

SARAWAK GONE / THE DAM / Ep01: The Bidayuh and the Dam

By

Andrew Garton

Post-production script

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Andrew Garton
ag@toysatellite.org
+61 409 948 280
<http://sarawakgone.cc>
<http://toysatellite.org>

TITLES

1

WIDE: BOY PADDLING IN STREAM.

TITLE: SARAWAK GONE

MUSIC: Theme music

MONTAGE: TITLES, TRUCKS, HEAVY MACHINERY, CROSSING BRIDGE,
ENTERING FOREST

SUBTITLE: THE BIDAYUH AND THE DAM

POV: CROSSING BRIDGE

FADE OUT

INTRODUCTION

2

MEDIUM: ANDREW GARTON TO CAMERA.

Garton stands in front of a forest.

GARTON
(to camera)
Sarawak is one of two Malaysian
states on the island of Borneo
supporting more than 40
sub-ethnic groups which include
the Iban, Penan and Bidayuh.

SUBTITLE: ANDREW GARTON

CUT TO

LOCATION

3

GRAPHICS: MAP OF MALAYSIA

We move over map of Australasia and hone in on Malaysia.

GARTON
(voice over)
The Bidayuh are believed to
originate from an area called
Sungkong, a mountainous region
located in what we today know as
West Kalimantan. Although
recorded in there as early as
1621, in the mid to late 19th
century, the Bidayuh ventured
into the forests of Sarawak,
including Bau, Padawan, Penrissen
and Serian to establish new
settlements there. "Bidayuh"
means 'inhabitants of land'.

(CONTINUED)

GRAPHICS: MAP FOCUS ON SARAWAK

We see the island of Borneo and zero in on Sarawak.

GARTON

(cont'd)

In 2008 I visited the direct descendants of these early settlers and the controversial dam threatening their inherited land, their rights and livelihood.

GRAPHICS: MAP CROSSING FOCUS ON UPPER BENGOH CATCHMENT

We see the Kalimantan border and hone in on the Upper Bengoh Catchment pointing to the four villages Kampung Taba Sait, Kampung Rjoi, Kampung Samban Teleg and Kamung Pain Bojong.

CROSS-FADE TO

EXT. CAR, TRAVEL

Travelling to Upper Bengoh.

GARTON (cont'd)

(cont'd)

They are the builders of Sarawak's unique bamboo bridges, both natives of Sarawak and citizens of Malaysia. They are the Bidayuh of Upper Bengoh.

CUT TO

THE DAM

4

SUBTITLE: THE BIDAYUH OF UPPER BENGOH

EXTREME WIDE SHOT: FORESTS OF BENGOH

GARTON

(voice over)

Four Bidayuh Kampung, or villages, are located on the site of the Bengoh Dam designed to meet the disputed water needs of Kuching.

MONTAGE: FOREST, FLORA

Establish the vast area to be submerged by the dam.

(CONTINUED)

GARTON (cont'd)

(voice over)

With no water conservation measures in place, repairs to existing infrastructure neither under way nor planned and hinging on a publicly suppressed Kuching Water Supply Study, the proposed Bengoh Dam catchment will consume an area of 12,700 hectares, the dam itself swallowing up to 8.5 square kilometres of flora and fauna including 199 Bidayuh families, their heritage farms, fishing, hunting and burial grounds, their customs, practices, and their Native Customary Rights.

KAMPUNGS

5

EXT: HAND-HELD, JUNGLE, VARIOUS SHOTS

Walking through the forest.

GARTON

(voice over)

The Bidayuh Kampung are accessible only by foot and yet some homes have solar power, generators. The two Upper Bengoh schools have satellite dishes and Internet access. Everything, from refrigerators to fuel, building materials and furniture are carried by porters crossing bamboo bridges, negotiating steep slopes, frequent storms and mud.

Crossing bamboo bridge, heading to Kampung Sait.

FADE OUT

KAMPUNG TABA SAIT

6

PAN: KAMPUNG SAIT

Entering Kampung Taba Sait.

SUBTITLE: KAMPUNG TABA SAIT, 54 FAMILIES

GARTON

(voice over)

Kampung Taba Sait is a low-lying village literally suspended above
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARTON (cont'd)
a valley on a patchwork of bamboo
and stilts. Villagers live in
close proximity to each other.

MONTAGE: VILLAGE LIFE

GARTON (cont'd)
(voice over, cont'd)
They store rice in their homes up
to five years in advance and
light their Kampung with a
combination of solar power and a
single generator. Their farms,
hunting grounds, fresh water
fishing and Taba Sait's self
reliance will be entirely flooded
by the Benghoh Dam.

CUT TO

KAMPUNG REJOI

7

POV: FOREST TRAIL

Leaving Sait for Rejoi

GARTON
(voice over)
Getting to Kampung Rejoi I
crossed several impeccably
engineered bridges made from
bamboo and wire strung over the
Sarawak Kiri river. Established,
well tendered gardens run the
perimeter of many of the homes in
Rejoi, each built with timber or
concrete. Tiled bathrooms, ample
kitchens and well kept social
areas are common. Many houses had
man-made ponds nearby provide
with ready access to fish for
eating. These are lovely homes of
a welcoming and generous people.

EXT: CROSSING SMALL BAMBOO BRIDGE INTO KAMPONG REJOI

Entering Kampong Rejoi

SUBTITLE: KAMPUNG REJOI, 41 FAMILIES

EXT: REJOI

Village life, in gardens.

(CONTINUED)

GARTON (cont'd)
 (voice over, cont'd)
 Both Semban and Rejoi villagers are descendants from a people called the Biemban or 'people of Emban', named after the Emban River. Their early leaders and warriors were legendary, fiercely defending their settlements.

The Sarawak Gazette, in articles published from 1885 to 1887, described the Semban as living in an area that would, in later years be known as Semban Native Customary Rights Land. Kampung Rejoi is situated on this land.

Preparing food.

GARTON (cont'd)
 (voice over, cont'd)
 Fish, rice, chicken, wild boar and fruit are the staple of all the Kampung in the region. Kampung farms support cash crops such as pepper, rubber, pineapple and cocoa. Locally grown food include rice, papaya and durian... One had to be reminded that everything else is carried into these villages, from tinned food to generators and the fuel to power them.

CUT TO

KAMPUNG SEMBAN TELEG

8

SUBTITLE: KAMPUNG SEMBAN TELEG, 50 FAMILIES

EXT: ENTERING THE VILLAGE

GARTON
 (voice over)
 Kampung Semban Teleg, the highest of all four villages, and the most difficult to reach, is home to a small number of elderly women known for the gold rings they wear around their arms and ankles. A tradition, some say, that grew at the time the Chinese had established trading routes along the west coast of Borneo as early as the twelfth century.

(CONTINUED)

EXT: VILLAGE LIFE

We see a man cutting a coconut, women carrying goods, gardens and well built homes.

GARTON (cont'd)
(voice over, cont'd)
Semban is a well established community only requiring an access road to improve conditions here. Despite being well above the proposed catchment, the residents of Semban will also be relocated. The development's Environmental Impact Assessment refers to a proposed Resort for the region. It's unlikely the resort's developers would want their residents to look out over Sarawak's newest man-made lake onto the inhabitants of a Bidayuh village.

CUT TO

KAMPUNG PAIN BOJONG

9

SUBTITLE: KAMPUNG PAIN BOJONG, 54 FAMILIES

GARTON
(voice over)
Kampung Pain Bojong is a low lying village that has existed in the region according to oral history records, as early as 1893.

CUT TO INTERVIEW

BODUI ANAK DAYU
We've been here since 1893. Our great grandparents by the name of Saang and Sandung cleared Bung Jogong for their first settlement after they came down from Bung Kiding in 1893.

EXT: VILLAGE LIFE

SUBTITLE: BODUI ANAK DAYU, KAMPONG BOJONG

BODUI ANAK DAYU (cont'd)
(voice over, cont'd)
There were quite a number of families at Bung Jogong by that time before they decided to split
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BODUI ANAK DAYU (cont'd)
and migrate to Sait and some to
Pain. In 1984, our village was
razed by fire, then we moved
further up to the place called
Bojong in 1985, which is our
present settlement.

GARTON
(voice over)
Built on the banks of the Sarawak
Kiri river, Bojong is the closest
village to the dam construction
site. A few of its men work for
the construction company as
labourers, but many would prefer
not to leave.

JAMIS ANAK JOHN
We think they will cheat us. They
said they will pay us but
actually, we are kicked out from
our place without compensation.
And at the new place, we have to
be in debt, our house, no food,
and from where would we get our
money?

SUBTITLE: JAMIS ANAK JOHN, KAMPONG BOJONG

JAMIS ANAK JOHN (cont'd)
If we have to move to the new
place, if we have to pay for our
houses, there's no point to be in
debt. How do we pay these if
there are no jobs there?

BODUI ANAK DAYU
From the beginning since we live
here, we farm, we got enough to
eat. As a farmer, each family of
two persons, husband and wife,
need at least about 6 acres of
land for farming a year.

BODUI ANAK DAYU
(cont'd)
So, I heard about the
government's promise to give us 3
acres if we were to be resettled.
What will happen to us as
farmers, since the rotation
period for hill padi farming
takes about 15 years?

Before the water rises, I want to
say something here because I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BODUI ANAK DAYU (cont'd)
 think, once the dam is completed,
 we are not allowed to pollute the
 water will be accused of
 polluting water. We will not be
 allowed to use it or pass through
 it. So, from where should we
 walk? I ask of the government
 that if we move to a new
 location, the government must
 abide by their promise when they
 first arrive to this village. The
 must not forget their promise to
 us, that is, we are to move above
 the flooded area, above the
 perimeter survey, because it is
 difficult to move to another
 place.

So, we will give our land and our
 farms inside the perimeter survey
 to them. We request the
 government to pay us fairly, a
 fair price because it's our land
 and our properties, because
 everything inside the area will
 be flooded, it will be lost and
 we won't have any right to the
 land again, that is the reason.
 But we can move to the higher
 ground, which is outside the
 flooded area, because we were
 promised in the past that the
 government will make roads and
 clear the area for us where we
 can build our homes, build a
 clinic, football field, community
 hall, these were what we were
 promised, and in the reservoir,
 they will give us an area where
 we can do fish farming, so a fish
 cage would be allocated to one
 family, each family would tend to
 their own fish. That was what we
 were promised.

We leave Kampong Bojong.

FADE OUT

DAM CONSTRUCTION

10

EXT: CONSTRUCTION SITE.

Stepping out of jungle into construction site.

SUBTITLE: BENGOH DAM CONSTRUCTION SITE

(CONTINUED)

GARTON

Whether you're going in or
leaving Upper Bengoh you'll walk
straight into this...

SLOW PAN

We see construction site, trucks, graders, etc.

GARTON

(voice over)

Construction began well before
any one knew what was going on.
The Environment Impact Assessment
had not yet been made public and
bull dozers were already clearing
Bidayuh farmlands for a quarry
sparking a series of injunctions
to prevent further trespass into
what has become another one of
the many native customary land
disputes sitting in Sarawaks
courts.

MONTAGE: VARIOUS, VIDEO, STILLS OF CONSTRUCTION SITE.

GARTON (cont'd)

(voice over, cont'd)

The dam's construction was
awarded to Naim Cendera Lapan, a
company headed by Sarawak's Chief
Minister's first cousin, Hamed
Sepawi. Naim Chendra Lapan
outsourced the job of building
the dam to the Chinese
company, Sino Hydro, for half of
the contracted budget.

GARTON (cont'd)

(voice over, cont'd)

Considered business as usual
amongst the powerful corporate
elite in Sarawak, the links
between them and government are
deep and well protected.

GARTON (cont'd)

(voice over, cont'd)

The Bidayuh have none of the
protections afforded Sarawaks
private companies. The Government
has sent its own people to do the
work of Naim Cendera Lapan,
enlisting Bidayuh to support
resettlement. Whilst some Bidayuh
have have signed blank documents
others have been bribed with

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GARTON (cont'd)

offers of more land and money to turn against their community leaders and intimidate their supporters.

GARTON (cont'd)

(voice over, cont'd)

Taba Sait, Pain Bojong and Rejoi - will be fully submerged when the dam is fully completed in July 2010. In all, 199 families with a total population of around 1,300 people will be displaced

GARTON (cont'd)

(voice over, cont'd)

No amount of compensation will replace the Bidayuh's culture and their traditions. Resettlement will lead the Bidayuh out of their land and into a world many Bidayuh claim they have no need for.

SIMO

(to camera)

Everything we ourselves do and find it and with have that thing free, and then when if we have some money also we don't have to spend to buy other things but just to spend for my children to school only. So those other things we don't have to buy.

SUBTITLE: SIMO ANAK SEKAM, KAMPONG REJOI

SIMO (cont'd)

If anybody else say can leave Rejoi it is very hard for me to answer, because Rejoi is the place where the great great grand mother before belong to them until now. We have to protects that land.

CUT TO:

TEXT PLATE: In October 2009 the Bidayuh of Upper Bengoh served a Writ of Summons and Statement of claims to the Kuching High Court in Sarawak. They have declared the construction of the dam illegal and unconstitutional.

FADE TO

CREDITS

11

For further information RENGAH SARAWAK
rengah.c2o.org

Presented by ANDREW GARTON

Series consultant / translations SACCESS (Sarawak Access)

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12

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