

# JAMES

.....A SHORT STORY.....

# KING



# THE ONLY WITNESS

ALFIE GOES TO THAILAND - BOOK 1



JAMES KING

The Only Witness

*Alfie Goes to Thailand - Book 1 - A Short Story*

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There are times when things stop making sense.

They are often the times when everything falls into place.

JAMES KING - 2019



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## Author's Note

**I strongly recommend that you read the Alfie Goes to Thailand series books in order, particularly the three novels.**

At the time I wrote THE ONLY WITNESS, I had no plans to write a trilogy of novels about Alfie and his adventures. But the story became a part of the series and is based on a true-life incident.

I like it because it is typical of many strange things that happen in Thailand and life generally. It also has a flavour of the series and will give you a taste for ALFIE GOES TO THAILAND, which, I hope, will make you want to read all the books.

If you think any incidents or scenes in the series are unrealistic, or farfetched, remember the story is based on true life events. And truth is often stranger than fiction.

Learn more about me and my books at [James King Books](#)



## A Peaceful Day

**R**eturning to the village on the way back from his regular morning cycle ride, Alfie Mynn had a strange feeling, as he turned off the canal road and pedalled leisurely through the village. When his stomach started churning for no apparent reason, it was usually a sign of something untoward brewing. Eight in the morning is not early, especially in the small farming communities of Thailand. Most folk were up by five-thirty, before the sun rose. But today was Sunday, and workers were not rushing to work in the nearby factories. Even so, the more than usual quiet was eerie.

It took an unusual occurrence to disrupt the tranquillity of the picturesque landscape and peaceful communities of North Thailand's villages. Alfie was past middle-age, but he was fit, because every day he walked across the farms and along the river bank, or he pedalled through the adjoining villages on his way to the golf club. On weekdays he waved to the school kids as they played around the shelter in the centre of the village. They waited there for the bus to pick them up and take them to a nearby village. The old school in the temple grounds, they used

to attend, was closed last month, so they had to go to the one across the main highway. It wasn't far, about four kilometres, and they had fun on the bus before the more serious matter of school began.

The two old ladies who waved and shouted to Alfie as he rode by earlier were still busy at the food stall in the adjoining village. Thais do that without subtlety or a hint of shyness. They begged him to stop and eat the food they cooked early and sold on the roadside. Trade was good, so it didn't bother them that he rode on, at the same time waving back at them. People didn't cook for themselves if they worked outside the village. They were up before sunrise, and it was easier to grab a takeaway *khanom jin* or *kapow moo sab* on their way to work. At twenty-five or thirty Baht, it was much cheaper too, and still the old ladies made good money from their efforts. Their husbands, who were working the family farm, never saw how busy the food stall was, and never saw the money their wives made. If they found out, sales of whiskey in the village would have gone through the roof.

Alfie pedalled up the incline out of the last village and onto the canal road, which took him to the Golf Club where he greeted the gateman in his usual cheery way.

"Sawasdee krupp."

"Sawasdee krupp. Sabaidee mai krupp?" the gateman called back.

"Sabaidee, khob khun krupp."

He parked his bike, stretched and breathed in the fresh morning air, before strolling along the path leading to the sixth tee. The morning sun broke through the trees which lined the fairway, and a foursome was just replacing the flag in the hole on the fifth green. Alfie stopped to greet them before turning his

attention to the pretty young lady who ran the little drinks café. One of the staff from the clubhouse drove her there in a golf buggy, at the same time every morning to open up. Alfie bought a coke, and sat with her on the wall chatting, as the foursome tee'd off. When they had gone Alfie paid for his drink, said goodbye and walked back to the gatehouse.

It wasn't far from home, about twelve kilometres round trip, but it was an invigorating ride with no hills and few inclines. Most days he did it in forty-five minutes. Occasionally he needed longer when his legs felt more like a creaky eighty-five-year old's or he didn't get such a good night's sleep.

## A Vicious Assault

**T**here wasn't a soul in the high street as he rode through the village. He saw no walkers, no cyclists, no motor-bikes, trucks or cars, no children, and no shops were open. It was like a ghost town in a Western movie, without the tumbleweed. Has a plague hit our little village in the night? I know it's Sunday, but this is very odd.

A hundred metres up ahead, a delivery truck was parked outside Joy's pub and general store. He couldn't see anyone, and all was quiet. He sensed a lull preceding imminent danger. A chilling scream broke the eerie silence, followed by a fearsome volley of abuse, as a man's body sailed out from behind the truck. He landed on his shoulder, and his head bounced on the concrete road. With a groan, he rolled onto his back, taking the weight off his shoulder. But he could barely move, as blood gushed from the head wound caused by the impact and his nose being flattened against his face. He was badly hurt and not in a condition to render harm to anyone. Yet, in an instant, another man ran after the flying body, kicking it, shouting obscenities and gesticulating wildly. It happened in a split second, and

there had to be a build-up, which Alfie didn't see or hear, and no-one else did either. Where was Joy? Where was the delivery man?

One thing Alfie had learned during his time in Thailand, was – do not to get involved in other people's business – particularly when it involves a level of violence such as this. He was not cut out for this kind of stuff. As he rode past the truck, the assailant stared manically into his eyes, as though he was taking a mental snapshot of the intruder. Alfie was scared, and myriad thoughts raced through his mind as he continued home on auto-pilot. He fell off his bike in the driveway and left it there, while he staggered up the steps. Then he collapsed into his bamboo hammock on the veranda, as Pong rushed out of the house when she heard the noise.

“What's wrong, what happened, tee-rag?”

He caught his breath and tried to explain what he had just witnessed.

“Never have I seen such anger and aggression as I saw in that man's wild staring eyes.”

“Do you know him?”

“No.”

“What did he look like?”

“I can't say, but if I see him again, or just his photograph, I will definitely recognise him. I could never forget those manic eyes and his wild bushy hair.”

The image of the man, who stood like a triumphant gladiator, over his defeated opponent was etched in Alfie's mind. He tried to imagine what evil thoughts and emotions could enter a person's head, that would induce them to inflict such injury on a fellow human, but he couldn't. It was no accident or spur of the moment flare-up. Of that Alfie was certain.

A malaise in modern society had made us almost immune to similar incidents in the world's inner cities, but when it surfaced in Alfie's peaceful farming village, it stunned everyone. If the victim was dead, or he died as a result of the assault, the first question would surely be, was it premeditated murder?

The whole village was in shock, but the bizarre events that followed shocked Alfie more.



## The Only Witness

**A**lfie only saw the end of the fight, when a body flew into the road. And he was the only person who could give eyewitness evidence except for the victim and the perpetrator. The former was barely conscious by the time Alfie rode past, and the perpetrator was hardly likely to talk, even if the police found him. I am the only witness so that won't happen unless I come forward, Alfie thought, shivering from fear, not cold. It was 30°C. He assumed the attacker would disappear at once after he rode past the scene. And he prayed the victim would recover, once someone, braver than him, scraped him off the road and took him to hospital. Because if he didn't, there was only one person who could identify the assailant. Alfie was the only white person in the village, and the assailant had stared into his eyes as he rode past.

In a quandary he waited, biding his time. He kept his trap shut and listened to see what may happen. He threatened to sew Pong's lips together if she breathed a word to anyone. Her job was to play amateur sleuth, tap the village grapevine and bring the information back to Alfie for processing. What a nightmare;

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