



# **B**OA CONSTRICTOR STOLEN IN PURMEREND (THE NETHERLANDS)

*John van Hoorn*

At the beginning of June a Boa Constrictor was stolen from the reptile department located on the first floor of the 'Nolte' petshop, on the Padjedijk 1 in Purmerend. It happened on a Saturday at about four o'clock. The shop was very crowded and the owner was unable to pay attention to the security-camera, which was supposed to guard the reptile department.

That's how a man could put the boa around his neck and hide it under his tracksuit, while nobody was watching. When he came down the stairs, he was directly in view with the lump under his coat, but before anyone could respond, the bird had already flown, in an escape car, which was waiting outside.

The following week the papers were full of it. I put a reward out of f 500,00 for the 'golden' clue. (We were talking about a special specimen of Hog Island Boa.) Unfortunately this led to nothing, I had given up hope that I would ever see the snake again.

I went to the police station to report that the snake had been stolen and that I had a suspicion about who had done it. It was a customer who had already bought some different snakes and was very interested in the stolen specimen. One month before the

crime he gave me a call, to ask if the snake was still there but he never showed up.

Some six weeks later something happened that I had I never dreamt of. I received a telephone call and I instantly recognised the customer, whom I had put under suspicion in the first place, by his accent. He asked me what snakes I sold and which species. I answered his questions normally. He told me he had a snake for me and he said the name of the stolen snake. My blood was starting to boil. Then he said: 'Look near the stairs, there is a bag.' I was close to the stairs, because the telephone is installed there, and I saw the bag which I thought belonged to another customer.

The boa was returned inconspicuously, nobody had seen anything. The man on the phone said: 'Sorry it was a mistake.' And then he asked me not to report this to the police. I told him it was OK, because I was happy that I had the boa back.

There must be something good, deep inside this thief. He could have left the snake anywhere but he drove two hours, to return the snake to me.

*Translation: Jacoline Braas  
Corrections: Mark Wootten*