

# **lunatic fringe**

Episode One

**"A Slice of Paradox"**

Written by

**Paul Davies**

*1st*  
**DRAFT**

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**1. EXT. GANG GANG VALLEY**

**LATE AFTERNOON**

Viewed from the summit of Mt. Never Ever the Gang Gang River is like a thin brown snake as it winds its way from the base of the mountain hundreds of metres below, past the small town of Bullumbah, and on to the sparkling waters of the Pacific Ocean fifteen kilometres away.

Up close is dense, impenetrable forest canopy. Beyond the town, towards the coast, lie the cleared pastures of the dairy and sugar cane farms- their uniform deep green punctuated with black and white cattle.

The landscape is uniquely North Coast, New South Wales.

Within this immense panorama we gradually become aware of a late model Commodore powering its way along the south bank of the Gang Gang- speeding west towards Bullumbah from the Pacific Highway. Viewed from the heights of Mt. Never Ever it's like a matchbox toy in a sea of rolling hills.

We hear the driver, Sally Morants, speaking.

**SALLY**

(voice over)

Why can't he do it on the Wednesday ?

(beat)

The 13th - after I get back.

(beat)

But I'm due in Brussels (that week . . .)

(rising impatience)

I thought we'd cleared all this with his agent ?

**2. INT/EXT. SALLY'S CAR**

**LATE AFTERNOON**

Sally is on her mobile phone. She is dressed in an expensive, but comfortable linen suit. Despite the power dressing however, she looks crumpled and tired.

**SALLY**

He'll have to, Nicole- I'm committed to a firm delivery date for that program. And I'm NOT going to change the mix again. Not just for one voice over.

Sally sighs, listening to a litany of problems from Nicole's end.

In the passenger seat beside her, Ruth Abrahams wears jeans and a denim jacket. Ruth is more bright eyed and bushy tailed. She has her feet on the dashboard, idly taking in the landscape.

Sally notices nothing of the outside world. She remains locked in on her phone conversation .

The back seat is loaded with Ruth's backpack and Sally's leather suitcase with matching laptop computer carrier. A clear plastic bag of duty free scotch and a carton of cigarettes sits wedged between the luggage.

**SALLY**

Look- just tell him off as gently as possible. OK? And DEMAND that he be there. You know-the way I do it. And remember: actors are troubled souls. They inhabit other people's psyches for a living. That's why their egos are so fragile.

(listens-sighs)

Alright, alright - So what's my diary say for the Thursday ?

Suddenly Sally's phone starts making strange noises and the line goes dead.

**SALLY**

(pressing "redial")

Oh great !

We hear the redial on an international call.

**SALLY**

(explaining to Ruth)

Ever since the Americans and the British pulled the plug we're supposed to churn out the same amount of product on half the budget.

(into phone)

Hullo... Nicole ?

For a moment there's a sound of someone on the other end but almost immediately the phone makes strange crackling sounds again and soon goes dead.

**SALLY**

Shit ! What's wrong with this thing !

Sally drops the phone beside her.

**RUTH**

(looking for an explanation)

There's a lot of mountains around here. . .

Ruth is peering through the windscreen at the towering presence of Mt. Never Ever silhouetted by a brilliant sunset up ahead of them. It's sharp, volcanic shape is quite striking.

But Sally is hardly interested in anything other than her production problems half a world away.

**SALLY**

Knew it was a bad time to come. Should've waited another week.

**RUTH**

There never would've been a good time.  
Look,

(one of Ruth's "quotes")

You're a fine, sensible, balanced human being  
and every day in every way you're getting  
better and better.

**SALLY**

Renee would only try something like this  
while I'm away.

**RUTH**

(brightly)

Oh look. . .

Sally's car passes a "Watch For Koala's" sign which has been peppered with bullet holes.

**RUTH**

Redneck country. . .

Then almost immediately she spots a "Form One Lane" sign corrupted to "Form One PLaneT"

**RUTH**

And . . . ageing hippies.

(gloomily)

The prospects don't look exactly fabulous to me.

**SALLY**  
(playful slap)  
We're here for a holiday- not a sex orgy.

**RUTH**  
You wish.

They laugh.

**3. EXT. MAIN STREET BULLUMBAH LATE AFTERNOON**

At the Rotary Park where Bullumbah's main street begins Sally's car passes a large sign surrounded by Service Club logos, announcing:

VILLAGE OF BULLUMBAH  
FOUNDED 1865 - POPULATION 1100  
(A TIDY TOWN)

**4. INT/EXT. SALLY'S CAR LATE AFTERNOON**

Ruth is glancing at the near empty main street. (It's the lull between the after school rush and the arrival of the night time crowd.)

**RUTH**  
(sighs)  
Eleven hundred people- all home watching TV.

Sally is adjusting her watch.

**SALLY**  
What time is it here ? That agent closes at five.

**RUTH**  
You've got five minutes.

As they pass the pub we see Angus Forbes locking his spotless, antique white Jaguar outside the pub's bottle shop. He wears his golf club blazer.

Past him walk a group of barefooted young people uniformly costumed with dreadlocks and tattered clothing. One of them carries a didgeridoo, a woman has a bundle of clothing on her head- African style.

Sally notices the pub.

**SALLY**

We need supplies. I'll get the key and meet you in the deli.

(looking around, anxious)

Can you see a Real Estate place ?

Bullumbah consists of this single main street with its row of quaint shops and imposing art deco emporium: "Edwards and Keith"- reminiscent of an earlier era.

There is one of everything- pub, bank, police station, courthouse, memorial hall, service station, fire station, real estate agency, butcher shop, grocer and cafe.

Dotted amongst this "colonial" streetscape, however are also signs of something different: the odd New Age mural - (surging Rainbows and koori images). There is also the Organic Wholefoods shop and the Alternative Power Supply Co - "The Greenhouse Effect" which has the slogan: "Think globally. Act Now !"

It is early spring so many of the flowering trees are starting to bud. It's a pretty town but again, this hardly makes much of an impression on our blinkered travellers.

**5. EXT. MAIN STREET BULLUMBAH LATE AFTERNOON**

Sally glances up, frowning at the parking sign telling her to "Reverse Park at 45 degrees".

Unfamiliar with the practice (an in a hurry) she has a lot of trouble negotiating a rear end park in a spot just off the main street.

When they get out it's at a really odd angle but Sally is too concerned to make the agent on time and just rushes off.

Along the main street an old bloke in a cowboy hat and boots with moleskins and a flannel shirt drives past her in a racing sulky. A large thoroughbred horse is pulling it at a brisk trot.

He is overtaken by a young loon on a bicycle with a bike helmet that has red wings flaring out of it.

Again Sally doesn't even register these odd sights.

#### 6. INT. BROMHEAD'S REAL ESTATE LATE AFTERNOON

Neil Bromhead has been waiting in his otherwise empty office. He wears a neat business suit and has a certain worked-on charm, a smile that's just a little bit fixed.

The office walls are decorated with various local maps and planned subdivisions. There are coloured photos of houses and farms for sale.

He is handing Sally a key and a rough map of how to get to "The Block."

**NEIL**

You can't miss it- it's the only place with an auction sign.

**SALLY**

Have there been many enquiries ?

**NEIL**

(shrugs)

A few . . . expect most of the local interest will come in closer to the day itself.

**SALLY**

(turning to go)

Thanks.

**NEIL**

Had it all tidied up for you -as requested. There's everything you need, sheets and kitchenware. . . I had Alice see to it.

Sally is halfway out the door.

**NEIL**

Let me know if there are any problems. . .

But she is gone.

Neil raises an eyebrow and goes to lock up his office.

**7. EXT. BULLUMBAH PUB LATE AFTERNOON**

Sally comes out of Bromhead's Real Estate Agency and heads towards the pub.

She passes a rainbow coloured kombi with ying and yang signs and some "feral" people piling aboard. They carry boxes of provisions- mostly tinned food and vegetables along with a carton of Stones Green Ginger wine and a bottle of scotch.

Amongst the group are Trevor the Street Poet, a chubby, woolly headed bloke in his early 40s and The Rainbow Warrior, a young woman about 20 who is almost bald, apart from a mohican patch of hair running down the middle of her skull to a pony tail at the back. One side of her head has a snake tattoo.

The the kombi's driver is on a CB radio.

**KOMBI DRIVER**

Mobile patrol to Skull Camp, over. . .

Outside the pub there are kids playing "Cops and Loggers" on the footpath, their parents inside drinking. One kid "the bunny" has climbed a pole of the pub's verandah, the others are trying to drag him down.

**KIDS**

Get the feral !

Pull him down.

Other (slightly older) kids ride skateboards- a further irritation for Sally. She has to negotiate her way through the melee.



Ned Semple, a large framed, gruff looking, logging contractor and several of his "crew" stagger out of the public bar having finished their Friday session. They carry several slabs of stubbies and are already fairly inebriated.

**NED**

(yelling back inside)

Come on Robbo- ya mongrel. . .

Sally gives them a wide birth and goes on into the Bottle Shop.

**8. INT. PUB BOTTLE SHOP** **LATE AFTERNOON**

Angus is standing at the counter with a carton nearly full of fine wines and spirits. His accent is educated Australian- bordering on British, as clipped and neat as his air force moustache.

Audrey, the barmaid is placing more bottles into it.

**ANGUS**

(checking a list)

. . . a bottle of Pernod. . . A half of Tia Maria. . .  
And two large tonics thanks, Audrey.

Sally waits behind him, checking her watch.

**AUDREY**

Is that the lot, Mr. Forbes ?

**9. INT. O'CONNORS' GROCERIES** **LATE AFTERNOON**

A typical country town milk bar/grocery store: hot instant coffee with frothed milk and hamburgers to go. There are some sad looking fruit and vegies and a small range of basic items in an illuminated glass cabinet: ham, corned meat, blocks of cheese.

Behind this stands Florence O'Connor, a woman of about 60. She wears a floral apron, thick, old fashioned glasses and stands next to the cash register waiting for customers.

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**RUTH**

(making a find)

Oh look, Sal, sun dried tomatoes.

**FLORENCE**

No love, they're apricots. . .

Sally and Ruth share a look, trying not to laugh.

**10. INT/EXT. SALLY'S CAR**

**EARLY EVENING**

Sally accelerates fast out of the main street - still in a hurry.

The car is now packed with various bags of shopping including the bottles of champagne rattling around on the back seat.

**RUTH**

How could Peter possibly think you'd get excited about living in a "Tidy Town" where the only action is the pub or a video store ?

**SALLY**

He didn't think. End of story.

**RUTH**

(checking Neil's map)

Next on the left. . .

Sally screams out of the main street into the Gang Gang road. They suddenly drop off the bitumen onto a rutted, pot-holed dirt road.

The Commodore's suspension handles the holes but there are so many of them, the road so narrow and the corners so sharp.

Sally is noticing the landscape as if for the first time. Gentle rolling green hills reminiscent of some lush European setting (and dotted with exotic camphor laurel trees) are giving way to more rugged, steeper slopes covered in thick forest. Huge trees rear up on either side of the road making it feel suddenly darker.

Glances at her watch.

**SALLY**

I really didn't want to start looking for it in the dark.

**RUTH**

(checking the map)

It just says "12 K from the end of the bitumen."

Sally is annoyed at a series of unlucky hold ups.

**SALLY**

Two hours ! - waiting to land Sydney airport.  
I mean, why can't they get their act together ?

She shakes her head.

**SALLY**

My life as a holding pattern.

She thinks about it, reaching for another smoke.

**RUTH**

Well now you've got permission to land.

**SALLY**

(doubting it)

Hmm...

**RUTH**

It's perfect here. You're saving me from four weeks of Frieda.

**SALLY**

Your mother is charming. I always get a good laugh out of her. Invite her down for a week.

**RUTH**

Are you kidding !

**SALLY**

(laughs at the idea)

Yeah alright, just a thought.

**RUTH**

And that's your last cigarette, by the way.

**SALLY**

Tomorrow. . . Tomorrow - we start the health plan tomorrow.

Ruth looks dubious.

**SALLY**

I promise. . .

Out of nowhere a huge logging truck overtakes them spewing up muddy water from all of its 22 wheels.

**SALLY**

Shit !

**RUTH**

That's a bit much !

Momentarily blinded by mud Sally has to brake sharply and flip on the wipers. She swings to a halt on the RIGHT hand side of the road.

**RUTH**

Lookout !

Suddenly realising her mistake Sally turns back to the left at the last moment.

**RUTH**

What are you doing !

The car slews to a halt.

**SALLY**

Sorry.

**RUTH**

(sharply)

You're not in France !

Sally is looking contrite.

Ruth hands her the map.

**RUTH**

Why don't you navigate while I steer ?

Ruth opens her door and jumps out.

Sally realises she's tired.

**RUTH**

Just slow down. . .

INT/EXT. SALLY'S CAR

Sally drives on Bullum on the west side of town. There

11. EXT. GANG GANG ROAD EARLY EVENING

Sally feels the cold as they get out and swap seats. A vicious westerly is tearing straight down out of the valley at them.

She squirms as she notices a dead wallaby on the side of the road, it has recently been hit by a car- perhaps even the truck that just went past.

12. INT/EXT. SALLY'S CAR EARLY EVENING

Ruth settles behind the wheel, Sally takes the map.

**RUTH**

You're on Bullum time now. . .

Up ahead of them the sun drops behind the sharp volcanic peak of Mt. Never Ever.

**RUTH**

Does

and One Australian Bushfire sun is setting  
by their quiet way across a narrow, wooded

out is disabled.

her side of the bridge in to

**13. EXT. GANG GANG VALLEY**

**SUNSET**

As in the opening shot, we again take in the whole panorama of the valley from the summit of Mt. Never Ever. The shadow outline of the mountain travels up the valley in a brief time-lapse sequence. Sally's Commodore is again a matchbox toy in a huge landscape. We see it move off.

**14. INT/EXT. SALLY'S CAR**

**EARLY EVENING**

As she drives on Ruth takes in the more thickly forested landscape on this side of town. There is an occasional small farm house tucked away from the road, their faint lights winking through tall timbers.

Sally is again punching numbers on her mobile It gives an engaged signal. She presses redial.

**SALLY**

Nicole picked a fantastic time to get herself pregnant. She needs a baby now like she needs a hole in the head. . . . I told her the place was fast becoming a joke. . . . If she took maternity leave now who knows what will happen to the place by the time she gets back ?

Sally turns her attention to the phone again but all she's getting now is an engaged signal.

Sally finally gives up.

**SALLY**

This is impossible.

**RUTH**

Good.

Looming up ahead of them out of the gathering twilight are six Thai Buddhist monks and one Australian Buddhist nun in saffron robes. They are making their quiet way across a narrow wooden bridge.

Sally and Ruth squint in disbelief.

Ruth pulls to a halt on her side of the bridge to let them pass.

**RUTH**

Not much hope for me there either.

Sally punches her.

**SALLY**

You're incorrigible

**RUTH**

I know.

They share a laugh.  
Ruth drives on.

**RUTH**

That's why you need me.

The rain increases, the wipers are soon going full pelt.

**SALLY**

(smiling)

I don't need you.

**RUTH**

Bulldust.

They chuckle again, an easy, comfortable friendship.

**RUTH**

We really should do this more often. Once a year at least... if you can tear yourself away.

**SALLY**

Yeah, maybe.

**RUTH**

No matter where in the world we are.



**15. EXT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**EVENING**

Ruth has come to a halt opposite a small weatherboard house.

**SALLY**

(voice over)

Where in the world are we ?

**16. INT. SALLY'S CAR**

**EVENING**

Sally is screwing up her face in despair at the shambolic nature of the place, it's smallness, and the junk lying all around it.

**RUTH**

Home.

**17. EXT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**EVENING**

The car sits motionless with its engine running next to the cattle grid entrance. Above them a pole archway with "THE BLOCK" carved into it has a distinct lean to one side.

The auction sign is nailed to one of the supporting poles.

**SALLY**

(voice over)

Oh, this can't be it surely.

But in the pale, wet, evening light it almost has a kind of appealing glow around it (if you can ignore the rubbish).

**RUTH**

(voice over)

It looks kind of cosy. . .

**18. INT. SALLY'S CAR**

**EVENING**

But as Ruth drives in across the shallow gravel bed of the river and up the main drive to the house all Sally can see is the rusting car bodies and the decrepit farm machinery littering the front yard.

**SALLY**

(shaking her head in disbelief)

Oh God, Peter. . .

**RUTH**

I tell you it has a certain charm.

They pull to a halt close to the verandah.

**RUTH**

(getting out to brave the rain)

Come on let's just hope the roof works.

**19. EXT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**EVENING**

Of course there's no garage so as they scramble to unload the car in the rain and gathering dark we notice that from the front the whole place looks slightly out of square.

A pile of fire wood sits near the steps - in the rain. And certain "extensions" here and there give a "homemade" feel to the place.

Consequently, when Sally turns the key in the lock the door refuses to budge.

She starts shoving, Ruth drops her backpack and lends a shoulder.

**RUTH**

I saw this in a movie once.

Together they sort of manage to barge it open.

**20. INT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**NIGHT**

Rain pounds down on the tin roof making a deafening noise. They're both dripping wet.

Sally flicks on the main light. It's tiny 12 volt bulb emits a dull glow.

She takes in the drab interior, the smoke stained walls with their portraits of various gurus. There are clumps of candle wax covering the table and large 12 volt Telecom batteries sitting next to the porta gas cooker in one corner.

**SALLY**  
(appalled)

Geezus !

Ruth spots someone familiar.

**RUTH**  
Oh look, there's Guru Maya.

She studies the poster of a striking looking Indian woman in her 30s. She is dressed in red hat and cloak.

**RUTH**  
Isn't she beautiful ?

Other Indian gurus, including Muktananda beam down at them from the yellowed kitchen walls obviously leftovers from the last tenants.

Ruth bounces on a floorboard, testing the stumps. The whole house shakes and an empty vodka bottle with a candle stub in it falls off the kitchen table and breaks.

**RUTH**  
Sorry. (laughs)  
You're not seriously going to sell this place.

Sally turns to looking for the bathroom and heads down the small hallway.

The first room she opens is stacked full of plastic bags packed with rubbish. Half the wall is unfinished and the gap is covered with a blue tarpaulin.

Sally turns on her heel and makes determined strides towards the phone.

**SALLY**

We're not staying.

**RUTH**

What ?

**SALLY**

I saw a motel on the other side of town.

Sally is checking a phone number in her personal organiser.

Ruth is amazed.

**RUTH**

Sally- relax !

Sally dials a Paris number on an old black phone sitting on a shelf made from wooden soft drink crates.

**SALLY**

This is what happens when you leave things up to agents.

**RUTH**

Look, there's plenty of wood, we can have a nice warm fire. . .

**SALLY**

(totally frustrated)

The wood is wet. It was LEFT out in the rain !  
There's a room back there without any walls !

**RUTH**

Great, natural air conditioning. No electricity bills.

**SALLY**

The phone's gone dead. . . .  
(She jiggles the phone.)  
. . . Nothing !

Sally drops the phone in frustration.

**RUTH**

Look, we drag the mattresses in and sleep round the fire. It'll be great. Just like camping indoors.

Sally doesn't look terribly impressed.

**SALLY**

Camping wasn't what I had in mind.

**RUTH**

(shrugs- being open about it)

If it's really appalling we can go somewhere tomorrow. . . Come on. It's late. It's raining.

Sally's shoulders drop. Nothing is like she imagined.

**RUTH**

(as if talking to a child)

Go and warm up with a nice hot shower. Leave the fire to an old brownie.

**SALLY**

You weren't a brownie.

**RUTH**

I'LL get the fire going - somehow, there's always petrol. Then we can open the bar. . . and just relax. . .

Ruth is unloading groceries and bottles of champagne from a damp carton into the fridge. She glances round the back.

**RUTH**

There's no power cord ?

**SALLY**

(remembering)

Ahm. . . I think he said it runs on gas.

Ruth is down on all fours, peering uncertainly under the fridge door. The dim light is not much help.

**RUTH**

So how do you switch it on ?

Happy to let Ruth worry about it Sally wanders off looking for the bathroom.

She quickly finds it.

**SALLY**

(voice off- frustrated)

AND there's no toilet !

Ruth comes down the small hallway to join Sally who is staring at a room that contains a shower over an old bath, a sink set into a wooden crate and a large staghorn on another wall that's also half finished and open to the elements.

**RUTH**

(cheerfully)

Yes there is. Look . . .

Ruth has spotted it outside through the gap: a dim shape in the light coming from their "open room". It consists of an old chair frame sitting over a big hole in the ground and covered by a rough tin shelter

**SALLY**

I'm not going out there !

**RUTH**

It's only for a month.

(always the coach)

We're going to CHANGE, remember ?

Sally accepts that she has to let Ruth badger her into certain things.

**RUTH**

(enjoying her torment)

Just keep an eye out for Redbacks.

Sally takes out a notebook and jots down "toilet paper". "insect repellent".

Ruth shakes her head laughing.

**21. INT. SALLY'S BATHROOM**

**NIGHT**

10 minutes later the bathroom is all hot and steamy from the shower.

Sally is finally enjoying a rare feeling of warmth and relaxation.

Out in the kitchen Ruth seems to have located a radio. Music is heard off.

Suddenly, Sally's hot water turns to freezing cold.

She jumps back and fiddles with the hot tap but it all comes out cold.

**SALLY**

Shit! shit! shit!

She emerges, shivering and quickly wrapping a towel around herself, and plugs in her hair dryer.

The warm air of the dryer allows her to relax again. She plays it over her whole body.

But after only 10 seconds of relief everything suddenly goes black. The dryer stops, the radio cuts out, the lights are off.

Sally groans.

**RUTH**

(calling out from the kitchen)

Are the lights out in there?

**SALLY**

Oh Christ! What now?

There's complete black out. No moon, no streetlights, no fire, nothing.

Sally gropes her way along the bathroom wall to the hallway, and "feels" her way back to the lounge/kitchen.

**SALLY**

There must be a match near that cooking thing.

Ruth is crawling around on the floor. Looking for the candle stub.

**RUTH**

Did you see where the bottle fell ?

Sally has made her way to the porta gas cooker, feels her way around its edge and finds a box of matches.

Sally quickly lights one and suddenly throws into stark relief a bush rat sniffing his way around the back of the cooker.

Caught by the flare of light it rears up on hind legs waving whiskers at her. In real life the rat is only a few inches long. But Sally sees it close-up, magnified as a cruel and frightening monster.

She screams.

The rat dives off the cooker and scrambles away through her legs.

Sally jumps, the match burns her finger and goes out.

**SALLY**

(in pain)

Ow !

They are suddenly plunged back into firelight again - now a dim interior peopled by ugly, menacing creatures.

**SALLY**

Where did it go ?

Ruth is looking around nervously.

The hammering of rain on the roof gradually stops and almost immediately is replaced by a cacophony of frogs and crickets.



**23. EXT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**NIGHT**

Half an hour later The dull glow of the fire shines through the kitchen window.

Next to the house Ruth shovels a pile of sawdust into the toilet hole and picks up the candle stub and heads in towards the house.

As soon as she's gone the bush around the house comes alive with nocturnal creatures great and small. Some of these we see again in extreme close up.

As well as frogs and crickets and other insects there are also small marsupials and various nightbirds -obviously the time when lot of the local fauna become active.

**24. INT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**NIGHT**

Sally face is lit by her laptop as she finishes off a report overdue in the Paris office. The only other light in the room comes from the fire.

A glass of champagne beside her, the glow of the fire is finally having a calming effect.

Around her - the remains of a meal of bread, cheese and dried apricots.

Ruth comes in carrying the candle stub.

**RUTH**

There's no toilet paper

**SALLY**

Yeah, I've got it.

She holds up her electronic notebook and we catch a glimpse of the tiny screen:

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| Soap         | Broom            |
| Paint        | Mop and bucket   |
| Bleach       | Scrubbing things |
| Toilet Paper | Insect repellent |
| Curtains     | Brushes          |
| Detergent    |                  |

Ruth tops up both their glasses.

**RUTH**

God, the strain of having to have a good time  
is going to kill you isn't it ?

Suddenly there's an incredible, loud, blood curdling screech.

Sally and Ruth freeze.

This is followed by an incredible banging and yelping and in the ceiling  
immediately above them.

Sally looks up ominously.

**RUTH**

Possums ?

**SALLY**

(reassuring herself)

Yes, possums.

Ruth sticks the candle stub in front of the portrait of Guru Maya. It's  
light starts fading. . . .

**SALLY**

Is that really the only candle we've got ?

The candle reaches meltdown and we're left with only firelight again.

We dolly in on the fire and dissolve through to

**25. INT. SALLY'S LOUNGE/KITCHEN**

**NIGHT**

One hour later the fire is a pile of glowing embers.

Sally has settled onto two lounge chairs which she's pulled together to  
make an improvised bed. Sleep eludes her.

She sits up in her "bed" still tapping into her laptop. There are snippets  
of a production schedule for a radio program on her screen.

Ruth is snoring softly in her sleeping bag on the single mattress next to the fire. Nearby there is a debris of clothes flowing out of her backpack.

A low drumming sound starts up far off in the night.

Sally's eyes flick around the room.

She frowns at this new sound.

She flicks off her laptop. The sound of it stirs Ruth awake vaguely.

**RUTH**

(drowsily, behind Sally)

Huh ?

**SALLY**

Can you hear it ?

Ruth stirs and also sits up.

**RUTH**

What ?

**SALLY**

A kind of drumming.

**RUTH**

(despairing)

Forgodsake go to sleep !

Sally remains alert, her eyes darting about in the dim firelight. This new sound has her really puzzled.

The drumming gets louder. . .

The drumming is coming from a circle of people sitting around a camp fire high up on the slopes of Mt. Never Ever at the back of Sally's land. They are beating drums and congas and shaking tins with seeds in them- their faces illuminated by the fire.

There are faces with tattoos and small bones and rings stuck through noses and ears. Many are dreadlocked but some are virtually bald except for a long narrow mane of hair going down to a pony tail at the back.

There are a few older faces with hippy beards and beads but most of these people are in their twenties.

Amongst the fire circle Trevor the "Street Poet" plays a didgeridoo. Ben Woods thumps a set of congas. A girl next to him hits a length of white plumping pipe with a thong. Almost everybody has an instrument that shakes or bangs.

A bottle of Stones' Green Ginger wine is being mixed with a bottle of cheap whisky into a large stone jar - a "Stone Mac". The jar is passed around. It's followed by bars of chocolate.

Roasting on a spit on the fire is the carcass of the wallaby that Sally saw killed on the side of the road earlier.

Beyond the fire circle other people are dressed like American Indians and walk around twirling sticks with a lighted kerosene wick at either end. Their fiery arcs make mesmeric circles of light in the chill night air.

Backing it all is the primitive relentless beat of the many percussion instruments.

We close in on the flaming, suspended circles of the fire sticks and tilt up to the larger circle of a full moon cut across by dark clouds with silver linings.

Almost directly above the fire a young woman, Rainbow (the "bunny") is sitting on a platform at the top of an enormous log tripod. Her legs dangle over the edge. She wears warpaint and lots of feathers stuck at odd angles through her hair. She has her own bottle of "StoneMac" and a big bar of chocolate (to protect against the cold).

From her vantage point we are staring down into the main fire as if looking into the centre of a timeless tribal gathering. Off to one side, in the valley below, is the faint glimmer of Sally's fire-lit lounge room window.

The drumming fades back to a minor chord amongst the crickets and frogs. . .

Having abandoned any hope of sleep and feeling as though it's the middle of the day (European time) Sally is back at the kitchen table twisting the cork on another bottle of French Champagne.

She has her laptop running on the kitchen table and has been typing out a memo to her boss about problems of studio access and actors who arbitrarily change their availability - getting it down while she still has a head of steam up about it.

Unable to sleep with all this going on Ruth is rolling a cigarette. She's propped on the side of her mattress, warming her feet in her ugg boots next to the fire.

Sally is in a fashionable tracksuit and cashmere pullover.

**RUTH**

(warning)

That's our last bottle of the good stuff. . .

**SALLY**

It's the only way I can cope with the idea of slipping between those ghastly sheets.

The sheets are made up with Ruth's doona on Sally's "lounge chair bed".

She holds out her hand for a toke on Ruth's smoke.

**RUTH**

(reproachful)

What?

**SALLY**

It's my last puff I promise.

Ruth hands her the rollie.

**SALLY**

You're a bad influence.

Ruth smiles, Sally savours the nicotine hit, hands it back.

**SALLY**

This time I've lead YOU astray.

NIGHT

**RUTH**  
Just look on it as an adventure. It's not like  
were in the middle of Africa.

Ruth laughs.

**RUTH**  
There's no lions or tigers.

**SALLY**  
What about leeches, though ?  
(squirms)  
The idea of something sucking blood out of  
you. . .

**RUTH**  
(prompting)  
Speaking of leeches. . . How is he coping ?

Sally has a sudden flash of Peter.

**28. EXT. PARIS CAFE**

**DAY**

*Sally and Peter are sitting at a table outside a cafe in Paris. He smiles as he opens some tissue paper to reveal a gold chain.*

*They look happy. In the first flush of living together.*

**SALLY**  
What ?

**PETER**  
*It's a good luck charm.*

**SALLY**  
You made this ?

**PETER**  
*Of course. You've inspired me to new heights.*

**29. INT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**NIGHT**

Sally turns back to typing in her laptop.

**SALLY**

(with some bitterness)

Oh, his "career" has really picked up.  
Obviously I must have been holding him  
back.

**RUTH**

That's it? . . . Five years? . . . It's all over?  
No going back. . .

**SALLY**

(glancing round the place, almost to herself)  
Five years. . .

Ruth hears a mossier approach and slaps it on her arm.

**RUTH**

Now nothing can hurt us.

Ruth slips back down into her sleeping bag. Sally continues to punch out her memo. Her face is illuminated by the dull greenish glow of the laptop's screen

The light from the fire slowly fades. . .

**30. INT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**NIGHT**

An hour later. . .

Sally is finally stretched asleep between the two lounge chairs.

And with the fire light mostly gone the kitchen quietly comes to life.

Ants and cockroaches are swarming all over the crumbs of their meal.  
The bush rat returns and silently selects some choice morsels

Viewed from a macro level the creatures who share Sally's house  
inhabit another world.

A faint moonlight beams straight in through the kitchen window.

The fire is a collection of glowing embers.

Ruth is asleep on the mattress next to it.

Above them a large diamond python ("Monty") detaches himself from a rafter and slithers over the arm of Sally's chair/bed

The far off drumming fades. . .

**31. EXT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**EARLY MORNING**

Sunrise on "The Block."

The rain is well and truly gone and we see Sally's house for the first time in broad daylight.

Somewhere across the valley a rooster crows.

**32. EXT. BELMONT'S FARM**

**EARLY MORNING**

The rooster is on an old stump in the middle of the Belmont's chook pen.

Close-up the rooster is deafening.

A young boy, Tom Belmont, comes down with a bucket of kitchen scraps.

He opens the rickety wire and wood "door" to the chook pen and checking that nobody is watching he sneaks up behind the rooster with the bucket held ready to be dumped.



**33. INT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**EARLY MORNING**

A second rooster call carries over and stirs Sally awake.

A third call rings out but is suddenly cut off in midstream.

It's 7 am but already the sun is hot.

A painful needle of light cuts through the flimsy kitchen curtains straight into Sally's left eye.

**34. EXT. BELMONT'S FARM**

**EARLY MORNING**

The rooster is running around shaking bits of lettuce and strands of spaghetti off his back.

Tom is amused then turns to see his mother watching him from the kitchen widow.

He's been sprung.

As their eyes meet there is a moment of shared amusement between Tom and his mother.

**36. INT. BELMONT'S KITCHEN**

**EARLY MORNING**

Jacqui Belmont is at her kitchen sink washing up breakfast. Her smile fades as she glances anxiously in her husband's direction.

Phil Belmont remains huddled over his bible, mouthing the words of a particular passage. He is at the kitchen table and seems not to have noticed the rooster's interrupted call.

Jacqui looks relieved then glances back out the window at Tom.

Tom rinses out the chook bucket from a tap on the bottom of the tank and hurries up the back steps.

37. INT. SALLY'S HOUSE

EARLY MORNING

Sally is sitting up on the lounge chair bed and rubbing her forehead between sips of Alka Seltzer.

The already uncomfortable humidity and the bright light does not make for a great way to be restored to consciousness.

She winces at the three empty champagne bottles stacked against the wall- next to the telecom batteries.

Somewhere off is the sound of four wheel drive vehicles struggling up hill in low gear.

Sally notices Ruth still dead to the world next to the fire place. The fire is out.

Sally can't find her Reeboks amongst the debris of last night: the boxes and bags and bits of luggage scattered around the kitchen floor.

Since it's only for a moment Sally borrows Ruth's ugg boots and heads outside.

38. EXT. SALLY'S HOUSE ("TOILET")

EARLY MORNING

Sally arrives at the empty chair frame.

Beside the chair a shovel is stuck into a mound of sawdust. As we saw last night the whole thing is covered by a old sheet of roofing iron, held up by four poles leaning at an angle.

She peers uncertainly around the chair and into the hole looking for redbacks.

**SALLY**

(muttering)

... the way some people live in the  
20th century... it's disgusting !

Satisfied there's nothing threatening down there she tentatively drops her pants and squats on the chair - unaware of the amazing view spread out all around her.

The surrounding mountain tops are like islands in a sea of fog and mist. In the distance the faint tinkle of the Buddhist Monastery bell.

However, she looks up sharply as she hears the sound of approaching vehicles. . .

Several beat up old cars lead by another brightly painted kombi van are coming onto the property.

Sally quickly scrambles back into her tracksuit pants as the invasion of vehicles is soon followed by people walking up behind them, carrying peace flags and koori flags, and banners proclaiming

"No Forest/No Future"

"Sack State Forests"

"Our Loss-Your Loss- Future Generations Lose"

"National Parks issue Licence to Kill!"

She moves away from the toilet wondering what the hell these people want.

But instead of coming towards the house the strange procession continues on up the slope, following an old logging track that leads to the back of the property.

Intrigued as to what's going on, and thinking it will only take a moment to find out, Sally hurries to catch up with them.

There are some and others, and some of

VARIOUS PROTESTERS

There are some and others, and some of

### **39. EXT. SKULL CAMP**

**DAY**

A few hundred metres up the road Sally is amazed to come across a wide clearing in the forest. She's puffing from the climb - ugg boots not being the best idea for bush walking.

There's tents and teepees and bits of canvas thrown over the branches of trees.

An old Sydney Double Decker bus has been turned into a mobile home (Destination: "Anywhere"). It is full of kids their several mothers and common father- a slight man with long shaggy grey hair and beard.

Sally has never seen anything quite like it.

Nobody seems to wear any shoes. She notices how filthy some people's feet are. The clothing is either bland and ragged or long, colourful and flowing. There are lots of vests and strange hats.

There are people of all types and ages. Local people and others from all over the North Coast.

Somewhere under it all is the same relentless drumming that Sally recognises from last night. Now it's like a call to arms as people stream out of the camp towards the site of a large blockade on an adjacent forest road.

Sally's attention is suddenly drawn by a voice heard through a megaphone.

**40. EXT. BLOCKADE**

**DAY**

The voice is that of a large, chubby police officer with a wide brimmed hat and dark blue leather jacket. He is backed by a line of police.

**RON**

(through megaphone)

Can I have your attention, please? I am  
Sergeant Ron Lumley of Bullumbah Police  
Station. . .

There are hoots and catcalls and cries of

**VARIOUS PROTESTERS**

Good on yer Ron.  
Go for it baby. . .

**RON**

(riding over them)

. . . and I have been told by District Forester  
Steve Parker that State Forests have closed  
this area. . .

There are hisses and boos on mention of Parker's name.

And generally the statement is met by howls of derision and scorn from the large crowd of people gathered under an enormous pole tripod.

The tripod stands across the middle of a logging road leading into the Never Ever State Forest. At the top of it sits the young feral woman (Rainbow) on a rough platform.

Sally cranes back her neck, amazed at how tall it is.

In front of the tripod is an old broken down car parked across the road.

Although not at first obvious there is another young woman "locked on" to the car's springs with a "U" shaped Kryptonite bike lock. The lock goes around the springs and around her neck- effectively welding her to the body of the wreck.

**RON**

This is for your own protection.

Even louder jeers and scornful laughter from the crowd.

**RADICAL PROTESTER**

You can't close a forest you fascist pig !

Martin Howard, a politician from a minor party in the state's upper house is also in the front line. He wears a neat suit made from Hemp fibre. Suddenly everyone is talking at once.

**MARTIN**

Logging in this forest is illegal ! You can't close the forest because you haven't done a proper Fauna impact statement. You have no power to invoke the Act.

**RADICAL PROTESTER**

You want me ? Come and get me. Come on Lumley You chickenshit, fat fascist pig. Come on pig boy.

Ron talks over the top of the "rabble"

Trevor The Street Poet is also in the front line He is dressed in a Koala Bear outfit.

**RON**

Right you've had your notice. Anyone who is still here in five minutes will be liable to arrest for trespass under Section 15 of the NSW Forestry Act of 1916. . .

**RADICAL PROTESTER**

Fascist pigs !  
BuildCorp running dogs !

**TREVOR**

(leading the chorus)  
We shall. . . We shall not be moved..What do we want ?

**ALL**

More Forests !

**TREVOR**

When do we want 'em ?

**ALL**

Now !

**GRANDMOTHER**

They're our forests. You can't close our forests.

Behind the radical element and the mostly "feral" hard core Sally notices two women in their sixties. There are also people like Stuart and Norman, two gay men in their early 40s, as well as a lot of kids who think it's all a great lark.

Sally hangs by her (virtually non-existent) fence line remaining neutral; but intrigued by all the goings-on. The road being blockaded runs parallel to her boundary just inside the State Forest proper.

Nobody appears to be taking any notice of Sgt. Ron Lumley's warning so with a nod of his head Ron motions the order for the police line to move forward. The protesters brace themselves by linking arms.

People shout back at the police chanting out things like:

**VARIOUS PROTESTERS**

Save our Native Australian Forests and  
Animals! Hands off the Never Ever.

It's all jumbled up and chaotic as the police wade into the front line, selecting certain obvious ringleaders (including the Radical Protester) and hauling them by the belt (if they have one) over to the waiting Paddy Wagon.

Inside the Koala suit, Trevor the Street Poet keeps up his chant:

**TREVOR**

What do we want ?

**CHORUS**

No Logging !

**TREVOR**

When do we want it ?

**CHORUS**

Now !

Trevor is also one of the first to be arrested. Two big police officers (one is Constable Ruby Corkoran) pull his koala head off and lead him towards the waiting paddy wagon.

**CONST. RUBY**

(to Trevor, leading him away)  
Come on Blinky. . .

People being lead away are cheered and congratulated by the rest.

Mercedes Bromhead, a small, dynamic Filipino woman attempts to capture it all with one of several still cameras draped around her neck. She maintains a kind of neutrality between the police and the protesters.

She lies down on her stomach to get a good shot of the young woman ("Leaf") under the car. Police Constable 1 has brought the "jaws of life" to the kryptonite lock - a kind of giant pair of hydraulically powered tin snips.

He wedges the device in under the car. They have trouble manoeuvring it.

**LEAF**

You're hurting my neck. . . You're hurting  
my neck!

(increasing concern)

You're hurting my neck !

Sally frowns in concern at the goings on under the car. She flashes back to another scene.

41. INT. PARIS APARTMENT

NIGHT

*The room is pitch black.*

*A flash of Sally screaming, angry, in pain. Her voice reverberates.*

**SALLY**

(voice over)

Stop it ! . . . Stop it !

Back to Sally's look of concern now, unaware of her position she is being drawn across her boundary line.

Leaf's "buddy" is Hawk who hovers next to the car monitoring everything.

**HAWK**

You're hurting her neck you bastard !

**LEAF**

You're hurting my neck !

**POLICE OFFICER 1**

(to the cop behind him)

We'll have to get an angle grinder.

**LEAF**

You can't get an angle grinder this car is leaking petrol.

**HAWK**

It's leaking petrol everywhere. You can't use it.

Like Mercedes, Ben Woods is also somewhere in the middle. He wears a yellow armband which gives him immunity from arrest. He is taping the action with a Hi8 video camera.

By now the tussle is turning into a kind of mass wrestling match as shouting and angry people are torn out of their passive (linked arms) defence and herded individually towards one of the paddy wagons in various head and arm locks. Some go peacefully and are just lead away.

Others put up a hell of a fight. They get a thump or two for their trouble out of sight behind the paddy wagon.

Meanwhile the throbbing drums back the action like an old fashioned battle march.

As the line of protesters dissolves and the car is towed away a cherry picker now trundles forward to take on Rainbow "the bunny" at the top of the tripod. In the cherry picker's pod are police rescue officers in white overalls.

It's an extremely delicate operation performed about 7 metres above ground level.



Sally's confusion turns to concern as time and again the cherry picker manoeuvres for a better approach to the platform. Rainbow hangs back, avoiding contact with the police rescue officers. Even Ron Lumley senses the danger.

We see this action through the shaky zoom of Ben Woods' camera. One of the police rescue officers manages to snap a self tightening set of handcuffs around Rainbow's ankle. The handcuffs are in turn attached to a thick rope held by the Rescue Officer.

**RESCUE OFFICER**

(to Rainbow)

You better hold onto your leg or it could be dislocated.

The camera pans off the action as Ben halts shooting and storms over to Ron.

**BEN**

You said nobody would be put in physical danger.

Ron shrugs.

**RON**

Nobody is. . .

**BEN**

Someone falls from up there and they're going to break their bloody neck.

**RON**

If she stays in a Closed Forest the loggers will break it for her.

Ron smiles, confident and unruffled by the chaos going on around him. He knows he's got the situation well in hand.

**RON**

We're only doing it for your safety Ben. Don't want a tree dropping on you during logging operations now do you ?

It's meant to sound like a threat.

**BEN**

(more in sorrow than anger)

We had a deal, Ron.

**RON**

(reasserting his authority)

Look we didn't build the tripod. If you play with fire expect to get burnt.

**BEN**

Thanks, I'll remember that the next time I light one.

For the first time Ron's confident manner falters. Ben is simply angry. Ron takes the off-handed comment as a real threat.

**RON**

We're only doing our job, you know. I happen to like trees too. As a matter of fact Sheila and I planted a whole lot of wattles this year.

Ben explodes and lays right into him.

**BEN**

(indicating "the bunny")

If she's injured in the slightest way then I'll make damn sure we bring a civil action against you and sue you for every cent you've got - wattles and all !

Ron looks suddenly doubtful

**RON**

Oh yeah, on what basis ?

**BEN**

On the basis we had an agreement- which I've got witnesses to- that nobody would be put at risk.

It may be drawing a long bow legally but in the heat of the moment it's an expression of Ben's anger that strikes home.

Ron looks back up at the drama unfolding round the cherry picker, he wipes the sweat from his brow. The sun is coming up over the tree canopy. It's going to be a warm day.

Ben swings back to continue recording the whole thing on tape.

Ron looks personally put out. He stands immobile and actionless, the local ground commander amid the general chaos of arrests and tumult going on around him.

Above it all the cherry picker makes one final lunge at the tripod. One rescue officer holds the rope attached to her ankle handcuff while the other attempts to haul her bodily into the pod of the cherry picker.

"The bunny" hangs back at the extreme outer edge of the platform.

Ben now rounds on Steve Parker, standing with a group of loggers. Steve is dressed in the uniform of the Chief District Forester.

**BEN**

(to Steve)

Do you accept public liability for this ?

**STEVE**

(shrugs, unconcerned)

Rescue always do a professional job.

**BEN**

It's your forest, you're responsible.

**STEVE**

Yes, and they're our poles that you've stolen to make that bloody tripod.

A general gasp of concern goes up from the whole crowd. It draws Ben and Steve's attention back to events at the top of the tripod.

One rescue officer throws a safety harness around "the bunny" like a lasso, while the other rushes forward to pull her by the ankle into the cherry picker.

Almost all other action stops as, to avoid arrest, "the bunny" slips backwards off the tripod.

Another audible gasp goes up from the crowd looking on from below.

Fortunately the bunny is saved from serious injury as she's held by the harness - but drops down as if at the end of a long bungee cord - swinging backwards and forwards now like a pendulum underneath the tripod - just managing to miss bumping into the poles themselves.

Ron feels his heart skip a beat and like everyone else Sally is drawn into the circle of amazed onlookers wondering if the bunny will land safely after dropping about 5 metres.

Without realising Sally presses forward past a "Forestry Closure Notice."

She is almost immediately swept up from behind by Constable Ruby Corkoran, who grabs an arm and twists it up behind Sally in a painful but firm grip, pushing her towards the paddywagon.

Shocked and amazed Sally protests, struggling against Ruby's grip. It's happened so quickly Sally can't quite believe it.

**SALLY**

Wait a minute. . . What ?

**CONST. RUBY**

You're under arrest.

**SALLY**

But I'm nothing to do with the demonstration !

**CONST. RUBY**

You're in a closed forest.

Ruby simply frogmarches Sally towards the paddy wagon. In the background "the bunny" is lowered safely to the ground and immediately arrested by several police.

**SALLY**

(lashing out)

This is ridiculous ! I wish to speak to the person in charge.

**CONST. RUBY**

You keep struggling I'll add resisting arrest.

Ruby's physical grip and blockheaded insensitivity sends Sally right over the top. She kicks and lashes out like a wildcat. Her helpless and unjust predicament triggers in Sally another sudden painful stab of memory.

**43. INT. PARIS APARTMENT**  
**NIGHT**

---

*Over Sally's arrest struggle there's a sequence of quick intercuts all from inside a darkened apartment- flashes of a recurring nightmare.*

*The images are a grainy monochrome, close up and unfocused The sounds are slowed down, resonant, echoing. Sounds of someone gasping, grunting, physically constrained. Some images have no sound.*

*A door opens on a darkened room.*

*Light stabs across a polished wooden floor.*

**SALLY**

*What ? . . .*

*A hand pushes another hand away.*

*A glass rolls off a dresser and breaks.*

*We hear Sally's voice distorted.*

**SALLY**  
(reverb)

*You arsehole !*

**44. EXT/INT. POLICE PADDY WAGON** **DAY**

---

**SALLY**

*You arsehole !*

*She is yelling back at Ruby who bundles Sally into the paddy wagon and slams the door behind her. Sally is extremely agitated, not just at being arrested but she is stirred by the painful memory of the flashback.*

**SALLY**

(yelling back through a grill)

*You've made a mistake !*

*Ruby finds that highly amusing.*

**SALLY**

I'm NOT a demonstrator!

The paddy wagon also erupts with laughter.

**TREVOR**

Nice try mate . . .

She swings around sharply to find herself in a dark, hot, cramped space with about a dozen bemused protesters.

There's a great feeling inside amongst the people arrested. Each new arrival is greeted like a conquering hero. With Sally there is just laughter.

Sally's nose catches a bouquet of smokey camp fire blended with intense body odour. Some of these people are not just ferals they are "crusties". Crusties have a thing about personal hygiene- mainly about its absence.

Sally squeezes onto a bench between two women - one with dreadlocks, the other about 17 or 18 years old has her head clean shaven and is breast feeding a baby. There are tattoos on her skull.

Sally smiles uncertainly at the baby. Already nursing a delicate tummy from the night before she now feels a distinct queasiness. Afraid she might be about to throw up Sally places a handkerchief over her nose and mouth, pretending to blow it but really avoiding the odours and hoping it's not too obvious.

Sally takes in the odd assortment of costumes arrayed on the bench opposite, including Trevor the Street Poet in his koala costume minus the head. Then she looks down at her own, mud spattered aerobic outfit and Ruth's ugg boots. The feral opposite has his feet wrapped in strips of hessian tied with string.

In the world of the paddy wagon the ferals are the norm and Sally is the odd one out.

Trevor is grinning, sensing her predicament.

**TREVOR**

(smiling, friendly)

Have a some chocolate. . .

He's leaning forward offering her a bar of dark chocolate. People outside are slipping fruit and sweets through one of the vents.

Sally shakes her head not wanting to get involved.

Outside the shouts and clamour of the demonstration can still be heard.  
A woman screams in pain.

**RAINBOW**

(off)

Let me go you pig!  
(screams)

**TREVOR**

(still offering the chocolate)

Could be a while before we get there.

**SALLY**

No, thank you. I'm not big on sweets.

**TREVOR**

Have a poem then.

He pulls out a photocopied sheet (one of several) from inside his Koala outfit.

Not wanting to appear too offside Sally takes it. He smiles at her. She glances at the handwritten sheet, not quite sure what to make of it.

**TREVOR**

I'm Trevor the Street Poet.

**SALLY**

Sally, Sally Morants

**TREVOR**

(nodding at each one)

This is Angel, Moonsong, Rufus, Nimbjin,  
Krystal, Pan, Leaf...

The paddy wagon's door swings open and "the bunny" from the tripod is thrown in - her warpaint and feathers somewhat ruffled from her near fall and arrest.

**TREVOR**

... and the Rainbow Warrior!

Rainbow gets huge applause and a big cheer as she plops on the floor raising a fist.

**TREVOR**

(continued)

Good one, Rainbow. You were magnificent.

**RAINBOW**

(rubbing her ankle)

Fuckin' Pigs! . . . Those bloody handcuffs  
are self tightening.

**TREVOR**

Yeah, real bastards.

Sally notices the door still held open with Ron counting numbers. She seizes the opportunity . . .

**SALLY**

Excuse me, Sergeant I'm afraid there's . . .  
(been a mistake)

But the door is slammed shut in her face again.

**RON**

(off)

Righto, Charlie.

Ron bangs on the side of the van and Sally is jerked backwards off balance as the paddy wagon pulls away.

Sally regains her footing and looks through the tiny grilled window in the door as they pass back down the forest road along a line of trucks and bulldozers with engines revving, impatient to move forward.

It's like the armoured column of an invading army. In fact most of these vehicles are painted in the uniform red and blue colours of "BuildCorp International". The company logo is the silhouette of a house with a fir tree growing out of it's chimney.

Sally glimpses men in overalls and flannelette shirts with yellow hardhats and ear muffs attached. Some are holding chainsaws, others are stubbing out their fags and jumping up into the high cabins of semi-trailers.



**45. EXT. LOGGING ROAD****DAY**

At the rear of the column Ned Semple, a logging contractor and Steve Parker, the District Forester are huddled in conference. Ned is pointing a finger at Steve's chest clearly taking an upper hand with the government employee. Steve listens as if to a boss.

**NED SEMPLE**

Three big tallows and a blue gum. Near the creek.

**STEVE PARKER**

Yeah...?

**NED SEMPLE**

If they're habitat trees I'm a friggin greenie.

**STEVE PARKER**

You've got to wear a few of them mate...

**NED**

Bullshit.

**STEVE PARKER**

Don't tell me, talk to National Parks...

The paddy wagon passes them and drives on out of the forest. Inside we hear the arrestees sing a victory song

(The Forest Fucker's Song?)

**46. INT/EXT. SALLY'S HOUSE****DAY**

Ruth slowly comes back to consciousness and notices that Sally's lounge chair bed is empty.

She pops her legs over the side of the mattress and looks around in vain for her ugg boots.

She settles for Sally's reeboks and wrapping a dressing gown loosely around her Ruth yawns and comes out onto the verandah.

Sal ?  
RUTH

But there's no answer.

Sally ?  
RUTH  
(bit louder)

She looks around both sides of the verandah, notices the car is still where they parked it last night and assumes Sally must have gone for a walk.

**47. INT. BULLUMBAH POLICE STATION DAY**

Sally is unscrewing her ear studs. She stands in front of Sgt. Ron Lumley who's sitting at his desk noting Sally's details. Ruby Corkoran is beside Sally taking her jewellery and putting it in an open envelope.

Sally looks extremely peeved.

RON  
You're not required to say anything but anything you do say may be taken down and used against you.

SALLY  
How much longer is this going to take ?

RON  
Family Name ?

SALLY  
Morants.

RON  
Given names ?

SALLY  
Sally Louise

**RON**  
Marital status ?

**SALLY**  
Well, that depends. . . .

**RON**  
What does that mean.

**SALLY**  
(slight hesitation)  
Separated.

**RON**  
Divorced ?

**SALLY**  
Not yet. Almost.

**RON**  
Maiden name ?

**SALLY**  
That is my maiden name.

**RON**  
"Morants" is your maiden name ?

**SALLY**  
(impatient)  
Yes !

**RON**  
Well, what's your husband's name ?

**SALLY**  
What's it got to do with him !?

**RUBY**  
(Prompting) And the chain, love.

Ruby has noticed the "good luck" gold chain hanging around Sally's neck.

Sally is momentarily distracted away from Ron.

What ?  
SALLY

Ruby nods at it.

Sally glances down at it.

48. EXT. PARIS CAFE DAY

*Sally smiles down at the chain Peter has just handed her. She fastens it around her neck.*

*Peter nods at her smiling.*

*They embrace.*

RON  
(voice over)  
I need to know your husband's name.

49. INT. BULLUMBAH POLICE STATION DAY

Ruby is placing the chain in the envelope and seals it up.

Sally comes back to the present but she's not quite heard what Ron has been asking. She has to think about where she is for a moment.

What ?  
SALLY

Your husband. . .  
RON

Richardson, Peter  
SALLY

**RON**

Where is he now ?

**SALLY**

Oh forgodsake ! My name is Sally Morants.  
What more do you need ?

Sally reacts at her hand being taken by Ruby and smeared in black ink for a full palm print.

**RON**

See there's two ways of doing this. . .The  
hard or easy.

**SALLY**

So just tell me what any of this has to do  
with my husband !?

Ruby presses Sally's hands on the on paper record. She suddenly feels like a criminal.

**RON**

How do I know you're Sally Morants ?

**SALLY**

(finally exploding)

I'm sorry but I don't carry my diplomatic  
passport when all I'm trying to do is go to  
the toilet on my own block of land.

Ron and Ruby are amused.

Sally just feels humiliated.

**RON**

We both reckon you should get a pretty  
good price for it, too. Don't we Ruby ?

Ruby is date stamping Sally's prints.

**RON**

Lots of young professionals moving up here.  
Growing all sorts of things up in the hills.  
Looking for their own slice of Paradise.

The tiny holding facility (cell block) is teeming with about a dozen people arrested at the Blockade.

As people are processed more are brought out of the paddy wagon parked round the back.

Amongst most people there's a sense of pride in being arrested for the cause. People are talking in small groups about what actually happened. What they saw and experienced.

Ruby brings Sally in.

Martin Howard, the "Green" politician is hanging near the door.

Sally almost has to squeeze herself into the overcrowded room. She baulks at the clouds of smoke and lack of personal space.

**MARTIN**

Any cameras out there for me yet Ruby ?

In another corner Leaf is chatting to some ferals.

**RUBY**

No Martin, you're not important enough this time. Thank god.

**LEAF**

It's true, they took the first load of people arrested out on the Dorrigo road and just let them go. None of them have managed to hitch back into town yet.

People around Martin laugh - obviously a running gag between Martin and Ruby.

**NIMBJIN**

How come ?

**MARTIN**

I've seen better gaols than this is Latin America.  
(making it public)  
This isn't a gaol this is a broom cupboard !

**LEAF**

Well you know it's obvious. They obviously want to keep the number of people arrested down.

Various people chuckle.

**MARTIN**

(yelling out)  
Hey Ron ? where's the evidence that this is a police station ?

**NIMBJIN**

Oh great, just my luck to get in the wrong paddy wagon.

**LEAF**

Ah we'll be right, Ben reckons the notice to close the forest

Everyone laughs.

**TREVOR**  
G'day ! - Sally ?

**LEAF**  
(continued)  
was technically illegal,

Trevor greets Sally with a smile and manages to wedge his way through the crowd over towards her.

By now the beads of sweat are really rolling out of Trevor's Koala suit. Sally is suffering at the proximity.

**SALLY**  
How long does this normally take ?

**TREVOR**  
Oh an hour or so if you're lucky and can demonstrate a viable address. Normal charge is 'Trespass in a closed forest', but with a bit of luck the EDO will find a technical breach of the FA and we'll all get off with a pat on the back from the magistrate and big party bankrolled by the LEAF fighting fund.

Sally can hardly understand a word he's saying. The acronyms leave her floundering. Her eyes glaze over.

**51. EXT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**DAY**

An hour later Ruth is dragging her mattress back into the "spare bedroom". She has moved the bags of rubbish to a big pile at the bottom of the front steps. Some she's loaded into the car for a quick trip to the tip.

Oblivious to the time - or what could possibly be keeping Sally, Ruth has made some basic efforts at tidying up - hanging her clothes on the simple rope and stick hanger that's been left behind.

Ruth pulls back the "tarp wall" to let some sunlight come flooding in. It has been set up like a curtain - running along a broom handle.

Suddenly the phone rings. . .

She turns round, slightly surprised

Sally is on the phone at Ron's desk. Other people are being processed and released in the background.

**SALLY**

... just my passport ... and ... and  
anything with UNESCO written on it.  
There must be one of my cards there  
somewhere .

(listens)

I know... I know... (still can't believe it)  
I was minding my own business on my  
own land.

(listens)

Just bring it ... and a pair of shoes. All -  
ALL will be explained. . .

Ron is handing her a sheet of paper.

**RON**

That's a copy of the charge. You'll be  
released on bail on your own  
recognisance to appear in court in a  
month's time. If you go back into any  
closed forest you will be liable to  
immediate arrest.

**SALLY**

What !?

Handing her another sheet of paper - the bail conditions.

**RON**

Just sign there.

**SALLY**

(hesitates from signing)

But I'm only staying a month.

**RON**

Then you'll have to come back.

**SALLY**

From Paris ! Are you kidding !?



**RON**

Not thinking of doing a Christopher  
Skase are we, Sal ?

**SALLY**

I can't just break a production schedule to  
fly back here again.

Ron goes on typing - slowly - on the charge sheet

**RON**

If you don't turn up we'll have to issue a  
warrant.

**SALLY**

(can hardly believe it)  
What, for my arrest ?

Ron nods.

**SALLY**

But that's absurd !

**RON**

(shrugs)

You could take it up with the clerk of  
courts. Get the matter brought forward. . .

**SALLY**

(almost cracking)

Oh FANTASTIC, just something else I  
want to be bothered with on a holiday !

Ron turns back to his typewriter.  
A two finger typist and painfully slow.

**RON**

Only there's been quite a backlog around  
here lately with all these blockades. The  
blockades have blockaded the system.

He chuckles and below Sally's name on the charge sheet we see him  
typing:

"Lot 13, Gang Gang Road, Bullumbah NSW 2489"

"Morants" has been crossed out and "Richardson" overwritten.

**RON**

(still typing and unmoved)

I'll put your local address for the meantime. . .  
That's where the summons will be sent.

He slowly types in the word "Trespassing" in the charge window of the sheet.

**SALLY**

(glancing at her watch)

Have you ever thought of getting  
secretarial help?

**53. EXT. THE BANK - RIVER STREET, BULLUMBAH DAY**

Ted Scanlon comes out of the Bank and crosses to the edge of the footpath to wait. Ted is a man in his sixties who has spent most of his working life out in the open. He's grey and weathered. A green pullover on a white shirt and tie with an akubra hat.

He checks his old watch against the town's clock, prominent at one end of the main street (River Street) and makes a slight adjustment. As he puts his watch away he has a faraway look in his eye and fails to notice Jack Bates going past. Jack is a farmer, about the same age as Ted.

**JACK**

(making a joke of it)

Not talking to anyone today, Ted?

Ted looks around vaguely.

**TED**

Oh ah- g'day Jack. What do you know?

**JACK**

(smiling)

The Roosters to win on Saturday.

**TED**

(nods and smiles back)

I'll tell Sean.

Jack moves on with a wave. Ted's smile fades.

Ruth turns into River Street from the Gang Gang road. She drives on past Ted and starts looking for a park near the police station.

Just behind her Brad Scanlon pulls up to collect Ted.

**54. INT/EXT. SCANLON UTE/ RIVER STREET DAY**

The ute has seen better days.

A sign on the door reads: "Scanlons and Sons Ltd. Sawmillers"

Ted climbs in shaking his head and looking rather despondent.

Brad looks surprised.

Brad  
that  
street in  
**BRAD**  
No good ?

**TED**  
Nup.

**BRAD**  
Shit !

Brad hits the steering wheel with his open palm and does a U- turn.

**BRAD**  
Ted  
What's wrong with him ?

**TED**  
Eight years ago  
It was all over in 10 minutes.

**BRAD**  
Doesn't he care about what this means ?  
For us ? For our workers ?

**TED**

All McKenzie has to know is - we don't have a quota. He won't refinance on maybe. Like "maybe" State Forests will come to their senses.

**BRAD**

Yeah, but, geezus- if we go down, half the town comes too.

**TED**

(not so sure)

Mmm maybe. . . In the old days, perhaps. . .

**BRAD**

It's so bloody short sighted !

Brad's U-turn has run them headlong into a spontaneous demonstration that has continued down off the mountain and reformed in the main street in front of the police station and adjacent to the court house.

**TED**

McKenzie's got his own bean counters.  
A bank is not a charity.

**BRAD**

And why not ? They're part of the community. Aren't they.

Ted shrugs. Not sure any more.

**BRAD**

Eight years ago they were throwing money at you.

**TED**

Eight years ago we had a guaranteed supply.

**BRAD**

Have we ever missed a repayment ?

**TED**

(smiles)

Not technically speaking. . .

(then a glum thought)

Not till now.

**BRAD**

We're paying for the mistakes THEY  
made in the 80s.

**TED**

And the 30s and the 70s and how far do  
you want to go back ?

Brad is just staring out of the window. Still adjusting to what all this  
means.

**BRAD**

It's come at the worst possible time. We'll  
have to stretch those logs from the  
McGilligan place.

**TED**

(nods)

Right down to tomato stakes.

**BRAD**

That's about all you'll get out of some of  
that stuff. It's not much better than salvage.

**TED**

We may have trouble getting salvage  
from Semple's crew as well.

**BRAD**

Oh great, since when ?

**TED**

Since he discovered just how little he's  
going to squeeze out of coup 37.  
BuildCorp are putting the screws on.

**BRAD**

You can't sack any more men, Dad. We're back to the bone as it is.

**TED**

(laughs mirthlessly)

Lucky me. Two sons to plug the gap.

Brad

(smiles)

Well, One and a half.

**TED**

(suddenly serious)

Go easy on him. Sean's at a difficult stage.

**BRAD**

I don't remember a stage. . .

**TED**

You were different.

Brad lets his frustration out on the people milling around the ute. He gives a blast on the horn.

Trevor the Street Poet, who has been standing near the ute in his Koala suit and "National Parks = Licence to Kill" placard gets a bit of a shock. He leaps back.

**BRAD**

Get a job !

Like Trevor, people are just hanging around on the road, blocking traffic. We see other people who were arrested.

The police are powerless to do much about it. In fact most of Bullumbah's thin blue line is tied up inside the Police Station processing people.

**TED**

Anyway, McKenzie knows how many men we've laid off. Half of them went straight into his office for a second mortgage!

**BRAD**  
(yelling out)  
Bloody Greenies !

Lost up till now in his own problems Ted seems to become fully aware of the demonstration.

**55. EXT. BULLUMBAH POLICE STATION DAY**

All the banners and flags and people seen on Mt. Never Ever are now swarming around the a stationary line of cars.

Ruth and Sally come out of the police station. Sally is one of the last to be released. She has swapped her ugg boots for a pair of shoes. They're almost directly opposite the ute on the footpath.

**TED**  
voice over)  
What would this mob know about second mortgages ? Or having a table full of hungry kids to feed.

**SALLY**  
It was appalling. Outrageous. I've never been so humiliated in all my life.

**56. INT. SCANLON UTE/RIVER STREET DAY**

Ted is glancing directly at Sally and Ruth through his window.

**TED**  
Half of them don't even live here.

**SALLY**  
This place is the pits.

In the small municipal park round the corner from the police station various protesters have gathered in small groups.

Ben Woods is with one group some of whom are filling in forms for a legal representative.

In the background is a television news crew. The journalist is doing his stand up to camera with the police station and the demonstrators with some banners framed in the background - having missed the real action they're attempting to cover the aftermath.

Martin Howard waits just off camera to do his interview

**TV JOURNALIST**

Bullumbah's tiny police station was packed to overflowing as 27 people were charged with trespass in coup . . .

The journalist dries, checks his prompt sheet.

**TV JOURNALIST**

(change of voice - less urgency to his camera operator)

Second take, George. Use the stock logging shot for the cut away.

(back to urgent)  
 . . . where 27 people were charged with trespass in coup 37 of the Never Ever State Forest. Greens Senator .

He stalls again, checks his notes. Beside him Martin looks amused.

**TV JOURNALIST**

Keep rolling. . .  
 (glances back to camera)  
 Martin Howard said it was urgent that the government review all quotas immediately as many of the remaining

**BEN**

(to small group)

So who had to give an undertaking not to go back into a closed forest ?

**RAINBOW**

Yeah, we all did.

**BEN**

What about the people who were actually arrested on the other side of the fence ?

**CRYSTAL**

Chaos and I were almost back to the camp when this big pig grabbed us.

**BEN**

I missed that. Did anybody else see it ?

**CRYSTAL**

Yeah, I think so.

**BEN**

Because that's private land. I mean they can't bust you for trespass if you were on private land.



**TV JOURNALIST**

(continued)

High Conservation Value forests were now practically logged out in the North East.

**RAINBOW**

Great. but how do we prove it ?

**BEN**

Perhaps Mercedes got some shots, we could ask her.

**CRYSTAL**

You know what cops are like, it's our word against theirs.

Gradually the focus shifts to Ben and his group. Sally and Ruth are walking back to where Ruth parked the car just next to where the group is gathered around Ben.

**SALLY**

I just want to get home, have a shower - and wash all this crap off me. I'm sure they . . . they deliberately left the vents open on the van. It was like being suffocated with dust. We were kept in there so long waiting to be processed people were urinating out under the back door.

**BEN**

Look there's lots of issues here that we can challenge. For a start the EIS is faulty. And so are the signs closing the forest. We've got legal advice that the way they were written is invalid. I think we should adjourn back to base camp and consider our options. . .

**RUTH**

God !

Sally overhears Ben mention "base camp" She is immediately drawn to what Ben is saying.

**SALLY**

(to Ruth)

Hang on a sec. . . I've got a sinking feeling. . .

Sally makes a B-line for Ben just as the group around him starts breaking up.

**SALLY**

(indignant)

This base camp ?

Ben looks at her, never having seen her before. She recoils at his dreadlocks and generally sweaty, dirty clothes.

**BEN**

Yeah ?

**SALLY**

Where is it ?

**BEN**

Off the Gang Gang Road. Lot 13.

**SALLY**

Piss off. Forget it.

**BEN**

(taken aback)

What ?

**SALLY**

I said "forget it". That's my property.

**BEN**

Your property ? It belongs to some bloke overseas.

**SALLY**

My husband, Peter Richardson.

**BEN**

Well congratulations. I'm your tenant.

**RUTH**

(delighted)

Great

**SALLY**

(double takes)

My what ?

This is news to Sally.

**BEN**

I pay the rent I can invite who I like on  
the place.

**SALLY**

Well I haven't seen any rent.

**BEN**

I pay fifty bucks a week for the old  
loggers' cottage up the back.

This is another surprise for Sally .

**BEN**

Well shack, really. I practically rebuilt the  
place.

**SALLY**

Shack ?

**BEN**

You can't see it from your place - it's up  
behind a big stand of tallow.

**SALLY**

(assuming)

Near the camp . . .

**RUTH**

Camp ?

**SALLY**

Our top paddock looks like the back lot  
on Mad Max 14 !

Ben bristles at her attitude.

**BEN**

Hang on a minute. Some of those people  
are putting their LIVES on the line -

**SALLY**

How the hell am I supposed to sell a place that's occupied ! ?

Ruth wishes she would cool it.

**RUTH**

Sally. . .

**BEN**

You bowl in here for 5 minutes and think you know everything. . .

**SALLY**

(cutting in)

It happens to be MY land !

**BEN**

. . . just like all the other absentee landlords

Sally is worked up about the invasion.

Ben is hurting at the failure of the Blockade.

**BEN**

You people come up here, fall in love with some fantasy about retiring to Rainbow country, buy a block of land, realise how bloody hard it is to just manage what exists let alone make any money out of it, give up, go back to the city, forget about the place, weeds run riot, feral animals out of control. . .

Sally feels unjustly accused and looks about to deny it all but Ben is too steamed up to allow an opportunity.

**BEN**

People just want a quick fix. They don't care about the long haul.

**SALLY**

That's why we're here - to sort it out. Your "camp" is making it impossible.

They reach a sort of impasse and there's an awkward pause.

Ruth hangs back, feeling Sally's a bit too hyped up from getting arrested and rather wishing she wouldn't bring them both into it.

Ben spots his lift coming round the corner. The throaty, rainbow coloured kombi van with the ying and yang symbols pulls up nearby.

**BEN**

(smiling)

See you back at "home" then. We can discuss my lease.

Sally doesn't like the way he uses the word "home."

Ben loads himself and his video camera into the kombi and it blows a lot of smoke as it drives off.

Ruth is watching him go with a rather wistful look.

**RUTH**

He's interesting.

**SALLY**

(not impressed)

Get real.

**RUTH**

Oh come on, he's a spunk.

**SALLY**

He smells.

(looking like "yuk")

The hair! The arrogance!

**RUTH**

Well, he's not the only one who's a bit hyper. . .

Ruth gives Sally a "stern" look.

**SALLY**

I don't need to be told what I care about right now. thank you very much: long or short haul.

Sally has turned the kitchen table into an "action stations" desk.

The laptop is set up in front of her between the phone and an open briefcase.

The rest of the table is already littered in dozens of scraps of paper, address book, coffee cups, and overflowing ashtray.

Sally is talking to her solicitor.

**SALLY**

(into phone)

Of course I want to fight it, Harry, I was arrested for trespassing on my own bloody land forcrissake !

Ruth hands her a glass of wine and goes back to attacking the cobwebs clogging up every corner of the kitchen ceiling.

**SALLY**

I mean what are my chances of working in the States if a conviction goes through ?  
... Seriously !

(listens)

I don't care what it costs, I'm not going to wear it for something I didn't do !

(listens)

Well how long will that take ?

(listens)

But I've got to be back in the office by beginning of September. . .

(gives up)

Look, you're my lawyer. Just fix it !

Sally drops the phone and lights another fag. Ruth notices, but this obviously isn't the time to pass comment.

Sally is scrabbling through the sheafs of paper on her desk

**SALLY**

Did you see where I put that plumber's phone number ?

**RUTH**

I think you should also talk to the agent about what exactly has been going on here.

**SALLY**

All I'm trying to do is clean up a mistake  
in my life and get on with it.

Sally feels a surge of injustice welling up from inside. She drops her  
head in her hands, rubbing above her right eyebrow.

**RUTH**

What's the matter ?

And she means "what's really the matter".

**SALLY**

I'm going to get a headache out of this. I  
can feel it coming.

**RUTH**

You've just got to learn to "let go."

Sally thinks about it for a moment.

**RUTH**

(continued)

Now. While you've got the opportunity.  
This break. Take charge of your OWN  
agenda for a change.

**SALLY**

Oh please- spare me the new age  
philosophy. Round here I can get that  
crap from experts.

Ruth looks miffed. And gives up on her.

But Sally doesn't even notice. Having found the number in the Yellow  
Pages she dials a plumber.

**59. EXT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**NIGHT**

The dim kitchen light shines out into the night. Again we become aware of various nocturnal birds and animals scurrying around the house.

**60. INT. SALLY'S KITCHEN**

**NIGHT**

Sally and Ruth are sitting round the kitchen table in the dim light of the single 12 volt bulb. There's a candle as well on the table stuck into a new candle holder - something from a local craft shop.

A big new esky sits in front of the useless fridge and generally the place looks a lot more tidied up.

The walls are brighter for having been scrubbed. The images of the gurus and various Hindu gods are gone.

For some moments Sally just stares into her glass of wine.

There's music on the 12 volt car radio - something from the 30s, romantic and old fashioned.

The radio is crudely wired up to the large telecom batteries.

After some moments. . .

**SALLY**

We've got to hide those batteries somehow. I dunno. A box or something.

Ruth looks over vaguely. She's been caught up in the music and the fire and is hardly registering what Sally has been saying.

**RUTH**

What ?

She notices the batteries as if for the first time.

**RUTH**

Oh yes.

Sally turns back to her laptop.



RUTH

(almost an afterthought)

Can we start having our "good time"  
now ?

61. INT. SALLY'S BEDROOM EARLY MORNING

Again the painful stab of sunlight cuts through the bedroom window and stirs Sally awake - she has finally made one of the rooms habitable, and her own.

Her suitcase is open in one corner. Clothes are folded neatly into it. A couple of expensive suits hang from an improvised rail.

Again a cock can be heard crowing off in the distance somewhere and this time it's mixed with the tinkle of the bell from the Buddhist Monastery at the extreme end of the valley.

62. INT. SALLY'S KITCHEN/LOUNGE EARLY MORNING

We see Ruth stir awake in her sleeping bag on the lounge room floor, close to the long dead fire.

The sound of an approaching vehicle can be heard.

63. INT. SALLY'S BEDROOM EARLY MORNING

Sally sits bolt upright at the sound of the approaching vehicle- and reaches for her Alka Seltzer as if a weird sense of deja vu is taking over.

SALLY

Oh no...

She scrambles out of bed in her expensive tracksuit and looks around for her shoes, she pads out into the hallway..

**64. INT. SALLY'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM EARLY MORNING**

... and spots Ruth's ugg boots as she comes into the kitchen.

But she rejects the ugg boots and opts instead for her own Dunlop Volley sandals instead - left near the fire to dry.

She steps over Ruth's sleeping form en route to the front door.

Ruth pops up in the sleeping bag behind her.

The vehicle can be heard stopping.

Sally opens the door to find Ben coming up the steps from his battered old Holden ute.

**65. EXT. SALLY'S VERANDAH EARLY MORNING**

Sally walks out to meet him, arms folded, defensive.

**SALLY**

(curt)

Yes, what do you want?

**BEN**

(smiling/friendly)

G'day, how's it going?

**SALLY**

Alright.

He hangs out on the verandah, smirking.

Sally is still wary of him and not making any moves towards inviting him in.

**BEN**

(shuffling, looking down at his boots)

Sorry about yesterday.

**SALLY**

Yes. So am I.

**64. INT. SALLY'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM EARLY MORNING**

... and spots Ruth's ugg boots as she comes into the kitchen.

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**BEN**

(shuffling, looking down at his boots)

Sorry about yesterday.

**SALLY**

Yes. So am I.

**BEN**

The deal was I looked after the place - between tenants and sort of . . . kept out of the way up the back. Seemed like a waste to let a shack go vacant. Especially when so many people around have nowhere to live.

If Ben is expecting compassion he's not getting it.

**SALLY**

Well I'm afraid I have to offer the property vacant possession. It's too complicated otherwise. And I only have a limited amount of time.

**BEN**

(shrugs)

Anyway I've got to go to Sydney soon.

Sally isn't sure if that's an offer to vacate.

**SALLY**

Oh good - so . . .

But Ruth appears behind Sally in the doorway, bright eyed and welcoming as usual.

**RUTH**

(pleased to see him)

What's happening in Sydney ?

Sally gives Ruth a look- indicating "butt out."

**BEN**

Oh - just catching up with a few friends.  
There's also an environmental conference. . .

**RUTH**

(cheerfully to Ben)

I'm just putting the kettle on if you want a cup of something ?

Not one to miss an opportunity Ben steps inside past Sally - giving her a sort of "sorry" look and a shrug. Sally is staring daggers at Ruth.

**66. INT. SALLY'S LOUNGE/KITCHEN      EARLY MORNING**

**BEN**

Tea would be good, I'm out of gas and  
was just on my way to town for a refill.

**SALLY**

(almost as if to keep herself  
out of Ben's scruffy way)  
I'll put the kettle on.

**RUTH**

Do you know anything about gas fridges ?

**BEN**

(bending to inspect it)  
Oh yeah, the pilot light on this one is a  
real bastard. I've had to fix it many times.  
Have you got a match ?

Ruth throws him her lighter and he flicks it on at a point underneath at  
the back.

**BEN**

You've just got to hold the starter button  
down a bit longer than most.

He gets it alight and stands up.

**BEN**

That should be cold in about an hour.

Ruth gives Sally a triumphant look, she's on a roll with this guy.

**RUTH**

(hopeful)  
You wouldn't happen to know anything about why the hot water  
system doesn't work ?

**BEN**

Probably sprung a leak in the polypipe.  
That was always a problem with my first  
design. The later version at my place  
works better.

**SALLY**

You put the hot water system in ?

**BEN**

No, I just designed it. Two of your tenants put it in - Carmel and Roger. They moved up here with a new baby. It was pretty cold that winter.

Sally feels that it's pretty cold now.

**BEN**

Who wants to boil a kettle every time you need hot water ?

The kettle whistles, Sally goes to scald the pot.

**67. EXT. SKULL CAMP**

**MORNING**

Rainbow is washing her face in the clear running waters of a small creek near the feral protest camp on Sally's land.

She takes a moment to absorb the beauty of the scene (a few kookaburras laughing in the trees opposite) then she fills a billy with water and drags a plastic bottle of milk out of the creek. It's anchored to the bank by a length of string. This is her "fridge"

As she heads back to her teepee she gathers a few twigs to start a fire.

Trevor The Street Poet is practicing a new song/poem next to it.

A pot of porridge is already boiling on the fire.

Rainbow adds the billy of water for tea.

**TREVOR**

(strumming a guitar and singing- badly)  
How many Bilbys  
Till the species is all gone ?  
How many dead koalas  
To tell you that you're wrong ?  
Come on loggers  
Let's chop another tree. . .  
Let's make a moonscape  
Where there once was Diversity. . .

**SALLY**

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**BEN**

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Let's make a moonscape  
Where there once was Diversity. . .

**DEANNA**

(calling out)

Who are you ?

Sally looks up sharply. Deanna is some distance away - dressed in formal riding gear- jodhpurs, coat, riding helmet, boots. She could almost be heading off to a fox hunt.

**DEANNA**

(louder)

Who are you !?

Deanna is afraid Sally may be a feral broken loose from the camp, she stands her mount defensively on the fence line.

Sally approaches.

**SALLY**

Hullo. . . I'm Sally Morants.

**DEANNA**

Yes. Well this is private land I'm afraid.

**SALLY**

I'm the owner here. . .

Deanna relaxes, realises her mistake.

**DEANNA**

Oh you poor thing.

As Sally approaches Deanna approvingly takes in Sally's Country Road shirt and neat linen trousers.

**DEANNA**

Deanna Forbes.

Deanna leans down to take Sally's hand. They shake across the fence line. Deanna is towering on her large horse.

**DEANNA**

Your neighbour.



**SALLY**

Oh- hullo.

Sally brightens at the prospect of meeting someone fairly human at last.

**DEANNA**

(indicating the camp)

What a trial this must be for you.

**SALLY**

Yes, I believe they're going, though.  
Thank god.

**DEANNA**

Oh good, you've ordered them off.  
Excellent.

**SALLY**

Well (not exactly "ordered")

**DEANNA**

(conspiratorial)

My dear, the things that have gone on on  
this property, I can't begin to tell you . . .

But obviously she'd love to - over several hours.

**SALLY**

Yes, well, we've got it on the market.

**DEANNA**

Angus and I noticed the sign go up. Pity  
you're not hanging on. I'm afraid "normal"  
people are becoming a bit outnumbered  
in this valley.

**SALLY**

Oh ?

**DEANNA**

Such a pity when the shire has so much to offer: the beach, the restaurants, the craftspeople, the relaxed lifestyle, not to mention of course the natural beauty.

**SALLY**

Yes, that's what attracted, ah, my . . . husband.

**DEANNA**

Oh, is he with you? You must both pop over for dinner sometime.

**SALLY**

Ah no, no he's not with me. I've brought a friend.

**DEANNA**

Well, you must come over. How does Saturday sound?

**SALLY**

(bit lost)

Ah well. . .

**DEANNA**

Pencil it in and let me know. Do you ride?

**SALLY**

Horses?

**DEANNA**

Yes.

**SALLY**

I hopped on a camel once at Taronga Park. . . Bit of a city girl I'm afraid.

**DEANNA**

What a pity - still some people find a natural aptitude. How long are you staying?

**SALLY**

We planned on about four weeks.

**DEANNA**

Oh wonderful. Well we'll see a bit of you then. Till Saturday. . .

And satisfied that her place is not being invaded Deanna, digs a spur into her horse and canters off.

Sally follows her exit and continues along the fence line.

Very soon, however, the fence sort of peters out and is replaced by trees with yellow markings.

She has come to the place where her boundary meets the State Forest.

**68. INT. NEIL BROMHEAD'S OFFICE**

**DAY**

Neil holds the door of his office open. Sally has been waiting in the outer foyer area where Neil's secretary, Alice, has her desk. Sally, for the first time, looks really dressed up - wearing her "professional" outfit - a very expensive and beautifully tailored pure wool suit.

Neil is also in a suit. He turns on a charming smile, ushering her in .

**NEIL**

So - everything in order ?

**SALLY**

Not really. The place was a pigstye.

Neil's smile fades, replaced by a frown of concern.

**NEIL**

How about a cappuccino ?

Sally shrugs, non-committal.

**NEIL**

Two thanks Alice.

He closes the door.

There are property maps and promotional posters of pretty ordinary looking brick veneer kit homes adorning his walls.

A silver framed photo of Neil and his wife Mercedes takes pride of place on his desk. Sally vaguely recognises Mercedes from the blockade.

**NEIL**

We get 'em from next door. Figured you might like a real one having come all the way from Paris.

He settles behind his desk. Sally sits opposite, looking impatient, a list of complaints ready.

**NEIL**

So. You've had a good look round the place then ? (smiles)

**SALLY**

Briefly.

**NEIL**

(smiles)

Heard about your expedition up the back paddock.

**SALLY**

(surprised - news travels)

Oh really . . .

**NEIL**

I told your husband he should do something about that fence line.

**SALLY**

That was hardly the problem. . .

**NEIL**

(jumping in)

Did you find the firewood ?

**SALLY**

(annoyed)

You left it outside.

**NEIL**

Yes. ("of course")

**SALLY**

It was wet!

**NEIL**

You don't stack wood inside the house -  
could be whiteants. . .

**SALLY**

(cutting him off)

Mr. Bromhead. I specifically asked you to  
have the place professionally cleaned.

**NEIL**

Well, I did pay Alice a bit of overtime. . .

**SALLY**

(cutting him off)

There was candle wax on the furniture,  
dirty posters all over the place, cobwebs,  
bags of rubbish just stuffed into the spare  
room - which has no wall!

**NEIL**

Well - it was never finished.

Sally baulks.

**NEIL**

Surely you knew that. (beat) When you  
bought it.

**SALLY**

I never came here. Buying it was Peter's  
idea.

**NEIL**

Oh right, well, I can understand your concern.

**SALLY**

Another thing.

**NEIL**

Yes.

**SALLY**

The phone.

**NEIL**

Yes, we kept it on for you. You mentioned you'd have business to catch up on.

**SALLY**

Yes, but it doesn't work.

Neil looks confused.

**NEIL**

But that's not right, surely ?

**SALLY**

Well - it doesn't work all the time.  
Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't.

**NEIL**

(relieved)

Oh yes - it's like that around here. Our exchange you see - still manual.

(chuckles)

We all have THAT problem. They've been promising us a new digital exchange for some time. You know what it's like.

**SALLY**

No, I afraid I don't know what it's like.  
And an intermittent phone line just isn't good enough.

**NEIL**

Well I'm afraid you'll have to take that up  
with the phone company.

Neil is rummaging around the pile of papers on his desk for Sally's file.

**NEIL**

Now, about the auction. . .

**SALLY**

Just before we get onto that.

Neil gives her a "now what ?" look.

**SALLY**

Your last fax clearly indicated that the  
tenants had moved out and the property  
was vacant possession.

**NEIL**

Ah look, Mrs. Richardson,

**SALLY**

Morants. . . The name's Sally Morants.

**NEIL**

Sally may I ?- I couldn't have predicted  
the green brigade would invade the place.

**SALLY**

I'm not talking about the demonstration.  
I'm talking about Ben Woods.

**NEIL**

Now there's a professional agitator !

**SALLY**

He said he'd been paying you rent.

**NEIL**

He said what ?

**SALLY**

There was no indication of any rental income outstanding on your final account.

Neil doesn't miss a beat.

**NEIL**

I gave him notice two months ago. Don't tell me he's still there ?

Alice comes in balancing the cappuccinos somewhat shakily. Grateful for the diversion Neil rips into her.

**NEIL**

Alice, do you know anything about this ?

**ALICE**

What ?

She reacts alarmed, spilling coffee, the cups rattling alarmingly on their saucers. A nervous soul at the best of times, Alice looks really cowed by Neil.

**NEIL**

Ben Woods, the Richardson place. When did that notice to vacate go out ? You know I'm not across the rental book.

Alice places the cups on his desk and looks nervously from Neil to Sally. Fortunately the rattling stops.

**ALICE**

I'll have to check.

**NEIL**

Thank you Alice.

She turns and scurries out.

**NEIL**

(confidentially to Sally)  
She's a bit scatty sometimes.

Neil sips his coffee.



**NEIL**

But she's loyal.

**SALLY**

That's alright because I have the figures here.

(checks her notebook)

He's been paying rent at \$40 a week for 6 months That's just over \$1000 outstanding.

**NEIL**

Ah- but there have been expenses.

**SALLY**

(surprised)

Expenses !

(extremely dubious)

What on ?

Again Neil doesn't miss a beat.

**NEIL**

I'll check the order book. Of course you know your husband authorised us to spend up to \$300 on any item without needing to refer it back to him. That's standard practice.

**SALLY**

Well my husband is not handling the property any more and I'm afraid your standard practice so far is a long way short of satisfactory.

Neil realises he's dealing with a "hostile." He grabs his phone and starts dialling.

**NEIL**

I'll get Ron and Ruby to pay our Mr. Woods a visit. They should have him out of there this afternoon.

**SALLY**

That won't be necessary.

**NEIL**

Sometimes it's just. . . if you don't do  
everything yourself you know. . .

**SALLY**

Really, I don't need the police.  
(then more firmly)  
I don't WANT the police. I've had quite  
enough of the police thank you. Just the  
back rent will be sufficient.

Neil stops dialling. Puts the phone down.

**SALLY**

Less your commission and . . .  
(dubiously)  
The expenses.

**NEIL**

Yes.

Neil nods, writes a note.  
Sally stands up to go.

**SALLY**

Itemised.

**NEIL**

I'm sure Alice will sort it out, give you a call.

**SALLY**

If the phone works.

Neil laughs escorting her to the door, buttoning his coat, the "perfect gentleman."

**NEIL**

Look on the bright side, beef and sugar  
are up at the moment. You and Mr.  
Richardson will be laughing all the way  
to the bank. There's lots of Pitt Street  
farmers flashing big super cheques  
wanting their slice of paradise.

**SALLY**

Paradox.

NEIL

What ?

SALLY

There seems a contradiction somewhere. . .

Neil follows her exit with a puzzled look. Shakes his head and then becomes aware of Alice staring up at him from her desk. He knows he's guilty of dropping her in it over the Ben Woods thing and quickly disappears inside his office avoiding the issue.

**69. INT. BULLUMBARIAN CAFE**

**DAY**

We open close on a copy of the Bullumbah Bugle (founded in 1901). Ruth is sitting with a coffee poring over the ads in the classifieds' page.

The coffee shop is set off the main street with a pleasant view of the river. Apart from the pub it's the main meeting place in town. The cuisine is heavily vegetarian, the coffee a specialty - widely reputed to be the best between Brisbane and Sydney. This tends to attract the "alternative" crowd.

But we also see a table of tellers from the bank - women mostly in the standard uniform. The couple of men tellers wear white shirts and ties. They're laughing, having a good time.

Norman Reynolds and Ray Connor are doing business at another table. Norman has a brochure on Pelton Wheels laid out in front of Ray.

Norman is small and trim looking with a neat moustache. Ray is large framed bloke with one wild eye and a tendency to look right through you - mildly threatening at first but really a gentle character underneath.

Sally comes in with a arm full of groceries - toilet paper prominent at the top.

The conversations are going on simultaneously.

Sally sits next to Ruth, unloading her shopping on the spare seat.

**RUTH**

It's a miracle. Real coffee in a small country town.

**NORMAN**

If you can be reasonably sure that your creek is perennial it will supply continuous current.

**SALLY**  
Yeah, I just tried one at the agent's.

**RUTH**  
How did it go ?

Sally shrugs.

**SALLY**  
He feigned ignorance. Tried to blame his secretary.

**RUTH**  
Oh well - Can we relax now ?

**SALLY**  
(nods)  
I feel like celebrating -  
(looking for a waiter)  
I don't suppose this place  
is licensed ?

**RUTH**  
Here's what you need:

Ruth is reading from the  
Health Notices in the "Bugle".

**RUTH**  
Cranial Rebalancing.

**SALLY**  
Oh give me a break.

**RUTH**  
Seriously - it might help  
with your headaches.

**SALLY**  
The only thing that works  
for me is a glass of dry  
white.

Ray thinks about it. Examining  
the brochure carefully

**NORMAN**  
Day and night

**RAY**  
Well the last four years have  
been the driest anyone around  
here can remember and so far  
the creek has always had at  
least a trickle.

**NORMAN**  
Well, of course you'll need more  
than a trickle and a bit of height  
to pump it through. . . I'd think  
about putting it somewhere  
near the bottom of that little  
waterfall you've got coming off  
the escarpment.

**RAY**  
I'd like to think about it.

**NORMAN**  
Sure. Take the brochure. And  
remember - no more worries  
about rainy days. It would save  
you having to buy those extra  
panels.

Max Wittwer, a tall good looking  
German in his late thirties comes  
in the door with an Agricultural  
Scientist visiting from the local  
university.

They're talking as they head for a  
table.

**AG. SCIENTIST**  
But QX doesn't affect humans.

She's looking around for service.  
None is forthcoming.

**SALLY**

God they're slow.

**RUTH**

Bullum time - Oh, here it is. . . This is a definite:

(reading)

"Cardio Manipulation"  
translated: heart healing. A  
fundamental reevaluation  
of the way one thinks  
about life. Find out how  
you can change the way  
you feel.

**SALLY**

If only it were that easy.

Sally is staring through the glass  
shop front of the Cafe. A group  
hug is forming on the footpath.

Initially three people were joined by a fourth and now different people  
drifting past seem to be joining in. The whole thing is like an evolving  
scrum that seems to be taking over the footpath.

Ruth follows Sally's look.

**RUTH**

Yeah, they do that a lot here. Have you  
noticed ?

Sally turns back to trying to grab the eye of a passing waiter. Somehow  
her eye catches Max's just at that moment.

Their eyes lock, Max smiles back - just something else people tend to  
do around here.

Sally's not used to it and quickly looks away.

**SALLY**

(to Ruth)

Do you want a glass of wine ?

**MAX**

Are you sure about that ?

**AG. SCIENTIST**

Absolutely. Baby oysters - yes.  
We know it's affected whole  
populations of oysters in a lot  
of the Northern Rivers - but  
definitely not people. You can  
eat an oyster contaminated  
with QX and not feel a thing.

**MAX**

So what's causing it ?

**AG SCIENTIST**

(shrugs)

Heavy metals in the pesticides  
on sugar cane. . . ? Or perhaps  
another by-product of acid  
sulphate soils ? No one's quite  
sure.

She grabs Norman Reynolds attention as he comes past her table carrying two mugs of coffee - muggochinos.

**SALLY**

Do you have a chardonnay or something ?

Norman double takes.

**NORMAN**

What ?

(amused at her mistake)

Actually, I don't work here.

(indicates the coffees)

I'm just getting these for our shop next door.

Sally looks embarrassed.

**SALLY**

Oh . . . Sorry.

Ruth laughs with Norman.

**NORMAN**

That's alright. I used to be a waiter.

**RUTH**

You run the Greenhouse Effect ?

**NORMAN**

That's it ! The one stop solar shop.

**SALLY**

Why can't I run my hair dryer on those big batteries that we've got ?

**NORMAN**

Not a good combination, really. 12 volt's mainly for lighting and radios, stuff that's light on amps. . . Why don't you come and have a look in the shop and I'll show you why.

**SALLY**

Yeah we will, thanks

**NORMAN**

(as he goes)

There's a hairdresser in town if you're desperate.

He goes out smiling.

**SALLY**

Get me out of here. . .

Ruth laughs at Sally. She can't put a foot right.

## **70. EXT. BUSTED HEADS**

**EARLY EVENING**

Busted Heads is the local surfing beach situated at the mouth of the Gang Gang River. The name comes from the broken shape of the large rock formation that marks the point where the river meets the sea. From a certain angle it looks like a huge goanna. And in fact was always regarded as such by the Bundjalung tribe.

There still aren't many buildings. A life saving club, a restaurant and a few shops stand on a kind of isthmus or narrow neck of land with a quiet wide river on one side and a big pounding surf beach on the other.

Sally pulls into the car park behind the beach just on sunset.

In the space next to them two surfers, Mark Mansfield and Dimity Bates are putting their boards up on the racks of large wheel base Toyota Landcruiser.

Mark is in his late 30s. Dimity very much younger. He has a persistent, hacking cough. They're both shivering slightly in their wetsuits.

It makes Sally feel cold just looking at them. She winds her window up. The sound of the cough diminishes. Dimity is patting him on the back - it's quite a fit.

**SALLY**  
(taking in the view)  
This is more like it.

As they walk from the car to the restaurant a brilliant sunset is already lighting up the western sky behind them.

Above the ancient rock of Busted Heads looms down over the carpark and an adjacent restaurant:

"Rusty's Seafood Experience"

A neon sign flicks into life lighting up the outline of a pelican in the Restaurant's logo.

**71. INT/EXT. RUSTY'S SEAFOOD EXPERIENCE      SUNSET**

Sally and Ruth come out to a table overlooking the beach on Rusty's wide back verandah.

It's a lovely setting for a meal with the whole sweep of 7 mile beach laid out in front of you: from the wide river mouth of the Gang Gang in the south to the 19th Century lighthouse on the prominent headland to the north.

A bucket of champagne arrives with two dozen local oysters.

As the waiter opens the champagne Sally and Ruth take in the magnificent view.

Somewhere off a small group can be heard chanting a mantra. They mostly wear white flowing cotton clothes and have gathered on the beach to watch the sunset.

The waiter fills both glasses and puts the bottle back in its ice bucket.

**SALLY**  
(to the waiter)

Thanks

He goes.

Sally holds up her glass

Ruth clinks it.



'Our arrival!'

RUTH

'Our Survival!'

SALLY

Somehow the notion of having survived spins Sally into another stab of memory.

72. INT. NICOLE & GERARD'S APARTMENT (PARIS) NIGHT

*Nicole and Sally clink glasses, smiling. She is about Sally's age. A small, petite woman with short dark hair and about 6 months pregnant.*

*They're at a dinner party. Half a dozen people sit around a large table. The hubbub of conversation seems muted though, as if heard through ear plugs.*

*Peter, Sally's husband is sitting next to her. Their clink of glasses is more formal, almost off hand. The body language tells us that they have nothing much to say to each other.*

*Opposite Sally is Gerard, Nicole's husband. Sally smiles warmly at him as they clink glasses.*

*Peter notices the warmth and looks away. Sally catches his reaction and now feels embarrassed by it.*

SALLY

*(proposing the toast)*

*Au l'enfant de Gerard et Nicole.*

*(To Gerard and Nicole's baby)*

**73. INT. RUSTY'S SEAFOOD EXPERIENCE**

**EVENING**

We come back on Sally as she sips her champagne. A troubled look, a certain absence.

She is unaware of the wonderful sunset occurring in the vast panorama of sky visible from Rusty's verandah.

Ruth has been talking.

**RUTH**

... don't you think ?

**SALLY**

(back in the present)

What ?

**RUTH**

I said it's hard to imagine a more beautiful spot in the world.

**SALLY**

Compared to what ?

**RUTH**

Compared to anywhere.

Sally takes in the landscape.

**SALLY**

Oh - yes. . . it's very pretty.

But Sally's response is too casual for Ruth.

**RUTH**

Doesn't it inspire you though - to get healthy ? To live for this. . .

**SALLY**

I'll pass on the Cranial Rebalancing.

**RUTH**

Oh come on- you said you'd try it with me.

**SALLY**

I'll think about it.

**RUTH**

No ! That's the whole point. That's why  
you need rebalancing.

Sally laughs, shaking her head.

**74. INT. SALLY'S HOUSE**

**NIGHT**

Sally and Ruth "barge open" the front door. They're in a happy mood.  
An nice meal,  
Two bottles of champagne.

Sally puts a match to the kindling in the fireplace and flops into one of  
the old lounge chairs.

Ruth sits at the table rubbing her forehead with the tips of her fingers.

**SALLY**

You know, I think I'm finally beginning  
to wind down.

**RUTH**

(off hand)

Mmm.

Sally notices Ruth with her head in her hands.

**SALLY**

Are you OK ?

**RUTH**

Two bottles is too much.

**75. INT. SALLY'S BEDROOM**

**NIGHT**

The room is lit by a full moon beaming through the curtains.

Sally wakes to hear the sound of Ruth being violently ill out in the bathroom.

She jumps out of bed.

**76. EXT. SALLY'S LOUNGE/KITCHEN**

**NIGHT**

Ruth is sitting on the side of the bath leaning over a bucket clasped to her chest. Sally feels her forehead - it's hot.

**SALLY**

How long's this been happening ?

**RUTH**

(groaning)

I feel like shit . .

**SALLY**

Why didn't you wake me ?

Ruth dry wretches so strenuously it triggers kind of hyperventilation.

**77. INT. SALLY'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM**

**NIGHT**

Sally is on the phone but nothing is happening. There's no dial tone - nothing.

She throws it down.

**SALLY**

Damn !

She grabs the car keys and gets a shoulder under Ruth.

**SALLY**

Come on let's go. There must be a hospital. . .

She helps her walk to the car. Ruth is gasping.

**78. INT. SALLY'S CAR**

**NIGHT**

The Gang Gang road is bad enough in daylight at night it's positively death defying.

Sally is concentrating hard on the narrow bridges and hairpin bends.

Beside her on the front seat Ruth asthma attack persists. Every breath for her now is a struggle.

The concern on Sally's face is framed by the windscreen.

The gasping deepens and reverberates.

**79. INT. PARIS APARTMENT**

**NIGHT**

*We are inside a dark room.*

*Again the images are menacing and distorted. Almost subliminal.*

*The door opens and a flash of light stabs across the floor.*

*We hear Sally's voice but can't see her. It's too dark. The images too distorted.*

**SALLY**

*(voice over)*

*What's going on ?*

**PETER**

*(voice over)*

*I just want to talk. . .*

**SALLY**

*There's nothing to talk about Peter.*

*The light from the door crosses Sally's face. There's a look of consternation.*

She helps her walk to the car. Ruth is gasping.

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*We hear Sally's voice but can't see her. It's too dark. The images too distorted.*

**SALLY**

*(voice over)*

*What's going on ?*

**PETER**

*(voice over)*

*I just want to talk. . .*

**SALLY**

*There's nothing to talk about Peter.*

*The light from the door crosses Sally's face. There's a look of consternation.*

Sally is hurrying up the steps.

The dog, a blue heeler, is barking at her viciously. Fortunately, he's chained to a pole under the house.

Phil opens the door before she has a chance to knock.

Sally is a bit surprised but mostly relieved to find someone awake.

However Phil's look is anything but friendly. In fact it's mildly hostile.

**PHIL**

Yes ?

**SALLY**

Hullo - Sorry to trouble you. Could you tell me where the nearest doctor is ?

The dog barks loudly.

It's almost impossible for Sally to be heard above the din.

**PHIL**

We don't know any doctors.

Sally baulks at this but ploughs on.

**SALLY**

Perhaps I could use your phone ? Ours seems to be out of order.

**PHIL**

You don't need doctors.

**SALLY**

(impatient/anxious glance back to the car)  
My friend is very sick. . .

Jacqui, Phil's wife, appears behind him in a dressing gown.

**JACQUI**

(off)

Phil ?

**PHIL**

I'm handling it.

**JACQUI**

Who is it ?

**PHIL**

Just go back to bed.

Sally's hackles rise.

**SALLY**

(spelling it out)

DO YOU HAVE a phone ?

Phil snaps his attention back to Sally, mildly startled by her sharp tone.

**SALLY**

We need a bloody doctor ! - Urgently !

Jacqui comes forward.

**JACQUI**

There's a hospital near the butter factory.  
Turn left at the roundabout.

**SALLY**

(firmly/satisfied)

Thank you.

And she hurries down the steps.

**JACQUI**

(after her)

I'll ring them and tell them you're on your way.

Phil gives his wife a withering look.



**83. EXT. BULLUMBAH HOSPITAL**

**NIGHT**

Sally's Commodore speeds up to the casualty entrance of Bullumbah's tiny hospital and slides to a halt on the gravel.

There's only one rather dim red light at the end of a rampway which Sally runs up and starts banging on the glass door.

Then she spots the buzzer and pushes it, craning her face to the glass wondering if anybody is awake inside.

To her a relief a nurse appears, walking quickly.

**84. INT. BULLUMBAH HOSPITAL**

**NIGHT**

A few minutes later Ruth is on a stretcher in a small cubicle. An oxygen mask has been placed over her so the breathing though still laboured is less frenetic.

The nurse is taking Ruth's temperature, blood pressure, and pulse.

**FIRST NURSE**

Does she have any allergies ?

**SALLY**

I don't know

**FIRST NURSE**

Was it something she ate ?

**SALLY**

I don't know.

**FIRST NURSE**

Has this happened before ?

**SALLY**

(becoming desperate)

I don't know !

(calmer)

Not to my knowledge. . .

A second nurse appears.

**SECOND NURSE**

The doctor's on his way. . .

**FIRST NURSE**

Adrenalin OK ?

**SECOND NURSE**

Yeah, he says that's fine.

**FIRST NURSE**

We'll just give her a shot to ease the breathing.

Sally nods, she looks and feels exhausted.

**SECOND NURSE**

There's a machine down the corridor if  
you'd like a hot drink.

Sally watches as they give Ruth a needle.

A moment later Sally walks, almost in a trance, straight past the automatic coffee machine out into the corridor and back towards the casualty entrance.

**85. EXT. BULLUMBAH HOSPITAL**

**DAWN**

Sally comes out of the hospital and walks on past the car to the edge of the gravel carpark which overlooks the town. Here she stops and her shoulders drop.

As light floods the eastern sky birds start calling out in the trees all around her. She becomes aware of the flowering trees of the town as if for the first time.

She's relieved that the emergency is over.

She feels the rising sun warm her face.

**END OF EPISODE ONE**