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Dallas J Baker

I'm going to set you to boiling baby

Abstract:

This work is a creative and Foucauldian-style ethical intervention into the author's childhood memories. Specifically, it re-imagines a moment in the author's youth when he first acknowledged his sexuality and gender difference. The script fuses non-fiction and fiction methodologies to produce a dramatic narrative. The finished work is neither fact nor wholly imagined. The script was developed using an interdisciplinary approach including factual research (evidence from author diaries and interviews with family members and such like) and fiction techniques such as associative and stream-of-consciousness writing. In this way, a script was produced that adheres to the core components of the "true" story whilst refiguring others to emphasise aspects of the author's experience that were wholly internal and even non-verbal (associations, imaginings, latent feelings etc). The result is a work that operates both as memoir and as an intervention into memory.

Biographical note:

Dr Dallas J Baker is an academic in the School of Arts and Social Sciences at Southern Cross University. He has an MA from Swinburne University and a PhD from Griffith University. His study and research intersect with a number of disciplines: writing, media and cultural studies. Dallas is also a writer with creative work published in a number of journals and anthologies. His current research interests are Queer Theory and its application to subjectivity and self-making in cultural practices such as creative writing and popular music consumption.

Keywords:

Creative writing – Scriptwriting – Memoir – Ethics of the self – Queer writing

THE CHARACTERS

DALLY - Dally is fourteen years old but looks twelve, has wavy blonde hair, pale skin and greyish eyes.

NARRATOR - Dally's voice at age fourteen.

GEN "THE GENERAL" HOOD - An effeminate American who has taken up residence in one of Toowoomba's oldest homes.

MOTHER - Dally's mother. She is in her mid thirties with blonde hair.

NANNA - Dally's grandmother. She's in her mid sixties and has a tangle of grey hair.

DELIVERY GUY - Good looking, muscled and with tattoos.

FINN TWINS - Two rough and tumble teenage boys.

SETTING

The action takes place in Toowoomba in late winter 1982. Toowoomba was on the cusp of change then, but still felt like a small country town stuck in the 1950s. It was backward looking and a little run down.

Locations:

Toowoomba streets

Corner Shop

Dally's place - an old weatherboard cottage

Tor House - a dilapidated mansion divided into flats

I'M GOING TO SET YOU TO BOILING BABY

TITLE UP: *TOOWOOMBA, QUEENSLAND, 1982*

FADE IN:

1. EXT. SUBURBAN TOOWOOMBA STREET, ESTABLISHING - DAY

From a bird's eye view, we see a suburban street typical of a Queensland town of the time: weatherboard houses with corrugated iron roofs on large blocks with deep backyards.

A Butcher bird sings, accompanied now and then by the call of a magpie. Redbrick chimneys puff gently into the wide sky, above backyards with mango or macadamia trees and chicken coops. It is quiet, but alive. The neighborhood looks a little shabby, but not neglected.

NARRATOR (V.O)

This is how I remember things. I've been told that this isn't exactly how things were. But that doesn't matter to me. My memories are my own, and I will make them what I will....

CUT TO:

2. EXT. SUBURBAN TOOWOOMBA STREET - DAY, CONTINUOUS

The street is straight and wide. In the distance, about two blocks away, is a corner shop. It's a weatherboard building with a broad timber awning. It has seen better days. A fading "Paddle Pop" sign has pride of place on the shop façade, directly above the awning.

In the foreground, below us on the footpath, a child with wavy, shoulder length blonde hair meanders down the street towards the store. This is DALLY. When we zoom in on Dally, the slightly muffled sound of pop music drifts upwards.

CUT TO:

3. EXT. SUBURBAN TOOWOOMBA STREET - DAY

From behind, at street level, we see that DALLY is carrying a portable cassette player or "tape recorder", quite a clunky thing. It's playing "synthetic" pop music. There is cord tied to the cassette players handle which is strung over Dally's shoulders, making the cassette player look like a weird shoulder bag. From this angle, Dally appears to be female; wearing a pair of maroon corduroy jeans and a cream cardigan. Dally's feet are bare.

From the front, we see that Dally looks about twelve years old with rosy cheeks and pink lips. There is an ambiguity to Dally's gender. The longish hair and rosy cheeks suggest femininity, but something about Dally's gait, and the bare feet, say otherwise.

Now that we are closer, we can hear that the music is "Don't You Want Me" by The Human League. We focus in on the turning wheels of the tape player, then move up to the open cardigan, beneath which is a purple t-shirt bearing an iron-on transfer of a toothy, ogre-like monster with the caption "Trust Me".

NARRATOR (V.O)

That's me; thinking I'm the height
of cool. And yes, I'm a boy,
despite appearances.

A white Holden Kingswood drives up behind Dally and slows down to coast alongside him. The occupants, a largely overweight middle-aged man at the wheel and a bone thin middle-aged woman in the passenger seat. Both are smoking. The cabin of the car is like a gas chamber. The occupants of the car stare at Dally and shake their heads. Dally is oblivious that he is being watched, too busy walking in time with the music. He doesn't even notice when they honk their horn and drive off.

NARRATOR (V.O)

I was lost in my own world. If you
were a girly boy growing up in
Toowoomba then, you'd have
retreated into your own world too.
Trust me on this.

Out of nowhere, something strikes Dally in the arm and splatters. Before he has time to work out what's hit him, another projectile strikes him in the side of the head; a lemon. It bursts all through his hair. He ducks and staggers. The tape recorder slips off his shoulder in the process, and then goes silent. Another lemon hits Dally in the chest and he falls down.

He looks around to find the source of the lemon bombardment and sees two teenage boys across the street semi-concealed behind a paling fence. They have mulish looks on their faces. These are the FINN TWINS. The Finn boys look very rough and tumble. Despite the cold, they're wearing only singlets, footy shorts, a few freckles and a sneer. They're shoeless as well. Their hands are full of lemons. They fire another volley and three hit Dally in quick succession.

FINN TWINS
(hurling more lemons)
Cop that poofter!

SUPERIMPOSE: *Poofter* ('pʊftə) – noun: 1. A man who is considered effeminate or homosexual. 2. A contemptible person.

The lemons land all around Dally and explode. One hits the tape recorder, causing the lid to pop open and the cassette to eject and the tape to tangle.

DALLY
No!

Dally hurls himself towards the tape recorder. When he removes the cassette, which is called *Hottest Hits 1982*, the tape snags on the player and unspools.

DALLY (CONT)
(to the twins)
Bastards! You've nearly ruined my
Hottest Hits cassette!

He gingerly untangles the tape, rewinds the tape onto the cassette and wipes it clean with a handkerchief.

DALLY (CONT)
(to himself)
My favorite thing ever.

He tenderly wraps the cassette in the hanky and puts it in his pocket.

The Finn Twins laugh and run off. Dally stands up, sighs and wipes the lemon debris off his face and clothes. His hair is poking up at odd angles now, and looks sticky. He picks up his cassette player, wipes it off with his hand, and continues on his way.

NARRATOR (V.O)

No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't convince the locals that, rather than hate me, they should appreciate me for my coolness. But most of the locals wouldn't have known cool if it bit them on the rear end. I suppose, neither did I, really.

CUT TO:

4. EXT. CORNER SHOP - DAY, CONTINUOUS

DALLY is still fussing with his hair when he arrives at the corner shop. He glances up and sees something that makes him stop still and stare.

DALLY

(stunned)

Holy...

Sitting, with his legs crossed, on the bench under the awning outside the store, is a very strange looking man. He is a shortish, plump, soft-faced and lamb-haired fellow in his sixties. This is GEN HOOD. He is dressed in a grey flannel suit and a highly-ironed white shirt. This is all topped off with a ruby red ascot tie decorated with golden pheasants. His head is adorned with a straw fedora.

Gen is slurping on a raspberry iceblock. He seems unaware that he is being watched. In fact, the childish delight with which he is devouring the iceblock makes it clear that he thinks he's completely alone.

NARRATOR (V.O)

I'd heard a lot about him, but never seen him before. He was American. The local kids called him "the General". In a neighbourhood where most of the men wore work shorts and singlets, the General stood out like a peacock in a henhouse.

Clearly fascinated, Dally continues staring at Gen Hood as he slowly walks toward the shop entrance. He takes one final look back at the man before he goes inside.

As Dally enters the store, Gen Hood's eyes flick briefly towards the door, showing that he was aware, after all, that he was being watched.

CUT TO:

5. INT. CORNER SHOP - DAY, CONTINUOUS

DALLY enters the shop, glancing over his shoulder through the shop windows to where the General is sitting outside. He smiles tentatively at the shopkeeper, MRS. GILL, an austere woman with tight black curls and thick black glasses. Mrs. Gill is doing a crossword in a large-print crossword book.

Dally goes to an aisle in the back of the store and, looking embarrassed, hesitates to pick up an item from the shelf in front of him.

The shelf is full of brightly colored packages of sanitary napkins. Dally sighs and picks up a packet. On the way back to the counter, he stops at the freezer, slides the door open and selects a chocolate Paddle Pop. He arrives at the counter looking embarrassed, his hair still all sticky, the t-shirt saying "Trust Me!"

DALLY
(cautiously)
Hi Mrs. Gill.

SHOP LADY
(coldly)
Hello.

NARRATOR (V.O)
The local kids were all terrified of Mrs. Gill. She'd once spent a night in the lock-up for beating her husband unconscious with a sizzling frying pan.

Mrs. Gill stares disapprovingly down her nose at Dally. He puts the Paddle Pop and the sanitary napkins on the counter and takes a small step back, watching Mrs. Gill with anxious eyes. The shopkeeper glances at the sanitary napkins and the Paddle Pop and then, her lips tightening with even more disapproval, looks at Dally as if he was something awful she's found on the sole of her shoe. As she rings-up the prices of Dally's items on the cash register, she says, almost to herself:

MRS GILL

No boy should be buying his own
mother's period pads.

DALLY

(nervously)

I... I think she's too embarrassed to
buy them herself.

MRS GILL

Perhaps she likes to fool herself
that periods are something that
only happen to other women, women
whose sons aren't gormless enough
to buy their mother's feminine
hygiene products for them?

DALLY

(trembling)

What's gormless?

SUPERIMPOSE: *Gormless ('gɔ:mlɪs) - adjective: stupid, dull.*

MRS GILL

You are. You're the very definition
of gormless.

Dally looks perplexed.

MRS GILL (CONT)

Look it up in a dictionary, if
you've got one.

Mrs. Gill looks at Dally as though it is very unlikely that he
has a dictionary. Dally smiles back, trying to look friendly,
but, given his sticky hair and the Trust Me t-shirt, he only
manages to look more gormless.

MRS GILL (CONTD)

That'll be \$3.90.

Dally hands over the money. Mrs. Gill places his change on the
counter, gives Dally one final disdainful look and turns back
to her crossword book.

CUT TO:

6. EXT. CORNER SHOP - DAY, CONTINUOUS

As DALLY comes back out of the store, his face pink with shame, he stuffs the sanitary napkins under his armpit, presumably to hide them from the gaze of passers-by.

He looks to the bench where the General had been sitting, but the man is no longer there. Dally's face shows that he is disappointed. As if to ease this disappointment, he frees the chocolate Paddle Pop from its wrapper and subjects it to a series of long, cold licks and heads back up the street in the direction he came.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There's nothing like a chocolate
Paddle Pop to ease disappointment
and lingering period pad shame.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Paddle Pop: a milk-based frozen dairy snack
popular in Australia and New Zealand.*

CUT TO:

7. EXT. SUBURBAN TOOWOOMBA STREET - DAY, CONTINUOUS

Dally meanders towards home, paying more attention to consuming his Paddle Pop than his surroundings. It's as if he's on sugar-induced autopilot.

The cassette player hangs silent at his side, bar for a thwacking noise it makes as it bangs against Dally's thigh as he walks.

8. EXT. DALLY'S HOUSE - DAY, ESTABLISHING

DALLY enters the yard of his home. The house is a dump; only slightly better than a shack. Its paint has long since peeled away, leaving the exposed weatherboards cracked and grey. Some of the windows are broken, sealed up with thick plastic and tape. The grass of the lawn has grown to shin height.

Dally finishes his Paddle Pop and throws the stick in a nearby bush. He mounts the rickety wooden stairs of the house and goes inside.

CUT TO:

9. INT. DALLY'S PLACE, KITCHEN - DAY, CONTINUOUS

A woman with wavy blonde hair, much like DALLY'S, is sitting at an old kitchen table with a cup of tea. A steaming teapot sits in front of her. This is Dally's MOTHER. She looks a little downcast. The kitchen table is in the center of the room. There is a large wood burning stove against one wall. A curtain-less window over the sink is a little grimy but lets in shafts of yellowish light.

DALLY enters the kitchen and takes the sanitary napkins from under his arm and puts them on the table. He removes the tape recorder from his shoulder and puts that on the table as well.

Dally's mother watches him remove the tape player, blinks and slightly rolls her eyes but says nothing about it. Unburdened by the recorder, Dally places the change before his mother as well.

MOTHER

Is that all the change?

Dally sighs with a note of indignation, as if offended at the suggestion he has pocketed some of the money.

DALLY

Yep.

MOTHER

(smiling softly)

Didn't buy anything else? No little treats?

DALLY

(unconvincingly)

Nope.

Dally, shiftily avoiding his mother's gaze, grabs a cup and sits down. He pours himself some tea from the pot on the table. He adds milk and reaches for the sugar.

MOTHER

You're going to have to go to school on Monday. You stayed home all last week already.

Dally pauses in his reach for the sugar, but then continues as if his mother hadn't said anything. He adds two spoons of sugar and stirs.

MOTHER (CONT)

You can't keep wagging school
Dally. They'll send someone 'round
and I'll be in trouble... Why don't
you want to go?

DALLY

I just don't want to...

MOTHER

Yes, but why? Are the other boys
mean to you?

DALLY

I just don't want to.

Dally's mother sighs. She looks troubled but when she goes to
say something further, Dally interrupts.

DALLY (CONT)

I saw that General guy at the shop.

MOTHER

(looks into his eyes)

Which General?

DALLY

The one who always wears the suit
and the hat; and those bright ties.

MOTHER

Oh *him*...

She says this with a distinct tone of disapproval.

MOTHER (CONT)

He's not a real General, Dally.

DALLY

Then why does everyone call him
that?

MOTHER

I don't know. I think maybe it's
his nickname. I'd stay clear of
him, he's a bit strange that old
man.

DALLY

Strange?

MOTHER

Yeah, with the hat and those ties,
and that old suit. He's a bit
touched in the head, like your
nanna.

She smirks at this last. As if on cue, an elderly woman with a
craze of grey hair shuffles past the kitchen door. She is
barefoot too, wearing only a loose-fitting white nightgown.
She's mumbling animatedly to herself and making wringing
gestures with her hands. This is NANNA.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Our nanna was the yardstick of what
was normal and what was nuts. She
was a paranoid schizophrenic and
regularly ran away from home
wearing nothing but her underpants.

Dally watches his grandmother disappear down the hallway.

MOTHER

So, don't you go talking to that
old man, okay? Promise me?

DALLY

Okay.

Dally gets up and heads out of the kitchen, leaving his mother
looking worried, absentmindedly rolling her cup of tea in her
hands.

Dally enters the hall, his brow furrowed with thought.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I knew right then and there that
that was a promise I was going to
have to break.

CUT TO:

10. INT. DALLY'S PLACE, LOUNGE ROOM - DAY, CONTINUOUS

DALLY enters a darkish lounge room. There is one window
letting in some light but most of the light is coming from a
lit open fireplace. The room is furnished with an old Genoa
couch and a clunky old black and white television.

NANNA is sitting on the couch. She is barefoot as well. She has a clutch of naked Barbie dolls in her hands. She is fiddling with them unconsciously, tugging on their hair, as she watches an old movie on TV.

Dally pays her no mind and sits on the floor directly in front of the TV. The old film is "Hush, Hush Sweet Charlotte" starring Bette Davis. The scene playing is the one where Charlotte bursts into a cotillion ball covered in blood. Dally is instantly drawn in. He scoots forward on his bottom so that he's even closer to the TV.

SUPERIMPOSE: *"Hush... Hush, Sweet Charlotte": a 1964 Southern Gothic film starring Bette Davis and much admired by homosexuals.*

NANNA
You'll ruin your eyes sitting that close.

Dally's eyes flick up and to the left in the general direction of where Nanna is sitting, showing that he's listening to her but he doesn't say anything. His attention is on the screen.

Nanna wrings the necks of the Barbie dolls and cranes her neck this way and that to try and see around Dally who is now blocking the screen.

NANNA (CONT)
Was your father a glass blower?

DALLY
(not looking at her)
What?

NANNA (CONT)
I can't see through your head...

Dally shuffles to the side a little and turns to check with his grandmother that she can see the television now. She nods in the affirmative. Dally notices the dolls, then turns back to watch the TV.

DALLY
(staring at TV)
What's with the dolls Nanna?

NANNA
They're whores. Americans. They're gonna burn.

She gestures with her head to the lit fireplace. Dally doesn't see this gesture, but his eyes glance in that direction also.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Delusion* (dɪ'lu:ʒən) – noun: A belief held in the face of evidence to the contrary, that is resistant to all reason.

DALLY

That's nice Nanna, you burn them
American whores.

Dally returns to gazing at the screen, but then his eyes flick up as a thought occurs to him.

DALLY (CONT)

(still watching TV)

Nanna, do you know where that
American, the one they call the
General, lives?

Nanna twists the heads of the dolls in her hands and shifts uneasily in her seat.

NANNA

Oh, yes, I know where that American
lives, he lives up on Newmarket
Street, at Tor.

Dally's eyes widen.

DALLY

At Tor House? Really? Are you sure.

NANNA

Oh yes, I'm sure. I know where all
the Americans are. All of them...
The CIA sends them... They watch me...
they watch me through the TV,
through the ads.

Dally's brow furrows with thought again. The light of the black & white television reflects in his eyes as he thinks.

NARRATOR (V.O)

As soon as I heard the General
lived at Tor House, I knew I wasn't
going to school the next day. I was
fascinated with that place...

CUT TO:

11. EXT. DALLY'S HOUSE - DAY, ESTABLISHING

The next morning, down the side of his house, DALLY is hanging the portable tape recorder on the handlebar of a beat-up old purple bike.

He takes a bundle out of his pocket and un-wraps it. It's the Hottest Hits cassette. He rubs it lovingly with a finger, then puts it in the tape recorder and presses play. As the tape begins to spin, emitting that strange quiet static that precedes the first track, he hops on the bike and pushes away.

12. EXT. TOR HOUSE - DAY

DALLY rides his bike around a corner and into a normal looking tree-lined Toowoomba street. His portable tape recorder is slung over the handle bars of his old beat up bicycle. It is playing "I Ran" by Flock of Seagulls.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Flock of Seagulls: an English New Wave band better known for their eccentric hairstyles than their music.*

Over the tops of the houses and trees, and stark against the sky, the folly tower of Tor House rises, dramatically different from all the houses surrounding it. It is eerily gothic and dilapidated.

Even in its dilapidated state, the folly is beautiful; endowed with an intricate façade of eclectic styles, a heady mix of neo-classical and neo-gothic. Tor is set back from the street, and so only the tower is visible.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Tor was like a weird gothic doll house that'd been plonked down in Toowoomba by some temporal or spatial anomaly; maybe teleported there by aliens. It would've been more at home on Mockingbird Lane, next door to the Addams Family, than it was in our neighbourhood.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Addams Family: Gothic television program featuring an eccentric family who delight in the macabre. Much admired by homosexuals and depressives.*

CUT TO:

13. EXT. TOR HOUSE - DAY, CONTINUOUS

DALLY dismounts from his bike at the head of the long u-shaped driveway to the house. Tor, once a grand mansion, is now a rabbit warren of flats, so Dally checks the mailboxes to see which of the flats is the General's place. The mailbox for number four has the name "Gen. J. E. Hood" written on it in black marker.

Dally stashes his bike behind a large camphor laurel tree, leaning it up against the trunk, and then, his face showing a mixture of both nerves and excitement, heads up the drive towards the mansion.

The closer to the house he gets, the more the tower seems to loom above him.

As he approaches the front of the house, Dally sees the number four painted on the door to the tower. His face lights with excitement at the realisation that the General lives in the folly.

He takes a deep breath, walks up the handful of steps at the front of the tower, hesitates just a moment, and then knocks softly on the door.

Just seconds after Dally knocks, as if he'd been waiting for someone to come to the door, GEN HOOD swings the door open and looks down at Dally with a puzzled expression on his face.

GEN HOOD

Who, on earth, are you?

Gen's voice is a rich Southern twang, albeit a little high-pitched, not unlike an older woman's. He is wearing a quizzical expression and his usual grey flannel suit with a blue ascot tie.

Dally steps back a little, apparently dazed by Gen's sudden appearance. He swallows, mustering his voice. In the meantime, Gen taps his foot on the threshold and says:

GEN HOOD (CONT)

Well, what do you want? I'm waiting
on an important delivery today...

Dally looks into Gen's impatient face and notices that his eyes are a little red. His blonde, lambs-wool hair, normally hidden beneath a fedora, is uncombed. He also looks sad, like he's been crying. He sighs, as if Dally's appearing on his doorstep is the final straw in a series of unpleasant events.

GEN HOOD

Well? What do you want?

DALLY

I, I don't want anything... I just, I just thought maybe we could be friends...

It is clear by Dally's face that he hadn't planned to say this, it just came out.

GEN HOOD

Friends? Are you mad? I'm sixty-one years old and you must be hardly ten...

DALLY

(apologetically)

I'm fourteen...

GEN HOOD

(in a softer tone)

Fourteen? Well, ain't you tiny for fourteen... What makes you want to be friends with me, *little one*?

DALLY

I just, I just like Americans and... well, you're always dressed so nice.

GEN HOOD

Well, little one, the latter is certainly true, but I find it hard to believe the former. You must be the only person in the whole of Toowoomba who likes Americans. There's so much anti-American feeling these days, what with how Vietnam went and everything, I can barely leave the house without getting shouted at.

DALLY

My nanna hates Americans, but I don't, I love them...

GEN HOOD

You don't say? You sure you're not nuts? You ain't an escapee from Bailey Henderson mental hospital are you? Have they got a children's ward up there?

DALLY

No, they don't. They got some teenagers up there though.

GEN HOOD

Well, if I'm to believe you, you are a teenager. So, what'd you do? Did you break out? Are you on the run from the nuthouse?

DALLY

No, I live just down the street... I saw you at the shop the other day...

GEN HOOD

Oh, that was you, the one staring at me like I had rabies or something? Not lettin' me eat my raspberry popsicle in peace?

DALLY

I didn't mean to stare. I just... I just liked your tie... the one with the birds...

GEN HOOD

Pheasants.

DALLY

Pheasants, yeah. I really liked that tie.

GEN HOOD

You an' me both little one... Well, I suppose you want a cup of tea? You Queenslanders always do.

He turned and took a few steps into the house. Dally stayed put, unsure what to do. Gen glances over his shoulder when he realises his visitor hasn't moved and says:

GEN HOOD (CONT)

Well, come on then, it's time we got started being friends.

Dally hesitates a moment and then follows him into the tower. Gen swings the door closed.

CUT TO:

14. INT. TOR HOUSE, SITTING ROOM - DAY, CONTINUOUS

The ground floor of the folly is one large space. DALLY's eyes widen appreciatively at the opulence of the main room. It has the feeling of the orient, and of English country houses; rich soft-furnishings and upholstery teamed with heavy, darkly-stained wooden furniture. It is a riot of rich reds, sumptuous blues and deep, old-fashioned greens. As he is lead in by GEN HOOD, Dally notes appreciatively that there are a lot of books.

DALLY

Oh, I love books.

GEN HOOD

Me too, they make life liveable,
don't they?

Dally nods then notes a staircase in the corner, going upwards to the top of the tower. It is apparent that Gen Hood's flat occupies the two stories of the folly. There is also a hallway that must have once connected the folly to the rest of the house that has been converted into a long, narrow kitchen with a bathroom at the far end.

GEN HOOD

Have a seat, little one.

Gen indicates a crimson art deco sofa. As Dally sits, Gen goes into the galley kitchen and sets to making tea. Dally can see him from where he is sitting and watches him with a growing fascination.

Gen moves in a kind of gliding fashion; his feet seem to only just touch the ground before springing into the air again.

SUPERIMPOSE: *"Light in his loafers": Euphemism for
homosexual man, especially when implying
effeminacy because of a springy gait.*

Dally rolls his eyes. Gen fills a kettle and pops it on the stove. Then, as he turns the knob to ignite the hotplate, he says, apparently to the kettle:

GEN HOOD

I'm goin' to set you to boilin'
baby.

Dally's eyes widen and his mouth opens a little; a look of confusion and surprise. Is Gen talking to the kettle? As Gen retrieves cups and saucers from a wooden cabinet with frosted glass doors, Dally shakes his head, indicating that he thinks he must have misunderstood. He watches Gen even more keenly as he bustles around the kitchen, but Gen doesn't say anything more.

As the kettle begins to heat, Gen comes back into the sitting room and goes to a lamp on an end table right by the sofa where Dally is sitting. Dally watches him like a hawk. Then, as clear as day, Gen says to the lamp:

GEN HOOD (CONT)

I'm flippin' you on honey.

Dally does a double take. What on earth is Gen doing? True to his word, Gen flips a switch on the lamp and a soft golden light comes on. He then glides over to a cabinet by the staircase. There is a record-player positioned on top of it in-between two tall stacks of records.

As Gen flicks the stereo on, placing the needle gently onto the revolving black vinyl, he says:

GEN HOOD (CONT)

I'm settin' you to spinnin' and
singin' sugar.

Dally's face shows that he has never witnessed anything like this before, not even from his grandmother. Gen really is talking to inanimate objects. As Gen stands back up, a sad song by Billie Holiday fills the room.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

That's it Billie, you spin and you
sing.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Billie Holiday (1915 - 1959): An American jazz singer and songwriter much admired by those light in their loafers.*

Dally's curiosity can no longer be contained.

DALLY

Umm... why are you talking to the
lamp and stuff?

GEN HOOD

Oh, it's just a little thing I do to keep my ear attuned to my voice. See, for the last five years I've spent most of my time alone. I rarely speak to anyone at all anymore. Months and months can go by without me using my voice even once... A little while ago, I had to go to Pigotts to buy me a length of satin to dress up that sideboard there.

He indicates an antique sideboard behind Dally gleaming darkly with many layers of polish, a solitary vase set at its centre.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

When the sales attendant asked me what I'd like, I started to say "Only a yard of your Christmas green satin if you don't mind", but as soon as I said the first couple of words I was so shocked by the sound coming out of my mouth, by my own voice, that I froze.

Dally looks like he doesn't really understand.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

You know how when you ring up to a radio station and make a request and you hear yourself coming out of the radio and you think "Who on earth is that? That can't be me!" Well, that's what it was like. I was so put off by how high and screechy my voice sounded I couldn't say another word. I just clamped my mouth shut and walked on out of there. I ain't been back to Pigotts since, I was so embarrassed. Anyway, I'd gone so long without speaking that I forgot what I sounded like. So now, I say little things to the appliances so that I don't shock myself again. I find that it acclimatises me to the, ah, unusual pitch of my voice.

Dally is silent with wonder.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

(self-consciously)

I know it's silly, but it's better
than feelin' embarrassed every time
I open my mouth out in public.

Dally contemplates this for a moment and then asks:

DALLY

So, why do you only talk to the
appliances? Why don't you speak to
the furniture too?

GEN HOOD

Because, little one, the furniture
doesn't do anything.

He says this as though it were the most obvious thing in the world. Furniture doesn't boil water, or light up a room, throw heat, wash clothes, play records or cook food and so there's no point speaking to it.

He leaves the room and comes back with a tray loaded with a steaming pot of tea and two cups. He places them on a coffee table in front of the sofa.

Gen pours Dally a cup of tea and adds milk and sugar without asking. Dally takes the cup he's handed and sips, loving the milky white sweetness. He holds the cup close to him, savouring the warmth, and has a closer look around.

The wall opposite where Dally is sitting is covered in an assortment of framed photographs, most of them showing a handsome man spanning many years. The oldest picture, in which the man is maybe twenty, is black and white and browning at the edges. In it, the man smiles disarmingly at the camera, sitting shirtless on the bank of a creek. The newest picture is in colour and looks like it was taken maybe a decade ago. In this photograph, the man is much older, perhaps fifty years old. He is sitting on a maroon couch by a window in Gen's flat with his eyes closed, soaking up the sun that is coming through the window in bright shafts. Dally looks over to the window and sees that the couch is still there.

GEN HOOD

How's your tea?

Dally starts with fright; he'd been so absorbed in the photographs that he hadn't noticed Gen sit down right next to him.

DALLY

Lovely.

GEN HOOD

(echoing & smirking)

Lovely...

Dally shifts uncomfortably in his seat, sips at his tea.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

What's your name anyway?

As he waits for Dally to answer, he stirs sugar into his own tea with a silver teaspoon that clinks softly against the bottom of his cup.

DALLY

Dallas.

GEN HOOD

Dallas? That's almost as unusual as my name.

Dally smiles a bit uncomfortably.

DALLY

People always say *something* about my name. Usually about Texas, or about the TV show, you know with J.R and Sue-Ellen Ewing.

SUPERIMPOSE: *"Dallas": a long-running American television soap opera revolving around a wealthy, feuding Texan family. Made popular by hysterics and, you guessed it, homosexuals.*

DALLY sips more tea, a little uneasily.

DALLY (CONT)

Why do they call you the General?

GEN HOOD

Well, that's the postman's fault really. He spread it about that my mail was addressed to a General. But he doesn't know the whole story...

Dally looks like he wants to hear the whole story.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

I hail from a very traditional Georgia family. It was the custom among my people to name the first born son after a Confederate War General. I was unlucky enough to be conceived first, and so I was named after General Jubal Early.

Gen raises an eyebrow as if to say 'Can you believe it?'

GEN HOOD (CONT)

General Jubal Early was the hero of a number of successful battles against the North. My full name is General Jubal Early Hood. Now, Mamma refused to call me General. So instead she used to call me Ju, Little Ju, Ju Baby. Much to my Daddy's horror, who was a flagrant anti-Semite. So Daddy started calling me Earl, short for Early. Oh, I hated that name. There were already two boys in my family called Earl and both of 'em were right next door to total imbeciles. One of them used to eat dirt. He'd sprinkle it on his baloney sandwiches. Dreadful. Though I dare say dirt could only improve the flavour of baloney. It's an awful meat....

Gen pauses to take a sip of his tea.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

Anyway, I liked Ju or Jubal about as much as I liked Earl. It reminded me too much of jelly jubes which I never liked. So I just started calling myself Gen, short for General. Before long, everybody took the hint and was calling me Gen as well. In the South, unusual names are quite accepted, most Southerners being eccentric in the naming of their children to begin with. That's especially true of Georgia.

DALLY

If you're from Georgia, why did you
come to live here?

Apparently, Dally cannot imagine why anyone from anywhere else
would choose to live in Toowoomba.

GEN HOOD

I was billeted here as a soldier
during World War Two, right here in
this very house. I was only twenty
years old and I'd never been
further than about fifty miles from
my hometown, Covington Georgia.
Once the war broke out, I enlisted
as soon as I could. I'd wanted to
get away from Covington ever since
I was old enough to figure out
there was more to life than that
claustrophobic little town. When I
got here, I felt at home straight
away. I just loved the light, and
the strangeness of all the plants
and animals... And on my first day
here in Toowoomba, I met my
lifelong friend, Eddie, Edward
Beit.

Gen indicates the man in the photographs on the wall.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

I had to come all the way across
the world to find him. He was
unique, one of a kind, and we were
soul mates... He was descended from
one of the original owners of this
house, but his family had long
since lost their money. I'd never
had a friend like him before... It
changed my life to know, for the
first time, that I was loved just
for being me...

Gen pauses, looks down at the carpet. There is a glimmer of
tears in the corners of his eyes. Dally looks away, out the
window to the overgrown yard and a line of white sheets
hanging heavily on an old clothesline.

DALLY

So, you were friends, best friends?

GEN HOOD

Friends, and so much more.

After a moment, when Dally looks back again, Gen's face has taken on a worried expression, as though he fears that he's said too much. But Dally hasn't connected the dots.

There is an awkward pause in which neither of them knows what to say. A soft sound from above, not unlike swift footsteps muffled by deep carpet, ends the uncomfortable silence. Dally looks at Gen enquiringly.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

(with a smile)

Just the resident ghost...

DALLY

(looking up)

This place is haunted?

GEN HOOD

Oh yes, utterly haunted!

DALLY

By who?

GEN HOOD

Well, it's a bit of a sordid tale. A long time ago, during the residence of the second owner of the house, the kook who built the folly, there was a maid who committed suicide, up there in the tower. She hung herself. The rumour is that she was pregnant and the owner, her master, was the father, the dirty old dog. Of course, that would've been terribly shameful back then in the 1800s. Evidently it was a shame she couldn't live with. It's her ghost that paces around up in the top of the tower.

DALLY

(nervously)

Does she ever come down here?

GEN HOOD

Oh no, she stays up on the second floor. But lots of strange things have happened all over the house. I suspect there's more than one ghost. Chairs move around on their own, wardrobe doors are flung open in the dead of night and a bloody-looking dampness spreads on the walls and then disappears. There's one spot on the floor in the old ballroom that is freezing to the touch. Oh, and once, I felt an invisible finger tap me on the shoulder...

DALLY

Holy Mother Mary!

GEN HOOD

Yes, it was wonderfully terrifying.

DALLY

How was it wonderful?

GEN HOOD

Well, little one, fear is a great illuminator. It shows us who and what we really are beneath all of our civilised composure.

By the look on Dally's face, this concept is a bit too deep for him at the age of fourteen. He takes another sip of his hot tea. Then there is a knock at the door.

CUT TO:

15. INT. TOR HOUSE, SITTING ROOM - DAY, CONTINUOUS

GEN leaps up and opens the door to reveal a young man, maybe in his early twenties. The young man is tall and lean, but with a solid chest pressed into a tight black polo shirt. His solid legs are encased in tight black jeans. His biceps strain under the cotton of his short sleeves and are covered in tattoos of flaming skulls, flaming swords and serpents writhing in flaming halos.

He is clearly a DELIVERY GUY, for he is holding a large bouquet of blue carnations. There are about two dozen of them, all a startling peacock blue with the tips of the petals a pristine white. The Delivery Guy looks at Gen as though he might have come to the wrong address.

DELIVERY GUY

Delivery for *General* J. E. Hood?

GEN HOOD

(beaming)

Oh yes, that's me. Would you mind bringing them in?

The Delivery Guy shrugs his shoulders and steps up into the sitting room. When he spots DALLY on the sofa, he gives him a weak smile. Dally smiles back; his eyes taking in how well-dressed and good looking the delivery guy is.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

(to Delivery Guy)

If you'd just pop them in the vase on that sideboard there...

He indicates the darkly gleaming cabinet behind Dally where there's a blue glass vase shaped like a funeral urn. The Delivery Guy places the flowers in the vase. Dally watches as the flaming skull on the guy's arm seems to wink as it moves when his bicep flexes.

Once the flowers are settled in their container, the Delivery Guy turns and hands Gen a small envelope.

DELIVERY GUY

That's your card.

The Delivery Guy then turns towards the door and heads out. He gives a half-hearted wave as he leaves and says to the room at large:

DELIVERY GUY

Enjoy.

Gen closes the door behind him with a sigh. He taps his chest lightly, as if to hush or calm his heart.

This action by Gen makes Dally feel uneasy, he shifts in his seat and nervously sips at his tea.

Gen goes over to gaze at the carnations.

GEN HOOD

Aren't they exquisite?

DALLY

What are they?

GEN HOOD

Carnations, lovely, no?

SUPERIMPOSE: *Carnation (kɑ: 'neɪʃən) - noun: A flowering species of Dianthus popular in the 1980s and long favoured by homosexuals and Irish playwrights.*

DALLY

Yes, they are... You know, you're the only other person I know who uses words like that, like "lovely" and "exquisite". Once I said a sausage roll from the PF Chicken Bar was exquisite and my whole family looked at me like I was something horrible at the bottom of a toilet.

Gen looks over his shoulder at Dally quizzically, perhaps still wondering if the boy is actually a little nuts.

GEN HOOD

Delicious story, little one. But I think you'll find we have more in common than quirky names, a love of books and a shared vocabulary. I sense that when you grow up, you'll be a lot like me.

Dally looks a bit confused and worried.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

Anyway, you can hardly compare a sausage roll, even one from the PF Chicken Bar, with these carnations... Aren't they just wonders of our modern times...?

DALLY

What do you mean?

GEN HOOD

I mean that it's just incredible
the things they can do now. Look at
these flowers, when they were cut
they were just ordinary white
carnations. The florist has had
them drinking dye for the last two
days to turn them blue. The effect
is wonderful isn't it? The little
white tips make them look like
they've been lightly dusted with
snow.

DALLY

They look like lolly flowers
sprinkled with icing sugar to me.

GEN HOOD

(chuckling)

You're right, they do.

Gen opens and reads the card.

DALLY

Who are they from?

He sighs before answering.

GEN HOOD

From me.

DALLY

From you?

GEN HOOD

Yes, you see today is a rather
special day. Five years ago today...
my Eddie passed away.

Gen looks over at the wall of photographs and smiles sadly.
His eyes are now unmistakeably teary.

DALLY

I'm... I'm sorry...

Dally says this a bit automatically. A realisation is dawning
on his face.

He looks at the photographs of the handsome man on the wall, and then notices a few things around the room he hadn't noticed before: a small statue of Michelangelo's David, a book on male nudes on the sofa by the window. Then he looks over the flat again, at all the books and cushions and ornamentation. He puts two and two together and his face pales.

SUPERIMPOSE: *Homosexual: (həʊməʊ'seksjuəl) – noun: 1. A type of well-dressed man much favoured by other homosexuals. 2. A person who is sexually attracted to members of the same sex.*

Gen is oblivious to Dally's discomfort.

GEN HOOD

There's no need for you to be
sorry, little one. But it's nice
that you are... The desperate thing
is, today's also my birthday, and
the anniversary of when we first...

Gen pauses, looking at Dally as if considering how much to tell someone so young.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

When we... first met.

Dally says nothing. Comprehension that Gen Hood is gay is dawning on his face, and that comprehension is mixed with fear.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

We met on my birthday, then, after
I got discharged from the military,
I came back here and we moved in
together, also on my birthday. And
then he died on my birthday... five
years ago... five years ago today.

Gen turns his back to Dally, looking down at the flowers, his breathing changes to strained, irregular gasps. Dally glances longingly at the door, then back at Gen, clearly calculating if he can just get up and leave. But before he can do so, Gen speaks again, still with his back turned.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

Every year for my birthday, Eddie
used to bring me 24 carnations;
each birthday a different colour.
Since he died, I've been sending
them to myself. Seeing them here...

He touches the tips of the carnations with a trembling hand.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

...fools me into believing that he's
still with me.... And as I wake
tomorrow morning, I'll catch the
scent of these carnations and
think, just for that moment before
I'm fully awake, that he's there in
bed beside me, that he... that he
never died.

Dally's face shows that this information is too much for him.
He looks to be in some kind of pain. He glances longingly at
the door again, then back at Gen. It's very clear that he
wants to get out of there.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

Memory is a funny thing, you know.
Since I started performing this
little ritual, sending the flowers
to myself, I'm almost able to
forget that Eddie is gone. Why,
this morning, I was sure I felt him
kiss me, here on my cheek... But then
I woke and his side of the bed was
empty, cold...

Gen turns and looks at Dally, catching him looking longingly
at the door. The look on Dally's face brings Gen out of his
reminiscences. He takes a deep breath, wipes the tears from
his eyes.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

I'm so sorry, little one, I
shouldn't have said these sad
things to you.

DALLY

It's okay.

It's clear by Dally's voice that it isn't okay. His face is
filled with a mixture of pity and anxiety.

Gen moves back to sit down next to Dally. Dally tenses up.

GEN HOOD

Let's talk about something else....
What did you think of that delivery
guy?

Dally shrugs, utterly bemused.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

I saw you watching him... you
couldn't keep your eyes off of him.

Gen's voice is kindly, but Dally takes the question as an accusation. His face shows acute worry. Gen just keeps smiling at Dally, waiting for an answer.

DALLY

(defensively)

I liked his tattoos.

GEN HOOD

(smirking)

Of course you did. Another thing we
have in common.

Dally's eyes widen. His anxiety is growing. He peers down into his cup, staring at its milky contents as though he might find something other than tea inside. Then he looks back at the door.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

I saw that burly fellow out the
back of the florist when I placed
my order. He didn't see me, he was
dragging boxes around. But I asked
specifically for him to make the
delivery. I thought his appearance
at my door might spice up my
birthday a bit.

Dally looks up into Gen's face, apparently surprised at this confession and distracted, a little, from his own anxiety.

DALLY

But..., but Eddie...

GEN HOOD

Oh, don't misread me little one,
I'm faithful to Eddie, painfully
faithful, and though I'm old,
painfully old, I'm not blind. And
neither was Eddie for that matter.
He would've liked that young man's
tattoos just as much as we did.

Gen smirks, glancing over to the black and white photo of a shirtless, grinning Eddie.

This is the last straw for Dally. He breaks down into tears. The teacup shakes in his hands.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

What... what's the matter?

DALLY

(sobbing)

I don't want to be like you... All alone and, and talking to yourself and sending yourself flowers, and so, so sad...

Gen looks taken aback. He carefully puts his teacup down and takes the one from Dally's hands and puts that down too.

GEN HOOD

You listen to me little one. You got me on a bad day. I'm not sad like this most days, not really... Besides, when you're as old as I am you understand that, even though life is a real bitch sometimes, it's worth it if you've spent most of it with someone you love... Do you think, all those years ago, if I'd known that Eddie and I would be parted like we were, and that I would spend my last years alone, that I would've changed anything? That I wouldn't have loved him? Well, I'll tell you right now, I wouldn't have changed a thing. I loved Eddie more than anything in the world, still do. I wouldn't give up a single day of my time with him to save myself from all the years of grief I've felt since he died.

Gen takes Dally's hand.

GEN HOOD (CONT)

And I'll tell you something else, life is hard. Real hard. There's no avoiding it. And when you're like we are, it's even harder. Sometimes you're going to want to give up, but don't. There will be wonderful things for you, and one day you might even meet someone like Eddie, who'll love you simply for who you are.

DALLY

I can't believe anyone'll ever love me like that.

GEN HOOD

Well believe it little one, 'cause it's going to happen. If someone can love me, as odd as I am, you'll have no problems. Why, you'll grow up to be a real charmer, I can tell. I got me an eye for such things.

DALLY

Really?

GEN HOOD

Trust me, I never lie.

DALLY

But you do talk to yourself...

GEN HOOD

(grinning)

Nobody's perfect. Now, you better head on home. It's getting late. I feel the sunset comin'. I got a twinge in me bones.

Dally gives a small smile. He takes a breath, gets up and walks towards the door. Before he reaches it, he turns and walks back to Gen. He hesitates a moment, as if weighing up a momentous decision, then he takes something out of his pocket and gives it to Gen.

DALLY

Happy birthday... Don't open it till I'm gone.

GEN HOOD

Uh, okay. Thanks.

Dally heads back to the door, opens it and pauses. He asks:

DALLY

Can I come back tomorrow?

GEN HOOD

Sure, sure you can come back tomorrow.

Dally smiles, then turns and walks out the door. Gen unwraps what Dally gave him. It is the Hottest Hits cassette. Gen looks perplexed but amused.

CUT TO:

16. EXT. TOR HOUSE - DAY, CONTINUOUS

DALLY is smiling softly as he walks down the front stairs of Tor House. He walks up to his bicycle, which is still leaning against the large tree. He takes hold of the cassette player hanging on the handle bar and says:

DALLY
I'm going to set you to spinning
and singing baby.

He takes another cassette out of his pocket and presses the play button. "Through Being Cool" by Devo comes out of the speaker.

SUPERIMPOSE: *DEVO: A post-punk band much admired by juvenile delinquents and teen homosexuals.*

Dally mounts his old purple bike and rides off down the street, still softly smiling. The folly tower of Tor House stands tall against the blue sky above him. As he rides into the distance, the music fades and is replaced by a voice over:

NARRATOR (V.O)
I never regretted giving away my
favourite thing ever, not once. I
saw it as a fair trade. Gen gave me
something much better than *Hottest
Hits 1982*. He'd made me feel that I
was worth something, and that one
day I would know what it felt like
to be loved just for being me.

CUT TO:

17. EXT. SUBURBAN TOOWOOMBA STREET, ESTABLISHING - DAY

From a bird's eye view, we see a suburban street typical of a Queensland town of the time: weatherboard houses with corrugated iron roofs.

A Butcher bird sings, accompanied now and then by the call of a magpie. Redbrick chimneys puff gently into the wide sky above backyards with mango or macadamia trees and chicken coops.

NARRATOR (V.O)

This is how I remember things. My memories are my own, and I will make them what I will...

FADE TO BLACK

END OF SCRIPT

Research statement

Research background

Memoir is lately garnering more scholarly attention (Williams 2013). Core to much scholarly discussion of memoir is the nexus between fact and fiction and the role of memory in understanding both (Williams 2013; Murdock 2003). This work undermines the ‘factual push’ of much memoir by drawing on growing understanding that memory is fluid and changeable (Murdock 2003). This work applies these notions of memory as fluid to creative praxis.

Research contribution

The genre of memoir occupies a significant place in the cinematic and literary arts (Murdock 2003). This creative work extends the application of memoir as mere retelling to one of *refiguring* of memory. This script foregrounds the mutable nature of memory (Murdock 2003) and actively intervenes in memory to recast or ‘queer’ past events. This is done as part of a Foucauldian ethics of the self (Foucault 1986) to remake both memory and subjectivity. In this way, this script makes a contribution to the rethinking of scripted memoir and of memory itself.

Research significance

This work is one of the first Queer Theory informed, creative applications of ideas around the mutability of memory to a creative work. The work is innovative in that it applies theories of memory, gender and sexuality from multiple disciplines. This script is among the first to be created and published as a script in and of itself as a research output irrespective of any possible production. It is also a wholly original creative work.

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RMIT University

Craig Batty

Frankie goes to Hollywood: a comedy script

Abstract:

Adam is a television producer with an enviable track record. He has produced 10 factual shows, including the Logie-winning *Australia's Best Gardens*. Frankie is a younger 'rising star' within the production company, climbing her way to executive producer in just a few years. Her impressive show *Pensioners Win Prizes* has kept the company and her job afloat – even if there are awkward looks and hushed allegations of rigging whenever it is mentioned. So when Adam and Frankie are thrown together to work on a new family-based factual entertainment show, all hell breaks loose. Frankie has, after all, just returned from Hollywood – with a fresh way of thinking about narrative structure and character conflict. *Frankie Goes to Hollywood* is a black comedy that, through exaggeration, parodies the way that factual entertainment shows are put together – or at least are critiqued as being put together. Drawing on scholarly research from film, television, media and cultural studies, the screenplay expresses ideas and concerns about the manipulation of subjects, presenters and experts into characters for the sake of gaining a bigger audience.

Biographical note:

Dr Craig Batty is a Senior Lecturer and Creative Practice Research Leader in the School of Media and Communication, RMIT University. He is a screenwriter, script consultant and script editor, with experiences in short film, feature film, television and online drama. He is author of the books *Screenplays: How to Write and Sell Them* (Kamera Books 2012) and *Movies That Move Us: Screenwriting and the Power of the Protagonist's Journey* (Palgrave Macmillan 2011), and co-author of the books *The Creative Screenwriter: Exercises to Expand Your Craft* (Methuen 2012), *Media Writing: A Practical Introduction* (Palgrave Macmillan 2010) and *Writing for the Screen: Creative and Critical Approaches* (Palgrave Macmillan 2008). He is co-founder of the script development company, Articulate Monkey.

Keywords:

Creative writing – Scriptwriting – Screenwriting – Reality television – Character

Frankie Goes to Hollywood

1. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Television producer ADAM (early 40s, fit) and production assistant JOSEPH (late 20s, awkward) sit at a table.

Surrounded by paperwork and DVDs, they're both studious. Joseph goes to say something but doesn't. Adam goes to say something but doesn't. Both go to say something but don't.

2. EXT. TV STUDIO, CAR PARK - DAY

An Audi A5 rolls into a designated space: Frankie Smart, Executive Producer. The paint looks quite fresh.

FRANKIE (late 30s, sexy) steps out confidently, clutching a heavy bag. She has something good on her mind.

She breathes in the air as if it's a drug.

3. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Adam and Joseph are now deep in conversation.

ADAM

A nice, normal family to remind us
what it is to be Australian. To have
morals. Good attitudes.

JOSEPH

Family BBQs.

ADAM

Respect. An enviable standard of
living.

4. INT. TV STUDIO, RECEPTION - DAY

Frankie glides past the grubby reception. The receptionist, GLENYS, looks up from her book: *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

GLENYS

You're back!

FRANKIE

And better than ever!

GLENYS

Hot weather? Hot men?

FRANKIE

It was a transformation, Glenys.

(beat)

Transformation!

5. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Adam and Joseph are now more animated. Focused.

ADAM

Tremendous Television has always prided itself in strong morals and family values. That's one of the reasons I joined the company.

JOSEPH

And we've got Lord Reith to thank for that.

(beat)

When I was writing my thesis...

ADAM

The power is in the premise, Joseph. Our premise is simple...

6. INT. TV STUDIO, CORRIDOR - DAY

A group of PENSIONERS are being ushered into a TV studio by camp production assistant ROMEO. His eyes light up when he sees Frankie strutting towards him.

FRANKIE

Pile them high and sell it cheap!

ROMEO

Babe!

Frankie and Romeo air kiss.

FRANKIE

Meet me for lunch, darling. I've got an offer you'll find very hard to refuse.

Frankie powers away. Romeo watches on in awe, excited by her words.

PENSIONER 1 (REMOTE)

I don't know why we're bothering. It's all rigged anyway.

7. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Adam stands by a whiteboard. On it he's written, in big letters, 'Ordinary people. Ordinary circumstances.'

ADAM

True to our culture. True to our nation. And true to ourselves.

JOSEPH

(like a lap-dog)

We're not, and shouldn't be, like the Americans. Or the Brits.

ADAM

We're just bloody nice people!

Joseph stands, but Adam nods for him to sit back down.

ADAM

Which is why, if done honestly and respectfully, we'll be a hit.

JOSEPH

Strengthening both our brand and our reputation.

ADAM

Representing life as it really is. We want viewers to feel...

The door suddenly bursts open. Adam and Joseph look. Frankie, all teeth and tits, poses before waltzing in.

FRANKIE

I want misfits - and lots of them!
Bogans and bridezillas, all under one roof. Preferably one that's leaking.

Joseph doesn't know where to look or what to say. Adam tries to keep his calm but is clearly unsettled.

FRANKIE

An ex-prostitute if we can find one.
With a rent boy son.

(beat)

Husband - even better!

ADAM

(trying to regain control)
Welcome back, Frankie. We're...

Frankie clicks her fingers at him, acknowledging his words but not wanting her flow to be interrupted.

FRANKIE

I'm seeing families from hell. And so
is our audience. Or they bloody well
will be!

Frankie heaves her bag onto the table and pulls out a raft of screenwriting books: McKee, Vogler, Field, etc.

FRANKIE

Here's our answer, boys! Ratings,
awards, promotions - they're all in
here.

Adam gives her a knowing look.

ADAM

Let me guess. Every page littered with
formulas for success?

Frankie throws the books around, proud. She keeps one back and breathes in the pages.

FRANKIE

You can smell the conflict!

ADAM

I can smell a rat.

Joseph takes this literally and sniffs the pages. Adam pushes the books close to him away.

ADAM

This is just fiction.

FRANKIE

It's very real, Adam. Very real.

ADAM

It's films. We're making teatime
telly, not high-end Hollywood.

Frankie walks over to Adam.

FRANKIE

Are you happy being a lowly producer?

She circles around him, making him slightly uncomfortable.

FRANKIE

Bob, Chris, Syd... they all say the
same. Conflict drives an audience, not
comfort. Who wants happy families when
we can have families at war?

Adam stands, breaking her control.

ADAM

The broadcaster clearly...

FRANKIE

...doesn't know what it wants until we
give it to them!

An awkward stand-off between Adam and Frankie, until Adam sits
back down.

FRANKIE

(proud)

Look at Pensioners Win Prizes!

Joseph wriggles uncomfortably. He looks at Adam.

FRANKIE (CONT)

They put me in charge of Factual, and
so this is where we're going.

JOSEPH

As long as we stick to the facts?

FRANKIE

We hit them with conflict and
character. No more of this, 'Oh,
aren't they lovely people?' garbage.
From now on, drama, drama, drama.
Tectonic plates clashing under the
fault lines.

(beat)

Boys, we're going to rock this nation
to its core!

Adam takes a very deep, very controlled breath.

Frankie flicks through one of the books and again breathes in the pages.

8. INT. TV STUDIO, CANTEEN - AFTERNOON

Adam and Joseph queue in the line. Adam is tense, tapping his tray unconsciously.

ADAM

Hollywood's gone to her head.

JOSEPH

It'll be 'The Walk of Fame'. Muscle Beach.

ADAM

As a producer, I have an absolute ethical obligation to my subjects and my audience.

JOSEPH

Is there a way to combine both?
Conflict, but with consideration?

ADAM

The only thing she considers is her career. And she doesn't care who she swallows up on the way.

Joseph ponders for a second.

JOSEPH

I hope it's not moussaka again.

Across the canteen, Frankie is in cahoots with Romeo.

ROMEO

It's a yes, wow... but, d'you think I'm good enough?

FRANKIE

You slept with the ombudsman guy for me, didn't you? Stopped that stupid investigation!

ROMEO

(proud)

He'll not say anything. I took plenty of pictures.

Frankie gives him a wink - and he loves it.

FRANKIE

Which is why I want you by my side in
Factual. You're too good for greedy
fucking grannies.

Romeo beams and bites into his sandwich.

FRANKIE

Plus you might be able to help me get
my hands on Chris Hemsworth.

Romeo almost chokes. Frankie gives him a dirty wink.

9. INT. TV STUDIO, RECEPTION - DAY

Joseph talks to Glenys, who's only half listening - she's caught
up in *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

JOSEPH

So ... Adam will be busy all
afternoon. Evening probably, too.

GLENYS

Mmmm.

JOSEPH

If Eve calls, tell her to make his
favourite and put it in the oven. And
get a bottle of red in.

GLENYS

Right.

Joseph wants to say something else but is awkward. He turns away
- only to be faced with a smiling Romeo.

JOSEPH

Romeo...

ROMEO

Juliet!

(beat)

Come on, brainbox, we're working
together now.

Romeo grabs his hand and leads a confused Joseph away.

JOSEPH

What about Pensioners Win Prizes?

10. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Adam stands next to the whiteboard. He's changed the words to, 'Extraordinary people. Extraordinary circumstances.'

Frankie watches him intently. Joseph and Romeo take notes, Joseph by hand, Romeo on an iPad.

ADAM

Ok, so ... Australian Family, and where we're at.

FRANKIE

Oh yeah, I forgot...

Adam glares at her - another problem?

FRANKIE

We're calling it *My Family Rules*.

Romeo types excitedly on his iPad. Joseph is confused.

JOSEPH

Isn't that like...

FRANKIE

Instantly full of conflict, yes! We're not talking nouns - we're talking action, attitude, drama. Bogan Broadmeadows mothers versus yummy mummies from South Yarra.

Adam pauses for a moment, taking it all in. And then:

ADAM

Ok, so ... *My Family Rules*, and where we're at. And heading to. And the sewers we're dredging in order to pull a good audience.

FRANKIE

And export overseas.

JOSEPH

Does one dredge a sewer?

ROMEO

(tongue-in-cheek)

Only if you insist!

Joseph is confused by this.

ADAM

Can we remind ourselves what the
broadcaster wants?

FRANKIE

Needs.

JOSEPH

When I was writing my thesis...

ADAM

This is my tenth show. I'm quite
confident with the guidelines.

FRANKIE

How many got a second series?

Adam ignores the comment and instead writes on the whiteboard:
'Educate. Inform. Entertain.'

ADAM

I know we're going back eighty years,
but I always find these words a strong
starting point.

FRANKIE

People go to school to be educated.
And read newspapers to be informed.
They turn on the TV to be entertained.

ADAM

Shame you didn't think about that with
Pensioners Win Prizes.

Joseph looks at Romeo, nervous about his reaction.

FRANKIE

I'll let that one go, Adam, because
you're a nice guy and I like you. The
general public, however, wouldn't like
you. Guys like you don't cut it on TV.

(beat)

Nor do your ideas.

ADAM

(flustered)

So winning a Logie in 2008 for
Australia's Best Gardens, that wasn't
cutting it?

FRANKIE

The only thing being cut in that old
dress was a load of grass. And
probably the wrists of half the
viewers.

Awkward silence. Joseph goes to say something but doesn't.

Frankie gets up and goes over to the whiteboard.

FRANKIE

Adam, darling, it's easy to be stuck
in the past. It's comfortable. As
Hollywood tells us, it's safe to
remain in our Ordinary World. But it's
not good enough. We need an *adventure*.

ADAM

(sarcastic)

Oh yes, a *Special World*!

FRANKIE

You see, my gift is already being put
to good use.

ROMEO

(to himself)

I'll be trying mine tonight.

Joseph gives him a curious look.

FRANKIE

Allow me to...

Frankie pushes Adam to one side. But he won't budge.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

...just ...if you wouldn't mind,
please...

Adam gives up, sharply. He sits down.

FRANKIE

We start on mothers. Domestic Goddess
versus dirty bitch.

She rubs out 'Educate' and 'Inform' and starts to write wildly on
the whiteboard.

FRANKIE

I'm seeing close-ups of sparkling staircases and manky carpets. Luxurious living versus living on the breadline. We'll bring in live bugs if we need to. Set up a premise of disgust.

ADAM

This breaks all moral - and legal - codes of conduct.

FRANKIE

Then we slam into the kids coming home from school. Music lessons intercut with *Home and Away*. Theme tune to show the contrast. Beethoven's 5th with 'You know we belong together'.

(beat)

Then we're back on the mums. One making the house perfect, the other making a mess of dinner. Chandeliers intercut with a freezer full of beef burgers!

Joseph and Romeo are frantically taking notes.

ADAM

For information, I'm not comfortable with any of this.

FRANKIE

(excited)

Precisely! Shaken, not stirred!

11. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Frankie is even more animated now. The whiteboard has been filled with ideas: 'Domestic abuse?'; 'Plant cigarettes under kid's bed!'; 'Father = transvestite?', etc.

12. EXT. TV STUDIO, CAR PARK - DAY

Adam takes a cigarette from a COLLEAGUE. He looks at it guiltily but then lights it up - he really needs this.

13. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Joseph and Romeo are checking out a website with profiles of strange-looking people, at the same time cross-referencing them with one of the screenwriting books.

14 INT. TV STUDIO, FRANKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Frankie sips champagne as she leafs through a pile of trashy magazines. Headlines stand out: 'Kids Starved But They Look Better For It'; 'Dog Hairs Make Perfect Aperitif'; 'I Ate My Own Baby', etc.

Next to her, screenwriting books are littered with multi-coloured post-it notes.

15. EXT. TV STUDIO, CAR PARK - DAY

Adam sends a text to his wife (Eve): 'Don't wait up. Let the kids watch as much *Home and Away* as they like! xx'

As he puts the mobile phone back in his inside pocket, he feels something and, after a slight hesitation, pulls it out. It's a hip flask. He stares at it.

16. INT. TV STUDIO, CORRIDOR - DAY

Romeo is talking animatedly to Glenys. She actually puts *Fifty Shades of Grey* down and listens with interest.

17. INT. TV STUDIO, FRANKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Frankie, still drinking, is finishing a telephone call.

FRANKIE
(into phone)
Peter, you're a darling.
(beat, giggles)
Oh stop! I have to work with him.
(beat)
I bought it from LA! I thought it
might be your size...
(beat, giggles)
Ok, ciao darling. See you soon. And
get Chris to call me!

She puts the phone down and looks very happy with herself.

18 INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Production of the show is well under way. On the whiteboard, sample logos, participants and episode arcs.

Joseph and Romeo get on well. Joseph now has an iPad.

Adam talks but doesn't stand up. He seems a little tipsy.

ADAM

We start shooting in two weeks.
Nothing's ready but I'm assured the
raw look makes it more authentic. Not
that there's anything authentic about
this bloody show...

ROMEO

The people are real.

ADAM

If you call choosing life's winners
and losers like you would horses on
Melbourne Cup day, then yes, the
people are very real.

JOSEPH

I think he meant, like, they're not
... clones, or anything.

ADAM

(under his breath)

Something you'd know about.

Joseph and Romeo pull the exact same confused look. Frankie
bounces in, excited.

FRANKIE

(to Romeo)

I don't know which setting you used,
but he's agreed to it!

ROMEO

(filthy)

I said I'd have him bending over
backwards for me...

Joseph flinches, almost jealous.

ADAM

Is someone going to... ?

FRANKIE

Chris Hemsworth!

ROMEO

The God of all exports!

JOSEPH

When I was writing my thesis...

FRANKIE

He's going to present! A front man
with a whole lot of front!

ADAM

Well ... yes, that is impressive.

FRANKIE

It's an extra hundred thousand viewers
an episode.

ADAM

Who's writing the scripts? There's
that sweet guy from Australian Story
who...

FRANKIE

I am. And Romeo script editing.

Frankie looks to Adam for a response, but he's vacant.

FRANKIE

The deal was, I'd be the only one
putting things in Chris's mouth.

ROMEO

Me massaging it all into shape.

JOSEPH

Well I don't think he's all that.

ADAM

I'm actually surprised he agreed to
stoop so low.

FRANKIE

We... negotiated a PhD as part of the
deal.

Adam looks at Joseph. Joseph looks at Romeo. Romeo smiles.

ROMEO

Everyone's got one these days.

Joseph is disappointed by the comment.

FRANKIE

It only cost ten grand! Hollywood
Institute of Performance Studies.

ROMEO

We joked how he could call himself Dr
HIPS!

ADAM

Oh dear God...

FRANKIE

I thought about getting one myself.

ADAM

(to himself)

Not sure you need any more hips.

Frankie eyes him suspiciously - 'what did he say?'

ROMEO

The criteria was having a substantial
body of work, but because his body *is*
his work...

JOSEPH

Four years of really hard work!

FRANKIE

We've got Chris Hemsworth to front our
fantastic new show, and it's gonna
make us money and bag us prizes -
what's the problem?

Awkward silence.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Great!

(beat)

Ok, casting. Romeo, have you spoken to
the Siamese twins yet?

Adam drops his head on the table.

19. EXT. TV STUDIO, CAR PARK - DAY

An army of people start to arrive at the studio. Joseph and Romeo check them in:

- A FAMILY OF THUGS, each with the same dagger tattoo on their necks;
- A RELIGIOUS FAMILY, each carrying a bible;
- Hard-looking LESBIAN MOTHERS with TWO YOUNG CHILDREN;
- A MIME-ARTIST COUPLE with mime-artist TWINS;
- An OLD MAN with a supermodel-type much YOUNGER WOMAN, and their FIVE CHILDREN.

An ambulance arrives, followed by a horse and cart, followed by a mini-bus from a psychiatric hospital.

20. INT. TV STUDIO, CORRIDOR - DAY

Frankie eagerly ushers the auditionees into the green room. She smiles over at Adam, who's looking nervous.

FRANKIE

Everyone has a seat with their name on it.

AUDITIONEE 1

(remote)

Can we take it home?

AUDITIONEE 2

(remote)

I'm only here for a free feed.

AUDITIONEE 3

(remote)

Daddy always said I'd be famous. But I couldn't tell anybody ... just like the other thing.

FRANKIE

TV history in the making!

AUDITIONEE 4

(remote)

Make sure they don't see your tag.

21. EXT. TV STUDIO, CAR PARK - DAY

Joseph and Romeo usher the last few people into the studio and then head in themselves.

Just as they close the door, a car horn sounds. They turn in unison to see a hearse driving into the car park.

As it pulls into a space, the words 'Sister' written in flowers can be seen through the side window.

22 INT. TV STUDIO, AUDITION ROOM - DAY

Cameras are set up for the auditions. Adam and Frankie sit at the back. Joseph and Romeo are up front.

- The Thugs are having a heated domestic, the Mother hitting the Father around the head several times;

- The Religious Family sit in silent prayer;

- The Lesbian Mothers kiss each others' necks as the Children do the talking;

- The Mime Artists perform a mock dinner-eating scene;

- The Supermodel-type sits on the Old Man's knee as the five Children scrap;

- The Psychiatric Patient freaks out as the horse, without cart, sniffs around her.

Adam is shell-shocked at everything he's seeing. Frankie, who's been making notes in one of the screenwriting books, pops open another bottle of champagne.

23. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Everyone sits around the table, looking through schedules, screenwriting books and various bits of paperwork.

On the whiteboard, pictures of the auditionees are grouped into what has been termed 'Character Orbits': Rich, Redneck, X-Rated, Damaged and Product Placement.

Adam looks worse than ever. Romeo gives Frankie a massage.

FRANKIE

I think we can say we've seen it all.

ADAM

I didn't know it was possible.

FRANKIE

The network'll go mad over us!

ADAM

Or perhaps be mad with us?

ROMEO

We'll go viral!

ADAM

It's just vile!

FRANKIE

(to Adam)

Are you in the wrong department? See yourself as a comedian, Adam?

ADAM

Someone's gonna be laughing.

JOSEPH

I wonder, is there a way of marrying the two? Morals with madness, that kind of thing?

ADAM

Morally ethical yet with a dash of manipulation, you mean?

FRANKIE

(to Joseph)

You're a genius!

ROMEO

He does have a PhD.

Joseph smiles, happy with Romeo for the comment.

ADAM

So does Chris flaming Hemsworth!

Frankie goes to the whiteboard and writes excitedly: 'Season 1 Climax'.

FRANKIE

We end with a marriage. Spouses from different families.

(beat)

Divorce with a capital 'Holy shit!' We do a one-hour special.

ADAM

And we do this how? You can't just engineer a divorce.

FRANKIE

This is television - we can make anything happen!

24. INT. TV STUDIO, RECEPTION - DAY

Frankie, Adam, Joseph and Romeo walk down the corridor, deep in conversation. Adam takes a sly swig of whiskey.

Glenys is now reading one of the screenwriting books. She holds it up to Frankie - 'This is good!'

25. EXT. STREET 1 - DAY

The CAMERA CREW arrive at a dodgy-looking street. As they get out of the van, scruffy YOUTHS on bikes circle them.

26. INT. TV STUDIO, FRANKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Frankie is being interviewed by someone from a TV magazine. She's highly animated and the INTERVIEWER is clearly enthralled by her.

27 EXT. GARDEN PATH 1 - DAY

The Crew lug their equipment up the path towards a small house. A TRUE BLUE AUSSIE man in gaudy shorts, gaudy shirt and thongs greets them with a slab of beers.

28. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Adam stares out of the window, slowly drinking more whiskey. We notice that the hip flask is engraved: '15 Years at Tremendous Television - Congratulations!'

29. EXT. STREET 2 - DAY

The Crew arrive at a more salubrious street, lined with expensive cars and classy homes.

30. INT. TV STUDIO, FRANKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Frankie is telling two EXECUTIVES about the show.

They don't react much, but when she points to a life-size cut-out of Chris Hemsworth with his arms around a fat prostitute and an Asian midget, they smile huge smiles.

31. EXT. GARDEN PATH 2 - DAY

The Crew lug their equipment up the path towards a giant house. A MORMON HOUSEWIFE in a pale green dress greets them with a plate of bread.

32. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - NIGHT

It's dark outside and Adam is still staring out of the window. He goes to take a swig of whiskey but it's empty.

A text from his wife comes through on his phone, on the table behind him: 'The kids want to see their father ... and the wife wants to see her husband! xx'

33. EXT. TV STUDIO, CAR PARK - NIGHT

Frankie is in her car. Her phone rings.

FRANKIE

(o/s)

Yeah?

(beat)

Not tonight. I've got work to do.

(beat)

Don't be the antagonist in this!

(beat)

I'm sorry.

(beat)

Ciao then.

She sits in the car for a moment. And then she pulls out.

34. EXT. STREET 3 - MORNING

It's early morning and the suburban street is quiet. The sun has started to rise, creating an eerie hue.

Birds chirp musically from the trees. All is still and tranquil until:

A huge SCREAM from inside one of the houses.

35. INT. TV STUDIO, FRANKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Frankie is on the phone. In front of her, live footage from the shoot streams on her laptop.

FRANKIE

(on phone)

Explain to her what an inciting incident is and she'll be fine. And I'm not digging that jumper. I'll send wardrobe over.

(beat)

Then turn it into a story. She steals from op-shops. Hijacks the donations, something like that. As long as she learns a lesson at the end and can reflect.

36. INT. HOUSE 1, BEDROOM - DAY

Adam is on the other end of the phone, trying hard to hear Frankie's voice above the filming going on behind.

ADAM

(on phone)

And I suppose you want to send someone over from sets? Have them redecorate the lounge?

He's smug, but Frankie likes the idea. His face drops.

37. EXT. GARDEN 1 - DAY

Joseph and the crew watch on as the Religious Father pushes his Daughter on the swing. They look happy.

Romeo arrives with a serrated knife. Joseph does a double-take. Romeo looks guilty, but just shrugs.

38. INT. HOUSE 2, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Adam watches on as Supermodel and Old Man talk to the camera. He's endeared by what they're saying.

The DIRECTOR gives them a signal, and after a moment's hesitation and awkward 'acting', Supermodel suddenly picks up a glass of water and throws it over Old Man.

39. EXT. STREET 4 - DAY

The Thug Family stand outside their house, screaming at their NEIGHBOURS. Thug Father wields a crowbar.

Joseph and Romeo purposely push the Thugs. As tension escalates and all hell breaks loose, they slip away.

40. INT. TV STUDIO, FRANKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Frankie sips champagne as she watches on, excited.

41. INT. HOUSE 3, KITCHEN - DAY

Adam tucks away his whiskey. He takes a deep breath.

He steps into the 'set' and rearranges the kitchen, hiding all the old-fashioned items in the cupboards.

A SET DRESSER arrives with flashy new kitchen items.

Adam removes all fruit and vegetables from the fridge and replaces them with chocolate and processed meals.

The Mormon Housewife strolls into the kitchen and is startled by its transformation. Adam smiles a meek smile.

42. EXT. GARDEN 2 - DAY

True Blue lies on a sun lounger, drinking beer. Joseph and Romeo crouch in front of the camera, 'coaching' him.

TRUE BLUE

(to camera)

Yeah we have our ups and downs, but deep down she's a great girl. I love her to bits.

ROMEO

(to True Blue)

Umm ... maybe emphasise the conflicts
a bit more?

JOSEPH

And play on the innuendo?

TRUE BLUE

Ok. Umm...

(beat, re-set)

Yeah we have our ups and downs - quite
a lot, actually - but she's a bloody
great girl deep down ... if you know
what I mean?!

He gives a grotesque wink.

JOSEPH

That's great.

ROMEO

A bit dirtier?

TRUE BLUE

Jeez, what kinda show is this?!

Joseph and Romeo give each other a look.

TRUE BLUE (CONT'D)

She can be a bit needy - in more ways
than one! - but she's also quite deep
... if you get me?!

ROMEO

Umm...

JUMP CUT: SECONDS
LATER.

TRUE BLUE

She can be a bitch, but in bed she's
really wild!

JUMP CUT: SECONDS
LATER.

TRUE BLUE (CONT'D)

Yeah she's a good root, but jeez, she
can be a real fucking bitch!

ROMEO / JOSEPH

Perfect!

True Blue raises his beer to the camera.

Then, off-screen, the neighing of a horse. True Blue looks at Joseph and Romeo, confused.

43. INT. TV STUDIO, FRANKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Frankie types furiously on her laptop, writing scripts.

There's a knock at her door - it's Adam.

FRANKIE

Come!

Adam enters. He looks slightly drunk and really quite ill.

FRANKIE

What's best, 'slut' or 'mole'?

Adam is too preoccupied to care. He slumps into a chair.

FRANKIE

You're getting fantastic footage.
(beat)

And Chris loves op-shops, so the kleptomania story really works.

ADAM

I think I need a week off.

FRANKIE

Not mid-shoot, mister.

ADAM

The kids. My wife.

FRANKIE

If it's falling to pieces, maybe we should send a crew round yours. Where d'you live again?

Adam is at boiling point.

ADAM

(shouting)

Please!

(beat)

I'm really feeling the pressure. And I feel like a total fraud.

FRANKIE

Rubbish. The kids know you'll be around more once we've wrapped.

ADAM

(quiet)

That's not what I meant.

Frankie glances up from the laptop and looks at Adam. She's slightly perturbed by the state he's in.

FRANKIE

Ok. One day. Today. It's half a day, but still.

Adam looks vaguely pleased, but also sad.

FRANKIE

Don't forget we've got the Siamese twins tomorrow. It's going to be a television first.

Adam desperately wants to say something but gives up.

He gets out of the chair and shuffles towards the door.

FRANKIE

I do understand.

(beat)

And I'm sorry. It's just ... when you've got half a million viewers wanting...

ADAM

Don't you ever get tired of the constant... pretending?

An awkward moment. Frankie can't say too much, even if Adam wants her to say a lot more.

FRANKIE

(diffusing)

I think I'll go with 'mole'. Chris likes animals.

Adam is deflated. He opens the door and leaves.

A moment, then Frankie continues to type furiously. She laughs at one of her own jokes.

44. INT. TV STUDIO, EDIT SUITE - DAY

Adam, Joseph and Romeo sit with the EDITOR as she looks through the footage: lots of rowing and fighting.

ROMEO

Are they tears?

EDITOR

No, but we can add them in.

JOSEPH

Perfect second act climax.

Romeo gives him a cheeky smile.

Adam looks frozen for a moment. He looks at the screen, and then at Joseph and Romeo. Then he slowly stands up and walks out.

45. INT. TV STUDIO, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Frankie, Joseph and Romeo celebrate with champagne and cakes.

JOSEPH

Can't wait to see the final cut.

FRANKIE

Just a few touch ups to do. A few sound effects. Oh, and some CGI.

Adam walks in looking healthier and happier.

FRANKIE

Champers, Mr Producer?

ADAM

I'm off drink for a while.

ROMEO

Oh well, more for us!

JOSEPH

(to Adam)

Are you ok?

ADAM

Yes, Joseph, thank you. In fact, I'm very ok.

FRANKIE

Ah, you saw the confession scene?
Wasn't it just...?

ADAM

I'm moving on. I actually can't do this anymore.

Joseph and Romeo look concerned, but Frankie doesn't look surprised at all.

FRANKIE

TV's not for everyone. Short lifespan and all that.

ADAM

I'm going into children's.

FRANKIE

Careful!

ADAM

I think it's more... me.

(to Frankie)

Not so warped and manipulative.

JOSEPH

You say that, but when I was writing my thesis...

FRANKIE

Small ideas for small minds.

(beat)

With all due respect.

Adam goes over to Joseph.

ADAM

I was thinking ... hoping ... it'd be great if you joined me.

JOSEPH

(caught out)

Oh.

ADAM

They've agreed in principle. I need someone with brains.

(beat)

Clearly I don't have any.

Romeo gives Joseph a look - he doesn't want him to go.

JOSEPH

It's just that...

FRANKIE

We like him now!

ROMEO

Really like him... now.

ADAM

With all due respect, this guy is in a different league. It's not every day you find someone...

JOSEPH

I want to stay.

Adam is surprised. But then not. An awkward moment.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Agreed, it's not exactly what I envisaged when I came into Factual, but there's something... pleasurable about it.

ADAM

About engineering scenarios to capture fabricated conflict?

JOSEPH

It's the character journeys I love. No matter what we fake, or how many clever edits we do, they still learn something at the end.

ROMEO

It's all very emotional.

JOSEPH

You don't get that when you're watching someone ... cut grass.

Another awkward moment. But Adam is dignified, respecting Joseph's decision with a nod and a smile.

ADAM

I'm going to go now.

FRANKIE

Don't forget the Logies!

ADAM

Yeah, the Logies.

Adam looks around the room. He pauses at the whiteboard and takes it all in. He smiles to himself and then leaves.

JOSEPH

Oh my God, I feel terrible.

Romeo grips Joseph's shoulder in consolation.

FRANKIE

All's fair in love and telly.

(beat)

He was a useless producer anyway. He'd only hold you back.

JOSEPH

Maybe.

FRANKIE

Which is why...

(she pops another champagne)

I'm promoting you both to co-producers!

Joseph and Romeo are stunned for a moment, then jubilant. They hug each other.

FRANKIE

Alright, calm the homo hormones!

Joseph is shocked by the comment - has he been caught out?

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

I'm meeting the big bosses today to talk about a second series. It's pretty much in the bag.

ROMEO

Hope so - I've ordered a new car.

Frankie re-fill their glasses.

FRANKIE

Don't worry your pretty little pink socks. I've got them eating out of my hands.

Joseph raises his glass.

JOSEPH

To *My Family Rules*!

Frankie puts her arms around them both.

FRANKIE

And my family that rules!

They raise their glasses and toast.

FADE TO BLACK:

46. BLACK SCREEN (TRAILER)

A black screen that slowly turns purple. The *My Family Rules* logo dissolves into view.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH

(v/o)

Something strange is happening in Australia.

(beat)

Up and down the land, our people are experiencing something truly phenomenal. Something neither science nor religion can explain.

(beat)

This thing is...

47. INT. HOUSE 4, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Thug Father holds Thug Daughter up against the wall by the scruff of her neck.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH (CONT'D)

(v/o)

...the family.

THUG DAUGHTER

You're supposed to be my dad, you fucking drongo!

As Thug Father tightens his grip, a family photograph drops from the wall and smashes over her head.

48. EXT. GARDEN 3 - DAY

Mormon Family, in full attire, sit in the garden eating a lacklustre lunch.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH

(v/o)

Witness the highs...

All of a sudden, dog crap is thrown from next door and lands in the middle of their table. They just stare.

49. INT. HOUSE 5, KITCHEN - DAY

Lesbian Mothers cry as their Children turn to show writing scrawled on the backs of their jackets: 'Dikes die!'

CHRIS HEMSWORTH (CONT'D)
(v/o)
...and the lows...

50. EXT. GARDEN 1 - DAY

Religious Father pushes his Daughter on the swing, happily singing her a nursery rhyme.

All of a sudden, the swing snaps and Daughter falls onto the grass. She cries uncontrollably.

Father tries to comfort her but Religious Mother dashes over and slaps him, taking Daughter back inside.

Father then also cries, dropping to his knees like he's having a nervous breakdown.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH (CONT'D)
(v/o)
... of Australian family life in this
brand new reality show, brought to you
by the award-winning team behind the
hit show Pensioners Win Prizes.

51. EXT. STREET 4 - DAY

Thug Family scrap with their Neighbours. Joseph and Romeo's 'cameo' has been edited out with a rather obvious product-placed CGI Toyota.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH (CONT'D)
(v/o)
From tantrums ...

THUG FATHER
(remote)
I'm only a dole-bludger 'cos the
fucking system's fucked!

52. INT. HOUSE 6, BEDROOM - DAY

Psychiatric Patient rocks back and forth on his bed.

On the shelf next to him, two urns and a framed photograph of him with mum and dad, on an exotic holiday in Thailand.

Next to him on the bed, a scrapbook with a prominent newspaper headline: 'Youth-in-Asia?'

CHRIS HEMSWORTH (CONT'D)

(v/o)

...to traumas...

53. EXT. GARDEN 2 - DAY

True Blue drinks beer on his sun lounger, as before - only this time the horse is standing over him.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH (CONT'D)

(v/o)

...to pure titillation...

TRUE BLUE

(as before)

Yeah she's a good root, but jeez, she can be a real fucking bitch!

The horse neighs.

54. INT. HOUSE 1, BEDROOM - DAY

A MOTHER wearing a very loud jumper rummages through her wardrobe, almost frantic.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH (CONT'D)

(v/o)

...this winter, we all grow up.

MOTHER

Who put this here?! I promise, I haven't been stealing again ...

She looks at the camera, panicked.

55. EXT. STREET 4 - DAY

The scrap continues, the whole street now joining in.

THUG DAUGHTER

(remote)

My dad's got bigger balls than all of
you!

THUG MOTHER

(remote)

Yeah, and she'd know!

56. EXT. STREET 5 - DAY

CHRIS HEMSWORTH, in fitted jeans and a very tight white singlet,
stands with his arms around a FAT PROSTITUTE and an ASIAN MIDGET
(as seen in the life-size cut-out).

CHRIS HEMSWORTH

When My Family Rules!

Chris smiles a sexy smile. Fat Prostitute strokes his arm.

57. PURPLE SCREEN

The My Family Rules logo slams into view once more, this time
with a strapline: 'For those who need to belong'.

END OF SCRIPT

Research statement

Research background

This parody script is inspired by scholarly work relating to the field of reality television. More specifically, it is a creative expression of arguments relating to the ‘characterisation’ of subjects, presenters and experts that were made in a recent scholarly book chapter by the author, for a collection entitled *Celebrity Cultures and Real Lives*. Drawing on the work of Beattie (2004), Lewis (2008), Thirkell (2010) et al., this work is situated within a creative space infused by film, television, media and cultural studies.

Research contribution

The book chapter that inspired this work is innovative in that it discusses how reality television shows are ‘strategically’ put together: how they are structured, cast, emotionally engineered, etc. No other scholarly work does this, from a practice-based point of view. The work here, then, is doubly innovative in that it interprets the scholarly ideas presented in a creative way. Academic arguments have been transformed into characters and action, and quotations used have been transformed into dialogue.

Research significance

This script is able to present research-informed ideas in a format that is both innovative (creative theory) and appealing to a wider audience (entertainment, not just critique). It creatively combines fiction with academic research, for both the overall concept (e.g., what does the script have to say?) and the nuances of scene writing (e.g., how can quotations be turned into dialogue?). It argues for the creative expression of film, television, media and cultural studies in a form that is relevant to its arguments (i.e., parody).

Works cited

Beattie, Keith 2004 *Documentary screens: Nonfiction film and television*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Lewis, Tania 2008 *Smart living: Lifestyle media and popular expertise*, New York: Peter Lang

Thirkell, Robert 2010 *Conflict: An insider's guide to storytelling in factual/reality tv and film*, London: Methuen

Griffith University

Debra Beattie

The Bounty

Abstract:

This script is dedicated to the memory of Susanne Chauvel-Carlsson, and was inspired by a chapter in Elsa Chauvel's book, *My Life With Charles* (1973). This is the story of the making of a dream, a dream to capture the essence of a narrative set in the South Seas, a story of a mutiny of the soul when *The Bounty* sailed into Matavai Bay in 1789. In 1932, the young Australian filmmakers Elsa and Charles Chauvel set sail with their cameraman Tasman Higgins to travel 15,000 miles by steamer to Papeete and Pitcairn. Leaving their toddler daughter Susanne with grandparents back in Stanthorpe, the trio set out on a journey that would take six months to complete, to gather film footage never before seen, of Tahitian dancers on location in Tahiti for their film, *In the Wake of the Bounty*.

Biographical Note:

Debra Beattie is an Australian filmmaker, scholar, writer and teacher. She has produced and directed documentaries in Australia for over thirty years with a diverse group of communities, indigenous, Indonesian, and Melanesian. Most recently she was the associate producer on *Fairweather Man* (2008) an ABC television documentary on the life and times of an artist who lived on Bribie Island in the sixties. Beattie is an innovative creator, a scholar of new media documentary and social engagement. In 2001, she directed *The Wrong Crowd* a pioneering web-based documentary for ABC Online; and in 2004 developed design best practice for online counselling as Chief Investigator on ARC Discovery with Kidshelpline. Since 2006, she has engaged in delivery of documentary in public places such as galleries, museums and libraries.

Keywords:

Creative Writing – Scriptwriting – Australian History – South Pacific – Cinema heritage

THE CHARACTERS

ELSA - Elegant, stylish, talented, intelligent, actress and film collaborator, mother

CHARLES - Debonair and dynamic young man in his late thirties, suave, good looking with a fierce pride in his country and its stories

TASMAN - Hardworking, talented, committed, gentleman and scholar, and loving husband to Gladys in Sydney

PITCAIRN ISLANDER

BILLE - ELOCUTION STUDENT

FIVE FEMALE DANCE STUDENTS

BABY SUSANNE(S)

RUTH CURTIS

HERC McINTYRE

CIGAR SMOKING STUDIO EXECUTIVE

TARO

RA' IHAU

RA' IMERE

COMMANDANT

TAHITIAN DANCERS

THE BOUNTY

1. EXT. PITCAIRN ISLAND HARBOUR, ESTABLISHING - DAY

The story opens with a cyclone at sea. The orchestra begins with a crescendo. The sequence needs to convey the extraordinary intensity of a cyclone on an island harbor in the South Seas. A beautifully dressed woman in an early 1930s business suit is being lowered, in a rope chair, from the rafters. She is straining to see her rescuers arriving in an open boat.

ELSA (V.O.)

Through driving rain, as our vessel
hove-to off Pitcairn Island, my
straining eyes picked up two open
boats striving valiantly to reach
us. Soon, I was slipped into a rope
chair and flung out into space.
Then down, down, the sea rising to
meet me, till I was caught and
swung into place, in a tossing
boat, by the tawny arms of a
Pitcairn seaman.

A storm is whipping up ocean waves. The place is revealed through the rain and wind. With its plunging cliffs, sharp crags and hostile coastline, this was not a safe anchorage.

ELSA

But it was in this place that
Fletcher Christian and his
mutineers had unloaded their meagre
provisions, determined to start
their new life. They burnt 'The
Bounty' and vowed never to leave.

ELSA, her husband CHARLES, and their cameraman, TASMAN Higgins are all lowered into the waiting small boat.

CUT TO:

1A. NEWSPAPER HEADLINES MONTAGE

The front pages of various newspapers swirl across the screen. The papers are all from 1933. The following headlines spin into focus:

LOST IN STORM

THREE HOURS' TERROR

PRODUCER'S EXPERIENCE

CUT TO:

1B. EXT. ON THE SEA, OFFSHORE PITCAIRN ISLAND - DAY

ELSA is lowered into the arms of a Pitcairn seaman. She looks back through the rain to the steamer ship, and Elsa and her rescuers row towards the shoreline.

CUT TO:

2. EXT. BOATSIDE, SYDNEY WHARF - DAY

TITLE UP: *SYDNEY HARBOUR, MARCH 1932*

At the bottom of the stairs leading to the steamer-ship, there is a selection of brown leather hard suitcases and large camera Cases and the largest is a long rectangular suitcase containing the tripod which is emblazoned EXPEDITIONARY FILMS.

TASMAN HIGGINS and CHARLES CHAUVEL wait for ELSA so that all three can board together.

TASMAN

15,000 miles Charles! And at what a colossal speed! These average 15 knots I hear. So we should be there in six weeks - all going well.

CHARLES

Indeed Tasman. And when we get there, what will we find? No Australian has set foot there - certainly not one with a movie camera!

TASMAN

It is a big gamble Charles but with Universal studios backing us, well, I really think you've got a story and a location here that will knock the socks off any audience.

CHARLES

Thanks for the vote of confidence.
Let's hope it's not too
inhospitable.

ELSA arrives in a taxi and the driver unloads her cases.

CHARLES

Ready Partner?

ELSA nods and the three of them climb the stairs.

TASMAN carries most of the luggage.

CUT TO:

3. EXT. CLIFFTOP OVERLOOKING PITCAIRN HARBOUR - DAY - MONTHS
LATER

TASMAN CHARLES and ELSA are standing together, TASMAN on
camera and ELSA with clipboard. They are on the clifftop
overlooking the same harbour off Pitcairn Island. They are
looking out to yet another storm much like the one that
brought them there.

ELSA

(wistfully) That
steamer-ship is so,
so close and yet so
far.

TASMAN

That boat isn't going to be able to
get into the harbor tonight not
with this weather. They won't
wait. It'll sail for Tahiti tonight
without us. They'll be wanting to
get away and ahead of this, before
it gets any worse.

(Sound FX: *Waves breaking, Thunder, lightning flashing*)

CHARLES

Well, it's going to be another
month before the next one arrives.
Pray to God the weather is good
that day. The locals are bunkering
down. I guess we better pack up
too. Think you've got what we need
Tas?

TASMAN

Sure thing. We've got some great film footage here Charles old man. And let's pray to God that these amazing film reels we've shot stays safe and dry for another month.

CHARLES

It really is an island fortress.

ELSA

And a fortress against cyclones and tropical storms

ELSA moves in closer to her husband CHARLES.

ELSA

It's already been two months since we left Australia. I miss Susanne so much.

TASMAN has packed up the tripod and the camera and is ready to walk back to the hut. Charles offers to carry the camera

CHARLES

If we can keep it at a steady temperature, it should be fine, eh?

As the two men walk together, ELSA looks out at the building storm.

CUT TO:

4. EXT. QUEENSLAND VERANDAH - DAY

TITLE UP: THREE MONTHS EARLIER

A cottage called "MISTY MOUNTAINS" a classic "Queenslander" house, nestled below Mt Marley in Stanthorpe. On the verandah, there are now four young girls leaving in a tumble of teenage laughter down the front stairs. The girls are all dressed in dancing costumes.

ELSA is leaning on the verandah railing, dressed in a sleeveless dress, of lemon and pale orange, with the skirt cut on the bias, in a chiffon print of abstract floral with a fresh sprig of mimosa at her waist.

ELSA

(singing as she walks along the verandah) I can see a jacaranda just outside my back verandah. I can see it when I stand up in my cot.

On the end of the verandah, there is a white wicker bassinet and a jacaranda tree flowering beautifully nearby. A year old toddler can be heard to call 'Mama'.

ELSA

(now standing near to the cot)
Shhhhh. My darling. Almost done.

BILLE

(arriving from inside the house)
I don't mind finishing early today
Mrs Chauvel, if you need to tend to baby Susanne.

ELSA

No, Bille - best we finish the lesson properly.
Susanne will be fine for another five minutes.

CUT TO:

5. INT. QUEENSLANDER HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

INTERIOR of the "Misty Mountains" house with the view from the back verandah of the beautiful Mt Marley in the distance.

CHARLES is seated in a large leather chair, beside a large wooden desk and a large plaque is emblazoned with gold "EXPEDITIONARY FILMS". He is reading intently and with great excitement.

RUTH CURTIS is seated in an elegant office-chair reading through a pile of books at her feet.

CHARLES

Ruthie, read this! I found it over at the Nuttall's, our neighbours' place, just in the next valley. It's from one of Bligh's own hand-written logbooks. I thought I remembered reading it there, when I was a boy, and sure enough, there it was!

RUTH CURTIS

(Los Angeles accent)

Charles, I think we are on a winner
here for sure.

CHARLES

(*humming*)

Blue skies, calling to me, nothing
but blue skies do I see.

ELSA takes up the tune with increasing conviction, on the
front verandah, to a bonny baby Susanne.

CUT TO:

6. INT. LOS ANGELES - SUNSET

INTERIOR of office with window looking over the studio at
Universal Pictures, Los Angeles

At a long table are seated 'EXPEDITIONARY FILMS' represented
by Charles Chauvel and Tasman Higgins.

CHARLES is pitching the storyline for "In the Wake of the
Bounty" to the American financial backers at Universal.

HERC MCINTYRE, Universal's man in Australia, is at the table.

CHARLES walks backward and forwards as provides the pros and
cons of the project. The scene is replete with cigar smoking
studio executives a la Preston Sturges's 1941 Classic
"Sullivan's Travels". The agreed-to funding to start filming
is very tight.

CUT TO:

7. EXT. RAILING OF STEAMERSHIP IN AUCKLAND HARBOUR

CHARLES and ELSA stand arm-in-arm looking out to sea. ELSA is
impeccably dressed in a travelling suit, and a debonair and
well-dressed CHARLES suggests that they return to their ship's
cabin. They are leaving Auckland Harbour.

A close-up of a cascade of letters and cards addressed to the
Chauvels, which are scattered across one of the beds. There
are also a number of Kodak snapshots of a toddler digging in a
garden.

ELSA sits on the bed looking at the photographs and the
letters for a second time.

CHARLES strides in, intently studying the travel brochure he is holding.

CHARLES
Tahiti! Finally! We sail for Tahiti
at first light darling!

ELSA is drawn to his warmth and energy. They embrace and gaze at the ocean outside their cabin-window.

ELSA
Yes my darling that very same
Tahiti that once cast her magic
spell around those rough, hard-
fisted English sailors from The
Bounty...

FADE TO BLACK:

8. EXT. WHARF, PAPEETE

Montage of white Tiare flowers, the blue lagoons, the pale blue faa, the green mountains, the white beaches as bird's eye view of the island, and then landing at the wharf in downtown Papeete.

ELSA, CHARLES and TASMAN are standing with their luggage.

ELSA
It is the Perfume of Tahiti that
greeted you ... long before we fully
pulled into the wharf even, there
it was .. sweet and strong ..

CHARLES
(breathing deeply)
Aaaahhhhhh!

TASMAN
I'll get us a taxi to the hotel.

Tahitian girls with flamboyant flowers tucked rakishly behind brown ears under cartwheel-pandanus hats stroll by, and Tahitian men wearing the starched white linen of the French gendarme stand in quiet conversation.

9. INT. TAXI ON WAY TO MATAVAI BAY

The trio is now travelling in a 1930s Peugeot (or Citroen) and the driver takes them over rustic bridges, past bamboo huts, running streams, and the most beautiful lagoons.

CHARLES

How could we make a film about the Bounty and not film it on location right here in Tahiti? This place is magical.

TASMAN

You can see why those boys from Old Blighty might decide to mutiny against our Captain William Bligh. It makes a lot more sense when you experience just what it was they were being tempted by.

CHARLES

An Australian story destined for the cinema! And if we are going to do it, we must make sure we pull back every veil in every scene.

10. EXT. TAXI ARRIVING AT F'AA

The drums begin to sound as they emerge from the taxi, just as a welcoming ceremony is in process. The dancers stamp their feet and sway their hips in time to the beat of the drum, as CHARLES and ELSA and TASMAN walk along a wooden pontoon to their lagoon room.

11. EXT. VERANDAH OF LAGOON ROOM - MORNING

On the verandah of a thatched room on stilts over a lagoon and there is an exquisite breakfast of tropical fruits on the table.

ELSA is humming 'Blue Skies'. She is looking elegant in a Coco Chanel inspired 'beach pyjama' outfit embroidered with frangipani motifs. She is wearing a pandanus hat.

CHARLES is wearing a cabana suit popular with men as beach-wear in the 1930s.

They are relaxed, having been here for a few days, and the discussion is on how they will source the extras for the dancing scenes.

Their new friend, the charismatic entrepreneur Taro arrives and he is smiling hugely.

He is accompanied by two beautiful Tahitian women.

TARO

Bonjour Madame, Bonjour Monsieur.
Je vous prenons rencontrer les
danseuses, Ra'ihau and Ra'imere!

CHARLES

Elsa, I think we have found just
the right talent scout.

ELSA

(grabs her hat)

Taro, lead the way.

12. EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - SUNSET

CHARLES, ELSA, TASMAN, TARO and his friends Ra'ihau and
Ra'imere, are all walking together slowly in the late
afternoon sunshine.

They arrive at the corner of Quai de Subsistances and the Rue
de Rivoli as it is only place on the boulevard still open to
with seats and a table.

But a tattered hula skirt has been placed across a window
outside the café.

Charles reads a notice pinned to the skirt.

CHARLES

Please, for local and transient
clients protection against
molestation and insult - permit the
management to repeat, for certain
class of intruder, drunks, near
drunks, and acting drunks, strictly
not tolerated - and absolutely
forbidden to bring street girls
here, this is a respectable place.

TARO and his friends reluctantly peel off and head back to
their lodgings.

The plucky trio bolsters their spirits with a night at this
local bar. There is a Parisian chanteuse of 1930s Jazz tunes -
like 'East of the sun, West of the moon'

CHARLES

(jolts upright)

Canoes! Thirty feet long!

ELSA

With only 3,000 pounds left to complete the entire film, Charles, I really don't think we ...

CHARLES

But what a scene! Can't you see it?

13. EXT. BEACH BY LAGOON - DAY

Dancing girls and beachcombers prepare for their scene.

CHARLES is directing.

ELSA is assisting.

THE FRENCH COMMANDANT arrives with his aide-de-campe and asks in French and then English:

THE FRENCH COMMANDANT

Would Monsieur and Madame Chauvel kindly permit me to stay to watch the oh-so-lovely dancing girls?

ELSA

Bien sur, Commandant. S'il vous plait. Monsieur. As you see, we have indeed the cream of the beautiful Tahitian girls in Papeete, but not yet the strong Tahitian men.

14. EXT. PRESIDENTIAL PALACE - DAY

In the formal courtyard of the presidential palace, the ornate wrought-iron gates of the barracks compound open and a military bugle sounds.

ELSA arrives, and is greeted by the COMMANDANT.

There are lines of young soldiers marching in and assembling in front of her, waiting there, line upon line of handsome, impudent faces.

COMMANDANT

Madame, the pick of my Army awaits your choice!

ELSA

Oh you must choose, Commandant, they all look equal to me.

COMMANDANT

(in Tahitian)

I ordered each man to discard his
shirt.

ELSA

Oh!

Her reaction is at the same time embarrassed and intrigued.

CUT TO:

15. EXT. BEACH BY LAGOON - DAY

There are twelve Tahitian men in traditional clothing carrying a large canoe across the beach leading around the lagoon. As they lower the large canoe from their shoulders, there are a dozen young Tahitian women arriving to rehearse their dancing. The French Commandant also arrives with his aide-de-camp.

The female dancers perform their traditional dance with the beating of the drums, the swaying of the hips, the stamping of the feet.

Then the male dancers join them.

FADE SLOWLY:

Cross-fade to footage of these scenes in the original film shot in 1933 on location in Matavai Bay, Tahiti for "In the Wake of the Bounty"

16. EXT. STEAMERSHIP RAILING - SUNSET

At the top of the boarding stairs of the steamer-ship, leaning over the railing are the passengers dressed in tuxedos and satin ball-gowns. Amongst them are CHARLES and ELSA. The all-aboard signal sounds out.

CHARLES

(heartfelt to ELSA)

Thank you, partner.

CROSS FADE:

17. EXT. VERANDAH 'MISTY MOUNTAINS' - DAY

ELSA is playing with SUSANNE, now a bonny 20 month old.

CHARLES is reading the paper.

Suddenly he leaps to his feet exclaiming.

CHARLES

Look at this strapping young
fellow, Elsa! Let's call him in for
a screen test. He'd be perfect to
play our Mister Fletcher Christian!

Elsa looks closely at the newspaper photograph.

ELSA

But he isn't an actor darling, he's
just an adventurer.

*Closing images of one of Hollywood's most successful box
office stars of the 1940s, ERROL FLYNN, in his first cinematic
role as Fletcher Christian.*

FADE TO BLACK

END OF SCRIPT

Research statement

Research background

This script draws on autobiographical accounts by Elsa Chauvel (1973) and her daughter Susanne Chauvel-Carlsson (1989) as well as research accounts written by Cunningham (1991) and Molloy (1990). This script on the making of 'In the Wake of the Bounty' (1934) is a dramatised interpretation titled simply 'The Bounty' (2013).

Research contribution

The writer's earlier practice-led research into 'dramadoc' (Paget 1998) and dramatised history (Lipkin 2002) was published online in 2004. *The wrong crowd* (2004) utilised the same research methodology in constructing an imagined explanation for well-known historical facts.

Research significance

The Bounty (2013) has been written as a contribution to the continued documentation of the cinematic legacy of the Chauvels. On this occasion, the screenplay recounts their work in the Pacific. *The making of "Sons Of Matthew"* (2009) documented a narrative set in Queensland, and screened at the Brisbane International Film Festival.

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Central Queensland University

Susan Davis

Figments of Eliza – a dramatic interlude about place

Abstract:

This work uses the creative nonfiction form of a dramatic script to explore the story of Eliza Fraser and a woman's relationship to place. Using questions of relevance to the contemporary explorer juxtaposed with the documented history of Eliza Fraser's experiences after a shipwreck in 1836, documentary evidence and place-based research were transformed to create a one women show. The script was developed following research and blogging in the role of Eliza Fraser across a four-month period. In shaping the arc of the script, consideration was given to the concept of a tragic hero and the female version of the 'hero's journey' (Campbell 1990; Murdock 1990) including domestic imprisonment, journey through the underworld, symbolic death, discovery of the mother figure, female tradition, magical flight and rescue. Eliza's alienation from the place and its people raises questions about what it means to belong, both then and now.

Biographical note:

Susan Davis is a Senior Lecturer at CQ University, Noosa. She has been devising and writing scripts for more than 20 years, many in her prior professional life as a drama educator and Performing Arts Head of Department and more recently as director for youth, regional and international performance projects. Sue has written curriculum and assessment materials for syllabus and assessment projects, has presented and published her work about drama and new media at state, national and international levels.

Keywords:

Creative writing – Scriptwriting – Creative nonfiction – Drama – Heroine's journey

Characters:

ELIZA: Eliza Fraser is a woman in her late thirties who is a mother of three. Her husband was captain of the vessel the *Stirling Castle*. She was accompanying him on the voyage because of concerns about his health and wellbeing. Her initial confidence and assurance is challenged by certain men within the crew and by events that follow.

VOICEOVER ELIZA (VO. ELIZA): This Eliza is the storyteller and diarist. The Voiceover role was also created to help create a more dynamic interplay and enable the performer to focus on physical presence and enactment. For the premiere performance this role was pre-recorded as part of a soundscape that played throughout the piece. This role could also be performed live and it is possible to experiment with splitting the role in different ways.

MALE VOICEOVER (M. VO): This voice sets the scene and location and at times contributes as if a character. This can be performed live or pre-recorded.



SCENE 1 – How long until you belong?

(A woman sits half turned from the audience in the pose of the one existing portrait of Eliza Fraser).

ELIZA: How long do you have to live in a place before you belong?

(She goes to a trunk and opens it; she takes out several key objects for telling the story and prepares to face the audience.)

VO. ELIZA: It might belong to you, but do you belong to it? Do you have to feel it, eat from it, build from it, lie in it?

How long does it take to know yourself and what you are capable of? You might believe certain things of yourself, but actions can betray all that you hold dear.

ELIZA: I have a story to tell you ... about finding myself in a place where I didn't belong. I could ask of you some sympathy, but many of you have already made up your mind. I was a most ordinary woman, a wife and a mother. I did not desire riches, fame, or infamy. I never thought about my name living on, or imagined I could be called such names. I have been called a liar, a victim, a thief, a sideshow spectacle. Perhaps some truth is to be found in all these labels. To be honest, I only wished to survive and see my children grown ... to keep heart and soul alive.

But the stories afterwards... the scandal sheets gone wild ... sympathy, horror, titillation, atrocity.

VO. ELIZA: How long does it take?

... to be saved, to betray, to forgive, to forget?

SCENE 2 - First night

Sfx: Ocean sounds, creaking of ship

M. VO: May 1836, Sydney.

ELIZA: My name is Eliza Fraser, I am 37 years old and a mother of three, Jane 15, James 11 and David 6. *(Rolls a long shawl up and places it under her skirts)* And soon to give birth to my fourth, hopefully after we arrive in Singapore. We head out from Sydney Harbour today. My husband Captain James Fraser is at the helm, then there's the crew, 18 sea-faring men, and ... myself!

(She unpacks her familiar things and begins to embroider)

VO. ELIZA: Born in a time when a woman's lot is largely that of wife, mother, and household chatelaine, I have managed all these roles and then some. Having three children and a husband whose health is ailing has forced me to take on an active role in running his affairs; it is this role that has drawn me into my current dilemma.

ELIZA: So, those of you who are wives and mothers let me ask you this. If your husband were the family bread-winner... and quite unwell, would you be pleased to bid farewell to him as he set sail around the world for six whole months? And would you be happy to do so if he were sailing to a place where he'd sailed before... and nearly perished there in a shipwreck? Well, I was not, so here I am ... about to say farewell to Sydney town from the decks of the Stirling Castle. I hope that my presence will help my husband, with his diet and his duties.

VO. ELIZA: So it is an unlikely vision I present, when I mount the deck and call orders to the men. If my husband is not near, they feign deafness or mumble oaths.

ELIZA: Did you hear that? They're whispering about me again.

I know they call me a 'she-devil' and a 'vixen'. Some of the men resent my requests, when I ask them to clean, to repair, to eat, to wash, to wait. I thank the lord for good men such as first mate Charles Brown and our cousin John Baxter. I would fear for my very safety if left alone with men such as Youlden and Stone.

Quibble and agitate as they may, they will have to learn to live with me, until we reach Singapore and my delivery.

VO. ELIZA: If they wish to be paid at the end of this voyage they will learn to hold their tongues and mend their ways. I long to retreat to my needlework and more gentle pursuits, but now is not the time. It is our first day at sea with a new crew and order must be established.

ELIZA: Excuse me men; the Captain says it is time to scrub the decks. (*She pauses but there is obviously no response*)

The Captain has asked me to tell you to scrub the decks ...thank you. (*Pauses again*)

(*Demands*) You must scrub the decks, then repair the long boat. That is an order!

SCENE 3 – Life all at sea

M. VO: May 18, 1836

(Sfx: Wind, seagulls cry)

ELIZA: We have made good speed since leaving Sydney Heads. A steady breeze is blowing and we have passed entrances to the Hawkesbury and Hunter Rivers.

VO. ELIZA: We now move into territory that is less well explored. I admit only to myself a sense of disquiet as we approach the Torres Strait and the scene of my husband's earlier mishap.

ELIZA: You look out to the land and it does not welcome you. There are no candles burning, no houses, no signs of civilisation. What beauty others might see is lost on me. That green is no true green; the sky's hue offends the eye. There is comfort only to be found in all that is familiar.

(Mimes the pouring of cups of tea, stirs in sugar and hands the cup as if to her husband then picks up her embroidery)

VO. ELIZA: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,
Bless the bed that I lie on.
Four corners to my bed,
Four angels round my head.
One to watch and one to pray,
And two to bear my fears away.

ELIZA: If you could stop life and halt its progress, like stopping the hands of a clock, where would you pause it? At a moment you would savour for its sheer brilliance and joy? Or perhaps one more simple representing contentment. If that power were mine, I would go back to breakfast of that morn, of fried bread, a companionable silence and a perfect, sweet cup of tea...

SCENE 4 – One moment

(SFX Rain and wind, and then crashing timber sounds)

M. VO: May 21, 1836

VO. ELIZA: It was just after 9 o'clock in the evening, I was in the hallway when we crashed and I was thrown to the floor.

(SFX Screeching sound as ships grinds onto the reef).

(Eliza falling, or struggling to crawl across the floor)

ELIZA: What's happening?

 The water's pouring in, it's all around

M. VO: It's a reef; we've struck a reef.

VO. ELIZA: The ship tipped to the side, I struggled to make it on deck.

(Screams and cries of surprise, anger and frustration)

ELIZA: We're stuck fast on a reef, there's water gushing in the hull.

VO. ELIZA: My paper role as she-captain was torn apart as the men ignored both myself and my husband as he called out his commands.

M. VO: Cut down the sails, and move on to the mast. Perhaps we can swing her around.

ELIZA: Why won't they listen to him, what are they doing?

M. VO: Prepare the boats. Pack what you can.

ELIZA: Get provisions to the longboat...but what about the repairs?

M. VO: Take food, water, clothing, and all that is most precious.

ELIZA: Clothing, food, what else, what is most precious? *(As she grabs a small box)*

M. VO: Abandon ship!

 15 lbs of salt beef, 15 lbs salt pork 50 lbs hard biscuit, jar of butter, jar of tripe, captain's jams & jellies, 3 gallons brandy, half keg of ale, captains sea chest, 3 trunks of Mrs Fraser's clothes, 2 sextants, 2 chronometers, 1 axe, 2 pistols, 2 muskets and 1 fowling piece.

ELIZA: The water, the water, the water's coming in the longboat too... but where are the kegs of water? *(She looks around frantically as she begins to row)*

(Sfx: Sound of rowing)

VO. ELIZA: Two boats, an 18-foot pinnace and a 22-foot long boat. I am on the long boat. Myself, the captain and 11 of the men.

M. VO: The repairs are not holding. Start bailing ... NOW.

SCENE 5 – Weep no more

M. VO: May 26, 1836

(ELIZA sits on the trunk as if in a rowing boat, she begins to row).

VO. ELIZA: Four days after the wreck.... after the Stirling Castle struck a reef, in an area where our maps showed none should be. But there is no arguing with a sinking ship, nor with a babe whose time has come, untimely though it be.

ELIZA: At first I wept with fear, and pain from the bleeding blisters on my hands, but then the pain from deep within became more primal still.

(She begins to whimper and then cry out as she goes into labour)

The babe ... *(She draws a shawl out from under her skirt and wraps it up like a babe)*

VO. ELIZA: And so I bore the babe, there in a longboat, lost at sea, surrounded by 11 men, in another sinking boat.

The babe - *(she slowly moves to the side and casts the bundle gently down)* a bundle cast afloat one dark and dismal night. I tried not to look, knew such a sight would haunt me still, but could not drag my eyes away. It barely took one breath...

ELIZA: It barely took one breath, in the struggle to clear the waters from its chest, born into a sinking boat, launched from a sinking ship. What hope could there be for life to flourish in such a watery confine?

VO. ELIZA: My eyes are dry, salt-encrusted but not with tears. The salt coats my eyes, my skin, my hair, my clothes. My lips and hands are blistered and the skin peels from my face. My throat is parched; at first with grief but now, just thirst.

ELIZA: It barely took one breath.....

The weeping from my eyes has stopped but my body weeps. The milk seeps from my breast, my womb weeps for its lost encumbrance.

The soul withers but the body endures ...*(she whispers as the voiceover starts)* ... that is how to survive such a time.

VO. ELIZA: The soul withers but the body endures – that is how to survive.

SCENE 6 - Hankering

(Sfx drifting water sounds as a boat becalmed)

M. VO: June 1836

(ELIZA lays out fabric as a sail in an attempt to catch rain)

VO. ELIZA: I believe we have been at sea for three weeks, none can be sure. We landed for a time on an island, searched for food and water, found a little... but not enough to keep us long.

ELIZA The salted meat and jellies are gone. We have no water. We try to catch water when it rains. I lay out my skirts to soak up dew and mix it with sea water to slake my thirst.

VO. ELIZA: Others have attempted drinking seawater alone but their health has not been sustained.

ELIZA: There is yet a little sea biscuit, but most of it has spoiled.

(ELIZA reaches for imagined objects, mimes catching them, eating them, putting them on, appears happy and content)

Today I dreamt of new bonnets and babies... of fresh raspberries and cream, and embroidered silk scarves.

VO. ELIZA: Every day I make myself think of something beautiful, of something simply perfect. And there are oranges cut into eight ... pudding with nutmeg and raisins ... and a bright pink bonnet with a silk satin ribbon ...

ELIZA: ... pudding with nutmeg and raisins ... and a bright pink bonnet with a silk satin ribbon.

SCENE 7 - Hungering

(Sfx: Thunder rumble, then male whispers.)

(ELIZA licks her fingers as if licking sticky remains, she reacts as if cut/hurt, sucks her finger, looks at it, contemplates it and sucks it again more enthusiastically)

ELIZA: Have you ever tasted your own blood? Could you taste that of another? I have tasted my blood, as I soothe my bleeding hands. It tastes of salt, sweetness, hints of metal. It is not repulsive, but could I consume the flesh of another? There are others here who contemplate such madness.

VO. ELIZA: They whisper in the night, tell tales of starving desperation, of barbarities and degradation. Each draws a straw.... The loser (*she points into the audience*) sacrificed to provide food for the living.

ELIZA: Some here argue that we should land the vessel ... take our chance on these cursed shores, find food, pray for friendly natives who might help us. My husband disagrees. He reminds us of Captain Bligh and his survival after mutiny on the *Bounty*. On a vessel of this size he charted a journey of three thousand miles. With little food and water he reached his destination with only one man lost.

VO. ELIZA: Could we be that fortunate? There are other tales less favourable, of skirmishes and hostilities. And these whispered, desperate tales.

ELIZA: ... whispered, desperate tales. Of blood, of flesh, of bones, of taste ... suspicion and survival.

SCENE 8 – Ungainly ghosts

M. VO: Late June, 1836

M. VO: And when they reached the fatal shore,
Its name is call'd Wide Bay,
The savages soon them espied,
Rush'd down and seiz'd their prey,
And bore their victims in the boat,
Into their savage den,
To describe the feelings of those poor souls
Is past the art of men.
(*Note: from Wreck of the Stirling Castle, 1837, by John Curtis*)

ELIZA: We straggle ashore, stumbling as if drunken after the weeks at sea.

VO. ELIZA: I am not sure if I should be proud or embarrassed to say that the goods we unloaded included several trunks of my possessions... what remained of my clothes and my best crockery.

ELIZA: And then there is this (*opens a small wooden box to show clothing for her baby*) ... precious remnants of a former life. Things that are familiar.

VO. ELIZA: It is ironic that the place where we landed came to bear our name, when my husband insisted we should not land there. K'gari it was called, now Fraser Island. For us, it was a reluctant landing, driven by fear and a fragile hope.

SCENE 9 – At their mercy

ELIZA: Those men, what do they want? Are they going to kill us? What can we offer them?

VO. ELIZA: Those men ... they could have killed us if they chose. Could have stripped us, beaten us, abused us.

That is a tale I later told, and some of it did come to pass.

Those men ... to begin with they just watched us.. but would they help?

ELIZA: Can you help us? (*As if hiding behind husband*) Water... can you give us fresh water? And food we need food?

Please, we won't hurt you. What do you want, this? Here then. James, James, what are you doing? What they want to see your... ! Put that away....

VO. ELIZA: It wasn't much, the food they gave, but share they did. This first group, exchanging gifts and then watching from afar.

(*ELIZA watches food thrown to the ground in front of her, picks it up and savours a bite.*)

ELIZA: More?

VO. ELIZA: We set up camp, traded more clothes! Tried to repair the boat yet again. But the winds were our enemies. Half our party deserted, eager to walk to Moreton Bay.

ELIZA: What do you see when you look at this land? For me... endless miles of ocean and sand. Nothing looks like fruit that I know, nothing like the comforts of our modern life. But what would you think, what would you do without the trappings of your life around you?

We are at the mercy of this land, and its people.

SCENE 10 – My naked self

M. VO: July 1836

ELIZA: As a child did you ever play this game? "Imagine you are marooned on a desert island and could only take... two things... what would you take"? This assumes you have some choice in the matter. I now know the answer to that question. My wedding ring and these earrings. These are the things that remain.

What do you want? We've nothing left to give. Go away, shoo, leave us be.

(ELIZA mimes having her clothes stripped from her and reacts to being inspected throughout the following ...)

VO. ELIZA: Our clothes stripped away, our bodies exposed. Rough hands inspecting parts, which never see the light of day. The natives involved ... are different from the first, they steal and they yell, demand and insist. They poke and prod, want more and more.

ELIZA: But there are some things you can't have, some things that are mine. *(ELIZA ties on her 'string of leaves' in a ritualistic way as if being helped by another person, she ties the ring and earrings on as well.)* And now I wear a fringe of leaves, tied by my love, protecting that given by my love.

VO. ELIZA: The ring and earrings ... now hidden beneath a fringe of leaves.

SCENE 11 – A woman's work

M. VO: Near Hook Point, August 1836

(Sfx: Australian bush sounds and underlying ominous tone.)

ELIZA: I have no food; no clothes and now, I no longer have the comfort of my husband's presence. There is no one I can speak to, to encourage or consort with. Whether to share us around like trophies or to prolong our lives, I cannot fathom, but our party has been divided between the native groups. I was left alone on the beach... before the women found me.

My life, now that of a slave. It takes all day to find a meagre meal, digging, dragging, climbing, wading. I search for food and do their bidding.

VO. ELIZA: When I became attached to this clan, the women insisted I go on their foraging trips. They laughed at my inadequacies and insisted I learn how to find their bungwal roots. Then tired of my failings, their laughter turned to disdain. One of the women, I shall call her K'gari for this place, one woman showed compassion.

ELIZA: K'gari... you are the only one...

VO. ELIZA: When first she led me away from the others, I expected the worst. I thought she might trade me to another group... but she sat me down and took my hands. She began to point at the bites and swellings on my arms and there was concern in her eyes, not contempt.

ELIZA: Yes, the bites.. the cuts... the stings.

VO. ELIZA: When she began to rub this unguent on my limbs, I pulled away at first.

ELIZA: What is that? (*smelling*) ... fat... charcoal?

VO. ELIZA: She continued in her ministrations and I admit there was relief to be found.

ELIZA: Now I'm black... like you.

Since then she has shown me favour on occasion. Morsels of food, soft bark to sleep on, bright coloured feathers and necklaces of shells. These simple gifts, virtual treasures within this meagre existence.

Thank you K'Gari ... you are the only one.

SCENE 12 – A child

ELIZA: (Sings) *My bonnie lie over the ocean*
My bonnie lie over the sea
My bonnie lie over the ocean
Oh bring back my bonnies to me.

A child lies in my arms... he nuzzles my breast and grips my thumb. You may think I am dreaming, or delirious perhaps, but this time you would be mistaken. The child is real, flesh and bone and dark of skin.

VO. ELIZA: When she brought the child to me I was not sure what she expected. He was a sickly child, crying and whimpering. But this is my job.... to mind the child, for much of the day left in my care. I cannot say I relish the task; it is enough to maintain myself. There is such strangeness and familiarity in the holding of a child in my arms. When he sought comfort, I resisted initially. He clung on though, demanding and persisting.

ELIZA: Here is a babe in my arms, where one should have been.

SCENE 13 – Darkest nights and prayers for dawn

(Sfx: Dingo howls and night bush sounds)

(ELIZA shivers violently, wakes, and becomes agitated, scratching, rubbing, searching, and then remembers what has happened and goes still)

VO. ELIZA: I am so cold and frozen to my very heart. Through every layer of my body the cold has crept. It is impossible to sleep. I shiver, I scratch, I try to wrap the bark about me and creep towards the campfire embers. I am barred from the native's huts; I sleep with the dogs and the fleas. I wait for the dawn and wonder if it will be my last.

ELIZA: And now... I must tell you most reluctantly ... some terrible news. My husband is dead. Speared through the shoulder, he died in my arms. Buried in a nameless grave, he has passed from this world to join Our Lord and Saviour. Do not cry though, it gladdens my heart, I must be happy for him... he is no longer suffering. I envisage him at the Lord's table, in his finest captain's garb. He is healthy and happy, enjoying a sumptuous feast. Friends congratulate him on his life's work ... and Jesus smiles, as James is welcomed into the heavenly kingdom. Angels sing, harps ripple and my dear, sweet James is honoured and at peace. *(She breaks down, silently weeping... it is all a charade.)*

VO. ELIZA: *(Singing) Gentle Jesus meek and mild
Look upon this little child
Little ones to him belong
I am weak but he is strong.
Yes Jesus loves me, yes Jesus loves me
Yes Jesus loves me, the bible tells me so.*

ELIZA: I still believe, I still believe, I will believe.

I could let myself slip away, but I will fight to the bitter end to prevent my children ending as orphans in a poor house. *(Her entreaty)* God of miracles and wonders, you who parted the Red Sea, brought plague and pestilence, protected Daniel in the Lion's den and raised Lazarus from the dead ... please show some mercy for this poor wretched woman now. *(Growing angry)* The laws of nature are no barrier to you, you control the forces and command the universe. Lord, send me a sign!

SCENE 14 – Bargains with knights or knaves

(Sfx: crickets, nighttime noises)

M. VO: There the ferryman stands, who rules the dreary coast
 A sordid god: down from his hairy chin
 A length of beard descends, uncombed, unclean;
 His eyes, like hollow furnaces on fire;
 A girdle, foul with grease, binds his obscene attire.

(ELIZA lies as if sleeping but opens her eyes as if seeing a man standing over her)

VO. ELIZA: When first his face appeared above me I felt certain I had been visited
 by a ghost. The man's face weather-beaten to such an extent he
 seemed native, but the contours of his visage suggested not. He
 signalled for me to remain silent and follow him away from the camp.
 Was this man my knight, my deliverance, my sign? I dare not
 believe yet but followed anyway,

 We reach the water's edge, a river? A passage that must be crossed.

(Sfx: Ominous undertones... building throughout the next paragraph. ELIZA becomes prone during the following section, opens her legs and responds to being ravaged.)

ELIZA: As Virgil described the ferryman so might I. And like the tortured
 souls who must pay a price to take the boat and cross the river Styx,
 from the world of the living to the world of the dead, I too had a price
 to pay.

VO. ELIZA: My knight was in fact a knave whose heart was as dark as Hades. His
 leering smile revealed his dark desire, his belief that my compliance
 was unquestioned. I railed against bargaining away my last shred of
 dignity, though bargain indeed I must.

(Sounds stops)

 What is most exacting to endure? Striking the bargain, enacting it, or
 living with the consequences?

ELIZA: I can tell you now that the nightmares that repossess you again and
 again are indeed more difficult to live with than the act itself.

SCENE 15 – Walkabout to where?

M. VO: Near Inskip Point and Rainbow Beach

(Sfx: Boat in water being rowed, then wading in water, then footsteps in sand.)

VO. ELIZA: Reaching the other side delivered no salvation. To hide our tracks, we waded in water for miles.

ELIZA: We walk and then we walk. Walking without talking... silently walking ... endless beach line, sand and water, water and sand, water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink... no time to stop and forage.

VO. ELIZA: Pain shoots and dulls, old injuries and new, my foot, my shoulder, broken skin, broken wings. As my mind began to wander, we headed inland. Dunes and swamps, creeks, more water. Any hope that we were close to Moreton Bay was shattered as we were surrounded by natives, whether by accident or intent.

(Sfx: didgeridoo, mumbled voices, excited sounds.)

ELIZA: Where... is Moreton Bay?

Take me to Moreton Bay?

VO. ELIZA: Like a carnival doll I was passed from one to another and finally stationed in one of their shelters. I was the object of considerable interest and spectacle, the curious brought to look upon the she-ghost, the first female one they'd seen.

ELIZA: Stop... no more *(pleads with them)* please leave me alone....

(She curls into a tiny ball)

VO. ELIZA: Now I am entirely alone, no James, no Baxter, no K'gari, no hope. No protest from my lips, no tears burn my lids, no fight drives my limbs. I close my eyes to the world, prepare to surrender. I dream of floating on gentle waves, of delicate arms holding me and caressing me as I drift in balmy waters beneath perfumed pink skies.

(Sfx: Water, drifting sounds, gradual thumping beat starts underneath, and builds louder.)

VO. ELIZA: Sweetness turns to dust and my dreams of heaven are peopled by angry giants, faces grotesquely painted, full of accusation. Pounding rhythms surround me, invade me. The throbbing in my body beats an angry rhythm with the stomping cries of corroborree.

(ELIZA sits up suddenly, shaken, feverish, in agony)

ELIZA: Who's there, what's happening?

 James, is that you, have you come for me?

SCENE 16 - Salvation

M. VO: August 17, Fig tree point near Lake Cootharaba

VO. ELIZA: I was quite literally swept away. Swept high into the air. The jolting gait of my possessor signalled this as no heavenly intervention. If I were to be rescued by angels they would surely spirit me away with nary a bump. The clouds could be seen through the treetops but they did not rush to greet me. The moon laughed at my calamity and the stars twinkled in amusement.

ELIZA: Who are you? Where are you taking me? Put me down!

VO. ELIZA: John Graham was a convict man transported to Moreton Bay. He had escaped and lived with the natives for some years before being recaptured. He had volunteered to assist in my rescue and through this act he demonstrated the most noble of sentiments. "I have come to save you Ma'am" he said, and in that moment, I knew that he would.

(ELIZA unties the vine from around her, replaces her wedding ring on her finger, unwraps a bundle of clothes, and dresses.)

M. VO: Around her loins was part of a pair of trousers, they covered her thighs, wound round with vines, as well for delicacy as for the preservation of her marriage and earrings.

 You never saw such an object. Although only 38 years, she looked like an old woman of 70, black, dreadfully crippled. She caught my hand and burst into tears, sunk down quite exhausted. ... a mere skeleton, her legs a mass of sores.

ELIZA: Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you..

(She becomes aware of her sad and sorry state and is mortified. She wraps a blanket around herself before looking up and finding the energy to go on.)

VO. ELIZA: And so we set up that beach again, walking through the night, fearful of being captured once again. Lieutenant Otter and Mr Graham showed the greatest kindness, supporting me, carrying me, ministering to me.

SCENE 17 – My Ebenezer

M. VO: Double Island Point, August 22

(She arranges the stones, one on top of the other)

ELIZA: Before I leave this fatal shore, I must give thanks and raise a stone, an Ebenezer. I must honour my James, our captain ... and honour our Lord and Saviour.

VO. ELIZA: “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” In this act we follow the example of the prophet Samuel. He said these words as he erected a stone to celebrate the help that God gave Israel. He called it an “Ebenezer”.

ELIZA: I also follow the example of my husband. When we first landed upon these shores my husband gave thanks, declaring, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”. I had turned from God and faith, but with this act I now restore my faith anew.

My monument might not stand throughout the ages, but it represents the truth, and one that my husband believed. The Lord will help us and I will survive. Vale to my Captain who still believed.

And now I leave this place, this part of my tale is told. I lived on this land, ate from it, slept on it, but it is not mine. I don’t belong. I long for home.

SCENE 18 – Survivors

M. VO: Eliza Fraser and six of the crew survived the wreck of the Stirling Castle and events that followed.

Robert Darge, Henry Youlden and Joseph Corralis were found on Bribie Island by Lieutenant Otter, who led the rescue party to find Eliza.

Robert Dayman & Little Bob Carey were found at Lake Cooroibah

John Baxter was found on Fraser Island

The only survivor from the pinnacle was Robert Hodge, found at Macleay River, New South Wales

Eliza Fraser spent two months recovering at Moreton Bay before sailing to Sydney, public receptions, the popular media and worldwide notoriety. Rumours, exaggerations, perhaps madness....

ELIZA: ... but that my friends is another tale again.

THE END

(Thank you to Mary Eggleston for her input and feedback throughout the development of this script and taking on the role of Eliza in performance. Enquiries regarding performance of this script should be directed to Susan Davis s.davis@cqu.edu.au.)

Research statement

Research background

This work explores relationships to place through the experiences of the infamous Eliza Fraser. To create this narrative documentary research was shaped into a fictional imagining of events exploring the monologue genre.

Research contribution

Creative nonfiction allows writers to transform factually based information into various literary texts (Brien 2000, Gutkind 2008). The most popular forms have been memoir and biography – this work extends its application through the creation of a dramatic script. The Eliza Fraser story has inspired works by many notable Australian artists including Nolan, White, Williamson & Burstall and Sculthorpe (with text by Barbara Blackman). This script makes a contemporary female contribution to this oeuvre.

Research significance

This script was developed for the NeoGeography 3C project supported by Arts Queensland, the Australia Council for the Arts and Sunshine Coast Council. *Figments of Eliza* has been staged successfully but can be read as a piece of writing in its own right.

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Griffith University

Linda Hassall

Salvation

Abstract:

Salvation is a realisation of Hassall's creative research into themes associated with white inheritance of Australian landscape. The work transforms theoretical investigation of landscape from post-colonial and spatial positions into theatrical exploration and questions Euro-centric associations of historical and future place, asking 'What will we leave behind?' *Salvation* voices some uncomfortable national silences to investigate and provoke socio-cultural questions pertaining to identity, nation, race, class and gender. *Salvation* questions the ideological or mythological perceptions that may promote a sense of the significance of dominant (white) European society in the Australian landscape. *Salvation* may read as a metaphor that voices Australian racial, environmental and cultural tensions. *Salvation* claims the value of landscape as central to the themes investigated *and* to the cultural knowledge statements that are embedded within the fiction. *Salvation* had a season at The Brisbane Powerhouse in August/September 2012.

Biographical note:

Dr Linda Hassall is Lecturer in Applied Theatre, Griffith University, with over 20 years experience as a director, playwright and dramaturge. Her play, *Salvation Roses*, the focus of her recently completed PhD, addresses themes of white inheritance of landscape, and was a top ten finalist in 2011 Qld Premiers Drama Awards. Linda's first published play, *Post Office Rose*, won a Matilda Award for Best New Play (2006). Linda's other published play is *A Contemporary Hymn* (2012). Linda has been commissioned to write the play that is the final phase of 3 year ARC funded project, *The Difficult Return*, which explores the impact of combat experiences on returning veterans and their families. Linda is a creative researcher on *The Boathouse – Representing the Elders: Indigenous research, oral history and documentary theatre* (Griffith University/AEL collaborative research project grant). Linda's research focusses on how land and culture scapes impact on behaviour and identity.

Keywords:

Creative writing – Scriptwriting – Post dramatic performance – Contemporary gothic

THE CHARACTERS:

Voices:	Echoes of white Australian voices who engage from historical fragmented moments of PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE.
Chorus:	VOICES play numerous characters, operating as a chorus of up to 22 performers. They chorally perform all songs.
Grotesque:	All chorus members are part of the carnival of the grotesque, over-exaggerated; dusty, dry and deteriorated. English sensibilities, manners and behaviours are highly exaggerated.
Tall Ship:	Looming presence created by the chorus.
Ships:	The first fleet and future invading forces.
Bow Sprite:	The spirit of the Tall Ship.
The Bride:	A symbol of settlement.
Preacher:	Missionary zealot.
Ghosts:	Men who've died working the landscape.

SETTING

An Australian Gothic physical theatre and musical performance script. The characters' physically create images and symbols within the setting such as the TALL Ships. Set pieces are tin buckets filled with; earth, dreams of land, other paraphernalia – letters, British and Australian flags, broken parasols, tea cups. The paraphernalia is used to create constructions in the landscape. Music, hymns and songs used are copyright free. Traditional ballads/hymns are bastardised in keeping with the Gothic tone. Dialogue is heightened and / indicates where dialogue is cut off.

SCENE 1 – Farewell to England

(Echoing through the mist and the distance a tolling and the lyrics of a convict ballad -distorted).

CHORUS: Farewell to old England forever
Farewell to my rum culls as well
Farewell to the well known Old Bailey
Where I used for to cut such a swell

Singing Tooral lioral liaddity
Singing Tooral lioral liay
Singing Tooral lioral liaddity
And we're bound for Botany Bay x2

(A TALL SHIP is breathing, coughing and gagging. A cry of pain. A moan of release. Through the mist and the distance a bell is tolling. Convicts are spewed from the bowels of the ship – they evoke voices from the past).

PAST: I am one of the dead, for surely one cannot survive *this*. Yes dead I must be. Yet in death there seems no comfort. From the endless sea. The endless sickness.

CHORUS: Singing Tooral lioral liaddity
Singing Tooral lioral liay
Singing Tooral lioral liaddity
And we're bound for Botany Bay

PAST: With every rancid breath I taste excrement. Shit festering with disease. It is not a taste easily spat out. It is the taste of misery. A collective filth. The taste of starvation. A scurried flavour lingers on the tongue. We stand on the bloated bellies of the dead. Our scabbed and putrid feet sink into rotting flesh. Our toenails turn black and peel away. The rats are well fed and thrive.

PAST: Men *Heave* against each other. Sweat against each other. Sodomise each other. Or are sodomised. Men.

PAST: Men stronger than I summon the strength to defy the monstrous sea, this monstrous demon ship, this monstrous vengeful journey to the dungeon of the world. We go for God and England and Justice. Men find comfort in the little death of release. Men defy social sensibilities to feel something. Anything. Rave and Rape against the injustices of England's transplanted Justice. We journey as aliens into the unknown. God help me. Destination Botany Bay.

CHORUS: Singing Tooral lioral liaddity
Singing Tooral lioral liay *(continues)*

(Convicts are sucked back into The TALL SHIP. As it approaches the sounds of human misery magnify).

SCENE 2 – Heave Ho

(A bell is tolling. The TALL SHIP waits. Its sails crack. Historical time is malleable. Stock whips are cracking in the distance drawing the Tall Ship closer. ‘Heave Ho is a choral representation of bringing the ship to dock).

BOW SPRITE: Salvation.

CHORUS: Heave Ho –

BOW SPRITE: Murderers, rapists, thieves/

CHORUS: Heave Ho –

(The Tall Ship is alive. It breathes. The whips crack).

CHORUS: Heave Ho –

BOW SPRITE: /Repent and find Salvation!

CHORUS: Heave Ho –

BOW SPRITE: Pickpockets, prostitutes/

CHORUS: Heave Ho –

(The Tall Ship’s breathing escalates).

BOW SPRITE: /Repent and find Salvation/

CHORUS: Heave Ho –

BOW SPRITE: /you poor miserable bastards bound for Botany Bay.

(The TALL SHIP fills the space. Bound For Botany Bay – fades as the ship draws breath and transforms into the FIRST FLEET of smaller ships. Heave Ho reprise builds as the smaller ships draw closer).

SHIP: The fatal shore shrieked.

SHIP: We should have listened to her discontent.

(The Ships transform into human detritus floundering in the unfamiliar landscape. The peaceful sounds in the landscape distort into the fatal shore shrieking and then wide open chords evoking distance).

Letter Home 1:

PAST: My Dearest Faith
We are surely damned. There is no Salvation to be found here.
Even if we repent. There is drought. There is terrifying distance
...

CHORUS: Terror Australis (terror)
Terror Nullius Terror (terror)

(The CHORUS drawn into the distance as if swallowed by it, drawn by the sound of the landscape calling to them, enticing them, seducing them. The CHORUS cuts across the following with; I am Free by Barney E. Warren, 1911. The Hymn cuts in and out and through the breaks in the dialogue and is hummed underneath. The PAST VOICES are female).

CHORUS: I am free in the all-cleansing blood,
Oh, the sweet flowing tide in my soul,
Ever keeping me white, in the city of light!
Blessed Jesus, in Thee I am whole.

Oh, the blood of Jesus!
Precious blood of the cross I see;
It is keeping me pure, for the promise is sure,
Praise the Lord, O my soul! I am free.

PAST: Salvation was thought to be found in the great distance. In our
desire to move into the emptiness of that vast desert space.

PAST: To spread ourselves, however thinly across - into - through the
horizon.

PAST: We left white boot-heeled footprints in the dirt.

PAST: We trod carelessly across the darker bare footed imprints of
those of ancient lines and eternal time.

PAST: We didn't care. We were seeking Salvation.

PAST: We took little with us.

PAST: Nothing of import really except God and Justice and Good
intentions.

CHORUS: I am free, what a wonderful thought!
It is filling my soul every day,
There's a voice speaking deep in my heart ever sweet,
I will guide you along in the way.

PAST: We carried these with us on the backs of dreams of land.

PAST: Dreams carried in cardboard suitcases and boxes and buckets.

PAST: Vessels filled with goods and greed and great white hopes.

PAST: You see, Salvation was ours sayeth the Lord.

PAST: In Salvation there was promise. The promised land.

CHORUS: “I am free” is the song I will sing
As I march on this beautiful way;
Oh, my heart doth abound with the joy I have found,
In His favour divine I will stay.

(Time is malleable. The FUTURE voices are male).

FUTURE: Never mind the genocide.

FUTURE: Never mind that.

FUTURE: That’s a position of perspective.

FUTURE: History.

FUTURE: We were just moving into the distance eager to meet the promise.

FUTURE: The promise of Salvation from the past.

FUTURE: The promise of Salvation from poverty and the pain of separation.

PAST: We looked into the distance and imagined beyond into the brightest of bright futures.

FUTURE: We could not conceive of what we did...what we caused.. what we ignored...what we...what we/

FUTURE: /what we see now from far into the future we couldn’t possibly have imagined.

FUTURE: We were like children.

CHORUS: I am free from the bondage of sin,
And the hope of my soul’s ever fair,
I shall dwell where they sing of my Saviour and King,
In a mansion of light over there.

PAST: We were like children.

FUTURE: Like children we understand far too late that promises are empty, miserable things... like buckets that have no bottoms.



Figure 1: A carnival of the grotesque sequence – drought and no reprieve from the never-ending heat. Figure 2: Utilising costume to transform into the sail of a TALL Ship. (Brisbane Powerhouse Production, August/September, 2012).

SCENE 3 - Into the Landscape

(The Male PAST VOICE is talking of the landscape. The FUTURE VOICE is female).

PAST: She called to me. I moved toward her. By the good Christ she was a beauty. Strong and fierce. Bright and hot. Her name - Horizon. She captivated me with the colours she clothed herself in. Shades of seduction that would never be recaptured in paint or oil or imagination. She whispered words on the hot red winds that blew from the West. Words that made me weak. That made me tremble. I desired all of her. Every inch of sandy hot hills and pink tipped crests. I climbed over, through and into her. I had to have her, tame her, beat her into submission and then she'd be mine. I sinned to have her. By the Christ I did. I was lost in her distance.

FUTURE: Can be claustrophobic all that distance. Stops up ya lungs. Gives ya a cancer in the lungs, distance does. Ya can feel all that distance pressing down on ya. Squeezin' the life outta ya. Ya realize how fucken' insignificant ya are when ya consider all that distance surroundin' us out here.

(The carnival of the grotesque parades: There are settlers and colonists and preachers. There are prostitutes and puritans. There are mothers dragging half dead children, there are men with axes and guns. There are lovers with good intentions. They are looking for Salvation).

Letter Home 2:

PAST: Dearest Hope
My Dear, I fear there is too much blood caked in this desert earth for any decent crop to grow. Yet I persist. For you my Hope. For our hopeful future. Yesterday an empty threat of rain... We are civilised men we will civilise this landscape. We will civilise the natives...we WILL/

(Time leaps to the future. FUTURE VOICES engage in contemporary debate).

FUTURE: This is their fucking country and it's more than fucking obvious it is not a place for pale skinned society descended from the fucking English criminal classes.

FUTURE: Don't you go tellin' me this country isn't mine... we, they, them, those before us took this country. Bastards took it. I know that. But I had nothin' to do with that... weren't me. It weren't theirs, but they took it. What the fuck can ya expect...Murderers, rapists, prostitutes, thieves, preachers/

FUTURE: /original fuckin' boat people.

FUTURE: They weren't gonna come here and ask to fucking share, now were they? That's history. It matters to the victors. The tragedy is that the others, the blacks were primitives. Primitives have no history.

FUTURE: The blacks were before history – white history it is I'm talkin' about – they were the before history, history had to butcher. Them poor bastards being here brought the white mission into perspective. They brought the hope of our Salvation.

(Times shifts to settlement: shotguns - slaughter of the indigenous population cut with disparaging comments on Australian aborigines and laughter. The settlers are being drawn into the distance - transfixed. VOICES are the perspective of the FUTURE).

FUTURE: The empty vessels of settlement carried our language - never uttered, never heard – yet the sounds of it shattered the silence and shredded the distance.

FUTURE: Language. We brought the English language into a landscape that could have easily done without it.

FUTURE: We babbled into the distance and told it of buildings we planned to construct.

FUTURE: We told it inconsequential things.

FUTURE: We complained about its heat.

FUTURE: We told it about curtain materials and rugs and crockery and babies yet to be born.

FUTURE: We named places in the distance, paddocks and mountains and other things that had no use for our useless names'¹.

FUTURE: In building and cursing and debating and naming we aimed to settle our own history and map out a future.

FUTURE: The distance remained silent. Her silence echoed her contempt.

(CHORUS builds shelter in a landscape that offers no shelter. There is a celebration of settlement - Bush Dance. Anticipation of children to come. Time and history shift. The female VOICES are writhing in the dirt, miscarrying babies into a dry landscape who sucks at them greedily).

VOICE: Little baby leakin' outta me into the dirt/

VOICE: Dripping outa me/

VOICE: slipping down me thighs.

VOICE: Little clots'a blood.

VOICE: Little moist things. Babies lost to this land.

VOICE: This country'll suck a womb dry.

VOICE: Greedy fuckin' place this.

VOICE: It gets a smell'a life... sniffs it out... in the dust storms and the red desert heat/

VOICE: Creeps up ya legs and pushes itself inside ya/

VOICE: /reaches up and tears it right outta ya/

VOICE: Clamp ya legs together!

VOICE: Hold it in!

VOICE: Pray the little bastard'll grab hold a something...

VOICE: Too fuckin' small and this country's too fucking strong.

VOICE: Alright you bitch, you fucking cunt, ya got another one.

VOICE: I got blood ties to that dirt...my bastard kids are out there,

VOICE: soaking up the sun/

VOICE: soaking into the dirt/

VOICE: /soft little bones ... sleeping. Sleep little ones. Sleep.

VOICE: Those who seek Salvation, lose it.
Those who lost Salvation, hope to reclaim it.
That's been the tragedy of this country.

(The dead children are scooped up and laid gently in tin buckets). They walk away with their dead babies in the buckets. They sing the Hymn I am coming to the Cross by William McDonald, 1870).

CHORUS: I am trusting, Lord, in Thee,
Blessed Lamb of Calvary;
Humbly at Thy cross I bow,
Jesus saves me, saves me now.

I am poor and weak and blind;
I am counting all but dross;
I shall full salvation find

Here I give my all to Thee:
Friends and time and earthly store;
Soul and body Thine to be,
Wholly Thine forevermore.

In the promises I trust;
Now I feel the blood applied;
I am prostrate in the dust;
I with Christ am crucified.

Jesus comes! He fills my soul!
Perfected in Him I am;
I am every whit made whole:
Glory, glory to the Lamb!

(The Bride appears. The dress is lit from within. She carries a bundle – a baby shape – though there is no baby just dusty dry dirt that slowly spills to the floor. The bones of dead children are reaching up under the dress for her. Trying to claw their way out of the earth and back into her arms).

Letter Home 3:

PAST: /God willing my dearest HOPE I await your arrival and our forthcoming nuptials in a fever of excitement. Though I fear this country is less than kind to the gentler sex...it is too dry.

BRIDE: My children are reflected in the heat haze on the distant horizon. As am I.

The self I see reflected in the landscape is clouded by my bloody inheritance of it. My reflection and those transparent reflections of my children are hazy...indistinct...but my darlings are reflected there on that horizon of un-belonging all the same. It offers little comfort that grudging reflection.



FIGURE3: The Bride and her children – their bones clawing back through the earth into her arms.(Brisbane Powerhouse, August/September, 2012)

(The barn dance music is reprised – an echo of a happier time. A single dancer is left alone in the landscape spinning endlessly in the overwhelming space. From far off we hear a dingo howl, another answers. Silence. The dancer topples to the earth).

SCENE 4 – Salvation is Yours

(The carnival of the grotesque are looking for God. There are sinners and puritans praying for Salvation. They are erecting the Cross. A lone woman begins to sing cabaret style; At the Cross by William J Henry, 1911).

CHORUS: There's salvation full and free,
 At the cross;
 Sinner, come and pardoned be
 At the cross;
 Lo, the Savior waiting stands,
 See His bleeding side and hands,
 He will break sin's awful bands
 At the cross.

PREACHER: Repent all ye sinners and you will be given Salvation. It is promised.

Letter Home 4:

PAST: Dearest Charity
 I try to find God. But this country is too big and I do not know where to begin to look for him. I fear one day that the searching will become too much for me and I will give him up for lost...If it would only rain/

(PREACHER is a parody of an evangelist).

PREACHER: Repent I say and you will find God. YOU WILL FIND GOD. HERE. Look for the cross. Turn your sinning eyes toward the Lord and the cross will be your beacon to Heaven. The symbol of our Lord and your Salvation.

CHORUS: There's salvation full and free,
At the cross;
Sinner, come and pardoned be
At the cross...

PREACHER: Cast your eyes across this godforsaken land and look for him. Search until you are blind and dumb and deaf. But do not give up. He is out there in the drought and distance. Yes he is you, miserable sinners. Salvation is yours sayeth the Lord.

CHORUS: At the cross, at the cross,
There's salvation full and free at the cross...

PREACHER: Find the heathen and bring him to the cross.

(Aboriginal women and children are dragged to the cross and treated brutally).

PREACHER: For his own good and your salvation bring him to the cross. If he refuses bind him. If he still refuses to cast his eyes toward the lord, toward the true cross of God, flog him until his back is bleeding and broken.

CHORUS: There thy soul shall find sweet rest,
At the cross;
Heaven's peace shall fill thy breast,
All thy guilt shall pass away,
At the cross...

PREACHER: It is your responsibility, designated to YOU from God to terrify him, terrorize him and if that doesn't work TEMPT HIM with disease riddled blankets and glass beads into believing.

Take his women, take his country then take his spirit. And if that does not convince the misguided heathen to turn his eyes toward the wooden cross, kill him and take his children.

(The children are torn from their mother's and flung toward the white missionaries waiting at the cross).

CHORUS: There is grace for every need,
At the cross;

Thou shalt find a friend indeed,
At the cross...

PREACHER: Wrap those lost lambs in the spirit of God. Wrap them in white linen and white lies. Clothe their nakedness and teach them to speak with the tongue of the Saviour. Teach them servitude and force them to sever all ties to the rainbow serpent. Then you may look to the cross of Salvation and IT WILL be yours sayeth the Lord. Trust in the word of the Lord and you will never need to say you are Sorry.

CHORUS: At the cross, at the cross,
There's salvation full and free at the cross...

(The cross is used to yoke the aborigines).

CHORUS: Honour the Indigenous peoples of this land...
For the pain, suffering and hurt of these stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind/
WE ARE SORRY
To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities
WE ARE SORRY.
For the indignity and degradation...
WE ARE SORRY (Rudd, 2008)²

(In the Southern sky the Southern Cross appears).

SCENE 5 – Men and Mateship and the Demon Drink

(Men move into the landscape. They desire to claim it, make it their own - tame it. Felling, Fencing, Fighting and Fucking. The landscape moans from deep within. VOICES are from the PRESENT)

PRESENT: This landscape is a woman going through menopause. Once fertile, her rich red soil is no longer fertile. She is a hostile and cruel bitch, my landscape, as she cracks and no longer bleeds, opening herself up for the rain that doesn't come.

(The men engage in a movement sequence that moves through time. It includes tree felling, sawing, hammering, cane cutting, mining - any industry that has raped the landscape for natural resources. The industrial soundscape is created by the actors with the tin buckets. The landscape bleeds. The men tire - collapse and proceed to drink themselves stupid).

Letter Home 5:

PAST: Dear Temperance
You have been long suffering in the face of my absence. This bastard place binds me to cruel labour. My back is near

crippled, my hands are blistered and weeping. No matter how
hard I work there seems more to be done.
The sun drives me mad. It puts me in mind of murder.

(A pub brawl breaks out. The female VOICES respond to the chaos of the brawl).

VOICE: She don't kill the men out here.

VOICE: Couldn't be fuckin' bothered.

VOICE: She lets the axes and the guns and the grog do that for her.

VOICE: Useless bastard's men in this country.

VOICE: Always have bin'.

VOICE: She got no use for them and their ideas'a mateship.

*(GHOSTS of bushrangers and drovers, labourers and swagmen appear from the
places where the dead men lie. The female VOICES tell how they lived and died).*

GHOST: Droving cattle

GHOST: Fighting

GHOST: Fencing

GHOST: Tree felling

VOICE: Chainsaw took to him. Bit 'im real good. Stupid bastard. Any
decent bloke'd get bitten by a Redbelly black, King Brown, fall
off his fucking horse, die of thirst or something. Not him...oh
no. He let a bloody chainsaw get him. Smartarse. Bled out in
the paddock before anyone missed him.

VOICE: Dickhead.

GHOST: Beating the odds/

GHOST: /and the burning sun/

VOICE: Sun got 'im in the end. Melanoma'ed. Tiny little mark ended
up eating him out from the inside. From arsehole to breakfast
basically.

GHOST: /and the bastard cattle/

GHOST: /and the blunt axes/

GHOST: /and bludgers/

GHOST: /endless bitumen roads.

VOICE: Ute got him, hey. Pinned him down.
Blew a tire on Devel's Rd coming back from the Curry...
(the) Jack was fucked. Crushed him. They reckon he lived for
two days under that car 'fore that truckie spotted him.
'parently the ants and the flies had a good go at him too. The
land'd drained most of him, drunk her fill. Tryin' to stave off
the menopause. She's a cruel bitch ...Cunt of a way to go.

GHOST: AND snakes/

GHOST: /and the demon drink

Letter Home continued:

PAST: Dearest Temperance
I am truly repentant for what I have did to you. I do ... adore
you but it is hard to abstain in this bastard of a place with its
sun and its flies and its ability to strip your skin and your
dreams...I can take little more...surely it must rain soon and
ease my dis-temper and my unquenching thirst...

*(Domestic Violence sequence exploring depths of love, passion, depression associated
with violence against women due to alcohol abuse. The VOICE comes from the
beaten woman. Her plight is reflected upon by VOICES from the FUTURE).*

VOICE: Thought I was dead that one time.
Wasn't though. Not that time anyways.
After I pulled meself ta'gether, I fucked 'is mate out
the back a' the beer garden. Took me floggin' and
moved on. Lost a kid the next day.
Scooped it up in a ice cream bucket outta the dirt and
threw it down the lav. Got fuckin' on with it.

FUTURE: And if ya hadn't noticed there's no more men,
there's no more water, no more vehicles and there's
no more fuckin' fuel, so we've all been flogged now
haven't we.

VOICE: Nah a good floggin' never hurt anyone, 'less it kills ya a'
course.

FUTURE: No use what so bloody ever. Men and their ideas'a love an'
mateship and heroes and cheerin' fuckin' dead soldiers
paradin' down streets, laying flowers on monuments. This
place don't care.

FUTURE: We were only ever really travellers here.

Journey men. Women with suitcases packed with broken dreams and dead children and men with buckets full of destroyed hopes.

GHOST: But we keep sayin' fuck you! She respects that.
We pay the price of the little Aussie Battler

FUTURE: Penance.
Payin' the fuckin' piper.
God save the Queen and her wild Colonial Boys

BOW SPRITE: We sought Salvation in the distance and the dirt and the dry desert heat and there was no Salvation.

SCENE 6 – White Inheritance

(The carnival of the grotesque reflect on the past from the position of the apocalyptic future. They question the audience. They offer them cups of tea from broken tea cups. The wave tattered flags at them or use the flags as blankets. The landscape is desolate. The carnival music distorts fades and drifts away into the decimated landscape. Abide with Me (anon) cuts across the following).

ONE VOICE: Abide with me; fast falls the eventide
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

FUTURE: Someone else desires her. I could not keep her. Not forever.
Fool that I was. I loved her too cruelly. Too long. She did not forgive me. Her colours have faded. In her sadness her former brightness flickers. Her generous sandy hills are left scarred. Deep pits of emptiness where her beauty used to be. I took from her all she had to give. She rejects me. And my heart breaks. My heart is torn from my chest and is ground under the boot heels of him who wants her now. The red winds that blow from the West no longer whisper but scream my betrayal. She hurls her drought and fire and flood at me and scorns my fear. She wants another. A lover who will be tender. In the dark eyes of that lover I see my pale defeat.

ONE VOICE: Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word;
But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free.
Come not to sojourn, but abide with me.

(The acid rain is about to fall. VOICES from the FUTURE reflect on the past history).

Letter Home 6:

FUTURE: My Dearest Darling Patience
It rained today. And the land was cleansed...

FUTURE: No one left now.

FUTURE: Why were anyone here in the first place I'd like ta know.

FUTURE: When?

FUTURE: Before the weather.

(A dingo howls in the empty distance).

Before the bastard dogs and bleak weather.
Before one fuckin' disaster after another.
Before we got buried in Salvation.

FUTURE: Holocaust initially. That was then forgotten, rewritten.
Then it was the Coal or the Copper or the Cattle. Gas or oil.
Musta been some fucking good reason ta come out here after
all that went on. All that violence. All that murderin'.
How the fuck would I know? Men came. That's what I know.
Men came and attempted to make a mark.

FUTURE: She's opening up. Out there. Cracking and splitting/

VOICE: Gets us all 'ventually. The distance.

VOICE: It's difficult to move through anymore.

She's opening up. Out there. Cracking and splitting/

VOICE: Didn't get the blacks though.

VOICE: Nah. They thrive on distance.

VOICE: We just disappear in it. It's like we was never here.

It's like this land don't care if we was here or not when she
starts throwin' all that distance at ya

VOICE: They's the shadows ya see in the landscape...those
blacks...loomin' 'cross the country...coverin' up us white girls
and boys... stretchin' outta the distance. Nippin' and snappin'
at our heels. Doggin' us with their history. With the truth.

VOICE: Children of the distance. Us white people never took, those that are comin' never will take... to it either. 'Cause others will come. We are fools to think they won't.

(The sound of ships horn that transforms into sounds of helicopters, jets, sirens. The dingoes are real close. Their shadows flicker across the heat haze. The VOICES struggle to maintain their place in all the distance as the TALL SHIPS approach in a future military invasion).

CHORUS: Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings,
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea—
Come, Friend of sinners, and thus bide with me.

FUTURE: On the day. On the day of the final disaster.

FUTURE: On the final white Australia Day. It rained.

FUTURE: Kerosene blue sky turned to silver and the shards rained down on the land.

FUTURE: It tasted like acid that rain.

(The acid rain falls).

FUTURE: It burnt the tongue and scalded the roof of the mouth and scorched its way down the back of the throat.

FUTURE: Christ ...it's burning me. Burning the skin and the sin and the dirt/

FUTURE: /yea though I walk through /

FUTURE: /clean outta me/

FUTURE: /The Valley /

FUTURE: /Hot/

FUTURE: /Of the Shadow /

FUTURE: /Hot/

FUTURE: /Of Death/

FUTURE: /Dust to Dust

FUTURE: We's all ancient bones covered in earth now.
Bones that whisper the stories. Of those forgotten/

FUTURE: /As they push through the dry skin of this land.
The whites and blacks whose stories are imprinted in places
you pass through.

FUTURE: Those who are still there shimmerin' in the desert heat. Ya see
'em if ya look hard enough/

FUTURE: In the flutter of the ragged curtains of those dead towns ya
drive through.

FUTURE: Their names noted in plaques, scratched into tree stumps,
chiselled on the face of monuments... waiting for someone to
read them out loud. Your names there too...

FUTURE: When the other's came, the ones in *your* future, they re-named.

FUTURE: History. It's all just History.

FUTURE: Was an ordinary day. The day the rain came.

FUTURE: I recall.

FUTURE: Nuthin' much went on/

FUTURE: Same old same old really. Happens like that. Goes on, we
ignore the same thing day after day after day.

FUTURE: Then the unexpected. No reason.

FUTURE: Nah nothing different went on that day. 'Cept for the arrival/

FUTURE: /an the rain/

FUTURE: /an the invasion a' course.

FUTURE: This land. She don't forget and she don't forgive. Violence.
Embedded in the history of the place.

FUTURE: Imprinted on the fuckin' landscape.
*(The landscape catches on fire and as the flames recede, The Southern Cross appears
brightly in the sky. More TALL SHIPS approach.)*

THE END

Endnotes

1. Inspired by Paul Carter's 1987 account of Australia originating in acts of settlement, possession and dispossession *The Road to Botany Bay: an exploration of landscape and history*.
2. From Prime Minister Rudd's 2008 national apology to the First Nation People of Australia for wrongs including the forcible removal of children from families.

Research statement

Research background

Situated in the field of creative writing for performance, *Salvation* is an innovative post-dramatic realisation of Hassall's doctoral research into themes associated with white inheritance of Australian landscape (2012). The practice-led investigation contextualised three years of theoretical research of sociological, environmental and spatial contexts of Australian 'landscape' and investigates tensions inherent in 'landscape' constructs since transportation.

Research contribution

Contributing to contemporary creative research in methodological, dramaturgical and theatrical fields, *Salvation* uniquely, transforms theoretical discourses into cultural expression. *Salvation* provokes post-colonial sociological debates from conflicting cultural perspectives and is informed by current investigations of landscape from socio-racial, socio-geographic and sustainability positions.

Research significance

Salvation advances the performance research that was a top ten finalists in the Queensland Premiers Drama Award 2011. Premiering at the Brisbane Powerhouse in August/September 2012 it was acknowledged in the best five designs in the Del Artè Charts 2012. The work unifies rigorous theoretical interrogation with unique forms of multidisciplinary theatrical expression to pose questions about the 'role' of the white Australian in the contemporary national landscape.

Works cited

Hassall, Linda 2012 'Evoking and Excavating Representations of Landscape: *How are experiences of landscape explored in the creation and development of a new play: Dawn's Faded Rose?*', unpublished doctoral thesis, Brisbane: Griffith U

La Trobe University

Hester Joyce and Catherine Joyce

Afrika ants

Abstract:

This project takes its impulse from Franz Kafka's fragmented, fanciful, and fantastic *Amerika (the man who disappeared)*, published posthumously in 1927. The script investigates the application of auto/biographical and screen memoir research to the construction of multiplatform narratives collating material collected from the 1950s to the present day drawn from my family's travels in Zambia. This is a collaborative project that includes archival family and public footage, photographs, magazines, audio and visual interviews. This output takes the form of 'screenplay as work of art', as screen memoir, underpinned by themes of home, place, memory and migration.

Biographical notes:

Dr. Hester Joyce is a Senior Lecturer in Media Screen + Sound at La Trobe University. She is co-author of *New Zealand film and television: institution, industry and cultural change* (2011) and a contributor to J Bennett and R Beirne (eds) *Making film and television histories* (2011). She has professional credits in acting, writing and directing in theatre and in acting, script consulting in film and television. Research interests include scriptwriting research, policy and practice; life writing and film memoir; national and indigenous cinema; and creative and media arts practice.

Catherine Joyce is a writer and researcher working in Auckland.

Keywords:

Creative writing – Scriptwriting – Life writing – Screenplay – Migration

THE CHARACTERS

Lou, Em and Cat. Australian sisters in their fifties.

SETTING/STAGE DESIGN

The roads around the copper belt in northern Zambia near the Congo border in 2011. The townships of Chingola and Chililabombwe in the 1950s.

Afrika Ants

TITLE UP: **COPPERBELT, ZAMBIA, 2011**

FADE IN:

1. EXT. NDOLA-CHINGOLA ROAD - DAY

Pot-holed asphalt road whizzes by swarming with big mining trucks and smaller cars, most have seen better days. The road is narrow, two lanes with dirt walking tracks on either side and lots of foot traffic.

Groups of women walking with heavy parcels, water, goods, balanced on their heads, children following.

Men walking and on bicycles, loaded up. Goats, dogs wandering. Crowded. Precarious.

CAT (V.O)

In 2011 my two sisters and I, went back to Zambia, to Chingola, for the first time since we had lived there in the 1950s. We stayed in a guesthouse run by a white Zimbabwean, Johnno. The guesthouse mostly had men, mostly from South Africa, staying in it who worked in mining. We were quite unusual in that the few tourists who came to Chingola would stay in the only, expensive hotel in town.

Driving into a small town, rundown 1950s brick houses, a worn sign 'Welcome to Chingola'.

CAT (V.O)

We hired a car for our stay there. The men in the guesthouse were horrified to learn that we were driving around without a cell phone to use if we got into any trouble.

A street, a sign for a boutique hotel 'The Hibiscus'.

A two-metre brick block fence topped with broken glass and barbed wire.

On a forbidding iron gate a sign 'No trespassing, armed guard,' below, a graphic of teeth-bearing dogs.

CAT (V.O)

Johnno told us that when he first moved there he bought a new car. Being a flamboyant character, he bought a rather flash car, a large sedan painted a sparkly gold, and hired a driver.

INSERT file photograph of sparkling gold winged car.

CAT (V.O)

This led to him being seen as a wealthy man, even though he insisted he was not. One night as he was being driven home, his driver stopped the car at an intersection and they were held up by a group of men with guns. They shot the driver and stole the car. Johnno said he was very shaken by this incident and he replaced the car with the most inconspicuous, ordinary car he could find.

INSERT file photograph of small navy blue car.

CUT TO:

2. INT. CAR - DAY

A long dirt road seen through a rear car window recedes into the distance. Bumpy, dry, dusty.

Sequence of stills of bush views in late afternoon sun. Macchia-type scrub trees and native grasses crowding the roadside.

A single grass roof adobe hut. A beaten bicycle leaning against a tree.

Three women are inside the car, sisters, LOU is driving, CAT in front, EM in back. Lou stops abruptly.

LOU
(Pointing)
Marching ants.

EM
Where?

LOU
There. Right in front of the
car.

EM
Just a sec.

Em gets out of the car. Is seen camera in hand from
inside the car taking footage of the ants.

INSERT documentary file footage close-up of a column of
army ants.

LOU
(Shouts)
Don't stand in them.

Em looks up briefly. Films for a little longer. Then
jumps across the ants and gets back in the car.

CAT
Great. Well-spotted.

CUT TO:

3. EXT. MINER'S COMPOUND - DAY

A newly graded dirt road, wide areas of cleared areas,
few trees. In the distance are large mining buildings,
massive hills of open caste mining, mine-shaft towers.
The road comes to a high fence with razor barbed wire
tunneling across the top. A security gate opens.

The car pulls into the dusty yard area of a mining
accommodation compound. Rows of fresh white prefab
buildings.

LOU
Bit different from our old
place.

EM
Basic. Fly In Fly Outs I
guess. Not quite the Utopian
dream of the fifties.

Dominating the centre of the compound is a spreading tree towering out of the top of a very large anthill, over six metres high and across.

Under the tree on a rudimentary wooden bench a man sits with his laptop.

CAT
Johnno said that's the only
place they can get reception.
They call it the internet
cafe.

CUT TO:

4. EXT. SAFARI TENT DECK - DAY

Lou, Em and Cat sit on the deck of a safari tent in warm afternoon sunlight. Em holds the camera pointing it towards Cat.

CAT
We could start with the ants.

LOU
Ants?

CAT
The ant stories. You know the
ant hill in the front yard.

LOU
Oh, outside our other house in
Bancroft? Chililabombwe, I
mean. Not much of it left now
- they're used for making
bricks, I think. Something
about the dirt being really
fine because the ants have
already digested it.

INSERT still of the main street of Chililabombwe township. A wide impoverished streetscape, lined with one and two storied buildings - a bank, clothing store, a fake 'local Starbucks'. All with windows security grilled.

Older model cars angled parked.

INSERT still of demolished anthill in front of a simple tidy brick house.

CAT

Mum told me they went to a cocktail party in someone's garden - quite formal.

FADE TO:

5. EXT. CHINGOLA HOUSE GARDEN 1958

Silent footage of party gathering. Families, children.
Sound of an old projector flicking.

INSERT Hand drawn sequence of a group of people, cocktail glasses in hand, talking and laughing.

At the centre a woman in a summer dress.

CAT (V.O)

She was standing chatting to someone and all of a sudden an electric shock went through her whole body.

INSERT Hand drawing of the woman jettisoning her glass as an electric shock passes through her.

CAT (V.O)

She looked down and her legs were covered in ants. They had climbed up all over her while she was chatting and she hadn't noticed. They bite on command and they bit her all at once.

INSERT Series of drawings of the woman, running away from the party, in a bathroom stripping off and sitting in a bathtub.

CAT (V.O)

She just had to run home, strip off all her clothes and jump in to a bath full of water.

CUT TO:

6. EXT. SAFARI TENT DECK - DAY

Lou, Em and Cat on the deck of a safari tent.

CAT

Pinching ants, she said.

Em hands the camera to Cat.

EM

This is a story Dad told me.

Cat plays around with the camera.

EM

Just a portrait size, chest up
and press the red button. As
long as the green light is on.
We just want the audio anyway
I reckon.

FADE TO:

7. EXT. CHINGOLA MINE HOSPITAL 1958 - DAY

Still of 1950s modest white brick building - faded deco
style. A large treed garden at the front.

EM (V.O)

He was in the hospital lab and
one of his technicians came
running in and said there were
ants coming. Up the path
towards the lab.

CUT TO:

8. EXT. SAFARI TENT DECK - DAY

Cat talks as she films.

CAT

Were the techs local?

LOU

It was a black hospital. For
Africans only. Part of Dad's
contract with the mining
company was to train the local
men in the lab. There was a
white hospital, for expats, in
another township. Probably
army ants. A column.

EM

Dad said they demolish everything in their way. So he was worried about the lab. Anyway. The tech squatted down and just looked at it for a while as it was heading up the path towards the lab door. Then he got a pair of tweezers and picked out one ant and turned it around and pointed it the other way.

FADE TO:

9. EXT. CHINGOLA MINE HOSPITAL 1958 - DAY

Documentary file footage. Close up of army ant column streaming in an orderly fashion along a concrete path. The head of the column stops, a moment of disarray - then the ants regroup and march off in a new direction.

EM (V.O)

After a few minutes the whole column turned and went the other way.

CUT TO:

10. EXT. SAFARI TENT DECK - DAY

Lou, Em and Cat on the deck of a safari tent. The sun is lower, shadows deeper.

CAT

I never heard that story. We can use that stuff you got today of the ants.

EM

It's not there. I'm not sure what happened but I haven't got it. Should be able to get some for free. There'll be heaps on the internet.

LOU

Well I came home from school one day and Richard came over from next door.

Em takes the camera from Cat and turns it to Lou.

CAT
Do you remember this
happening?

LOU
I was about six. This was in
8th street.

FADE TO:

11. Ext. chingola house 1958 - day

INSERT still of rear yard of a tidy brick mining house.

LOU (V.O)
And there were some marching
ants going across the back
garden somewhere near the
garage. And he challenged me
to jump over them.

INSERT of girl-child's face. Suspicious.

LOU (V.O)
So I jumped back and forth a
few times.

INSERT of girl gleefully jumping back and forth over a
column of ants, plaits swinging. Boy looks on.

LOU (V.O)
(laughs)
And then he challenged me to
actually put my foot in them.

INSERT of child's foot planting on a line of ants.

LOU (V.O)
And they immediately came all
over me and the gardener had
to come and hose me down.

INSERT of Edward (Bemba tribe African man) hosing the
girl down. Boy runs off.

CUT TO:

12. EXT. SAFARI TENT DECK - DAY

In the dusk the women continue talking.

CAT
Was that Peanut?

LOU
Pinasi was his real name. But
it sounded like penis so the
expats called him Peanut.

EM
Sign of the times.

LOU
The gardener was Edward.

CAT
Did they bite?

LOU
Yea I think they bit. I can't
really remember. Remember I
told you there were service
lanes at the back of the
houses. I must've dropped my
schoolbag there and in the
ensuing sort of carry on
someone stole it. I was very
cross about that.

CAT
Dad told me a story about
Edward. Dad was on call for
emergencies one weekend and
was called out to match some
blood. It was the middle of
the night. When he got to the
lab he found that it was
Edward that needed the
transfusion.

INSERT series of stills taken from the safaris tent deck
over a lake as the sun is setting.

Bush with sun striking through. Antelope grazing.

An old wooden sign 'Cottage 200 Cape to Cairo Railway
Line BSA Co 1907'. Exotic, magical dusk light.

CAT

There was great rivalry
between Edward and our
neighbour's gardener. Edward
had been accused of peeing on
the neighbour's vegetable
garden and the other gardener
came over and slit Edward's
throat with a knife.

EM

That must've happened in the
African compound. They weren't
allowed to live near us.

LOU

He was lucky Dad could match
the blood in time. It's the
middle of nowhere.

EM

That's what I thought. When we
got off the plane and on that
road from Ndola.

LOU

I know. What were they
thinking?

CAT

But imagine what it was like
coming from post-war Scotland.
They were hungry for a start.

EM

In their twenties...

CAT

There's that letter from Dad's
friend telling him about the
dances and sundowner parties
and how much they'd have to
live on here.

EM

It must have seemed so exotic.

LOU

And warm.

CUT TO:

13. EXT. NDOLA-CHINGOLA ROAD - DAY

Lou driving, Em in the passenger seat and Cat in the back.

EM

Bloody hell. This is supposed to be the best road in Zambia.

LOU

The goats are a bit of worry. Wouldn't want to hit one.

CAT

Never mind the trucks.

Up ahead a van is parked off the road, one side up on a jack. Several men mill about as one waves down passing cars. None stop.

LOU

We could stop.

CAT

No! There's at least six of them and three of us.

LOU

It's ok the doors are locked.

CAT

Don't stop the car. Remember what happened to Johnno.

Lou pulls over ahead of the van.

CAT

Jesus Lou. Don't open the window. We don't know what they want. Just keep the window shut.

Em winds down the window a few centimetres. The man gesticulates through the gap. Em and Lou have a muted conversation with him.

CAT

We're not giving him a ride! Just wind the window up. Just drive away.

Em winds the window up as Lou pulls out on to the road.

CAT

(looking back)

That was weird. We slow down
and stop then we tell him we
can't help them.

The man stands abandoned at the roadside. Road
busy with people and trucks and animals recedes
out the rear window.

FADE TO
BLACK

END OF SCRIPT

Research statement

Research background

The study of literary auto/biography suggests the unavoidable collision (collusion) of the self and the other in the rendering of pasts (Anderson 2011). In biographical screenwriting, the audio-visual rendering compounds memory and its function in screen storytelling (Nichols 2001). This research begins with stories told by our parents about our beginnings in an exotic, distant place, Chingola, a mining township in the copper belt of northern Zambia. These stories were locked into our memories through the family's home movies making them indistinguishable from real memories. Some now seem mundane, even trivial, but these are the stories we have remembered. In 2011, we went back to Zambia for the first time since the 1950s, and collected more stories of life as it is lived there now, told to us by the people we met, and those we brought with us, experienced first-hand.

Research contribution

Screenwriting develops a narrative, production constructs required footage and together they create a screen story. Here a range of material has arrived, 1950s family films, interviews with family members, recent footage, photographs and documentary archives. Told stories shape the script based on this found material. Missing material is collected from publically available sources. The script investigates the application of biographical and film memoir research to the construction of multiplatform narratives to collate such material.

Research significance

With increased availability of both the means of production and avenues of exhibition, construction of screen biography is challenging the boundaries of auto/biography. This script questions how audio-visual media can be used to represent the vagaries of memory in the recounting of stories. This genre might be called 'screen memoir'.

Works cited

- Anderson, Linda 2011 *Autobiography* (2nd edn), London and New York: Routledge
 Nichols, Bill 2001 *Introduction to documentary*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana UP

Griffith University

Marcus Waters

Paul & Ally: “Guess who is coming to dinner”

Abstract:

This work contextualises contemporary academic discourses on Aboriginal subjectivity in the writing of a television series; written as creative practice that identifies the way we continue to debate the nature of Aboriginal consciousness. The work posits autobiographical ethnicity as an analytical position from which the screenwriter writes, in that it separates itself from current Indigenous studies. This approach reveals a parallel tradition of intellectual and creative development beyond that which is connected to an act of colonisation. Thus there are possibilities for contributing to the development of new theoretical and conceptual frameworks that move away from historical essentialist constructs of cultural identity that position ‘race’ in a binary based upon exclusivity and colonisation. The script explores the tensions created through grappling with this oppressive playing out of ‘race’ as it is constructed through contemporary inter-family relationships. Only by decoupling Aboriginality from historically constructed essentialist fantasies can we acknowledge the richness of diversity within Aboriginal families in a rapidly emerging Aboriginal First Nation screenwriting culture.

Biographical note:

As an Aboriginal Kamilaroi screenwriter and academic, Dr. Marcus Waters’ writing engineers a hypothetical academic, cultural and creative third space in reinventing the Indigenous position beyond its current binary. Dr. Waters’ stage play *Where From You Come* appeared at Brisbane’s La Boite Theatre before winning the inaugural Australian Film, Television and Radio Schools’ Macquarie Bank scholarship in ‘Excellence in Screenwriting’. During this time, he wrote a number of award-winning international short films before going on to write for television with the Channel 7 Network and SBS. Winner of the Cultural Inclusiveness Award in the 2009 Griffith Awards for Excellence in Teaching, Dr Waters convenes screenwriting for the Griffith University School of Humanities.

Keywords:

Creative writing – Scriptwriting – Autobiographical ethnicity – Indigeneity and creative practice

Paul & Ally: "Guess who is coming to Dinner."

FADE IN:

1. INT. KITCHEN - MORNING - DAY 1

Pauly, Ally and Dhagaan are in the kitchen. Ally pours some juice, Pauly takes it over to Dhagaan who is sitting at the kitchen table, staring dreamily.

PAULY

Look at this boy.

ALLY

Yeah, so? He looks happy.

PAULY

No one's that happy.

ALLY

Do you want me to call a doctor, Pauly?

PAULY

I... just wish I could go with him, I would love to visit that world he lives in, look. He's so happy. [To Dhagaan] Dhagaan, what are you thinking of?

DHAGAAN

Wrestling.

PAULY

See, every thing changes when you get older: Wrestling. Huh, you that happy boy? You can't do that as an adult. You try but you can't. Wrestling, oh that's not real, it's gammon. So gammon, my life is gammon. Bungo, no money. Who am I? Why am I here? I don't wanna go to work, what am I doing? Am I gay? Why won't my wife sleep with me?

DHAGAAN

I sleep with you Daddy.

Dhagaan gets up off his chair goes and hugs Pauly, walks O.S.

ALLY

[To Pauly] Happy now?

PAULY

See, his world is so happy he wants
to fix my crappy world. Wrestling?
When did you last dream about men
in their underwear bulging with
muscles wrestling, and sweating all
over you?

ALLY

[Smiles] Yesterday [Walks O.S.]

[Opening Credits:]

2. INT. NOEL AND MARY KITCHEN - MORNING - DAY 1

Noel and Mary are in their kitchen. Mary is stirring a pot on the stove. Noel is sitting at the kitchen table, looking through supermarket shopping receipts. It is obviously irritating Mary.

MARY

Will you stop? You're driving me
nuts [She turns away]. This is who
you are now? Having to look through
shopping receipts for bargains?

NOEL

I like to save money.

MARY

[She picks up a coupon] How many
five dollar pizzas can we eat?

NOEL

Who said anything about we?

MARY

Anyway, we don't eat take-a-way, I
cook.

NOEL

OK, where's my breakfast?

MARY

Eat a receipt.

Noel puts a couple of receipts in his mouth starts chewing.

MARY

[Shaking her head] That's the man I married!

Pauly knocks on the door and enters.

PAULY

Hi.

NOEL

[Still chewing] Hello Pauly.

MARY

Hi.

PAULY

Hey [To Noel] what yah eating?

MARY

Don't worry about yah Father dear, you hungry?

PAULY

No, no, I just ate.

NOEL

[Spits out the paper] Oh, so you'll cook for him!

PAULY

[Looking at the paper spat out by his Father] What is this?

NOEL

Here, you hungry? [Hands him a pile of receipts] have some.

PAULY

[Shakes his head] Oh, God, it's worse than I thought.

MARY

What dear?

PAULY

Ally's parents.

Mary and Noel groan.

PAULY

They're coming up from Sydney for the weekend.

MARY

We're busy this weekend Pauly.

PAULY

Oh, come on Ma, they don't come that often.

MARY

Oh, no, wasn't it enough they took you and Dhagaan away? Five years you were gone Pauly.

NOEL

Where did they go for Christmas last year? Paris?

PAULY

That was work Mum!

NOEL

I don't know what they are trying to prove, you should just get old gracefully.

Pauly and Mary both look at Noel and his pile of receipts.

MARY

They're so gammon. I always have to hear about how beautiful the world is and how lucky we are to be alive.

Pauly and Mary both look again at Noel who is now putting more receipts in his mouth.

PAULY

OK, I get your point, please you can't leave me alone with them, Ally becomes...

NOEL

White [Mary and Noel laugh].

PAULY

Come on, not fair. I know you don't want to and they have no idea, but please.

MARY

They did pay for the wedding.

NOEL

[Muffled still eating] They're suppose... [Spits out the receipts] They're supposed too.

Mary has put a plate of food on the table in front of Noel. She also gets milk out of the fridge to pour him a glass.

MARY

Here, wash down those receipts.

PAULY

And wasn't it a lovely wedding? You can find new things to make fun of them about. We can all laugh at them once they're gone.

MARY

Well it was a lovely wedding.

PAULY

Good, so youse are both coming!

MARY

Don't you feel the same way about them?

PAULY

No, Ma, I like 'em.

NOEL

After five years with them in Sydney. I would hate their guts.

PAULY

Nah, they were always gone travelling, it's not like...

NOEL

Like what?

PAULY

The loving bond we have here, but
you still gotta be nice. It's not
just for Ally, it's for me too, and
Dhagaan.

NOEL

Here, buy Dhagaan a pizza, tell him
it's from Poppy.

PAULY

How did you collect so many
receipts?

MARY

He goes to the shopping centre and
picks them up off the floor outside
supermarkets.

PAULY

Dad! You were putting them in your
mouth.

NOEL

She wouldn't cook me breakfast!

Pauly shakes his head in disbelief turns and exits O.S.

3. INT. LIVINGROOM - AFTERNOON - DAY 2

Ally is frantically tidying up toys. Pauly is begrudgingly
fixing up magazines on the side coffee table.

ALLY

Who taught you how to clean?

PAULY

Hey, I didn't even know people
scrubbed the inside of their ovens
before I meet you.

ALLY

No wonder your Mother is the way
she is, black men do nothing around
the house.

PAULY

Hey not fair, I know a lot of Black
men who clean.

ALLY

Not in this house?

Pauly picks up one of the magazines.

PAULY

'Art House' [picks up another one]
'Art Link' we don't read these?

ALLY

I popped into the Judith Wright
Centre and picked them up.

PAULY

What? 'Woman's Day' and 'Women's
Weekly' not sophisticated enough
for your parents?

The doorbell rings. Ally snatches the magazines off Pauly and
places them back down neatly on the coffee table.

ALLY

Is that the shirt you're wearing?

PAULY

[Starts to unbutton his shirt] I
just don't get white people?

ALLY

You behave [turns to open the front
door].

Pauly randomly messes up Ally's pile of magazines as Ally
opens the door, and greets her mother and father. Pauly is
busted as they enter quickly not having moved after having
just taken his shirt off.

ALLY

Hi!

SOPHIA

Ally sweetie!

They enter and see Pauly isn't wearing a shirt, Pauly
compensates by dropping his shirt and putting his hands over
his nipples, embarrassed.

SOPHIA

Oh, Hello Paul.

PAULY

Hello. I was just... getting a little crazy.

RONALD

Crazy as ever, ay Snoop Dog? [Digs his elbow into Pauly.]

PAULY

Snoop? Oh, God, yeah that's me
Ronald S.N. double O.P. Hey Sophia
[Goes to kiss Sophia on the cheek.]

SOPHIA

Hello darling. [Doesn't know where to hug Pauly with his shirt off]

ALLY

OK, Dad, Snoop, this is all getting a little weird.

SOPHIA

Yes, lets all agree to keep our clothes on please Paul, and Ronald really. Snoop Dog?

Pauly starts to re-button his shirt.

RONALD

Hey lighten up ladies, just keeping it real, ay Paul, where's little Dhagaan?

PAULY

Jail. [Laughs.]

SOPHIA

What? Already?

ALLY

No, [Hits Pauly] its nap time.

SOPHIA

[To Ally] Darling, we have to talk.

ALLY

What's wrong Ma?

RONALD

We sold the house, we're moving to Melbourne.

ALLY

The family home?

RONALD

Your Mother wanted to be closer to
the cultural Hub. St Kilda, the
Comedy Festival, the Theatre...

ALLY

My room?

PAULY

Probably sold as part of the house...

Ally again hits Pauly. There's a knock at the door. Pauly runs
to answer it, Mary and Noel enter.

PAULY

Mum, Dad, how good to see you both
[Hugs them].

MARY

[Holding a small present] Pauly,
it's just us.

NOEL

[Looks towards Ronald and Sophia]
That bad ay son? Hello in-laws.

MARY

[Hands Sophia present] Hello
darling. Hello Ronald.

SOPHIA

[Kisses Noel on the cheek] Hello
sweetie.

NOEL

[Enjoys tight hug with Sophia]
You're a lucky man Ronald!

Sophia dusts herself down, embarrassed after being grabbed by
Noel. Mary hits Noel.

SOPHIA

Oh, Mary you shouldn't have.

Sophia looks for somewhere to put the present, places it on
the magazines, stops, and puts them in an orderly fashion
before placing the present back on top.

NOEL

Ronald, how have you been? How was Paris?

RONALD

Actually, it was Rome.

SOPHIA

From here we are going to Vietnam.

MARY

What?

NOEL

Why don't you just save some money and go to China town in the Valley?

PAULY

Because that would be China Dad.

ALLY

Must have a small windfall? After selling the house.

SOPHIA

Ally please there are so many exciting shows to see in Melbourne. Do you enjoy live performance Mary?

MARY

You got be kidding right!

NOEL

We saw a good fight at the tavern last week coming home from Bingo.

SOPHIA

We just saw some very funky experimental stuff at the Institute of Modern Art.

RONALD

Oh, and yes we saw Aborigines at Tjapukai in Cairns.

SOPHIA

Oh, yes, I just loved Tjapukai.

NOEL

Interesting, the mob we saw fighting out side the tavern were also Aborigines.

Pauly, Noel and Mary all laugh.

PAULY

Hey, they must be performing
everywhere!

ALLY

[Not happy] You know the Tjapukai
dancers in Cairns, they're very
famous I hear they're very good.

SOPHIA

Loved it. We're going back.

NOEL

How much did you pay to see
blackfella's dance?

RONALD

One hundred and Forty dollars.

MARY

To see blackfella's dance?

SOPHIA

And dinner, at night, it was
beautiful.

NOEL

For fifty bucks I'll dance naked
for both of yah, and Mary can put
on a stew!

Mary and Pauly laugh. Ally looks embarrassed.

PAULY

Hey, look at this. [Slaps his
thighs then does some shake-a-leg]
That's twenty bucks already.

Mary and Noel laugh. Ronald and Sophia do not look amused.

ALLY

Pauly, can I see you in the
kitchen, right now?

PAULY

Okay, here I come. [Stomps out
still shaking-a-leg] Gamilaraay
Wunagoonda, Huh, Huh, Hey!

NOEL

[Looks at Ronald] That's another
fifteen bucks right there.

Pauly exits following Ally O.S.

4. INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON - DAY 3

Pauly follows Ally into the kitchen.

ALLY

What are you guys doing?

PAULY

Oh no, nothing. We're just...
dancing!

ALLY

They sold the house Pauly, and
you're just making fun of my
parents.

PAULY

No, no. All right, just a little,
but c'mon... it was just a house?

ALLY

It was where I grew up, all my
childhood memories.

PAULY

[Hugs Ally] I know what you mean,
the housing commission area I grew
up in has become another island off
Samoa.

Ally threatens Pauly with a finger. She retrieves a plate of
vegetables and dip from the fridge.

ALLY

Why do you always have to be such a
clown?

They both exit O.S.

5. INT. LIVINGROOM - AFTERNOON - DAY 3

Ally and Pauly enter back into the living room. Ally brings in
the plate of vegetables and dip.

SOPHIA

Everything okay?

PAULY

Oh, yeah, couldn't be better. We were just saying it's a shame we don't spend more time together as a family.

SOPHIA

Why don't we all have dinner together, tomorrow night?

PAULY

Huh?

RONALD

Excellent Idea! We are staying at the Marriott Hotel in the city. I'll make a reservation for tomorrow night.

ALLY

The Marriott, oh that would be lovely, thank you.

MARY

No, no, no, thank you. We just wouldn't feel, no not those kinds of places - no sorry...

SOPHIA

Oh, don't be silly. In fact, Pauly, bring one of your lovely cousins, its time we got to meet more of the family.

PAULY

They all came to the wedding?

SOPHIA

Oh I know darling, but that's not the same. Oh come on, our treat. It would mean so much to us.

MARY

[Looking pleading at Pauly] But we're just so very busy.

ALLY

Pauly?

PAULY

[Wanting to support Ally] Well,
we're not too busy for family, yes
family. We will all go, the whole
family. Together.

RONALD

I'll make the reservation.

MARY

Oh, OK, just this once.

NOEL

I bet we don't see any Aborigines.

6. INT. MARRIOTT RESTURANT - NIGHT - DAY 4

The interior is of a very fancy posh restaurant. Noel, Mary,
Ally, Pauly and cousin Vernon enter.

MAITRE'D

Welcome to the Marriott.

Mary and Noel look absolutely stunned and terrified.

ALLY

Uh, we're with the Atherton party.

MAITRE'D

Yes, your hosts have arrived
already. I'll be glad to take you
to your table.

NOEL

Shit, look at these people.

MARY

No. We'll... we'll seat ourselves,
thank you. Come on Noel, let's go.

ALLY

[To Pauly] What's wrong with your
parents?

Vernon is waiting in the doorway.

VERNON

Pauly? [Signals for Pauly to come
back.]

PAULY

What? What is it?

VERNON

I don't feel comfortable brah?

PAULY

Its all good brah, just enjoy the food and try not too talk much.

VERNON

It's like everyone is staring brah.

PAULY

Only if they hear you talk!

Vernon starts to fidget, nervous.

PAULY

Or do that, it'll be alright. Come on.

They go to the table. Ally, Mary and Noel are already there.

RONALD

Vernon, I haven't seen you since the wedding!

VERNON

Hello.

PAULY

See, Ally's Father remembers you.

NOEL

No, he doesn't, he had to ask me his name.

SOPHIA

Don't be silly, you were Pauly's best man.

VERNON

No, that was cousin Alfy!

SOPHIA

Sorry your just all... [Thinking quickly] are so lovely!

VERNON

[Smiles] Not feeling any easier Pauly.

[The waiter approaches.]

WAITER

Good evening.

VERNON

[Loudly, jumpy] Good evening.

WAITER

Hello. I am William, here are your menus.

MARY

Oh, oh, excuse me, but uh... there's so much stuff [silverware] on the table. What's it all for?

WILLIAM

For you to eat with, madam.

MARY

I only have one mouth, this is ridiculous, and how can I move my arms around without breaking something? [Gives William the forks, some glasses] and here take these plates.

Ally looks uncomfortable.

MARY

Give me your plates. [Collects the plates from Noel, Pauly and Vernon.] c'mon, you think we can afford to replace these?

PAULY

Ma. You have like three courses!

MARY

Really, Pauly, does this look like Sizzler to you?

NOEL

I fell asleep at Sizzlers.

VERNON

Thanks Aunt Mary, now I have room to rest my elbows. [Relaxes].

WILLIAM

I'll be back shortly with tonight's specials.

MARY

Vernon, get your elbows up off the table?

NOEL

What kind of food do they have here?

ALLY

[Becoming angry] Nice, Noel, really nice!

RONALD

[Trying to break the ice] Ever been to Italy?

MARY

Why would you say that, do we look like we been to Italy?

RONALD

No, it's just that the other night Noel asked about Italy.

NOEL

Paris, I asked about Paris and it doesn't mean I would want to go there, who would I talk to?

PAULY

You are a funny man Dad.

RONALD

When we were visiting the Vatican we were surprised to find that Michelangelo's Pieta had been in cased in glass.

SOPHIA

Oh, this is so funny.

RONALD

Apparently some drunken Australian had attempted to rugby tackle it and broken the nose.

Ally laughs, Pauly laughs politely.

MARY

Why is that funny?

SOPHIA

Well, it's just so Australian.

NOEL

What would a Blackfella do, try and steal it? [Laughs]

RONALD

[Serious] No, it's just too big Noel.

William returns with a basket full of bread.

WILLIAM

Fresh bread it is free with your meal?

VERNON

Here we go, you trying to be funny mate!

WILLIAM

Sorry?

VERNON

You think this is Saint Vinny's mate, offering us free bread?

WILLIAM

No, sir, I'm sorry, we do not mean...

VERNON

Yeah, just keep going mate.

PAULY

I don't think he's having a go, brother just take the bread!

ALLY

[Trying to change the subject] I'll have a baguette, over here.

VERNON

Baguette, what the? Pauly what's a baguette?

WILLIAM

Would you like to speak with the manager, sir?

NOEL

Why, is he Aboriginal?

PAULY

Dad, you're not helping.

Pauly reaches over and puts some bread on Vernon's plate. The waiter looks offended.

PAULY

Sorry, man it's either that or he smacks you!

NOEL

Hey, don't apologise. I think he was being a smart arse. Am I right?

RONALD

I have no idea what's going on.

NOEL

That's OK Ronald, I don't get these places either?

WILLIAM

Perhaps you'd like to hear tonight's specials.

VERNON

Just watch it mate!

ALLY

Vernon please.

WILLIAM

[Trying not to look at Vernon] In addition to the menu, the chef has prepared a crab in a puff pastry. It's a Dungeness crab in a light butter and garlic sauce...

NOEL

How much is that?

WILLIAM

Its ninety five dollars, sir.

MARY

Oh.

NOEL

[Head counts table] That's reasonable.

MARY

[Hits Noel] That's each idiot!

NOEL

Oh!

SOPHIA

Now, Noel, Mary, you're not to look at prices tonight.

NOEL

Prices? I can't even say half the stuff they have here.

PAULY

Can we have a minute here please?

WILLIAM

Certainly.

PAULY

Thank you.

William looks back at Vernon, nervous smile. Vernon glares back.

VERNON

This guy's really working me.

RONALD

Noel, I assure you, uh, its okay. We've been here before.

NOEL

You came back again knowing how much they charge?

PAULY

Dad, please, just calm down. Try and enjoy yourself.

MARY

You really feel comfortable in a place like this, I mean, it seems so unnecessary.

SOPHIA

Well, of course it's not necessary, Mary, it's a luxury. But sometimes a little luxury is necessary.

MARY

Well, I guess we just don't understand.

RONALD

Well, not everyone can understand everything.

NOEL

What's that supposed to mean?

PAULY

It's alright dad, please!

NOEL

No, what's he mean?

MARY

Five years, five years they took you from me!

VERNON

Anyone else feeling uncomfortable?

SOPHIA

Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.

PAULY

Of course it's not a good idea, it was a bad idea. A very, very, bad idea.

ALLY

Pauly, what are you doing?

PAULY

Oh, come on, our families should never be at the same table together. This is why we were separated until the fifties, didn't have the vote till the seventies, my God, you enjoyed watching Aborigines dance in Cairns! What are we?

RONALD

We enjoyed watching those Aborigines dancing!

PAULY

Murri's, Murri's, Murri's dancing!

ALLY

Pauly!

PAULY

I mean, of course you did, because you care, I get it okay? And I know you care because that's the kind of people you are. You probably voted yes at the referendum, walked over the bridge in harmony, supported the sea of hands, but my family are those people, we are black, your Grandson Dhagaan is Aboriginal!

Uncomfortable silence.

SOPHIA

Why, Paul, I had no idea you felt that way about us.

PAULY

I don't, OK I do! Yes I do! And I love that about you, but not around my family. We suffered because of... [Ally gives Pauly death stares]. Sorry... I shouldn't have said anything, I was just making conversation.

Ally glares at Pauly who looks around not wanting to make eye contact. Pauly calls for the waiter!

PAULY

[Shouting, everybody in the restaurant stares] William!

7. INT. MARY NOEL KITCHEN - NIGHT - DAY 4

Noel and Mary enter the house. Pauly follows them.

NOEL

Shouldn't you go back to your house?

PAULY

Are you kidding, did you see Ally? They're pretty mad ay?

MARY

You know what son? I can't blame them?

PAULY

Me?

NOEL

Yeah, sorry son but I have to agree with Mum.

PAULY

No way, you're only mad because we didn't eat?

NOEL

Yeah Paul, thanks for reminding me, Mary, cook something, will ya? Thanks to your son here I'm starving.

MARY

I got some frozen stew left over we can chuck that in the microwave.

NOEL

Not exactly stuffed crab with garlic is it Paul?

MARY

You embarrassed us.

PAULY

You didn't want to go. You complained the whole time. What are you mad at me for?

NOEL

But we did go, and you were rude.

PAULY

Me, I was rude?

MARY

Yes, we didn't raise you like that Paul.

NOEL

You go to someone else's country and you sit, and you observe, and you respect, that's blackfella Paul, this was no different.

MARY

Then you come home, run them down,
laugh at them all you want, but
never to their face.

PAULY

What are you talking about? I only
said what I said because of you
two.

NOEL

Why, what did we do?

PAULY

What did you do? It was like
mission week on broken English
radio.

NOEL

That was hard for us, we don't live
like that, weren't allowed to even
see that.

MARY

You can never understand Paul, we
used to clean for people like that,
when I was eight, nine, ten years
old taken from Toomelah and forced
to wash and clean in Goondiwindi.
But we survived that and we were
their guests.

NOEL

[Hugs Mary] And we would have
stayed.

MARY

I'll put that stew on [walks to
open freezer] I thought you knew
more about what being family was
all about. What being black, true
Aboriginal was all about. White
people aren't like us, I mean you
can tell a Murri to their face,
but, could you imagine what would
happen if white people started
telling each other what they really
thought of each other?

NOEL

Ronald and Sophie, they are nice people, but they aren't Aboriginal, Kamilaroi, you spoke to them like they were black fella's. You can't do that to white fella's.

PAULY

[Understands now what Noel and Mary are both saying] Oh... no, I have to get home, quickly before they start talking to each other without me.

Pauly exits.

8. INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - DAY 4

Ally is sitting on top of the bed, still in her dress. Pauly enters in the darkness, and Ally switches the light on.

PAULY

Oh, you're up. Sorry...

ALLY

I couldn't believe you tonight, Paul, you were so rude.

PAULY

Even Mum and Dad turned on me.

ALLY

Let me ask you something, Pauly. How many faults would I find in your parents?

PAULY

Should I just go and sleep on the lounge now?

ALLY

How would you like it if I marched over there and told your parents all the things that I didn't like about them?

PAULY

At least I'd get some sleep.

ALLY

Narrow minded, intrusive,
completely insensitive, racist and
bossy.

PAULY

Hey c'mon, we can't be racist,
we're black. You must be racist for
saying that we are racist.

ALLY

I am serious, Pauly.

PAULY

I know.

ALLY

Except, you know, I would never say
anything because the closeness of
this family is very important to
me.

PAULY

I, look... I'm sorry. I'm very sorry.

ALLY

You're really sorry.

PAULY

Yes. Really, really sorry.

ALLY

What are you sorry for?

PAULY

I'm sorry... I don't know?

ALLY

Come on, Pauly.

PAULY

I didn't mean to insult them. I was
embarrassed, that's all. I was
embarrassed and angry that your
parents didn't know any better and
my parents were so scared, and I
didn't know how to act, and I upset
everybody and I was wrong. I ruined
everything.

ALLY

What else?

PAULY

There's more?

ALLY

You call my parents tomorrow.

PAULY

Yes, of course. I'd call them right now, but they're probably at a midnight show of belly dancing jugglers on the wharf. [Ally tries not to smile.] Come on. Please, just forgive me, alright? I just, I hadn't seen my parents like that before, they were always so strong and they should never have to feel like that, ever!

ALLY

Maybe you can shout a dinner for just two, at the Marriott.

PAULY

No, they wouldn't want to go back there.

ALLY

You and me. Idiot!

PAULY

Yeah of course!

ALLY

You know what really worried me tonight, Pauly? I didn't realise the huge responsibility we have in raising Dhagaan.

PAULY

Oh, no. We just rear him like any other kid, he doesn't ever need to know about any of that.

ALLY

No he does, you were right, he is Aboriginal and some people will judge him and we have to prepare him for that. The other thing that bothered me is that I had no idea just how ignorant my own parents were.

PAULY

Yeah, [Ally elbows Pauly].

ALLY

You don't think of any of this when
you fall in love?

PAULY

I love you.

ALLY

I love you to.

They kiss.

FADE TO BLACK

END OF SCRIPT

Research statement

Research background

Paul and Ally utilises autobiographical ethnicity as a rhetorical construction (Ang 2001) and scholarship on identity to explore urban forms of Indigeneity. Indigenous peoples have only recently begun to debate what constitutes an Indigenous identity within a contemporary context (e.g. Taylor 2001, in Paradies 2006).

Research contribution

In wanting to create an interdisciplinary collegiate mode more inclusive than current Indigenous text, the writer developed ‘autobiographical ethnicity’ as the research methodology for his doctorate. *Paul and Ally* reflects this methodology as creative practice.

Research significance

As a descendent of the Kamilaroi Aboriginal First Nation and also Irish heritage, the writer draws upon their ancestry as both the coloniser and the colonised, both ‘Black and consummately White’ (Lehman 2004). This practice-led research into autobiographical ethnicity allows for a shift in contemporary Indigenous studies.

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