

A Quiet Place To Die.
an original screenplay by
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BLACK SCREEN:

WORDS APPEAR:

"Whatever happens to you has been waiting to happen since the beginning of time. The twining strands of fate wove both of them together: your own existence and the things that will occur." Marcus Auerilius.

Then...

NORTH WEST QUEENSLAND - 1981

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH ESCARPMENT - DAWN (1981)

First LIGHT on the horizon. Wind gusts whip and sing through the rocks. SPINIFEX sways with each fresh burst. The stage upon which our story shall take place is awakening.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOOT HILLS - SUNRISE (1981)

The SUN, an orb of shimmering fire, rises. Leaves of the GUMS rustle. BIRD SONGS increase. Long shadows as light cascades over the landscape.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT FLOOR - SUNRISE (1981)

A DINGO slinks on to the top of a small dune. Something off screen catches its attention. Then, startled by whatever it's looking at, scurries away.

Slowly a MAN, dressed bush rough, stockman like, carrying a SHOTGUN, clutching his left shoulder and looking completely exhausted, trudges onto the crest of the dune. The man's name is COBY DAWSON (27)

Coby collapses to his knees. His shirt on the left upper shoulder is torn and heavily blood stained.

Raising his head, he stares out at a HOMESTEAD sitting far across the plain at the base of a long line of rocky escarpments. Hauling himself back onto his feet, he stumbles on.

INT. DAWSON HOMESTEAD - MORNING (1981)

The front door to the homestead bursts open. Coby stumbles in.

INT. DAWSON HOMESTEAD - KITCHEN (1981)

At the sink, he turns on the tap. Thirsty as hell, drinks.

INT. DAWSON HOMESTEAD - BATHROOM (1981)

Ransacked. The door to a smashed MIRRORED WALL CABINET hangs loosely off one hinge. Coby studies the tired, dirty and unshaven reflection staring back.

Gingerly taking off his shirt, he examines a nasty GUNSHOT WOUND to his upper left arm.

Slumping down the wall, he searches through the contents of the cabinet scattered about the floor.

Finding a BOTTLE of ANTISEPTIC, twists off the cap with his teeth and pours the contents over his wound. As the antiseptic bites into the raw exposed flesh he HISSES with pain.

INT. DAWSON HOMESTEAD - BEDROOM (1981)

Arm bandaged, Coby gazes into the bedroom. The room, although Spartan, has also been completely ransacked.

Entering, he approaches an overturned DESK. Crumpled on the floor beside it, lies a smashed MODEL of a SPANISH GALLEON.

Coby attempts to reassemble some pieces. It's irreparable. He places it gently on the window sill.

At the bed, he picks up a blanket off the floor and smells it. Seating himself on the edge of the bed he gazes mindfully around the room.

INT. MACAVOY'S HOUSE - NIGHT (1981)

A MAN, sitting in front of a PHONE at a kitchen table in near darkness, draws upon a cigarette.

The glow reveals a stern, hard face. The eyes, deep, sharp and dangerous. Straight away you get the feeling that if you fuck with this man, he will fuck you back.

Meet DETECTIVE DOUG MACAVOY, a 42 year old, solid, hard arse, old school cop.

The glow dies down. You can barely see him, but you know he can see you. You can feel him watching.

He drags on the cigarette again. Under the glow, we watch as he slides BULLETS into the chamber of a SMITH AND WESSON 38 SPECIAL.

The phone rings. On the first bell he snaps it up. He listens to the caller, then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACAVOY

I'm on my way.

COBY'S NIGHTMARE - INT. PICK UP TRUCK - NIGHT (1981)

BAMM! BAMM! BAMM! Intense gunfire. The windscreen shatters. Pieces of the dashboard are chewed up and splintered by shot. It's fierce, quick and frightening.

INT. DAWSON HOMESTEAD - BEDROOM - NIGHT (1981)

Coby, sweating profusely, snaps awake from his nightmare to a darkened room. Swinging himself onto the edge of the bed, clasps his head and tries to calm himself down.

INT. DAWSON HOMESTEAD - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT (1981)

Montage of shots of Coby, sitting on an old tattered couch, dialing up numbers on a phone in his lap, until...

COBY

Yeah Tony... it's Coby

(listens)

I know, listen, have you seen, Jim?

(listens)

How long ago was that?

EXT. SHED - NIGHT (1981)

The weather beaten doors to an OLD SHED creak into the night air as Coby swings them open.

Moving inside, he disappears into the darkness. A light flicks on to reveal, surrounded by junk, an old rusted out FORD V8 F100.

INT. SHED - NIGHT (1981)

Coby, at a large pile of old CAR PARTS lying on the floor, sorts aside some rubbish and picks up an OLD CAR BATTERY.

INT. SHED - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER (1981)

Coby, leaning into the engine bay of the F100, installs the battery.

INT. F100 - NIGHT (1981)

Coby turns the key. The engine winds over but doesn't start. He tries again. The engine turns and turns then, just when you think the battery is going to die, the engine roars into life.

INT. MACAVOY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM (1981)

Macavoy stands in the doorway of the bedroom. Lying in the bed is MACAVOY'S WIFE. Her name is JILL.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jill is awake with her back to him. Macavoy doesn't know it, he turns to leave.

JILL
Aren't you going to kiss me before
you go?

Macavoy turns back.

MACAVOY
I thought you were asleep?

JILL
They're the best ones.

MACAVOY
I just had a cigarette.

JILL
I know. I can smell it from here.

Macavoy sits down on the bed and gently strokes his wife's hair. It's weird, now there's a distinct contrast to the man we first met in the kitchen. Here he seems soft, child-like, not a devil at all.

JILL
You said you were going to stop.

MACAVOY
Well I just put it out... that's
sort of stopping.

Jill gently laughs. Macavoy smiles.

JILL
Do you have to go now? It's so
late.

Macavoy stares at his shadowy reflection in a large WALL MIRROR beside the bed. The reflection answers.

MACAVOY
It's what we do.

EXT. TOWN STREETS - NIGHT (1981)

Macavoy's car glides along the streets of an eerily quiet town.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT (1981)

Coby's F100 rumbles down the highway towards the twinkling lights from a distant town.

INT. MACAVOY'S CAR - NIGHT - MOVING (1981)

Macavoy passes a lone, disheveled looking, ABORIGINAL MAN, dressed in rags, ambling, barefoot, along the road. A deep FACIAL SCAR runs over the man's RIGHT EYE down to his CHEEK. The man's name is WAJIKUL (late 40's)

He and Macavoy fix their gaze upon each other as they pass. It's a silent, intense interaction.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT (1981)

Coby idles his F100 slowly along a street. Pulling up beside a BULL BARRED HJ UTE parked in front of a DILAPIDATED FIBRO HOUSE, he studies the car.

Parking his car, he exits the vehicle and approaches the house, which has been the scene of a serious party. Cans, bottles and rubbish litter the front yard.

EXT. POLICE STATION - REAR CAR PARK - NIGHT (1981)

DETECTIVE STEVE HARCOURT (mid 40's) leaning against a wall smoking a cigarette, watches as Macavoy's car pulls into the poorly lit CAR PARK. A few POLICE and CIVILIAN vehicles are scattered about.

Macavoy exits his vehicle and approaches Steve. Steve straightens up against the wall. Seems intimidated.

MACAVOY

Well?

STEVE

Nothing!

(pensive)

He's a hard nut to crack.

MACAVOY

Everyone's breakable, Steve.

Macavoy searches Steve's eyes for any sign of fragility.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

It's all about pressure.

Macavoy moves to the door.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

But given time... everything fucking crumples.

INT. CELL BLOCK CORRIDOR - NIGHT (1981)

Macavoy, Steve trailing behind, strides down the corridor past the cells.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An ABORIGINAL MAN presses his face up against a CELL WINDOW as the men pass by. His name is WANGANANARAKAI

WANGANANARAKAI

HEY BOSS! When ya' goin' ta' let
a fella' go 'ome?

MACAVOY

When we fucking say so! Now fuck
off!

STEVE

Go back to sleep, Wanga.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT (1981)

The cell is a filth incrustated shit bin. Seated, reverse style on a fold out chair is a slim, 23 year old, academy fresh, worldly ignorant, police graduate called, CONSTABLE SAM VANUTTI.

Lying on the floor before him is a young, bashed and bloody stockman (mid 20's) called, JIMMY DAWSON.

Standing over him, casually unwrapping a leather belt from around his fist, is a hard looking, heavy set, middle aged, POLICE SERGEANT called, SGT PETE JAMIESON

Macavoy and Steve enter. Macavoy's the only man in the room carrying a gun. Immediately upon seeing Macavoy enter Vanutti alights from the chair. The King has arrived and everybody in the cell knows it.

VANUTTI

Looks like your fucked now, Jimmy!

MACAVOY

Easy, Sam! We don't want to scare
the lad.

The men, except for Jimmy of course, smirk at the ironic statement as Macavoy wanders over and takes a look at the bloodied mess lying on the floor.

MACAVOY

Jesus, Jimmy, you look like shit!
Haven't you and Pete been getting
along?
(to Pete)
Well?

Pete shakes a slow "no".

MACAVOY

And no dramas getting him out of
Frank's place?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

Just the usual bit of lip from
some of the lads. Jimmy didn't
give us any trouble.

Macavoy turns his attention back to Jimmy

MACAVOY

Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy.

Squatting down, Macavoy, grabbing Jimmy by the hair,
wrenches his head back hard.

MACAVOY

Let me get straight to the point!

Macavoy slams Jimmy's head into the floor.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

Where's - my - men?

Jimmy dribbles out, through a mouth full of blood..

JIMMY

I don't know.

MACAVOY

But someone does. And I'm betting
that fucking thing you call your
brother is that someone. What do
you reckon?

Macavoy tightens his grip on Jimmy's hair.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

You see, Jimmy, somewhere and
somehow, someone got ahead of
themselves. Started to see things
in a really fuzzy fucking light.
One could almost say, delusional.
You know, everything, and I do
mean everything, could have been
just sweet. Smooth. Like the
Smurfs meeting the Cookie monster,
with rainbows and all that glittery
shit falling from the sky. But
noooo...

Slams Jimmy's head into the ground.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

Someone wanted to go down a
different road...

And again.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

Take a different...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And again.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

Track!

Macavoy releases Jimmy's hair, rises, coldly watches as Jimmy claws his way to the corner of the cell.

MACAVOY

Is this boring you, Jimmy? Would you like me to ask Pete to help you, you know, re-focus your attention?

Jimmy is at wit's end. He can't take another flogging. He spits...

JIMMY

I don't know a - FUCKING - THING! How the hell can I tell you about something that I don't fucking know? What more do you want?

Macavoy casually un-holsters his side arm.

MACAVOY

There's always more, Jimmy. But unfortunately for you, you've just gone and rendered yourself obsolete.

The whole chain of events is un-nerving Steve. He tries to avert disaster with a pathetic...

STEVE

Doug! Maybe he's telling the truth. Maybe---

Doug, without turning to face Steve, raises his hand.

MACAVOY

---Don't, Steve! Just fucking don't!

Steve, as Macavoy levels his 38 SPECIAL straight at Jimmy's head, searches for support in Pete and Vanutti's eyes but finds only contempt.

MACAVOY

You see, Jimmy, I just can't let you walk out that door. It would be... irresponsible.

VANUTTI

See ya', Jimmy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

<p>JIMMY For fuck's sake! Just hang on! JUST HANG ON!</p>	<p>STEVE Doug! C'mon...</p>
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MACAVOY
I'm just not that patient a man.

Suddenly a low, cold voice from behind breaks the moment.

COBY (O.S.)
You boys should really learn to
lock your doors!

The men turn... **WHAMMM!** The butt of a 12 GAUGE SHOTGUN smashes into Macavoy's face, dropping Macavoy, unconscious, to the ground. His gun skids across the cell floor.

Coby Dawson, looking wild and dangerous, pans his weapon over those still standing.

COBY
You been hurting my brother, Pete?

Guns don't intimidate Pete. He's serious hard core.

PETE
You just killed yourself!

BOOM! Coby blasts a shot into the wall beside Pete.

COBY
And you just nearly killed yourself.

Pete's eyes burn Coby dead.

COBY (CONT'D)
You need to pick yourself up, Jim.

Jimmy lifts himself up off the floor.

COBY (CONT'D)
And the gun, Jim.

Jim, retrieving Macavoy's hand gun, shuffles over to Coby's side. Coby pans his shotgun over the men.

STEVE
Coby! You need to listen

COBY
I don't need to do shit.

PETE
Where the hell are they?

Coby and Jim back their way up towards the cell door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COBY
The web we weave. Who the fuck
are you people?

Leaning out of the cell door, Coby checks the hallway then turns back to face the officers.

COBY
Good-bye boys! Oh, and Pete.

KABOOM! Coby blasts a shot into the ceiling above Pete.

COBY
You really shouldn't hurt my
brother!

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT (1981)

The Dawson's sprint around a corner and race towards Coby's F100 parked at the end of the street.

COBY
(to Jim.)
C'mon!

INT. POLICE STATION - BACK OFFICE - NIGHT (1981)

Pete, mad as hell, with the other officers in tow, storms into the room.

Unlocking a WEAPONS CABINET, Pete takes down a SHOTGUN and an ARMALITE SEMI AUTOMATIC ASSAULT RIFLE.

PETE
Steve, you stay here.

Passes Vanutti the shotgun.

PETE (CONT'D)
If Doug needs a doctor, get him
one.

STEVE
Do you want me to contact Mt Isa
and tell 'em our situation?

PETE
This is our party.

Pete slaps a magazine into the Armalite.

PETE (CONT'D)
No one else is invited.

INT. F100 PICK UP TRUCK - NIGHT (1981)

Coby turns the ignition. The engine barely winds over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COBY
Come on! Come on!

JIMMY
What the hell is going
on, Coby?

Coby turns the key again. The engine groans. The inability for the car to start is driving Coby insane.

COBY
Farrrrkkk!

JIMMY
Coby!

COBY
WHAT?

JIMMY
What the fuck is happening?

COBY
The fuckers tried to do me in!
Alright? I don't know why, but
they did! And as you could probably
tell, they weren't too happy with
you either.

JIMMY
Bullshit!

Coby lifts his shirt sleeve to reveal a blood soaked bandage.

COBY
Does that look like bullshit, Jim?

Jimmy's mind is spinning. The vehicle still won't start.

COBY
For fuck's sake!

Coby hysterically kicks and punches the dash.

COBY (CONT'D)
YOU-HEAP-OF-FUCKING-SHIT! JUST-
FUCKING-START!

JIMMY
Leave it. My car! It's still at
Franks'. We can make it.

Overcome with frustration Coby shakes and slaps the steering wheel.

COBY
FARRRRKKKK!

EXT. POLICE STATION - REAR CARPARK - NIGHT (1981)

Pete and Vanutti stare at two SLASHED FRONT TYRES on a POLICE PURSUIT VEHICLE.

The officers look around. Every vehicle in the car park has had its' tyres slashed.

PETE
 (to Vanutti)
 They're not going to change themselves, are they?

EXT. FENCE - NIGHT (1981)

Coby and Jimmy collapse, out of breath, beside an old WOODEN FENCE. Suddenly, a LARGE DOG on the other side, lunges up at the fence, barking and growling, trying to attack the boys. Coby spins and levels his shotgun at the fence.

COBY
 MOTHER FUCKER!

Coby kicks the fence. The dog erupts. A light from a house turns on. A male voice yells.

VOICE (O.S.)
 WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

Jimmy grabs Coby by the sleeve.

JIMMY
 C'mon! We're nearly there.

INT. POLICE PURSUIT CAR - MOVING - DAWN (1981)

The car crosses over an intersection. Vanutti, in the passenger seat, spots Coby's F100 at the end of a street.

VANUTTI
 Stop! Stop!
 (points)
 There!

Pete reverses back then slowly drives towards the abandoned vehicle. 20 metres out, the officers exit the vehicle, shoulder their weapons and cautiously approach.

VANUTTI
 She's empty, Sarge. Man these boys just....

Pete, hearing something, hisses a low..

PETE
 Shhhhh!

Listens to the sounds of the night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE (CONT'D)

Hear that?

Vanutti listens. Only the sound of the town dogs barking wafts through the air.

VANUTTI

The dogs?

PETE

Yeah, but that's just dogs being dogs. Behind that.

Vanutti listens again. The distinct sound of one dog, way off, barking savage, resonates through the rest.

VANUTTI

That?

Pete nods "yes".

PETE

Frank's place.

VANUTTI

Jimmy's car!

PETE

Jimmy's fucking car.

EXT. STREET - DAWN (1981)

Coby and Jimmy stumble towards a group of cars parked in front of a DILAPIDATED HOUSE.

They approach a BULL BARRED, 253 SMALL BLOCK V8 HJ UTE. Coby tries the door. Locked.

COBY

(to Jimmy)

Keys?

Jimmy pats down his pockets.

JIMMY

Shit!

INT. FIBRO HOUSE (1981)

The place is a mess. A few people lie about, in a drunken slumber, on the floor.

Coby and Jimmy move through the house and into the lounge room, which is open plan and adjoins the kitchen.

On the COUCH, a large OBESE WOMAN and a skinny rat of MAN, completely unconcerned by Coby and Jimmy's presence, bonk away doggy style,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A heavily tattooed BIKER TYPE MAN sits alone at the kitchen table, flipping through the pages of a hot-rod MAGAZINE. A BONG sits on the table in front of him. The man's name is FLYNN (30's).

FLYNN

Coby! Back so soon, bro?

Flynn notices Jimmy's blood stained face.

FLYNN (CONT'D)

Jesus, Jim, you look like shit.
Do ya' want a bong, mate? Ta'
help freshen' ya' up a bit.

JIMMY

What I want is my keys.

FLYNN

Can't help ya', bro.

The obese lady calls, between her moans of delight, to Jim.

OBESE LADY

They're on the fridge, sweetie.

(moans)

Frank...

(moans to the skinny
man)

Oh yeah, baby! Go baby!

(to Jim.)

Frank put 'em there...

(moans)

...when the pigs took ya' away.

Jim doesn't know what to say, except...

JIMMY

Right... thanks.

... and heads to the fridge. Coby finding an empty PLASTIC BOTTLE, fills it under the sink tap.

FLYNN

(nonchalant)

I see ya' found your brother then,
Coby. I'm taking it they didn't
let him out on bail?

COBY

It's none of your business anymore,
Flynn.

Flynn raises his hands in mock surrender.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLYNN

Excuse me! But you don't seriously think ya' can bust ya' brother out of jail, then just ride off into the sunset like the green fuckin' lantern do ya'?

JIMMY

It's the lone ranger idiot.

Jimmy, finding the keys, holds them up to Coby.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

We're good!

Coby nods.

COBY

Well there's a lot you don't know, Flynn.

Flynn casually packs a cone.

FLYNN

And there again, maybe there's a lot I do. You can be Mother Theresa and he can be Darth fucking Vader for all it matters, but you two are now a threat to the whole concept of civil obedience, law and order and all that shit. You're a crack in a very fragile wall my friend.

Flynn sucks on the bong.

COBY

Is that right?

Beat as Flynn exhales dope smoke.

FLYNN

Damn right it's right.

Shakes his head from the hit.

FLYNN (CONT'D)

Fucckkk! I've been down this road before boys. I know where it leads.

COBY

Really!

FLYNN

Yeah, really!

COBY

Which is?

JIMMY

Coby, C'mon!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Coby looks over at Jimmy and nods "yes".

FLYNN
It's not a nice place.

Flynn's words unsettle Jimmy.

JIMMY
(anxious. to Coby.)
Enough of this shit. Let's just
get the fuck out of here.

Coby raises his hand to Jimmy to wait.

COBY
(to Flynn)
I'm not planning to end up in no
cage.

FLYNN
But there is a plan, right?

COBY
It's a work in progress.

FLYNN
Well at least ya' got something to
keep ya' busy.

COBY
I'll see you, Flynn.

FLYNN
I hope so.
(to Jimmy)
It's been nice talking to ya',
Jim. Should do it again some time.

Coby exits the kitchen. Jimmy turns to Flynn.

JIMMY
That's the problem, isn't it? You
talk too much.

FLYNN
Or maybe, you just don't say enough.

EXT. STREET - SUNRISE (1981)

Coby's in the ute, at the wheel. Jimmy jumps in. The ute
pulls away.

INT. JIMMY'S UTE - MOVING - SUNRISE (1981)

Coby brings the ute to a halt. Unsure to the sudden stop,
Jimmy looks over to his brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

What?

Coby head gestures up the road at the Police car, Vanutti and Pete inside, idling down the street towards them.

JIMMY

Oh shit!

The Police car stops 50 yards out. It's a Mexican stand off. Coby growls..

COBY

Fuck 'em!

... and punches the accelerator.

INT. POLICE PURSUIT CAR - STATIONARY - SUNRISE (1981)

The officers watch in amazement as the ute hurtles towards them.

PETE

You've got to be joking!

VANUTTI

BACK! BACK! BACK!

Pete shifts gear into reverse. FLOORS the accelerator. The tyres SQUEAL. It's too late. The ute SMASHES into the Police car.

INT. JIMMY'S UTE - MOVING (1981)

Coby slams the car into reverse. Squeals the vehicle back down the street

JIMMY

GO! GO! GO!

EXT. STREET - SUNRISE (1981)

Pete stumbles out of the vehicle and shoots at the fleeing vehicle.

INT. JIMMY'S UTE - MOVING (1981)

Jimmy cowers as bullets punch into the grill and smash the windscreen. Coby wrenches the wheel. Spins the ute. Drops it into gear. Punches the accelerator.

EXT. STREET - SUNRISE (1981)

Pete ceases firing as the ute squeals and fish tails down the street and disappears around a corner.

A MAN storms out from a house. A WOMAN, at the window, peers timidly out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A LITTLE DOG, following the man onto the street, runs around barking at the officers.

<p>MAN (to Pete) WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS GOING ON?</p>	<p>VANUTTI (kicking at the dog) Fuck off!</p>
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Pete, ignoring the man's question, gazes back at the Police car. Steam billows out from under the hood. Oil spills out from the sump onto the road.

MAN
(to Pete)
OFFICER! I'M TALKING TO YOU!

Flynn and a few other party goers, woken by the shoot-out, watch the commotion from the verandah of Frank's house.

Pete, turning to the man, gestures to cars parked on the street.

PETE
Which one of these shit heaps is
yours?

MAN
What? Oh no! NO WAY!

EXT. STREETS - SUNRISE. (1981)

The ute, slight WHIFF OF STEAM streaming over the hood, lurches into a long side ways slide, barely missing an oncoming vehicle, onto the main highway.

INT. JIMMY'S UTE - MOVING (1981)

Coby's hyped. Jimmy seems strangely relaxed.

COBY
Can you believe that shit?! Mother
fuckers!

Coby looks over at an ashen faced Jimmy.

COBY
Jim!

Coby notices blood staining up over Jimmy's left breast.

JIMMY
I don't feel so good.

COBY
OH NO! Oh Jesus!

Coby lifts Jimmy's shirt to reveal a bullet entry wound above the heart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Leaning Jimmy forward, Coby checks for an exit wound. Jimmy's shirt, on his back, is heavily blood stained.

COBY

Ohh no! Ohhh, Jimmy!

Coby, leans his brother back and applies pressure with his left hand to the wound.

COBY

It's going to be OK, Jim. We'll get a doctor. Just hang in there. It's just a scratch.

Jimmy laughs weakly.

JIMMY

A scratch.

COBY

That's right! Just a scratch. I've seen you with much worse. You just gotta' hang in there.

Jimmy flops his head against the window.

JIMMY

Just a scratch.

INT. ORANGE COROLLA - MOVING - SUNRISE. (1981)

Pete thrashes the ORANGE COROLLA through the streets. Vanutti hangs on for dear life. A little JESUS FIGURINE, bounces and bobs along on the dash.

INT. JIMMY'S UTE - MOVING - CONTINUOUS (1981)

Coby tries to nudge his brother back to life but it's of no use, Jimmy is dead.

COBY

Jimmy! C'mon, Bro. Wake up. Jimmy!
Jimmy!

PAMM! Something bursts from under the hood. The car shudders. Coby smashes the dash with his fist.

COBY

No you don't! Not now! NOT-FUCKING-NOW!

The shuddering stops. Coby punches the accelerator.

COBY

Good girl.

Then, PAANNNGG! The vehicle shudders violently. Smoke and steam billow out from under the hood.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SUNRISE (1981)

The ute grinds to a long agonizing halt.

INT. JIMMY'S UTE - STATIONERY - SUNRISE (1981)

Coby, mind spinning a thousand miles per hour, sits in a teary, stunned silence.

He checks the rear view mirror then looks over at his brother. Back to the mirror. Thinking... thinking... then..

COBY

C'mon, Jim, we gotta' go! We can do this! We can do this!

EXT. HIGHWAY - SUNRISE (1981)

The Corolla buzzes down the highway.

EXT. SCRUB - SUNRISE (1981)

Coby, shotgun slung over his shoulder, Macavoy's hand gun stuffed in his belt and the water bottle in his grasp, drags his brother into the bush.

It's hard work. Exhausted, Coby collapses. Catches his breath. Drags his brother again. Collapses.

COBY

Hang in there, Jim. I can do this. We're going to make it.

Coby drags his brother one more time, then collapses onto his brother's chest.

COBY

(sobbing)
Not again! Not again!

EXT. HIGHWAY - SUNRISE (1981)

The Corolla pulls up 50 meters from the ute. The officers exit the car and, guns at the ready, approach the vehicle.

Vanutti, peering in through the opened passenger door notices blood stains on the bench seat.

VANUTTI

Jimmy's hit!

PETE

(callously)
Good.

Pete wanders over to the edge of the road. He spots drag marks in the dirt leading off into the bush.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

Wait here!

VANUTTI

But, Sarge...

PETE

Just wait here!

EXT. SCRUB - SUNRISE (1981)

Pete, rifle at the ready, follows the snaking drag marks through the dry scrub.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SUNRISE (1981)

Vanutti, waiting nervously by the abandoned vehicle, hearing something rustle in the bushes, snaps his shotgun to his shoulder.

VANUTTI

Who's there? Who the fuck is there?

Suddenly a large RED KANGAROO bounds out from behind a patch of dense scrub.

VANUTTI

(relieved)

Fuck!

EXT. SCRUB - MOMENTS LATER - SUNRISE (1981)

At a small clearing, Pete spots Jimmy's body lying in the dirt. Scanning the area for any signs of Coby he cautiously approaches.

Kneeling down beside the corpse, he inspects Jimmy's fatal wound. Out of the corner of his eye, he catches movement off to his side.

He turns to see, standing 10 yards out with a shotgun leveled straight at him, Coby Dawson. Time momentarily stands still, then Coby hisses...

COBY

Do it!

Pete spins to shoot, but he doesn't have a chance in hell. Coby guns him down mid-turn.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME TIME - SUNRISE (1981)

Vanutti stumbles back in shock as the retort of the shotgun blast thunders in from out of the scrub.

EXT. CITY STREET - EARLY MORNING (1981)

A slender, fit looking, CHINESE WOMAN, jogs briskly along a pleasant leafy street. Her name is LEE LING (30's) and this is definitely not the outback.

She passes an old man, dressed in his pajamas, retrieving a newspaper from his front lawn.

Smiling to herself, she calls out, with a slight hint of mockery in her voice..

LEE LING
Morning, Mr Harrison!

The old man, feigning surprise, replies...

OLD MAN
Oh! Morning, Lee!

The old man, with his eyes fixated on Lee's bottom, watches her run on.

Lee Ling, grin on her face, glances back over her shoulder, catching the old man out.

Sheepishly, the old man drops his head, raises his paper in a good-bye gesture and shuffles back towards the house.

INT. LEE LING'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING (1981)

The front door opens. Lee Ling, puffing and sweaty, steps inside. A LITTLE DOG runs up to greet her. Lee Ling bundles the dog up into her arms.

LEE LING
Hello, Maisey! Did you miss me?
Did you want to come too, did you?
But you're just too little. Look
at your little legs. You'd die.

INT. BEDROOM - LEE LING'S HOUSE (1981)

Lee Ling spins into the bedroom. Dumps the dog on the bed. A WOMAN, called CASSY, Caucasian, mid 20's, cascading brunette hair, quite attractive and still half asleep under the sheets, lifts her head and moans.

CASSY
Not on the bed!

Nudges the dog off with her feet.

CASSY (CONT'D)
How'd you go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEE LING
(undressing)
Stupid sport.

CASSY
That's why I don't do it.

Lee Ling smiles as she steps into the...

INT. BATHROOM - LEE LING'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS (1981)

Lee Ling, turns on the shower. Checks herself out in the mirror. Sheds the last of her clothes and enters the shower.

The shower screen opens as Cassy, dressed only in a t-shirt, watches Lee wash.

CASSY
How was, Mr Harrison?

Lee Ling laughs.

LEE LING
On time.

Cassy loses the t-shirt.

CASSY
Dirty old bastard.

Cassy enters the shower.

LEE LING
What are you doing?

Cassy slides the screen door closed.

CASSY
Nothing.

Through the opaque shower screen door we see them embrace.

INT. KITCHEN - LEE LING'S HOUSE - MORNING (1981)

Breakfast. Lee Ling, dressed corporate, is seated at the table. Cassy, towel wrapped around her head and dressed daggy, prepares coffee at the kitchen bench.

CASSY
Oh yeah! While you were out a man called.

LEE LING
What man?

CASSY
Don't know. Didn't say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEE LING

Did he leave a message?

CASSY

I suppose. In a way.

LEE LING

And?

CASSY

He just said to tell you that he's booked a flight. Reservation's at six, but he can't make it to dinner.

Cassy places two cups of coffee down on the table.

CASSY (CONT'D)

Looks like you're going somewhere?

INT. MACAVOY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - MORNING (1981)

A SPEED BOAT and an immaculately kept HARLEY DAVIDSON MOTORCYCLE sit center stage on the garage floor.

Macavoy, un-kept and sporting a serious BRUISE to his head, sits at a work bench preparing his RIFLE whilst listening to PARLIAMENT QUESTION time on the RADIO.

It's hard to notice at first, but hidden amongst the tools and boxes are hidden MEMORABILIA of Macavoy's years of service in the ARMY.

Battalion insignia. Photos of friends in uniform. Shell casings. Webbing. Nothing overt. Very subtle. It's not a work bench, it's a shrine.

INT. MACAVOY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN (1981)

A housewife's dream. Jill, carrying groceries, strolls in and dumps them on the marble bench. Hearing the radio, she tentatively calls...

JILL

Doug?

INT. MACAVOY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER (1981)

Jill enters the garage.

JILL

Oh, you're home! I didn't expect you back 'till much later.

Macavoy keeps on with the rifle.

JILL (CONT'D)

Where's the car?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACAVOY

It's got a flat tyre.

JILL

Why didn't you change it?

MACAVOY

I didn't have enough spares.
Where's, Annie?

JILL

It's Tuesday. You know she has
care group on Tuesday.

Jill approaches the bench.

JILL

What do you mean, you didn't have
enough spares?

Sees the injury.

JILL (CONT'D)

Oh my God! What happened?

Cradles Macavoy's face.

MACAVOY

We had a problem down at the
station.

JILL

What? Who... who did this to you?

MACAVOY

Pete's dead.

JILL

Dead! What do you mean dead?

MACAVOY

There's only one dead, sweetheart.

JILL

How?

MACAVOY

With a gun, Jill.

The sound of a car horn HONKS from outside. Macavoy zips
his rifle into a carry case.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

I have to go.

Bundling up 4 magazines of bullets, Macavoy ambles over to
the roller door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

I don't know what time I will be
in.

Macavoy is too distant, too aloof. Jill senses deep
trouble.

JILL

Go where?

Macavoy lifts the roller door. Light streams in
silhouetting his figure in the doorway.

Jill, hand shielding her eyes from the sudden glare, gazes
out to see a Police 4wd parked in the driveway with Vanutti
and Steve, their faces sullen, empty and tired, sitting
inside.

JILL

Go where, Doug?

INT. HELICOPTER - MOVING - MIDDAY (1981)

A HELICOPTER thumps low and fast over the desert. Macavoy,
head set on and a SCOPED REMMINGTON MODEL 742 AUTO LOADER
resting on his lap, scours the desert floor.

MACAVOY

(to the pilot)

Swing it back round, Ted. Take it
down low.

Macavoy gestures to a ridge line of rocky hills.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

If he's going anywhere, it will be
into those hills. If he gets in
there, we are truly fucked.

The pilot swings the chopper into a long sweeping arc.
Doug's headphones crackle into life.

STEVE (V.O.)

Doug, this is Mobile twenty seven,
are you there? Over.

MACAVOY

Go ahead! Over.

EXT. COMMUNICATIONS BASE - DESERT - MIDDAY (1981)

An ARMY STYLE TENT COMMUNICATIONS BASE busy with POLICE
and SEARCH AND RESCUE volunteers coming and going.

Steve and Vanutti are seated in a POLICE 4WD near the main
operations tent. Vanutti seems disinterested in everything
going on around him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE
 (into handset)
 We just finished sweeping the
 Dajarra section. We got nothing.
 Over.

MACAVOY (V.O.)
 Have George and Davo come in yet?

Steve looks over at two MOUNTED POLICE dismounting near
 the tent.

STEVE
 They've just come in. Over!

INT. HELICOPTER - MIDDAY (1981)

MACAVOY
 Get them to run their horses over
 to Derwent Station and start
 patrolling the Northern boundary
 right up to Battle Camp. It's a
 long shot, but you never know how
 far this prick might have got.
 The most important thing is to
 keep the pressure on. He'll be
 trying damn hard to get back up to
 his country. There's only a couple
 of ways he can do that. We need
 to block his routes. Keep him out
 here on the flats. Let the elements
 dry him out and force him to break
 cover. Over.

EXT. COMMUNICATIONS BASE - MIDDAY (1981)

STEVE
 Yeah, copy that!

MACAVOY (V.O.)
 You and Sam head on up to Talgara.
 I'll meet you up there later on.
 Over!

STEVE
 Do you really think he'd be stupid
 enough to make a run for home.
 Over?

EXT. ROCKY FOOTHILLS - MIDDAY (1981)

Wedged in deep under a ROCKY OVERHANG, listening to the
 distant sound of a chopper, lies Coby Dawson.

MACAVOY (V.O.)
 This prick's not running.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACAVOY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This is a dog, slinking back to its lair, looking for a place to fight. He's heading home alright. But it matters not where he chooses to make his stand. Coby Dawson's days are drawing to a very rapid and sudden fucking close.

EXT. ABORIGINAL TOWN CAMP - AFTERNOON (1981)

It's almost meditative. Each stroke calm. Each dot deliberate, as Wajikul, seated beside a bush LEAN-TO, paints onto a small CANVAS.

A LITTLE ABORIGINAL GIRL, standing behind him, watches closely as he paints.

A topless ABORIGINAL WOMAN (40's) quietly brushes ashes over damper cooking in the fire. Her name is LARINGA.

Wajikul, finishing the final touches to an image of a stylized crane's foot on the canvas, explains to the little girl.

WAJIKUL

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

And this one, the old people used. They would make the mark, so we all knew which fella was our country. When we see this fella, we knew we were 'ome.

Laringa looks up, her attention drawn to two ABORIGINAL MEN approaching the camp.

The men, nodding a gesture of hello to Laringa, seat themselves down on the opposite side of the fire.

The men, both seeming a little bit apprehensive, watch Wajikul paint for a moment. Then, one man clearing his throat, asks...

ABORIGINAL#1

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

Hey, old man, You hear about all that mischief in town the other night?

Wajikul keeps on with his painting.

WAJIKUL

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

Yeah, I hear.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAJIKUL (CONT'D)

Seems like those coppers got a whipping. Some white fellas had 'em running about all over the place.

ABORIGINAL#1

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

Wangananarakai said you know those white fellas. He said they part of your mob.

Laringa, seemingly ignoring the men's conversation, keeps tending the fire, she's listening though... very closely.

WAJIKUL

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

'Aint no white fella part of my mob.

ABORIGINAL#2

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

Wangananarakai said you know their old man. Says they's old Jack Dawson's boys. Said that you was part of old Jack's mob, when you were a young fella.

Wajikul pauses painting. Laringa noticing the abrupt stop, flicks the little girl away with her eyes. The little girl reluctantly skulks away.

WAJIKUL

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

How Wangananarakai know it was the Dawson mob?

ABORIGINAL#2

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

He was in the lock up the same night they busted out.

ABORIGINAL#1

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

One poor bugger's already dead.

ABORIGINAL#2

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

Cops got 'im good. Out on the Barkley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wajikul delicately places the tops back on the little pots of paint beside him.

WAJIKUL
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
And the other fella'?

ABORIGINAL#1
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
Wangananarakai said he's run into
your old country. Says the coppers
are hunting 'im like a dog. Says
he killed a copper. Now heaps of
coppers are wanting to kill 'im.

ABORIGINAL#1 (CONT'D)
(to Aboriginal 2.
Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
They'll do it too.

Wajikul, washing his brushes in a little pannikin of water, watches as the red paint on the bristles dissolve like blood into the water.

The other men, noticing that the information has affected Wajikul, leave him to his own space and converse with Laringa.

EXT. ABORIGINAL TOWN CAMP - SUNSET (1981)

Laringa, billy can in hand, dirty towel over her shoulder, wanders through the camp busy with people settling in for the night.

EXT. LEAN TO - TOWN CAMP - SUNSET (1981)

Laringa, dumps the billy can and hangs her towel from a strung piece of wire. Thinking that Wajikul is in the lean to she says...

LARINGA
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled.)
Old Mananjirra, said that the young
fellas are playin' cards down on
flat rock later...

Ducking in under the tin, she sees...

LARINGA
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled.)
Wants ta' know if...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

... Wajikul's paints, brushes and canvas neatly stacked up in the far corner beside an old style DOCTOR'S BAG, but no Wajikul.

As she scours the camp for her man, an OLD LADY from a neighboring humpy calls to Laringa

OLD LADY
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled.)
He's gone up the hill.

EXT. ROCKY HILL TOP - DUSK (1981)

Laringa, clambering over the rocks, spots Wajikul sitting alone, staring out at the desert.

Approaching, she quietly seats herself down beside him. Wajikul doesn't stir.

A quiet beat as they both ponder the panorama. Then, without facing Laringa, Wajikul breaks the silence.

WAJIKUL
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled.)
What you doing here?

LARINGA
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled.)
I like hills.

Wajikul smiles, turns and gazes at the woman. Laringa softly cups his cheek in her hand.

LARINGA
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled.)
What happened?

Laringa, surprised at the sight of a solitary tear running down Wajikul's face, wipes it away. Wajikul bows his head deep into her touch.

Transfixed upon her man's expression of sadness, Laringa lifting his head, gazes deep into his eyes.

LARINGA (CONT'D)
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled.)
What's going on?

Laringa watches as Wajikul's eyes widen. His gaze harden. She can see that he's not looking at her. Her eyes are now somehow a portal and through them... he's remembering.

FLASH BACK TO

EXT. DESERT - MIDDAY (1953)

Two ADULT ABORIGINALS, carrying SHOVEL SPEARS, barefoot and wearing only TATTERED SHORTS, run hard across a VAST ARID PLAIN.

FADE TO BLACK.

Words appear:

**KALKADOON COUNTRY - NORTHWEST
QUEENSLAND - 1953**

FADE IN:

Wajikul, as a 17 year old boy, trails behind. The two older men peel away from each other. Wajikul slows his speed and comes to rest near a stand of DESERT ACACIA.

From his vantage point, he watches as the older men close in on a large WHITE BULLOCK, SHOVEL SPEAR protruding from its rib cage, staggering across a SALT PAN.

The first man, TJULAKAI, runs forward brandishing his SPEAR.

Tjulakai launches his shovel spear. The spear buries deep into the bullocks neck. Blood gushes from the fresh wound. The bullock, staggering back from the impact, holds its ground.

The second Aboriginal man, WANGJATTARINGA, maneuvers around to the rear of the bullock. The bullock spins to face him as Wangjattaringa hurls his SPEAR.

The bullock rocks back as the spear buries deep into its side. The beast falls and slumps onto its side.

Wangjattaringa and Tjulakai approach cautiously. Tjulakai, squatting down beside the dying beast's head, gently strokes the animal's brow as the animal's blood filled breath slowly weakens.

The animal shudders, exhales deeply and dies. Tjulakai tenderly presses its eyes closed.

Wajikul, joining the two older men, extracts one of the spears from out of the bullock's side.

TJULAKAI
(to Wajikul.
Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled.)
Keep it.

Tjulakai, taking a KNIFE strapped to his waist, cuts into the guts of the dead bullock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wangjattaringa, edgy, scours the horizon as Tjulakai passes some meat to Wajikul.

TJULAKAI
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
Take this to grandfather and tell
the others where we are.

Wajikul, turning to leave, notices Wangjattaringa transfixed on something far off on the horizon.

Wajikul gazes out to where he thinks Wangjattaringa is looking. Tjulakai stands to join them.

The trio stare hard into the waving liquid blur of the heat haze rising up from the desert floor.

Wangjattaringa, spotting something, points.

WANGJATTARINGA
(to Tjulakai.
Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
There!

The group watch as an apparition slowly emerges from out of the haze. Tjulakai, fear engulfing his face, turns quickly to Wangjattaringa.

TJULAKAI
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
RUN!

Suddenly Tjulakai's upper shoulder blade explodes. He drops like a rag doll to the ground. Dead.

The retort of a distant rifle rolls in from across the plain moments later.

Wangjattaringa cries out...

WANGJATTARINGA
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
Go boy! Run!

Just as a bullet slams into his side, grotesquely knocking him to the ground. Wajikul, dumfounded, stares at the wounded man.

WANGJATTARINGA
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
RUN, WAJIKUL! RUN!

Wajikul doesn't react.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WANGJATTARINGA
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

RUN!

A bullet whistles past Wajikul's face, snapping him from his shock. Panic stricken, still clutching the meat and spear, he bolts into the scrub,

A STOCKMAN approaches across the plain. He rides up to Wangjattaringa. Wangjattaringa, defiant, glares up into the stockman's eyes. The stockman lowers his weapon and shoots Wangjattaringa through the head.

STOCKMAN
Try eating my fucking beef now ya'
black bastard.

The stockman rides over to Tjulakai and, although Tjulakai is dead, pumps a round into the body.

WAJIKUL - IN SCRUB

The retort from the stockman's rifle echoing out, sweeps a new wave of fear over Wajikul as he stumbles through the scrub.

EXT. SALT PAN - MIDDAY - MOMENTS LATER

The stockman dismounts and checks the dead bullock. He notices Wajikul's tracks disappearing into the bush.

WAJIKUL - IN SCRUB

Wajikul, at full sprint, tosses the liver.

STOCKMAN - IN SCRUB

Punches his horse through the scrub. Spots the discarded liver caught in the low branches of a gnarly dry bush.

WAJIKUL - ON FLAT PLAIN

Wajikul, spying a ROCKY OUTCROP, dashes towards it.

STOCKMAN - ON FLAT PLAIN

The stockman, breaking from out of the scrub, spots Wajikul scampering towards the rocks. Whipping his horse into a gallop, he shoulders his LEE ENFIELD 303 and shoots.

WAJIKUL - FOOT OF OUTCROP

The bullet chews up the dirt in front of Wajikul, just as he dives for cover behind some large boulders.

WAJIKUL - IN OUTCROP

Wajikul, warily edging up high on some rocks, cautiously peers over and watches as the stockman...

STOCKMAN - BASE OF OUTCROP

Passes below, calling...

STOCKMAN

There's no way out, boy. Ya' may
as well come on down. No one's
gunna' hurt ya', son!

WAJIKUL - IN OUTCROP

Wajikul, crouching, slinks along the boulders watching the stockman. Summoning up his courage, he rises and hurls the spear.

STOCKMAN - BASE OF OUTCROP - SAME TIME

Spotting the movement behind and above him, wheels his horse around, fires off a wild shot just as the spear buries deep into his side.

WAJIKUL - IN OUTCROP - SAME TIME

Watches as the impact from the spear, knocks the stockman from his mount. The horse spins and gallops across the flat.

EXT. BASE OF OUTCROP - MOMENTS LATER

The stockman, drowning in his own blood, crawls along. In the b.g. Wajikul approaches.

Taking hold of the shaft of the spear, Wajikul follows the dying man like someone walking a dog.

The stockman, rolling onto his side, stares up, through terrified eyes, at Wajikul.

WAJIKUL

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

This is my father's spear. It is
a good spear.

Then, so suddenly, so violently, Wajikul thrusts the spear further into the man's side.

The stockman, releasing a blood curdling groan, clutches at the shaft of the spear then, very slowly, as the life drains out of him, slumps back dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAJIKUL (CONT'D)
What do you think?

FADE TO BLACK

WORDS APPEAR:

2 DAYS LATER

FADE IN:

EXT. OPEN PLAIN - AFTERNOON (1953)

A lone, quiet natured, yet resolute and fiercely independent STOCKMAN named JACK DAWSON (late 20's) drives a small mob of CATTLE across a dry plain.

With the sound of INTERMITTENT GUNFIRE rolling in across the hills, he pulls his horse to a halt, listens, then calls to his DOG, a Blue Heeler, cross mongrel, called GRUBBY DOG.

JACK
Grubby dog!

The dog runs up to his side.

JACK
You stay here! You hear me? No biting. No chasing 'roos.

The dog, listening, pricks its ears.

JACK (CONT'D)
You hear me? You stay hear. Look after the mob. Off ya' go. Go on!

The dog races off towards the cattle. Jack watches him go then, wheeling his horse around, rides away.

EXT. ABORIGINAL BUSH CAMP - AFTERNOON (1953)

The camp, a mixture of bark and old roofing iron HUMPIES, shelters around a distinct twisted WINTER GUM.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CAMP - SAME TIME (1953)

Wajikul, hiding in the long grass on the outskirts of the camp, clutching his spear and rifle, crawls on his stomach up to a clump of spinifex and very slowly separates the grass. He watches as...

EXT. ABORIGINAL BUSH CAMP - AFTERNOON - SAME TIME (1953)

5 STOCKMEN walk amongst the dead and dying bodies of around 11 ABORIGINAL MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A man, sporting a distinct long BLACK MOUSTACHE, called BARRY FITZGERALD (40's) levels a PISTOL at the forehead of an OLD ABORIGINAL MAN, who is on his knees sobbing.

Another man, with two heavily TATTOOED FOREARMS, called FRANK REDFERN (40's) walks up and kicks the old Aboriginal man to the ground.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CAMP - SAME TIME (1953)

To Wajikul's horror he watches as Barry finishes the old man off with two shots to the head.

A BABY'S cry wails out from amongst the carnage. Barry walks over, fires off a shot and the crying abruptly stops.

EXT. HILL TOP - AFTERNOON (1953)

Jack Dawson scours the landscape. On the plains below he spots the camp and the dust trail of riders moving across the plain.

EXT. ABORIGINAL BUSH CAMP - AFTERNOON - LATER (1953)

Wajikul wanders, dumfounded by the sight of the slain, through the camp. Spotting the body of his Mother he approaches, drops to his knees and sobs deeply on the woman's chest.

Beat.

A horse SNORTS off screen. Wajikul, rifle in hand, spins to his feet to the sight of Jack mounted on his steed.

JACK
EASY, SON. I ---

BAMMM! By accident or by design, Wajikul's rifle discharges. Jack Dawson cowers as the bullet hisses past.

Wajikul tries to shoot again but, in his panic, struggles to work the bolt.

Jack Dawson surges his horse into Wajikul, knocking him to the ground. The rifle spills from the Wajikul's grasp.

Wajikul scrambles for his rifle. Jack charges again, sending Wajikul sprawling to the ground.

Jack maneuverers his mount over the rifle as Wajikul, blood dripping from his nose, stares furiously at him.

JACK
I'm not here ta' harm ya'! Do you understand?

A tense beat as they stare each other down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A woman moans from amongst the dead. Dismounting, whilst keeping a wary eye on Wajikul, Jack, walking with a very prominent limp, collects Wajikul's rifle, chambers a round and leans it against one of the humpies.

Turning his back to the boy, Jack attends the needs of the wounded woman. His actions confirm to Wajikul that Jack indeed means no harm.

Jack cradles the seriously wounded woman's head in his arms, gently trying to soothe her whilst she dies.

JACK

Easy girl.

He watches as Wajikul, collapsing near the body of his Mother, presses her lifeless hand against his head and quietly sobs. The Aboriginal woman, cradled in Jack's arms, quietly murmurs.

ABORIGINAL WOMAN

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

I'm flying now. They're singing
the flying song. I can hear them.

JACK

Easy girl... easy.

ABORIGINAL WOMAN

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

I'm going now. They're all there.
I see them.

Her body falls limp. Jack lays her head down, folds her arms over her chest then ponders the shredded bloody mess around him.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY (1981)

LEE LING, using the bonnet of a WHITE FORD XD SEDAN as a table, applies the last fold to a PAPER PLANE.

Striding onto the crest of the hill, she raises her hand, feeling for the wind. The distant sound of a motorbike fills the air. She drops her gaze and watches as a motorbike tracks along a dirt road below.

A wind gust sweeps up the hill. She launches the paper plane into the air and with a soft word whispers...

LEE LING

(Chinese: subtitled)

Fly!

She watches as the plane rises high into the air then heads back to her vehicle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Picking up a CLIPBOARD resting on the bonnet of the car, she waits as a man, riding a HARLEY DAVIDSON MOTORCYCLE, summits the hill and pulls in beside her.

The rider removes his helmet, unties a bandanna from around his face to reveal... Flynn.

Here we discover that Flynn is actually an UNDERCOVER COP and Lee Ling is his HANDLER.

FLYNN

Boss.

Lee Ling turns and peers out at the view.

LEE LING

It sure is something isn't it?

Flynn, reaching into his jacket, doesn't share the sentiment.

FLYNN

Only if your passing through.

Lee Ling searches the sky for her plane. Flynn dismounts from the motorcycle.

LEE LING

You've been out here too long.

Flynn passes her a notebook.

FLYNN

You haven't had to live here.

Flynn lights up a cigarette while Lee Ling studies the notebook.

FLYNN

How was your drive?

LEE LING

Long.

Skimming through the pages.

LEE LING

So what do you think?

FLYNN

Three years of getting stoned, drinking piss and having hair lice down the drain is what I think.

LEE LING

Charming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLYNN

Seriously though, they weren't trying to arrest shit. Something stinks, Lee. I thought I knew what everyone was up to out here, but in fact, I don't know a God damn thing!

LEE LING

I want you to come in?

FLYNN

Do I have a choice?

LEE LING

No. You're still my puppet remember?

FLYNN

Great.

Lee ling detects a hint of disappointment.

LEE LING

You've done good work out here..be happy with that, but what you witnessed changes our focus.

Lee opens the clipboard.

LEE LING (CONT'D)

I agree, something does stink and I don't think it's all our cowboy. Did you know our late, Sgt Jamieson and, Detective Macavoy, were vets. Served together.

Reading from the board.

LEE LING (CONT'D)

Two tours. 5th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. Vietnam. '69 to '70.

FLYNN

No shit?

LEE LING

Ahuh! As for, Senior Sergeant Stratfield...

Flips a page.

LEE LING (CONT'D)

... apart from the fact that he can't hold together a marriage, or two, was also under investigation

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEE LING (CONT'D)
 into the shooting deaths of two
 known stand over men in Brisbane,
 five years back. The investigation
 eventually fell flat. Whilst the
 bath water went one way, the baby
 was quietly transferred out here,
 to where I'd say, the light does
 not shine so bright.

FLYNN
 Friends in high places.

LEE LING
 So it would seem!

FLYNN
 And the others?

LEE LING
 They're all a bunch of misfits.

References from the board.

LEE LING (CONT'D)
 Bill Lacey. 26. Single bloke.
 Discharged his firearm straight
 into the head of a neighbor's dog
 during a drug raid on a house in
 Townsville. I suppose being sent
 out here was his penance for
 stuffing up.

FLYNN
 Unbelievable! And Harcourt?

LEE LING
 Divorced. Two kids, all grown up.
 Originally he was in armed robbery,
 then was moved to missing persons,
 then was sent out here.

FLYNN
 Jesus! This whole place is a
 graveyard for fuck ups.

LEE LING
 You have to dump your rubbish
 somewhere.

FLYNN
 And the young one?

Lee reads from the board.

LEE LING
 Constable Vanutti. Academy fresh.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEE LING (CONT'D)

Drew the short straw. First posting was out here. I call him, my virgin in a house full of whores.

FLYNN

Nice!

LEE LING

Thank you!

FLYNN

So, what do you want to do?

LEE LING

Apparently, after their parents died, the Dawson's were under the care of their uncle, on their mother's side, a one..

The clipboard again.

LEE LING (CONT'D)

Howard Moorecroft. He owns a property... Brooloo Downs. 70 kilometers west of town.

Lee Ling searches the sky once more for her paper plane.

LEE LING (CONT'D)

Before we go chasing the hounds we need to find out all we can about the fox.

EXT. TALGARA HOMESTEAD - AFTERNOON (1981)

A chopper winds down. Macavoy stepping out, strides over to Vanutti and Steve standing around a POLICE 4WD parked near the homestead. Vanutti seems quiet. Moody.

MACAVOY

(re: the homestead)

The womb from where shit is born.

(to Steve)

You been inside yet?

STEVE

It's empty.

Macavoy gazes at the aloof Vanutti.

MACAVOY

(to Vanutti)

What's wrong with you?

VANUTTI

Nothin'!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE

It's been hard on him.

MACAVOY

It's been fucking hard on all of us. You two can bounce around freaking out and cry in the corner and wish all this wasn't so, but it's not going to change a God damn thing.

STEVE

We completely underestimated them, Doug!

MACAVOY

No one underestimated shit!

STEVE

This whole thing is a sinking ship!

MACAVOY

You seriously need to have a good hard look around you, Steeve! See this shit?

Gestures to the landscape.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

This is as far as it fucking gets. No one gives a fuck about this place. No ones scrutinizing us, 'cause no one cares. There's no super mall with plastic trees and wind up fucking dogs running around coming our way. This is the end of God damn nowhere.

STEVE

And that's going to save us?

MACAVOY

Coby Dawson is now a one hundred percent, certified, cold blooded, cop killer. We do him and no one will blink an eye. I can see it now,

Spreads his hands in the air.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

Cop killer and known fucking deviate, dies in shoot-out with police.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

The only thing you two depressing fucking morons will have to worry about is, which side of your chest you want the medal pinned on.

STEVE

That simple?

MACAVOY

It never was that complex! As for now,

(to Steve)

I need you to get back to the station. Jill's manning the phones---

STEVE

--Does she know what's going on?

Macavoy's face sours.

MACAVOY

You just get your arse back to the station and run things from there. Me and Mr "I've had a bad fucking day" will handle things from here. And enough of this woe is me shit. Enjoy! 'Cause days like these don't come around all the time.

EXT. TALGARA HOMESTEAD - AFTERNOON (1981)

RED DUST billows as Macavoy and Vanutti, shielding their eyes from the wind blast, watch the chopper lift off into the air and slowly thump away.

VANUTTI

Now what?

EXT. TALGARA HOMESTEAD - SUNSET (1981)

Macavoy steps onto the verandah draining the last of the PETROL from out of a FUEL TIN as he goes.

Tossing the tin back into the house, he lights up a cigarette and tosses the still lit match onto the fuel trail. Flame races inside the house. A fire ball erupts.

Macavoy glares at the mortified Vanutti.

MACAVOY

What?

Macavoy the cop is dead. Macavoy the soldier has arrived.

EXT. ABORIGINAL TOWN CAMP - NIGHT (1981)

Somewhere in the camp a piece of tin CLANKS away as the wind gently WHISTLES through the sleeping camp.

Wajikul, lying awake in his humpy, listens to the night. Laringa, head resting on his shoulder, sleeps beside him.

Peering out into darkness, Wajikul notices an ABORIGINAL WOMAN, near naked, walk, from out of the shadows, behind a neighboring HUMPY. The woman is the ghost of Wajikul's dead MOTHER.

Wajikul raises his head. There's something about the woman he recognizes, but it's dark. Hard to see detail.

He waits for her to re-appear on the other side. Nothing, only dust blown by a gust of wind.

Wajikul rests his head back down and... WHAMMM! The woman's face is right above him, staring at him through deep dark eyes. Wajikul spins up, waking Laringa. Wajikul looks around but the woman has vanished into thin air!

LARINGA
(startled)
What is it?

Wajikul scurries out of the humpy, searching for any sign of the woman. Nothing.

LARINGA
What?

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY (1981)

An old beat up UTE, with THREE ABORIGINAL MEN squashed inside, pulls up to the side of a dusty road. The passenger door opens. Wajikul alights from the vehicle, carrying his old Doctor's bag.

PASSENGER
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
You sure you'll be alright, old man?

Wajikul's look reflects the disrespect in the question. The young man realizes it, his eyes apologize.

The PASSENGER takes an old SINGLE SHOT 1914 PRUSSIAN 303 CAVALRY RIFLE cradled between his legs and passes it to him. The DRIVER, leaning forward, stares at Wajikul in silent awe.

Wajikul slings the rifle over his shoulder. The passenger opens the glove box, scrapes up some BULLETS and sprinkles them into Wajikul's hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PASSENGER
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
That's all there is.

EXT. TREE - MIDDAY(1981)

Coby, exhausted, slumping down against the base of a tree, pours water over his face then drinks thirstily.

Through weary eyes he gazes out at the heat wave quivering the air. Slowly, eyes falling heavy, he drifts to sleep.

EXT. TREE - MID AFTERNOON (1981)

A HORSE snorts. Coby groggily snaps awake. He listens to a MAN, from behind the tree, talking to someone further away.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1 (O.S.)
I can't help it. It's all this
bloody riding. Does my bladder
in.

Slowly, quietly, Coby reaches for his shotgun and rises to his feet.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#2 (O.S.)
Riding with you all day does my
fucking head in.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1 (O.S.)
Funny!

POLICE SIDE OF THE TREE.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN #2, holding his PARTNER'S HORSE by the reins, casually gazes into the scrub whilst his partner urinates against the tree.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#2
If that prick got this far out
he's a bloody gazelle.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1
You going to Sharon's tonight?

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#2
What's she got on?

COBY'S SIDE OF THE TREE.

Coby slowly backs his way around the tree as the head of MOUNTED POLICEMAN'S #2 horse moves into his line of sight.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1 (O.S.)
Tim's 40th. She's throwing a
surprise party for him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Coby can't move any further without being spotted by Mounted Officer#1 urinating behind the tree. Anxiously he watches as Mounted policeman #2 slowly rides into full view.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#2
No shit? That fat prick's 40? I
always thought he was older!

Coby stepping away from the tree, levels his shotgun at Mounted Officer #2.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#2 (CONT'D)
I wouldn't mind going. It all
depends if they....

Mounted policeman #2, glancing over at Mounted Policeman #1, spots Coby, shotgun at the shoulder, sighting him up.

Coby shakes his head in a silent warning for Mounted Policeman#2 not to speak.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1 (O.S.)
If they what?

The sound of a zip being done up. Mounted officer #1 steps into Coby's line of sight.

Mounted officer #2 makes a desperate grab for his side arm.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#2
GEORGE!!!

BOOOM! Coby blasts Mounted Policeman #2 from his saddle. His horse, taking some shot, bolts off into the bush. The other horse follows.

Mounted Policeman #1, spinning in shock to see Coby, leaps back behind the safety of the tree.

Coby pulling back around the other side of the tree, cuts him off. **BOOOM!** Coby hammers a round at the officer.

The Officer spins back the other way. Coby maneuvers back around. **BANG! BANG! BANG!** The officer frantically shoots at Coby as he appears on the other side.

Coby pulls in tight against the tree as does the officer. And there they both stand, separated by nothing more than a tree.

COBY
(giggling)
Ya' nearly got me ya' bastard.
What have you got, two rounds left?

Waits for a reply. No answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COBY

Your thirty eight against my
shotgun. They aren't good odds,
pig. How much are they paying you
to die out here? Three hundred...
four hundred a week, tops.

(pause)

There is a way out of this you
know.

The cop's sweating bullets.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1

H..H..How?

COBY

We walk away!

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1

Just like that?

COBY

Well it's 50 fucking 50 isn't it.
Maybe, and I mean just maybe, you
get lucky. Manage to shoot me,
with your little 38, before I shoot
you. Flip the coin, and I get
lucky, blow you away first with my
big old 12 gauge. Paint the sky
red with your big pig head. Either
way you look at it, that's a big
fucking risk for 400 bucks a week.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1

You just killed an officer of the
law!

COBY

And no one paid me a cent. What's
that telling ya'?

The officer glances over at his very dead partner.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1

How are we going to do this?

COBY

You throw out your gun.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1

Fuck you! You throw out yours!

COBY

Not gunna' happen, pig!

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1

Well, fuck you then!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COBY

Alright... option two. 10 miles down that creek is the old battle camp road. You take off your boots and throw them out to me. I'll pull away, but you gotta' count to a hundred... loud... so I can hear ya'. You get to walk out of here and I get a chance to go. It's the only choice we got.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1

You're just going to let me walk out of here?

COBY

And you're going to do the same. You can keep your gun. But if you as even stick your head out as I leave, or stop counting, I'll do ya'.

(pause)

What's it going to be, getting pissed and eating cake with Timmy or sitting under this tree with a fucking mad man all night?

The officer churns over the idea. Then, reluctantly, kicks off his boots.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1

Alright! I'm throwing out my boots, don't you go and shoot, do you hear me?

COBY

I'm cool!

He flings them out past Coby's side of the tree.

COBY

Socks!

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1

You said, boots!

COBY

Yeah, well, I meant socks as well.

The officer takes off his socks and tosses them out.

COBY

(sarcastically)

One... two... three...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

<p>MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1 One, two, three, four, five...</p>	<p>COBY No peeking now, pig.</p>
---	--------------------------------------

Coby backs away from the tree, collecting up the boots and socks as he goes.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1
Six, seven, eight..

COBY
I can't hear youuu!

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1
NINE, TEN, ELEVEN..

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TREE - LATER (1981)

The Officer, less anxious, continues.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1
Sixty five, sixty six, sixty...
seven, sixty....

Listens for Coby.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1 (CONT'D)
Nine... seventy...

Carefully peers around the tree.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1 (CONT'D)
Seventy.... one

No sign of Coby.

MOUNTED POLICEMAN#1 (CONT'D)
Seventy..... two..

Cautiously steps away from the tree. Ceases counting as the pure relief that his nightmare is over sweeps over him.

COBY (O.S.)
I knew you'd look!

The officer spins in horror to see Coby standing behind him, shotgun levelled straight at his gut. BOOOM! Coby guns him down in cold blood.

COBY
You people just can't be trusted.

EXT. DESERT - MIDDAY (1981)

Wajikul, fatigued, trudges across a hot plain. The sight of a long line of cattle moving slowly move along the horizon, kneaded by the heat haze into a surreal, undulating caterpillar, causes his mind to drift back to...

EXT. TALGARA HOMESTEAD - MAIN GATES - NEAR SUNSET (1953)

CATTLE move lethargically along a fence line. A dog bolts to and fro, barking and working the cattle, it is GRUBBY DOG.

Trailing behind the small herd, mounted on a horse is Jack Dawson. Wajikul (as a teenager), rifle slung over his shoulder, walks off to one side.

Jack stops his horse in front of a cattle grid. On a large post and railing fence beside the grid, carved into the top railing, is a sign. "**TALGARA**".

Jack rides over to Wajikul.

JACK

You head up the track a bit 'till you come to the house gates. Stop there 'till I come and get ya'. Do you understand?

Wajikul nods yes.

JACK

I've got to take this mob down the road a bit, drop 'em off at the old 2 mile bore paddock, then I'll take you on up to the house, OK?

Nods again.

JACK

I'll need the rifle.

Wajikul hesitates.

JACK

If Mrs Dawson wanders past and sees you sitting there with a gun, she'll be beside herself. You'll get it back when you're settled in.

Wajikul passes the rifle to Jack.

JACK

Just stop at the gate till I get there. I'll see you in a little while.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jack canters off, leaving Wajikul staring down a long dirt road running off through the gates.

EXT. HOUSE GATES - EVENING (1953)

Wajikul approaches a large STEEL GATE. The LIGHTS from the HOMESTEAD flicker through the twilight like a marooned ship.

EXT. HOUSE GATES - EVENING - LATER (1953)

Wajikul, seated against the gate post, drifts in and out of sleep. Suddenly a "CLICK" Like wood on wood, resonates out from the dark. Then another "CLICK".

A FEMALE DINGO, gliding silently out from the dry grass, stops in front of Wajikul. The Dingo paces back and forth in front of him, sniffing the air. Wajikul's scared. Dare not move.

WAJIKUL
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
Get out. Away!

The Dingo brings its head close to Wajikul's face.

DINGO
(whispers. Aboriginal
dialect. subtitled)
This place a good place. Plenty
everything place.

Through the darkness comes the sound of a horse snorting. The dingo turns quickly, stares off towards the direction of the sound. On the back of its head and neck are deep blood stains. It turns once again to Wajikul.

DINGO
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
A good place.

Then, quite suddenly, the Dingo pulls back and up onto its hind legs. As it pulls away further it morphs into WAJIKUL'S MOTHER.

MOTHER
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
A good place!

Then dissolves into the night. Wajikul snaps awake (or does he) as Jack Dawson appears from out of the blackness with grubby dog by his side.

JACK
You alright, son?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wajikul, still dazed by the experience, nods.

JACK
C'mon then, let's get you sorted
out.

As Wajikul and Jack move off through the gates a dingo slinks onto the track behind them and watches them go.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (1953)

SARAH DAWSON, early 20's, six months pregnant and attractively unglamorous, stokes the fire in an old style wood fired oven.

A little dog, in the kitchen, runs to the fly screen door and, with tail wagging, yaps away at something outside. Sarah goes to the door and steps out onto the...

EXT. VERANDAH - NIGHT (1953)

Peering out into the night she watches as Jack, leading his horse with Grubby Dog by his side emerge from out of the blackness.

SARAH
Decided to come home have you?

JACK
No where else to go.

SARAH
No one would have you more likely.

Wajikul tentatively steps out from behind the horse. Sarah, startled by the sight of the young boy, looks to her husband.

SARAH
Jack?

EXT. VERANDAH - NIGHT (1953)

The sound of Sarah and Jack, deep in a serious discussion, drifts out from the house whilst Wajikul, plate of food on his lap and surrounded by the station dogs, gazes quizzically at a fork in his hands.

Prodding a brussel sprout, he sniffs at the vegetable, takes a tentative bite and disgusted by the taste, spits it out.

Flicking the sprout to the ground, putting aside the fork, he picks up a lump of meat from the plate and eats it with his hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH (V.O.)

It's not the point, Jack, and you know it!

JACK (V.O.)

Well, what was I suppose to do?

SARAH (V.O.)

You could have asked me.

JACK (V.O.)

I'm asking now.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (1953)

Jack, mug of tea in hand, sits at the kitchen table, whilst a distraught Sarah clears the table.

SARAH

No you're not. This isn't asking. This is you deciding how it's going to be and me, once again, having absolutely no choice in the matter.

JACK

It's a boy, sweetheart. Not a stray dog.

SARAH

I know what it is, Jack! Don't you make me out to be something I'm not. Don't you dare! But you just don't seem to understand.

(lowers her voice.)

What you bought home, that's sitting outside our house... is trouble. He's seen things. Bad things. And he's also seen the people that did those things. This doesn't just end, like closing a book or turning out a light. It's trouble, Jack! You mark my words!

Sarah churlishly dumps dishes into the sink.

JACK

And what if I had returned. Came home and told you of what I found out there, and that I left behind a child, all alone amongst the guts and flies. What then your thoughts of me?

Sarah pauses at the sink. Jack's words seem to have broken her angst. She mumbles...

SARAH

I should have listened to my mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sarah, fetching an iron kettle from off the wood fire stove, seats herself at the table and fills the tea pot whilst Jack rolls up a cigarette.

SARAH

What about the mission. He could go there. We could talk to Father O'Connolly.

JACK

Nothing good comes from Father O'Connolly. Bash their ears with stuff they don't want to hear and keep 'em in a place they don't want to be.

SARAH

You shouldn't say that. He does what he can.

JACK

He's got nothing, Darlin'.

SARAH

And we've only got a little bit more than that.

JACK

It's still more.

SARAH

You can't save the world, Jack.

Beat as Sarah sips quietly at her tea. Jack watches smoke drift up from his cigarette.

Sarah goes to speak but just before the words can leave her mouth Jack quietly murmurs...

JACK

I remember once I saw this bird. It was beautiful. The tail feathers, long and white, delicate. The colors on its chest, as it flew above us, blue and emerald green. 'Till this day I've never seen anything quite like it. And as we all lay there, men dying and those already dead..

Jack lifts his head and gazes soulfully into Sarah's eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)

Jap and Aussie...

As Jack lowers his head, Sarah, obviously stunned by the fact that Jack is opening up about the war, listens with a deep and silent interest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK (CONT'D)

A soft rain started to fall through the canopy. Very light. Drifting down through the leaves. And for a brief moment, just an instant, we all watched as this bird flew through the mist. And it was like, somehow, we all knew, could all feel, that it was there to remind us of what we didn't have to be.

Gazes back into Sarah's eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)

Maybe it's not the world I'm trying to save.

INT. SHED - NIGHT (1953)

Wajikul casts a wary eye over his new sleeping quarters as Jack, dumping a blanket on the ground, hangs a lantern from a beam and rests Wajikul's rifle against the post.

JACK

You can stop here until you work out what you want to do. If you want to run off, I'm not going to stop you. If you're still here in the morning... well... let's just treat it like a new day.

EXT. OPEN PLAIN - DAY (1953)

Jack, mounted on horse back, watches, with bemused interest, as a very clumsy Wajikul, riding an old mare, chases after a young steer.

Jack canters over and musters the beast back in with the herd then joins Wajikul at the rear of the mob.

Wajikul's appearance is a stark contrast to the boy Jack first saved. Dirty but neat. Old work pants, canvas shirt, tattered Stetson hat. The only unusual feature about him is that he rides bare foot.

JACK

(demonstrating with his reins)

When you pull left ya' gotta' ease off on the right. Same when ya' pull right, just give some slack on the left, otherwise she won't know where you want to go. Do you understand?

Wajikul nods "yes".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK
You're doing good, son.

Cantering away.

JACK (CONT'D)
I do believe we'll make a stockman
out of you yet.

A hint of a smile spreads over Wajikul's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE OF SHOTS (OVER A PERIOD OF DAYS)

1. Jack and Wajikul mustering a big herd of cattle through the bush.

2. Wajikul, holding his horse by the reins, passing Jack, who's in the saddle, some bush tucker he's collected off a shrub. Jack tasting it and nodding his approval.

3. Jack and Wajikul riding up to the homestead at sunset. The little dog running out to greet them. Wajikul dismounting and playfully ruffing the dog up. Looking up to see Sarah on the verandah, he smiles at her and Sarah hesitantly smiles back.

INT. STABLES - LATE AFTERNOON - DAYS LATER (1953)

Wajikul, gently brushes down a horse, softly caresses the animal with his free hand. Jack, spreading chaff into a feeding trough, watches the boy.

JACK
You know the thing about horses?

Jack walks over and rubs the horses head.

JACK (CONT'D)
They don't trust anyone or anything.
It takes time. For them to trust
you... and you them. She's a good
a horse.
(to the horse.)
Aren't you girl?
(to Wajikul.)
Keep her. What good is a man out
here if he doesn't own his own
horse?

Wajikul cradles his head into the horses neck. Then, looking straight into Jack's eyes and with a deep sincerity in his voice.

WAJIKUL
Thank you, Jack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jack, understanding Wajikul isn't referring to the horse, nods his head.

FADE OUT

Sound of cattle bellowing.

FADE IN:

EXT. BROOLOO STATION - CATTLE YARDS - MIDDAY(1981)

A young STEER is thrown to the ground in a CRUSH. A STOCKMAN taking the hind leg, heaves it back whilst a sun hardened, cheeky as hell, elderly bushman, called HOWARD MOORECROFT, leans over the beast and, using a small KNIFE, castrates the animal.

Howard creakily straightens up. He glances over towards the homestead and notices a WHITE FORD XD SEDAN parked out front.

Flynn and Lee Ling stand beside the vehicle talking to Howard's WIFE, who's pointing towards the yards.

Another Stockman strides over with a red hot BRANDING IRON and sears the beast's hide. The cow's painful bellow brings Howard back to the job at hand.

 HOWARD
 (to the stockman)
 Let 'im go!

The crush is opened. The cow bucks and kicks its way towards a small mob of cattle huddled in the corner of the yard. Another beast is captured. The process repeated.

A voice calls from the railing fence.

 LEE LING
 Excuse me! Howard. Howard
 Moorecroft?

 HOWARD.
 (without looking)
 Folks 'round here just call me,
 Crofty.
 (turns to face Lee
 Ling)
 That's cause they know,
 (imitation Scottish
 accent)
 I'm sneaky and crofty. 'Specially
 with the ladies.

Gives Lee Ling a wink. The other Stockmen smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD.
 (to the stockmen.)
 You blokes right to keep going?
 Looks like I've got me a hot date!

The stockmen grin and chuckle to themselves.

INT. BROOLOO STATION - KITCHEN (1981)

The kitchen is civilized and country neat. Howard washes his hands at the sink then joins Lee Ling and Flynn at the table.

Howard's wife, an old style country lady called, MARGARET, places cups of tea and biscuits on the table.

MARGARET
 Just help yourself.
 (to Lee Ling)
 Sugar?

LEE LING
 Yes, thank you.

HOWARD.
 I always knew it would come to this one day. Ever since their old man died, whatever guiding hand they had was lost. My sister couldn't watch over them...you know...
 (still hurt)
 She was having her own problems, cancer and stuff.

Margaret goes to an old duchess style cupboard. Takes down a framed faded BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO of a woman in a splendidly flowing white wedding dress and Jack Dawson, smart as a stick, in an AIF uniform. She passes the photo to Lee Ling.

FLYNN
 But... didn't they stay with you after the death.
 Lee Ling studies the photo

MARGARET
 That's her there on their wedding day.

LEE LING
 She's beautiful.

Lee Ling passes the photo to Flynn. Flynn studies it while Howard talks.

HOWARD.
 Only for a year. They may have been just teenagers but they were already men.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD. (CONT'D)

I was just a piece of rope that they had to chew through. An inconvenience.

(proud)

I mean, young Coby's been driving since he was 10. Had to prop him up on boards, so he could see out the window. Tie a brick to the accelerator, just so he could reach the pedal.

FLYNN

(re: the photo)

Jack was in the war?

HOWARD.

Joined up in 42 on his 17th birthday. He was a veteran of Isurava. Won the Military Cross for valor too.

FLYNN

Where?

MARGARET

New Guinea.

HOWARD.

Had his hip near ripped off by Japanese machine gun fire in 43. For 3 days him and a couple of other wounded blokes crawled and walked through the bush trying to get back to base. Eventually they got picked up by Fuzzy Wuzzies and---

LEE LING

---Who?

FLYNN

Fuzzy Wuzzies. Native porters.

HOWARD.

They carried him back behind the lines. Spent the last year of the war learning how to walk.

FLYNN

Unbelievable.

HOWARD.

Returned back out here when he was 19. Came back, I don't know... different. Seen something I reckon, down there in the mud and muck that changed him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Howard gazes into the bottom of his tea cup.

HOWARD.

He was one of nature's true gentlemen. They don't make people like Jack anymore.

LEE LING

It must have been hard for them, Coby and Jimmy, losing their parents so young.

MARGARET

Jimmy is... was the sensitive one. He felt it the most I think... poor boy.

FLYNN

What about, Coby?

HOWARD.

Coby was never right after his dad died.

LEE LING

How did he die?

HOWARD.

They reckon it was a heart attack or he was thrown, but no one really knows for sure. Went out boundary riding and only his horse came back. Was three days before anyone found him and when they did his body was strewn all over the place like God damn mince from where the dingoes had ripped into him. Wasn't much left of him.

(remembering)

Top bloke.

LEE LING

Who found him?

MARGARET

(gently.)

Coby.

HOWARD.

Picked up what he could and carried the pieces back on his horse. Imagine that! Bringing your own dad home on your lap and stuffed in your shirt.

An uncomfortable quietness settles over the group, then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET
 (to Lee Ling)
 Another biscuit, dear?

LEE LING
 (to Margaret)
 Thank you.
 (to Howard)
 Do you think Coby and Jimmy were
 involved in any, how can I put it---

HOWARD.
 ---Mischief!

LEE LING
 Yeah... mischief.

HOWARD.
 What time ya' got to head home?

EXT. DRY CREEK BED - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Coby, looking truly formidable, ambling towards a dry creek bed, notices a rough, calico covered RICKSHAW STYLE CANOPY protruding above the creek line.

The canopy moves forward, the clank of metal, then stops. Moves, clanks, then stops. It's weird.

Coby silently approaches and peers down into the creek bed. He watches as an ELDERLY MAN, with NO LEGS, wearing gloves, dressed ragged, scratches away at the ground with a small geological pick.

The "rickshaw" style canopy is tied to the man's waist and harnessed to his shoulders and extends above his head.

A WATER BOTTLE and a TIN CAN hang around the man's neck. The man's name is BOBBY BLUE BORE.

Bobby, picking up a small stone, holds it towards the sun, studies it then places it in his tin can. Then, without turning to face Coby...

BOBBY
 You gonna' stand there all day
 starin' at me like a retard or are
 you going to say somethin'?

Coby steps back, stunned that the man knew he was there. Bobby turns to face Coby.

BOBBY
 Ya got any tucker?

Coby nods "no".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

What about chocolate. Ya' got any of that?

COBY

I got nothin'!

BOBBY

I haven't had that shit in ages.

COBY

Are you, Bobby Blue Bore?

BOBBY

Apparently. However, my grade two teacher, Mrs Moony, use ta' call me a clown.

(imitates her voice)

"There's a clown in every circus isn't there, Robert?" Fuckin' idiot! Of course there is. What sort of question is that?

EXT. STONY FLAT - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Coby piggy backs Bobby across the flat.

BOBBY

So your old Jack Dawson's boy.

COBY

How do you know that?

BOBBY

When they came here asking if I had seen a fella' called Coby Dawson. I put two and two together and came up with fucking eight. I'm a mathematical fucking genius. There's nothin' I don't know.

COBY

Did you know my father?

BOBBY

Of 'im. Can't say I really knew 'im.

Bobby points to a clump of sandy hills.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Over there, near those little hills.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE LINE - AFTERNOON (1981)

Howard, Lee Ling and Flynn summit the top of a long sweeping ridge line. The view is awesome. Howard's 4WD sits way down on the desert floor below them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD.
Ya' right, luv?

LEE LING
I'm fine. That's a big hill.

HOWARD
Or maybe ya' just got little legs.

Lee Ling flicks him a playfully insulted look.

HOWARD
I'm just teasing ya'.

Howard, moving over to the edge of the ridge, points out to the lights of what seems like a small city, twinkling far off in the distance.

HOWARD.
You see that? That's Blue Star mine. 1000 men. City folk mainly. Come out here looking for the big bucks.

Howard turns, sweeps his hands through the air.

HOWARD.
Now, you see those far ridges? Behind them is Talgara, old Jack's place. His block sweeps right up to this here ridge we're standing on and all the way to those far hills over north.

FLYNN.
It's a big place.

HOWARD
Not really. Not for out here. Now!

Howard points down to the valley floor.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
You see that patch of green? Like a big blob of snot!

FLYNN
That's not what I think it is?

HOWARD.
Yep! God damn wacky weed. Near 2 acres of it.

FLYNN
Holy Jesus!

Lee Ling gestures to the Blue Star Mine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEE LING

And all that's for there?

HOWARD.

Where else is it going to go? Not enough young folk in town to get through all that. I'm sure they'd give it a bloody good go though.

LEE LING

Unbelievable!

Howard seats himself on a rock.

HOWARD

No one musters out here and the boys knew it. Too rocky, the feed's shit, but there is a bit of ground water that leaks out from out of this ridge and some of the soil is not too bad, just not enough for cattle.

FLYNN

Did the boys know you knew?

HOWARD.

I don't think so. None of my business anyway. Coby and Jim aren't bad lads, they were just doing what they could to keep the place running. This land is either drowning in water or dying of thirst. The only stations that pull a decent dollar out here are the big holdings that can make it through the tough times, not small family shows like ours.

(more to himself)

There's no future in cattle anymore.

LEE LING

Do you think the police somehow had a hand in all this?

HOWARD.

A hand... HA! Like bees to a honey pot. Some days I'd sit up here and watch 'em come and go like little blue mice.

Flynn and Lee Ling look knowingly at each other.

HOWARD. (CONT'D)

(imitation Scottish accent.)

Like I said, call me, Crofty. 'Cause I'm sneaky and crofty,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Winking at Lee Ling.

HOWARD. (CONT'D)
'Specially with the ladies.

EXT. BOBBY'S CAMP - AFTERNOON (1981)

Bobby's camp is Spartan. Everything in it has been built to accommodate his disability.

There's a HAND PUMP to draw water from a bore, beside a dilapidated WINDMILL. A low set, rough BUSH PLATFORM as a seat. A TABLE with cut down legs. Some small roofing iron SHEDS. Even the SHOVELS have shortened handles. His home is a DUG-OUT, burrowed into the side of a ROCKY KNOLL.

Coby places bobby on the ground. Bobby "disrobes" from his frame. Sets his tools to one side.

COBY
Do you live here alone?

BOBBY
I do have a dog...

Casts his eyes around the camp.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
... somewhere. Then of course there's the ants, roos, dingoes, crows, fuckin' galahs and who can forget the bloody snakes. And of course...

Gestures to Coby.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
The occasional visitor. So theoretically, yes. Technically, no.

Bobby swings himself over to a WORK BENCH. Takes the tin from around his neck. Sprinkles some tiny stones into a jar.

COBY
What are they?

BOBBY
Sapphires. Tha' blue ones. Tha' ladies love 'em.

COBY
Is that how you survive out here?
Buy food and stuff?

Bobby climbs up onto his platform.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

Fuck no! I don't sell 'em. Hard enough fuckin' finding 'em. I just like wettin' 'em down and lookin' at 'em.

COBY

So where do you get your money?

Bobby reaches into a small wooden box and tosses Coby a small nugget of gold.

BOBBY

I pick it up when I'm out looking for the glass. The benefits of bein' so close to tha' ground. You know, old Bill Fischer, from up Oxley station way?

Coby nods his head.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

He brings me what I need. And every month I reciprocate' tha' favour. It's what ya' call a gentlemen's agreement.

Bobby watches Coby fondle the nugget.

BOBBY

'Ows it feel?

COBY

Heavy.

BOBBY

Not that, ya' idiot. Ta' have every fella out looking for ya'? Ta' be a wanted man?

Coby's stumped for an answer.

BOBBY

Exactly. Ya' supposed ta' say it feels like shit, 'cause that's what ya' think everyone thinks ya' should say. But it doesn't does it? It doesn't feel like that at all. I can see it in ya' eyes. You're a free man and you fuckin' like it.

EXT. BOBBY'S CAMP - NIGHT - LATER (1981)

Dinner's finished. Plates and pots lie on the ground. Coby, warming himself by the camp fire watches Bobby swing himself out of his dug-out, nudging along a bottle of whiskey and then climb up onto his platform.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

I don't like the ground. To many
scorpions.

Bobby, tapping sand out of a couple of tin pannikins,
measures out a shot of whiskey into each one.

Coby takes the opportunity to take a quick check of the
ground for any sign of scorpion life.

Bobby, watching Coby out of the corner of his eye, chuckles
softly then passes one of the pannikins to Coby.

BOBBY

Well, here's to whatever.
(raises his pannikin)
Cheers!

COBY

Cheers.

The men swig on their drinks then sit a beat in bush
silence.

COBY

Why the hell do you stay here? I
mean, you could live anywhere.

BOBBY

Why do you stay here?

COBY

No where else to go.

BOBBY

Bullshit! There's plenty of places
to go. It's because this is who
you fucking are.

COBY

Yeah well, I like being who I am.

BOBBY

Congratulations. I like being me
too.

Beat.

COBY.

Is it true what they say?

BOBBY

'Bout what?

COBY

You know... about you. That you
used to... you know... rob banks.
Back in the fifties.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

They always say a lot, don't they?
Actually, I was a paleontologist.

COBY.

A what?

BOBBY

Fossils. I use to study and collect
fossils. The bank robbin' came
later. It was my passion.

COBY.

Fossils?

BOBBY

No you idiot! Robbing banks. Had
to move to a place where there
weren't any. That's why I came
out here. That was before I lost
my legs mind you. Hard to rob
banks with out fuckin' legs. Mind
you, if there was one out here,
I'd give it a fuckin' go.

Booby swigs on his whiskey. His mind wanders back to
earlier years.

BOBBY

I loved that shit. Stridin' into
a bank. Jumpin' on the counter,
acting like a mad man. Clock's
tickin'. Every one lookin' at
ya', wonderin' what ya' was gonna'
do next. Wavin' ya' guns 'round
like, John Wayne. You know what I
mean.

COBY

I've never robbed any banks.

BOBBY

But you have waved ya' gun around,
haven't ya'?

Bobby takes a quiet sip of his whiskey while Coby silently
reflects on the deeper implications of Bobby's comment.

BOBBY

Do you know the thing about Killin'?

Coby raises his eyes to Bobby's.

BOBBY

Any man can fuckin' do it. I
mean...

Looks hard at Coby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY (CONT'D)

You're not the only one that has.
Once ya' justify the reason why we
should, pullin' tha' trigga' is no
harder than butterin' bread.

COBY

Yeah well, this is different.

BOBBY

Different my fuckin' arse! You're
no different than the rest of us.
Tryin' ta' make truths of your
lies. Turnin' your lead into gold.
The fact of tha' matter is, if you
look deep, and I mean real deep,
you've been wanting this. Yearning
for it. Everybody look at Coby.
Feel my pain!

COBY

Fuck you, Bob!

BOBBY

Easy, ya' still a guest in my home.
Give us ya' cup.

Coby passes the cup.

COBY

Yeah well, you don't really know
what's going on.

Bobby pours some whiskey.

BOBBY

If you say so.

Bobby passes back the cup.

COBY

I say so. Ta.

Bobby stares off into the night. Coby prods and adjusts
the fire. The very faint howl of dingoes rolls in through
the darkness. The men listen.

BOBBY

It's tha' truth, Coby.

COBY

What is?

Bobby gestures to the desert.

BOBBY

All this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY (CONT'D)

That's why no one wants to live out here. 'Cause every one's frightened of it. It clears away tha' bullshit. Clarifies tha' mind. Lets you see you and no one fucking else. It's why Jesus loved it and Muhammad rode his camel all over it. And it's time you started looking at it.

Bobby stares hard at Coby.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

You seriously need ta' come to terms with where you are heading, 'cause If you don't, then you're fuckin' lost. And you of all people should know...you don't want to be fucking lost out here.

A large, wild looking, dog, dead bush rat in its mouth, wanders onto the fringe of camp, sniffs the air and stares at Coby.

BOBBY

(to the dog)

It's alright, boy. He's just visiting. Coby, meet, Brutus. Brutus, Coby.

(to Coby)

He comes and goes. I got no control over him. He does what he wants. A little bit like someone else we know.

INT. XD SEDAN - MOVING - NIGHT.(1981)

Lee Ling drives through the night whilst Flynn stares out the side window watching ghostly forms of telegraph poles whizz by and disappear into the darkness.

LEE LING

What are you thinking?

The question breaks Flynn's mind drift.

FLYNN

Huh... nothing.

LEE LING

OK.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLYNN

I'm starting to think that unless you're born out here you're never going to be let in. Never going to be one of them. You think you're close but in actual fact you couldn't be further away. You're just... entertainment.

LEE LING

Welcome to my world, Flynn.

The comment causes Flynn to take stock of his own self pity. He looks deeply at Lee Ling and grunts.

FLYNN

Huh!

Lee Ling smiles at his little epiphany.

LEE LING

Do you know what I think?

Flynn awaits Lee's insight.

LEE LING (CONT'D)

Whatever's going on out here,

Head gestures back.

LEE LING (CONT'D)

Has nothing to do with that.

FLYNN.

Why do you say that?

LEE LING

Lions!

FLYNN

Lions?

LEE LING

Exactly! My father once told me that the only reason a lion tamer can walk into a cage full of man eating lions is because, just off stage, out of sight from the audience, is some guy sitting there holding a 12 gauge ready to shoot dead any lion that steps out of place.

FLYNN

What's your point?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEE LING

Think about it! Coby walks straight into the lion cage to break his brother out of jail. That takes balls.

FLYNN

Someone's out back.

LEE LING

Or something. And whatever it is, Coby thought it was big enough to protect him and his brother.

FLYNN

But he was wrong.

LEE LING

Yes he was. And they weren't bashing Jimmy because they're worried about their hold over their little drug trade. They hold the reins. They know it. The Dawsons know it. I mean, without their approval, no one moves shit!

FLYNN

And without their protection every one goes to jail.

LEE LING

They were looking for answers!

FLYNN

The question is, about what?

LEE LING

About where the hell that man with the shotgun sits?

EXT. BOBBY'S CAMP - NIGHT - LATER (1981)

Bobby's snoring softly rumbles from out of the dugout as Coby lifts the lid of the little wooden box. A small fortune in small gold nuggets shines back.

Coby reaches into his pocket, takes out the nugget that Bobby gave him earlier and drops it into the box.

BOBBY (O.S.)

He use to do it.

Coby, startled, spins to see Bobby at the entrance to the dugout.

COBY

Huh! What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

Your old man. Bring me my stuff.
Before old Bill.

Bobby tosses Coby a leather bound cylindrical object.

BOBBY

Never took a cent for it either.
We had a lot in common.

Points to the object.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

That may come in handy. Help you
avoid any... problems and stuff.

Bobby turns and swings himself back into the dugout.

BOBBY

Take whatever you need. Get
yourself a new life. There's
nothing here for you anymore.

As Coby watches Bobby disappear into the darkness of the cave, something catches his eye. He looks up to see Brutus, sitting motionless on top of the dugout, quietly looking back at him.

EXT. ROCKY OVERHANG - DESERT - NIGHT (1981)

Wajikul, naked to the waist and under the light of a small fire, runs his hands gently over a series of FADED ROCK PAINTINGS staining the walls of the escarpment.

Some of the paintings are of the stylized "cranes feet" we saw him painting on the canvas back in the town camp.

The flickering light and shadows cast from the fire causes the paintings to dance and sway, creating the illusion that the artwork is alive.

EXT. ROCKY OVERHANG - DESERT - NIGHT - LATER (1981)

Wajikul withdraws TWO CLICKING STICKS and a dirty BOTTLE of water from out of his doctors bag..

He places the bottle on the ground then moves over towards the fire. He clicks his sticks together 3 times, closes his eyes and calls.

WAJIKUL

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

It is me. I'm coming home now.
It is me. Wajikul. Let me in.

Then slowly, clicking his sticks together, he starts dancing and singing a low ancient chant.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT (1981)

We listen to Wajikul's singing as we watch Coby sitting on a small ridge overlooking the desert.

He flips the lid on the cylindrical leather object and extracts an old style SPY GLASS.

He extends it and, through the spy glass, scans the desert. Gazes at the moon. The stars. Back to the desert. Sees a dark smoke trail, rising black into the moonlit sky. Shock spreads over his face.

COBY

Oh no!

EXT. ROCKY OVERHANG - DESERT - NIGHT (1981)

Wajikul, deep in trance, dances and sings. The flames lick the night. The pictures on the rocks dance. The glowing embers drift upward into night sky, until we reach..

DREAM STATE - WAJIKUL'S MIND (1981)

Blackness. Suddenly, Wajikul's Mother's face rushes towards us from out of the darkness.

MOTHER.

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

It's time?

Her face smashes into light. Deep blackness. Then,

EXT. ROCKY OVERHANG - DESERT - MORNING (1981)

Wajikul snaps awake to see a dingo sitting some meters away looking at him. The dog rises, walks to the edge of the escarpment and stares down at the desert.

The dingo looks back at Wajikul then out to the desert, seemingly beckoning Wajikul to look.

Wajikul moves out from under the overhang and gazes out to where the dingo is looking.

As Wajikul scours the desert floor from his vantage point, he notices birds, far away, circling in the sky.

Wajikul looks back at the dog only to catch sight of it slinking away.

EXT. DESERT - DAY (1981)

Wajikul approaches, a dead, still saddled, blood stained horse being feasted upon by some crows.

Hunting the crows away he studies the dead animal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Studying the terrain, he notices the dead horse's tracks leading off into the scrub.

EXT. THE GUM TREE - DAY (1981)

Wajikul stands over the shoeless corpse of mounted officer#1. He turns and gazes at the body of officer#2 a short distance away.

Wajikul squats down beside the body. Studies the corpse. The dead man's bare feet seem to mesmerize Wajikul.

Wajikul gazes out at the bush. A willy willy dances across the desert floor, spinning dust into the air.

FLASH BACK TO

EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON (1953)

A dust trail spirals into the air as a 1953 FJ HOLDEN POLICE CAR motors along a dirt road.

The vehicle turns off through some gates. On the railing fence, carved into the top beam beside the gate, is a sign that reads "TALGARA"

INT. FJ HOLDEN POLICE CAR - MOVING - AFTERNOON (1953)

Three men sit in the car. The driver is a cop. His name is DON CHAMPION. Don is a red faced, well fed, lackey of the big white land holders.

The Passenger beside him is the TATTOOED MAN from the massacre. His name is FRANK REDFERN. Frank is a 40 year old, insipid, beer gutted, follow the mob, good old boy.

The man in the back is the BLACK MOUSTACHE also from the massacre. His name is BARRY FITZGERALD. Barry is a mid 30's, evil, nasty looking, bush hardened, acid eyed snake.

DON

No you bloody well won't. You leave it to me. He's a God damn vet. Might pay to remember that.

Sights up Barry in the rear view mirror.

DON (CONT'D)

Do you hear me Barry?

BARRY

Yeah, I hear ya'.

FRANK

Ya' sure we got the right bloke?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DON

Quite sure. Matty picked up the tracks. Reckons the only fella' it could have been was Jack pushing his mob through after the cattle sales.

EXT. FENCE LINE - AFTERNOON - LATER (1953)

Wajikul, mounted on horse back, pushes a mob of cattle along a fence line, towards the homestead only 500 yards out.

Spinning his horse to walk back down the herd, he notices the dust trail of a car approaching Talgara.

Transfixed on the sight he he watches as the vehicle rattles past.

EXT. TALGARA HOMESTEAD - AFTERNOON (1953)

The car pulls into the homestead. Jack Dawson steps out onto the verandah. Sarah follows.

When Sarah sees their uninvited guests she flicks Jack a piercingly resentful look. Jack wisely keeps his mouth shut.

Don strides up to the couple, big smile spread over his red face. The other men slink out of the car and wait where it's parked.

JACK

Don.

DON

Jack!

Tips his hat.

DON (CONT'D)

Mrs Dawson.

SARAH.

Hello Sergeant.

DON

(to Jack)

Do you mind if we have a... word?

JACK

Come on in.

Barry, noticing Wajikul bringing the cattle into the cattle yards, breaks from the car and wanders over. Frank stays put. He seems uncomfortable. Fidgety.

EXT. CATTLE YARDS - AFTERNOON (1953)

Barry, leaning against the railing fence, watches Wajikul push the cattle in.

BARRY
You haven't ridden much have you,
boy?

Wajikul, without answering, rides over to the railing fence. Barry follows.

BARRY
Don't see many black fella's riding
without boots, unless they've just
come in from walkin' about.

Wajikul dismounts and ties his horse up to the fence. Barry grabs Wajikul's arms through the railing.

BARRY
This your first time out of the
bush, boy?

Wajikul looks hard at the man. At first he can't see it, then it clicks.

FLASH BACK TO**EXT. DESERT - ABORIGINAL CAMP (1953)**

Wajikul, hiding out on the fringe of the camp, pries apart the spinifex.

Wajikul watches as a stockman, with a big black moustache, shoots dead an older Aboriginal man.

BACK TO SCENE.**EXT. CATTLE YARDS (1953)**

Wajikul shakes himself free from Barry's grasp and walks away. Barry follows.

BARRY
What do you think it's like being
a cow? Spend your whole life
wandering around, not knowing that
one day someone is going to shoot
you in the head and cut you up.

Wajikul climbs the railing fence. Heads to the stables.

BARRY
What's the matter, boy? Cat got
your tongue?

INT. KITCHEN (1953)

Sarah places cups out on the table then pours hot water into an old tea pot. Places it down. She's nervous. Hands are a little bit shaky.

SARAH.

(to Don)

Just let it steep a minute. Is there anything else I can get you? Biscuits, or some---

DON

---Don't trouble your self, Mrs Dawson. This is just a quick visit. Still got to get over to Battle Camp Station. Apparently they're having a few problems over there.

SARAH.

I hope it's not anything serious.

Don fixes a stern eye on Jack

DON

Nothing that can't be fixed.

Sarah knows where this is going.

SARAH

Well, if you excuse me.

DON

Yes, of course.

Sarah turns to leave.

DON

How many months to go?

SARAH

Three.

DON

Must be excited?

SARAH

Yes... yes we are.

Sarah looks at Jack. Jack gives her a reassuring glance.

SARAH

Anyway, I'll leave you gentlemen to it.

DON

Thanks for the tea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK
Thanks, Darl'.

Sarah splits through a door to another room.

INT. LOBBY / HALLWAY (1953)

Sarah, leaning close to the wall, strains to listen to the men's conversation.

INT. KITCHEN (1953)

JACK
What do you want, Don?

DON
You know why I'm here, Jack. Seems you found something that should be forgotten.

JACK
What makes you think I found something?

DON
Next time it would pay to be not so, how can I put it... tender. Blacks don't cross the arms of their dead, Jack.

JACK
But good Christians do. You're a good Christian aren't you, Don?

DON
What I am, is an officer of the law. I keep the peace.

JACK
Really. If only you were as diligent a week ago.

DON
You may not like what happened out there, but it's done. Kicking up a fuss over it will achieve nothing. Waste a lot of people's time to change nothing. Do we understand each other, Jack?

JACK
No, I don't think we do! If you think that what happened, "out there", as you put it, is acceptable, well God help you, Don.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DON

I don't like it anymore than you do.

JACK

You're just going to do nothing about it?

DON

Do what, Jack? No white man is going to jail for killing a couple of black fellas.

JACK

It wasn't just a couple, Don. You know that.

DON

Do you know they speared Bob Scanlin, out on Wild Horse Flats?

JACK

He would have done something to deserve it. I know, Bob.

DON

No man deserves to die that way.

JACK

But a black fella does?

DON

My advice, Jack. Let the dust settle on this one. Don't go stir it up. No good will come of it. Everything will just get... you know... dirty. Do you understand what I'm saying, Jack?

JACK

You need to get out of my house, Don.

DON

I hope I never have to come back here, Jack.

JACK

I hope so to.

Suddenly, the sound of Frank screaming madly from outside.

FRANK (O.S.)

DON! DO-ON! GET OUT HERE! DONNNN!
DONNNNNN!

Don and Jack race outside.

EXT. TALGARA HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS (1953)

Frank's stuck to the spot, terror stricken, watching Barry stagger towards him, clutching at something on his chest.

Pale shock covers Barry's face. He stops. Removes his hand. HORSE TRIMMING SHEARS stick from his CHEST. He turns, looks back at the CATTLE YARDS. BLOOD STAINS from MULTIPLE stab wounds cover his back. Barry turns back to face Frank and whispers.

BARRY

Frank...

He slumps to the ground. Sarah, on the verandah, drops to her knees in shock and screams.

SARAH

I KNEW IT WOULD COME TO THIS!
WHAT DID I SAY? I KNEW IT! I KNEW
IT! I KNEW IT!

Don and Jack run to his aid.

EXT. DESERT - DAY (1953)

Wajikul tugs at the reins but, try as he might, his wounded horse, unable to rise, only thrashes and writhes in the dust.

Wajikul looks up in desperation at men on mounts galloping across the plain towards him.

A bullet slams into his horse's neck. Wajikul releases the reins and runs.

FADE OUT

The sound of keys jingling and boots crunching on gravel.

FADE IN:

EXT. LOCK UP - DAY (1953)

Jack Dawson limps towards a small BRICK CELL that sits just off from the main police building.

Don Champion, sporting a nasty looking bruise to the eye, trails beside him, jingling the CELL KEYS in his hand.

DON

You need to wipe your hands of this one, Jack. You tried to help and look how that's turned out. Bloody black fellas, it's all about pay back.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DON (CONT'D)

How'd you get it in your head you could somehow change all that? There's not a man born yet that can fathom the way they think.

JACK

Sometimes life puts things in your way that you're not meant to step over, Don. It's nature's way of giving us a chance to see who we really are. I hope one day you can learn that.

DON

Don't lecture me Jack!

Don opens the cell door. The light floods in revealing Wajikul, lying on the floor, stripped to his waist, bloody and shackled. Flies buzz out the door as it opens. The light near blinds him.

JACK

Jesus, Don, he's just a kid.

DON

Kills like a man though, doesn't he?

Jack enters the cell and helps Wajikul to sit up against the wall.

DON

Oh, and, Jack. Don't be thinking that anything you might know about... things, might be able to help this prick. The desert's a strange place. One minute somethen's there and then the next it's... just gone.

Jack doesn't reply.

DON

(terse)

Be quick! I got things to do.

Don walks away, mumbles under his voice..

DON

Fucking coon lover.

Jack squats down beside Wajikul.

WAJIKUL

Can you close the door boss. The light gets my eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

Yeah sure.

Jack closes the door, then squats back down and checks Wajikul's wounds.

JACK

And don't call me, boss. OK?

WAJIKUL

Sorry, boss.

JACK

What did I just say?

Jack, turning Wajikul's head to one side, checks a serious facial laceration running from his right eye down to his cheek.

JACK

Bloody animals.

WAJIKUL

I'm sorry, Jack.

JACK

No, no. I'm sorry, son. I thought we'd have more time... to let the pain dry out.

Jack, pulling a hanky from his pocket, wets it down and wipes away dry blood from Wajikul's face.

JACK (CONT'D)

We just didn't have enough time that's all.

WAJIKUL

I couldn't see it.

JACK

What?

WAJIKUL

Ever drying out.

JACK

Not seeing something doesn't mean it isn't there.

WAJIKUL

Are they going to hang me, Jack?

JACK

No one's going to hang you. They don't hang boys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAJIKUL

What's going to happen, Jack?

JACK

They're going to put you in jail, son. Probably for a long time. Do you understand?

Wajikul nods "yes".

JACK

Don't you die on me in there. Do you hear me? You promise me? Don't you go and die on me, Ok? I'm going to try and set things right. Tell 'em what I know.

WAJIKUL

Jack.

JACK

Yeah.

WAJIKUL

I saw my mother last night.

JACK

Did ya'?

WAJIKUL

She was beautiful.

JACK

There's nothing better than a mother, is there?

WAJIKUL

She said to say thank you for all you done.

Long beat.

WAJIKUL

(whispers)

They killed my family, Jack.

JACK

I know, son. I know.

Jack cradles the boy, like a father with a son.

Then, "THUMP!" "THUMP!" "THUMP!" As Don hammers on the door.

DON

Righto', Jack!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The door bursts open. Light floods in like a spotlight, capturing Jack's tenderness. A shadow falls over them as Don moves into the doorway.

DON (CONT'D)

Times up!

INT. COURT HOUSE - DAY (1953)

The court house is packed. All white. Not an Aboriginal in sight. Wajikul, shackled and bruised, looking completely lost, stands in the dock.

Don Champion, swollen with self importance, stands beside him.

The JUDGE, in his robe, sits in his high chair. Sweat beads down his face. He looks greasy, like he's hit the piss hard the night before.

The PROSECUTOR leans back in his chair. He nods his head knowingly at the Judge.

The DEFENCE LAWYER, young, pimply and inexperienced taps his fingers nervously on the table.

The JURY, all white, sit off to one side. The SELECT MEMBER from the Jury is on his feet delivering the verdict.

It's a kangaroo court in the truest sense.

Jack Dawson is seated up the back. Surrounding him and seated beside him are some seriously hard looking men.

JURIST

(to the judge)

Guilty, your Honour. On all counts... guilty!

A buzz of approval hums through the court house.

JUDGE

Then, Wajikul

Reads from a sheet of paper.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Tjarra... Tjarrarinnga. For resisting arrest and assaulting an Officer of the law,

Don drops his head. A few sly heckles aimed at Don drift out from the audience.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I sentence you to 5 years imprisonment.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE (CONT'D)

And for the most heinous, callous
and cold blooded murder of, Barry
Harvey Fitzgerald, I sentence you
to life imprisonment. 25 years.
Non parole period of 20.

The court hums again. The Judge slams down his gavel

JUDGE

Get this man out of my court!

Some people clap. There's a commotion up the back. The
crowd turn. Jack's on his feet.

JACK

(to the judge)

YOU KNOW DAMN WELL WHAT HAPPENED
OUT THERE, JOHN!

Men try to pin Jack back.

JACK

(to men)

GET YOUR BLOODY HANDS
OFF ME!

JUDGE

ORDER! ORDER!

Men grab at Jack. Jack swings wildly. Men drop. Others
back away. The judge bangs his gavel.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

JACK! FOR GOD'S SAKE! ORDER!

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. RIDGE - MORNING (1981)

Two JACKAROOS, on horse back, ride along the side of a
long sweeping ridge line.

JACKAROO#1 gazes down into the rocky gully and spots the
twisted wreck of a police 4wd smashed upon the rocks.
Below.

JACKAROO #1

(shocked)

Bloody hell!

JACKAROO#2 rides over.

JACKAROO #2

Jesus!

EXT. BOBBY'S CAMP - MORNING (1981)

Bobby, cleaning down the skin of a small wallaby, stops, lifts his head.

BOBBY
 (loud. To seemingly
 no one)
 He's headin' North!
 (mumbling to himself)
 I suppose you got nothing to fucking
 eat either.

On the hill above the camp, staring down at Bobby, stands Wajikul. After a brief beat, Wajikul quietly turns and moves off into the scrub.

INT. MOTEL - MORNING - SAME TIME (1981)

Lee Ling, waiting in her room with the door open, watches as Flynn's Harley rumbles into the car park and pulls up beside her XD FORD SEDAN. She holsters her pistol, closes a brief case on the bed and exits the room.

EXT. MOTEL - MORNING - (1981)

Crossing the car park, she notices the Motel receptionist glowering at her judgmentally from the office window. Lee Ling smiles. The receptionist does not reciprocate.

FLYNN
 Morning.

LEE LING
 Yes it is!

FLYNN
 Where to?

Lee Ling gazes back at the overly curious receptionist.

LEE LING
 It's time we tamed some lions.

EXT. RILEY'S RIDGE - MORNING(1981)

Coby Dawson crawls on his stomach towards the edge of a steep cliff.

Gazing through the spy glass he spots smoke drifting up from the burnt remains of Talgara homestead.

Lowering the spy glass, as if the lens portrayed an illusion, he stares out at the homestead with the naked eye.

Still unable to accept the sight, he peers through the spy glass once again.

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING TALGARA HOMESTEAD - MORNING(1981)

Vanutti, dirty, worn out, lying on his stomach on the knoll of a hill, scans the desert with a pair of binoculars.

Through the binoculars he sees a "FLASH" of something reflecting off Riley's ridge.

Vanutti calls, in a low voice, to Macavoy, seated below him amongst the rocks, studying a map.

VANUTTI

Sarge! Sarge!

MACAVOY

What?

VANUTTI

I saw something. On the ridge.

Macavoy moves up. Lies down beside Vanutti.

MACAVOY.

Where?

The "FLASH" again.

VANUTTI

There! See it?

MACAVOY.

And the world will turn!

Macavoy takes the binoculars. Scours the ridge.

MACAVOY.

Get on to Ted, tell him to get out here asap. Then get on to all mobile units and tell 'em to get their arses over to the east side of Riley's ridge.

(back to binoculars)

Tell them we've got Dawson on the hill. Do it now!

Vanutti splits to the police 4WD.

MACAVOY

(to himself)

Now what, sunshine?

EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING(1981)

Lee Ling and Flynn pull into the local police station. They exit the vehicle and head into the building.

INT. POLICE STATION - FRONT OFFICE (1981)

Lee Ling and Flynn enter. Jill, behind the counter, taps away at a typewriter.

LEE LING
Good morning.

JILL
Morning.

LEE LING
I was wondering if we could speak
to Senior Sergeant Stratfield?

The request throws Jill.

JILL
Ummmm! Just hang on a minute.

INT. BACK OFFICE (1981)

A young WHEEL CHAIR bound, deformed and mentally disabled girl sits watching cartoons on the office tv.

Steve swigs down the last of his coffee. Slides his hand gun into his shoulder holster. Picks up some car keys lying on the table. Jill, looking anxious, enters.

JILL
There's some people out front asking
for Stratty.

STEVE
Who?

JILL
I don't know.

INT. FRONT OFFICE (1981)

Steve enters the office. Jill follows him out and pretends to busy herself.

STEVE
(to Lee Ling)
How can I help you?

LEE LING
Senior Sergeant Stratfield. Is he
in?

Steve tries to gauge Lee Ling and answer the question. Lee Ling can see his mind working.

STEVE
And you are?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEE LING

I'm sorry. I'm Detective Sergeant Lee ling and this is Sergeant Flynn Jacobsen. And you are?

STEVE

Harcourt. Detective Harcourt.

LEE LING

(cryptic)

It seems you've got a few problems out here, Detective?

STEVE

Yes, it does... doesn't it?

FLYNN

What about, Detective Macavoy. Is he around?

STEVE

Out in the field with, Sergeant Stratfield. Every one from this office is tied up on a man hunt at the moment.

LEE LING

So we've heard.

The little girl pushes herself out into the main office. She gives Lee Ling a big geeky smile. Lee Ling smiles back.

LEE LING

Hello, darling. What's your name?

Jill moves over to Anne Jane. Places her arm protectively over the girls shoulder.

Lee Ling notices that Mum's squeezing Anne Jane's shoulder just a little too tight.

JILL

This is, Anne Jane. We call her, Annie.

LEE LING

(to Anne Jane)

That's a lovely name.

The girl emits a lovely, yet strange, grunting laugh.

JILL

I'm Doug's wife. Jill. Jill Macavoy.

LEE LING

Nice to meet you. I'm, Lee Ling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jill nods a polite hello.

FLYNN

(to Steve)

So... Detective. Sergeant
Stratfield! When are you expecting
him back?

STEVE

Well, right at this moment, they've
just located our fugitive.

LEE LING

Coby Dawson?

STEVE

Yeah... correct. We've got him
cornered him on a hill 'bout 60
klicks North West of here. I just
got the call not 5 minutes ago.

LEE LING

Killed one of your men didn't he?

STEVE

In cold blood!

FLYNN

After you killed his brother?

STEVE

What's your point?

FLYNN

No point.

STEVE

Pointless then?

Both men stare coldly at each other. Suddenly the office
doors swings open. The 2 Jackaroos, accompanied by an
OLDER MAN, enter the office.

OLDER MAN

(To Steve)

We need to talk to someone.

STEVE

What about?

OLDER MAN

These lads have found something.

STEVE

What?

JACKAROO #2

Cop car. All smashed to shit

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE

Where?

The older man gestures out the door.

OLDER MAN

'Bout 50 klicks South of here.
And then another 15 klicks in, off
the old Stanley track.

JACKAROO #1

There's dead men in it! One of
them is a cop.

LEE LING

(to Steve)

I think we'll ride along on this
one Detective.

EXT. SITE OF 1953 ABORIGINAL BUSH CAMP - MORNING (1981)

Wajikul, motionless, stares straight ahead at a distinct
old winter gum tree standing alone on a harsh arid plain.

Wajikul, dropping his weapon and old Doctors bag, approaches
the tree. As he walks, apparitions appear. In his mind
or not... who knows?

An Aboriginal man, naked to the waist, blood stains on his
face and shoulder, glides past.

MAN

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

Hey young one. Where you been?

Wajikul moves on, passing a young woman. She too is stained
with blood.

YOUNG WOMAN

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

Your mother wants to see you. She
been waiting.

Men, women, children, all stained with blood, gather around,
talking to and about him.

Sitting in the shade of an old bark lean-to, Wajikul notices
a woman. He approaches. Closer. Closer. Leaning down
towards her, his face pales. It's his mother.

MOTHER

(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)

You been gone a long time.

(a whispered hiss)

We're waiting for you. It's time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wajikul reaches to touch his Mother, then... WOMP! Wajikul stumbles to his knees. The camp is gone. Frantically he scratches at the sand. Scrapes up earth. Spins around wildly, searching for his family

EXT. ROCKY GULLY - MID MORNING (1981)

The Police 4WD is a mangled, upturned wreck. Lee Ling and Flynn, squatting down on opposite sides of the vehicle, peer in at the bloated, fly blown bodies inside. Steve looks on from a short distance away.

FLYNN
(To Lee Ling)
Looks like things didn't go to plan.

LEE LING
The web we weave.

Lee Ling, stands, gazes up at the 2 Jackaroos and the older man peering down at them from on top of the cliff.

LEE LING
It's a long drop.

FLYNN
Lucky they were already dead.

LEE LING
Funny sort of luck.
(to Steve)
Well you're right about one thing, Detective! Senior Sergeant Stratfield is in the field. Care to have a look?

Steve looks on glumly.

LEE LING
Anything you'd like to tell us, Steve?

Steve remains tight lipped.

LEE LING
If you want to dig yourself a deeper hole, go right ahead. We know about the drugs. About Talgara. Your association with the Dawsons. Your operations out of Blue Star... It's over, Steve.

FLYNN
Talk to us.

Steve, drawing a deep breath, fixing his gaze on Flynn, reluctantly mumbles...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE
We knew we had a dog in the wire.

LEE LING
(shocked)
How could you possibly know that?

STEVE
You're not the only one with
friends, Detective.

FLASH BACK TO

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT (1981)

STEVE (V.O.)
We just didn't know how much dirt
you had. But we knew something
bad was on its way.

A MAN, smoking a cigarette, dressed in slacks, white shirt
and a shoulder holstered gun, stands, with his back to us,
at a large desk, talking on the phone in a low, stern,
whispered voice.

As he reaches over to ash his cigarette, a name plate is
revealed on the desk. It reads: DETECTIVE SNR SGT MANNION:
ORGANIZED CRIME UNIT.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT (1981)

A very tense, uniformed cop called, SGT STRATFIELD (50's)
listens intently to someone on the phone.

STEVE (V.O.)
And it made a lot of people shit
scared.

Hanging up the phone, he pans his worried eyes over Macavoy,
Pete, Vanutti and another middle aged, slightly fat but
hard looking man dressed in civilian clothes, called
DETECTIVE LACEY.

INT - COBY'S PICK UP - MOVING - NIGHT (1981)

Coby turns off from a dirt road and idles his Pick up onto
a small, open, tree lined flat.

STEVE (V.O.)
They were worried that if Coby and
Jim went down, they could use what
they had on us to save themselves.
It was simple math. Either us or
them. And who was going to miss
two uneducated pieces of hick shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The headlights reveal, parked on the flat, a POLICE 4WD with Detective Lacey and Sgt Stratfield leaning against the bonnet.

STEVE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Jimmy was out of town. One at a time or together, didn't really matter. So we put in the call.

Parking his vehicle in front of the Police 4WD, Coby, suspicious, pulls a shotgun, lying on the seat, closer towards him.

COBY
 Boys!

STRATFIELD
 Coby.

Detective Lacey, breaking away from Sgt Stratfield's side, peels around to the driver's side of the Police 4WD.

EXT. DRY FLAT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS (1981)

Sgt Stratfield field continues to try and lull Coby into a false sense of security.

STRATFIELD
 I got something I want to show you.

Wary as hell, Coby remains quiet.

STRATFIELD (CONT'D)
 C'mon. It's in the car.

Coby's not buying it.

STRATFIELD (CONT'D)
 C'mon! You're not going to believe this.

COBY
 What have you got?

As Sgt Stratfield heads towards the police 4WD he signals Detective Lacey with a slight nod.

With that, Detective Lacey, SHOTGUN in hand, spins out from the 4WD.

Sgt Stratfield, spinning back to face Coby, draws his SIDE ARM and, together with Detective Lacey, open fire.

INT. COBY'S PICK UP - CONTINUOUS (1981)

Coby, grabbing the shotgun as he goes, scrambles across the bench seat and out the passenger side door as a barrage

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

of bullets punch into vehicle. One round, hitting its mark, strikes him in his UPPER LEFT ARM.

EXT. DRY FLAT - COBY - CONTINUOUS (1981)

Rolling out of the vehicle, and using it as cover, squirms along the ground to the rear of the vehicle.

Peering out from under the car he spots the legs of the two officers approaching and blasts a shot.

EXT. DRY FLAT - STRATFIELD & LACEY - CONTINUOUS (1981)

Sgt Stratfield, screaming in agony, slumps to the ground, clutching his leg.

Detective Lacey squats down and unleashes a hail of shots into the vehicle, punching metal and blowing out the tyres.

EXT. DRY FLAT - COBY - CONTINUOUS (1981)

Coby spins out and away from the vehicle. Rising, sights up Detective Lacey and shoots.

EXT. DRY FLAT - STRATFIELD & LACEY - CONTINUOUS (1981)

Detective Lacey takes the brunt of the shot straight in the chest.

Sgt Stratfield, although writhing in pain, raises his weapon. The hollow click of an empty chamber, as he pulls the trigger, is instantly followed by a savage blast from Coby's shotgun that smashes his head straight back into the dirt.

CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE:

EXT. ROCKY GULLY - MID MORNING (1981)

STEVE

We didn't know what had happened.
We went looking. Found Coby's car---

LEE LING

--How did you know where to look?

STEVE

It was our usual drop off spot.
That's why we knew Coby would come.

LEE LING

And Stratfield and Lacey?

FLASH BACK TO

EXT. DRY FLAT - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER (1981)

STEVE (V.O.)

They had just gone. Vanished.

Coby, struggling with the combination of the weight and his wound, drags Detective Lacey's body toward the Police 4WD.

INT. POLICE 4WD - NIGHT (1981)

Coby, in the back seat, hauls Detective Lacey's body, slumped half in, half out of the passenger door, into the vehicle. On the floor, between the front and rear seats, lies the body of Sgt Stratfield.

EXT. RIDGE LINE - DAWN (1981)

Coby, driving through the scrub, brings the Police 4WD to a halt at the edge of long sweeping ridge line. He exits the vehicle, takes off his shirt and wipes down the steering wheel, gear stick, seat and door handles.

STEVE (V.O.)

For three days we searched everywhere. But we always came up empty.

Using the shirt as a glove, shifts the gear stick into neutral and pushes the car over the cliff.

INT. PUB - NIGHT (1981)

Busy with hard men doing some hard drinking.

STEVE (V.O.)

Then, one night, we got a tip that Jim was back in town. It's all we had to go on...

A heavy set, beer gutted, PUBLICAN watches as Jimmy, down the far end of the bar, swings a carton of beer onto his shoulder. The Publican moves over to a wall phone and dials up a number.

INT. FIBRO HOUSE - NIGHT (1981)

A party is in full swing as Jim enjoys a drink amongst the crowd. Someone taps him on the shoulder and points.

STEVE (V.O.)

... so we picked him up.

Jim looks over to see Sgt Pete Jamieson and Detective Steve Harcourt glaring at him from across the room.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACK TO SCENE:

EXT. ROCKY GULLY - MID MORNING (1981)

LEE LING

The problem now, Detective, is that, Coby Dawson, is running around with the very real and firm belief that anyone with a badge or gun is out to kill him. This filthy mess is only going to get worse. How was this ever a solution?

Lee Ling head gestures to Flynn.

LEE LING (CONT'D)

You're under arrest.

Flynn steps towards Steve. Steve steps back, draws his hand gun and aims it straight at Flynn's head.

STEVE

You're not touching shit!

LEE LING

Don't be stupid, Steve.

STEVE

Fuck you! You think I'm going to rot in jail..

Gestures to the car.

STEVE (CONT'D)

... for those pieces of shit? I don't fucking think so.

(despondent.)

You've got no idea what it's like to be around men like that. Like, Macavoy.

(to Flynn.)

It was never meant to be this way.

FLYNN

It never is.

Flynn reaches for the pistol.

FLYNN (CONT'D)

Give me the gun.

Steve takes a step back.

STEVE

I've got nothing no more! Do you know that?

Places the barrel against his heart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE (CONT'D)

Nothing!

Flynn lunges for the weapon.

FLYNN.

No, Steve! Don't!

Too late. Steve pulls the trigger.

EXT. FOOT OF RILEY'S RIDGE - AFTERNOON(1981)

The base camp is busy with police cordoning off Riley's Ridge.

Macavoy, seated in a POLICE 4WD, CB handset in his hands, looking cold and empty, stares out at the activity around him. Suddenly he starts smashing the handset against the steering wheel.

MACAVOY

FUCK!
 (SMASH)
 FUCK!
 (SMASH)
 FUCK!
 (SMASH)
 FUCK!

The handset shatters. Macavoy slumps back into the seat, gazes mindlessly out the window. Men stare back pondering his outburst.

Macavoy, exiting the vehicle, storms over to a group of Police, huddled around and studying a map laid out on the bonnet of Police 4WD.

One of those men is Vanutti. Another is a burly, no nonsense, middle aged Police Sergeant called SGT BURFORD.

MACAVOY

(to the whole group)
 Where the fuck is my chopper?

SGT BURFORD

He's on his way, Detective.

MACAVOY

On his way, is not a time. I want an ETA.

Sgt Burford moves over to the window of the 4WD, reaches in, grabs the handset.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SGT BURFORD

(to Macavoy)

Do you know we just got word that
Davo's horse has been found
wandering alone along the old battle
camp road?

MACAVOY

Bullshit!

SGT BURFORD

We can't find George either.

MACAVOY

You tell, Ted, to get here now!

EXT. DESERT FLOOR - AFTERNOON(1981)

A helicopter screams overhead. Wajikul watches it fly
towards a large rocky hill rising out from the desert floor.

INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON (1981)

Jill Macavoy sits in front of a Police CB radio, clasping
the handset, sobbing. Behind her, hand on her shoulder,
Lee Ling.

Flynn enters. In the b.g. through the glass doors of the
station we catch a glimpse of an Ambulance leaving the
police station.

FLYNN

(delicately)

Boss! We're ready to go.

INT. HELICOPTER - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Riley's Ridge looms out of the desert like a fortress, as
the helicopter thumps towards it.

Macavoy clicks a magazine into a scoped REMMINGTON MODEL
742 AUTO LOADER then places three more magazines on the
seat beside him. The pilot glances over with a serious
look of concern.

On the ground below we see Police and other Search vehicles
positioning themselves at the base of the hill.

MACAVOY

(to pilot)

Hold this height and track around
it counter clockwise.

The pilot acknowledging, sweeps the chopper into a long
arc as Macavoy scours the hill through the rifle's scope.

MACAVOY

Where are you?

EXT. COBY'S POSITION - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Coby, acutely aware of the encircling chopper, manoeuvres himself around the rocks to keep out of its line of sight.

INT. HELICOPTER - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

MACAVOY

(to Pilot)

Can you swing it around and give me a straight run over the top? I want to have a look down. Right on top of those rocks.

PILOT

No problem!

The pilot arcs the chopper high, banks it over and descends. Macavoy, through the scope, suddenly catches a glimpse of Coby tucking in behind a boulder.

MACAVOY

BINGO!

(to pilot)

BRING ME BACK ROUND. GIVE ME A LINE OF SIGHT!

The pilot swings the chopper into a sharp arc.

Macavoy, panning the area through his scope, unleashes a savage volley of rounds towards a mound of boulders.

EXT. COBY'S POSITION - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Coby reels back as bullets smash and chew into the rocks around him.

EXT. FOOT OF RILEY'S RIDGE - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

As repeating gun fire echoes out from the chopper, Sgt Burford looks to Vanutti for answers.

Vanutti flips a bitter, downtrodden glance at the Sergeant then dropping his head, stares at the ground.

SGT BURFORD

My God! What have you boys been up to?

INT. HELICOPTER - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Macavoy snaps another magazine into his rifle.

MACAVOY

(to pilot)

Keep this height and bring me in for another run!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The pilot throws the chopper into another arc.

EXT. COBY'S POSITION - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Coby, pulling in behind some boulders, shoulders his shotgun as the sound of the chopper grows louder. He waits. Louder. Waits, then, spinning out from his cover, fires.

INT. HELICOPTER - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Shot punches through the Plexiglas of the chopper, barely missing the pilot.

PILOT

JESSUSS!

Macavoy lays down withering fire onto Coby's position.

EXT. COBY - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Rounds chip and chew at the rock as Coby pulls back behind the boulders. The firing relents. Coby spins back out. Hammers three consecutive shots at the chopper.

INT. HELICOPTER - LATE AFTERNOON (1981)

Shot tears through the Plexiglas floor, hitting the collective, splintering fragments of plastic and metal into the pilots leg.

PILOT

OH JESUS! I'M SHOT! I'M FUCKING SHOT!

MACAVOY

IT'S NOTHING! IT'S FUCKING NOTHING! YOU BRING ME IN FOR ANOTHER RUN!

PILOT

HOLY SHIT! OH FUCK! I'M TAKING IT DOWN.

MACAVOY

DON'T YOU DARE TAKE THIS BIRD DOWN, TED! IT'S ONLY A FLESH WOUND. IT'S NOTHING!

PILOT

I'M FUCKING SHOT, DOUG! I'M GOING DOWN! HOLY JESUS! THIS IS MADNESS!

MACAVOY

THIS IS JUST-ONE-MAN! I'VE SEEN CHOPPERS DESCEND INTO HELL. SEEN PILOTS FILLED WITH HOLES AND STILL STAY-IN-THE-FUCKING FIGHT.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACAVOY (CONT'D)
SEEN MEN FALL FROM THE SKY LIKE
THRESHED FUCKING WHEAT AND STILL
THEY BRING THEIR BIRDS IN.

Macavoy gestures to the ridge like a mad man.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)
IT'S - JUST - ONE - MAN!

PILOT-TED
THIS ISN'T A FUCKING WAR, DOUG!

The statement stops Macavoy cold. Momentarily causes him to doubt his own twisted reality.

MACAVOY
Then what is it?

Macavoy, eyes lost and empty, stares at the pilot. The pilot, staring back, sees only madness.

PILOT-TED
You're insane! I'M GOING DOWN!

Macavoy kicks the Plexiglas.

MACAVOY
FUUUUUCK!

EXT. COBY - MOMENTS LATER (1981)

Coby watches the chopper spin to the ground.

COBY
Enjoy the walk, dickhead!

EXT. DESERT FLOOR - DUSK (1981)

Wajikul approaches the base of Riley's Ridge. 100 Yards in front of him, nestled in the scrub, sits a POLICE 4WD.

The crackle of a CB and men talking, drifts like dust through the bush. Wajikul quietly maneuvers around their position.

EXT. BASE OF RILEY'S RIDGE - DUSK (1981)

The chopper is on the ground. Two uniformed police carry the injured pilot towards a Police 4WD.

PILOT
(to his rescuers)
I'm telling ya'! The man's mad.
Completely fucking mad!

Macavoy standing beside the downed chopper, removes the LEUPOLD SCOPE from his rifle. Sgt Burford approaches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SGT BURFORD

There's no need for you to go up there, Detective. He can't last more than two days before the sun burns him out. You know that. All we have to do is wait.

MACAVOY

This boy is a fucking snake. Come dark, he will try to find a way off of there. And I'm not about to let that happen.

Slaps a magazine into his rifle.

MACAVOY (CONT'D)

No one goes on that hill until I return! Are we understood? NO ONE!

SGT BURFORD

I hope you know what you're doing, Detective?

MACAVOY

You just stay off my hill!

EXT. COBY - RILEY'S RIDGE - DUSK (1981)

Gazing down onto the desert floor, Coby watches as vehicles position themselves around the base of the ridge.

EXT. MACAVOY - RILEY'S RIDGE - DUSK (1981)

Darkness has almost engulfed the hill as Macavoy edges his way up the rocky slopes. His movements are trained, polished, tactical. Wherever he looks his rifle follows.

EXT. STEEP GULLY - LAST LIGHT (1981)

Wajikul climbing up a cleft in a cliff face, inches his way to the summit of Riley's Ridge.

EXT. MACAVOY - RILEY'S RIDGE - LAST LIGHT (1981)

Macavoy, squatting amongst the rocks, scans the gnarled, shadowy matrix of the rock strewn hill top through the sights of his rifle.

The faint sound of rocks tumbling, clatters into the night air. Swinging his rifle towards the direction of the noise, he listens, watches, waits then moves on.

EXT. FOOT OF RILEY'S RIDGE - NIGHT (1981)

Sgt Burford, Vanutti and some other officers huddle around a POLICE 4WD, drinking coffee, talking quietly and smoking cigarettes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Their attention is drawn to the approaching lights of a 4WD pulling into camp.

Detective Lee Ling, Flynn and Howard Moorecroft step out of the vehicle. Sgt Burford strides over to meet them.

LEE LING
Sgt Burford?

SGT BURFORD
That's correct.

LEE LING
Detective Lee Ling.
(shakes hands)
And this is, Sgt Flynn Jacobsen.

FLYNN
(offers his hand)
Sergeant.

SGT BURFORD
(takes it)
How are ya'?

LEE LING
Oh! And this is, Mr. Moorecroft.
Coby's uncle.

SGT BURFORD
I know who it is. How are you,
Crofty?

HOWARD
Good thanks, John. Busy night
hey?

SGT BURFORD
It's certainly has had its moments.

LEE LING
Where's Detective Macavoy?

Sgt Burford gestures to the hill.

SGT BURFORD
Up there!

LEE LING
Can we get up there?

SGT BURFORD
This one's a waiting game,
Detective.

LEE LING
What about Constable Vanutti?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SGT BURFORD
Skinny fella'. Straw hair. Right
behind me.

LEE LING
Do you want to do the honors?

FLYNN
Be my pleasure.

Flynn strides over towards Vanutti. Lee Ling and Sergeant Burford follow. This isn't Howard's business, he stays back watching.

FLYNN
Constable Samuel Adrian Vanutti?

VANUTTI
Yeah.

FLYNN
You're under arrest.

VANUTTI
What?

Flynn grabs Vanutti's arm, spins him, and forces him over the hood of the 4WD.

VANUTTI
What the fuck are you doing?

Flynn retrieves Vanutti's service revolver. Hands it to Lee Ling.

FLYNN
You have the right to remain silent.

Flynn pushes Vanutti down hard onto the hood. Applies handcuffs.

FLYNN (CONT'D)
Anything you do say, can and will
be used against you in a court of
law.

VANUTTI
What the hell are you talking about?

SGT BURFORD
It's over, son.

VANUTTI
I've done NOTHING!

LEE LING
Exactly!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXT - MACAVOY ON RILEY'S RIDGE - NIGHT (1981)

Macavoy stealthily moves in behind a large rock. Cautiously peers over the top and scans the colorless moonscape.

Something catches his eye. He shoulders his rifle. Readies himself to shoot.

His tension eases upon seeing a dingo, 100 yards out, sitting on some rocks, staring back at him.

He lowers his rifle. The animal slinks away. Macavoy turning to do the same, stops, his face sours...

MACAVOY

Who the fu---

KERRRACKKK! A single round buries deep into his chest. He slumps straight down, like a puppet cut from its strings.

EXT. COBY'S POSITION - SAME TIME (1981)

Coby, startled by the shot, spins and drops behind a clump of stone.

EXT. FOOT OF RILEY'S RIDGE - SAME TIME (1981)

The echo of the single shot rolls down from off the hill. The police vehicle's CB crackles into life as officers report the shot. Lee Ling looks worryingly over at Sgt Burford

SGT BURFORD

(to Lee Ling)

At first light we go. Until then no one's going up that hill.

(into handset)

This is, red one, to all mobile units. You hold your ground. I repeat! You hold your ground.

EXT. MACAVOY'S RESTING PLACE - NIGHT (1981)

A figure floats quietly out of the dark shadows to reveal... Wajikul. Picking his way around the stone, he stands over the lifeless body of Macavoy.

Wajikul's whole demeanor has changed. His eyes cold. He looks dangerous. This is Wajikul the hunter. Turning, he glides silently back into the darkness.

EXT. COBY'S POSITION - NIGHT - LATER (1981)

Coby, motionless behind the rocks, strains to listen to the night. **THUMP!** Something hits the ground behind him. Coby spins. Blasts out a round. A voice whispers from the blackness behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAJIKUL

Coby!

Coby spins to shoot. Wajikul, moving quickly from out of the darkness, takes hold of the shotgun's barrel and wrestles Coby to the ground.

WAJIKUL

It's alright. I'm a friend of ya' father.

The words stop Coby dead in his tracks. A big smile spreads across Wajikul's face.

WAJIKUL

Are ya' hungry?

EXT. COBY'S POSITION - LATER (1981)

Coby, ravenously drinking and eating almost at the same time, and Wajikul, sit nestled amongst a bank of large boulders.

Wajikul, poking his finger through one of the bullet holes in his bag, quips...

WAJIKUL

You killed my bag!

Coby, too consumed with his food and drink, doesn't even entertain a retort.

EXT. COBY'S POSITION - LATER (1981)

Wajikul, seated beside Coby, examines the spyglass and, to his great surprise, extends it open.

COBY

I just can't remember.

WAJIKUL

It was a long time ago!

Raises the spyglass to his eye.

WAJIKUL

Whoa!

Lowers the spyglass and examines it with a child like curiosity.

WAJIKUL

You's was still a little fella.
Ya' mother didn't like 'im goin',
considering what I did and all.

Peers through the spyglass again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAJIKUL

After ya' got bigger, he'd just
come alone.

Wajikul reaches out his hand as if trying to grasp the
stars.

COBY

Every month?

WAJIKUL

Yep.

Beat.

COBY

I've always wanted to go there.
An astronaut. That's all I ever
wanted to be. Just float. See
what's out there. A better place
maybe. A new world.

(beat)

What about you? Did you ever have
a dream? Something you always
wanted to do?

WAJIKUL

Yeah, I had a dreamin' once.

COBY

What?

WAJIKUL

Shoes.

COBY

Shoes?

WAJIKUL

A shoe shop.

(pauses)

I remember one time, your old man,
on one of his visits, brung old
Wajikul a brand new pair of shoes.
Those buggers you can run in. You
know the fellas. White they were.
Bright white. I remember opening
that box, pullin' back the paper,
all crinkly and clean and there
they were, shinin' out like tha'
moon. And the smell, all fresh,
like after the rain. Made a fella'
feel good inside. Feel right again.
I's got to thinkin', if I ever
got out of there, I'd get me a
shoe shop. Make every fella' feel
good when they open that box.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COBY

Huh.

Beat.

WAJIKUL

You've killed a lot of fellas,
Coby!

Silence as Coby contemplates the statement.

WAJIKUL

You're not plannin' on going down
are ya'?

COBY

They don't have to come up here.

WAJIKUL

Yes they do.

COBY

I can't do jail. I just can't.

Wajikul passes the spyglass back to Coby.

COBY

I'm going to die up here aren't I?

WAJIKUL

There'll be no more killin'. All
we gotta' do is wait until all
those coppers are feelin' sleepy
'n thinkin' about their girlfriends.
Then we'll sneak ourselves off of
here like a couple of Dingoes.

Wajikul flaps his hands.

WAJIKUL

Fly away like two little birds.

Picking up his rifle, rises.

WAJIKUL

Why don't ya' rest up. Try and
get some sleep. And don't you
worry about nothin'. Old Wajikul
will look over ya'. Make sure
none of those coppers get up to
any sneaky business.

Steps up and perches himself on a large boulder.

WAJIKUL

Ya' safe now. Get some kip into
ya'. I'll wake ya' when it's time
to go.

EXT. COBY'S POSITION - RILEY'S RIDGE - DAWN (1981)

Wajikul gazes out at the distant horizon. The very faint hint of dawn brushes the skyline. Moving off the rocks, he positions himself at the feet of the sleeping Coby.

WAJIKUL
(Aboriginal dialect.
subtitled)
It's time to go, Coby.

EXT. FOOT OF RILEY'S RIDGE - DAWN (1981)

Sgt Burford, Lee Ling, Flynn and Howard, drinking coffee, trying to stay warm, huddle around the plain 4WD.

Another group of police milling around a Police 4WD, stand guard over the handcuffed Vanutti seated inside.

A shot thunders out, ripping apart the dead quiet of the early dawn. Sgt Burford, startled, spills the coffee he was pouring over the bonnet of the 4WD.

SGT BURFORD
Jesus!

LEE LING
(to Sgt Burford)
We have to get up there.

Sergeant Burford ponders the conditions.

SGT BURFORD
Alright! Get your kit. We leave
in ten.

HOWARD
(to Sgt Burford)
I'm coming with you!

SGT BURFORD
Not this time, Crofty!

LEE LING
We'll need him if we contact with,
Coby.

Sgt Burford grinds the idea.

SGT BURFORD
Ah, shit! But don't you go family
on me, Howard. The boy is a killer.

HOWARD
I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SGT BURFORD

I can't tell you how this is going to end.

HOWARD

I know.

EXT. EDGE OF CLIFF - DAWN (1981)

Wajikul gazes out at the vast desert plain slowly being lit by the rising sun.

Far away in the distance a thin line of smoke drifts up into the air from the smoldering ruins of Talgara station

On the valley floor he spots a small group of Aborigines walking single file through the scrub.

One of the Aborigines, Wajikul's mother, turns and stares up towards him then continues her trek. As Wajikul watches, the whole group slowly dissolve and disappear.

Wajikul steps down from his perch. Squats down beside the dead body of Coby, places the spyglass on Coby's chest then gently crosses Coby's arms.

Gathering up his doctor's bag and rifle, he takes one last look at Coby, then walks away.

EXT. SLOPES OF RILEY'S RIDGE - DAWN (1981)

Lee Ling, Flynn, Howard, Sgt Burford and 2 UNIFORMED OFFICERS called CASEY and HANNAY edge their way up the steep slopes of Riley's Ridge.

Lee Ling stopping to catch her breath, takes in the view. Sergeant Burford moves past her.

SGT BURFORD

You're looking the wrong way, Detective.

EXT. CLIFF - DAWN (1981)

Wajikul edges himself down the cleft in the cliff.

EXT. SUMMIT OF RILEY'S RIDGE - DAWN (1981)

The officers clamber over the last of the craggy boulders and summit the hill. The group pause.

SGT BURFORD

(to the group)

Remember, we don't know who's alive or who's dead. You stay alert. If you see anything, you call it in and wait 'till we get to you. Clear?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They all nod in agreement.

SGT BURFORD (CONT'D)
 Alright! Let's spread out! And
be careful!

EXT. BASE OF RILEY'S RIDGE - DAWN (1981)

A very tired looking Police officer, standing in front of a 4WD, yawns deeply then, pressing a pair of binoculars to his eyes, scours the ridge top.

Another officer snores away inside the vehicle. Wajikul, slinking silently through the scrub behind them, disappears into the bush.

EXT. RILEY'S RIDGE - SUNRISE (1981)

Sgt Burford scans the hilltop through the rifle scope. Flynn and Lee Ling move in beside him.

FLYNN
 Anything?

Panning his rifle, Sgt Burford spots Howard and the other officers, spread out in a line, moving over the ridge.

SGT BURFORD
 Not yet. But he's here somewhere.

EXT. RILEY'S RIDGE - SUNRISE (1981)

Howard strolls onto the top of a small flat plateau of rock. Gazing back he watches as the two other officers move off across the hill.

Taking in the view of the desert he spots the tiny, lone figure of Wajikul disappearing into the scrub.

Turning to alert the officers of his discovery he glimpses the lifeless body of Coby lying between the rocks. The sight stills him.

EXT. DESERT FLOOR - SUNRISE (1981)

Wajikul, crossing over a stony flat, stops, gazes back at the sunlit monolith of Riley's Ridge rising up out of the desert then turns and walks on.

EXT. RILEY'S RIDGE - MOMENTS LATER (1981)

Sgt Burford, hearing Flynn's walkie talkie crackle to life, pauses.

OFFICER CASEY (V.O.)
 You there, Sarge?

Flynn passes the walkie talkie to Sgt Burford

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SGT BURFORD

Go ahead.

OFFICER CASEY (V.O.)

You need to get over here!

EXT. MACAVOY'S RESTING PLACE - SUNRISE (1981)

The officers stand around the lifeless heap of Macavoy as Lee Ling examines the body.

SGT BURFORD

I told him to wait, but he wouldn't listen.

LEE LING

He's been shot. Point blank. Single round to the heart.

SGT BURFORD

I told him to wait!

LEE LING

He should have listened.

Lee Ling looks around at the group.

LEE LING

Where's, Howard?

EXT. DESERT - MORNING (1981)

Wajikul, trekking along a gully, spots a dingo staring down at him from a small ridge. The dingo turns and disappears over the other side. Wajikul follows.

EXT. COBY'S RESTING PLACE - MORNING (1981)

Howard, squatting beside the body of Coby Dawson, gazes up at the officers peering down from the rocks above.

LEE LING

I'm sorry, Howard.

HOWARD

It is what it is.

Lee Ling descends from the rocks. As she uncrosses Coby's arms the spy glass rolls to the ground.

HOWARD

May I have a look at that?

Lee Ling passes the spy glass to Howard then, rolling the body onto its side, Lee Ling examines the fatal wound. Blood stains the back of Coby's shirt and the ground where he lies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEE LING

It makes no sense. These men didn't kill each other. They couldn't have taken two steps with wounds like these.

(to Sgt Burford)

Someone else is on this hill.

EXT. HIGH RIDGE - MID MORNING (1981)

Wajikul, high on the ridge, watches the dust trails of vehicles searching for him on the desert floor. Taking one last look at the distant sight of Riley's Ridge, he turns and moves on.

EXT. CLUMP OF ROCKS - RILEY'S RIDGE - LATER (1981)

The sound of a chopper approaching thumps through the air as Howard, spy glass in hand, sits on the rocks above the body of Coby. In the b.g. two officers carry away the body of Macavoy on a stretcher.

Howard, examining the spyglass, notices a faint engraving in the tarnished brass. Rubbing the metal with his thumb, he reads the engraving: Jack Dawson.

HOWARD

You old bugger.

Lee Ling walks over and seats herself down beside Howard. In an attempt to conceal the engraving, Howard wraps both hands over the spyglass.

HOWARD

How'd you go?

LEE LING

Nothing. Don't worry. We've got people on the ground. Whoever it was, we'll find them.

HOWARD

I'm not worried.

Beat.

HOWARD

(re: the view)

It sure is something, isn't it?

LEE LING

Yes it is.

HOWARD

You know, there was a time when a man could ride out, on a morning just like this and there would be

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD (CONT'D)

dingoes... twenty... thirty strong. Mobs of 'em, coming back from out hunting all night. Moving across the plains. Heading back to their lairs and holes in the foothills. At night, they'd come around our camps and howl so bad that a man couldn't even sleep.

(pause)

Now you could spend a week out here and hear nothing. There's nothing wild any more. It's all been shot, baited or pushed out. We killed off the very thing that brought us out here in the first place. All this...

Head gestures towards Coby.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

... was just inevitable.

(pause)

Poor bugger! He just ran out of world.

EXT. 1953 MASSACRE SITE - SUNSET (1981)

Wajikul, staring at the old winter gum tree, drops his bag and rifle.

Taking the rifle by the barrel, in an intense release of emotion, smashes the weapon against the tree, until it shatters into pieces.

In tears, emotionally exhausted, he slumps his head against the tree and paws at the trunk.

The wind increases, and on it float the sounds of people talking (Aboriginal dialect) and children laughing.

A hand touches Wajikul's face. Wajikul raises his eyes to see that the tree has vanished and his head now rests against the forehead of his Mother.

Behind his Mother, stand the ghosts of other members of his family, long since dead. Behind them, dancing in the dust, are women painted up for ceremony.

MOTHER

You're home now. We've been waiting so long. So... so long.

Tears of relief, of joy, silently stream down Wajikul's face.

FADE OUT

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FADE IN:

INT. WHITE XD - MOVING - AFTERNOON (1981)

Flynn's at the wheel. Lee Ling seems perplexed.

LEE LING

A hundred and fifty thousand...
dollars?

FLYNN

At least. I mean, they have to
evaluate it, but that's what they
reckon.

Flynn pulls up in front of a house.

LEE LING

Sapphires?

FLYNN

Yup! And Gold.

LEE LING

I don't get it. So all this
madness. For what?

Lee Ling reaches for a gift wrapped present on the back
seat.

FLYNN

It's just the way of men.

LEE LING

And their guns.

FLYNN.

Naaah, just men.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - MACAVOY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON (1981)

Lee Ling knocks. Waits a beat. The door slowly opens.
Jill Macavoy peers out.

LEE LING

Do you mind?

INT. MACAVOY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON (1981)

Anne Jane scratches away at a new coloring-in book whilst
Jill and Lee Ling, sipping coffee, sit around a kitchen
table talking.

JILL

...and it wasn't long after that
we had Annie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEE LING

Did you know there would be...
Problems?

JILL

Not until she was born. I wouldn't
trade her though, not for all the
tea in China.

(pause)

It was hard for Doug though. He
always blamed himself. Blamed the
war... the sprays.

The women watch Anne Jane draw.

JILL

Sometimes... I would find him
sitting in the bath, scrubbed pink
and near bleeding. And I would
ask him what's going on? What's
he doing? And you know what he'd
say?

Lee Ling nods no.

JILL

He was trying to scrub out the
poison.

(sad)

Trying to wash it all away.

LEE LING

Ohh, Jill.

JILL

He wasn't a bad man. It was just
hard for him... you know? The way
they were treated when they came
back, and then...

Gestures to Anne.

JILL (CONT'D)

... all this. It was just too
much. Just way too much. He'd
always say, how is it that a man
can do nothing, yet get so much,
and he did everything, tried so
hard, and got nothing? I know he
wasn't talking about us. I know
we were his everything. But it
still hurt.

Anne Jane holds out a drawing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JILL
 (to Anne Jane)
 That's lovely, sweetheart.
 (to Lee Ling)
 I think she wants you to have it.

LEE LING	JILL
(to Anne Jane)	(to Lee Ling)
Is that for me? Why,	I felt him go you know?
thank you. It's	
beautiful. You're	
very clever.	

Lee Ling turns to face Jill, even Anne Jane stops to listen.

EXT. 1953 MASSACRE SITE - SUNSET (1981)

A dingo, sitting on a small dune, stares out at the sight of Wajikul chanting under the old winter gum.

A gust of wind tickles across the tops of the spinifex. The breeze strengthens. The dingo turns, takes three steps and dissolves into dust. Just blows away.

JILL (V.O.)
 Felt a warmth spread all over me.
 Like a breeze blowing through me.
 And I knew it was him leaving. I
 knew it was him saying good-bye.
 And I knew, at that very moment,
 he had finally found his peace.

FADE OUT

THE END.