "Mostly we shoot them first, and then we chop the body. It tastes just like chicken. Especially the liver - just the same as

chicken."

I tell him about the conversation I had earlier with a village head who saw the heads of six or seven children, including two babies, but he shakes his head and laughs. "We don't kill babies! If we find a baby we give to other people. In fact we found a kid and a baby and we saved them."

"How old does someone have to be before you will kill them?" I ask.

"Around 13 or 15," he says. "Why do you kill them? Why don't you just send them all away?"

"Because we hate them." Twenty minutes down the road, he gets out at his village. He is bubbly grateful. We have saved him a long walk at the end of a long, exciting day. A bit later on, the driver, a garrulous Christian from the island of Flores, who has lived around here for years and seems to know everyone, speaks up. "You know I've been all over this country - to Sumatra, to Java,

See CANNIBALS, page 33



RICHARD LLOYD PARRY is the Tokyo correspondent of *The Independent*.

Sex Critic



Respected and reviled, Bernard Trink is almost certainly Bangkok's most controversial columnist. His Nite Owl column, which has appeared weekly for more than thirty years, has ruffled feathers with its detailed reviews of the seedy side of Bangkok night life. A self-proclaimed authority on prostitution in Thailand, Mr. Trink recently chatted with Mick Elmore in the smoking room of the Bangkok Post.

Where was your first newspaper job?

In Hong Kong at the South China Morning Post, where I worked as a proof reader. Then I went to Japan where I worked for the English-language Yomiuri and Mainichi. I reviewed movies and had various girlfriends, some Japanese in Japan and others along the way. One was my wife, a student whom I left in Bangkok in '62. Eventually she came to Japan and we got married. I was in Japan for about three years when my wife became pregnant, so we came back to Thailand to have the baby near her family.

Where did you look for work in Thailand?

I went to the Bangkok World in 1965 with a scrapbook of movie reviews from Tokyo and showed them to Darryl Barrigan, the owner, who said: "Alright you're the entertainment editor of the Bangkok World." I'm still the entertainment editor [although the paper is now called The Bangkok Post].

When did the column start?

In early 1966 Barrigan said that before they cancelled a terrible column on night life, called the Night Owl, I should try my hand at it. I told Barrigan I wasn't a barfly (I don't drink much and wouldn't fit in with the stereotype Scotch drinkers).

When did you first sign off the column with "I don't give a hoot"?

The second piece I wrote. I visited a fire station in Phra Khlanong which had a tower where a fireman would stay all night to watch for fires. I spent a night in the tower for my second piece.

What was your first column about?

I visited the abattoir where they kill pigs. That was the think piece, the start of the column. Then I went around the night clubs: Cafe Dupree and Sonny's Chateau.

You always focused on bars?

The general manager of the Oriental Hotel, Albert Ursula, suggested I write more about bars. He took me to the sleaziest bars imaginable in Khlong Toey. The bar girls were, on average, 13 years old. Two things struck me: The girls were 13 years old and they were much more experienced than me. I was 35.

What happened in the bar?

You went in and they were squeezing and rubbing their bodies all over you. They were ready to go. I realized there was more to bars than drinking.

Where were the bars?

Patpong was an ordinary business street and the main bars on Ratchadamnoen were strictly Thai. All the action was on New Road and in Chinatown. Seven floor high opium dens were being converted to brothels since there was a law against opium. They had catwalks above so you could look down into each crib to see what was happening.

How did you report on a brothel?

I went to the staff. The mamasan, cashiers, the girls, bus boys and that's what I'd write about. Bar owners weren't too happy.

When did you first visit a brothel?

I had been to India and I can tell you Bombay has more brothels than Bangkok. Rooms were separated with a flimsy curtain and you could see very clearly what was happening. At that time I began to realise prostitution is a big thing and started to visit the brothels. The thing I didn't like about it was the girls couldn't leave. I mean they were sex slaves. You didn't see them crying

and beating on the door to get out but they couldn't leave. That upset me. If you're screwing a girl at least she should have the right to walk out if she wants.

What is an acceptable age for prostitution?

I always thought at 16 they were developed and it was acceptable but you realise in Thailand they have all the equipment but the brain is not old enough to make that decision. I never went in for 13 year olds. I'll go along with the government and say 18.

When did Go-Go dancing start in Bangkok?

The manager of Cafe Dupree on Suriwongse road, a Dutchman called Jan Lienders, introduced Go-Go

dancing in 1967. He pasted feathers on the girls and while they danced in cages he turned on this giant fan. The punch line, of course, was that the show finished when there were no feathers left.

Did your work have impact?

I had a photographer take pictures of Go-Go dancers in each bar and the readers would pull these girls after my column came out with their photos.

What do you mean by "pull" girls?

After they saw the girl's picture they would take her out and screw her. That's pull. Of course the paper got letters saying things like: "Oh, how can you have such immoral talents".

People say your writing promotes prostitution.

Prostitution was here long before I came and it will be here long after I'm gone. Not writing about it isn't going to make it go away. I'm not judgmental. I don't preach at the girls. If you chose to be a prostitute I'll write about it.

Isn't recommending a prostitute different from a movie review?

People who never visit massage parlors won't benefit by being told which number is better than another number. But I don't want to see the people who do visit them cheated. Your movie analogy is good. Some movies are very well worth seeing and some are garbage.

What are your main accomplishments?

Making readers realise that bar girls, contrary to stereotype, are not forced into prostitution. They choose to work in bars because they figured it was easy and they could leave whenever they wanted. Bar girls don't send their money home.

Mom sees about two per cent of their salary, they spend the other 98 per cent on themselves. I also tell



readers what bar girls are really like. I mean screw them but don't marry them. You can marry but you cannot reform.

Does it bother you that if people talk with you it will probably be about the sex industry?

I am an authority – if not THE authority – on prostitution in Thailand. It didn't happen overnight. It came from thirty years of making the rounds, writing and reading about it. It feels good, but in a better sense, it's deserved.

WILLIAM TELL

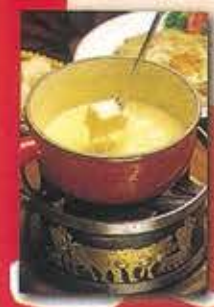
Swiss Restaurant



- ✦ Swiss Cheese Fondue
- ✦ Raclette Rustic Style
- ✦ Chocolate Fondue
- ✦ Chateaubriand

Weekly special set menu & Thai food also served

Nice garden seating
Open daily : 11.30 am - 11.30 pm
Tel: 258-1516



19/1 Sukhumvit Soi 20
Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok 10110
[300 metres from main road]
Website: www.william-tell.com
For driver: 0-2022-88888 20
เบอร์โทร 02-258-1516

Prime location for sale or rent

Very special offer for sale/rent at prime location.

... a must see!

- Town house in Sukhumvit Soi 39 with 24 hrs security, calm and peaceful location with swimming pool, direct telephone line, semi-furnished and ready to move in.
- House-cum-Office on main Sukhumvit Road near Soi 62. Located next to Expressway. Semi-furnished with direct telephone line.

For more in formation, please call Mr. Somsak
Tel: 253 2993, 253 6069



MICK ELMORE is a Bangkok-based journalist.

Gray Matters



Denis Gray and Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai celebrate the Associated Press' 150th birthday.

Denis Gray, dean of Bangkok journalists, was a refugee at age seven when his father fled the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia and roamed the world with his family.

After attending Yale University he entered an Army ROTC program and completed a masters degree in international relations at George Washington University.

To honor his obligation to the US Military, he was shipped off to Japan, where he first fell in love with Asia. He extended the tour for a year, but instead of Japan, the Army sent him to Vietnam.

In Vietnam, Gray was with a military intelligence unit which saw duty in I-Corps, the Central Highlands, Saigon, and the Cambodian border.

Gray also met journalist Kevin Buckley of Newsweek in Saigon and decided to try journalism when he got back home.

But Gray couldn't find journalism work for almost a year.

"Then I went to AP in New York City and applied for a job. I had never written one line of journalism and they asked me to start writing news stories on a typewriter that didn't even work properly."

A few weeks later AP hired him to work in Albany, where Gray stayed for just thirteen months.

"By a stroke of luck AP was looking for volunteers to go to Indochina," Gray said. "A few people

had been wounded and they expected Phnom Penh to fall soon after the American bombing shield stopped. I went from covering high school basketball in Albany to forty-eight hours later covering a grenade attack in Phnom Penh."

The AP Bureau chief in Saigon at that time was George Esper whom Gray calls a mentor and second father.

When the Indochina War wound down, Denis was shipped to Bonn because he spoke German.

"I was ready to commit suicide," he says. "When the final days were coming for all these places in Indochina. I asked George Esper if he needed some help, and he saved me. The only place I actually saw fall was Vientiane."

"I really thought about quitting by chance the bureau chief here, Richard Blystone (now with CNN), wanted to go to Europe so I got a chance to

work for AP here in Bangkok. So for the third time in my career I was quite lucky: first to get the job; second to be rescued from Albany; and third to get rescued from Bonn."

On the Khmer Rouge: "One reason many of the people working for us died was they just didn't believe the Khmer Rouge could be that horrible. We offered to evacuate them two weeks before Phnom Penh fell, but no one wanted to go. I remember them saying: 'It might be a little bit rough, but after all, we are

all Cambodians.' It was the opposite of Vietnam where everyone wanted to get out, but there wasn't a bloodbath."

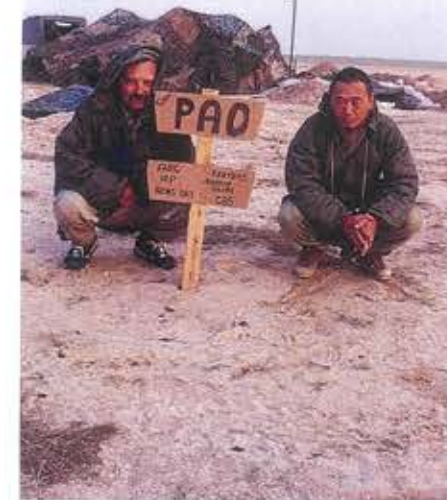
On good journalists: "The really good journalists I've known combine good professionalism along with a wonderful human." Gray cites Neil Davis and George Esper those he admires.

On Sydney Schanberg: "I didn't like him at all in Cambodia. He was much the same way he was portrayed in the movie: arrogant, and he thought only he and The New York Times knew the truth. I also thought that some of his reporting was way off-base. I just didn't like the guy. But in the few times I've seen him since, and having read his stuff about Cambodia, I really realize there is quite a bit of depth to him, and there is a great deal of human kindness in him as well. So I would have to put him on my list of good guys even though at the time I thought he was a bit of a shit."

Contemporary journalists he admires: "Nate Thayer and our bureau chief in Phnom Penh, Robin McDowell. They both are aggressive and they go after stories doggedly."

What to look for in hiring a Thai journalist: "They have to realize that most people in the world don't know where Nakhon Ratchasima is, or who the Thai prime minister is. So we need someone with a broader vision that goes beyond the Thai borders, and sometimes that is difficult to get across to Thai journalists who have always worked here and grown up here."

On his two hour interview with His Majesty the King of Thailand in 1985: "What impressed me most



Gray in the field.

about him was his total frankness. We talked about everything, including his brother, and he also talked about how when he first became king how little power he actually had. People forget that when he first came back to this country he was almost treated shabbily."

Denis is now working on a book about his personal recollections, from the fall of Marcos, to covering the tragic plight of the boat people, the death of Emperor Hirohito, six Asian Games, the Winter Olympics, Somalia, Rwanda, and the Gulf War.

The Best in Bangkok Book 1999

Thailand's Premier Discount Membership Program

"The Best in Bangkok Book 1999 is value for your money."

- Bangkok Post

OVER 100,000 BAHT IN SAVINGS!

Special FCCT Price 499 BAHT*

[Regular price 599 BAHT]

BEGIN USING YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD AND COUPONS TODAY AND RECEIVE INCREDIBLE SAVINGS IN FINE & CASUAL DINING PUBS, CLUBS & LOUNGES ENTERTAINMENT & ACTIVITIES FITNESS & BODY CARE

...and much, much more!

***Special Price only at the FCCT Clubhouse or contact us:**
The Best in Bangkok Book Co., Ltd. Tel: 662 268-1197
Fax: 662 267-7706 info@bestinbangkok.com



SCOTT MURRAY is a Bangkok-based journalist.



Boy and Grandmother, Nepal



Brahmin Child, Nepal



Tour Guide,
Myanmar



MICHON SEMON is a
Bangkok-based
photographer.



Teacher's Son, Nepal



At Prayer, Nepal



Tribal Woman,
Thailand

On show at the club through July, the exhibition "Portraits of Asia" includes hand-tinted photographs from Burma, Thailand and Nepal.

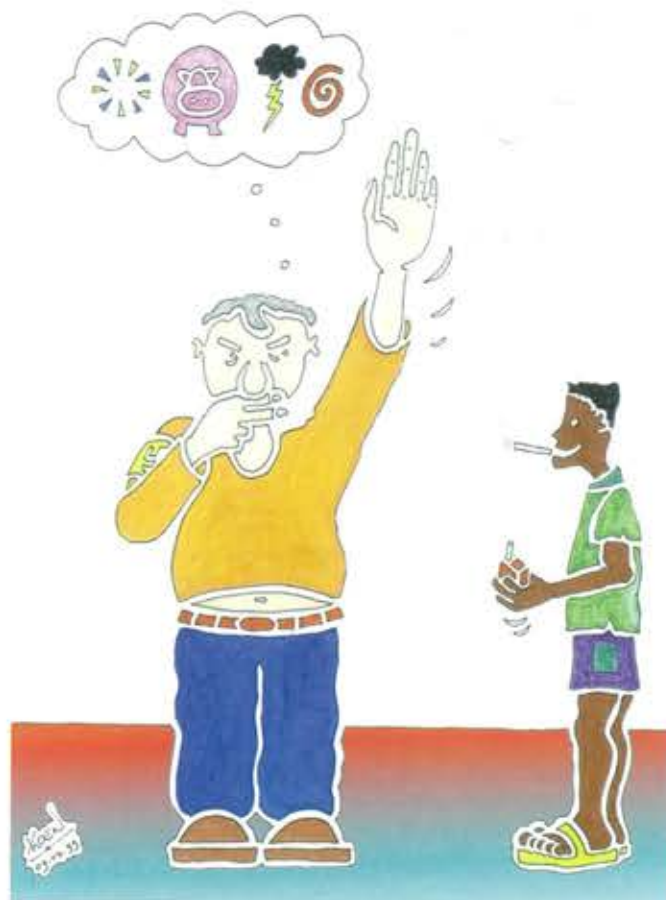
Stephff's Crisis



STEPHFF is a Bangkok-based self-syndicated cartoonist.



The Hack Stops Here



I hate Health Nazis. They wear silly bicycle helmets and spandex uniforms. They jog and eat vegetables and go on treadmills and yearn to exterminate smokers – inferior race! – for polluting their pure Aryan air.

We smokers are tolerated in Thailand, Land of the Free, but in bastions of fascism like California, tobacco lepers are banished even from bars. Soon we'll all be herded into ghettos and forced to wear tobacco-leaf armbands.

We're not even safe here. Once, in the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand, I was accosted by a female American stormtrooper:

"Would you mind not smoking?" she demanded. "I'm allergic to cigarette smoke."

"That's terrible," I replied solicitously. "What are the symptoms? Do you break out in hives?"

I should have blown smoke in her face but that would have been rude. The great thing about smokers is that we are tolerant of those who don't. Explaining the pleasures of nicotine to someone who has never tried a cigarette is like explaining sex to a eunuch. What's the point?

"Nicotine is a drug," writer Fran Leibowitz once explained. "People like drugs. That's why they use them."

So why am I giving up cigarettes?
I'll get around to that. First let me take a smoke break.

Ah, that's better. Nothing like coffee and a cigarette to stimulate the typing fingers. It's three in the afternoon, December 29th, and I have three more days before I stop smoking forever.

I'll be breaking a 36-year-old habit. I started at sixteen, along with the other guys on my Brooklyn street corner, but really got into it two years later. In the summer of 1965, I was an 18-year-old Catholic seminarian working in a civil rights campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. The priest we worked for paid us no salary but we did get room and board, all the Budweiser we could drink and all the Camels we could smoke. Unfiltered Camels – top-ranked for tar and nicotine! – were my brand for the next decade. I was such a tough guy purist that whenever I bummed a Marlboro or a Winston, I'd disdainfully pinch off the filter. I'll take my poison straight, thank you.

As a Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone, West Africa, I switched for a while to a local brand called Hollywood. A pack cost twelve cents. The cigarettes contained roots and stems and would occasionally flare up in your face. Hollywoods also turned your teeth a uniform, fetching shade of brown. I decided there was such a thing as being too tough a guy.

Heavy smoking caught up with me in Brazil. My Brazilian friends were wired all day to an insanely strong caffeine-nicotine buzz. I complained to a laid back American doctor about heart palpitations. "Hey," he replied. "Maybe cigarettes are just not your drug."

I discovered a controlled environment in which to quit. I joined a friend on a sailboat in the Philippines and when we upped anchor in Manila for an 1,200-mile voyage to Singapore, I didn't bring along any cigarettes. I was cured! I uncured myself in Singapore.

In Thailand, I smoked Krong Thips, which is like gargling with razor blades. When I had more money, I switched to Dunhills. I still suffered palpitations, though, and my Thai doctor in Songkhla sternly ordered me off cigarettes. Like a good Thai, I compromised.

Oddly enough, I don't even like the taste of a cigarette unless combined with coffee or beer. So I gave up coffee. This kept me smoke-free during the daylight hours. Then I cut back my beer-drinking to the weekend. Now my routine was to abstain from cigarettes totally from Monday till Friday afternoon when I'd plunge my muzzle into my first mug of beer and light up my first cigarette. This was the high point of my week, surrendering to that most sublime of pleasures: a cold beer followed by a hot smoke, the quintessential yin-and-yang pleasure principle. I drank and smoked bliss.

Each weekend, I'd go through two or three packs of cigarettes but on Monday morning I'd quit again. This was having my cake and eating it. For fifteen years in Songkhla, I got away with this happy routine of binge and spew. It was a healthy life too: daily walks on the beach, spearfishing, volleyball, running the Hash, taking my kids swimming. . .

Then I moved to Bangkok.

Ah, the Big Mango! That giant speeding heaving swarming pulsating roaring omnivorous beast of a metropolis and in the middle of it me, Big City Journalist – Associate Editor of *Manager Magazine* – prowling the streets in search of stories, scrambling for interviews, pumped up on stress, racing deadlines, zoom-

ing up tall buildings, weaving through traffic jams, breathing in the intoxicating fumes of urban exhaust. I was also popping cigarettes into my gob as fast as I could shake them out of the pack.

For five years, I lived in a seedy flophouse in Banglampoo whose beer garden was crammed each night with reporters, photographers, teachers, grad students and drunks. At the Manager office on Tanom Phra Athit, we all smoked. It was life in the fast lane.

Life got even faster when the baht crashed in July 1997.

Manager folded and the flophouse emptied. I sought refuge in Phuket as editor of the local English language newspaper. The publisher was a neatness freak so I was reduced to sneaking cigarettes out in the carport. This did serve to cut down on my addiction.

Then in March 1998, I moved to Cambodia and the Phnom Penh Post. The newsroom here was a shambles of mismatched tables, chairs, computers; shelves overflowed with discarded photos and yellowing newspapers; wise-ass comments were taped to the walls. And everyone had a cigarette in their mouths. For eight months – throughout the hectic election campaign, tumultuous street marches, park occupations, demonstrations, counter-demonstrations, counter-counter-demonstrations, violent police crackdowns and political stalemate – we lived life on the edge, pulling all-nighters and putting out special editions of the newspaper. We smoked a lot.

Then suddenly I'm back home in Thailand, jobless again, with a wife and four kids to feed. To economize, I gave up drinking. This was easy. I've done it dozens of times before. But what if I gave up smoking too? Several familiar reasons:

– My mother and grandfather died of lung cancer.

– We have a cousin from Songkhla staying with us who lies around coughing and gasping for breath and whose lung X-rays look like the Black Hole of Calcutta.

– My own chest pains and racking smoker's cough make seeing my kids through college a dubious proposition.

– I'm spending B2000 a month on a habit that I don't particularly enjoy now that I'm not drinking beer. If I'm not going to give up cigarettes now, when will I ever?

But what finally tipped the scales for me was small item in *Newsweek*. "Clearing the Smoke" stated that if I gave up smoking on January 1, 1999, my oxygen and carbon monoxide levels would return to normal in two days. A year later, my lung functions would increase by 30% and my heart attack risk drop by half. Five years later, my chances of lung cancer would fall by half too. After ten years, on January 1, 2009, when I would be 63, my precancerous cells would be replaced and I'd be at no more risk of cancer than a non-smoker. Ditto for a heart attack by 2014.

There I would be, aged 67, with the lungs and heart of a non-smoker! Of course, my liver would be shot by then, but what the hell. The idea is that I would be alive to see my three daughters and son at the ages of 36, 34, 26 and 24. By this time they will all be highly educated and well-married and in a position to support dear old Dad in a comfortable and riotously expensive old age. I decided to give them their chance.

So on January 1, 1999, I stop smoking. I've al-

ready put the process in motion, buttonholing all my friends and bragging about how I shall conquer the Devil Weed. Stomp that sucker flat!

Now all I have to do is do it.

On New Year's Day, I awoke in my bed in Prachinburi, skewered by a deadly hangover, and felt that I would never drink again, or smoke, or breathe. The night before, I had gone on a cheapo Chang beer binge with my wife and her friends, watching as our mob of kids ran wild to disco. Now I reached for the only medicine that would get me through the day: a good novel. *A Suitable Boy* is Vikram Seth's 1,350 page epic of courtship and political intrigue in 1951's India. This is where I would live for the next three days as I suffered nicotine withdrawal.

The symptoms of a nicotine fit are as difficult to describe as female orgasm. So I'm at a bit of a disadvantage here. There is a slight tightening of the throat muscles, an emptiness in the solar plexus region, a twitching of the lips in search of oral gratification. This latter need can be alleviated by sucking on lemon drops. Otherwise you're on your own.

Some smoke junkies depend on valium and nicotine gum and skin patches. Not me. My Catholic heritage dictated cold turkey. I was guided by two Catholic precepts: 1) the Mortification of Flesh and 2) the Primacy of the Will. You must suffer for your smoking sins – all 36 years of them. – through a process of Mortification of the Flesh. You are able to endure this because of the Primacy of Will. The decision has already been made: you can never smoke again. So stop thinking about it.

I stayed in bed for three days, only getting up when my daughters would summon me for meals. Food began to taste better. I ate slowly. There was no reason to rush for that post-prandial cigarette.

On the third day, Sunday, I arose and got dressed. My wife drove me to the station for my late afternoon train to Bangkok. I was almost cured now: the nicotine was gone from my blood. All I would have to fight now was its memory.

I had chosen a bad time to travel. The train was packed solid with people returning to Bangkok from their four-day holiday. I couldn't even squeeze into a carriage, jammed into the bathroom corridor instead.

Hawking cold drinks and peanuts and roast pork and fried chicken and sticky rice were beefy female vendors who manhandled their way past me. Why is it that all these women are five feet tall and four feet wide? Many a hoof crushed my foot. Pain, stress, boredom made me yearn for a cigarette. I banished the thought.

The crowd only began to thin out when we reached the outskirts of Bangkok. The punk kid next to me let out a sigh of relief and lit a cigarette. Poison! Filth! Degeneracy! Polluting my air! Breaking the law!

My face curled into a murderous scowl. My fingers twitched to wrap themselves around the punk's throat. I raged to haul him off to the nearest gestapo: *Sieg heil!*



JAMES ECKARDT is an Editor-At-Large at Scand-Media Corp. Ltd.

Jet Lag is better



A group of scientists in the United States now asserts that jet lag is an avoidable condition. A test by this reporter on a recent flight from New York to Bangkok validated their technique, but most travellers will find the cure worse than the disease.

Their jet lag therapy requires alternately strapping a set of wide spectrum lights onto your forehead, donning 1970's-style sunglasses and spending select moments behind a light-proof eyeshade.

They claim flawless execution of their instructions allows intercontinental travellers to slip across timezones feeling few ill-effects.

While many nostrums for jet lag have been touted over the years – including bizarre diets and high-tech hormone pills – few methods have the backing of as many scientists as the light exposure and deprivation method developed by researchers at the US National Institute of Mental Health.

Travellers properly exposed to light, the scientists claim, can adjust their body's internal clock to a twelve hour time change in just three days – nine days faster than the average untreated subject.

Instructions in their book, *How to Beat Jet Lag*, vary according to the direction of travel and number of time zones crossed. The scientific basis of their theory is that the body's internal clock, controlled by light, can be nudged forwards or backwards with carefully timed exposure to light and dark.

Light exposure after 3am, the scientists say, pushes the body's clock backwards, while exposure just be-

fore 3am sends it forward. Since adjustments can only be made incrementally, changes over many time zones takes a few of days to accomplish. Sticking closely to the book's instructions is essential since badly timed light exposure can actually worsen jet lag's symptoms. My flight left New York's John F. Kennedy airport in the afternoon, during the light exposure phase.

This meant staring out the window at clouds until a Macauley Culkin film began and the pushy Northwest Airlines hostess insisted I pull down the window shade. With shades drawn and cabin lights dimmed, it was time to don the light visor, an odd looking apparatus that straps onto your forehead and shines two 3000 lux full-spectrum lights into your eyes – the equivalent light of a sunny day.

The visor resembles a pregnant 1950s newsroom eyeshade, and is not recommended for the fashion conscious. One passenger inquired which low budget villain of science fiction had worn the visor.

To the wearer, however, the light visor is fairly comfortable and does not interfere with either reading or walking around the aircraft. The rechargeable battery pack slips easily into a pocket.

It would be easy to forget about, in fact, if not for the odd looks and questions from fellow passengers. While most passengers slept, I faithfully obeyed the instructions: Exercise vigorously to stay awake.

Soon after being informed of a little-known airline policy against passengers doing sit-ups in front of an emergency exit, I resorted to walking up and down the aircraft aisle. Nobody else onboard was wearing an anti jet lag visor.

One hour before the flight arrived in Tokyo, at 3am New York time, the light deprivation phase began. This meant putting on a light-proof eyeshade while seated, or donning a pair of oversized Sophia Loren-style sunglasses. After twenty-three hours of sleep deprivation, several glasses of inflight cognac and a desire to avoid further conflict with the air hostess, sleep came easily.

On arrival at Tokyo's Narita airport to change aircraft, however, slipping past security guards while wearing the extra dark wrap-around sunglasses was a little more difficult.

For the entire final leg of the journey, Tokyo to Bangkok, I slept behind the eyeshade. By the time I arrived in Bangkok, most of the jet lag treatment was already over.

For two days following the trip I exposed myself to light each afternoon – with natural sunlight or the light visor – and went to sleep fairly early. Otherwise, for meals and getting up in the morning, I kept a lifestyle in line with local hours.

Following all the instructions to the word, this jet lag susceptible traveler managed to cross eleven time zones, suffering nothing little more than in-flight embarrassment and the mild wrath of an ill-tempered air hostess.

How to Beat Jet Lag, US\$14.95, is published by Henry Holt and Company, 1993. Several companies sell jet lag light visors, including the SunBox Company of Gaithersburg, Maryland.

The odd-looking apparatus shines 3000 lux in your eyes.

THOMAS CRAMPTON (pictured above) is a Bangkok-based correspondent for the *International Herald Tribune*.

Cannibals (continued from page 21)

all over eastern Indonesia," he says, "and these people – they're the nicest, the friendliest, the best. There's no one like them."

He is perfectly serious, and what he says is true. There can't be any doubt that this is evil in its most bestial form, a twentieth-century heart of darkness. But these are not evil people, and this is not an evil place.

Borneo is the world's second biggest island. It is a rich equatorial land of forests, gold mines and plantations, but the people who live here are poor. The Dayaks are its original inhabitants, a scattered collection of different tribes who have lived in Borneo for thousands of years, dwelling in communal long houses, practising a form of animism, and surviving by hunting, and by slash and burn agriculture. Dayak warriors increased their prestige, and brought good luck to their villages, by collecting the heads of rival tribes in highly ritualised, set piece raids. Certain of the victims' organs, including the heart, brains and blood, were believed to bestow potency on those who consumed them, and the heads were preserved and worshipped in elaborate rituals.

Borneo's coastal areas are dominated by Muslim people called Malays, although the majority of them are ethnic Dayaks whose conversion to Islam began in the 15th century. Over the centuries, and in especially in the twentieth, other races have settled to form sizeable communities from all over the vast Republic of Indonesia – Chinese, Javanese, Sundanese, and Bugis from the island of Sulawesi. Then there are the Madurese.

What is it about the Madurese?

They come from a small, dry, barren island off the east coast of Java and all over Borneo, indeed throughout Indonesia, they are frankly reviled. Two beliefs in particular are almost universal. The first is that Madurese women, for reasons too technical to decently explain here, are exceptionally gifted lovers. The second is that the Madurese character makes them impossible to live with. According to this view, they are clannish, aggressive, and predatory.

By tradition, Madurese men carry curved rice sickles, called cilurit, which they use at the slightest provocation. "They cannot exist peacefully alongside other people," a Chinese friend said to me this week. "Chinese, Malays, Dayaks – we can get on together. But Madurese just love to fight and steal." Hearing this often enough, you begin to believe it. But it also sounds unpleasantly like the kind of consensus that has built up at various times about Romany gypsies, or about Jews.

I have never got to know a Madurese – for obvious reasons it is impossible here now. But Borneo's other people, like most Indonesians, are indeed kind and welcoming people about whom it is impossible to feel resentful or cynical. All over the island, and for decades, mining and plantation companies from Jakarta have seized land which for thousands of years they have regarded as their own – under Indonesian law, any land for which there is no written title belongs by default to the government.

The Indonesian word which you hear over and over again is "adat", usually translated as "traditional law". It is adat which is violated when somebody steals durians from the tree that has always belonged to your ancestors, or waves a sickle at you when you remonstrate with him. "In the eyes of Dayaks," a Catholic Dayak teacher said, "when people do not respect our adat, they become enemies, and we don't consider our enemies to be human anymore. They become animals in our eyes. And the Dayaks eat animals."

But who would do this kind of thing, even to an animal? Decapitation and cannibalism are deeply symbolic practices, the ultimate humiliation of a defeated enemy. Cut someone's head off and you reduce him to a lump of meat and a pantomime mask. This is the point about severed heads – they don't look fearful, so much as comical, like Halloween pumpkins or fairground gonks.

After dropping off my cannibal, I drove back to the town's hotel where a small number of journalists were gathered in the bar – cameramen who had spent the day taking pictures which will never be printed, and reporters with note books full of events which they will never properly be able to explain.

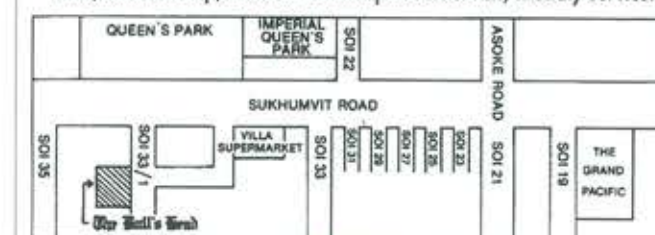


The Bull's Head
Pub &
Restaurant
Sukhumvit
Soi 33/1
Tel 259 4444

* REGULAR FEATURES *

Last Friday of the month 95.5 DJ Paul Jackson playing sounds from the 70's and 80's. Sundays 5-7 pm our legendary happy hour "Toss the Boss".

Second Tuesday of the month Quiz night with Rodney Bain, teams of four. Everyday - great atmosphere, good traditional homemade food, beers on tap, sounds from the jukebox & fast, friendly service.



www.greatbritish-pub.com

Creative design

ADVERTISING • DIRECT MAIL
BROCHURES • ANNUAL REPORTS
LOGOS & CORPORATE IDENTITY



Zoom International

MARKETING • ADVERTISING • DESIGN
TEL: 02-661 4467 • FAX: 02-661 4468
e-mail: zoom@loxinfo.co.th

Are YOU a Foreign Correspondent?

Find out instantly, with this handy test.

- Which Bangkok monument is ringed with 75 antique cannons?
- The enshrined images of which two Hindu gods flank Bangkok's "World Trade Center" shopping mall?
- Who dug Bangkok's Saen Saep canal?
- Which western country signed the first trade treaty with Thailand?
- The devil deity Rahu is worshipped by the wife of which former Prime Minister?
- Which senior politician's mother sells fermented shrimp at a market stall?
- What is the meaning of does the name QANTAS stand for?
- What is the capital of Tasmania?
- How many stars are there on Australia's flag?
- What was the name of the last Portuguese colony in India?
- Who is the British Foreign Secretary?
- What former Bangkok World hack recently lost his job at CNN?
- What did Christopher Moore call the Thermae Coffee Shop in A Killing Smile?
- What is the name of the annual Thai-American military exercises?
- How many nations are there in NATO?
- When was SEATO disbanded?
- How many provinces are there in Thailand?
- When the Royal Thai Government decided to plant trees what was the tree of choice?
- What are telephone poles made from in Thailand?
- What film actor recently died at age 61 in Malta?
- What Thai province has the highest number of malaria cases?
- Surin and Lop Buri are known for what animals?
- What has been another name for Thai baht?
- The Reverend Jesse Jackson arranged the release of how many US Army captives from Yugoslavia?
- Who was the Saudi co-commander of the 31 nation coalition forces in Desert Shield/Desert Storm?
- In what Bangkok hospital does Starbucks sell gourmet coffee?
- Where was the first department store in Thailand situated?
- AUA teaches English to Thais and Thai to farangs. On what street is it located?

Name the publications associated with the following promotions, slogans or phrases:

- Tomorrow's Newspaper.
- To report accurately and fairly the affairs of Asia in all spheres of human activity, to see the world from an Asian perspective, to be Asia's voice in the world.
- For several of our overseas contributors, one sentence can lead to another.
- "To avoid intoxication is the way to auspiciousness."
- Balanced news, fearless views
- The future is ours

Your Career (According to Correct Responses)

- 25-33 Quiz show winner - You're really smart, but probably don't have much social life.
- 10-24 Doctor, Lawyer, Broker, etc - You could qualify for one of the paying professions.
- 1-9 "expert" or "analyst" - You are clearly qualified to be quoted widely in leading international publications.
- Zero You are well suited for a career as Foreign Correspondent, swanning the globe on a limitless expense account. (A knowing nod is worth more than knowledge.)

1) The Democracy Monument, 2) Brahma and Ganesh, 3) Lao POWs, 4) 1833 US Treaty of Amity and Commerce, 5) Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, 6) Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, 7) Queensland and Northern Territory Air Service, 8) Hobart, 9) Six, one for each state, 10) Goa, 11) Robin Cook, 12) Peter Arnett, 13) Headquarters, 14) Cobra Gold, 15) 19, 16) 1976, 17) 76, 18) Gum or eucalyptus, 19) Cement, 20) Oliver Reed, 21) Tak, 22) Elephants and monkeys, 23) Ticals, 24) 3, 25) General Khallid, 26) Bumrungrad, 27) Chitlom Central Department Store, 28) Thanon Ratchadamri, 29) Bangkok Post, 30) Asiaweek, 31) Economist Intelligence Unit, 32) The New Light of Myanmar, 33) Philippine Daily Inquirer, 34) Manila Standard

Editor's note: Erap, meaning buddy in Tagalog, is Philippine President Joseph Estrada's nickname.

Dateline BANGKOK

The Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand's Quarterly Magazine

Dateline BANGKOK covers most foreign and local journalists, diplomats at the Embassies, and an attractive selection of international business executives in Thailand.

They are all pioneer users of high technology products and services, appreciate quality and design at home or in their offices, double/triple subscribers to newspapers, magazines and electronic news services, all frequent travellers, trend setters in each their foreign community, decision takers and advisors on everything from exhibition participation and PR/ advertising spendings to choice of best

hotels in Thailand or the region, heavy users of financial services, credit cards and insurance...

Few magazines in Thailand will help promote your services or products better towards a more attractive target group!

Corporate Publishing ?

- could also be your way to higher visibility, membership satisfaction and client preference.

We write, design, print, distribute and manage magazines, newsletters and brochures in close cooperation with our client's own PR staff or Chambers of Commerce, Clubs or Association.

☒ Yes, please contact me about:

☐ Advertising in the FCCT quarterly magazine "Dateline BANGKOK"

☐ Production of a corporate publication

Fax - or contact by phone or e-mail:

Scand-Media Corporation Limited
Telephone: (+66 2) 943 7166-8 Fax: (+66 2) 943 7169
e-mail: scandm@mozart.inet.co.th

