

THE SERPENT

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SPLIT-FLAP:

Woodsmoke rises from deep valleys; Gushing alpine rivers;  
Banyan trees and terraced rice paddies r



This headline: *Australian Couple Killed and Burned.* Ben



REMY  
(for what?)  
Yes. Really quite late.

Nadine - rolling her eyes for the others, explaining --

NADINE  
His mother. Every week she calls.  
Always the same time.

Remy - the same eye-roll confirms it. But --

CHARLES  
Well I have something for you,  
Nadine. Before you go.

And he's up, going to one of a few HALF-UNPACKED BAGS at the side of the room. Various belongings here. An expensive

\_\_\_\_\_ : the booze has flowed, so they're a bit loose  
Tipped. And Stanton is probing at some

Van Dongen - eyes up across the lawns. Watches that same  
Guard em



REMY

(likewise)

I'm not an idiot, Nadine. I know  
this. I just don't care. But we're  
not spending another night in this

ba  
a

Herman - never even thought of that. He's not sure. But --

NADINE (CONT'D)

I don't know where they have been  
for the last three months but  
wherever it i

And - listen - there are -  
belongings everywhere, which I  
don't think are theirs. Which must  
be T1 1 Tf (i) Tj ET BT 12 0 0 Tf (i) Tj ET BT

NADINE

Yes. Goodnight Angela. Goodnight  
Herman.

And they have hung up. Nadine turns to Remy. She's very  
serious about this now; French --

NADINE (CONT'D)

Think of all the people I  
introduced him to. The people I  
brought home to him. Think of what  
he might have done to them. / Pense  
à tous les gens à qui je l'ai  
présenté. Ceux que j'ai ramené chez  
lui. T'imagines ce qu'il a pu leur  
faire?

REMY

But - you didn't know

They walk in the direction of a car hire stand where a DATSUN sits at the kerb.

Charles does a quick negotiation with car dealer, who hands over the keys.

He climbs into the Datsun. Marie-Andrée and Ajay follow and th

16A

16A

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The bustling heart of this plush 5\* Hotel. At its RECEPTION  
DESK: Charles, Marie-Andrée, Ajay and --

LAXMAN

Mr. Bloem. Miss Dekker.

This Hotel Manager - tall, Brahmin Indian, effortlessly  
elegant: LAXMAN, 50s. Has both their DUTCH PASSPORTS in his  
hands. Refers to a REGISTER, but --

LAXMAN (CONT'D)

Our corner suites only accommodate  
two persons, Mr. Bloem...

Something in his tone. Hard to place. But Charles feels it  
instinctively: he's being patronised. So --

CHARLES

My secretary has alternative  
accommodation in the city.

Laxman - a long eye for Ajay, then --

LAXMAN

Of course.

Hi s

Charles who is engaged in the applied business of the game.  
Whisky, cigarettes, his cards. So --

LAXMAN

What is it you d



LAXMAN (CONT' D

MARI E-AND

You think I don't understand what  
you did to her an

CHARLES (CONT' D)

You would be home in Levis for  
Christmas. Go to church.

Takes a chunky hotel ASHTRAY. Counts out a few pills. And uses the ashtray to grind them into dust. At which, there is a knock at the door. Charles covers the powder and, French --

CHARLES

*Will you answer the door please? /  
Tu veux bien répondre à la porte ?*

And so she does. Here's a B

MARIE-ANDRÉE  
Only that she died.

\*  
\*

CHARLES  
And that is all you need to know.

\*  
\*

Another beat. Awful. She knows she is getting no more from  
him. Knows that this is her choice -

\*

NADINE  
Will you take one Ajay?

Various YOUTH here too. As Nadine hands HER CAMERA to Ajay --

NADINE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
Me and Monique.

AJAY  
Frankie too!

MARIE-ANDRÉE  
Yes. Frankie too.

Marie-Andrée - an entirely different woman to the one sitting in that hotel suite. Now she lifts LITTLE FRANKIE on to the longer. And SMILES, for Ajay to take the pictu

CHARLES

But I don't want my photograph  
taken either.

But here Marie-Andrée - her laughter, going to him --

MARIE-ANDRÉE

(French)

Alain! Enough! Leave Nadine be. /  
Alain! Ça suffit! Laisse Nadine  
tranquille.

And he smiles. No objection to being so instructed by her.  
Lays an arm around her. And pulls her into a deep kiss --

CHARL



This too: *European Girl Murdered*. Another INDISTINCT  
NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH. A young woman on a mortuary slab  
wearing a DISTINCTIVELY PATTERNED SUNDRESS.

(It is \_\_\_\_\_, who Domini que saw Marie-Andrée drug at  
Kanit House, \_\_\_\_\_.)

But here - Lawana. Seen something unwelcome. Her warning --

LAWANA (CONT'D)  
rM3 Knippenberg3.

HERMAN  
One moment, Lawana. BT 12 0 0 12 236 639 Tm /TT1 1 Tf (p)

HERMAN

I'm tracking through back copies of the Bangkok Post and other regional newspapers, sir.

VAN DONGEN

I can see that. Why?

HERMAN

Rese

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Nadine - camera about neck, two EMPTY LIQUOR BOTTLES in her arms. Come up from the pool area for supplies, so --

NADINE

Ajay? We're going to need more.

In she goes to the apartment, finds Ajay - at the counter, fighting bottles of booze and a box of ice. In comes Nadine, dumps those empties, and --

NADINE (CONT'D)

Let me help you.

Ajay - grateful, hands over the very full ice box to Nadine. Ducks into a cabinet to look for more suppli

*Raynott's Oil Politics*

Moving through: CHARLE

HERMAN (CONT'D)

In November 1944, at the end of the Battle of Overloon - an allied bomb completely destroyed our house. We weren



CONNIE-JO BRONZICH, American. Iris watches: TWO SILVER  
JUMKHAH EARRINGS spin in her ears.

Beside Connie-Jo: LAURENT CARRIERE. Tall, as all Canadians  
should be.

CONNIE-JO  
No. He doesn't. So I won't.



LAURENT

What can I say? I'm a freak for  
clean.

Ir

The figure - turning round at the request. IT'S AJAY. He

IRI

AJAY

Lord Shi va. Destroyer of all  
t

Laxman - checki ng wi th a REC

AJAY  
Grararrgggghh!!!

The most monstrous noise he can make, raises his hands in  
claws. And I

AJAY

No.

CHARLES

You are. To her you are a slave.

Ajay - still trying to process it all, t

And no



REMY (CONT' D)

Because we're not going back.

NADINE

Remy. Stop.  
(then)

HERMAN

These are the Turk's beads,  
correct?

He means the beads Ajay is wearing, poolside, in thos

Finds on the pillow: A SINGLE NEPALESE ROSE

MARIE-ANDRÉE

Then - the rest of her life, she's  
alone?

CONNIE-JO

Hey -

ten kids high the whole way  
overland and he won't even take a  
hit. Before him, my whole life, I  
only

Rubi

CONNIE-JO

MARI E-ANDRÉE

Charles - his eyes to Marie-Andrée. Hers: See! See What I Can Do? But he is calm, as, a JEWELER'S LOUP in his eye --

CHARLES

I cannot give you what you want for them.

Connie-Jo, Laurent - their optimism beginning to seep away.

CH





CONNIE-JO  
(her disappointment)  
Aren't you coming, Lena?

CHARLES  
She needs to rest. We're expecting  
our f

AJAY  
Are you really having a baby with  
Monique?

Charles - doesn't answer that. Just gives him a look and then reaches across him to the glove compartment. From which he removes one of those long KURKURI KNIVES.

CUT TO:

Laurent - his occluded senses roused by the door beside him opening. Stood the





Her

HERMAN

No.

(maybe)

It's complicated.

SIEMONS

My God, Cloggy. I turn my back for a day. You get ruthless.

HERMAN

(the file)

Is it enough?

SIEMONS

Enough for what?

HERMAN

For the police. Is it enough? If it is - I can tell Nadine to get out.

SIEMONS

She went back...!!? Herman!

HERMAN

She insists. She's very brave.

SIEMONS

And you're entirely reckless.

HERMAN

Says the man who wanted to shoot Gautier.

Siemons - a shrug for that. Guilty as charged --

HERMAN (CONT'D)

Paul: is it enough? Is it proo

HERMAN (CONT' D



HERMAN (CONT'D)  
I think this is Gautier and Leclerc  
leaving the country on the  
passports of my two Dutch.

The LANDING CARDS; the NEWSPAPER --

HERMAN (CONT'D)  
Just days before these murders took  
place. See - Paul? This is what he  
does. Forges his victims'  
passports. Moves through borders.  
Lays false trails across the entire  
continent...

SIEMONS  
Alright, Herman. Close your eyes  
and count to ten...

Landing Card Stubs, matches, newspaper...

SIEMONS (CONT'D)  
This... this is pure conjecture. It  
doesn't add up to anything!  
(Herman's face)  
What else...?

HERMAN (CONT'D)  
I have calls in - at every foreign  
embassy and every foreign ministry  
of every Western country. Missing  
persons enquiries; stolen  
passports; complaints of robbery or  
assaults of any kind.

And Siemons - hearing this. Stops. And, now he smiles --

SIEMONS  
Well: that explains it.

Siemons - putting that file back together. Waving for the  
waiter again. Standing. Pays cash. Ready to go. So --

HERMAN  
Explains what?

CUT TO:

70

70

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Herman - again following Siemons into this lurid bar --

HERMAN  
Does every diplomat in Bangkok come  
to this place?

Siemons - a shrug for that --

SIEMONS

Birds of a feather, Cloggy.

And then they see him - propping the bar: LAVE

(a beat; relenting)  
Crime report. Two Australian  
citizens; Greg and Viola Raynott.  
Both got Mickey-Finn'd and cleaned  
out on their holidays in Hua Hin  
last September.

(serious now)  
Whatever they gave the man - he  
almost died. Hospitalised for two  
weeks.

SIEMONS  
The last people they saw?

LAVÉR  
A couple they met on the beach. She  
was French Canadian...

HERMAN  
He was Asian in some way, but  
raised in France.

LAVÉR  
What is this, Ker-nippenberg?

But Herman isn't listening. He's reading further, poring over  
details. Stops. Looks up to Siemons, and --

HERMAN  
It says - the Raynotts des

It IRIS (CONT' D)

THAPA

I am very sorry to say it: but

IRIS (CONT' D)  
Did you speak

75

75

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Where Iris sits. Through a wide glass partition, Charles and Marie-Andrée are questioned in Thapa's office.

CUT TO:

76

76

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Thapa - opposite him: Charles and Marie-Andrée.

CHARLES  
... she is famous in the  
Netherlands... From the  
television...

Not somethi

h





But Paris in the Spring. I promise.  
/ Meme si ce policier veut qu'on  
reste, Je crois que c'est mieux  
qu'on parte. La vie a été un peu  
folle ces dernières semaines. M

\_\_\_\_\_ Iris - broken, emerging from the station herself. She sees that Taxi. Sees Charles and Marie-Andrée. Sees also their companion: \_\_\_\_\_.

The two of them. Eyes meet. Then he's gone.

FADE OUT.

79

79

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Angela - once more dropping Herma

HERMAN (V. O.)

' Summary of the evidence concerning  
the double murder discovered near  
the

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Around a campfire: FOOD AND GUITARS AND SONGS. And Charles at a trestle-table: MIXING COCKTAILS for the grateful FRENCHMEN.

CUT TO:

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The Three FRENCHMEN - passed out inside the van, while Charles and Ajay ransack their belongings for: PASSPORTS, TRAVELERS CHEQUES, CASH, CAMERAS...

Check a NAME in one those passports:

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s Jantasin, his Colleague - their faces as they turn through Herman's evidence. This litany of horrors. And all the while, Herman sits impassive.

CUT TO:

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Janthasin and his colleague - they close the file and push it across the table back toward Herman. Herman - eyeing Janthasin. Waiting, waiting...

CUT TO:

