

**WHEN THE OUTBACK STOOD STILL**

Written By

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Based on a true story  
by Terrance "Bull" Dann

BLACKSCREEN INTRO:

JOHN (V.O)

(Voice-over, opening credits, leading to scene)

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

*"And now these three things remain:*

*faith, hope and love.*

*And the greatest of these is love."*

1 Corinthians 13:13

FADE IN -

TITLE OVER: WESTERN AUSTRALIA SEPTEMBER 11, 2015

INT. PRISON UNIT COMMON AREA - DAY

A few prisoners are watching memorial services of 9-11 on a wall-mounted TV.

A prisoner JOHN makes a cup of coffee then walks over and stands watching the TV.

Another PRISONER looks briefly up at John.

PRISONER 1

Were you in America on September  
11, mate?

JOHN

In spirit.

The Australian PM is discussing the state of the world since 9-11.

John watches for a moment then walks out into:

EXT. PRISON YARD.

Prisoners walking around, some in groups, some playing basket ball.

Someone is playing a guitar and singing.

Two OFFICERS are looking on.

John leans against a wall and casually assesses the yard.

From his pocket he removes his plastic ID holder and smiles at a

PICTURE

of a young girl tucked behind the ID card.

He looks out beyond the razor wire fence enclosing him, whispers:

JOHN

Where are you, daughter?

Returning the photo to his pocket he sips his coffee, then he studies the cameras mounted on high poles observing the prisoners

He nods to the officers standing nearby, who are now studying him with suspicion.

OFFICER #1

You're not thinking about writing another letter to our Prime Minister across the roof are ya, prisoner?

JOHN

Nah, mate. No one gave a shit, anyway. Besides, they took my ladder away.

The second officer looks up three stories to the roofline.

OFFICER #2

How did an old man like you get up on that roof, anyway?

JOHN

I wasn't always this old.

OFFICER #1

(to officer 2)

It caused quite a stir, that. His U.S. consulate came up. The prison was locked down for hours.

OFFICER #2

What did you write up there?

JOHN

Let's just say that, if they hadn't turned back the news chopper, my daughter would still have a daddy, and I'd be home in America with my family.

John takes notice of music playing. Looking in the direction of the sound he sees a small group of prisoner listening to another prisoner play guitar and sing.

John nods again, then walks toward the group.

OFFICER #1  
We're watching you, prisoner!

JOHN  
Glad to know you're doing your job.

(CUT TO:)

John squats down among the group as the singer finishes the last of a song.

The prisoners clap for the singer then get up to leave.

One PRISONER (#2) acknowledges John with a 'fist bump' and an exchange of greetings.

PRISONER #2  
Hey, bro.

JOHN  
Hey.

John then turns his attention to the singer.

The ABORIGINAL MAN (40s) is thick and muscular. He is holding a guitar backwards, lightly strumming it.

JOHN  
You're good, mate. Not many can play a guitar upside down and backwards.

ABORIGINAL MAN  
(chuckles)  
Yeah. It's the way I learned play.

JOHN  
I haven't seen you around. Just get here?

ABORIGINAL MAN  
A few days ago. Just settlin' in. One of the fellas had this guitar, so I thought I'd pick some tunes. You play guitar?

JOHN

Almost every day on the outside.  
Seems like another lifetime ago.  
My hands don't work well since the  
heart attack a few years back.

(beat)

My name's John.

Extends his hand in greeting. The men shake.

ABORIGINAL MAN / BULL

I'm Terrance. Fella's call me Bull  
cuz I used to ride rodeo up north.

JOHN

And not because you're built like a  
bull, I take it?

BULL

Yeah, them Brahma's see me walkin'  
up to the chute, they know they met  
their match.

(beat)

I saw one cry once.

Bull picks casually on guitar: CONTINUOUS

JOHN

(laughs)

I can imagine. I grew up around  
horses and rodeos. My dad had a  
small ranch in Arizona way back  
when.

BULL

I love that Arizona.

JOHN

Ever been there?

BULL

Nah. But I dream of riding a horse  
through that Monument Valley where  
John Wayne made his movies.

JOHN

I've been all through there back in  
the day. It reminds of the pictures  
I've seen of the Kimberlies region.

TERRANCE

That's my home country up there.  
West Kimberlies. I'm from the  
Bunaba and Ngarigin tribes. You an  
American, then?

JOHN

Red, white and blue.

BULL

What brought you to Australia?

JOHN

Love. Destiny, maybe-- if you  
believe in that sort of thing.

(beat)

I had hoped to see kimberlies and  
all of Australia, but never got the  
chance.

BULL

Jail?

JOHN

The effects 9-11 saw to that, sadly  
-- war, economic crisis, increased  
cost of living, everyone scared and  
all.

Like many others, it ended most of  
the dreams my Aussie wife and I  
had.

Bull picks a melody then sings the lyrics.

BULL

*"Where were you when the world  
stopped turning on that September  
day..."*

JOHN

You know that song, mate?

Bull continues picking the melody: CONTINUOUS

BULL

All my mob knows Alan Jackson.  
Maybe especially that song, about  
the day America was attacked in  
2001 - 14 years ago today.

John stares reflectively into his cup.

JOHN

Wow. 14 years. Has it been that long?

BULL

Lots of stories on TV today about where people were when the attack happened.

JOHN

I remember where I was that day - or late evening, as it had been. We're 12 hours ahead of New York out here.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Chaos and panic on TV news. John is holding baby daughter.

JOHN (V.O.)

I'd only been in Australia two years to the month. I was rocking my baby daughter in my arms, watching it all unfold on the TV.

I remember whispering to her: That's your daddy's home, where your other family lives.

I realized I was crying when a tear fell from my eye and splashed on her little cheek.

END FLASHBACK

JOHN

One part of me desperately wanted to return home to help, be with family, while the other part was already home in Australia with my new family.

(MORE)



(CONT'D)

It's hard to understand, I guess,  
unless you're a born and bred  
American.

BULL

Hmm... I remember where I was. I  
reckon I'll never forget it.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

EXT. AUSTRALIA OUTBACK - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Young TERRANCE on horse, cowhands, cattle.

BULL (V.O.)

I was mustering cattle in the  
Northern Territory. The land itself  
-- trees, animals -- knew something  
had happened, long before any of us  
cowboys had heard about it. It was  
something none of had ever  
experienced in the bush before.  
END FLASHBACK

BULL

But it's also why me and all of my  
mob knows that song. We still stop  
and take our hats off when we hear  
it play.

JOHN

That's something I've never heard  
before -- the land and animals knew  
of 911 in Australia? How so?

BULL

(cheeky grin)

It's hard to understand, I guess -  
unless you're a born and bred  
Aussie Aboriginal.

JOHN

(laughs)

Fair enough.

BULL  
(serious)

But that day has haunted me for all these years. I think about it on every anniversary of 911, like today.

I don't talk about it, except to my own mob. But you being an American, I would tell you that story.

I'm thinking maybe your countrymen back in America would like to know just how much Australia felt their emotion that day when you get back home, cuz maybe they don't know. We're so far away down here and all.

John settles back against wall.

JOHN  
Well, I'm certainly intrigued now. I'd like to hear about it. I mean, if you don't mind.

Bull picks the melody to 'Where were you' on his guitar as he talks.

BULL  
To know how I came to be in the outback at all that day, I got to go back some years.

Cuz I have a daughter, too. It's different for me, though.

I'm thinking that if 911 never happened I might not have seen my daughter again for a long time until she was much older and all grown up.

So this story actually begins in 1992, back when I was just 24 years old, full of dreams, and the only one in my family who wanted to make a living riding in the rodeo...

(DISSOLVE TO:)

TITLE OVER: KATHERINE, NORTHERN TERRITORY - 1992

EXT. RODEO GROUNDS - DAY

Cowboys, spectators, hot summer day, rodeo atmosphere.

TERRANCE (24) is dressed in rodeo attire, preparing for his ride.

BULL (V.O.)

I was trying my luck at the  
Katherine Rodeo Show in the  
Northern Territory.

I was just getting' ready to ride a  
bronc when I caught eyes with the  
most beautiful Aboriginal girl that  
ever the sun had shown on...

A young ABORIGINAL WOMAN, is sitting among spectators.

Terrance is preparing for his ride.

Meanwhile, another cowboy prepares to ride and gives the attendants a quick nod to let them know he's ready. The chute opens. The cowboy quickly gets bucked off. The judges give him a good score, anyway. The crowd cheers, announcer calling the plays.

Terrance looks into the crowd of spectators and suddenly catches eyes with a young woman (Eileen) who smiles at him. Terrance smiles back, his confidence boosted as the announcer announces his name and calls Cowboy Up!

Young Terrance climbs onto the bronc, checks his grip, then glances back to see if the girl is watching him.

She is, and smiles again broadly. Terrance smiles back and nods to her. However, the attendants take the nod to mean he's ready to ride and the horse leaps high out of the chute as the gate flies open, catching Terrance off guard. Even so, Terrance rides beyond the 8 seconds and with practiced control, jumps off the bronc and lands on his feet, then runs to the rail to await the score. The crowd cheers.

In spite of a near perfect ride, the judges give him the lowest score. Terrance scowls at the judges, then, as he climbs over the rail he looks again for the girl

among the spectators. He sees her. She smiles broadly and gives him a 'thumb's up'.

Terrance puts his gear back in his rodeo bag. When he goes to look for her again, she's gone. He looks around but doesn't find her. Defeated, he slings his bag over his shoulder and walks out of the rodeo grounds.

(CUT TO:)

INT. LOCAL PUB - EVENING

The pub is crowded. A Juke Box is playing country music. Waitresses, some people dancing, lots of conversations, pub atmosphere.

A few U.S. military personnel from the nearby base mingle with the ADF.

Terrance is sipping a beer in a can at the bar counter.

A MAN come up and congratulates him on his ride.

MAN IN PUB #1

You're good on those broncs,  
cowboy. You should go pro.

TERRANCE

Hope to, one day.

MAN IN PUB #1

Stick with it, mate.

Terrance looks at his reflection in the bar mirror, his confidence bolstered, nods in approval of his looks.

Music changes when someone plays a song country love song on the Juke Box.

Terrance takes a long drink from the last of his beer, tipping his head back to get the last drop.

While doing so, the ABORIGINAL WOMAN walks up and leans against the bar beside him.

ABORIGINAL WOMAN

Nice ride today, cowboy.

Terrance sees her in the reflection of the mirror. Realizing who she is he almost chokes on his last swallow of beer.

He turns to face her. She smiles a familiar smile. He is caught off guard by her for the second time that day.

TERRANCE

Thanks. Them Judges didn't think so, though.

ABORIGINAL WOMAN / EILEEN

What do they know, anyway. Everyone's been talkin' about your ride. They think you were the best. And so do I.

My name's Eileen.

TERRANCE

I'm Terrance. I saw you in the seats today. You like the rodeo?

EILEEN

I like watching. I was there with some kin and friends.

TERRANCE

After I put my tack away, you were gone.

EILEEN

(Smiles coyly)

Did you come back lookin' for me, Terrance?

TERRANCE

(stammers)

I - uh, yeah -- I wanted to thank you for the support -- thumb's up and all.

EILEEN

(Giggles)

The whole crowd gave you a thumb's up!

(beat)

Thanks for the compliment... coming back to look for me.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Hey... do you wanna go for a walk,  
away from the noise?

TERRANCE

(smiles)

I'd like that.

(CUT TO:)

EXT. KATHERINE STREET / SIDEWALK - EVENING

Warm, clear night. Remnants of a sunset lines the horizon. Stars are brilliant in the outback sky.

Terrance and Eileen are walking beside each other along the main street, talking.

EILEEN

Your family into rodeo?

TERRANCE

Nah, just me. I've dreamed of riding in rodeos since I was a kid.

EILEEN

Dangerous sport, though.

My cousin's boyfriend broke his back in a ride up in Darwin a year ago. That broke her heart, their plans to marry and have kids.

Eventually, it broke them up. I'm too scared to get on a horse.

TERRANCE

It's a long way to the ground.

EILEEN

Well, you're good at it. I'm going to start studies at the university in Darwin as soon as I get back.

TERRANCE

That where you're from? Darwin?

EILEEN

Yeah. Most of my mob's up in that area. I came to Katherine to tend my daddy's property. He's in the hospital in Adelaide.

TERRANCE

Sorry to hear that. Will he be OK?

EILEEN

He's tough. He'll be back good as new before long. Where's your mob?

TERRANCE

I'm from Derby. Most of my kin are scattered around the Kimberlies region. Ever been out there?

EILEEN

No. I've never left the Territory. But I hear there's some nice scenery out there. Are you Bunaba?

TERRANCE

Bunaba and Ngarigin.

EILEEN

Old culture, them of the Kimberlies.  
(beat)  
Derby? That's near the Indian Ocean, isn't it?

TERRANCE

Yeah, where the Fitzroy River flows into the sea. They got one of the highest tides in the world - King Tide. And some of the biggest saltwater crocs.

EILEEN

Those old crocs don't bother us Aboriginal, anyway. They've acquired a taste for Pommies over the past two hundred years.

TERRANCE

(laughs)

Not very nutritious, though.

EILEEN

You staying long in Katherine, or just passin' through?

TERRANCE

I might stay for a while, until the next rodeo somewhere.

EILEEN

Where ya staying?

TERRANCE

With some kin just outside town - distant cousins, good mob. I just throw my swag on the floor and call it home.

EILEEN

That can't be comfortable.

TERRANCE

Ah, doesn't bother a cowboy much.

They arrive to a tree growing near the street. Eileen sits down against the tree. Young Terrance follows her lead.

Eileen looks dreamily into the night sky.

EILEEN

I forget how bright the stars are out here, away from the city lights.

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*{write additional dialogue to this section, leading in to the next line}*

-----  
EILEEN

Well, if you'll be stayin' in Katherine for a while, there's plenty of room at my dad's place, if you like.



There's an extra bed - unless you prefer throwin' your swag on the floor.

To be honest, I could use a hand around the place - keepin' up the yard, and all.

TERRANCE

Well, since you need a hand around the place..... I haven't slept in a bed for some time...

EILEEN

Well, then Terrance, It's a deal.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Moving in, tossing his swag on the floor. Terrance lays down on the bed, but it's too soft, tosses and turns.

In the morning, Eileen walks past the partially open door. Terrance is sleeping in his swag on the floor.

She smiles, shakes head.

Country love song resumes.

MONTAGE

>> Scene

>> Scene

>> Scene

>> Scene

>> Scene

>> and falling in love.

END MONTAGE

CLOSE ON:

Terrance and Eileen embrace against a blood-red NT sunset.

BULL (V.O.)

By the end of that week, me and  
Eileen just knew we were meant to  
be together

And I loved that girl.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Vast NT landscape. Lights of Katherine. A flock of galahs  
against the sunset circle and bed down in a tree.

END FLASHBACK

BULL

I reckoned we'd always be together.

JOHN

But no happily ever after, huh?

BULL

Could have been, maybe. Eileen  
loved me for the man I was, not the  
broncs I rode. I wouldn't know it  
for many years but Eileen, she  
hated them rodeos.

JOHN

But you met at the rodeo. Why was  
she there if she hated them?

BULL

Ah, Eileen didn't hate the rodeos  
back then. She liked going to the  
show with her family. But when her  
heart fell for a rodeo cowboy,  
that's when she started hatin' the  
rodeos cuz she worried her man  
would get hurt.

JOHN

Understandable, I guess. That happens in relations where one partner has a dangerous job like a soldier, police or fireman.

BULL

Yeah, like that. But we loved each other, be sure about that!

In 1996 me and Eileen moved to Kununurra, out in Western Australia.

That's about the middle between her kin and mine.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

TITLE OVER: KUNANURRA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Simple furnishings, baby cote, etc.

Terrance and Eileen and child interacting.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

VARIOUS RELATED SCENES

BULL (V.O.)

Then in 1998 Eileen gave birth to my daughter. We named her Triffina.

That little girl changed my whole world for the better and I loved them both.

A man's gotta work to provide for his family, but horses and rodeo was all I knew---and I was good at it.

Rodeo was my dream and I was sure that if those judges were fair I could out-ride the lot of them cowboys and make good money.

Eileen and Triffina would be proud and have a good life. But the life of a rodeo cowboy is hard.

But there's something about being  
on a horse.

I've always had a way with horses,  
and that's especially true about a  
long-legged dark bay gelding I was  
riding in the outback when America  
was attacked. Even that cheeky  
horse knew.

But I'll tell ya' about him down  
the trail a bit.

Well, my little Triffina grew day  
by day, year by year...

PASSAGE OF TIME: 1998...1999...2000...2001

Terrance, Eileen, 3 year old Triffina, in Kununurra.  
Growing up, interacting, loves her daddy who is her  
hero. Terrance gives her a little toy horse which she  
is seldom without.

BULL (V.O.)

I was still ridin' in the rodeos and  
out-riding the best of them, but I  
couldn't get the score. I think it's  
because I had no sponsor like the  
other cowboys did. Some were big  
names with big sponsors.

Rodeo, frustration and disappointment in Terrance's  
face. Eileen and Triffina in spectator seats. Eileen  
gives Terrance a thumb's up, then glares at the  
judges.

BULL (V.O.)

I don't think those judges were  
playin' fair, but I kept riding.

I wanted my daughter to watch her  
daddy ride, too. But that's about  
the time I learned Eileen hated the  
rodeo.

A couple cowboys got hurt pretty  
bad. Eileen got more worried about  
me.

A cowboy is taken from the arena on a stretcher, Eileen grimaces.

(CUT TO:)

Eileen and Terrance arguing.

EILEEN

If you won't quit for me, then  
think about your daughter.

TERRANCE

I ride for both of you, Eileen.

EILEEN

What good is it to us if you're  
broken up or dead? I can't do this,  
anymore.

After a ride, Terrance looks into the spectator seats but Eileen and Triffina are not there as they used to be.

BULL (V.O.)

Eileen couldn't keep living in  
fear of losing me with every ride,  
and she didn't want Triffina to see  
her daddy fall and get hurt or die,  
either.

Eventually, Eileen stopped coming  
to the rodeo to watch me.

Then one day she told me she was  
leaving, taking Triffina and going  
back to Darwin up in the Top End.  
She missed her kin up there and she  
wanted to go to the university to  
get an education. Eileen had put  
her dreams on hold for ten years  
while I chased my dream. I didn't  
know how she felt until it was too  
late. All I thought about was  
makin' it in the rodeo.

2001, Eileen with packed bags, Terrance picks up  
Triffina and cuddles her close, kisses on her head.  
As Eileen and Triffina leave through the door,  
Triffina runs back to her room and grabs the toy  
horse her daddy had given her, then cuddles his leg,  
then joins her mum.

## BULL

If I had been smart I would have  
stuck by that woman..... But rodeo was  
in my blood.

Begin sad country song - -

2001, bus leaving down a dusty Kununurra street

## BULL (V.O.)

Just like Eileen couldn't come to  
see me ride for fear of losing me,  
well, I couldn't see her and my  
daughter off on the bus, because I  
was losing them. All I had left was  
my rodeo bag, clothes on my back  
and my swag... the same as I had when  
me and Eileen had first met all  
those years ago.

I fell into a dark place in my soul  
after that...

## MONTAGE

>> Terrance becoming more down and lost as the bus  
travels farther away. Intercut scenes of memories of  
meeting Eileen, when Triffina was born, growing up,  
etc.

>> Terrance walking street, drunk.  
>> Triffina on buss with mum;

>> Terrance throwing his rodeo bag in frustration.  
>> Triffina on bus playing with the toy horse.

>> Terrance, night time, stumbles and passes out in  
the gutter with a near-empty can of beer.

>> Triffina sleeping on her mum's lap still holding  
the toy horse close.

>> Morning, the bus arrives in Darwin (Mum wakes  
Triffina with a kiss, sits her up.

>> Morning, Terrance's friends pick him up and dust  
him off, clean him up.

END MONTAGE

BULL (V.O.)

One afternoon I was thinking about my daughter.

Terrance sees his reflection in the glass.

BULL (V.O.)

Then I happened to see my reflection in a shop window. I had become a sorry pile of self pity.

That poor broken bloke starin' back at me was not my daughter's daddy, and I never wanted her to see me like that. I was better than that.

So I got off my sorry back side, grabbed my swag and rodeo bag, and headed to back to Katherine to see what the NT had to offer a rodeo man and a cowboy like me.

Terrance leaving on a bus down the same street as Eileen and Triffina had.

July 2001 - - back in Katherine, stepping off the bus, puts his cowboy hat on, collects his rodeo bag and hangs it over his shoulder then looks around.

(CONT'D)

I was back in Katherine, where me and Eileen first met. It wasn't easy on my heart, to be sure.

But even though Darwin is still a long way from Katherine, I felt closer to my daughter being back in the NT.

Terrance gets off buss, grabs his rodeo bag looks around, then starts walking.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

EVENING EXT.

Terrance walks up to a house where he is greeted by a COUSIN.

COUSIN

Sorry to hear about you and Eileen splitting up.

TERRANCE

How did you know?

COUSIN

Bush Telegraph, mate. Faster than the Internet.

You come to ride in the rodeo this weekend?

TERRANCE

Yeah. I might stay awhile and get some work.

COUSIN

Well, you're always welcome here, cousin. Got some tucker if you're hungry.

TERRANCE

More Tired than hungry, I reckon. Got a big day tomorrow at the rodeo.

COUSIN

Well, throw your swag anywhere but my kitchen. Good to see you again, Terrance.

TERRANCE

You Too. Thanks for letting me stay awhile.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

EXT. KATHERINE RODEO GROUND - DAY

Rodeo atmosphere.

Terrance looks up into the seats where he had first seen Eileen 9 years earlier - imagines her sitting there, smiling as she had back on that day they'd met.

Terrance makes his ride, again best of the lot, but is again given a low score. Terrance scowls at the judges, then dusts himself off and walks away.



(CUT TO:)

INT. KATHERINE PUB - EVENING

Same pub where he had first spoken to Eileen.

(Conversations)

Then, the same country love song plays on the Juke Box.

TERRANCE

Someone needs to put some new songs  
on that box. Then, drinks the last  
of his beer and gets up.

COUSIN

Callin' it a night, already, bro?

TERRANCE

Yeah. I need to rest up after that  
ride today. See ya all later.

(CUT TO:)

EXT. KATHERINE SIDEWALK / STREET - NIGHT

Terrance walking down the sidewalk as song fades in the  
distance.

Terrance sits down against the trunk of the same tree he  
and Eileen had sat under years before, and stares up at  
the stars, thinking.

(MATCH CUT TO:)

EXT. MORNING

Terrance is still sitting.

His thoughts are startled as a Ute skids to a stop  
then begins to drive away.

Several aboriginal passengers fill the interior and  
the bed of the ute.

PASSENGER #1

Hey, Terrance! Nice ride yesterday,  
mate.

PASSENGER #2

Cowboy Up!

PASSENGER #3

Sorry to hear about you and Eileen!

Terrance shakes his head.

TERRANCE

Bush Telegraph -

(DISSOLVE TO:)

KATHERINE CDB - LATER

Terrance walks down CDB along shops. As he passes a 'Job Seekers', he casually glances at the ads in the window.

He does a double-take as one ADVERTISEMENT catches his attention:

'Cowhand wanted on Auvergne Cattle Station. Apply inside'.

Terrance walks in to apply.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

EXT. LONE HIGHWAY - DAY

TITLE OVER: AUVERGNE CATTLE STATION, NORTHERN TERRITORY

A bus comes to a stop. Terrance steps off with his rodeo bag and swag. Then the bus continues down the road.

Terrance tosses his gear into the back of a waiting ute, climbs in the cab. The ute drives off down a dirt road into the bush.

(CUT TO:)

EXT. STATION HOMESTEAD

The ute comes to a stop near the main quarters. Terrance gets out and grabs his bag, then the ute pulls away.

A WOMAN (40s) and a MAN(40s) greet Terrance.

WOMAN / KAREN

Welcome to the Auvergne Cattle Station. I'm Karen and this is my husband, Alan. We're the station managers.

TERRANCE

I'm Terrance.

MAN / ALAN

I've heard you're a fair horseman. It'll be good to have some additional experience on this job.

KAREN

We've got a young Jillaroo from Germany on the team.

She's quick and smart, a good rider, but she's never worked country like this before. She'll look to us for advice and safety.

TERRANCE

No worries.

In the background, another MAN (30s) and WOMAN (30s) walk toward them. Walking obediently beside them is a young BLUE HEALER.

KAREN

Com'on. We'll introduce you to the head stockman and his wife.

The group comes together.

KAREN

This is Trevor and Sarah. They'll be in charge when you get to the stock yard. This is Terrance.

TREVOR

(to Terrance)

I know you! We saw you ride at the Katherine Rodeo last week.

TERRANCE

Yeah, I was there.

SARAH

That was a helluva ride, cowboy. We thought the judges were a bit greedy with the scores though.

The Blue Healer sniffs at Terrance then rubs against his leg.

TREVOR

And this RILEY. We're training him to be a cattle dog. Looks like you two will be good mates.

Terrance squats down and pets Riley.

TERRANCE

Smart breed, these.

SARAH

He's just 10 months old so he's got a lot of energy. He's up before any of us, ready to go.

ALAN

That's your quarters over there, Terrance. You can put your gear away, get settled, and meet the rest of the mob.

The cook will have some tucker for us in a bit.

TREVOR

Tomorrow we'll bring in the horses.

You can pick your ride. We'll spend the next few weeks training them up in the paddock before we head to the stock yard.

Best get rested up!

TERRANCE

I'll have no trouble sleeping tonight, boss!

(DISSOLVE TO BLACK:)

EXT. HOMESTEAD STOCK PEN - MORNING

CLOSE ON: A heard of HORSES thunder onto the screen.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Stock pen, and horse being herded into a holding pen by a man on a motorcycle and two others on horses.

Terrance and the other cowhands are leaning against the rail fence studying the horses. The gate is closed when the last of them is inside the pen.

COWBOY #1

Scruffy lot, them.

ALAN

Built for terrain. Most of them were born and raised in this region. Tough animals.

A tall dark BAY HORSE stands out from the rest, rears, then holds its head high and proud above the brumbies.

For a moment he seems to lock eyes with Terrance, then tosses its head and gallops fast and close along the fence, causing the other cowboys to jump back.

Terrance doesn't move, but watches the animal.

They look again at each other, then the horse gallops away through the herd of brumbies toward the far side of the pen.

TREVOR

All right. Pick your horse. Make it a good one. We'll be working them hard and long when we get to the stockyard in a few weeks.

TERRANCE

I know which horse I'll be riding, boss.

Alan notes Terrance's interest the tall bay horse.

ALAN

You don't mean that crazy bay?

TERRANCE

Yeah, that's the one.

ALAN

(laughs)

Let me pick a horse for ya,  
Terrance. No one's been able to  
catch that bugger, anyway.

TERRANCE

I'd like a go.

ALAN

Well, they say you're good with  
horses. Be my guest, cowboy. But  
don't say I didn't warn ya!

(DISSOLVE TO:)

SOME HOURS LATER...

The other cattle hands have selected their horses, which  
are tied up to the rail. They are watching Terrance, who  
is still trying to catch the bay horse.

ALAN

Sun's going down. I reckon he'll  
still be at it in the morning.

SARAH

I'm not sure who is more stubborn -  
that horse or that cowboy!

(CUT TO:)

Inside the pen Terrance is sweet talking the horse, slowly  
backing him into a corner of the fence.

TERRANCE

(to horse)

You might as well stop running away  
because I'm not going to give up on  
you!

Terrance caresses the horse's neck and lifts the halter to  
its nose, letting the horse smell it, then slowly slips it  
over its nose and head.

TERRANCE

There ya go. That won't hurt your  
pride any! Now you just follow me  
and we can put this day to bed.

Terrance comes out of the pen leading his horse. The  
remaining horses are mustered back to the horse paddock.

TREVOR

When you put your mind to  
something, you don't quit, do you?

TERRANCE

I reckon I'll be getting up two  
hours early every morning to catch  
him, though. He's a cheeky horse,  
this one. He thinks we're playing a  
game.

ALAN

(laughs)

Look at those long chicken legs.  
I'll bet he doesn't last a week out  
there before you're begging us for  
a different horse!

Terrance leads his horse away, talking to it.

TERRANCE

Don't listen to them. Just listen  
to me and I'll listen to you.  
We're gonna get on just fine.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

MONTAGE

>>Terrance is up early every morning, chasing the  
bay.

>>Later riding the horse who is clumsy and skittish,  
bucks and kicks.

>>Every morning it's the same catch-me-if-you-can  
game, but with each ride the horse becomes more and  
more sure-footed, more capable.

>>Terrance teaches the Jillaroo tricks of the trade,  
who catches on fast.

Three weeks later...

>>Catching the gelding in the morning still a game, but out performs all the other horses, cuts left, then right among the cattle. The Jillaroo following his lead.

>>Terrance's gelding leaps long and smooth over a creek. The Jillaroo's horse comes to an abrupt stop right before the water (afraid to jump it). She goes off and over the horse, landing in the water, sits up, wet, grimacing back at her horse.

>>Mornings are still a game, but when working, the bay is the best of the lot.

END MONTAGE

Last evening - Terrance putting the gelding away.

TERRANCE

(to horse)

I told you I wouldn't give up on you. Now look at ya. You're the best horse of the bunch, even if you are a cheeky old horse.

The Jillaroos smiles at them.

TERRANCE

Tomorrow we head to the stock yard.  
Tomorrow we go really to work!

Jillaroo blows a sagging strand of hair from her dusty face.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

EXT. STOCK YARD, OUTBACK - LATE AFTERNOON

TITLE OVER: September 7, 2001 - 100 k south of Auvergne Station

Australian Outback environment, wildlife, etc.

Intercut scenes as per narration.



## BULL (V.O.)

When we arrived at the stockyard we were welcomed by the nature of the outback...

A Kookaburra sat laughing at us from a limb in the old gum tree while a Wedge Tail Eagle circled against the sky, probably wondering what we were doing so deep in the bush.

Galaha squawked in a scrubby tree that grew near a dry creek bed. And at the billabong Willy Wagtails and Finches danced and darted back and forth.

There was so much chatter from nature that we could barely hear ourselves talk to each other...

Everyone working, unloading gear, setting up base camp, taking horses out of trailer, etc.

The COOK (50s) is setting up along side a creek bed. Riley, the dog, is running here and there.

Terrance drops his swag to the ground and begins helping the cook set up.

In the background there is a commotion in the horse trailer. A cowboy is then seen tumbling out the back onto the ground.

Trevor yells for Terrance, but who doesn't hear him. The stockman whistles then yells again for Terrance.

## COOK

I think they need you over at the gooseneck - - something about a horse...

Terrance looks over in the distance at the horse trailer just as another cowboy comes running out and tumbles to the ground.

The cook smiles, shakes her head, as Terrance runs over to the trailer.

Terrance comes up to the trailer, where a cowboy is dusting himself off.

COWBOY #1  
(to Terrance)

That damn horse won't come out of there. He kicked me right out the door.

The bugger's crazy, I tell ya!

Terrance cautiously enters trailer.

TERRANCE  
(to horse)

You being cheeky again? We've got work to do.

The boss won't mess around. He'll send you to the meat works along with the cattle if you keep misbehaving.

Now turn around so I can lead you out of here while it's still daylight.

Defiant for a moment, the horse then turns around, faces Terrance and nudges him on the shoulder.

Terrance comes out of the trailer leading his horse, obediently following.

Trevor shakes his head, then speaks to everyone--

TREVOR

All right. Let's get this camp set up. We'll have a feed then hit the swags.

We've got some long days ahead.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

TITLE OVER: SEPTEMBER 8, 2001

EXT. CAMP - DAWN

The Kookaburra laughs in the bum tree above the camp, signalling the beginning of another day.

The sun is just barely lighting up the eastern horizon. Finches, Willies, etc., chatter of nature.

Stock hands slowly waking up and preparing for the day.

The cook is up making breakfast.

Terrance is still sleeping in his swag. Riley comes up and licks his face. Terrance quickly sits up, wipes slobber from his face.

TERRANCE

We ain't *that* good of mates!

Trevor and Sarah laugh at Terrance and Riley as they sip their coffee.

Terrance, now up and prepared for the day, walks over to the cook.

COOK

Have a sit and a bite to eat, Terrance. Next feed is some hours away.

TERRANCE

Thanks, miss. But I'll have to eat on the go. I got to catch that cheeky old horse.

COOK

Wow - breakfast and a show! It doesn't get any better than that in the outback. [smiles and winks at the stockman and his wife]

Cowhands all sitting around with Damper and coffee watching Terrance chase his horse around the pen. Some minutes later, he has it bridled. Leads the horse over to the rail to saddles it up.

TREVOR

He must feel sorry for ya,  
Terrance. He gave up after 20  
minutes

The cowhands chuckle as the stockman Trevor stands up,  
then hollers out...

TREVOR

All right. First 100 head of cattle  
in the pen by noon.

I want them all drafted, cut,  
dehorned and tagged by supper time.

Tomorrow, we do it all over again.  
Let's go to it!

Tosses the last sip of coffee onto the campfire.

(CUT TO:)

(MONTAGE)

>> Early Morning.

>> Riley licks Terrance's face, wakes up, wipes  
slobbers.

>> Terrance chasing horse.

>> Mustering and working cattle.

>> Jillaroo working hard on her own, hot, sweaty.

>> End of the day, tired, sitting around campfire  
eating.

>> One young Jackaroo falls asleep while sitting and  
eating, falls over into Jillaroos plate on her lap.

END MONTAGE

TITLE OVER: SEPTEMBER 10, 2001

REPEAT PREVIOUS SCENE ROUTINES WITH VARIATION.

Same Jackaroo falls asleep while  
Eating, tips over toward the Jillaroo. This time she  
quickly moves aside.

The Jackaroo hits his head on the log where she was sitting. The Jillaroo smirks and shrugs and takes a bite of her meal.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

TITLE OVER: SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

REPEAT SAME SCENE ROUTINE

End of the day. This time the day ends differently.

Terrance is putting his horse away in the paddock for the night. The tall bay is acting odd, nervous. He tries to follow Terrance, comes to the fence, rears and tosses his head, runs in a tight circle then whinnies toward Terrance.

[The Jillaroo looks back curiously as she walks to camp]

Terrance returns to the horse that is obviously anxious. Terrance looks around for dingos that might be upsetting the horse. The other horses are grouped tight together, alert.

Terrance speaks to his horse, caresses its nose and neck:

TERRANCE

(to horse)

What's up with you, cheeky horse?

The horse nudges Terrance with his nose, whinnies lightly. Terrance caresses him. Terrance becomes aware that something's not right. He looks around the outback, a concerned look on his face, then talks to his horse. The usual wildlife is active, flying birds, etc, but seemingly anxious also.

TERRANCE

You go and settle down. We've got another hard day tomorrow.

Terrance pats his horse then walks away. The horse still whinnies. Terrance's face is still concerned as he glances around the land while walking to camp.

(CUT TO:)

EXT. CAMP - EARLY EVENING.

Stock-hands pouring coffee, taking a plate of food, sitting around the fire.

Terrance walks up to get a cup and his meal. The stockman Trevor is stirring his cup.

TREVOR

Your bay seems a bit out of sorts

TERRANCE

The other horses are grouped together.

TREVOR

Dingos too close for comfort, maybe.

TERRANCE

Maybe.

(CUT TO:)

Sitting around campfire eating. Frogs croaking loud from the billabong, an occasional dingo barks out in the distance.

The young Jillaroo with plate of food eases herself onto the log. Her buttocks is sore from 3 days of hard riding. She sits next to Terrance.

TERRANCE

A bit saddle sore, Jillaroo?

JILLAROO

A bit *everything* sore.

Terrance chuckles as he takes a bite of his food.

Momentary pause in conversation, then--

JILLAROO

How do you do it, Mr Terrance - - ride hard all day and still walk straight.

Others smile at the question.

TERRANCE

Been riding horses for a long time.

Pause while she takes a bite, then curiously asks...

JILLAROO

What tribe are you from, Mr  
Terrance? If I may ask?

TERRANCE

Bunaba and Ngarigin.

The Jillaroo tries to pronounce the names.

JILLAROO

Banuba ....Narry...*what?*

TREVOR

Don't feel bad, miss. I was born  
and raised in these parts and  
still can't pronounce Aboriginal  
names!

TERRANCE

I'm from the Kimberlies region, far  
west from here. But I feel at home  
anywhere in Australia. It's *all* our  
home.

JILLAROO

Hard environment, but it's so  
beautiful -- like no other place  
I've travelled.

COOK

Big country, too.

JILLAROO

You could put all of Germany in one  
paddock! It's easy to get lost,  
I'll bet.

TERRANCE

Not for us Aboriginal. We just seem  
to feel the land, know where we  
are.

For 60-thousand years my people  
walked across Australia, leaving  
their stories along the way for the  
next generations.

Scenes of ancient Aboriginal in Australia, painting caves, drinking from water holes, etc. The milky way and stars are mirrored on the land.

Dingo barks in the distance, night sky is brilliant.

JILLAROO

The stars are incredible out here.  
You don't see that in Europe.

SARAH

Brightest in the world, I reckon.

TREVOR

Sounds like the horses have settled  
down.

SARAH

And we should, too. Another big day  
tomorrow.

TREVOR

Yeah, I'm buggered, for sure.

All the group now gets up to prepare for sleep. As they do, only the young Jackaroo is still sitting with his plate. Then he snores, and is seen falling backwards onto the ground out of camera range. All the viewer hears is a groan 'ouch!'

(CUT TO:)

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT.

Campfire is all but cold. Everyone sleeping soundly, except Terrance. Terrance laying in swag staring up at the stars thinking about his daughter. His memories of her are impressed across the starry sky.

Ancient music begins to play, becoming stronger.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Aboriginal elder in full ceremonial attire and appears, against the starry sky, transparent at first, dancing to the rhythm.



He dances closer, with spear, mimicking nature in his moves. Closer and closer to Terrance, becoming more solid.

Then as the music is at its most intense, the dancer stabs the red dusty land with his spear, causing a shock wave to radiate out across the land in the vision.

The elder's eyes look skyward. The vision fades in smoke.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

(SLAM CUT TO:)

Terrance snaps awake, eyes open, looking at the stars above him.

He lays there a moment, then sits up, looking out into the dark, tipping his head listening... there are no dingos howling nor frogs croaking.

There is no sound at all...

(DISSOLVE TO:)

TITLE OVER: SEPTEMBER 12, 2001 (Australia)

EXT. CAMP - DAWN

The cook is up preparing breakfast. Other cow-hands shuffling about.

No usual Kookaburra calling out, no sound from the bush.

Stockman Trevor pours a cup of coffee and notices the dog, Riley, laying still beneath a tree, with its head low, but eyes, alert.

TREVOR

What's wrong with Riley?

The cook looks suspiciously around at the bushland.

COOK

What's wrong with the land?

Then everyone becomes aware of the silence. Sarah looks up in the gum tree. The Kookaburra is resting quiet on its branch.

SARAH

Not even a wake-up call this morning.

COOK

Nothing's moving. No birds, no breeze even. The campfire smoke just rises straight up.

SARAH

Calm before a big storm, maybe?

TREVOR

Too early in the season. Besides, Alan would have warned us.

Terrance comes up and pours a cup.

SARAH

Have you ever seen the land still like this before, Terrance?

TERRANCE

Not in all my days, miss.  
(beat)  
Something bad has happened, though.

Terrance looks out into the bushland.

TREVOR

What makes you say that?

TERRANCE

I had a dream last night. An ancestor came to me in the dream. When we have dreams like that it means something bad has happened.

Family is in trouble or an important tribal leader has died. When I woke up it was maybe around midnight.

There was no frogs croaking, no dingos, no sounds - just like now.

SARAH

Know why?

TERRANCE

In the dream my ancestor silenced  
the land, making everything lay  
down, quiet. It's sad. You can feel  
it.

SARAH

Something happen to your kin? And  
Elder?

TERRANCE

Everyone.

Sarah gives a curious stare at Terrance.

Trevor pauses, looks around while sipping his  
coffee, then.

TREVOR

Well, it's strange. I won't argue  
that. But we've got work to do so  
let's finish up breakfast and get  
the horses saddled. The chopper  
will be here in twenty minutes.

A call comes in over the two-way radio in the cab of the  
ute vehicle. Sarah quickly walks over, opens the door and  
answers it.

ALAN

(filtered)

G'day, Sarah. I need to speak with  
Trevor... um... privately. Is he  
close?

SARAH

Uh... yeah, he's right here. [Hands  
Trevor the radio with a curious  
expression on her face]

Trevor takes the radio mic from Sarah as they exchange  
looks, then sits in the cab and closes the door.

JILLAROO

(to Sarah)

What's going on?

SARAH

Not sure.

Terrance looks uneasily around the bushland, sipping his tea. A moment later, Trevor comes out of the ute with a troubled expression on his face.

SARAH

Well...?

TREVOR

(sighs, shrugs)

Alan wants us to push the cattle to the homestead. He said we learn why when we get there.

SARAH

What!? He can't be serious, Trev!

Good lord, that's over a hundred kilometres north of here.

Where's the stock trucks?

TREVOR

They're grounded. So is the chopper.

SARAH

Grounded? Trevor, what this about? What's going on?

TREVOR

Alan said he couldn't talk about it on the open radio, but that we'd learn when we get back to the homestead.

No doubt, it's something bad, though.

All eyes look at Terrance.

TERRANCE

I don't know.

COOK

Maybe not, but the whole outback certainly knows something.

They all look around at the dead still of the outback as the first rays of morning sunlight top the trees on the eastern horizon.

(CUT TO:)

Trevor addresses the stock hands.

TREVOR

OK, folks. For whatever reason, we've been instructed to push 3000 head of cattle up the homestead paddock.

We're going to have to do this the old fashioned way - on horses.

This kind of a drive hasn't been done for decades -- rarely with so few hands.

It's going to be a challenge, but you're all excellent riders. You know your job.

We'll push them to the highway, then home from there.

Let's get the camp sorted and the horses saddled.

TREVOR

(to Sarah)

Send Riley back with the cook. Jimmy will be taking the horse trailer.

Terrance is the first to the horse paddock, with his bridle in hand. He is expecting the usual chase game. But there is no game today.

As Terrance enters the paddock the tall bay comes trotting to Terrance, nudges him and rubs his shoulder against him.

Terrance slips the bridle on without any fuss and leads the horse to the rail fence to be saddled.

TREVOR

I never would have believed *that* if I hadn't seen it for myself!

TERRANCE

Even this cheeky horse knows something's not right.

TREVOR

Maybe that's why they were restless last night. They sensed something.

TERRANCE

That would be my guess, boss.

(CUT TO:)

Six cow-hands pushing 3000 head of cattle in the direction of the highway, then turn and follow it northward toward the homestead.

BULL NARRATES OVER SCENES - CONTINUOUS

INTERCUT SCENES AS REQUIRED.

BULL (v.o.)

We expected trouble from them cattle, straying off here and there. But we were wrong.

They hardly made a sound as they moved together in a line as if they knew where they had to go.

Me and the Jillaroo took up the rear.

Few words were spoken between us. There was no whistling or whooping to keep the cattle moving together. We didn't need to. No breeze stirred. The leaves of the gum trees hung limp as if sad.

Even the Wedge-tail Eagle had apparently been grounded.

Normally the highway would be busy with tourists, transport and mining rigs. Only a few vehicles passed us on the whole drive.

The land remained still and quiet,  
except for the hooves on the  
bitumen or dry red dirt.

The line of cattle stretched for as  
far as I could see. They knew  
whatever the horses knew.

The horses knew whatever the land  
knew.

Whatever they knew, it seemed we  
cowhands were the only one's who  
didn't know.

I was worried for my daughter far  
to the north.

Trevor and Sarah look back from the head herd.

TREVOR

Damnedest thing I've ever seen.

SARAH

You're not wrong.

BULL (v.o.)

We finally reached the homestead as  
the sun was setting. After putting  
the cattle and the horse in their  
paddocks, we all walked up to the  
main quarters where the station  
manager was waiting for us.

(CUT TO:)

EXT. HOMESTEAD - LATE AFTERNOON

TREVOR

(to Alan)

The cattle are secure. Now, what's  
this all about, Al?

Looking at their faces, Alan doesn't speak for a moment. Then:

ALAN

I think you'd all better come  
inside and see this for yourselves.

(CUT TO:)

INT. MAIN HOUSE

Stock hands enter and slowly gather around a TV set, joining Karen, whose eyes are fixed on the screen, arms folded tight.

Alan then joins his wife, Karen.

A voice is heard coming from the TV, talking about a tragedy. The faces of the group are confused at first, and look at each other.

On the TV screen are images of a building burning, people in panic, a frantic reporter reporting the events.

A banner at the bottom of the screen reads:  
'America Under Attack'.

Sarah raises her hands slowly to her mouth in shock.

Trevor is the first to speak:

TREVOR

Please tell me this is a Hollywood  
film.

ALAN

It's the real deal, Trev. America's  
being attacked.

SARAH

That's New York - the Trade  
Towers...

At that moment a plane smashes into the second tower.



SARAH: Jerks with surprise and gasps.

SARAH

That was a plane!

Trevor pulls Sarah close without taking his eyes off the TV. Screaming and panic, a frantic reporter calling the events.

Riley, under a table, troubled.

ALAN

It all started last night - - well, they're morning, around 8 or 9 AM New York time. That would be around eleven or midnight our time.

Trevor looks at Terrance who is standing beside him.

TREVOR

About the time you woke up?

TERRANCE

I reckon it was, boss.

ALAN

All U.S. flights are grounded. They're in a state of emergency, naturally. Almost all of Australia is shut down, too.

TREVOR

So is the outback, apparently.

ALAN

What do you mean?

TREVOR

Eerie. Not a sound out there, no wildlife.

Who's attacking them?

ALAN

From the reports, they are still trying to learn who's behind the attacks.

Sarah suddenly cries out, grabs Trevor's arm. A gasp comes from the group.

SARAH

My god! The tower collapsed! Oh,  
those poor people!

Tears well up in Sarah's eyes, her hand  
still to her mouth in shock.

ALAN

These scenes are replays, folks.  
Both towers have collapsed. The  
Pentagon was also hit bad and a  
passenger jet crashed somewhere in  
Pennsylvania.

Karen and I have been watching the  
news since early this morning.

I got a call from the head office  
who ordered the chopper grounded  
and the cattle brought in.

(to Trevor)

That's when I called you.

JILLAROO

Are we going to war?

ALAN

(Solemnly)

Looks that way, miss. No doubt  
America will retaliate with a  
vengeance when they learn who is  
behind it.

Australia will stand beside them.

Alan approaches Trevor, Sarah walks over to  
Karen and hugs her, then wipes tears from  
her eyes.

ALAN

(to Trevor)

We're down indefinitely, Trev. No  
telling when we'll be operational  
again.

A couple of hands have volunteered  
to stay on at the station with  
Karen and myself.

Your crew will probably want to be  
home with their family as soon as

they can. I'll draw pay in the morning.

I understand the bus is still running through Timber Creek - - for now.

(to everyone)

If anyone wants to use the phone here, feel free to do so.

Alan looks at the young German woman, concern on her face.

ALAN

Where's your family, miss?

JILLAROO

My dad's in Holland right now, but my mother is at my auntie's house in Sydney.

TREVOR

That's a long way by bus - Three, four days by bus - if they remain operating.

JILLAROO

I'll call my mother.

But if it's all the same to you, I'd feel safer staying here for now.

ALAN

We can use your help, too, of course. I'll keep you on the payroll.

Trevor looks at Terrance.

TERRANCE

I know where I need to go, boss.

Trevor nods in agreement, puts a hand on Terrance's shoulder.

Camera moves toward the TV screene, into the dust and smoke and panic, moves beyond and through it, then:

(DISSOLVE TO:)

EXT. HOMESTEAD - MID-MORNING

TITLE OVER: SEPTEMBER 13, 2001 (Australia)

TREVOR

It's been a pleasure having you on the team, Mr Terrance.

ALAN

You've always got a job on the Auvergne Station, mate.

TERRANCE

Thank you. It's been good working with you, too. Maybe I'll come back this way down the trail, but right now I have another responsibility.

TREVOR

Down the trail, then.

Terrance, Trevor and Alan part ways, Terrance heads toward the ute, while Trevor and Alan return inside the main quarters.

At that moment, the Jillaroo comes running out toward Terrance.

JILLAROO

Mr. Terrance... Mr. Terrance, in case I don't see you again, because of the war and all, I just wanted to thank you for your guidance out there.

TERRANCE

You're a natural with horses. You should be proud. Not many young hands could do what you did helpin' with those cattle like that.

JILLAROO

Thank you, Mr Terrance.

Truth be known, I always felt safe in that rough bushland knowing you were on the team.

Walks slowly together toward the ute.

TERRANCE

The outback knows you now. The red dirt is on your skin and the campfire smoke is in your hair.

It knows your voice and heartbeat.

The outback is a living thing. You learned that. Respect it and you will always be safe there... even if we go to war.

JILLAROO

I'll remember that. Take care, Mr Terrance. [extends her hand, they shake]

TERRANCE

You take care, too, Jillaroo.

They begin to walk away. Then Terrance turns back toward her.

TERRANCE

Jillaroo...

She stops and looks back at Terrance.

My friends call me 'Bull'.

JILLAROO

(Smiles warmly)

*Bull* it is.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

Terrance in the ute passenger side, as they drive out across the horse paddock toward the highway.

Terrance's horse comes galloping up along side the ute, tossing its head, snorting, looking at Terrance as he runs along side. Terrance, showing respect for the horse, tips his hat and says:

TERRANCE

You take care, too, cheeky horse.

The horse seems to know what Terrance said,  
whinnies, turns and runs full on across the paddock.

MONTAGE

>> Terrance waiting for a bus at Timber Creek. It  
arrives, he boards it, it continues on its way.

>> Terrance on bus looking out the window. The  
camera is outside looking in, reflections passing be  
in the glass.

>> Terrance on bus looking out the window (from the  
inside now). Passes by a sign post: 'WELCOME TO  
DARWIN'.

END MONTAGE

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

City of Darwin skyline.

(CUT TO:)

EXT. CITY OF DARWIN - DOWN TOWN - AFTERNOON

TITLE OVER: Darwin, Northern Territory ('Top End')  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2001

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

>> Terrance exits the bus with his rodeo bag. He  
looks up and down the street, then begins walking.

>> Along the streets people are grouped talking,

>> Some watching a TV through a shop window, a  
newspaper with headlines of the attack in America.

>> A few military vehicles pass.

>> American and Australian military personnel  
mingle, shake hands in joint cooperation.

>> An American flag and Australian flag fly half-  
mast beside each other.

>> Banners read: *Australia is with you, America!*

>> Some people watching news or talking in groups are seen to be crying, hug each other.

>> The energy in Darwin is tense, active, in complete contrast to the silence of the outback Terrance had just came from.

(DISSOLVE TO:)

EXT. OUTSIDE TOWN OF DARWIN - EVENING

Terrance is walking up to a house where an aboriginal woman is sweeping the veranda. Two young children are playing in the yard. The woman doesn't look up but seems to know the man approaching.

MARY

You be a long way from Derby,  
Terrance.

TERRANCE

I just come off the Auvergne  
Station. They're shut down because  
of the attack in America.

MARY

Come in. JONA's in the back cookin'  
a feed on the barbie.

MARY

Sorry to hear about you and Eileen.

DOOR SHUTS

(CUT TO:)

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Back yard is lit up, esky, etc.

JONA , Mary and Terrance at table eating, talking.

-----

*{Write more here....then, }*

-----  
(CUT TO:)

EXT. SIDEWALK BY HOUSE - DAY

Terrance is cleaned up and dressed neat. He walks up to a house but stands respectfully at the edge of the property where his daughter and Eileen are living.

The front door to the house is open. He pictures his daughter in his mind, then whispers her name.

TERRANCE

*Triffina...*

A moment later a young child comes to the door, looking curiously around. Suddenly she sees Terrance standing at the edge of the property and runs to him.

TRIFFINA

Daddy! ..... Mum, daddy's here!

Triffina jumps into her dad's arms, Terrance, cuddling his daughter close. At that moment Eileen comes through the door and approaches. She is dressed nicely, hair done up.

She's beautiful to him.

TERRANCE

Eileen. You look very nice.

EILEEN

I dressed for Uni, but the classes are still closed on account of the attack in America.

EILEEN

Triffina, go into the house. Daddy will see you in just a bit.

Terrance sets his daughter down who then obeys her mum, giggling with excitement as she runs into the house.

There is a pause before Eileen speaks. Then:



EILEEN

I knew you'd be coming for her,  
Terrance.

TERRANCE

I don't want to fight, Eileen. I  
want to take Triffina to Derby.  
She's got kin she's never met,  
cousins her age.

EILEEN

She misses you, Terrance. It's good  
you're here.

(beat)

But meeting kin in Derby isn't the  
reason you came for her at this  
time.

TERRANCE

She'll be safe in Derby.

(beat)

You would both be safe with me.

EILEEN

All my kin are in the NT. Most  
around Darwin.

And I... Terrance... I --

TERRANCE

I know you got a man, Eileen.

Eileen pauses uncomfortably, sighs, then  
speaks calmly to Terrance.

EILEEN

You'll have no fight from me,  
Terrance. I have lots of studies to  
do at Uni right now.

She misses you very much and she  
should meet her kin out west.

(beat)

You can bring her back when things  
settle down again.

A military vehicle passes by. They both look at it  
for a moment.

Eileen nods toward the passing vehicle.

(CONT'D)

She doesn't need to know about  
adult worries.

Terrance nods in agreement.

TERRANCE  
I'll take good care of our  
daughter, Eileen.

EILEEN  
I know you will, Terrance. Or she  
would be staying right here with  
me.

Eileen hollers for Triffina who comes running back  
out to them.

EILEEN  
You're going to Derby on holiday  
with dad to see your kin.

TRIFFINA  
Yay! Holiday with dad!

Triffina jumps and twirls, then hugs her dad's leg.

EILEEN  
I'll get her packed.

Eileen glances back at the house. A man is standing  
in the doorway.

But you should wait here.

TERRANCE  
Fair enough.

(CUT TO:)

LATER -

Terrance is pacing along the edge of the property.

Triffina comes running out, her mother following  
with a large bag of items.

Terrance scoops up Triffina in one arm and takes  
the bag from Eileen in his other hand.

EILEEN

I'm surprised the bus is still running. Not much else is.

TERRANCE

Long enough to get to Derby, I hope.

Momentary pause, then Eileen speaks.

EILEEN

Terrance... If war comes to Australia, you take our daughter and go deep into the bush country. No one can find an Aboriginal out there unless we *want* to be found.

(beat)

I'll find you.

TERRANCE

Bush telegraph?

EILEEN

(smiles)

Bush Telegraph.

They share a longing look between them. There is still love. They almost embrace, but the man comes to the door once again, interrupting the moment.

EILEEN

And no horses, Terrance. Not until she's older!

TERRANCE

Not until she's older.

(beat)

Be safe, Eileen.

EILEEN

You too, Terrance.

(to Triffina)

You be good for your daddy on the bus. Call me every day when you get to Derby!

TRIFFINA

I will, mum.

Eileen and Terrance share one last look of longing and love.

Then Terrance walks away down the sidewalk toward town, carrying his daughter and a bag of her items.

EILEEN

A tear streams down her cheek.

(CUT TO:)

BUS RIDE TO DERBY  
INTERCUT AS NEEDED

The bus ride scene is a series of memories combined with passing towns to show the passing of time and travel across the land from Darwin to Derby.

MONTAGE:

>> Triffina, sitting beside her dad;  
Terrance looking out the window

>> [Passing sign post: *Katherine* ]  
Scenes of first meeting Eileen, rodeo rides

>> [Passing sign post: *Timber Creek / Auvergne Cattle Station*]  
memories of the outback, crew, Jillaroo, mustering cattle, then silence of the outback, then news of 911 at the homestead, saying good bye, etc

>> [Passing sign post: *Kununurra* ]  
the day Triffina was born, rodeo grounds, Eileen and Triffina leaving.

>> Traffina sleeping on her dad's lap;  
Later aake, Triffina plays with her toy horse against the window with the passing landscape reflecting in the glass. Then, in that same reflection, two fighter jets fly past not far from the bus (one U.S., one RAAF, flying together). From inside the bus now, Terrance looks out as the jets turn and disappear seconds later.

>> Memory of news: PM John Howard - Australia stands together beside our American friends and ally...

>> [Final passing sign post: DERBY]

As the bus passes by the last town sign, DERBY, the scene goes into slow motion, the sign lingering, then the scene fades to black. The journey is complete.

END MOTAGE

(DISSOLVE TO BLACK)

(FADE IN)

TITLE OVER: THREE MONTHS LATER.

INT. HOUSE -NIGHT

The house is filled with people, kids, talking, noise, etc. There is a party atmosphere, a gathering of friends and family, a bbq.

Triffina on the phone:

TRIFFINA

Bye, mum! I love you!

The child hangs up and quickly joins a group of young children running through an open door into the back yard of the house.

Seeing her dad she opens her arms and he picks her up. He turns around to face the crowd of family and friends enjoying themselves in the yard.

Scene looking from behind over and above him.

Country music is playing on a radio. The current song ends and the DJ comes on the radio:

VOICE OF RADIO DJ

That was Brooks and Dunn here on another hot summer night in north WA. Now, by special request from our American friends out on the \_\_\_\_\_ ?? \_\_\_\_\_ military base, here's Mr Alan Jackson - - asking *Where Were You When The World Stood Still.....* on September 11, 2001....

The Alan Jackson song, *Where Were You* begins to play...

The commotion and talking of the people gathered in the back yard falls quiet.

Terrance is shown in a front shot respectfully removing his cowboy hat while holding Triffina in his other arm.

The scene changes, viewing the crowd from behind him, looking over his shoulder. The people stand, men remove their hats. Couples hold each other and sway gently.

Parents have their children close. Only the song is heard.

Camera still looking from behind Terrance, Triffina throws her arms around her dad and hugs him, her face seen smiling contently on his shoulder, the toy horse in her hand.

At this point the scene freezes in that moment.

The outside edges of the screen scene blur slightly. While the song continues to play, 10-15 second video snips of people from various cities and regions all around Australia take turns recounting where they were, what they felt, etc.

On the other side are images of September 11 in New York - people helping, people crying, news snips, etc. These continue throughout the Alan Jackson song.

When Alan Jackson sings the last line of the song, *Where were you when the world stopped turning on that September day...* This is where Terrance now finishes his narration of the story:

BULL (V.O.)

I remember where I was that day...  
I reckon I'll never forget it - -  
The day the outback stood still...

(DISSOLVE TO:)

EXT. OUTBACK - DAWN

The outback is calm.

Traditional instruments and music begin to play,  
growing gradually stronger.

An Aboriginal spiritual man is poised with his spear  
in the ground, seemingly frozen in time.

Nothing moves around him, he doesn't move.

Mamera moves to the front of the man, then moves  
closer to him. When the camera is close, it pauses  
for a moment, then the man quickly pulls the spear  
from the red dirt and stares directly into the  
camera.

At the same moment, a flock of galahs and other  
birds fly up and outward from behind him...he brings  
the land back to life.

The Kookaburra laughs loud. The scene freezes with a  
plume of red dirt and the flock of birds flying up  
behind him.

(FADE OUT)  
(CREDITS ROLL)

**POSTSCRIPT**

FADE IN:

EXT. PRISON YARD, CAGED COURT AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

JOHN OFF SCREEN:

John looks through a wire cage, beyond the razor wire fence and into the horizon of the morning. The scene is depicted through his eyes.

One hand grips the wire cage. In the other hand he holds a small plastic coffee cup.

On his left wrist he wears a cheap digital watch.

The time is 10:09 AM. The Date is 26 June 2017.

A moment later the time changes to 10:10 AM.

JOHN (O.S.)

Happy birthday, daughter. I love you. Daddy is here.

(beat)

I never left you.


(beat)

I was taken.

The camera then rises up through the wire, beyond his enclosure, turns and looks down on the roof of what is revealed to be a prison.

FIRST SEEN in a corner of the roof is a symbol like a lightning bolt with a diagonal line through it.

Beside this is written:

 **DADDY IS HERE.**

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: On the roof is seen a faded blue message:

**TO PM JULIA GILLARD.  
INNOCENT U.S. CITIZEN.  
WHERE IS NATURAL JUSTICE AND FAIR TREATMENT.**

FADE OUT.



**FILM: "WHEN THE OUTBACK STOOD STILL"**

## CHARACTER LIST / BACKGROUND

(Note that character names may likely be changed for actual film)

**PRESENT STORY CHARACTERS:**

- 1: **JOHN** (55) - American.  
 2: **'BULL'** (49) - Older Terrance, main story teller. Aboriginal.

**FLASHBACK STORY CHARACTERS:**

- 3: **TERRANCE** (24-33) - Younger BULL (above).  
 4: **EILEEN** (22) - Terrance's wife.  
 5: **ALAN** (40s) - Manager at Auvergne Cattle Station Homestead.  
 6: **KAREN** (40s) Manager at Auvergne Cattle Station Homestead (wife of ALAN).  
 7: **TREVOR** (30s) - Cattle Boss, Stock camp.  
 8: **SARAH** (30s) Cattle Boss, Stock camp (wife of TREVOR).  
 9: **MEGAN** (25) - ("JILLAROO") - Female stock-hand from Germany, backpacker.  
 10: **KARLA** (50s) - ("COOK") - Stock Camp cook.

**EXTRA CHARACTERS:**

- 11: **PRISONER #1** (20s)  
 12: **PRISONER #2** (20s)  
 13: **OFFICER #1** (40s)  
 14: **OFFICER #2** (30s)  
 15: **MAN IN PUB #1** (30s)  
 16: **WILLY** (40s) (COUSIN)  
 17: **MARY** (20s) (COUSIN)  
 18: **JONA** (20s) (COUSIN)  
 19: **COWBOY #1** (20s) - ("JACKAROO")

**ANIMAL CHARACTERS:**

- 20: **BLUE HEALER** - ("RILEY")  
 21: **DARK BAY HORSE** - ("CHEEKY HORSE")