

JOYRIDERS

Written by

Michael Halford

6/50 Cowper St. Randwick NSW
0423696532

FADE FROM BLACK.

EXT. WASTELAND - AFTERNOON

EXTREME HIGH ANGLE ON :

A man, middle aged, lies dead on a sea of wild grass.

From this height the corpse looks, at first glance, something like a speck of soil on the beautiful pattern of a leaf. Only the sound of wind through grass ruffles the silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASTELAND - SAME

ECU ON:

The world reflected in the shine of his patent leather shoes, the relentless arc of a second hand across the face of a cheap wrist watch, the pattern of dried sweat on a business shirt, the uneven edge of a soiled finger nail, the blotchy ink of an ancient tattoo under lifeless skin, a missing button...

ECU of the corpse's face; his unblinking eyes stare skyward. We move even closer, examining the details of his weather beaten face. Closer and closer still; until we push into the immense expanse of the dead eye. The pupil engulfs us until the screen goes completely black.

MATCH CUT TO

We move through the darkness...

A tiny light emerges out of the blackness. Is it something that might remind us of an electrical impulse moving along a nerve or maybe something from deep space?

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

(Extreme high angle)

As we move closer it emerges that it is, in fact, a solitary car, far below us, travelling along a country road. Only the headlights pick out the odd silhouette of the odd tree or sign post- all else is lost in a cloak of darkness.

We move closer still, until we are close to the top of the travelling car.

The occupants and the nature of their journey are unknown to us. We track along with it pushing in closer and closer until... darkness.

MATCH CUT TO

ECU EYE

We pull out of extreme close-up of the same immense eye - but this time it is alive and animated.

MATCH CUT TO:

ECU FACE

This is the face BRICK, an older man... maybe 45, maybe 50; with a weather beaten face like that, who knows. We recognise him as the dead man lying on the grass.

He is stocky with a thick neck and forearms and is dressed in a conservative collared shirt, sports jacket and trousers. However the image of an ordinary middle aged business man is subtly undermined by the small tattoo tear just below his left eye.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Slow pull out continued: Brick is sitting impassively in the back seat of the travelling car. His weathered face is illuminated by the ambient light of the occasional passing car.

BRICK (V.O.)

Someone once told me that your spirit will stay alive after you're dead only as long as there is someone living who still remembers you... Funny, I forget who told me that.

By now we have slowly pulled out and we are free to observe the other occupants within the confines of the car:

At the wheel is ALDO a heavy set man in his early twenties. He has close cropped hair and tattooed hands. He wears a tourist T-shirt with Sydney Tower on the front.

BRICK (CONT'D)

(v/o)

I guess most everyone who walks the earth wonders about it sometime, wouldn't be human if they didn't...

Some people go on about it all the time as if somehow they've got the inside dope, but who of us really knows what the fuck really happens when the shutters come down...

Some reckon that there's nothing; only a darkness stretching out as far as eternity lasts, some say that it's all an unbroken circle, some sort of wheel that never stops turning... whatever the fuck that means...

Next to Aldo is CANDY. She young and beautiful but in a cheap way - it is obvious that she is well used to 'putting all the goods in the shop window'. Her bottle blonde hair has dark roots and there are dark rings under her eyes.

Except for anxiously trying to scrap the black polish off her nails with her thumb, she sits ramrod straight and stares intently ahead. Her mind is racing at a million miles an hour.

BRICK (CONT'D)

(v/o)

Me?... All's I know is you come in and you go out; and it looks like it's a helluva lot better to be on this side of the fence... and that's about the size of it, or it would be if it wasn't for that nagging feeling... maybe you know the one that I mean. You try not the think about it, push it deep down and get the fuck on with it... but still it always seems to be there; waiting silently just around the next corner... waiting to fuck up a perfect day.

Finally, slumped in the backseat, next to Brick, is TV - a sort of poor man's Michael Hutchence. He wears a leather jacket thrown over the top of a 'heroin' tracksuit and his long greasy hair falls down one side of his face. Compared to the cool composure of Brick, TV looks agitated and sweaty.

They all four travel in silence... nonetheless there seems to be an air of tension that links them.

TV is smoking and, in slow motion, lets out a long draft of smoke before turning to address Brick.

TV

I dunno why we'd come all this way out? How much more to go?

BRICK

Didn't we just go through all that? Todger just said to meet him out here so we are meeting out here, OK? Relax will ya.

(to Aldo)

Aldo take the next right... Now, straight ahead then left at the fork.

TV

Just seems weird to me, that's all

BRICK

(to TV)

Listen TV, we just do what we're told. Just see Todger and give him the case... then it it's done. Simple.

TV

(sullen)

I don't even know what the big deal is, I never even seen the fuckin' thing before. Someone's made a fuckin' mistake.

BRICK

Sure... and that's what we are gunna sort out. Listen, Todger's a business man and you're a good earner; Todger knows that so it'll all be sweet. Let's just clear up the problem and then we can all get back to work. That's what everyone wants right?

TV

(cheering up)

Yeah, OK, yeah... Todger likes me... I'm likeable.

You know, I bet Todger was a bit like me when he was in his prime;

(MORE)

TV (CONT'D)

sees himself in me, that's why he likes me.
I'm in the top ten with a bullet and he knows it; everyone knows that TV sells right? And that means special rules for special people... You know...

Unable to contain herself any longer Candy erupts, twisting around to scream at TV.

CANDY
(bitterly)

Shut the fuck up TV, you fuckin' moron!

This takes everyone by surprise, especially TV.

TV
(struggling to regain his composure)
Huh?...wha?...

Its cool babe, wez just gonna talk. Todge and me...

CANDY
(screams over the top with a frightening intensity)
No, no, no! Wake the fuck up!

TV looks dumbly around him, eventually his eyes light up with a horrific comprehension. He panics and starts to make some sort of move but Brick, as quick as a flash, subdues him with a savage crack to the side head.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

ECU Candy face harshly lit by a flouro light reflected in a vanity mirror, she is pale and sweating slightly; her eyes glassy... she moves forward out of frame. The sound of vomiting are heard. At length, she reappears in frame.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

High-angle of a cramped, filthy bathroom - vanity, toilet and shower with moldy plastic shower curtain.

Candy, dressed only in black bra and panties is little unsteady on her feet.

She flushes the toilet and opens the bathroom cabinet and takes out a canister of pills, opens it and takes one. She looks over her shoulder toward the door before drinking straight from the tap.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A high-angle of the dimly lit bedroom/lounge in their shabby apartment. A dishevelled TV is sprawled out asleep on the unmade bed, music is playing and the muted television is pumping out flashing images in the corner. Drug paraphernalia is spread out on the bedside table.

Candy stands over TV for a few moments until she is satisfied TV is asleep before pulling out a suitcase from underneath the bed. She opens it and beneath a newspaper is a sizeable amount of cash secured by rubber bands, a small amount of white powder in a plastic bag and what could be travel documents and tickets. In close-up, we see few more rolls of cash tossed inside, the travel documents are taken out and the lid closed. The suitcase is then replaced under the bed.

Candy quickly moves to a dressing table chaotically covered in cosmetics and other feminine bits and pieces - on the mirror are a few kisses made with red lipstick. She glances over her shoulder at the sleeping TV before she opens a pink vinyl handbag.

TV
(groggy)
Candy?

Candy freezes. With her back to the bed she holds her handbag against her belly, blocking any view of what she is doing. TV murmurs something else unintelligible. She says nothing.

After a beat or two, turns her head and looks toward the bed. TV has slipped back into a deep, drug-induced sleep.

The coast being clear; Candy hastily places the travel documents in the handbag followed by a handful of tissues. She places the handbag on the floor between the dresser and the wardrobe then she stands and faces herself in the mirror.

She stares blankly at her image, then like a sleep walker she slowly fusses with her hair for a moment, then runs her hands down her abdomen before returning her hands to her side.

Slow push in on Candy's reflection framed only on her torso - from neck to thigh.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A long dissolve from Candy's torso to the extreme aerial view of the road. The tiny white car emerges into view travelling north, bisecting Candy's torso from her crotch and heading toward her belly...

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

TV is nursing his head; he stems the flow of a blood with a bit of rag. Candy is sobbing gently. Aldo concentrates on the road and Brick smokes a cigarette.

TV

(trying to rally himself)
Honest... honest I don't know what the fuck is going on. I never done nothin'...
I've always been straight, you know that Brick!

Tell 'em Candy...

Brick is unmoved and silent.

TV (CONT'D)

(pleading)
Fucked if I know what is goin' on!
Let's talk about this. Can we just talk. Please Brick.
Let's call Todger... call Todger!

Please Brick... please...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

At that moment, the car rounds a bend on the dirt road and there blocking the road is a large cow. The car is travelling at speed and Aldo has to stand on the brakes; the wheels lock-up and the car lurches into a violent skid.

The car stops abruptly only inches away from the cow who is totally unfazed by the missile hurtling towards her. The cow looks blankly at the car.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Inside the car it is a different story; none of the occupants are wearing their seat belts and all are propelled forward. Brick is flung forward into the head rest of the seat in front; his cigarette in his mouth exploding into sparks on impact. Everyone else hangs on for dear life.

ALDO

Fuck!

In a micro-second, TV reacts!

Almost before the car comes to a stop, he flings open the door and bolts from the car and runs off into the darkness.

Brick is dazed but he too reacts quickly.

BRICK

Watch her Aldo!

He pulls out his gun and sets off after TV.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

HIGH ANGLE ON:

The car is sitting stationary in the middle of the road with both its back doors open. The cow slowly walks off the road.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Aldo and Candy sit in suspended animation, stiff and awkward. Slowly, Candy softens and turns to look at Aldo.

CANDY

(composed, almost affectionate)

You're not really gonna do it are you Aldo?

Aldo still stares straight ahead.

ALDO

I, I dunno Candy.

CANDY

Aldo it's me, Candy. You know me...
you won't do it will you Aldo?

ALDO

I dunno Candy... Brick says...

CANDY

Do you always do what Brick says?

ALDO

(a little flustered)

I dunno, yeah... I mean no.

They sit in silence for a beat. Then Candy focuses, calmly bringing all her natural sex appeal to bear on the moment.

CANDY

Aldo?

Aldo turns to look at her for the first time.

CANDY (CONT'D)

I've seen the way you look at me.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSHLAND - NIGHT

Only darkness and the sound of desperate breathing.

ECU of TV's face comes gradually into sharper focus; he is wild eyed and desperate. He is trying to make good his escape and part running, part stumbling along a bush track.

He stops momentarily and listens. There is no sound except for his own harsh breathing. He looks left, then right. He starts to go up a track to the left, then stops again and returns to the same spot. He changes his minds and goes in the other direction.

Suddenly Brick crashes through the bush and tackles TV. They fall to the ground and wrestle with each other madly. They grunt and snort in a life and death struggle, resembling more animals than men.

HIGH ANGLE ON:

TV somehow manages to get to his feet but Brick shows surprising agility and is quickly upon him. He grabs TV by the scuff of the neck and roughly pushes him; face first, against the trunk of a tree. Holding TV tight he presses his gun to the back of his head.

A flash of light erupts from the muzzle and whites out the frame.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The sound of a long, loud protracted sound of a gun shot which eventually fades to silence.

A slow motion view of TV and Candy at home in their apartment. It is evening and the scene is bathed in soft light; Candy is sitting on sofa and TV is standing behind her with his arms on her shoulders. They laughing - some intimate trifle that only lovers can share.

TV, still laughing, turns and lurches to the right out of frame leaving Candy sitting alone.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Candy sits in the front seat of the car; Aldo is nuzzling her neck and his hand is inside her shirt, fondling her breast. Candy is completely compliant and makes well practiced sounds of pleasure, however her face and eyes tell a completely different story.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

HIGH ANGLE ON: The car, headlights on and back doors still open. A dark shape emerges from the bush and lumbers towards the car.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The blood splattered face of Brick appears at the passenger window.

Aldo and Candy are startled by Brick's sudden appearance and Aldo's amorous mood has instantly evaporated.

They watch mutely as Brick reaches in and opens the glove box. He is breathing unevenly and he retrieves an asthma inhaler he which uses in a couple of short, sharp bursts.

Brick then goes around top the back seat of the car and rummages around on the floor of the car. He straightens up with a warm can of beer - he rips it open, however instead of drinking it he leans over and pours it over the side of head to wash away TV's blood.

CANDY
(tentatively)
Where's TV?

BRICK
He's gone.

Candy lets out a short, strangled cry as Brick throws the empty can away and walks back to the car. He slumps into the back seat and searches through his pockets, fishing out a crumpled pack of cigarettes and a lighter. He lights a smoke and deeply inhales; letting the smoke come out in a long drawn out draft.

ALDO
(strangely eager)
What's it like, Brick?

Brick screws his face up in a 'what the fuck' expression.

BRICK
What?

ALDO
(persisting)
What's it like?

BRICK
It was like nothin'... Now wake the fuck up and listen to me you dumb fuck!
I want you to go down that track... you'll find it soon enough. Bring it back here and put it in the boot. And don't say another fuckin' word until that's done... now fuck off!

Aldo, chastened like a child, gets out and lurches off into the night. Brick and Candy remain in the car. Brick seems very subdued, as if he exhausted and deep in thought. He takes out his gun and rests it in his lap and closes his eyes while he continues to smoke. Candy sobs quietly in the front seat. After some time, Candy turns and looks at Brick.

CANDY
(quietly)
TV didn't deserve that.

BRICK
We all deserve that.

CANDY
He never really hurt anyone.

BRICK
(very quietly)
So what.

They fall silent for a moment, Brick remains with his eyes closed.

CANDY
You're going to kill me too.

Brick doesn't respond, lost, for a moment, in his own world.

CANDY (CONT'D)
Brick... listen... Do you believe
in God?

Brick opens his eyes.

BRICK
(puzzled)
Huh?

CANDY
You know, God? Do you believe in
God?

BRICK
About as much as he believes in me.

CANDY
Well, I do.

Brick stirs, looking directly at Candy.

BRICK
And what God would that be? What
God do you think would have you?

Listen Candy, I not sure what the
fuck you're playing at Candy, but
don't fuckin' talk to me about God.
You're on the hook and not even
fuckin' Jesus could get you off
it... Funny how people only want to
bother with the idea of God once
they get in a fix, like he's some
kind of lucky rabbits foot or
something.

CANDY
It's not it. It's bigger than that,
I just didn't realise it.

BRICK

Sure.

Tell me where was all these thoughts of the Almighty when you and TV decided to rip off Todger's smack and stuff a suitcase full of his cash, eh? Where was God then?

CANDY

Inside me.

BRICK

Huh?

What the fuck are you talking about now?

CANDY

Inside me, God's inside me.

BRICK

What? Stop talking shit.

CANDY

I'm pregnant.

BRICK

Pregnant? You?

Bullshit Candy, you couldn't lie straight in bed.

CANDY

No really Brick, I'm serious. I've got life inside me.

BRICK

(unsettled but wary)

A baby?...

What, you and TV?

CANDY

Yeah, I suppose, I dunno.

What's important is that I've got life inside me... that's the only real thing now.

BRICK

Real huh?

About as real as that suitcase full of cash and \$500 a day habit, eh?

CANDY

Fuck you. I was just trying to set myself up for the baby... you know to be a real person for once; to be a good mother.

BRICK

Fuck off; a mother of an addiction,
you mean?
You were doing it for yourself,
just like always. And now you're
fucked.

CANDY

Think what like about me, but you
can't kill something innocent like
my baby.

Brick is totally impassive now, regarding Candy with cold hooded eyes.

CANDY (CONT'D)

(disgusted)
How can anyone get so low?

BRICK

(flatly)
It can happen.

ALDO (O.S.)

Hey Brick!
Can you give me a hand, he's
fuckin' leakin' all over the place!

CUT TO:

INT. CAR TRUNK - MOMENTS LATER

POV from inside the car's trunk: In the back, stand Aldo and Candy; Brick steps in and lifts up a body in a blood stained blanket and bound with twine, and tosses it in the boot. He steps back and slams the trunk shut.

CUT TO BLACK

BRICK (V.O.)

I've done a lot of things...
things that others could never
understand... or even dream of.
But it makes sense to me; always
has.
You see, the world needs people
like me as much as anyone else,
maybe more than most. After all, I
fill a need in the order of
things...

FADE IN:

EXT. BUSHLAND - DAWN

The sound of digging.

ECU on the pattern on the dirty, blood stained blanket.

A slow pull out reveals more a human form. After a few shovel full of dark, moist earth, it disappears from view.

BRICK (V.O.)

...Most everything you hear are just empty words; bullshit just made up by people who can't handle the fact that everything, everything is crying out for change. And that's where I come in, I just help remove the barriers and let it all happen...

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSHLAND TREE - MORNING

Brick is urinating, standing under the bough an immense tree. He looks about; the light coming through the massive branches and down at the enormous ancient roots. The sound of the wind through the bush is all that can be heard.

BRICK (V.O.)

All I know is that no matter what, ain't none of us innocence and, deep down, we all deserve what we get...

He adjusts himself, picks up the suitcase and makes his way back through the trees the short distance to rejoin Aldo and Candy

BRICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

... And if everything gets all get smashed up in the process, then there ain't nothing to blame - fuck it, maybe it's just nature acting in self-defense.

Aldo is using the back of the shovel to pat down the soil over TV's shallow grave. Candy crouches next to the grave.

Candy sees Brick approach and rises to face him. Aldo stops what he is doing and stands with the shovel next to Candy. Together they strike a united but stiff pose; absurdly reminiscent of the couple in the painting 'American Gothic'.

Brick can't resist a wry smile as he draws close.

BRICK (CONT'D)
 What's this?
 The farmer takes a wife?

ALDO
 There's been a change of plans.

BRICK
 (amused)
 No kidding?
 Don't tell me... it's got something
 to do with you and Candy.

ALDO
 You're not going to hurt Candy OK?

BRICK
 (casually)
 OK.

Aldo steps forward menacingly.

ALDO
 No, I mean it. No one is going to
 hurt Candy.

BRICK
 (joking)
 O... K!

ALDO
 Candy and me are going away.

BRICK
 Right...

ALDO
 Yeah. We gonna be together.
 I'm gonna protect her.

BRICK
 (smiling)
 Protect her?... Jesus, I haven't
 heard it called that before.

Brick turns to Candy who is watching the exchange between
 Brick and Aldo intently.

BRICK (CONT'D)
 (approving)
 Well Candy, whaddya think? Sounds
 like another one of your miracles.

CANDY
You wouldn't know anything about that.

BRICK
True love eh? What are the chances of that?
I wonder what TV would have to say about all this if he didn't have a mouth full of dirt.

Aldo drops the shovel.

ALDO
Fuck you Brick. You always think you fuckin' know everything.

BRICK
Whoa there, big fella!
Don't get me wrong I'm a believer - you two will make a great couple. Candy we'll make a great little homemaker... Go, go and send me a postcard when you get settled!

Aldo is confused by Brick's attitude. Maybe even a little touched.

ALDO
You, you mean that Brick?

BRICK
(like an uncle at a wedding)
Of course I do. Who am I to stand in the way?

CANDY
(coolly)
What about the suitcase, Brick?

Brick instantly becomes deadly serious.

BRICK
No. It's not yours, OK...
I think you guys are getting a good deal as is.

ALDO
(turning to Candy)
Its OK Candy, we can get along OK. I'll look after you, you'll see.

CANDY
No.
We need it... get it for me babe.

Aldo is unsure what to do - then he moves forward to retrieve the case. Brick raises a hand in caution.

BRICK
(with cold menace)
Stay where you are Aldo - it's not
fuckin' yours.
No need for tears before bedtime.

Aldo pauses not sure what to do; he's seen this side of Brick before.

Flustered, he looks toward at Candy who urges him forward. He steps forward and awkwardly goes for the gun that he has tucked into the back of his pants. Aldo straightens his arm and points the gun at Brick.

ALDO
Get...

At that instant, Brick is upon him!

Brick, with startling speed, steps forward and with one hand slaps the gun straight out of Aldo's hand while the other hand pulls out his gun.

Before a stunned Aldo can even react; Brick fires point blank into his chest.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSHLAND - CONTINUOUS

An extreme long shot of scene.

Aldo collapses helplessly on the ground; clawing the dirt like an animal.
Brick coolly stands over Aldo for a moment then deliberately aims and shoots him in the head, execution style. The shot echoes into the distant.

Meanwhile, the fleeing figure of Candy disappears amongst the trees.

EXT. BUSHLAND HILL - LATER

Brick, carrying the suitcase, is walking amongst the trees. He cuts a strange figure, a bit like a business man who has been miraculously transported in a foreign world.

He climbs up a long hill. At the top of the rise he pauses amongst some rocks and puts the suitcase down.

He is out breath and reaches into his pocket and pulls out his ventilator and takes a couple of short sharp bursts. He fishes into his pocket again and takes out a cigarette and lights it - taking a deep drag.

He looks about him... taking the sky and beautiful surroundings as if seeing it for the first time. Brick has the look of a person who has just solved a particularly difficult puzzle... all the pieces are being to fall into place and the tension seems to drain from his face.

He throws away his smoke and goes to pick up his suitcase. As he reaches out for the handle, a snake strikes out from nowhere and bites him. The snake and the bite all occur so lightning fast that Brick isn't even sure what just happened.

Brick recoils back in pain but doesn't cry out or say a word. He sucks at his hand and takes a moment to compose himself. He then picks up the suitcase and does his best to continue on his way.

EXT. BUSHLAND - AFTERNOON

Brick is picking his way through the lengthening shadows. His insignificant figure, is dwarfed by the immensity of the nature surrounding him.

CUT TO:

ECU BRICK'S FACE

Brick is sweating profusely and his face is flushed red.

EXT. WASTELAND - LATE AFTERNOON

HIGH ANGLE ON:

Brick. He half sits, half falls down on the ground. He flops back a grassy expanse. We recognise the surroundings as the same as when first encountered Brick as a corpse. The shadows lengthen in time lapse yet Brick remains unmoving.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASTELAND - LATER

Candy appears in frame.

She stands close over Brick, silently regarding him. Only the sound of the wind through the grass can be heard.

Brick stirs at last and slowly, painfully pulls out his gun and points it squarely at her. However he is unable or unwilling to pull the trigger. Candy bends down and, ever so gently, pries the gun from his grasp.

Brick is powerless to stop her yet there seems is no animosity between them, in fact, she tends to him like a nurse tenderly caring for a favourite patient.

Like a ritual, played between them out thousands of times before, Candy slowly takes the gun and picks up the suitcase and walks out of frame without looking back.

ECU BRICK'S FACE

The last remaining moments, as Bricks life slips away; his eyes reflect the sky and a hint of a smile seems to dance across his face.

EXT. WASTELAND - LATE AFTERNOON

HIGH ANGLE ON:

The original view of the figure of Brick lying prostrate in an expanse of grass. The constant wind through the grass is the only sound to be heard.

DISSOLVE TO:

Brick's corpse lying on the grass dissolves, also imperceptibly at first, into a bird's-eye view of an expansive natural landscape.

It is beautiful and luminous; the contours of the land are bathed in twilight glow and it is almost as if Brick has now fused with the entire environment.

Way below us we can see a road and the solitary movement within the entire landscape - it's the now familiar car travelling north.

CUT TO:

EXT COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

... The same angle, but much closer on the car which now almost fills the frame.

Travelling toward some unknown destination the car seems to slide into darkness. The headlights spring on.

CUT TO BLACK

END.

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

