

Documentary Pitch

W. Somerset Maugham: Secrets from the Outstations



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SUMMARY

AUTHOR	T. A. Morton
GENRE	Documentary
RELEASE	Documentary
DURATION	60 minutes
AGE RANGE	General adult
LOCATIONS	Singapore, KL, Borneo, UK

Author Information

T.A. Morton is a Singapore based Irish/Australian writer. Her short stories have appeared in the *Lakeview International Journal of Arts and Literature* and *The Best Asian Short Stories 2019*. In 2020 she was shortlisted for the Virginia Prize for Fiction and the Bridport Prize. She has recently completed her Masters in Crime and Thriller Writing at Cambridge University. In August 2022, her novel, *Someone is Coming*, was published by Monsoon Books. It was launched at the Singapore Writers festival and at the Georgetown Lit Fest in Penang.

Works by the author

- *Someone is Coming* (Monsoon Books)

TAGLINE	Exposing the secrets of 1920s colonial Singapore and Kuala Lumpur through the lens of W. Somerset Maugham
LOGLINE	The documentary explores how one of the world's most popular authors, W. Somerset Maugham, gained fame and notoriety for exposing the flaws and foibles of colonial life in prewar Singapore and Kuala Lumpur in a series of short stories.
GENRE	Documentary
SUBJECT	W. Somerset Maugham
THEMES	1920s colonial life, colonialism, homosexuality, impact of the author's works on the perception of Singapore, relevance of the author in Singapore today
TONE	Narrated in Singapore, Malaysia, Borneo and the UK at places relevant to Maugham, the documentary will also use photographs, historical old footage, Singaporean landmarks, local bookshops, maps and interviews with Singaporean writers and academics.
SYNOPSIS	Offers an introduction to W. Somerset Maugham and his life in Singapore and Malaysia as well as an overview of the short stories he based in both places. The narrator explores how Maugham sensationalised the lives of real colonials in the region in his short stories thus gaining both global fame and, in Singapore and KL, notoriety and ostracism. The narrator also looks at how Maugham hinted at the ills of colonialism while at the same time holding back scared of being exposed by the British establishment as a homosexual, which was illegal at the time. The narrator visits places important to Maugham, such as Raffles Hotel in Singapore, which to this day still trades on his name, and the narrator interviews current authors and academics to discover how Maugham's works impacted the perception of Singapore around the world and how his stories are perceived today.
SCRIPT	A 10k-word documentary script has been written and is based on a paper presented at the Literary London Society by the author in regards to how W. Somerset Maugham characterised the English in the East, addressing the role of Singapore and Malaysia in Maugham's literature.
*NOTE	The script was originally offered by the author to Zafar Anjum of Singapore-based Filmwallas but no agreement was signed and, at the author's request, Zafar recently emailed to confirm he would officially step back from this project.