



This is a tragedy.

Paul blamed himself for persuading Tazzie to overstay his brief stint in Wallibong.
Other people blamed the TV folk from Sydney who took over the city for 3 or 4 days.
Or maybe it was simply that the bikie moll should have kept her database up to date.

Whatever ultimately caused the chain of events, this is a tragedy.

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BOWLING FOR THE BONG

A TRAGEDY IN ONE ACT

PROLOGUE Wednesday

This is a really low-grade flat. Very untidy. As loud rock music plays, our camera trails into a child's bedroom where there are double bunks. Lucy fiddles with her 5th birthday cards, lined up on a really untidy old chest of drawers. We see that one card has a mauve \$5 note clipped to it. The card has the word "Granddaughter" clearly visible. Cheap toys (recently received) are piled about in disarray.

Lucy runs to the window and peers around. She shrieks: "Daddy!" and then tears out of the room.

Lucy and her sister Tina (aged 2) jump about at the door. They call out "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy's here!" Their mother Rhonda Fitzgerald admits her ex-partner O'Connell with an ill grace.

Rhonda is aggressive and bitter whereas Brendan is trying hard to make peace. As Rhonda slaps about, pretending to perform necessary housework, Brendan hugs his daughters. He is listening to their chatter (Lucy is wildly excited to tell her father about her recent 5th birthday party) and Brendan responds accordingly. On occasion, Rhonda will be off-screen. She is all bustle and go when there is an audience to impress.

Rhonda *nasty*

Whadda you want?

Brendan *mild*

Well ... ah ... I want to give our little girls a big hug. And I wanted to help you with the kids if you want to go to your old man's funeral.

Rhonda

Huh! Fat chance!

Brendan

You are going, aren't you?

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Rhonda No I'm not. And neither is Denny and neither is Claudine. We're a big, fat "no-show".

Brendan *surprised* You're not? Well ... that's not going to look too good ...

Rhonda *rounds on him* I don't actually give a shit. He was out there in Woop Woop. We never saw him. We may as well have been dead for all he cared.

Brendan Oh, wait a minute! He always sent Christmas cards and birthday cards with money.

Rhonda *scathing* Yeah. A cheap card and a \$5 note. Wootidoo!

I mean, really! What can you buy with \$5 these days?

Brendan That might have been all he could afford.

Brendan is dragged away by his daughters.

Rhonda *to herself* He was a frigging police sergeant. What do **they** earn? Mean, cold-hearted and useless: that was my old man. And the last thing I will ever do is go to his crappy funeral.

END OF PROLOGUE

TITLE ROLL THROUGH

Beautiful bush scenery, central NSW. Jared (dressed in the uniform of NSW police sergeant) drives along the main highway. We see him in the car (driving) as well as external shots. A sign pointing to Wallibong 18 KM is clearly visible. Jared whistles through his teeth along with the car radio. Finally Jared pulls up at the tiny Police station in the main street of Wallibong. This building resembles a small house, nestled in gorgeous bushland. It is utterly picture-perfect.

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Paul He's only here as a fill-in. But you never know ...

Natalie I thought they were closing that cop shop down anyhow. At Wallibong.

Paul Well, there was no hope of that happening while Bong was in charge but now that he's gone ... Dunno ...

Brett's mobile phones rings. He looks at the screen. And now he jumps up, leaving the crowd.

Brett This is them now. I'll find out what they have on Sergeant Kerr and let you know ...

END OF SCENE

Scene iii: The Wallibong Police Station Thursday afternoon

Jared is into the task of working through all the paperwork. He has procured a couple of empty drawers which sit on the bench as if they were boxes. He is trying to sort through the paperwork in an orderly and organized fashion. He whistles through his teeth.

The door swings open. Clarrie Tozer marches in. Jared looks up. Clarrie slaps a thick envelope onto one pile of paperwork.

Clarrie Just passing. I got yer mail for ya. Don't bother to thank me. Put that one with all the others.

Jared *equably* Righto. Ta.

Clarrie So what d'ya know?

Jared *surprised* Me? Nothing. I go where I'm told and I do what I'm told.

Clarrie nods wisely.

Clarrie Best way to be! But whadda ya know about being a pastoralist?

A grazier?

Jared *shrugs* Silage ... Drenching ... Ah ... Cutting off the dags ... Shearing --

Suddenly, Clarrie points at Jared, lecturing him.

Clarrie Well, you listen to me. I'll give you the drum. They only put the senior shearers on the board to shear the rams. Y'understand? None of the boys get that job. Only the **experienced** men clip the rams. You remember that! The rams are kings, mate. Kings!

You keep that in mind, soldier, and you won't get into any trouble.

Clarrie nods several times, making his point, then he turns on his heel and marches out. Jared scratches his head. He studies the envelope then chucks it to one side.

END OF SCENE

Scene iv: The Wesley Funeral Complex in Eagleby Thursday afternoon

Brett returns to the group of policemen at Bong Fitzgerald's funeral wake.

Paul *to Brett* So what's the news on the Tazzie boy?

All I can think of is: how many suspect types we've had over the years.

We had a constable that was in a rock band (didn't we once?) and some other bloke collected fossils. What does this bloke do?

Brett He likes fishing and he doesn't say much. Quiet thinker. Good mind. And he had a love affair that turned to crap.

Laughter.

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Paul *snorts* That happens to the best of us.

Well, we can kit him out for the fishing. Isn't there a comp at Chrissie on the lake? We can dob him in for that.

They eat, drink and shift about. Paul shakes his head.

Paul *disgusted* Fishing! Jesus H. Christ! And stamp collecting and star gazing, I'll bet. Well, thank God he's only on a loaner.

However, Brett shakes his head, grinning widely. He has been saving up the best for last.

Brett *quiet* He plays cricket.

Everyone stops, staring as if struck by an electric charge. Brett flicks his eyebrows. Paul looks suspicious.

Paul Bats or bowls?

Brett *grins* Bowls.

Paul We've got a bagful of fast bowlers. What we really need is a spin bowler.

Paul stares at Brett, with his head to the side. Paul grins very slowly.

Paul *carefully* He's bowls spin, doesn't he? You bloody bewdy! Are you going to absolutely make my day and tell me that he bowls finger spin?

Brett nods, smiling. Paul lets out a long, long breath. Everyone in the group is very interested in that news.

Brett Quite good at it, according to my source in Tazzie.

Terry Yeah but he might be a lousy cop with it.

Paul Don't care what sort of copper he is so long as he delivers the goods come the cricket season. Right! I'll race back to the shop and start pressing buttons. Where's he staying?

Natalie At the Almay Motel. What we need to persuade him to stay is a nice billet with a nice family.

Jared If you're such good mates with the deceased, how come you dipped out on the funeral? You could've at least paid your last respects.

Lou *firm* Too busy doing your dirty business. Anyway I don't like funerals. And Bong's got kids. And my bet is that they never come near the funeral. Cause they hated 'im. So if they don't go how come I should go?

But I never had no trouble with 'im. Other than when he was drunk. And ya just dodged 'im then, didn't ya?

Anyway, be back when ya find yer feet. They'll be at the end of yer legs to stop them from fraying.

[Giggles helplessly.]

See ya Mr Tazzie.

Jared watches Lou exit the building and we hear Lou almost bump into another man who is entering the police station.

Lou *voice-off* 'Scuse me, mate!

The second man (Max) enters, looking about. He smiles slightly at Jared, nodding his head.

Jared *sighs* Yes? What's up?

Max I'm here to see Sergeant Fitzgerald.

Jared Ah ...

Max Is he about? Sergeant Richard Fitzgerald.

Jared No ... Ah ...

Max Are you able to call him on his mobile and let him know that I'm here, please? Max Strudwick from the ATO. It's fairly important that I speak to him.

Jared There you are. You would have been in trouble if you'd asked for "white" ... No idea where the milk is ...

And here's some biscuits that I found. I only just got here today to cover for them at the funeral. So ...

Max nods and mutters "Ta". He is clearly knocked for six. Jared stands by, thinking deeply.

Jared I'm going to be sifting through his papers. Are you after his tax files or something?

Max *rueful smirk* "Death and taxes" you reckon?

No. I wanted to speak to him. In person. Shit!

Jared Okay. You probably need to see his solicitor, then.

Max Maybe ... No, I needed to speak to him in person. Ask him some questions. There are some anomalies. Damn! I doubt if anything would have been written down.

Jared *raising his eyebrows* Anomalies?

Max "An" anomaly. Just one ... Sorry ... I'm gutted to be quite honest.

Would you know if ... No! His personal documents wouldn't be here, anyway: they'd be at his house. In a wall safe or ...

[Looks about and sighs; he is lost]

You're right. I need to chat with his solicitor. If you find out who that is when you're churning through his papers, let me know, will you? I'll give you my deets.

Max pockets three biscuits as he swills down the last of his tea.

Max then reaches into his jacket pocket and flips a business card to Jared. Jared (after a quick glance at the card) walks over to the noticeboard, searches out an unimportant notice thereon, and then

Jared *voice-over* Hi, Max. It's Sergeant Jared Kerr from the police station.

Max *voice-over* Thanks for calling. You got something?

Jared *voice-over* Think so ... I've found a couple of letters here from Duncan Fairhouse. He's a legal eagle. Rang his office and they say he's at the funeral. So I'd say he's your man. I'll SMS you his number. But wait for a while to give him time to get back ... you know ...

Max *voice-over* Sure thing. Good work. I'll let you know how it all goes ...

END OF SCENE

Scene vii: The Eagleby Police Station Thursday late afternoon

The Eagleby Police Station is much bigger than the one at Wallibong. The funeral is over and work recommences. Paul is involved with photocopying. We find Paul and Jared in conversation.

Paul Boxes of fish? Nah, don't know anything about that. Somebody will turn up and claim them, for sure. But let me know what the back-story is on that, okay?

Jared Yup. And the ATO bloke?

Paul Yeah. Give him a helping hand. It'll turn out to be a furphy. Bong Fitzgerald wasn't sophisticated enough to try and run rings around the ATO. Get it off your plate ASAP. Okay?

Jared *nods* What about the ram bloke? What's that all about?

Paul *laughs* Clarrie Tozer is full of piss and wind. You say "Yes, Clarrie" and "Thanks, Clarrie" and then forget all about him. He's alright. It's his *missus* that's the problem.

You'll have blow-ins fronting up to your desk having a whinge about having a bingle or nearly having a bingle with Clarrie's

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green Rover. Day-trippers and tourists and truckies and that crowd ...

But it'll be Yvonne Tozer driving. No! You can't call it "driving"; "in charge of a vehicle with not a fucking clue" is what it's called. Don't charge the driver; just caution Yvonne T.

Paul has finished his copying. He collects his papers and then Paul and Jared move off, talking as they move to Paul's desk.

Paul I'm organizing a room for you with a family half-way between Eagleby and the Bong. The Lewis Family. That works out choice for all of us. Good family. Three teenage boys. Tim's mad on hunting and fishing, so you two should hit it off a treat. He's the local "fix-it" man. Tractors, hay-bailers and all that stuff ...

Jared Fine.

Paul I've set it up so that you can stay in this locality for a while. I think you might fit in well with our group. I really do. They all seem to like you. At least until after the cricket season.

Paul winks.

Jared *grins* Fine.

Paul Alright. So you're staying at the Almay Motel until further notice. All charges and fees to be covered by the Force, but don't go crazy. When your room is ready with the Lewis's I'll give you a tinkle. Keep this ATO bloke in yer radar vision and keep wading through Bong's papers.

END OF SCENE

Jared The country style pie sounds alright. I guess I have to wade through all that fish in the freezer if no-one claims it.

Laughter.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*The food situation has been sorted out. Both men have pots of beer. Jared eats his pie with a knife and fork whereas Max tackles a juicy (and obviously delicious) steak with salad and chips.*

Jared                                   What does this little anomaly involve? Like, how long are you staying in Eagleby?

Max                                    The solicitor was hopelessly tied up for the rest of today. He's probably still working even now.

Can't see me until tomorrow. Go from there. I'd rather not hang around if I can get out of it. You?

Jared                                   Well I'm supposed to be a temporary in-and-out but they've changed all that. My reputation has preceded me and so now I have to stay here at this motel until the billet they found for me is ready. Tomorrow they reckon. And I'm now on a permanent status. For what it's worth.

Max                                    Your reputation? What! Are you a hot-shot cop?

Jared                                   Nup. Apparently they need a spin bowler for next cricket season. Some idiot let slip that I've played a bit and that clinched it.

My new superior has made it clear to me that I'm to protect my bowling arm from any injury or strain at all cost.

*Laughter.*

Max I've never heard of someone getting a job because of their sporting prowess. That's a bewdy.

Jared Oh! And the boss *also* said that I'm to move you along quick as I can but to give you every possible assistance. There you are! Can't say fairer than that!

*More laughter.*

*The men continue eating and drinking. More guests have filtered in. All of these folk attended Richard Fitzgerald's funeral. They provide a low hum of chat and amused laughter.*

*Jared looks about, making sure no-one is listening in. Jared leans forward.*

Jared *quietly* I want to talk to you, but not here. Outside. When we finish.

*Max nods.*

SEGUE INTO NEXT SCENE

### **Scene x:** Exterior Carpark at the Almay Motel Thursday evening

*Jared and Max stand about in the carpark, hands deep in their pockets.*

Jared I said that I wanted to talk to you but I'm not sure where to start.

For instance, are you able to give me a hint about what you wanted the now-dead sergeant for? Such that I can focus on something concrete while I look at all his stuff?

Max *nods* Sure. But this is for your ears only.

Sergeant Richard Fitzgerald gave a lady a diamond. He couldn't get into the Sydney CBD (time constraints), but she could. So off

she trotted to a reputable and well-known Sydney jeweller to get it set in a gold band. For a ring.

Trouble was that the jeweller was *too* reputable. The stone was part of an international cache that was "of interest" to an insurance company. It was a hallmark. She (the jeweller) recognized that stone at once from distributed photographs.

*My* involvement was that if the stone came to Fitzgerald through legitimate avenues then he would have had to pay import duty on it. But there's no record of that. So all I had to do was find out from Fitzgerald how the stone came into his possession. Basically, find the person at the bottom of the heap and assure myself that *that* person had ultimately paid the import duty. Simple.

Jared                   That's why you jumped to the immediate conclusion that the sarge had been done-in. That he was in a gang and that his little mistake had made him dispensable.

Max                     No not really ... Well ... I guess so ...

Jared                   You know, I watch all those US films about rorts and mafia and all that ... What gets me is how dumb it all is. If you want *loyalty* from your henchmen, you don't shoot one of them because he made a crappy mistake. Or they wanted to test your loyalty or that ... That would put the wind up all the others and they wouldn't want to stick with you. But that's precisely what they do. Crazy!

Max *nods*             But that's all academic (isn't it?) because (if you're right) our Sergeant Fitzgerald died of natural causes. And I'm not sure that he was in a gang or anything like that ...

I just have to hope that the legal bloke will help me. I'll pick his brains tomorrow.

Look! Don't get me wrong. This is not a penny-halfpenny little rort. There's big money here that's owed to Mr Taxman.

*Jared is still following his own train of thought.*

Jared                   And in real life the dodgy business would be done such that no-one knew who was at the top. And the guy at the top would be squeaky clean. You could get away with a crooked set-up like that for years if you did it right.

Max                     But there's a weak link ***somewhere***. All you have to do is find it. Even in the best-run company, there's a pinhole.

Jared                   And so Sergeant Richard "Bong" Fitzgerald is your weak link, is he? Or at least that's what you wanted.

We should retrace our steps with this dude ... I got this third-hand, by the way.

Okay, so ... He went to an address in Wallibong, walked into the front yard and then "Kapow!" He was dead.

Why he was going there: dunno. Any rate ... As far as I know it was all good. The doctor went straight to the spot where he dropped and Lou Tong had stood beside his bod until she got there. The doc. She's a "she". The prognosis was heart attack. Someone mentioned that they thought he was an accident about to happen. High blood pressure and stuff. Not a solitary hint of suspicion.

*Max is disappointed. He starts tearing off leaves from an adjacent bush. He sighs; this sigh reveals how annoyed and thwarted he feels.*

Max *sadly*             Yeah. Right. I'm off to bed.

*The two men shake hands and nod to each other.*

Jared                   See ya. Good luck with the bub.

Max                                    Yeah. Not due for a couple of months yet ... Thanks.

Jared                                 And I hope the mouthpiece gives you a leg-up. There must be ***some*** use for those people!

END OF SCENE

**Scene xi:** Interior of Room 7 at the Almay Motel Late Thursday night into Friday morning

*The motel room is dark, but we can make out some exterior light through chinks in the curtain (in that the carpark remains well-lit). Max is asleep, breathing deeply in his motel bed.*

*Suddenly and with great effort, Max sits in bed. He has woken himself up from a deep sleep. Something in his memory has been sparked.*

Max *to himself*                    Where's that bloody bit of paper? Shit!

*Muttering obscenities to himself, Max staggers around the motel room. He finds the light switch, turns on the light and then finds the crappy piece of paper that Jared gave him. Max plonks himself on the bed and begins to dial the number on the paper (on his mobile phone).*

Max *into phone*                    Tazzie? What room are you in, mate?

END OF SCENE

**Scene xii:** Interior of Wallibong Police Station Late Thursday night into Friday morning

[I looked up smuggling using frozen fish. Drugs yes. But can't find an entry for diamonds. If anyone else thought of ice hidden in frozen fish – sorry but all care was taken.]

*Just to be absolutely clear: Max and Jared motored from Eagleby to Wallibong in Jared's hire car. Max does have a car parked at the Almay Motel, but they drove together in Jared's car.*

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*Our camera for this scene is stationed in the dirty, crummy sink. The action takes place as described with an overlay of voices (belonging to Max and Jared). They work at speed, wear latex gloves and they smart at the coldness of the frozen fish. Their dialogue is jarring, overlaid and crisp. This is a guide only: the actors can improvise and go with the flow.*

*Jared takes the precaution of placing an inverted saucer over the plug hole (as he cannot locate a plug). On top of the saucer he places a weight.*

*The men plunge the frozen fish into a bucket of water (boiled from the jug) using tongs and then they tear and pull at the fish in the sink.*

Max *voice-over* "Fischen". Recognized the name. Woke up like I'd just come out of a nightmare. Snap!

Max and Jared *voices-over* No! the water heater is broken. Just dip them in this bowl here –  
Tear them with your hands.

Bloody cold.

What are you thinking? That the diamonds are being smuggled in the fish?

Hang on! This one has foil around it. Foil prohibits x-rays. Or do I mean scans?

I know what you mean.

Hang on ...

*Diamonds covered with the innards of a frozen fish spill into the sink and dance around the upturned saucer. We hear both men gasp.*

END OF SCENE



And especially in these days of fast cars, smart phones and web links. Nobody needs this cop shop. Nobody.

So my question is: why is it still going?

*Paul and Max look at each other. That thought had not occurred to them.*

Jared

And the place is run-down. The water heater doesn't work. Between receiving frozen fish and advice from the ram expert, I thought I'd turn my talents to fixing it. But this cupboard door is either jammed shut or glued shut.

Anyway, I have already retrieved my tool box from the boot of the hire car. So I'll just muck around here while youse make notes.

*Jared works on his carpentry project. Paul shrugs.*

Paul

Righto. Bong died totally unexpectedly and so we all spent the remainder of Monday trying to get in touch with his rellies. His 3 kids were all we could find and they couldn't have cared less that their old man was dead. So my missus and some other civic-minded people organized the funeral service and the wake. Flyers were sent to everyone with a pulse and ... so forth. Anyway most of the city of Eagleby rocked-up. Nothing at all peculiar happened regarding the dead sarge from Monday night onwards to yesterday when you flexed up.

Now what I mean by saying "nothing happened" is that we locked up this station and put a note on the door that we'd reopen on Thursday. And for the punters to ring Eagleby if they needed attention. Nothing.

Constable Terry Naylor re-opened on Thursday at 9.00 am. He checked up on the place (just as a precaution) but it was obvious that no-one had been near the place. So there you are. No suspicious or worrying activity regarding Sergeant Bong

Fitzgerald until you showed-up to relieve Terry.

Jared *grunts as he works* The ram bloke. And then Tong from the Bong.

Paul Correct. Clarrie Tozer waited for you to show up, fetched the mail for you and then slapped the letter on the counter. "Put that with the others".

Then Lou Tong waited for you to show up and shoved the dodgy fish into the freezer. "Can't go to the funeral because I'm too busy doing your dirty work".

Jared *grunts as he works* You got it.

*Paul is deep in thought. He has kicked back and sits almost horizontally.*

Paul Okay. I'm starting to get a picture here. What was in the letter that Clarrie chucked at you?

Jared *teeth gritted* Dunno. Gave it to Max.

*Paul turns to Max. Max quickly flicks open his briefcase, finds the thick envelope and hands it to Paul.*

Max We thought that the solicitor should see that. Unopened.

*Paul finds a dodgy bread-and-butter knife in a drawer and slits open the envelope.*

Paul That was absolutely the correct way to go. But I don't feel like waking Dinkie-Dunk at 2 o'clock in the morning and dragging him all the way over here. He can go seconds.

This is thick. That gives one pause ...

*Paul extracts the many folded papers from the envelope and quickly peruses them. He makes a face, shrugs and then passes the sheaf to Max who is waiting eagerly.*

Max *agog* Lucky Strike? The betting agency ... Christ! And ... And all with different account numbers and all for different people. \$200 a pop ...

*Finally, Jared has success and the stuck door gives way in two torn pieces. Jared is thrown backwards due to the action of the breaking door.*

Jared *triumphant* Got it!

Ah ... that's not a water heater.

*The three men gather at the once-was cupboard. In it stands a very modern and robust safe. They stare at the safe.*

Jared I heard about a computer programmer who was rorting like a horny bull. Every Wednesday morning he had to disarm the bomb he'd programmed. If the bomb wasn't disarmed then ...

Max Then what? Let me guess. That company's entire computer system ground to a screeching halt and all live files were lost.

Jared *nods* That's where my thought-waves were heading. Suppose we break into this safe? Maybe that sends off a chain of disasters and we wind up looking bad.

Paul *sceptical* Aw come on! That can't happen, can it?

*Max inspects the safe closely.*

Max *uncertain* I dunno. It's got all kinds of fancy electronics down the side here. Maybe Tazzie's onto something ...

Paul Okay. My mind is now firmly made up. I'm calling in the chums from HQ in Sydney. What do we want? Safe experts, the fraud squad ... Anyone else?

Jared We might want someone legal ... Other than Duncan Fairhouse ...

Your best contact at Sydney Central will be Tanya Antonio.

Hey! Isn't there an investigator at the Eagleby station? We'd better get him involved with all this, as well.

*Paul snorts and laughs derisively.*

Paul Neil Redyard? Don't make me laugh. He wouldn't soil his silky-smooth fingers on something as sordid as bodgy fiscal

transactions. He might come down out of his ivory tower for an attention-grabbing headline (if someone of note got himself murdered), but his chief interest is sucking-up to the moneyed families hereabouts. When he's not whacking a golf ball around. No, forget all about him.

*[Turns to Max]*

Max. Go back to bed and have your anticipated meeting with Fairhouse. Don't give him any idea about all this: you just want to look at Bong's tax records. That okay?

Max

Sure.

Paul

And make a mental note of anything useful from his quarter. But steer clear of the Lucky Strike letter. Our team will handle that. Anyway, make something up if you get stuck. I'll back you up. Now, I'll drive you back to the motel in my car.

*[Turns to Jared]*

I think there might be a spade near the back door. I want you to bury any of the fish that's lying about. Double-check for any more diamonds, but I reckon it was all in the silver-foiled job. When I've dropped Max off I'll come back here and we'll start ringing around. Don't touch the safe or anything else. And if anyone fronts and wonders why we're in such a mess, we've had a break-in (tell them that).

END OF SCENE

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**Scene xiv:** Interior of Wallibong Police Station Friday morning

*Paul and Jared are dressed in their correct police uniforms. They are showered and shaved, hair combed and have both eaten substantial breakfasts. Paul looks about. He has left several traps in order to check if the police station has been breached. Paul makes a face.*

Paul Nup. All good. I'd have expected some activity from --

Jared No. His fellow crims don't know who he is. I'm sure of that. And thus they don't know that he is dead. They might have heard that a sergeant at Wallibong has snuffed it. But they don't associate **that** bloke with **their** bloke. If you get my drift.

Paul How did ya figure that out?

Jared You've known him for how many years? To you he was just a Sergeant Plod who wasn't sophisticated enough to pull off an ATO stitch-up. No, in reality he was as clever as a shit-house rat. He protected himself at the top from all of his underlings. They did as they were told and didn't have a fucking clue who it was that pulled their strings. Prob'ly via the Lucky Strike accounts. One for each of his subordinates maybe. Somehow ... My gut tells me there's a definite connection ...

Paul Aw, you're a friggin' conspiracy theory nut, aren't ya? Na! No way, mate. I reckon you're running well ahead of yerself ...

But nevertheless hold that thought, Smart-Arse. You can tell the specialists. Get yerself an elephant stamp.

Now! Trot over to the store and bring Lou Tong back. I want to ask him what he knows.

*Jared nods and leaves the police station by the front door. Paul wanders out the back and looks about at the scenery. He stretches. On his return into the police station via the back door, he pulls up short at the sight of a huge man standing inside the front door. Jeff Ainstee is a well-muscled truckie wearing a dark blue singlet, shorts, long woollen socks and elastic-sided boots. He is well-tanned and has a selection of tattoos on his arms and chest.*

*Both men stare at each other. Finally, Paul breaks the silence.*

Paul *careful* Yes?

Jeff I'm driving the Kenworth that's parked up outside. I've scraped the bumper of a 4-wheels out on the highway. But it wasn't my fault. The lady driver just changed lanes without any warning as if I wasn't there.

*Relief floods Paul's face. The humour of the situation appeals to him.*

Paul Describe the car.

Jeff Um ... Green I think. One of those Brit cars with a fancy price-tag. Sedan.

Paul A Rover?

Jeff Yeah, something like that. I wanted to get in first in case she makes trouble.

Paul *smiling* She won't. Her name is Mrs Yvonne Tozer and she's a legend in these parts for making up her own road rules. Let your boss know what's happened and then leave it to me. The mood I'm in at the moment, I'll shred her licence for her.

*Paul jots down some notes on one of his official cards, flips it to Jeff and nods farewell.*

Paul On yer way!

🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵 **Break** 🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵🎵

*Lou and Jared stand about in the police station. Paul sits, taking notes.*

Paul Okay. Thanks Lou.

Lou Do I keep bringing in the fish, then? Or whatever it is that turns up?

Paul                                    Yeah, for now. Let you know if there's any change. And you let **me** know if anybody contacts you and it feels strange.

Lou *giggles*                        **Everything** seems strange to me, Senior Sergeant Classon.

Can I go now? Shop doesn't run itself, you know.

*Paul waves Lou off.*

Paul *dismissive*                    On yer bike.

**If we can have some music here ("something-is-about-to-happen") that would be great.**

**This is a keynote scene.**

**The whole tragedy revolves around the fact that Jared is forced to spend the night in the police station. "There is no room left at the inn". Had he been absent from the police station, the tragedy would not have unfolded.**

**And the blame for this situation is laid at the doorstep of the "Housewise" people, who are totally oblivious that this is so.**

*Lou moves towards the door and then stops. He does a funny little dance and hums a perky tune.*

Lou *chuckling*                        You forgot, haven't ya?

Paul *all at sea*                        What?

Lou                                        "Housewise". All the Housewise people are comin'. Today or tomorrer. Somethin' like that. You gotta run the cop shop **and** look after the big wigs from the Big Smoke.

Tata.

*Lou skips out. Paul appears to be momentarily gutted. Then he tries to pull it together. Jared looks a question.*

Paul *stricken*                        Oh fuck-a-duck! I'd forgotten about the TV people. They're

coming for about 4 days to film segments for their show.

*There is no response from Jared.*

Paul                    You must have seen it. "Housewise" it's called. Lots of ideas for trendy home-owners and married people and like that about cooking and gardening and doing up their homes ... What they call a "magazine show". They often skip out of town and put together a show in the bush. We've been picked, mainly due to the strenuous efforts of my lady wife and Mrs Redyard. I'm pretty sure our dog is going to get done-over by their resident vet.

Jared *shakes head*        No mate. I never watch stuff like that. Footy or cricket, me. And of course, UFC and boxing.

Paul                    Yeah, well that shows that you're a man of sense and good taste. My viewing preferences run a poor fifth in our house.

Jared *bright*                I knew that something was kicking off. The "Show" or something, I thought.

Paul *lost*                    "The Show"?

Jared                    Yeah. Agriculture. What you guys call the "Royal Easter Show". We call it the "Royal Hobart Show". Showbags, sheep-shearing, woodchop, the boxing tent --

Paul *nasty*                 Well, this knees-up will be 80 times worse than any livestock exhibit you could muster. They'll be wanting plates of scones brought in and cups of exotic tea with flowers floating in it and Foxtel in their bedrooms and --

Jared                    I couldn't work out why my motel room where I'm staying wasn't able to be extended. But that'll be because the TV people have snaffled it. That's the answer right there.

Paul                    Yeah. And they've snaffled every other corner of the stable.

Bugger! What a prick of a time for them to show up.

*Paul paces about, thinking.*

Paul                   Damn! What a cock-up! I can't even put you on a sofa in my place because I've got these police people staying with me. And the caravan is taken. Shit! And Tim Lewis can't give you the room at his place until the "Housewise" folks clear off.

Jared                   So ... I could bunk down here, then. Is that against the regulations?

*Paul shrugs expansively. Paul and Jared stare at each other. Paul resumes his pacing and then sighs.*

Paul                   Okay. Let's lock this lot up and go back to Eagleby. We'll nick out to the airfield to meet-and-greet the heavyweights. They can come up with our plan of action. My poor brain is totally overworked right now.

Look! I'm sorry about this. With all these extra people in town, all our plans are thrown into chaos. I'll get a mattress for you and my Mrs Classon can scout around and find you some bedding. This will be your new home. For now.

Do you mind? Just for now?

Jared *shrugs*           It was my idea. Let's do it!

Paul *nods*             Good man. Come on! We have to lock up and skedaddle.

I'll die of curiosity until I see what's in that safe ...

Jared                   I'll let Max know what we're up to. Bit of a shame if he drives out here and we're back in Eagleby ...

*Paul nods as the two men begin their lock-down of the Wallibong police station.*

END OF SCENE

**Scene xv:** Interior of Wallibong Police Station Friday afternoon

*An inflatable king single bed has been provided. It is fully made up and standing on its side against the wall. The large safe has been extracted from the cupboard and sits prominently in the middle of the floor.*

*Three police have arrived from Sydney Central: Tanya Antonio, Felicity (Fliss) Warner and Watt Dormand. They all wear casual clothing. A fourth member is not present in this scene. He is Special Operations Officer (Mark Kierney). We will meet this suit later.*

*Fliss works the safe opening. Watt squats nearby to Fliss. Fliss wears headphones which are attached to a device. She is deeply concentrating on the task at hand. Watt is the IT expert. He is monitoring WIFI activity on a sophisticated laptop. They seldom speak to each other but if they do it is in hushed tones. Jared in police uniform sits within earshot, intently watching the operation. Max leans against the counter, also intently watching.*

*Paul and Terry (in correct police uniform) stand aside with Tanya. She signals with her head to Paul and Terry that they should step outside.*

SEGUE DIRECTLY INTO NEXT SCENE

**Scene xvi:** Exterior of Wallibong Police Station, The Back Yard Friday afternoon

*Tanya, Paul and Terry wander about. They finally settle on a small rock wall, where they can sit. Bird calls attract their attention. Tanya seems pleased.*

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tanya                | Wow! This part of the world is so pretty. Who knew?                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Paul <i>shrugs</i>   | Guess so ... Never thought about it.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Tanya <i>to Paul</i> | We'd better leave them to it. Watt has to ensure that there is no break in transmission when Fliss cracks the code and opens the safe. The "listeners" cannot be warned that something is up. Everything seamless and non-threatening. |

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Whoever they are ... The "listeners" I mean ...

Paul That's right then: it's wired for sound that thing?

Tanya *smug* Oh yeah, baby! Watt thinks that one or maybe more than one receiver is listening in 24/7. But who and what will happen is anyone's guess.

*Paul nods. He finds it all overwhelming.*

Tanya Safe-crackers are yesterday's sunshine. It's all bits and bytes nowadays. Soon you'll need a uni degree to become a crim ...

*Paul nods. Tanya relaxes, sighing.*

Tanya *to Paul* Well ... And I understand that you have a role to play in the "Housewise" bizz?

Paul *uncomfortable* Yeah. The dog is being done by that vet bloke: Dr Jamie.

Tanya What's your dog's problem?

Paul *shrugs* Nothing. They're going to deal with his barking at the postman. Make out that that's the issue.

Terry *puzzled* But all dogs bark at the postman. That's what dogs do.

Paul You'd think so, eh? But Mrs Classon ***insists*** that our family will feature in the show. That's all we could come up with. I can't tell you how bloody nervous I am. Having cameras in my face. It's right up her alley, though: my Mrs Classon. And the kids are excited to be getting their dials on the telly.

Tanya You'll be alright.

Terry *laughs* So what will Dr Jamie do? Spray Rusty's bed with something and then teach you how to behave in front of him?

Paul *rueful* That'll be it.

Tanya *to Paul* How are you getting on with Sergeant Kerr?

Paul Tazzie? Yeah, he's a good bloke.

Tanya We've known for yonks that something weird was going on but nobody could nut it out. Just little biddy things but they all mount up. Then Jared "Tazzie" Kerr nailed it. No-one else saw it. No-one! Only him.

Paul What was that?

Tanya That the Wallibong police force consisting of a single sergeant was a complete anachronism.

Paul Ah! That's why Tazzie was sent here? I couldn't figure it out. When old Bong died, I guessed that this little cop shop would be closed down and we'd absorb the extra duties at Eagleby.

Tanya *shakes head* No! No! No! Everything has to run along as if Fitzgerald was still in the driver's seat. Keep the routine going. Mr Tozer collecting the registered letters from Lucky Strike at the Post Office and Lou Tong receiving the frozen fish or whatever as part of his supermarket resupply. And there's probably dozens of other little activities which will no doubt come into Tazzie's arena as the days drift on.

But without Max's breakthrough (I mean regarding the diamonds) we'd never have latched onto all this.

All in all we've had some marvellous luck. And of course Tazzie being so clued-up.

Terry So where does Lucky Strike come in?

Tanya It's been done before (apparently) but never as sophisticated as this. Tazzie believes that secret instructions are being distributed through the bets. Maybe post office box numbers. Sounds crazy but it's worth looking at.

We'll try that theory out for real once we've checked out any

other possibilities. There can't be any visible connection. Bong Fitzgerald had to be completely and utterly insulated from his network of worker ants. (If that's the kind of operation he was running ... which seems to be the case).

Terry *shrewd*                      Therefore, Bong's sudden and completely unexpected death was in a way a blessing from Heaven?

Tanya                              For us. Yes. It was. That and the diamond Bong gave to the suspicious girlfriend. That was his mistake. And really, it was quite unlike him. He never, ever made mistakes.

END OF SCENE

**Scene xvii:** Interior Eagleby Police Stations Friday afternoon

*Max and Jared wander about in the Eagleby police station until they run down Paul.*

Jared                              Quick word?

Paul                                Yeah?

Jared                              We chundered out to Wallibong to check the station. All good. But it seemed like we had a chance (what they call "a window of opportunity") to do some more deep fishing. To that end Max interviewed Lou Tong in my presence.

Paul *to Max*                      Did he tell you how the operation was set up?

Max *nods*                         Sure. It was all very straight forward. Lou received Bong's "supplies" as part of his usual deliveries. Lou simply carted the stuff over to the cop shop.

**FLASHBACK**

*Lou is busy in his shop. He bustles about, talking and gesticulating wildly. Jared and Max look on.*

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Lou No! Not alway fish. You got that wrong. Fish only once.

He not very choosy, old policeman Bong. Sometime it be frozen spaghetti Bolognese sauce in plastic packs. Sometime lady face cream in jars. Sometime frozen quick meals: Heat and Prepare. From Spain!

But Lou Tong from Bong told to ars no questions and keep mouth shut. Which I do until found him dead at 10 Wysteria Street.

Jared What was the significance of 10 Wysteria Street? Why had he gone there, do you know?

Lou Sure I know! They couple of Pit Bull Terriers those 2 love birds that live there. He always goin' over in cop car to keep the peace. Either the bloke had a lump the size of an egg on his scone, or the widgy had a black eye. They source of constant trouble to community. Everyone ring up Bong to complain.

But that night before, they had scarpered. Done a midnight flit. Owed rent money. Had wrecked the house inside: you name it.

Nice day. Car being serviced. So Bong stroll down there on foot to sort it out when bang! Gone! Hearty just because he had to walk on foot to that marital mess. Bloody shame!

Jared And that was it? Just that? He walked to that place in order to calm things down, and that brought on the heart attack?

Lou *forceful* Told you! Always drove. He never lifted a finger if he could help it and that walk for an unfit man jus' too much. Accident waiting to happen, was old Bong.

**END OF FLASHBACK**

Paul Well that solves a couple of outstanding issues in one hit.

Jared Not quite. Let Max tell you.

Max Okay. Fitzgerald had a deal with the importers. They paid no tax on the diamonds at the port of origin. The stuff come to our shores and then shifted through the port facility without the diamonds incurring any duty. Fitzgerald must have cleaned up the ice, then sold them on. Saved him an absolute packet.

Paul So how did you blokes at the ATO nut it out?

Max We were aiming at travellers hiding the stuff in their luggage or body parts. It was only the tip-off about the solitaire – and you know the rest.

Paul Well that's where it all goes pear-shaped, if yer *really* wanna know. We have a woman getting a ring set and the jeweller raises the alarm. You ATO boys find out (via the jeweller) that this woman received that precious gem from Bong. That he actually flew to Sydney and belted a golf ball around at the Sydney Golf Club. But I can't see Bong doing any of that owing to the fact that he was so unfit he couldn't even make it to Wysteria Street without keeling over.

Face it: no woman in her right mind would look twice at Bong.

No! This whole thing smells of smoked herrings.

We have to visit this woman. It was never Bong that gave her the solitaire. Someone else worked with him.

Yeah. That's a plan. I'll take Natalie. The feminine touch ...

END OF SCENE

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**Scene xviii:** Exterior of Royal Sydney Golf Course, Clubhouse Saturday afternoon

*Marlene Telbot-Hythe is a stunningly attractive woman in her early 40's. She is superbly turned out and drips with jewellery. Marlene sits at a small table in the shade nearby to the RSGC clubhouse (such that a waiter could trot out with drinks and snacks). At the same table sit Paul and Natalie. They are both dressed to impress, wearing their best casual attire.*

Marlene *wistful*                    He was so very kind. Thoughtful. Gents aren't kind and caring like that anymore. Old school. It was really nice to be treated like a lady for once.

Flowers ... chocolates ... I've never felt so ... So *special* before.  
Poor Richard!

*Paul and Natalie share a very quick glance at each other. This does not square with their memories of Bong Fitzgerald.*

Marlene *wistful*                    I'm so sorry to learn from you that he is dead. Had I known, of course I would have attended his funeral. That was on Thursday, wasn't it?

*Paul and Natalie nod their agreement.*

Marlene                                Yes ... Poor Richard ...

*Paul sips his drink, with a meaningful glance at Natalie.*

Natalie                                Marlene, did Richard tell you that he was a sergeant in the NSW Police force?

Marlene                                Oh, yes! No secret about that. He was stationed somewhere in the sticks (he said) and wanted to transfer back to Sydney. He was very fond of his golf. And quite a competent golfer, too.

*Paul and Natalie shift about in their seats and exchange another very quick glance.*

Natalie                                And you met him here at the golf club?

Marlene                                Yes. I first met him in the clubrooms on a Saturday afternoon. We clicked immediately. I'm divorced and he was widowed. He

made the other men look ordinary.

Natalie And the gifts? Were there other gifts beside the chocolates and flowers? Anything else?

Marlene You're obviously heading towards the diamond he gave to me. It was flawless. I know diamonds. It was utterly superb.

Natalie But were there other similar presents?

Marlene There were no similar presents: no jewellery nor anything like that. Just that solitaire diamond ...

Judging by this police presence, my guess is that I'll never see that stone again.

*[Sighs wistfully.]*

No. Just that diamond ... that's all – that was the last time I saw him. It was just sitting in his pocket. He gave it to me to get set. In a ring he said.

*[Heavy sigh.]*

I know what you're thinking. Whirlwind romance. But it somehow seemed right. A real Prince Charming.

Paul And after you visited Blenheim Gold and Silver to get the stone set in a ring – that's when the ATO contacted you?

*Marlene nods.*

Marlene They were very polite (the ATO people). They phoned me and asked for the bona fides on the stone. I told them it had been a gift from my male friend. Then all I had to tell them was his name.

I wasn't hassled nor questioned. They were polite and professional, I thought.

Paul Where is the diamond now?

Marlene With the jeweller's I suppose ... As I said, I'm probably not going to kiss it again.

Paul *smiles, nods* Okay.

Natalie?

Natalie Marlene, it's very important to us not to have any crossed wires. No misunderstandings ...

I'm going to show you a selection of photographs. I would like you to identify Richard Fitzgerald from among these photos. Is that alright?

*Marlene shrugs.*

Marlene Sure. I promise not to start bawling.

Natalie Okay. I have four photos. I'll ask you to point to the photo of Richard, please.

*Natalie extracts 4 photos from a manila folder. They are of Clarrie Tozer, Neil Redyard, Bong Fitzgerald and Duncan Fairhouse (whom we as yet have not met). Natalie lays these on the table in front of Marlene in such a way that Marlene has a clear view.*

*Marlene stabs her finger at the second photo: of Neil Redyard.*

Marlene Yes, that's my Richard. Whew! I said I wouldn't start bawling but I'm awfully close.

*Neither Paul nor Natalie evidence any surprise at Marlene's choice.*

Natalie You're sure? No hesitation?

Marlene No. That's Richard Fitzgerald. No mistake.

*Natalie quickly collects the other 3 photos. Paul carefully retrieves the photo of Neil Redyard. When Paul speaks, he is brisk and professional.*

Paul Unfortunately, Marlene, you have been imposed upon. If this man (whom you know as Sergeant Richard Fitzgerald) contacts

you again, please let me know immediately. Or Natalie here.

*Paul and Natalie stand. They hand business cards to Marlene, who is totally stunned.*

Marlene But will he ...? I mean ... If he's supposed to be dead --

Natalie We have to leave it there, I'm afraid. Thank you for your help, Marlene. If you need to talk to anyone, please call my number.

*Natalie and Paul exit quickly. They are seen to walk back to the carpark where a hire car awaits them.*

Natalie *voice-over* Bong Fitzgerald playing golf! Would he know which end of the 9-iron to hold?

Paul *voice-over* "Which end of the caddy would he grab" is more like it. But I have to admire old Redyard's taste. She's a looker alright.  
Jesus! What a dope that Redyard turned out to be! I mean ... I always thought he'd brown-tongued somehow to get to his exalted position ... He wasn't ever going to win Mastermind.  
And then to palm himself off as Bong Fitzgerald. The first thing people will wonder is why would a dishy lady like Marlene Telbot-bloody-hyphen-Hythe ever fall for a ponce like Bong? It's sheer lunacy!

Natalie *voice-over* We must find out her beauty tips and pass them on to Lorraine Redyard. Sure she'll be thrilled to find out what her hubby has been up to.

END OF SCENE

**Scene xix:** Interior of Sydney Airport Gate 49 Saturday

*Our camera hangs back. Redyard is pushing himself forward to converse with a big-wig at Sydney Airport in the environs of Gate 49. We cannot quite hear the person to whom Redyard speaks. That conversation is just nods, grunts and gestures. Redyard is audible; however all we can understand are snatches of conversation. People mill past the men in either direction. Redyard utters something expected: “too much money”, “they only want to make trouble”, “voted Labor all his life, poor sod”, and so on. Basically, Redyard is brown-nosing.*

*Then two uniformed security guards march up to Redyard. They can be seen to politely draw him away from Gate 49.*

*Redyard is extremely put out. We hear “what’s this all about?” Redyard is more upset that he is to be questioned than that his suck-up is being interrupted.*

END OF SCENE

**Scene xx:** Interior of Small Plane Travelling from Sydney Airport to Eagleby Saturday evening

*Natalie sits in a single seat next to a window in a tiny plane that returns her and Paul back to Eagleby. She flips through a women’s magazine. She receives a tap on the shoulder and turns so that she can converse with the person sitting behind her (that is, Paul).*

Natalie                                  Mmm?

Paul                                        At Bong’s funeral, you said something. About Bong’s kids.

Natalie                                  What? That they were ungrateful little shits? Well, they are.

Paul                                        He told you that?

Natalie                                  Yes.

*[Thoughtful pause.]*

But now that I've had time to toss it around in my head, I think that maybe he was just trying it on.

Paul *frowns*

Why would he? What would he gain by that?

Natalie

That I'd be just one more idiot that he had fooled. He wanted me to think that he was crying into his beer. You know: "Poor Daddy, why did his kids turn their backs on him?" Picked me out to confide in. But now I think it was all put-on.

Paul

Isn't that funny ... I wondered about the drinking ... whether it was an act. And you think so too?

Natalie *nods*

He was playing us on a string. Pretending to be an alky but not. There were no bottles at his home. And not a single bottle open or empty at the Bong cop shop. None of the liquor outlets within cooee have any record of him buying liquor.

He was putting one over on us. But I can't figure out why. I mean ultimately "why".

Paul *sighs*

Geez ... You think that you know a bloke after umpteen years but turns out that he's a real enigma. Utterly unreadable.

Natalie

So what's our next step, boss?

Paul

Tanya is calling a meeting as soon as they ship Redyard back to Sydney. They'll probably be at the airstrip when we land.

END OF SCENE

### **Scene xxi:** Exterior of Small Eagleby Airport Building Saturday evening

*Natalie and Paul move through the small airport building with Tanya, Neil and Mark in the background. There is no direct contact between the two groups: only a few brief hand waves.*

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the way. Then we'll quickly download the current status and give out your next responsibilities.

So I'm Senior Sergeant Tanya Antonio of Sydney Central and I've been appointed (from on high) as the team leader for project Bong Safe Drop.

Okay. So we have Sergeant Jared "Tazzie" Kerr coming to us from Sydney via Tasmania. Max Strudwick from the ATO. Specialist consultant Felicity "Fliss" Warner and IT whizkid Constable Watt Dormand. Both of these lovely people are from Sydney Central with me.

Then Constables Terry Naylor and Brett Barass. And the next people are Senior Sergeant Paul Classon with Sergeant Natalie Rochevale. Famed for her punting prowess.

Right!

Fliss. Give us your briefing.

Fliss

Several of us have been working through the contents of the late Sergeant Richard Fitzgerald's safe. We've read and catalogued everything. We came to agree that Fitzgerald had set up a highly sophisticated scheme whereby he ran dodgy businesses (we don't know what yet) by sending computer printed instructions out to his underlings via Post Office boxes. As per what Natalie said.

Our firm belief is that the numbers of these boxes were given to the underlings via bets placed in prefigured betting accounts. Lucky Strike.

Paul

Sorry, I missed something ... Are these PO boxes situated in one place, or -- ?

Fliss

Well, they are all over New South Wales and into southern Queensland. Into the Gold Coast. This looks like it was major

coverage.

However, the real find was a laptop. It reveals everything. But breaking into it safely without destroying data was an exercise in extreme caution. Watt and I were focused on that most of the day. And there were about a dozen data sticks: all encrypted so no immediate joy there. And before anyone asks, Fitzgerald kept hardly any printed documentation. It was mostly all stored electronically. We'll keep on with that ...

At any rate, the latest stuff was on the laptop, so we have been able to crack on. Place the bets and so on ...

Tanya *nods*

Sensational! So Fliss your team will keep on with that. Great work.

Watt?

Watt

The safe was ultra-sophisticated. I've rung around some mates in the force and Googled like mad. We can't find anything even remotely this nerdie since a bloke in Syria got a team of middle-eastern boffins together and they knocked up something similar. Now we have to ask if Fitzgerald was linked to Syria ...?

Anyway, it's humming along (the safe). And we think that it's not yet sending out any distress calls (which is what we at first feared).

Jared

How the hell did he use that thing? I had to reef open a cupboard door to even get to it on hands and knees.

Watt

There was a trap door next to it: in the next cupboard. He had a neat little tunnel under the cop shop which brought him up into the cupboard. Took a Dolphin light with him (I suppose). Anyway, he could work in the cupboard without any interruption.

Paul *scornful*

Bong must have conned some crim to dig that out for him – the tunnel I mean. He couldn't possibly have dug out anything like

that for himself!

Natalie

But that's still amazing! To go to the lengths of getting a tunnel constructed. I never ever dreamt that he --

Tanya

No! He was a complete enigma, that's for sure.

Alright. Mark is not here as he is escorting Neil Redyard to Sydney where Redyard will be grilled by an internal affairs board.

It all has to do with Bong trading in diamonds and Neil having one of these stones in his possession.

In short, Neil has performed a gross breach of trust. It may be that he was even blackmailing Bong Fitzgerald. Whatever, he will probably be asked to resign his commission.

This is totally top secret and not to be discussed by anyone to anyone at any time. I must make this clear.

Natalie and I will be visiting Lorraine Redyard this evening to deliver the bad news. But no further discussion amongst yourselves, please.

Max

That was the one slip-up though. It started the ball rolling ...

Tanya

Yep. It did. But not very professional. So, Max: you and Jared are focused on the diamonds. The ATO have very kindly offered us every possible assistance to uncover the source of the diamonds.

Terry, you'll be running around looking after the TV people. A contingent of private crowd-control dudes has been hired.

"Housewise": they couldn't have shown up at a worse moment, but they're here now and they'll need to be shepherded about.

Alright. That's everyone. Over and out. Try to get a good night's sleep now.

END OF SCENE

The tragedy now unfolds.

Remember that the bikies do not know that there is anyone resident in the cop shop.

All they know is that the safe has arked-up.

**Scene xxii:** At The Wallibong Police Station Saturday around midnight into Sunday morning

*Saturday night. We hear Jared breathing deeply as he sleeps. The safe sits in the room, out of its cupboard. It has been humming along, no problems. Nothing untoward; until our camera angle changes and we see a bright yellow light on the safe has been blinking. We focus on that light for about 5 blinks.*

*Jared is woken as 8 bikers from the outlawed Togas gang roar up. They prepare Molotov cocktails. Jared grabs his service revolver, smashes through a window and shoots out the tyres of two of the bikes. We hear the shocked surprise of the bikers on finding that someone is actually resident in the police station. The riders who have had their bikes shot out from under them are carted off as pillion passengers. One of them (Leckie) is critically injured not from gunshot but from being run over as the others scattered. We hear scattered, random comments and shouts: all of which are indistinguishable.*

*Before any serious damage is done to the building, the bikers roar away. Jared rings up on his mobile phone as he tears outside to get the bike rego numbers of the two damaged motorcycles.*

Jared *mobile phone*

This is Sergeant Jared Kerr working on the Bong Safe Drop project. The police station at Wallibong has come under attack from a group of about 10 bikers. Have shot out the tyres of 2 motorcycles. Please take down these numbers – hang on --

*[moving about to view the motorcycles]*

LLXC 5032 and (hang on) JM JW 9810. Please trace the owners

immediately and get back to me.

Believe that one of the bikers has been injured when they scarpered after I shot the tyres. I was the sole occupant of the police station and am not injured. Several Molotov cocktails were lit and thrown at the station, but all fizzed out on the grass. I will now contact Senior Sergeant Tanya Antonio and advise her.

Yeah, thanks.

*Jared ends the call then phones Tanya.*

Jared *mobile phone*      Yeah. Sorry Tanya. About 10 bikers have shown up here and tried to bomb the cop shop.

No. I'm quite okay.

Listen. Get down here ASAP, will you? Yeah I've rung it all through to Central Command.

But ... There's a yellow light blinking on the safe ...

*Jared (breathing fast) moves the stricken motorcycles closer to the cop shop. He looks around. No-one else has been woken by the fracas.*

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxiii:** Exterior Night On The Highway very very early Sunday morning

*The motorcycles are tearing along the highway when the one in the rear with pillion passenger slows right down. We now see that the rider (Johnno) is distressed at the condition of his pillion passenger Leckie, who slumps and tips off the motorcycle. Leckie lies on the ground, almost lifeless.*

Johnno *frightened*      Leckie! Mate! What's goin' on?

*Johnno attempts to haul Leckie back onto the motorcycle but he is too heavy. Just now, another bikie (Mongol Khan) retraces his journey to join Johnno and Leckie..*

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Mongol Khan *urgent*            Come on mate. We can't muck around. The cops'll be gunnin' for us.

Johnno                            Yeah, well help me get Leckie back on board, will ya? I reckon he's bought his ticket for the big dirt dive.

*Both Johnno and Mongol Khan attempt to reseat Leckie but Leckie is almost dead. Another 2 bikes rock up. The riders are Kozzie and Freckler.*

Freckler                         What are yuz doin'? Come on, will yuz!

Kozzie                             Wait on. Tie him onto Johnno. I've got a bit of rope here.

*Johnno sits astride his motorcycle while Freckler and Kozzie use their combined strength to haul the dying Leckie up behind Johnno. Then they tie Leckie up to Johnno, around the waist.*

Freckler *shouts*                That'll do. Listen. There's a truck stop up the road. The others have gone in there. But we won't have long before the cops find us. So fuckin' move it!

*All 3 motorcycles roar off. But Leckie's body has not withstood the challenges of the ride and he has died.*

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxiv:** Exterior Night Wallibong Police Station very very early Sunday morning

*Jared, Tanya, Paul and Watt stand around in the Wallibong police station, staring at the safe. The yellow light continues to flash.*

*Watt bends down and opens the safe, using the sequence given to him by Fliss. He moves things around in the safe, then closes the door. He rekeys the sequence. The yellow light flicks off.*

*The four police operatives look at each other, relieved.*

Tanya                              Well, that's that, then.



good. A O K. But indirectly you've caused an injury to a biker.

Hmmmm ....

Jared So I have to lay low? And I'll probably be suspended facing a full enquiry?

Tanya *thinking hard* Be prepared for that. It'll only be to cover our backsides.

No ... I'm thinking ...

You know what? I've got a funny feeling that these Toga blokes are heavily into retribution and mutilation. Just a vague memory

...

Hang on!

*Tanya fiddles with her phone. A web site flicks into view. Wordlessly, Tanya shows the web page to Jared. His eyebrows lift in intense surprise.*

*We see that the current police officer of Wallibong is Sergeant Jared "Tazzie" Kerr. There is a small blurb about Jared, and a photo of him smiling broadly.*

Tanya I typed in "who is in charge at Wallibong police station" and you popped up. If I can do that, so can Joe Bloggs on the street, or so can Everest Tankeray ... I'm not real happy ...

Your parents: are they still in Tazzie?

Jared Yeah. Willow Bend.

Tanya And any siblings?

Jared One sister. She still lives at home with Mum and Dad.

Tanya Grandparents?

Jared They're in England at the moment, touring around. 2 grandmas and one grand-dad.

*Tanya nods.*

Tanya That's cosy old Tasmania for you ...

Give me your address in Willow Bend.

Jared                               19 Glenview Grange. 19 Glenview Grange Willow Bend.  
Tasmania.

*Tanya nods and makes a call on her mobile phone.*

Tanya *mobile phone*           Hi! Senior Sergeant Tanya Antonio, head of the Bong Safe Drop project. I want immediate 24-hour protection for a family who are now in grave danger of a reprisal killing. They are the Kerr family at 19 Glenview Grange, Willow Bend Tasmania.

That's total protection until further notice. Starts immediately.

Thank you.

*Tanya closes the call and turns back to Jared. She passes him her mobile phone.*

Tanya                               Ring your mum and dad and explain what's happened. They are to remain indoors and stay out of sight until we get the Toga boys sorted out.

Use **my** phone because we're expecting some more action on **your** phone.

Who can tell if this bunch of goonies has a reach as far south as Tazzie? But --

*[Jared's phone rings.]*

Ah! I'm a fortune teller.

*Tanya neatly takes Jared's mobile phone while he wanders off to obey Tanya's instructions.*

Tanya *mobile phone*           Senior Sergeant Tanya Antonio working with Sergeant Jared Kerr. What've you got?

*Tanya scribbles on a scrap of paper. Then she brusquely thanks her caller and closes the call.*

Tanya                               We've captured one of the felons. Thanks to Jared's early alert, we at least managed one. "Mongol Khan" (don't ask me to pronounce his real name). One of the founding members of

Toga. He's up for a strenuous grilling later this morning. This being Sunday.

Tanya *to Paul*

Sorry, Paul, but we're going to have to gather everyone together. The quicker we work this through ...

Jared

Am I staying here?

Tanya

Nope. We can lock this all down and head back to Eagleby.

Paul *to Jared*

That billet with the Lewis family is still open after all. You can doss there.

Jared *nods*

Yeah. Thanks.

Tanya *in command*

Okay everyone. Back to Eagleby for a war council.

*They all scurry out.*

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxv:** Exterior Night Time Truck Stop Off The Highway very very early Sunday

*[The language has been tidied up to avoid too much swearing.]*

*Leckie's body lies on the ground at the truck-stop, surrounded by the remaining 6 motorcycles.*

*Someone has laid a canvas square over Leckie's body. Nearby, Matterhorn is on the ground on all*

*fours with his head resting on his fists. He weeps loudly, continually calling out (sobbing) "Leckie!"*

*and "They shot me brother!" The other bikers (sombre and tearful) stand about. Some smoke weed.*

Trojan *voice-over*

He wasn't shot, mate. One of us accidentally ran him over when that arsehole --

Matterhorn *savage*

Same thing! Same thing! My brother's dead and it's their fault. They shot the fuckin' gun!

*Trojan (now in camera shot) shrugs. Matterhorn continues to sob. Everyone else is gutted.*

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*Then the sobbing draws to a close and Matterhorn stands. He looks about him, composing himself.*

Matterhorn                    We've been royally stitched-up here, comrades. Our orders were to take action if the distress call on that electronic bullshit gadget was activated. We did that and now we find ourselves double-crossed. Okay. We've been stitched-up and double-crossed. Okay.

*Matterhorn goes over to Leckie's body and drops to his knees. Solemnly and with the utmost dramatic effect, Matterhorn pulls back the canvas sheet. With a mammoth effort, Matterhorn controls his emotions. He bends forward and kisses Leckie softly on the mouth.*

Matterhorn *low voice*        I swear to you that we will deal with these arseholes. They will know the anger of the Togas. They will know vengeance.

*[whispers]*

I swear to you.

*Sadly, Matterhorn replaces the canvas sheet and stands. Suddenly, Matterhorn is very businesslike. He uses the word "retal" as a short form of "retaliation".*

Matterhorn                    Leave my brother's body there as it is. Let the bastards find him ... Find what they done to him.

By now we have every cop in New South looking for us. So we have to get out of here. Everybody must take a different route and get back to headquarters quick as ya can. If you're caught by the cops, say nothin'. Those of us that get back, we'll start the retal immediately. What we want is the name of the copper who works that station. Find out his name and then we target his family.

Johnno: you straddle my saddle. Everest: you take Johnno's sickle. Let's go!

*Without any further hesitation, each man mounts his motorcycle (with Everest as Matterhorn's pillion passenger) and speeds off into the night.*

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxvi:** Exterior and Interior Secret Headquarters of Toga Gang around dawn on Sunday morning

*We get a good shot of Santo, Wayne and Marischo mounting guard on a first floor balcony. They strut about complete with powerful weaponry. The HQ is also protected by savage dogs roaming about. Barbed wire. Heavily fortified. When Kozzie rocks up, the automatic gates slip open enough for him to slip in. Then they shut powerfully as he enters. The dogs approach him but growl only. Kozzie ignores the dogs.*

*Inside the building, Kozzie becomes very active.*

Kozzie *calling*                      Wake up yer bastards! We've been stitched-up to buggery.

*Gwynne appears, sketchily dressed. She begins to ask questions when she is interrupted by Kozzie's rant.*

Kozzie                                I want Sandy here now! Get her you useless bitch. Sandy!  
Sandy!

*As Gwynne scampers off, Sandy appears. She is pulling a loose t-shirt over bare breasts.*

Sandy                                What's all the racket?

Kozzie                                We were stitched-up. Who's runnin' that cop shop in Wallibong?  
Where's that electronic gizmo?

*Kozzie finds a piece of electronic equipment and proceeds to destroy it by brutalizing it with an office chair. The girls back away in alarm as Kozzie (looking savage) lays into the equipment in barbaric, uncontrolled fashion.*

*Then the door flings open. Everest enters. They have to shout to be heard over the noise which Kozzie is making.*

Gwynne *alarmed*                    Would you mind telling me what the hell is going on?

Everest                                Didn't he tell ya? Leckie got killed. By the coppers. It was a set-up. We took it right up the bum.

*There is a horrified gasp from the girls.*

Everest *even*                        Which is why I need to find out **immediately** the name of the cunt copper who organized the shoot-out.

*There is a mad scramble for mobile phones, in order to get Google sessions operational.*

Everest *punching phone keys*    Google it. "Copper" ... "Wally-bong-bong" ... "give me his name" ...

*Keeping away from Kozzie's mayhem, the trio try for a good response on their mobile phones.*

Gwynne *frustrated*                I can't get this to work. It just brings up a movie ...

*Kozzie interrupts his savagery to snatch the mobile phone from Gwynne in order to smash it violently against an iron pillar.*

Sandy *to Everest*                Was Leckie shot? Did they shoot him?

Everest                                No. But they shot his sickle out from under him and he got crushed in the panic. So yeah they may as well have --

*Gasping for breath and eyes aglint from his savage attack on the electronic equipment, Kozzie marches up to Sandy. Kozzie stabs his finger into Sandy's shoulder. She winces at the pain.*

Kozzie *uncontrolled*                That fuckin' database of yours ... Get onto that **now** and find out which asshole copper runs the Wallibong cop shop. **Now!**

*Sandy rushes over to a PC on another desk and begins logging in. Within seconds she retrieves the data. Meanwhile Trojan slams through the door.*

Trojan *panic*                        I'm pretty sure they nicked the Khan. I'm pretty sure. Freckler as well. I think. I'm pretty sure.

Everest                                What a fuckin' cock-up!

*Everest grabs Gwynne and kisses her with pent-up emotion. They are locked in a clinch for some time. Meanwhile Sandy does not find what she is after.*

Sandy                                      How do you spell that place? "W", "O", "L" --

Kozzie *calming down*                Nuh. It's got an "A". Second letter is an "A" ...

*Sandy clicks keys then gives a yelp of excitement.*

Sandy                                      Yeah, Here it is. Got it. Sergeant Richard Fitzgerald. And here's his photo.

*Kozzie strides over and looks for a while at the screen. Meanwhile Matterhorn and Johnno burst in. The door slams shut after them. Kozzie frowns and shakes his head mouthing "dunno, never seen him before". Meanwhile Johnno marches up to Sandy, scooping her in his arms and kissing her madly.*

Matterhorn                                Who are we waiting for?

*Titty-lou (swathed in a filmy peignoir) totters into the room, trying to tidy her hair.*

Titty-lou                                    God! Youse bastards can't make enough noise can ya!

Gwynne *answering*                    Just Mongol Khan and Freckler.

*Matterhorn*

*Matterhorn nods. He looks about as if for inspiration. His eyes rest on Titty-lou. She has scanned the room, counting heads in an obvious, rather childish fashion.*

Titty-lou                                    And Leckie. He's a no-show as yet.

Everest                                     Leckie's been killed by the cops, honey.

*There is a long silence. Everyone seems to be waiting for Matterhorn to explode as Kozzie did. But Matterhorn nods after a while.*

Matterhorn                                Sandy, what did you say that guy is called? At Woop-woop cop shop?

*Sandy untangles herself from Johnno's attentions.*

Sandy                                        Erm ... Richard Fitzgerald. Sergeant Richard Fitzgerald. Known locally as "Bong".

*Matterhorn nods again.*

Trojan *frowns*                             We know him, don't we? We have connections to that bloke ...

Matterhorn *in command* War council.

*He points to another room. Everybody nods and heads in that direction. Freckler enters loudly. They all turn towards him.*

Freckler The asshole pigs got the Khan.

Matterhorn He's not gonna spill to the cops. Mongol Khan would rather slit his own wrists than squeal ... Okay ... Council of War. I want to take out this Sergeant Fitz-fuckin'-Gerald and all his kin.

Let's go!

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxvii:** At The Eagleby Police Station Sunday morning around 5.00 am

*Mongol Khan sits in an interview room with Tanya, Paul and Terry. There are cups of coffee.*

Mongol Khan I told you I don't know who the bloke was. All I know is that there were clear instructions. And we had to follow them (whatever they were). It was supposed to be some sort of honour thing. We were obligated to keep an eye on this u-beaut electronic apparatus that had been installed. Green flashing light every so often. Drove me fucking mental. And if it changed colour to red we had specific instructions. That's when they would kick in.

Tanya *voice-off* What were the instructions?

Mongol Khan *shrugs* Dunno. I mean, didn't know at the time. See, the Horn had all that information. But it turned out that all we had to do was torch a building and then follow up with a van to get rid of a safe. The safe had to be drowned at sea. Fuck off! The sea's

1000 kilometres away from that place, isn't it? Chuck it into the sea! Jesus Christ!

*Paul begins to speak but Mongol Khan is on a roll.*

Mongol Khan

So we get to this place in Outer Woop Woop. We did what we were told: torch the building. It was an old cop shop. "Don't worry" says the Horn. "No-one's home." And then just when we get started the bloke who isn't home let's fly with a round of ammunition. Leckie (he's the Horn's bro) wasn't too good last time I looked at him ...

I'd fairly hate to see the Horn's face right now. He'll be more than spewing. A filthy copper set us up. Shit! You'd better be prepared for a *major* payback, man. Major!

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxviii:** House Belonging to Tyson and Leonie George Torched around 5.00am  
Sunday morning

*A couple of Toga members scamper about in the dawn light pouring petrol around and inside the house of Tyson and Leonie George. They chuck lit matches onto the petrol and then scamper off. The house is soon well alight. Then a loud blast is witnessed as the house explodes.*

END OF SCENE

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**Scene xxix:** Exterior into Interior of the Armstrong Home around 5.00am Sunday morning

*Johnno realizes that there is a toy dog on the property and removes a small pistol from his belt. He entices the dog to him and then calmly shoots it. He replaces the gun in his belt.*

*We watch Johnno expertly gain entrance to the house. He stands, looking about, working out where the child's bedroom is. He walks out of camera shot.*

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxx:** Interior The Flat of Rhonda Fitzgerald around 5.00am Sunday morning

*Rhonda's crappy flat is dark. Outside Rhonda's bedroom, Freckler watches Rhonda sleep with the 2 year old Tina. He seems uncertain. The small child begins to twitch. Freckler is uncomfortable. So he turns away. He finds the bedroom where Lucy sleeps. He goes to her and squats down.*

Freckler *low-voiced*            It's okay honey. Your Daddy has a present for you. He's waiting outside.

*Lucy murmurs "Daddy".*

Freckler *low-voiced*            Yeah you love your old Daddy, don't you Hon? Let me carry you down there. He can't come up himself because he's holding the present ... It's really big ...

*We see Freckler carry the child out to a motorcycle with sidecar. A tiny voice is heard to say:  
"Where's Daddy?"*

END OF SCENE

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**FILMING THE WALLIBONG "HOUSEWISE" EPISODE**

The fitness guru has gathered together some of the more presentable bodies of Wallibong. They are working through a routine. Someone fluffs it so they have to restart (much laughter). Crew of 4 including cameraman.

**Scene xxxi:** At The Eagleby Police Station Sunday morning around 6.00 am

*We need to get all the bits and pieces sorted out.*

*In this scene the various pieces of news will fly in at breakneck speed.*

*Present are Terry, Max, Brett, Paul, Jared and Watt. Natalie will turn up late, as will Fliss. Tanya is the leader. Paul will write on the whiteboard behind Tanya.*

Tanya                      Firstly, have we had any responses from the Lucky Strike bets?

Brett                      Right! You are all aware that last night, Nats and I placed bets for each of the 28 betting accounts on the Perth trots, using the codes we found in Bong's safe. We alerted local police to eyeball the PO boxes from later this morning. That's a lot of manpower so I hope to Christ we got it right.

Tanya                      Yeah. So do we all ...

What happens if we catch anyone at the PO box?

Brett                      Well, Nats alerted all the relevant people and they'll simply ask a few questions. Take names and addresses. Their occupation. She just wants to get a picture of what this betting business is all about. And Inspector Mark Kierney didn't come back as planned but stayed on in Sydney. Flies back today.

At any rate, Nats is liaising with him to get this chugging along.

Tanya                      Good. Where is Natalie? Is she coming?

Paul                        Er ... Yeah ... She has kids ...



One is married with one child. The other is separated from her partner. Two children (girls).

But his son is the interesting one. He is divorced, no kids. Dennis Fitzgerald is currently boarding with Tyson George and his missus: Leonie. Both Dennis and Tyson were one-time members of the Heliport Biker group. Not any longer.

The funny thing is that all the members of the Togas were at one time in the Heliport gang. But about 10 or 12 of them splintered off because of issues with drugs and violence. They formed the rival Toga gang. That centred on the Johnson brothers apparently.

The Heliports are community minded: caring for homeless people and Vietnam vets.

*Several people smirk and guffaw. Jared sparks up reaching for his notes.*

Jared *alert*

Hang on! The two cycles I shot at ... Here it is ...

One of the blokes was Alexander Johnson, known as "Leckie".

Terry

Right! So this body that they found at Winnimai: it has to be that Johnson brother. That ties in with what the Khan kindly divulged.

Okay but there's more. One of the Toga molls is Gwynne Loughbridge. She is the sister of Leonie George. That's the woman who lives where Dennis is shackled-up. Tyson's wife.

So we have all kinds of connections here with Bong Fitzgerald.

*Everyone is silent, looking around them.*

Tanya

As Terry said, we interviewed Mongol Khan. Given that he's a tough mother who wouldn't squeal even if you inserted a rocket up his clacker, he was surprisingly forthcoming. It would seem that Bong Fitzgerald planned well in advance. If necessity struck, he could destroy all evidence of his criminal activities (whatever

they were) by using the Toga Gang bikers. That's why they turned up ...

Paul, write this down on the whiteboard.

Theory (1) is that the Togas were completely unaware of who was running the show. That's Jared's original theory which Mark, Paul and I agree with, and this Khan guy corroborates. They simply responded to the electronic message from the safe. The word "cocoon" springs to mind. This Bong created a clever cocoon such that no-one knew he was dodgy.

Theory (2) is that the link is Dennis. He and his father worked this rort (whatever it is) and the Togas provided the muscle power in case things ran off the rails. So they knew it was a Fitzgerald operation all along. I'm not buying this second theory because it basically makes no sense. But best to keep an open mind ...

*Tanya turns and reads the notes on the whiteboard carefully.*

Tanya

Let me think about whether the Fitzgerald clan need police protection. Yes, they probably do ... but ...

Better to be safe than sorry. Paul, I'll leave that to you and Terry to sort out. Around the clock 24-hour police protection.

I've run out of puff. Going to kip for a few hours then back into it, even though it's Sunday. So back here at (what?) 9.00 am sharp. No excuses. Max, no need for your input – sorry we woke you. Go back to bed.

*Everyone stands and some begin to shuffle out of the room. As the group files out, they chatter.*

*There are laptops to close down and notes to pocket. They are all tired.*

Paul *yawns*

Thanks everyone.

Who's minding the shop?

Brett I'm rostered on.

Paul Okay. I'm to be informed of any new developments. Let Tanya have a few hours' sleep ...

Tazzie: you'll have to find yourself a doss here. The billet is out for the moment. Put some chairs together or something ... You brought the blankets and stuff from Bong?

Jared Yeah. I made a swag. Don't worry about me. I'll be right.

Paul *yawns* Rightio. See you all at 9.00 am. Nighty-night for a couple of hours ...

END OF SCENE

**FILMING THE WALLIBONG "HOUSEWISE" EPISODE**

The handyman expert repairs a boat beside the lake which Paul mentioned in ACT I, scene iv. 5 crewmen, including a cameraman.

**Scene xxxii:** Internal Classon Master Bedroom Sunday morning 6.30 and to 7.00 am

*[Paul left the Eagleby police station, drove home, had a coffee in front of the TV and then got ready for bed. In that time, there was more action as described by Brett. The sun has now risen.]*

*Paul is trying to get into bed without disturbing his wife. They murmur to each other. Paul's mobile immediately rings. We hear Paul murmur "Shit!"*

Paul *mobile phone* Yeah?

Brett *voice only* It's started. The George house where Dennis Fitzgerald --

*Paul appears concerned as he listens to his mobile phone. He swings his legs over the edge of the bed.*

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SEQUE INTO NEXT SCENE

**Scene xxxiii:** Internal Eagleby Police Station around 7.00 am Sunday morning

*Brett is speaking to Paul on his mobile phone. However, the police station phone rings stridently.*

Brett *mobile phone*            Sorry, Paul. Phone's ringing. Hang on ...

*With his back to the camera, Brett takes the call. He responds "Yep" or "Got it" to his caller, then hangs up. Quickly he returns to Paul via the mobile phone.*

Brett *mobile phone*            Ya still there?

Paul *voice only*                Yeah.

Brett *urgent*                    Okay so the first message was regarding the George house. It's been blown apart and torched.

*[The police station phone rings again.]*

Nobody home. The 3 of them were out jogging in a park somewhere, even that crazy early. They're interviewing neighbours now.

Hang on ...

*Again, with his back to the camera, Brett takes the call. He responds "Yep" or "Got it" to his caller, then hangs up. Quickly he returns to Paul via the mobile phone.*

Brett *mobile phone*            Sorry to muck you around. Sounds really serious.

Two separate incidents have been reported: kidnappings. We set up the protection too late.

The cops that went to the flat in Dunbee (where Rhonda Fitzgerald and her two daughters live) found the mother and the 2 year old had been in the bed together. But the 5 year old girl was missing, apparently kidnapped. She is Lucy Fitzgerald. As I

said 5 years old. There are definite signs of a break-in rather than that she just wandered off. The cops on the scene are raising the red alert and they're mobilizing reinforcements. They want to get out the description on the web news and on TV.

Okay. So my next call was the same sort of thing. This time it is her cousin Laurie Armstrong. He's 4 years old. Same idea. Police protection guys rock up at the house of Bong's other daughter, and then the break-in and kidnapping are discovered. The pet dog has been shot dead. Likewise a red alert.

Paul *voice only*                      So it looks like the Togas have done all this, does it? Is that what they're saying? What do they think --

Brett *mobile phone*                      Sorry, mate. All I got is what I told you.

Paul *voice only*                      Okay. I'll let those guys on the scene carry the can. We can't do anything from here except sit around and wait for phone calls. So here's what we do: you stay on board and man the shop. The rest of us will sleep until the briefing in a couple of hours – I mean the one planned for 9.00 am. With any luck the kids will be located and okay by then. See ya.

*The call ends. Brett sighs. He puts his mobile phone down and then notices Jared standing nearby. The two men stare at each other.*

Brett                                      It's getting really ugly ...

Jared                                      I'll ring the cops that are looking after my folks. Let them know that the Togas are arking up. Just so they know how serious it is ...

Brett *nods*                                Yeah, you'd better.

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxxiv:** Exterior to Interior Toga HQ 7.00 am Sunday

*Freckler takes Lucy back to HQ (motorbike and sidecar). The child is asking where her daddy is and Freckler is trying to calm her.*

*Inside Matterhorn is waiting. He signals to Freckler to take the child (who is walking and holding Freckler's hand) into a room.*

Freckler *harassed*                    She's gettin' toey.

*[To Lucy]*

It's okay, Honey. I got a big surprise for you in here.

*Freckler disappears with Lucy into an adjacent room. Meanwhile, Matterhorn stalks about, contemplating. He looks from one person to the next, then his eyes alight on Gwynne. Matterhorn speaks to Gwynne in the same soothing manner as Freckler is using on Lucy.*

Matterhorn *sugar-sweet*    Go on into the room, Honey. You can play Mummy. You'd like that.

*Gwynne goes to the room with an ill-grace. Matterhorn waits for Freckler to return.*

Freckler                                    I'm really not a baby-sitting kind of guy, Horn. I'm not cut out for all that sweet talk.

Matterhorn                                You did okay, man. You did what you were told. So give me the keys to your sickle.

*Freckler retrieves the keys and throws them to Matterhorn who catches and pockets them.*

Matterhorn                                Ta. Still got the kiddie-car attached?

*Freckler nods.*

Freckler                                    Yeah, mate.

*Matterhorn nods. Then he addresses the assembled bikers and molls.*

Matterhorn                                Vengeance. Retaliation. An eye for an eye.

The pig took out my brother, Leckie. Strezlecki.

The pig has children. One of the children (the son) lives with





you?

Johnno

No. I'm killing one more person before I go underground.

Here's what you do. You drive me to Angel Nest. I'll tell you where to drop me off. Then you take the kid and dump him at the Angel Nest cop shop. It's got a big entrance. Park the car out of sight and run the kid inside. Don't get all sappy and drippy and start saying "Goodbye little man" or stuff like that. You have to sprint in and sprint out. Back in the car and then drive like fuck until you can ditch the car. Ditch it where it won't be thought about for a few days: like a supermarket car park or outside a laundromat. Or a 24-hour chemist ... Something like that ... Wipe it for fingerprints. Don't forget that.

Get yourself a disguise and somehow go north to Queensland. Way north. I'll ring you in about 3 weeks or so.

Sandy

I got all that. We're giving up the Togas. Probably a good thing.

*Johnno nods solemnly.*

Johnno

Actually the epiphany happened when I was strapped-up to Leckie. He was dying as he pressed against my back, sucking out the last little inch of life from me.

Sandy *makes a face*

That is completely gross.

*Sandy and Johnno go into a long and meaningful kiss.*

Sandy *softly*

Why did you think I was going to piss off from you outside of a 711?

Johnno *nods*

Because you were twittering about needing biscuits for the kid: like you were going to take him into hiding.

Sandy *sadly*

I'm sorry that I thought that ... Dumping you like that ... I just don't want to harm the little boy. Not really.

Johnno                                   No. There's "revenge" and then there's crass stupidity.

Sandy                                   Well, then: who is your last victim going to be, if it's not me and it's not the kid?

*There is a long pause.*

Johnno                                   I'm going for the Horn. And I think I can find him, if he's not at Toga HQ. I'll ambush him at his favourite bolt hole ...

Ten! He's taken out ten souls. And that's counting the poor little girl ...

*[Very firmly]*

That's the revenge.

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxxvi:** Laurie is dumped at the Angel Nest cop shop 7.30 am Sunday

*Sandy rushes into the police station with Laurie over her shoulder. She plonks him on the floor and then without a backward glance, tears out. We get a close-up of the little child looking about and then crying. He blubs: "Mummy!" several times.*

*We see and hear footsteps. A young male police constable bends over the child.*

Young police constable    Hey! What's up little man?

*There is a pause. The young constable's tone changes. He calls out to someone off-screen.*

Young police constable    Heff! Isn't there a missing kid? I think he's just been given to us.  
Can you find a description?

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxxvii:** Exterior, The Corby House at Timboon, near Angel Nest 7.30 am

Sunday

*Old Mrs Corby comes out of the toolshed carrying a spade. Old Mr Corby approaches her, carrying a large pointy kitchen knife. He is very perplexed.*

Old Mr Corby                      What are ya doin'? I heard noises and I --

Old Mrs Corby                     Just a minnie. I'll lock the shed again.

*While her husband fretfully looks on, Old Mrs Corby locks the shed with a heavy padlock.*

Old Mrs Corby                     I know as well as you do that Bryan Johnson will come here to hide out. They've been screaming about him on the telly. He's come here many times before. It's like his home. That's why I've taken the spade out of the shed: to hit him with.

*So appalled is Old Mr Corby that he cannot speak. He only flickers his lips as if making speech.*

Old Mrs Corby                     And you'll stab him with the knife. The cops will give us a medal.

*The elderly couple become silent. They are obviously afraid. Noises are heard.*

*Matterhorn does saunter into the yard (without seeing the elderly couple) and is frustrated by the lock on the shed.*

*Pressing her lips close together, Old Mrs Corby bravely creeps forward, with the spade held such that she can hit Matterhorn.*

*Johnno rocks up and quickly goes to the old woman. He signals for her to be quiet and then Johnno surprises Matterhorn, giving him a telling rabbit chop on the neck. Johnno politely takes the spade from the shocked old woman and belts Matterhorn over the head with it, savagely. Then he takes the knife from the hopelessly startled old man and stabs Matterhorn 10 times. With each stab Johnno tells the dying man that he owes this cut for a life taken. A life for a life. Then Johnno drops the knife, telling the elderly couple to clean up after him. He shakes hands with both Old Mr Corby and Old Mrs Corby and then jogs off. The old man and woman stare at each other.*

END OF SCENE

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**Scene xxxviii:** Jared Is Driven to Lewis Billet Sunday afternoon

*Paul drives Jared to the Lewis acreage (Tim). The wife is Diane and the 3 teenage boys are Leigh, Nathan and Taylor. Immediately, Jared is lured into a computer game (revolving around racing bikes). He cannot find a path around the couch so he simply vaults over the couch and joins in.*

Paul *voice off*                    I told Tazzie maybe 20 times that this is not his fault. If the fault is there, it's mine. Brett told me that Tazzie was a better-than-average spin bowler. And I just about barred-up (^scuse my French!) It was me that told him to stay on. Me!

The computer game becomes loud with Jared and the 3 boys barracking.

Tim *voice off*                    How were you gunna know what'd come out of that?

Paul *voice off*                    All we need is a really worthwhile finger-spin bowler. We found one. And look what's happened.

END OF SCENE

**Scene xxxix:** The discovery of Lucy's body in the train carriage Monday morning around 5.30 am

*On Monday morning, we watch the relevant railway carriage being brought into position at the station. It is still very dark. Most of the passengers are men dressed in safety gear. A couple of middle-aged women head for the last carriage. They are chatting about how cold it is. They sit down, still chatting and then become quiet.*

*One woman (looking scared) tip-toes towards the camera. When she sees the state of the child slumped on the seat she screams loudly. The other joins her and screams. They manage to get out that it must be the missing child. They jump off the train, calling in agony to the station master.*

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END OF SCENE

**FILMING THE WALLIBONG "HOUSEWISE" EPISODE**

The handicrafts lady is working in the church hall to make a stunning floral tribute. This lady speaks confidently to camera.

**Scene xl:** The Eagleby Police Station TV news update Monday morning

*Fliss, Tanya and Natalie happen to converge in a small meeting room at the cop shop in Eagleby. The TV news update is on. The female news presenter begins the news update, when her face suddenly crumples and she dissolves into sobs, covering her face with well-manicured hands.*

*The camera flips to a male presenter who is only just sitting. He takes over valiantly.*

Male presenter                      This update relates to the search for missing 5 year old Lucy Fitzgerald. Viewers are warned that the following story may be distressing.

*Now there is film footage with voice-over from the male presenter.*

*Most of the visual content is indistinct. It is only clear that many police abound and that an ambulance is nearby. They are somewhere near a railway station.*

Male presenter *voice-over*                      The body of a young girl (believed to be that of abducted Lucy Fitzgerald) has been found in a train carriage at St Erth railway station. Passengers discovered the grisly find as they boarded the 5.20 am train to Central Station. The child is believed to have been brutally murdered several hours earlier and her body then deposited in the train carriage. Police have notified relatives.

This follows the safe return of her cousin 4 year old Laurie --

*The TV is switched off. The three women quickly leave the small room.*

*Mark enters the building and marches straight towards the Gents. He stops at the door of the Ladies. Then he moves on, thoughtfully. We vaguely hear the sound of female crying from within the Ladies. Everyone else (apart from Natalie) gathers in the board room. Tanya tries to speak but can't get words out as her shoulders shake. She hurries out of the room. Our camera follows Tanya as she dashes outside to sit in the small courtyard crying distressingly.*

*The men in the boardroom watch Tanya from the window. They have no idea what to do.*

*Brett darts out and then as swiftly re-enters, making a face. He points out the door into the area where the desks are set up. Natalie sits at her desk, sobbing hopelessly. The men look at each other, lost.*

*Mark heads from the Gents to the boardroom when he realizes that Natalie is distressed. He goes to her but is pulled up short by the urgent whistles of Terry and Brett. Mark changes direction to join the other men. They are fidgeting about, in the manner of men who do not have a clue how to deal with females displaying grief.*

Mark *low-voiced*                      Where's Tanya?

*The men point to the window. Mark takes this in immediately, nodding sagely.*

Mark *wisely*                              What have we got here, then?

Tanya is weeping desperately outside and Natalie ditto at her desk. So that means that the woman currently locked in the Ladies (weeping desperately) must be Fliss.

Fine. Now I know where they all are ...

Gentlemen, we'll continue regardless.

*The men sit, all except for Max. He looks about and then quietly asks to be excused. The level of awkwardness rises as Max bolts from the room.*

*With a heavy sigh, Mark looks about the room.*

Mark                                      Anyone else? There's no shame in being upset. This latest crime absolutely tugs at the heart.

No? Alright, gents, let's sit down.

*The men sit, trying to keep it together. There is a tendency towards flippancy (as a protection) but that almost doesn't seep through.*

Mark Paul. You go first.

Paul *reading from notes* Big picture. We have a swag of different outcomes for Richard "Bong" Fitzgerald's children. One grandchild abducted (brutally murdered), another grandchild abducted (returned unharmed), and a third grandchild untouched. A pet dog shot and killed. A house completely destroyed.

Now as to the Togas ... What do we have here? ... Okay ...

We have Mongol Khan in custody, Leckie Johnson dead (an accident), his brother Matterhorn Johnson murdered (that is to say executed) and one of the Toga molls (Gwynne Loughbridge) seriously beaten enough to now be on life support. She's the sister of the woman whose house has been torched. Members of the Heliport biker gang have warned us that there will be reprisals (which is strange because they generally aren't into violent behaviour).

Our ultimate aim is to piece this all together and find out which Toga guy did which bit of the mayhem. Name names. To do that, we need to bring them all in for questioning. But they are holed-up in their well-fortified Sydney headquarters. Such is the gravity of this whole situation that Tanya has notified the Heliport lads that their help in flushing-out the Togas from their bolt-hole will be much appreciated. Shoot to maim is our only proviso.

*The men shift about, nodding or sighing. Mark gestures to Paul to continue.*

Paul Okay. After Brett and Natalie placed the Lucky Strike bets, they alerted relevant police to keep an eye on the post office boxes. 28 PO boxes were under surveillance and all 28 attracted

visitors.

*A gasp of surprise goes through the group.*

Paul                   The 28 punters were young or old, male or female. A real mix. They all had in common that they were ordinary, law-abiding citizens. All worked as either bookkeepers or accountants. Or had worked as such before being laid off. They all (to a man) claimed that they had participated in a Melbourne Cup competition last year and that they had won a betting voucher. Somehow, our old mate Bong Fitzgerald piggybacked on that comp. Or he rigged it ... Whatever ...

The deal was that each punter received a page of codes. Very professional looking. When a bet was placed on their behalf, they were to trot to the PO box revealed by decoding the bet and retrieve the mail from the PO box. They had all received a placky card to swipe and then punch in the code to open the PO box. Slick! That mail they collected then provided the instructions.

All they had to do was follow the instructions. Take **this** stock and pay reduced tax (via a loophole) on it and then charge **that** client less for the stock. It was penny ante stuff: \$20 saved here or \$30 saved there. The ledger always balanced. It was really crummy amounts. But with enough of them, Bong was raking in the money. By that I mean that all the accounts affected by the tax dodge were ultimately Bong's little companies.

The books always balanced, so no-one queried them.

Jared                   You called them law-abiding citizens. What do you mean by that?

Paul *grins*            Bong Fitzgerald tapped into a basic, fundamental flaw in the reasoning of Australians. The Ned Kelly factor. People (all people) know what is crime. They know and understand what is fraud. But if you tell them it is a "tax dodge", they are quite okay

with that. Any rort that saves on tax is considered okay by decent Australians. If you're not sure what I mean, go and get your tax done by a professional: their one and only aim is to keep your money away from the ATO. (I'm glad Max has cleared off when I say that) ...

Mark

Yeah, thanks Paul.

Well, I can now tell you the Neil Redyard story. He has resigned his commission and will sell up in Eagleby where his brown-tongue, social climbing will no doubt be much missed. Oh, and he's being divorced by Mrs Redyard, I understand.

As to his misdemeanour, it was blackmail (as we thought). Just like you Jared, Neil was concerned that the Wallibong police station was still being faithfully manned by Bong. He started nosing around. He got Bong sent off somewhere and discovered the safe. Then he confronted Bong and wanted a pay-off. Bong gave him a jar of face cream (the sort that ladies use). Told him that there was a gemstone inside it. Using the diamond he now had in his possession Neil planned to leave Australia with his new love Marlene. That's why he changed his name to Bong's: because it would be easy for him to control Bong and not soil his own reputation. But then Bong died. Thanks to Max we got onto that little dodge.

*There is another rustle of shifting about. Mark winds up.*

Mark

My next move is to team up with Duncan Fairhouse and sort out what is legally Fitzgerald money and what is not. I'll sort that out and then make sure that the tax money finds a good home (not in somebody's pocket). And Jared: we'll ensure that you are completely cleared on any involvement in the Leckie Johnson demise. No stain on your character or reputation. After what's gone on, you should be as right as rain (but I want it official).

Alright fellas, that's the show.

*Jared nods as the other men verbally concur with Mark. Then the men break out. As they leave, Paul grabs Jared's elbow. Max has rocked up to re-join the group.*

Paul *to Jared* I gotta ask you something because ... because I'm intrigued.  
What was the problem in Tasmania?

Jared *cracks a laugh* Which one?

Max *intervenes* The 24-carat bitch.

Jared *embarrassed* Oh ... Her ...

Paul *grins* Go on ... What happened there? Come on. I need a light note after all the drama.

*Jared looks about for inspiration, sucking in a big breath.*

Jared We were in a crowded room and she was being difficult. Whatever I suggested was shit. I began to feel that it was all over. I couldn't work out why. I'd been really nice to her. You know. But you know when the bell has rung ...  
  
And then she swung around and walked off. When she got as far as the dance floor, she turned around and in her loudest voice asked me what my name was because she'd forgotten.

*Both men wince.*

Max Ouch!

Jared Yeah. So I immediately got myself a transfer to New South Wales and haven't looked back.

*After a bit of shuffling about, Jared coughs and laughs.*

Jared Yeah ... So ... Has that given your afternoon a bit of a zing?

Paul *philosophical* Yeah. It has. I mean, all women are prone to despise their menfolk for some unspecified reason. But at least my missus can always recall my name.

END OF SCENE

**Scene xli:** At Toga HQ the Rest of the Bikers Are Rounded Up Tuesday morning

*Dennis and 3 other bikers take up strategic position in a factory and shoot to maim, taking out Santo, Wayne and Marischo.*

*Armoured police then storm the Toga HQ. We see the bikers and molls being roughly dragged out to the waiting vans. They are cuffed and struggling to be free.*

*This means that all the remaining Togas are in custody except for Matterhorn (executed) and Johnno.*

END OF SCENE

**Scene xlii:** Interior, The Offices of Duncan Fairhouse Tuesday afternoon

*Duncan's office. Duncan sits on one side of his desk and Mark on the other. Both men stare gloomily out of the window to the side, whereby they both get a grand view of the Eagleby oval. Many of the Housewise people (along with their equipment) are stationed there.*

*Duncan sighs as he plays with his biro.*

Duncan                      This is a bloody sad business.

Mark                         Yes ... Very distressing.

Duncan                      I can't really credit it, but the 3 of them have all been hassling me for the release of funds. Especially the woman whose child was murdered. Quite incredible!

Mark *surprised*             What? Bong's kids?

*Duncan nods solemnly.*

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Mark Well, that's basically what I want to do: wind up this affair so that you can execute Bong's will.

Did you have any trouble when you met with the bank manager?

Duncan No. He was cool. Very understanding. And his best estimate of the value of Fitzgerald's estate comes to just a touch over \$4 million. That's current. There could still be small ins and outs.

*Mark sits back in his chair, staring at Duncan.*

Duncan I know ... A country copper ...

I reckon that the plan was to retire in good time and then move the money off-shore. Maybe move overseas himself ... I don't know ... And on his death, that \$4 million would be available for his children, as nobody would ever know or guess that it was ill-gotten gain.

Mark So he stitched himself up by dying unexpectedly while a solitaire diamond was doing the rounds. And that bloody safe ...

Duncan It would make a good novel. Or a film ...

Mark Anyway, I'm satisfied that we can proceed.

He can't have profited from his crimes (now that we know about them). So I need to separate his rightful money from the dubious.

Then I'll sign off and you can distribute his funds.

Duncan Fine. So the dodgy money came to somewhere in the vicinity of \$3.2 million. That may take a while to sort out. But since it will no longer be part of the estate, I'll move on. That business need no longer affect his will.

There was no domicile nor transferable goods (for instance, car or boat). His monthly police pay cheque was salted away: he hardly touched that money. We have around \$700,000 there

(which includes all his super). I've organized that the tax on the cache of diamonds be paid, leaving another \$400,000.

Mark He gets to keep the ice, then?

Duncan Yes, he'd been dealing in diamonds without ever paying tax. Another of his money laundering schemes. Once the impost is paid, this latest lark becomes legit. All good.

Mark *frowns* So ... around \$1.1 million to share among the kids.

Duncan Correct. My plan is to distribute \$1 million with a proviso that there may be further outgoings when the entire business is finally settled. If there are any costs, then the money I'm withholding will probably suffice there.

*Mark nods and reaches across the desk. Duncan hands him a single sheet of A4 paper. Mark quickly reads this, nods and then signs across the bottom, including the date. As he hands back the paper to Duncan, he shakes his head.*

Mark *rueful* And this from a man who sent a \$5 bill to his grandchildren on their birthdays and at Christmas.

Duncan I'll contact the 3 beneficiaries and advise them to provide me with their bank BSBs and account numbers. Then I'll make the deposits and send written confirmation so they won't ever have to pay any duties on their share.

Mark And I'll fly over to Sydney first thing in the morning. Meeting with the Premier, who will be joined by the Federal Minister for Finance.

Duncan *humorous* Give them my best wishes.

Mark *laughs* They can make the call on what to do with the \$3.2 million. Since it was in fact a taxation-based rort, I can see it all sliding into the government coffers. Federal, not state.

*Both men stand and shake hands. Words of farewell are exchanged.*

END OF SCENE

**FILMING THE WALLIBONG "HOUSEWISE" EPISODE**

The cookery expert is setting up in a very attractive bush setting. We see the crew and their vehicles scattered about. There is some scat chat and laughter. A small crowd of onlookers has gathered.

**Scene xliii:** Interior Eagleby Police Station Tuesday afternoon

*The police station is very quiet. Brett hangs up the station phone. He stares at the phone, then cracks a laugh and shakes his head. Just then, Natalie wanders up. She looks a question.*

Brett                                Those Housewise people have almost finished up all their work and they're heading off back to Sydney. And guess what? The heavies have just had a big bingle with a green Rover.

*Natalie rolls her eyes.*

Natalie                              Mrs Tozer?

Brett                                 Sounds like it.

Natalie                              Do nothing. Paul can go out there and demand that she surrender her licence. That will totally make his day. They can claim the bingle on their insurance and we'll stand behind their claim. Job done.

END OF SCENE

**Scene xliv:** Interior the Flat of Rhonda Fitzgerald Tuesday afternoon

*As Rhonda acts out her despair, we hear the letter that Johnno sent to Mark Kierney.*

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*Rhonda, angrily crying, rushes into the bedroom of Lucy and Tina. She grabs the birthday card from her father and the accompanying \$5 note and rips them to shreds as she sobs angrily, with teeth clenched. Then (after sobbing for a little while) she collects the other cards carefully.*

Johnno *voice-over*            Dear Chief Inspector Kierney. I am writing to let you know that I was unable to take the life of the little boy. People went to war to protect Australia so it was ridiculous to deliberately harm a child; it is an offence to the dead soldiers. With respect to the man who was my friend and leader, I have taken that matter up and have executed him. I gave him ten knife strokes. One for every body that he murdered. The world will be a better place without that kind of thug. Me and Sandy are going into hiding. Yours John Burgmann (as was).

*The camera backs away slowly as the voice of the funeral guy is heard.*

Funeral guy *voice-over*      Life remains a mystery, beyond our understanding. That mystery is only heightened by death (which must come to us all).  
  
We grieve at this untimely death. Our sister was taken from us long before her time.  
  
Let us never forget this lovely child. She had a bright, golden future to look forward to. That was snatched from her needlessly. We shall miss her.

END OF SCENE

END OF FILM

EPILOGUE and CREDITS ROLL THROUGH

*Tazzie is spin bowling for the Wallibong team (Eagleby). He takes another wicket. There is a loud shout. The other fielders rush in to congratulate Tazzie. The dejected batsman wanders off. The camera rolls on, showing the delightful bush settings which lured the Housewise people from Sydney.*

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END CREDITS

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