

'The Bobby Calf' - Non-linear and non-classical narrative structures in the
cinema of unease

Nicholas Scrivin

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Primary Supervisor: David Hughes

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"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Levin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial letter.

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Abstract

This document outlines the research, development and production of a creative work and accompanying exegesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Communication Studies (MCS) programme. It includes the first draft of a feature film screenplay and an exegesis that explores the research conducted, the theoretical context of the work, and analyses the screenwriting process undertaken.

The Bobby Calf (2008) is the first draft of a feature film screenplay that uses a non-classical and non-linear narrative structure to tell the story of its main characters and advance the plot. A psychological drama set in rural New Zealand, The Bobby Calf (2008) was originally inspired by the Janet Frame short story The Reservoir (1963), a story based on a group of youngsters who venture forth to discover the forbidden reservoir; a place their parents had forbid them from going. Set in the outskirts of a small farming settlement, the story is a dark and gothic depiction of rural life and the harshness of reality faced by those brought up in a lifestyle they did not choose. The story focuses on the journey of ADAM (21); both as a young boy in 1988 (called JOHNNY) and as a young adult in 1997, and his mother CATH; a woman whose dreams and aspirations for her son and indeed her own life are slowly slipping away. The story centres on Adam as he grows more uncomfortable with how his life has ended up, and his discovery that the life he has been destined to fulfil is not the one he has chosen.

Accompanying the screenplay is an exegesis that explores the research conducted previously on the history of non-classical/non-linear narrative structures and the rationale behind the success and limitations of this now-popular form of storytelling. These types of narrative structures are not a new phenomenon, and as many authors have attested, the basis of this form of story telling is rooted in the history of screenwriting and film making, and borrows many techniques from theatre and literature.

Non-linear and non-classical narrative structures in the cinema of unease

This exegesis accompanies the first draft of the screenplay *The Bobby Calf* (2008); an example of non-linear and non-classical narrative structures in contemporary screen writing. It aims to extract meaning from the screenplay and places it within its theoretical context; that of non-linear and non-classical narrative structures in what Neill and Rymer (1995) have called the 'cinema of unease'. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the screenplay, to analyse the process undertaken and inform readers of the screenplay's narrative perspective and underlying themes and messages.

This exegesis is broken down into four sections. The first section looks at the inspiration and inception of the screenplay *The Bobby Calf* (2008); from its early beginnings and inspirations to its current form, and outlines its synopsis. It also explains the theoretical underpinning of the creative work and relates this to the subject matter of non-linear narrative structures. Secondly, this exegesis explores the research conducted previously on the history of non-classical/non-linear narrative structures and the rationale behind the success and limitations of this now-popular form of storytelling. Thirdly, it will explore underlying themes, messages and symbolism, to extract more meaning, motivation and reasoning behind the screenplay. The final section is a reflective review of the screenwriting journey, analysing the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and future aspirations of the project.

The screenplay – inspiration and beginnings

The Bobby Calf (2008) is the first draft of a feature film screenplay that uses a non-classical and non-linear narrative structure to tell the story of its main characters and advance the plot. A psychological drama set in rural New Zealand, *The Bobby Calf* (2008) was originally inspired by the Janet Frame short story *The Reservoir* (1963), a story based on a group of youngsters who venture forth to discover the forbidden reservoir; a place their parents had forbid them from going. While the current form of *The Bobby Calf* (2008) has completely evolved since its inception, many of the common themes, messages and underlying motifs from *The Reservoir* are still evident today.

In *The Reservoir* (Frame, 1963), a group of children are disillusioned to find that the reservoir isn't as scary, dangerous or secretive as their parents had suggested, nor does it live up to the expectations or images they had conjured up in their

minds. The crux of the story lies in the loss of innocence and youth, and the discovery that our parents don't know everything. It is this theme that is still core to *The Bobby Calf* (2008) today, and although *The Reservoir* (1963) is set in Otago and *The Bobby Calf* (2008) in a North Island farming community, the importance of location and setting is also an important feature in both. Many of the symbols and metaphors commonly used in Frame's work are still also evident in *The Bobby Calf* (2008); the underlying secrecy and danger of water, such as *Swans* (Frame, 1951), the use of rural landscapes to isolate individuals, and the calf motif used in another Frame story *The Bull Calf* (1963).

Inspired by Frame's short story and then conceived and written as a ten minute short film titled *The Offal Pit* (2006), the original story featured the character of CATH as the protagonist, and was a classically-narrated script, which followed a chronological and logical timeframe and pattern of events with a distinct start, middle and ending. In adapting *The Offal Pit*, which was renamed *The Bobby Calf* (2008), a non-linear and non-classical narrative was adopted to extract more insight and rationale behind the characterisation, establish more intrigue in the plot, and to develop drama and suspense leading to the climax and subsequent dénouement. However, the main rationale behind adopting such a narrative structure was to link the core theme of the story to the way in which the story was told. *The Bobby Calf* (2008) is about our childhood memories, and how our youth shapes the people we are today. A non-linear narrative was chosen to present this information rather than using the flashback technique to elicit information. During this process the character of ADAM also emerged as the driving force and protagonist.

The Bobby Calf (2008) was also inspired by some of my own experiences growing up in rural New Zealand. While the characters and storyline bear no resemblance at all to my own upbringing and this story is not auto-biographical, many of the rural locations and settings are inspired by my own memories of growing up on the outskirts of a farming community. My insights into the New Zealand farming community helped establish what I feel is a realistic, yet harsh and intricate portrayal and social commentary on rural New Zealand. In 2005 I completed a black-and-white still photography course with the purpose of helping inform the screenplay process. The black-and-white images that were taken were also key inspirations for the screenplay, providing motivation and visual guides to help me

clarify the setting and location of the story. These photographs have been included in the appendix of this document.

Before commencing work on *The Bobby Calf* (2008) and in order to write a screenplay with non-linear and non-classical narrative, I had to conduct research on what constitutes non-classical/non-linear narration and the history and purpose of this form of storytelling. This was to identify what were successful and unsuccessful uses of this form of narration, and this research is reviewed in the second part of this exegesis.

Synopsis – The Bobby Calf

The Bobby Calf (2008) is a psychological drama about the deterioration of the family unit in rural society and the loss of innocence and youth. Set in rural New Zealand on the outskirts of a small farming settlement, the story is a dark and gothic depiction of rural life and the harshness of reality faced by those brought up in a lifestyle they did not choose. The story focuses on the journey of ADAM (21); both as a young boy in 1988 (called JOHNNY) and as a young adult in 1997, and his mother CATH; a woman whose dreams and aspirations for her son and indeed her own life are slowly slipping away. The story concentrates on Adam as he grows more uncomfortable with how his life has ended up, and his discovery that the life he has been destined to fulfil is not the one he has chosen.

Adam lives with his mother Cath on a farm she inherited from her elderly parents and in the absence of her husband JOHN (35), who disappeared under mysterious circumstances nine years earlier.

A seemingly typical rural teenager, Adam spends his time on the rugby field, in front of the television, or going out drinking with his mates. However, underneath the masculine, idle and lazy bravado lurks a different side to Adam; a secret side of his personality that he rarely shows the outside world.

While Cath refuses help on the farm and shows signs of breaking under physical and emotional strain, Adam is content in letting life pass him by, rarely helping out at home or showing any interest in taking over the farm when he is older; to the despair of Cath and her father BRIAN [65].

Retreating to his childhood hideaway, Adam and best friend MATT [21] reminisce about childhood times at the offal pit; the once out-of-bounds place their parents forbid them from visiting. Representing time passed, lost ambitions, and the secrets we hide as children, the offal pit also reminds Adam and Matt about a time when life was easy and secure and nothing really mattered.

On his way to rugby training one morning, Adam notices JOHNNY (13); a young boy who lives on a farm nearby. Sensing a connection, Adam watches Johnny from afar, seeing an all-to familiar pattern emerging.

Emotionally closed and unable to deal with his emotions or feelings, Adam's only source of trust and support comes from an unlikely source - three kuia who live down the road. Confiding in Moira, Teri and Colleen, Adam questions whether the path he is following is the right one for him, and fears ending up like his mother, or worse, his absent father.

Johnny meanwhile, struggles with growing up in a hostile family environment. Venturing to discover the mysterious offal pit against the wishes of their parents, Johnny, Matt and Colin eventually find this out-of-bounds rural legend; less exciting and dangerous than they had hoped.

When Cath arranges a meeting for Adam to see a university dean against his wishes, and prevents him from attending rugby training, the mother-son relationship deteriorates. Adam retreats even further away from his mother, and Cath's mental state comes into question with the constant fear that her dreams for her son to take over the farm aren't becoming reality.

Meanwhile a vicious storm brews, symbolic of the impending danger, as reports come in that the storm could be as bad as the one the small town of Rauru experienced nine years previously.

As the storm reaches its climax and the river bursts its banks, Johnny tries to save a stranded bobby calf from the rising flood waters. When John beats and belittles his son for putting himself in danger (and refuses to save the calf) Johnny's anger and fear boils over and he accidentally shoots his father with a shotgun. At this moment, it is revealed to us that Johnny is in fact Adam, nine years earlier, and we have been watching two distinct time periods.

By hiding the body, Cath protects her son and the two make a pact to keep it a secret.

When Adam discovers that the kuia (killed nine years earlier in the same storm that 'claimed' his father) are either ghosts or figments of his imagination, and he is dropped from his beloved rugby team, Adam tries to turn his back on his life and the town, by waiting for a train that 'will never come'.

The main characterisation in The Bobby Calf

ADAM

Adam is a 21 year old male, who is an only son. He lives at home with his mother on a farm she inherited from her father. At the outset we see Adam as an archetypal young rugby player; idle, unmotivated, interested in watching rugby on television and hanging out with friends. He seems uninterested in helping his mother around the house and farm.

Adam plays rugby at the local club, however his interest in rugby may be only to fulfil the aspirations of his father, or what is 'expected' of a rural man growing up.

He is of stocky build, with dark brown/black hair. He plays the position of hooker in the rugby team, and although he is a good player, while playing his mind is often someplace else. Adam is quietly popular in the team and at his work. He is a man of few words, and the words he does speak don't usually convey much emotion or feeling.

Although it was intended that after his parents retired he would take over the running of the farm, Adam shows no desire to do this, instead allowing his mother to work the farm, only helping out on occasions.

Throughout the story we see that Adam's idleness is only skin deep, hiding a much more complex character. This is evident in his relationship with his mother and his close, but competitive and complex friendship with Matt.

Adam has a very closed and insecure personality. He keeps his relationships at arms length, including his mother. He confides only in the kuia, letting emotions bottle up and fester within. This is apparent in the climax of the story.

His relationship with his mother is one of guilt, and the relationship spirals out of control when the tension of keeping the secret of his father's death becomes unbearable for Adam.

Adam's jealousy and stifled and confused attraction towards Matt comes to a head at the 'changing rooms' party, and afterwards at the offal pit, when pent up jealousy, aggression and lack of communication boils over in both men.

CATH

Cath is 40 years old. She has inherited a farm from her parents, who were long-serving and long-time fourth generation farmers. She took over the farm after her husband John was killed nine years earlier. It is expected in rural families that the eldest son takes over the farm when he comes of age, but Adam shows no sign of this or interest, leaving Cath with this responsibility.

Cath looks older than her age. She has long brown hair, wrinkly hands, and a sun-marked face. She hides under layers of farming clothes, coats and overalls. Her hair is not well-maintained and she has broken and chipped nails. We get the impression that she was once a very attractive 'girl next door'.

Cath has an outwardly strong persona. She is seen by others as a hard worker, although somewhat aloof and absent. She uses guilt to manipulate her son Adam. She likes to be seen as a martyr in the wake of her husband's death, with any weakness showing failure in her point of view.

She is constantly trying to maintain the farm she inherited, under the watchful eye of her conservative yet caring father. She has had to downscale the herd and farming output considerably, and does not heed the advice of her father to employ extra help. However she has hired a farm-hand/share milker to take on some of the workload since Adam is not intent on doing so.

Before she took over the farm she was a housewife and co-farmer with her husband.

Through the story we see that Cath is not coping as well as she portrays. The underlying secret of her husband's disappearance soon exposes her as someone of a more fragile personality and we see her in various states of mental disorder.

MATT

Matt is best friend to Adam. He is 21 years old and lives locally. His family are not traditional farmers, more lifestyle farmers than 'real farmers'. He is a cocky, confident character who plays up on the stereotype of rugby-playing lout. He

seems comfortable in playing the role of 'bloke' and is happier in his own skin than Adam is.

Matt is smaller and fitter than Adam, something that causes jealousy on the rugby field. He is an excellent rugby player, and plays wing. He is more of a hit with the girls, and seems intent on 'scoring' as much as possible. His respect for women is low, with the exception of mothers and grandmothers.

Most people see Matt as a somewhat two-dimensional character. He was not an academic achiever at school, and would hassle Adam for being one of the brighter kids.

Matt works at his father's industrial plant. His parents are wealthier than Adam's, evident in their house and car.

Friends since primary school, Adam and Matt used to hang out at the offal pit/graveyard as kids. We get the sense that both characters are hiding something that went on at the offal pit, which does not get resolved. The competitiveness of mate-hood is evident in Matt, with jealousies about rugby prowess, scoring girls and secrets being the forefront of his character.

Narrative structure of *The Bobby Calf* (2008)

The Bobby Calf (2008) uses a non-linear and non-classical narrative structure to advance the plot and develop the characters. It is an integral part of how the screenplay is to be read and understood. It also uses what Berg (2006) calls a multiple personality (branched) plot narrative, which interweaves two distinct time periods in one characters' life.

This is where the audience sees two representations of the same character at different points and times. Examples of modern-day screenplays that utilise this narrative technique include *Fight Club* (1999) and *Sliding Doors* (1998).

The purpose of this style of writing is to ensure that the audience is unaware of the two differing time periods and the form of narrative from the outset. Rather, only subtle hints and suggestions are used and it is not until the climax (or 'reveal') that the audience is made aware of the different time periods. This is a deliberate and conscious decision, as I want the audience to believe that Adam and Johnny are two different characters. It is only at the climax that the audience realises that they have been subject to unreliable narration; the scenes where

Johnny is on-screen are actually flashbacks in Adam's memory. Adam is the only character that interacts with Johnny; and even he is unaware that he is imagining himself nine years earlier.

By using a multiple personality (branched) narrative, I want to allow the reader and the audience to take away their own perspective and their own interpretations from reading the script or viewing the film. Because of this reason, and like films that use non-classical and non-linear narratives and plots, such as *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), I intend *The Bobby Calf* (2008) to be written for repeat viewings. This is so the audience can re-discover or re-interpret the intricacies of the script. Because the film relies on a form of unreliable narration (narrated through the perspective of one of the characters rather than omnisciently) I feel the narrative creates an interesting dynamic and perspective for the film, and removes the reliance on its narrative for purely aesthetic reasons.

It is important to stress that the script jumps continuously from 1997 back to 1988 throughout. While this may seem jarring or disruptive to the reader of the script, it is deliberate and is intended to be seamless on the screen. There should be only subtle differences or identifiers that upon second or third viewing, audiences may pick up on. These subtle hints are only suggestive and direction will play an important part in the seamless juxtaposition between the two time periods.

I don't want the audience to be conscious of the fact that we are going back and forth in time. While in reality there would be many differences between 1988 and 1997, I intend to use these subtly, suggesting that many rural areas do not change much; they evolve at a slower pace and can seem quite dated. For example, the shop scene in present day 1997 is still very dated, and to viewers may look old-fashioned or backward. It probably looks exactly like the store in 1988.

The emergence of non-linear and non-classical narrative structures

The emergence and use of post-classical, non-classical and non-linear narrative structures in screenwriting is not a new phenomenon. As many authors have attested, the basis of this form of story telling is rooted in the history of screenwriting and film making, and borrows many techniques from theatre and literature. The terminology 'post-classic' or 'non-classic' is a moot point amongst critics; indeed, much discussion revolves around the simple classification systems

that we allude to when critiquing scripts and films. While some have regarded this type of screen writing an invention, new theories emerging suggest this type of narration is not as much an invention, rather a new-found popularity; brought to the mainstream by examples of storytelling including *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Memento* (2000), and *Run Lola Run* (1998).

Borrowing dramatic and narrative elements from theatre, literature and modernist cinema, these types of films have been part of the non-mainstream and world cinema landscape for many years (Newman, 2006). Academically, there are many conflicting theories and terminologies in defining exactly what non-classical or post-classical storytelling is. Eleftheria Thanouli, in her article “A new paradigm in contemporary cinema” (2006) cites a number of key theorists by the names of Fredric Jameson, Linda Hutcheon, Jim Collins and Christopher Sharret, who argue that post-modern cinema must employ nostalgia, parody or eclectic irony and endorses the breakdown of hierarchies and binary oppositions by mixing popular culture with High Art and traditional values with modernist practices (Thanouli, citing Jameson, 1983, Hutcheon 1988, Sharrett 1990, Collins 1993). As Thanouli suggests, this leaves the definition on post-classic or non-classical cinema wide open with much room for interpretation.

In contrast, there are scholars who refute the claim that there exists such a thing as non-classical narration. In his book *The Way Hollywood Tells It* (2006), Bordwell suggests that there is nothing new in what screenwriters are producing today, rather that works with perceived ‘post-classical’ elements are a mere re-hash of the classical norms. Breaking it down into four sub-sections of narration, Bordwell defines all narration as either classical narration, art cinema narration, historical-materialist narration or parametric narration. In order to understand if a shift has been made to post-classical narration (if such a thing exists) we need to understand what the classical paradigm is.

In his book *Narration in the Fiction Film* Bordwell states “The basic plot of classical narration consists on an undisturbed stage, the disturbance, the struggle, and the elimination of the disturbance” (Bordwell, p. 157).

Quoting Bordwell, Thanouli reinforces this belief to an extent. “The majority of films that come out of the big Hollywood studios nowadays seem to serve

Bordwell's goal to keep the classical model alive. Their overall narrative structure still complies with the classical conventions, while the new stylistic techniques like free-ranging camera movements or fast-speed motion cannot convince anyone that there has been a major paradigm shift" (Thanouli, 2006, p. 2). This quote is the crux of the argument about whether many of today's stories rely on purely visual elements or written narration to define them. When writing *The Bobby Calf* (2008) I was conscious that non-classical or non-linear narration must serve a purpose rather than be used for visual or aesthetic reasons alone. It must relate to the subject matter in order to be conceived as more than just 'show'.

While seeming to back up Bordwell's theory, Thanouli also proposes the emergence of a post-classical mode that is based on poetic terms and textual analysis rather than the standard or recycled paradigms. "Shall we stretch the limits of the classical mode to squeeze them in too or could we perhaps begin to consider the emergence of a new post-classical mode that can be defined in strictly poetic terms based on a close textual analysis devoid of the post-modern tropes that have been exhaustively recycled?" (Thanouli, 2006 p. 2).

Thanouli argues a good case, and this seems to be backed up by Berg (2006) in his classification of non-traditional plots and narratives. Put most succinctly: "What distinguishes the post-classical paradigm is that it turns the hybrid and multi-generic films into the norm, while it simultaneously initiates an archaeological dig into the classical generic codes to revive them triumphantly" (Thanouli, 2006, p. 3). Put simply, Thanouli is saying that there has to be an explanation to the rise in popularity of these non-traditionally narrated themes.

If Thanouli is correct and there does exist a post-classical category of films, non-classical and non-linear narration in screenwriting and film seems to be enjoying a new-found trend in modern cinema (Davis and de los Rios, 2006). Robert Davis and Riccardo de los Rios, in their article in *Film Criticism* "From Hollywood to Tokyo: resolving a tension in contemporary narrative cinema" (2006) describe a shift from the mid to late 1970s into movies where marketing and money-making ability was ingrained into the screenwriting and film making process. The article describes how Syd Field's 1979 "Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting" became known commonly in the industry as "the bible" (Davis and de los Rios, 2006).

Field's 1970 Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting' conveniently collapsed Aristotelian dramatic action into a three-act structure, with prescribed act lengths of thirty six, and thirty pages, respectively, and precisely placed plot points on paper through choice in dilemma and simplistic dichotomies (loyal/disloyal, loving/cruel, courageous/cowardly)". (Davis and de los Rios, 2006 p. 1).

This structure of writing a screenplay was over the next thirty years ingrained into the mainstream. This formula had become so recognisable that in the early nineties computer software had been developed to do just that. "By 1994 story development had become so template-driven that a team of USC alumni wrote a software programme, called Dramatica, that codified the principles of screenwriting and transformed the creative process into a massive fill-in-the-blank questionnaire" (Davis and de los Rios, p. 2).

This example illustrated how the "Hollywood" realm of screenwriting had become formulaic during this period, placing more emphasis on marketability and profitability (Davis and de los Rios, 2006).

There have been many reasons cited for the emergence of this post-classical form of narration. A common theme explaining the insurgence is the evolution of technology. Davis and de los Rios credit the onset of the internet, computer games, changes to the media landscape and the changes in distribution technology as bringing about a different desire in audiences (2006). This, often known as the MTV affect (onset of music videos, computer gaming) can be transcended by generational necessities (Generation X, Generation Y). Indeed Berg cites many contributory factors that follow a similar vein.

Outside of the world of film, many possible contributory factors might have helped shape this surging trend in unconventional narration: the fragmenting 'postmodern' condition and its revolt against master narratives; the ubiquity of shorter narrative media forms such as music video; video games, which stress multiple kinds of interactive narrativity, require various sorts of player strategies including role playing and team building, and repeatedly take players back to the same situations...(Berg, 2006, p.5).

The above quote encapsulates the views of many, and can give some credence to the onset of these post-classical elements of cinematic narration. Based on technological advances, these examples can show how Generation X and Y audiences require more interactivity, more choice and contrast in what they see on the screen. My own experiences suggest that increased media connectivity has created greater crossover between traditionally separate media channels. From the silver screen to the big screen, movie marketers are now branching out into all fields. Many feature film game spinoffs now include the on-screen talent for voiceovers, characterisation and introductions. Music videos from movie soundtracks can be mere advertisements for the movies in which they appear. Internet blog sites, as in the case of *Die Hard 4* (2007) are now key components of the marketing mix.

Furthermore, due to the increased competition of new technology and greater choices for people (internet, television, DVD) a possible explanation is that cinema needs to evolve with other technologies. The fact that people can buy DVDs or download films with ease means that screenplays can be written with the second, third and fourth viewing in mind. *The Bobby Calf* (2008), for example, has been written with repeat viewing in mind. Due to its unreliable narration and the subtleties in differentiating the two distinct time periods (which may not be visible or apparent in the first viewing), I feel *The Bobby Calf* (2008) will benefit from the audience watching it more than once, to pick up on the indicators written throughout. For example, subtle indicators in the script include the writing of Johnny/Adam's name on the school book, the worn couch in 1997 versus the new, clean couch in 1988, the lack of reference to Cath in 1988, the differing climates and weather in 1988 and Johnny/Adam's reflection changing in the water tank. These are all examples of subtle indicators not always apparent in the first viewing. The interpretation of the characters of Johnny and the kuia are also left up to interpretation and may benefit from repeat viewing. Many may want to revisit the film in order to clearly establish which characters are 'real' and which ones are figments of Adam's imagination due to the unreliable narration.

Another explanation is the growing importance and crossover into mainstream of more independent film making. "The recent phenomenon of complex narratives is rooted firmly in the alternative sphere of cinema, the films screened at festivals and art houses and seen on boutique cable televisions...Independent cinema,

which has supplanted foreign art cinema as the most prominent feature film alternative to Hollywood, offers appeals that are distinct from those of mainstream cinema” (Newman, p. 89). Non-classical narrated stories have always been a mainstay of independent cinema; in fact, many suggest that this is the key defining element between independent cinema and mainstream, apart from budget. Berg also agrees, stating: “In the U.S, the rise of independent film and the need for product differentiation are surely important factors” (Berg, p. 6).

One film-maker did bring the debate of post-modern or non-classical narration out into the public domain. Often called the “Tarantino Effect”, this terminology became the mainstay of critics and academics alike, although much debate and criticism surrounds this. As Berg rightly and vigorously points out, “Quentin Tarantino did not invent non-linear storytelling in film, of course, but his first two films, *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994) did make playing with narration cool and fun, and no doubt emboldened a host of filmmakers to experiment” (Berg, p. 6). Tarantino seems not to give himself too much credit for leading the charge in this type of storytelling. Quoted by Berg, Tarantino comments on “The Charlie Rose Show” about his use of non-linear storytelling:

It’s not so much I don’t believe in it [linear storytelling], it’s not the fact that I’m on this big crusade against linear storytelling...but it’s not the only game in town. If I had written *Pulp Fiction* as a novel...you would never even remotely bring up the structure...A novel can do that [linear storytelling] no problem. (Berg, 2006, quoting Tarantino).

Bringing it into the mainstream may have started a trend, but this was not the invention. Continuing with Berg’s research, three themes have emerged in the research of post-classical narration. The first theme Berg discovered is that the number of alternative film narratives is increasing (Berg, p. 7). This is described as a modest but steady growth, using Roger Ebert’s top 10 films for 2005 as an example. In this list, four of Ebert’s top 10 films were alternative narratives (*Syriana* (2005), *Crash* (2004), *Nine Lives* (2005) and *Me and You and Everybody We Know* (2005) (Berg, 2006, p. 8).

The second theme Berg highlighted is that there has been a large tendency for experimental narratives to crossover from art house cinema to all types of film making and screenwriting. This is evident in blockbusters ranging from *Harry*

Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004) to *Magnolia* (1999). A third theme also illustrated is that alternative or post-modern narrative experimentation is a worldwide theme, not solely an American one (Berg, 2006, p. 3). Global examples include Germany's *Run Lola Run* (1998), Mexican Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's *Ammores Perros* (2000), Hong Kong's *Chunking Express* (1994) and the United Kingdom's *Wonderland* (1999) (Berg, 2006, p. 7).

The Berg Classification System

Berg's classification system (Berg, p. 14-55) does well to define exactly what makes up this non-classical and non-linear genre in terms of plot and narration. While there are many examples and different sub-categories, it helps us to understand emergent themes in post-classical narration. *The Bobby Calf* (2008) (in reference to Berg's classification system) adheres to the multiple personality (branched) plot (Berg, p.19).

BERG'S CLASSIFICATION OF ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES (2006)

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
The Polyphonic or ensemble plot narration	Multiple protagonists, single location	Crash (2005) Gosford Park (2001) Nashville (1975) Grand Hotel (1932) Magnolia (1999) Pulp Fiction(1994) Love Actually (2003)
Parallel plot narration	Multiple protagonists in different times and/or spaces.	The Godfather Part II (1974) The Hours (2002) Syriana (2005) Traffic (2000)
Multiple personality (branched) plot narration	Multiple protagonists are the same person, or different versions of the same person	Fight Club (1999) Sliding Doors (1998) Melinda and Melinda (2005)
Backwards plot narration	Reverse plotting draws attention to and emphasises the casual chain in a way classical narration does not	Memento (2000) The Rules of Attraction (2002)
Daisy chain plot	No central protagonist, one character leads to the next	Heavy Metal (1981) The Red Violin (1998) Slacker (1990)
Repeated action plot narration	One character repeats an action	50 First Dates (2004) Groundhog Day (1993) Run Lola Run (1998)
Repeated event plot narration	One action seen from multiple characters' perspectives	Citizen Kane (1941) Rashomon (1950) Elephant (2003)
Hub and spoke plot	Multiple characters' story lines intersect decisively at one time and place	Go (1999) Lantana (2001) 21 Grams (2003) The Killing (1956)
The jumbled plot	Scrambled sequence of events motivated artistically by filmmaker's prerogative	Pulp Fiction (1994) 21 Grams (2003) Kill Bill (2003) Out of Sight (1998)
Subjective plot narration	A character's internal or filtered perspective, unreliable narration	Adaptation (2002) Repulsion (1965) A Beautiful Mind (2001) Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004) Donnie Darko (2001) Being John Malkovich (1999)
Existential plot narration	Minimal goal, causality and exposition	Saving Private Ryan (1998) The Thin Red Line (1998)
Metanarrative plot	Narration about the problem of movie narration	8 ½ (1963) All That Jazz (1979) Adaptation (2002) American Splendor (2003)

(Berg, p. 14-55)

The research conducted on post-classical and non-linear narrative techniques helped inform the screenwriting process. During the process I researched a number of films which had successfully adopted non-linear narrative structures. The example used was *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004).

Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004) uses a range of non-linear and non-classical narrative techniques to progress the story and to develop characters.

Based inside the head of protagonist JOEL BARRISH as he is getting the memory of his ex-girlfriend CLEMENTINE expunged from his brain, the script's premise allows

for great flexibility of narrative structure in non-classical ways. The film is a good example of how non-linear and non-classical narrative structures can be extremely effective in advancing the plot, developing characters, building intrigue and suspense, and keeping the audience engaged and active in the storyline.

It is not until half way through reading the script or watching the film that the audience realises the opening sequence is actually the end of the story told in reverse. As the scenes progress we realise that the audience is viewing the story from Joel's point-of-view as the erasing process is occurring.

This setup has allowed for a contemporary, post-classical and non-linear structure that not only relates to the subject matter, but is also an effective technique in building intrigue and suspense and requires a connection and deep thought from the audience. It is my intention in writing *The Bobby Calf* (2008) to in part emulate these strengths.

Both writer Kaufman and director Michel Gondry of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) have used indicators within the dialogue and cinematography to give the audience insight into the narrative. There are both visual and written or verbal cues as to what time, place and location the script is situated.

In analysing films with effective use of post-classical and non-linear narrative structures, I looked at how these techniques could be incorporated into *The Bobby Calf* (2008) to make the story more contemporary and engaging to the audience. The benefit of having this type of narrative is that it builds intrigue, encourages the audience or reader to look closer, helps in the development of characterisation, establishes back-story and setting and creates a modern, contemporary screenplay with commercial appeal.

While comparing *The Bobby Calf* (2008) to both successful and non-successful examples of non-linear and non-classical narrative structures, I am conscious that the narrative should relate inextricably to the subject matter, characterisation or advancement of the plot, and should use the successful techniques learned to help achieve this. In this sense, I do not want to create a film that adheres to the jumbled plot narrative described by Berg (2006), which includes such films as *Pulp*

Fiction (1997) and *21 Grams* (2003). These films tend to use this type of narration for pure visual effect and at the discretion of the director; and often this doesn't advance the story. As one commentator puts it, "...some directors may be just playing with us or, perhaps, acting out their boredom with that Hollywood script-conference menace the conventional story arc" (Denby, 2007, p. 2).

Linda Cowgill in her article "Non-linear narratives: the ultimate in time travel" describes the traditional purpose of non-classical narrations as follows: "Non-linear structure traditionally puts the emphasis on character as a strategy for describing a personality free of constraints imposed by a linear, goal-oriented plot" (Cowgill, p. 2). If this is indeed true, I hope this is the case *The Bobby Calf* (2008).

From the outset I was conscious that I did not want to simply change the narrative for the sake of it. I discovered that non-linear narratives were most successful when there was a direct correlation between any non-linear elements and the subject matter or storyline (as in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*) and not when the technique was used as pure gimmick or tokenism. I concluded that in order to convey certain aspects of the back-story, particularly those of childhood experiences and the varying stages of mental disorder, I would need to establish a non-chronological story that directly related to the theme and subject matter and that juxtaposed the present with the past.

Themes, symbolism and metaphors in *The Bobby Calf* (2008)

There are many thematic and symbolic elements of *The Bobby Calf* (2008) that provide insight into the lives of the characters and help the audience understand the core purpose of the script. In essence, *The Bobby Calf* (2008) is about the deterioration of the family unit and rural society, the loss of innocence and youth, and the discovery that parents don't always have the answers.

These themes are revealed to us in a number of ways, and in particular by the contrasting views of Adam as a young boy and Adam as a 21 year old living in a world that seems to be falling apart around him.

The story begins with Adam at a crossroads; waiting for a train that may never come. While we hear the haunting echo of the train through the valley, we

cannot see it. This is symbolic of Adam's mental state and growing inner voice of unrest. At the conclusion we are left wondering whether Adam will get on the train and whether Cath has already missed it.

The theme of discovering that your parents don't know everything is also very much prevalent in the script. This was the original premise for the script (inspired by Janet Frame's *The Reservoir*, 1963) and plays a pivotal role in the story. The offal pit is a true representation of this theme, and it is the discovery that our parents aren't perfect and don't hold all the answers, which affects Adam so dramatically. The offal pit is a place of escape for Adam and Matt, and the place they were told never to go to by their parents. It represents the place within ourselves that we keep secret. The discovery of the offal pit as children and the revelation that it isn't a scary, dangerous or forbidden place, as their parents had suggested, becomes symbolic of the discovery that their parents don't know everything and that their childhoods are coming to an end.

And it is these memories and childhood experiences that play a large part in forming the character of Adam. Throughout the script he reveals part of his personality through visualisations of his childhood - he sees himself as a younger child (Johnny) in the throes of puberty, when life was an adventure and an age of discovery. It is through these visualisations that Adam reveals to us the childhood memories that shape him today; his father's death; the bobby calf incident and his parents' continual fighting.

The story also plots the various stages of deterioration of Cath's mental state. We see the detrimental affects of Cath's choice to stay in her position, for better or worse; her ambitions and dreams of becoming a singer are beaten out of her by the harsh environment she was born into.

It is both the harsh geography and isolated location that play a major role in revealing the themes. At times this gothic, dark and eerie setting may be overpowering; the feeling that also overpowers Cath and Adam as they struggle their way through life. The location is a metaphor for the social constraints that are imposed on Adam and Cath, and is an outward representation and metaphor for their inner dialogue, their secrets, fears and soul. The location highlights their

inner emotions, repressed fears, isolation and loneliness. This theme can directly attribute it to Neill and Rymer's theory of the 'cinema of unease' (1995).

The screenplay is also a social commentary on the traditions of rural society in New Zealand. While still being true to the original concept of the script, the underlying themes have been developed and enhanced. When writing the script, it appeared to me that the story was in essence the deterioration of a family unit and similarly the deterioration of rural society in New Zealand. Adam, the eldest and only son of a traditional rural family, is expected to take over the farm. Being the only son to pass on the family name, Adam is under pressure to carry out the family wish. It is this dilemma that forces Adam into making a choice – to run or to stay, to end up in the life he does not want or end up like his father. It is the choices that these characters make that progress the story and give us the conflict. Cath goes into a downward spiral; her dreams of her son taking over the farm, marrying a nice girl and settling down are seemingly dashed.

Kuia

The three kuia play an important role in the story of *The Bobby Calf* (2008). First appearing at the beginning of the script as a narrated voice-over, the characters of Moira, Teri and Colleen appear as a mysterious trio of elderly Maori ladies who interact with Adam throughout the screenplay. We first see them walking down the train tracks, emerging from the rain and mist. Adam forms a close bond with the kuia, regularly coming in contact with them as they go about their day-to-day activities. Adam does not realise that the kuia have in fact been killed at a train crossing disaster nine years previously; the same night in which his father perished. The kuia represent an important symbol and metaphor in the film; that of fate and destiny. The characters are based on the three Greek Fates in Greek mythology; spinning life's thread. To represent this, we see them with a fishing rope and pair of scissors. The kuia make Adam question his fate and his life – and force him to ask the question – is this the way my life is ending up? The kuia also help reveal a glimpse of Adam's state of mind.

Train

The train motif is also another important thematic symbol in the script. There are references to the train throughout, particularly the sound of the train echoing in the hills. The sound is Adam's interior dialogue and the crescendo of his growing

fear about how his life will end up. The sound of the train also represents increasing mental unrest in both Adam and Cath. The fact that the train no longer runs is another theme to the story – Adam has metaphorically ‘missed’ the last train, meaning he cannot escape his upbringing or rural past.

Water

Water is another vital element in the story. Like Janet Frame’s novels and short stories, particularly *The Reservoir* (1963) and *Swans* (1963), water is a metaphor for secrecy, danger and the unknown. These three themes are a contributing factor in the development of both Cath and Adam. The river is where the Kuia are first seen, and from where they emerge at the end of the story. The running tap is symbolic of the growing secrecy between Adam and Cath in regards to the death of John.

Offal pit

One of the most important and crucial scenes in *The Bobby Calf* (2008) is the scene when Adam and Matt first visit the offal pit. A makeshift hut in an old derelict shed, the offal pit is not only an important visual element, but also a vital thematic element and symbol. The offal pit represents the secrets we have from youth that, although are hidden, always remain. It is a metaphor for Adam and Cath’s secrets and hidden fears. Literally, the offal pit holds the secret that starts to destroy Adam and Cath; hiding John’s body. Therefore it is both a literal and metaphorical representation of this theme. It also holds the secret to the closeness, jealousy, pent-up aggression, and affectionate undertones of Adam and Matt’s relationship.

Bobby calf

The bobby calf is the personification of the character of Adam; he is the bobby calf that has its life pre-determined. The bobby calf, which symbolises youth and innocence, is taken away and killed. We see Adam, at a young age, showing concern when his father kills his pet calf, and again when he is older and trying to save the life of the stranded calf. When his father kills the bobby calf, Adam’s youth and innocence is taken away. He must face the realities of life (and death). The theme of the script is that, like the calves that get shipped off to slaughter, Adam is helpless in determining how his life will end up.

The Bobby Calf and the 'cinema of unease'

Upon reflection, *The Bobby Calf* (2008) is a prime example of what Sam Neill and Julie Rymer describe in their 1995 documentary as belonging to the theory of the 'cinema of unease'. This somewhat controversial theory, which gained much credit and praise overseas, yet criticism in New Zealand (Petrie, 2005), deals with the underlying themes, driving forces and essences that make up New Zealand cinema of the age. While New Zealand cinema may have moved beyond the cinema of unease over the past ten years, the theory still stands relevant and an integral debating point in New Zealand film theory, and one that must be considered when reading *The Bobby Calf* (2008).

Outlining a brief history of New Zealand cinema and storytelling on film, the documentary "*Cinema of Unease: A Personal Journey by Sam Neill*" (Neill, Rymer, 1995) describes a common theme amongst New Zealand films; the journey of a 'man alone' in an isolated landscape - in reference to the novel of the same name by John Mulgan (1939). The theory paints New Zealand films as dark, uneasy and gothic works that are known for their brooding and powerful landscapes, a sense of unease, isolation and fear, and that also touch on mental instabilities and violence. According to Neill and Rymer, this emerging trend in New Zealand cinema started a move away from earlier film themes which tended to show New Zealand as picture-postcard representations of the motherland.

"They [New Zealand film-makers] would turn their back on the picturesque. They saw the landscape as a metaphor for a psychological interior, and looked to the darker heart of a menacing land". (Neill, Rymer, 1995).

In his article *From the Cinema of Poetry to the Cinema of Unease: Brad Mcgann's In My Father's Den*, (Illusions, 2005), Duncan Petrie refers to the cinema of unease as the use of themes about fear, violence, Puritanism, insanity and brooding.

The theory of the 'cinema of unease' is indeed an important and vital talking point in New Zealand screenplay writing and cinema, and one that must continue to be discussed. Much of the criticism of this theory surrounds the lack of

acknowledgement it gives to New Zealand's growingly diverse population. My own reflection is that this criticism is indeed founded and has some merit, particularly if we look at New Zealand films in the past five years and the urbanisation of New Zealand film. However, while the 'man alone' premise of the cinema of unease has indeed moved on from the days of New Zealand film making in the 1970s, still rooted to the core is the relationship (be it strained, loving, new or isolated) between the main characters and the land and landscape in which they walk.

If we analyse *The Bobby Calf* (2008) in reference to the cinema of unease, we see a very compelling fit. Many of the characteristics that Neill and Rymer identify as traits of the cinema of unease are pertinent in *The Bobby Calf* (2008). Both Adam, our protagonist, and indeed his mother Cath can be seen to be 'men alone' (in reference to John Mulgan's novel) – characters seemingly isolated in a harsh and overbearing environment in varying degrees of mental despair. Adam's father John, also conforms to the 'man alone' theory; aggressive, violent and masculine, on the brink of mental breakdown.

Similarly the important role landscapes play in the cinema of unease is as much a part of *The Bobby Calf* (2008) as of other films that adhere to the theory. The brooding, dark and powerful locations and settings of the script can indeed be looked at within the prism of the cinema of unease. In fact, like many films quoted by Neill and Rymer which have locale and settings as integral parts of the film, *The Bobby Calf* (2008) too has a vital link to the land and location.

The screenwriting process, analysis and journey

The Bobby Calf (2008) is the first draft of a screenplay based on an idea which has been in development since 2006. It is important to note from the outset of this section that I feel *The Bobby Calf* (2008) is only the starting point in the screenplay journey. I believe that the script requires more development to ensure it is the best as it can possibly be and to ensure maximum commercial viability. I acknowledge the limitations in the current script, and know there is much work and development needed, however I look forward to completing this in 2009.

The screenwriting process over the course of this thesis has made me realise that writing scripts, particularly those with non-linear narratives, is a moving,

changeable and constantly evolving process, that requires patience, the ability to think objectively and seek feedback and criticism. Therefore I see *The Bobby Calf* (2008) script as only the starting point in a much longer process. I believe this script requires more evolution and development during the drafting process, and I will be continuing to adapt, re-write and seek feedback on the script.

Over the course of writing the script I have encountered many challenges and also discovered many insights. While the main ideas are still in place from the original ten-minute script, and themes touched on in the original context remain intact, extensive analysis, development and progression has occurred in three main areas; narrative, characterisation and theme. It was these three areas that proved the most challenging when increasing the script from a ten-minute short, to a feature-length drama.

One of the major challenges I faced during the writing of *The Bobby Calf* (2008) centred around its classical narrative. Changing the narrative form marked a considerable mindset shift and changed the way I approached the writing process completely. In the past I have been used to writing scripts that adhered to linear chronology and the use of 'flashbacking' techniques. I am also more confident in writing for the short-film genre rather than feature-length. At its inception, *The Bobby Calf* (then "The Offal Pit") was a chronological, classically narrated story that had the traditional paradigm arc. Its structure was basic and told the story in perfect chronology and synchronicity. While this was suitable for the shorter, ten-minute script, when developing an hour-long screenplay this left me with a predicament; particularly when trying to convey certain back-story elements. The idea of changing the narrative to one that encapsulated childhood memories overlapping with the current action was a somewhat daunting task.

I was very confident in the belief that I did not want to write a script that conformed to a post-classical narrative structure simply to adhere to the 'trend'. As discussed earlier, these films have now become more popular, one senses that these types of films have seen popularity in production that may help its 'saleability' in what is a very competitive film market. While this wasn't the sole purpose of uprooting the narrative structure, it is indeed a welcome benefit.

During the development of the script, I toyed with a number of techniques and narrative structures to convey these memories and the history of the characters. The eventual structure I chose had two distinct time periods running simultaneously and thus two versions of the protagonist; Adam in 1997 and a young Adam (Johnny) in 1988. As there also exists an overlap between the two time periods, this established a form of unreliable narration. The scenes in which Johnny appears are actually memories in Adam's head, as he reminisces about childhood actions that have shaped him. This form of unreliable narration, combined with the multiple protagonist style of narration was at times confusing to write, however its effect was deliberate. I felt that these two forms of narration helped influence the audience's views on Adam as he struggles with the early stages of mental breakdown. It is left up to the audience to interpret as they see fit. This simultaneous or parallel chronology had elements overlapping, making the audience unaware that Johnny was actually the same character as our protagonist until a reveal some time later. The latter sets up an interesting dilemma of particular importance; are the scenes we are watching of Adam as a young boy really reflective (did they happen) or are these just fantasies?

This is similar to the scenes with the kuia. When we discover they have in fact died nine years earlier, I wanted the audience to question Adam's mental state of mind. I leave it open to interpretation whether one thinks the kuia are ghosts or mythical figures, or are figments and illusions in Adam's head. Again, I wanted these scenes to be a comment on Adam's current mental state.

Another area that provided some challenge was characterisation. While this is imperative to any good story, the characters of Cath and Adam have completely evolved from their ten minute counterparts. Firstly, the character of Cath, originally the protagonist, has now taken a more supportive role in the script. Adam has become the major focus of the piece, and his relationship with Cath becomes the crux of the story.

One challenge has been to create supporting characters that were not just two-dimensional 'filler' characters that conformed to stereotypes. In particular, I am referring to Tina, Sarah and other local characters. I acknowledge their current weaknesses, and these characters will need more refining as the script progresses

to provide more specific characterisation, finding their 'third dimension' and to get away from stereotypes.

Matt is also a character who I have found challenging to write. While I can picture him in my own mind, it has been a challenge to put this down on paper. Matt is also a complex character, however I feel at present he does not get enough screen-time. He currently comes across as the joker; which he is. However, there are layers to Matt's character that are underlying; particularly his relationship with Adam and his girlfriend Tina. These are areas that I would like to further develop to ensure a realistic and detailed character.

Conclusion

This exegesis has provided an overview of the screenplay of *The Bobby Calf* (2008), placing it within its theoretical context; that being non-linear and non-classical narrative structures. It has provided background information on the inspiration and motivation behind the script, and has concluded with a self-reflective assessment of the process, challenges and future viability of the script. It has provided an overview of the plot, synopsis, characterisation and main themes and symbolism used throughout to assist the reader and audience in their understanding of the screenplay. It has also reflected on past research conducted on both the history and the successes of non-linear and non-classical narration in film and analyses the script within this context. To conclude, *The Bobby Calf* (2008) is the first draft of a feature film script that I hope will continue to develop over the coming year. It is the framework of what I feel could be a very viable and intensely engaging script which I hope has commercial viability for either television or film. Its adherence to the cinema of unease theory is indeed valid, and while some may see this as a dated concept, it still has intrigue and relevance today. While the core of all storytelling hasn't changed, a newfound emergence and popularity of differing, alternative forms of narration in screenwriting has created momentum, and allows us a differing perspective on stories that may otherwise have been told classically. The screenwriting journey is not over yet, and I look forward to working on *The Bobby Calf* in 2009.

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Appendix



The Bobby Calf
A feature film script

Nic Scrivin

First draft December
2008
Copyright N SCRIVIN

CAST LIST

ADAM	Male, 21, rugby playing lad, at the crossroads
CATH	Female, 40, Adam's mother, farmer
MATT	Male, 21, Adam's best friend
BRIAN	Male, 65, Cath's father
JOHNNY	Male, 13, Adam as a young boy
JOHN	Male, 35, Adam/Johnny's father
SARAH	Female, 20, Adam's girlfriend
TINA	Female, 19, Matt's girlfriend
MOIRA	Female, 65, Maori kuia
TERI	Female, 62, Maori kuia
COLLEEN	Female, 62, Maori kuia
WEATHERMAN	Male, 40, "Jim Hickey"
JOCK	Male, 55, Adam's boss
MARY	Female, 65, Cath's mother
COLIN	Male, 12, friend with Adam and Matt
MISS MARSHALL	Female, 44, Johnny's teacher
DAVE	Male, 30, Adam's workmate
JIM	Male, 28, Adam's workmate
MANDY	Female, 19, checkout operator
DONNA	Female, 18, checkout operator
POLICEWOMAN	Female, 30
NEWS REPORTER	Male, 35
EXTRAS	Rugby players, school children, workmates

1 EXT BLACK 1988

Black.

VOICE-OVER (MOIRA)

The train only comes at night.

Out of the dark it comes.
Through the valleys. Through the
trees. Over water, over earth -
to wake us - while we sleep.

A distant whisper not stirring us
from dreams. Until it creeps.
Closer. An echo through the
hills. It begins to roar.
Louder. Making its way closer.

It wakes us.

Trains don't pass through this
place. Not any more. A sound
once common; now a distant
memory. We kuia know this sound.

Like the fate that marks our
passage, we cannot stop it.

AUDIO: TRAIN GETTING LOUDER/WIND AND RAIN CRESCENDO TO
LOUD CLIMAX.

2 EXT FARM 1997

FADE IN

ADAM [21] stands in a flooded paddock on a small mound of
earth surrounded by water. His shirt is ripped and hanging
off. He holds a small calf in his arms. It is stormy and
raining. The title "The Bobby Calf" appears on the
screen.

FADE TO BLACK.

3 EXT TRAIN STATION 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

A silhouette of a lone man (ADAM) standing on a derelict
train platform. It is dark and raining. A thick mist
grasps the small amount of light thrown by a single bulb
attached to a dilapidated and unused station house some
distance behind him. The house windows are boarded up.
The platform is chipped and worn. Weeds snake up through
the cracked concrete. A tagged location sign reads
"Rauru". The air is still. Quiet. An old tin sign hangs
by a lone nail on a large metal pole. It makes a
screeching noise as it blows in the wind.

A large rucksack sits at his feet. Breaking the silence, a slow gradual murmur of human voices (babble) appears in the direction of the train tracks.

CLOSE UP OF THREE PAIRS OF WORN AND AGED SHOES WALKING ALONG A DARK TRAIN TRACK.

Emerging from the mist, walking along the train tracks appear TERI, COLLEEN and MOIRA. They are talking to themselves. A dog walks with them.

MOIRA (INAUDIBLE)
What you do that for?

COLLEEN
I'd have clipped 'em one.

TERI
You would've?

COLLEEN
Yeah, I would've.

TERI
Y'see. She would've.

MOIRA
You're just an old meanie, you are.

The three ladies reach the platform and climb the stairs up to the concrete ledge. They are each carrying bags and fishing lines. Looking puffed, they sit at the shelter.

MOIRA
Ooh, need to rest my feet. Can't walk as far as they used to.

They see Adam standing on the platform.

MOIRA
Hey boy. Whatcha doing?

TERI
You catching a train?

COLLEEN
Might be waiting a while boy.

The three ladies cackle and grin.

ADAM
I'm waiting for the bus. This is where it stops now.

MOIRA
A bus! What you wanna catch one of those things for?

COLLEEN
Our train not good enough for
you?

ADAM
Ah...what train?

MOIRA
The train!

ADAM
The train doesn't come through
here any more.

TERI
Sometimes it does.

COLLEEN
Can't you hear it?

ADAM
Hear what?

TERI
The train! You dumb boy.

ADAM
There hasn't been a train through
here in years.

MOIRA
Ooh, look, that cutie's giving
you cheek Colls.

TERI
He's giving you cheek Colls.

COLLEEN
You giving me cheek boy?

MOIRA
You flirting with her, ain't you
boy? (laughs).

TERI
(laughs) She getting you all hot
and bothered?

Adam looks away.

COLLEEN
Look, we made him blush, see.

TERI
Ooh. That baby face. So cute. I
could have him!

MOIRA
You reckon you could have him?

TERI
Yeah I reckon.

COLLEEN
So where you going?

ADAM
I've got to leave town.

MOIRA
You running away?

TERI
In this storm? You must be
crazy.

COLLEEN
Roads are all washed out. We
should know.

MOIRA
Why the rush?

ADAM
I can't stay. I can't end up
like them.

COLLEEN
What's wrong with your shirt?

ADAM
Sorry?

TERI
It's not finished. Your shirt.
It's got bits all hanging down.

Adam looks at his shirt. It is frayed at the sleeves (on
purpose for fashion).

ADAM
I think it's supposed to be like
that.

Teri reaches into her bag, pulls out a pair of scissors
and clips a bit of loose cotton hanging off Adam's
shirt.

TERI
There you go. See, you need a
woman like me around.

MOIRA
You coming back?

ADAM
What?

MOIRA

I said...you coming back?

Adam looks wide-eyed at Moira. He starts to walk, backwards. He runs.

MOIRA

Silly boy. He's gonna miss the train.

FADE TO BLACK

4 INT FARMHOUSE 1988

Extreme close up of a pixelated television screen. The television is old. A slow pull back reveals a weather report. The graphics are old and dated. A weather-man (JIM HICKEY) speaks in the background.

WEATHER-MAN (AUDIO)

And we're seeing a huge low pressure system coming down from the pacific.

This is gonna a big one, folks. We have a heavy rain warning for all parts of the North Island, with gale force winds predicted from 10pm on Saturday.

This severe cyclone will surely pack a punch. From Bream Head to Cape Colvill we have a severe weather warning, with the coast guard warning all boaties to check moorings. Properties in low lying areas should look out for flooding as... (fade out)

The camera continues its slow pan out revealing the inside of a small farmhouse/cottage. It is neat and tidy but basic. A family picture sits on the wall behind the television; a mother, father and son.

We see the back of a neat and new couch, a small table in a dining room, and a blue and white kitchen. The camera pans out through a window.

5 EXT FARMHOUSE 1988 CONTINUOUS

We are now outside. A small farming cottage - white weather boards, brick chimney, dark tin roof. A large pururi tree towers to the left of the house.

The garden is neat and well maintained. The camera pulls

out continually to a high angle shot and cranes out.

FADE TO BLACK.

6 EXT RUARU 1997 DUSK

CUT TO: BIRD'S EYE VIEW SHOT FROM ABOVE

We see a metal road snaking its way between acres of green paddocks. Trees frame the road. A large river sits at the base of the road, surrounded by trees. At the end of the road stand two small houses on opposite sides. A cowshed is nearby.

7 EXT BRIDGE 1997 CONTINUOUS

A small concrete bridge sits high over a rocky river. A dusty metal road winds up a hill leading to the farmhouse/cottage. It is winter. In the distance sits a cow shed. The sky is a dark and menacing.

We hear footsteps crunching on loose metal. Adam runs into shot and over the bridge, the sound changing to a dull thud of rugby sprigs on the concrete. He wears rugby gear and boots.

Teri, Colleen and Moira fish with a net in the river. Teri looks up as she hears the hollow echo of Adam's sprigs hit the concrete bridge. Next to them on the bank of the river sits an old bucket, an old net, a pair of scissors, and an eel; still moving. A dog paddles in the shallows of the river.

The crunching footsteps resume as Adam continues to jog up a slight ascent and out of sight.

AUDIO: CRUNCHING SOUND OF BOOTS ON METAL, DULL THUD, WATER RUNNING

8 EXT BOBBY CALF PEN 1997 CONTINUOUS

A derelict, worn calf pen on the side of the road. Adam reaches the pen, stops running, and bends down to rest his hands and arms on his thighs to gain breath. He puffs for several intakes before his eyes are distracted.

Adam looks over at CATH [40] carrying a bucket of water into a small circular paddock holding a lone cow. Next to the cow lies a penicillin bucket, knocked over, spilling its contents. She is wearing blue overalls and gumboots. Adam concentrates.

A bike skids past Adam, breaking his concentration. JOHNNY (13) bikes past, turning his head to look at Adam. Johnny bikes out of shot, while Adam continues to walk up the road.

9 INT FARMHOUSE 1997 CONTINUOUS

The same farmhouse. It looks relatively the same, with a few subtle changes. A newer-looking television plays in the background. Adam enters, still wearing his boots and rugby gear.

Adam sits on a worn couch and watches television. He grabs the remote with one hand, and drinks a glass of milk with the other. He channel hops. We catch a glimpse of another weather report, still Jim Hickey, but with slightly more modern graphics. It quickly changes, and settles on a rugby match. The house is slightly messy, with papers and files piled on a small table in the corner. A photo frame sits face down on a table next to the couch

To one side is a record player, with a pile of dusty records piled up in a small cabinet. To the left of the couch sits a small table with a phone.

The phone rings. Without moving his eyes, Adam reaches with his hand, picks up the receiver and brings it to his ear.

ADAM

Hello. Hi Grandpa.
No she's still milking. Not sure
(long pause). Ok Grandpa... bye.

Adam hangs up the phone and reaches for his glass of milk.

AUDIO: A DOG BARKS OUTSIDE. A MOTOR BIKE STARTS UP.

10 EXT FARMHOUSE 1988

Johnny slams his bike down next to a large pururi tree.

Several small planks are nailed into the trunk of the tree. Johnny scurries up the ladder into a tree house, yelling as he does.

JOHNNY

Mum...I'm home.

11 EXT PADDOCK 1997 EVENING

A calf lies dead in short grass. A small chain is wrapped around its neck, leading to the back of a four-wheeled motorbike.

Cath is on her knees next to the calf. She wears damp and dirty blue overalls and gumboots that look too big. Her hair is tied back in a pony tail. She unties the chain from around its neck and struggles as she drags the calf along the ground out of shot.

Cath drags the calf through the grass to the foot of the bike. She bends down and struggles to lift the calf onto the rack on the back of the bike. As she does she is covered with transparent silver gunk from the afterbirth.

She wipes her brow with the clean back of her hand, and climbs onto the bike. She drives off into the distance.

12 INT FARMHOUSE 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

Cath enters through a laundry at the back of the farmhouse. She takes off her gumboots by hooking them under the lip of the door frame.

She enters a small laundry area to the left of a kitchen. She removes her sodden and dirty overalls and dumps them into a laundry basket. She washes her hands in a big concrete basin. She exits through the kitchen into the lounge.

13 INT LOUNGE 1997 CONTINUOUS

Cath enters the room where Adam is sitting watching television. Adam doesn't acknowledge his mother.

CATH

Did you run home in your boots again?

Adam shrugs. There is a long pause.

CATH

You'll ruin the sprigs.

ADAM

Forgot my trainers. It was more of a jog.

A long pause. Cath moves around the room picking up the clutter and the mess around the lounge. Adam doesn't move from his spot watching TV. His eyes do not move. Cath continues to clean around Adam.

CATH

Training okay?

ADAM

Was okay.

14 INT FARMHOUSE 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

Cath sits alone in the dining room. Adam is on the couch in the background watching a rugby match on TV.

Cath is working with a pile of papers, old books, and two scrapbooks. She opens one of the books, which is filled with old newspaper clippings, show programmes, sheet music

cut-outs and reports.

She closes the first scrapbook, and opens the second. Inside are theatre programmes, photos of a young girl on stage, vinyl record covers of Opera singer Kiri Te Kanawa.

Through the window of the dining room we see the faint outline of a dark tree. The silhouette is dark and eerie.

The phone rings and Cath answers.

CATH

Hi Dad. [BEAT] Lost another calf today. Stillborn. [BEAT] Yeah, it's 462. She's ready for the freezing works. [BEAT]

How's mum? [BEAT] Yeah, still on for Saturday. God, feels like we just finished the last lot. [BEAT]

I'll get Adam to help. [BEAT] Yip. See you then.

Cath hangs up the phone, and goes to exit the lounge.

ADAM

What can I help with?

CATH

Herd testing.

ADAM

Not again!

CATH

It won't take long. I'm running behind schedule. You promised after last time.

ADAM

I never.

CATH

I'm sorry. We need you.

ADAM

Fuck.

CATH

Don't swear.

ADAM

I've got training. Last one

before the game!

Cath stares sternly and disapprovingly at Adam.

Adam sits despondent. Watching his mother clean, he stands to take his glass to the kitchen.

Cath continues to tidy, and starts to hum. Adam leans down to the kitchen sink to get a glass of water. A gurgling and empty echo sound is heard.

ADAM

Mum, there's no water.

CATH

Again? You better be having me on.

ADAM

I thought you'd fixed the pipe?

CATH

I have. Twice. Cow must have stood on it.

Cath moves towards the laundry and puts her boots on.

CATH

I'll take the bike.

ADAM

S'okay. I can have milk.

CATH

I'll take the bike.

Cath exits the back door.

Adam looks out the kitchen window and sees the headlights of the motorbike appear in the darkness. The sound of the bike starts up, followed by a dog barking. He follows the bike with his eyes as it leaves down the track.

BLACK.

15 INT ADAM'S BEDROOM 1997 THE NEXT MORNING

Adam lies asleep on a single bed in a messy room. He is too big for the bed and his legs hang over the edge.

There are posters of the Auckland rugby team and swimsuit models on the walls. A small desk with piles of books and old videos sits beneath a window looking out onto the farm.

Adam stirs, wakes, and sits up in bed. He wipes his eyes, before looking out the window.

Through the window we see Cath driving a tractor with a

large round hay bail on the front of the hydraulic lift.

Adam watches his mother for some time, looking curiously at what she is doing.

16 INT SHOWER 1997 CONTINUOUS

Adam showers. He lets the water hit his face and arches his neck to the ceiling.

After a few seconds the water splutters and runs out. Adam reaches for the taps, and turns off the shower.

Adam exits and stands in the bathroom looking into the mirror. He yawns and reaches for the taps, which are to his left. No water comes out.

CLOSE UP OF ADAM SQUEEZING TOOTHPASTE ONTO HIS TOOTHBRUSH.

Adam brushes his teeth while staring into the mirror.

17 EXT ROAD 1997 LATER

Adam walks down the road carrying a billy of milk. He reaches an old, disused train station and house. The house and platform is dilapidated. Moira, Teri and Colleen sit on a small veranda runs the length of the front of the house. Some of the floorboards are missing.

Outside a dog (PUCK) is sitting next to an old kennel. It barks as Adam approaches.

Adam walks into shot and opens a small wire gate at the front of the house. He enters, and goes to pat the dog. He pours the milk into the dog's bowl.

Moira sits in an old arm chair reading a dated Women's Weekly.

CLOSE UP OF WOMEN'S WEEKLY COVER WITH THE DATE AS MARCH 1988

ADAM

Morning. Here's your milk for Puck.

MOIRA

Thanks boy. I'll sort you out next week.

ADAM

Yeah no worries. Fishing today?

MOIRA

Yeah.

ADAM

Fancy your chances?

COLLEEN

We'll see. If Teri's smelly feet
don't scare them eels off.

Adam laughs. Teri slaps Colleen across the shoulder.

MOIRA

You off to work?

ADAM

Running late. As usual. Better
go, my lift's gonna go without
me.

MOIRA

Okay. Thanks boy.

Adam pats the dog again before exiting.

18 EXT ROAD 1997 CONTINUOUS

Adam walks up the metal road. He passes the same concrete
bridge as the previous day.

A MONTAGE SEQUENCE OF ADAM WALKING UP THE ROAD, PASSING A
WATER TANK, QUARRY, AND VERY FEW HOUSES.

19 EXT MATT'S HOUSE 1997 CONTINUOUS

A house further up the road. It is nicer and more modern
than Adam and Cath's house.

Lying on the bonnet of his car, MATT [21] feigns
sleeping. Adam walks into shot and stands next to the
man. His eyes still closed, Matt speaks.

MATT

Fucking late, bro.

Matt smiles and wakes.

ADAM

Yeah, no bloody water. Mum spent
the night trying to fix it. We
got a leak somewhere.

MATT

Why weren't you down there
helping her, you lazy bastard?

Adam shrugs.

Hey you ready for this weekend?

ADAM
Yeah. Suppose. Gotta work on my
line-out though.

MATT
Not the game dickhead. Saturday
night. The changing rooms
party? Fund-raiser for the rugby
club. Should be good, man.

ADAM
Who's going?

MATT
Me. Dunno who else.

ADAM
Should help mum. Might come for
a while.

Matt hops off the bonnet and the two men walk to the side
of the car. Matt gets in the driver's seat and Adam into
the passenger's side. Matt starts the car and the two
drive off down the road in a cloud of smoke.

20 EXT SCHOOL 1988 MORNING

A small country school with three classrooms. At the
front gate is large maroon sign "Rauru Primary". A pile
of old BMX's lays piled up at the foot of the sign.

A large field surrounded by native bush sits down a bank
running to the side of the classrooms.

A hand-held bell sounds. With a skid, Johnny parks his
bike on the pile and runs up to the classroom.

21 INT CAR 1997 CONTINUOUS

A long silence as the two men drive down the road.

MATT
Sarah going?

ADAM
Nup. Not her scene. Hope Andrea
ain't going either.

MATT
Sheesh. The dreaded ex. Don't
blame ya. Still, should be a bit
of talent. And if not, there's
always Trish.

Adam cringes and laughs.

MATT

Or some other chick. You know what they say on the town's sign. "Welcome to Ruauru. Where even fat chicks get laid".

ADAM
True. So true.

Both men laugh, before silence.

MATT
So. How's your mum? Farm going okay?

ADAM
She's fine.

MATT
Must be hard this time of year, what with...well. You know. How long has it been?

ADAM
Yeah. Eight. Nine years.

MATT
She's hard, your mum. Good sort.

Matt looks at Adam who stares out the window. In the side mirror, Adam spots a boy biking furiously along the road.

Matt, unaware of the boy, revs the car's engine and drives closely to the biker, causing a huge dust plume. Adam leans forward and looks at the side mirror.

ADAM
Hey, look out for that kid.

MATT
What kid?

As the dust settles, we see Johnny's reflection in the mirror, coughing and spluttering, stopping on the side of the road. Adam looks puzzled.

MATT
Who was it?

ADAM
I....dunno. Looks like that kid from up the road.

MATT
What kid? I didn't see any kid.

The dust settles. Adam looks over his shoulder. He cannot see Johnny.

EXT SAWMILL CARPARK 1997

The car pulls up to a timber mill. Adam gets out of the car.

ADAM

Thanks for the lift. See you tonight. Four-thirty yeah?

Adam shuts the door and the car takes off. Adam walks into the yard.

23 EXT SCHOOL 1988 MID MORNING

Three boys sit in a small alley with their backs leaning up against the back of the school library - a small, free-standing prefab. A retaining wall gives them little space to move.

Secretly and on-guard they smoke a pack of Rothman's cigarettes. They keep an eye out for anyone who may be watching.

24 EXT SAWMILL 1997 LATER THAT DAY

Adam stands in a large sawmill forecourt. He is wearing shorts, an old rugby shirt, and heavy workman boots. Sawdust covers the ground. A large corrugated iron shed runs the length of the forecourt. There are two huge conveyor belt saws working outside. Several men mill around carrying planks of wood.

Adam passes a large wooden plank through a skill saw. Other workers carry wood behind him.

CLOSE UP OF A PILE OF SAWDUST LANDING AT ADAM'S FEET.

The boss JOCK (55) exits from a small office and approaches Adam. He signals for Adam to come over to meet him.

Adam removes his earmuffs and walks over to meet Jock in the middle of the forecourt away from the noise of the machinery. He lights a cigarette as he walks.

JOCK

Nice work on those panels today.
Good straight lines.

ADAM

Thanks. Can't take all the credit. Jim helped.

There is a pause. Jock struggles to find something to say.

JOCK

Oh hey - about that leave. Sorry mate, no can do. Bruce is off

sick and we've got that big order to meet. If you can get Chris to cover..

ADAM

Nah it's sweet. Can miss one game.

Another silence. Jock subconsciously tidies his hair with the palm of his hand. Still looking to the ground, he speaks.

JOCK

How's your mum? She good?

Adam realises the motive for Jock's conversation.

ADAM

She's fine, I guess.

JOCK

Good sort, your mum. Salt of the earth. She going to the town social?

Adam looks mockingly.

ADAM

Town social? What are we, 1932?

Jock frowns. Sensing his anger at being mocked, Adam changes his tune.

ADAM

Um...nah, not sure. Not really her thing.

Jock looks slightly despondent but accepting.

JOCK

Oh, okay. It was just...

ADAM

I'll tell her you said hi. If you're at the pub tomorrow night you might bump into her.

Adam walks off back to his machine, putting on his earmuffs. Jock watches from afar.

AUDIO: LOUD PIERCING SOUND OF BAND-SAW

25 EXT SCHOOL 1988 3PM

An old fashioned classroom. The school bell rings.

26 EXT WATER TANK 1997 AFTERNOON

A large hill at the back of the cow shed. The sky is dark grey and raining heavily. The wind is strong. To the side of the hill is a small gully/ravine with a patch of native bush.

From a high angle shot we see Cath half way up the hill between the cow shed and a large black water tank at the top of the hill. Cath is carrying a temporary fence wire and standards placing them in the ground and unwinding the fence as she goes.

LONG SHOT: A BIG BLACK SILHOUETTE OF A WATER TANK ON TOP OF A HILL.

Cath enters from behind the water tank. She is wearing her waterproof green overalls with a tie-string hood encroaching her face.

Still unravelling the fence, she gets it snagged. She pauses, drops the nest of fencing she has lassoed around her arm into a heap on the grass.

She kneels on the grass and starts to untangle the mess. She reaches into a sack she is also carrying and pulls out some wire cutters. She proceeds to cut one of the wires. Cath looks over her shoulder and stands when she hears the farm dogs bark in the distance. She squints through the rain and wind, before continuing on with her task.

27 EXT WATER TANK 1988

The rain clears and the sun comes out. Johnny peers over the top of the water tank secretly spying on Cath, who does not notice him.

Cath leaves. Johnny leans over to the hole in the top of the water tank. He looks inside and sees his reflection. He spits into the water creating large ripples, distorting his reflection. As it does, his reflection changes into Adam (age 21) for a split second.

Johnny returns to lying on his back and looks up into the sky.

POV SHOT OF JOHNNY LOOKING AT THE BLUE SKY.

The sun goes behind a cloud and the sky becomes dark.

28 EXT TIMBER MILL CARPARK 1997

CUT TO: A DARK CLOUDY SKY.

Adam lies on the bonnet of an old green Ford Cortina looking into the sky. The car is parked in the sawmill car park, his feet hooked into the grate at the front.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a packet of smokes. Shielding the wind, he lights up. He leans back onto the bonnet and looks up into the sky.

A young, pretty girl [SARAH] approaches the car.

SARAH

Hey mister, can I have one of those?

Adam looks up and sees SARAH (20). She is wearing a red hooded jacket, a black skirt to the knees and chunky loafers. Her hair is brown, pinned back. She is listening to a Walkman and still has the headphones in her ears.

Sitting up, Adam hands her a cigarette, which she accepts.

SARAH

Come here often?

ADAM

Every day.

SARAH

I've seen you around.

ADAM

Have you now? And do you like what you see?

Adam swings his legs off the car and grabs Sarah by the waist. He pulls her gently towards him and affectionately kisses her on the lips.

ADAM

Hey you.

SARAH

How was your day?

ADAM

Shit I hate this place.

SARAH

Hard day at the office?

ADAM

Prick won't give me time off for the finals.

SARAH

Quit. You don't need the money.

ADAM

Can't. Doing it as a favour. Family thing - you know. Heard about this party on Saturday?

SARAH

Tell me you're not going.

ADAM

What? It could be fun

SARAH

Seriously. You're serious?
Matt's put you up to it, hasn't
he?

Matt drives into the car park.

SARAH

Speak of the devil, here's your
boyfriend now.

ADAM

You need a lift? We're gonna
grab some beers and head to the
hut. You keen?

SARAH

Nah, I'm good. Dead animals not
really my thing. Let me know
about tomorrow night, yeah.

ADAM

Will do.

Adam kisses Sarah on the cheek, before getting into the
car. The car's wheels spin as Matt burns off.

29 EXT COW TRACK 1997 LATE AFTERNOON

A cow track between two paddocks. Old rickety fences run
either side. Matt's car drives up the race.

The rain has stopped. There is a shine and gloss to the
grass and air. The mud on the track is soft under wheel.

30 EXT OFFAL PIT 1997 CONTINUOUS

An offal pit/graveyard/dumping ground for dead cows and
animals.

It sits in the middle of a paddock some distance away from
the nearest track. The backdrop to the offal pit is a
patch of native bush, which is large and imposing.

At the base of a small hill/incline and at the foot of the
patch of bush lies a trench dug into the ground. The
trench is filled with offal, bones, skulls of dead cows,
dirt and mud, old 44 gallon drums and other junk.

Behind the trench is a line of large trees that shadow the
area. A large cow skull has been nailed up to one of the
trees.

The area is dark and eerie. The trees give a foreboding
atmosphere.

Scattered throughout the trees are bones of animals that haven't made it to the pit. Their bones litter the bush.

Further into the bush between the trees lie the wreckages of two old cars. One of the cars is sitting on its side.

At the top of the small incline close by sits an old macrocarpa tree and an old derelict hut looking down towards the offal pit. The hut is made out of old wooden planks and corrugated iron sloping downwards. A lean-to made out of corrugated iron sticks out in front of the hut. The hut has no door. There is a small square glass window at the front, with part of the glass broken.

In front of the hut and under the lean-to sits an old couch. The material is ripped and tattered. To the side of the couch sits a beer crate used as a small table.

Planks of wood, old crates, brown beer bottles (empty) and some old playboy magazines litter the ground. An old fridge lies on its back next to the couch.

Adam and Matt sit on the couch drinking beer in the traditional rugby-photo pose; legs apart looking forward, facing the offal pit.

The pair sit in silence for some time drinking beer, before Matt speaks:

MATT

This place hasn't changed much,
has it?

ADAM

Not much.

MATT

Wonder why your mum never wanted
us to find this place?

ADAM

Not sure.

MATT

Remember? "Don't go near the
offal pit". It's not like it's
dangerous or anything.

ADAM

I guess she was afraid.

MATT

Of what?

ADAM

I dunno. Mucking round with the bones. Catching diseases. Somehow I got the feeling she was hiding something.

MATT

I'm surprised this hut's still standing. Took us ages to fix this thing aye.

ADAM

At least three summers.

Both men take a swig of beer.

MATT

Man, things were so different back then. Life was so easy, you know. Nothing to worry about.

ADAM

You reckon? I dunno, man.

MATT

Do you remember that day? When we discovered this place?

ADAM

Like it was yesterday.

A silence. The conversation shifts gear. Matt takes a swig of beer.

MATT

We used to get up to mischief here, didn't we. You...come up here much?

Adam takes a moment before beginning to speak, as if to think carefully over his choice of words.

ADAM

Nah. Not really. Couple of times.

MATT

It's much quieter than I remember. Isolated.

Adam changes the subject.

ADAM

Can't go to training Saturday. Herd testing. Gotta help mum. Gutted.

Matt's attention is grabbed by something through the

trees. He stops.

Through a small belt of trees to the left of the offal pit and up a hill they see Cath in the distance, wearing a big green rain coat.

MATT
What's she doing?

ADAM
I'm not sure.

MATT
And what is she wearing? She looks like a yeti.

ADAM
Thanks bro.

MATT
Seriously! Electric fence down?

ADAM
Maybe. What's she carrying?

Through the trees we see Cath in the distance. Matt goes back to drinking. Adam however, still watches his mother.

31 INT FARMHOUSE 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

Adam is at the sink stacking some dishes.

Cath enters from the back door, wearing her green coat. The weather has cleared slightly. It is still light outside. She enters in a rush, and struggles to get her boots off.

CATH
Is there water yet?

ADAM
Not yet.

CATH
I'm late.

ADAM
Where are you going?

CATH
Visiting Gran. Hate going out without a shower. I'll have another look at the pump when I get back.

Cath exits to the bedroom without looking at Adam, all the while humming. Adam is still in the kitchen trying to pile up the dirty dishes to make room in the sink.

32 EXT DRIVEWAY 1997 CONTINUOUS

The red rear lights of Cath's car driving down the road through a cloud of dust. The car drives out of shot.

Immediately we hear the quad bike start up.

Adam drives into shot, pauses as if to wait for his mother to drive further away, before driving down to the cowshed, which we see in the distance.

33 EXT COWSHED 1997 CONTINUOUS

The cow shed is lit from behind as the sun disappears. The large sliding doors to the vat room are open, displaying the shiny metallic vat.

Drinking the spilt and dripping overflow of milk from the vat hose are two stray/feral kittens.

Adam walks into the vat room, frightening away the kittens, who dart into the shadows. Adam pauses, seeing the kittens.

CLOSE UP: VAT BEING OPENED AND ADAM PEERING OVER THE SIDE.

He lowers a small plastic billy into the creamy, thick milk. Once finished Adam closes the vat and pours some milk into a small white saucer sitting underneath the mechanical milking machine. He kneels and waits patiently.

A timid, stray kitten pokes its head round a dirty and chipped concrete wall. Adam waits and tries to pat the kitten, but scares it off each time.

34 EXT TREEHOUSE 1988 EVENING

Johnny sits in his treehouse. He plays with 'Masters of the Universe' figurines. He ties a piece of string around the waist of one of the figurines and drops it off the side of the hut. He swings it round making crashing noises. It swings into the side of the tree.

From inside the house we hear two adults arguing.

35 INT BRIAN'S HOUSE 1997 EVENING

An old fashioned farming cottage. Antiques and ornaments fill the room. Sitting in a chair looking out towards the window sits MARY [65] [Cath's mother]. Cath sits next to her with a bowl of puréed food and a spoon.

CATH

Come on. Last bit.

Cath tries to feed Mary.

CATH

Two calves today. Both heifers.
That makes four in a row now.
Adam's doing well. Still
planning to go to uni.
Agriculture, he thinks. Sending
him into town to meet the dean.

Mary looks out the window. She starts to hum a tune.
Cath puts the spoon back down into the bowl. Mary starts
to hum louder and louder, breaking into inaudible singing.

Cath looks outside the window. Brian stands crouched over
a big wooden block with an axe in one hand. He gingerly
bends down to pick up a piece of wood from the ground.

Cath exits the house.

36 EXT BRIAN'S HOUSE 1997 CONTINUOUS

Cath exits the back door of the house and approaches Brian
who is still chopping wood.

Brian places the piece of wood onto the large chopping
block.

CLOSE UP: THE AXE COMING DOWN, SPLITTING THE WOOD.

CATH

You'll hurt your back.

Brian continues to chop.

CATH

She's not doing well, is she.

BRIAN

She hasn't been for a while.
Doctors have done more tests.
Nothing conclusive.

CATH

Maybe it's time to look at
options.

CLOSE UP OF THE AXE COMING DOWN, SPLITTING THE WOOD.

BRIAN

This option is fine. I couldn't
live with myself. This is her
home.

CATH

We'll cope. I can come over more
often, help out where I can.

BRIAN

With what spare time? Cathy
you're flat tack as it is. You

should be the one looking at options.

CATH

We'll get by. It's been a hard winter. That's all.

Cath starts to enter the house. Brian calls after her.

BRIAN

Have you had the tests yet?

CATH

We're testing on Saturday - remember?

BRIAN

Not the herd. You. You know what they say.

Cath ignores him and closes the door.

CLOSE UP OF THE AXE COMING DOWN SPLITTING THE WOOD.

37 EXT PUMP HOUSE 1997 LATER THAT EVENING

A pump house next to a fast-flowing river. The shed is derelict and old. A small door hangs on one hinge.

Cutty grass and old tree stumps surround the pump house. A lone wooden power pole sits in the distance connected to the shed. Adam enters the pump house from the path.

38 INT PUMP HOUSE 1997 CONTINUOUS

The inside of the pump house is small and dark. Adam reaches up in darkness and pulls a small cord hanging from the ceiling.

A light appears and reveals a small old pump going at a very fast pace. There are several pipes pointing in all different directions. Adam looks at the pipes in confusion. He pauses to think, before having a token shake of a few pipes and wires. Adam gets a small electric shock and falls to the ground with a yelp.

Adam hears a group of kids splashing and playing. Curiously he stands and exits.

AUDIO: PUMP, SPLASHING, KIDS LAUGHING

39 EXT WATER HOLE 1988 EVENING

It is almost dark. A fast-flowing river on the farm. A small grass verge lines the river. A small row of trees sits to one side, an electric fence and a paddock to the other. A small pump shed sits down river. The river slows to a waterhole. Cows mill and graze in the nearby

paddock.

Johnny, COLIN (12) and MATT(12) are swimming. A large tree sits on the waters edge. A large branch reaches out across the river. Adam swings on a large rope over a waterhole at the end of the river. He runs and grabs the rope, swings out across the water, and lets go.

Johnny hits the water in a 'bellyflop', making a huge splash. Matt and Colin gasp in pain as they hear the sound.

COLIN

I'm getting out. It's freezing

MATT

Wuss. Grow some balls.

JOHNNY

Did you see that bomb? That was awesome.

MATT

Belly flop you mean.

COLIN

You know there's water rats this time of year.

MATT

Whatever. I've never seen one.

COLIN

There are. Dad says.

JOHNNY

You're full of crap. There are no water rats. Eels. Crays, maybe.

COLIN

You guys suck.

Matt climbs out of the river. He starts to piss in the river making the stream reach as high as he can, before Adam and Colin scream at him to stop. He turns around and pisses on the grass, before hitting the electric fence. Matt yelps as he his thrown backwards.

Laughing, Adam and Colin quickly swim to shore. The two boys can hardly climb the bank they are laughing so much.

MATT

Shut up you guys. That wasn't funny!

COLIN (LAUGHING)

That is the funniest thing I have ever seen! Look how far you flew!

JOHNNY

Ha ha. Serves you right for
pissing in the river. Come on,
we'd better go.

MATT

One last jump.

Matt and Johnny stand on the large tree trunk over-looking
the water. Matt takes a huge jump and hits the water with
a splash. He surfaces. Following him, Johnny takes a
dive, hitting the water hard.

Colin dries himself with a towel. Matt makes his way to
the side of the bank. Turning, he looks to the water.
Johnny hasn't surfaced. Silence.

MATT

Come on. Stop playing around.

COLIN

Where'd he go?

They look at each other. Moments pass. The water is
still. Colin and Matt search, getting slightly panicked.

More silence. The boys freak out!

MATT

Johnny!

As he yells, Johnny sneaks up behind the two and pushes
them in the river, and starts to laugh.

COLIN

You prick. That wasn't funny!

MATT

You're dead!

The three boys laugh as Matt and Colin get out of the
water and start to chase Johnny up the bank.

The boys, exhausted, sit on the bank drying themselves,
shivering.

MATT

So where is this place?

COLIN

What place?

MATT

The graveyard. Where they dump
all the bodies.

COLIN

What? Human bodies?

MATT
You dick. Animals. Cows, sheep,
pigs.

JOHNNY
It's right out the back. Way
past the tunnel. Mum and dad say
we're not allowed to go there.

MATT
How come?

JOHNNY
They say it's not safe.

MATT
Whatever. Like they would know.

COLIN
Well, maybe we better not. We
don't want to get into trouble.

MATT
Wuss.

JOHNNY
It will take at least half a day
to get there. We'll need to take
supplies.

COLIN
Like what?

JOHNNY
Food, water, knives, fishing
lines. Just in case.

MATT
When shall we do it?

JOHNNY
It's gotta be a surprise. Don't
tell anyone. We'll go on
Saturday. Colin, can you keep
your mouth shut? Don't go
blabbing to that sister of yours.

COLIN
Fine.

JOHNNY
Come on. It's getting dark.
Let's go.

40 INT CATH'S BEDROOM 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

Cath is home going through some records and has the music
turned up loud. Cath hums and sings. Adam enters.

CATH
You scared me. Where have you
been?

Cath quickly gets up and turns down the stereo.

ADAM
Pump house.

CATH
I told you I'd sort it.

ADAM
Well, you didn't. I need a
shower.

ADAM
How's Gran?

CATH
The same.

ADAM
Do we know what's wrong?

CATH
Doctors don't know.

There is a pause.

CATH
Dad's coming over for dinner
tomorrow night. You round?

ADAM
Got training. Free after that.

CATH
Don't be late. Remember we've
got testing this weekend.

ADAM
Like I could forget.

CATH
Well just make sure you don't.

ADAM
All right. Don't get on my case.

CATH
Someone needs to remind you.

ADAM
I said I'll be there.

A light switch. A hand darts into the room and switches on the light. JOHN (35) bursts into the room, agitated.

JOHN

Get up.

Johnny stirs in his bed, not wanting to wake.

JOHN

Are you deaf? I said get up.
You've got two minutes.

Reluctantly, Johnny rises slowly. He rubs his eyes, sluggishly and looks out the window.

JOHNNY

It's only 5 o'clock.

JOHN

Get your lazy arse out of bed now. Calf club is in two days. We want to win champion this year. We'll show those Mortons's. We'll show them who's got the best pedigree.

JOHNNY

Who gives a toss?

JOHN

Don't talk to me like that you lazy shit.

John rips the covers off Johnny and grabs him by the scruff and pulls him out of bed.

JOHN (ANGRY)

Get now, before I knock your block off. Now.

He pushes Johnny out of the door.

42 EXT BARN 1988 EARLY MORNING

A barn. Hundreds of calves mill around. Johnny stands in the middle of the calves. They bleat, move and shift, like a school of fish. Johnny looks around trying to pick out a calf. He struggles and yawns.

43 EXT BARN 1988 CONTINUOUS

Another part of the barn. Using a rope and halter, Johnny ties a calf to a wooden railing. He grabs a bucket of milk, and places it underneath the calf's head. He grabs a brush and starts to groom the calf.

EXT BOBBY CALF PEN 1988 LATER THAT MORNING

Colin waits for Johnny at the end of the tanker track on his bike. Johnny enters on his own bike. A large cattle truck is parked at the end of a loading ramp.

COLIN

Come on! We'll be late.

Johnny stops as he reaches Colin. In the paddock next door John herds a group of thirty calves towards the bobby calf pen. He uses a yard stick to whack the back of the calves, hurrying them along. A dog barks.

JOHNNY

I bloody hate calf club.

COLIN

What's your dad doing with those calves?

JOHNNY

He's putting them in the pen.

COLIN

What for?

JOHNNY

So they can go on the truck.

COLIN

What truck?

JOHNNY

You're such a towny. They're bobby calves.

COLIN

Bobby calves. What a dumb name. Bobby calves! Then what happens to them?

JOHNNY

They take them away. The useless ones. Bull calves mainly. They don't get a choice.

COLIN

Do you sell them?

JOHNNY

Yeah.

COLIN

And then what happens?

JOHNNY

They fatten them up. Then they slit their throats. End up in

the freezer.

COLIN

Man, that sucks. Glad I'm not one of those bobby calves. Let's get outta here.

The two boys bike off down the road.

45 INT CLASSROOM 1988 LATER THAT DAY

Johnny sits at an old fashioned wooden desk, covered with markings. With a pen he carves his initials "J.A.D" into the varnish into the wood, ignoring his teacher.

A notebook sits next to him. In small words the name "John Adam Donovan" is written.

A ruler is slammed down onto the desk. Johnny jumps.

The teacher; MISS MARSHALL (44), strides down the aisle.

MISS MARSHALL

Right, children. As you all know, Calf Club is happening tomorrow. For those of you without animals, you will be required to volunteer in the market stalls. I hope all of your mother's have finished baking their goods for the cake sale.

Adam gasps and winces. He reaches into his bag and pulls out a crumpled up piece of paper. He unravels it and the note reads: "Dear mothers". It is a note to his mother.

46 EXT ROAD AFTERNOON 1997

AUDIO: YELLING AND SCREAMING FROM INSIDE THE HOUSE

Adam walks down the road towards his house.

He spots Johnny sitting some distance down the road outside his house under a tree, hiding from the rain. From the road we hear a feuding couple from inside a house. They yell and scream at each other. Johnny sits trying to change the tyre on his bike. As he does, Matt comes up, hearing the yelling.

ADAM

Need a hand with that? You got a puncture?

Johnny continues to fix the tyre, tears running down his face.

ADAM

Don't listen to that. My folks

used to fight like cats and dogs
too. Everyone fights. It's
normal. So you pretty keen on
that bike, aren't ya?

Johnny continues to ignore Adam.

ADAM
What's your name?

He is ignored.

ADAM
Fair enough.

A dog runs into shot and starts to lick Adam's hand. The
three kuia arrive. They babble as they speak. Adam looks
up and gives a small wave.

MOIRA
Afternoon boy.

TERI
I see you've fixed your shirt.

COLLEEN
Who you talking to boy?

ADAM
This kid...

Adam turns around. There is no sign of Johnny. Puzzled,
he responds.

ADAM
Where'd he go?

MOIRA
You talking to yourself again
boy?

ADAM
I swear he was right here.

MOIRA
We know.

ADAM
Oh so you know him?

TERI
We know everything, don't we
Colls.

COLLEEN
You got that one right.

Cath drives the quad bike round a paddock, throwing hay off the back. She spots Adam standing on the road by himself. She spies on him.

48 INT FARMHOUSE 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

It is stormy outside. The wind and rain lash the house. Adam, Cath and Brian sit at a large square dining table. They are eating stew and mashed potatoes. Brian sits at the head of the table, with Cath and Adam sitting on either side. They don't speak. The television can be seen and heard over Brian's shoulder. Adam has his neck turned to try and watch the television.

BRIAN

Meat's tender.

CATH

It's that home kill we did last year.

BRIAN

It's good, isn't it Adam?

ADAM

If you say so.

Cath and Brian look at Adam with concern.

BRIAN (TO CATH)

You get another milk grade?

CATH

Yeah, I'm sure those bastards are wrong. Have scrubbed and cleaned those pipes til my hands are worn to the bone. Got number 23 off a week ago so it can't be that.

BRIAN

Mastitis?

CATH

Lots of it going round this year. It's the rain and mud.

BRIAN

What do you think about this storm? Looks pretty big.

CATH

A bit of a worry. Might need a hand moving stock to higher ground. They say the worst might bypass us.

There is a small silence. Adam still watches television.

BRIAN
How's the farmhand working out?

CATH
Not too bad. He's pretty wet
behind the ears but he'll be
fine.

BRIAN
Cath, you know if it's getting
too much we can get share milkers
in. You don't need to...

CATH
Share milking! More work than it
saves. Believe me, we don't want
to go down that road. This is
good for me. I'd get bored if I
didn't have anything to do.

Another silence. Brian turns his conversation to Adam.

BRIAN
How's the job?

ADAM
Pretty good. Jock's a good guy.

Adam gets up and leaves the table, leaving his half
finished plate, and staring at the television.
Brian looks at Cath in disappointment. Cath awkwardly
looks at Brian, before standing and clearing the table.

BRIAN
Who's playing?

ADAM
Harbour and Waikato. Harbour are
doing shit.

CATH
Testing shouldn't take us too
long on Saturday.

ADAM
Game's not till one. Could still
make it after herd testing.

CATH
We'll see. Depends on how well
it goes, doesn't it Dad?

Did Matt not want to stay for
dinner?

For the first time Adam turns his head away from the

television and looks at Cath.

CATH

Saw his car driving down the farm this afternoon. Weren't you with him? He had someone in the car.

ADAM

You mean yesterday?

Cath continues to clear away the table.

CATH

No. About an hour ago. He better not be going near that offal pit! It's disgusting up there. Oh, before I forget, I've made you an appointment.

ADAM

What for? When?

CATH

Tomorrow. To see the dean at the University.

ADAM

What? Who said I was going to University? Shit I was going to have a sleep in!

CATH

It's just an appointment. They have a great agriculture course. You'll have to go into the city. 10am.

ADAM

I better start walking now, hadn't I!

CATH

There's a bus that leaves at seven.

ADAM

Thanks for discussing it with me first.

CATH

What's there to discuss?

BRIAN

Your mother and I thought...

ADAM

Thought what?

CATH

We thought that it would be good
for you to see what's out there.
You always wanted to go to uni.

ADAM

It's a bit late for that now,
don't you think?

CATH

You could get a degree and then
who knows, maybe one day you'll
be ready to take over this
place.

BRIAN

We're only trying to help.

CATH

It's tomorrow. You'll go.

Adam exits in a huff. We hear the back door slam.

Brian and Cath look at each other concerned. There is a
long pause. Cath continues to clear away dishes.

49 INT KITCHEN 1997 CONTINUOUS

Cath puts the dishes in the sink. She turns the tap on
but no water comes out.

50 EXT OFFAL PIT 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

Adam hides behind the trees next to the offal pit. It is
dark. From a distance we see the headlights of a parked
car, and a small light hanging from the side of the hut.

Adam spies on the hut, trying to get closer.

POV OF ADAM WATCHING A GIRL (TINA) AND MATT DRINKING NEXT
TO THE HUT.

He watches, lurking in the bushes, as Matt leads Tina into
the hut.

51 EXT OFFAL PIT 1997 CONTINUOUS

A close up of a cracked window in the hut. Adam, in the
dark, peers through the window. Inside, Matt and Tina
have sex on an old makeshift bed. Adam watches.

52 INT CAR 1997 THE NEXT DAY MORNING

The next day. Matt drives Adam to work. Today there is
tension. The two men don't talk.

MATT

You coming to training tonight?

ADAM

Yup.

MATT

Keen for a few beers at the pub?
That karaoke competition is on.
Think Tina's gonna enter.

Silence.

MATT

You okay mate?

ADAM

Yeah. You see the Footy Show
last night on tv?

Adam tries to set a trap for Matt.

MATT

Ah....not sure. What time was it
on?

ADAM

Nine.

MATT

Nah missed it aye. Was having a
wank. How come?

ADAM

No reason.

Matt drops Adam off in the carpark.

MATT

See you a training.

The car burns off.

53 EXT RUGBY FIELD 1997 AFTERNOON

Adam and Matt on a rugby field. They drag a tackle bag
back into the middle of the field. A gentle rain falls. As
they do, a group of junior boys run out onto the field,
getting tangled under their feet.

MATT

Fucking juniors. Piss off!

KID

Fuck you!

One of the boys pulls the finger to Matt, Adam and the
other seniors, before they run off to a nearby field.

MATT (TO ADAM)

Tell me we were never that

fucking annoying. Little shits.

54 EXT RUGBY FIELD 1988

The junior boys team run onto the field, passing Adam and Matt as they drag the tackle bag back into the changing sheds.

Two of the boys, running separate from the rest of the group five metres behind, look like miniature versions of Adam and Matt.

55 EXT RUGBY FIELD 1988 CONTINUOUS

The junior boys are training on the field. John, their coach, yells from the sideline. A ball is kicked high in the air. Johnny runs in to catch the ball, but fumbles and knocks it forward. John blows the whistle.

JOHN

Come on! That was useless!
Johnny, what do you call that?
Butter fingers.

He grabs him by the scruff of the neck.

JOHN

Bloody concentrate.

John bounces the ball off Johnny's forehead. The team laughs.

JOHN

Two laps round the field. Now!

Matt sniggers.

JOHN

All of you.

The boys reluctantly start to run, punching Johnny in the arm as they go past.

MATT

Jeez. Your dad's pretty hard on
you. Grumpy old bugger.

JOHNNY

I'm used to it.

MATT

He got a problem or something?

JOHNNY

He's just like that.

The boys continue to run around the field.

56 INT CHANGING ROOMS 1997 AFTER TRAINING

Adam and Matt in the changing rooms. Standing side by side in communal showers facing the wall, Adam and Matt shower. Matt tries to sing some rock music, badly.

MATT

Fuck this changing rooms party is gonna rock, eh!

ADAM

Yeah. Should be good. Hope that skank isn't going.

MATT

Fuck you, that's my girl you're dissing there!

ADAM

Three quarters of the girls in this town are 'your girl'.

The men continue to shower.

ADAM

So...which one was it last night?

MATT

I don't get it.

ADAM

Nothing. Forget it.

Matt looks confused and guilty. Tries to change the subject.

MATT

I told you - I was at home having a wank.

ADAM

Just the one?

Matt reaches over to Adam's shower tap and turns the water on cold.

ADAM

Hey, fuck off you prick. You'll make my balls shrink.

MATT

It's not like that would make much difference.

ADAM

Whatever. Jealous, are you?

Matt laughs at Adam, before grabbing a towel off a rail and exits the showers.

MATT

Hey I've got an idea.

Matt wraps the towel around his waist and goes over to the seats and lockers. He opens his bag and pulls out a tube of 'deep heat' liniment. He walks over to a locker and pulls out someone's gear. Adam turns his shower off and grabs a towel walks over to Matt.

ADAM

You're a prick do you know that?

MATT

Shhhh, shhh. They'll hear.

Matt pulls out a mouth guard. He squeezes the liniment into the grooves and smears it with his finger. He laughs and grins at Adam.

ADAM

That's wrong, man.

Matt places the mouth guard back into its case. He reaches further into the locker and pulls out a jock strap and a cup.

ADAM

No!

MATT

Shut up!

Matt smears the tiger balm around the straps and inside the cup. He places it back in the locker.

ADAM

Ha, you're gonna get killed if anyone finds you out.

MATT

That'll teach him for messing with my sister. Let's go.

57 EXT RAURU PUB 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

An external shot of a country pub. Music (e.g. the Eagles) can be heard from inside. In the car park sit a group of Harley Davidsons, a tractor and a beat up old Cortina.

58 INT RAURU PUB 1997 CONTINUOUS

CLOSE UP OF TWO PINTS BEING POURED.

TINA (19)picks up the pints and carries them over to a large group of men sitting at a table.

Some have their backs to the table watching a rugby match playing on the television. Adam and Matt sit talking with the rest of the team. In the middle of the table sits a

huge pile of chips wrapped in newspaper, with tomato sauce bottles abundant.

Tina slams the pints down in front of Adam and Matt. She has dark hair and dark tanned skin (fake tan). She wears big hoop earrings and wears a tight singlet top.

Leaning over the beers to speak.

TINA

So what do you think? Have I got a chance?

MATT

Hell yes!

Matt grabs Tina and swings her round to sit her on his lap and puts his arm around her. The rest of the boys holler and wolf whistle and give her stick. Tina sees the funny side. Slapping him gently on the shoulder and breaking away from his weak grasp, she speaks.

TINA

Dick. Not with me. The contest. Hello? Karaoke? It's tonight! \$100 bar tab!

Tina points to a poster on the wall advertising a karaoke competition at the pub.

MATT

Sure babe. You've got a great voice!

ADAM

Tina, don't you need to be able to sing before entering those contests?

TINA

Jealous are we? I don't see you putting up your hand?

ADAM

I don't wanna upstage you.

TINA

Yeah right.

Tina leans over to the pile of fish and chips. She grabs a chip, dips it in sauce and brings it to her mouth, eyeing Adam the whole time. She walks away, giving Matt a flirtatious grin and wave. As she walks she swings past the bar.

TINA

Hold the fort for a mo, would ya, Tim?

Tina exits past the bar and through a door out the back. At the table, Matt grabs his beer, skulls it down before slamming it back on the table. Giving Adam a cheeky grin, Matt speaks.

MATT

Right. See you in a little bit.

ADAM

Don't get any on her tonsils.
She's gotta sing, remember.

MATT

Oh, she'll be singing all right!

ADAM

Lucky bastard.

Matt follows Tina outside. Adam continues to drink.

59 EXT RAURU PUB 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

Cath drives a car into the car park. She pulls in to an empty space and parks the car.

Inside the car, she waits, holding onto the steering wheel. On the passenger seat sits a pile of tapes and records. Nervously, Cath bites on her nails.

From outside we hear the sound of singing. "We Belong" by Pat Benatar.

60 INT RAURU PUB 1997 CONTINUOUS

Tina is on stage singing. It sounds awful. The rugby boys mock and cheer! Tina struts about the stage. Matt enters and sits.

Adam and Matt look at each other and cringe.

ADAM

Hope you washed your hands.

MATT

I dunno - why do they smell?

Matt tries to rub his hands in Adam's face. Adam grabs his wrists to try and block him.

ADAM

You're feral, do you know that?

ADAM

She's got some lungs on her,
doesn't she.

MATT

You betcha.

ADAM

She must be used to strangling cats!

MATT

Where's your mum? She should be down here singing.

They look over to another table. Jock sits waiting, dressed in a collar shirt. He looks around, trying to find someone in the crowd.

61 EXT RAURU PUB 1997 CONTINUOUS

Cath waits in her car. She doesn't leave.

62 INT FARMHOUSE 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

CLOSE-UP OF KARAOKE COMPETITION FLYER IN CATH'S HAND.

Cath screws it up in her hands and walks over to the rubbish bin and throws it away.

Adam arrives back to the house. Cath returns to the table and looks straight ahead with a cup of coffee cupped in her hands. She shakes.

CATH

Where have you been?

ADAM

Training. The pub.

CATH

How was your appointment?

ADAM

Fine.

CATH

How was the campus? Did you talk about the course?

ADAM

Yip.

CATH

And?

ADAM (SARCASTICALLY)

Not sure if it's the one for me. I'm really thinking about taking up another course. Maybe in fashion design.

CATH

Take that smirk of your face! I

know you never went!

ADAM

What?

CATH

The dean's office called. Said you never showed.

ADAM

What, that's bull.

CATH

Why do you lie? God, Adam. I ask you to do one thing - one simple thing, and you can't even do that right.

Jesus, Adam. You're just like your father! Never thinking about anyone else.

Cath paces around the room, back and forth. She inhales a couple of large breathes.

ADAM

Shit, I'm sorry! Jesus, calm down!

CATH

Don't you swear! You know Adam, it's about time you started pulling your weight around here. God, sometimes you're like a weight on my shoulders, let me tell you!

ADAM

You do tell me. All the time.

CATH

If your father was here he'd...

ADAM

Yeah, well he's not. I'm glad...

Cath suddenly throws her cup on the ground. It shatters. Adam is stunned.

CATH

I need you to start taking some responsibility for your life. There's got to be more to life than this. Don't end up like everyone else. Playing rugby, hanging out with mates, dead-end job. You're not like the rest of those guys that you hang out

with, you had brains at school.

Cath storms off in a huff. The stereo booms from the bedroom. Cath plays an old record from her collection. Two blue teacups on a shelf rattle with the sound.

Adam bends down and starts to pick up the broken cup.

63 INT ADAM'S ROOM 1997 THE NEXT MORNING

Adam is asleep in bed. Cath floats into his room carrying a tray of breakfast. Startled, Adam wakes. Cath smiles; completely contrasting her mood from the night before.

Cath puts the tray down next to Adam's bed. She goes over to the windows and pulls back the curtains. Adam puts his hand over his eyes to block the light.

CATH

You should get up while there's a small break in the weather. I made you breakfast.

Cath starts to sing as she flutters around the room. Adam looks at Cath with a puzzled expression. Cath is wearing make-up.

ADAM

Are...are you wearing...make-up?

CATH

Eat your breakfast. Made scrambled eggs and bacon. Your favourite.

ADAM

What's going on?

CATH

What do you mean?

ADAM

Last night you were all psycho. And now you're...

Cath exits before Adam gets to finish his sentence. Adam, lies in bed, startled at the reaction.

64 EXT RIVER 1997 LATER THAT DAY

Teri, Moira and Colleen sit on the bank of the river with their feet in the water. They have a small picnic basket next to them. Colleen sits reading a Women's Weekly.

Teri holds a fishing line.

She drags a bloodied plastic bag through the river to try and attract the eels. The sound of a tractor is heard nearby. There are eel carcasses on the side of the river.

CLOSE UP OF EEL HEADS, BLOODIED.

Adam runs along the bridge. He is in silhouette. The kuia wave.

MOIRA
Storm's coming.

65 EXT FARM 1988

A silhouette of Johnny, Colin and Matt walking through a paddock carrying supplies - food, fishing line, knife, bait, playboy magazine, etc.

COLIN
How long is this going to take?
My feet are starting to hurt.
You sure it's gonna be as cool as
you say?

JOHNNY
Not too much further. Another
hour.

COLIN
Another hour? Lucky we packed
enough food.

MATT
So what's at this place?

JOHNNY
I told you before. A graveyard.
It's called an offal pit, or
something. It's where they dump
all the dead animals.

MATT
Are there rats?

JOHNNY
Rats. Maggots. Blood and bones.

COLIN
Awesome.

The boys walk through a small paddock and through a pipe gate next to the cow shed. There are a few calves milling around. Johnny, the last to walk, closes the gate behind him. Unaware, the gate does not shut and it swings open.

MONTAGE: THE JOURNEY GETS MORE SINISTER AND DARKER, MORE FOREBODING, EERIE.

66 EXT OFFAL PIT 1988 LATER THAT DAY

The boys arrive at a patch of dark and large trees. In the middle of the trees is a dark path made of mud. There are two old, rickety fence posts either side of the path

but no fence or gate. The boys look at each other.

JOHNNY

We're here.

The boys enter the path and walk through the trees into the dark.

FADE TO BLACK.

67 EXT TIMBER MILL 1997 LATER THAT DAY

Adam is having lunch with a couple of workmates in a small trailer staffroom to the side of the forecourt. It is small, grungy and basic. The three men sit at a table eating lunch and reading the paper.

AUDIO: A RADIO PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND

VOICE-OVER (RADIO)

(fading in) ... a low pressure system looks set to make landfall in the north over the coming days, almost nine years ago to the day since the North Island experienced one of the worst cyclones on record.

Bola caused severe flooding, power outages across the country, and was responsible for the death of two people, including the driver of a freight train which plunged into the swollen Rauru river.

And in sport, the All Blacks prepare for one of their toughest matches of the season, as they...(fade)

DAVE

Shit, All Blacks will do all right.

ADAM

Yeah, they'll miss Jones though.

JIM

That poof's always injured. Groin strain this, hamstring that. Harden up man.

DAVE

You got a game tomorrow?

ADAM

One PM. It'll be a tough one.
Marist are hard.

JIM

Not in this storm you wont.
Haven't you heard? It's all over
the news. Another cyclone. They
say it could be worse than...

Jim stops mid sentence - foot in mouth. Dave gives him a concerned look. The men look at each other with wide eyes.

Adam hasn't noticed and continues as normal. He stands to take his rubbish to the bin. Dave stands and follows him trying to change the subject.

DAVE

Besides. You fit enough boy?
Jeez, look at your beer gut man.
Looks like you've been doing more
drinking than running.

ADAM

It's all those pies your mum
makes me...it's hard work making
you another brother...

JIM

Ooh. Burn!

DAVE

Yeah, you wish mate.

A man screams from the yard. The men run outside.

68 EXT TIMBER MILL 1997 CONTINUOUS

A huddle of men stand in a circle. Another man paces on a mobile phone calling an ambulance. The group of men part as Adam and Dave try to see what's going on. A man crouches in the sawdust holding his hand.

His hand is missing three fingers, leaving bloodied stumps with the bone showing. A workmate rushes over and grabs a towel and starts to wrap the hand. Adam looks down onto the ground and sees the remains of three fingers in a pile of sawdust. The sawdust underneath becomes more red with the blood.

JOCK

Adam, get a plastic bag and some
ice!

Adam, rather pale and stunned, rushes back to the staff room to do what Jock says. He returns and approaches

Jock.

JOCK

Well, don't just stand there.
Pick them up!

Adam hesitates, before kneeling slowly. Wincing, he picks up the severed fingers and places them in the plastic bag, which he now fills with ice.

CUT TO:

69 EXT OFFAL PIT 1988 LATER THAT AFTERNOON

CLOSE UP OF BONES STICKING OUT OF THE OFFAL PIT.

The offal pit. A small, derelict hut stands to one side. The three boys stand, looking bemused. A pile of bones and carcasses fill the pit. Confused, the boys ponder.

MATT

This....is it?

COLIN

Are we sure this is the place?

JOHNNY

I guess so.

MATT

It's not scary at all.

COLIN

Where are the rats?

The boys move towards the bones and start prodding them with old sticks. They inspect the hut, banging the side of it with their sticks.

MATT

This hut is pretty cool.

JOHNNY

I wonder why my parents never
wanted us to come here?

MATT

They're pussies. They don't know
shit.

JOHNNY

What is there to be afraid of?

COLIN

What a let-down. I'm hungry.
Where's the food.

70 INT FARMHOUSE 1997 LATER THAT DAY

Adam arrives home from work. He enters the house, which is a complete mess. There are dishes piled up in the sink, papers on the floor and the television is still on. Adam walks around the house looking for Cath. She enters from her bedroom, perky and aloof.

CATH

Oh you're home. Just checked the pipes. Water's still not working.

ADAM

Have you been out today? You look different.

CATH

No. Why?

ADAM

House is just a bit of a mess. That's not like you.

CATH

Didn't want to tidy. Couldn't be bothered.

ADAM

I can do it.

CATH

No need.

ADAM

You all right?

CATH

I'm fine thanks honey. Off to get some groceries from the store. Back soon.

Cath's mind is somewhere else. She hums under her breath as she talks and walks around the room and exits.

71 INT LOCAL SHOP 1997 LATER THAT DAY

A depressing and dated local store-come-supermarket. The bleep of an outmoded checkout machine annoys in the background. Aisles are stacked with no-name brands and basics. Cath wheels around a small rickety shopping trolley down a narrow aisle. Other shoppers go about their business. Cath, away with the fairies, continues to shop.

Two checkout operators lean on the counter talking while there are no customers. We enter the conversation half

way through.

DONNA

...I'm going. I'm in the army room.

MANDY

Lucky. I'm in the kiwi room.

DONNA

You got your outfit sorted?

MANDY

Tiny black singlet. Gumboots.

DONNA

Nice.

MANDY

Hey I wonder who's going to be there?

DONNA

The usual suspects.

MANDY

What about Matt?

DONNA

He's with Tina.

MANDY

Hasn't stopped him in the past.

DONNA

You're such a slapper.

MANDY

I don't know what he sees in that whore anyway.

DONNA

Hey what about Adam?

MANDY

Bit creepy, don't you think.

DONNA

You reckon?

MANDY

I mean, would you want to go out with him? Besides, isn't he with that weird chick Sarah?

DONNA

Still don't think I'd kick him out of my bed.

MANDY
Even after...well, you know.

DONNA
No, what?

Cath approaches the front of the store. Donna and Mandy are oblivious to her. She is hidden by one of the aisles.

MANDY
I mean, don't get me wrong. Nice guy and everything. But mental family. Dad goes missing and mum goes a bit batty. Strange if you ask me.

DONNA
Don't suppose you can blame them though. Still, might be all right for a shag Saturday night.

The girls laugh as Cath comes into view. Donna and Mandy freeze; caught out. Mouth opened, Mandy speaks.

MANDY
Um...Hi, Mrs Donovan. How are you? We were - um, just talking about Adam!

Donna turns to Mandy and mouths the word "fuuuuuck". Cath stands and smiles - hiding her shame at hearing them talking about her.

72 EXT LOCAL SHOP 1997 CONTINUOUS

Cath exits the shop carrying large bags of groceries. She approaches her car and fumbles as she tries to find her keys. She drops a bag of groceries.

Jock gets out of his car and rushes over to help her.

JOCK
Let me help you with that.

Jock bends down and helps Cath pick up the groceries.

CATH
Don't know what's with me today.

JOCK
Having one of those days myself.

Cath and Jock finish picking up the groceries and putting them in the back of Cath's car. There is a weird silence.

JOCK
Thought I might have seen you at the pub this week.

CATH
I've got to go.

JOCK
We could use some talent in this town.

Cath gets into the car.

JOCK
Cath. I hope this isn't out of line. But I was wondering...

Cath looks at Jock.

...I was wondering if you were busy tomorrow night?

Again there is silence.

Fancy a meal?

Cath contemplates. Her mood changes positively. She gets out of the car.

CATH
Why not! I'd love to.

Cath smiles, and lets out a big breath.

73 EXT LOCAL SHOP CONTINUOUS

Cath's car drives away out of the car park. Jock stands in the car park looking chuffed.

74 EXT FARM 1997 CONTINUOUS

An open pipe gate. A calf stands next to it, on a metal track. It stands bleating.

CLOSE UP: CALF BLEATING

75 EXT OFFAL PIT 1988 LATER

It gets darker. The boys don't seem to notice. Matt looks at a Playboy sitting outside the hut. Colin eats food. Johnny plays with a camp fire. A slight wind runs through the trees. The moon sheds some faded light onto the tin roof.

76 EXT FARM 1988 CONTINUOUS

AUDIO: A LOUD TRACTOR

John drives the tractor down the race. With one hand he steers, with the other he reaches back and throws hay into the paddock next to the race. He only looks in front briefly.

CLOSE UP OF A SHOTGUN ON THE BACK OF THE TRACTOR

77 EXT OFFAL PIT 1988 LATER

Johnny hears the smallest hint of a sound. An echo. A train approaches. Distant at first.

JOHNNY
Anybody hear that?

MATT
Nope. What?

JOHNNY
The train?

It becomes louder. The chug of the train along the tracks reverberates and echoes through the forested valley. Suddenly a large wind gust rustles through the trees.

The boys look at each other, spooked. As the sound dies down, Johnny looks at his watch.

JOHNNY
Shit! It's late. We gotta go.
I've gotta get my calf in! Dad's
gonna kill me.

78 EXT FARM 1988 THIRTY MINUTES LATER

AUDIO: A GUNSHOT IN THE DISTANCE

Johnny runs down the race. He sees a silhouette of a man who stands with a shotgun cocked to his side. It is John.

A dead calf lies at his feet. Dark red blood stains its white hair.

Johnny grinds to a halt and stands, stunned, silent.

John looks forward.

JOHN
Hit it with the tractor. That's
what happens when you leave gates
open. Ran out in front of me,
didn't it.

You useless piece of shit. Top
pedigree that was. I'll never
make a farmer out of you!

Johnny shakes in fear. John walks past him, slinging the gun over his shoulder.

JOHN
Get home. Your mother's looking

for you.

He throws the gun on the back of the quad bike.

CLOSE UP OF GUN

79 EXT COW SHED 1997 NEXT MORNING

It is morning. Cath and Brian are testing cows in the cow shed. The herd is in the yard.

Cath and Brian are in the yard, dividing stock in between gates. They see Adam approach, but say nothing. Adam approaches the gate to the yard.

ADAM

Sorry I'm late. Slept in.

There is a long pause as Adam gets no response from either Cath or Brian. Adam starts to climb over the gate.

80 EXT COW SHED 1997 CONTINUOUS

CUT TO ADAM IN THE PIT.

Cows are already in the row hooked up to the cups. Adam reaches for several plastic beakers that are in a rack on the ground. He starts to attach them to each of the cows' pumps and writes with a black marker on the plastic beaker.

The row of cows are finished. Adam starts to remove the cups from a cow. As he does, it kicks, hitting Adam in the arm. Adam flies backwards, before glancing up at his mother and grandfather in the yard.

A text message tone is heard. Adam reaches into his pocket, and pulls out his mobile phone.

CLOSE UP: A TEXT MESSAGE FROM MATT. IT READS: "YOU COMING?"

81 EXT YARD 1997 LATER THAT DAY

A high angle shot above the cowshed. We see Cath and Brian still in the yard dividing the stock. Cath is hosing down the yard with a high pressure hose.

CATH

Right, Adam do you want to help...

ADAM

Jesus mum, I gotta go.

CATH

We're not done yet. There's still a few more rows to do.

ADAM

But I'm gonna be late. I gotta...

CATH

Sorry, Adam. You're just going to have to miss it. It's only training, you can still make the game tomorrow. You shouldn't have slept in then we wouldn't be in this mess.

ADAM

I can't let the team down.

CATH

But letting me down, that's okay then?

ADAM

Don't start mum. It isn't my choice to be here.

BRIAN

Adam, please be reasonable.

ADAM

I'm outta here.

CATH

Don't you dare leave. There's still more work to do. Come back here. Adam!

ADAM

Fuck off mum.

CATH

You ungrateful bastard.

BRIAN

Cath, calm down.

CATH

How dare you! You think I enjoy this life? This farm I didn't even want! If you think this is how I pictured my life turning out, you're mistaken. Money's tight. We've got no grass. And on top of that I've got to put up with you moping around doing nothing all day.

ADAM

Guilt's not gonna work, mum.

CATH

Guilt? Huh...guilt! Talk to me about guilt Adam! You should

know, after all...

Cath stops herself mid-sentence as Brian looks on awkwardly. Cath and Adam lock eyes in defiance. Adam walks off to the house.

Cath smiles.

82 EXT RUGBY FIELD 1997 LATER THAT DAY

The rain pours. The rugby team are practising their scrum in the rain. Adam, late, runs and joins them.

MATT

Shit, coach is not happy with you.

ADAM

Fucking mum. Always on my case.

MATT

You guys fighting?

ADAM

She's lost it.

MATT

Looks like the game might be postponed anyway. This storm is supposed to arrive tomorrow. It's a biggie.

ADAM

Shit, hope the party's still on. I need to get hammered!

In the distance a fellow rugby player starts to scream, and hops around bow-legged. He quickly removes his shorts, revealing a jock strap. He tries desperately to remove it.

Adam and Matt laugh. Other team members joke and taunt. Adam and Matt look at each other with cheeky grins.

83 EXT CARPARK 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

A carpark outside the rugby club. It pours with rain. The bass of the music booms from inside. Thunder and lightning fill the sky.

84 INT CHANGING ROOMS PARTY 1997 CONTINUOUS

Inside a rugby club party held in the concrete changing rooms. Each changing room is decorated in a different theme.

The music is loud and pumping. Adam walks down the dark, slightly blue-lit corridor. The fluorescent light strobes slightly. There are people milling around, filling the

corridor, all drinking. A couple make out in the corner entrance to one of the rooms. Adam pushes through the crowds of people.

Adam glances into the first room. It is an army-themed room. Girls in khaki and camouflage bikini tops pour spirits down the throats of rugby players. There are green nets on the walls and there is 'tour of duty' rock music playing. There is a bunker to one side, and a couple making out in the corner.

Adam walks past the second room. It is a kiwi-themed room. Guys are wearing black singlets and stubbies, listening to 'Slice of Heaven' by Dave Dobbyn. There is a dog inside. The girls are wearing blue overalls and gumboots and jandals. There are pictures of Buck Shelford on the walls.

Adam approaches the third room which is themed as an operating theatre. There is a dentists' chair in the centre of the room. All of the concrete is white. A shirtless man lies on the chair. Two 'slutty nurses' wearing short nurses uniforms and bikinis hold a syringe needle full of vodka. They tip the chair back and squirt the injection into the man's mouth. Others in the room cheer and yell.

Adam finally reaches the fourth room which is a surfing/Hawaiian-themed room. There are grass mats, surfboards, sand, Hawaiian material and flowers. Inside the room they play the Beach Boys. Adam finally sees Matt, who is wearing brown shorts and no top, with a lei around his neck.

MATT

Mate, where the fuck have you been?

ADAM

Looking for you.

MATT

This party rocks.

ADAM

What? I can't hear you.

MATT

Here, have a drink!

A girl comes over to Adam in a tiny bikini and with a half a coconut shell pours a drink down his mouth. Adam, slightly taken aback, gasps.

ADAM

Jesus, what the fuck is in it?

GIRL

Vodka and Bacardi.

ADAM
Together? That's fucking
disgusting!

MATT
Where's Sarah?

ADAM
What?

MATT
Where's Sarah?

ADAM
I can't hear you.

Matt starts to mime making out with a girl, the outline of breasts and hips.

ADAM
Sarah? She won't come. Not her
scene.

Adam takes a swig of his pina colada. Smiles for the first time that night.

Tina enters the Hawaiian themed room dressed as a female Rambo.

TINA
Stick 'em up, bitch!

She points a fake machine gun at Matt, who pretends to get shot with a round of bullets. He shakes before falling to the floor. Tina comes across and stands over Matt straddling him. She kneels down and proceeds to kiss him, to the cheers and hollers of the crowd gathered in the room.

Adam looks away, searches for another drink. He finds one and skulls it back.

Tina stands and drags Matt from the ground by the collar. She walks past Adam who is now standing in the corner of the room.

TINA
Hi Adam. Mind if I take him
away? He's been a bad boy.

ADAM
You slut.

TINA
You bet!

Tina blows Adam a kiss before dragging Matt out of the room. Adam stands alone, looking round for someone he knows. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his

phone. He reads a text from Sarah.

CLOSE UP:PHONE TEXT: "WHERE ARE YOU?".

Adam, looking disappointed, exits the room. He wanders the dark hallways. There are now more people making out in any spare space there is. Adam hears someone call out his name. It's a bunch of rugby mates.

JOSH

Adam, you wanker!

Three players come up to Adam and attempt many variations of handshake. One of them grabs Adam by the arms and the other places a Perspex hose into his mouth. The men pin him down, as Josh grabs two bottles of beer and pours them down a funnel at the end of the hose. Adam splutters to begin with, but trying to save face, drinks the entire two bottles of beer, before spitting out the hose. Josh and the boys cheer!

85 INT CATH'S BEDROOM 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

Cath stands at a mirror. She is wearing a fancy, sparkly red dress with a plunging neckline. She clips earrings to her ears and starts to fuss with her hair nervously.

86 EXT CHANGING ROOMS PARTY 1997 CONTINUOUS

Sarah stands outside the clubrooms, huddled under a ledge, sheltering from the pouring rain. The bass of the music can be heard coming from inside the changing sheds. She crosses her arms to keep warm. She pulls out her phone and starts to text.

CLOSE UP: PHONE - TEXTING THE WORDS: "I'M OUTSIDE. COME AND GET ME".

She waits, but doesn't get a response. Next to her is a group of guys sitting drinking. A man rushes past Sarah and throws up at her feet. Sarah cringes.

87 INT FARMHOUSE 1988 NIGHT

Johnny sits huddled in the corner of his room. He is pale and white. From another room we hear screaming and yelling; his parents fighting. Adam holds his hands up to his ears.

88 INT CHANGING ROOMS PARTY 1997 CONTINUOUS

PARTY GO-ERS (CHANT)

Skull! Skull! Skull!

Adam, again, chugs down two bottles of beer at once. When done, he raises his hands in victory! A girl in a slutty nurse costume comes over and puts a sash over his shoulders before kissing him on the lips.

Matt enters the room, looking sorry for himself.

ADAM

Mate, where the fuck have you been?

MATT

I think I've been dumped.

ADAM

What did you do.

MATT

Nothing. Stupid cow. So I threw up on her a little bit. What's the big deal?

Adam laughs.

ADAM

I told you you're better off without her anyway.

89 INT FARMHOUSE 1988 CONTINUOUS

The fight continues. Johnny stands looking out of his bedroom window. The rain hits the glass hard. He presses his face up against the glass and looks out across the farm. The rain pours. In the distance he hears the bleats of calves.

90 EXT OFFAL PIT 1988 CONTINUOUS

CLOSE UP: A CALF CARCASS IS DROPPED INTO THE OFFAL PIT.

91 INT RAURU PUB 1997

Jock and Cath sit at a small table in the pub. Jock wears a jacket and tie. Cath looks over-dressed for the occasion. They eat. Nervous energy.

Cath looks outside the window. Rain lashes. Her mind is elsewhere.

JOCK

Something on your mind?

CATH

What? Sorry.

JOCK

You seem elsewhere. You know, if you need to talk about anything...

CATH

I'm sorry Jock. I'm not much fun tonight, am I.

JOCK
You look...nice.

CATH
It's this weather. I'm worried
about the stock.

JOCK
Is that a new dress?

CATH
I should have moved them to
higher ground yesterday. You know
that river's prone to flooding.

JOCK
Couldn't Adam have helped with
that?

Cath holds back a pained expression then reaches for a
bottle of wine and pours herself a large glass. She takes
a large gulp.

Sorry, Jock. No need to hear
about my problems.

JOCK
No I don't mind. Honestly.

CATH
This rain isn't letting up.
Should have moved the stock.

The awkwardness continues. Jock looks despondent.

92 INT CHANGING ROOMS PARTY 1997 CONTINUOUS

Now in the kiwi room, Adam and Matt are sitting on a
couch. Everyone in the room is singing (badly) 'Slice of
Heaven'. Adam is now wearing a black singlet and
gumboots. The 'slutty' nurse again appears and comes over
to Adam.

GIRL
So this is where you've been
hiding from me.

ADAM
I haven't been hiding from
anyone.

GIRL
Have you had all your shots?

The nurse straddles Adam (who is sitting down) and
proceeds to kiss him. He pulls back, but she grabs his
head and buries it in her breast. The crowd cheers and
yells, to a showing-off nurse. Matt has a sudden
realisation.

MATT

Oh, shit man, you better not aye,
you know Sarah's outside?

ADAM

Shit, when did she get here?

Adam suddenly comes back down to earth and pushes the nurse off him and stands. As he does, he sees Sarah, standing in the doorway, visibly angry.

Sarah exits, pushing people out of her way. The crowd 'ooh'. Adam puts his head in his hands.

93 EXT CARPARK 1997 CONTINUOUS

Sarah exits the changing rooms. Adam rushes to catch her and grabs her by the elbow. It pours.

SARAH

Get your hands off me.

ADAM

Sarah, wait. I'm sorry.

SARAH

You didn't look that sorry.

ADAM

She pinned me down. I didn't know what was happening.

SARAH

Yeah right.

ADAM

It's true. The guys set me up. Come on, get out of the rain.

SARAH

This isn't like you. It's not you.

ADAM

I know. She meant nothing.

SARAH

Not her. I could care less about that whore. This place! This town. What happened? You were never like the other guys. You always wanted to get away. Make something of your life. You're trapped. Just like the rest of us.

ADAM

Where is this coming from?

SARAH
Jesus. I thought you were
different. You've pissed your
potential up the wall. And for
what?

ADAM
I can't leave. Not with mum.

SARAH
Don't use that as an excuse. You
know that's not the reason.

ADAM
And I suppose you know the real
reason, do you?

SARAH
Fuck off Adam. See you in twenty
years. Right here, no doubt.

Sarah storms off. Adam stands in the rain. Matt arrives
from inside the changing rooms.

A CLOSE UP OF MATT. HE SMILES SLYLY.

94 EXT CARPARK 1997 LATER

Adam and Matt sit on a fence outside the clubrooms
drinking. It is pouring with rain. Thunder and
lightning.

MATT
Look at us. Two fucking
losers.

ADAM
You think I blew it?

MATT
Yip.

ADAM
She's not coming back, aye?

MATT
Nup.

ADAM
We're fucked, aye?

MATT
Yip. Man, let's get outta here!
This party's going down... hey I've
got an idea. I can call Fiona.
Booty call. She might have a
friend!

ADAM

Yeah. Give her a call. Where shall we go?

MATT
Your place?

ADAM
And wake mum up?

MATT
We could always go to the hut?

ADAM
Not sure if that's a good idea.

MATT
There's shelter, beer. What more do we need?

ADAM
How will we get there?

Adam and Matt look over at Matt's Cortina parked in the carpark.

MATT
How many have you had?

ADAM
Far too many.

The boys look at the beer bottles they hold in their hands.

95 INT CATH'S CAR 1997 CONTINUOUS

Cath drives. Jock sits in the passenger seat. Windscreen wipers flick back and forth at speed. Rain pelts the car. The car stops outside Jock's house.

Moments pass. Jack sits nervously.

JOCK
Thanks for a lovely night, Cath.

Cath smiles, but looks ahead.

JOCK
We should do this again.

CATH
I'd like that.

JOCK
If you need any help tomorrow - with the stock - just give us a yell.

Cath turns to Jock, smiles.

CATH
You'd do that?

JOCK
I would. I'm here for you...

Cath quickly leans over and kisses Jock. It turns into a long, lingering kiss.

When done, Jock looks taken aback, but chuffed.

JOCK
Well. That's a turn for the books.

CATH
Am I being too forward?

JOCK
No. Just...didn't see that coming, that's all.

CATH
Oh. Okay.

JOCK
From the signals that you were giving me at dinner I...

Again, Cath kisses Jock interrupting him.

JOCK
Right. Well. Did you want to come in for a drink?

Cath's mood changes.

96 EXT CATH'S CAR 1997 CONTINUOUS

Jock shuts the door of the car and stands in the rain. The car pulls away into the night. Jock shakes his head in confusion.

CLOSE UP OF HEADLIGHTS IN THE RAIN

97 EXT TRACK 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

JUXTAPOSITION OF HEADLIGHTS IN THE RAIN

A car drives along the track leading up to the offal pit. It still pours.

One of the headlights has been smashed. There is a large (new) dent in the front of the car. It slowly makes its way along the winding track.

It approaches a cow standing in the way. Matt sounds the horn, but the cow doesn't move. Adam throws a beer can to scare it. The cow eventually moves, and the car

continues.

98 EXT OFFAL PIT 1997 CONTINUOUS

The car pulls up next to the hut and stops suddenly. Slowly the two doors open. Matt falls out of the passenger seat and onto the ground. He laughs and stumbles across to the deck of the hut and sits on the the couch.

Adam gets out of the drivers side, leaving the headlights on, giving them light. He carries a bag of rugby gear. They both get soaked by the rain that pelts down. Both men slur their words.

MATT

Fuck. Let me put the wheel lock on.

ADAM

Yeah, lots of thefts in these parts!

Adam slowly exits the car and stumbles over to the hut, still soaked from the rain.

The two men sit on the deck of the hut, sheltering from the rain.

Adam pulls a lighter out of his pocket and lights two kerosene lanterns that are nearby. He hangs one on the corner of the hut and puts one next to the couch, which is sheltered by the rain.

ADAM

Fuck it's cold.

MATT

This'll warm you up.

Matt opens a chilly bin next to the couch which is full of beer. He throws a beer to Adam.

ADAM

You heard from Fiona?

MATT

Shit.

ADAM

What?

MATT

Where's my phone?

ADAM

Check the car.

Matt exits to check the car and returns. Adam is rolling a joint.

MATT
Must have lost it at the rugby club. There goes our fun.

As he returns, Matt slips and falls over.

MATT
Shit.

ADAM
Clumsy munter.

Matt drags himself up, and moves to the hut. He takes his shirt off and starts wringing out the mud and rain.

MATT
Gonna freeze my balls off out here. You got a towel in your bag?

Adam reaches over for his bag and rifles through it. He chucks Matt a towel. He wraps it around his body and sits on the couch. He starts to take off his jeans, which are also soaked. He puts on a small pair of rugby shorts. He grabs a beer and opens it.

MATT
Looks like it's just us. A wank it is then.

ADAM
Fuck off! In your own time, please.

MATT
You reckon we'll be all right in this weather?

ADAM
Should be fine. This hut has survived worse.

The wind increases and shakes the hut and trees. The wood creaks.

AUDIO: CATTLE MOAN AND BLEAT IN THE DISTANCE

Adam is distracted by the noise of cows in the distance.

99 EXT BRIDGE 1997 CONTINUOUS

Cath's car approaches the small concrete bridge. The car slows to a stop. Rain persists. The wind is now strong and gale force. The river runs wild and now laps at the foot of the bridge. It almost floods. Cath's car slowly

makes its way across the flooded river.

100 EXT OFFAL PIT 1997 CONTINUOUS

Adam and Matt continue to drink. A flutter of wings. A morepork sounds.

MATT

Shit. What was that?

ADAM

Dunno. Morepork or something.

MATT

Jeez, they're bad luck man. Not good, aye bro.

ADAM

What do you mean?

MATT

Bad luck.

ADAM

You've always been a wuss.

MATT

Nah, my old man always used to say they're bad luck. Especially around these parts. There's something in the waters.

ADAM

What do you mean?

Realising he may have implied something, he changes tack.

MATT

Oh...nah. I didn't mean...you know. This river.

ADAM

Bola.

MATT

Yeah. Sorry, I know I shouldn't bring it up. I was meaning those old ladies. They say their ghosts never left this river. Freaky shit.

ADAM

What old ladies?

MATT

You know those ones killed in the train crash.

ADAM

Bull. That didn't happen.

MATT

Nah, man. They say it happened. You know that train crash? So the story goes the driver used to give these three old birds a lift up north on one of the logging trains. Then they'd hitch a ride back down.

CROSS FADE

101 EXT MONTAGE 1988

A montage of three old Maori ladies, Moira, Colleen and Teri, walking next to a train track. A large logging train is stationary. From the cabin the driver waves. The three climb on board one of the disused carriages. A dog (Puck) jumps up to join them.

MATT (VOICE OVER)

Bad timing if you ask me. I guess they were trying to get back up north before the storm.

Then, of course, we all know what happens. Bridge washes out, train crashes into the water, driver killed, bla, bla, bla. As far as anyone knows they just skipped town and went up north. The legend has it that the only thing to survive the crash was the dog. Found on the banks of the river a few days later.

102 EXT OFFAL PIT 1997 CONTINUOUS

Back at the offal pit. The men sit.

MATT

Whether it's true or not, no one really knows.

Adam sits silently, stunned.

MATT

Are you all right man? You look as white as a ghost. Jeez, I hope...I mean, I know it must be hard for you hearing about... Well, you know.

ADAM

Yeah, I'm fine. Give us another

beer, would you!

Matt chucks Adam a beer. Adam quickly skulls it back and stands.

MATT

You better slow down man. You don't want to be rolling round the field on game day.

The mood turns jovial.

ADAM

Haha you reckon? You giving me rugby tips now?

He picks up a rugby ball from the sports bag and spin passes it to Matt. Both are still on the deck under the lean-to.

MATT

God knows you need them!

Matt returns the ball.

ADAM

Like you're a pro. When was the last time you scored?

Matt stands and the two pass the ball to each other.

MATT

At least I don't tackle like a girl.

ADAM

Care to place a wager on that?

Adam jokingly pushes Matt on the shoulder. Matt laughs and pushes him back.

MATT

I know you're no good for it.

Adam pretends to pass the ball to Matt, but fakes. Matt quickly tackles Adam off the deck and onto the wet and muddy ground.

ADAM

What the fuck are you doing?

MATT

Tackle like a girl do I?

Adam pushes Matt off him, who stands. Adam quickly rises to his feet and returns the tackle. The two fall to the ground again.

The mood has changed. The boys scrap and start to fight

on the ground. They push and shove. Adam throws a punch. It connects with Matt's face. Matt in turn tries to punch Adam.

The two men struggle to their feet, still fighting. After going at it for a few moments the two men try to kick and punch. They are close. Matt grabs Adam by the shoulders and pulls him towards him. They push and shove.

The mood changes again. They stop. Matt still holds Adam by the shoulders. They pant and try to gain breath. They look at each other. Scared. They move towards each other. Close. Nervous.

FADE TO BLACK.

103 INT OFFAL PIT HUT 1997 THE NEXT MORNING

Early morning. Adam and Matt lie asleep on an old mattress on the floor of the hut. Rain pelts the cracked glass window.

CLOSE UP OF WATER SPLASHING ADAM'S FACE.

Adam wakes. Startled, he leaps to his feet. He looks at Matt sleeping next to him. Adam looks stunned. He quickly grabs some jeans and puts them on. Matt starts to stir.

Adam quickly exits the hut.

104 EXT OFFAL PIT 1997 CONTINUOUS

Adam runs out of the hut and falls to his knees and vomits violently. He kneels for a few moments, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. Slowly he looks up.

He quickly stands on the small deck outside the hut. He looks out to the paddocks in the distance.

LONG SHOT: FLOODED PADDOCKS, WATER.

He runs to the car.

105 INT HOUSE MORNING 1988

John bursts into the bedroom, waking Johnny.

JOHN
Get out of bed.

Johnny, startled, rushes out the door.

106 INT HOUSE 1997 CONTINUOUS

Cath sleeps on her bed, still wearing her dress from the night before, her make-up smudged. An alarm clock reads 6.30am.

Cath wakes, stumbles out of bed. She stands and walks to the window. She looks outside; shocked.

She runs out the door.

107 EXT 1988 CONTINUOUS

A small herd of cows stand on a mound of grass poking up out of flooded water.

AUDIO: MOTORBIKE, DOG BARK.

John drives the quad bike, yelling at the dog to move the stock. The herd moves like a school of fish. The rain pelts down. Johnny stands, barefoot. The cows slowly make their way through the flood waters. A lone cow moves off in another direction.

JOHN

Don't just stand there. Give me
a hand. Get that cow.

Johnny runs to the water's edge, waving his hands and arms, trying to usher the cow in the other direction.

108 EXT FARM 1997

Cath stands on a large tree stump, surrounded by water. The wild storm can be seen in the distance. She wears her red dress, with gumboots, and a 'dri-za-bone' coat, unbuttoned at the front. Her make-up from the night before is still visible, her hair and dress blows in the wind. She looks over the flooded plains for livestock. She points.

CATH

Over there! Adam, in the left
paddock.

109 EXT FARM 1997 CONTINUOUS

A lone calf is snagged on a fence flooded with water. It struggles against the rising waters.

Adam drives the quad bike through a narrow path of green over to where Cath is pointing. He parks the bike and wades through the water, using the fence as his guide.

His shirt gets snagged on the barbed wire, ripping his shirt in half, cutting him. Adam winces.

CLOSE UP: CALF TANGLED IN BARBED WIRE

Adam struggles to free the calf.

ADAM

It's all right, little guy. I've
got you. You're free now.

The calf bellows and screams. Adam picks up the calf, and carries it to safety. He reaches dry land, pauses and holds the calf in his arms.

110 EXT RIVER 1988

Johnny stands on the flooded river bank. A dead calf floats down the river. A lone calf stands helpless next to the rising flood waters.

Johnny crawls along the waters edge to save the calf. He trips, falling into the flood waters. He grabs onto a branch that has fallen into the water. He screams but manages to pull himself up on to the bank.

JOHN

Johnny! Leave it. It's as good as dead.

Johnny continues to try and help the calf

JOHNNY

I don't want it to die.

JOHN

Do as I say. Get back here now.

Johnny disobeys. He tries to pick up the calf but struggles. John makes his way along the river's edge. He reaches the clearing and grabs Johnny by the scruff and drags him to safety.

JOHNNY

Let me go!

The pair reach the other side. John throws Johnny to the ground.

JOHN

Do as I say boy.

Johnny stands, scared. John hits Johnny across the face and knocks him to the ground with the back of his hand.

JOHN

I don't have time to waste on you. I've got stock to move!

Johnny stands, crying, but holds his ground.

JOHN

Do as I say boy, or...

Johnny continues to hold his ground. John strikes him again. Johnny falls to the ground.

JOHN

I don't have time for this. Go.

Johnny climbs to his feet. Shaking, he cowers away. He reaches the quad bike which is parked nearby.

CLOSE UP:SHOT GUN

On the back carry tray lies a shot gun. It points in John's direction. Johnny stops. He reaches for the gun and strokes the barrel. He looks over his shoulder.

John turns.

JOHN

What are you doing? I said go.

Johnny breathes heavily. Quickly and without thinking, Johnny's finger grips the trigger.

It shoots. It hits John in the back. He freezes, stunned, and falls onto the ground next to the river. Johnny jumps backwards, shocked.

(CATH)

Johnny!

(CATH)

Adam!

Cath stands above the river on the bridge. She has seen everything.

JOHNNY

Mum!

It is revealed to us that Cath is Johnny's mother and Adam is Johnny.

111 INT FLASHBACK 1988 FARMHOUSE

CLOSE UP: FAMILY PICTURE ON THE TABLE OF JOHN, JOHNNY (ADAM) AND CATH.

112 INT FLASHBACK 1988 FARMHOUSE

John and Cath argue and fight inside the lounge. Cut to Johnny crying in his bedroom.

113 INT FLASHBACK 1988 FARMHOUSE

The pururi tree next to the house. We now see Johnny's tree house next to the same farmhouse.

114 INT FLASH FORWARD 1997 CAR

Jump forward to Adam and Matt driving to work (scene 21). Adam looks in the car mirror reflection.

MATT

Who was it?

ADAM

I....dunno. Looks like that kid from up the road.

MATT

What kid? I didn't see any kid.

The dust settles. Adam looks over his shoulder. He cannot see Johnny.

115 EXT FLASH FORWARD 1997 ROAD

Jump forward to scene 46. Adam is talking to the Kuia.

MOIRA

Who you talking to boy?

ADAM

This kid...

Adam turns around. There is no sign of Johnny. Puzzled, he responds.

ADAM

Where'd he go?

MOIRA

You talking to yourself again boy?

116 EXT RIVER 1988

We are back at the river. Johnny cries. He returns to save the calf. He navigates the small ledge to reach the calf. He picks up the calf and struggling, drags it to safety. The calf runs away.

Johnny looks at his mother, tears rolling down his cheeks.

CATH

Go home, Johnny. Go home.

He starts to run, crying, shaking. He runs down the rivers edge.

117 EXT DOWN RIVER 1988 CONTINUOUS

Johnny continues to run down the river. Out of the water wade Colleen, Moira and Teri. They climb onto the bank at a calmer stretch of the river. Johnny stops, mesmerized.

Moira looks at Johnny. They stare.

FADE TO BLACK.

CATH (VOICE OVER)

An accident. That's all it was.
No one needs to know.

118 EXT RIVER 1988

AUDIO: SOUND OF A MOTORBIKE.

John's dead body lies on the river bank. Cath takes a rope from the back of the quad bike and ties it around John's waist. She returns to the quad bike and ties it to the bars on the back of the bike.

CATH (VOICE OVER)

Listen to me Johnny. No one needs to know about this. We'll think of something.

119 EXT FARMHOUSE 1988 FORWARD

Red and blue lights flash and reflect on the white paint of the house. A police patrol vehicle, painted in old style black-and-white, is parked in the driveway. Neighbours stand at the gate.

120 EXT OFFAL PIT 1988 EARLIER THAT DAY

The rain has stopped. A tractor drives into shot. Its bucket arms are up. Cow limbs can be seen poking out from the side. It carries a load of dead animals drowned by the waters.

A close up of carcasses being dumped into the offal pit.

CATH(VOICE OVER)

I saw it from the bridge. One minute he was there, the next...he was gone. I ran down to try and see if I could find him. The water was too strong.

121 EXT OFFAL PIT 1988 LATER

A pile of soil and dirt is dumped on the fresh offal.

AUDIO: TRACTOR/MACHINERY SOUNDS

We see a slight glimpse of John's remains poking out of the dirt.

CLOSE UP:A HUMAN FOOT SLIGHTLY REVEALED

122 INT FARMHOUSE 1988 CONTINUOUS

A younger looking Brian sits at the dining table. He holds Cath's hand. Johnny, sits alongside.

POLICEWOMAN

If there's anything we can do, Cath, please let us know.

BRIAN

So what happens now?

POLICEWOMAN

We'll see if the divers come back with anything. We'll need to search the coast.

Johnny stands, and approaches the television. He reaches for the volume.

A reporter stands on a bank next to a rising river.

NEWS REPORTER (AUDIO)

Low lying areas have been flooded. Roofs have been lifted. Farmers are struggling to move stock to higher ground. The cyclone struck with tremendous force and is bearing down on the North Island causing havoc.

In the small rural town of Rauru, disaster struck twice as two local men were killed. The first when this small rail bridge collapsed, sending an empty logging train into the water below, killing the lone driver of the vehicle. And tonight police divers have called off their search for missing local man John Michael Donovan who was swept away by rising flood waters. Police will resume a search of the Kaipara coastline in hopes of finding a body in the morning.

FADE TO BLACK.

123 EXT RUGBY FIELD 1997 THE NEXT DAY

The rugby field. Adam sits on a bench outside the concrete club rooms and changing sheds. He has a large bruise above his left eye. Adam is wearing his rugby gear. Matt exits the changing rooms and slowly sits next to Adam. He also has a few bruises on his face.

There is an awkward silence. Matt sips from a sipper bottle.

MATT

This place is a mess from last night.

Adam sits looking forward.

MATT
How you feeling?

ADAM
Fine. All things considered.

MATT
You get the stock moved?

ADAM
Yeah, we got it sorted.

MATT
Your mum still lost it?

ADAM
Yeah.

MATT
You guys sweet?

ADAM
She's not talking to me.

MATT
Mate.

There is a long silence. Matt looks at the ground.

MATT
I feel rough. Haven't felt this
hung over in ages. Probably a
good thing the field's are washed
out. Don't think I could handle
eighty minutes.

There is silence.

MATT
Don't remember a thing about last
night.

Adam turns to look at Matt.

MATT
Man, that's a shiner. Did I...

ADAM
Forget about it.

MATT
Um. Yeah.

There is more awkward silence now.

MATT
You see the team postings?

Adam says nothing. Takes a drink of water from a sipper

bottle.

MATT

Gutted for you man. Greg's been pretty good lately. Guess the coach is punishing you for missing practice.

There is a really long silence.

MATT

Listen...about last night...

ADAM

Nothing happened...just two drunken mates. Nothing more.

Silence.

A group of rugby players exit the changing rooms and walk off to the car park.

MATT

Hey I'd better go. What are you up to tonight? Me and Tina are gonna go hang out at Josh's if you want...

ADAM

Tina?

MATT

Yeah. We. Well, things are sweet now. She came over and we talked. She forgives me.

ADAM

Can't. Gotta help mum clear up after the storm.

MATT

Right. Well, um. I guess I'll catch you later Johnny-boy.

Matt stands. He lingers for a few moments, before joining the others. Adam says nothing. He sits on the bench looking forward.

124 INT CHANGING ROOMS 1997 CONTINUOUS

Adam stands in front of a chipped mirror in a bathroom stall. He stares into the mirror. His eyes start to swell with tears. He dry reaches, still staring at the mirror. He dry reaches for a second time, before turning quickly to the toilet to the right of him.

Adam slams down onto his knees, grabbing the bowl with his

hands before throwing up violently into the toilet.

A SHOT OF SICK HITTING THE SIDE OF THE BOWL. A CLOSE-UP OF SALIVA AND SICK ON ADAM'S FACE.

125 EXT CHANGING ROOMS 1997 CONTINUOUS

Adam exits the changing rooms. He carries a bag full of gear. The hollow sound of sprigs on concrete is heard. He pauses, looks back at the changing rooms, and walks away.

126 EXT RUGBY FIELD 1997 CONTINUOUS

SILHOUETTE OF ADAM WALKING AWAY FROM THE RUGBY FIELD.

127 INT FARMHOUSE 1997 LATER THAT NIGHT

The back door opens. Cath walks inside. She takes off her clothes and dumps them in the laundry.

She enters the kitchen.

CATH

Adam?

She walks into the lounge. The television is switched off.

CLOSE UP: TELEVISION SET TURNED OFF

128 INT ADAM'S ROOM CONTINUOUS

Cath enters Adam's room. She looks around. His belongings are gone.

129 INT KITCHEN 1997 CONTINUOUS

Cath re-enters the kitchen. She stops and looks at the kitchen sink.

The tap is on. Water gushes, running full-bore into the sink.

CLOSE UP OF THE WATER RUNNING DOWN THE SINK.

Cath looks out the window. The faintest sound of a train is heard. It gets louder, and the sound of the horn is heard.

Adam enters. He drops his backpack onto the ground. Cath looks at Adam.

CATH

Where have you been?

ADAM

The pump. I fixed the water.

130 EXT TRAIN STATION 1997 NIGHT

It is dark. Teri, Colleen and Moira sit at the train station.

The sound of a train getting louder and louder is heard.

FADE TO BLACK.

ENDS.