

"Narcotics I - THE SOURCE"

VIDEO

AN ARREST IN A BOWLING
ALLEY

COPS GRAB DEALER AT
THIS POINT

OVER FIELDS OF OPIUM
POPPIES

AUDIO

NARRATOR:

This bowling alley happens to be in Bangkok, Thailand. But chances are extremely good that what you are watching is also happening, right now, in many of the other major cities of the world as well. For where there are people these days, there is a market for illegal drugs and enforcement officers trying to cope with the problem.

Perhaps a million arrests are made each year around the world for unlawful possession, sale or use of narcotics. What makes Bangkok unique and Thailand's drug problem difficult to solve is that the source of this morphine is right in their own backyard ... the measures they and the UN are taking to dry up a major international drug source are the subject of this report.

In Thailand's fields -- just a few hundred miles from Bangkok -- these particular pretty poppies blow and they produce opium from which you make morphine whose

final, most lethal end product is heroin. It's not just Thailand's problem either. Over half of the illicit opium grown on the entire globe comes from here, or near here an isolated corner of Southeast Asia, where northern Thailand, Laos, Burma and China share some common but largely uninhabited and unpatrolled boundaries.

AREA MAP
OVER POPPY FIELDS

Drug traffickers and law enforcement officers use the same unofficial but wholly appropriate name for it -- The Golden Triangle.

HARVESTING

There are guesses that close to one thousand tons of raw opium are produced in the Golden Triangle each year, but most remains in Asia. The rest -- much too much -- reaches markets in the West. Part of it never leaves the area and is used by local people.

OPIUM SMOKING BY HILL
TRIBE PEOPLE

Many of the hill people who live here smoke opium as a matter of course with little or no stigma attached. Some start on it for its traditional medical use, as a pain killer. But most would rather dream away their lives than live them, and use the pipe solely to escape that reality.

Over the years an attempt to kick the habit would usually involve a visit to a tribal healer, a Buddhist monk or Christian missionary -- anyone they believed could cure their addiction. But now more and more have heard of the new hospital near Bangkok.

TANYARAK HOSPITAL
SEQUENCE

Tanyarak opened in 1967. It is one of the most modern and well staffed drug hospitals in Southeast Asia. A sincere and genuine effort on the part of the Thai Government to do something about the narcotics problem. But so far, the results are somewhat disappointing.

WARD

METHADONE DISTRIBUTION

The problem at Tanyarak is an almost universal one in the world of drug treatment. The most respected majority medical and psychological opinion says that for treatment to be effective it must be voluntary. The patients must be here because they want to be here. They, themselves must desperately want to solve their drug problems. And so they come voluntarily -- but, much more often than not, they leave after just

INCOMING PATIENTS

a few weeks, too soon to adapt easily to a drug free life, and the result is that Tanyarak sees quite a few revolving door customers, repeaters coming back time and again.

FOOD PARCEL
INSPECTION

There have been cases of visitors smuggling drugs in - so the nurses check all packages.

GROUP OF PATIENTS

Addicts come in all ages, but the youngest one is a nine year old boy who became hooked, because "friends made him try funny tasting cigarettes".

We asked a patient if he had been here before ...

INTERVIEW WITH PATIENT
AT TANYARAK HOSPITAL

PATIENT:
Three times.

QUESTION:
Three times; what happened at the hospital?

PATIENT:
In the first time, I stop for two years then I smoke again.

QUESTION:
Why?

PATIENT:
Because, for one who's smoking, is really hard to stop. I don't know what the reason, my body is need to smoke all the time. It all depends upon the willpower whether we stop or not.

INTERVIEW WITH BUSINESSMAN

BUSINESSMAN:

Well, if I found one of my babies smoking heroin, I would slap his face, and kick him, or send him to the hospital or prison to cure him.

INTERVIEW WITH STUDENTS

FIRST STUDENT (MALE):

I tried, a long time ago in a party, but just once in my life, that's all. And I really got a nice experience.

SECOND STUDENT (FEMALE):

I've heard it that the Thai youth take drugs.

THIRD STUDENT (MALE):

I know quite a few who take drugs, but maybe they just try it for fun. I know quite a lot of them.

FIRST STUDENT (MALE):

But I think that to live in the world today, we don't have to use any drugs to help us to solve any problems in life.

NARRATOR:

JAIL SEQUENCE

Under the laws of Thailand, non-medical use of a drug is an offence carrying a stiff penalty. Heroin users are liable to prison sentences of from two to ten years ...

EXERCISE YARD

And, by conservative estimate, there are over 200,000 addicts in Thailand.

Some prisoners work, others are just

INSIDE BARRACKS

plain bored by the monotony of it all

and many will revert to drugs soon after
the end of their sentences.

SUBTITLES UNDER SHORT
INMATE INTERVIEWS

1. I'll be in jail three years
because I was on heroin.
2. At first friends helped my family
but now they are on their own.
3. I lost touch with my family
I guess I liked to fool around.

NARRATOR:

HILLTRIBE VILLAGE
PRESENTATION

There is a "connection" between those
prisoners in Bangkok and these simple
decent people living off the land. They
don't look like an organized gang of
international dope peddlers. And they
are not. But the land on which they live
the hills of Northern Thailand are part
of the Golden Triangle where the opium poppies
grow

VILLAGE STORE

The half million Hill Tribe people are
pretty much self-sufficient as far as food
and clothing are concerned. They grow or
make whatever they need. But they can't
grow matches or canned goods and they can't
make transistor radios. This requires

STORE

cash at the village store. And opium is the only crop the hill people can sell for cash. And most of these hill people have never even heard of the 1959 law that makes opium growing illegal

SILVERSMITH AT WORK

And the cash is not just for necessities or useful luxuries ... a great deal of it goes to the local silversmith

Status is measured here by the amount of silver jewelry worn by the youngsters and marriageable daughters ... a six roll necklace costs sixteen hundred bahts -- eighty American dollars ... six months income for a farming family is a very important part of a dowry.

THE VILLAGE SPRING

The duties of the tribes' women include fetching the supply of water each day at dawn.

It is only in the last century that the hill tribes started to cultivate opium and even today not all of them grow it, or smoke it. The Karens, for instance, generally do not grow any, but the Meos,

who always did, have devised an ingenious way to make their work lighter ...

JERRY HOUGHTON
AUSTRALIAN TA EXPERT

HOUGHTON:

The worst thing that happens is that these people become rather easily addicted to opium. The opium growers higher up will often almost enslave the Karens by getting them addicted to opium and then having them go off and work in the opium fields, feeding them and paying them in opium, not in money, and then they virtually become hopeless addicts and live a life of almost slavery, working in the opium fields for the opium growers. And so, this is probably the main problem: the fact that they provide an unwitting labour force for opium production.

NARRATOR:

But there are other major problems ... and chief among them is to provide a profitable alternative to opium production which, despite the 1959 law, goes right on.

FIRST PREP OF OPIUM IN
A VILLAGE HUT

Aside from what is consumed in the individual villages, the hill people never had much to do with processing or distribution. That's mostly the lucrative province of traffickers from the lowlands. But a sizeable piece of the action is controlled by illegal armed bands who have lived in the area since 1949,

refining the raw opium in secret laboratories and then running it across the borders in heavily armed caravans.

BURNING FIELDS

The first step in opium production is to slash and burn After two or three crops, the thin unfertilized topsoil is exhausted and the process begins all over again on virgin land ...

Just strike a match and watch everything -- grass, brush and trees -- go up in smoke

Thailand, with its own population explosion, simply could not afford to waste its countryside. And just as it had to put a stop to opium production, it had to put a stop to this wholesale deforestation with its consequent erosion and flash floods

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

The Thais began in the sixties. They attempted to reduce opium production by improving the lot of the hill tribes. The King himself contributes monies from the royal purse.

S. SMUTKOPT, THAI
ANTHROPOLOGIST

SMUTKOPT:

This piece of land belongs to the village. We call it demonstration plot. And everybody is a member, everybody from this village. Each member has a certain part, a certain plot here. They work on it and they grow crops and they harvest and they earn what they have done. If we are convincing them that we have some work to do all year around, they are not going to work with the Meos up in the hill.

"RED HAT"
CUT AWAY

So that's the indirect way to help the people in stopping growing opium. You see, the man in the red hat is addicted and he is still working, but, if we keep them busy, I think we can help him. And later on, if we can help them and if we can send them to the hospital, we can be sure they can be cured and they'll be all right.

The people here they are not growing opium, but some are hired by the Meos up in the mountain, nearby here. They would like to keep the labour for a long time and so when they are addicted, they have to work for them, otherwise they don't have enough money to buy.

NARRATOR:

THE VILLAGE
"RICE BANK"

Another problem comes when the rice crop fails. Instead of having to rely on cash from opium sales to buy food in emergencies, there is now a rice bank, set up with money from the King. Now the hill people deposit surplus rice to draw upon the bank in lean months.

SMUTKOPT'S VOICE OVER
END OF SEQUENCE

SMUTKOPT (VO):
If they can live on the land all year,
if they earn enough, they'll stay.
I am very sure on this point.

FISH POND

NARRATOR:

In 1970 the Government of Thailand asked the United Nations' help in finding even other ways for the hill people to make a living instead of growing opium.

Creating and stocking village fish ponds not only adds needed protein to a diet too heavy in starches, it also adds variety to the menu, and sometimes, a little money to the pockets.

HERD OF
CATTLE

Introducing better and hardier livestock also enriches the food supply and eventually makes possible a new dairy industry. New agricultural stations -- complete with coffee and fruit tree nurseries, from which tomorrow's orchards will grow

TREE NURSERY

And when they grow and when the dairy industry and commercial fish farming become realities, ways to market the produce will have to be devised in a region where not even roads now exist.

WEAVING

The hill people have always made their own clothing from their own hand woven material. One United Nations goal is to get them to make more than they need. Such cottage industries can also bring in cash to help eliminate the need to produce opium.

NEW STORES

Progress is being made. New general stores and permanent housing are gradually appearing in some villages. They replace the usual flimsy and temporary thatched huts, proof that the government's effort is beginning to work, that people will give up their semi-nomadic existence when they are offered a better and more stable way of life.

NEW HOUSING

PRINCE BISSADEJ, HEAD OF
KING'S PROJECT
ON CAMERA

PRINCE BISSADEJ:

This is a permanent village. Normally, they stay here. They grow rice. And, in September, they would go up the mountain, that way, and cultivate opium poppy.

FRUIT TREES

NARRATOR:

But now some villagers have decided to forego opium production and stay in the valley.

In a few places poppy fields are bordered by fruit trees which may someday replace them and farmers have a chance to observe and learn from the Thai experts. Fruits we take for granted cannot grow in the steamy lowlands - they fetch high prices in Bangkok, and could make up for lost opium income

AERIAL VIEWS OF
MAE THO

The United Nations has selected five isolated villages, to start its own project. None has access roads to the rest of the world.

MEOS

They are Meo and Lisaw villages and Meos are the main opium growers. Richard Mann is the U.N. expert in the fields.

MANN
ON CAMERA

MANN:

We hope that it could become a pilot village, a pilot project where we can put in useful work here that the people can see and get some benefit from the crops that they would grow and in the project that is taking place here. But with this special fund from the United Nations, we hope to spread the resources around enough to benefit many villages.

POTATOES

NARRATOR:

In the village of Mae Tho, Prince Bissadej shows potatoes to villagers who didn't even know such things existed and not only tells them how they grow but how much they can get for them in the stores of a country which so far has had to rely on rice.

PRINCE BISSADEJ
ON CAMERA

PRINCE BISSADEJ:

Potato is heavy but potato will give them more money than opium.

MANN
ON CAMERA

MANN:

It would be very difficult, I think, to find a cash crop which would get the returns that you can get with opium, of course. Again, we have to remember that this is all in an experimental stage and it'll take time and lots of experimentation and demonstrations to come up with crops which would substitute for opium.

GROUP DISCUSSION WITH RICHARD
MANN, HOUGHTON AND INTERPRETER

QUESTION:

Is there land available below here?

HOUGHTON:

They have been searching for several places. You would have to find at least 600 ray of irrigable land. May be we can get enough by terracing the sides of the village.

MANN:

I don't know if we have a water source, but we can't see it in one or two years, that's the problem.

QUESTION:

How are they going to take it down to market?

PRINCE:

They have to take it down by horse, by horseback, usually, about four hours to the main road.

QUESTION:

But are you planning to build roads leading to these villages?

PRINCE:

We will build some roads but not up to this village. I think we will do it about two miles short of the village. We think that if we get the road up to here, the people from below will come and exploit them. Maybe they buy up the land and we want to get them strong, economically, first, before we get the town people connected with the village.

LEADS INTO ROAD
BUILDING SEQUENCE

NARRATOR:

And roads do get built to connect the hamlets with towns Not superhighways by any means, but a decided improvement over old trails barely wide enough for one packhorse ... Even before the roads can be planned, many studies must be made, field surveys in countless villages to find out the special problems of each community, and where each should fit in the projected scheme of things.

ROADS

GROUP ARRIVING IN
HAMLET

MANN'S VOICE (OFF CAMERA)
DURING DISCUSSION WITH
VILLAGERS

MANN:

I am relatively confident that we can do something. How much, I am not sure. This is a big project. It's never been

MANN
ON CAMERA

done. We're working with many diverse groups of people, tribal people with different languages, different cultural practices, and so forth, and it is very difficult at this time to really say. Depending on the price of some of these fruits, maybe; they can work in nuts, or something that will have a high return.

NARRATOR:

MANN, PRINCE TALKING
WITH VILLAGERS

Dick Mann has one great advantage over other technical assistance experts: he has lived and worked in Northern Thailand for some ten years before being tapped by the U.N. for this job. He speaks the various hill tribes' languages fluently...

VILLAGER SAYS SOMETHING
IN THAI AND MANN TRANSLATES

MANN:

Here he is saying that it would be very advantageous to the village, that they could do many things, if they had water coming right down this valley, but they want to make sure.

NARRATOR:

Sometimes he even has to double up as interpreter between hill tribe villagers and Thais from Bangkok,

MANN:

He says he tried several trees. He tried. He says they are very good. They would like to try many more. They're very much interested in these things. If we can just show them the way.

MANN
ON CAMERA

I would say that the King's project has been very successful. For what they've done, they've done a good job. And I think this is primarily because they are sincerely interested in helping the hill people. We hope that the United Nations project and the King's project can work hand in hand, can be co-ordinated in a co-operative effort.

NARRATOR:

GROUP ON ROAD

Co-ordination and co-operation and a lot of hope that sometime in the future the pretty poppies will cease to grow in Thailand ...

HILL TRIBE WOMAN SMOKING
(START OF SEQUENCE)

Opium may make for wonderful dreams, but in the stay-awake world it is a hideous trap

CHILD IN HUT

Now it is a stick. Like babies everywhere he follows his mother. What will it be when he is nine years old?

END OF SEQUENCE

While only thirty per cent of the hill tribe people may be addicted to the opium they grow, the hundreds of tons they don't use themselves are what make the illegal traders rich

POLICE ROADBLOCK

The police set up road blocks ... but they might as well be looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack

JEEP ON BACK ROAD

There are so many roads, so many different ways, When this Narcotics File was prepared, the bulk of the Golden Triangle's opium was consumed in Asia. But as Middle East production begins to dry up, the big dealers will seek new sources of supply.

BOAT ON CANAL

Thailand is doing what it can to dry up her part of the South East Asian Source. Our next file will trace the illegal routes of traffic the connections which deliver the narcotics harvest into the world's markets, and the efforts to stamp out this traffic.

BANGKOK STREETS
AT NIGHT

POLICE STATION AND ADDICTS
BEING THROWN IN JAIL

Jail, anywhere in the world, is not a pretty place, nor is it intended to be. The hope of the United Nations project in Thailand -- a two million dollar investment for the first five years and for the UN these days, that's a lot -- is that by drying up at least one source -- there will be less drugs to push, and fewer arrests to be made

for their sale or use on the streets of
Bangkok, Hong Kong, New York, Marseilles
or Munich. And it most certainly is
worth a try

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