

The Diplomat & the Samaritan
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It was wintertime Down Under. The beaches were deserted, the bikinis packed away, the tennis stars halfway around the world at Wimbledon. Both the Sydney press and the Canberra embassy cocktail circuit were hard up for a topic. Then, voila! The Malaysian High Commissioner to Australia disappeared without a trace. Who? Well, actually, even in sleepy Canberra Tun Lim Yew Hock, 51, wasn't exactly well known; but once he had dropped from sight, suddenly almost everyone recalled having seen the dapper, pipe-smoking little diplomat at parties or the Canberra race track where, it was whispered excitedly, he had lost more than he won.

A nationwide police dragnet turned up more details. A Sydney newspaperman reported that he had seen the Tun (an aristocratic Malaysian title, though of lower rank than Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's Prime Minister) taking a plane to Sydney under the assumed name "Hawk." Lim Yew Hock turned out to have been a habitue of Sydney's tenderloin King's Cross district, particularly its Paradise Club, which featured Sandra Nelson, 19, the most expansive (43-24-36) stripper in town. Where was Sandra? Also missing; and try as they might, the police couldn't locate her for questioning.

Lim's wife and his two daughters went on TV with a tearful plea for him to come home. Through a telephone interview with a Sydney editor, even the Tunku made a personal appeal from Kuala Lumpur: "Come back, my dear friend, and I will welcome you. I will be happy to let bygones be bygones." To "supervise the search," the Tunku even sent Malaysia's chief of protocol, Enche Abdul Rahman Jallal, rushing to the scene. Upon arrival, he surprised newsmen with his theory that Lim Yew Hock had perhaps "tripped on a stone, and is now being cared for by some kindly gentleman who does not yet know who he is."

Three days later, the Tunku (from Kuala Lumpur) announced that the missing Tun had been turned in. In Canberra, the protocol chieftain explained that "a good Samaritan" had brought him back in a car from Sydney, 200 miles away, after a ten-day absence. The mysterious Samaritan was said to have found the envoy, ill and vomiting, wandering in Sydney shortly after he disappeared, cared for him during the next eight days, and conveniently discovered who he was for the first time on the ninth.

Canberra newsmen found this story disappointing in almost every respect. Could the mysterious benefactor have been such a recluse that he never read newspapers or looked at TV? Why had he not called the police, Lim's family, or even a doctor? What about Sandra? She turned up on the front page of the Sydney Sunday Mirror, complete with pictures, on the same day that Lim returned, explaining that she and "Hocky" were merely good friends who often got together for a chat between floor shows, and that she had no idea where he had been. To all questions, Protocol Chieftain Abdul Rahman had no real answers. "My friend," he said, cryptically, "I can assure you there was a good Samaritan."

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