



Source: Martin Chulov, 'Families forget badlands for a day', *The Australian online*, 23/03/06.

Tags: [travel](#), [intimacy](#)

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So there I am, working at the Miramar complex at Noosa as a masseuse. Clients come in from all over the place—from Japan, Germany, other parts of Australia. You hear their talk on the streets, you feel their strangeness in the supermarkets and you see them soaked in the surrounds of this luxury holiday world. I am part of their luxury.

I work shifts of course, me and another girl, massaging the fat bodies. We do spar therapies as well, and aromatherapy and I get to feel who they are, just for 20 minutes. It's a good life really, although I don't know what Mum would have thought about it all. She'd be proud I suppose, that I'm working, even got a passport now. Did I tell you I am a double Gemini? I know all that now, all that stuff about the signs, the Qantas Club, all that stuff about the things she could never give me, like Dolce & Gabbana and Light Blue. And I hear stories, plenty of stories as I massage the knots away and the tension lets go.

Like this guy Damian—an art student from Perth, just back from Iceland. He said he went there to walk, says he goes everywhere just to walk, not walk like going on hiking adventures with groups, but walking like just walking. Actually he said he was doing a walking 'project'. It's taking him years. And between walks he soaks, he finds where the steam is and he soaks. He showed me pictures on his digital camera of the steam in Iceland. Steam baths in the open sky. He said, this is what he said, he said, 'I didn't want to leave that bath. It was like

holding a watery creature to myself, like embracing a creature made of sweat and tears and other bodily fluids very tightly to my chest, always.'

I maybe do ten clients a shift.

Another one was Cedric, an old guy from Hamburg. Must have been about 45, balding and soft. Nice enough, you know, telling me about the trip from Germany through Bangkok and what he wants to do with his life. In Noosa for five days: he didn't know where he was going really. I was thinking maybe he needs a walking project or something. Me, I'm part of the package. Him, well, he likes the golf and the massages, the food and the wine and the holiday but...So after a few days of this line of conversation, where he just talks about the bad things in his life, I decide to hit him for a donation. Why not, if I keep it discrete. He wouldn't have heard of Crabb and all those children, but he could give to the charity and it would make him feel better, so I suggest a coffee on my day off.

At his age Cedric is lonely and vulnerable and I know this. We meet at a cafe near the beach at the other end to Miramar. I am wearing my MNG singlet top showing plenty of bare arms, relaxing myself for a change. In he walks in his floppy shorts and sandals, soaking up the surrounds, smiling...

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from stories by Helen Bradbury and Domenico de Clario.*