



LIARS,

GUNS

&

MONEY

Concept Outline & Treatment

Writers:

Paul Davies & John Hughes

© May, 1996

EARLYWORKS Pty. Ltd. [ACN 064 975 355]
27 Ethel Street, Brunswick East, Australia 3057
phone / fax 613 93801001. e-mail jbeworks@mail.peg.apc.org.au

e a r l y w o r k s

SYNOPSIS: LIARS GUNS & MONEY

THE HEAT Episode 513 - "Liars, Guns & Money":

When Francis Newcombe is found dead it looks like suicide, but SNR, CONST. NICK SITARENOS suspects murder. The INSPECTOR, BERNIE CHAPMAN, seems to agree at first, but inexplicably changes his mind. Conflict within the squad reveals underlying beliefs and alliances which splits the team into irreconcilable factions.

Newcombe has left behind a trail of financial chaos. The merchant bank he ran is revealed to have been fraudulent from the beginning. The Newcombe-Hanley bank has its origins in the murky underworld of Kings Cross during its R & R heyday of the late sixties. On Newcombe's death, Martin Hanley, his partner in the bank, has disappeared.

The team soon learn that there are far too many people with strong motives for wanting to see Newcombe dead. These include professionals and small business people who have lost their life savings in his bank along with the trail of crims, small and large, who for years have been the bank's clientele. As episode 513, 'Liars Guns and Money' progresses it becomes clear that the list of suspects surely must include key players in Australia's military/intelligence community and those of it's Allies.

Our police team find themselves lifting the lid on a world of money laundering, drug running, arms dealing, outright fraud and the destabilisation of governments around the world. It begins to feel like something way too hot for THE HEAT.

THE PRODUCTION COMPANY

THE HEAT is a low budget, commercial television police series with a long and honourable history, but its future is both threatened and enhanced by the new social agendas of early '70s radicalism. ALICE joins the team with a progressive agenda. As a result THE HEAT is moving into exciting new territory but pressure from the top - the Production Company Board and the broadcasters - threaten the program's very existence and with it the livelihood of the creative team.

ALICE forms an alliance with the new bright boy at Board level (Adam Valenca) in the hope that he will help see them through the crisis produced by their ground breaking episode 513, but betrayal and secret agendas go deeper than anyone suspected. In these final weeks of THE HEAT, the (Vietnam) war comes home in a searing climax where our characters find their lives and their stories combusting in critical mass. Fiction collides with reality. Alice's moment of truth catapults her into 'another world' driven by a surreal encounter with the simulacrum of the closing moments of the cold war.

LIARS, GUNS & MONEY

Introduction

When Peter Smith and Alan Bleasdale made *No Surrender* in 1985, their allegorical tale of Irish politics and Thatcher's Britain transposed to night club interiors a comic nightmare not unlike that Lindsay Anderson had proposed three years before in *Britannia Hospital*. Lindsay Anderson set his story in the future, while *LIARS, GUNS & MONEY* is set in the past, and instead of the hospital or the night club we have the box, and the television studio as the hermetic world through which an account of the political and social history of a moment in Australia's recent past might be examined.

In so far as the hospital and the nightclub respectively stand as metaphors for a society in the various crisis of mid 1980s entrepreneurial authoritarianism, the television studio can be seen as a kind of simulacrum factory - a location for the manufacture of (hyper)reality, its narratives as overheating ideology machines with their myths and counter-myths the sustaining self deceptions of a generation.

As we gaze in astonishment from the second half of the 1990s at images and stories from the decade beginning in the mid 1960s, we are looking back at a decade of social and cultural change probably unequalled since the early years of this century. In a sense this film explores how these kinds of challenges and changes are mediated and represented within popular culture.

The television artefacts of thirty years ago fascinate a generation of the present. On the surface this fascination is articulated as 'cult'. The sub-cultural fanzine consciousness gathers around itself certain artefacts of the past under the rubric of 'nostalgia'. But they are much more than this. Or rather, once the algorithm 'nostalgia = history - politics' is applied critically to these artefacts; they emerge crystallised as allegory.

It is this allegorical dimension that constitutes the fulcrum of the aesthetic structure of *LIARS, GUNS & MONEY*. Balanced across this centre; is on the one hand the 'soapie', and on the other a kind of surreal, hyper-realism. At the centre point, what first appears as nostalgic parody - black and white, two dimensional, crude, funny - becomes legible during the course of the film as rather more archaic and intense. It is contrasted against the tragic naivety and irrecoverable idealism of the politics of everyday life in the decade (1965-75), and with the real history of localised corruption and conspiracy, international power plays and political betrayal that accompanied it (the hyper-real).

The years 1965 and 1975 - with 1968 another kind of fulcrum point after which 'nothing has been the same' - stand as relatively unexamined turning points in the emergence of our present. Many of today's dominant ideological mythemes have their origins as critique in the 1960s. Think of 'gay liberation', 'women's lib', women in the work force, 'the right to choose', or of Vatican 11. Of the 'counter-culture', indeed, of the re-emergence of Australian cultural nationalism staged in the streets as the performance of anti-imperialism, in the parliament as 'buy back the farm' and on television as the celebration of the Victorian Police Force !

The 1960's 'cop shows' anywhere in the world generate models of masculinity, of crime, of death, of politics and of justice which are deeply revealing of both the political culture, and of the cultural politics, of their period. In our sub story there is an obvious reference to the Melbourne television series 'Homicide', a project rightly celebrated for its extraordinary success in generating an audience for Australian television drama in a context of British and US programming hegemony of the early 1960s.

The period of its production (1964 - 1974), roughly-coincided with the years of Australia's Vietnam, and with a period of social upheaval and change throughout the world. *LIARS, GUNS & MONEY* will draw on aspects of the social drama of *Homicide's* latter period, setting it in the context of Australia's late 1960's and early 1970s in a form which

is informed by, but does not simply parody, programs like the Crawford's television production.

No Surrender and *Britannia Hospital* are reference points here for other reasons as well as for their rhetorical, or dramatic strategies. Both films work with that uneasy edginess between black comedy and horror. And with that other edginess, between political satire and prophecy. There is a kind of uncanny recognition of real events embedded in their narratives, which, delivered as straight drama become powerfully ironic and disturbing, thought provoking and worrisome. This is the territory the film will occupy.

Other reference points for the project might include elements of the 'screw-ball' tradition of Mel Brooks and the 'B Grade' aesthetic of Frank Capra.

The film will be low budget, comic, sophisticated and critical. It could be described as 'Cop Shop' meets *Tout Va Bien*. Or 'Homicide' meets 'The Box' perhaps. The 'soapie' is already self parody but when its conventions and aesthetic are put into play against the other genres here an eerie and exciting estrangement will emerge; a kind of uncanny revisiting of the familiarity of 'popular culture'.

It could be made from beginning to end almost entirely within the walls of the South Australian Film Corporation. Other studio complexes around the country would be equally suitable. Our idea is to push the creative possibilities and logistical advantages of a studio shoot to their limit.

Another key element in the projects creative concept is the strategic deployment of collaborative, workshop practices in extended pre-production. The efficiency and coherence of our shoot will be enhanced immeasurably by a longer than usual 'rehearsal' period involving key members of a creative team.

This core group would ideally include, along with the writer Paul Davies and the director John Hughes, the cinematographer Dion Beebe, the designer Sarah Stollman, the composer Paul Grabowsky,

actors, Paul Davies, Margaret Cameron, Peter Cummins, John Flaus, Angie Milliken and Nicos Lathouris; these and others with whom the writer and the director have worked on previous films.

The contribution of composer Paul Grabowsky will be invaluable. (Paul Grabowsky was involved with the music score for Davies' *Exits*.) The project will be an opportunity for Paul to work with a variety of 'found musics' from the period in which the film is set (mid 1970s) in a context of generic shifts and tearing. We envisage a score deploying the musical conventions of the crime show and 'the soapie' against the musical canon of the 1970s, with the kind of sophistication and wit with which Grabowsky's Australian Art Orchestra has treated classical European orchestral music in 'Ringing the Bell Backwards' (Origin recordings 1994).

The key collaborator here is Paul Davies. He and the director have worked together on a number of previous projects. Paul was co-writer on *All That Is Solid*, on *Traps*, and on *One Way Street*. Paul was writer and director, with Pat Laughren, of the low budget feature *Exits*. He was a staff writer with Crawfords and worked on *Homicide* and other series television drama in the early 1970s.

He was a formative member of Theatre Works in Melbourne, and its artistic director during Theatre Works' most successful period, with its string of highly regarded environmental comedies; 'Storming Mont Albert by Tram', 'Breaking Up in Balwyn' as so on, which were written by Paul. Currently, he is senior writer on a new series in development for ABC television and an ongoing television writer with Channel Nine.

LIARS, GUNS & MONEY

STORY AND STRUCTURE

The events of the film occur inside three separate realities:

1) The First Story (ground floor): The world of THE HEAT.

A black and white universe in which the central characters are three men in brown suits with pork pie hats who ask a lot of questions and do a lot of hanging around desks and filing cabinets, occasionally taking sandshoes, or the impression of a car tyre, down to forensic - before heading out for the ritual car chase at the end. Here a new character has been introduced to the familiar all-male pattern. The new recruit, a woman, has been added to the team through the efforts of the Script Editor ALICE.

The program is shot mainly inside a couple of sets in a small television studio. A two dimensional world with two dimensional characters. Cheap, plot driven television drama of two decades ago. Performances carry certain vestiges of the stage, in dialogue there is a degree of celebration of an Australian idiom.

Truth and Justice are always triumphant in THE HEAT. Nothing is easy but no crime is ever left unsolved. Until now.

2) The Second Story (first floor) The world of The Production Company.

A dynamic and intense dream factory of writers, actors, producers, directors, technical crew, designers, typists, hairdressers, cleaners, carpenters, drivers and a handful of "stars". The world they inhabit is characterised by the conventions of the soap opera. The production design is colourful, stark and simple, the lighting bright and flat. Relationships between the characters are fraught with tension and shifting alliances. The workplace is a hotbed of stress driven intrigue.

Performances are characterised by a sense of despair in the characters varying self knowledge of themselves locked into a kind of costume drama soapie set in the mid seventies.

3) The Third Story (The second floor): The Board Room

The board room is where The Production Company encounters the demands of the broadcasters. This is where the big decisions are made and where the professional futures of the creative team, in both their second floor and ground floor personae, are decided - for reasons that may have little to do with the actual quality of their work, or everything to do with it.

In terms of its visual style, this 'story' has more of a surreal edge. Here a more intensive realism performs a higher level of production value. Performances are utterly naturalistic, relationships more 'believable', emotional entanglements more complex and dense. A more cinematic, less 'televisual' production design, camera movement and lighting distinguish this world from the others it regulates and creates.

THE GROUND FLOOR CHARACTERS "THE HEAT":

INSPECTOR BERNIE CHAPMAN: 50 something. The father figure. The supervisor. The counsellor, kind but firm. Doesn't actually do very much. Deals with the virtual third floor, the never seen hierarchy above him.

SERGEANT TOM MACKENZIE: 40 something. The hard cop. The muscle. Direct. Ruthless. Driven by internal psychological crisis. Perhaps a kind of underlying psychopathic tendency is kept under control- just. Sharp, clever, but not insightful. It might be imagined he has had an alcoholic father who beat and deserted his mother.

SENIOR CONSTABLE NICK SITARENOS: 40 something. Greek boy doing good. The brainy one. Understands financial complexities. Background in fraud squad (accountancy at TAFE). Father perhaps a lecturer in Classics at University.

CONSTABLE BETTY ANDREWS: 30 single mum. Betty has joined the force after her kids got to school. Skilled in clinical psychology in criminology. She is still doing the course part time. She has deep concerns about the sergeant. Episode 513 is the one where she joins the squad as a result of Alice's advocacy within The Production Company.

(These four characters have another persona in their role as actors on the first floor)

FIRST FLOOR CHARACTERS:

THE SCRIPT EDITOR: ALICE CAROL, 28. She is motivated by a political commitment to popular culture and making television relevant and responsible. An idealist obviously. She is in transition from a promising relationship with Nick (the actor playing the snr. Const.) to an romantic entanglement with a young company lawyer who has recently been appointed to the Production Company Board.

THE WRITER: GEORGE HARPO, 46. A writer of pulp crime fiction who made the transition to television 11 years ago when "THE HEAT" started. He has been starting to feel somewhat jaded by the whole experience and has been wondering whether he's 'losing it'. However he has been recently enlivened by Alice's enthusiasm and with her encouragement has written what he considers to be his masterpiece episode No 513 "Liars, Guns & Money".

THE PRODUCER/DIRECTOR: DAVID TAYLOR, 38. As a 'cultural nationalist' David has a passionate commitment to the show. He is extremely proud of "THE HEAT" and how he's helped make it the great success it has become. He brought Alice into the team but is torn between taking up her challenging ideas and maintaining what he perceives to be the audience's expectations of the show.

THE PROPS MASTER: JACK FLOWERS, 50+ Jack has been with The Company for as long as anybody can remember. He knows the back stories of everybody yet maintains a distance. His concerns are more abstract and ethereal. He is a poet and publishes slim volumes of verse. For him the props store is a treasury of sacred objects.

THE PRODUCTION DESIGNER: MAGGIE COHEN, 40 ish. She has been the costume designer but found herself suddenly promoted when the previous Art Director resigned. She is annoyed by the increased workload and very stressed. Maggie feels her real talents are being overlooked. She has a tendency to anticipate disaster ahead.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: ADAM VALENCA, 35 ish. A lawyer, an ambitious high flier, newly appointed to the board of the Production Company because of his alleged access to new streams of off shore financing. Deceptively modest and "progressive", culturally literate. Has a big picture about where the company is going.

TREATMENT

note: The film is shot almost entirely in a studio location. The sets are constructed in such a way that it is possible to have a perspective from the ground floor through to the offices above, and vice-versa. A central device in this design is a spiral staircase that links the three floors (and beyond). Another 'mediation' between the floors is the television monitor. For example, in the Boardroom a television monitor provides a 'line-out' from the studio floor and also provides access to broadcast television; the news services from the outside world.

To the accompaniment of The Cream's *Political Man*, the film opens in low contrast monochrome blue with a man stashing a briefcase full of money (US dollars, Swiss Francs, Thai Baht). The last thing he throws in the case is an 8mm machine pistol.

Cut to series of close ups showing a blue Mercedes leaving the city along a major highway. With the car's three pointed star occupying the foreground we see an Australian bush landscape gliding by. We are close on the wheels of the car as it ~~and~~ crunches across gravel and turns into a secluded picnic ground.

A wide shot establishes the Mercedes alone in the picnic spot. No people can be seen. Suddenly the tranquillity is punctured as a single shot rings out, followed by the endless blaring of the car's horn.

Cut to the opening title sequence for "THE HEAT". Generic cop show theme music accompanies the introduction of the homicide squad team consisting of Inspector Bernie Chapman, Sergeant Tom McKenzie, Senior Constable Nick Sitarenos and introducing Constable Betty Higgins. A series of images under this sequence alerts the audience to the presence of this new, female member of the team. We see their hierarchical relationship established and a hint of the relationships between the detectives, apparent in their various ways of welcoming her.

The title sequence ends with the episode title : "Liars, Guns & Money", "Written by George Harpo"

Early the next day our squad arrives at the picnic ground which has already been secured with blue and white check tape by the local police. Our team is briefed by the local Sergeant who tells them the occupant of the car has blown his head off with a single shot. There is a degree of patronising sympathy for Betty encountering such a gory case on her first day.

From a quick registration check it would appear the body is probably that of business tycoon Francis Xaviour Newcombe. There is not much in the car to go on. All that remains is a small leather bound address book that NICK finds in the glove compartment. BETTY is sent off to interview the jogger with the dog who found the body.

Cut to interior police office. Here we learn something of the public background of Mr. Frank Newcombe. The main question for the squad is whether this is in fact a murder or a suicide? Everything points to suicide being the most probable explanation. The inspector thinks they should hold off any decisions on that one until the forensic report comes in. But from what NICK is learning about Newcombe's background he continues to remain suspicious. To start with, nobody can find Newcombe's business partner Martin Hanley. Another troubling development - Inspector Bernie has it on good authority that the Fraud Squad are lobbying the commissioner to take over control of the case since in their view it clearly isn't a homicide.

Through a series of interrogations in the interview room with various clients and officers of the bank - conducted principally by TOM with NICK quietly taking notes in the background- we learn that the Newcombe/Hanley merchant bank has left a trail of debt and disaster in it's wake.

TOM and NICK are seeing out their last guest - a doctor who has lost his entire life savings with the bank. They promise to keep him informed.

Meanwhile BETTY puts down the phone and tells NICK that no one seems to be on duty at the bank's headquarters. BERNIE sticks his head round the door and says what he doesn't understand is why the

fraud squad didn't seal the office yesterday. He orders his team down there immediately.

Half an hour later the squad arrive at the banks' headquarters and start to break in. We are watching the door being pounded on from inside a completely trashed bank office. Suddenly as the wall falls towards us there's a blackout, the set is lit with house lights and the scene coloured. We see "Betty", "Nick", and "Tom" looking very annoyed in the ruins of a television set. DAVID, the director, calls "CUT" and rips into the set builders who are standing holding the remains of a broken off flat.

There's a heated argument as to who to blame. The actors playing Tom, Nick and Betty claim that the door was locked. The set builders claim the script said it had to be locked; that's why they're breaking in. DAVID declares that there is "a communication problem on this show".

He slams the script of "Liars, Guns & Money" into the debris of the set; it becomes just another prop in the pile of paper of the trashed bank office.

Title Sequence 2:

Pastel coloured animated head credits inter-cut with the introduction of key players in the Production Company. The first credit is the writer GEORGE HARPO. We see his name in close up on the discarded script on the floor of THE HEAT's set morphing into the Writer's Credit. Other credits are embedded in similarly appropriate props. For example the director's name is discovered being written on a clapper board, the "stars" names go up on a production schedule, the Props Master is seen selecting a lock from his shelf of objects.

We see a hint of relationships between all these people and their various roles in the making of THE HEAT. ADAM is addressing the Board from the head of the table explaining a cash flow scenario and last but not least we get the credit for ALICE CAROL the script editor

who is seen picking up the director's script from the rubbish of the ruined set.

Cut to the director's partitioned cubicle on the first floor of the Production Company building. DAVID sits quietly at his desk as if stunned, holding a memo. ALICE turns up with his script. She tells him the repair of the set will take another 15 minutes and is asking him if they should break for lunch now?

There is detailed discussion about the implications of the rescheduling. It could mean either losing an exterior location or compounding two scenes into one somewhere else. She inquires about the memo DAVID flaps absent mindedly as they speak. DAVID warns her it's strictly confidential but confides that the Network have suddenly cancelled the next eight scripts !

This is a real crisis because a new script will have to be written almost overnight to keep the production machine moving. ALICE is aghast. As far as she's aware the Network have never even bothered reading the scripts before. It's always been a rubber stamping process. What the hell is going on !? DAVID is as mystified as ALICE. They begin their speculations. Maybe the network don't like the new female character; Alice's first real innovation as script editor. ALICE protests, she lobbied endlessly to get Betty in there.

Back down on the set PHIL the Carpenter is removing a lock from the damaged door. "FLOWERS" the Props Master is holding a new lock thoughtfully in his hands. He tells PHIL if you're got a shoulder to the door job you always need a K49 lock with the slip trigger. FLOWERS quietly rebukes PHIL for not checking with him first. Shifting gears slightly FLOWERS goes on to elaborate expertly on the history and the significance of "The Lock" and it's "Key" as a structure of narrative.

Back at the Inspector's office BETTY and NICK report that nothing has been revealed from their trip to the bank's head offices other than that everything that might have been of value has been taken or destroyed. There is discussion about the significance of the Fraud

Squad's failure in not sealing the place immediately the suicide was discovered. Is it a typical 'stuff up' or are there wheels within wheels in play here?

But NICK does have something; the tape from an answering machine from which he hopes to find some new leads as to who cared most about contacting the bank in its final moments. BETTY contributes her observation that business cards from the Dallas Diner, down in Kings Cross, were flooding the second drawer of the reception desk.

There is some discussion about the origins of the Dallas Diner as a location for American GI's on R and R. That could mean anything, suggests the INSPECTOR, maybe the receptionist had a thing for smart uniforms? Typical male response says BETTY. BERNIE says "And get that tape down to the techo, we want a good copy back here right away".

Cut to the Dallas Diner where BETTY is working under cover as a waitress. looking uncomfortable (about the role and its dialogue) in her bar maid's costume. She is listening to the GI's at the bar. They are discussing property values at a place called Brunswick Heads somewhere up the coast. They quote an adviser called Bart who has told them they could make a killing up there. We see BETTY register this information with interest.

Meanwhile, at a table in semi-darkness at the back of the Diner BART HAUS is engaged in a heated meeting. Beside him on a chair is the briefcase from Scene 1. He is talking to MARTIN HANLEY who is agitated and looking around nervously. BART is trying to reassure HANLEY. Unfortunately BETTY is not able to get a good look at HANLEY

Back in the office the INSPECTOR, TOM and NICK are looking at slides of the bank's personnel that they have finally got from the files of the Commonwealth Corporate Watch task force, the feds, who have been watching this gang for some time. Up on the screen we see the same Martin Hanley, partner in the bank and missing since Newcombe's death.

Nick contributes some background on the Diner, and its principal, the shadowy Bart Haus, an American entrepreneur. with a background in the CIA and military intelligence. A briefing takes place. As we learn more we worry about Betty. Tom remembers that a female journalist covering corruption in the Cross was last seen alive there two years ago. Bert Haus is apparently a very dangerous man and anything could happen. "You better get down there" says the INSPECTOR. TOM nods. "And see what the boffins can give us on their financial transactions Nick."

In GEORGE's cubicle ALICE has just broken the news about the cancelled scripts. Head in hands GEORGE gives us his 'back story'. Keeping this company afloat with his blood, sweat and tears for eighteen years and those bastards can't recognise a decent script if they fell over it. ALICE wonders if they've gone too far with the new episodes. She could gently draw attention to some 'minor' credibility problems in recent work - such as the scene of Betty at the Diner for example. George responds that the audience "has to realise that this is true. that there is such a place!"

ALICE comforts GEORGE. She too is concerned with the program's 'authenticity' - this is part of her reform agenda and she is very supportive of George's intentions. They sit close, confiding, searching together for a solution to their crisis. "BETTY" arrives in the scene, dressed in her Diner costume. She is shocked to see GEORGE and ALICE close like this, and they equally, are embarrassed by her unannounced arrival. ALICE and BETTY share a strained moment. GEORGE greets "BETTY" warmly. "BETTY", however, turns and leaves.

She walks past the props store room where FLOWERS is contemplating the 8mm pistol (from Scene 1).

In the props room FLOWERS is telling PHIL about the pistol. He begins with a short speech about the technical excellence of the object, but soon moves on to discourse on the object as an emblem of the 'repressed' of the cold war. Behind him we see the briefcase from

Scene 1 and a huge photographic reproduction leaning against a wall, giving his speech a kind of 'virtual' location. (These backgrounds change throughout the film whenever we return to this location)

ALICE visits ADAM in Board room. He is perched on the edge of the table dictating a letter to a SECRETARY. We note a side board in the board room which features a large television monitor on which we can see the studio 'at rest' two stories below. ALICE and ADAM have had very little to do with one another before, he is new on the Board. She has sought an 'informal' meeting with him to see how he feels about the new direction the show has been taking. ADAM is completely supportive of the new moves. He says that's why he agreed to help the company out because he could "see the future". ADAM shares his vision for the company with ALICE. She is mystified and entranced. It is disclosed that he is recently divorced and available.

NICK is with the BOFFIN who is loading up a huge mainframe computer with a reel of 2" tape. There is a lot of business with 'high tech' facilities of the early 1970s. This is police work on the cutting edge of technology, circa 1974. But the BOFFIN has reached a dead end. There are patterns of transactions involving hot spots around the world. The key offices seem to have corresponded with the geography of the drug cartels: Chiang Mai, Marseilles, Hong Kong, Bolivia, Sydney. But the final purpose of these round robin exchanges is difficult to establish. It is definitely money laundering, and it is definitely fraud, but it feels like there's more.

NICK retires with a pile of print outs, an atlas and a bulky electric calculator, mumbling, "The Money Trail".

In a lane way beside the Dallas Diner, TOM is having an altercation with a BOUNCER. TOM flashes his badge and pushes past the bouncer. Once inside he pretends to arrest BETTY, dragging her across the dance floor, much to the amusement of the Diner's clientele. Many of the customers in the Diner don't move, as they are really store dummies dressed in costumes. Martin Hanley is no longer around. The manager, BART HAUS, makes a phone call.

In the office BETTY is tending her wounds and TOM is apologising for "being a bit rough maybe". NICK arrives holding his computer cards and announces that he thinks he's on to something. He storms into the Inspector's office with the enthusiasm of an excited puppy, but before NICK can speak the INSPECTOR holds up his right hand - traffic cop like - saying "Now, wait a minute Nick, I know what you're going to say. But its just not our territory mate. They've pulled us off it. But what I can tell you is that it's for a higher purpose - the good of the country - national security is involved here. It's international law enforcement we're dealing with now. It's just one of those things beyond our control. Just think of it as a sleeping dog, son."

Back in the Props Storeroom, PHIL has come to return the store dummies we have seen filling in as "extras" in the Dallas Diner. FLOWERS tells him that these are now kept in the roof. They're seldom used since the times "when the Production Company was really making films - but those days are long gone, we don't do big exteriors any more". PHIL staggers on up the stairs with dummies in tow.

NICK is with BETTY at the pub (the Dallas Diner slightly redressed). They plot their response to the Inspector's orders to 'lay off'. BETTY supports NICK on this. She says almost exactly what ALICE has said to GEORGE in their 'script crisis' scene earlier. (Back behind the cameras we see George avidly engaged with the scene; mouthing every word of the dialogue he knows off by heart)

BETTY shares NICK's fascination with the underworld landscape opening up before them and agrees with his proposal that they 'go it alone'. Maybe she is getting into this thing with NICK with more than law enforcement on her mind. For his part NICK too is becoming romantically attached. Together they sift through what they know and wonder what exactly is the 'higher purpose' to which they are supposed to be committed.

"BETTY" is with ALICE in Alice's office. The day's shooting is finished and "BETTY" is out of costume. She is quite a different person. ALICE is doing her best to explain that there is no romantic attachment

between herself and George. It appears at first as if "BETTY" might be relieved that ALICE is no threat to her in a relationship with George, until they kiss. Then we realise that the source of "BETTY's" jealousy resides elsewhere. But ALICE pulls away from the embrace, and, while comforting "BETTY", declares that she "has been seeing someone else".

ADAM and ALICE are having an informal dinner together in Alice's flat. They are sharing a joint and talking about contractual problems on "Liars, Guns & Money". They try to find a way to allow a night shoot within the contract with "Nick", which doesn't involve paying a loading. They agree to be generous.

On the television in the background is the late night news. The lead stories are announced before the first ad break; international news; progress towards 'peace with honour' in Vietnam, anti-government right wing rebels launch an offensive in Angola, Allende's government toppled in Latin America. On the home front; anti-Vietnam demonstrations, and a developing scandal involving foreign loans rock the federal government. ADAM crawls across the floor and turns off the sound. ADAM and ALICE make love.

GEORGE is writing on a primitive electric typewriter in his lounge room at home. He has a primitive 'remote' channel selector - a puff ball device connected to the television via a long rubber hose. GEORGE is switching between 'The Box' and 'Homicide', plundering dialogue and making little collages from these 'found' materials.

We see him type "new draft Episode 514". Stop, new paragraph. "MK ULTRA" He hears a noise outside, and through the cane blinds sees a suited figure surreptitiously approaching the house. Hurriedly looking around him GEORGE collects odd bits and pieces of paper and stuffs them into kitchen drawers. The door bell rings.

GEORGE answers to find "NICK" - although a little dishevelled, still in his brown suit and looking anxious. They share a nightcap and toast while NICK asks GEORGE for the research materials behind 'Liars, Guns & Money'. "Background on my character" he says.

GEORGE hands him some government reports and newspaper files. NICK makes it very clear that he doesn't want his visit known to anyone else on the set, "including your heart throb Alice". GEORGE is offended and throws him out.

ADAM and ALICE are in pillow talk mode. ADAM is explaining to ALICE that the real story - "for us" - is the future of broadcasting. ADAM tells her that while he is looking for off shore money for the company his real (secret) brief is to prepare an application for the fourth television licence on behalf of the company. ALICE speculates that this may be connected with the sudden cancellation of the scripts. He says maybe yes, it probably has nothing to do with the stories but everything to do with the big picture. He too, swears her to secrecy.

The next day ALICE is knocking on the props store door to see if FLOWERS is in. We hear the clatter of an old 16mm double head projector. FLOWERS opens the top half of his door to reveal that he has been watching a copy of the recently completed Australian independent movie "Dalmas" He invites her in to watch it with him, tells her she will be interested in this. He explains the experimental nature of the film and they talk about it as a critique of the politics of the counter culture.

FLOWERS wonders, staring at an object from his "private collection" - a "real prop" from Dalmas (the axe) - whether hallucinogens really are a force for change. He tells her that if you really want to understand the present maybe you do need to consider these things. She responds by saying she isn't interested in a minority audience and that's why she is working in television.

Back inside THE HEAT office the INSPECTOR calls BETTY into his office. He is angry. He has just discovered that Betty has been putting in unauthorised requests to the Boffin for information regarding the interlocking directorships in the affairs of the Newcombe/Hanley bank. The commissioner has been on his back, following Fraud Squad complaints about Betty's other inquiries. What the hell is going on?

BETTY pleads ignorance about the bureaucratic protocols involved. This is all new to her. He gives her a thorough dressing down, and puts her on notice. Any more contravention of his explicit instructions and she will be back in uniform directing traffic.

In the outer office NICK and BETTY discuss the implications now BERNIE has tumbled to their project. It appears their research is being monitored through several agencies and BERNIE has become their policeman. They agree that "BERNIE is gutless, we need a new departmental head and probably a new police chief".

Meanwhile BERNIE is on the phone calling up 'personnel', seeking the file on CONSTABLE BETTY ANDREWS and "while you're at I'll also have the file on SNR CONST. NICK SITARINOS." TOM is in the office with BERNIE, smoking cigarettes.

A script meeting is under way between ALICE and GEORGE. "NICK" arrives saying he wants to see the early draft of the next episode. He fears BETTY is on the skids. Has she been written out? In his opinion "we should write out the Inspector" ALICE wonders if "NICK" is getting a little close to his character. Do we have a psychotic episode coming up here? Are they working too hard? GEORGE thinks the actors should stay out of it. ALICE disagrees.

Meanwhile "BERNIE" is meeting with DAVID who is sympathetic to the argument that the female character has upset the balance of authority and loyalty in the series. She has to go. She is dividing the men. DAVID confides that the network appears to agree and maybe they are going to have make some changes fast, but how to get GEORGE and ALICE to co-operate?.

From the Props Store window we see FLOWERS observing the comings and goings of the actors from office to office on the Production Company's first floor. Behind him this time is a huge blow up of moratorium demonstrators in the streets, Melbourne circa 1971.

On the set of THE HEAT we are in the scene before the fifth commercial break (a turning point scene). NICK is arguing with

BERNIE that new information puts the case firmly in homicide's territory. NICK says that the forensic evidence blows huge holes in the suicide theory. There is conclusive proof, claims NICK that Frank Newcombe could not have shot himself. NICK thinks he knows who was responsible for the murder. He triumphantly turns to a large 'Rola' tape recorder and presses 'play'. We hear nothing. They both appear engrossed and re-act with varying facial expressions.

NICK then names BERT HAUS as the murderer elaborating the claim with information that the bank was hand in hand with international drug smuggling operations connected to American covert operations through the Dallas Diner. BERNIE explodes, he says NICK needs a rest. He is becoming very confused and his behaviour is aberrant. He is behaving like a paid agitator, not a policeman. NICK says "It's right to protest!". BERNIE orders NICK to hand over his badge and his pistol. NICK refuses saying he'll appeal directly to the Commissioner. BERNIE says "You're too late, the Commissioner has already been informed."

BETTY and NICK break into the Dallas Diner. (On this occasion the slip lock works perfectly). In the basement of the Diner NICK and BETTY discover concealed crates. Forcing a crate open, the whole stack of crates falls open before them, like a set of dominos. There are dozens of guns. NICK and BETTY stare in astonishment at a pile of Soviet made AK 47 assault rifles. There is a delivery docket stapled to the inside of the crate with an address in Honduras.

ALICE arrives in the control room while DAVID is directing the Dallas Diner scene through the intercom. He is saying "How many rifles does it say in your script?". She calls him aside and with a worried look tells him there will have to be an early lunch break. There is to be an urgent meeting in the Board room, immediately.

ADAM is addressing the collected staff in the company of the full board on the second floor. FLOWERS is sitting on the stairwell which continues in the corner of the room but inexplicably stops at a man hole in the ceiling. ADAM announces there is good news and bad news. There is downsizing on the agenda, "The HEAT has to be

burned", unfortunately some people will have to be laid off - at least temporarily, until the new concepts are up and running. The demographics are that audiences want soaps and there is little room for serious television drama, of the kind that THE HEAT has been delivering all these years.

He personally supports the program completely as they all know but he simply does not know how he can explain this to the network given the demographics. He invites them to make suggestions. There is a deafening silence. Everyone is stunned. ADAM gently embraces ALICE who looks like she may cry.

Back on THE HEAT set the recriminations begin.

DAVID wants Episode 513 to be finished, even under "these uncertain conditions". PHIL wants to call the unions in to discuss their options. BERNIE realising his career is over wants to announce a strike immediately and put out a press release. TOM wants to "be realistic" - he feels the next series might a better vehicle for their talents. Indeed he confides that in 'private conversations' with Adam he has got Adam's support for some feature ideas.

BETTY has been waiting for a chance to turn on GEORGE and ALICE, ever since the decline of her relationship with ALICE. The scripts are the problem, she says, pointing the finger at GEORGE and ALICE. ALICE wants to transform the crisis into an opportunity, suggesting they 'work in' and continue making the show as a collective "Yeah, socialism in one studio!" says GEORGE.

FLOWERS is returning various props to their appointed places, dwelling for a moment over each of them in the process. He is speaking with the PRODUCTION DESIGNER. She is crying. She is convinced it is all her fault. She was the one who came up with the brown suits that nobody ever really liked. And it was she who said to Adam - in an unguarded moment - that The Production Company could do some terrific stuff if they were able to work with colour. She bursts into tears.

FLOWERS just continues to contemplate his objects, philosophically. Now he holds an astrological sign - two fish swimming in opposite directions (Pisces).

PHIL the set builder is striking the 'jack shack' set. He's calling over his shoulder to DAVID. He's saying that they're all wrong. The truth is that the show has been 'burned' by the networks because they want to see the whole company go down before the hearings for the new television license are held. The company is on the skids. This "new series' stuff is a 'cover story', a lie. There will be no new series. They've pulled the plug. Permanently.

GEORGE and NICK are at the pub (Diner set redressed), where GEORGE says that BETTY is half right. The scripts were part of the problem, "but not because there was anything wrong with them but precisely because they were part of the solution. They were too close to the truth." "Liars, Guns & Money" was to be the thin edge of a wedge that would force open the whole structure of the underworld of money laundering, police corruption, drugs smuggling, and arms dealing in the service of the Cold War. GEORGE is very depressed and defeated. NICK, on the other hand thinks this is a beginning, not an end - he quotes Gramsci and advocates "optimism of the will" against GEORGE's "pessimism of the intellect".

On the stairwell ALICE is speaking with FLOWERS, who is returning from the pay office on the second floor. ALICE is very edgy and distraught. She has just come from ADAM's sympathetic embrace following the Board meeting. ALICE and FLOWERS sit down together on the steps. FLOWERS remains stoic in adversity. He shows her his retrenchment notice, commenting on the rhetorical form of the letter attached. "One sentence constitutes the closure of twenty five years" ALICE is shocked. But this goes against the assurances from the Board only an hour before!

FLOWERS points out that a close reading of what Adam actually said leaves plenty of room for him to do whatever he likes. "Don't you see Alice, it's all deception" ALICE says "No, it depends on how you look at it", things have changed; Adam wants the company to move

forward with the times, change is always painful, etc. ADAM has big plans for the company - a 'paradigm shift'. The promise of the TV license.

This is not new to FLOWERS, who now feels a responsibility to alert ALICE to the rumour that has been circulating for some days that the new Head of Drama at Channel Twelve will be ADAM. ALICE is incredulous.

FLOWERS goes on. The Americans don't want Australian indigenous drama any more than they want an independent foreign policy. And the ritualistic examination of death, with its accompanying allocation of blame and exercise of punishment - which has been the structure of THE HEAT for years - served some purpose, perhaps, while Australian soldiers were engaged in scenarios of real death in the American war against Vietnamese nationalism. Obedience to authority and the inevitable triumph of good over evil needed constant reaffirmation during these years. ALICE does not need to know this.

Board members pass ALICE as she returns up the stairs into the Board room. They greet her with mixed messages. Mostly reassuring, a little doubt. When she arrives ADAM appears to be packing as well. ALICE does not see the briefcase he is closing is the same one we saw in "Liars, Guns & Money" Sc. 1., complete with money and the pistol. ADAM walks the length of the room to meet her. She says "Adam what is really going on here? Is it true that you're leaving?" She is terribly distraught and anxious.

ADAM seeks to reassure her. He sits her down. Explaining that everyone is getting overheated; what is needed is a little critical distance, a broader perspective. Gradually she begins to come around, it is a kind of catharsis moment for her. ADAM 'sweet talks' her into a more relaxed mood. "Let's call work off for today".

ADAM goes to the Board room sideboard and produces a bottle of chilled white wine from the bar fridge. They are almost joking together at this point. ADAM makes a crack about 'designer drugs' and how

they need something for this particular 'transition stress'. She agrees. He produces a lovely sugar sweet; in the shape of a tiny apple. He tenderly slips it between her lips like a ice cream commercial. She sucks. He says "This is what we call MK Ultra, you'll like it".

ADAM then takes from his pocket his car keys. Her attention is drawn to the glittering (star filter enhanced), Mercedes symbol on the key ring. She looks back to ADAM who is walking slowly backwards, away from her. When he arrives at his brief case, he announces that he has to leave and promises to call her.

ALICE starts to follow him but realises that she can no longer estimate the distance between herself and the door. She feels ill as the room warps around her. Moving in fragmented moments she staggers toward the door. The sound of a helicopter strangely close draws her toward the staircase with its mysterious ending at a manhole.

Disoriented, she pushes through the man hole as "corpses" (Flowers dummies) fall against her body, knocking her backwards. She continues to climb as a series of treated moments from newsreels of the day occupy her experience. The sound of television news stories, centring on the last days of the Vietnam war, become deafening. Gunfire competes with the helicopter blades in dominating the soundtrack. She continues onto the roof, finding herself among the desperate refugees on the roof of the US Embassy in Saigon in 1975.

The helicopter leaves without her. She is alone with the industrial landscape below and Adam's Mercedes driving out of the car park.

Leaning against the industrial park's cyclone fence is FLOWERS, watching. *All You Need Is Love* occupies the sound track.

Closing titles roll up over the car's three pointed star occupying the foreground, the colour drains to monochrome blue, as an Australian bush landscape glides by behind.