



Fieldwork: A Novel

Mischa Berlinski

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A daring, spellbinding tale of anthropologists, missionaries, demon possession, sexual taboos, murder, and an obsessed young reporter named Mischa Berlinski

When his girlfriend takes a job as a schoolteacher in northern Thailand, Mischa Berlinski goes along for the ride, working as little as possible for one of Thailand's English-language newspapers. One evening a fellow expatriate tips him off to a story. A charismatic American anthropologist, Martiya van der Leun, has been found dead—a suicide—in the Thai prison where she was serving a fifty-year sentence for murder.

Motivated first by simple curiosity, then by deeper and more mysterious feelings, Mischa searches relentlessly to discover the details of Martiya's crime. His search leads him to the origins of modern anthropology—and into the family history of Martiya's victim, a brilliant young missionary whose grandparents left Oklahoma to preach the Word in the 1920s and never went back. Finally, Mischa's obsession takes him into the world of the Thai hill tribes, whose way of life becomes a battleground for two competing, and utterly American, ways of looking at the world.

Vivid, passionate, funny, deeply researched, and page-turningly plotted, *Fieldwork* is a novel about fascination and taboo—scientific, religious, and sexual. It announces an assured and captivating new voice in American fiction.

Mischa Berlinski was born in New York in 1973. He studied classics at the University of California at Berkeley and at Columbia University. He has worked as a journalist in Thailand. He lives in Rome.

A National Book Award Finalist

The New York Magazine Best Debut of the Year

A Los Angeles Times Favorite Book of the Year

A San Francisco Chronicle Notable Book of the Year

A Chicago Tribune Favorite Book of the Year

A Seattle Times Favorite Book of the Year

A Christian Science Monitor Best Book of the Year

A Library Journal Best Book of the Year

A Kirkus Review Top 10 Book of the Year

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"Mischa Berlinski brings a wealth of vivid detail to his narrative, and writes with real authority. *Fieldwork* is as fascinating as an ethnographer's private journal, as entertaining as a finely plotted thriller."—**John Wray, author of *Canaan's Tongue***

"The West has long equated exotic peoples with the dark and the wild. It is the strength of Mischa Berlinski's novel to chart those elements in the heart of the anthropology that seeks to explore them. He turns received ideas on their heads, for he makes us unsure about the things we thought we knew while showing us truths that we like to hide from ourselves."—**Nigel Barley, author of *The Innocent Anthropologist***

"A journalist investigates the suicide of an American anthropologist serving time for murder in a Thai jail. Mischa and Rachel are a young, bored, American couple who decide, upon college graduation, to move to northern Thailand, where Rachel accepts a job teaching first grade in Chiang Mai and Mischa pieces together enough freelance journalism gigs to make a living. But Mischa's focus changes when another wanderlust American tips him off to the riveting story of Martiya van der Leun, a middle-aged anthropologist who overdosed on opium while serving a murder sentence in Chiang Mai's women's prison. Mischa has almost no information about the crime, and leads on Martiya's life seem scarce, but he pursues the story with an anthropological fervor—one that he soon learns would have made Martiya proud. He follows Martiya's life from her childhood in an Indonesian village to her teenage years in California to her career in Thailand, where she began as a field researcher studying the Dyalo people. Slowly he uncovers important puzzle pieces, learning most notably that Martiya's murder victim was David Walker, a fourth-generation American missionary from a family of Dyalo experts, and that what had begun for Martiya as an academic project with the Dyalo eventually became for her an obsessive way of life. As Mischa integrates himself into the facets of Martiya's story, he becomes as consumed with it as she had become with the Dyalo, and when Rachel returns to America at the end of the year, Mischa finds that he cannot leave. Berlinski's methodical account of the factors that led a rational intellectual to commit such a heinous crime is air-tight and intensely gripping. But equally notable is his ability to conjure such an elaborate portrait of the fictional Dyalo, and his treatment of both religious missionary and anthropological fieldwork is subtle and insightful. Impeccable research and a juicy, intricate plot pay off in this perfectly executed debut."—**Kirkus Reviews**

"A fictional version of the author serves as the narrator of Berlinski's . . . thriller set in Thailand. Mischa Berlinski, a reporter who's moved to northern Thailand to be with his schoolteacher girlfriend, Rachel, hears from his friend Josh about the suicide of Martiya van der Leun, an American anthropologist, in a Thai jail, where she was serving 50 years for murder. As Mischa begins to investigate Martiya's life and supposed crimes, he becomes increasingly obsessed with the woman . . . Berlinski, who has been a journalist in Thailand, vividly portrays the exotic setting and brings depth and nuance to his depictions of the Thais . . . a lean, interesting tale about, among many other things, the differences between modern and tribal cultures."—**Publishers Weekly**

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The particular book Fieldwork: A Novel has a lot info on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was written by the very famous author. The author makes some research ahead of write this book. That book very easy to read you may get the point easily after perusing this book.

Jennifer Walker:

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