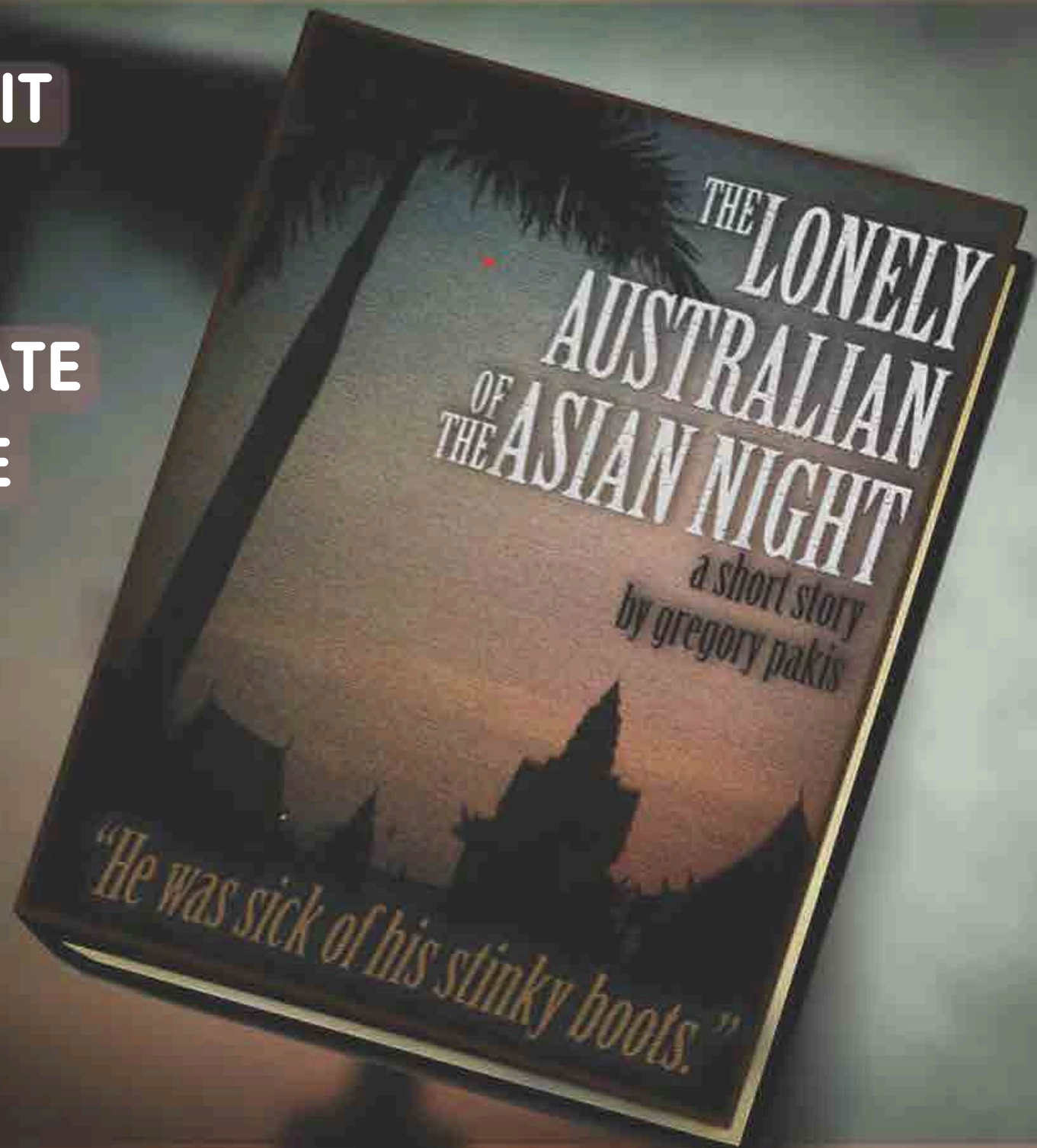


MEDIA KIT

**FOR
IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**





Title - The Lonely Australian of the Asian Night

Author - Gregory Pakis

Genre - Travel, Crime

Type - Fiction, Short Story

Price - 99c (AUD)

Words - 6,500

Publication Date - 14/8/24

Available on Amazon Kindle

what's the story ?

Hookers and hawkers.

Mosques and mosquitos.

Paul has had enough of Southeast Asia.

He's only here 'cos it's cheap. And he's on the run from police after leaving Australia. No, that place wasn't much better either.

Well, it was when he was young.

When his life was full of promise. An up-and-coming boxer.

And he had friends. And fun.

Then a bit of bad luck later and he found himself on the run in outback Australia.

Paranoid. Hiding from shadows.

The heat. The dust. The sweat.

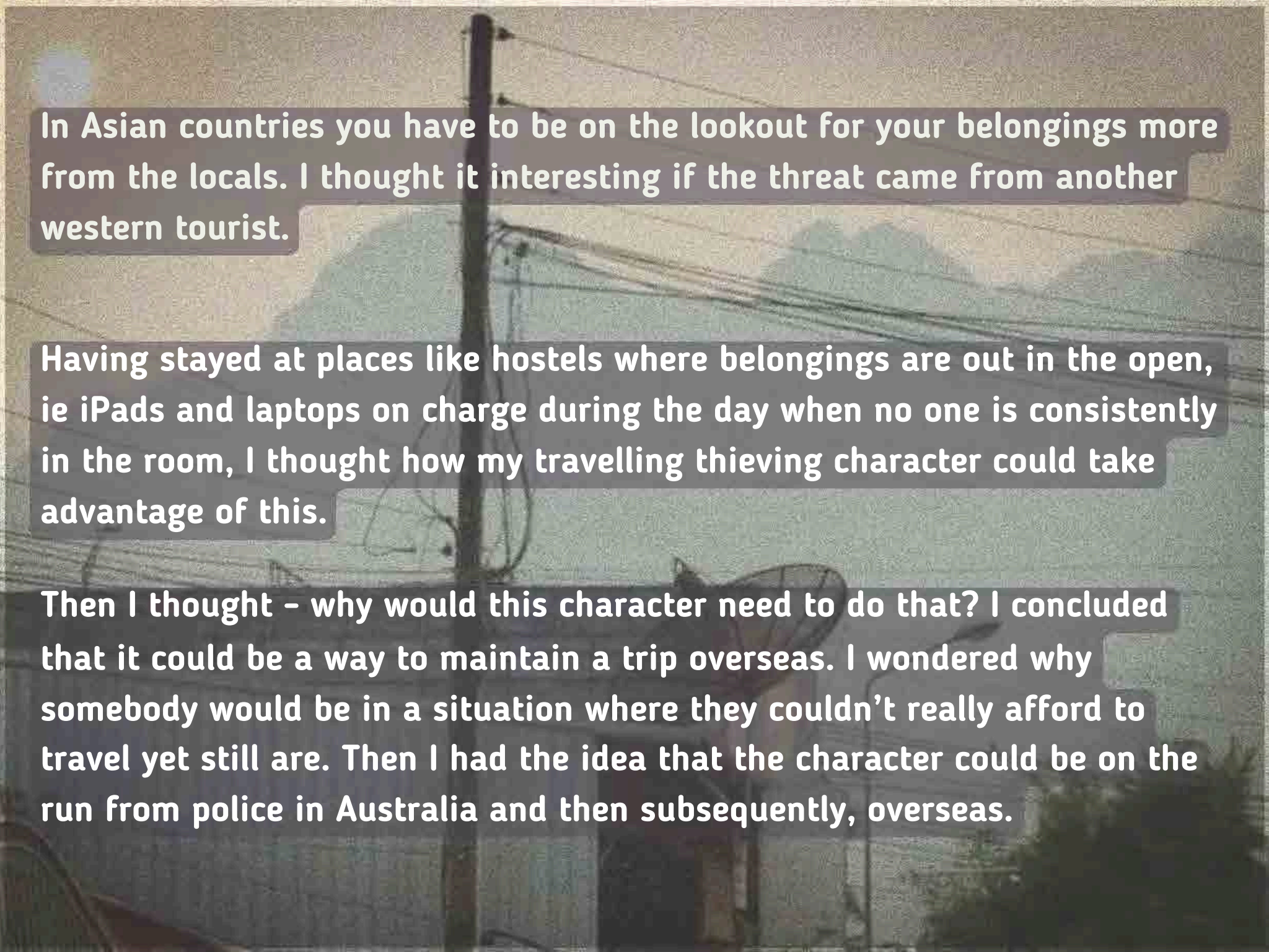
Next stop, Southeast Asia.

Where did I get the idea ?

In 2014 I was hitch-hiking from Perth to Margaret River and I had spent a night sleeping on the side of the highway. Though generally I would hitch-hike for adventure, when I got into Margaret River, I felt like I had always had when hitch-hiking, like an outsider; grimy and desperate.

A couple of days later while on a bus back to Perth I had the story idea about a hitch-hiker, perhaps a tourist, that steals from other tourists. I was thinking about the idea in the context of going overseas because I was heading to India and Nepal in a couple of weeks.

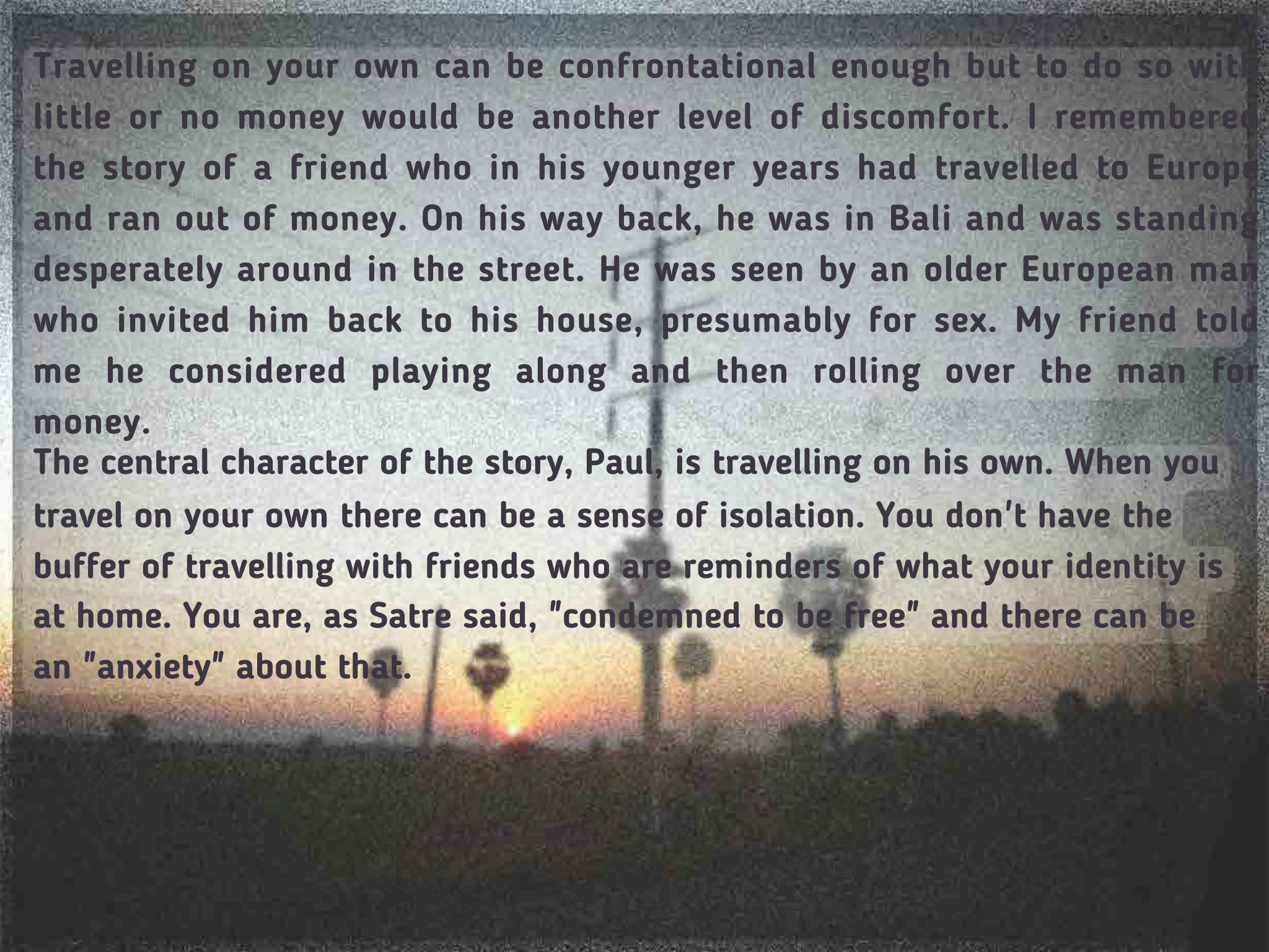
Over the next few years, after I had been to a few countries in Southeast Asia, I thought again about this character who was by now less a hitch-hiker and more a thieving tourist.



In Asian countries you have to be on the lookout for your belongings more from the locals. I thought it interesting if the threat came from another western tourist.

Having stayed at places like hostels where belongings are out in the open, ie iPads and laptops on charge during the day when no one is consistently in the room, I thought how my travelling thieving character could take advantage of this.

Then I thought - why would this character need to do that? I concluded that it could be a way to maintain a trip overseas. I wondered why somebody would be in a situation where they couldn't really afford to travel yet still are. Then I had the idea that the character could be on the run from police in Australia and then subsequently, overseas.



Travelling on your own can be confrontational enough but to do so with little or no money would be another level of discomfort. I remembered the story of a friend who in his younger years had travelled to Europe and ran out of money. On his way back, he was in Bali and was standing desperately around in the street. He was seen by an older European man who invited him back to his house, presumably for sex. My friend told me he considered playing along and then rolling over the man for money.

The central character of the story, Paul, is travelling on his own. When you travel on your own there can be a sense of isolation. You don't have the buffer of travelling with friends who are reminders of what your identity is at home. You are, as Satre said, "condemned to be free" and there can be an "anxiety" about that.

I thought this story could also provide

a different view of Asia

than as a "paradise" - staying in bamboo huts and cocktails on the beach etc. The character, Paul, and a lot of Western people don't like Asia because they think it is dirty or a lot of the other things we have to associate with Asia. There is probably also culture shock. In Western countries we live in a culture where individuality is somewhat valued but in Asia the opposite is true. So, I thought it interesting to have

a character who is travelling in Asia but doesn't want to be.

A dark, grainy photograph of a road winding through a desolate landscape under a blue sky. The road is a light brown color, contrasting with the dark, shadowed ground on either side. The sky is a deep, clear blue. The overall mood is one of isolation and vastness.

Even to an Australian,

the Australian outback can be a foreign place

Since my early twenties, I had hitch-hiked and driven many times through parts of the outback and it can be a scary place. I thought at the beginning of the story if I had Paul eluding police around Australia, the ugliness and emptiness of the outback could reflect his desperate state of mind.

The Lonely Australian of the Asian Night is also

the story of lost youth

As I grew older, I gained a deeper understanding of what youth was. I thought about people I had known who had unravelled with time, and wondered why this happens. Perhaps there is some law of entropy and people who don't put the effort in to stop or slow it will unravel with it.

This is the case with Paul.

As described in the story, when he was younger, Paul had a sense of optimism because everything came to him easily. Then the loss of a fit body, the development of bad habits, his friends having fallen away all pulled the rug from under his feet. There is no mention of Paul's family in the story, and he wonders what his ex-boxing coach (a father figure of sorts) who has passed away would think of his current state.

IS IT BASED ON REAL PEOPLE OR EVENTS ?

The central character is mostly a fictional character. He is based on some of my reactions to travelling alone in Asia. He is also loosely based on some of the fighters I met when I trained at a kickboxing gym in Fitzroy, Melbourne in the 1990's. Whilst young and promising they are in a good way, but if the fighting career doesn't take off as planned, or things in general don't work out, where do people with these fighter instincts go? Where do they fit in? I've followed the careers of a fair few Australian fighters and many of them have appeared in media headlines for the wrong reasons.

Characters



CHRIS, is very much based on an Indian guy I met in Goa in 2014. He offered interesting insights into India while he seemed to want me as a wingman to meet Western female tourists.

TRAI is based on a guy I met him in HCMC in 2015 who told me of his criminal history in Australia and extradition back to Vietnam.

AMIR is based on a local shady businessman in Melbourne in the 1990's that I had been told about. He'd made contact with a friend of mine in exactly the way described in the story.

The novella, **Wake in Fright**

by Kenneth Cook bears a resemblance to *The Lonely Australian of the Asian Night* in how the city dweller protagonist experiences desperation and isolation in the unsympathetic Australian outback.

This foreigner in a foreign land idea is also similarly represented in *Shantaram*, by Gregory David Roberts.

In writing *The Lonely Australian of the Asian Night*, I also considered aspects of the novels, *Highways To A War* and *The Year Of Living Dangerously*, both by Christopher Koch.



WHEN DID I WRITE IT ?

2016 / 2017

WHERE DID I WRITE IT ?

Mostly in Melbourne, but I edited it during a trip to Taiwan in 2018.

WHO ARE MY FAVOURITE (TRAVEL) WRITERS ?

Jack Kerouac, George Orwell and Paul Theroux to name a few.

BOOK TRAILER



AUTHOR CHAT TO CAMERA



WHO IS GREGORY PAKIS ?

Gregory is an Australian author and film-maker.

He has written the short story, *The Lonely Australian of the Asian Night*; the horror-suspense novellas, *The Regressor* and *He*, and *Memoir of a Suburban Hoer-Bo*, which is partly an account of when he lived out of a van for ten years in Melbourne, Australia.

Gregory Pakis is also the writer / director of the feature films, *The Garth Method* (2005) and *The Joe Manifesto* (2013), which have won national and international awards and been distributed through Accent Entertainment, Label Entertainment, Vanguard Cinema and more.

Gregory's more informal video projects are the feature documentaries, *Garth Goes Hitch-Hiking* (2007) and *Garth Lives in a Van* (2011) which have screened at film festivals in Australia.

More recently, he has created the comedy series, *suBURPieS* and his *WACKY VLOG* which can found on his socials.

Gregory has been featured in articles in *The Age*, *The Herald Sun*, *Beat Magazine*, *Inpress*, *FILMINK*, and the *Neos Kosmos*. He has been interviewed on radio by the *ABC*, *3RRR*, *SYN FM* and *3CR*.



Gregory Pakis. India. 2017

to receive a review copy

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Story Excerpt

Generally, he was never the worrying type but the worry started to creep into his mind when he was on the run in Australia. It was there that the shadow formed. He wanted to know what or who was over his shoulder and the more he looked the more he worried he would see something. But he never did. When he was on the run, it was the first time he had travelled anywhere in Australia. Out there, there were no rules; not out on the desert road, not out under the desert night, not in what felt to him like red-neck towns and bars where everything was really hot, yet somehow cold. Paul remembered the sweat pouring out of his forehead, making his sunglasses slip down the bridge of his nose. And he'd never felt sweat come out of his throat before. He remembered the fear in his belly and eagles circling under the searing sun. It was in the outback that he had felt alone for the



first time. It was there that he felt his youth further away than it had ever been. It was there that he first felt the *nothingness*.

