

FLOOD

by

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FADE IN

EXT. OUTBACK - NIGHT

POV starts in moon-lit, sparsely vegetated land with the THUNDER of a fast-running river in the background. Camera pushes through the bush and rests on a large factory shed with a solitary light out the front.

INT./EXT. REAR OF UTE - NIGHT

POV from CELINA--14yo Asian girl--as she is attacked. She SCREAMS as someone unseen and much stronger wrestles with her. A hand is slapped over her mouth, attempting to muffle her shouts. She lands heavily in the back of a ute but manages to twist free of the hands holding her, scrapping her nails against the metal trying to grip something.

She catches glimpses of the back the car and nearby spotlights, the two contrasts blurring in her manic thrashing. Material is pulled against her face. She tears at it trying to shout, to beg, to breathe.

Her view alternates between the lights and black.

A metal bar is smacked over her head and she falls unconscious.

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE CARD:

"FLOOD"

INT. DRIVER'S SEAT OF CAR - NIGHT.

From MINKA's--slender, medium-sized woman in late-30s dressed in black--POV, dim headlights barely illuminate the tarmac, a long, dark road surrounded by open (but unseen) land.

The only sound is the HISS of the road. The radio CRACKLES as she tunes in to a regional station.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
...after one of the heaviest
monsoon seasons on record, Cyclone
Tori will hit hard, dumping an

expected three hundred millimetres
on the north east.

Rain starts to fall on the windscreen and quickly gets heavy. Visibility becomes poor.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Those living in potential flood
zones should prepare for...

A phone vibrates on the passenger seat. Minka picks it up and checks the display. It reads F*CKING CHEAT. She sighs and clicks mute. She is shocked by a loud and long HONK (doppler) drawing her attention back to the road. Blinding lights flash past from a truck washing out her vision.

Her car lurches to the side and runs off the road.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD.

The headlights highlight the rain. The engine is silent. The wipers SQUEAK as they slowly sweep from side to side. Minka opens her door, which CREAKS with age.

MINKA gets out and moves around to front of car and checks under the bumper.

The phone rings again. She answers it. Although she is angry, there is a desperation and vulnerability to her voice.

MINKA
(Angry)
What! ... Now you care? ... Go
find happiness with your little
bitch.

She throws phone into the field and screams after it. Opens car door and gets back in.

Rain begins to fall heavier.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

From Minka's POV, her vision throbs at the edges in time with her HEART BEAT and laboured BREATHING. Her emotion dissolves and returns to normal after several seconds.

Minka gasps as she realises what she's done, then gets back out of car.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Running into the field, she scans the ground but can't

find the phone. She stalks back to the car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Minka slumps into her seat. Pushes back her soaking hair and places head in hands. Her breathing slows and her head begins to fall forward. She is shocked as another truck blasts its HORN as it passes.

Minka starts the car and pulls out onto the road. She speeds off, the speedo showing her going faster and faster. Barely able to see what is ahead. She veers sharply to the left as her headlights flash across a sign pointing to Bunyip Creek.

EXT. INTERSECTION UNDER ONE STREET LIGHT.

Her car slides uncontrollably into the side road then speeds off into the dark. After twenty seconds of manic driving the car screeches to halt with smoke and steam pouring out of the engine. The headlights shine on a sign saying 'If it's flooded...forget it!'. Beyond the sign, the headlights illuminate the start of an old narrow bridge.

Minka gets out and checks the river which is lapping over the edges of the bridge. She glances back at the sign, then gives it the finger.

She gets back in car and floors it. The engine ROARS.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

From Minka's POV, a bow wave breaks over the bonnet and washes out the windscreen. The car comes to a sudden stop as it crashes into something.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

She gets out to discover she has made it across but crashed into a fence post. While examining the damage, the bridge gives way, disappearing into turbulent waters.

MINKA

You can check out any time you like.

One headlight is broken. She kicks the damaged fender until it fits roughly into place, then gets back in and continues to drive toward a solitary street lamp placed above a sign saying 'WELCOME TO BUNYIP CREEK'.

INT. BAR - NIGHT.

THE WHISTLE is a small RSL-styled pub based around a long bar on one side of the room. A couple of pokies are at the end. On the opposite side a couple of booths. A dozen people are in.

MUSIC plays from jukebox washing out the general conversation. A TV sits in the corner broadcasting an AFL game. VOICES float in the background. The whole place looks like it's moving in slow motion.

A group of bikies sit in the corner booth talking quietly between themselves. BRYAN, bald, 40s overweight trucker, approaches. MUNT, head bikie 50s dressed in leather and denim, nods and allows Bryan to join them. Their conversation is inaudible. Munt slides a roll of hundred dollar bills across the table. Bryan nervously nods, takes the money.

A row of men sit at the bar, quietly staring at the game. The TV Screen goes blank and the patrons SHOUT in disappointment.

Bryan jumps at the shout from the bar. The bikies laugh at him. He gets up and leaves.

A young barmaid, JESSIE--late-20s, a slim peroxide blonde with a hard face--pours drinks but glances over her shoulder at the screen. She returns her focus to the pour and places the glass on the bar. A patron hands her a package and she slips it under the counter next to a concealed baseball bat. The packaging slips away to reveal a hunting knife.

EXT. UNDER STREET LIGHT OUT THE FRONT OF POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Old wooden police station (Queenslander with wide verandas) One street light shining on sign. A Land Cruiser is parked out the front, with a man standing next to it in a raincoat.

MILSY--a young, eager, and over-weight man in his mid-20s--turns to see who is approaching. He raises hand to shade the headlight.

The car stops but no one gets out. Eventually, the door opens.

MILSY
(Cautious)
Can I help you?

MINKA
The bridge is out.

MILSY
Who are you?

MINKA
Detective Senior Sergeant Minka
Saul. You got a name?

MILSY
(Excited)
Uh. Uh. Uh.

Minka sighs loudly as she walks over to him.

MINKA
(Exasperated)
It's not a hard question.

MILSY
Sorry. I'm Constable Jim Mills.
Everyone calls me Milsy.

MINKA
Well, Constable, I'm not one for
being overly friendly with the
juniors when I'm soaking, but open
up.

MILSY
Uh, yeah, sure. Uh, what for?

MINKA
I generally don't like my orders
being questioned. I'm not in a
good mood.

Milsy hustles over to the front door and unlocks it,
opening it for her. She pushes past him.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT.

She flicks on the light and looks around. The front room
of the station has a long wooden bench taking up most of
the width. A hinged bench top sits at one end.

MINKA
I need to inform head office or
someone about the bridge.

MILSY
Don't you have a phone?

She ducks under the bench and moves into the rear room.
It contains two desks. One neat. One a mess. Milsy tries
to follow but gets caught under the bench, before lifting
it and stepping through.

MINKA
Something happened to it.

She picks up the phone on the messy desk and starts to dial. She spots a uniform and signals for Milsy to hand it over.

MINKA (CONT'D)
Emergency services?

She unbuttons her top and drops it on the floor. Milsy turns away. She rolls her eyes.

MINKA (CONT'D)
Yeah, the bridge to Bunyip creek
is out... I'll ask.
(To Milsy)
Do you have another bridge yet? I
mean it's only been twenty years
since I left.

She slips on the police shirt and buttons it up.

MILSY
(Over his shoulder)
No. Only the one.

MINKA
(To phone)
Apparently there is only the one.
Yeah I'll hold.

She kicks off her shoes and drops her trousers.

MINKA (CONT'D)
(To Milsy)
It looks like the place hasn't
changed in twenty years.

Wipes finger over desk.

MINKA (CONT'D)
Or cleaned.

She pulls on the pants, placing the phone between her ear and shoulder.

MILSY
I'm glad you're here. I called
Kyle, but he didn't answer. I
didn't know what to do.

MINKA
About what?

MILSY
Someone's just found a body.

Minka glances sharply over at Milsy, then quickly returns her focus to the phone.

MINKA
Hello? Hello? The line's gone
dead.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

A group of men wearing casual business clothing sit around a large table, looking at DRILLING PLANS for the area. The walls are covered in paintings of local landscapes. TOMAS--late-50s overweight businessman with grey hair--is talking earnestly to ROB--early-40s, thin, balding--about the deal. CHRIS--late-40s, fit and muscular, died hair--listens in with a mixture of disdain and impatience.

TOMAS
(Concerned)
The Chinese won't wait too long
before moving on to other
investment opportunities. We have
to be quick and confident.

ROB
And we're being blocked by the
ancient woman, who doesn't even
know her name or that she even
owns the property.

Chris sweeps his arm in a grand gesture.

CHRIS
(Blasé)
We're taking care of it.

TOMAS
What do you mean, you're 'taking
care of it'? The last thing we
need is trouble snooping around,
delaying the transaction. It's got
to be legal even if not totally
ethical.

CHRIS
(Laughing)
Leave the ethics to the polies.
This is business.

ROB
Maybe we can leave the bumper
sticker slogans out of it. What
profit do we make if we simply buy
her out?

CHRIS

Not enough to be worth my time.
And without me, you've got no deal
at all. The Chinese don't care one
bit how we get the land. Look at
their own country.

TOMAS

I don't know. It feels bad.

CHRIS

Listen, we've got the council
behind us, we've got the cops.
We've got investors. Everything is
in place and lined up. There is
nothing to worry about. It's just
one old lady. I've paid everyone
off.

Tomas sits in silence with his head lowered, hands hidden under the table. Chris picks up his copy of the plans and spins them across the table, then leans across, pointing at Tomas.

CHRIS

You need this, Tomas, I've seen
your debt. Christ, it's all over
the news.

TOMAS

They're exaggerating it.

CHRIS

I've got your creditors calling me
up. So, I'm telling you, I walk
out if we don't take care of it,
then you lose everything. And your
trophy wife will probably leave
you as soon as the spending
allowance runs out. What's it to
be?

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT.

MINKA

(Holding out her hand)
Lend me your phone.

Milsy slowly hands his over. Minka closes her eyes and takes a deep breath, then dials. She starts her conversation with a conciliatory tone but gets aggressive as it continues.

MINKA (CONT'D)

Yeah, it's me. We got cut off. No,
my battery died, I'm on a ... work
colleague's phone. What d'you

want?

Milsy leans against a desk, then stands picks up a thin DHL cardboard envelope. He hands it to Minka.

MILSY

(Mouthing quietly)

Came in for you by courier this afternoon. It's from Sydney. Looks like Head Office.

Minka takes the envelope, rips it open and pulls the letter half way out and scans the opening paragraph. Her attention is drawn back to the phone. She tucks the envelope under her arm and prowls around the office.

MINKA

(Angry)

How dare you. You have no right. It's half mine. Listen closely. You continue along this line and I will personally see something bad happens...

(beat)

Are you recording this? Because if you are, by law, you need to declare it.

(beat)

I'm the risk? Well, it's not like you were that honest.

(beat)

Go fuck yourself.

She hands back the phone, anger boiling inside. Taking a moment to settle, she stands thoughtfully, then waves the envelope. It is apparent she is holding back her emotions about the phone call and trying to keep them under control.

MINKA (CONT'D)

I'm banned.

MILSY

From where?

MINKA

Sydney.

MILSY

All of it?

MINKA

Pretty much. Not that it matters. And the first public mistake and I'll be chucked off the force. What a bastard.

She throws the envelope on the desk.

MILSY
 Why are you banned? How is that possible?

MINKA
 (Angry)
 Let's go.

INT. MILSY'S CAR - NIGHT.

Minka and Milsy (driving) head to the cattle shed. Milsy has a small smile on his face, but generally looks worried. Minka sits quietly, her eyes flicking from side to side, lost in thought, her thumb nail scratching at her tooth. Their silence is reinforced by the HEAVY RAIN on the roof. The windscreen wipers SQUEAK as they flick back and forth. She finally speaks, her voice softer.

MINKA
 Who called it in?

MILSY
 Mrs Pickering heard a scream from the old derelict sheds. Thought it was odd so she went and investigated.

Minka turns and stares out the window tracing her finger over the condensation on the rubber seal.

MINKA
 (distracted)
 Mrs Pickering, the old school teacher? Still alive.

She shakes her head in disbelief.

MINKA (CONT'D)
 Must have made a pact with the devil. What kind of scream?

MILSY
 What do you mean?

MINKA
 Female. Male. What did she say when you asked?

Minka looks over at Milsy. Milsy looks uneasily back.

MILSY
 (Hesitates)
 I didn't ask.

Minka sighs.

MILSY (CONT'D)

She's not the most coherent of people.

Minka points to the side of the road. A man is highlighted in the headlights. He suspiciously glances back over his shoulder.

MINKA

Who's this joker?

MILSY

Er, he's my friend, Buzz.

MINKA

What's the idiot doing out in this weather?

MILSY

He doubles as a handyman or general runabout. You know. Bit of a lad. Likes a laugh.

MINKA

Pull over.

Milsy pulls the car over and Minka winds down her window and places her arm on the sill.

BUZZ

Hey, Tubs, what you--

MINKA

(Serious police voice)

Bet you're popular with the women, Buzz.

BUZZ

Who the hell are you? Hey Milsy, who is this? You dating cougars?

MILSY

Hey, Buzz. It's my new boss.

BUZZ

What you doing out in this?

MINKA

Could ask the same, Buzz.

MILSY

We've got a murder. Out by the old shed near Mrs Pickering.

MINKA

Oi! Don't tell anyone until we've notified the NOK.

(Turns back to Buzz)

So, what are you doing out on this charming night?

BUZZ

Walking.

MINKA

Anywhere in particular?

BUZZ

No law against it.

MINKA

Don't get smart or I'll book you for loitering.

BUZZ

But I'm talking to you.

MINKA

The law can be a bitch. Hit it, Milsy.

The Land Cruiser draws away. Buzz, with a worried expression, watches them leave before turning and running back along the track toward the town.

EXT. DERELICT SHED - NIGHT

Land Cruiser pulls up to entrance of shed, a small door in the corrugated iron (as in opening scene).

The door SQUEAKS as they open it. One interior light, a lamp in the corner.

INT. DERELICT SHED - NIGHT

Minka pauses as she enters the interior. Rusty tools hang on hooks. The shed has a concrete floor with a drain in the centre. A body lies next to the drain.

SIMON, thin, late 30s, thinning blonde hair, white shirt and jeans. Blood has run from the injury to the drain. Minka is shocked when she sees who it is but hides most of her emotion.

MILSY

It's a bit gruesome.

MINKA

Yeah.

Milsy goes to step into the shed but she stops him.

MINKA (CONT'D)

Notice anything?

MILSY
Besides the deceased?

MINKA
Look down. What do you see?

MILSY
Er, my feet.

MINKA
Muddy feet. You're going to leave footprints. So why are ours the only ones?

MILSY
The murder happened before the rain.

MINKA
A couple of small feet just by the entrance. Could be Pickering's. Organise a time to interview Mrs Pickering.

Minka walks around the body then kneels next to the head. She pulls a pen out of her pocket and moves the head gently.

MILSY
His name is Simon Morrison.

MINKA
Take this down. Deceased male. 38 years old.

Milsy fumbles in his pockets before bringing out a phone.

MILSY
How do you know his age?

He starts to enter the information. Minka glances up at him before continuing.

MINKA
Take some photos. Get closeups of the head wounds. And video the scene, the tools, victim. Don't post them online.

MILSY
That would be a breach of protocol.

MINKA
Wouldn't be the first time. A cursory examination shows multiple trauma to the head. No other

She lifts up his fingers with the pen and examines them. On his left hand she finds white skin on ring finger.

MINKA (CONT'D)
Was he married?

MILSY
He was a while back. Marilyn. I think they separated.

MINKA
Not divorced?

MILSY
I don't know.

MINKA
His wedding band is missing. Tan mark around his finger. Looks like it was removed after the attack. Might be worth asking Mrs Ex where she was at the time.

Milsy films the walls, floor, and victim, moving the phone slowly over the scene.

MINKA (CONT'D)
No other visible signs. Not even in defence. Possible surprise attack.

She stands and scans the area, checkomh the line from the door to the body. She grabs Milsy and positions him next to the body.

MINKA (CONT'D)
Work with me. Someone is killing Simon. Basically, one solid blow to the head.

She raises her hand and pretends to bash Milsy over the head.

MINKA (CONT'D)
The murderer is discovered. Is it by a friend or foe?

MILSY
Er, friend.

MINKA
I don't think so. If it was a friend, there would be no body. The two of them would have got rid of it.

MILSY
Foe?

She acts out a potential enemy entering the scene.

MINKA

A foe comes in and disturbs them.
Surely she or he wouldn't be
expecting a violent confrontation.

She points to Milsy and Simon.

MINKA (CONT'D)

You see a victim and a murderer,
what do you do?

MILSY

Er, report it to the police?

MINKA

You'd either try and stop it. Or
run. Fight or flee. So...

There is an awkward pause.

MILSY

So?

Minka kneels next to Simon and runs her fingers over his
face, a moment of sadness on hers.

MINKA

Open up a file. Get in contact
with the nearest district to
organise a forensics team. Let's
start assembling a list of
suspects.

MILSY

You said 'so...'

MINKA

We either have a witness or
another body.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

ROB

The rational is, we take out a
holding company in a temporary
name. We can put in a fake bid and
use it as evidence of
competition--

The door bursts open and Buzz runs in, dripping with
water. They stare at him.

CHRIS

(Angry)

What?

BUZZ
(Out of breath)
Someone's been killed out on the
Morrison estate.

Tomas places his hands on his head, pushing back his
hair.

TOMAS
(Worried)
Jesus.

CHRIS
Did you fix the issue?

BUZZ
No, the cops rolled me on the way
over.

CHRIS
Cops?! Christ, you're meant to be
friends with them.

BUZZ
They got some new chick with them
who says she's the boss.

CHRIS
Someone new? Why weren't we told?

ROB
Will this affect the plan?

CHRIS
Oh, yes. It's just got a lot
worse.

Chris turns to Tomas. Tomas puts his hands in his head.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You're part of it now, no backing
out.

INT. MILSY'S CAR. NIGHT

MILSY
What do we do with the body?

Minka looks over her shoulder at Simon's body in the back
of the car.

MINKA
Need somewhere cool to store it
until we can get a forensics team
out. There a butcher in town?

MILSY

No. What about the pub? They've got the cool room for kegs and stuff.

MINKA

Is Dunc still the owner?

MILSY

No. His daughter, Law.

Minka looks out the window.

MINKA

(Resigned)

Great.

MILSY

Is there a problem?

MINKA

We'll see.

EXT. REAR OF PUB. NIGHT

The land cruiser pulls up at the rear of the pub. The area is fenced in by old corrugated iron. Milsy gets out first with Minka following hesitantly a few seconds later. LAW--50 years old and stern wearing jeans and a Bundaberg singlet, hair tied back--is stacking cartons into the cool room from the back of her ute. A tarpaulin has been erected over the entrance to the room and the ute.

LAW

Milsy, you're just in time for a staffie. You brought a friend?

MILSY

Yeah, it's...

Minka appears uncertainly from behind the car. Law crosses her arms and her face hardens.

LAW

(Sneering)

Well, look who it bloody well is. You musta done somethin' pretty bad to be back here.

MINKA

(Professional voice)

Laura. We need to store something in your fridge.

LAW

(Outraged)

No bloody way.

MILSY
Official police business.

LAW
What is it?

MINKA
A body.

LAW
(Outraged)
No bloody way.

MINKA
Heard you the first time.

LAW
Maybe you should bloody listen.
But I remember that's not your
style, unless you got some big
city manners when you was away.

Milsy looks uncertainly between the two.

MILSY
C'mon, Law. You'd be helping us
out.

She lets her eyes drift over to Milsy, her face softening
a little.

LAW
Who is it?

MINKA
Simon Morrison.

Law nods and unfolds her arms.

MINKA
You don't seem surprised.

LAW
You hear rumours.

MINKA
Maybe you should report those
rumours to the police, before it
happens.

LAW
If I had to report every vague and
barely coherent whisper I hear,
I'd be living down at the station.

MINKA

And Simon wouldn't be dead.

LAW

I understand you're probably pissed off, but what did you expect him to do?

MINKA

I'm here as an officer of the law, I suggest you see me as such.

LAW

I'm not feeling too civic-minded all of a sudden. And I certainly don't feel the least bit sorry for you.

MINKA

You remember who grants you your liquor license?

MILSY

(friendly)

C'mon, Law. You know we wouldn't ask unless we had to.

EXT. REAR OF PUB - CONTINUOUS

Milsy and Minka carry Simon's body from the car to the coldstore. Law has disappeared, but the the clinking of glasses can be heard in the background from inside the pub.

MINKA

Still a cow.

MILSY

She's all right, you know.

MINKA

You say that before or after the free drink?

MILSY

It's a small community and only two officers. We need everyone's help. We look out for each other.

MINKA

She sure acted helpful.

MILSY

She puts up with a lot of crap running the pub on her own.

They lay Simon's body on the flood against the far wall

and cover it with a sheet.

MINKA

A word of advice, you're not their friend, you are a police officer. You ask them to do something, they need to comply.

MILSY

What if they don't?

MINKA

Arrest them.

Minka closes the coldstore door and pushes that latch into position.

MILSY

What if they're not breaking the law.

Minka pauses inserting the padlock into the coldstore latch.

MINKA

Everyone's guilty of something.

She locks the padlock with a loud CLICK.

INT. MILSY'S CAR - NIGHT.

MINKA

Anyone in town got form?

He glances over at her uncertainly.

MILSY

Got what?

MINKA

A record. Violent behaviour. That kind of thing.

MILSY

Not that I recall off the top of my head.

MINKA

List of persons of interest?

MILSY

Uh, we've got a pin-up board at the station.

MINKA

How well do you know the faces?

He glances at her again.

MILSY

Um.

MINKA

Memorise them tomorrow.

MILSY

I sort of know some of them.

She taps her fingers on the window sill.

MINKA

Anyone new or passing through?

MILSY

Bikies are always stopping off here, but they mainly stick to themselves. I'm guessing the only person who they know, or who knows them would be Law.

MINKA

It's something. Put her on the list of suspects.

MILSY

Law? Are you sure? She's got our body in her fridge.

MINKA

You heard her, she hears rumours. Find out exactly what she's been hearing. You don't need to arrest her for that. You can play good cop.

EXT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT

They pull up to the police station. Another Land Cruiser is parked out the front next to Minka's car. An interior light is on in the station.

INT. MILSY'S CAR. NIGHT

MILSY

Looks like you can meet Kyle, after all.

MINKA

Should I be worried?

MILSY

Nah, he's cool.

MINKA
(Sarcastic)
Just what I need. Go, Kyle, go.

MILSY
What?

She opens the door to get out.

MINKA
Doesn't matter. I'll get the file started. Be on the lookout for a fresh face, any suspicious activity; and check out Simon's ex.

INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT

Minka enters the police station, shaking the rain off her jacket. As the ROAR of Milsy's engine fades, a male voice floats out from the rear office.

KYLE
Yeah, we've got our very own detective, shiny and new up from Sydney. Probably some bloody uptight bitch. You know what they're like.

She moves through the office and peers around the doorway. KYLE--mid-40s fit and well groomed, dressed casually in uniform--sits at his desk, feet up on corner of the desk, talking into a headset. She knocks loudly on the door jam.

MINKA
The bloody uptight bitch is here.

Kyle glances over his shoulder and gives her a wave.

KYLE
I'll get back to you.

He turns off the radio. She knocks his boots off the desk and sits down on the opposite side.

MINKA
I thought the lines were dead.

KYLE
Using shortwave. It's not the best line, but while the antenna is still standing it's something. You're not what I expected.

MINKA
Good. I like to get the

disappointment out the way early.
Your turn.

KYLE

(Dryly)

Your big city humour isn't going
to fly up here.

MINKA

Are we going to have a problem?

KYLE

If you're lucky.

MINKA

You any good at forensics?

KYLE

I hold my own.

MINKA

The body's in the pub cold store.

KYLE

That'll go down well.

MINKA

Let them complain. You think you
could have a look at it tomorrow?

KYLE

One good thing about the wet is
that it keeps the criminals in
doors. I got time.

MINKA

Thanks. Hoping to settle in
tomorrow.

KYLE

Well, if work is going to get in
the way, I'll cover for you.

MINKA

That attitude get you many
friends?

KYLE

I apologise. Are you living above
the Whistle?

MINKA

No, Foster had a small place on
the edge of his land. He told me I
could use it if ever back in town.

KYLE

Must have been a while since you

spoke to Gerry. He's sold off most of his land to the Fraccers. I don't recall seeing any small places, just drilling rigs. I got a spare bed if you need it.

MINKA

I bet you say that to all the girls. Thanks. But no thanks.

KYLE

You got any family, husband, coming up?

MINKA

(Pauses)

No.

KYLE

You not married?

Minka folds her arms and leans back.

MINKA

The deceased is Simon Morrison. You know much about him?

KYLE

Bloody troublesome guy. In fact, whole family was a handful. The old lady's gone senile and is causing even more grief than before. Wish she'd die and give us all some peace.

MINKA

Was he into anything illegal?

KYLE

There were rumours.

MINKA

Like?

KYLE

(Shrugging)

Bad connections to Sydney.

MINKA

From here? Got any documentation?

KYLE

Come back to my place and I'll read to you.

MINKA

(Tired)

Let's keep it professional.

Kyle leans forward onto the desk and gives her a charming smile.

KYLE

I am being professional. If you weren't the boss, I'd be chatting you up right now.

MINKA

Who say's you're not?

KYLE

You'd know.

MINKA

Really? How?

KYLE

You'd be in my bed. Or yours. I'm a new age kind of guy.

Minka stands and moves toward the door.

MINKA

Do me a favour, be all new age-y and open a file. There's a good boy.

She gives him a pat on the head.

KYLE

Now?

MINKA

Unless your bed is full. Didn't think so.

INT. MARYLYN'S HOUSE

MARYLYN--mid-30s clinging on to her youth dressed in loose nightwear (summer PJs and a see-through Kimono)--sits in the front room of her home, a modest worker's shack next to a disused railway. A stereo plays 80s rock MUSIC loudly enough to drown out the rain. A standing fan blows her hair as it twists. The room has one two-seater sofa covered in 70s-styled material, a shelf full of bottles and glasses, an ancient TV on top of a DVD player in the corner on an old cabinet. The room is bathed in a golden glow from a 70s LAMP.

Marylyn drops her hand into a plastic bucket next to her filled with ice and several Jim Beam and Cola bottles. She pulls one out and places the glass against her chest, closes her eyes enjoying the cool.

She becomes aware that someone is KNOCKING at her door. She gets up and staggers over and opens door. A dark

figure appears on the other side of the fly screen. She flicks on the exterior light to reveal Milsy.

MARYLYN

(Angry)

Don't you go telling me the music is too loud.

MILSY

(Timid)

Um, no. It's, ah, bad news.

She gives him a seductive/appraising look. She unlocks the fly screen and opens the door. Milsy removes his hat and moves uncertainly into the centre of the room.

MARYLYN

Bad news deserves a drink.

MILSY

It's about Simon.

MARYLYN

What's he got himself into?

MILSY

He was involved in an incident. I'm sorry. He was attacked and killed.

MARYLYN

(Shocked)

Shit.

She grabs a bottle of Jack Daniels from her drinks shelf, unscrews the lid and drinks straight from the bottle.

MARYLYN

(Disbelieving)

Killed?

She takes a few deep breaths, placing her hand against the shelf to steady herself. As she goes into shock, she reverts to the only coping mechanism she has, seduction. Her gaze shifts over to Milsy, eyeing him up under long, fake eyelashes.

MARYLYN

Can't say it wasn't coming. How did it happen?

MILSY

He was attacked. A blow to the head. We think it was quick. What makes you say he had it coming?

MARYLYN

The bastard was knee-deep in all

sorts of shit.

MILSY

You haven't seen his wedding ring?
Did he leave it with you?

MARYLYN

(Laughing)

I had to screw whatever I got out
of the bastard. So, no, he didn't
even leave the cheap-arse ring.
Maybe, he was going to give it to
the next slag he could pin against
the pub wall.

She waves toward the sofa and grabs another glass.

MARYLYN

Have a seat. You want a drink?

He nervously sits.

MILSY

Uh, no. On duty and all that.

She sits down right next to him, the two squeezing into
the narrow sofa. Milsy's discomfort is obvious.

MILSY

Er, he's got the safety box down
at the station. I guess you'll
need to check through it being the
registered next of kin.

She rolls over and straddles him, wrapping her arms
around his neck and whispering into his ear.

MARYLYN

You know anything about the will?

MILSY

I, I, I can't tell you that.

MARYLYN

Oh, you can, and you know why.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Minka pulls up next to the bridge, her headlights
revealing it is now nothing more than a semi-submerged
pile of timber. The welcome sign flexes in the wind.

She gets out and moves around to the back of her car,
popping the boot. The wind and rain drive down heavily,
forcing the boot down on her as she pulls out safety
equipment. By the river, the wind and rain is much
wilder.

She places down two safety cones on either side of the bridge entrance and drives stakes through their centres, fastening them to the ground. The warning tape flutters out of her hand as she struggles to stretch it across the posts on either side. Feeling the strain of a long and emotional day, she rests against the side of her car and lowers her head letting the rain cascade over her rain cape.

She breathes deeply and readies to tie the tape again. Lights flash across her face as a BMW sedan pulls up behind her car. She approaches. The driver's window rolls down two inches. The interior is pitch dark and the driver can only be seen in outline.

MINKA
 (Shouting above the
 weather)
 Bridge is out. You'll have to go
 back to town.

She points the torch back along the track. The window rolls back up and the car backs out and heads slowly along the track.

As she turns back to the bridge, a bright light shines through the trees farther down the river. She fetches a baton from her boot and hikes along by the river, smashing aside the bush as she pushes through.

The light turns into the headlights of a Range Rover.

Two people are outlined in the headlights.

JESSIE
 I thought you said it had sonar.
 We can make it.

TOMAS
 I want to get out of here as much
 as you, but we have to be--

Minka shines her torch in their faces interrupting them. For a moment, it looks like they were about to run.

MINKA
 Sir, what are you and your--
 (beat)
 --significant other attempting to
 do?

TOMAS
 You used to be able to cross here.
 It shallows out a bit.

MINKA
 Must be pretty important to try
 and cross this. What's the reason?

Tomas looks uncertainly at Jessie, and shifts from foot to foot.

TOMAS
Er, a business meeting.

MINKA
Is it worth your life?

TOMAS
To a businessman, it is his life.

Minka moves around to the side of the Range Rover and shines her torch into the rear and peers in.

MINKA
What are your names?

JESSIE
Do we have to tell you if we're not doing anything wrong?

MINKA
Makes it easier to identify your bodies when we fish them from the river.

TOMAS
Hey. You're new, aren't you? I'm Tomas, and this is Jessie, my wife.

Minka gives him a side glance, momentarily distracting her.

INT. RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

The light skips across the contents, revealing a large knife tucked under several travel bags.

EXT. BY RIVER - NIGHT

Minka returns her attention to the back of the car, having missed the knife.

MINKA
Plenty of luggage. Long meeting, is it?

Minka returns the light to Jessie and Tomas, examining them.

JESSIE
Sometimes you just gotta get out.

MINKA

Spoken like a true philosopher.
You can get out when it's safe.
Head back home and screw each
other senseless. See how you feel
in the morning.

EXT. MARYLYN'S HOUSE

Milsy adjusts his uniform as the door closes behind him. Marylyn is seen as a silhouette through the screen door, outlined by the yellow glow of the interior lights.

He runs to the Land Cruiser keeping his head down against the rain and pulls open the door.

INT. MILSY'S CAR. NIGHT

The Land Cruiser starts on the third attempt. He lets out a sigh of relief and drives off. The radio cuts out. He tries to retune the station but only gets STATIC.

As he returns his focus to the road he spots Buzz in the rear view mirror, in the back seat of his car.

BUZZ

(Menacing)

My, you've been a popular boy tonight.

MILSY

Jesus, Buzz, you scared the shit out of me.

BUZZ

Seen with two women. But, you gotta admit it looks like you got a thing for cougars.

MILSY

It's not like that.

BUZZ

Really? You took your sweet time with Simon's lady. Nearly fell asleep waiting for you to finish.

MILSY

(Angry)

Nothing happened.

Buzz raises his phone and opens up the photo app.

BUZZ

Wanna see?

Milsy pushes the phone away.

MILSY
What do you want?

BUZZ
Just wondering if you could tell
me who the body was?

MILSY
What do you want to know for?

BUZZ
You know what I'm like. Love a bit
of juicy gossip. So, who stiffed
it?

MILSY
Buzz, I can't tell you. We've got
rules we have to follow. I can get
into trouble. This is serious. I
can't afford to lose this job.

BUZZ
We got a deal. You're not gonna
pike out on me? I'd hate your new
pretty boss to find out.

MILSY
You'll hear soon enough. Now, get
out of the car, please.

Milsy pulls over to the side of the road.

BUZZ
Take me to the pub.

MILSY
It's closed.

BUZZ
It's where I'm sleeping tonight.

MILSY
The police is not a taxi service.

BUZZ
Yeah, well, we all know about
that. Be a good lad, and drop me
off at the Whistle.

MILSY
Buzz, get out.

BUZZ
Ain't gonna. You need to play
along.

The two stare at each other. Buzz puts his hands behind his head and feet up on the seat, smiling at Milsy and defying him. Milsy cracks. Without saying anything, he drives through the town and stops out the front of the pub. He keeps his hands on the steering wheel and stares straight ahead.

BUZZ

Good man. I knew you'd come good.
Good! What am I saying. Sleep
easy.

Buzz slides across the seat and gets out of the car.

EXT. THE WHISTLE - NIGHT

Buzz runs to the veranda. He gives Milsy a quick wave then disappears inside.

INT. MILSY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Milsy rests his head on the steering wheel and lets out a long sigh. There is a quiet CRASH to his right. He inches the Land Cruiser forward and peers down the side of the pub. A figure (Bryan) lands on the ground after jumping the fence.

Milsy turns the headlights off and watches.

The man turns and his face is caught in the light. He tips over a bin and starts to search through the rubbish.

MILSY

(Whispers to self)
Lookout for a fresh face, any
suspicious activity.

Milsy turns on the police lights and drives the car into the alcove. Bryan, startled by the lights, turns and disappears through an opening in the fence.

Milsy reverses back out onto the road and takes off around the block to head the man off.

EXT. STREET BEHIND THE WHISTLE - NIGHT

POV of Bryan, watches the Land Cruiser coast past from a hiding point in the bushes between the houses. Milsy has a search light out and is scanning the houses.

The light flashes across his face and he pulls back into the bushes.

As soon as the car passes, Bryan dashes across the road.

INT. MILSY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Milsy catches the movement and swings the car around to chase. He drives back down the street watching the figure run through the houses and out into the bush.

EXT. CENTRE OF BUNYIP CREEK TOWN

Minka drives her car down the main road through the town made up of only a couple of dozen buildings. The street is dark except for a few illuminated corporate signs (Shell, Commonwealth Bank, etc.) and the Whistle which has two lights out the front.

As she drives past the pub she has a flashback to when she was younger.

FLASHBACK - INT. PUB - NIGHT

Loud late-90s MUSIC plays and she dances around with some friends, holding drinks and laughing.

EXT. REAR OF PUB - NIGHT

Muted music plays in the background as Minka has sex with Simon against the wall.

EXT. REAR OF PUB - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Minka sits on an old rusty oil drum and finishes a cigarette, with a bottle of beer in the other, while Simon zips up his jeans. She offers him the cigarette.

SIMON

I don't want that disgusting stuff
inside of me.

MINKA

Could have said the same about
you. But as it's our last night...

SIMON

(Smiles)
Pass the bottle.

She hands him the bottle and he leans against the oil drum and has a mouthful. He places his arm around her shoulders and pulls her close.

SIMON

You be careful in Sydney. It can
be a dangerous place. My dad says
it was bad.

MINKA

Won't be there for that long. As soon as training is over I'm coming back. Promise. Will you wait for me?

SIMON

Always. Unless someone hotter comes along.

MINKA

Fucker.

She pushes him away.

SIMON

You're already talking like them. Promise me you'll keep safe.

She takes back the bottle and smiles at him.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MINKA'S CAR - NIGHT.

Minka drives up to an old weatherboard house, small but set on a big block. Wire fence runs along the front. One of the windows is boarded up.

MINKA

Really moving up in the world.

EXT. ALFIE'S HOUSE. DARK - NIGHT

Minka gets out of the car, runs to the veranda and knocks heavily on the door.

ALFIE

Who is it?

MINKA

(Shouts)

Open up. It's the police.

The door opens to reveal ALFIE--overly thin, early-30s, dressed in track pants and a flannelette shirt over a black ACDC t-shirt.

ALFIE

Mini? You're home?

INT. ALFIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is small and untidy. A small 70s LAMP with frilled edging sits in the corner shedding a dim light.

The room contains a collapsing sofa, a chair, a flat screen TV with a game console. Several glasses are scattered around the available surfaces, all containing cigarette ends.

She sniffs the air.

MINKA
You still clean?

Alfie recedes into his cowl and places his hands in his pockets.

ALFIE
Of course.

MINKA
Doesn't smell like it.

ALFIE
It's so dull round here, you've got to do something.

MINKA
I'm guessing, getting stoned when your sister is in charge of the cops isn't a good idea. Anyway, it's not going to be so quiet for long.

ALFIE
What's happened? You want a drink?

MINKA
Bring the bottle.

ALFIE
Sounds bad.

Alfie fetches a bottle of bourbon from the kitchen and returns with two glasses. She casts an eye over the sofa before sitting on it, throwing old clothes off it onto the floor. Alfie pours the drinks and passes a glass to her. She takes a mouthful. He sits and carefully watches her from the single chair opposite.

MINKA
It's Simon.

She pauses to get her emotions under control.

MINKA
He's dead.

ALFIE
Jesus.

MINKA

I wish. At least he'd come back to life in a couple of days.

They both laugh. Alfie relaxes and takes a sip.

ALFIE

But he'd think he was god.

MINKA

No different to any other man I've met.

Minka looks around the room scanning over the various pieces of furniture and general untidiness.

MINKA

You still playing the bachelor?

ALFIE

You wait until you see the quality of women here.

MINKA

Dad would be proud. Mum would probably strangle you.

ALFIE

It suits me. I have no burning desire for kids.

MINKA

No different to any other man I've met. I was really looking forward to seeing Simon. Since everything went to shit in Sydney, he was like a beacon to an innocent time. Turns out, the fucker was even single.

ALFIE

I don't think his ex would have liked you moving in on her territory. She's a bit hard core.

MINKA

She can get screwed. I had him first. And he promised me.

ALFIE

Yeah, well...

MINKA

Don't say it. It didn't mean anything.

ALFIE

But you couldn't blame him for

being angry.

MINKA
Jesus, you had to remind me.

ALFIE
And Jonas?

She bursts into tears.

MINKA
They're taking my life, Alfie.
Everything. My job. Jonas is
divorcing me and taking the house.
There's nothing left.

She gets up and rushes to the bathroom.

INT. ALFIE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

She closes the door and leans against it, placing her hands over her face.

ALFIE
(through the door)
You all right?

She grabs a hand towel and cries into it. Her head pounds and the walls of the small room close in.

MINKA
(calls out)
Give me a minute.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN

Milsy drives the Land Cruiser into the bush after the running figure. He is forced to pull over as the trees block the way. He jumps out and turns on his flash light, peers into the bush. The rain is nearly impenetrable.

The beam slices through the rain and flashes across trees and scrub. He catches movement to his right and charges off after the shape. He catches the figure in his light. It's a kangaroo jumping away. He stops and swings the light around when he hears another sound. Nothing.

He turns and comes face to face with Bryan who cracks him over the head with a steel bar.

INT. ALFIE'S HOUSE: BATHROOM

Minka sits on the edge of the bath and looks around the small room. Harsh light reflects off all the sharp edges.

She holds her head in her hands and closes her eyes. The room throbs. She pounds her fist into her knee before rubbing the inside of her left forearm.

She lunges over at the medicine cabinet and pulls it open, looking through the couple of boxes and bottles, throwing them into the sink. She pulls out an aspirin box and pops a pill from the packaging.

As she places the tablet in her mouth she spots something in the back of the cabinet. She reaches in and pulls out a wedding ring.