

Something In The Air

Block 1
Episode 1

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MOVERS AND SHAKERS

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INT. RADIO STATION/BOOTH

DAY 1

RYAN

RYAN CASSIDY, a young radio announcer of just nineteen, leans into his microphone and purrs like a veteran.

1 RYAN

This is Ryan Cassidy on Radio 3ES, the Voice of the Springs...
And it's time for another listener request - an oldie but a goodie, from the 'Wild One' himself... a man who could really move... Radio 3ES... have we got a day for you...

A Johnny O'Keefe SONG sails through the airwaves.

(0.10)

EXT. RAILWAY TRACK

DAY 1

HARRY

HARRY VIRTUE, twelve and a half, walks along the tracks of a disused railway line bopping along to the music on his walk-man, 'playing' an imaginary guitar.

Incongruous, wearing a school uniform and brilliantined hair, he rotates his arm from time to time like a rock-star

THE MUSIC continues and bridges to:

(0.10)

INT/EXT. MERCEDES/COUNTRY ROAD

DAY 1

FR BRIAN, DOUG

A BIG OLD MERCEDES follows an unformed road through the rolling back-blocks of rural Victoria.

Inside the car, SENATOR DOUGLAS RUTHERFORD, 57, sits behind the wheel beside an unexpectedly good-looking priest in his early thirties. The priest, FATHER BRIAN, has a very black eye.

1 DOUG

Looks nasty.

BRIAN shrugs non committedly

2 DOUG

I saw the incident of course, but I never realised...

3 FR BRIAN

We were on the ground when it happened, Senator. Did it with his elbow.

The good DOUG winces at the thought.

4 DOUG

Still. I saw the punch that started it all. You got him a real beauty.

5 FR BRIAN

White line fever.

6 DOUG

Always gets you in trouble.

7 FR BRIAN

Might have been worth it if we'd won. What we need's a centre-half forward.

8 DOUG

And a ruckman. And a rover. And anyone who can kick...

(0.40)

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/CROSSROADS

DAY 1

FR BRIAN, DOUG

A simple sign stands at a crossroads, pointing the way to 'Emu Springs'.

The Mercedes draws to a stop long enough to disgorge the priest who alights with his backpack.

As the Mercedes continues on its way, FATHER BRIAN dumps his backpack beside the signpost and breathes in the hot sweet air. He closes his eyes, content.

Then, starting with his clerical collar, he begins to take off his clothes, hooking his jacket on the sign and folding the rest into his backpack.

1 FR BRIAN

This'll do you know. If my number's up.
Right here at the crossroads... No
metaphor intended... No that I'm
wanting to jump the queue. Heaven
forbid.

He glances upwards somewhat self-consciously.

2 FR BRIAN

Sorry, I'm babbling...

CUT TO:

FR BRIAN now wearing runners - of the particularly snappy colored variety - running shorts, a singlet and a white baseball cap.

He picks up two sizeable rocks from the side of the road, puts them in his pack, folding his jacket in on top.

Stretching first one leg and then the other, he moves to the centre of the road, shoulders his pack, checks his watch, and then, as if stung into action by some unheard gun, he's off...

...running back along the road towards the town (in the direction from which he had come).

We CUT BACK to see Father Brian's leather shoes forgotten by the side of the road.

(1.20)

EXT. RAILWAY TRACK

DAY 1

HARRY

HARRY continues along the track.

Incongruous, wearing a school uniform and his brilliantined hair, he rotates his arm from time to time, pounding his guitar like his hero.

(0.15)

INT/EXT. LIMO/COUNTRYROAD CROSSROADS

DAY 1

FR BRIAN, TOM, ROLLO, DR EVA, EMU

CLOSE ON FATHER BRIAN, sweating profusely from the exertion of his run, as he jogs along the roadway.

CLOSE ON his running shoes as he pounding along the dusty road.

AND CLOSE on his weighted backpack as it pounds against his back.

THE CAMERA PANS across the endless, rolling fields to fix on a long white limousine, travelling at speed on a distant road.

The limo surges through the crossroads and hits its brakes.

CLOSE ON its rear wheels as it reverses back to take the road to Emu Springs.

The limo dips and bottoms as it bears down on FR BRIAN.

The limousine powers past, enveloping FR BRIAN in a cloud of dust.

(a la Dustin Hoffman)
I'm running here...

WE CUT INSIDE the limo again, this time to reveal its passenger.

TOM DOOLEY; bored, regal, a man utterly absorbed by his self-image - until confronted by the slightest slur.

TOM starts to notice something outside, travelling on a parallel course. Perplexed, he fixes his stare and activates the window.

CLOSE ON his expressionless face as it's revealed by the descending glass.

A motorised jigger speeds along a railway track some distance away from the road.

Seated beneath a black umbrella sits a woman dressed in flowing clothes, in her own way just as self-absorbed as the man in the limo. Certainly she pays the car not the slightest attention.

This is DR EVA PETROVSKA (DR E), who will we meet in good time.

2 ROLLO

What in the hell is that?

But before an answer can be proffered, ROLLO reacts to something on the road ahead, and hits the anchors.

The big white limo ploughs to a stop.

An EMU stands on the roadway, blocking the limousine's path.

The haughty fowl looks in at the occupants of the car with complete disdain. Or is it admiring its mirror image?

(1.25)

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. RAILWAY CROSSING

DAY 1

RYAN V/O, DR EVA, HARRY

DR EVA sails through the railway crossing returning HARRY'S wave as she passes.

1 RYAN (V/O)

And a reminder for those entering this year's Miss Goldfield's Beauty Pageant, with the festival only four weeks away, entries must be lodged here at the radio station no later than 5 p.m. this coming Friday.

(0.10)

EXT. RAILWAY STATION/MAIN STREET

DAY 1

DR EVA, RYAN

DR E's jigger pulls into the station at the end of the disused line.

1 RYAN (V/O)

...All late entries will be excluded and, as usual, "no correspondence will be entered into". Isn't it nice to notice some things never change... So as everyone looks forward to another delightful day in Emu Springs...

DR EVA alights and moves to the door of the station. But it's not a railway station she peers into, but a radio station. 'Radio 3ES' it says on the door beneath a 'Back in Five Minutes' sign.

2 RYAN (V/O)

...our little pocketful of paradise, where there's just no stopping our zing. Our town, where people jump out of bed in the morning.... absolutely fly out their front doors just.....

The DOCTOR moves to the arched entryway that frames the town.

3 RYAN (V/O)

...to see a fellow local on Old Emu Road... Or just wander languidly through the streets if only for a minute or two and soak up the country town atmosphere. I can tell you, this town is positively jumping with excitement.

But in the main street of Emu Springs, dominated by its landmark Poppet Head (gold mining derrick), there's nothing to be seen apart from a small figure heading towards the General Store.

(0.50)

INT. GENERAL STORE

DAY 1

MON, LEN, RYAN

MONICA TAYLOR (53), is up a ladder, stock taking, when her husband, LEN (60's), dressed in dressing gown, pyjamas and slippers, moves emphesemically to the cigarette counter for some Drum and a packet of papers.

1 MON

You pay for that Len Taylor, like everyone else. Or my books will never balance.

LEN moves to the cash register, takes out the correct money, places it on the counter, and shuffles his way outside as RYAN enters.

The radio is playing in the background.

2 RYAN

(brightly)

Morning.

3 MON

The Voice of the Springs himself.

She starts down the ladder while he selects his purchases.

4 MON

(her back to RYAN)

Diet Coke, chewing-gum, corn-chips and
the Melbourne paper.

5 RYAN

Am I that predictable?

6 MON

We like that in the country.

We become aware of RYAN's voice on the radio. As if to
suggest he's somehow cheating, MON winds up the volume.

We become aware of RYAN's voice on the radio. As if to
suggest he's somehow cheating, she winds up the volume.

7 RYAN (V/O)

And now for a change of pace. Roberto
Costanzo and 'Dos Temas Populaires
Cubanos' (ADJUST) or words more or less
to that effect... And 'Tango
Argentinos'. Dwayne Eddy, eat your
heart out...

A cascade of guitars plunges us into the Tango.

8 MON

That's a good trick.

9 RYAN

What?

10 MON

'Throwing your voice' like that

RYAN grins good-naturedly.

(1.00)

INT. RADIO STATION

DAY 1

HELEN

ON THE SOUNDTRACK, the swelling Tango.

And an image, opaque at first, moving beyond the windows, dancing, turning, dipping, moving as if on ice.

CLOSE ON the proud mane of HELEN VIRTUE as she turns abruptly left, then right, then left again, dancing alone to the music.

In this sequence we will not be aware who or indeed where she is. It is simply the image of a woman lost in the dance.

(0.15)

INT. GENERAL STORE

DAY 1

RYAN, MON

THE MUSIC suddenly stops. The pause is something of an art form in Tango, but this is ridiculous.

RYAN smiles self-consciously - and waits.

As does MON.

But the music fails to continue.

1 RYAN

You er, didn't touch the radio, did you, Mon?

2 MON

Nope.

RYAN takes up the radio, checks the tuning, shakes it, thumps it, and starts to panic.

He grunts under his breath - *Shit!* - and then turns and runs from the store, leaving his purchases behind.

(0.15)

EXT. GENERAL STORE/ROAD

DAY 1

RYAN, LEN, DR EVA

RYAN explodes from the store and takes off across the road for the Radio Station.

LEN sits outside on the bench. He exhales a huge cloud of smoke and suppresses an emphysemic gurgle.

RYAN almost collides with DR EVA as she crosses the road towards the shop.

The big white limo bears right down on her.

She gracefully avoids it, turning to register, if only subliminally, the uniqueness of such a vehicle in Emu Springs.

LEN watches impassively from his bench as if he's seen it all before.

1 DR EVA

Hello Len. And how are we feeling today?

As he goes to answer, he's convulsed by a coughing fit.

The good doctor waits patiently for it to subside.

2 LEN

(at last)
Can't complain.

(0.30)

INT. RADIO STATION/BOOTH

DAY 1

HELEN, RYAN, MEGAN

In the studio, HELEN punches buttons at random to unlock the glitch and holds the headphones to an ear.

MEGAN enters, slips behind the console, and attempts to assist.

1 HELEN

We'd like to apologise for that temporary break in...

A partial grab of an advertisement -

2 RYAN (V/O)

...to keep hydatids at bay....

...and a squeeze of TANGO tells HELEN she's not yet on air.

A look from MEGAN - *Oh no!*

3 HELEN

Well that's the Tango for you. Gathers you up and leaves you there... with only one way down.

The 'On Air' light glows red at last on the console.

4 HELEN

This is Radio 3ES, the Voice of the Springs. First in music, first in news and first... first in the soothing sounds of silence, if only for a moment at the beginning of a busy day. This is Helen Virtue, and radio live, and another song from our play-list...

As she punches the 'play' button again and again, MEGAN looks on anxiously.

A SONG bursts into life as HELEN rides the volume and struggles to continue her patter, although she's no idea of the name of the song.

5 HELEN

(thinking quickly)
Why don't you phone in and tell me what
you think it is - Okay?

RYAN bursts through the door, where he's greeted with a
withering look from HELEN, and a look of annoyance from
MEGAN.

(0.45)

EXT/INT. TOWN CENTRE/LIMO

DAY 1

TOM, ROLLO

As Helen's selection plays on the car radio, TOM's
instruction to ROLLO is measured and precise.

1 TOM

Do you think you could find another
station?

AND WE CUT OUTSIDE as the limo continues its journey.

(0.15)

EXT. OLD EMU ROAD

DAY 1

FR BRIAN, LEN

FR BRIAN runs up the main street, focused on the Poppet
Head ahead.

All around he imagines the sounds of voices, cheering the
winner like they do on Festival Day.

His backpack feels like it's filled with lead, his legs
feel like they're made of jelly.

Reaching the Poppet Head, he pulls up quickly and gathers
his breath.

The street is now silent. No one is watching but LEN.

FR BRIAN relieves himself of his backpack, removes the two rocks and adds them to a small pile of similar stones beside the Poppet Head.

Catching sight of LEN, he gives an awkward smile.

1 FR BRIAN

(just a touch self-
consciously)

'Morning.

FR BRIAN moves off.

LEN puffs on his cigarette and watches with his deadpan stare.

(0.30)

EXT. LANGRIDGE

DAY 1

TOM, ROLLO

The limo turns into a road leading up to a gracious old Victorian Homestead.

The sign on the gate says *Langridge*.

The big car draws to a stop.

ROLLO alights and moves towards the house.

TOM DOOLEY also emerges into the sun and takes in the house and the view, then moves towards it, he has an air of casual wealth and influence about him, like an ageing pop-star or maverick businessman. He is tall and gangly and dressed in cowboy boots, blue jeans, white shirt and sunglasses.

1 ROLLO

Well, this is it. Home for the foreseeable future.

2 TOM

It's enough to bring me here, Rollo.
There's no need to gloat.

Not that he was for a second.

3 ROLLO

I rather like it.

ROLLO heads back to the limo.

4 ROLLO

I'll get the keys...

TOM tries the door and finds it isn't locked.

5 TOM

No one locks doors in the country,
Rollo. Or goes to the theatre, or
clubs, or restaurants. Or does
anything at all...

His mournful tone trails away as he disappears inside.

(0.45)

INT. GENERAL STORE

DAY 1

MON, DR EVA, SARAH (PATIENT), N/S PATIENTS X 3

A small sign announces 'Surgery Open'.

DR EVA escorts SARAH from her surgery out the back. The
patient is carrying a plastic bag filled with dried herbs.

1 DR EVA

The Korean Ginseng should work, Sarah.
Otherwise we'll have to go back to the
antibiotics and try a stronger dose.

2 SARAH

Thank you, Doctor.

3 MON

Don't forget your groceries, Sarah.

The PATIENT crosses to collect her bags.

4 MON

Bye for now...

The door 'DINGS' as the patient leaves.

DR EVA turns towards three waiting PATIENTS.

5 DR EVA

Ladies. Mr Hardy.

The PATIENTS nod in acknowledgement.

DR EVA begins checking her appointment book.

6 DR EVA

(mildly surprised)

No Mrs Bogart today?

7 MON

She was in here yesterday. She looked fine to me.

8 DR EVA

How's Len?

9 MON

He's no better. He's no worse.

DR EVA lets it pass and returns to the book.

10 DR EVA

You've got these next three patients booked at the same time.

11 MON

You can take your pick.

12 DR EVA

But what about the others?

13 MON

They won't mind waiting. They can do their shopping.

DR EVA frowns and turns towards the PATIENTS.

14 DR EVA

Thank you, Mrs Hyland, you're next.

DR EVA leads the PATIENT into the surgery.

(0.55)

EXT. PUB/ROAD

DAY 1

FR BRIAN

FATHER BRIAN flashes into view. Flustered, he's arriving late...and still wearing those running shoes.

(0.10)

INT. PUB

DAY 1

SALLY, JULIA, STUART, FR BRIAN, N/S PATRONS

The Festival Committee settles down around the bar, JULIA RUTHERFORD is the Chair. JULIA is a ship-shape 53 and impossible to stop under twenty times her own length.

1 JULIA

Let's get straight down to it, we've got a full agenda and time is not on our side.

FR BRIAN props beside SALLY SABATINI (27) school-teacher and congenial who takes in his black-eye and freshly showered, somewhat red-faced appearance.

STUART MCGREGOR (45) the publican, a former policeman with a copper's swagger, is part of the meeting, but stays behind the bar.

2 SALLY

(sotto)

Are you all right, Father?

3 FR BRIAN

Just been punishing myself a little more than usual.

4 SALLY

(with a grin)

How very priestly.

FR BRIAN grins while JULIA pretends she didn't hear.

5 JULIA

(struggling for order)

Shall we take the minutes as read?

6 STUART

Someone's moved into Langridge. With a limousine and driver.

7 FR BRIAN

I saw the car this morning.

8 SALLY

Do we know who it is?

9 STUART

Pop Star's the best guess to date. We're yet to learn a name.

10 FR BRIAN

It's good to see someone using the place for a change.

JULIA attempting to gain control of the meeting.

11 JULIA

Item one. The Miss Goldfields Pageant...

12 SALLY

Do you think we can make this the last one?

13 JULIA

I beg your pardon?

14 SALLY

It's the new millennium. Don't you think it's time for a change? My vote's for something more up-to-date. Like, I don't know, a Young Citizen's Award.

15 FR BRIAN

That's a great idea...

CLOSE on JULIA's shock.

16 SALLY

No disrespect intended. To former Festival Queens...

17 FR BRIAN

At least the boys could enter.

18 JULIA

The boys have their football fixture.

STUART moves from behind the bar to join them and sits beside FATHER BRIAN.

19 FR BRIAN

...Yes.

20 JULIA

We've done it for forty years!

21 SALLY

Which is why we could do with a change. If you ask me, the whole Festival could do with a re-vamp. Don't you think it's starting to creak?

22 JULIA

(tight lipped)

Are we going to stick to the agenda? Or make it up as we go along? We really don't have time for these diversions.

23 SALLY

Sorry.

24 FR BRIAN

..Likewise.

STUART whiffing.

25 STUART

What's that smell?

SALLY begins to whiff and then looks down at Father Brian's runners, and sees he's not wearing socks.

26 SALLY

Socks usually help, Father.

27 FR BRIAN

I seem to have mislaid my shoes.

JULIA's blood pressure rises dangerously.

28 JULIA

The Miss Goldfields Pageant.

JULIA tries very hard to keep the irritation out of her voice.

29 JULIA

We have seven entries already with applications still to close. At least the young ones seem to understand tradition. Now, how are we going for Judges?

30 SALLY

Well, the good Senator, of course...

31 FR BRIAN

It's traditional.

JULIA gives him a look, but he wasn't being facetious.

32 JULIA

I'll see if he can fit it in to his busy schedule. I don't think he'll be

in Canberra. And, Stuart, if you'd be so kind?

33 STUART

Delighted.

STUART, unable to withstand the smell of Father Brian's runners any longer, rises and wanders away from the group.

SALLY, as discreetly as possible, attempts to fan away the pong.

34 SALLY

(holding her breath)

I was thinking of asking Helen.

Exhale of breath.

35 JULIA

Your sister?

36 SALLY

(holding her breath)

I thought a woman for a change?

Another exhale of breath.

37 JULIA

We've always had... (men before).

Feeling she might be pushing things a little, JULIA stops.

38 JULIA

Shall we put it to the vote?

39 FR BRIAN

Do we have to be so formal?

Unable to bear it any longer, SALLY also moves away from FR BRIAN's smelly feet.

STUART wanders back with a pair of shoes and socks for FR BRIAN and places them beside his seat.

FR BRIAN gives a sheepish smile - *thanks*.

40 JULIA

Meaning?

41 FR BRIAN

The Manager of the Radio station. It's good for publicity... Don't you think?

42 STUART

Absolutely.

43 JULIA

(through lips of string)

I would appear to be in the minority.

She makes it sound like a terminal disease.

44 JULIA

Item two. The Procession. Or should we consider a Love-In or something?

45 SALLY/STUART/FR BRIAN

No, no. The procession's fine. We've always had a procession. Traditional...

FR BRIAN leans down to swap his shoes, SALLY and STUART scatter.

JULIA gives FR BRIAN a disapproving look.

(2.25)

EXT. RADIO STATION

DAY 1

HELEN, DR EVA

HELEN on the platform, her briefcase beside her, appears distracted.

1 DR EVA

You're leaving early today.

She turns as DR EVA approaches through the archway.

2 HELEN

My car's being serviced. I have to catch the bus.

3 DR EVA

Why don't you come with me?

4 HELEN

On that?

She indicates the trolley at the platform.

5 DR EVA

It's perfectly safe.

DR EVA stows her black bag in the rack behind the seat.

Still apprehensive, HELEN checks her watch.

DR EVA climbs onto the pumper's single chair and waits for HELEN to join her.

6 DR EVA

Come on.

HELEN puts her briefcase in the rack and climbs aboard.

7 HELEN

(above the engine)

My son will be very jealous.

8 DR EVA

(louder as well)

How is young Harry?

9 HELEN

Living in a world of his own.

10 DR EVA

Aren't we all? Hold on.

HELEN grips onto the small rail at the front as the pumper moves away.

(0.40)

EXT. COUNTRY SIDE/RAILWAY TRACK

DAY 1

HELEN, DR EVA

The two women glide along the track at speed, the wind dancing in their faces.

HELEN finds the sense of freedom invigorating.

DR EVA just smiles her contented smile, as if she knew it would be a tonic.

CUT WIDE as the umbrella rigged pumper sails on the burnished fields.

(0.15)

EXT. LANGRIDGE

DAY 1

TOM, ROLLO, FR BRIAN

TOM sits in the cool of the verandah with a long drink (Melon Vodka with ice and soda).

1 TOM

What restaurants have they got in town?

ROLLO stands in the doorway, reading from the combined phone book and yellow pages. And a very thin volume it is.

2 ROLLO

There's the pub. They do a 'Surf 'n Turf'. And a Chinese; eat-in or take-away.

ROLLO looks askance to see TOM's not surprised.

3 ROLLO

There's a little more to choose from in Bullandra. Three pubs... And a Chinese. Naturally.

4 TOM

There's nothing natural about a Chinese
takeaway in the middle of nowhere.

(unamused)

Get me another drink.

He holds up his glass which ROLLO takes, then reacts as
someone approaches.

FR BRIAN heads up the driveway on foot, now wearing the
shoes and socks Stuart gave him.

5 TOM

Now what?

6 FR BRIAN

Hello there!

7 TOM

Good grief. It's the Mormons.

8 ROLLO

Hello Father.

9 TOM

Don't encourage him. Tell him it's
private land.

10 FR BRIAN

(extending his hand as he
climbs the steps)

Brian O'Rourke.

11 ROLLO

I'm Rollo. Lovely day.

12 FR BRIAN

They all are, mate. They all are.

He shakes hands with ROLLO and turns to TOM, still
glowering beneath his sunnies.

FR BRIAN approaches with his hand extended, which TOM
ignores.

13 TOM

I gave yesterday.

14 FR BRIAN

Just a friendly call. To welcome you to the district.

TOM sits trapped in his chair.

15 TOM

Get the man a drink, Rollo. Or we'll all die of thirst.

ROLLO raises an eyebrow slightly and crosses to a small table to fix the drinks.

FR BRIAN helps himself to a seat.

16 FR BRIAN

Sorry, didn't catch the name.

17 TOM

Tom.

18 FR BRIAN

Tom...

19 TOM

(deadpan)

Tom In Cognito... It's Italian.

20 FR BRIAN

Oh...

(with a laugh as he realises the joke)

Fine.

TOM remains inscrutable.

21 TOM

Did you get the short straw, Father?

22 FR BRIAN

I'm sorry...

23 TOM

You've been sent to check me out?

FR BRIAN grins, responding well to this man's directness.

24 FR BRIAN

You understand the country, Tom.

25 TOM

No. I understand human nature.

ROLLO crosses with the drinks.

26 FR BRIAN

Thank you. Cheers.

FR BRIAN raises his glass to TOM and takes a sip. Whatever it is, it packs quite a punch.

27 TOM

(explaining)

Melon Vodka.

28 FR BRIAN

(hoarsely)

Fine.

TOM gets up and heads through into the house with his drink, calling back over his shoulder.

29 TOM

You're not going to learn a thing you know.

30 FR BRIAN

I'll settle for the drink.

(then to ROLLO)

I was very nearly a Jesuit.

Which for FR BRIAN justifies everything.

(1.50)

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT:TALE FARM
DUSK 1
NIL CAST

(0.05)

INT. TALE FARM/KITCHEN
DUSK 1
HELEN, SALLY, JOE, HARRY

JOE SABATINI, Sally's husband, a thirty-something poet and farmer, is finishing the washing up with HARRY, while HELEN and SALLY sit at the table.

1 HELEN

Dr Eva said you could have a ride on her trolley sometimes, Harry.

2 HARRY

Cool.

3 JOE

So, who's staying at Langridge?

4 HELEN

I've no idea.

5 SALLY

Stuart thinks it's a pop star.

6 HARRY

Impossible. Rock and roll ended in '78.

7 JOE

(completing the sentence)
... with the death of Johnny O'Keefe.
Boo-boom!

8 HELEN

Should we observe a minute's silence?

9 JOE

You can if you like. I've got stock to check.

(to HARRY)
Are you coming?

10 HARRY
(fudging)
I've got homework to do.

11 HELEN
Can't you do both?

12 JOE
It's all right. He can help me
tomorrow.

JOE grabs up his boots and heads for the door.

HARRY hovers awkwardly with the tea towel.

13 HELEN
Homework, Harry. And by that I don't
mean listen to music.

HARRY begrudgingly leaves.

SALLY is studying her sister.

14 HELEN
What?

15 SALLY
Why so anxious?

16 HELEN
I'm not...

17 SALLY
Yes you are. You want him to do the
manly thing and check the stock with
Joe. And you don't want him listening
to music.

18 HELEN
It's the same old thing all the time.

19 SALLY
He's obsessed with Johnny O'Keefe.

20 HELEN

Exactly.

21 SALLY

It's a phase, Helen. Remember his axolotl fetish? Ten fish tanks in his bedroom. Then came the pet rocks, followed by his fixation with the colour orange. He got over them all.

HELEN crosses to fill the kettle.

22 SALLY

It's normal to over-compensate for reasonable periods when a child loses a parent.

23 HELEN

Is this the school teacher talking?

24 SALLY

I see it all the time from mothers on their own. Your anxiety becomes his anxiety...

25 HELEN

And he's strange enough as it is?

26 SALLY

Unique perhaps. Is it something else?

27 HELEN

What...

28 SALLY

Something at work?

29 HELEN

(turning)

It's the easiest job I've ever had.

30 SALLY

Maybe that's the problem?

31 HELEN

I promise you, it suits me fine.

32 SALLY

So you're not missing life as a high powered banker? Dealing with those millions?

33 HELEN

Sally, I wonder why I ever bothered.

Which seems genuine enough.

34 HELEN

I think I'll get some air.

And she heads outside leaving the tea unmade and SALLY just a little puzzled.

SALLY crosses to lift the kettle off the stove.

(1.45)

EXT. TALE FARM

DUSK 1

HELEN, HARRY

HELEN heads out into the gathering dark.

She stands in the shadows.

Rock music thumps from a brightly lit window. HARRY's silhouette bops on the shade.

HELEN manages a smile and tries very hard not to worry.

(0.15)

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT: PUB/ROAD

DAY 2

NIL CAST

(0.10)

INT. RADIO STATION/BOOTH

DAY 2

RYAN, LEN, FR BRIAN

RYAN, LEN and FR BRIAN who's still looking a little worse for wear - in a variety of footy scarves and beanies, face-off across the MICROPHONE, singing along to a recording of the Emu Springs Club Song. (To the tune of L'Marseillaise).

1 RYAN/LEN/FR BRIAN

We're from Emu Springs we are the best,
We are winners through and through. We
are tough and strong, we're mighty,
And we run like Emus too.

Always winning is our dream, We are the
greatest, ever seen. Go
Emus, the Mighty Emus, We'll have
another beer, When
we're Premiers next year.

2 RYAN

Welcome everyone, welcome, to another
informative and incisive hour of
Sportsman Corner. And how are we today,
Tigger?

3 LEN

Replete, Pooh. Serene and satisfied.

4 RYAN

Really, Tigger? Despite the result on
Saturday?

5 LEN

Satisfaction in football, my boy, is
not only measured by the score on the
board.

6 RYAN

Very profound, Tigger. Almost
philosophical... And Eeyore? How are you
travelling? Do I detect just a touch,
around the eye area for instance, of
post-match-blues?

7 FR BRIAN

An instance of clear provocation...

8 LEN

And he's got the shiner to prove it...

9 FR BRIAN

It's a body contact sport, Pooh. And there're things that happen, maybe regrettably, but there're things that happen sometimes on the football field that couldn't possibly be sanctioned anywhere else. Such as on the street, for instance, or in the schoolyard...

10 LEN

Or in the Church.

LEN's left-field embellishment throws FR BRIAN for a moment.

11 LEN

You wouldn't want a blue in a place of worship.

12 RYAN

Talk to us Tigger about White Line Fever. You've seen people in its grips before?

13 LEN

Well Eeyore's such a great example. Normally, a mild manner man of the cloth, but on the field of play, an absolute animal. And I say that as an animal lover, Pooh.

14 RYAN

As I'm sure we all are, Tigger. Well, of Emu's anyway. So we've got a bye Saturday, but what about our game next week? Eeyore here's joyous to have the time to recover, but we are carrying a few injuries. Garry Simcock hasn't really recovered from that tractor accident, he'll be out action another couple of weeks. Are you game to make a prediction?

15 LEN

I'm picking the mighty Emus, Pooh. By three goals.

16 RYAN

Three goals, Tigger? That's a pretty specific prediction.

17 LEN

Mate, I had a dream last night. Two goals down at the last change and we hold 'em scoreless in the final quarter.

18 RYAN

Well folks, you heard it first on Sportsmens' Corner, from the 'Old Predicted' himself. Tell me Tigger, have you ever, have you ever been wrong?

As LEN goes to reply he is seized by a coughing fit. As he covers his mouth and struggles to stifle it, RYAN drags the microphone closer and pushes a glass of water towards LEN.

19 RYAN

I think we all know the answer to that one.

With tears in his eyes and bile in his throat, LEN gives RYAN a go-ahead wave.

20 RYAN

I'll play some inspiring music.

And he cues a song.

(2.35)

EXT. GENERAL STORE

DAY 2

MEGAN, RYAN, TOM

The Poppet Head looks down on the almost deserted street.

MEGAN and RYAN are eating their lunches on an up-turned cable reel outside the pub. They talk between mouthfuls.

1 MEGAN

One day, I'm going to do Breakfast. On Triple J. Or Drive on Fox. Phil O'Neill's my hero. And Adam Spencer...

2 RYAN

They reckon they'll get a computer to do Talk-back one day. They say there's this limited number of responses to any question. "It's the government's fault". "You can't blame the government". "That would never have happened in the good old days". "You can't stand in the way of progress..."

3 MEGAN

Wendy Harmer's a legend...

4 RYAN

What's more, they reckon the same computer will be measuring ratings as it goes to air - so it can select the best response.

5 MEGAN

You can't beat live. Live's where it's at. Where it's always been.

6 RYAN

It's all radio in the end.

Their self-absorbed conversation peters to a stop as they become aware of someone approaching along the street, a tall gangly man with a gunslinger's swagger.

With the sun at his back, he's difficult to identify at first, but as he walks into a shaded area, they begin to make out the cowboy boots, blue jeans, white shirt and shades and realise it's the mystery man himself.

TOM DOOLEY stops in the middle of the street, and, for no apparent reason, removes his shades.

MEGAN and RYAN react in unison as they recognise who it is.

7 MEGAN

That's what's - his - name.

8 RYAN

It's him. It's the King

9 MEGAN

Didn't anyone know who he was?

10 RYAN

Now that's what I call a legend!

CLOSE ON TOM as he reacts to a creaking sound behind him.
He turns.

The POPPET HEAD seems to shift against the sky. Or is it
only the passing clouds? The creaking stops.

He goes to continue on his way as the creaking starts
again.

He stops for another look.

And very slowly, the Poppet Head, Emu Springs's town symbol
and ancient landmark, tilts and twists and comes crashing
to the ground.

MEGAN and RYAN rise slowly to their feet.

TOM DOOLEY stares at the wreckage before him and then turns
to look at MEGAN and RYAN.

(1.40)

END OF EPISODE.