

Diggers

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© 1 June, 2004.



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1 EXT A CLEARING IN A FOREST – DAY 1

We hear ragged breathing, mixed with crying, and footsteps, which turn out to be a SOLDIER running through the bush. His face is covered with a rag, helmet, goggles – we cannot see his face. There is an assault rifle over his shoulder. He has an Australian flag insignia. He rips off the rag, squats and vomits. He stands up, spits out extra vomit, throws away his rifle, keeps running.

2 EXT A RIVER IN THE FOREST – DAY 2

The SOLDIER comes to a wide, clear, slow-flowing river. He runs straight in. He slows down as the water quickly comes up to his chest. His breathing becomes calmer and is eclipsed by the sounds of birds and running water.

The SOLDIER allows himself to drift in the water. He trails his hand in the river and looks at the sun reflecting on the water, and the rocks on the riverbed. He notices a trail of red in the water. He stops drifting and stands up in the river. The water is now running completely red. Something bumps him. It is a corpse, wearing the same uniform as him. He frantically pushes it away. He stands absolutely still as more corpses float by.

Title – ‘Diggers’.

3 EXT A TRAIN STATION - DAY 3

Titles indicate it is “Five years later”.

We see GREG, running into the train station. There is no train on the platform. GREG sits down and turns on a laptop which he is carrying. GREG is about 35 and wears a suit. There are two POLICEMEN on the platform and several other COMMUTERS. No one shows any curiosity about the presence of the POLICEMEN. The POLICEMEN are standing still, facing away from the train tracks.

Among the many ads on the platform are several posters with Australian flags urging us to “Take the Challenge for Australia”, “Reunite Australia” and so forth – obviously nationalistic in intent, but vague as to details. The imagery on these ads is similar to what you would expect from ads for Vegemite or similar products that brand themselves as distinctively Australian – smiling white children, Aboriginals in traditional dress, footballers etc. One of the posters has a cartoon of a smiling, dark-skinned couple in Western dress who could be Indian or Middle Eastern. The poster says “Remember – Cultural or Religious Items Which May Cause Offence May Not Be Worn on Public Transport, in Government Buildings or in Public Schools. Let’s All Work Together For Australia”. The poster depicts a Sikh’s turban, Moslem headscarf, and an oversized crucifix necklace each with an ‘x’ next to them.

GREG wears a suit and has a short haircut, almost reminiscent of the 1950s. The other COMMUTERS are dressed noticeably differently to people today. Most of the men wear suits and ties, the women wear long dresses. True to the poster, there is no ethnic clothing: Arab women do not wear headscarves, Sikh men do not wear turbans. Men have short hair or crew cuts, women have shoulder-length hair tied back in a ponytail. There are a couple of people in military uniform, both Australian and American. There are several people who have severe injuries, in both military and civilian dress.

A train arrives. GREG packs up his laptop in a panic. The POLICEMEN position themselves in front of one of the doors (the two of them in front of one of the doors, not one each). A distorted voice is heard.

INTERCOM

Your attention please ladies and gentlemen. For your safety and protection there will now be a random security check. Please have two forms of acceptable identification ready.

GREG and the other COMMUTERS line up. The POLICEMEN check a ticket which everyone seems to have and then allow people on to the train. When one carriage is full, they move to the next one which opens and the process is repeated. We see a long, stationary line of waiting commuters.

GREG (showing his ticket)

There you go.

4 INT THE TRAIN - DAY 4

GREG is talking to a device attached to his laptop.

GREG

I feel...ah...I feel a sense of pride and...ah, interest, in being given the job of interviewing Nick Griffin. It is our duty and pleasure to bring his story to life for a generation that they, ah, should know about those who suffered so much for their freedom, and ah...this is part of the government's plan to Reunite Australia. Which I...I'm very aware of, ah, having helped to enact that campaign. And of course every Australian should be aware of the need to Reunite Australia in any case. Although sadly there are elements who are not so aware, or ah, indeed are actively working against the national interest, which of course is why this show and so much of our work here is so, is needed.

On the train there are videos playing ads similar to the still ones seen on the train station. A different pair of POLICEMEN board the train and start checking tickets. A schoolboy makes fun of them, showing off to a group of girls. One of the POLICEMEN whacks him around the head before checking his ticket and moving on. The boy, who is bleeding, sits next to Greg, tries not to cry but can't help himself. Greg continues speaking into the computer and ignores him (unless the reference to unpatriotic elements is intended to be for his benefit).

5 EXT OUTSIDE NICK GRIFFIN'S HOUSE – DAY 5

A FILM CREW are unloading film equipment from a small van, supervised by GREG. All of the CREW are formally dressed like GREG and the COMMUTERS, with the exception of EVAN. EVAN is slightly older and more individually and stylishly dressed, ditto his hair, which might have tips or be bleached for example. He does not appear outrageously flamboyant by any means, indeed his dress is closer to that of a fashionable person from about now than that of the other characters – nor does he have an exaggeratedly camp way of speaking or acting, except in the general sense of being ironically humorous and irreverent - however he contrasts with the exaggeratedly 'masculine' and 'feminine' appearance of the other characters. The intention is that EVAN should be the one who is obviously gay, and the one who is representative of the culture of today.

GREG

Right, just...yep, over there mate (etc).

GREG claps his hands.

GREG

OK, team. How is everyone today?

EVAN

Can't complain Greg. It's not allowed you know.

(laughter from other TEAM MEMBERS)

GREG

Evan, that was not appropriate

EVAN and another CREW MEMBER are unloading a heavy piece of equipment, holding one end each. EVAN is obviously fairly puffed out by the exertion.

EVAN

There we go...down there I reckon...Christ...the sacrifices I make to bring the public their daily dose of warnography.

Both EVAN and the CREW MEMBER laugh.

GREG

Evan, Evan, listen to me Evan. These men fought and died to stop terrorism Evan, and we are here to bring their story to the public in the face of, in the face of I might say a lot of indifference and even, outright lies and irreverence. And I will have them treated with the respect they so rightly deserve, right?

Seemingly unconsciously, GREG has raised his hand as if to clip EVAN around the head in a similar way to the POLICEMAN's beating of the SCHOOL BOY. EVAN appears about to say something and then to choke it back.

EVAN

Yes, OK.

GREG

Good mate, good.

GREG now moves his hand as if to give EVAN a hearty clap on the shoulder, but then decides not to. GREG's hand waves in the air awkwardly until he puts it down.

During this exchange EVAN and the CREW MEMBER who laughed both look at the ground, with their hands clasped in front of them. They seem to be adopting a pose of submission rather than feeling genuine shame. The other TEAM MEMBERS avoid looking at what's happening,

GREG goes up to the front door, and the CREW pick up the equipment and follow him. GREG's chest is puffed, his shoulders are back, his eyes stare straight in front of him, and his jaw is set, all of which seem to be deliberately adopted poses rather than a reflection of how he actually feels.

We can see EVAN pick up the heavy equipment again, and give an eye-rolling and smirk to the person helping him. However the set of EVAN's jaw is angry and the other CREW MEMBER looks away rather than smirking back. We might notice that the Venetian blinds in the windows are all completely closed.

GREG knocks on the door. A TEENAGER of about 16-18 answers the door.

GREG

Ah, g'day mate, Greg is Nick Griffin in?

TEENAGER

Yeah (pause). That's me.

6 INT NICK GRIFFIN'S HOUSE – DAY 6

NICK leads them through his house. It is dark – indeed there does not seem to be any sunlight coming in from outside. The corridors and rooms are all smaller than a normal house, and the CREW has a lot of trouble maneuvering their equipment.

The house also seems to have far more rooms and corridors than a normal house. Many of the rooms seem to be entirely internal, with none of their walls facing outside.

The CREW have trouble keeping up with NICK. They quickly pass various rooms. In some of them various shabby-looking YOUNG MEN (aged about 15-20) stand staring at them – that is, the YOUNG MEN do not look around as they pass, but rather seem to have been standing there waiting for them in order to look at them as they pass. One of the YOUNG MEN may be vaguely recognisable as the SOLDIER from the opening scene.

NICK stops in a small pentagonal room, each of the walls of which has a door, with GREG close behind him, to let the rest of the CREW catch up.

NICK (to GREG, who is moving his hand towards the handle of one of the doors)

Not there, that's locked. Just follow me.

NICK's accent ('foller me') is very working class and/or rural, but seems put on.

NICK leads THE CREW to a small room similar to the ones we have already seen – that is, it is small, shabby (there is an extremely worn and faded carpet), there do not appear to be any windows, and a few run-down YOUNG MEN appear in the doors to look at THE CREW.

ANDY is sitting in the room. He is similarly young, but severely scarred on his face and hands. ANDY seems alarmed. He tries to get up but seems to have trouble. He speaks, but the words are either severely slurred or nonsensical. NICK goes over the ANDY, puts his arm around him, strokes his hair.

NICK

It's OK Andy, it's OK mate, it's OK...it's OK.

Andy calms down.

NICK

Andy's like a lot of guys in the war y'know? The war did stuff to a lot of people. A lot of people got injured, scarred...even when you can't see them they're still there...

GREG momentarily seems puzzled by NICK's statement, but his face quickly takes on an expression of reverence, which again does not seem completely sincere.

GREG

Yeah mate, sure, yeah.

NICK (to ANDY, in the tone of someone talking to a dog)

OK, go on, go play! Go play!

ANDY leaves.

NICK

You weren't supposed to be here today.

GREG looks at his watch.

GREG

Aaah...yeah mate, the 25th, that's today.

NICK

No mate, not today.

GREG

Aaaah...aah, the 25th I think mate. We talked to...

NICK (interrupting)

You could've been anyone y'know. I am who I am. There are elements out there, people that...

GREG (interrupting)

Oh yeah, sure, for sure mate. You don't need to worry about that. We're all across Keeping an Eye Out For Australia. Ah..in fact, we actually made those ads...

NICK (interrupting)

Look, when I get on the train? Right, when I'm getting off, I don't get up until the doors are just about to close, and then I jump out. I learned that in the war. I still do that today y'know? There's a negative spirit in this country of ours. That's what caused the war in the first place. And we wounded it, but we didn't kill it. It's still out there.

GREG

Yep, good, great, great mate, that's exactly what we want you to talk about. But we need to get the cameras set up first...

GREG claps his hands.

GREG (continues)

...so, Evan, if you could...

EVAN and the CREW begin to set up their equipment.

NICK

Do you want to see some drill?

GREG

Ahh...well...yeah, OK...

One of the YOUNG MEN hands NICK what seems to be a broom handle. NICK stands at a slack version of attention and holds the handle as if he is holding a rifle.

NICK

Teen...huh! Preseeeee...harm! (etc)

NICK begins to go through a drill routine with his broom handle. He is initially satirising drill but he gradually gets faster, and begins to do the routine more seriously and with more skill. He whips his broom handle around, almost hitting one of the CREW in the face. He yells at the YOUNG MEN.

NICK

What are you doing standing around there? Pick it up you weak faggots!

Some of the YOUNG MEN come into the small room and begin to join in with NICK, with varying degrees of seriousness. They fill the room and force the CREW to back away, almost pinning them to the wall.

7 INT NICK GRIFFIN'S HOUSE – DAY 7

GREG is interviewing NICK.

GREG

So, I suppose, to join 8RAR you had to be pretty tough?

NICK

Yeah, like, it's not for everyone.

GREG

Well yeah, I guess a lot of people would've dropped out?

NICK

Yeah...sometimes, they see shit and they can't handle it. A lot of guys made out they were ready for shit and they couldn't do it, it was all talk...

GREG

Um...so, they couldn't handle the training? They weren't...strong enough?

NICK

Yeah, like exactly, they were weak. Like, I've seen a lot of guys crying and throwing up just because of stuff they had to do in the training.

GREG

OK...so...

NICK

Like, they made you...like, if you can't kill a dog how are you gonna kill a person you know?

GREG

Living off the land kind of thing?

8 INT THE SAME ROOM – DAY 8

We see that EVAN has replaced GREG.

NICK

I don't want it in there!

EVAN

OK, OK, it's gone, it's your show.

We cut to GREG, in the backyard. He has a cigarette and a lighter, but he makes no move to light it. GREG stares at nothing, and breathes heavily, his body rigid.

The yard is a medium-sized suburban plot of land. The ground is very uneven. A high fence shields the yard from the neighbours on either side. However where we would expect to see the back wall of the fence, there is actually a row of trees. The trees are very high, thick, and dark. It is impossible to tell whether the fence runs behind them, or whether there is a gap. It is also impossible to tell whether there is only a single row of trees. For all we can see through the high grass and thick mass of branches, it could be the beginning of a forest.

The grass near these trees is overgrown. The grass in the rest of the yard is well-kept. The yard is featureless – other than the mowing it could be a vacant lot.

NICK (soft and somewhat muffled, indicating that we are hearing what GREG is hearing)

It was just a joke.

EVAN (similarly muffled)

It's cool, it's cool, whatever you want, we'll do whatever you want.

GREG begins walking across the backyard, away from the house and towards the trees. We can still hear an angry NICK and a placating EVAN. Their words become indistinct, but they do not become softer. GREG is seemingly moving quickly and purposefully. We see his back and the trees. The trees appear to be much further away than they did in previous shots. From what we have seen we would expect GREG to arrive at the trees in less than a minute. The trees are coming closer, but far less quickly than that. Just as GREG arrives at them and starts to pull the branches aside the scene abruptly ends.

9 INT THE CREW'S VAN – EVENING 9

The CREW are sitting in the van, eating a takeaway meal of hamburgers and chips, with the exception of EVAN, who has a something apparently home-cooked, vegetarian, and of a higher quality, and GREG, who is not eating.

GREG

Well, you know, it's weird when you meet someone like that isn't it?

EVAN

Well...um...I guess...

GREG

I mean, I read all about Nick Griffin. Not just for this story either. I've read about it in the papers. I wasn't...I didn't go to the war, I...um...it was...I wasn't accepted for a front line job, one of my cousins...had a record.

CREW MEMBER

But them having a criminal record wouldn't...

Unseen by GREG, EVAN puts his hand on the CREW MEMBER's arm, shakes his head slightly, and with the other makes a revolutionary-style clenched fist salute.

Pause.

GREG

But that's not what I mean. I mean, I followed his story in the papers when it was happening. You know, and I tried to do my part as well...

GREG's voice is becoming more insincere-sounding.

...and, you know, 'we also serve' and so on, the farmers feed the soldiers' bodies and we feed their spirits, and you know, we were doing it for the boys on the front line, you know...like Nick.

Pause.

GREG

I don't think it matters. I don't think what he did matters.

Pause.

GREG

I mean, what he did matters. That's not what I meant. I mean, what he did matters and it's the other stuff that doesn't. His personality and that. His heroism matters, and the other stuff, whether I find him hard to get along with or not, that doesn't matter.

10 EXT OUTSIDE NICK'S HOUSE – NIGHT 10

We see GREG having a smoke in the back yard. It is night. We can hear, very quietly and indistinctly, the sound of NICK and EVAN's voices. We hear crickets. Behind him ANDY appears in the doorway. ANDY moves out of the light and walks up to GREG, keeping out of his line of sight. ANDY moves silently. He puts his hand on GREG's arm. GREG jumps.

GREG

Fuck! Fuck, fuck, oh God...sorry. Shit. I'm sorry. I'm sorry...Andy isn't it? Um...it's...it's OK.

GREG holds out his hand towards ANDY, but does not touch him.

ANDY

I wuh...the war...with Nick.

ANDY seems to have some kind of severe speech impediment.

GREG

You were in the war with Nick were you? Well...good. Good for you. Are you related to Nick? Is Nick your cousin? Or your brother?

ANDY

Nick...we...bush...ladies...

There are long pauses full of vague gestures and mumbling between each word of ANDY's.

GREG (somewhat sarcastically)

OK, so not brothers then?

ANDY

Once...red...ladies...all lying down...crying...burnt...

During this speech, we see ANDY make various gestures including pulling at his trousers as if taking off his belt, and pointing a gun at the ground and shooting it. ANDY does not make a 'gun' out of one finger and a thumb, rather he accurately makes the gestures of a person drawing a pistol, firing it, and replacing it in a holster. At one point ANDY opens his mouth wide, and we can see that he is missing teeth and his tongue appears to be injured or deformed. The colour of ANDY's mouth is far redder, more like blood, than that of a normal person. GREG becomes less abstracted and start to listen to what ANDY is saying, with a growing expression of fear and disgust.

GREG

But...you didn't really go to the war with Nick yeah? You're just his cousin or his brother or something?

ANDY (enunciating carefully)

We are all brothers in death. Most of you know what it is to see ten, twenty, thirty bodies lying in a row. This is a glorious chapter in our history which has never been written, and never can be written.

Silence. GREG opens his mouth but does not say anything. ANDY takes GREG's arm and leads him into the house.

ANDY leads GREG down a dark, twisting corridor.

Cut to NICK, still being interviewed by EVAN. NICK jumps up.

NICK

Where the fuck is Andy?

Cut back to ANDY and GREG. ANDY leads GREG into another small room, where there is a DVD player. The room is dark. ANDY turns on a lamp. ANDY finds a DVD, which he puts in the DVD player, and presses play.

We cut between ANDY and GREG's faces, what is on the screen, and NICK.

NICK is rushing around the dark house in a panic, seemingly lost – he goes one way and then stops and goes the other, tries doors which are locked, and so on.

GREG's expression is one of horror.

ANDY's expression is one of shame.

The scene on the DVD appears to be amateur footage and the scene is not clear. However we can clearly hear the soundtrack. It is NICK's voice.

NICK

You're a faggot! Tell me you're a faggot you bitch!

OTHER VOICE

Oh fuck...oh fuck...I'll tell you whatever you want to know...

NICK, on the DVD, appears to be kicking the other person who is on the ground. He says one word per kick.

NICK

I. Want. To. Know. That. You. Are. A. Faggot!

OTHER VOICE

Just fucking kill him.

NICK

Oh I'm gunna fucking kill him! You can be very fucking sure of that! I'm going to fucking well apply Rule 6 on him. What's rule 6 guys?

OTHER VOICES (in unison)

No pooftas!

NICK

That's right. No..

(sound of a gun being fired)

NICK

Fucking...

(sound of a gun being fired)

We see NICK enter the room, unbeknownst to GREG.

NICK (on the DVD, more calmly)

...anything.

NICK puts his hand on GREG's shoulder and he whips around.

Behind GREG we see EVAN and some of the other CREW MEMBERS, with their hands tied, and some of the YOUNG MEN.

NICK

Come here Andy.

ANDY does not move.

NICK

Come on mate.

ANDY comes. NICK holds ANDY and strokes his hair, talking to him softly.

NICK

Dere dere, poor boy, poor boy, you've been in the wars haven't you?

NICK speaks to the YOUNG MEN

NICK

Take Andy away. Come back in about half an hour.

NICK gestures to one of the YOUNG MEN, who ties GREG's hands in a similar fashion to the rest of the crew. The YOUNG MAN takes ANDY's arm and they leave. Only GREG, NICK, and the CREW (including EVAN) are in the room, but due to its small size it is still crowded. NICK turns a dial on the lamp and the light lowers until the room is almost completely dark.

NICK

I told you there were enemies everywhere. People want to rewrite history. Let the terrorists win mate! Make you feel guilty. Make you feel like...turn day into night and night into day.

NICK does not sound angry at the crew, rather he sounds like he does not believe himself, like he is pleading with them.

NICK

I make no apologies mate. No apologies fucking needed or wanted. You sleep at night in your beds because of me, don't you forget that. Everything they say about me is true. I won the Congressional Medal of Honour for what I did, only Australian to ever be awarded that.

GREG (softly)

What for.

NICK

For fighting against Evil. We fought against Evil and we won. I fight against monsters that want to destroy everyone.

GREG (softly)

Yeah.

NICK draws his knife slowly across GREG's face. NICK has an expression of disgust at what he is doing. We see GREG start to bleed, but NICK is scarring him rather than killing him. GREG starts to cry, silently.

NICK

I'm the King Cock, and nobody is going to do anything to me.

Pause. NICK unties them. He avoids eye contact and so do they. He gestures that they may leave. They do, shrinking away from him, and again, avoiding eye contact.

We see the crew silently moving down a series of corridors, followed by NICK. They enter the first room and gather their equipment, still silent, still not looking at NICK or each other. They move slowly down more corridors, and out the front door. NICK stands in the front doorway. No one has said anything for several minutes.

NICK

I was only doing what I was trained to do.

GREG

I know.