

FEVER

Original Story and Screenplay

by

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1st 30 pages

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EXT. CAR WHEEL

CLOSE ON: SPINNING CAR WHEEL.

Shrouded in red dust. We PULL BACK to see the wheel CONVULSING against an unsealed road.

OVERHEAD SHOT: A solitary 4WD driving AT SPEED along a red desert road. PULLING BACK, the full desolation of the dry Australian Outback is revealed.

INT. CAR STEREO

CLOSE UP on a female hand as it presses PLAY on a CAR STEREO.

A familiar song starts, before being cut short by the PLAY button being pressed again. Then another, until we start hearing humming.

PULLING BACK we see a pretty young female driver (LISA RIORDIN) is the one humming, partly in-tune.

Just before the CHORUS, the sound of a blessedly ridiculous phone ringtone interrupts.

Lisa reaches across and turns down the volume on the stereo before pressing the phone to answer.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
(American Accent)  
Hello?

LISA  
(American Accent)  
Mom..

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
Hello? I can hardly hear you.

LISA  
Driving Mom -

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
What? What was that? -

LISA  
I'm Driving. I am on my way to  
Warratama.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
Your father and I were so worried  
about you --

LISA  
Stepfather--

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)  
I think it's a bad signal--

LISA  
I'm fine mom.

EXT. OUTBACK ROAD - DAY

We now briefly see a WIDER SHOT of Lisa driving a white 4WD along an outback unsealed road, as dust is BILLOWING OUT the back as the 4WD barrels down the road.

MOTHER (V.O.)  
Are you sure? I can fly over and see you while Bruce minds the kids--

INT. CAR

LISA  
Dogs--

The phone BEEPS twice.

MOTHER (V.O.)  
Did you say Warratama? I hope your not undoing what we spent so much time--

LISA  
It's work.

MOTHER (V.O.)  
What? Work? OK. It is so hard to hear you. Anyway, he seemed a perfect gentleman and now with all the cost of cancelling all the preparations, I thought -

LISA  
Mom, I have to go, I've got another call. I will call you back.

MOTHER (V.O.)  
Love you.

Lisa hangs up and presses the phone.

PHONE RECORDING (V.O.)  
You have one new message.

The phone beeps again.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Hey, its me. You haven't returned any of my messages, so I called your office and they said you have left on some kind of assignment up north. Any way, I just wanted to apologize again for my stupid behavior, and ah-

Lisa punches at the phone.

MALE VOICE (V.O.) (cont'd)

I love you still, and ah -

Lisa punches the phone again and again.

LISA

Arsehole!

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

I hope you will -

Lisa now looks down at the phone, pressing fiercely.

LISA

STOP STUPID PHONE.

Finally just as the message stops, Lisa LOOKS UP to see the 4WD has almost left the road.

LISA (cont'd)

Shit!

She PULLS HARD on the steering wheel to regain control, before putting on the brakes and letting out a PRIMAL SCREAM.

EXT. OUTBACK ROAD - DAY

LONG RANGE SHOT: A dancing haze on a red horizon, with the BUZZING OF FLIES in the background.

The haze materialises into the shape of a car. A white 4WD.

INT. 4WD

Inside, the driver (KEN) leans over to the middle console and turns up the CD-player. His wife (DOROTHY) is staring out at the barren landscape, the red earth. Dark and heavy storms clouds hug the horizon, inching their way forward.

DOROTHY  
You said it would be there an hour ago.

The husband feigns deafness and continues to eyeball the road ahead.

DOROTHY  
This will be the death of me.

KEN  
You're the one who wanted to see the real country.  
(beat)  
Have you called John to let him know we'll be late?

Dorothy ignores him, looking out the window. Suddenly, Ken starts to slow the car down.

DOROTHY  
What?

Just ahead, is the faint outline of a vehicle on the side of the road coming into focus through the heat haze.

DOROTHY  
What is it?

KEN  
Someone's broken down.

Ken continues to slow down the car as they get closer.

DOROTHY  
For goodness sake, Don't stop.

Ken gives her a look of disdain.

DOROTHY  
Well, they could be like that fellow. You know the Wolf Creek one.

KEN  
Dorothy, this is not Double Bay. I have to see if they're all right.

EXT.BROKEN CAR

We are back to the sound of BUZZING FLIES as we watch the 4WD approaching.

Turning around we see a handsome athletic looking man (KARL RATZNER) standing on the side of the road, in front of a Ford station wagon slumped in a ditch.

The Range Rover 4WD slows down and pulls up in front of Karl.

Karl nods and makes eye contact, before stubbing out a cigarette and slowly walking toward them. Ken lowers his window.

KEN

You OK?

KARL

My car hit a Kangaroo.

Ken puts the Range Rover in neutral and gets out and walks with Karl over to the front of the broken station wagon.

Bits of meat and fur are still stuck to the bull bar with hundreds of flies swarming around. Ken covers his nose because of the stench.

KEN

I don't think you're going anywhere in this.

KARL

Yes. One minute I was driving and the next minute this giant Kangaroo was right in front of my car.

KEN

American right?

KARL

On a driving holiday of this beautiful land of yours.

Ken looks over at Dorothy and starts mouthing 'American' to her. She shrugs her shoulders.

KEN

(To Dorothy)

He's an American. A tourist.

(To Karl)

We'll we can give you a lift to the next town to get help.

KARL

Thank you. I'll just get my things.

Karl starts to walk to the back of the broken station wagon.

KEN

I'll give you a hand.

(beat)

The wife was worried. She didn't want me to stop. You know all the stories about the outback...

We see briefly the contents of the back of the station wagon. Two duffle bags and a few tools, including a shovel. Karl briefly unzips a bag and we see the butt of a rifle.

KARL

You can never be TOO careful.

EXT. OUTBACK ROAD - DAY

Karl is now driving the new Range Rover at MAXIMUMN SPEED, smoking a cigarette, listening and humming to the same CD of music that KEN and DOROTHY had been listening.

Except, Ken or Dorothy nowhere to be seen.

EXT. OUTBACK POLICE STATION - DAY

A white 4WD, with the writing POLICE clearly marked on the side of the vehicle, pulls up outside an old and forlorn looking outback police station.

A broken old style police light out the front and a rusty Ute parked to the side with the hand painted word POLICE written on the doors.

Lisa gets out of her vehicle, before grabbing two bags from the back seat and moving over to the main door of the police station. It is locked.

LISA

Shit.

She presses an old and dirty buzzer counts to ten. Still no answer.

She steps to the side of the building and a gate.

It is unlocked. She walks through and around to a back screen door which is open and walks inside.

INT. POLICE STATION, (POV)

We see the interior of the building from Lisa's perspective.

The first room she finds is a stale 1950's style kitchen - the only modern accessory being a sexist calendar hung prominently on the fridge.

Lisa continues to walk through and down a hallway.

The first door she comes to is slightly ajar. She pushes it open.

Inside an older man (SENIOR SERGEANT MITCH O'ROURKE) is lying in his pants and singlet with his back to the door.

A singlet only partly hides scars of former trauma on his back.

She moves closer towards Mitch.

As she is almost at the side of the bed he swings around, holding a gun pointed at her head.

She jumps back in fright.

INT. POLICE STATION

LISA  
JESUS.

MITCH  
You're not Marjory.

Mitch gets his focus on Lisa and puts his gun down.

LISA  
You scared the hell out me.

Mitch rolls over and out of bed.

He moves over and scoops up a police shirt and starts to pull it on while noticing Lisa staring at his scars.

MITCH  
One minute. A bit of privacy.

He slams the door shut abruptly and forcing Lisa out of the room.

LISA  
Who is Marjory?

The door swings open and fully clothed Mitch marches past Lisa heading towards a door leading to the front of the building.



INT. POLICE STATION, FRONT OFFICE - DAY

Mitch moves to the front door, unlocking it and returning to a desk drowning in paper.

He puts on a pair of reading glasses, ignoring Lisa who has followed him into the room.

LISA

Let's start again. I'm Constable Lisa Riordin from Perth. Your request for support. You remember?

Mitch still ignores her as he walks over and unlocks the front door and fly screen, before returning to a filthy paper strewn desk.

MITCH

An American...

LISA

Yes, my mother. I grew up in America. My father was Australian. An Australian -

(pause)

So, as I was saying let's start again, I -

At that very moment, the fly wire screen door to the station swings open and two men come flying in:

- the first a sweaty middle aged Asian man (BARRY) in dirty mechanics overalls with BARRY'S FINE MOTORS on the back;

- the second an Indian looking man (ANTONIO) in a bow tie and old clothes.

ANTONIO

This man is a thief. Arrest him Mitch.

BARRY

Bullshit. I did exactly what you asked me to do.

Mitch ignores both men as he finishes scribbling on a piece of paper.

He folds the paper into his top pocket, flicking his glasses onto the table.

He gets up and starts to move towards the front door.

ANTONIO

On everything that is sacred, I swear  
he destroyed my car.

BARRY

Rubbish. Rubbish. Rubbish.

LISA

(To Mitch)

The fax from the assistant  
commissioner's office. You sent a  
request.

MITCH

(To Antonio)

Antonio, can't help you mate.

(To Barry)

Cut him some slack Barry.

(To Lisa)

Can't speak. Got to see the Doc.

Mitch walks out the front door, followed by the other three.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Mitch heads to the old Ute with the hand painted POLICE  
wordage as Lisa follows him.

LISA

But I'm your new assistant.

MITCH

OK, you can drive.

Mitch throws her the keys and they get in the old truck.

After a few bunny hops, Lisa turns out of the front parking  
lot of the police station.

EXT. DOC'S SURGERY - DAY

The old Police Ute pulls up out the front of an colonial  
style single story building with several cars and Utes  
parked out front.

Mitch heads inside, followed by Lisa.

INT. DOC'S SURGERY, WAITING ROOM - DAY

Inside, Mitch and Lisa are confronted by a room full of outback characters and their pets - the pets looking relatively normal.

Some are sneezing, a small girl has her arm bandaged and an assortment of people are holding dogs, cats and even a goat.

At a desk is a matronly looking woman (MARJORY) fielding phone calls and paperwork.

MARJORY

Mitch.

MITCH

Marjory.

MARJORY

Thank god. Go right in.

Mitch nods as he walks through a frosted glass door, followed by Lisa.

INT. DOC'S SURGERY, SURGERY

They walk inside to find a taller older man (DOC) finishing the final stitches to the leg of a young boy, his mother watching nervously.

DOC

And that is why God gave you a spare, son.

He looks up and nods and smiles to the mother before turning to greet Mitch. The boy springs off the operating table and mother and injured boy depart the room.

DOC

(To Mitch)

Thanks Mitch.

Mitch producing the piece of paper from his pocket, hands it to Doc.

MITCH

I don't know what the town would do without you.

Just then a teenage girl walks in to the room with her dog.

DOC  
(To the Dog)  
And what have you swallowed this time  
Scruffy?

Doc starts putting on a rubber glove.

LISA  
(To Mitch)  
I don't understand.

Mitch makes eye contact with the Doc before rolling his eyes.

MITCH  
(To Doc)  
My new assistant from Perth.

Lisa extends her hand to Doc, now wearing a rubber glove.

He smiles broadly at her, shaking her hand firmly before returning his attention to the dog, lifting its tail and moving his face close to its backside.

LISA  
Constable Lisa Riordan.

The Doc sticks a rubber glove covered hand up the backside of the dog, causing the dog to yelp.

DOC  
(To the Dog)  
Sorry Scruffy. This is the price you  
pay for swallowing crap-

MITCH  
(To Lisa)  
Doc here is our local miracle worker.

Doc finishes looking at the backside of the dog and removes the rubber glove.

DOC  
Local Vet. Warratama doesn't have a  
GP. Hasn't had one for more than  
twenty years. It seems ghosts and  
ghost towns don't need doctors. So  
any breaks, cuts or bruises they come  
to me.

MITCH  
Not if Perth had their way.

DOC

Well, thank goodness for people like you Mitch and the strings you pulled.

MITCH

We'll you can stop worrying about the investigation for the moment. But no more pulling out appendixes OK. Otherwise next time, I wont be able to help.

EXT. OUTBACK ROAD - AFTERNOON

Karl is driving still at full speed down the highway as rain and the dust turn into streaks of mud on the windscreen.

His mobile phone rings, he puts it on speaker.

KARL

Ratzner.

PETER (V.O.)

(In German)

You didn't call. We thought they had you -

KARL

Nothing to worry about. Catching up now.

EXT. FISHING TRAWLER - AFTERNOON

A fishing trawler is off the coast in rolling seas.

A blond haired man (PETER) is standing to the side of the wheel house runs speaking on the phone.

PETER

(In English)

We will be there to pick you up in two days.

KARL (V.O.)

And how are the kids? You still have them?

Peter starts walking with the phone to the back of the boat.

PETER

Yes. Fine. Fine.

(beat)

All good.

Peter looks down into the hull tanks at GUNTHER sitting down on boxes of crates.

One crate is half open. Inside are guns neatly stacked in wrapping paper.

INT. OUTBACK ROAD - AFTERNOON

Karl still driving the Range Rover, turns up the wind shield wipers as the rain increases.

KARL  
See you Sunday.

Karl hangs up the phone and starts dialing another number.

At that moment, a Ute comes screaming past tooting its horn, almost colliding with the Range Rover.

As the car pulls in front of the Range Rover, a young long haired hoon sticks his head out of the passenger window yelling profanities.

Suddenly a large rock spins up from the back tyres of the Ute and smashes the windscreen of the Range Rover.

KARL  
SHIT.

Karl grapples with the steering wheel as the Range Rover swerves towards the side of the road. Karl puts his foot on the brake peddle, the windscreen a shattered and muddy mess. Karl smashes his hands on the steering wheel in frustration.

KARL (cont'd)  
Shit.

EXT. LAZY CREEK BRIDGE - LATER

Mitch and Lisa are standing in the middle of the road in raincoats and orange torches, as steady rain falls.

To the side, a cattle truck being pulled out from a side ditch next to an old rickety bridge with a vandalized sign.

MITCH  
(To Truck Pulling)  
That should do it Reg.

An older Aboriginal man (REG) gets out of the tow truck and comes over to Mitch and Lisa.

He is followed by the cattle truck driver.

REG  
(To Lisa)  
You're soaked.  
(To Mitch)  
She'll get sick Mitch.

Mitch looks over at her.

LISA  
(To Reg)  
I'm fine. Part of the job it seems.

REG  
(To Mitch)  
The creeks already flooded the local  
camp site. The mob has moved back to  
the larger camp over the gully. So  
won't be long before the town is cut  
off until the end of the rains.

MITCH  
(To Cattle Truck  
Driver)  
Take it slowly. But keep going.  
Otherwise, you'll be feeding those  
Cattle out the back stalls of the  
Grand for the next week or two.

The Cattle Truck driver nods to Mitch, as does Reg.

Lisa turns to walk away.

REG  
(To Lisa)  
You look familiar. You sure you don't  
have any cousins up this way Miss?

Lisa shakes her head negatively, while wiping some of the  
water from her face.

Reg shrugs his shoulders and shuffles back to his truck.

Mitch looks at Lisa, who starts to cough.

MITCH  
(To Lisa)  
Better get you out of this weather.  
(beat)  
I'll take you to the Grand Hotel.

EXT. MAIN STREET, WARRATAMA - NIGHT

Mitch drives along the rain soaked main street of Warratama.

One closed and abandoned shop after another except for a few odd signs of life like Antonios Tandoori Italian Restaurant opposite a great old hotel become almost unbearably bright against the surrounding decay.

LISA  
 (To Mitch)  
 The Vet wasn't joking when he said it  
 was a ghost town.

Mitch stops the police truck out in front of the Grand Hotel, next to the same Ute we saw with two youths who caused the breaking of the windscreen of the Range Rover driven by Karl.

Mitch helps Lisa pull out her bags from the back seat and walk up and through the main door into the main reception.

INT. GRAND HOTEL, GUEST RECEPTION

The interior of the Grand Hotel is a faded tribute to frontier gold rush hotels and whore houses, cluttered with dusty memorabilia and memories.

As soon as Mitch and Lisa walk in, a large woman GRETA rushes from behind the reception desk to greet them.

GRETA  
 (To Mitch)  
 Thank god. The Johnson boys are out  
 of control.

She barely looks at Lisa until she notices the pool of water coming from her soaked uniform.

GRETA  
 (To Mitch)  
 Mitch! She'll die of pneumonia!

Greta, grabs Lisa's arm and starts to push her towards a grand staircase.

GRETA (cont'd)  
 (To Lisa)  
 Don't worry darling. We have a lovely  
 suite for you. We'll get you out of  
 these wet clothes in no time.

Lisa breaks the embrace of Greta, smiling vainly.



LISA  
Thank you...

GRETA  
Ah an American!

Lisa nods.

GRETA  
Greta. You can call me Greta. And  
what is your name darling?

Lisa watches Mitch walk out of the reception area through a door labeled GRAND BAR.

LISA  
Thank you Greta. Lisa. My name is  
Lisa. But as you can see, I am also a  
police officer. I'll see if Mitch  
needs any help.

Lisa heads towards the door to the Grand Bar

GRETA  
Mitch will be fine. Don't let them  
scare you. I'll be here if there is  
anything you need.

INT. GRAND HOTEL, GRAND BAR - NIGHT

Lisa walks through door and as if into another era, the Grand Bar full of smoke, noise, classic 70's rock and roll music and unique characters.

Mitch is talking to two dirty looking older men (GREENHOPE) and (COOPER).

In a corner furthest from the bar some young men with a couple of girls are clinking beers and shouting out the words of the song.

They stop singing when Lisa comes in and instead start wolf whistling. Mitch turns to see Lisa.

MITCH  
(To Lisa)  
Why don't you get changed?

As she gets closer, she notices both men speaking with Mitch are wearing guns. So are most of the people in the bar.

LISA  
I just wanted to see if you were  
OK...Jesus does everyone have a gun  
in this place?

MITCH  
(To Greenhope and  
Cooper)  
Spook and Coop, this is a new one  
from Perth.

Both men let out an 'ahh' as the wolf whistles from the back  
continue.

GREENHOPE  
It's the outback constable.

COOPER  
Not the city.

GREENHOPE  
Snakes.

COOPER  
Snakes and crocs.

GREENHOPE  
Yep big ones. And wild pigs and dogs.  
Them laws on firearms are for the  
city.

MITCH  
(To Lisa)  
Get changed. Take your time. I'll be  
here and when you get back I'll shout  
you whatever is your poison.

INT. GRAND HOTEL, LISA'S ROOM

Lisa is sitting in the bath.

A moment of peace washes over her, before something snaps in  
and she grabs a towel to get up and out towards a bed with a  
dress laid out.

EXT. TOWN STREET OUTSIDE GRAND HOTEL - NIGHT

The wounded Range Rover inches to a halt outside the front  
of the Grand Hotel.

Karl steps out and notices the same Ute that caused the  
damage parked next to the Police Truck.

He walks around to the back and pulls out his bags, the rain strikes the tip of a shovel to the side and hair and thick congealed drops of blood flush away.

He closes the car and walks towards the reception.

INT. GRAND HOTEL, GRAND BAR

Lisa and Mitch (still in his police uniform) are now sitting at a table in the Grand Bar.

The atmosphere is even busier and rowdier as more and more drink away.

The wolf whistles continue, but with less skill.

MITCH

(To Lisa)

Don't worry about them. The Johnson boys are sometimes the only entertainment around here.

LISA

Is this normal?

MITCH

Not really.

(beat)

Bit slow. Come peak stock season, this bar used to be full. Since the bigger mines set up further west, most of the shops have closed down and few prospectors are left. All that's left are a few good people, a lot of empty shops and a few low life.

A slippery looking man (MAYOR DICK MASTERS) slinks up behind Mitch, eyeballing Lisa.

He places his hands on the shoulders of Mitch.

MITCH

(To Lisa)

Speaking of which...

MAYOR DICK

Sorry to interrupt Mitch, but who is this ravishing beauty in our midst?

Lisa extends her hand.

LISA  
Constable Lisa Riordin.

MAYOR DICK  
Ah but an American?

LISA  
My father was Australian. But I grew up in Arizona. I came back over here to do my University and now this is my home.

MAYOR DICK  
Ah a pretty police woman, Just what this town needs. A new image.

Dick hands Lisa his card, on it is a laundry list of titles, extending to the reverse.

MAYOR DICK  
I am the local Mayor and welcome to Warratama.

MITCH  
He is also the local real estate agent, landlord, conveyancer, notary and postmaster.

MAYOR DICK  
Yes, well Senior Sergeant, to some falls great responsibility.

Just then Karl walks through the door into the Grand Lounge.  
The first to spot him are The Johnson boys.

They suddenly goes silent, causing Mitch, Lisa and most of the bar to eyeball Karl as he walks to the main Bar and the barman (ANDRE).

KARL  
Excuse me. Could you please direct me to a repair shop in this town?

ANDRE  
You're a yank?

Karl looks at him strangely.

ANDRE  
Your wheels are playing up mate?

KARL  
Excuse me?

ANDRE

Sorry mate. Your American right?

Karl nods while he looks around the room and notices the two youths from the Ute that wrecked his windscreen sitting at the back tables drinking beers with others.

He is too busy glaring at them to notice Mitch come up next to him.

ANDRE

What'll you have?

KARL

(Still looking at the Johnson boys)  
Some hillbilly kids tried to run me off the road. My windscreen was damaged.

MITCH

You said someone tried to run you off the road?

Karl turns around and is startled to see Mitch next to him.

But before anyone gets a word in, Mayor Dick interrupts.

MAYOR DICK

(To Mitch)

Sorry to interrupt Mitch, but I have matter of utmost importance to discuss.

Mitch ignores the Mayor.

MITCH

(To Karl)

Can you make out a description of the car or the driver?

KARL

No, it is no problem officer. It was raining. I couldn't make out the pick up or who was driving. If I can just find a repair shop I can fix my windscreen and go.

Mitch shrugs his shoulders and looks back at the youths sitting at the back of the bar, frozen like mannequins.

ANDRE

(To Karl)

Barry over there is a magician with all types of engines and cars.

Andre points to Barry who is now drinking with Antonio, slapping each other on the back and laughing as if nothing had happened between them.

ANDRE

He's the only mechanic in four hundred miles. You can't miss his place.

MAYOR DICK

(To Mitch)

Mitch is it true you're going to close Lazy Creek and Gully Roads by the end of the week?

MITCH

(To Mayor Dick)

If this rain keeps up, we'll have no option.

(To Karl)

Mate. I'd get your car fixed pretty quick. Otherwise, you'll be seeing a lot more of the Johnston boys and this place.

Karl nods and moves off.

He stops for a moment, locking eyes on Lisa, who smiles at him.

MAYOR DICK

(To Mitch)

What about the investor meeting at the end of the week? If we're cut off then all that planning is down the drain.

Mitch grabs his beer and turns towards the table with Lisa.

MITCH

(To Mayor Dick)

Well Dick. The ghosts will just have to keep us company for a few more months...

INT. BARRY'S FINE MOTORS - DAY

Karl is on the phone, bashing his hands on the side wall watching Barry busily ripping the windscreen off the Range Rover.

The rain on the tin roof of the garage sounds like canned applause.

KARL  
 (shouting into phone)  
 Peter, a change in plans. Am stuck  
 in a place called Warratama until the  
 car is fixed.

PETER (V.O.)  
 What about another one?

KARL  
 No good. I have to wait. It is too  
 small a town. Two days at maximum.

BARRY  
 (To Karl)  
 You leave keys. Can't fix till glass  
 comes. Going to take a couple of  
 days.

KARL  
 Hold on a moment.

Karl puts his hand over the phone.

KARL  
 (To Barry)  
 I am on the phone.

BARRY  
 Two days. You give me the keys, I  
 call you when ready.

KARL  
 (To Peter on phone)  
 I'll call you back.

Karl slams the portable phone down and stares at Barry and  
 the car.

EXT. OLD GOLDFIELDS, WARNER'S CLAIM - DAY

The rain continues to pour.

Mitch and Lisa pull up in a police truck at a moonscape and  
 scarred landscape dotted with fences, mining equipment and  
 warning signs.

Both get out.

This time, Lisa is wearing rain protective gear, but  
 coughing and sneezing.

MITCH

We'll walk from here. You OK?

Lisa simultaneously nods and coughs at the same time.

LISA

What is this place?

MITCH

This used to be a thriving gold town back at the turn of the

MITCH

century. Yep, Warratama had no less than forty hotels and pubs up and down the main street. About all that's left are the tailings, and old mines around this area. Old Albert Warner an old Pol is about the last of his breed.

Mitch and Lisa walk along between tailing heaps to the front of a small cabin, festooned with all kinds of warning and "get out" signs.

MITCH (cont'd)

(Shouting towards the Shack) Albert it's Mitch O'Rourke. We come in peace.

The door to the cabin creaks open and a shotgun peaks out. Lisa reaches to unhinge her gun.

WARNER

Whoever you are, this is my property. Get away.

MITCH

Warner, It's Mitch. I've brought someone to see you.

The gun withdraws into the cabin.

WARNER

I don't want to see anybody. I am too busy. Go away.

MITCH

Albert it's a new police woman. She won't bite.

The door slowly opens and a hunched man wearing ill fitted glasses, with wispy grey hair (WARNER) emerges.



His spectacles are taped together and tied with rubber bands to hold them on.

WARNER  
A police voo-man...

He moves up and surveys Lisa, who is trying to stand still but is occasionally coughing and sniffing.

WARNER  
(At Lisa)  
...A police voo-man eh?

Warner smiles and reveals missing teeth.

MITCH  
I am showing her around. I thought I might show her some local hospitality...

WARNER  
A police voo-man?

Lisa stomps her boots.

LISA  
What? What? (cough) I'm not some kind of ornament. What is wrong with you men?

Warner stumbles back and looks bewildered about her outburst.

MITCH  
(To Lisa)  
Don't be offended. Warner likes you. Normally he shoots people first. It's just that not too many attractive young women live around these parts, especially a police VOOMAN.

WARNER  
(To Lisa)  
Ahgh, Captain O'Rourke, she is too skinny to be a proper police voo-man.

Lisa puts her hands on her hips in disgust and starts to walk back to the truck before letting off a huge sneeze. Mitch laughs heavily.

MITCH  
(To Lisa)  
Ignore it Riordin. He's harmless.

LISA  
I didn't come here to be made fun of.

WARNER  
(To Lisa)  
Please come. Please come inside.

Warner signals to Mitch and to Lisa to come inside his cabin.

Mitch turns to Lisa and opens his palms as a gesture for her to accept the invitation.

She slowly takes her hands off her hips and sullenly walks towards the tin shack.

WARNER  
...I want to show you something.  
Please come.

INT. OLD GOLDFIELDS, WARNERS SHACK- DAY

Inside, the shack is crammed full of odd and ends.

There is the smell of unwashed sheets and mouldy food.

Warner scrounges around and finds two Boxes and turns them on their side as stools.

He motions for Mitch and Lisa to have a seat.

WARNER  
Dis rain. Very bad. I have to get  
pump working all night or I drown,  
no?

Mitch smiles.

MITCH  
So how are you going old timer? Still  
looking for Dead Man's Reef.

Warner closes the shack door.

He waves his hands and moves back towards Mitch.

WARNER  
Can dis vooman be trusted? Mitch nods  
affirmatively.

WARNER  
I think I am close no. I am very  
close.

(MORE)

WARNER (cont'd)  
I tell you because you are my friend  
Mitch. I tell, you tell no one else  
da?

Mitch nods again.

WARNER (cont'd)  
The reef runs the whole length of  
valley.

MITCH  
So you've found it?

Warner frowns.

He stands up and moves to a rickety bench near the wall.

He starts throwing off mouldy clothes and tools onto the  
floor.

He stops, turns around holding a bottle of whisky and three  
rusty cups. He moves back to Mitch and pours two whiskeys.

He signals to Lisa if she would like one.

She nods her head no. Mitch sips at his cup of whisky.

MITCH  
Jeez, Warner you'd kill someone with  
this one day.

WARNER  
I tell you because you are my friend.  
I am close. Very close.

Warner shuffles around to the back of the cabin and returns  
holding an old burlap sack.

He lumps it on the table in front of Lisa and Mitch,  
emptying the contents.

It is shavings of different sized quartz.

MITCH  
Quartz yes. But any gold?

WARNER  
I pulled dis out in past few days. I  
pulled this out at end of no 2 shaft.

MITCH  
So what are you saying?

WARNER  
I am close. Tell no one.

Mitch smiles, looking at his watch before looking over at Lisa.

Warner keeps mumbling and talking to himself.

WARNER (cont'd)  
No one. I am close.

EXT. OUTSIDE WARNERS SHACK - AFTERNOON

The rain is still pelting down. Lisa and Mitch sidestep the muddy puddles and walk back to the truck.

MITCH  
(To Warner)  
I'll come up and see you next week  
OK?

Warner nods, turning to Lisa and smiles again and they get into the truck.

Warner waves at Lisa.

WARNER  
A police voo-man. A nice police  
voo-man. Sick. She needs to rest.

Mitch turns the police truck around and heads down the hill back towards town.

EXT. INSIDE POLICE TRUCK - AFTERNOON

LISA  
So what's the story with him?

MITCH  
Albert's been chasing a myth for  
thirty years. Believing that the  
miners missed one last great shaft of  
gold and quartz- dead man's reef.

LISA  
Did they?

MITCH  
No. Warner not even is real name.  
It's Warnburg, but everyone call's  
him Warner.

(MORE)

MITCH (cont'd)  
 All the gold was on the other side of town. Warner's been digging in the wrong place...

The radio in the truck squawks into action as Lisa coughs.

RADIO (V.O.)  
 Warratama station, this is Geraldton command, over. Warratama station..

Mitch picks up the microphone.

MITCH  
 (To Radio)  
 Warratama. What's up.

RADIO (V.O.)  
 Mitch, there's an accident about a hundred miles up the road from your location. Two unidentified fatalities. A Ford station wagon, hit a Roo burst into flames. Coroner is on the way. Can you still get out and review.

MITCH  
 (To Radio)  
 I'm on my way.

Mitch turns to Lisa.

MITCH  
 (To Lisa)  
 I'm dropping you back at the Grand. Get some rest and I will see you in the morning. You don't have to come out.

Lisa nods and coughs again.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GRAND HOTEL - AFTERNOON

The rain is still teaming.

Mitch winds down the window and calls out to Lisa who runs to the veranda of the hotel.

MITCH  
 Get some rest. See you in the morning. Greta will help you.

Lisa nods before turning toward the hotel entrance and walks inside.

INT. LISA'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Lisa is sitting on a bed in front of a laptop, holding the landline phone.

She is wearing an old bathrobe and her head is covered in a towel.

A set of files are next to her, including two thick brown envelope satchels.

One is already opened, and we see just a fleeting glimpse of some of the photos of what looks like a man in uniform.

GRETA (V.O.)

Now remember like I said, rub the Vicks in and then put on your socks straight away. You'll be right as rain.

LISA

(To Phone)

Yes thanks again Greta. Got it. Bye

GRETA (V.O)

Bye dear.

Lisa gets back to looking at her computer when the phone rings again.

LISA

(To Phone)

Greta, I've got to keep going--

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MILES (V.O.)

Jim Miles Lisa.

LISA

(To Miles on Phone)

Assistant Commissioner.

(cough)

Sorry, I thought you were the receptionist.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MILES (V.O.)

Is everything alright Inspector?

LISA

(To Miles on Phone)

Fine. Just a bit of a cough. The rain.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MILES (V.O.)

And O'Rourke?

LISA

No, not yet. It will be on his desk  
by tomorrow morning.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MILES (V.O.)

I still don't understand why you had  
to drive up all that way, when you  
could have just posted it to him -

LISA

Sir

(cough)

He is a thirty year veteran and hero.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MILES (V.O.)

Was. He's washed up. No one  
remembers -

LISA

Yes, but you said you trusted my  
judgment. I thought this was the best  
way to handle it -

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MILES (V.O.)

OK. Ok. Hand him the paperwork first  
thing. I've seen the weather report  
and -

(beat)

Get over your cold and get the hell  
out of there before you're flooded  
in. I need you back in Perth before  
the end of the week.

LISA

Yes sir.

She hangs up the phone and looks back at the two envelopes.

She pulls out the photo we could only partially see before  
and stares at it. We can only see the back of it.

She feels the edges in her hands and carefully puts it back  
in the envelope.

EXT. BURNT OUT CAR ON OUTBACK ROAD- NIGHT

Mitch is standing in the front of the burnt out shell of the  
Ford station wagon we saw earlier.

Rain is still steadily pouring.