



Wrong Turn

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(Treatment)

Synopsis: A small repertory company is taking "The Importance of Being Earnest" around Australian country towns in the late fifties. On route from an engagement in Darwin to one in Mt. Isa their bus becomes lost and breaks down. Here, apparently by accident, they encounter an old man who fled to this wasteland during the second world war and who has remained alone there ever since. He meets their arrival and occupation of his shack with quite violent aggression. Realising, however, that to move on in such waterless and uninhabited country would probably mean death they insist on staying and are forced to use their collective physical superiority to do so. What follows was vaguely suggested by a recent incident outside Mt. Isa where a man with a broken leg was abandoned by his companions and died after hobbling a few miles back to a waterhole where they spent the day. It was said that he'd made himself too hard to get on with.

Paul Davies

Cast

- Wally. 35-40. The tour manager more or less by default since he's the oldest and since no one else has either the mechanical ability or the inclination to do the hack work. At which he's reasonably, but not astonishingly capable. He also does bit parts (Chasuable in "Earnest"), drives the bus, does the lights, sets, money etc. Wally is likeable and easy going.
- Lucy. 21. Immature and absorbed wholeheartedly in the worst excesses of fifties pop culture. Adores Pat Boone and Jeff Chandler. Not surprisingly, she's often called upon to play roles considerably younger than her real age. Likes to think of herself as daringly bohemian. Wears scarves over her hair and Lolita-ish sunglasses.
- Brian. 26. Camp, but in a quiet way. A competent actor who is given to a fair bit of costuming off stage (he and Lucy have this beatnik thing in common). On the day of the breakdown he's wearing a sort of Elvis outfit with lashings of Californian Poppy just to crown the effect.
- George. 27. George is the sort of bloke Osborne might have modelled Jimmy Porter on for "Look Back in Anger." He's the disgruntled young turk, rebel-without-a-cause type but also given to some fairly broad Australian inclinations like following the horses and heavy drinking. Both of which tend to leave him constantly penniless, and are symptoms of a larger inability to cope with the daily trivia of living. Yet he chafes against the cultural submission of Brian and Lucy and dresses in the conservative male stereotype of the time.

Madge.

20. Is the real thinker and still point around which the troupe turns. Well educated with an upper middle class background (Sydney) she nevertheless was attracted to theatre as a communal thing and sees in it the grand chance of holding up the mirror to her time, and through this, provoking real change. This young dream is fading a bit but the original resilience is still there. In a crisis she's calm and capable, but she's also a little aloof-- a product of her interest in books, new ideas, the future. For some time she's been a sort of big sister to George, picking up the pieces where he leaves them. They've been lovers but it is sort of hopeless. Madge is a survivor and a contributor. None of them realize her full worth.

Riley.

50s. A slightly crazed old desert rat who fled from the army after Darwin was bombed in 1942. The extent of his lunacy, however, is the subject of some doubt. It's said he may have seen Lassiter's reef, but this is probably something of a myth itself. He certainly shows no evidence of having money. His gummy leg is supported by a home-made crutch (the result of a sloppy night on the turps with a passing group of aborigines) he survives in the interior through a certain native cunning.

Widgery.

A professional 'roo shooter and combination of all that was worst in the American western. He takes mindless delight in the effect on strangers of his clothes and car-- a nightmarish arrangement of skin, bone, and other cast-off products of his trade. Now thirty he ran away from a miserable slum childhood in Newcastle, knocked about stations doing odd jobs, fencing, driving, jesterdom etc, until he started making a living from the kangaroo. The life suits him.

We open on a tight shot of a bus's wheel, churning up dust. Obviously some broken down outback road. And from the look of the wheel the bus isn't in much better shape. The music over is quintessential fifties rock (specially written). Around this time the Australian top forty consisted of songs like "Cindy, Oh Cindy" "Rock Around the Clock" and real nonsense like "Tan Shoes and Pink Shoe Laces."

Shock cut to title of production company (white on black). No sound.

Back to the rock song at the point where we left it. This time it is laid over an extreme close-up of a fifties road map of Australia. We follow the road south from Darwin and take the turn towards Mt. Isa and the Queensland border. Just inside the sunshine state we note a road junction with what's obviously just barely a track leading off to the north.

Cut to title "Wrong Turn"

Now we're inside one of those old bush community halls that often double as a theatre, wedding reception centre, concert and dance venue etc. We hold on a tight shot of the character Lucy and discover that she's playing Cecily Cardew in "Earnest" Lucy (As Cecily) "Did you really Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily. I don't like novels that end happily."

Cut to title of actress playing Lucy.

On Brian playing Algernon: "I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection."

Cut to title of actor playing Brian.

On Madge playing Gwendolen: "The story of your romantic origin, as related to me by mamma, with unpleasing comments, has naturally stirred the deeper fibres of my nature. Your Christian name has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your character makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me. Your town address at the Albany I have. What is your address in the country?" (Perhaps a slightly wider shot here shows just enough of the desperately small audience to indicate that Wilde's comedy is fairly lost on them).

Title of actress playing Madge.

On George playing Jack: "Pardon me, Cecily, you are a little too young to understand these matters. To invent anything at all is an act of sheer genius, and in a commercial age like ours shows considerable physical courage. Few of your modern novelists dare to invent a single thing. It is an open secret that they don't know how to do it. Upon the other hand, to corroborate a falsehood is a distinctly cowardly action. I know it is a thing that the newspapers do one for the other, every day. But it is not the act of a gentleman. No gentleman ever corroborates anything."

Title of actor playing George.

On Wally playing Chasuable: "I have come to the conclusion that the Primitive Church was in error on certain points. Corrupt readings seem to have crept into the text. I beg to solicit the honour of your hand." (By now it should be revealed that they're playing to an almost empty house-- but we never see all the audience)

Title of the actor playing Wally.

Suddenly we're looking along the barrel of a .22 rifle. Voiced over are Algenon and Cecily: "Oh well! the accounts I have received of Australia and the next world, are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily." The .22 fires and in slow motion a kangaroo drops dead. And Cecily replies "Yes, but are you good enough for it?" And a second roo falls.

Cut to title of actors playing Riley and Widgery.

The camera shoots forward through the windscreen of the travelling bus. A radio hangs above the dash playing a continuation of the rock song heard over the first two credits. Hold for a few beats then we hear George (VO) "Turn that bloody crap off."

Cut to title for original music.

Looking through the rear window of the bus. Madge's finger in frame dawdles through the dust on the glass for a few beats, idly twisting one way then ^{an} other. After a few beats she writes "All is lost."

Cut to title for script.

The fork of two roads. Hold on a rotting, almost handmade outback signpost reading "Mt. Isa 200" one way and the long since obliterated name of some other town in the other direction. After a few beats the grind of the buses engine is heard approaching, suddenly it sweeps past the road sign and through the consequent cloud of dust left behind we see the post sway ever so slightly and then crash to the ground raising a smaller cloud of dust. So we're not sure which way the bus has gone.

Cut to title for director.

Inside the bus again and we find the five members of our touring party. Wally is driving. George is reading the racing form from the Brisbane "Courier Mail." Lucy is filing her nails, Madge is writing a letter on a copy of "Catcher in the Rye" and Brian, who still has his stage make-up on is asleep. The bus could date from before the war, but from their clothes alone it's obvious we're somewhere in the late fifties. Perhaps George's paper splashes something about Nixon and Kennedy.

We hold on the interior of the bus for quite some time, build the lethargy, the monotony and tedium of outback travel. The heat. Flies. The neverending sameness of the landscape outside. George checks his watch and moves forward to the radio and snaps it back on, fiddles with the dial until he gets what sounds to be the tail end of a race. From his expression it's obvious he's lost again. He sits back down and Madge notices him tick something off on his form. He looks up and catches her watching him. He gives a what-the-hell gesture. And so there's more silence. Eventually Brian stirs awake. Looks around blearily. Then with a sort of Wildean resonance to his voice (he tends to talk in aphorisms) declares to Madge that man really is a sort of hairless ape. To which George rounds on him angrily and spurts out "I wish you'd take your bloody make-up off." Brian pouts at that and when Lucy asks him what made him say such a silly thing Brian says he was dreaming of Darwin and what Madge had said once about him wanting to hide his theory from the world knowing the alarming effect it would have. George rejoins with some disparaging comments about the town, Darwin, observing that another performance there would have wiped them out. We learn that the missing members of the troupe (Bracknell and Prism) came down with malaria there and were left behind. It means that they can't go on with "The Importance of Being Earnest" which says George is a silly bloody play anyway, the bloody English, strangling themselves with their own platitudes. Madge suggests they should start rehearsing some of the new English plays (Look Back in Anger etc.) and that George would make a good Jimmy Porter. Naturally he assumes that's a dig, but none of them have even heard of Osborne however and silence descends again as George mumbles something about the Japs failing to blitz Darwin off the face of the earth and so save them from ever having had to go there. Brian^{fcc:15} it's just because George lost heavily in a two up game there. And Wally starts saying something to the effect that if George thought Darwin was bad he should wait till he sees the Isa when he's interrupted by some ominous chugs from the engine.

At first nobody except Wally takes much notice but as the grinding continues to get worse they all slowly sit up. The engine winds through a strange repertoire of sounds. George demands to know what's wrong. Wally doesn't know. On being told that he should know Wally merely shrugs and says the bus is twenty years old, that's all, it's got every right to whinge a little. However, Wally doesn't pull over and after a few more seconds (holding the tension of what might happen) the engine picks up again and returns to its normal drone. The troupe's relief is visible. Lucy switches the radio back on and finds some mindless pop music as they all relax back to their former doings. Except for George who, seizing upon an opportunity to demonstrate his general bastardry starts recounting tales of what's happened to people who've broken down in the outback complete with graphic, almost clinical descriptions of what dying of thirst and exposure is really like--hamming it up to buggery. He even touches on the tragic ironies surrounding the death of Bourke and Wills hereabouts. To George it's all a huge joke but the others are less than interested. Eventually Lucy tells him to shut-up. Instead he changes the subject to Mt. Isa again, and eventually Brisbane, the end of the tour, the coast. The Surfers Paradise Hotel! And so the conversation ambles on. Madge takes her cue from Bourke and Wills, mentions the old explorer's belief in an inland sea, the mystery of the rivers flowing inland, the belief that the sea would give some purpose to the desert, would make the continent another America by enabling a concentration of people inland--but of course it never happened and so we're still a small nation, clinging to a coastal fringe. But it was a great dream and it gave a purpose to their lonely wanderings. George makes a disparaging comment about their wanderings and their transparent lack of purpose. Apart from which it's alcoholically dry as well. Madge says well, it was a great disappointment when they found Lake Eyre instead. George doesn't quite get that, but one thing leads to another and soon they're talking about atomic testing in the centre, the bomb itself which leads into Senator Joe McCarthy and the coming American elections.

George decides that he doesn't like Americans at all, and doesn't trust Nixon, ribs Lucy and Brian about their gear and the terrible music she keeps listening to on the radio. Lucy defends both Americans and the Korean war. Moreover she thinks Ike's great, as great as Mr. Mengies, certainly a hundred times preferable to that horrible Mr. Kruschov.

Wally switches the radio off again and this brings their attention back to the driver. He's fumbling with his road map and asks Madge to hold it for him as he drives. They ask him what's up. He replies they should have passed a petrol station by now. Madge and George and Wally pore over the map. "Does he need petrol?" Well, not really, they're good for another fifty miles or so, but it's odd that's all. Wally thinks the speedo on the bus must be out.

This sets George off on a rage against the bus, it's age, it's decrepitude, the general financial condition of the troupe, the boredom of the tour, it's effect on his career. This time Wally tells him to shut-up. Unusual from Wally, but it only provokes another fit of spleen from George involving this time quite a personal attack on Wally himself and his stupid bloody bus. Wally, Madge and Lucy retort all at once when the grinding and shuddering return. The effect this time is electric. Sobered by George's horror stories it shuts them all up. The shuddering continues for about half a minute and their concern builds with it. George orders Wally to stop. Wally feels if they do that they might never get it started again. Lucy and Madge agree. What would you know says George, bloody sheilas. But Wally insists on not stopping, says that garage can't be far off they'll get it checked there. And gradually, as if on cue, the motor returns to (what passes for) normal again.

Again they relax and Wally has his moment of self vindication. There, he says, didn't I tell you. We'll get it fixed further on. At the garage. But the general relief is short-lived because at this point Brian, who has been poring over the map lifts his head and asks "What garage?" General consternation. "This isn't the road to Mt. Isa." Wally begs to differ. But Brian goes into some detail, it's the wrong road: certain landmarks, perhaps a dry creek they should have crossed by now and anyway where is the garage? The speedo was alright yesterday.

George finds himself agreeing with Brian as yard by yard the road becomes more of a track and then in places appears to disappear altogether so that they're virtually travelling on virgin soil. Outback roads are like this says Wally, not very hopefully. George now demands that Wally turn back. The safety of all of them is at stake. But Wally refuses says there isn't enough petrol now anyway. George repeats his demand. The cast is split and things reach boiling point with George almost physically trying to wrench the steering wheel from Wally's grasp, the bus swerves violently, jumps a rock and there's a suddenly terrible wrenching noise. Brief, violent, absolute. A quick cut outside the bus and low shot in front as the vehicle drifts its last few feet towards the camera. It seems to sigh, exhale some steam and then the whole engine collapses into the dust, the fan still turning.

Widen to a high shot that reveals for the first time the indifferent vastness in which our little group has now been trapped. Silence.

A cut back inside the bus returns us to the music and shows us a tableau of stunned disbelief. The gay nonsense on the radio is a complete contrast to Wally who's hunched possessively over his steering wheel. Wide-eyed at his worst fears being realised.

The girls are open-mouthed. George is doing a reasonable imitation of Macbeth seeing the bloodied dagger and Brian stares glumly ahead with one of those "I told you so" looks. He's the first to return to life with the words "You bastard, George." George pleads weakly that it wasn't his fault.

They're all quite flabbergasted almost afraid to investigate. Lucy says she feels the bus is a bit lighter somehow. Brian is droll. His somewhat superfluous opinion is that something seems to be up with the engine. He says Wally, hopelessly, probably just out of petrol. Brian laughs. The speedo and the petrol gauge must both have been out insists Wally. Brian's laughter increases. It snaps George back into angry life. He storms towards the door, but of course it chooses this moment not to open. After an initial bit of huffing and puffing he takes to kicking it, and spinning around grabs the arm of a dummy from a nearby props basket and starts beating it with that over Wally's faint protests. Eventually the whole door falls out.

This stops George momentarily, but he slowly alights, and slowly walks around to the front of the bus to survey the damage, still holding his cudgel. The sight of the dead engine sends him into a frenzy of rage-- against everything. In a second he's kicking blindly at a front tyre when all of a sudden that, too, collapses.

As it goes down the bus tilts dangerously to one side throwing Madge, Lucy and Brian off balance. Lucy screams and Brian and Wally are quickly outside wrestling George away from the vehicle and the possibility of him doing more damage. The three roll in the dust until, finally, George's anger is quenched.

He slowly and silently gets up, dusts himself off, strides back into the bus, gets his suitcase, his paper and his radio (the others also silent stand back and watch) and crosses to the other side of the road. He puts his case back down and stands there.

Madge quietly demands to know what he thinks he's doing. I'm leaving says George, I quit. This, despite their general predicament, brings a hail of laughter from the other four. He has had a gutfull he roars back. Their laughter increases. Then he starts attacking them personally. Talentless bums, only took the tour because they weren't good enough to work in a real theatre etc. You're going to get a lift are you, says Brian. "The first one that comes along." Brian points out that they don't really know where they are, what they can be sure of is that they're about a 100 miles from nowhere and from the look of the road there mightn't be another car for weeks. Well, replies George, he'll let the next town know where they are, but that's more than they deserve and he picks up his case and starts walking. When it soon becomes clear that he's actually serious Madge calls out and then starts off after him. She walks alongside and pleads with him to be sensible. George is unmoved. "Well let me carry your radio at least." George plods fixedly on.

Back at the bus Brian says good riddance. Wally is shaking his head over the engine and Lucy decides she needs to go to the toilet. She wanders off the road and in looking for a suitable tree, perhaps rounds a small hill or some such, gets on with her business. Just as she's about to turn back she notices something odd in the bush further on. It's out of sight from the road but she calls back to Brian and Wally and they wander over.

Madge and George hear her call and stop. It sounds hopeful. Now, says Madge, for godsake be sensible and come back. George still resists but the prospect of the track that lies before him is pretty daunting and he looks to be weakening when he says no, bugger it, at last he's made a decision about his life and he's sticking to it. Madge agrees that it's a decision about his life alright-- involving the loss of some if he persists in going on. He remains adamant however and so Madge washes her hands of him and heads back to the others. It will have been obvious by now from the conversations that Madge and George have been casual lovers and Madge is not above using this to persuade him, she may even shout after him some spot on home truths about his self indulgence etc. but all to no avail.

Meanwhile Wally, Brian and Lucy approach the house. It doesn't look promising. It's a bush hut of very rough design. Old and tumbling down, home made obviously and for some inexplicable reason (not just to do with it's bush carpentry or apparent desertedness) it's also a little bit ominous. However it's less forbidding than the landscape around them and tentatively they decide to enter. We might see them approach through one of the windows but again, this isn't from any particular third party's point of view-- but it could be. We build an air of mystery and trepidation as Wally pushes the door open. He calls out if anyone's home. Silence.

So the three of them file in and observe the interior. A few skins lie about, a lantern, a slab table, a bed, tin plates and vegetable glasses, a billy over the ashes of an open fire. Very spartan, very basic. Their disappointment is obvious. It seems deserted. They sit down and start planning their next move when the door opening momentarily startles them. But it's only Madge. She brings the depressing news about George. The rest of them appear nonplussed and resume their discussion of what to do. Madge insists they should concentrate on stopping George. But Lucy points out

quite reasonably that here, or on the track they're all in the same boat. And anyway it was George who knew all about dying of thirst. Which prompts Wally to mention that he noticed a water tank round the side. Easy says she could do with a drink now and Wally, dutifully, takes the billy and goes out.

On the track George himself is displaying all the signs of early heat exhaustion-- although a smattering of Stanislawsky is helping (it's just a pity nobody is there to see it really). But clearly his grand march into the future is becoming somewhat wonky to say the least. Eventually he stops and almost automatically drops his suitcase. The suitcase? Does he need this junk? He kneels beside it and opens it. A few little odds and ends are easily dispensed with, as are his clothes and in a moment a spare pair of shoes joins them on the side of the road. A photograph of Madge. He pauses over it. Then it's gone too. A diary of his own poetry he stuffs in his shirt. But his scrapbook of reviews and newspaper clippings is really a problem. He stuffs it in his shirt, then after a pause, observing the impossible bulk of both of them takes them both out again. He feels their individual weights, weighing up his scrapbook against his poems, the future or the past? If only he was blind like justice. Finally he opens a page of each, reads a review and then a poem and chucks them both away. Picks up Madge's photo instead. Stuffs that down his shirt and dispenses with the final objects-- a shaving kit, a punter's friend, a pack of cards, a couple of playscripts. And that's it. He closes the port kicks it into what should be the gutter and walks on, the photograph and the radio his only companions. He switches the radio on and a DJ announces another song. We follow George and the music down the road. Pan up along the road to underscore the hopelessness of his resolve. He strides on gradually being swallowed up by a mirage.

Outside the shack Wally is watching the last few drips of an incredibly slow tap drain into his billy. We hear a metallic click out of frame and notice the two barrels of a shot-gun nudge into shot from above. Wally half turns, a shock, and he quickly glances up. At first he thinks it's some kind of joke but looming over him is a frightening figure. An old man on a crutch with the tan of a hundred hot Sundays, a long scraggly beard, long grey hair and deep, recessed, bright blue eyes. His right leg is strapped with calico, the crutch is homemade, and immediately betrays the same bush carpentry style of the shack. His overall demeanour is that of a sort of Santa Claus gone troppo. Wally is aghast. "Pinching water" says Riley. Wally continues speechless. "Out here water's more valuable than gold." Wally fumbles an apology and starts to outline the general predicament which is cut short by Riley who queries him about the bus. Wally half glances back towards the shack and decides to pretend that he's alone, bringing some of his stage experience to bear. In that case says Riley I'll kill you now. He steadies the shot-gun at shoulder level and is about to fire when Wally, backing away starts to blurt out the truth. At which precise moment Lucy emerges from the shack concerned about what's taking Wally so long and the movement startles Riley. He lets a barrel go which narrowly misses her. She screams.

On the track George hears the shot. Stops. Switches off the radio. Half turns.

Inside the shack Brian is gulping half a fist full of damper and struggling to his feet as Lucy and Wally back through the door followed by Riley, his gun pointing the way.

"Pinching my grub as well" observes Riley as all four back towards the wall. Riley goes on to explain that although he has only a cartridge left it's enough to kill one of them and he's not particular but he could kill them for trespassing anyway. And be within his rights.

On the track George is debating with himself out loud. "Don't go back" and "It's none of my business now" he declares to the empty bush. Then we hear in voice over (with slight echo) his lines from "Earnest" (As Jack) "Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?" Madge (as Gwendolen) "I can. For I feel that you are sure to change." George slows to a standstill. Obviously torn, half turns again. Then declares out loud "It's none of my bloody business." And walks on.

Back at the shack Madge is making a spirited attempt to put things in a relatively sane light. She patiently explains who they are, what happened to the bus and tries to apologise about the water and damper but says they thought the hut must have been deserted. Naturally they'll pay the old man for whatever they've taken. She understands his fear of strangers but assures him they mean no harm. Riley, however, is not convinced. He hasn't got a glue like Oscar Wilde is, doesn't care about their bus and insists that they've come to steal his provisions and do him in. A helpless old cripple minding his business in the bush. He's just lucky he stumbled across them when he did. The bush is full of old fellas like him who've been done in by travellers.

When further efforts to reconstrate with the men fail Wally seizes upon one last solution. Says alright, they obviously can't leave since they'll all die outside anyway-- so suppose he does kill one of them (the girls protest) there'll still be three left and one of them a male who'll quickly overpower the old bloke and cart him off to justice and the hanging he'll deserve. Much better to give them a bit of water and let them find their own way back to the main road.

This has an effect on Riley. But then he thinks the death penalty's been abolished, and anyway they're trespassers and anyway it's just a trick to disarm him and besides if he kills Wally it won't be a male that's left by the look of it but two and a half females. Riley roars laughing at the prospect, gives some evidence of his remaining strength and toughness. Brian, his make-up running a little in the heat is not amused.

Riley continues to slap his one good knee and fall about generally, but the rirth is short lived as George's voice is heard behind him saying "Move one inch and you're dead"(George is doing his best version of a sort of Micky Spillane character) The performance is convincing enough because Riley lowers his shotgun, and in another second Wally secures it. Riley turns to see George pointing a pistol at him. George squeezes the trigger, Riley gasps and a flag shoots out of George's pistol with "Bang" written on it. "Stage-prop" says George. Naturally they're all glad to see him, especially Madge. But the collective dilemma remains. In fact it's worse since they're now stuck in the middle of nowhere with what seems to be an obvious mad-man.

However Lucy is, despite her recent shock, quite sympathetic to the old bloke, and Madge likewise. Brian, still smarting from the insult is all for blasting him with his own gun. "At least let's blow his other leg off, teach the old bastard a lesson." He hates the type, conservative, wisely, against the artist, all that's wrong with the Australian red-neck. Lucy passes over that, can see his point about strangers. She'd be afraid too, living alone.

Madge, typically, steers a middle course, and George with her, points out the common predicament, that they're all in it together. "That's a bloody change, coming from you" says Brian who goes on to point out that the old man was quite prepared to shoot them, for christsake. He's obviously all alone and mad, nobody'd miss him.

"I've got friends" interjects Riley, defeated, but still proud. They're all inclined to doubt it, however, and Brian goes so far as to find the notion of Riley having friends quite ridiculous, but Lucy insists on compassion (Riley has been mounting a pretty convincing hard-luck story of his own-- once he's disarmed) and so Wally starts taking charge of things again. He removes the cartridge from the shot-gun and, after making sure there's no more ammunition, hands the weapon back to the old man. Riley appears to be impressed by the gesture. Brian is outraged, but outvoted, and they all begin to relax again. "Now" says Wally "What to do. . ."

They question Riley about where exactly they are and, a little reluctantly he fills them in. A hundred miles from nowhere is precisely the upshot of it all. How does he survive then, in what appears to be an almost impossible area? I get by, says Riley, a little kangaroo and rabbit, flour and tea, and besides, the bouns have been doing it for thousands of years. Also sometimes there's a sort of mail truck. . . The faint hope that this is their exit is soon squashed when Riley tells them it's not due for another two weeks.

They press him with questions about his lifestyle which now begins to intrigue them, and Riley rises to the occasion. He's a hermit of course. Deliberately so. Gave up the world and all its faults during the depression to tramp out here away from everybody, even from water, the only place he could find absolute solitude. Their interest, except for Brian, is genuine, and gradually he warms to their company. A cup of tea is suggested which the girls make and Riley expands on his world view. But the tea brings with it new considerations of what they should do next. They ask him for advice. He suggests that two of them make for a station about forty miles away. There'd be vehicles there that could come back and pick the rest of them up.

It's agreed, but given the distance to walk there's not much point in starting out till morning. Riley hedges, then half-heartedly offers them shelter for the night, but Wally points out they live in the bus anyway and can sleep there. Well, says Riley, a little relieved the least I can do is offer you food-- to make up for things, a sort of no hard feelings, sort of gesture. They accept, and Madge heads back to the bus to get some things to contribute to the meal. After a few minutes George excuses himself, Riley throws the merest glance sideways at his exit, and Lucy starts collecting the tea things.

In the bus Madge is putting spuds and rice and a few veges into a couple of pots.

On the road George slowly approaches his abandoned suitcase.

Outside Riely's shack Wally is filling another pan with water, when Brian comes up and in a half whisper says they're mad to trust the old bastard. What if it's all a trick to lure two of them off into nowhere and so take on the other three again. Wally shrugs this off. His trusting nature tends to think Riley is just naturally suspicious of strangers that's all. He seems harmless enough, really. Sure he's a bit touched by the sun but what else can they do? And if Brian likes he (Brian) and George can set off for the station tomorrow. No, says Brian he wants to stay behind. Alright says Wally. Brian thinks about that for a beat and changes his mind again says he'll set off with Wally, leave George behind. Alright says Wally, more worried about the slowness of the tap. But Brian isn't too sure about that arrangement either. But as Wally said, what else can they do? And if the old bloke is lying about the station they'll come back and give him a good thrashing and try and find the "highway" instead.

Brian thinks about that. The idea of the thrashing obviously has it's appeal. Says yeah, what else can they do. Then, almost as an afterthought Wally says you know, this may seem crazy but the old bugger's face is familiar somehow. Wally shakes his head. Brian shrugs.

At the bus George carrying his suitcase in meets Madge coming down the steps with food. Is he going to stay? No, just till they get back to civilization. They talk about things, their relationship, the future of the troupe, loyalty to the others, the good times, the bad times, all in front of the visible broken down symbol of what might have held them together (the context of which makes this exploration of their relationship all slightly ridiculous). Nevertheless it gives us an opportunity to explore Madge a little more fully: talented and responsible where George is not. In urging him to stay she may come across as something of a big sister but the tensions between them are also sexual. George, the full hopeless romantic desperado is still sticking to his earlier decision to leave however. Madge is obviously disappointed, but covers it. George urges her to join him, but she feels she must stay with the troupe. George is openly mocking: What troupe? With a diminishing cast of four they'll soon be down to poetry readings in the town hall. He proposes that Madge and he go to Melbourne. Television has just started (he has a hopelessly idealised view of how television is going to change the world) he's sure they could break into it somehow-- a game show perhaps, and eventually Australia must make it's own dramas. But sadly, Madge turns this down and they walk silently back to the shack.

. . . Where a long meandering conversation is taking place which wanders over the whole range of the fifties: Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, and -- television which George picks up on as he enters. A coincidence he and Madge were just saying-- why don't they all abandon the tour and head for Melbourne?

Wally reckons the shot would be another relatively new idea-- the theatre restaurant. He wants to open one. Lucy wants to make a film, but in Australia in the fifties that's absurd. The two ladies left behind in Darwin are mentioned (Bracknell and Prism) but nobody seems to think they'll see much of them again. Sisters, they have family in New Guinea, plan to head there after they get over their malaria-- carrying microbes to Newcastle quips Brian. But the joke falls a little flat.

Meanwhile Lucy and Riley are preparing the evening meal. The others drift outside to watch the sunset which, in this part of the world is usually fairly spectacular. Wally breaks out a bottle of scotch. Brian starts a song. The others join in. Perhaps Wally has a mouthorgan. It's a gay, risque, thespian sort of ballad.

Inside, while Lucy's busy in another corner Riley notices a bottle of sleeping pills in one of the girl's handbags. He throws a quick precautionary glance in Lucy's direction. Registers that she hasn't seen him see them.

Outside the song finishes and the meal is brought out. As they eat Riley does the talking. He expands on his life out here, the depression, humping the bluey, aborigines and so on. All bush stories of doubtful veracity. It also gives him an excuse not to eat much. As his monologue drones on we notice the others becoming fairly drowsy. Lucy might make some inane remarks about country air and it's invigorating effects, or what a big day they've had, ~~so~~ healthy. Wally finds he has to jerk himself awake. The movement alerts George who notices he's feeling fairly tired too. In another moment Lucy tumbles forward over her food and is snoring her head off.

Brian says something about being rude to your host, Riley is making surreptitious glances back to the shack (his gun) George notices and frowns and in another moment Madge slides sideways and rests her head against his shoulder.

George frowns again at this. Riley consumes a miniscule mouthfull, George looks down at his food, sideways at Madge and it clicks "Madge's sleeping pills." Riley decides it's time to make a dash (or a hobble) for it. But Wally is still conscious enough to trip him just as he takes a few steps. Another instant and Brian's asleep.

There ensues a pathetic/ridiculous struggle as George and Wally, drowsy and yawning like bastards attempt to hold down Riley who wriggles in and out of their grasp like a greasy witchety grub. As the three of them roll around on the ground it's obvious that our two heroes are losing their almost superhuman battle against sleep. (They try slapping each other as well to keep awake) So. You've got them fighting Riley (seriously) and themselves (in desperation) until George hits on another idea, sticks his fingers down his throat and starts vomiting.

Wally is just sober enough to follow suit, yet enough of the sleeping tablets have entered their systems to make them still incredibly tired. Riley is openly cursing them now, threatening all sorts of dire consequences, but it's the rage of hopelessness. Wally finally manages to climb on top of him and hold his head down-- George piles the prostrate bodies of Brian and Lucy over his legs and goes for the shot-gun, detouring via the water tank where he puts his head under the tap in a last effort to revive, having vomited all he can. We notice that he leaves the tap on-- dripping it's slow drip into the bucket under it.

By the time he comes outside again Wally is also snoring. George tries for one savage, but necessary blow to Riley's head with the butt of the shot-gun. In his semi-conscious condition his first swipe misses and hits Brian instead. Riley curses even louder and George, stumbling backwards from the recoil of the blow, mumbles an apology to Brian.

But another blow, a miss, and a third blow (swinging it like a golf club) connects and succeeds in putting Riley out to it. Then, after trying to break the shot-gun against the post of the shack and succeeding merely in half destroying the building George himself sinks to his knees and falls backward to the ground unconscious. (It would be nice to have all this, and the pile of bodies silouetted against the desert sunset)

Night deepens and we pan up to a brilliantly clear sky voiced over which is a chorus of snoring. We hold on the sky and jump cut to the first hints of dawn. As the sky lightens we hear the, at first, faint hum of an automobile and the, as yet, distant jingle of a car radio.

We build these two sounds as we cut from shots of the shack (bodies out of shot), the last remnants of the water flowing over the side of the tank bucket, the bus (exterior) and then the bus interior as a cloud of dust and noise sweeps past the vehicle's windows.

Out to a tight, travelling shot of the front grill of a big Chrysler Royal, the proverbial yank tank, a cross between Disneyland and Armageddon. Huge horns rear up either side of the radiator and as we tilt over the top (driver still unseen) we notice that instead of the usual chrome motif on the bonnet (where say, the jaguar is on the Jag and the silver lady is on a Rolls) we have instead the entire skeleton-rampant of a wild pig. The skeleton covers the whole bonnet. It's the sort of custom-lining that

Around the sides are glued the skins of various animals. We hold on a limpet shot above the back wheel, shooting forward, as the car roars in a circle around the front of Riley's shack. Horn tooting, it screeches to a halt.

We cut to under the car and observe a pair of fantastic boots and spurs clomping into the dust. The click of a bolt alerts us to the presence of another gun. A higher shot shows the vehicle to be a sort of mobile shooting platform: a savage beast of a dog growling at the bodies, a back seat full of dead roos from the night's shoot, a spot light on the roll bar over the front seat. The visitor fires off a shot into the air and we cut to his face as he yells out Riley's name (it's as interesting as the body work on his car). However there's still no sign of life coming from the serum so he whistles the mongrel in to investigate.

The dog finds nothing worth eating there and comes back to Widgey as he collects the bucket into which the last of Riley's water has drained and walks on over to the troupe. He hurls the water over them and this provides the first signs of life. Brian will be wondering about the blood on his temple.

Riley seems to come to first. "Widgey!" he cries, "Widge, they tried to kill me the bastards, it's a good thing you came." The wakening players protest.

And Widgey turns to Wally for an explanation. Riley repeats his claim but Brian cuts him off by accusing Riley of beating him while asleep, then notices Riley has a similar wound. Which seems to add credence to Riley's story, along with the demolished shack. But Wally has begun a half-coherent explanation all over again, the bus, the tour, the pills, dying of thirst. George and the rest of them try to correct his drowsy incoherence and succeed only in confusing Widgey all the more. Which is complicated by Riley's interruptions as well.

They're all appealing to Widgey as some sort of objective third party who will return justice to the world-- as indeed he could since he still holds his rifle fairly guardedly, a little unsure of all of them. "Oscar who?" he asks now getting thoroughly cheesed off and confused.

Anyway says Widgey to Riley, I thought you'd gone to Darwin. Riley props and says well what are you doing here if you thought I was gone-- pinching my water. No, laughs Widgey, I was looking for your gold, besides your water's all gone. Riley is speechless and rushes over to investigate his empty tank.

As he goes Widgey explains that the old crow had come out here seventeen or eighteen years ago as a deserter from the army after Darwin was bombed (he joined at the late age of 32 in 1940). The other interesting thing is that people out here reckon that with the aid of maps he stole from the army he found Lassiter's reef but couldn't admit it for fear of the army catching up with him. And wasn't prepared to trust anyone else with the knowledge. Who knows? It could be true. Nobody really knows too much about the old coot except that it all seems to have sent him a bit demented.

At which point Lucy, rubbing the sleep from her eyes finally comes to, and gets to her feet. Her little gasp of shock alerts Widgey to the fact that his appearance has had the desired effect, and after looking her up and down decides that he's fairly impressed with her in his uncouth, larrikan sort of way.

So now he really is interested in the troupe. He asks about the bus again, and again Wally, being the sort of spokesman volunteers the narrative of what's happened-- which again revives conflicts in the cast, especially around the matter of George and how and why they got lost.

George, ever defensive, blames Wally. Brian blames George etc etc. From the water tank Riley's strangled cry of despair calls on Widgey to avenge him. He knows how precious water is after all. It's blokes like Riley and Widgey who have to live out here.

But Widgey is going off Riley and onto Lucy in a big way. He asks Lucy to explain what's happened which she does in her best Annette Funicello manner. An interruption from George brings the threat of a wounding from Widgey. This frightens Lucy, but she proceeds.

At the end of her version Wally takes the opportunity of asking Widgey for a lift, offers him money. Yes, please, says Lucy. Could you help us. Riley points out that without water now he'll have to come too. Brian says yes, they'll drop him off at the first police station. This stops Widgey and a latent comradeship with a fellow desert rat does come through. Widgey says he'll give them a lift but insists that's got to be the end of it. No cops. So, reluctantly, under threat of being stranded together again at Riley's place-- or what's left of it (and this time with no water even) the troupe and Riley decide to suspend, if not bury, the hatchet-- very grudgingly.

As they're all fetching their gear from the bus, and Riley his few valuables from the shack Widgey starts doing a line for Lucy. She's of course, horrified, but with a gun and a car. . .

At the bus George draws Wally aside and voices the observation Wally had made earlier to Brian, that Riley's face is vaguely familiar. No, says Brian it's just that he looks a bit like every other Falstaff they've ever done or seen. Brian is more worried about Widgey. What if he does the lot of them in to have his way with Lucy. Wally and Madge dismiss this as just his paranoia. But Brian insists that Widgey is ten times more dangerous than Riley ever was. Wally shrugs and says that's a risk they're just going to have to take.

The roos are bundled out of Widgery's car. He quickly skins them, putting the skins back. "American tourists" he explains to Lucy are mad enough to actually pay good money for the infernal things. But at least he's his own boss, earns a fair bit really (it's starting to sound like a proposal). His dog chomps on a leg or two and Widgery keeps a couple of tails. "For soup" he smiles. "Tonight." And winks a leering wink at Lucy who smiles back, but inwardly her marching-girl morality is aghast.

Soon they're all assembling around the Chrysler Royal again and it's obvious that what they think are their essential possessions just aren't going to fit. This starts another fight among the lot of them. So Widgery puts Lucy in the excruciating position of acting as magistrate over what stays and what goes. One by one, books, make-up, clothes etc. are kept or thrown away-- a growing pile of debris beside the skinned roos. (This should be a fairly humorous swan through the artifacts of the fifties). Lucy herself is going to throw away a hair curler but Widgery insists she keep it. I like you pretty he grins.

Eventually they're ready and pile in. Widgery makes a special place for Lucy next to him, trying to imagine it's just him and his girlfriend going for a Sunday drive.

Then a throaty roar of exhaust and they're off, past the shack, past the pile of roos and cast-off goods, past the bus and all it's memories, and back up the fatal road.

(the following draft scenes provide the conclusion to the film)

EXTENSION: WIDGEY'S CAR TRAVELLING ALONG DESERT ROAD:
DAY TWO (MID-DAY): WIDGEY, RILEY, MADGE, WALLY, LUCY,
BRIAN, GEORGE, (WIDGEY'S DOG).

THEY'RE CHURNING ALONG THE TRACK VERY FAST. WIDGEY ALSO HAS A THING ABOUT SPEED, FANCIES HIMSELF OUT HERE AS A BIT OF A DONALD CAMPBELL AND IS, OF COURSE, OUT TO IMPRESS LUCY AS MUCH AS HE CAN. THE SPEED HAS ALL OF THEM WORRIED BUT THEY'RE NOT GAME TO ADMIT IT, AND ANYWAY PROBABLY FEEL IT'S BEST TO GET IT ALL OVER AND DONE WITH AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

RILEY IS SQUASHED IN THE BACK, LOOKING VERY UNHAPPY BETWEEN BRIAN AND GEORGE. WALLY IS ALSO IN THE BACK SEAT, SITTING HIGH ON TOP OF THE LUGGAGE. IT'S JUST WIDGEY AND THE TWO GIRLS IN FRONT.

WIDGEY'S DOG, FROM HIS BOX ON THE BOOT, STARTS LICKING RILEY'S WOUND.

RILEY. Get away.

THE DOG DOES IT AGAIN.

RILEY. Shoo! (MUMBLES) Bloody thing.

HE LOOKS SIDWAYS AT BRIAN AND GEORGE. BRIAN IS SMIRKING, AND AGAIN THE DOG LICKS HIM.

RILEY. Widge. . .

WIDGEY. (WITHOUT TURNING ROUND) Yeah.

RILEY. Widge, the dog. . .

WIDGEY. What 'bout him.

RILEY. He's. . . he's a bit close.

WIDGEY. That's tough. We're all a bit close.

RILEY. He smells.

WIDGERY. Gawd, you should talk.

RILEY. Widge, I don't like it back here.

BRIAN. (A SIGH OF MOUNTING INTOLERANCE
OF RILEY)

GEORGE. Pack it in Riley.

RILEY. Widge, they're doing things to me.
Since yesterday they've been doing
things. Funny things. They don't
like me.

BRIAN. The feeling's mutual you old
scum bucket.

RILEY. See Widge.

AND THE DOG STARTS LICKING HIM AGAIN.

RILEY. Get away you bloody beast.

AND HE WHACKS IT'S NOSE WITH THE TOP OF HIS CRUTCH. IT YELPS.
INSTANTLY WIDGERY SCREECHES THE CAR TO A HALT. THEY ALL
CRASH FORWARD AT THE SUDDENNESS. WIDGERY BOUNDS OVER
HIS DOOR AND COMES UP ANGRY BESIDE THE BACK SEAT.

WIDGERY. Did you hit him?

RILEY. No.

BRIAN. (LOW) Liar.

RILEY. No, Widge, strewth.

WIDGERY IS GRABBING RILEY BY THE COLLAR AND IS THREATENING
WITH A FIST.

LUCY. Please!

WIDGERY PROFS.

WIDGERY LOWERS HIS FIST.

WIDGERY. You lay another finger on "Yahoo" and so help me I'll thrash you Riley.

RILEY. He kept licking me, Widge.

WIDGERY. (LAUGHS) Well he likes you!

GEORGE. (TO RILEY) Don't knock it mate he seems to be the only one who does.

RILEY. Did you hear that Widge. It's these two. They keep looking at me. They're doing. . .

BEFORE HE HAS A CHANCE TO FINISH WIDGERY HAS HIM BY THE COLLAR PRACTICALLY LIFTS HIM OUT OF THE BACK SEAT AND OPENS THE FRONT DOOR, DRAGGING RILEY ALONG WITH HIM.

WIDGERY. (TO MADGE) Would you mind, lady?

MADGE. (GETTING OUT) Of course not.

MADGE JOINS WALLY, BRIAN, AND GEORGE IN THE BACK SEAT. WIDGERY THROWS RILEY IN THE FRONT AND PROPS HIM UP.

WIDGERY. I've just about had a gutful, Riley.

RILEY. Thanks, Widge, thanks a million.

ON THE WAY AROUND THE CAR BACK TO HIS SEAT WIDGERY PATS HIS MONGREL AND STARTS MAKING COOING, KISSING NOISES AT HIM. ANOTHER HARD STARE AT RILEY AND THEY'RE OFF AGAIN.

THEY CONTINUE ALONG FOR SOME TIME. NOBODY SPEAKS-- ALL WITH ENOUGH TO THINK ABOUT. EVENTUALLY WIDGEY SMILES AT LUCY.

WIDGEY. Well, Luce, we might be a thousand miles from Brisbane but we sure got some contact with the big smoke.

AND HE SWITCHES THE RADIO ON. FINDS A SORT OF COUNTRY AND WESTERN STATION WITH A SONG SOMETHING LIKE "STAND BY YOUR MAN."

WIDGEY. (TO LUCY) Like that?

SHE NODS. NOT GAME TO SAY NO. THEN PERHAPS SHE DOES LIKE IT.

WIDGEY. (STARTS SINGING ALONG WITH THE SONG AND OF COURSE HE HAS A TERRIBLE VOICE)

BRIAN ROLLS HIS EYES.

WIDGEY. (ERRORS OF SINGING, LAUGHS)
Well, if this ain't the life, eh? Out here. Bloody great country.

LUCY NODS POLITELY BECAUSE HE'S LOOKING AT HER BUT THE ACTION SOON CAUSES HIM TO SWERVE TO MISS A TREE AND A SLIGHT CORNER. HE DECIDES TO CONCENTRATE ON THE ROAD AGAIN. RILEY HALF TURNS TO THE BACK SEAT.

RILEY. I don't know if I like havin' me back to 'em either, Widge.

WIDGEY. Jesus!

RILEY. Bloody strangers, come out here, prying into a bloke's life, drinkin' his water, destroying his home.

RILEY. (TURNS FULL ROUND) Well why dontcha!
(TURNS BACK TO FACE AHEAD) Leave
blokes like me and Widge in peace.

WIDGEY NOT SURE HE AGREES WITH THAT.

RILEY. My home! It was good enough for
ya when ya needed it. I never
asked ya to break down. . .

WALLY. Fair go, mate.

RILEY. Don't you "mate" me.

WIDGEY. Ah, shut-up, Riley.

RILEY. Trampin into a bloke's place.
Pinchin' his grub.

WIDGEY. Knowing you, you old bastard
you probably fixed their bus
so it would break down. Killin'
tourists, make a bit of a change
from rabbit, wouldn't it?

RILEY. I wouldn't eat any of 'em.
Too tough.

WIDGEY. Everybody knows you're not the
full quid.

RILEY. (GRUNTS)

WIDGEY. (TO THE OTHERS) They reckon he
ate a boung once, during the big
drought.

RILEY. That's bullshit. I tried to
save the bugger.

WIDGEY. (TO WALLY) He didn't set youse
up did he? (LAUGHS AND TURNS

HOWEVER SOMETHING ABOUT THE OFF-BAND REMARK STOPS GEORGE.
HE DOESN'T QUITE KNOW WHY. HE FROWNS.

WIDGERY REACHES INTO THE GLOVE BOX AND TAKES OUT A HALF
EMPTY BOTTLE OF BEEHLEIGH RUM. TAKES A SWIG, RUBS THE
TOP OF IT WITH HIS PALM AND OFFERS IT TO LUCY.

WIDGERY. Like a swig, honey?

SHE SHAKES HER HEAD.

RILEY LOOKS VERY THIRSTY. WIDGERY REGISTERS HIS HOPEFUL
LOOK.

WIDGERY. (TO LUCY) Will we give the old
coot a drink?

LUCY DOESN'T LIKE THE IDEA OF SITTING BETWEEN TWO
DRUNKS, IN FACT SHE DOESN'T LIKE THE IDEA OF ALCOHOL
AT ALL, ESPECIALLY IN CARS. GEORGE ALSO IS LOOKING
FAIRLY KEEN.

LUCY. I. . . I. . . don't you
think we should wait till
we stop.

RILEY, WHO HAS ALREADY OBSERVED THAT HER EVERY WISH IS
WIDGERY'S COMMAND, IS VISIBLY DEPRESSED.

WIDGERY. Suits me, sweetheart.

AND HE PUTS THE BOTTLE BACK IN THE GLOVE BOX.

RILEY. (LOW TO LUCY) You fucking bitch.

WIDGERY SLEWS THE CAR TO A HALT AGAIN. AGAIN THEY ALL
CRASH FORWARD.

WIDGERY. Get out.

RILEY. Eh?

WIDGERY. Get out.

RILEY. Now, listen, Widge. . .

WIDGERY. Fuckingwell get out.

RILEY. You can't.

THE OTHERS FOLLOW IT LIKE A TENNIS MATCH, NOT DARING TO BELIEVE WIDGERY COULD BE SERIOUS.

WIDGERY. 'Course I bloody can. Piss off.

RILEY. (MUTE APPEAL TO THE OTHERS) No.

WIDGERY. I'm telling you Riley. . .

RILEY. But. . . we come about twenty miles, and. . . there's no water back home anyway, Widge, you say that.

MADGE. You're not serious, surely.

WIDGERY. I won't have ladies insulted in my car.

MADGE. Of course, but. . .

RILEY. Widge, I'll die out there.

WIDGERY. Serves you right. Teach you to watch your tongue.

LUCY. I didn't really think he meant any harm.

RILEY. Widge please. Stop horsin' around

WIDGERY. You want me to throw you out?

MADGE. Will he die?

WIDGERY. } Nah.

RILEY } Yes.

RILEY. 'Course I bloody will, not even
an abc'd make it, not here, this
time of day, not with a broke' leg .

WIDGERY GRABS RILEY'S CRUTCH AND HURLS IT OUT ONTO THE
DUST.

WIDGERY. Go on. Fiss off.

MADGE. Look, I really think, perhaps. . .
you've made your point. I'm sure
Mr. Riley is sorry.

WIDGERY. Yeah?

MADGE. Well you just can't leave him
here in the middle of nowhere.

WIDGERY. He was goin' to do you lot in
wasn't he?

RILEY. I always said they'd kill me.

WIDGERY. Shut-up.

WALLY. Look, Widgery, ah, I'll. . .
I think you'll find Lucy didn't
take any offence, really. (GIBARS
HIS THROAT) Golly, we ah, you
know, have to swear on stage
sometimes. . .

LUCY. Yes, that's right. . . (of course)

WIDGERY. (TO WALLY) You want to join him.

WALLY. Eh?

RILEY. Widge, come on let's get out
of here.

WALLY. Yeah, I think that's a good
idea.

GEORGE. Christ, you can't just leave him.

WIDGERY. Righte, hop out with him then.

LUCY. Please, Widge, I'm really not upset.

WIDGERY. Too bad. I'm sick of his whinging anyway. . .

RILEY MAKES A GRAB FOR WIDGERY'S RIFLE WHICH IS STRAPPED ACROSS THE BONNET (THERE'S NO WINDSCREEN). BUT IT'S HOPELESS WIDGERY HAS BEEN WAITING FOR IT. GRABS RILEY'S WRIST, HOLDS IT AND OVER THE OLD MAN'S PROTESTS, HURLS HIM BODILY AFTER HIS CRUTCH. IT'S NOT QUITE EFFECTIVE A THROW HOWEVER AS RILEY CLINGS TO WIDGERY LIKE A LEECH. EVENTUALLY THE LATTER EXTRICATES HIMSELF HOWEVER AND THE OLD MAN IS SOBBING ON THE GROUND.

WIDGERY. (TURNING BACK TO THE CAR)
Anybody else?

RILEY. (SOBBING) Wiiiiiiiidge

WIDGERY. (LAUGHS) He's a better actor than you lot.

WIDGERY WALKS BACK TO HIS SEAT, CLIMBS IN, STARTS THE MOTOR. THE SOUND GALVANISES RILEY BACK INTO ACTION HE HOBBOLES QUICKLY OVER AND IS NOW CLUTCHING ONTO THE OUTSIDE OF THE DOOR NEAREST TO LUCY.

RILEY. Please Widge. . . I'll I'll give you anything. Please don't leave me.

THE OTHERS ARE EITHER TOO STUNNED OR TOO AFRAID TO SPEAK.

WIDGERY. You're lucky I left you the crutch.

AS THE CAR MOVES FORWARD RILEY HOBBOLES ALONGSIDE, STILL CLINGING ON.

RILEY. Please.

TO DROWN OUT RILEY'S CRIES WIDGETY TURNS UP THE VOLUME OF THE RADIO FULL BLAST. AND AS THEY PICK UP SPEED RILEY DECIDES IT'S PROBABLY BETTER TO DIE LATER ON RATHER THAN NOW THROUGH DROPPING OFF AT EIGHTY MILES AN HOUR, SO HE FALLS AND THEY SPEED OFF LEAVING RILEY CURSING AND BEGGING AND HOBBLING AFTER THEM.

RILEY. (SCREAMS) I said you bastards'd
kill me and you have!

THE TRUTH OF THIS SORT OF HITS THEM. WIDGE TURNS TO LUCY. BEE'S CLEARLY FEELING PRETTY BAD. THEY'RE ALL SORT OF ACCOMPLICES THROUGH THEIR FAILURE TO ACT.

WIDGETY. Ah, he often walks twenty
miles a day just to set a few
traps, 'course, ah, if he doesn't
make it well the crows'll get
him before anyone else does. . .

IT DOESN'T MAKE THEM FEEL ANY EASIER. GEORGE TURNS TO FACE AHEAD AFTER OBSERVING THE LONELY GESTICULATING FIGURE OF RILEY DISAPPEARING BEHIND. WE MOVE IN ON GEORGE'S FACE, HE FROWNS, CONCERNED, SOMETHING CLICKING INTO PLACE. CLOSE ON HIS FOREHEAD AS

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR: ROAD JUNCTION: DAY ONE (MORNING): NO CAST.

FLASHBACK TO THE SIGN POST WHERE IT ALL WENT WRONG. IN QUICK CUTS WE SEE THE POST POINTING IN SEVERAL POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS.

(6.03)

INTERIOR: RILEY'S SHACK: DAY ONE (MORNING): WALLY, BRIAN,
LUCY.

FLASHBACK TO THE SHOT OF THEM APPROACHING THE SHACK FOR
THE FIRST TIME. SEEN THROUGH ONE OF IT'S WINDOWS.

CUT TO:

(0.02)

EXTERIOR: DESERT ROAD : DAY ONE (MORNING): NO CAST.

FLASHBACK TO THE BUS'S ENGINE FALLING OUT.

CUT TO:

(0.01)

INTERIOR : BUSH HALL: (DAY OF "BARGHEST" PERFORMANCE):
BRIAN, LUCY, EXTRAS.

WE'RE BACK IN THE PLAY. BRIAN AND LUCY ON STAGE.

(LUCY AS CECILY): Well I know of course, how
important it is not to keep
a business engagement if one
wants to retain any sense of
the beauty of life, but I still
think you had better wait 'till
Uncle Jack arrives. I know he
wants to speak to you about
emigrating.

AS THEY SPEAK WE DOLLY ALONG THE BACK OF THE SCATTERED
AUDIENCE ABOUT SEAT LEVEL-- THEY'RE SITTING ON LONG
WOODEN FORMS.

(BRIAN AS ALGERON). About my what?

(LUCY AS CECILY). Your emigrating. He has gone
up to buy your outfit.

BY NOW THE STAGE IS OUT OF SHOT ALTOGETHER WE MERELY
HEAR THE WORDS AS THE CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY ALONG THE
BACK ROW.

(BRIAN AS ALGERNON). I certainly wouldn't let Jack
buy my outfit. He has no taste
in neckties at all.

(LUCY AS CECILY). I don't think you will require
neckties. Uncle Jack is
sending you to Australia.

(BRIAN AS ALGERNON). Australia! I'd sooner die.

AT THIS POINT THE CAMERA HAS JUST REACHED THE SEAT
OCCUPIED BY AN OLD MAN WITH A GALICO BANDAAGED LEG
AND A HOMEMADE CRUTCH BESIDE IT.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR: WIDGERY'S CAR TRAVELLING ALONG DESERT ROAD:
DAY TWO (MID-DAY): WIDGERY, MADGE, WALLY, LUCY, BRIAN,
GEORGE, (WIDGERY'S DOG).

WE FLASH BACK, CLOSE ON GEORGE REGISTERING THE SHOCK
OF IT. HE TURNS BACK TO LOOK AT THE TRAIL OF DUST
BEHIND THEM BUT RILEY HAS LONG SINCE DISAPPEARED.

EXTERIOR: ROAD JUNCTION: DAY ONE (MORNING): NO CAST.

FLASHBACK TO THE SIGN POST AS IT FALLS.

EXTERIOR: WIDGERY'S CAR TRAVELLING ALONG DESERT ROAD:
DAY TWO (MID-DAY): WIDGERY, MADGE, WALLY, LUCY, BRIAN,
GEORGE, (WIDGERY'S DOG).

GEORGE SHAKES HIS HEAD. HE CAN'T BELIEVE IT. HE LOOKS FROM WALLY ON ONE SIDE TO BRIAN ON THE OTHER.

GEORGE. You know we have seen
 Riley before.

BRIAN AND WALLY TURN TO HIM, CURIOUS.

GEORGE. He was at our performance
 in Darwin.

THEY CONTINUE TO STARE, INCREDULOUS, THEN

WALLY. You're getting a bit too
 much sun, mate.

BRIAN. (LAUGHS) Next you'll be
 telling us changed the sign.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR: DESERT ROAD: DAY TWO (MID-DAY): RILEY.

RILEY APPROXIMATELY WHERE THEY LEFT HIM.
HE'S WHOOPING WITH JOY AND HURLING HIS CRUTCH UP INTO THE
AIR. THROWS HIS HEAD BACK AND LAUGHS UPROARIOUSLY.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR: WIDGERY'S CAR TRAVELLING ALONG DESERT ROAD:
DAY TWO (MID-DAY): WIDGERY, MADGE, WALLY, LUCY, BRIAN,
GEORGE, (WIDGERY'S DOG).

BACK IN THE CAR THINGS ARE HUMMING ALONG AS BEFORE, GEORGE
STILL SHAKING HIS HEAD. SUDDENLY WE HEAR A RATTLE AND
A CRUG, A FEW BEATS, WIDGERY LOOKS A LITTLE CONCERNED,
THEN SUDDENLY FROM THE MOTOR THERE'S A TERRIBLE WRENCHING
NOISE DIRECTLY REMINISCENT OF THE NOISE THE BUS MADE BEFORE
IT BROKE DOWN. GEORGE LEANS FORWARD HORRIPIED. FREEZE FRAME.
(BRIAN AS ALGERON). (SL. ECHO) Australia! I'd rather die.

END CREDITS

