

TB

DARCLIGHT

WOLF CREEK (SEQUEL)

By

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DIRECTORS NOTES; WOLF CREEK 2

Greg Mclean September 2010

The reaction to the first Wolf Creek film far exceeded all expectations both critically and commercially. It played at two of the most prestigious film festivals in the world (Sundance and Cannes) while also raking in millions of dollars in box office returns and quickly secured a place as 'one of the most terrifying movies ever made'. It was an uncompromising little picture that couldn't be denied, which also proved that the character of Mick Taylor resonated powerfully with audiences as a figure of genuine horror and menace. The goal had always been to create a home grown Australian 'boogiemán' whose story could sustain multiple episodes or 'adventures'. And after the success of the first film we immediately began working on story ideas.

I strongly felt audiences wanted to learn more about Mick. As horrific as he is, they were craving to go deeper into the mind of this mass-murdering psychopath that was a living, breathing, monstrous version of the darkest shadow of the Australian psyche. And so we constructed a film in which the audience would get to experience this in the most exciting and unforgettable fashion. Aside from this, my specific goal in writing this sequel was to deepen the legend of Mick Taylor, while at the same time creating a surprising action/thriller. It's taken three years to come up with just the right balance of action, horror and suspense while creating a new kind of film for a different world cinema market.

As director, I believe all of these elements are powerfully present in the script we've crafted and that the production team, with their demonstrated ability to put gripping, suspenseful action on the screen, will fully realise this film's potential to deliver a unique, visually arresting and highly marketable movie driven by a very powerful central performance. And best of all, like the first movie, it will scare the living daylights out of audiences; always the goal with any great horror film.

I'm thrilled to share the next stage of the Wolf Creek journey with audiences around the world.

Greg Mclean

WHITE TITLES ON BLACK:

The following is based on actual events.

30,000 people are reported missing in Australia every
year.

90% are found within a month.

Some are never seen again.

FADE IN:

1 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 1

A shimmering highway, heat so dense it's like rippling water. Blurring our vision. The dark bitumen looks like an infinite, winding serpent.

Slowly a darker shape emerges. As if it's forming from the very particles of the desert air itself. Gradually we realize we are looking at a vehicle, heading toward us down the long, lonely desert highway.

In particular, it's a Ford F100 truck. Eventually it gets closer and louder until its NOISE is deafening and it BLASTS past and we...

HARD CUT TO:

2 HIGH WIDE AERIAL - DESERT - OUTBACK - DAY 2

Far below the vehicle is a speck again. ON: a vast, straight highway. Surrounding it is the timeless desert. Silent. Vast.

The Australian Outback.

HARD CUT TO:

3 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 3

A souped-up (very late model) highway patrol police car is concealed by an ancient, peeling roadsign. The vehicle is only visible from one side of the hundred mile stretch of nothing. Obvious. But cheeky.

4

INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS

4

TWO COPS. Dark mirrored shades. Sweating, hot and bored to the point of killing themselves. They don't know it, but someone's about to save them the trouble.

COP #1 lazily pops the radar out the window. Sighs like he's just run a marathon.

STATIC BUZZES over the RADIO: a BORED VOICE checking units in the area.

COP #2 reaches for a packet of potato chips. He opens it and starts munching loudly. Chomping mouthfuls.

The first cop finally extends his hand without looking over.

Cop #2 stops. Sighs. Finally picks out 'a' chip and puts it in his partner's hand.

Cop #1 winces at the pathetic offering. Hoovers it anyway. The other cop goes back to stuffing his maw.

A BEEP makes them both look left. They exchange an amazed glance -- something's actually happening.

A blue truck flashes past.

Cop #1 tracks it then clicks for a speed.

CLOSE ON: 100 KMS.

COP #2
He's under. Bugger.

COP #1
He doesn't know that.

A wry smile: Cop #2 gets it.

COP #2
This arsehole is dead meat.

COP #1
Dead - meat.

5

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

5

A SIREN SCREAMS. TIRES spew a massive rooster-tail and BURN RUBBER.

6 **EXT. HIGHWAY - AHEAD - DAY** 6

The blue truck trundles along. In the far B.G. WE SEE flashing lights, then the blue turbo-charged patrol car comes into view. The SOUND of the SIREN builds.

7 **INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS - DAY** 7

It's been said some cops only sign up so they can drive like maniacs and fire guns at people and not get in trouble. Looking at the grins on these two, you might think it was true.

8 **INT. BLUE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS - DAY** 8

Through the back window the DRIVER -- wearing a distinctive battered akubra hat -- notices he has company. We can tell by the way he moves his head he's not happy about it. Then we know he's not happy because he takes a huge bowie knife from his glovebox and lays it on the seat. This thing ain't for slicing tomatoes. It's a huntin' knife of the first order. Designed for killin'. And skinnin'.

Efficiently.

9 **EXT. BLUE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS - DAY** 9

A left-hand indicator light flashes and the vehicle slows, pulling over onto the red dirt. Dust rises until it blacks out the frame.

10 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY** 10

The patrol car stops ahead. Sits there a beat. Nothing happens.

ANGLE: through the back window of the truck. The driver's waiting patiently. Even if he is fingering the knife.

11 **INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS - DAY** 11

The two cops sit there. After a long while, one sighs. Reaches for the door until he's halted by a hand on his shoulder. A small headshake.

COP #2
Make the prick sweat.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

A grin, nod from Cop #1. He settles again.

12 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

12

ANGLE: into the back of the truck. Its occupant still waits patiently.

After a long time he scratches his head: "What the hell are these clowns playing at?"

13 EXT. HIGHWAY PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS - DAY

13

ANOTHER ANGLE ON: the patrol car. Then both doors open as little feet in big boots step out. The men stretch their huge guts and adjust their belts, taking their time before closing the doors and turning to face the 'offender'.

WE FOLLOW them to the window and rise up behind Cop #1, who RAPS HEAVILY on the window.

The window rolls down, and out of shadow we see for the first time a certain bloke some might recognize. For those who don't: it's the criminally insane psychopath and brutal serial killer MICK TAYLOR.

He smiles broadly.

MICK

G'day fellas. Hope I wasn't doing anything too wrong?

A glance of disdain between the cops behind mirrored shades. Cop #2 scans the interior of the vehicle before moving toward the rear.

MICK (CONT'D)

Seems to be the problem?

Cop #1 glances back to Mick.

COP #1

Seems you were breaking the speed limit, sunshine. Now get outta this shitbox 'fore I haul your ass out and take your licence away on the spot.

CLOSE ON: Mick. And in this instant we know both these men will be dead within the next five minutes. Mick smiles, very brightly.

MICK

Anything you say, Officer.

The cop's power trip's going real well. So he thinks.

Meanwhile, Cop #2 starts poking around in the back of the truck. Freezes as he sees...

...blood dripping to the dusty ground. From a big closed metal storage locker.

The officer draws his weapon and opens the door to reveal...

...a fresh kangaroo carcass hanging next to two large wild pigs. Various gutting, cleaning and hunting gear alongside.

The cop sighs with relief, holsters his gun and closes the door shut -- missing the bloodied and severed female HAND that drops in the foreground as we CUT TO BLACK.

UP FRONT

Mick stands before Cop # 1.

COP #1

Know how fast you were going?

MICK

Guessing was faster than I was
'sposed to be going if you blokes
pulled me up.

He chuckles. Cop #1 doesn't. The other cop arrives.

COP #2

Some kinda half-arsed pig-shooter
or somethin'?

Mick sees he's referring to his recent kills.

MICK

Gotta make a quid somehow', right
lads?

The cops look at each other.

COP #1

Hundred 'n' twenty. You were
twenty k's over the limit.

Mick blanches. He's more careful than that.

MICK

You sure? Coulda sworn I was sittin' on a hundred.

COP #1

Callin' me a liar?

MICK

No. Not at all mate. Must have made a mistake, that's all. Gets pretty lonely on these highways out here. Was probably daydreaming again. Guess I forgot to check properly. Sorry 'bout that. Won't happen again.

He goes to leave. A big hand on his shoulder stops him.

COP #2

The fuck you think you're goin'?

Mick stops. Eyes them. Slowly a smile cracks.

MICK

Ah, you bastards. You're putting me on! You're not really going to book me, are ya?

COP #1

Bet your hillbilly arse, we are.

He pops out his book, starts to write it up. The other cop notices the tires. Looks closer.

COP #1 (CONT'D)

Can I see your licence?

Mick nods, opens the door. As he reaches inside his hand lingers momentarily at the bowie knife, but continues on to the glovebox. Best to let this one play out. Bullets, smokes and a fox whistle spill out before he finds a tattered licence.

When he emerges, Cop #2's rounding the car and shaking his head.

COP #2

Nup. no good. These tires are bald. You can't drive with tires like this.

Mick's getting a little frustrated.

MICK

Come on, guys. They're fine for driving in the dry, which is frankly -

(gesturing around)

-where I'm doing most of me driving. Only a few years old anyway so...

And Cop #1 has his gun out -- trained on Mick.

COP #1

Raise your hands, turn around and face the vehicle.

MICK

What? You can't be serious?

Cop #2 whacks him in the shoulder so Mick spins. Cop #1 monsters him against the hood of his truck. Presses the gun against the back of Mick's head. Mick acts as surprised as hell. These guys are cowboys. At the very least seen too many episodes of 'COPS'.

MICK (CONT'D)

Bloody hell, boys. Careful with that thing.

COP #1

Shut the fuck up, hick. I was just going to write you up for speeding. But apparently this pile of shit shouldn't even be on the road, and after that last outburst neither should you.

Cop #2 sees a large hunting rifle in a rack behind the seat in the car. Nods to his colleague.

COP #2

Sarge. Check that out.

The other cop peers over his shades. Then back to Mick. Still spreadeagled on the hood.

COP 1#

Got a licence for that?

Mick, doing a great job of keeping his cool, nods.

MICK

Yes, sir. It's in the glovebox. I can get it for you if you like-

(CONTINUED)

COP #1

Don't move a muscle, sunshine.

The sarge nods and Cop #2 takes over holding Mick at gunpoint. Cop #1 completes writing out the ticket. When done he tears it out and nods for Cop #2 to step back as he reaches around, stuffs the ticket in Mick's front pocket. Mick goes to move.

COP #1 (CONT'D)

Uh huh. Keep your hands on the hood until you can't hear us no more, you understand?

Mick nods.

COP #1 (CONT'D)

As you'll see that ticket there takes away your licence for speeding, having an unroadworthy vehicle and for obstructing officers of the law trying to do their duty. Righteo, sunshine?

Mick watches them as they walk back to their car. Keeps his hands on the hood as asked.

COP #2

Have yourself a good day, now.

They squeeze into the patrol car. DOORS SLAM. The ENGINE turns over and they burn the tires and spray a dustcloud all over Mick and his truck.

Mick finally opens his eyes. Caked in dust. Just stands there watching their car disappear into the distance. And we see stirring deep in those eyes an evil not quite human.

The policemen laugh hard.

COP #1

That dumb sonofabitch didn't know what hit him. Probably been cruisin' around out here for years without seeing another car, then, BOOM, gets pulled up by the cops.

COP #2

See the look on his face?

COP #1

Face of one unlucky prick. I tell you.

(poor impersonation)
'Sorry' bout that, won't happen again'. We bloody know it won't, mate. Not while we're out here, keeping the road safe... my arse!

He continues to chuckle and then...

...KABOOM as COP #2's entire head EXPLODES! All that's left is a bloodpumping stump. Cop #1 screams and fights the wheel, ignoring the bucket of brain matter and gore covering the left side of his face. Wind jets into his eyes through the shattered windshield making it even harder to discern the road.

15

EXT. HIGHWAY/DESERT - DAY

15

The patrol car leaves the highway, fishtails then vanishes down a steep RAVINE. As it rolls GLASS and DEBRIS fly off the vehicle until it CRASHES to a dusty halt on it's roof.

Then: silence.

16

EXT. HIGHWAY/RAVINE - DAY

16

The dust cloud is some ten meters down. Mick's truck blocks out the view as it halts and WE MOVE UP the side until we find Mick.

He glances over, scratches his head goodnaturedly. Then he grabs his hunting rifle from the front seat, ejects the smoking shell and chambers another round. Grabs his knife, pulls a worn shovel from the rear and heads off.

All the while whistling 'Waltzing Matilda'.

17

EXT. RAVINE - DAY

17

The wrecked patrol car lies like a shattered insect. SCREAMS from inside. Cop #1 crawls from a broken window. He is literally covered in blood. Half his own, half his (ex)partner's. He glances up toward the highway; it's a steep climb. Then behind; the rocks soon give way to open desert.

Moaning in agony, so many things busted up he doesn't know how to move. He more or less falls forward until he's a few feet from the vehicle...

(CONTINUED)

...and bumps into Mick's boots.

He freezes before looking upwards. The sun is behind and we see that familiar silhouette of our main man: Mick Taylor. We hear that CHUCKLE. The sound of a man totally in control.

Cop #1 falls back, screams as he lands in agony. Hisses through blood and broken teeth.

COP #1

The... the fuck you think you're doing? You'll be put away forever! Forever! Know what happens if you fuck with a cop? You're fucked!

Mick lights a cigarette. Blows smoke. Smiles.

MICK

I'm not the bloke with fractured ribs about to dig a hole about-
(peers at the corpse
of the other Cop)
- six foot five long. And unfortunately for you, your little mate was right, back there. I am a pigshooter.

He tosses the cop a shovel.

MICK (CONT'D)

Now dig. Pig.

CLOSE ON: Cop #1's face. As it dawns on him he's entered the kind of nightmare you only see in horror movies.

Except this is real. This is his life.

CUT TO:

The sun is lower, casting a red glow over the desert. Mick sits smoking beside a SHALLOW GRAVE next to the patrol car. The putrefying CORPSE of the headless Cop lies next to it. Millions of flies swarm and feast.

Finally, Cop #1 -- a man close to death, sweat-covered, broken in every way -- crawls from the hole.

COP #1

I... I did it. I did what you asked.

(CONTINUED)

MICK

Nice one, sunshine.
(Gestures to the corpse)
Now roll that king-sized turd in
there. And fill it.

The man just stands there, about to pass out. Mick raises his hunting rifle and the cop finds new inspiration.

19

EXT. RAVINE/DESERT - EVEN LATER DAY

19

The cop pats down the dirt with feet ripped to shreds. Boots hanging in bits. Dried blood and flies covering his leg wounds. He collapses. Looks up at Mick.

Nearby, Mick finishes covering the underbelly of the PATROL CAR with dense SCRUB -- making it invisible from the air. The broken cop drops the shovel.

COP #1

Alright. I did it. I filled it
for Christ's sake. Please.
Please let me go.

Mick shrugs.

MICK

I'm going to let you go. But you
go that way.

The man turns, looks into the open desert. Not up toward the highway.

He's about to complain. Thinks better of it. Stands and stumbles forward, then starts running for all he's worth through the saltbush. To freedom. To life. He's running as if his whole existence depended on it. Which, considering who he's just met, it does.

The cop keeps stumbling on, putting more and more distance between himself and the crash site, sprinting as if fueled by the power of God himself.

Finally, he slows. Stares ahead at the gaping maw of the desert stretching before him. What the hell would he do now?

He glances behind, can't even see the crash site anymore. Slows to a stumble. Maybe he could cut back-

Then: KABOOM! A huge calibre round fired with pinpoint accuracy EXPLODES out the mans chest.

(CONTINUED)

He drops like a puppet with cut strings. A good eight hundred yards from the highway. Clearly, this was Mick's strategy all along.

A family of nearby dingoes hear the gunshot and smell the fresh meat instantly.

Mick smiles. The remains won't be there tomorrow.

Mick unchambers his rifle. A quick look left and right, and he climbs back into his truck. He glances down the RAVINE and out into the DESERT. No trace of anything that's occurred here will be ever be known. Mick nods to himself.

MICK

Nothin' half-arsed bout that, mate.

He turns the ignition and we...

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN. WIND BLOWS. SPINE-CHILLING.

Title appears:

WOLF CREEK II

A vast panorama: red desert, endless skies, a lone, long highway. Mick's vehicle BLASTS past and continues until it's a speck in the distance. WE PULL BACK TO...

MATCH CUT TO:

...reveal the image is actually a tattered poster tacked up behind the reception desk at the "OUTBACK-PACKERS' HOSTEL".

Tracking back through the reception area we see that the desk is unoccupied. Wild party MUSIC is getting louder. A small crappy Christmas tree sits on the counter. Someone has threaded a can of VB beer down its trunk in lieu of an angel.

An open office-door behind lets out a TELEVISION's blue shifting light and muffled DRONE.

The SOUND of people talking and laughing drifts over the empty hostel reception. We follow the amiable noise past the junk food and soft drink dispensers, the racks of maps and brochures and the plastic chairs crowding the entrance, and along a...

...CORRIDOR. Rows of doors on either side. Some are open, revealing unmade bunk-beds jammed into the narrow confines. Floors are strewn with clothing and open backpacks. We CONTINUE UP...

...STAIRS, to the second level.

More ROOMS, but an open space beckons ahead. The TALKING increases in volume: the residents. The upstairs common room is a big open area filled with scrappy furniture, stained carpet and a DOZEN BACKPACKERS. A casual party is rocking.

It's been a stifflingly hot day and the tourists all lounge around in shorts and singlets and bra tops. A number of different conversations all going at once (improvised). Much drinking.

An ENGLISH DUDE and a NEW ZEALANDER argue.

ENGLISH DUDE

Mildura, there's nothing else to do there. All your accommodation and food's paid for. You just rake the money in. Made five-grand in three weeks. Lived off it for months.

NEW ZEALANDER

Least in Goulburn we could still party. Met a local babe down there too. Gorgeous, she was. Made the whole trip worthwhile. Choice, bro.

The English dude shrugs.

ENGLISH DUDE

Plenty of time for that, mate. Why pass up the filthy lucre when it's right in front of you?

NEW ZEALANDER

She was filthy and she was right in front of me and...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NEW ZEALANDER (CONT'D)

I know that doesn't even make sense, but you know what I mean, yeah?

ENGLISH DUDE

You're drunk out of your mind.

The kiwi blinks, nods. We keep PANNING around, lingering on conversations, as if deciding who to concentrate on.

A distinctive CANADIAN accent can be heard. The big Canuck has barreled up a JAPANESE GIRL.

CANADIAN

-- spent time in Tokyo. Amazing culture, incredible city. The lights, the energy in the streets, amazing, there's nothing like it. But it's so packed it's like being a goddamn sardine!

A trio of ENGLISH girls drink VODKA and share a cigarette: ROSE, CATHERINE and GEORGIA.

ROSE

It was honestly the smallest thing I've ever seen! I said to him, 'honey, your dick's so small your girlfriend took it to court and they threw it out for lack of evidence'.

The girls laugh.

Separated from this scintillating conversation perched on the windowsill rests a guy drawing on a sketchbook. This is RUTGER ENQVIST (early 20s), German, strongly-built. We linger on him then rise and reveal the world beyond the window...

The heart of Sydney. A vast stretch of lights and noise. The steps of each building are crowded with people drinking. Others walk slowly up the street, singing and laughing. A lazy festival atmosphere rises from the streets.

CLOSE ON: Rutger drawing the skyline. He's adept. An economy of line and style. A FRENCH GIRL sits on the nearby windowsill and watches him.

FRENCH GIRL

Why don't you take a photo? It's easier.

Rutger looks up. Searches for the words.

RUTGER

(heavy German accent)

No... emotion. Too flat.

The girl smiles.

FRENCH GIRL

Oui. A good reason.

She turns back to the girl next to her -- KATARINA SCHMIDT (also early 20s). Katarina is particularly beautiful with long sun-kissed hair. She smiles at Rutger. He gives her a grin, turning the page and starting to sketch her.

We've found our couple.

FRENCH GIRL (CONT'D)

It's not safe anymore, Katarina. People go missing. You should take the bus. Or fly. It's not so expensive now.

She looks to Rutger, uncertain.

RUTGER

(still sketching)

We hitchhiked through Europe. It's safe if we travel as a couple. It's only when you are alone that you are in trouble.

Katarina smiles. Her English is not great.

KATARINA

(heavy German accent)

He's my bodyguard. Rutger would scare anyone off.

Rutger grins, continuing to move the pencil with quick, practiced strokes as he talks.

RUTGER

Besides, it the best way to see real Australia. And to meet real Australians. We have been up the coast and all we meet are other backpackers, other Europeans.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RUTGER (CONT'D)

We hardly meet any locals. So boring!

FRENCH GIRL

I heard of three hitchhikers who got picked up and taken to the desert and killed. Last year.

Katarina's smile fades. A FRENCH GUY -- possibly the girl's boyfriend -- overhears.

FRENCH GUY

That's not what happened. The guy killed the other two himself. They charged him, but he got off eventually.

FRENCH GIRL

No, wait. That's right. But I don't think he killed them.

FRENCH GUY

Then who did?

RUTGER

(ignoring them)

I have it all mapped out. We will see the real country before we leave.

FRENCH GIRL

What? Ayres Rock? These things you can see on postcards. We French and Germans -- we are not equipped.

Katarina glances at Rutger and he shrugs. It must be a point of contention.

RUTGER

I have other places. Amazing places.

His enthusiasm is infectious. Katarina smiles.

FRENCH GIRL

(intrigued)

Really? Where?

Rutger jumps off the windowsill and rummages through his backpack. He produces a well-thumbed MAP. He clears some empty bottles from the table and is about to perform a timeless backpacking tradition -- the poring over a map -- when Katarina checks her watch.

(CONTINUED)

KATARINA

Rutger. We must call home.

RUTGER

Okay, okay.

He grins at the French girl.

RUTGER (CONT'D)

We'll be back. Hold that thought!

FRENCH GIRL

You better be! We're heading out soon.

Katarina threads through the maze of legs and chairs, on a mission. Rutger follows, stuffing the map into his jacket pocket.

Catcalls of 'pikers' follow them, even after Katarina mimes making a phone call. The congregation laugh.

25

INT. BACKPACKERS' HOSTEL - HALL - NIGHT

25

Rutger hugs Katarina as they walk. (Their conversations together are always in German, subtitled with English.)

KATARINA

Let me see.

RUTGER

(innocent)

See what?

KATARINA

Don't pretend. You're a terrible liar. Show me what you were drawing.

He pauses and in the overhead fluorescent shows her the drawing.

CLOSE ON: Katarina in profile, wild locks flowing. She stares into the distance, smiling slightly. She'd been listening to the French girl talk, but Rutger makes her look contemplative and dreamy, as if contemplating something far deeper.

Katarina stares at the sketch.

KATARINA (CONT'D)

(soft)

Can I keep it?

(CONTINUED)

RUTGER

It's not my best.

KATARINA

To me it is.

He smiles and rips the page out for her. She walks with it held tightly in one hand. He kisses her.

At the end of the hall is a public phone. Its metal frame is covered in stickers and graffiti accumulated by thousands of travelers over the years.

Rutger idly reads them as Katarina dials. It takes some time to ring through. We only hear her side of the conversation.

KATARINA (CONT'D)

Yes, hello? Mother? It's Kata.

(louder)

It's Kata! Yes. I cannot hear you very well... We are fine, fine. But it's so hot here. No, I want to leave as soon as possible. But Rutger has his plans.

He gives her a squeeze. She grins.

KATARINA (CONT'D)

No, tell Father we have enough money to fly. But Rutger wants to see the outback his own way. You know how obsessive he gets.

Rutger raises an eyebrow; she's getting him in trouble with her parents. He starts kissing her ear.

KATARINA (CONT'D)

We'll be safe. Of course. I promise. He'll look after me.

She pushes Rutger away. It's his turn to grin.

KATARINA (CONT'D)

(rummaging in her pocket)

We have a cellphone. Only for emergencies. I'll give you the number... Yes, I know it's about time. Just be happy we have it.

TIME CUT TO:

Rutger's now talking to his parents. He rolls his eyes at Katarina as he is asked a million questions. The SOUND of a muffled GERMAN VOICE on the other end. Rutger patiently listens to his father's travel advice, as if used to these lectures.

On their way back from the phone Rutger holds the partially-folded map in front of him and pencils a possible path.

KATARINA

So how long to Alice Springs? It looks a long way.

RUTGER

The highway is good. Maybe three days if we get enough lifts. We can camp in Broken Hill. Then Adelaide or Coober Pedy. I've always wanted to go there. It's supposed to look like Mars. Alien.

KATARINA

But if we don't get lifts...

RUTGER

-- if we're pushed for time we'll get a bus. It'll be easy, Kata. You'll love it, I promise. Just 'go with the flow'.

(in English)

No worries, mate.

She pauses, smiles, just needing reassurance.

FROM THE COMMON ROOM a COMMOTION can be heard. Katarina and Rutger walk in and are almost bowled over by a moving couch. The English Dude and the New Zealander -- united by beer -- are pushing it.

ENGLISH DUDE

(to Rutger and
Katarina)

Hey! You lot coming?

The German couple watch them barrel past.

Around the room the other backpackers are filling eskies with beer and rolling up blankets. Some steal chairs.

The French girl appears before them laughing, arm around her boyfriend.

(CONTINUED)

KATARINA

What's going on?

FRENCH GUY

You're coming with us!

He embraces both of them and pushes them towards the door. They stumble on alongside him and laugh.

RUTGER

Where are we going?

FRENCH GIRL

Bondi. The whole street's coming. We shall celebrate Christmas on the beach. It is Australia. That is what you must do!

Katarina laughs and looks back at the commotion in the room. The English Guy and the Canadian are unplugging the small scuffed bar fridge.

ROSE

Oi! You buggers can't take that.

The Canadian sprays her with beer.

We follow Rutger and Katarina and their French friends down the corridor and stairs and through the front entrance. The couch is being threaded through the main doorway ahead. Laughter in the air. The young enjoying all that life has to offer.

Time slows and as the foursome pass through the doorway and we FREEZE on Rutger and Katarina grinning at each other. BLEEDS TO WHITE.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: sand. Like the red desert of the opening image. But this is lighter, finer. And it's littered with beer cans and empty bottles. Bodies sleep in the background. The sun strains at the horizon, casting a too-harsh sheen over everything.

WE FOCUS on the couch and bar fridge resting on the remains of a bonfire. Both still smolder. In the background behind the charred furniture stretches the blue water of the Pacific Ocean. The image is one of civilization spoiling nature yet again.

CUT TO:

28

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

28

Over the following CREDIT SEQUENCE we see CLOSE ON two pairs of boots trudging along the gravel beside a highway. We pull back to reveal Rutger and Katarina in backpacks walking on the outskirts of the city with thumbs casually held out. They talk and laugh, excited at the adventure ahead.

They run ahead as a passing car stops. Then get in, stuffing their backpacks in the boot.

CUT TO:

29

INT. CAR - DAY

29

Civilization is soon left behind. A vast landscape stretches away from the road. Barrenness on all sides. A land of horizons. Katarina stares out at the passing vista. The open empty spaces are unlike anything she's seen before.

CUT TO:

30

POV - KATARINA LOOKING TO MOUNTAINS - DAY

30

Forlorn mountains in the distance break the monotony of the view, but they only seem to emphasize the remoteness and hostility of the environment.

CUT TO:

31

EXT. - HIGHWAY - LATER DAY

31

An 18-wheeler road train flashes past the other way, dwarfing them. Its grille is like a prehistoric animal. The car rocks.

They pass a burnt-out car by the side of the road, an ubiquitous sight in the outback.

CUT TO:

32

INT. CAR - LOOKING OUT TO ROAD - DAY

32

CLOSE ON a passing sign reading "MOBILE PHONE AREA". Katarina stares. Does that mean their phone won't work elsewhere?

CUT TO:

33

EXT. HIGHWAY TURNOFF - LATER DAY

33

The couple get out of the car at a turnoff and wave thanks. They shrug on their backpacks and keep walking, staring out at the dusty landscape as the car heads off. Katarina wipes her brow of sweat.

CUT TO:

34

INT. DIRTY UTE - LATER DAY

34

They now sit cramped in the front cabin of a dirty ute. The OLD CODGER driving rattles on next to them. He's enjoying the company, so much so he won't shut up. Rutger glances at Kata and she smiles.

CUT TO:

35

EXT. CARAVAN PARK - DUSK

35

The couple trudge into a caravan park in fading afternoon light.

CUT TO:

36

EXT. CARAVAN PARK - CAMPSITE - EVENING

36

Rutger hammers in the last tentpost while Katarina grabs a bucket for water. She kisses him as she passes and he pinches her bum.

CUT TO:

37

EXT. HIGHWAY ROADSIDE - NEXT DAY

37

Katarina stands looking at a dead kangaroo by the roadside. Flies buzz. Rutger catches up with her and she keeps walking.

CUT TO:

38

EXT. HIGHWAY - ON KOMBI - DAY

38

A Volkswagon Kombi van driven by other tourists drives them in to Alice Springs. (END SEQUENCE)

CUT TO:

39

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS - LATE AFTERNOON

39

As Rutger and Katarina walk back from sightseeing, daypacks on their shoulders, they see three ABORIGINAL KIDS walking towards them. The kids see the travelers' backpacks and point and laugh at them; speaking a native dialect.

The Germans smile, nodding along with them. But there's something unsettling about these kids. They're soon bored and they run off. Rutger watches them go.

RUTGER

What were they saying?

KATARINA

I don't know. But they found something amusing.

RUTGER

(shaking his head)
Weird.

KATARINA

Not really. You are pretty funny looking. You must admit.

He lunges at her and she squeals.

CUT TO:

40

INT. TENT - NIGHT

40

Rutger -- wrapped in a sleeping bag -- idly sketches on a pad by the light of a travel lamp.

41

EXT. CARAVAN PARK - NIGHT

41

Katarina returns, stares up at the spread of stars, swinging her toiletries bag.

42

INT. TENT - NIGHT

42

Rutger glances up when she bounces into the tent. She jumps on him and scatters his paper and pencil.

RUTGER

(surprised)
Shit. Hey!

She forces herself down into the sleeping bag alongside him.

(CONTINUED)

KATARINA

Move over.

She slips off her pajama top and bottoms and throws them on her nearby backpack. Rutger can't help smiling at the warm naked body pressed close. She lies on top of him and holds his face, looking down into his eyes.

KATARINA (CONT'D)

You look happier now.

RUTGER

What makes you say that?

KATARINA

It's 'hard' to say.

RUTGER

Well spotted.

KATARINA

'Hard' to miss.

RUTGER

Okay, enough with the crappy jokes!

He tips her off -- still within the confines of the sleeping bag -- and hurriedly shrugs out of his shirt.

43

EXT. TENT - NIGHT

43

We HEAR their MUFFLED LAUGHTER.

CUT TO:

44

EXT. KINGS CANYON - MIDDAY

44

The couple climb a steep track through thick bush. They puff at the exertion but the surroundings are so amazing there are no complaints. Rutger stops to look at a kookaburra watching him from the trees, its huge beak regal.

At the plateau they emerge to an incredible sight. Stop and stare.

Strange dome-shaped structures are scattered along the top of the mountain -- the relics of sand-dune slopes. The extraordinary 'Beehives'. They wander amongst them. Katarina takes photos. Rutger continues on, glancing around in awe.

(CONTINUED)

Finally, they emerge at a lookout that gives an amazing view of the sheer, smooth double walls of Kings Canyon. It is like a chainsaw or an axe has bisected the mountain. As if the earth has been split in two.

RUTGER

(softly)

I told you it would be worth it.

She nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. KINGS CANYON LAGOON - LATER

They follow signs to a lagoon. An oasis amongst the harsh landscape. They strip and bathe in the cool water.

CUT TO:

EXT. KINGS CANYON LAGOON - EVEN LATER

Afterwards they float on their backs and stare up at the endless sky. Katarina smiles up at the sunny, perfect sky.

RUTGER

(idly)

Such a big sky. So bright. Like we're closer to the sun here.

He swims closer to Kata.

RUTGER (CONT'D)

I read about a woman whose car broke down out in the desert. She should have stayed with it, but instead she walked for help thinking she was close to a town. They found her body about five kilometers away. She had been walking parallel to a river the whole time. She never realized it.

Katarina laughs grimly.

KATARINA

That's supposed to make me want to travel out here?

(CONTINUED)

RUTGER

I'm just saying it's beautiful,
but also dangerous. Like you.

She kisses him. They tread water, bodies bound together.

CUT TO:

47

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - EARLY MORNING

47

Anxious to get on the road, Rutger is still tying the tent to his pack as they walk. The sun is almost mounting the horizon, a pink glow in the sky. Soft breeze in the air.

But the road to Halls Creek is less heavily traveled and they walk without success for some time.

CUT TO:

48

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - LATE MORNING

48

The sun scorches down. Katarina is starting to get worried.

RUTGER

-- the gauche style. This gallery in Lausanne. It means untutored, but it also had paintings by the criminally insane and mentally impaired. The freedom of these works. Unencumbered by theory and convention. So innocent.

Katarina's looking worried.

KATARINA

That's fascinating. But perhaps we should go back, Rutger? Take the coach? Maybe we're not meant to do this.

Rutger is about to reply when a car appears in the distance.

RUTGER

There!

He sticks out a thumb and the 4-Wheel Drive slows and stops ahead. All we can see of the driver through the back window is the silhouette of his hat.

(CONTINUED)

Rutger and Katarina eagerly grab their packs and run up to the vehicle, grateful for the rescue. Any longer out here and they'd begin to bake.

A smiling FARMER (mid-forties, rotund) jumps out of the car and waves g'day, helping them put their packs in the back.

The FARMER'S WIFE smiles at them from the passenger seat. She holds a GOAT. In fact the backseat is full of KID GOATS. All bleating, chewing, eating. Chaotic.

FARMER

What're you doin' out here? Fry
your bloody brains in this heat.

Rutger and Kata look at each other, not entirely sure what he just said.

FARMER (CONT'D)

In you get. Where you headed?

The backpackers gratefully climb in. A GOAT chews Katarina's hair making her squeal.

The Landrover disappears into the distance.

CUT TO:

Rutger retrieves his pack from a different car and thanks the driver. Katarina reads the sign posted at the start of the dirt track: "WOLF CREEK CRATER - FOLLOW ROAD TO END AND FOLLOW TRAIL SIGNS". Bullet holes cover the metal sign. The car pulls away.

The pair begin the long trek up the track.

CUT TO:

A large sign greets them: "WOLF CREEK CRATER - WALKING TRAIL - ALLOW 3 HOURS". Someone has strung a bunch of now-dead flowers next to the sign. Katarina looks closer at them.

(CONTINUED)

KATARINA

Flowers.

Rutger looks quizzically at her, sees them.

RUTGER

They're memorial flowers. For you.

He hands them to her, they smile and kiss. They fall apart in her hands.

KATARINA

God you're ridiculous. I never know when you're serious!

She slaps him and he chuckles. They stare up at the rise ahead. It just looks like a big hill -- its size hard to comprehend from their lowly position. The white bones of tiny animal skeletons litter the ground.

RUTGER

Come on then, Madam lazy bones.

He hefts his pack and starts hiking up the trail. Katarina looks back at the sign. Then she follows him.

CUT TO:

53

EXT. WOLF CREEK CRATER - DAY

53

They sit on the edge of the huge depression and hold each other at the awesome sight. From behind them WE SEE the crater stretching away, then WE RISE ABOVE to reveal the spectacular sight of the WOLF CREEK CRATER. It is like a vast eye cut in the earth, the circle of vegetation in its center a staring iris. A perfectly-formed bowl 60 meters deep and with a massive diameter of some 800 meters, formed when a meteorite collided with the earth millions of years ago. The edges flare up to create a symmetrical ring of hills. It's both spectacular and eerie -- something otherworldly about the site.

RUTGER

My god. This place is incredible. I wonder how long it will last before the desert swallows it up completely.

KATARINA

Forever, probably.

RUTGER

Not forever. Nothing lasts forever...

(CONTINUED)

KATARINA

(snapping back)

-- OK, but in the meantime can you stop being such a morbid asshole, okay? What's wrong with you?

He looks at her, a little taken aback.

A NOISE from the rocks behind them. FOOTSTEPS on the uneven ground. The SOUND of ROCKS being dislodged.

Katarina suddenly looks back as...

...a FAMILY appears over the hill behind them, making a ruckus. A MOTHER and FATHER and TWO KIDS carrying water bottles. The kids look bored and annoyed. Other tourists exploring the crater.

The German couple smile politely. But the sublime beauty of the meteor site has been disrupted. Nor can they contemplate the crater in silence anymore -- with the nearby family arguing over where to sit and where's the best place to take a photo.

And when another GROUP appears -- TWO GUYS and a GIRL -- Rutger and Katarina grab their packs and trek off. The site no longer seems that special.

CUT TO:

54

EXT. WOLF CREEK NATIONAL PARK - AFTERNOON

54

Rutger and Katarina stand on the side of the road, packs between their feet, and watch one of the interlopers' cars turn off the dirt track and head the other way, away from Halls Creek.

RUTGER

Goddammit!

(calling after)

You can't go this way?

Motherfuckers!

Katarina looks at him with concern. He's not usually the one to get upset.

RUTGER (CONT'D)

It's alright. Someone will come past.

He hauls his pack onto his shoulder and sets off. Katarina stares after the car then follows.

CUT TO:

55

EXT. WOLF CREEK NATIONAL PARK - DUSK

55

They're still walking some time later. It's starting to get dark.

KATARINA

Maybe we should head back? Find a passing coach or something?

RUTGER

You seen any coaches?

She's stung by his tone. He points to the beginnings of forest ahead, the mass of trees stretching out on either side of the road.

RUTGER (CONT'D)

We'll walk for a little more and if no-one comes along we'll set up our tent.

A tense look.

RUTGER (CONT'D)

It's okay. Once we get on the road to Darwin we'll be fine. I guarantee it.

CUT TO:

56

EXT. WOLF CREEK NATIONAL PARK FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

56

Their small tent is dwarfed by the surrounding trees, the glow of the lamp within illuminating the little dwelling. The remains of a campfire smokes lazily nearby.

57

INT. TENT - NIGHT

57

The couple are snuggled up in their sleeping bags.

KATARINA

...but if I take my major as Philosophy I won't be able to continue Psych. I have to choose.

RUTGER

How can it be so cold at night?

KATARINA

Rutger!

(CONTINUED)

RUTGER

(smiling)

Sorry. Do you really see yourself becoming a Psychologist? Dealing with crazy people for the rest of your life?

KATARINA

I'm with you, aren't I?

RUTGER

Good point.

KATARINA

But I have to be realistic. I have to think of a career. Where will it take me?

RUTGER

You're Professor Heinrich's sweetheart. Take the Research Assistant job. He'll push to get you into post-grad. You'll be head of the department one day.

She glances over.

KATARINA

And you?

RUTGER

I will go into Law. My father is right. I should follow him.

She looks shocked.

KATARINA

What about your painting?

RUTGER

Art never saved people's lives, protected their property, punished the wrong. It's just indulgent shit.

KATARINA

Perfect. Now you've repeated what your father thinks, how about we hear your thoughts on the matter?

CUT TO:

58

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

58

A car comes into view heading over a rise. Twin headlights like sullen eyes. It slows and pauses at the top.

From the rise the tent can be seen, slightly illuminated amongst the mass of trees. It looks vulnerable. Lonely.

The car idles, its throaty engine contemplating. There are no other vehicles on the road.

It decides.

Slowly, like fate, the headlights swing around and the black shape of the ute slips into the trees as if a shark underwater.

CUT TO:

59

INT. TENT - NIGHT

59

Rutger continues, enthused now.

RUTGER

That's it. I think I will become
a stripper and keep old horny
ladies happy.

He jumps up, having to crouch over in the small tent.

RUTGER (CONT'D)

Do you want a demonstration?

He starts unbuttoning his pajamas and nearly loses his footing. She squeals, holds her hands in front of her.

KATARINA

You're too clumsy. Even if you
are cute.

RUTGER

(not looking at her)
What was that?

KATARINA

I said, you're cute but clumsy.

RUTGER

(finger to lips)
Shhh.

OUTSIDE we HEAR a CAR ENGINE. Light sweeps over the tent.

(CONTINUED)

KATARINA

(whispered)

Who is that? Is that someone
here?

He looks at her, still concentrating on the noise. He
reaches down for her hand.

RUTGER

Wait here. I'll see who it is.
Probably just other campers.

He shrugs on a jumper and slips on his shoes and unzips
the tent.

KATARINA

Perhaps you should --

RUTGER

It's okay. Don't worry.

He slips out of the tent.

The V8 ENGINE RATTLES to a noisy death, but the light
stays on.

Katarina stays huddled in her sleeping bag.

60

EXT. WOLF CREEK NATIONAL PARK FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

60

Rutger shields his eyes from the blazing spotlights of a
big dusty-black ute. The car looks like some great
beast: caked in red dirt, huge tires, giant bullbar and
steel roll bars with big spot lamps along the top.

The door opens and the DRIVER climbs out. At first he is
only a silhouette behind the lights but then he comes
into view, stretching his limbs. A big bushman; strong
arms, hands like anvils, confident swagger. Normally the
sort of guy you'd love to give you a hand out in the
bush.

But this is Mick Taylor.

MICK

What the bloody hell are you
buggers doing here? Can't camp in
a National Park, mate.

Rutger looks sheepish. Glances around.

(CONTINUED)

RUTGER

(English)

We didn't know this was a National Park. There are no signs.

Mick raises a hand as he walks over.

MICK

Nah, I'm not a Ranger, mate.
Don't get your knickers in a knot.
Wouldn't dob you in, either. But
gotta keep an eye on these things.

He tramps on their fire, which is still smoldering slightly.

MICK (CONT'D)

I mean, your fire's not even out properly. Look at that bracken -
drier than a nun's nasty. One
spark and this whole fucking
place'd go up.

Rutger doesn't know what to say.

RUTGER

I did put water on it.

MICK

Yeah? And still didn't go out,
eh?

Rutger shuffles, uncomfortable. Mick makes him seem like a little kid.

MICK (CONT'D)

Just as well I found you when I
did. Anyway, name's Mick.

He holds out a hand. Rutger shakes it.

RUTGER

Rutger.

MICK

Kraut, are ya?

Katarina grabs a jumper at the SOUND of talking from outside. She hauls it on, crawling to the entrance to peer out.

62

EXT. WOLF CREEK NATIONAL PARK FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

62

The car's spotlight shines directly at their tent and at first she can only make out Rutger's silhouette. Then she sees Mick shaking hands with Rutger.

Mick sees her looking out and touches the brim of his hat. She can see his teeth as he smiles. He seems friendly enough.

MICK

Evening, ma'am.

He tips his hat. But we see something flash across his eyes; a predator has just locked in his prey. A decision has been made.

Katarina, or Rutger, don't see it. She smiles back awkwardly then scuttles back into the tent for jeans.

63

EXT. WOLF CREEK NATIONAL PARK FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

63

Mick points casually at his ute.

MICK

If the rangers did find you here you'd be charged. Wouldn't want to be deported for something as silly as that would you? I'm heading through town myself. I could give you a lift there, get you set up in the caravan park. I mean, you're not going to hike all the way back to Halls Creek, are you?

RUTGER

Well, we hoped to get a lift tomorrow. But as I said, we see no signs here. So we didn't think we were doing anything wrong.

MICK

Well, I'm offering you a lift, mate, so you don't get bloody caught.

RUTGER

But there aren't any signs. Are you sure this is a National Park?

Mick's charming demeanor slips.

(CONTINUED)

MICK

I just said so, didn't I?

RUTGER

Well, yes...

MICK

'Well', you calling me a liar?

Rutger realizes he has said the wrong thing. Mick just stares at him; a killer stare. Mick's hiding his hostility less with every exchange.

64

INT. TENT - NIGHT

64

Katarina is on her back in the narrow confine trying to slip her jeans on when she hears the CONVERSATION OUTSIDE increase in volume.

She glances out again.

65

EXT. WOLF CREEK NATIONAL PARK FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

65

Rutger is shaking his head as Mick points back at his vehicle more emphatically. The argument has turned heated.

RUTGER

I'm not calling you a liar. But we wish to stay. It's too late to leave anyway.

MICK

Look, I'm giving you one last chance to help you out here, mate.

Rutger shakes his head, trying not to let the situation -- this local man chancing upon them in the forest and demanding they leave -- unsettle him. Confidence is the only thing that will work here. Control of the conversation.

RUTGER

Thank-you. But we will stay. We are sorry about the fire. And for making you come out of your way.

He turns to walk back to the tent.

MICK

(low)
Don't you walk away from me.

(CONTINUED)

It wasn't the right move. Rutger stares at him.

Mick's getting agitated. Then he looks past the German at the tent. His eyes narrow. Rutger sees Kata moving within. She glances out at them and Rutger mimes making a phone call. 'Call police' he mouths.

Mick moves in behind him.

66 **IN THE TENT - NIGHT**

66

Katarina, scared, ducks back in and searches for the emergency cellphone.

We HEAR a SNARL and she glances through the gap.

67 **EXT. WOLF CREEK NATIONAL PARK CLEARING - NIGHT**

67

Outside she sees the towering man in front of the spotlight pull a knife from a hip scabbard and lunge at Rutger.

Her boyfriend tries to twist but cries out as he is stabbed in the back. Mick grabs him almost intimately around the chest and works the knife in. Rutger falls to the ground. Mick yells down at him and we hear this time.

MICK

Let's see you talk back now, you
Kraut prick!

Rutger clutches at the grass around him, in terrible pain. His legs twitch.

Mick turns to Katarina and grins. She screams and bolts out of the tent in bare feet.

But he is surprisingly quick and is immediately behind her, tackling her to the ground.

She struggles and he beats her savagely. Leaving her bloody and subdued.

He ties her wrists together with black cable-ties then splays her legs apart with tent posts, talking all the while. His hat has fallen off and he sweeps his hair back and slips the Akubra back on, composing himself, regaining control.

MICK (CONT'D)

Didn't want to do you here. But
your stupid fuckin' boyfriend
forced me. And now: why wait?

She moans through the blood streaming into her eyes,
barely able to see him. He grins down at her, swimming
into vision.

MICK (CONT'D)

Anyway, I'm Mick. Pleased ta meet
you.

He chuckles, mockingly shakes her limp hand then uses the
bloody knife to strip her, cutting away at her jumper.

Mick compulsively keeps up the chatter.

MICK (CONT'D)

I still don't for the life of me
know what you friggin' tourists
see in this place. This is how ya
spend ya life? Fucking bludgers.

Almost unconscious, Katarina begins to drift away into
another place, staring up at the sky past the leering
grin.

She can barely focus on the shadow looming behind her
attacker. It is Rutger.

Mick is concentrating on the task at hand, enjoying the
revelation of the tight young body beneath him and
doesn't see the boy teetering behind his shoulder.

Rutger swings a stick and clubs him across the back of
the head. Mick tumbles off the girl.

But the young German is badly weakened and it is not
enough to knock out the bigger man. Mick rounds on
Rutger, enraged. He leaps and grapples him to the
ground.

It is an ugly, desperate fight. Rutger breaks Mick's
nose with a wild punch, sending him even further into an
angered frenzy. Mick hits him back hard. Again. Rutger
is nearly knocked out with the force.

The big man is too strong, too focused and he forces the
boy's head to the ground and begins sawing at his neck
with the knife. Rutger continues to struggle as black
blood gouts from his neck.

But he cannot get free and his limbs spasm and eyes go glassy as his attacker keeps sawing as if at an animal, all the way back to the spinal column and through the thick bone. The SOUND is horrible.

Katarina screams at the sight, shocked from her catatonia, and frantically rubs her bonds on a sharpened tree stump.

Rutger's head comes free of his body followed by a geyser of blood.

Mick stumbles back, wiping at his face as if shocked even at what he's done, eyes glazed. He turns back to see the girl disappearing into the trees.

MICK (CONT'D)

Fuck!

He runs back to his ute.

Mick hurtles through the bush with the spotlight blazing as if hunting for kangaroos. Katarina's ephemeral form darts between the trees ahead like a ghost.

MICK

(to self)

Come on, Mick. Come on...

He eases his rifle out of its rack and lays it across his lap in readiness. He's done this many times before with animals. It's no different now.

Katarina looks back and he grins at the fear on her face.

MICK (CONT'D)

(crooning)

...this is gonna be a good one...

He puts the rifle back in its rack.

MICK (CONT'D)

...let's keep her in one piece.
For now.

Branches whip past and the ute. The black beast of a car with its ROARING ENGINE lurches over the uneven ground. But Mick steers with a practiced bush-bashing hand, slipping between the trees and tearing over branches. He won't be denied his prize.

Then the girl jumps headlong into a maze of thorns and disappears out of sight. It's too thick for him to follow.

He brakes and slams the ute into reverse.

Finds another path and skids around it, reaching out the window and angling the spotlight on her fleeting form.

He manages to keep pace with her for a moment but then she reaches open ground and bolts away.

CUT TO:

A fat joint blazes to the THUMPING SOUND of DANCE MUSIC. WIDER and we see PAUL HAMMERSMITH (mid-20s); a young Englishman on a solo adventure. He's a hip, streetwise geezer. Right now he's about as happy a young man abroad can be. Hot car. Open road. Great music. And seriously baked when...

...a CELLPHONE RINGS. He quickly turns off the music, scrabbles about for the phone, finally finds it.

INSERT: PAUL'S CELLPHONE

CLOSE ON: a caller ID photo of a cute brunette cuddling Paul. The name 'MY ANGEL' is across the photo.

BACK TO SCENE

He grins and speaks fast.

PAUL
(into phone, decisive
English accent)
Beck? Becky, is that you?

CRACKLING, STATIC. Paul curses.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Beck, I can't hear anything.
There's no bloody phone service
out here. If that is you,
everything's going great. I'm
okay, halfway to somewhere, it's
late at night and I've been
driving for about... four hours...

STATIC. Suddenly makes him feel lonely.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (CONT'D)

(into phone)

-- Beck, if you can hear me, I...
I miss you. And I love you.
Can't wait to see you, babe. You
can probably tell: little stoned
over here. Only a week now and
I'll be home and I've got a kind
of massive surprise for you. Been
thinking a lot while I've been
away and... Beck? Becky? Shit.

MORE STATIC. Paul snaps the phone shut.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Have to wait 'til tomorrow.

He pops down his cell, opens the glovebox and takes out a
small velvet box. He takes a peak at the modest diamond
ring inside. He's clearly as nervous as he is excited
about reaching the biggest decision of his young life so
far.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(doing introductions)

Missus Hammersmith. Mister and
Missus Paul Hammersmith. Pleased
to meet you.

He nods, smiles.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(to self)

Doesn't sound half bad.

He slams the MUSIC back on. Continues grooving to the
fat beats.

Little does he know his world is about to change.

Katarina bursts from the thick bush and onto the main
highway.

She sees the vehicle traveling toward her and runs down
the middle of the road towards it.

The Jeep slams on its brakes and skids, surfboard
strapped to the roof nearly flying off.

71

POV FROM INSIDE THE JEEP - NIGHT

71

Paul sees a nightmare vision of a half-naked woman, blood streaming down her face, stumbling into the harsh beam of his headlights.

72

EXT. CHASE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

72

After the initial shock he jumps out to help the girl.

KATARINA

Back there... A man... Attacked
me.

She is too traumatized to explain what happened and can only point back at the bush.

Mick's spotlight appears through the trees from a path a few hundred meters away. The car hurtles out onto the road.

PAUL

Holy shit! Come on!

Paul quickly grabs Katarina and pushes her into the passenger seat then runs around and jumps in. His TIRES SQUEAL.

73

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

73

He looks in the rearview at the car gaining on them.

PAUL

Who is that?

Katarina doesn't answer. He starts freaking out.

PAUL (CONT'D)

The fuck's goin' on here?

Katarina tries to speak but just opens and closes her mouth like a dying fish.

KATARINA

I... I...

It doesn't matter because suddenly the car fills his rearview.

74

EXT. JEEP - NIGHT

74

Mick comes up behind them -- the BIG V8 of the ute sounding monstrous -- and slams into their rear. The jeep jerks forward.

75

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

75

Paul shouts in terror as Mick keeps ramming them, trying to send them off the road. But somehow he manages to keep from crashing.

76

EXT. CHASE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

76

Mick moves alongside them, face in shadow, before slamming into their side. METAL SHRIEKS.

77

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

77

Katarina screams as Paul fights the steering wheel.

78

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

78

Paul looks up at the ute locked against them. The barrel of a rifle points back.

79

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

79

Paul barely has time to force Katarina's head down and duck himself as the GUN BOOMS. Metal and plastic shatter around them.

He brakes.

80

EXT. CHASE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

80

Metal screams as the ute dislodges from them and shoots past.

The Jeep accelerates to try to slam into the now-vulnerable ute. But Mick is ready and steers away at the last moment. Paul merely grazes the other car.

81

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

81

Katarina screams next to him. He's yelling himself; there is no escape from this insanity.

82

EXT. CHASE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

82

Paul can see Mick pointing at the girl next to him and wagging his tongue. He's going to get his toy if he has to kill Paul to do it. And he's going to enjoy the hunt in the meantime.

Mick cackles and speeds up until alongside.

Paul again tries to hit his rear panel but it doesn't work this time.

Mick fires and the shot hits Paul's door.

83

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

83

Paul stares down at the whistling hole. They don't stand a chance.

Driven to desperation, Paul steels himself. When Mick comes alongside them again -- the big ute like a predator closing in on its prey -- Paul swerves into him, forcing him off the road.

84

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

84

Mick tries to fight the momentum.

85

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

85

But Paul keeps the steering wheel suicidally locked. Katarina digs her nails into the dashboard, terrified.

86

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

86

They crash off the road and through the running wire fence.

87

EXT. SCRUBLAND OFF HIGHWAY - NIGHT

87

The locked cars bash over the rough ground.

88

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

88

Paul heads for a crop of gumtrees. Glances across at Mick trying to brake, cursing. Mick suddenly veers hard left and vanishes into blackness before hitting them.

Paul has to veer right at the last moment and they bump and bounce through the rugged terrain before spinning onto a smoother track. Paul glances behind, but can't see a thing. It's just dust and darkness back there. They've lost him.

89

EXT. SCRUBLAND/TRACK - NIGHT

89

The jeep glides along through the night carefully following the dusty bush track.

90

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

90

Paul glances around to Katarina. Puts a hand on her arm, which brings her around.

PAUL

Hey, hey it's okay. I think we lost him.

She stares at him a second. Then she notices he's slowing down and starts to panic.

PAUL (CONT'D)

No, no, it's okay. If we don't turn off the lights he'll be able to track us again. We need to stop and hide. It's okay.

They slow and then stop, Paul quickly killing the headlights. The pair sit in silence, both terrified, glancing behind for any sign of Mick or his dreaded spotlights. There's nothing out there but gaping blackness. And an ocean of stars overhead. By starlight, Paul attempts to comfort the stricken girl. He places a hand on her arm, doing the best he can to stop her sobbing.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Hey, come on. You're alright now. I've got you.

Katarina swallows hard, wipes tears, looks to him. He whispers, keeping as quiet as possible.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I don't really know what's going on, but you're safe now. We'll get you to a hospital, get the police and get help as soon as we think he's gone. Okay?

She just stares. Wipes tears. Paul's never done anything like this before, so he's feeling his way.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(softly)

What's... what's your name?

She pauses before answering, reflexes slow with shock.

KATARINA

Katarina. From Hamburg. Germany.

He smiles.

PAUL

Well, you certainly don't sound like a local. Lucky I came past when...

Her reaction tells him: wrong approach.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm Paul. From sunny London. Been working in Perth the last few months. My mates are all surfing in Broome. May as well go and have fun in me last week, right?

He's talking a mile a minute, trying to calm both of them. She nods. At least she's listening.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Not that I'm much good. Only a beginner. Not like I ever had the chance back home. But thinking of going on to Hawaii when my visa runs out. Should have enough money left. And the waves there are supposed to be wicked. I'm going to take my girlfriend when I...

He peters out. Knows he's just blabbing now to stave off the horrible silence.

PAUL (CONT'D)

We'll have to go on to Halls Creek. It's not too far.

Katarina clenches her hands beside him and stares straight ahead. She's doing well to keep it together.

PAUL (CONT'D)

It's okay now. Really. I won't let him catch you again. I promise.

She nods. She puts her head down on the headrest, exhausted.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Good idea. Let's rest until we get some light.

She closes her eyes. Paul lies back, does the same. But his eyes stay open.

91

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

91

The silhouette of the Jeep is outlined against the vast night sky. A shooting star streaks across the heavens.

HARD CUT TO:

92

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

92

Paul snaps awake with a start. His sudden movement wakes Katarina also, who stretches. Paul scratches his head, wipes his eyes.

PAUL

Do you want more heat? Are you cold?

Katarina shivers but doesn't answer. He takes her in, feels terrible for her. She's totally shell-shocked. A zombie.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I've been in some pretty bad scrapes myself. Been stabbed. Beaten up. Got jumped one night walking home from a pub. Three of them, there were. Nearly broke my legs. Kicked my ribs in. Who knew ten year old girls could be that nasty?

He finally sees a hint of a smile.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Look, I'll be shagged if I'm going to let some crazy hick be the one to do me in. Got too much to live for. Like you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Anyway, this place's got nothing
on Clapham North.

He looks up at the horizon.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Should be light soon. Let's get
moving, see if we can find the
highway again...

He snaps on the headlights REVEALING...

...MICK'S TRUCK -- front grille against their own --
waiting in the darkness.

They both scream, then Paul looks right -- into Mick's
face at his window. Mick grins, raises the crowbar he
was about to break in with and SMASHES Paul's window,
spraying him with glass.

Paul jams the ignition and slams the car into reverse,
raising a dust cloud as he spins the wheel and scrambles
backwards out of there.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The Jeep now screams along the bush tracks, headlights
bouncing across the stony, brush-strewn paths of the
outback. Suddenly behind them appear the bright
spotlights on Mick's truck, gaining with every second.

Soon he's right on their tail again, his driving skills
and vehicle across rough terrain far superior.

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

Paul strains to see what's coming up, the track flashes
up before them surrounded by total darkness. Katarina
flicks her attention between what's ahead and what's
behind.

KATARINA

Hurry! Faster, faster!

Mick veers out and pulls up almost parallel to their
speeding vehicle. We see his face in the gloom; looking
cocky as he cruises along, as casual as if on a Sunday
drive. It's clear he's just been toying with them all
along. He gives a small salute, not seeing the small
clump of gumtrees Paul has spotted coming up to the right
of the track.

94 CONTINUED:

94

Paul keeps one eye fixed on Mick and one eye on the approaching trees, and just as they are about to pass them Paul...

...swerves hard right, knocking Mick's truck so it veers towards a thick trunk. Mick sees it and BRAKES but it's too late as he slides towards the tree and...

...KER-RASH! The front of the truck crumples in. It's totaled.

95 INT. JEEP - NIGHT

95

Paul and Katarina again whoop in celebration, looking back as they leave their pursuer behind.

KATARINA

(amazed)

You did it.

Paul grins at her, overwhelmed with relief. Then he turns back to the path ahead. Spots a dirt track and heads for it.

96 EXT. SCRUBLAND OFF HIGHWAY - NIGHT

96

Mick climbs out of his steaming, caved-in car, rests the rifle into his shoulder and sets his jaw. He leans into the rifle.

97 POV THROUGH RIFLE SCOPE - NIGHT

97

Mick zooms in on the back of Paul's head. Caresses the trigger.

98 INT. JEEP - NIGHT

98

Oblivious, Paul concentrates on keeping to the track and putting distance between them and the madman.

99 POV THROUGH RIFLE SCOPE - NIGHT

99

Mick re-aims a foot ahead of Paul's head to allow for drift. Breathes out. Easy as you like.

Squeezes the trigger: a professional.

100

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

100

From behind Paul's shoulder we see a hole in the road ahead looming suddenly in the headlights. He swerves slightly.

There is an EXPLOSION of glass. Blood sprays around him and something punches into the dashboard. He freezes, eyes wide, thinking he has been shot. But he's still alive. Still driving.

Then he glances over at Katarina. Her lower jawbone has disintegrated and her half-head lolls against her chest. Only her seat belt holds the weight of her dead body upright.

101

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

101

Paul sucks in breath to scream and nearly crashes the car. He slows, freaked out, then realizes Mick could be lining up for another shot. He ducks down in his seat, hurtling on into the night.

102

POV THROUGH RIFLE SCOPE - NIGHT

102

Mick sees the girl's slumped figure bumping about, lifeless.

103

EXT. SCRUBLAND OFF HIGHWAY - NIGHT

103

On Mick as he lowers the weapon, incredulous.

MICK
(to self)
Oh, for fuck's sake.

He got the wrong target!

He's just prematurely killed his plaything. The headlights retreat into darkness, the car now out of range. ON Mick: white-hot rage washes over him. And a chilling determination.

MICK (CONT'D)
You owe me, boy.

CUT TO:

104

EXT. DESERT DIRT TRACK - LATER

104

The Jeep finds a dirt road and turns onto it.

105

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

105

Paul pushes on in the darkness. But is hopelessly lost. He keeps glancing back over his shoulder but there's no sign of Mick. He's managed to escape.

He tries not to look at the body lolling lazily next to him. But it becomes too much and eventually he pulls over.

He hesitates then jumps out of the car.

106

EXT. DESERT DIRT TRACK - NIGHT

106

ON Paul as he stares through the open door in at Katarina's body.

107

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

107

She slumps in the seat, a vision of horror. Her upper teeth rest against her collarbone. Blood stains the seat a dark muck.

108

EXT. DESERT DIRT TRACK - NIGHT

108

ON Paul. He wipes the blood on his face, unsure what to do. He glances around at the vast, empty desert.

Moves around to the side of the car and opens the passenger door.

One of Katarina's arms hangs out.

He reaches across her body, averting his eyes from the mess that was her face, and unhooks her seat belt. She slumps down in the seat, then tumbles to one side and hits the dirt. He can't catch her in time. It's an ignominious treatment of her corpse.

He grabs her blood-splattered shoulders and drags her into the grass by the side of the road.

It's not a respectful treatment of her either. He pauses, pacing up and down next to her. He can't leave her out here for the animals and elements. He looks up and down the road, torn.

Finally, he hauls her around to the back of the car and opens the boot.

108 CONTINUED:

108

Her arms flop as he lifts her up and places her in the back. That's the least he can do for her.

CUT TO:

109 **EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAWN**

109

Morning breaks as Paul pulls onto the main highway. The Jeep RATTLES and COUGHS as it hits solid bitumen again.

110 **INT. JEEP - DAWN**

110

Paul breathes a sigh of relief. Somehow he's managed to find his way back. Light floods the cabin. He blinks at the harshness. Needs some sleep. Wrinkles his nose at the smell of blood. But there's nothing he can do about that yet.

Keeps driving.

CUT TO:

111 **INT. JEEP - SHORT TIME LATER**

111

He's taking a swig of water when he sees a sign ahead.

112 **EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY**

112

On sign: "STURTS REST 120 kms".

113 **INT. JEEP - DAY**

113

He grabs the map again, spreading it on the steering wheel.

He's somehow managed to miss Halls Creek altogether. The small town of Sturts Rest lies beyond a long mountain range.

PAUL

Shit shit shit!

But there's no point turning back. It's closer to the next town. He stuffs the map back in the glovebox and continues on. He yawns and blinks, has to concentrate. The harsh dawn light is playing havoc with his vision.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Come on, Paul. Hold it together.
You're okay. You're okay.

114 EXT. SECOND CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

114

Which is why he doesn't see the CAR appear behind him on the horizon. A silver flash in the morning light.

115 INT. JEEP - DAY

115

Paul is scanning the road ahead for cars or houses or anything that can help him. But as always there's nothing.

He glances in the rearview.

Looks again.

Then back over his shoulder. He screams with joy, brakes and pulls his car over. Finally, another person.

PAUL

Fuck yes!

116 EXT. SECOND CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

116

Paul climbs out and moves to the middle of the road, waving his arms.

PAUL

Hey! Here! Here I am!

The car looms closer, but it's not slowing down.

Paul's confused, but keeps to the center of the road. He waves bigger, screams louder.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Hey! Stop! Stop! Help!

Paul's now worried. The car races closer, doing 120 mph at least, and at the last second Paul...

...leaps out of the way for his life. The car blasts past, not missing a beat. Paul stands, staring after the car, astonished. Then he gets furious.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You fucking bastards! Why don't
you stop! Fuck you! You fucks!

He falls to his knees and screams. Cries, glancing up after the car.

Sees another car -- coming this way. Another chance. He stands and moves toward it down the highway.

(CONTINUED)

THE CAR -- an RV -- wavers in the morning heat-haze, coming on fast.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey, stop! Please!

It's almost here, but it's not slowing. If anything it's speeding up. Paul waves one last time then dives out of its path. That was close.

Paul picks himself up, dusting himself off. Walks onto the road and stares after the speeding car, dumbstruck.

PAUL (CONT'D)

The fuck is wrong with these people?

He wipes down his jeans, pats his hair; maybe it's his appearance. Something suddenly catches his eye, heading in the same direction as the last car.

Another vehicle, this time an 18-WHEELER TRUCK, mounts the rise and barrels down the highway. It disappears from view into a depression in the highway.

Paul sets his jaw -- third time lucky. He moves to the middle of the highway and raises his arms, making himself as visible as possible.

PAUL (CONT'D)

All right you pricks. I'm not moving this time.

Slowly, we see the massive 18-wheeler rise through the heat-haze, front grille like a giant skull with broken, grinning teeth. Then, as it mounts another rise it slows, AIRBRAKES HISSING as it comes to a halt.

Paul slows, arms falling to his side. His welcoming smile fades as dread rises like black bile. Something's very wrong here.

CLOSER ON: the still 18-wheeler.

It looks like a 30-ton beast. Waiting to pounce. Mick's found a replacement.

CLOSE ON: Paul. He swallows, staggers back toward his Jeep and scrambles inside, panic taking over. He frantically starts the engine and glances behind as he hears...

...the 18-wheeler's ENGINE GROWLS to life.

Here it comes.

117 INT. JEEP - DAY

117

Paul kicks the accelerator. Glances behind again -- the truck's gaining incredibly fast for something that big. It's hauling ass.

118 EXT. SECOND CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

118

The Jeep flees before the 18-wheeler, Paul's got a good 500 meters head start, but the distance is closing fast.

119 INT. JEEP - DAY

119

Paul's punching the steering wheel as he's urging his vehicle faster, faster. He glances behind again, eyes wide with terror.

120 EXT. SECOND CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

120

The truck is close enough now we can see details. Blood is sprayed across part of its windshield. Then we make out a figure inside wearing a hat. A very familiar hat.

It BLASTS its HORN: PARP PARP PARP.

121 INT. JEEP - DAY

121

Holy shit. Paul's fucked now. He tries to get more speed from the Jeep and sways across the road to make a harder target.

But it's futile.

122 EXT. SECOND CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

122

The truck bears down. Crunches into its rear.

123 INT. JEEP - DAY

123

Paul jerks forward in the seat. Cries out. This can't be happening. He was supposed to be on a fun trip!

Tears of frustration roll down his face as he curses the car, the swearing drowned out by the roaring engine behind.

124 INT. TRUCK - DAY

124

Mick is gleefully singing along to the BLARING COUNTRY TRACK 'Ruby' by Kenny Rogers. He's having a ball. Blasts the horn again -- he's certainly having fun. In the background of the cabin we can glimpse the previous -- now dead -- owner of the Big Rig. His corpse unceremoniously dumped back there.

125 EXT. SECOND CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

125

The truck menaces the tiny vehicle, gaining fast. Then 500 meters ahead we see the RV that passed Paul a while back, doing the speed limit. The Jeep and truck close on it quickly.

126 INT. JEEP - DAY

126

Paul turns back to face front, his eyes lighting up as he sees the RV. He pumps his horn, warning them to get off the road.

127 INT. RV - DAY

127

A MIDDLE-AGED MUM and DAD glance behind as they see the racing vehicles speeding toward them. Dad slows a little and pulls over to let them pass. Shakes his head at their recklessness.

128 INT. JEEP - DAY

128

Paul, closing on them fast, screams as if they can hear him.

PAUL

Move! Get off the road! Fucking
move!

129 EXT. SECOND CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

129

The Jeep flashes past them as if they're standing still. Then the truck approaches, aims directly for them and the 30-ton monster smashes into their rear at 130 kmh.

The RV disintegrates in a cloud of plastic parts, smoke and shattered panels. Two bodies seem to be part of the flying jetsam that scatter in the truck's wake.

The big rig doesn't miss a beat. It's like a steel baseball bat smashing a wine glass.

130

INT. TRUCK - DAY

130

Mick glances back a moment.

MICK

Morning folks. Nice day for a
drive in the country.

He chuckles. Bops along to Kenny Rogers: *'The wants and
the needs of a woman your age, Ruby I realize'...*

Life doesn't get more fun.

131

INT. JEEP - DAY

131

Paul glances behind at the gaining behemoth as it pulls
closer again. Sees the scattered dust cloud that was the
RV. This is beyond insanity.

PAUL

(to the RV couple)
Should've fuckin' stopped.

Then he concentrates on the road ahead, as a steep drop
appears leading into a low, flat valley.

132

EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

132

A ruler-straight highway like a thin band of black across
the red desert. We can see mountains rising at the far
end, to which they're heading. Morning light glowing
brighter behind them.

Until now we have only seen dead kangaroos by the side of
the road. Now a huge pack bounds in from across the
desert.

133

INT. JEEP - DAY

133

Paul sees them at the last moment, concentrating instead
on the truck behind, and he swerves the wheel.

134

EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

134

He manages to miss the first kangaroo but clips the
second. It spirals up into the corner of the windshield,
cracking the glass, and up over the roof. Then he clears
the mob.

135 **INT. TRUCK - DAY**

135

Mick grimaces, tries to predict their path, but in a big rig it makes little difference. It goes only one way: forward.

MICK

Ah, you stupid bastards!

136 **MICK'S POV - AHEAD - DAY**

136

As a BIG RED KANGAROO spins towards us and smashes into the passenger side windshield. It tumbles away along the side of the truck. We plough through the rest of the pack. The SOUND of MEAT THUDDING INTO METAL. Blood sprays up the windshield.

137 **EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY**

137

The kangaroos splat around the sides of the truck and beneath its wheels. The 18-wheeler barely registers and continues.

138 **INT. TRUCK - DAY**

138

Mick punches out the remains of his windshield. We see him even more clearly now, like a death's head lording over the steering wheel.

MICK

Sorry Skippy.

139 **EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY**

139

The Jeep sweeps down into the plain, the metal monster growling deeper as Mick gears up to get more speed.

140 **INT. JEEP - DAY**

140

Paul checks his rearview, hopeful the roos did more damage to the truck. But they only took out his adversary's windshield -- not enough to stop him. He curses, faces the highway, sets his jaw again. Then sees something ahead: the first car that nearly ran him over is stopped two kilometers ahead on the side of the road. Paul immediately starts pumping his horn, attempting to warn these people also.

141 **EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY** 141

We see the Jeep and truck screaming toward the parked vehicle, closing the distance fast.

142 **EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY ROADSIDE - DAY** 142

On the vehicle's hood a hot thermos and lamingtons are set on a rug. MAVIS and ETHEL, two nice blue-rince-set ladies, lean against the car, prepping a camera to capture the sunrise. One of them passes the other a cup of tea, when suddenly she notices the other looking up the highway.

Then we hear the sound of screaming engines and a frantically BEEPING HORN. They exchange a concerned glance.

143 **INT. JEEP - DAY** 143

Paul leans forward, pumping the horn desperately.

PAUL

Get outta here! Get outta the
way!

144 **INT. TRUCK - DAY** 144

Mick notes the stationary car approaching, shrugs to himself.

145 **EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY** 145

Paul's Jeep flashes past at 140 kmh, horn blaring crazily. The women look after him with disgust, shaking their heads: 'maniac'. Then they glance back just as...

...the 18-wheeler smacks the rear of their car like a four-iron hitting a golf ball. It sends the car forward with such force it shears the old ladies in two; before the entire car explodes into an unrecognizable mess of steel, rubber and lamingtons.

The third trailer on Mick's truck catches a piece of the vehicle's wreckage and shunts off, breaking its connector and crashing off into the desert. Now there's only two trailers on the roadtrain.

146 INT. TRUCK - DAY

146

Mick glances back, winces at the incredible destruction.

MICK

Nice spot for a cuppa.

He chuckles.

147 EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

147

The truck has a clear run, gains and nudges the rear of the Jeep, pushing it forward as the smaller vehicle strains to remain on the road. Tires smoke and METAL SQUEALS. But it remains just ahead, by a fraction.

Suddenly Mick gears down again, and spurts forward, his grille now level with the lefthand passenger door.

148 INT. JEEP - DAY

148

Paul's taken by surprise. Jams his foot down harder and starts to pull away as the GRILLE SLAMS into the passenger door, buckling it inwards. He screams.

PAUL

Fuck off! Leave me alone!

149 EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY

149

The Jeeps swerves crazily as Paul struggles to keep it on the road. More SMOKING TIRES and SCREECHING STEEL, but the Jeep finally manages to get free and pull ahead. Albeit with panels and parts now hanging freely.

150 INT. TRUCK - DAY

150

Mick glances ahead, shakes his head.

MICK

Hold still, ya little mongrel!

151 INT. JEEP - DAY

151

Paul, sweat now pouring, is almost hyperventilating. That was too close. He scans the road ahead, which is rising into the mountains. This might be a chance to escape. In hilly terrain he will have the advantage. The truck will struggle.

(CONTINUED)

151 CONTINUED:

He sets his jaw. Plants his foot.

CUT TO:

152 **EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY** 152

A cute little BUNNY RABBIT smells the morning air and hops onto the middle of the highway. Its ears wiggle; senses something's coming. WE RACK FOCUS: to the Jeep and truck screaming up the highway.

153 **INT. JEEP - DAY** 153

Paul sees the rabbit, doesn't swerve, goes right over it.

154 **EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY - DAY** 154

The Jeep passes over the crouching bunny. The rabbit looks after the Jeep. Then to the approaching TRUCK.

155 **INT. JEEP - DAY** 155

Mick notes the bunny, alters his course slightly.

156 **EXT. THIRD CHASE HIGHWAY** 156

The rabbit holds his ground as eighteen wheels flash overhead -- and pass him. It glances after the strange vehicles and hops off the road. Unaware of how lucky it is.

157 **EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY** 157

We start to move to higher ground, the road leading up into the mountain range. The road suddenly drops away on either side of the bitumen.

158 **INT. JEEP - DAY** 158

Paul glances over the edge. This looks precarious. One bump here and he'd be finished. Paul checks the rear view, yells in frustration.

PAUL

Leave me alone! I didn't do anything!

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED:

But in the rear-view all we see is Mick's grin beneath the dark hat.

159 INT. TRUCK - DAY 159

The Jeep looks tiny beneath us. We HEAR GRINDING GEARS as Mick attempts to get more speed.

160 EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY 160

The truck ROARS as he accelerates and shunts the Jeep hard. It skids and swerves on the road, nearly going off the side. But manages to stay on by a whisker.

161 INT. TRUCK - DAY 161

Mick glances up ahead. The road rises even further. He gears down again.

162 EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY 162

The Jeep gradually pulls away.

163 INT. JEEP - DAY 163

Paul hunches over the steering wheel, foot flat on the accelerator, as he tears up the mountain. Glances in the rear-view. The truck is falling back.

PAUL
Yeah. Go! Yeah!

From over his shoulder we see a sharp corner ahead. He scrapes around it at full speed, not even bothering to brake. REARVIEW: The truck falls even further behind.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Yeah you fucker!

Keeps the pace up. Takes another corner.

164 EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY 164

The Jeep skids around the bend. Its rear tires almost lose their traction. He's pushing it too hard.

165 **INT. TRUCK - DAY**

165

Mick sees this. He changes down a gear and pushes on.
Grins to himself.

166 **EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY**

166

The Jeep squeals as it hugs the road. Paul's not going to let this madman catch him. Steam is now starting to billow from the hood. As the road winds up it becomes harder to take at full speed. The turns are becoming harsher, the dropoff more deadly.

167 **INT. JEEP - DAY**

167

Paul keeps pushing the car to its limits. CLOSE ON: The temperature gauge is at three-quarters and still rising.

168 **EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY**

168

A gravel reststop extends out beyond the narrow highway. It ends in a steep drop. Paul races onward.

169 **INT. JEEP - DAY**

169

He drops a gear and locks the wheel around the corner. But it's too sharp. He starts to slide.

170 **EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - RESTSTOP - DAY**

170

The Jeep spins out in gravel, overshooting the turn. It skids sideways towards the edge of the reststop. This time the surfboard does come off the roof. It shoots across the gravel and disappears over the edge.

171 **INT. JEEP - DAY**

171

Paul is yelling as he fights the wheel, peering terrified over the side of the car.

172 **EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - RESTSTOP - DAY**

172

Gravel suddenly becomes a drop-away to nothingness. The Jeep somehow stops on the edge. Dust rises. Momentary silence. The Jeep has stopped parallel to the cliff; out Paul's door is a fifty meter drop.

173 INT. JEEP - DAY

173

Paul gulps. That's taken a few years off his life. Then he remembers where he is and frantically tries to restart the car.

CLOSE ON: The temperature gauge is all the way to the top.

174 EXT. JEEP - DAY

174

Steam pours up now the car has stopped. It's not going to start again.

175 INT. JEEP - DAY

175

Paul pumps the accelerator as he tries to start the car. No use.

A RUMBLING SOUND.

Paul looks across the buckled passenger's door as the 18-wheeler comes into view.

The nightmare grille bears down on the stalled car.

Then the AIRBRAKES kick in as the truck bunny-hops towards him, gradually losing speed. The AIR BRAKES HISS at is halts. Thirty feet away.

176 INT. JEEP - DAY

176

Paul dives for the passenger door, but it's stuck. The buckling has lodged it shut. He glances up and SEES the 18-wheeler creeping forward, edging closer. He scrambles for the driver's door and flings it open and pulls back as he sees open space. Paul is well and truly cornered. He starts to edge back inside when KER-RASH!

He's bumped and falls out of the Jeep but he...

...grabs onto the swinging door, and hangs there. Looks down at the drop, then back to the grille of the truck, resting against his vehicle. We can see Mick's smiling face. He nods, PARPS the AIRHORN. Then he nudges the car again -- it's clear he's going to shove it right off the cliff.

Paul uses his legs to swing the door closer to the car, grabs the seat belt and hauls himself agonizingly back inside before pulling the door closed.

(CONTINUED)

176 CONTINUED:

176

Mick bumps the car again. Paul glances at the inevitable drop. He quickly buckles his seat belt, winds down his window and crosses himself as...

...the ROAR of the ENGINE fills our ears. Underneath that: MICK'S HARSH LAUGH.

PAUL

Please God.

He closes his eyes. The Jeep's wheels bounce and slip over the gravel as the car is forced sideways.

Then it falls.

177 INT. JEEP - DAY

177

The SOUND of RUSHING AIR. Paul SCREAMING. The world whirls around us.

178 EXT. CLIFF - DAY

178

The free-falling Jeep manages to run down its side for part of the way. Then it hits an outcrop and tumbles over, spinning.

179 INT. JEEP - DAY

179

It's like we're in a tumble-dryer. Paul's arms and debris flail around the cabin. The cliff-face flashes past outside the disintegrating windshield.

180 EXT. CLIFF - DAY

180

The crumpled car finds purchase again and skids down the angled slope. Then the Jeep flips to the bottom and crashes on its roof. Dust like a plague of locusts eclipses the car.

Silence.

181 INT. JEEP - DAY

181

Paul hangs upside down. Still. A world of dust. But he's somehow survived. Blood seeps from his nose and patters on the roof below. He flails against his seatbelt in a sudden wild panic.

Then he stops, as agony from every part of his being arrives en masse. He braces one hand on the roof.

(CONTINUED)

Fumbles at the seat belt clasp again. It's been warped by the accident, and at the angle he's on he can't reach it. He smells something odd, glances around to the...

...petrol flowing into the cabin. Pouring down into the white-hot engine.

This thing is gonna blow any second.

His face drains of color as he lunges back to the seatbelt clip, straining to reach it.

CLOSE ON: his fingers stretching, his sweating, bloodied face.

CLOSE ON: petrol dripping into the smoking engine area. We hear a LOUD HISS.

CLOSE ON: Paul hearing this and SCREAMING as he reaches harder and grabs at the seatbelt...

...ripping it open and tumbling...

...out of the Jeep. GLASS CRUNCHES beneath his hands as he scrambles as fast as he can away from the smashed vehicle.

ON Paul as he collapses to his knees in the dirt. Shakes his head. How did he survive that? Stares at the car resting like an overturned insect. Waiting for it to blow. One wheel still spins. But it does not go up (unlike in most movies). It just smokes and CREAKS.

Paul sighs with relief; looks at his bloodied hands, amazed he's survived. He glances up at the cliff above in wonder. No sign of the horror he's just faced.

He scans the surrounding landscape. The arid expanse stretches out to the horizon. He's on a flat plain. It's going to be a long walk, whichever direction he goes.

Paul glances back at the car. From over his shoulder WE SEE a water bottle on the backseat. He scrambles back, rummaging inside for it when he HEARS a STRANGE WHISTLING NOISE. He freezes. Then looks up.

Something gigantic blots out the sun, tumbling down towards us. Then it coalesces into focus.

It's the 18-wheeler truck!

Paul scrambles away from the car, not even realizing he's managed to grab the water bottle. He's just trying to get out of the way when he loses his footing and falls...

...screaming. Paul slaps across the ground as he drags himself as far from the ROARING MISSILE that is the truck when...

...he finally makes his feet and runs out into the desert as too close behind we see...

...the massive 18-wheeler and its two trailers SMASH into the Jeep. Its impact creates a huge shockwave of dust and debris. The NOISE is like the end of the world.

The dust slowly settles. STEEL PIECES TINKER to a THUDDING STOP all over.

But no explosion.

Paul stands, wobbly, amidst the settling dust cloud. Astonished he's cheated death twice, he starts to laugh. Like a crazy person. He looks to the top of the cliff.

PAUL

(yelling up)

You stupid bastard. You missed me! Now what're you gonna do? Huh? Huh? I know what you can do, you can suck my ba-

KABOOM!!!

The TRUCK and CAR suddenly EXPLODE simultaneously. Paul is blasted from his feet by the SHOCKWAVE which swats him some fifteen feet away.

He rolls to a bloody stop, cuts filled with dirt, eyes full of sand. Lies as still as a stone.

The hot air dissipates. Then he slowly raises his head, spits dirt and glances up. Shields his eyes.

The Jeep is obliterated. The roadtrain has crumpled in upon itself and blazes angrily. It's a surreal sight. He just stares open-mouthed, in shock. Then he shifts his gaze up the mountain.

Mick stands at the cliffedge. Watching. Patient. Even from this distance Paul can see his clenched fists. The determination of a hunter eyeing his prey. Calculating.

Paul is chilled to his core. What kind of man is he dealing with?

182 CONTINUED: (2)

He staggers backwards, horrified.

183 **EXT. DESERT - DAY**

183

ON Paul as he stumbles, grabs the water bottle, retreats into the desert. Ribs injured, he doubles over as he jogs as best he can. But he's in a bad way.

184 **POV FROM CLIFF - DAY**

184

We stare down at the small figure heading off into the vast desert. Then we track his direction out into the expanse. And turn away from the cliff edge.

CUT TO:

185 **EXT. DESERT - LATER**

185

Paul trudges through the red wasteland. Water bottle now all but empty. He's torn off part of his shirt to wrap around his head -- anything to protect against the lethal glare. But with the rising sun blazing down and no cover it is only a matter of time. If Mick doesn't get him, the elements certainly will.

He takes the last sip of water then stares at the empty bottle. Then he lets it drop to the ground.

And trudges ahead.

CUT TO:

186 **EXT. DESERT - EVEN LATER**

186

The sun beats down. Unrelenting. Brutal.

A sheep's carcass bakes. CLOSE ON: ants gnaw at its thickened leather-like hide. A scorpion scuttles within its ribcage.

The vast landscape stretches to the mirage of the horizon.

A tiny figure stumbles on in the uncaring outback.

Paul is drenched in sweat. His face beneath the makeshift headband is reddened and peeling. His eyes are vacant and on automatic pilot.

CLOSE ON: his tattered shoes scrape ahead through the dirt: left, then right, then left.

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED:

186

He's going to die out here. No doubt about it. He stumbles and falls to the ground as his vision blurs into liquid heat haze. He's on the verge of losing consciousness, muttering something we cannot understand. He rolls over and looks ahead, his eyes trying to focus.

187 PAUL'S POV -- THROUGH THE HEAT HAZE - DAY

187

Something shimmers into view.

Paul hauls himself to his feet and keeps trudging. Finally his eyes focus, slow to respond. He squints and shades his sight, peering ahead. A square structure rising from the dirt.

A farmhouse.

188 EXT. DESERT NEAR FARMSTEAD - DAY

188

Paul staggers to his feet and increases his pace, desperate to escape. Sweat pours from his brow, face caked with red dirt and brittle black blood, stings his eyes.

As he gets closer we see an old rundown farming estate. Spooky dilapidated shearing sheds and rusting machinery. The homestead itself is a double-story sandstone building sitting out by itself.

Paul heads for it, walking like the living dead from a bad zombie movie. Shambling drunkenly.

189 EXT. SHEARING SHEDS - DAY

189

The sheds haven't been used in years. Dark shadows rest within. Ancient machines are rusted to the spot. Animal bones hang like ornaments from long ago. Sheep skulls, kangaroo bones, an eagle's skeleton. Eerie Australian bric-a-brac.

Wind blows through an ancient willow tree, whispering like long dead voices. Hanging tools clink together like a madman's mobile.

190 EXT. FARMSTEAD - DAY

190

But Paul continues to the house, paying no mind to the creepy environment around him. He finally makes it onto the veranda and out of the sun. He collapses.

(CONTINUED)

Manages to drag himself to his feet and fall against the door. He BANGS on the wood. Nothing.

BANGS AGAIN, harder.

PAUL
(croaking)
Please... please open up...

Movement within the house. Then the SOUND of someone else. A muffled conversation. BOOTS up the hall.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Who is it?

PAUL
(voice giving out)
Please help...

The door swings open. A sun-dried retired farmer in his seventies stands within. This is JACK. Behind him is his wife LIL, still in nightgown and slippers.

JACK
What the bloody hell's going on here?

The old couple stare at their strange visitor.

JACK (CONT'D)
Lil, help him up.

Paul passes out as they grab an arm each and haul the broken young man inside. The door slams shut on the harsh landscape. Paul's safe now.

WE MOVE THROUGH THE HOUSE -- seen through Paul's eyes it's all wavering, liquid forms. The old couple's faces, their distant, echoing voices. We can tell the home is not quite as dilapidated as outside; some cracks in the walls, threadbare carpets, old furniture. An OLD DOG wanders in from the kitchen on arthritic legs and BARKS a couple of times; the sound seems backwards. We continue into a...

...BEDROOM. Paul's eyes roll back in his head.

PAUL
Where... where am I..?

LIL
(to Jack)
Put him up there, love. I'll get
water.

Lil bustles out and Jack helps Paul drink a little. Then she returns and soaks a face cloth in a bowl and pads his forehead. Paul slowly notices the old woman, but when he looks at her it is Katarina, her back to us. Beyond her there's a dark shadow at the edge of the room. It hangs in the air ominously, increasing in size.

Paul glances back to Katarina; she turns and smiles but her lower jaws hangs off; Paul SCREAMS and WE HARD CUT TO:

WIDE ANGLE: the old couple exchanging a glance. Tense. Paul is sitting up, sweat drenched. His breathing subsides. It seems some time has past. They move out of the room and Paul puts his head back on the pillow and closes his eyes as we DISSOLVE TO...

192 INT. FARMSTEAD - LATER

192

Jack and Lil stand beside Paul, who's just woken again.

JACK
I've put the diff back in. We're
good to go now.

LIL
Let him rest. He's been through
an ordeal by the looks of things.
Wait 'til the boy gets home.
He'll know what to do with him.

Paul passes out again and we DISSOLVE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

193 INT. FARMSTEAD - LATE AFTERNOON/EVENING

193

The SOUND of LICKING.

Paul jerks awake. The dog is lapping the blood from his face. He pulls away and sits upright. Long black shadows grid the room, honey light spills inside. He glances around. How long has he been asleep?

The BACK DOOR BANGS deeper in the house and he starts. The dog glances to the sound then back at him, unconcerned. It limps away. Bored.

(CONTINUED)

Folded clothes have been left by his feet. He shrugs out of his dirty, torn shirt.

CUT TO PAUL: The old man's borrowed clothes hanging from his small frame. They're clean at least.

Paul heads towards the back of the house. The SOUND of TALKING, CUTLERY CLINKING.

The hall tracks from the entrance past the lounge room on one side and stairs on the other, down past a storage room beneath the stairs opposite a gun-case.

Paul walks slowly towards the sound. In the kitchen Jack hunches over a bowl of soup. Lil stands for another bowl when she sees the stranger.

LIL

We didn't know whether to wake you. We'll head off as soon as you've eaten something.

PAUL

(still croaky)
Phone?

JACK

No phones out here. We got a shortwave. Not that it's working at the moment.

Fear returns to Paul's eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)

It's the magnets. Something weird in the ground. TV often goes on the blink too. Have to be self-sufficient, out here.

Lil sees Paul's expression and immediately helps him into the room.

LIL

It's alright, love. Just sit down. Tell us what happened. My name's Lil. This is Jack.

Paul sits down. Stares at the soup in front of him.

PAUL

This girl came out of nowhere. Covered in blood. A car came after her. This... this man. And... and he shot her.

The couple glance to each other. Paul's still stunned by what he's witnessed.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Why would anyone do that?

JACK

(angry)

Too many bloody nutters out here.
Why we keep to ourselves.

Lil watches the boy, tries to take his mind off what he's been through.

LIL

(to Paul)

What are you doing out here, love?

Paul tries to focus.

PAUL

I've... I've been working in
Darwin the last few months. I was
heading to Broome to catch up with
some mates. Do some surfing. Not
that I'm much good... And my
board's gone now anyway...

Lil doesn't know what to say so she passes some bread to him. He stares at his soup, still reliving what happened. Then takes a sip. It's good. Spoons up another mouthful. He glances up at the old couple.

JACK

Come on, son. Eat up. You'll
need your strength.

LIL

I made it special for you.

Something about the way they are smiling, too eager for him to eat the soup.

Paul freezes, lowers his spoon. What if they are in on this too? What if they're drugging him right now? What if Mick's their son? Paul suddenly gets dizzy, mind racing. Jack stands suddenly when...

...OUTSIDE, the dog BARKS. Paul straightens in his seat as if electrocuted. Jack slowly turns.

PAUL

No.

JACK

Wait here.

Paul's white with fear. Lil moves to comfort him.

PAUL

You don't understand.

Jack grabs the shotgun and heads purposefully outside.

CUT TO:

194

EXT. FARMSTEAD - DUSK

194

The last of the sunlight has faded. Jack stands on the verandah and stares out at the darkness. The dog trots in past him, tail between its legs. Jack grips the shotgun.

From out of the shadows appears Mick like a phantom.

His face is set with purpose. He holds a gun by his side. Jack raises his shotgun on the intruder. Mick doesn't flinch.

MICK

G'day, mate. The boy. Hand him over.

JACK

Get off my property.

MICK

(calling out)
You in there, Hero? You want to kill them too?

Jack's shotgun starts to waver.

JACK

I said get the hell away from here.

Mick's focus swivels back to Jack. Staring at him with those steely eyes. Jack's using all of his strength just to keep the gun leveled. Mick smiles, nods and melts back into the darkness.

195

INT. FARMSTEAD KITCHEN - DUSK

195

Lil comforts a terrified Paul as Jack walks back in.

JACK

He's gone.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

No he's not.

JACK

Will be if I see him again.

Cocks his SHOTGUN. They wait, listening for sounds outside. Paul jumps at a CREAK from one side of the house. Then a GROAN from the other. A GUST OF WIND rattles the house. Suddenly every sound seems amplified. Foreboding.

JACK (CONT'D)

Car's around the side. We'll go out together.

He starts to head out of the kitchen when a STRANGE NOISE halts him. Like CRINKLING PAPER.

He, Lil and Paul glance at each other. The sound becomes a DULL ROAR. And it's building. Paul stares agape at the smoky fingers emerging through the gaps in the wall.

Mick's set the house on fire!

Jack and Lil look at each other, terrified.

JACK (CONT'D)

Bucket!

He lumbers off down the hallway.

LIL

No Jack! The car!

Lil continues rummaging through the drawers for the keys but Paul retreats into the room opposite the kitchen, fear paralyzing him. He crumples in a corner as smoke rises around.

Jack tries to pick up two buckets from beneath the table next to the gun case while keeping hold of the gun. It's awkward. The sound of his house of fifty years burning rises around him. He manages to grab the handles of both buckets finally. But he looks up at the smoke now filling the hall. It's obvious it's going to be too late. He abandons the buckets and turns back to the kitchen.

He doesn't see the storage closet door open behind him.

197 **POV FROM BENEATH THE TABLE - DUSK**

197

LOW ANGLE: Mick appears behind Jack, brings his own gun up to the old man's head and...

...KA-BOOM! Jack's brains spray towards us.

198 **INT. FARMSTEAD - DUSK**

198

At the SOUND of the SHOT Lil SCREAMS as she comes out of the kitchen, keys in hand. She sees her husband slumped into the now-shattered gun case and a big man in a hat standing over him. Flames lick the front door behind.

She turns and runs.

199 **POV DOWN HALL - DUSK**

199

Mick brings up his rifle with practiced ease, smoothly reloading then firing and...

...Lil blasts through the back door like she's been fired from a cannon.

200 **INT. FARMSTEAD - DUSK**

200

Mick casually reloads his rifle while walking to the back door.

201 **EXT. FARMSTEAD BACK VERANDAH - DUSK**

201

Lil crawls moaning to the expanse of dirt beyond the house as if to salvation. Her back is flooding with blood.

She looks up as Mick's shadow falls over her. The warm barrel of the gun presses against her teeth. She stares up. Mick squats above her and grins, plucking the car keys out of her clawed hand.

MICK

We could have had some fun, you
and I.

He looks into her eyes. Drinks in her last moments of fear.

Then squeezes the trigger.

He stands up and looks down the hall. Walks back inside.

202

INT. FARMSTEAD - DUSK

202

Mick looks into the kitchen. It's empty. Smoke is filling the corridor and the blaze roars in our ears.

He looks at the sitting room across from the kitchen. Moves into that, leading with his weapon.

He scans the little-used room. But it's empty too. Paul is no longer huddled in the corner.

MICK
(softly calling)
Where are ya, Hero?

He comes back out into the hallway. Glances up the stairs. If Paul's upstairs he's going to die up there. Mick smiles at that.

Then his head WHIPS DOWN as a SOUND comes from the front of the house. A window breaking.

Fire blocks his way.

CUT TO:

203

EXT. FARMSTEAD - DUSK

203

Paul staggers from the burning building, putting distance between himself and Mick.

He glances back at the fire raging, face a fear streaked mask of terror. Not only did he fail to save Katarina's life. He's got two other people killed.

But adrenaline kicks in and he pushes onwards, past the outskirts of the property.

Scrubland lies ahead, the ground becoming more hilly. It should provide cover.

204

EXT. SCRUBLAND - DUSK

204

He stumbles through the needle-grass and risks a glance back. The burning building lights the early evening sky.

Then: a shadow within the front doorway.

Mick emerges from the smoke, walking face in shadow, inevitable. He sees Paul looking back.

(CONTINUED)

204 CONTINUED:

204

Mick's shirt and hat smolder. But he will not be denied his prey as he comes on out of the fire. As patient and as certain as death itself.

The GAS TANK next to the house EXPLODES but Mick doesn't pause. He reloads his gun, silhouetted by fire, staring ahead.

Paul cries out in fear and turns and runs, staggering on his injured leg.

205 **EXT. FARMSTEAD - DUSK**

205

Mick watches him go. Looks at the garage. Juggles the keys in his hand. Why not make it easy?

CUT TO:

206 **EXT. SCRUBLAND - EVENING**

206

Paul hurtles through the low bushes.

A SOUND behind him. A CAR ENGINE.

Headlights pierce the night. An old pickup truck lurches towards him. The rusted heap bounces along the grass. As it gets closer the gun appears out of the driver's side window. Tracks an arc.

A DEAFENING BOOM shatters the night.

Paul cries out and clutches his shoulder. Looks down. Blood pulses through his fingers. He looks up as the car turns slowly for another pass, engine groaning.

White with pain, Paul pushes to his feet and heads for a valley ahead. The uneven ground should prevent the car going any further. He pushes on until HEARING the car just behind. Then he hides behind some low foliage.

Mick climbs out of the car and scans the area with a torch. No sign of his quarry. Hefts the gun and starts searching.

MICK

Come out, come out, wherever you
are! Where are ya, Hero? Hey?

Paul huddles beneath the shrub, tucking his head into his chest as if that will block out the outside world.

Mick's VOICE comes agonizingly closer. The torch plays over the bush.

(CONTINUED)

206 CONTINUED:

206

The terrified boy bites his lip and tries not to cry out in fear and pain. Blood dribbles down his chin.

207 **POV THROUGH THE BUSH - EVENING**

207

We can see Mick's boots pass by, so close we can read their R.M. Williams tag.

MICK

(singing)

Fi Fi, Fo, Fum, I smell the blood
of an Englishman! Come on, come
to Uncle Mick. I'm not gonna hurt
you.

The SOUND of our PULSE POUNDS in our head. Mick's boots seem to SHAKE the EARTH.

208 **EXT. SCRUBLAND - EVENING**

208

Mick continues on without seeing Paul, who waits for the sound of his calling to fade away. Then he uncoils one leg. Soundlessly fights cramp.

He hesitates a little longer until certain Mick has passed by. Finally Paul raises his head.

Mick has gone. He'd be silhouetted on the horizon if he was still close by.

Paul glances back towards the farmstead. The pickup truck rests at the base of the valley.

Paul doubles back, running low, racing for the truck. His leg's still bad and his shoulder hangs awkwardly. But he pushes on despite his wounds. He's a survivor. He's not going to let some colonial madman finish him off. A look of determination is set on his face. He's going get out of this nightmare when...

...a shape rises from the grass forty feet behind him.

Mick has been waiting all along. An old hunting trick.

209 **POV THROUGH RIFLE SCOPE - EVENING**

209

Mick sights down the rifle as if tracking an animal. Aims at Paul's oblivious head. Then he changes his mind and tracks down to his feet. He has plans for this one.

A BOOM cracks the sky.

210 **EXT. SCRUBLAND - EVENING** 210

On Paul: as his legs slash out from under him, left thigh GRAZED by the gunshot.

211 **POV THROUGH RIFLE SCOPE - EVENING** 211

Mick watches his quarry buck into the ground like a downed rabbit.

212 **EXT. SCRUBLAND - EVENING** 212

ON Mick.

MICK
(chuckles)
The winner!

He rechambers another round with some satisfaction.

Paul screams at the pain and scrabbles back in terror as Mick appears. He narrows his eyes as Paul defiantly yells through his agony -- like an animal resisting capture. Mick grins then...

...clubs the rifle butt into Paul's face.

CUT TO BLACK:

213 **INT. CAVE/SHED - NIGHT** 213

Paul gasps awake, sucking in air like he's drowning. He struggles but can't move. Looks down at himself.

CLOSE ON: he's tied to an old barbershop chair. Both arms and legs. His foot hangs from a shattered ankle. Agonizing. He glances around, terrified.

All around is deepest darkness. WATER DRIPS somewhere, echoing loudly. He appears to be in some kind of shed, but the sounds indicate we are deep underground. A dim overhead light globe barely illuminates his chair and wall of tools to his left. Wherever he is, he's clearly...

...in the lair of the monster.

Something SOUNDS in the gloom beyond. A gravelly voice fills the air.

MICK

You obviously don't know the first rule of the Outback. You never, never stop. Would have saved yourself a whole lot of trouble.

Paul squints, tries to gauge where the voice is coming from.

MICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Why're you out here, Pommy?

Paul screams and struggles against his bonds, but he's utterly powerless. At the mercy of a maniac. WE KEEP CLOSE on Paul's face: on his wide, panic-filled eyes.

MICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I asked you a question. Why - are you - here?

PAUL

Please. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interfere. I should have left her there. Minded my own business...

The voice ignores him.

MICK (O.S.)

-- maybe I can answer it for you. You're here for an adventure. For excitement...

Mick's face looms from the darkness.

MICK (CONT'D)

-- for a thrill, hey? Somethin' different?

PAUL

(crying with terror)

Please. Yes, I suppose so. Look, I'm really sorry mate. Just let me go, and... and I can just walk away.

Chuckles from the gloom echo around the place. Like Satan's own laugh.

MICK

That's a good one. You expect to come to my fuckin' country, waltz around like you own the bloody place, get between a man and his meal and "just walk away", eh?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICK (CONT'D)

Just like that? You Pommy bastard's will never learn, will you. 'Fact, none of you foreign cunts will. I keep sending the same message, but apparently it ain't getting through.

Chuckles.

MICK (CONT'D)

But no worries 'mate'. I'll just see if I've got bus fare for you so you can be on your way, eh?

Something glints out of the darkness. Paul freezes. It is the blade of a knife. It strokes the side of his neck and face lazily. Moves up and traces his mouth. Mick's face appears from shadow.

MICK (CONT'D)

(whispers)

You owe me, boy. Think you could just take her from me? Huh?

He runs the knife lower.

MICK (CONT'D)

Where's your famous English wit, now? Hey Mister Smarty Fuckin' Pants? Not so lippy now, huh? And be even harder... with no tongue.

The knife trails around Paul's throat, before moving toward his mouth -- it's clear Mick's going to start there. Paul suddenly blurts out.

PAUL

There once was a man from York, who picked his nose with a fork. When it got stuck, he cried 'I don't give a fuck', and walked around looking like a dork.

Mick freezes, taken aback. The knife unconsciously drops. Paul thinks quick and sprays out another.

PAUL (CONT'D)

There once was a man from Kansas, Who's nuts were made out of brass. In stormy weather, he'd clack them together, and lightning shot out of his ass.

Mick cracks a smile, confused but amused.

(CONTINUED)

MICK

What are you doing, Pom?

Paul talks even faster.

PAUL

There was an old lady from
Wheeling, who had a funny feeling.
She laid on her back,
and tickled her crack,
and pissed all over the ceiling.

Mick cracks up. Tears run down his face. He holsters
his knife and pulls up a chair.

MICK

Funny little fucker, huh? Where'd
you learn those?

PAUL

Boarding school.

Mick considers him. Then suddenly darkness crosses his
face again. Smile vanishes.

MICK

Still don't know nothin' about my
country, you little Pommy...

Mick brings his knife back up but Paul quickly speaks up,
loud, proud.

PAUL

There's an old Australian
stockman, lying, dying.
He gets himself up on one elbow,
turns to his mates,
who are gathered 'round, and he
says:

(Paul breaks into
song)

Watch me wallabies feed, mate,
Watch me wallabies feed.
They're a dangerous breed, mate,
So watch me wallabies feed.
All together now!
Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down.
Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down.

Mick is looking at Paul, open-mouthed, stunned.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Keep me cockatoo cool, Curl,
Keep me cockatoo cool.
Don't go acting the fool, Curl,
Keep me cockatoo cool.
All together now!

Mick suddenly breaks into song with Paul. A bizarre, increasingly raucous duet unfolds.

PAUL/MICK

Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down.
Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down.
Take me koala back, Jack,
Take me koala back.
He lives somewhere out on the
track, Mac,
So take me koala back.

Mick's dancing, slapping his thighs, bopping a crazy dance.

PAUL/MICK (CONT'D)

All together now!
Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down.
Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down.
Play your didgeridoo, Blue,
Play your didgeridoo.
Keep playing 'til I shoot through,
Blue,
Play your didgeridoo.

Mick's now singing like he's at the Opera house. Who knew he was a karaoke fan?

PAUL/MICK (CONT'D)

All together now!
Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down.
Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down...

Paul stumbles, doesn't know the next lines. Mick slowly sits, eyes glinting. He knows this part. In fact, we sense it might be his favorite.

MICK

...Tan me hide when I'm dead,
Fred,
Tan me hide when I'm dead.
(Spoken, pointed)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICK (CONT'D)

So we tanned his hide when he
died, Clyde,
And that's it hanging on the
shed...

Mick lets the last words echo to silence. Paul's frozen,
unsure what the madman is going to make of his
distraction when suddenly Mick slaps Paul hard on the
shoulder.

MICK (CONT'D)

You mad little British cunt!
How'd you know that song?

Paul sees an opening.

PAUL

My... mum had the record and we'd
listen to it endlessly as kids.
He was bigger in the U.K. than he
was here, you know. Rolf Harris.

MICK

My word you're a knowledgable
little prick.

Mick eyes him in a new light. Leans in close.

MICK (CONT'D)

Know what? You're alright, mate.
Let's have a fuckin' drink.

Paul manages a smile, nods through his agony. Mick's
totally oblivious to the blood and cuts covering his
victim.

PAUL

Thought you'd never bloody ask!

MICK

(imitating British
accent)

'Thought you'd never bloody ask!'

Mick howls with laughter. The kid is good. The bushman
stands and darts into the gloom into some offshoot of the
main area.

Paul's eyes scan around fast, searching for a weapon of
any kind, a way he can get free from his bonds.

Nothing sharp -- but a bench to his left holds some nasty
torture instruments. Including a large claw hammer.

NOISES of CLINKING BOTTLES as Mick returns from the gloom.

Paul smiles broadly, trying to keep Mick engaged and occupied; befriending the beast could be his only means of survival. It's insane but at the moment his choices are severely limited.

Mick sits opposite with two tin cups and a bottle of Bundaberg rum. He hands one to Paul, who can't raise his hands as they're roped to the armrests of the chair. Mick gives Paul a look of 'don't you try run away again' and unties his right hand.

Then he slaps a tin cup into it, sloshes it full of rum, fills his own and takes a deep breath.

MICK (CONT'D)

Up ya bum.

They chink and drink. Paul sips and coughs out the harsh liquor. Mick skolls his whole cup in one gulp and looks to Paul. Paul doesn't want to offend so quickly has another go. This time he drains it and places it out front for more, smiling. Mick's delighted.

MICK (CONT'D)

Alright, isn't it? Tastes like camel's piss but Jesus it gives a man a fuckin' buzz.

Mick downs another cup. Paul matches him.

PAUL

Bundaberg Rum. It's all me and my mates ever drink. Beautiful.

Mick's filling both cups again. Seems like he hasn't had a drinking buddy (who wasn't a corpse) for some time.

MICK

(sings)

God made the sugar cane grow where
it's hot,
And teetotal abstainers to grow
where it's not.
Let the sin bosun warn of
perdition to come;
We'll drink it and chance it, so
bring on the rum.

CHORUS: Bundaberg rum, and it's
overproof rum,
Will tan your inside and grow hair
on your bum.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICK (CONT'D)

Let the blue ribbon beat on his
empty old drum
Or his waterlogged belly, but
we'll stick to our rum.

We're men who drink it, oh yes,
men indeed,
Of the bushranging hairnecked
olden time breed.
We shave with our axes. We dress
in old rags.
We feed on old boots and we sleep
on old bags.

Paul joins in the chorus as best he can, trying to
remember the words.

MICK/PAUL

Bundaberg rum, and it's overproof
rum,
Will tan your inside and grow hair
on your bum.
Let the blue ribbon beat on his
empty old drum
Or his waterlogged belly, but
we'll stick to our rum.

Paul sways along as Mick belts out the final stanza.

MICK

Dull care flies away when our
voices resound,
And the grass shrivels up when we
spit on the ground.
When we finally die and are buried
in clay,
Our bodies are pickled and never
decay.

Mick holds up the bottle; takes a long drink from it.
Paul laughs like it's the greatest ditty he's ever heard.
They bump cups and down their drinks, Mick instantly
refilling them both.

MICK (CONT'D)

Now, seems as you're such a
fuckin' Einstein know-it-all I got
a little game we can play. Like a
quiz, you know? I ask you ten
questions, if you get half of 'em
right -- so, five -- I'll let you
go. Sound alright to you?

Paul's attempting to not scream with joy. Trying to keep cool. And mask his glances to the claw hammer on the bench.

PAUL

Sounds... sounds brilliant. I didn't get your name.

Mick's feeling the booze, and he's now like we've never seen him. It's like he's a happy bloke in a bar, a bloke you'd love to chew the fat with and share a drink.

MICK

Mick Taylor's my name. Pig-shooter and general fuckin' outback legend. You ready to rock 'n' roll?

Paul nods vigorously. Mick puts his cup down and leans over to the bench. He turns back with a large angle grinder and sets it on his knees.

Paul's eyes nearly pop out staring at it.

PAUL

What's that for, Mick?

MICK

Oh, forgot to mention. Each one you get wrong I grind off a finger. Ten questions, ten fingers, kinda' symmetrical. Know what I mean?

Paul's sweat starts rolling. His nerves are quivering, on the edge now. He gives a trembling smile, trying to hold his shit together. He breathes out.

PAUL

So it's like 'Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?'

MICK

Yeah, but you won't be calling no fuckin' friend if you don't know the answer. You'll be screamin' in agonizing pain.

Mick chuckles, thinks he's hilarious. Paul says a silent prayer to a God he in this moment really hopes exists.

PAUL

(nods)
Let's rock 'n' roll.

Mick grabs the bottle, fills Paul's cup, then his own.
Then he settles and faces Paul.

MICK

We'll start off with an easy one.
What Aboriginal term for a
waterhole is also the name of an
Australian 'surf' clothing
company?

Paul's eyes light up, he knows this -- but he's also
desperate not to say the wrong answer. He hesitates,
then finally:

PAUL

Billabong?

Mick grins, they both clink cups and drink. Paul's
relieved, sighs. Wipes sweat.

MICK

Very good. Now, this one's a
little harder, but you're a
stinkin' Pom, so you'll be right.
What year did the British settle
in Australia?

Paul, mind racing, eyes closed. Recalling history
lessons from years ago.

PAUL

After Lieutenant James Cook
discovered the east coast and
mapped it in Seventeen-seventy,
the First Fleet landed and settled
in... Seventeen-eighty-eight.

Mick sips, eyeing the kid with a hint of admiration.
Paul opens his eyes, mind still racing.

PAUL (CONT'D)

The British first arrived to
settle Sydney on eighteenth
January Seventeen-eighty-eight, at
Botany Bay, but for several
reasons, moved northwards to Port
Jackson, arriving and settling on
twenty-sixth January Seventeen-
eighty-eight.

Mick's deeply impressed. In fact, he's amazed.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Does that answer your question?

MICK

Jesus. You are a smart cunt. I might have to let you go just on that answer alone-

Paul leans forward, eager.

PAUL

History. One of my hobbies-

MICK

-- but I'm a man of my word. And I did say ten... Symmetrical with the finger thing, blah blah.

Mick pours the last from the rum bottle. Getting really toasted now. Paul swallows, glances at the claw hammer. Then back to Mick. Preparing for the worst.

MICK (CONT'D)

Righteo. What year did the British begin deporting convicts to Australia?

Paul closes his eyes, breathes deeply. Then finally.

PAUL

Seventeen.. eighty-seven... No... Seventeen-eighty-eight? The first eleven ships of the First Fleet landed their 'cargo' of around seven hundred and eighty British convicts at Botany Bay in New South Wales. Two more convict fleets arrived in Seventeen-ninety and Seventeen-ninety-one, and the first free settlers arrived in Seventeen-ninety-three.

Mick sips his last drop. Eyes Paul a long time. Giving nothing away. Paul's waiting for a reaction.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Mick? I'm... that's right. Isn't it?

Mick doesn't answer. Seems he picked the wrong person to play a quiz with. Admiration has turn to resentment. He locks Paul in his gaze.

MICK

Why?

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

I... I don't really understand the question-

Mick bristles angrily. Sudden violence brims -- SHOUTS.

MICK

Why did the British deport convicts to Australia?

Paul's flustered at Mick's outburst. Knows this is not a straight question. Time passes.

MICK (CONT'D)

Come on, you dumb little fuck.
Time waits for no man. Tick,
tock, tick, tock, tick...

WHIIRRRRRR!!!! He gives the ANGLE GRINDER a blast.
Paul's shaken, confused, and he blurts out:

PAUL

Well, first of all, after losing the thirteen colonies they'd lost their penal settlements in Virginia in the United States, so they needed somewhere to put all the criminals that were stacking up in England. They couldn't handle the numbers of these people and they were spreading disease and just wasting resources and...

Mick's not liking this answer.

PAUL (CONT'D)

...and second: Australia looked as though it would be as rich in resources as the Americas. Obviously the British wanted to secure this before the Dutch or French did. Something like that?

Mick stands, grabs a steel vise from a nearby bench and sets it near Paul's untied hand. Paul screams as Mick grabs his finger and tightens it into the vise so it can't move.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Mick? Mick, come on! That's the right answer, I know it is! Mick! Please? For fuck's sake...

Mick grabs the angle grinder and it SCREAMS to life, WHIRRING its SANDPAPER BELT furiously.

(CONTINUED)

Mick grins, shakes his head and lowers the grinder to connect with Paul's outstretched finger and it...

...sprays red mist as it dissolves the flesh quickly, before SQUEALING against BONE, which it also chips back as the belt eats away an inch of Paul's finger before Mick stops, then ties the wounded hand back to the seat.

Paul's passing in and out of consciousness, staring at his pumping stump of a finger.

MICK

The right answer is because...
(leans in, whispers)
...they were a pack of Pommy
cunts.

Mick chuckles uproariously. Paul screams in agony.

MICK (CONT'D)

No seriously, you're right,
technically. And that-
(drinks)
-gives me the shits.

Paul stares at Mick, screams again, mind on the edge of collapse.

MICK (CONT'D)

Calm down, calm down. Jesus
Christ, acting like a bloody girl.
One more quick one, an easy one
then I'll get us another drink and
I'll get you outta' there.
Righteo? You're doing well mate.
Doing real well.

Paul settles, glances at his bloodied, mashed finger --
'Doing real well?'

MICK (CONT'D)

Who's the most famous Australian
cricketer? And not Shane Fucking
Warne.

Paul knows this. But he also knows that Mick has to take his hand out of its bonds to grind it. If he can make him free his left hand -- closer to the claw hammer -- he might be within reach.

Paul pretends to grapple with the question. Mick's confused.

MICK (CONT'D)

Batsman. Acknowledged as the
greatest of all time.

Paul looks skyward, attempting to appear stumped. He's
no Brando.

PAUL

Shit. I should know this. This
should be easy... come on!

MICK

First name's S... Sir... Second
name starts with D... D... D...
Rhymes with 'on'... D... O... N...

Paul strains, acting as if trying to desperately guess
it.

PAUL

Sir... Dennis... Lilee?

MICK

You're joking? Hmmpf. Maybe not
so smart after all, eh? Oh
well... If you don't know it...

Mick stands, wheels over the vise, unties Paul's left
hand and wedges his fingers tight inside. Paul's
struggling the whole time.

PAUL

No Mick, come on, come on. You
don't need to do that... I got
four right, come on!

He arcs up the angle grinder and red sprays Paul's face
as Mick GRINDS a good inch off Paul's left index finger.

The screaming and blood finally cease and the machine
dies down. Mick sets down the grinder. Paul's barely
holding it together.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Please... let me out of here.

MICK

I am going to let you out of
there, mate. You've been a bloody
good sport. But first I'm going
grab us something else to drink.

(leans close)

Don't go anywhere.

He ducks out into gloom. Paul sits up fast, reaches over and strains trying to reach...

...the claw hammer. His fingers spider closer, closer. Catch the edge and it...

...spins further away. Paul stifles a scream as he hears...

...NOISES down the corridor. He leans back over and strains for the hammer, almost dislocating his shoulder as he strains and grunts for it, closing centimeter by centimeter closer as...

...NOISES move closer to us. Mick returning, singing as...

...Paul makes a final gut-churning lunge. We hear RIBS CRACK as he grasps the hammer and pulls it toward himself, quickly concealing it in shadow as Mick...

...appears back in the room. He's holding a bottle of rum and a pile of clothing. He quickly begins filling the cups with rum, takes a long slug and turns to grab the clothing.

PAUL

You're going to let me go now,
yeah?

Mick's back is turned. He's doing something we can't see.

MICK

Uh, well, I said I'm going to let
you out of there. And I am, but
we're goin' somewhere else down
here.

PAUL

What?

MICK

Yeah, see, no one ever really gets
out of here-

Mick reaches over and flicks a light switch and some dim LIGHTS BUZZ ON revealing the...

MICK (CONT'D)

-as such.

...twelve decomposing FEMALE CORPSES that are nailed, strapped and hung in horrific poses about the walls of this dungeon-like cave.

(CONTINUED)

Mostly naked, lime-covered and mutilated in ways too agonizing to describe. We realize we've been surrounded by them the whole time, and they've all been arranged ritually like bizarre pale ghosts, watching.

MICK (CONT'D)

That'd just be crazy.

Paul screams like his mind's just snapped into a million pieces. Crying, tears flowing, snot pouring, a sniveling mess.

PAUL

What the fuck is this? What's going on here? You said you're a man of your word!

Mick turns, holding a woman's dress, some tights, a pair of heels, and some stockings.

MICK

Yeah, I am. But like I said before, you owe me. You took away my plaything, so you're gonna have to stand in for a bit. Okey dokey?

Paul's horror rises to a new level as his mind races.

PAUL

What the...? You're not... no... you can't be going to... You're some fuckin' fag freak...

And Mick's on him in a second, smashes him across the face hard. He grasps Paul's face with one huge hand, almost squishing out his teeth. Mick's face is close, insane, rage like hot lava slicking his shadowed face. Eyes wide.

MICK

Don't you ever fuckin' say that. Don't ever fuckin' say that. It's just... practical is all.

Paul nods his head as much as he can.

PAUL

Okay, okay, okay. Sorry. I didn't mean it like that...

Mick's insane outburst subsides as quickly as it appeared. He lets go of Paul's face, leans back and Paul...

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (CONT'D)

-Mick!

...SMASHES him in the side of the head with the hammer.

Mick thuds to the ground, stunned.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I meant it like that, you psycho
Crocodile Dundee piece-of-shit.

Paul quickly puts the claws of the hammer to his still-tied arm and rips at the bonds, loosening them enough so he can slide his arm out.

Mick rolls around, staggered but far from unconscious.

Paul leaps from the chair, grabs a flashlight from the bench and runs as fast as he can, vanishing into the darkness of the tunnels.

214

INT. MINING TUNNELS - NIGHT

214

Cut long ago, the tunnels are high and wide enough that Paul only has to crouch a little as he staggers forward, flashlight beam cutting spastically through the blackness like a strobelight.

He reaches a 'T' intersection. Glances left then right. The wrong choice here could mean the end. He glances back the way he came -- no sign of Mick, but the thought of him is enough to make Paul choose a direction fast. He heads right.

215

INT. MINING TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

215

Paul splashes through a section ankle-deep in water which slows him, before gaining speed again and racing as fast as he can onwards.

216

INT. MINING TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

216

We spot Paul's flashlight bobbing quickly, then slowing as he approaches, stopping right before us. We can see Paul's frozen face in the upglow of the light as he edges closer and closer. Until he halts, eyes wide with terror.

REVERSE and we see Paul is staring at a deadend. The tunnel just stops in this direction.

(CONTINUED)

216 CONTINUED:

PAUL
No no no no fuck no!

Paul spins and races back the way he came.

217 INT. MINING TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS 217

Again the bobbing flashlight appears and grows larger as Paul bolts toward us down the tunnel. He slows, getting cautious as he nears the intersection of tunnels. He hugs the wall, glances back down where he came from and then flits across and runs left, quickly disappearing into darkness.

218 INT. MINING TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS 218

Paul enters a large, vaulted space, similar in scale to where he woke earlier. There's old rusted tools, pieces of mining equipment, barrels. Looks like some kind of storage area.

Ropes swing from a breeze coming down the central tunnel. Paul smells the air: it seems fresher. He's about to head that way when he sees opening to his left.

219 INT. ALCOVE - CONTINUOUS 219

There's some light coming from inside. Paul quickly decides to glance in -- 'maybe that's the way out?'

We follow his trembling torch beam as he rounds a pile of rusted barrels to find the space opens out again and around the walls are hung...

...FOUR MALE CORPSES. Some skeletal, some as fresh as six months, but all wearing some remnants of women's clothing. A bra. A skirt. A torn blouse.

In the middle of the room is a workbench with numerous straps. Next to that is a table of tools. Paul shudders with the realization that this where he was headed. He backs away from the grisly sight, barely holding in the contents of his guts. He turns with a new zeal for survival burning in his eyes.

For it's not just dying down here that terrifies. Death would be welcomed as an old friend. It's what happens before you die. The unimaginable horror of being in this psychopath's power for as long as he chooses.

Paul jumps as he hears MICK'S VOICE, booming like a foghorn down the tunnels. Bouncing off the walls.

(CONTINUED)

MICK (O.S.)

Owww. That really, really hurt.
I think you broke something.
There's blood everywhere and... I
just hope your fuckin' happy with
yourself, mate.

Paul's legs almost buckle, but he half falls/tumbles his
escape up the tunnel. Mick's voice booms after, seeming
to fill every corner of the space.

MICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'd just got us some more booze
and that's the bloody thanks I
get?

220

INT. MINING TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

220

Paul's running blindly -- pushing through cobwebs,
smashing through ancient crates -- possessed with the
will to live. Now more animal than man, pure instinct
has taken over as he races along the tunnels desperate
for escape. Following the smell of clean air. Hoping he
isn't running right back into the bosom of the beast.

221

INT. MINING TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

221

Paul slows as he reaches another crossroads; tunnels
running either direction. One way looks dark, smaller.
The other seems to grow larger. Paul tries to catch his
breath, glances back the way Mick's voice booms from.

MICK (O.S.)

C'mon, mate. We were having a
good time, yeah? Singin' and
drinkin' and carryin' on? Don't
be like that...

(breaks into drunken
song)

...All together now!
Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down.
Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
Tie me kangaroo down... ah fuck
ya!

Paul shudders and disappears to the left, running on his
last legs.

MICK (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Go git'm, you mongrel bastards!

The SOUNDS of DOGS BARKING. Vicious hunting dogs.

222 INT. MINING TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

222

Paul glances back as he hears these sounds, adding another dimension of insane horror to his flight through the hell of these tunnels.

He coughs, gasping for air as he collapses, knocking his head against the rocky wall. Blood runs quickly from a cut, but soon it's indistinguishable from the other muck and gore covering his face. He staggers to his shaky legs and continues down the tunnel.

223 INT. MINING TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

223

Paul approaches a section with a thin side tunnel running off it. It's more of a natural crevice, but through it appears to be some kind of metal and dim light.

He squeezes through, gets stuck halfway, and panics as the SOUND of Mick and the dogs gets closer and closer.

Finally he pops through and falls to the ground inside the

224 INT. ROCK ANTE-CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

224

It's a rock-hewn room with a fifteen foot ceiling and dim light emanating from ancient lamps strewn around the floor. Two are working and they illuminate the five boulders which have chains attached to them. Attached to the chains are human remains. Crumbled. Ancient.

One corpse close to Paul doesn't look so ancient. In fact it looks recently dead. Paul crawls closer to inspect it, glancing behind nervously as he does.

We see it's a YOUNG WOMAN (mid 20s). Once pretty, her face now a skeletal mask of horror. Drawn, tight and white as flour.

Paul takes this insane room in. The awfulness of this place, he looks at her face again as she...

...opens her eyes and SCREAMS in agony, a sound beyond description. Almost not human. Paul looks on in horror, then back the way he came as he hears...

... the DOGS, alerted by her sound. Paul looks back to the prone victim, now screaming a low gargle, mind having been mushed by the experience of being one of Mick's playthings for who-knows-how long.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Please... be quiet... Please...

She makes terrible eye contact with Paul. Like a tormented soul direct from hell would look.

YOUNG WOMAN

Make - it - stop... Please...

Her eyes go to a large boulder nearby. She nods. Paul -- eyes filled with tears -- immediately understands. She's basically dead anyway. Starved, broken, paralyzed, a shattered mockery of a human life. He stands, reaches for the rock, heaves it above his head and is about to drop it on her face and end her suffering when he halts.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

Please... kill me... Please...

Paul drops the rock to the side. He can't -- won't -- harm another human being. He backs away from her, powerless, as the SOUNDS of the DOGS continue on, becoming louder. As does the SOUND of Mick calling crazily to him.

PAUL

I'll come back... Please... I will... Just be quiet. Please.

Paul takes one last look at the room, at the Young Woman's prone corpse, turns and runs back through the crevice. Her CRYING echoes after him like a haunting ghost. Tormenting him, chasing him.

This agonized cry is as chilling as any noise we've heard so far. It's the sound of the deepest misery imaginable. Suffering beyond imagination. The sound every burning soul in hell makes crying for release from an eternity of torment.

Paul moves more cautiously down the tunnel now, unsure how close Mick and the dogs are. He rounds a corner around which the tunnel opens out. Paul smells the air -- it's definitely fresher from this direction.

He moves forward only to freeze when he hears a deep, vicious GROWL to his right.

Paul glances around to the TWO BLACK FORMS in the gloom, about four meters away.

HUGE PIG HUNTING DOGS: Rhodesian Ridgebacks. Snarling as they edge closer, closer.

Paul takes a deep breath as he slowly edges back but suddenly the animals BARK and charge and...

...Paul stumbles on loose stones and falls as...

...the monstrous killers bound toward him and he...

...screams and raises his arms to protect his face when...

..THHHHHHWACK!

Paul glances up to see a spiked booby-trap has sprung from the wall and impaled the huge dog. It shudders its last death-throes as it hangs dead. The other dog growls but can no longer get to Paul past the blocked tunnel.

Paul's about to stand but his hand slips downwards somehow. Curious, he investigates.

Under the floor -- where Paul was headed -- is a huge hole. It's covered with a fake surface of tarpaulin camouflaged by dirt -- concealing a deep pit with dozens of sharpened spikes.

Paul looks closely at the walls ahead, spots more swing traps.

He's chilled as he realizes the path leading out is booby-trapped. Tricks from the Vietnam War only a vet would know and only a madman would remember.

The remaining dog barks. Alerting its master to Paul's whereabouts.

PAUL

(hissed)

Shhhhh! Shut the fuck up!

No use. Paul crawls forward, pulls out the claw hammer and puts an arm through the trap. Waits for the dog to leap up...

...then smashes it in the skull -- dropping it to the ground instantly.

Panting with the exertion, Paul rips open the swing trap and pulls the dead dog toward the intersection, laying its huge form just before the spiked pit.

Then, clasping his hammer, he crawls into a shadowed area opposite and waits. Huddling against the wall as best he can.

MICK (O.S.)

Come on, mate. What are you doing? Like I said, there's no way out of here.

Paul swallows and squeezes himself into the wall as the voice grows louder, clearer, almost upon him.

Then we see the silhouette of Mick walking up the tunnel, the way Paul came.

MICK (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna hurt ya. But trust me... If you keep heading the way you are...

Mick peters out as he moves directly in front of Paul. He's inches away. Halts staring at his dead pets.

CLOSE ON: Mick's face. Anger builds as he looks down at the corpses of perhaps his closest friends. He lets out a YELL: pain/anger/remorse. Then quickly calms himself.

MICK (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. Alright. Now I might have to hurt ya.

He stops, sensing something behind him and turns to see...

...Paul. Mick spins around fully as Paul attacks with the hammer, going for the head but...

...Mick is too fast and grabs the hammer mid-swing. His other hand snaps shut around Paul's throat. Mick pulls him closer, his face blood-covered, evil, insane, smiling.

MICK (CONT'D)

Got ya. Now, where were we?

Paul's feet lift off the ground as Mick turns to carry him back into the mine -- when Paul delivers an almighty kick to Mick's nuts.

The big man drops him instantly and buckles, taking a step back.

Paul seizes his moment, runs then kicks Mick as hard as he can in the chest, sending Mick staggering backwards.

225 CONTINUED: (3)

225

His feet catch against the corpse of the huge dead dog and Mick...

...falls backwards, crashing through the surface of the concealed pit trap and...

...is impaled by the spikes. He gurgles blood. His eyes go wide, then suddenly he's still.

The monster is dead.

Paul crawls to the edge, looks down at the still form of the mad bushman. The battered tourist breathes hard, grasping his crushed windpipe. Eventually he stands and carefully edges his way around the trap until he disappears down the tunnel.

CUT TO:

226 **EXT. MINING TUNNEL EXIT/CAMP - DAWN**

226

Paul emerges out the side of a tunnel and sees he's in a vast deserted mining camp. Somewhere in the outback. Gray light creeps over the surrounding hills. Dark shapes of broken-down trucks, vehicles, mining equipment litter the area.

He looks like he's been to hell and back. As, well, he has. He staggers forward into the dawn, picking his way through the machinery until he finds the road that leads out. Gingerly staggers onwards as best he can.

227 **EXT. TRACK THROUGH DESERT - DAWN**

227

The sun higher now. Paul shakes with the exertion, sweat runs making lighter marks through the caked blood and filth that cover his face. He halts as he see something ahead, then hurries toward it.

228 **EXT. OUTBACK HIGHWAY - DAWN**

228

Long, straight. He squints right and left before collapsing to the tarmac. He looks skyward, silently thanking whatever God he prayed to earlier to get him out of there.

Then he looks left -- a speck on the horizon indicates an APPROACHING VEHICLE.

Paul hauls his broken body upright, and walks down the center of the road waving both his arms.

(CONTINUED)

The car gets closer, closer, closer. Paul smiles broadly as he sees its graffiti-covered BACKPACKERS' VAN but then his expression changes.

The vehicle is not slowing down. It PARPS its HORN and Paul dives off the road and it blasts past and continues on its path. Not missing a beat. As if Paul were nothing more than a wounded animal. Paul's initial fury turns to insane laughter.

PAUL

Never stop. You never stop 'cause you never know. You just... never stop...

He cackles insanely, but slows as he hears ANOTHER VEHICLE approaching. Paul mutters under his breath, desperate.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Please. This time... Please stop.

He staggers up the road again as the vehicle roars closer, closer, closer. Paul's face drops again as he moves to the side of the road and then the vehicle WHIPS PAST before...

...slowing to a halt some fifteen meters down the road.

Paul explodes with excitement, limping toward the vehicle. It's a rugged looking F-100 FORD TRUCK. The door opens and a large man gets out. Hat, shorts, singlet: a tough-looking OUTBACK BASTARD. (In fact he looks a bit like Mick.)

OUTBACK BASTARD

What the bloody hell happened to you?

Paul staggers the remaining distance.

PAUL

Thank God. Thank God you stopped.

The man grabs a water canteen from the back and quickly hands it to Paul, who skolls it thirstily.

OUTBACK BASTARD

Here, get that into ya.

PAUL

We've gotta to go back. There's someone else hurt back there. A girl. She's alive.

228 CONTINUED: (2)

228

OFF the man's concerned look we HARD CUT TO:

229 EXT. MINING CAMP - DAWN

229

The man's truck rests in the background. Paul sits in the F.G., wrapped in a blanket. The man appears from the truck with a flashlight and a shotgun. They're near the entrance to the mining tunnels.

PAUL

Through and to the left. But be careful. There's traps in there.

Outback Bastard nods and quickly disappears into the tunnels. Paul closes his eyes, suddenly realizes how desperate he is for sleep. And the sun is warm now on his face. Soothing. Calming. Like heaven.

Paul opens his eyes, scans around and ends up on the man's truck. Paul notes for the first time it looks a lot like Mick's. Then he notes the hunting rifle rack behind the seat. And the area on the back for storing kills.

A chill goes through Paul as he hears a SOUND behind him. Then the man's legs appear to Paul's left. He doesn't look up but asks, now nervous.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You're... a pig-shooter as well?

The man is stationary, then suddenly we see a gush of red dripping down his front. Paul glances up and SCREAMS as he sees...

...Outback Bastard, his throat's sliced open, BLOOD geysers down his body as he drops to his knees. We notice MICK'S HUNTING KNIFE lodged firmly in his back when...

...KABOOM! His chest explodes with a SHOTGUN BLAST and he crashes forward onto his face. A dead, bloody mess.

Paul glances around and is suddenly face to face with...

...Mick. The mad bushman lowers to his haunches, face glistening red in the bright morning sunlight. We can see puncture holes through his chest, shoulder, legs. But, somehow, he's still alive.

Paul's got nothing left. No fight. No running. No strength. Nothing. Mick just looks at him, gives his evil chuckle then he clubs Paul with the butt of the shotgun and we:

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO BLACK.

Eerie sounds echo through the long, long darkness.

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS - MORNING

Paul snaps awake on a side street in the outback city. A few cars lazily pass by. It's early and no one takes much notice of a drunk passed out on the streets. Even if he is covered in blood. People presume a bar fight from the night before. Or just plain, 'don't care'.

Paul painfully sits up, attempts to make sense of where he is. Is this real? Did he dream the whole thing? Is he dead?

He squints. Nothing makes sense. He goes to wipe flies from his eyes when his hand catches a note stuffed into his top pocket. He pulls it out and reads it.

In neat, copper-plate handwriting: *'Good to meet you, mate. First time anyone's ever caught me in one of my own traps so figured you deserved to live. Plus I'd hate to see such a terrific singing voice go to waste. See you round... Mick.'*

Paul just stares at it as his mind crumbles, tears flow and reality shatters. He whispers over and over.

PAUL

Never... stop... Never stop...
Never stop...

He stares into the blackest abyss of horror imaginable as a few bystanders gather.

CUT TO BLACK:

TEXT APPEARS:

BLOOD FOUND ON THE CLOTHING OF PAUL HAMMERSMITH WAS CONFIRMED TO BE THAT OF MISSING GERMAN TOURIST KATARINA SCHMIDT. HOWEVER HER BODY AND THAT OF BOYFRIEND RUTGER ENQVIST WERE NEVER FOUND.

HAMMERSMITH IS RECORDED AS A 'PERSON OF INTEREST' IN THE GERMAN COUPLE'S DISAPPEARANCE.

THE CASE REMAINS OPEN.

FADE OUT.

(CONTINUED)

TB

230

CONTINUED:

107.

230

THE END