

THE VANCOUVER

# courier



## Inside

**Peking Opera is up to monkey business and it's most entertaining**  
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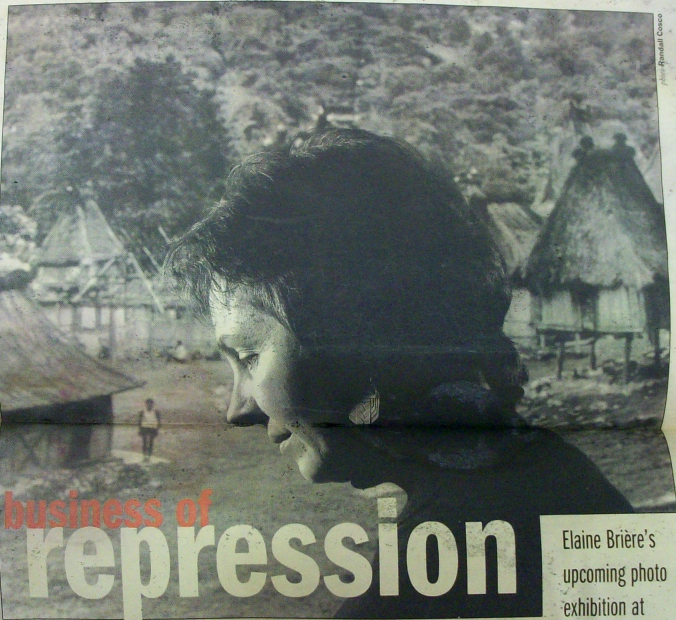


Photo: Ronald Cosco

## The business of repression

by **Geoff Olson**  
contributing writer

In the early 1970s, Elaine Briere was a young photographer backpacking around the world in search of places off the beaten path. East Timor was one of the first she visited.

Her documentation of the Timorese people turned out to be more than travelogue snapshots. "I took the last documentary photos before they were invaded, at least that we know of," Briere says over coffee in her East Side home.

Briere recalls how she and a group of travellers were "adopted" into a village after a native girl found them stranded on the beach. "The rainy season had just ended and the countryside was dotted with delightful little villages surrounded by gardens and jungle. (The people were) gracious and dignified, devoted to family and clan, kind and hospitable to strangers.

The Timorese, who once comprised about 12 ethnic-

linguistic groups, are mostly animists, believers in nature spirits. They have a creation myth about a boy who saves a crocodile's life: when the crocodile is old he repays the kindness, and his scaly body becomes an island for the boy's descendants, with the promise of protection from all future harm.

East Timor was, she posits, a primitive leisure society, with a system of "subsistence affluence," independent of outside resources. "Weddings were two weeks long, whole summers were taken off visiting people...we would think it's paradise. I know it sounds romantic." She hands me a calendar illustrated with her photographs. Looking at the luminous faces in the calendar, one can't help but suspect that the Timorese had briefly tasted paradise. If the island wasn't quite heaven, it wasn't the hell it would become after Briere's departure.

Please see page 4.

Elaine Briere's upcoming photo exhibition at A Walk Is gallery chronicles East Timor before it became lost paradise lost

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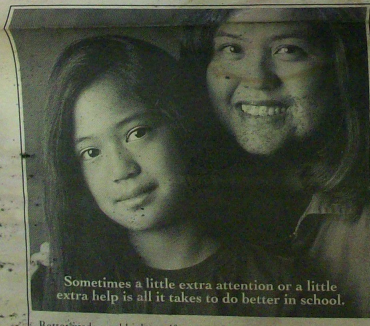
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## cover

# Activism began with Chomsky meeting

Continued from page 1

TIMOR WAS PARTITIONED IN 1859, after years of disputes that began when the Dutch East India Co. challenged Portuguese control in 1643. The western part of Timor became Dutch (Anglo-Dutch) while the Portuguese retained the eastern part. After Japanese occupation (1942-45), Dutch Timor became part of Indonesia.

When Briere visited East Timor in April 1974, Portugal's colonial rule over its part of the divided island was collapsing. In the subsequent political vacuum, two main parties emerged—the left-wing Fretilin and UDT, which favoured a loose association with Portugal. With Indonesian assistance, UDT quit a coalition of all parties preparing for independence and declared war on the popular Fretilin. After a brief civil war, Fretilin gained control of most of East Timor. Fearing an invasion, it unilaterally declared independence in November, 1975.

On Dec. 7, Indonesia—which had no historical claim to East Timor—invasion with a massive air, overland and sea assault. Indonesia's president, Gen. Suharto, came to power in 1968 in a coup that resulted in the executions of huge numbers of suspected communists, and those associated with them. (Estimates range from 600,000 to 1,000,000 Indonesians, with a further 500,000 jailed.)

Briere was living on a small boat in Nanaimo Harbour when he heard of the invasion. "I remember talking to people at the dock, and someone came up and said, 'Oh, have you heard—East Timor's been invaded by Indonesia.' I felt sick. I went down to my boat and was just stunned."

Briere heard little about circumstances following the invasion. "Media coverage of East Timor was nonexistent in the '70s. North American mainstream media focused on the genocide in Cambodia and paid little heed to the contemporaneous carnage committed by a western ally." There was an announcement of Indonesian troops in Timor, and that was it. "I knew Indonesia. I had been there for about six months and it didn't take long to realize it was a really repressive regime. I just knew terrible things must be happening in East Timor."

According to the Catholic Church and other sources, the

population of East Timor declined by some 200,000 in the years 1975 to 1979—a third of the population. In 1976, Indonesia formally incorporated East Timor as its 27th province. From 1977 to 1978, the Indonesian army engaged in a program of wholesale "pacification" measures used to destroy the will of the East Timorese. "There was a man killed just recently for performing a tribal ritual. It's considered witchcraft, and they burned a number of women at the stake in the early '80s for witchcraft," Briere shakes his head in bewilderment. "Imagine that, in this day and age."

Even today, news reports on the area are scant. Stories of atrocities only began to reach public awareness through the efforts of refugees and a small global network of activists like Briere.

Briere's photojournalism puts a human face to the tragedy. Her portraits of the Timorese have appeared in human rights documents, *The Globe and Mail*, and the NFB's documentary on media critic Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*.

It was after she came upon one of Chomsky's essays, *Genocide in the Sky*, and met him on Vancouver Island that Briere went from Timor photo-archivist to activist. She began to give slide shows in church basements and at college campuses and wrote articles for human rights publications. In 1986, the Canadian Council of Churches began to send Briere to the decolonization hearings on East Timor at the UN. In 1986, she co-founded ETAN, the East Timor Alert Network, which today has 3,000 members and 12 chapters in Canada.

Fatigue, illness and financial hardship have dogged Briere's activism. Although she is given strength by the Timorese people who are playing for the highest stakes possible, a scene from her documentary film *Bitter Harvest: The Self-Out of East Timor* shows what she's up against.

Frustrated with the refusals of Indonesian and Canadian officials to sit for interviews, Briere decided to Ottawa to intercept then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Andre Ouellet. The closest she gets is a scrum on Parliament Hill. As Ouellet enters a room with waiting press, Briere, microphone in hand, presses him with a question about Canada's position on East

Timor. Ouellet, wearing a stern expression—and with one upraised hand to indicate he's going to job off the question—ignores her and walks on. The film then jumps to a thicket of sound balloons and cameras, with Ouellet at its centre. Briere, more insistently, tries again. "Mr. Ouellet, what is Canada going to do to help East Timor?"

The foreign minister turns, looking to make a quick exit from the scene. "In sorry, that's not on the agenda." Another reporter jumps in. "Can I ask you about the fish negotiations, what's happening there?" "Yes," he responds, easing up. Briere jumps in again: "I'd just like to ask when Canada is going to endorse the UN resolutions..." But Ouellet is already beating a hasty retreat, terminating his audience with the press.

It's our responsibility as Canadians to make sure our government is setting some guidelines—that's what government is for," she says. "It's not just to act as pump for business. Chretien has been over there on these trade missions more than any other prime minister."

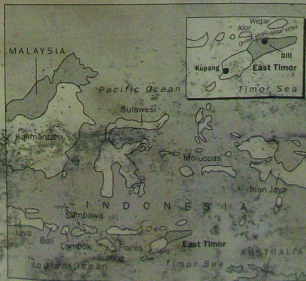
But what did the west have to gain by supporting Indonesia's claims to Timor? She sighs and relates the intertwining interests of power, politics and money. "Everybody agrees that oil was a big factor. There were deals being made between the Australian (Prime Minister) Gough Whitlam and Indonesian President Soekarno before the invasion. It was argued that Australia would ignore the invasion in favour of getting a large chunk of East Timor oil, which is what has happened now. The Timor Gap treaty has been signed. Fifteen big international companies are now pumping oil out of the continental shelf, but that's not helping."

The other fact was that the United States wanted to keep Indonesia in charge of the West and Qimbi Straits, which is a deep-water channel for submarines. It's debatable how important this is now, but it was seen as an important thing in the post-Vietnam period, with the cold war going on." But the greatest concern, according to Briere, was the fear that the military in Jakarta had of an independent Timor, and the possibility of a coup.

According to human rights organizations like TAPOL and Amnesty International, forced sterilization and rape have been accepted means of the Indonesian army to water down the Timor gene pool. Today the killings are more likely to be politically motivated rather than just random attacks on the population. On Nov. 12, 1991, Indonesian troops emptied their machine guns into a peaceful demonstration at the Santa Cruz cemetery in the East Timor capital of Dili. However, the event was captured on film by western reporters, and since then the Indonesian military on Timor—some 10,000 strong—have been more circumspect in their brutality.

The East Timorese still resist, but at a massive price. Indonesia maintains order through

Continued on page 5





cover



Fatima Sleeping—East Timor, 1974.

photo Elaine Briere

## Liberals put business ahead of ethics

Continued from page 4

manuscript, obscuring of Pancasila, a set of five principles that encompass faith in God, humanitarianism, nationalism, democracy, and social ideals that forms the basic outlook of the Indonesian nation. Under Pancasila it is illegal to make statements insulting to the presidency, and associations of any kind must receive official approval. University papers must be screened not to risk the loss of a student's pay packets of \$10,000 to \$5 a week, and in Indonesia, for attending press conferences.

Under one of the agreements, Canadian companies in Indonesia have invested about \$2.5 billion in a nickel mining operation since 1968. The project, financing was backed by guarantees of \$57.5 million from the federal government's Export Development Corporation. Meanwhile, Inco is downsizing its operations at home and moving its workers. Canada's military and defence communication contractors also have strong interests in Indonesia.

With a population of 195 million people, Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world and one of the most financially powerful of the "Asian Tigers." Once the world's fastest growing economy, Indonesia has an economic profile that is a mix of capitalism and socialism—oil, gas, mining, forest, hydroelectric power, environmental management and telecommunications. Suharto brought the country into the modern age, making it an investor's paradise, where labour was paid 14¢ a day, and sometimes less. The Suharto family's wealth is estimated in the billions.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's Team Canada trips to Indonesia have resulted in trade agreements expected to generate billions of dollars worth of business. Under foreign minister Barbara McDougall, the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney suspended military sales to Indonesia because of human rights concerns. When the Liberals came to power, the ban lifted, in spite of Chrétien's stated free-election supports for East

Timor. Questions about human rights in East Timor are now, as Ouellet put it, "in on the agenda." Briere has no use for the frequently heard argument that western dollars will help Third World people bootstrap themselves into economic freedom and democracy.

*"I remember talking to people at the dock, and someone came up and said, 'Oh, have you heard—East Timor's been invaded by Indonesia.' I felt sick...."*

—Elaine Briere

"If that were true we'd have freedom and democracy all over the world, because business has been foremost in the foreign policy of western countries ever since World War II," she says. "It's the belief that eventually they're going to become like we are: free and with civil liberties, that if they have the same kind of economic system as us they're going to have our political system. There's no real evidence of that."

Theological arguments about the myth of development and the myth of progress, she says, allow business people to disavow any moral connection between overseas financial investment and human rights abuses. Other students of human rights agree. "East Canadian investors need to take some responsibility. If a Canadian business person says, 'I don't care about human rights,' far enough," states Geoffrey Robinson, Amnesty International's Indonesian specialist. "If, however, they say they do care and they can't do anything about it, then I call them liars. Because it's precisely business people who can make a point, who can be listened to because of the impor-

tance of investment to the Indonesian economy."

Ron Richardson, Vancouver's Asia Pacific media officer, arguing the case of foreign investors, had this to say in *Bitter Harvest*: "I think the rest of the world pretty much accepts there is no prospect of there being an independent East Timor, that the best resolution for the problem is to have Timor stay as a territory."

The Timorese have no intention of going quietly, and the international human rights community intend to make it uncomfortable for Canadian officials who make such blithe statements. In 1996, José Ramos Horta—the leading international spokesman for Timor—and Catholic Bishop Carlos Belo shared the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts on behalf of their people.

Briere is heartened that a small group of people can bring international attention to it after many years—to human rights abuses in a small corner of the world.

"I think it's a very healthy sign... if this happened 40 or 50 years ago, the Timorese may have all but disappeared by now. There wasn't the human rights network that there is in the world today, but it's hard to get the kind of press that we need to prevent these kinds of things from happening in the future."

Chomsky, in conversation with Briere in *Bitter Harvest*, put the problem succinctly: "The famous Canadian diplomat—I think his name was John Hughes—once described what he called the Canadian idea. He said the Canadian ideals to stand up for your ideals and find a way around them."

This March, the Portuguese government is sponsoring a group of Timorese and their supporters to visit Vancouver for seminars and forums at UBC and SFU. On March 8, the 1996 Nobel Peace Laureate José Ramos Horta will speak at the Robson Square Conference Centre, after the screening of *Bitter Harvest*. The Sell-Out of East Timor, at 2 p.m. (Briere's photographs will be on display March 9 to 10 at A Walk In Gallery, 976 Denman (602-0060). For further details, call 682-4191 or 723-8330.

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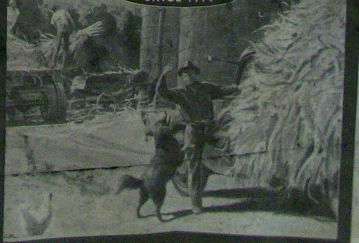
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# Mission TIMES

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AUGUST 5, 1997

10 TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 1997 THE TIMES

## News

### Photographer records world shattered by war

BY TANIS GILLIS  
Times Reporter

The year was 1974 and Elaine Briere watched from a window as her plane descended on the tropical beauty of East Timor in the South Pacific.

"It was just fabulous," she said, remembering the approach to the island.

"It was physically very beautiful. You could see these little villages dotting the landscape."

Little did the Mission resident know, then, her first brush with the tiny, tropical island would shape the rest of her life.

For centuries, the people of East Timor had cultivated sophisticated trading and currency systems and a vibrant culture.

The Timorese pooled their skills and resources and worked together. Competition was kept to sports, dress and dance, Briere said.

"It was another world," she said. "It was like stepping back in time."

"It was a society without any serious crime," she added. "Murder and rape were virtually unknown."

With camera in hand, Briere, then in her 20s, recorded on film as many aspects of East Timor life as she could.

From a young, wide-eyed girl using both hands to steady the load of corn she carries on her head, to the closeness shown by another smiling little girl hugging a chubby baby, Briere caught life on the island in vivid black and white.

But the peaceful lifestyle

and ancient traditions of the Timorese were soon to be snuffed under the boot heel of the Indonesian government.

"I didn't know then that I had probably the last pictures taken before the invasion."

When Briere returned to her Nanaimo home she heard word of Indonesian military's invasion of East Timor on Dec. 7, 1975.

She was horrified by the violence, and the vicious battle waged against a helpless and defenceless people.

"The Indonesians invaded with a land, sea and air attack, a full scale military invasion," Briere said. "They just killed randomly for six weeks."

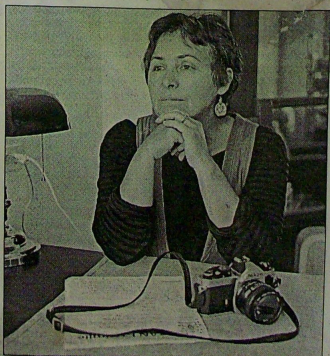
Although East Timor

was a Portuguese colony, Portugal had never imposed direct rule on them, she said. Instead the island was governed by the traditional chief method.

When East Timor decided it wanted its independence recognized, the Indonesian military decided the little island would be an easy conquest. It wasn't, and 21 years later, the Timorese are still fighting to regain control, Briere said.

The cost of resistance has been high. Amnesty International estimates that 200,000 Timorese had been killed by 1980. Those that are still alive have been restricted to strategic hamlets in the lowlands. Every day they carry a pass.

See II p. 1, col. 11



JEAN KONDA-WITTE/TIMES

Photojournalist Elaine Briere recorded peaceful East Timor on film before it was invaded by Indonesia.

## Vote possible for island people

Continued from page 10

"They're very bitter about what happened," said Briere, who isn't allowed in East Timor.

"They realize the Indonesians want to get rid of them, so they're fighting really hard."

Briere said because Indonesia is such an important ally for Canada in the South Pacific, Canada has behaved as if East Timor is part of Indonesia and has supported the Indonesian occupation.

The United Nations, on the other hand, has recognized East Timor's right to be independent, Briere said.

"Most western countries, except for Canada, the United States, Australia and Japan, are backing a United Nations referendum in East Timor."

Only East Timorese could vote in the referendum.

If they voted for independence, the Indonesians and their military couldn't return.

Meanwhile, East Timorese guerrillas continue to wait in secret hideaways in the mountains, ready to defend their island at any cost.

They are likely spurred on by memories of their former society which was peaceful with a life free of the fear of serious crime.

It was a time when they had weddings and funerals that went on for months and involved entire villages.

Elaine Briere's photos of East Timor will be on display at the University College of the Fraser Valley's Abbotsford campus this month.

The show is part of the annual Fraser Valley Arts and Peace Festival.



***1997 Fraser Valley  
Arts & Peace Festival***

***Art Gallery***

featuring

**Gu Xiong**  
***Evolution and Conflict***

&

**Elaine Briere**  
***East Timor***



***July 28 - August 9***

University College of the Fraser Valley  
33844 King Road, Abbotsford, B.C.

**opening reception July 28, 8-10 p.m.**

**artist's talk by Gu Xiong**

**music by Linda Forseth & Heidi Berg**

1997 Fraser Valley Arts & Peace Festival  
Guest Artists

Gu Xiong

"Evolution and Conflict":	acrylic	\$8000
"Coca-cola"	acrylic	\$5000
"Bicycles"	acrylic	\$5000
"MacDonalds"	acrylic	\$5000
"Forks"	acrylic	\$5000

Elaine Briere

"Baskets and Beans"	photo	\$120
"Los Pallos"	photo	\$120
"Sunday Market"	photo	\$120
"Coming home from the Sunday Market"	photo	\$120
"Sunday Market"	photo	\$200
"Village Children"	photo	\$120
"Village Children"	photo	\$120
"Hill Tribes girl carrying corn"	photo	\$165
"Village near Lauten"	photo	\$200
"Fisherman"	photo	\$120
"Going to Market"	photo	\$120
"Hill Tribesmen"	photo	\$200
"Atoni tribesman and pots"	photo	\$120
"Palm Wine"	photo	\$120
"East Timor"	photo	\$200
"Hill Tribesman washing buffalo"	photo	\$120
"Hill Tribesman playing flute"	photo	\$120
"Elderly Hill Tribeswoman"	photo	\$200
"Tobacco Lady"	photo	\$120
"Girl and brother"	photo	\$120
"Hill Tribes family"	photo	\$165
"Hill Tribespeople returning from the Sunday Market"	photo	\$200
"Mountain Regions"	photo	\$200

1997 Fraser Valley Arts & Peace Festival  
Contributing Artists

Lora Armbruster	"Going to Church"	acrylic	\$595
	"Golden Evening"	oil	\$395
Iraj Dashti	"Lovers"	earthenware clay	\$500
	"Mother and Child I"	earthenware clay	\$800
	"Mother and Child II"	earthenware clay	\$800
Werner Friesen	"Random Order - #1"	oil	NFS
	"Random Order - #2"	oil	NFS
Caroline Good	"Silent Companion"	mixed media	NFS
	"Bringer of Miracles"	mixed media	NFS
	"A Little Child Will Lead Them"	mixed media	\$275
Erica Grimm-Vance	"This Present Moment: Death and Dying Done"	mixed media	\$2800
David Kaarsemaker	"Malien Refugee"	charcoal and conte	NFS
	"Harold"	charcoal	NFS
	"H.E.E."	charcoal	NFS
Edith Krause	"Preservation I"	mixed media woodcut	\$95
	"After Dinner Blues"	woodcut	\$95
	"Family Portrait"	watercolour woodcut	\$95
Brenda Lobe	"Resurrection"	acrylic	NFS
Hugo M. K. Mymy	"Sarajevo Station"	oil on board	NFS
	"Afghanistan"	found objects, fabric	NFS
Nadine Neudorf	"Futility and Captivity"	mixed media	NFS
	"Blessed is She"	mixed media	NFS
Friedrich Peter	"Christ is the Image of the Invisible God"	laser print	\$210
	"Tell to the Generation to come the praises of the Lord"	ink and watercolour	\$280
	"The Angel at Carnegie Centre"	acrylic	\$380
	"Angel at the Library"	acrylic	\$380

Elaine's film "A Bitter Paradise: the sell-out of East Timor" will be shown at the festival on August 7th at 7 p.m.



Friday, September 26, 1997 F5

# Timor sell-out just appalling

## Review

### Bitter Paradises: The Sell-Out of East Timor

★★★★

Director: Elaine Briere

Where: Global Visions Festival, GMCC Multi-purpose room

When: Today only, 7 p.m.

Classification: Not available

ROGER LEVESQUE

Special to The Journal

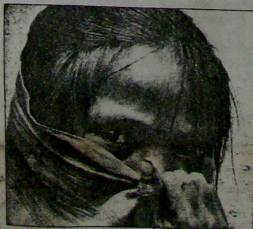
Edmonton

If you're Canadian, be prepared to be appalled. Here's why: For some four centuries East Timor was a small, peaceful island colony of Portugal, situated between Indonesia and Australia in a part of the ocean that happened to contain significant, untapped underwater oil reserves. Then, in 1975, the Timorese made the mistake of declaring independence.

Scant days later, Indonesia invaded to "liberate" them from colonialism, eventually sending some 40,000 troops by sea and air, enacting a genocide of grotesque proportions that has seen the native population of East Timor go from 700,000 to 500,000.

It's a particularly sad story but as a Canadian citizen the chief emotion you might feel after watching the award-winning documentary, *Bitter Paradise: The Selling Of East Timor*, isn't sadness but anger. Yes, you should be appalled, because considerable evidence exists to argue that this genocide — complete with all the usual atrocities that one expects of such a horrendous action — has been underwritten by the Canadian government and big business in the name of foreign relations and trade. Some might call it plain old greed.

Further evidence suggests that both Australia and Canada had prior knowledge of Indonesia's intent to invade East Timor, and Canada's record at the United Nations is a public bly on our reputation as peacekeepers.



File photo  
East Timorese girl from the Hill tribes

When the UN voted overwhelmingly to condemn the invasion, Canada abstained.

What makes director/producer Elaine Briere's remarkable film so important? It's more than just the killing fields in a far-off nation, or a catalogue of death and torture (though for a few minutes *Bitter Paradise* is pretty hard to watch). Briere has brought the issue home to our doorstep in a style that's concise, persistent, moving, surprisingly well balanced, very comprehensive for a 66-minute feature, and highly watchable. But then the director has been involved since before it all began.

She was there in East Timor as a photographer/tourist about one year before the declaration of independence and became the last known person to document the island way of life before the genocide began. Her personal recollections and subsequent role in trying to do something about East Timor hold the film together. The likes of media watcher Noam Chomsky fill in the significance of what actually happened as representatives from business and government are asked difficult questions.

Perhaps the most chilling part comes in seeing figures like Pierre Trudeau and Jean Chretien making smiley-face with the likes of President Suharto, Indonesia's long-time dictator/president. And then there's the comment from Ron Richardson, Media Officer for the Asia Pacific Foundation that "that's the way the world is."

When businessmen with interests in Indonesia claim not to know what's going on it's obvious they don't want to know, because Canada, after all, is the largest trading partner in Indonesia (the world's fourth most populated country).

East Timor has also been largely ignored in the mainstream media and Briere asks why. An exchange with a producer from CBC Radio's *As It Happens* is especially interesting.

Ultimately there is one comforting thing about *Bitter Paradise*.

Our own government can comply with genocide and throw billions in aid at the perpetrators, but Canadians still have one of the best documentary makers anywhere helping to expose it.

When politicians from Canada and Indonesia avoid Briere's questions on camera, the silence is deafening.

■ Note: Briere's film recently won the award for Best Political Documentary at the Hot Docs Film Festival and she will be at the screening tonight to answer questions.



# The Vancouver Sun

Vancouver, British Columbia, Saturday, November 30, 1996

A2

## Trade deals built on the corpses of children

On Dec. 7, 1975, Indonesia launched a surprise dawn invasion of a peaceful former colony of Portugal.

The aggression against East Timor was condemned by the United Nations. But not by Canada. Canada abstained from the vote.

Since then, 200,000 East Timorese have died in an orgy of bloodshed that former solicitor general Warren Allmand describes as the worst per capita genocide since the Nazis' "final solution."

Vancouver filmmaker Elaine Briere was in East Timor before the invasion. She remembers a tranquil paradise of friendly, happy people. Today, her grainy black-and-white tourist snapshots of Eden contrast with full-color images from a blood-soaked hell of fear, repression and lies — not the least of which are our own.

Her new film *Bitter Paradise: The Sell-out of East Timor* is a raw, riveting, shame-inducing examination of a culture in extremis and of the smug, exculpatory hypocrisy of those Canadians who serve as Faustian accomplices to an ongoing crime against humanity.

Recent refugees from behind the Bamboo Curtain erected by the government tell her camera that Indonesia now has a program for sterilizing East Timorese school children while flooding the territory with migrants to swamp the indigenous population.

When East Timorese people mounted a demonstration to show visiting journalists that they were not the happy, consenting applicants for citizenship that Indonesia insists they are, the film documents the army's slaughter of 270 men, women and children — including a visiting student journalist from Australia.

But Canadian government officials, displaying a selective memory worthy of Ernst Zündel, business leaders with the morals of Pontius Pilate and a Western media that is either paralytically stupid or has abandoned any notion of a higher principle called finding out the truth, studiously continue to avert their eyes.

In the past decade, of the 87 stories this newspaper has run mentioning East Timor, only 14 also mentioned massacres. By comparison we've run 17 stories about frog jumping.



Stephen  
HUME

I choose frog jumping for the comparison rather than the 2,521 stories about a conflict in Bosnia that has produced one-tenth the casualties of East Timor in a population six times as large. I do so because one of the saddest segments of *Bitter Paradise* involves listening to an *As It Happens* producer explain why the extermination of one-third of East Timor's population is less worthy of coverage than a frog-jumping contest.

Canadians, the CBC producer said, just can't connect.

Why might that be? Because the fiction that the agony of East Timor has nothing to do with us grants permission to be chums with a gang of corrupt butchers in hopes of lining our own pockets.

Somehow, the question of whether Bre-X Minerals Ltd. can be forced by the Indonesian government to sell 75 per cent of its huge Busang gold deposit to Barrick Gold Corp. of Toronto deserves bigger headlines than the extirpation of indigenous peoples who get in the way.

This is because Canadian shareholders expect big profits from the greed-feast that East Timor represents to corporations currying favor with Indonesia for access to the vast mineral and petroleum reserves in the illegally seized territory.

*Bitter Paradise* juxtaposes the sorry spectacle of buttoned-down executives explaining that they know nothing of what's happened in East Timor with images of laughing Indonesian army units holding up the severed heads of dissidents.

There are many severed heads in this film.

Torture, mutilation and debased barbarism appear to be a speciality of the Indonesian army. Canadians, of course, cheerfully provide the weapons used for killing East Timorese peasants and then begging for posterity and their body parts.

"The best solution would be for the East Timorese to go quietly" says one business executive to the camera.

Just, one is compelled to think, as the Jews were expected to go quietly to their Holocaust.

That such rhetoric, echoing Himmler and the "final solution," should be so calmly used in today's boardrooms and escape without public outcry, is enough to make one want to vomit.

Briere's film shows Vancouver university professors earnestly justifying the value of accepting huge grants from Indonesia to go there and raise the level of scientific knowledge.

They contrast with images of blood-stained walls where young East Timorese intellectuals have just had their brains smashed out by the Indonesian government. A young man talks of having his fingernails pulled out. A young woman talks of rape and murder.

Joe Clark obfuscates. Andre Ouellet evades. Jean Chretien bubbles over billion-dollar trade deals. Mephistopheles grins.

"We used to go in with lists of political prisoners we wanted released," a senior foreign affairs official told *The Sun* not long ago. "Now we go in with lists of companies that want contracts."

Briere insists we bear witness to the relentless truth behind those contracts: rows of mutilated corpses, dead women with their legs still spread, children of tender years with their faces shot off, a young girl staring at us accusingly through a mask of blood.

Last Tuesday, when some demonstrators at UBC tried to burn a Canadian flag in protest over human rights violations in China, patriotic students took the flag away from them.

They were Canadian, they said, they love what Canada stands for. Commendable. What does Canada stand for? Perhaps they should do themselves the favor of going to see Briere's horrifying film.

It might cause them to ask whether trade deals that are built on the corpses of children and profits ground from the bones of an entire people can be wrapped in the Canadian flag without leaving unspeakable stains.

*Bitter Paradise* premieres Sunday at Foto-Bae Gallery, 231 Carrall Street, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. See it and weep for your country's dishonor in the name of greed and hypocrisy.



# Bitter Paradise angry, provocative

**T**HE press are not in the business of letting people know how power works. It would be crazy to expect them to be. They are part of the power system, so why would they expose it?"

Noam Chomsky, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has been beating this particular drum for decades, and he is probably the most authoritative and persuasive critic of mass media we have. His comments are included in the opening documentary film of this season's *From the Heart* series, which is called *Bitter Paradise: The Sell-Out of East Timor* (TVQ at 10 p.m.).

Timor, a large island in the Lesser Sunda group, was divided in colonial times between the Dutch in the west and the Portuguese in the east. Indonesia, which included West Timor when it achieved independence from the Netherlands, invaded East Timor in 1975 and declared it annexed. The invasion by the highly mechanized Indonesian armed forces resulted in a death toll estimated to be about 200,000. As well as dropping up to 40 bombs a day on the East Timorese, the invasion had been accompanied by mass rapes, torture and other violations of the heretofore peaceful people's civil rights.

In the documentary, The Globe and Mail and CBC Radio's *As It Happens* are also singled out for pretty damning criticism in their alleged failure to properly report on the invasion. The Globe is criticized for providing almost zero coverage of the atrocities, and there is a great radio interview in which Jim Nunn of CBC Radio's *Media File* asks producer George Jamieson of *As It Happens* why the current-events show had not given better coverage to the



## Television

### John Haslett Cuff

story. Jamieson's defence was cringingly lame, a classic example of journalistic weaseling that every working journalist will recognize with at least a twinge of shared guilt.

The documentary is an extremely personal venture for the filmmaker, Elaine Briere, inspired by a visit she made to the island community more than 20 years ago. For her, the personal is political; since taking a series of superb black-and-white photographs (some of which are included in the film) of the pre-invasion East Timorese, she has also become a social activist. With *Bitter Paradise*, she has elevated her personal crusade to a scathing critique of the Canadian government and business community, which have close and profitable links to the Indonesian government.

It is no surprise to learn that East Timor has considerable oil reserves, and Indonesia is viewed by the business community as the gateway to Southeast Asia. Indonesia, with its population of 195 million and vast natural resources, is touted as being well on its way to becoming a significant economic power, and the Canadian government and business community have been understandably eager to pursue all the opportunities it represents.

Still, it is enlightening and even a

little shocking to see and hear how blithely unconcerned (and unrepentant) some of Canada's business executives are when confronted with the tally of horror inflicted on East Timor by the Indonesian armed forces. The best most of them can come up with in response is, "that's the way of the world. . . . The best thing East Timor can do is to go quietly along." Equally appalling are the scenes shot in the House of Commons where several Opposition members are questioning Joe Clark (the Conservative external affairs minister at the time) on the same issue, and all he can say is that the reports of atrocities are "exaggerated." As someone in the film observes, had Hitler won the war, no doubt these same politicians would be lining up to say the same thing about the Holocaust.

*Bitter Paradise* is the sort of provocative, passionate film that would never be financed or aired by a major network because it is not considered "balanced." There is little footage wasted on hearing the usual denials, lies and obfuscations the viewer would expect to hear from either the Indonesian government or military if the documentary were aired on the CBC or some other commercial network. Instead, this angry, honest and valuable documentary critique of government, media and business calumny is relegated to a provincial education network and tucked comfortably under the harmless "From the Heart" sobriquet.



## THE POWER OF MONEY

# Canada's hands dirty from Indonesia's mess

The huge fires, vast clouds of deadly smog and the fatal smog caused plane crash that killed 234 people in Indonesia this week can be seen as symptoms of a greater disease.

It's the out-of-control greed that drives the Indonesian economy and threatens to drive it into the ground.

It's the shortsighted greed of cash crop plantation owners who burn their forests and brush to clear the land, only to pollute the air, damage the tourist trade and cause a passenger plane, flying through low visibility, to slam into a hillside.

It's the same greed that spawned Bre-X and now keeps Indonesia's Suharto military dictatorship in power in the populous southeast Asian archipelago nation.

And, most tragically, it's the same predatory and immoral acquisitiveness that led to the conquest and occupation of the territory of East Timor.

That occupation began in December 1975 when 40,000 Indonesian troops invaded the adjacent former Portuguese colony and claimed the area as a "province" of Indonesia.

The act was nearly identical to Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invasion of



**ROBERT BRAGG**  
Calgary Herald

Kuwait in 1990 but, while the United Nations condemned both invasions, absolutely nothing was done to protect or defend the Timorese and no sanctions or penalties were ever aimed at Indonesia.

To its everlasting shame, Canada abstained from that UN vote.

And that may explain why today the government of Canada is so successful at promoting trade and investment in Indonesia on behalf of Canadian industries. Indonesia knows a friend when it sees one.

Mining, forestry, pulp and paper, oil and gas companies are some of the key Canadian industrial sectors whose Indonesian ventures are subsidized by Canadian taxpayers through export development credits, grants and the help of the commercial section of the Canadian embassy in Jakarta.

But isn't this good for Canada and Indonesia? Isn't trade the way to go in the new globalized world economy?

Not according to B.C.-based documentary film maker Elaine Briere.

"We're exporting jobs to Indonesia," Briere said in an interview from Vancouver earlier this week.

Her research into her prize-winning film *Bitter Paradise: The Sell-out of East Timor* yielded a 30-page list of Canadian companies currently operating in Indonesia.

"The Canadian government should not be giving aid to Canadian companies that

want to go there," she said. "If industry wants to go to Indonesia, they should do that on their own."

Briere's film is a vivid attempt to expose the nightmare of the illegal conquest of East Timor, a deliberately genocidal invasion which has so far claimed the lives of 200,000 Timorese. It's one of the largest but least noticed mass killings since the Second World War.

The film shows how the indigenous population of the island has been bombed, shot, displaced, tortured and starved. In 1978-79 resistance forces in the jungles were carpet-bombed. Villagers and rural farmers were rounded up and herded into "strategic hamlets."

The younger Timorese have been "intensively indoctrinated" but a war of resistance continues more than 20 years after the first Indonesian soldiers landed in what they thought would be a three-month takeover.

Briere, who had visited the island as a young photographer in the pre-invasion days of 1974, is convinced that the only reason the Indonesian army has not totally eradicated the remaining 500,000 indigenous people is because the world has become aware of the situation.

That awareness was slow in coming.

The invasion was given scant play in Western media and there seems to have been a cynical acceptance of Suharto's brute force approach among world leaders and diplomats at the time.

World opinion however has begun to take notice. In 1991, soldiers in Dili, the capital of East Timor, opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators killing hundreds and wounding scores more.

This was business as usual as far as they were concerned but it was captured on video tape and made the global net

work news the next day. Awareness also increased when East Timorese leaders, Jose Ramos Horta in exile and Dili's Bishop Carlos Belo, were awarded

the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996.

In Canada, Briere's film won the political documentary award at Toronto's Hot Docs festival this year.

It can be viewed in Calgary today at 3 p.m. at the Carpenter's Hall, 301 10th St. N.W. and again tomorrow at 12 noon at the International Centre Lounge, room 588 of the Bio-Sciences building at the University of Calgary. Elaine Briere will be at both screenings.

(Contact Robert Bragg at 235-7135 or e-mail bragg@theherald.southam.ca)

It's the same greed that spawned Bre-X and keeps Suharto's military dictatorship in power



# A Country Now Forgotten

A way of life could soon be lost if Indonesia's invasion of East Timor is not challenged successfully by the international community

by Elaine Brière

**F**ROM FIRST SIGHT, the villages of East Timor drew my friend Nicola and I into an ancient reality where people belonged to the earth and the earth to them. I arrived in the little-known Portuguese colony, 620 kilometres northwest of Darwin, Australia, in the spring of 1974. I stepped into a world I had not imagined, but one I immediately felt I knew.

It was an accident that we went there at all. We had missed our plane to Bali and were intrigued by stories of what was then called Portuguese Timor. Shortly after arriving in Baucau, we were quickly adopted by an old Timorese couple and their teenaged daughter. Their house was made from stones, bamboo and thatch. It was surrounded by palm wine trees, a few metres from a white sandy beach where men went fishing every evening just before dusk.

Life for these tribal farmers had a seamless quality. Once our "mama" took us to visit her maternal village. Upon our arrival we were taken to the women's house to have a nap. I'll never forget how indescribably pleasant and serene it felt dozing off in the women's house; the animated chatter of mama and her old friends fading off into the hot afternoon. The Timorese seemed to have a lot of free time and went about their chores in a leisurely fashion. They liked to sing when they worked.

Before the arrival of the Europeans, the Timorese ruled themselves in some 46 small kingdoms, all free and independent of one another. Fifteen distinct languages are spoken and many dialects. In spite of a strong warrior tradition, relations between peoples of East Timor were generally peaceful and reciprocal.

They traded sandalwood and other products with countries as far away as China before the arrival of the Europeans. The Portuguese won control of East Timor from the Dutch in the sixteenth century and a lucrative exploitation of slaves, sandalwood and Timorese ponies began. But they were never able to impose direct rule on the fiercely independent people.

After several centuries of Portuguese rule and a cruel Japanese occupation during World War Two, the Timorese still maintained a subsistence affluence interwoven with a rich social and cultural tradition. The population lived in small villages in the countryside. They owned land and grew a wide range of crops. The gap between the rich and the poor was slight, the status of women high and crime was almost nonexistent.

On our travels throughout other parts of Asia, Nicola and I often reflected on how much better the lives of the Timorese were than those of many other tribal and semi-tribal peoples, who had

industrial societies closing in on them from every corner.

**On December 7, 1975, a little more than a year after we left, East Timor** was brutally invaded by its expansionist neighbour, Indonesia. Courtesy of U.S. military assistance, tons of phosphorous and napalm reduced tidy mountain villages to rubble and ash, killing and terrorizing their inhabitants. Chemical defoliants were sprayed on crops and forests. Tens of thousands were killed and maimed.

Today the Timorese are forced to live in strategic villages along roads that Indonesia is building – with ample western assistance – throughout the countryside. They are forbidden to go back to their land under pain of death. Those suspected of giving assistance to the Timorese resistance, Falintil, are routinely tortured and killed. Human rights groups estimate that one third or more of East Timor's population has been wiped out since the invasion. Entire ethno-linguistic groups have disappeared. Survivors are forbidden to practice their animist religion. They are forced to work on cash crop plantations the Indonesians are cultivating on sacred ancestral lands.

Now it's no longer possible to visit the spectacular villages, to be enchanted by the house's walls decorated with paintings of the sacred crocodile





The village of Lautem, East Timor before the 1974 Indonesian invasion.

and other mythical creatures or to admire the richly carved houseposts and rooftops sporting nautilus shells and small animal carvings.

**I was still struggling with the culture shock of coming back when I heard about the invasion.** I missed the friendly village footpaths and teasops under the trees. I missed the ambience and conviviality of the indigenous marketplace. I missed the warmth and good natured disposition of the village people. I was back into the land of make-believe scarcity; of Big Mac, Pharmasave and the shopping mall.

Later I learned that when Indonesian paratroopers entered the villages around Baucau they ordered all the young people to assemble in the town square. They raped the young women and cut them to pieces with knives. They poured petrol on the genitals of the young men and set them on fire before killing them.

The western media, given as they are to distortion and omission of serious human rights abuses in the western sphere of influence, legitimize present-day genocidal wars against tribal peoples by describing them as "insurrections," "civil wars" or "terrorist attacks." According to Bernard Neitschmann, a geography professor at Berkeley, 86 out of the 120 wars in the world today are one-sided conflicts by

the state against indigenous peoples. Though there would be considerable outrage if such techniques were used against the populations of Europe or North America, state armies in the Third World are free to use genocidal tactics against these people. Western-backed elites eradicate whole villages, force relocation of whole populations into concentration camps and take over traditional homelands without fear of exposure. First World countries supply arms, tactical advice and aid. All in a shroud of silence.

**I wanted to help East Timor but I didn't know how. It wasn't until I read world-renowned linguist and social critic Noam Chomsky's account of why the West encouraged the invasion in his book *Towards a New Cold War* that I began to work on the issue.** Chomsky met me in Victoria, where he was guest lecturing. He put me in touch with the international human rights community. Since then, I've never looked back.

I discovered that the photographs I had taken in East Timor in 1974 were a rare documentation of a people virtually cut off from the outside world. These photographs could make a real difference in exposing their plight. Since 1985, I've mounted three international exhibitions; one in Sweden, one in Japan and one in Portugal

(opened by Mario Soares, the president of the republic). A fourth exhibit is to tour Australia and parts of Europe.

I also lobbied the Canadian Council of Churches for support of an educational programme that would inform the outside world of the Timorese situation. As a result, in 1986, I received a small budget to start the East Timor Alert Network. I was thus able to get in touch with concerned people across Canada, to participate in the United Nations hearings on the country and to build relationships with the international network supporting the Timorese.

East Timor has become an international symbol of the right of small nations and tribal peoples to self-rule. And, as a former Portuguese colony, it can claim the right in international law to a free and fair act of self-determination under UN auspices.

Every year, human rights groups, experts in international law and solidarity groups from around the world converge at the UN decolonization hearings in New York to defend the rights of the Timorese people and to condemn Indonesia. Every year, Indonesia tries to stop these hearings because they expose to the world the true nature of its colonialism.

Instead of supporting East Timor at the UN, the Canadian government has consistently supported Indonesia. At



the time of the invasion, Canada was the major investor in Indonesia. As Noam Chomsky points out, "Canada has enormous leverage over the slaughters in East Timor and never used it. The media were never concerned, and the intellectual community were never concerned. In this respect Canada has contributed materially to the slaughter in East Timor."



Canada is one of the few industrialized states preventing a united front against Indonesian human rights abuses. It's not often that Canada can make a big difference in world events. A withdrawal of Canadian government support for the Indonesian occupation could initiate a chain of events that would see a UN-supervised referendum on self-determination in East Timor become a reality.

Indonesia is a target country for Canadian trade and the third largest recipient of Canadian aid. Because of the failure of the Canadian media to inform us about the genocide in East Timor and the brutal nature of its occupation, our government's line has had unrestricted play. Relations with Indonesia have spread across a broad spectrum of Canadian institutions, including many universities and non-government organizations.

Canadians see Indonesia as a friendly country. Military-related sales continue, investment is on the rise and aid is given with no human rights criteria attached whatsoever. We have the Canadian-Indonesian business council to facilitate relations in a wide range of activities from manufacturing to mining for hundreds of Canadian companies.

Yet Indonesia is a brutal police state created by force in 1965, killing approximately one million people throughout the archipelago in the process. Displaying a flimsy democratic front, the regime, led by General Suharto, requires all political parties to accept Pancasila, an Orwellian ideology of state worship endorsed by Golkar, the party of the army. Golkar is always in power and General Suharto is always the only candidate for president. Death squads are openly endorsed by Suharto. Bakorstanas, the army's special police, have powers to arrest, torture and "disappear" anyone they like.

Canadian tax dollars are helping to fund a sanitized image of this state. Witness the joint CIDA-Indonesia six-

part film series "Indonesia, a Generation of Change," which ran for the second time on B.C.'s Knowledge network last fall. Devoid of any social and political content, the series neatly sidesteps the fact that, for the diverse peoples of the archipelago, Dutch colonialism has simply been replaced with Javanese colonialism.

Through films like this, the Indonesian regime hopes to raise its tourist potential and deflect growing criticism by the international human rights and environmental community. Canadians who do get the rare opportunity to learn what is happening are appalled by the support successive Canadian governments have given to this brutal occupation. But without critical coverage by the mainstream media, propaganda like the film is all the more successful.

After being frustrated time and again in my efforts to alert mainstream media to the continuing trauma of the Timorese, I realized how much the Canadian media is failing in its responsibility to inform us. We are accomplices to Indonesia's activities, but because it is not a country on the media agenda, Canadians are not aware of even the barest facts about this extremely violent regime. External Affairs, for instance, briefed *The Globe and Mail's* Edith Terry before she went off to Indonesia. She later described Suharto as a "cuddly teddy bear." When Edmon-ton's David Kilgore, then a Tory MP, went to the UN hearings in August 1989 to support East Timor, CBC Radio's *As It Happens* refused to interview him. They did the same thing last year when Ray Funk, NDP MP for Prince Albert-Churchill River, went

Timor become a reality. In his reply to the concerns of Canadians over East Timor, former external affairs minister Joe Clark said our foreign policy (read recognition of the illegal occupation) is shaped "through consideration of what is right and what best serves the interest of Canada and its citizens." Those few who are served by our foreign policy towards East Timor are making good profits from Indonesia's enslaved population and exploited resources.

Why do those who represent us turn a blind eye to genocide? Why are we on such intimate terms with one of the world's most repugnant regimes? What does it mean to our democratic principles when the federal government can do these things without our knowledge or consent? Why isn't the media doing its job?

My personal awakening has led me to believe the Timorese way of life holds the answers to many of our modern-day problems. We seldom speculate on what we have lost with the growth of civilization. The terrible irony behind the destruction of societies like those in East Timor is that they are the surviving models developed countries need to emulate if we are to live in harmony with nature and with each other. The chance to learn from them could be lost if the last pre-industrial cultures are allowed to be wiped out with the final gasps of the industrial age. TM

Elaine Brière is a photographer and former coordinator of the East Timor Alert Network. She lives in Vancouver, B.C.



So I will say this for you. I  
know of any thing. I  
thought it  
was important you  
see that Bell's  
calculations are costing a  
lot.



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Jul23	VICTORI PQ 514	279-1619	OK	1106	4		1.92✓
Jul24	MONTREAL BC	994-3265	OK	1638	1		0.35
Jul24	WELLS ESTERON 613	822-1227	OS	2013	27	4.54	8.42✓
Jul24	GLO TORONTO ON 416	531-5850	OS	2254	7	1.18	2.18✓
Jul24	T TORONTO ON 416	484-2600	OK	1018	2		0.96✓
Jul25	W WINDSOR ON 519	973-1116	OK	1214	9		4.32✓
Jul25	PR GEO BC	563-4986	OS	2035	17	2.08	3.87
Jul27	VICTORI BC	472-8629	OS	1810	1	0.03	0.27
Jul27	VICTORI BC	472-8629	OS	1811	1	0.03	0.27
Jul28	VICTORI BC	472-8629	OS	1819	1	0.03	0.27
Jul29	WINDSOR ON 519	258-6262	OK	1003	1		0.48✓
Jul30	NANAIMO BC	754-4579	OS	2029	21	2.13	3.96
Jul30	UNITEDKIN DM 1816530322	OB	2310	1	0.25		0.80
Jul31	OTTAWAHULLON 613	245-0230	OK	1758	1		0.48✓
Jul31	OTTAWAHULLON 613	245-0230	OK	1759	1		0.48✓
Jul31	OTTAWAHULLON 613	245-0230	OS	1800	1	0.17	0.31
Aug 1	MONTREAL PQ 514	844-4076	OK	0822	3		1.44
Aug 1	MONTREAL PQ 514	844-4076	OK	1011	2		0.96
Aug 1	MONTREAL PQ 514	844-4076	OK	1224	14		6.72
Aug 1	MONTREAL PQ 514	844-4076	OK	1238	1		0.48

322672090705091400024835000000001



RECYCLED PAPER  
PLEASE RECYCLETelephone Number  
Bill Date  
Customer Account NumberTOM HAWKEN  
325 8350 2  
Aug 14, 1995  
228720907 5

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## Long distance continued

Date	Place and number	called	Type	Time	Min	Savings	
Aug 1	DUNCAN	BC	748-5573	OK	1242	1	0.29
Aug 2	NELSON	BC	352-2594	OS	1814	10	1.22 2.28
Aug 3	VICTORI	BC	380-2659	OS	1858	10	1.05 1.95
Aug 6	VICTORI	BC	380-2659	OS	1152	10	1.05 1.95
Aug 6	TORONTO	ON 416	466-4903	OS	1257	1	0.17 0.31
Aug 6	PROVOTMPHYOR	503	862-9043	OB	2305	1	0.26 0.27
Aug 7	TORONTO	ON 416	205-2427	OK	1104	3	1.44
Aug 8	VICTORI	BC	380-0786	OK	1026	7	2.10
Aug 8	ORLEANS	ON 613	834-2021	OS	1847	2	0.34 0.62
Aug 8	GLOUCESTERON	613	822-1227	OS	1852	1	0.17 0.31
Aug 8	ORLEANS	ON 613	834-2021	OS	1852	1	0.17 0.31
Aug10	MONTREAL	PQ 514	844-4076	OK	1102	3	1.44
Real Plus discount 15.0% on 139.37							20.90 16
Total Real Plus - Regular							118.47
							193.45

## Total long distance

Taxes	15.36
GST (Reg. # R100652692) at 7.0% on 219.45	13.54
BC Provincial tax at 7.0% on 193.45	28.90
Subtotal	248.35

## Total new charges

AMOUNT OWING IS DUE BY	SEP 5, 1995	\$248.35
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SOME MONTHLY RATES FOR RENTAL PHONES IN THE 1995  
GREATER VANCOUVER WHITE PAGES ARE INCORRECT.  
THE MONTHLY RATE FOR RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS FOR  
VISTA PHONE (AL) OR \$4.00 (BUSINESS).  
(RESIDENTIAL)

Bellas calls 175.68  
GST 24.50  
BC Prov. Tax  
#200.18

P.S. Check the addition as I don't  
have a calculator.

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