

FEUER ASLAN



The Doris van der Stratten Story

Based on the book

'Doris Van der Stratton'

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The Treatment for the screen

'Eurasian'

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It was the closing of the day:
She loosed the chain and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away...

The Lady of Shalott. Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

A 10 PART TV SERIES:

Doris van der Stratten, an Anglo-Indian, Australian housewife, suffered a violent and unsettled early life and married into a Eurasian dynasty in Malaya. At the outset of the Second World War she survived a massacre in Southern Thailand, endured a five-month trek through the jungles of Malaya, was incarcerated with POWs, became the mistress of the Japanese Commander of Kuala Lumpur, before finally and fatally encountering the Japanese military police – the dreaded Kempetei.

THIS IS HER STORY.





Jap Threw Woman Out Of Window

CHINESE WITNESS STATES
From Our Own Correspondent

KUALA LUMPUR, Monday.
THE story of how a European civilian prisoner, Mrs. Doris Van der Straaten was stripped, slapped and strung up by the arm pits and finally thrown out of a window was narrated in the War Crimes Court today by a civilian interpreter under the Japanese, when he gave evidence against 2nd/Lt. Murakami Shuzi, a member of the Kempetai, who is charged with ill-treatment and causing the death of Mrs. Van der Straaten while she was under interrogation at the Kempetai headquarters.



NARRATIVE STYLE

The series would be rendered as a drama set against a backdrop of real historical events.

Incidents would be sympathetically embellished, added or expanded to more fully engage with Doris' story. The trials, great suffering, racial and physical abuse she endured, and vigorously rose above, as an Anglo-Indian woman, represent the episodes of her extraordinary life and tragic death.

As a device, a Malay journalist named Mohd Ifran Yusof aka William (Willy) Welden would interact with Doris throughout her journey. From Adelaide to Kuala Lumpur to Thailand, through the jungle and back to Kuala Lumpur. He would act as a narrative foil, recordist, and a grounding to provide additional verisimilitude to the narrative.



MAIN STORY ARC:

The extraordinary life and sad death of the Indo-European, Dulcima, or Doris van der Stratten.

In 1910 when aged 6 in in London, and later in Adelaide, she lived as witness to and under the constant abuse of her mother and her mother's lovers. She to moved Malaya then to southern Thailand with her second husband, the Eurasian Philip van der Stratten. In 1939 at the outbreak of WWII she survived the massacre of civilians by Japanese soldiers at Kampong Toh. She then endured an epic five-month journey through the jungles of enemy-occupied Malaya. Emaciated and diseased, she gave herself up to the Japanese and was interned with POWs and civilians in Taiping Prison. She became the mistress of a senior ranking Japanese military officer and brought to Kuala Lumpur where, to avoid racist treatment, she claimed to be an Italian national. She came to the attention of the dreaded Kempetei, who decided she was a British spy. In 1943, at 39, she was tortured and murdered by the Japanese military police.

BACKSTORY:

Ifran is the real spy. Recruited by the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) in 1921 to both report on any enemy activity in SE Asia. Later he joined the Special Operations Executive (SOE) - renamed 'Force 136' - to firstly monitor the Japanese forces in WWII Malaya, especially the Kempetei. Secondarily to facilitate the Malay-Muslim underground resistance to the occupying forces.

The PLAYERS:

Doris Van der Stratten nee Doris Dulcima Heath. 21 – 39
An Anglo-Indian Eurasian woman. Selfish, fiery very attractive.

Doris as a child. 6. Scared, lonely, dominated by her mother.

Mohd Ifran Yusof aka William (Willy) Welden. 30 - 79
A Malay journalist for the *Adelaide News*. Erudite, urbane. Able to mix freely with the colonials.

Pauline Alexandrova Budd nee Jordan (later Heath). 18 - 35 - 56
Doris' mother. A woman of Anglo-Indian extraction.

Philip van der Stratten. 41. Doris' second husband.
A European/Ceylonese. Mild mannered, slightly effeminate.
Part of a large, prosperous Eurasian family based in Malaya.

Colonel Koda. 50. Japanese Garrison Commander. Doris' lover. At turns caring and at others violently spiteful.

Lt Shuzi Murakami. 30. Head Interrogator for the Kempetei, racist, vicious and despising of anything non-Japanese. Particularly other Asians. Doris' murderer. Tried ultimately for war crimes.



CONTEMPARY NARRATIVE CONTEXT

1. Racism



The EURASIAN intermediary role in Malaya and the far east was a complex place to be, being located in the racist colonial hierarchy according to subtle gradations of colour and lineage. Eurasians were, of course, hugely divergent; some appeared to be pure Caucasian, while others were much more 'Asiatic'. The British turned to the linguistic, cultural and technical skills of Eurasians to support their endeavours.

The Eurasian existed with a place in either culture and conversely with a place in neither.

CONTEMPARY NARRATIVE CONTEXT

2. Female abuse

Throughout the narrative, Doris and her mother suffer terrible abuse. Whether from other Eurasians, the Anglo-Australians, the colonial British or the Japanese.

Yet while a story set mainly in the far east before and during the war years of the mid 20th century, when and where social mores were strange and different, its relevance to the role, treatment and position of women and particularly **WOMEN OF COLOUR** still reverberates today.

Maybe more so.



CONTEMPARY NARRATIVE CONTEXT

3. Gender politics

Several of the main players exhibit homosexual traits.

The need for the Australian men to be violent towards women masks a sublimated need to establish masculinity and the 'mates' culture.

Philip van Stratten (Doris' husband), whose barely contained effeminacy leaves him open to scorn and abuse,

The boyishly attractive Japanese head of the military police demonstrates not only hatred of Asian nationals but a uncontained hatred of women.



THE SERIES

1. A Piquant Story
2. Two Philips.
3. I love you long time.
4. After the storm.
5. Buaya di-bawah sungei.
6. Jungle Nights
7. Love and Death in Taiping
8. Supai no Aishiteimasu
9. From the Fourth Floor
10. The Long Drop



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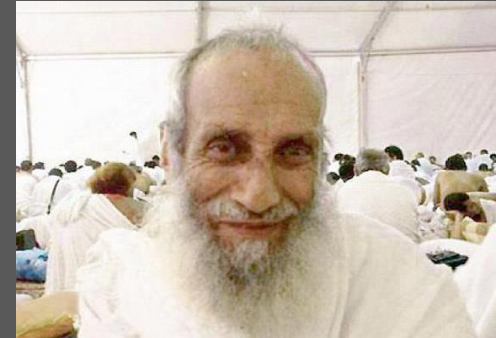


Episode 1. A Piquant Story.

Prologue:

In 1990, Kuala Lumpur, an aging Ifran, now a pious Haji, answers the rhetorical question. 'Did I know Doris van der Stratten? Oh Yes!'

'First time I saw her she was in the Adelaide Magistrates Court. 17. Young, pretty as many a mixed child can be, she was ashamed, trembling, terrified....'



It's 1921, Irfan, considerably younger, is reporting the suit brought by Pauline Heath, Doris' mother, in the Adelaide Magistrate's Court. Pauline is seeking damages for assault from George Caine, a trombonist at the Theatre Royal. Sitting watching her mother's reputation and dubious past being dragged through the mud is a teenage Doris Heath.

Pauline's past life in London is recounted in flashback, as the story of her violent drunken relationship with her then husband, Neil Heath, is graphically depicted and witnessed by a screaming, terrified 6 year-old Doris who tries to intervene. Pauline vents her anger and frustration out on Doris for the rest of their life together.

Racially motivated Caine brings up Pauline's Anglo-Indian origins in Dacca and Karachi. And her marriage to another Eurasian, Ralph Budd (who may or may not have been Doris' father), a hugely prejudiced smear that resonated with the conservative, post WWI Anglo-Saxon community.

Irfan is faithfully reporting the story in the '*Adelaide News*' which earns praise from his peers and sensational public acclaim for it's growing drama.

Pauline's violent treatment at the hands of Caine are recounted. How he attacked her, pushing her through a café plate glass window. The teenage Doris, having witnessed this is again traumatized by events, desperately trying to administer some form of aid to her mother's shattered, profusely bleeding arm.

Not only does the court find against Pauline but she has to bear the costs and is branded a 'scarlet women'.

By 1925, at Pauline's urging, Doris marries Richard Wall, a billiard hall proprietor. Another abusive and failed relationship.

She gives birth to two daughters but in 1934 divorces Wall. Wall keeps the girls – Doris never sees them again!

It is at this time that Ifran (Willy as he known to his colleagues) comes to the attention of the Investigation Branch (IB), an Australian/Commonwealth intelligence force. He is willingly recruited. Later he Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB).

Episode 2. Two Philips.

Prologue:

Irfan is, despite his short-lived success reporting Pauline's trial, he is still expected to report on anything and everything.

'It was at a recital given by Dame Nellie Melba in Adelaide that I first saw Doris and Philip van der Stratten. He was from a prominent Eurasian/Ceylonese Dynasty, yet both were seated apart and well away from the Australians.....'

AUGUST 17th, 1922. NEWS OF THE WEEK.

GEELONG BEATS ALL RECORDS

DAME MELBA'S PERFORMANCE RAISES £7012

Unique Demonstration at His Majesty's Theatre

When the Mayor first launched the proposal of a concert for the Kitchener Memorial Hospital, at which Sydney's record £6800 "house" would be eclipsed, the proposal was regarded in the light as his Great Ocean Road—"wild-cat" scheme, but like that same road, the idea matured until it came an accomplished fact. At the outset many people whose pockets might possibly affect, frowned upon the proposition, whilst another section, always ready to be prejudiced against

chased by the Mayor for £20, and when put up again, the final bid being that of £15 from Mr. J. H. McPhillimy. During the bidding Dame Nellie kept the audience in a simmer of amusement. Mayor Hitchcock then handed to Melba a sheet on which was painted the figures £7012—the money realised by the effort. The announcement was received with enthusiasm, in the midst of which Melba turned to the Mayor and said, "I may say thanks to you." Ald. Hitchcock said now proud he was that Geelong had beaten Sydney's effort, and then stated that Dame Melba had raised £50,000 for various patriotic funds. He referred to the splendid encouragement she was always

ness of enunciation, asset of a singer, but of our leading vocal. Then again, there is control (which is necessary), was played several own inimitable style. most cultured musician ser of note. Miss I, protegee of Dame Nellie city for the first time had a very good reception a contralto voice of grand and should certainly re-ranks of the profession. It would be hard Melba night without of the genial John Lem who is so beloved of. He played last night.



Doris has followed young Philip into the Theatre Royal, Adelaide. She manages to make eye contact with Philip. He reciprocates with a smile and returns to the aria.

In the Kuala Lumpur family home several years before, Philip van der Stratten would spend hours listening to opera on the family's gramophone. He adored Nellie Melba. He is listening to the same aria he would be listening to in Adelaide all those years later. His effete nature did not sit well with his family's industrial/mercantile culture. He is mocked by his siblings.

In the concert hall, the music reverberating in her head, Doris recalls her recently and acrimonious divorce from Wall, his treatment of her – a plaything for both himself and his chums in the billiard hall causes great trouble – particularly when Pauline comes to Doris' defense.

Doris leaves the concert hall with Philip.

The music segues into the past and the departure of the Philip van der Stratten family from Ceylon and their arrival in Malaya in the early 1930s. The huge family move into a large house on Ceylon Road in Kuala Lumpur. Young Philip's father, also called Philip is chief clerk for the Malayan Railways. While a martinet at home the elder Philip is treated with barely masked contempt by his colonial masters.

The two Philips could not be more different. In a fit of pique and frustration the elder Philip sends his young son to Adelaide to study engineering.

Young Philip has a bad time among the hard living Australians, both because of his mixed race and his fey demeanor.

After Wall, Doris is pursuing her further options. Egged on by her mother, who has read about young Philip and his family in a report by, Irfan, Philip seems a suitable catch.

Thus begins a somewhat obvious seduction. Unmoved by Philip's failure to consummate their relationship which to his great relief, she does not judge – in gratitude, and as self-defense, Philip proposes – and Doris accepts.

They sail to Malaysia under different names where Doris is treated with scorn by the family – but, in a rare act of defiance, Philip insists on marrying Doris.

Begrudgingly, the elder Philip throws a large and expansive wedding, attended by all the major Eurasian families in town. Irfan is a surreptitious wedding guest. Philip the elder's dislike of Doris and the marriage is manifestly obvious.

Elder Philip's immediate British superior absently tears up his wedding invitation.

Episode 3. I love you long time.

Prologue:

In early 1941 Irfan had been sent to Southern Thailand to report (spy) on the imminent Japanese invasion.

‘No-one was in any doubt about what the Japanese would do after Pearl Harbor. The Malay peninsular with all its natural resources would be a great temptation. Meeting the van der Strattens there was a coincidence I would live to regret.....’



It seemed that Doris had found her true place. Philip's family did not welcome her with open arms but life in Kuala Lumpur in the late 1930s was good for her. Young Philip was kind to her, defended her and funded her lifestyle as she provided the protection he needed. And, due to the influx of investment into Malaysia, KL was a party town.

Even in 1939 the elder Philip's pushing his son into the job as electrical engineer for the Thailand Tin Mining Co. in Pinyok, near the Thai – Malaysian border did not matter to the couple. It too was a very liberal place – lots of Europeans, mostly bachelors, meant lots of casual love affairs.

Ifran mixed freely with the European community both reporting legitimately to the paper back home while seconded to the British Special Operation Executive (SOE) to organize local resistance cadres against the obvious and imminent Japanese attack. Donning local garb he hid in plain sight.

The Japanese simply strolled into Southern Thailand, mostly ignored by the British and aided willfully by the Thai police. They gathered all the Europeans in a small house in a small village called Kampong Toh.

They were kept under guard for several days. Philip was terrified. Often breaking down and having to be subdued by the others. Doris on the other hand tried to seduce the guards to give them more food.

A strange dynamic developed. The starchy men and women, mainly British, decided to resist and heaped scorn on Doris and the other non-British who they saw as ‘collaborators’. The two parties were at logger heads – the British even suggested executing Doris and her troupe. Fights broke out, causing the Japanese guards to intervene.

Ifran, in full local mode, came several times under the pretense of bringing food, but mainly to share information with the SOE ‘plants’.

Finally the Japanese commander, named Koda, came and accused them all of being spies.

Doris pleaded with him seductively; he wavered but, in face of the mainly British intransigence, they dragged out one Brit and, in front of them all, the officer struck off his head. The Brits, partially subdued screamed about war crimes and retribution, in response Koda stormed out in high dudgeon.

That night the Japanese came. They strafed the whole house with machine guns for many minutes. They threw hand-grenades through the windows and ruthlessly bayoneted any survivors.

When they left, thinking all were dead, a mattress in the corner lifted and the petrified face of Doris van der Stratten emerged.

Episode 4. After the storm.

Prologue:

December 1941. Irfan had assembled a small Malay cadre in Southern Thailand. Their aim was to do as much as possible to disrupt the Japanese operations of the tin mines. Unfortunately the Japanese blamed the Europeans for the sabotage.

‘I had to report back to Australia, we heard the shooting and the explosions and the screaming While we watched helpless from the edge of the jungle bodies were being thrown out of the windows.....’

