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"LASSETER THEME" PLAYS TO BLACK SCREEN.

DISSOLVE TO:

Sydney 2005. The sky is blazing Gold with the intensity of the Sun. The beautiful harbor is depicted - Harbor Bridge. Modern Buildings, Parks, Circular Quay and the Manly Ferry. A large sun ray points directly to the CBD. It centers upon -

EXT. HAMPTON HOTEL,CBD SYDNEY -- AFT

Parked outside are new Sports cars and a vintage Villiers motorcycle with sidecar.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON HOTEL,CBD SYDNEY -- AFT

The Hotel is retro modern with glistening chrome. A trio of "SUIT'S" are standing at the Bar. The background music is Neil Young's "Heart of Gold.'

SUIT 3

Three Lasseter's thanks.

SUIT 1

I told you to buy at 350. Gold's now up to 425 and I've made a killing.

SUIT 2

I've invested in Belgrove mines. Straight from the source as they say.

SUIT 3

I'll hedge between you two.

ANGLE ON

EXECUTIVE CHEF ANTOINE, An old dandy aged at 125 years old! He is remarkably well preserved with inquisitive eyes dressed in a tailored suit of Almond-green and holding a teak walking stick it's tip glowing like a blue hydrangea. He suddenly stands up straight,bangs the stick on the bar and stamps his feet. He has a high shrill French voice.

ANTOINE

Dom Perignon for Antoine immediately!

The SUITS look at him and laugh.

SUIT 1

Hope you are not eavesdropping.
 (Takes his Lasseter)
 Hmm, Vodka, Goldwasser and Pineapple
 juice. Four of these should see me
 out.

ANTOINE

Monsieur, your tales hold no
 interest to me. I am of another
 age.

SUIT 1

No offence intended but your times
 don't matter anymore. Nobody cares.
 It's 2005.

The BARTENDER gives the bottle of Dom to ANTOINE who
 carefully lays four One hundred dollar notes down upon the
 bar making a cross of them. He moves back to his table, pours
 a drink and stares intently at his wedding finger. On it is
 a ring, it's oversize crystal holding a single tear. ANTOINE
 disappears into his own world. He stares directly towards
 the screen.

ANTOINE

Let's see if we disagree with
 Monsieur Suit. I wish to tell you
 a little fable. But first a little
 lesson.

DISSOLVE TO:

CGI: An Old World Map appears dated 1776. It has a line
 appearing first in Plymouth England then traveling all the
 way to Botany bay Australia.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

Australia was the last big Island
 we all wanted to find. Finally a
 bunch of
 (snorts)
 Englishmen found it in their wooden
 boat. I would have sunk it with a
 cannon. However, just like America
 the new continent was opened up.

A montage of Sepia photos appear -

Convicts making houses.

Horse carts driven on a rough dirt road near the harbor.

Men and women tilling the ground.

Sheep and cattle grazing.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

Now back to my little fable.
However amusing it is to speak ill
of one's enemies, it is even more
delectable to speak ill of one's
friends.

(He swigs from the Dom
bottle)

Some people just sleep through
life. However...Monsieur
Shortnin', well...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AN OLD HOUSE 1890 SYDNEY -- AFTERNOON

HAROLD LASSETER, a young boy of twelve lies on his old bed
reading in awe two books, "Captain's loot" and "Cut throat
Jack and the golden doubloons."

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD, 1890 SYDNEY -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is getting a good beating by schoolboys.

SCHOOLBOY

Your fathers dead! Your mothers
poor, you'll be nothing ever more!

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOLROOM, 1890 SYDNEY -- AFTERNOON

An insolent looking LASSETER is regarding the NUN who yells
at him.

NUN

Tell me monkey what is four times
six?

LASSETER

Twenty one.

NUN

Go outside and THINK!!!

Lasseter looks at the crucifix on the wall.

LASSETER

Mr. Jesus knows what I think of you. He probably thinks it too.

The NUN screams and races after LASSETER with her stick. She trips over her habit and the kids laugh.

CGI: Of an accelerated clock showing the passing hours.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL BELL -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is staring at the ground. OLIVE MAY, a schoolgirl with red flowing hair walks up to him and smiles. She gives him a lolly and smiles.

ANTOINE

You must admit young Lasseter had it a bit hard and was mighty dumb at maths but never with the ladies. Especially Miss Olive May Belgrove from the Araluen Goldfields and finally Goulburn. Rumor had it she held out with the bushranger Ned Kelly but found him smelly and a touch not all there. With Lasseter it was love at first sight. By God he could talk too.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOLROOM, 1890 SYDNEY -- MORNING

LASSETER is back with his classmates. He is reading aloud and writing on the blackboard. They are all mesmerized by his dexterity in English.

LASSETER

Scholars, the quixotic nuances of "Treasure Island" can be depicted thus...

CUT TO:

INT. LASSETER'S DESK -- MORNING

A sign reads "Mr. Harold Lasseter, 1st Prize English."

CUT TO:

INT. LAW SCHOOL 1896 SYDNEY -- EVENING

An eighteen year old LASSETER is being praised by the selection committee. LASSETER however, shakes his head and leaves.

ANTOINE

Shortnin' knew that every hick village, provincial town and major city in the world has slimy, sniveling, back stabbing snake faced lawyer bastards and most of them aren't worth a dogs backside. What the world does not have enough of is unique individuals...Lasseter was. You may see that he was short for his age. My memories a bit slow but he told me he did all sorts of wondrous things...

The following Sepia montage of LASSETER portrays on the screen.

Armed robbery stealing comic books.

At a Christian reform school praying and being beaten senseless by the Priest.

Leading a World War One battle charge in a Colonels uniform.

Crossing the Atlantic in the First class smokers room.

Sharecropping in Kansas with a pregnant wife.

Surveying and engineering in 1920's skyscraper New York.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

...But in reality which most of us hate, I reckon he did the following.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS, 1897 WORK GANG -- DAY

LASSETER is bashing pivots into railway sleepers with a mallet. The BOSMAN leads them into a work song whilst swinging a mighty big truncheon.

BOSMAN

"We boys workin' way down south.
We love workin' for cash,if not
Bosman will us bash, bash, bash."

LASSETER Is starting to struggle with his mallet.

BOSMAN (CONT'D)
Shortnin' hurry up there! Help him
along boys.

All of a sudden the whole work gang breaks out into the old Black spiritual "Mammas little baby loves shortnin' bread." LASSETER throws down his mallet and tackles the nearest man. A mighty good fight occurs with LASSETER at first winning. He then runs off towards the hot desert.

BOSMAN (CONT'D)
Shortnin' you'll be dead in two
days!

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT -- MORNING

LASSETER is stumbling along the railway tracks. He suddenly falls prostate upon the line. (O.S.) a buggy is heard. The BOSMAN appears picking him up.

BOSMAN
Don't die on me son. I'll say this
for you shortnin' you sure are
different to them other gorillas
back there.

ANTOINE V/O
And young shortnin' earned enough
to...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS, 1897 -- STORE MAIN STREET AFTERNOON

LASSETER is dressed in prospectors gear. He hugs OLIVE MAY who has some dressmaking material. He leaves the store and is about to mount his horse when the STOREMAN beckons to him.

STOREMAN
I've seen plenty of fools in my
time but you take the cake.

LASSETER
Well now Shakespeare's fool came
out a winner in the end.

STOREMAN

Bet that fool feller died in the goldfields or came back a ravin' drunkard. Does he live here?

LASSETER

(sarcastically)

No, he went to England. Tell you what mister, I'll make a deal with you. I'll come back with enough gold for you to make a golden horseshoe. You can nail it to the wall and put on it, "Given to me by a fool."

STOREMAN

How old are you son?

LASSETER

Some say I'm twenty-one, others say twenty-four. Me I reckon around seventeen.

OLIVE MAY

Don't make me a widow shortnin'.

STOREMAN

If them Aborigines don't spear him the sun will.

LASSETER

Tell you one last thing mister. If I were you I'd set up a cattle corral, cathouse, bank, hotel, funeral parlor and a doctor's room. Put them all together like. That's the future. I call em' Malls.

LASSETER smiles, doffs his hat and nearly falls as the horse gallops off.

STOREMAN

What's the horses name?

LASSETER

Julius Caesar!

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN DESERT -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is slowly riding in the hot sun west of Alice Springs towards the foreboding MacDonnell Ranges. The land is wild with mulga, sand and spinifax.

LASSETER

Well Julius, Rome wasn't built in a day. Do you reckon we will conquer this great barren horseshit of a place in a day?

JULIUS rears up at the Horse insult throws LASSETER and gallops off.

LASSETER (CONT'D)

Now boy, don't take it personally. Come back here!

LASSETER runs off to find Julius. As he climbs a windy sand dune, he trips, falls down a narrow valley and lands in golden sand suffering concussion. As he comes to his senses he is surrounded in a Golden haze. All around him is Gold, Gold, Gold - a glistening reef as far as he can see.

LASSETER (CONT'D)

Julius! Thank you!

CGI: Of JULIUS talking.

JULIUS

I'm not to sure I should have bucked you. This is going to change your life Son.

LASSETER virtually swims in the gold dust and showers with it. He stuffs as much as he can in his tuckerbag and tries to roughly peg out a claim. He starts to walk in an easterly direction back to Alice Springs. He stumbles in the heat and drinks his last drop of water. As he falls his dehydrated brain sees-

Pirates shaking his hand and then beheading him with cutlasses.

Himself in a harem.

Himself as King of England.

From LASSETER'S P.O.V we see a camel ridden by an Afghan Trader coming towards him.

LASSETER
Are you Sinbad? A wise man?

The camel trader smiles, jumps off and at first speaks in his native Pashto saying hello.

CAMEL TRADER
Staray më she!

LASSETER
What?

CAMEL TRADER
Me Dost. You lost.

LASSETER
I've found what no man has ever found.
(Pause)
Freedom and ecstasy!

DOST
You talk with the sun. If you no go to Alice you die.

DOST makes a hammock from some canvas in his sack, places LASSETER upon it, gives him water and covers him from burning. He regards him and shakes his head.

DOST (CONT'D)
Dost read Arabian Nights. He search for ecstasy too and never find. Even at night.

They slowly make their way towards Alice Springs amongst picturesque red sandstone gorges, enticing water holes lined by red river gum and ghost gum trees. Unseen by LASSETER and DOST they are observed by three Aborigines.

LASSETER
Julius! We have to find him.

DOST
Julius?

LASSETER
Julius Caesar. He was with me all the way.

DOST
You should not be here boy. Dost know what happen to Julius.

LASSETER

What?

DOST

He stabbed.

LASSETER

No! He ran off the coward. He
left me to fry in the heat.

DOST just ignores him and prods the camel to move more quickly.

LASSETER (CONT'D)

I must write letters, maps, drafts.

LASSETER falls in and out of sleep as DOST regards him with mirth.

DOST

Dost here seventeen years and see
no mile of gold....plenty dead men
and men who tell lies... Not even
one inch of gold.

DOST halts observing the harsh terrain.

DOST (CONT'D)

We stay here tonight. I look after
you.

LASSETER

I have to get back!

DOST

I take you back dead then.

DOST makes camp and a fire. From the bush a rustle is heard as HARDING a rough looking young man enters the campsite. He looks at DOST.

HARDING

Don't mind me Ghan. That boy looks
like a dead man.

DOST

He rest. Tomorrow we go.

HARDING

I said don't mind me. I'm just a
surveyor. Just checking out things.

LASSETER tries to rise up.

LASSETER
 Surveyor? You might be able to
 help me.

DOST
 Stay down boy.

Harding looks at LASSETER'S Tuckerbag.

HARDING
 How can I help you boy?

LASSETER falls down again.

DOST
 Me cook emu. You want?

HARDING
 Don't mind if I do.

They sit down and eat and then settle in for the night.
 HARDING slides over to LASSETER who is dead to the world and
 opens his tuckerbag. He sifts the gold dust through his
 hands.

From DOST'S P.O.V we see him watching HARDING.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT -- MORNING

DOST is arguing with HARDING. LASSETER is watching them and
 regards it as funny and throws Emu meat at them.

DOST
 I see you look in tuckerbag.

HARDING
 So what Ghan?

DOST
 Dost no like you.

HARDING
 Gold has no friends.

LASSETER
 I don't think I'll find the place
 again.

HARDING
 Well maybe my instruments can help.

HARDING pushes DOST

HARDING (CONT'D)
Get lost Ghan.

DOST suddenly throws HARDING to the ground in a perfect judo throw.

LASSETER
You know Karate?

DOST
No. Just Dost.

LASSETER
Maybe we should go?

DOST picks LASSETER up and places him on the makeshift bed.

CGI: DOST'S camel kicks HARDING and says "That's one from me!"

CGI: As they start for Alice Springs two little Devils wearing Cowboy hats, one White, the other Black appear on LASSETER'S Shoulder.

BLACK DEVIL
Don't be greedy boy. Share with
charity. Life is short for you
shortnin'
(laughs at his own joke)
Be greedy open up a cat house or
something people really want.

WHITE DEVIL
With your gold start an orphanage
for the children of dead
prospectors.

The BLACK DEVIL punches the WHITE DEVIL off his shoulder.

LASSETER shakes his head.

LASSETER
Must be the heat.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS, PROSPECTORS STORE -- MORNING

DOST dismounts and tends to LASSETER who is regaining his senses. OLIVE MAY stares out the window, puts down her dressmaking and runs outside caressing LASSETER.

OLIVE MAY
 Look at you! I'm at least half a
 widow!

LASSETER
 (whispers)
 Pretend to cry.

OLIVE MAY
 Pretend? I'm not crying over a
 fool like you. I'm crying because
 I'm stuck here.

LASSETER
 (pats his tuckerbag which
 glitters yellow)
 If I was you I'd be crying rivers.

OLIVE MAY wails. DOST tries to comfort her.

DOST
 Me Dost. Dost look after boy. Boy
 crazy with lies. Dost can take no
 more.

OLIVE MAY
 I know. Help me get him to his
 room. He'll have to rest for a few
 days.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL -- MORNING

Together they carry him up some stairs with his head banging
 on each stair.

LASSETER
 Ow!

OLIVE MAY
 That's for being such a fool!

LASSETER is thrown on the bed. Some Gold dust falls from his
 bag and he picks it up and gives it to DOST

DOST
 No need boy. Me just happy you
 better.

LASSETER
 Take it and go and see the big
 city.

DOST

Tell you what maybe I do. Get more camels for Dost and rent out. Dost see you again one day thank Allah.

He bows and says goodbye in Pashto.

DOST (CONT'D)

Manana. Khudây pë âmân!

DOST leaves.

OLIVE MAY

You and me can buy a nice place near Sydney Harbor.

LASSETER

A house? No more adventure?

OLIVE MAY

I'll be a lady and make dresses for low and high society.

LASSETER

I'll design an arched harbor bridge.

OLIVE MAY

They'll never make an arched bridge.

LASSETER

Olive May with all this Gold I found we could buy all of New South Wales and half of Victoria. My reefs eighty miles long.

OLIVE MAY

Don't be greedy.

LASSETER

Well maybe ten miles.

OLIVE MAY

We only need a little of it.

LASSETER

I guess it's around one mile. Never again will I be called shortnin' I will be Lord Lasseter! King Lasseter! Prime Minister Lasseter!

OLIVE MAY

You sure you're not telling me a long one?

LASSETER

There's no need to anymore.

He is in his own world of dreams and desire.

LASSETER (CONT'D)

(beat)

All of those Pirate books I read while being beaten black and blue by a Nun and other fools has come true. If I stop now I'll be nobody.

LASSETER hums the tune "Aura Lee " later to be made famous as "Love me tender" by Elvis.

OLIVE MAY

You and I walking down George Street. You in a Gentleman's outfit. Me in a sequined silver dress with pearls and a green belt of Gold. The smell of steak, perfume, wine and dancing the waltz.

The sublime sound of a soprano is heard. She sings an aria from Pucinni's La Bohome.

LASSETER and OLIVE MAY look at each other. They then walk down the hall and pause at a doorway where a beautiful woman, NELLIE MELBA is singing.

OLIVE MAY (CONT'D)

It's an angel.

NELLIE

No. It's Nellie Melba.

LASSETER

Nellie what are you doing in a dump like this?

NELLIE

I gained fame in Paris and London only to be hoodwinked by a dastardly cad who took all my money. Dastardly he was.

OLIVE MAY kicks LASSETER.

OLIVE MAY
Believe me I know the type.

LASSETER
Miss Nellie, never have I heard
such a voice. Let us help you.

OLIVE MAY
I don't believe it. You said us.

NELLIE
I am a woman who needs no help Sir.
I'll just make another comeback.

LASSETER
One day people will say, They have
had more comebacks then Nellie
Melba.

NELLIE starts to cry. OLIVE MAY comforts her.

OLIVE MAY
You sure do have a way with the
ladies.

NELLIE
Men can go to hell!
(Pause)
Well maybe one is okay. Mr. Henry
Ford of American automobile fame.

LASSETER
Automobiles?

NELLIE
Yes. Henry said one day soon they
would be everywhere. You just hop
in them, put in some petrol and
drive wherever your little heart
desires.

LASSETER
I could make a place to store them
in the Cities. I'd call them Multi
level parking stations and charge
them like rent.

OLIVE MAY laughs.

OLIVE MAY
Whoever would go for that?

LASSETER

(wounded)

I am a man of vision!

OLIVE MAY

Talking of vision. We can't stay here. Forget Sydney. We can go to Araluen where I was born. It's a big town near the sea and full of Gold. I know people there.

LASSETER

I'll be the Mayor.

OLIVE MAY

We could buy a little property.

NELLIE

Time for me to move on. Maybe Italy and La Scala.

LASSETER

Miss Nellie lets meet up in ten years and tell all.

OLIVE MAY

Shortnin' do you know about hydraulic sluicing and dredging?

LASSETER

Sure do!

OLIVE MAY

Can we go by Cobb and Co? It will be so romantic. The railway seems so modern.

LASSETER

We can fly!

NELLIE

With wings?

LASSETER

They're called aeroplanes. I've seen them in books. One day people will travel quickly all over the world in them.

OLIVE MAY

If that happens I'll ride down the street naked like Lady Godiva.

NELLIE

And I'll somersault on stage during
an aria.

LASSETER

Let's go! We're young, nothing can
stop us.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET -- AFTERNOON

ANGLE ON

A dirty pair of boots. Gold dust
is falling on them.

Camera rises to show the surveyor HARDING who smiles with
black teeth.

HARDING

Dumb ass boy. We'll meet again.

CUT TO:

INT. ALICE SPRINGS, HOTEL 1897 -- MORNING

LASSETER is looking out his bedroom window. He seems pleased
with himself.

(O.S) The stomping of boots on a wooden floor is heard.

LASSETER reaches for a gun. He realizes he doesn't own one.

LASSETER

Well, it was fun while it lasted.

OLIVE MAY rushes in with a Newspaper. LASSETER tackles her.

OLIVE MAY

What the hell is wrong with you?
The sun's made you crazy.

LASSETER

I thought you was a nefarious man
come to do me dishonor.

OLIVE MAY

What? Never mind look at this.

LASSETER regards the newspaper headline

" YOUNG FOOL FINDS TEN MILES OF GOLD!"

LASSETER

That's me.

OLIVE MAY

Look at the photo.

It is photograph of LASSETER being carried up the stairs by DOST and OLIVE MAY.

OLIVE MAY (CONT'D)

Look how fat I look.

LASSETER

Let's get on the first coach out of here. There will be people everywhere soon.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS, PROSPECTORS STORE -- AFTERNOON

The STOREMAN is smiling and hanging up his golden horseshoe. A photographer is about to take his photo.

STOREMAN

Yes sirree. I Thought he was a mighty dumb shirker type...I was wrong.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEAT UP DIRT ROAD. NEW SOUTH WALES -- MORNING

The Cobb and Co stagecoach is laboring up a steep hill. A hot wind is blowing up a dust storm. The COACHMAN peers inside.

COACHMAN

Sorry Sir, but gentlemen are required to walk alongside hills to relieve the effort on the horses.

LASSETER

Ain't no gentleman.

OLIVE MAY

Yes you are. Remember Nellie?

CUT TO:

LASSETER Is sweating profusely in the heat and dust as the stagecoach slowly makes it's way uphill.

CGI: An emu and kangaroo look at him laugh and shake their heads.

EMU
Damn dumb boy.

KANGAROO
Say that again.

EMU
Damn dumb boy.

The Kangaroo kicks the Emu.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANBERRA AUSTRALIA'S CAPITAL -- AFTERNOON

The coach has stopped for lunch. LASSETER looks towards where the world famous Lake Burley Griffin will one day be.

LASSETER
I reckon a lake should go there.

OLIVE MAY
With no water around better make it a park.

LASSETER
You just wait and see. It could be man made and probably some damn yankee will beat us to it. I'll find my reef again and Australia will make me Prime Minister.

Birds sing. The sun is mild and the land green.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
A cup of tea and a tomato sandwich is all I want.

OLIVE MAY
If time would just stay still right here we'd be happy ever after.

LASSETER
We'd die of boredom. Let's descend on this town of yours.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET ARALUEN -- AFTERNOON

Araluen is situated in a deep valley. The only access is by way of a track so steep that goods have to be dragged up and down on sleds. OLIVE MAY and LASSETER slide down followed by their meager belongings.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET ARALUEN -- AFTERNOON

Bedlam reigns supreme. Chinese are shooting whites. Whites shooting Chinese. Men and Women are vomiting in front of the hotel. Women are hitting men and in turned being punched by men. Hangings are commonplace and the Undertaker is smiling counting bloodied pound notes.

OLIVE MAY

What vile mannered people. When I'm mayoress I'll have them all horsewhipped!

LASSETER

They should go to the sea and cool off. Matter of fact I will. Is it within walking style?

OLIVE MAY

(embarrassed)

Sure. It's just forty miles east as the crow flies.

A shot is heard and a crow falls on her head.

LASSETER

You should be dog whipped for such a whopper.

OLIVE MAY

With that gold you have left, we can buy a house and rent it to boarders. Why, there must be hundreds of them.

LASSETER

From what I see a cat house is the answer. Cool em' right down. Maybe one for the girls too.

OLIVE MAY slaps him.

CGI:The WHITE and BLACK devils appear on his shoulder again.

BLACK DEVIL

Silly cow will send you broke with
boarders. A cat house is the go.

LASSETER

Silly cow!

OLIVE MAY

Who is a silly cow?

LASSETER

The one over there in the pasture.

WHITE DEVIL

Stay with borders son. Girls will
see you stirring up a soup bowl of
trouble.

BLACK DEVIL punches off the WHITE DEVIL

BLACK DEVIL

Wuss! Wuss! Wuss!

LASSETER

Wonder of they have a head doctor
here. Olive May you win. A
boarding house it is.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE -- DAY

The cells are full and people are lined up and yelling at
OLIVE MAY to hurry up and sign her House contract.

LASSETER

What's wrong? Just sign.

OLIVE MAY

Can't.

LASSETER

Why the hell not?

Suddenly she grabs the pen dips it in ink and signs with a
large X.

OLIVE MAY regards the crowd.

OLIVE MAY

Might not be able to read and write
but own my first building at
nineteen!

CUT TO:

INT. ARALUEN HOTEL -- NIGHT

Relative peace abounds except for a few brawls and shootings.
LASSETER is holding court with his new found friends.

LASSETER

Boys seventy miles long it is. I
was blind from the gold's
reflection for three days. With
your help we can all be mighty
rich. Just need two hundred
pounds. I'm not a greedy man.

SUCKER

You sound like a liar to me.

LASSETER

You look like a dogs backside to
me.

The SUCKER pulls a gun and is shot dead by a one eared and
one eyed man. He approaches LASSETER.

LASSETER

Thanks Sir. As I was saying only
five hundred pounds and a few good
men.

ONE EAR puts his smoking gun in his holster.

ONE EAR

Heard about that reef in 1880.
Three hundred men died trying to
find it,I was nearly one of em'.
Why don't you go down to Wollongong
harbor, stop in at the Brighton
Hotel and ask for a

(laughs)

Thing called Antoine. He is the
only man in the world who can sniff
out gold. You can't miss him.

LASSETER

What's the quickest way?

ONE EAR
 Down Macquarie Pass. Built by
 convicts with plenty of corners.
 Drives horse's crazy.

LASSETER
 I'll go by velocipede.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARALUEN, QUONG'S PROVISION STORE -- MORNING

OLIVE MAY and LASSETER are regarding a Penny Farthing an ordinary bicycle and a horse.

QUONG
 If it was me I say horse.

LASSETER
 Penny farthing?

LASSETER tries to ride it and falls off.

OLIVE MAY
 Shortnin' you are crazy.

QUONG
 Horse!

LASSETER rides the bike and looks at the horse.

LASSETER
 I'll take them all.

QUONG
 I hear you clever boy. Forget
 gold, go Sydney. Quong start tea
 shop in Sydney. Very fancy, very
 money.

LASSETER
 When we find the gold Olive May and
 I will be your guests of honor.

QUONG
 By then Quong in a box.

LASSETER
 You have to have faith Quong.

LASSETER takes the Penny Farthing and gives it to OLIVE MAY.

LASSETER
I reckon the world's a better place
when riding a penny farthing.

OLIVE MAY
Me? On that?

LASSETER
Damn shirker!

OLIVE MAY hops on and rides off.

LASSETER
I'll be back in two weeks or so.

OLIVE MAY is riding well.

OLIVE MAY
How the hell do you get off it?

CUT TO:

EXT. MACQUARIE PASS. -- MORNING

LASSETER is looking from the top of the Pass down to the sea.
Birds are chirping and a fine mist surrounds the area

He approaches a tree where his Horse and bicycle are tied.
Lasseter takes a deep breath.

LASSETER
What a time to be alive!

LASSETER attaches a long rope from the back of the bike tying
it to his horses mouthpiece. He gets on the bike and
gingerly starts to ride down the windy road. The horse rides
past him and he falls off the bicycle.

LASSETER
No! Hannibal stop! I'm trying to
make it easier for you and me both.
When we get to the bottom then you
can have a go.

HANNIBAL V/O

CGI: Where did I find you pal?

LASSETER tries again and rides slowly with Hannibal behind.

They gradually make perfect unity of balance and time. They
reach the last corner and stop to rest.

LASSETER

Damn. Forgot to take a camera to prove it can be done. Well Hannibal you'll just have to back me up.

HANNIBAL V/O

No one will believe us.

LASSETER lifts the bicycle, ties it sideways to Hannibal and they trot off.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIGHTON HOTEL WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- AFTERNOON

The Hotel is mysteriously empty. Only the BARMAN is present cleaning the bar.

LASSETER

Where is everyone?

BARMAN

At the races.

LASSETER

Where's the racetrack?

BARMAN

(points his finger towards the beach)

On the beach.

LASSETER

Got a room for a few nights?

BARMAN

Nope.

LASSETER

Anywhere else?

BARMAN

Most people first camp out on the hill overlooking the harbor. Can hire you a tent if you want.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRST FLOOR BRIGHTON HOTEL--AFT

A man is standing on the railing and staring towards the beach. Suddenly he falls to the sidewalk dead.

BACK TO SCENE

BARMAN (CONT'D)

Got a room now.

LASSETER

What was wrong with that feller?

BARMAN

Race one.

LASSETER

By the way do you know of a man called Antoine?

BARMAN

(cries)

He gave me a little wooden box as a present. "For the your bar." He said. In it was a viper!

LASSETER

Why?

BARMAN

Because I criticized his Lobster Supreme.

(Pause)

He makes life easier mister. We call him the Professor of beauty. King of transcendental gastronomy. No mess pots cooked here.

LASSETER

(confused)

Only here for a couple days. Be back later.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIGHTON BEACH WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER ties up Hannibal to a horse stock and observes the beauty of the area.

LASSETER
Hannibal if this place had gold
we'd be in heaven.

DISSOLVE TO:

A sepia montage of the area.
Women bathers.
Horses swimming in the ocean.
Gentleman walking the boardwalk.
Children playing cricket in the sand.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIGHTON BEACH WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- AFTERNOON

A distinguished looking couple are partaking in luncheon on
the green grass.

They are being fussed over by Executive Chef ANTOINE tailored
in a suit of Almond-green, White top hat and gloves.

ANTOINE V/O

At last I appear.

ANTOINE
I propose to you Poulet San Michel,
beignets de fromage de chevere and
crepes a la Antoine.

The diners smile in ecstasy and Antoine starts to prepare his
cuisine. Suddenly he stops sniffing loudly.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)
I smell Gold.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT BRIGHTON BEACH WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER hesitantly walks towards ANTOINE.

ANTOINE
Yes it is I you are after.

LASSETER
I hear you can sniff out gold?

ANTOINE

(sniffs)

Antoine can sniff anybody and do anything.

LASSETER

I'll make it short. I found a reef forty miles long up at the MacDonnell ranges in the Northern Territory. Need you to help me find it again.

ANTOINE

In short no.

LASSETER

In short a Fifty fifty split.

ANTOINE

Antoine detests the heat.

LASSETER

Well, I'll be at the hotel. Think it over.

ANTOINE returns to his guests and pours some champagne. He walks to his preparation table and presents his beignets de fromage de chevere to his guests and stamps his feet.

ANTOINE

Antoine demands your verdict!

The couple smile in ecstasy.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIGHTON BEACH WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- AFTERNOON

A long camera shot of the horse race.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLIFF ROAD WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- MORNING

LASSETER is sitting on the cliffs edge. He is despondent.

LASSETER

Well, son you will just have to do things on your own just like always.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIGHTON BEACH WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- SAME TIME MORNING

The sun is shining the sky blue. ANTOINE is dressed in a frilly shirt, shiny black boots and a hat with an ostrich feather on it. He is about to hang himself from a tree. In his left hand is a copy of the famous cuisine book, "The Physiology of Taste" and in his right "The Bible". Scattered on the ground are numerous race tickets.

ANTOINE

What a waste. The world needs
Antoine. I wish for a sign.

CGI: Suddenly thunder is heard and a lightning bolt hits the rope and ANTOINE falls to the ground and the race tickets disappear. A voice from the clouds is heard.

VOICE

Last chance son.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLIFF ROAD WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- MORNING

O/S the sound of a motorcycle is heard. LASSETER looks down the road. ANTOINE is riding towards him on a Pink Villers motorcycle with sidecar. The unusual thing is that ANTOINE is standing in the sidecar and leaning over with his hands to control the bike. LASSETER shakes his head.

LASSETER

Now I've seen it all.

ANTOINE stops next to LASSETER

ANTOINE

Antoine has made his decision. All night I cried in the hotel but have decided to grace you with your request under two conditions.

LASSETER

Tell me.

ANTOINE

I can create not mess but cuisine and that my motorcycle accompany me.

Lasseter goes to shake ANTOINES hand. ANTOINE first puts on a glove.

LASSETER
Shake like a man.

ANTOINE
I shake like Antoine.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIGHTON HOTEL WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- MORNING

ANGLE ON
A group of well and not so well
dressed men are talking to each
other in a serious manner. There
is some paper on the table. An old
man stands up.

OLD MAN
Agreed Gentlemen?

MEN
Agreed.

OLD MAN
Well I'd like to say we conceived a
mighty fine thing today. A
business idea unlike any other.
History will remember us.

LASSETER and ANTOINE come down the stairs and a young man
quickly grabs the paper on the table and burns it in an
ashtray.

LASSETER regards the men. ANTOINE regards them with a sniff.

LASSETER
Morning Gentlemen.

Some of them grumble.

LASSETER
Thank God I'm not a gambling man.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIGHTON HOTEL WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- DAY

LASSETER is counting some money. He looks at his horse
Hannibal.

LASSETER

Well Hannibal old Mr Bond reckons you're too big to be a mine draft horse. So you can end your days as a swim horse for kids on the beach. How about that?

HANNIBAL

CGI: Thanks Shortnin'. It's a lot better than going with you on a wild goose chase where I'd probably die of thirst.

ANTOINE regards HANNIBAL

ANTOINE

I will make Steak Tartare of him.

HANNIBAL kicks out at ANTOINE narrowly missing him.

HANNIBAL

Damn fancy boy.

LASSETER

Now boys. Let's just depart as friends.

ANTOINE hisses at HANNIBAL who launches a kick at him.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD TO ARALUEN -- AFTERNOON

ANTOINE is dressed extravagantly and LASSETER is sitting in the sidecar.

Lasseter is writing down names - Prime Minister Lasseter? King Lasseter the First? He regards ANTOINE.

LASSETER

By the way did you get a farewell from the Hotel staff and guests?

ANTOINE

In short no. But I left them one.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRIGHTON HOTEL WOLLONGONG HARBOR -- EVENING

Food is on the table but Staff and guests are vomiting everywhere.

CUT TO:

EXT. FULL SHOT MAIN STREET ARALUEN -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER and ANTOINE are arriving at OLIVE MAY'S boarding house. Two miners regard ANTOINE and make disparaging remarks like -

MINER 1
Sissy!

MINER 2
Nancy boy.

ANTOINE pulls out a Pearl handled ladies revolver and shoots them in the toes.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT

EXT. MAIN STREET ARALUEN -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER tells ANTOINE to pull over next to a house with a sign - "Miss Olive May's Boarding house for respectable Miners". Lasseter hops off and runs into the house. OLIVE MAY is mending a dress. She also has a number of books in an exquisite Edwardian bookcase.

OLIVE MAY
Shortnin' You came back!

LASSETER
Did you think I wouldn't?

OLIVE MAY
There's no knowing with you.

They embrace.

LASSETER
I'm only stopping for supplies.
Tomorrow I'm off to find my reef.

OLIVE MAY
With who?

LASSETER
It's too much for a delicate one
like you. I'll be back right soon.

O/S intense foot stomps are heard. ANTOINE walks in.

LASSETER
Miss Olive May, I present to you
Executive Chef Antoine Professor of
cuisine and beauty.

ANTOINE bows and presents her with a golden lily.

ANTOINE
For the most beautiful one.

OLIVE MAY
Oh my.

LASSETER
Olive May, Antoine is the only man
in the world who can sniff out
gold.

OLIVE MAY
Come on now!

ANTOINE sniffs and goes to her bodice.

ANTOINE
I smell gold.

OLIVE MAY
You cad.

LASSETER
What you hiding?

OLIVE MAY takes out a bag of gold.

OLIVE MAY
I thought it the best place.

LASSETER
When we come back you'll have to
find a bank vault.

OLIVE MAY
Talking of that I bought this
bookcase from a broke prospector.
I's the real thing. Edwardian.

LASSETER
Must be worth a fortune!

OLIVE MAY
It is. It can be our little nest
egg if it all goes wrong.

LASSETER
Nothing will go wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. ARALUEN BOARDING HOUSE -- NIGHT

LASSETER and OLIVE MAY lie in bed. He is in a serious mode.

LASSETER
(beat)
Not many people believe in Me. In fact many laugh at me. Makes me believe in myself even more. It's time to find my reef.

OLIVE MAY
I always believe in you.

LASSETER
You sure do. With Antoine I may very well do it.

OLIVE MAY
And maybe the sun will kill you or make you crazy like last time.

LASSETER
Olive May the world and cemeteries are full of people who dream and drift through life and no one remembers them. I don't want to be one of them.

OLIVE MAY
Shortnin' I can't bear to see you go again. Just leave whilst I am sleeping.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET ARALUEN -- MORNING

LASSETER and ANTOINE leave on the motorcycle which is full of supplies. ANTOINE jumps off.

ANTOINE
One moment.

CUT TO:

INT. ARALUEN BOARDING HOUSE -- MORNING

ANTOINE kisses OLIVE MAYS hand.

ANTOINE

My dearest treasure should you ever wish to find me just send a letter to Paris simply addressed to "Antoine Professor of Beauty." It will find me.

OLIVE MAY cries and ANTOINE gathers some tears in a little bottle.

DISSOLVE TO:

CGI: A MAP OF AUSTRALIA WITH A LINE STARTING AT ARALUEN AND GOING TOWARDS CARNARVON IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA SHOWING THEIR WAY TO THE REEF.

ANTOINE V/O

We had a few adventures on the way but not much to do with me so it is not worth showing.

CUT TO

EXT. CARNARVON HOTEL -- DAY

Lasseter and Antoine pull up and sniff the air.

ANTOINE

Nothing.

LASSETER

It's seven hundred miles to the east.

ANTOINE

Antoine can just smell it.

LASSETER

I can smell a beer.

CUT TO:

INT. CARNARVON HOTEL -- DAY

An old prosecutor is looking at LASSETER and shaking his head. ANTOINE is busy brushing his hair in a mirror and smiling at his coiffure.

PROSECTOR
You'd be better using a string of
camels or horses.

LASSETER
Don't have much luck with horses.
And camels make me go crazy.

PROSECTOR
The heat son, the heat. It's
called the Devil's heat. A
motorcycle will blow.

LASSETER
I know.

ANTOINE
Never!

LASSETER
The old boy might be right.

ANTOINE
Antoine never rides horses.

LASSETER
Come on! Don't quit now.

PROSECTOR
You can keep it in my shed.

ANTOINE
Shed? Never!

PROSECTOR
Nothing in there but fishing gear.

ANTOINE
Merci then. Time to go.

LASSETER
Camels or Horses?

PROSECTOR
Camels will see you come back.

CUT TO:

INT. CARNARVON HOTEL -- DAY

LASSETER and ANTOINE are preparing to leave. A DRUNK takes
exception to Antoine's clothes.

DRUNK
Damn Sissy boy.

ANTOINE slaps him across the face with his gloves.

ANTOINE
Antoine challenges you to a duel.

The Drunk whacks Antoine on the nose.

LASSETER
No! Anywhere but there!

LASSETER jumps the drunk and an all in brawl occurs stopped only by ANTOINE holding his ladies revolver to the stock of beer barrels.

ANTOINE
Attention animals! Attention animals!

ANTOINE shoots six shots into the barrels and beer flows all over the floor.

ANTOINE
It is only drink for the scum! I prefer Champagne nectar for the superior.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER and ANTOINE slowly travel amongst red dirt, mulga bush and spinifax.

LASSETER
How's the snout?

ANTOINE
It will never be the same.

LASSETER
Oh yes it will. We need it.

As sudden sand storm crops up. From a distance a snorting camel is heard.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
Maybe we got company. And, I reckon the reefs around here.

HARDING appears through the storm.

HANRDING
What did you say boy?

LASSETER
Well the ghost reappears.

HARDING
Where's the Ghan?

LASSETER
Made his money and left.

HARDING
I can help.

LASSETER
Maybe.

HARDING pats his saddle and brings out a sextant and a compass. He regards ANTOINE.

HARDING
Got the right tools. Who's the flop?

ANTOINE
Executive Chef Antoine, professor of beauty and sniffer of Gold.

HARDING
Sniffer?

LASSETER
Look boys let's just get on with it. Plenty for everyone.

HARDING
Lets go.

LASSETER
Where?

ANTOINE sniffs loudly.

ANTOINE
This way.

ANTOINE leads the charge as the sky and surrounds are bathed in a haze of Gold.

CUT TO:

EXT. LASSETER'S REEF -- DAY

LASSETER
Told you it was true!

ANTOINE
Antoine will create a culinary
empire.

HARDING
What?

LASSETER
It must be a hundred miles long,

HARDING
First lets check nobody else is
around.

HARDING rides off. LASSETER hugs ANTOINE and twists his
nose.

LASSETER
Antoine your nose is a genius!

ANTOINE
And Antoine?

LASSETER
I'll be Prime Minister by
Christmas.

HARDING returns.

HARDING
Nobody. Let's stake out a claim.

HARDING brings his sextant and compass and regards the sun.

HARDING (CONT'D)
Hey dreamer! Help me.

They perform some measurements.

HARDING (CONT'D)
What is the exact time? I make it
twelve midday.

LASSETER
Twelve midday.

ANTOINE
Twelve thirty.

HARDING
You sure your not fast?

ANTOINE
Antoine is exact.

HARDING
Never had a problem with my watch.

LASSETER
Me either. Sorry Antoine.

ANTOINE
This watch is German. It is always exact unlike your English watches.

LASSETER
Look let's not argue now. We'll go back to Carnarvon and get a miners party together.

CUT TO

FULL SHOT- CARNARVON -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is riding in the sidecar and ANTOINE accelerates to the Hotel where HARDING is sitting outside.

LASSETER
(regards watch)
I make it two PM.

HARDING
Me too.

ANTOINE
Two thirty.

ANTOINE points to the town clock. It says two thirty.

LASSETER
We'll ask someone.

An old drunk walks by.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
Got the time boss?

OLD MAN
Two thirty. Time for a beer.

An old lady walks by.

OLD LADY

Two thirty. Time for scones and
tea.

A Priest walks by.

LASSETER

This one we can trust.

PRIEST

Two thirty my Son. Time for
Confession.

LASSETER

Okay boys let's do some maths.

They work out the measurements and LASSETER falls down as if
dead.

LASSETER (CONT'D)

According to these the reef lies
one thousand miles east of here.

HARDING

That's in the middle of the Indian
Ocean.

LASSETER

Our Compasses varies 21 and a
quarter degrees to the east.

ANTOINE sniffs.

HARDING

Shut up or I'll cut that snout
right off your grinning face.

LASSETER

Who's going to gamble on a group of
men with slow watches?

LASSETER regards HARDING and his saddle bag. It glitters
with Gold.

HARDING

Took some to help out my sick
Daddy.

LASSETER looks at ANTOINE. His bag glitters.

ANTOINE

For a little cafe.

LASSETER
Damn thieves both of you.

HARDING kicks open LASSETER's bag. Some nuggets fall out.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
Just to prove it to myself.

HARDING
Tell you what. Reckon I got enough
here to have a nice little life.
Might shake hands and move on.

LASSETER
If that's what you want.

HARDING and LASSETER shake hands. HARDING regards ANTOINE

HARDING
Shake hands?

ANTOINE puts on his gloves.

HARDING (CONT'D)
Okay.

They shake and HARDING mounts his Horse and gallops off.

LASSETER
Trust him?

ANTOINE
I shall poison him slowly with a
dish of Emu surprise.

LASSETER
What you going to do?

ANTOINE
Go overseas and open up a
restaurant in Paris for a while.

LASSETER
Well you earned it. Me, well I
can't go back to Olive May empty
handed.

ANTOINE
Try again.

LASSETER
 Might get some proper education on
 this matter. I'm only twenty
 three.

ANTOINE takes off his gloves and shakes LASSETER by the hand.

ANTOINE
 Till we meet again.

ANTOINE starts his motorcycle and rides off into the
 distance. LASSETER just sits down with his head down.

LASSETER
 Well, I wrecked it again.

ANTOINE V/O

I felt terrible and sad. Shortnin' even more so...but things
 soon changed.

CUT TO:

EXT. "HMS POWERFUL" INDIAN OCEAN -- AFTERNOON

Able Seaman LASSETER is tying down provisions in a storm.
 Another Seaman smiles.

SEAMAN
 Tomorrow we'll be in Capetown.
 Girls, drink and fun.

LASSETER
 Do they have mines and gold in
 South Africa?

SEAMAN
 Sure. Diamonds, gold and rubies
 for miles.

LASSETER
 Already knew. Just testing a
 monkey like you.

The SEAMAN good naturedly punches LASSETER

LASSETER (CONT'D)
 Not so hard!

CUT TO

FULL SHOT CAPETOWN HARBOR -- MORNING

The gang of Sailors disembark and are about to hit town.

CUT TO

FULL SHOT. CAPETOWN STREET -- DAY

LASSETER pokes the driver in the back.

LASSETER

Let me off here. Boy's I'll catch
you later.

They jeer him and LASSETER walks along the busy thoroughfare.
He sees a shop with a sign Mining Supplies and enters.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUPPLY STORE -- MORNING

The owner looks at him.

OWNER

What are you after?

LASSETER

Sir, I'll be brief. I found a reef
back home in Australia and I'm
looking for a way to find it again.
Technical like.

OWNER

Best to read these books here. How
long you been in the Navy?

LASSETER

Just about to finish.

OWNER

Tell you what. You can stay here
and read to your heart's content.
I'll try to answer your questions.

LASSETER

Thank you Sir.

CGI: LASSETER devouring the books and the OWNER talking to
him.

OWNER

If you ever back this way call in
and I'll give you a job.

They shake hands.

LASSETER

Thank you Sir but I got a reef to find.

SUDDENLY the White Devil appears on his shoulder.

WHITE DEVIL

Haven't you forgotten someone?

CUT TO:

EXT. ARALUEN BOARDING HOUSE -- DAY

OLIVE MAY walks to the mailbox. She is pregnant.

There is no mail and tears stream down her face. A woman goes by.

WOMAN

He'll be back.

OLIVE MAY

I think he's dead.

WOMAN

Come to the dance with me tonight?

OLIVE MAY

How can a pregnant girl dance the fox-trot?

CUT TO

EXT. LONDON PORT -- DAY

"HMS Powerful" is docked. LASSETER and the sailors are smiling.

LASSETER

We have only one day may as well go drinking.

SEAMAN

That's the go. Next week we'll be in America.

LASSETER

I want to see California.

SEAMAN

Gold!

LASSETER
Got me an idea.

SEAMAN
Never seen Gold.

LASSETER
Me either.

CUT TO:

INT. BEAT UP BAR -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is concentrating on a book he stole from the Capetown store. There is a group of tough looking foreign men drinking next to him. He smiles and one smiles back.

LASSETER
Where you from?

The man reply's in broken English.

MAN
Russia.

LASSETER
Are you sailors?

MAN
Revolutionaries. We are off to London for the Communist Convention.

LASSETER
I'm just a seaman. Politics does not interest me.

LASSETER observes a man with piercing eyes looking at him. The man smiles. LASSETER motions to him if he wants a drink. The man nods.

MAN
My friend says you have eyes that look into the future. You have a dream.

LASSETER
Have to have one of you want to survive. What's his name?

The man smiles.

MAN

We call him Stalin.

The man goes to buy some drinks. LASSETER observes STALIN who pretends to shoot the other man with his finger. STALIN looks at LASSETER who shakes.

LASSETER

(to himself)

Wonder if this Stalin will ever amount to anything? He gives me the shivers.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT NEW YORK -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is stunned by the developing skyscrapers and size of the City. He walks along and sees an advertisement.

THE ADVERTISEMENT READS: "FOR A WEEK ONLY, MR. HENRY FORD INTRODUCES HIS AUTOMOBILE FOR EVERYBODY. FREE ADMISSION. BE EARLY."

CUT TO:

INT- AUDITORIUM -- EVENING

LASSETER is sitting down and listening to HENRY FORD. He is leaning on a Model T prototype.

FORD

Mr Thomas Edison believed in me.
And I believe in the American dream
and it's people. If money is your
hope for independence you will
never have it. The only real
security that a man will have in
this world is a reserve of
knowledge, experience, and ability.
I'm going to democratize the
automobile. It's called the Model
T!

When I'm through, everybody will be able to afford one, and about everybody will have one as long as you like the color in black.

People stand and clap. LASSETER is mesmerized by Henry Ford's personality. NELLIE MELBA is in the audience and spies LASSETER.

NELLIE

Shortnin'

LASSETER

Nellie!

They embrace.

NELLIE

What are you doing here?

LASSETER

I saw an advertisement about
Automobiles down at the wharves.

NELLIE

Mr Ford is the one to meet! His
Model T will revolutionize the
world. Where's Olive May?

LASSETER

(sheepishly)

Well, to tell the truth we have had
a little argument.

NELLIE

You're a fool if you let her go.

LASSETER

Don't worry we're still together.

NELLIE

Nobody stays together when they're
overseas. I should know.

HENRY FORD comes over and offers his hand to LASSETER.

FORD

When can I deliver your model T?

LASSETER

Yesterday.

FORD

I like you already son. What is
your name?

LASSETER

Harold Lasseter Sir.

NELLIE

We met in Australia. Shortnin' and
his girl rescued me from a cad.

FORD
Australia? It's a wild country
just like America. Ideal for the
Ford automobile.

LASSETER
Mr Ford, I've invented a multi
level car park. It saves space.

FORD
(clearly impressed)
Can you sell?

NELLIE
He can sell anything. In fact he
found a Gold reef. Whoops, sorry.

LASSETER
Don't worry. It's two hundred
miles long.

FORD
How would you like to set up Ford
in Australia for me? It'll make
you very wealthy.

LASSETER
Well...

FORD
It's a quick dream fulfilled.

LASSETER
Mr Ford I'd rather concentrate on
finding my reef again. Maybe then
I'll take up your offer.

FORD
No time like now.

LASSETER
Would you like to invest in my
reef? You too would be very
wealthy.

FORD
How long did you say it was?

LASSETER
Ten miles minimum.

FORD
Have you heard of Thomas Edison?

LASSETER
He's the inventor.

FORD
He told me if you have something
nobody else has and it can sell in
volume you're on your way.

LASSETER
My gold's in volume.

FORD
I'll give you till tomorrow Mr
Lasseter. Please excuse me I have
to meet some important people.

NELLIE
Take this dream.

LASSETER
I have to have my own dream Nellie.

NELLIE
By the way did you arrive here by
aeroplane?

LASSETER
Sure did. So, now you'll have to
do a somersault whilst singing.

NELLIE
I read that they will start next
decade.

LASSETER
Could be very well right.

NELLIE
Next week Henry is trying to break
the land speed record on ice.
It'll do wonders for publicity.
Come along?

LASSETER
Sure, see you all there.

NELLIE leaves and sings an aria. An attractive waitress
offers LASSETER a drink.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
What's your name?

WAITRESS
Elizabeth Scott.

LASSETER
Glad to meet you Miss Scott.

WAITRESS
What make you think it's Miss?

LASSETER smiles and the WHITE and BLACK DEVILS appear on his shoulder.

WHITE DEVIL
Don't do it son.

BLACK DEVIL
Forget Olive May she's probably
married a Gold Prosector by now.

WHITE DEVIL
She's probably in bed right now
crying her eyes out for you to
return.

BLACK DEVIL
Plenty of fish in the sea.

WHITE DEVIL pushes off the BLACK DEVIL.

CUT TO:

INT. ARALUEN BOARDING HOUSE -- NIGHT

A huge drunken boarder WARTH in Wellington boots is stumbling down the hallway yodeling. He stops outside a door and kicks it in. OLIVE MAY is sitting there shocked.

WARTH
Where's my bloody dinner?

OLIVE MAY
I made it three hours ago you
drunkard.

WARTH
Make it again!

He vomits and OLIVE MAY hits him with a gold prospectors pan.

OLIVE MAY
Get the hell out of my house and
don't come back!

WARTH
I'll kill you!

He tackles her and she grabs a revolver from her pocket.

 OLIVE MAY
I'll kill you!

 WARTH
I'm leavin' and never comin' back.

 OLIVE MAY
Good!

 WARTH
You'll be sorry letting me go.

 OLIVE MAY
I've been sorry ever since I've
been here.

WARTH leaves and OLIVE MAY sits down, pours a huge brandy and sobs.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARALUEN BOARDING HOUSE -- DAY

A Policeman knocks on her door.

 OLIVE MAY
Yes Officer?

 OFFICER
Miss Olive May do you know a
Mathias Warth?

 OLIVE MAY
No.

 OFFICER
A Marthias Warth was found floating
in the creek.

 OLIVE MAY
So?

 OFFICER
Floating face down.

He points to a cart where a body is covered with only dirty black boots protruding.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
He has your house down as a residence.

OLIVE MAY
My God I only knew him as The yodeler. Always yodeling. He came here drunk, bashed down my door and hit me.

OFFICER
Not your fault ma'am.

OLIVE MAY
Does he have any kin?

OFFICER
None that we can find.

OLIVE MAY
If you can't find anyone I'll pay for his burial.

OFFICER
You don't have to do that. The Govt will pay for a paupers funeral.

OLIVE MAY
It won't be the first time. You have to have a little bit of dignity even in death.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARALUEN BOARDING HOUSE -- NIGHT

OLIVE MAY is in bed doing her accounts.

OLIVE MAY
Shortnin' please come back.
There's something you must know.

She pays her growing stomach.

CUT TO:

INT. DUMP ROOM NEW YORK -- NIGHT

LASSETER and the WAITRESS are embracing.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT NEW YORK -- DAY

A series of sepia montages portray LASSETER in the big city.

Coney Island.

Brooklyn Bridge.

Central Park.

City skyscrapers.

Fifth avenue.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE ST CLAIR -- DAY

Henry Ford tries for a land speed record run on the ice of Lake St. Clair during the winter. This happened on Jan. 12, 1904, when Ford and Huff set a flying-mile record - timed and sanctioned by the AAA - of 91.37 mph. By this time, the car was being referred to variously as the "new 999" or the "Red Devil 999" in newspapers and advertising.

Ford's record was broken by William K. Vanderbilt at Ormond Beach, Fla., less than a month later, but that was plenty of time to generate widespread publicity for Ford and his new company. Henry Ford gets out of the car to admirers and later goes to LASSETER who wildly congratulates him.

FORD

Well have you thought out my offer?

LASSETER

Yes and I thank you for it. But, like you I must follow my own dream.

FORD

Fair enough Son but as of tomorrow I'll be finding somebody to go to Australia and set up Ford there.

LASSETER

I understand that.

FORD observes LASSETER keenly.

FORD

I assure you that you and I will meet again.

LASSETER

I hope so Maybe I'll be riding in
one of them Model T's!

FORD

Give me a year or two and it'll be
true.

LASSETER

I reckon they will be so fast that
in the cities they'll have to put
in road speed bumps.

FORD

Never!

NELLIE hugs LASSETER.

NELLIE

Well, it's goodbye again.

LASSETER

We'll meet again.

NELLIE

Look after him Florence.

FLORENCE

I will.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK WEDDING CHAPEL -- DAY

LASSETER and FLORENCE are married.

ANTOINE V/O

I don't know what happened to shortnin' but he just
completely forgot about Olive May. Maybe it was just a young
thing. Even the Gold reef dream was gone.

CUT TO

EXT. NIAGARA FALLS -- DAY

LASSETER and FLORENCE are walking around the falls.

LASSETER

What a place for a honeymoon!

FLORENCE

It's just so beautiful and natural.

LASSETER

Florence, I'm not an impulsive man by nature but when I saw you I knew you were the one.

FLORENCE

I did too. But I'm worried.

LASSETER

About what?

FLORENCE

I don't have much to offer you. What we had is pretty much in trouble.

LASSETER

Well let me see if I can fix it.

FLORENCE

You don't have to. Maybe I'll be able to get rid of the hired help.

LASSETER

Florence I never did have a family and it gave me deep sorrow and pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. A TRAIN IS RUSHING PAST RURAL KANSAS -- AFTERNOON

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT. KANSAS FARM -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER and FLORENCE are in a taxi that drives them up the path to an old dilapidated farm.

CUT TO:

INT. KANSAS FARMHOUSE -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is introduced to FLORENCE'S Mother who is bedridden.

LASSETER

Please to meet your acquaintance
mama.

GRANDMOTHER

(coughs)
Likewise.

FLORENCE

We have had this farm for generations, since dad has gone it's a bit too much now.

LASSETER

Well I'll give it a go. I know about farms from Australia.

CUT TO:

INT. KANSAS FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

A tremendous country dinner has been prepared. LASSETER is about to wolf it down when FLORENCE stops him.

FLORENCE

Grace first. "Lord thank you for your gifts that we are about to receive amen."

LASSETER woofs it all down to the amazement of FLORENCE.

LASSETER

Man's got to have an appetite if he's going to work on a far.

ANGLE ON

EXT. KANSAS FARMHOUSE -- MORNING

Montage of LASSETER at work on the farm.

Fixing fences.

Mending a barn.

Putting Potatoes in a sack.

Chasing cows.

Sitting under a tree exhausted enjoying lunch.

ANTOINE V/O

It was like shortnin' finally found a family and a real job. His deep sorrow gave way to happiness and real toil. But as usual time would darken it.

CUT TO:

INT. KANSAS FARMHOUSE -- DAY

FLORENCE gives birth to a baby girl.

LASSETER
I'll call her Ruby!

CUT TO:

INT. KANSAS FARMHOUSE -- DAY
FLORENCE gives birth to a baby boy.

LASSETER
I'll call him Arthur!

CUT TO:

INT. KANSAS FARMHOUSE -- AFTERNOON
ARTHUR is dead and covered up. LASSETER is crying.

CUT TO:

EXT. KANSAS FARMHOUSE -- DAY
ARTHUR is buried.

LASSETER
He was only nine days old.

CUT TO:

EXT. INT- AUDITORIUM -- DAY
The farmhouse is in pristine condition and has a 'For Sale'
sign on it.

ANTOINE V/O
I didn't hold it against him. He
fixed the place up like new. After
Arthur died Grandma did too. I
don't know if Shortnin' thought his
past had caught up with him or he
just had to get away with Florence
to somewhere else.

CUT TO

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR -- AFTERNOON
LASSETER and FLORENCE and Ruby are about to get on board the
SS Arabic for Australia.

LASSETER
It's our best chance.

FLORENCE

Is it?

LASSETER

You know it is. I'll find my reef
and we'll be rich.

FLORENCE

All I want is some happiness.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS -- EVENING

A busy restaurant with distinguished clients.

ANTOINE V/O

A little of what happened to me
after leaving Shortnin' and
Australia. How was I to use my
intelligence, brilliance and
culture?

ANTOINE observes the presentation of his cuisine and stamps
his feet.

ANTOINE

Your views?

They smile with approval.

CGI: A series of dishes and customers.

ANTOINE V/O

I created Lobster Thermidor, Beef
Bourgeois and Steak Josephine Later
to be called Steak Diane for the
masses.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS CHAMPS ELLYESS -- AFTERNOON

ANTOINE dressed in Top hat cane and lavish coat and parades
along the famous elegant avenue and all around him bow and
sape to him.

CUT TO:

INT. PARIS RESTAURANT -- EVENING

ANTOINE is cooking in pink shorts with his underlings amazed.

ANTOINE V/O

I was the first to cook in shorts because of the heat and use copper pots. I even became Detective Antoine.

CUT TO

FULL SHOT PARIS RESTAURANT KITCHEN -- EVENING

CGI: Hundreds of Chickens are stored, quickly they disappear.

Antoine is waving good-bye to Chefs in their long hats.

ANTOINE V/O

All over Paris we were running out of Coq au vin. Tempers were running high.

ANTOINE is tasting some soup. He spits it out and throws a pot at the sous Chef.

ANTOINE

Fit only for the dead!

The pot misses the sous chef and hits a passing chef on the head. His top hat falls off and on his head are three chickens that fall and roll along the floor. He runs and is tackled.

ANTOINE V/O

It was an organized racquet. And it helped me to create the Chicken Roll. For this heroic feat I was awarded the French medal of culinary honor class one and promoted. And I even invented the short Chefs beret to stop them.

Quick shot of chef throwing out their long hats and placing berets on their heads.

CUT TO:

INT. PARIS PALACE -- NIGHT

The French President and German Chancellor are dining. ANTOINE presents his plat de resistance and stamps his foot next to the German chancellor who looks up at him.

ANTOINE

Sorry, it is a medical condition.

The Chancellor tastes the dish and immediately falls face first into it dead.

ANTOINE V/O

I was accused of poisoning him and starting World War one! Narrowly did I miss the firing squad. I was demoted from Chef to the rich to cook for the scum.

CUT TO:

INT. PARIS SANTE PRISON -- AFTERNOON

ANTOINE is cooking slop and stamps his feet. The prisoners throw the slop at him.

ANTOINE

The professor of beauty to put up with this? No!

CUT TO:

INT. PARIS SANTE PRISON -- AFTERNOON

A poster is thrown under ANTOINE'S cell door. He picks it up and reads. "Attention scum! Prison or the front. You decide!"

CUT TO

EXT. PARIS CHAMPS ELLYESS WAR MOBILIZATION. -- DAY

Crowds of Soldiers are marching. ANTOINE is amongst them.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FRONT -- DAY

Battles are being fought and an ambulance stops to pick up the dead and wounded. ANTOINE steps out with hot soup. He tends to the slightly wounded.

ANTOINE V/O

I was employed at my suggestion as angel of cuisine. A little hot onion soup works wonders.

Another ambulance arrives and a burly man steps out.

MAN

Anything I cab do?

ANTOINE

Thank you all is being done.

The man shakes Antoine's hand.

MAN

Ernest Hemingway. Writer to be.

ANTOINE

Antoine, Professor of cuisine. In better times I could have told you a tale of the search for a fabulous Gold reef in Australia.

HEMINGWAY

Adventure is for me!

Bullets fly and they drive off.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT THE FRONT -- AFTERNOON

It is Christmas day and French and Germans are eating together.

ANTOINE V/O

Insanity!

A German soldier is woofing down Antoine's onion soup. He replies.

SOLDIER

Das ist gut!

ANTOINE

Of course!

SOLDIER

My name is Adolf Hitler.

ANTOINE V/O

If I only had known. I would have poisoned him there and then and become President of France.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FRONT -- AFTERNOON

ANTOINE is sitting in the ambulance. He takes out a letter and it reads - 'Antoine, Professor of Beauty Paris.'

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARALUEN BOARDING HOUSE -- DAY

OLIVE MAY is sitting in a rocking chair surrounded by children and a man mending a wall.

OLIVE MAY V/O

My dear Antoine, how cruel this war is. I have never seen Shortnin' and wonder have you? I could not wait I met a kindly man, a bricklayer who gave me four wonderful children.

The oldest boy smiles and hoists a young girl on his shoulders and says.

BOY

Madeline I'll take you to the store and buy you a doll for your birthday.

He strides off down the road with her.

OLIVE MAY V/O

The oldest Roy, is Shortnin's but he'll never know I suppose. Oh, Antoine if we could all meet again and find that blasted gold reef. Always Olive May.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE FRONT -- DAY

ANTOINE is giving soup to some soldiers. He hears moaning.

He gently touches a young soldier.

ANTOINE

Help is on the way.

The soldier tries to get something from his pocket. ANTOINE helps him. It is a photo. It is Olive MAY and her family. ANTOINE is in tears.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)
Who are you?

SOLDIER
Corporal Roy Belgrove Australia.

ROY dies and ANTOINE cradles him in his arms.

ANTOINE V/O
A dead boy in the mud in a foreign
land? A boy who's mother I knew?
Why couldn't I have told him that
last comfort? After the "Great
War" had ended Australia lost it's
innocence and became a more mature
nation. Not so Shortnin'.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM NSW -- DAY

A montage of LASSETER at work.

Tending to a large vegetable garden.

Working on a road gang.

Mending fences with a young lady smiling admirably at him.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM NSW -- AFTERNOON

Men are bringing their Horses to Lasseter he pockets some
pound notes.

LASSETER
Yes Sir, agistment is the answer.
You always need a spare horse to
come back too. Never know when the
other one's going to go lame.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN LOADING RAMP -- DAY

LASSETER is busy with some men loading horses on a cattle
boat.

LASSETER
How many today boys?

MAN

Forty.

LASSETER

A tidy sum indeed to be made.
Well, horses it's off to Sydney
with you.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN -- AFTERNOON

The cattle boat is making it's way in rough seas towards
Sydney.

CUT TO:

EXT. CIRCULAR QUAY -- MORNING

LASSETER is being paid by some men.

CUT TO:

INT. SYDNEY HOTEL -- AFTERNOON

A dapperly dressed LASSETER is talking to an attractive woman
and they leave arm in arm.

CUT TO:

INT. SYDNEY HOTEL -- EVENING

LASSETER in a different Hotel does exactly the same thing.

ANTOINE V/O

Damn boy had no shame. Florence
and Ruby were left on that farm and
he never went back.

(Sniffs)

He even convinced more greedy fools
to find that reef. They had a good
time.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

A montage of sepia shots of the prosectors fate.

Dead in the desert heat.

Falling down ravines to their death.

Speared by Aborigines.

Being blown up by short fuses.

Killing each other with greed.

ANTOINE V/O

Mind you he did try to educate himself and Australia.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY LIBRARY -- DAY

LASSETER is reading books and starts to write a letter.

" My Dear Prime Minister, We need to cut ties with Great Britain. She can never defend her empire from so far away and I predict that Japan our ally will become our enemy and one day invade us. We must turn towards the United States."

He writes another:

"Dear Chief engineer, I propose and submit my design for an arched bridge for Sydney Harbor and not a flat one as is planned.

As Sydney is now full of traffic I suggest speed humps to slow cars down and multi level car parks to store them."

ANTOINE V/O

Trouble was it all came true and there was know way Shortnin' could prove a thing. It had to come down to finding that blasted Gold reef once and for all. This is how I found out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 1930 PARIS RITZ HOTEL BAR -- AFTERNOON

ANTOINE is finishing a bottle of Dom. The bar is empty and he has a folded newspaper next to him. Outside argumentative voices are heard.

ANTOINE

Felix, he must not be let in!

FELIX

Not in this establishment
Professor.

ANTOINE

You know my name.

FELIX

Everyone knows you. Since the financial crash they allow anybody who can talk their way in.

ANTOINE

No talking! Take them immediately to the wall for shooting.

The door flies open and a large man stumbles in. He sees ANTOINE,

MAN

Professor! It's Earnest Hemingway.

ANTOINE is amazed.

ANTOINE

You must write my biography.

HEMINGWAY

I'm strictly fiction.

ANTOINE

Felix, two magnums of Dom.

HEMINGWAY sits down and looks around.

HEMINGWAY

Is the depression this bad? I can remember not so long ago you couldn't get in for the crowds.

ANTOINE

Earnest, I only have quarter the number of cafes.

HEMINGWAY

The depression will go. Always does.

ANTOINE

To think all those years ago we were Ambulance officers. All of those dear dead boys.

ANTOINE cries.

HEMINGWAY

That is why we must go on. Live our lives for them never let evil win.

CGI: ANTOINE and HEMINGWAY drinking through ten bottles of DOM. HEMINGWAY falls to the floor. ANTOINE starts to sniff uncontrollably. He looks at the newspaper.

ANTOINE
All depression.

He is about to join HEMINGWAY on the floor when the newspaper mysteriously blows open to a headline reading - "EXPEDITION IN AUSTRALIA TO FIND WORLD'S BIGGEST GOLD REEF" and a photo of LASSETER.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)
Shortnin' you need me.

ANTOINE falls unconscious to the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARALUEN MAIN ROAD -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is driving up the road. He stops gets out and looks around trying to remember the past.

CUT TO:

INT. ARALUEN MAIN ROAD -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is the only one at the bar.

LASSETER
Where is everybody?

BARMAN
No one here anymore. Gold's all dredged out. People are growing orchards now.

LASSETER
I remember this place when it was roaring.

BARMAN
(laughs)
People have told me great tales.

LASSETER
Listen there was once a boarding house here.
(Nervous pause)
Olive May's?

BARMAN
Still here.

Lasseter drops his glass.

BARMAN (CONT'D)
Get you another one...It's moved to
92 Bradley street, it's a private
home now.

LASSETER
I see.

BARMAN
Wouldn't go there today. Heard the
Lady has some trouble.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ARALUEN BOARDING HOUSE -- NIGHT

THOMAS her husband, and OLIVE MAY are sitting around the
kitchen table.

THOMAS
No more boarders, no more gold.

OLIVE MAY
I know.

THOMAS
Maybe we should go to Sydney like
the others?

OLIVE MAY
Let's stay here. We'll see it
through. I can make dresses again.

The light globe breaks.

THOMAS
I'll just fix it.

THOMAS climbs to the table top, puts in the globe and slips
falling heavily to the floor cutting his head. OLIVE MAY
rushes to him.

THOMAS
I'm okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARALUEN MAIN ROAD -- DAY

THOMAS is walking home with some groceries. He is stumbling from a brain hemorrhage. Two women walk by.

WOMAN

Disgusting it is. Drunk at midday.

CUT TO:

INT. ARALUEN BOARDING HOUSE -- DAY

THOMAS is eating with OLIVE MAY and their children. He looks very sick. THOMAS smiles.

THOMAS

You are all so...

He drops dead.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT ARALUEN MAIN ROAD -- EVENING

It is foggy and rainy. OLIVE MAY is leading her children to the funeral parlor like a mother goose leading her flock. Nobody offers her a lift.

From the hotel window LASSETER looks on shaking and crying in guilty grief.

CUT TO:

ARALUEN HOTEL ROOM -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is about to hang himself from a tree.

ANTOINE V/O

He told me that it was his fault.
If he stayed with her nothing would
have happened. Roy would not have
died or Thomas. He did not have
the courage to face her.

LASSETER jumps off the chair but it jams and he is just suspended in mid air.

ANTOINE V/O (CONT'D)

He told me it was a sign to finally find that blasted gold reef and make amends to all he had hurt and there were many. He was helped along by

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEW YORK WALL STREET 1929 -- DAY

The Stock Exchange falls.

ANTOINE V/O

In the popular imagination the Great Depression was started by the "Crash of 1929" also known as the Black Tuesday, share prices on Wall Street collapsed catastrophically, setting off a chain of bankruptcies and defaults that quickly spread overseas. The events in the United States were the final shock in a worldwide depression, which put hundreds of millions out of work across the capitalist world throughout the 1930s.

ANGLE ON

EXT. NEW YORK STREET -- DAY

A shabbily dressed young man declares -

MAN

Brother, can you spare a dime?

A montage of images.

Empty heavy industry.

Families on the road looking for work.

Soup Kitchens.

ANTOINE V/O

In Australia it was just as bad.

EXT. ROAD TO MELBOURNE -- DAY

Men are trying to hitch a ride with a cardboard suitcase and a cardboard sign around their necks "Will do any work."

CUT TO:

INT. 1930 HAMPTON HOTEL, CBD SYDNEY -- AFTERNOON

LASSETER is drinking with new found mates and observes a young woman smiling at him. He suddenly puts his beer down and walks outside.

LASSETER
 (to himself)
 Not this time. Last chance.

CUT TO:

EXT. SYDNEY GEORGE STREET BUILDING -- DAY

Lasseter is looking at a sign that says "AUSTRALIAN WORKERS UNION" third floor.

LASSETER
 (to himself)
 You can do it. You have done it to other fools before. These ones are just bigger.

CGI: The White and Black Devils appear.

WHITE DEVIL
 Don't do this to the country.

BLACK DEVIL
 You're telling the truth. What's better than helping out your country and yourself at the same time?

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTRALIAN WORKER UNION OFFICE -- DAY

LASSETER approaches the secretary with all his charm.

LASSETER
 Good Afternoon Miss. Mr Harold Lasseter Esquire for Mr Bailey.
 (Pause)
 I have a two o'clock appointment.

SECRETARY
 Have a seat Mr Lasseter.

LASSETER
 Don't mind if I do. I've traveled five thousand miles to meet him.

SECRETARY

My God that far? Would you like a cup of teas and some biscuits?

LASSETER

Thank you kindly Miss.

SECRETARY

My names Madelaine.

LASSETER

That's them most beautiful name I have ever heard.

The door opens and out comes JOHN BAILEY a big gruff yet astute looking man wearing shirt suspenders.

BAILEY

Miss Madeline we seem to have run out of Tea.

He observes LASSETER.

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Hello.

LASSETER rushes over to him and offers his hand.

LASSETER

I have a proposition for you Mr Bailey it'll make Australia the richest nation in the world.

Bailey shakes his hand and shows him to the office.

BAILEY

(winks)

Madelaine, we need tea straight away.

INT. BAILEYS OFFICE -- DAY

BAILEY tells LASSETER to sit down and he then sits behind his desk.

BAILEY

That tea will refresh you.

LASSETER

I'm sure it will.

BAILEY

Now how do we save this great
country?

The door opens and MADELINE bring in beer.

BAILEY

Our special name for tea.
Sometimes we have them shirker,
prissy types and we do indeed give
them tea.

LASSETER and BAILEY open the bottles and toast.

LASSETER

Well I've discovered and pegged the
claim for a gold reef's that's ten
miles long. It's about five
hundred miles west of Alice
Springs. In fact I kept a bit go
gold dust to show you.

BAILEY leans forward from his chair.

BAILEY

I'm listening.

CGI: Accelerated time Of Lasseter telling Bailey his yarn.
Bailey and Lasseter are now quite drunk.

BAILEY

I'll tell you what. I'll do a bit
of investigation on mining records.
Then we might find a company. We
don't want may blunders. Come back
in a fortnight.

LASSETER is overjoyed and as he is about to leave replies.

LASSETER

We will go down in History.

LASSETER leaves and BAILEY looks at his appointment book.

BAILEY

Well how about that? He never even
had an appointment.

CUT TO:

INT. BAILEYS OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

A fortnight later. The office is full of men. LASSETER is smiling.

BAILEY

Lasseter, we'll be delighted to start an expedition. Looks like you are telling the truth.

LASSETER

(putting his hat to his chest)

I've never told a long one in my life.

The men cheer and drink beer and whisky.

BAILEY

Well call it Cage.
The Central Australian Gold
Exploration Company. Boys let's
first settle on shares, directors
and how much we need.

CGI: Accelerated time and drinking. A drunkard is mixing Vodka, Pineapple juice and water with gold specks in it.

He drinks it and smiles.

DRUNKARD

I've just created the Lasseter!

Finally a drunken BAILEY declares.

BAILEY

Okay, with a working capital of five thousand pounds and equal shares, this reef will make us the richest union in the world, build cooperatives and rescue people from poverty. Let's get this show on the road.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON HOTEL, CBD SYDNEY -- EVENING

LASSETER is with a young woman and so drunk he can hardly stand. He falls and she and a barman take him upstairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. BANK OF AUSTRALIA SYDNEY -- EVENING

LASSETER leaves an envelope with the Bank Manager.

LASSETER

It's only to be opened on my safe
return or my death.

MANAGER

Yes Mr Lasseter and let's hope it's
when you return. You might wish to
leave some gold with us.

LASSETER

I sure will. Could I possibly use
your phone?

MANAGER

By all means.

The Manager steps outside and closes the door.

Lasseter opens a letter and dials a number.

LASSETER

Nellie? Have I got a way to make
you rich. All you need is two
thousand pounds.

CGI: The white devil appears on his shoulder.

WHITE DEVIL

I give up!

CUT TO:

INT. HENRY FORDS OFFICE -- DAY

FORD is reading a newspaper article headlined.

"Search in Australia to find worlds largest gold reef."

He looks at the accompanying photo and recognizes Lasseter.

HENRY FORD

Well I'll be goddamned if it isn't
that feller I met with Nellie
Melba.

He calls to his Secretary.

FORD

Get me Howard Hughes on the line.

He picks up the receiver as it rings.

FORD (CONT'D)

Howard, I have a proposition to make to you as long as you have a plane we can use, I'll supply the car.

He listens to Hughes and replies.

FORD (CONT'D)

Howard, it's like I said years ago, History is more or less bunk. It's tradition. We don't want tradition. We want to live in the present, and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we make today. And. We'll sot those filthy unionist and communists to sort out.

FORD puts down the phone and calls to his secretary.

FORD (CONT'D)

Miss Fisher call the engineering department and see if they can make me a hot model T like the Red Devil. It has to be suitable for rough terrain. I'm off for an adventure.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS -- DAY

A newspaper crew are busy taking photos of the C.A.G.E. Team. Fred Blakely - Leader. Lasseter. Phillip Taylor- Driver. Micky - Aboriginal Guide. They move to the front of a Thorneycroft, a huge six wheel truck.

Everyone except Micky who seems bemused by the whole thing jostle for the best photo position.

NEWSMAN

Easy boys! We don't want you to perish here!

LASSETER

We'll live on damper bread and meat.

BLAKELY

When we come back it'll be fillet
steak everyday.

LASSETER

I'll try to find Antoine my chef.

NEWSMAN

Okay boys, smile.

A series of sepia shots are taken.

NEWSMAN (CONT'D)

Where's the pilot?

CUT TO

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS SMALL AIRPORT -- DAY

One of the famous planes in the world, a Gypsy Moth bi- plane
is being inspected by Errol Coote the pilot and Charles Ulm
an aviation pioneer.

ULM

You don't want a high compression
job, that's for racing. You need a
working outfit and there's no
better one than a Moth.

COOTE inspects the plane

COOTE

How many are there?

ULM

Over two thousand worldwide. I've
flown her and she has a good turn
of speed and ideal for the job
ahead.

COOTE

Take her for a run?

ULM

Off you go!

ANGLE ON

ALICE SPRINGS SMALL AIRPORT -- DAY

COOTE takes off and starts flying low completing acrobatics.

ULM

Damn brash boy will come a cropper
doing that.

COOTE lands the plane and ULM comes up to him.

ULM (CONT'D)

No speed record need to be beaten.

COOTE jumps out smiling.

COOTE

The boys need the fuselage painted
black with red wings. We'll call
her the Golden Quest.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY -- DAY

The Thorntcroft and other truck are making good way. There is
a bicycle tied to the already overloaded truck. MICKY the
Aboriginal guide is sitting on top of the Thornycroft as a
lookout. All are sweating profusely.

LASSETER

What's the bicycle for?

BLAKELY

If we have to search for water in
trackless country.

LASSETER

We got plenty of water.

BLAKELY

Who's boss here?

LASSETER

We all are.

BLAKELY

(ignores him)

How far away you reckon this reef
is?

LASSETER

About four hundred miles west of
here.

BLAKELY

We gotta watch out for sandy blight. If we all get it we're done for.

TAYLOR the driver turns around

TAYLOR

We gotta watch for spinifex snakes, sand storms, Aborigines, bogs and now sandy blight?

BLAKELY

Ain't a cricket match boys.

LASSETER

Well I heard Micky has the blight.

BLAKELY

What?

Blackely leans out of the truck and looks at MICKY.

BLAKELY (CONT'D)

Micky you got the blight?

MICKY

Yeah Boss, but I can still see for water. See bird and animal tracks real well. Can speak other language too.

BLAKELY

Okay.

MICKY

Got other things to lookout for boss. Plenty of tribes around here. Some good feller, some bad feller.

BLAKELY

Well I got a gun.

MICKY

Gun only good for some boss. Spear, boomerang and nulla nulla quick too.

LASSETER

I got a cure for the blight.

LASSETER brings out a small flask of water.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
Lourdes water. Straight from the
source. Blessed it is.

BLAKELY
Nonsense.

LASSETER
We'll see.

Suddenly there is a thunder crack.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
Told you he's on my side.

BLAKELY
Let's hope he's on all our sides.

CUT TO

FULL SHOT NORTHERN TERRITORY -- AFTERNOON

The sun is burning with intensity and the vastness and
barrenness of the land is overpowering. A group of
Aboriginals observe the expedition Trucks as they lumber
along.

CUT TO

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY -- EVENING

The expedition is camping overnight.

BLAKELY
We are already over six weeks late.
Gotta watch that sun.

LASSETER
I seen it rain for days here.

BLAKELY
When?

LASSETER
During my last three finds.

BLAKELY
Thought it was two?

LASSETER
I meant two.

BLAKELY
Your a bit to shifty for me.

TAYLOR
Listen Coote can you land in rain?

COOTE
Easy! But not sure about stopping
though.

LASSETER
Relax boys. Soon we'll all be rich
beyond our imagination.

BLAKELY
(regards Lasseter)
That's what I'm worried about.

MICKY
Keep quiet. Black feller around.

BLAKELY reaches for his revolver.

MICKY (CONT'D)
Stay still. Just go to sleep.

COOTE
Should all have a gun.

MICKY
They just look boss. Walkabout.
Look for Dingo and Kangaroo.

A group of Aborigines walk past the camp so silently and
closely that the team don't even see them.

CUT TO

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY -- DAY

The trucks have stopped near a creek. All of the crew are
examining the area for a landing strip.

TAYLOR
Not bad. Three hundred miles in
nine days.

BLAKELY
Reckon we'll call it Taylor's creek
then. Coote can you land the
Golden Quest here?

COOTE
It's flat enough.
(Looks around)
Got enough landing points.

LASSETER
Hey Coote reckon you can land it?

COOTE
Survived the war in France and
acrobat school.

LASSETER
Reckon you'll roll it.

COOTE
Want to bet on it loser?

LASSETER
Name the bet.

COOTE
Bet my share I won't roll it.

LASSETER
If you land you can have mine.

BLAKELY
You two shutup. Micky can we clear
the mulga away here?

MICKY
Yes boss.

TAYLOR starts to improvise using the Thornycroft as a bulldozer by tying a log to it's bumper bar. He starts to charge the mulga trees and is nearly speared by the incoming branches.

BLAKELY
Okay, boys get to work.

CGI: Many hours later and a small landing strip is starting to make shape. The only trouble is that the roots of the trees are still in the ground.

COOTE
Can't land with them like that.

MICKY just smiles and grabs a shovel and quickly digs one out by the root.

MICKY
 Nobody asked me boss.

They all laugh and applaud MICKY.

BLAKELY
 Could have been finished by now.

MICKY
 Stop soon boss. Mulga make good
 fire and windbreak.

A series of gunshots ring out. BLAKELY looks for his gun and it's gone.

FULL SHOT AIRSTRIP -- AFTERNOON

COOTE is busy running and shooting snakes.

COOTE
 Run! They'll kill you.

They all laugh at COOTE. LASSETER grabs a camera and takes a series of pictures. COOTE returns to the group.

MICKY
 Good shooting boss. That ones
 Spinifex snake. Kill you in a
 minute.

COOTE
 Not landing here.

LASSETER
 Now you've lost your share.

TAYLOR
 I'm staying in the Thornycroft
 tonight.

MICKY
 Just burn big fire. Snake doesn't
 like fire.

CUT TO

EXT. AIRSTRIP -- EVENING

A big fire is burning. The billy is boiling and they are eating some canned food.

BLAKELY

Coote first thing in the morning
take the truck and get the Golden
Quest. Get here as soon as you
can.

COOTE

Okay.

MICKY is sitting next to LASSETER.

MICKY

I been here for over forty years
boss. Never seen no Gold reef but
seen it in the dreaming.

LASSETER

I'm telling the truth Micky. See
if you seen it in the dreaming it
must be true.

MICKY

Could be, Could be. Maybe Spinifex
tree, mulga and sandstorm hide it.

LASSETER

I never lie. You just wait and
see.

MICKY

(smiles)

I believe you boss. Micky like an
adventure.

LASSETER good maturely throws some bully beef at him.
BLAKELY is reading the newspaper article of the expedition.

BLAKELY

Get to sleep boys. Lot of work
ahead of us. We gotta find that
reef soon. Wouldn't be surprised
if another group are looking too.

LASSETER starts to sing some Spirituals.

BLAKELY (CONT'D)

Suns got you fool.

CUT TO

FULL SHOT. ALICE SPRINGS AIRSTRIP-- DAY

HENRY FORD and HOWARD HUGHES get out of a hot Model T "Red Devil" Ford and are looking at a racing aircraft.

FORD
We have to beat them to it Howard.

HUGHES
We will with this baby.

HUGHES approaches the pilot and opens his wallet.

HUGHES (CONT'D)
How much?

PILOT
Twelve hundred pounds.

HUGHES counts out the money and gives it to him.

PILOT (CONT'D)
That's too much.

HUGHES
Keep it. Don't like this colonial
money prefer good old uncle sam's
dollars.

HUGHES jumps into the plane and takes off and does a series
of scary acrobatic maneuverers.

PILOT
Who the hell is that feller?

FORD
That's Howard Hughes one of the
richest men in America. I'm Henry
Ford.

The Pilot is stunned.

PILOT
Mr Ford I still have one of your
model T's. It goes like a flash.

FORD
Should try this one son.

They hop into the hot model and Ford races it all around the
landing strip.

PILOT

Say what are you two doing here so far away.

FORD

It is no secret we're here to find Lasseter's Gold reef.

PILOT

The expedition already left two weeks ago.

FORD brakes hard and stops the car.

FORD

Two week ago?

PILOT

Don't worry. The Pilot hasn't returned for his search plane yet.

FORD

We'll beat them son. We're Americans.

HUGHES dives down over the car and does a perfect turn and lands.

HUGHES

Handles like a dream.

CUT TO:

INT. EXT NORTHERN TERRITORY -- DAY

COOTE is about to leave. As he enters the truck BLAKELY grabs him.

BLAKELY

See you soon. Don't get on the drink.

COOTE

I'll be back as soon as I can. I want some of that Gold too.

LASSETER

Bring me back some Argarol.

COOTE

What the hell is that?

LASSETER
 For sandy blight. With Lourdes
 water and Argarol we'll be right.

COOTE drives off.

BLAKELY
 Okay, lets get some bearings for
 your reef.

LASSETER opens up a map.

LASSETER
 Here we are and the reefs about 150
 miles west of here. Between Ayers
 Rock, Mount Connor and Mount
 Marjorie.

BLAKELY
 Still a way to go.

LASSETER
 Coote will find it in a day. I'll
 go with him when he gets back.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS SMALL AIRPORT -- DAY

COOTE is smiling next to the Golden Quest for some
 photographers.

COOTE
 Boys I'll come back a rich man and
 the grog will be on me!

COOTE slowly turns for the runway, He guns the engine and
 flies down the runway. A man runs from the office yelling
 after him. COOTE does not hear him.

MAN
 Watch out for a man called Howard
 Hughes and his mate Henry Ford!
 They bought a racing moth to find
 the reef too!

CUT TO

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY SKY -- AFTERNOON

COOTE is flying towards Ayers Rock. The sun is a brilliant
 red reflecting off the immense red desert. All of a sudden
 the racing moth buzzes him with HUGHES giving him the finger.

COOTE
Who the hell is that?

HUGHES completes a turn and is on the backside of COOTES
moth.

COOTE (CONT'D)
What the hell? Okay mate I'll show
you! I was a Somme Air ace!

They enter into a spectacular aerial dogfight over Ayres rock
often coming perilously close to colliding.

CUT TO

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS -- DAY

FORD is driving his hot Model T along the rough roads towards
the expedition. He does not get far as the mulga and
spinifax stop him in his tracks.

FORD
Goddamn! These Australian roads
are worst than the American west.

Unseen by FORD a group of Aborigines observe the foolhardy
man.

ABORIGINE
Damn crazy men around lately.

CGI:Emu and Kangaroo.

EMU
Always thought those humans were
damn fools.

KANGAROO
Sure do agree. Remember that fool
we saw way back walking alongside a
stagecoach?

EMU
Sure do! Wonder what happened to
him?

KANGAROO
Bet his lying drunk in the gutter
like we saw the other flops back in
Darwin.

CUT TO

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS -- AFTERNOON

FORD IS driving back to Alice Springs.

FORD

Not beaten! Just changing ideas.
I'll call on a dealership,
introduce myself and drive this
sucker all over the country for
folk and show how tough a Ford is.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY SKY -- AFTERNOON

COOTE is now flying solo.

COOTE

Well whoever he is he ain't bad.
He's got a faster plane though.
Wonder where he is going?

CUT TO

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY SKY -- AFTERNOON

HUGHES is flying towards the west. He looks at a map.

HUGHES

Money buys anything. Especially
from journalists.

All of a sudden the sky glows gold. Even the sun seems ready
to burst. He looks down and there is the reef glowing gold
for miles.

HUGHES (CONT'D)

Well I'll be goddamned. Thought
the whole thing was a pack of lies.

HUGHES does a dive and circuits the reef. He looks for a
landing spot. He gingerly lands the plane near the reef.

HUGHES (CONT'D)

Even the landing strip is gold.
Howard your a lucky man.

HUGHES takes some bags from the plane and packs gold nuggets
and dust in them and place them back in the plane.

He then notices an old pegged out claim with the name
Lasseter 1897.

HUGHES
Someone beat me to it.

He buries the claim in goldust.

HUGHES
Stake my own.

He continuously loads the plane with gold till it is dangerously overloaded.

HUGHES
Bit heavy but she'll make it.

HUGHES takes off very slowly.

HUGHES
Come on you can do it!

As he flies over the reef he suddenly dives and a crash is heard.

CUT TO

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY -- DAY

The Expedition crew are getting on each others nerves.

LASSETER
Where's my mug?

BLAKELY
Who cares? They're a dime a dozen.

LASSETER
My mother gave it to me.

BLAKELY
Looks new to me.

LASSETER
Well my brother did.

TAYLOR
Who cares? Where the hell is Coote? Bet he got on the drink.

LASSETER
Yeah.

BLAKELY
Not him. Coote's reliable.

TAYLOR

Listen I reckon I saw your mug in
the back of the Thorny.

LASSETER goes to look for it.

BLAKELY

He's getting on my nerves.

TAYLOR

Me too. If he's lying about this
reef I'm gonna shoot him.

BLAKELY

Not before me.

LASSETER returns with the mug.

LASSETER

Found it.

BLAKELY

So we ain't liars.

LASSETER

Guess not. Okay boys lets not have
any more hot words.

LASSETER opens up a can of bully beef and throws meat at both
of them.

BLAKELY

That's it!

TAYLOR

You're a dead man.

They jump LASSETER and a brawl occurs. MICKY watches
grinning and then joins in helping LASSETER. An aeroplane
engine is heard overhead. They look up and see COOTE. He
flies low and waves to them.

LASSETER

Coote!

BLAKELY

Now we'll find the reef!

TAYLOR

Gold!

MICKY
 Trouble.

CUT TO

FULL SHOT MAKESHIFT AERODROME -- DAY

COOTE makes a low sortie and prepares to land.

COOTE
 Steady, steady!

Suddenly the engine stalls and COOTE loses control, somersaults and lands upside down on the ground trapping him in the cockpit.

BLAKELY
 Run boys!

LASSETER
 I've just got another gold share.

TAYLOR
 Shut your trap.

The plane is smoking fumes and steam.

BLAKELY
 Get him out before she blows up.

LASSETER
 Coote can you hear us?

COOTE just moans as BLAKELY and TAYLOR lift him out.

LASSETER
 It won't blow.

TAYLOR
 Give us a hand with him.

They take him to the campfire where MICKY is preparing some bush medicine. MICKY examines COOTE.

MICKY
 No good boss. He got broken leg,
 arm and ribs.

BLAKELY
 Can you fix him just here?

MICKY
A little. He must go to hospital
in Alice.

LASSETER
How?

MICKY
I'll drive him.

BLAKELY
Okay.

COOTE is raving.

COOTE
The red baron shot me down. The
red baron shot me down.

MICKY starts to wrap COOTE in some tree bark.

MICKY
Stop shock boss.

BLAKELY
Listen Micky we can't just wait
here. You know the route. Just
tell the new pilot to stick to it.
He'll find us.

MICKY
Okay boss. But watch out for black
fellers. Not all friendly like me.

CUT TO

EXT. AUSTRALIAN WORKER UNION OFFICE -- DAY

A telegraph boy brings in a telegram. MADELINE takes it and
approaches BAILEYS door. She takes a quick look at the
message.

MADLINE
Mr Bailey?

BAILEY
Yes?

MADLINE
There's a telegram for you.

BAILEY stands up from his desk and smiles.

BAILEY

The boy's have found the reef!

BAILEY reads the telegram and looks defeated.

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Coote has crashed the plane and is off to hospital. Madeline call an urgent meeting with the executive committee. We have to find another plane and pilot fast.

MADELINE

Yes Mr Bailey. I'll schedule it for tomorrow morning.

CUT TO

INT. AUSTRALIAN WORKER UNION OFFICE -- MORNING

BAILEY is on the phone. It is two weeks later.

BAILEY

Well that will have to do...certificates of safety? Leave all that to me. Make sure the first pilot goes with this Hall feller. Don't want to waste any more time.

MADELINE arrives with a pot of "Tea". BAILEY signals for her to wait.

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Pay by cheque and send the boys out there right away.

BAILEY puts down the receiver.

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Just bought a new plane. I'm sure it's fine.

CGI: of a pristine Gypsy Moth and then a shot of the "Golden Quest" 2 which is ratty and has paint peeling from it.

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Ahh...tea. Madeline it's all getting too much.

MADELINE opens the window and lets in some fresh air.

CUT TO

EXT. ROUGH TERRAIN WEST OF ALICE SPRINGS -- AFTERNOON

A wild sand storm is occurring and the Thornycroft is making very slow way continually being bogged down. BLAKELY yells at LASSETER through the storm.

BLAKELY

How the hell can you recognize landmarks in this weather?

LASSETER

I know where my reef is.

BLAKELY

Our reef!

LASSETER

We'll find it by the end of the week. It's near a pond and the bean tree markers will still be there.

BLAKELY

How long ago was that?

LASSETER

Ten years ago.

BLAKELY

One day it's ten years the next twenty!

The Thornycroft nearly rolls.

BLAKELY (CONT'D)

In ten days we have only traveled one hundred miles. You and the whole expedition is getting on my nerves.

LASSETER

You think I'm lying?

BLAKELY

Yes.

LASSETER

Here have some Dingo!

LASSETER throws a piece of meat at BLAKELY and they come to blows. The truck leans over to an angle and they all fall to the side. TAYLOR the driver yells out -

TAYLOR
All out! We'll have to hand dig
her out of the bloody sand.

CUT TO

EXT. ROUGH TERRAIN WEST OF ALICE SPRINGS -- AFTERNOON

Everyone is hand digging the sand away from the Thornycroft's wheels. As soon as they make a hole it is covered up again by the swirling sand.

TAYLOR
Watch out for sandblight! Protect
your eyes!

BLAKELY pushes LASSETER.

BLAKELY
I ain't the one whose blind here.

CUT TO:

INT. THORNEYCROFT -- AFTERNOON

All aboard are exhausted and beaten. BLAKELY stares at LASSETER.

BLAKELY
We have no choice we have to go
back to Ilibila and restructure.

LASSETER
No.

BLAKELY
Well I ain't dying for a wild goose
chase.

LASSETER
I tell you the reefs real. Years
ago I had the same problems finding
it.

BLAKELY throws down a map.

BLAKELY
No good in a sandstorm.

He watches LASSETER write in his diary.

BLAKELY (CONT'D)
 What the hell you doing with that?
 We are lost.

LASSETER ignores him and keeps doodling and writing.

BLAKELY (CONT'D)
 Where the hell is the new plane?
 With the plane we'd find it in
 days...if it exists.

LASSETER
 Shutup!

BLAKELY
 Anyway we have already soured
 relations with the Aborigines.
 They don't want any more white men
 into their land. Maybe we're
 cursed?

Suddenly a punch of thunder and dark skies loom.

LASSETER
 Shutup! You'll be scaring everyone
 off.

BLAKELY
 Taylor head back to Illibila.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT NORTHERN TERRITORY -- DAY

The Thorneycroft drives laboriously through the desert. The camera presents them as virtual toy trucks compared to the enormity of the desert.

CUT TO:

EXT. ILLIBILA -- DAY

The Thorneycroft and crew park at the campsite. MICKY arrives from Alice Springs. He gets out and looks scared. He jumps back in the truck.

MICKY
 Trouble coming boss.

BLAKELY
 Really? How unusual.

MICKY

Look.

A group of aborigines surround the truck. They beckon to MICKY.

BLAKELY

Stay here.

MICKY

Must talk boss find out what they want.

LASSETER

Tell em' were just passing through.

TAYLOR

Brilliant!

BLAKELY

Shut up! Okay Micky go but I got the rifle aimed at them.

MICKY jumps out and speaks to them. They seem not to understand him and he changes dialect.

MICKY

White feller just look around.

ABORIGINE

Look for bright God!

MICKY

They can't find it.

ABORIGINE

Other tribe look for us. Make war.

MICKY

We must stay here. Leave for Alice tomorrow.

ABORIGINE

We stay here too.

LASSETER hops out of the truck and a tight situation arises.

MICKY

Go back.

LASSETER

Tell em' they can have some gold as well.

MICKY
Bad time boss.

LASSETER
Every one likes Gold.

ABORIGINE
Tell him better to leave in ground.
Upset nobody then.

LASSETER goes to the truck and brings out some tin food and clothes.

LASSETER
Tell them it's a peace offering.

MICKY talks to them and they give LASSETER a Churinga a stone knife and a Kulpidji.

MICKY
Sacred boss. Better give back.

LASSETER
Micky just keep them from killing us.

From the air the "Golden Quest" 2 flies low and the aborigines flee from terror. The plane lands and COOTE in plaster and HALL hop out.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
Good timing boys.

MICKY
Plane look crook boss.

BLAKELY comes out of the truck.

BLAKELY
What sort of plane is this? Looks dirty and hasn't had a paint job in years.

COOTE
Best they could do considering.

BLAKELY
How can you help with a broken leg?

COOTE
Good to see you to Blackely.

HALL

Look, lets do a reconnaissance tomorrow and then we'll fly back to Alice and get her modified.

LASSETER

Everyone relax and get some sleep.

BLAKELY

Should shoot you now and get it over with.

LASSETER

Then you'll go back a broke and defeated man.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY SKY -- DAY

The 'Golden Quest' 2 is flying low over some mountains. LASSETER is grinning like a boy.

LASSETER

What a machine!

HALL

Not as bad as it looks.

He looks at the fuel gauge which registers low.

HALL

See anything? We're a bit low on fuel.

LASSETER

I do! Can you get between those three small mountains? I can make some measurements.

They fly down low and a group of Aborigines are on walkabout.

LASSETER

Hey fly down and scare the hell out of them.

HALL grins.

HALL

Watch this!

The plane flies down so low it clips some mulga and the
Aboriginals flee in terror. As the plane descends LASSETER
is in a fit of laughter.

LASSETER
Do it again!

HALL
No petrol...hurry up and get those
coordinates.

CUT TO

EXT. ILLIBILA -- AFTERNOON

The plane lands and LASSETER and HALL approach the campsite.

LASSETER
Listen Blackely I found the three
sisters. Know where the reef is
now.

BLAKELY
Can't use the trucks. Okay boys
take the plane back to Alice and
get her modified quickly and come
back.

HALL is checking the tanks.

HALL
Just a gallon left.

BLAKELY
Plenty in the cans in the truck.
Listen send a telegram to Sydney
and see what the hell they want us
to do.

They fuel the plane and COOTE and HALL take off.

BLAKELY (CONT'D)
Coote ain't saying much.

LASSETER
Got too knocked around in the
crash.

BLAKELY
Well we better settle down here and
wait. What else can we do? The
landscape is impassable by truck.

From the mulga a dingoe trapper, JOHNS come in with five Camels.

LASSETER
Maybe our prayers have been
answered.

ACCELERATED TIME IMAGE: LASSETER takes JOHNS aside and tells him about the reef.

JOHNS
Camels will find it.

LASSETER talks to BLAKELY and points out the camels and JOHNS.

BLAKELY
Don't worry you will get your
share. Just hurry up and find it!

CUT TO

FULL SHOT. CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN DESERT -- MORNING

LASSETER and JOHNS are riding Camels and have three more following them. The Camera pans to show them as virtual ants compared with the enormity of the desert and its heat.

LASSETER
We are not far from the mountains I
saw from the air.

JOHNS
Even Dingoes would keep away from
this hell.

They ride towards a narrow pass and all of a sudden there are explosions and dust making it impossible to go through. They reach for their guns. A motorcycle engine is heard coming towards them and out of the dust comes ANTOINE. JOHNS aims his gun at him.

LASSETER
No! He's a friend.

JOHNS
Looks like a ghost.

ANTOINE pulls up next to LASSETER.

ANTOINE
I sniffed Gold from Paris.

LASSETER

The camels are the answer. The trucks bogged down and the plane was good for location points.

CGI: A camel declares.

CAMEL

Where'd this fancy boy come from?

ANTOINE

Camels are impossible for cuisine. Too much fat.

LASSETER

What the hell are you blowing up?

ANTOINE

Got stuck in some mulga.
(Pats his dynamite)
Suddenly no more mulga.

LASSETER

How did your bike get this far?

ANTOINE

Special petrol. A secret.

LASSETER

Well follow us. We're nearly there.

LASSETER, JOHNS and the camels head due west. ANTOINE follows them and then impatiently accelerates past them. Thunder cracks, lightning strikes and a wild sandstorm starts. They all stop and the ground gives way underneath them and they fall down a deep ravine - THE GOLD REEF IS BEFORE THEM! Even they glitter from the Gold!

ANTOINE

Impossible.

JOHNS

We're suffering heat stroke.

LASSETER

I'm saved!!

ANTOINE regards his smashed bike.

ANTOINE

My boy!

JOHNS

My boy?

LASSETER

I'll buy you thousands more.

ANTOINE

(cries)

It was special...

JOHNS

Lasseter you better peg out a claim.

LASSETER

Right!

He walks around and sees a pegged claim and falls to the ground.

LASSETER

We're finished.

He looks at it - "Howard Hughes USA"

LASSETER

Who the heck is Howard Hughes?

He then destroys it burying it in the golden sand.

LASSETER

Wasn't there in the first place.
Sand covered it up.

The White and Black devils appear on his shoulder.

WHITE DEVIL

Can't believe it he was telling the truth.

BLACK DEVIL

He isn't.

They jump off and roll in the gold dust. LASSETER shakes his head.

LASSETER

Could have sworn I heard voices.

He pegs out his claim and returns to JOHNS and ANTOINE.

The heat is unbearable and they all are looking dazed.

JOHNS
Gotta leave now or we'll die.

LASSETER
What a place to die in.

ANTOINE
Paris is better.

LASSETER
Antoine hop on a camel. Quickly!

ANTOINE tries to get on but falls. JOHNS pushes him back up and he rides back to front. They all leave the reef and from ANTOINE'S P.O.V he is the last person to see the reef as they head for Illibila.

CUT TO

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY CAMPSITE -- AFTERNOON

BLAKELY, TAYLOR and MICKY are around the campfire bored to tears. Through the mulga camels arrive carrying LASSETER and JOHNS.

LASSETER
We found it! We found it!

JOHNS
It goes for miles and miles!

LASSETER
The camels made all the difference.

They dismount. LASSETER shows gold nuggets to BLAKELY.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
I'm gonna make them Camels gold horse shoes!

JOHNS
Don't need them.

LASSETER
Doesn't matter they earned them.

BLAKELY
Was any one there before you?

JOHNS
Not a soul.

BLAKELY

Lasseter?

JOHNS

He's tellin' the truth.

There is a rustle behind the mulga and a camel appears with the unconscious ANTOINE. BLAKELY gets his rifle.

LASSETER

No! He's a friend.

ANTOINE falls to the ground.

CGI: CAMEL.

CAMEL

All I heard was this was wrong and that was wrong! Should have bucked him off miles ago and let him eat emu and berries.

BLAKELY

How many more friends you got?
Takes a share away.

LASSETER

I'll give him some of mine.

The DEVILS appear.

WHITE DEVIL

Me too! I want my share.

BLACK DEVIL

Me too! I want my share.

BLAKELY

I'm hearing voices.

LASSETER

Always thought you were a bit slow
in the head.

BLAKELY points his gun at LASSETER.

BLAKELY

Don't reckon we'll be needing you
now. Johns take a camel and go to
Alice and telegram CAGE in Sydney.

JOHNS

Go tomorrow. I'm tired.

BLAKELY

Go now.

JOHNS grumbles, mounts a camel and leaves.

LASSETER

You need me Blackely. I'm the only one who knows the exact coordinates.

BLAKELY

Yeah I guess I do.

Puts down the gun.

BLAKELY

What a shame.

MICKY looks at ANTOINE.

MICKY

Fix him up boss?

LASSETER

Okay Micky.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE -- NIGHT

The fire burns low and snoring is heard. Slowly LASSETER gets up and makes some provisions and mounts a camel and ties another behind him. He silently steals out west in search of the reef. ANTOINE wakes and sees him. He is too weak to stand and tries to speak but his voice is hoarse.

ANTOINE

No Shortnin' Please don't go on your own.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE -- MORNING

The crew awaken. BLAKELY notices that all the camels are missing and no LASSETER.

BLAKELY

Always knew he was a liar.

ANTOINE tries to get up.

ANTOINE
He'll die out there.

BLAKELY
How the hell are we gonna find that
bloody reef now?

He looks to where Lasseter slept and there are the gold nuggets.

BLAKELY (CONT'D)
Where's the bloody plane?

CUT TO

EXT. ALICE SPRINGS AIRPORT -- DAY

The "Golden Quest" 2 is in pieces. COOTE and HALL look despondent. A MECHANIC looks at them.

MECHANIC
Take three weeks to get the
propeller parts and tail wing.

COOTE
Told you we shouldn't had done that
bootleg liquor trip and clipped the
runway.

HALL
Don't worry the boys will be
alright. I just have that good
felling about it.

CUT TO

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

LASSETER is drinking water profusely and seems disorientated. He falls from the camel.

LASSETER
(to himself dazed)
Gotta find it. The other fools
will wreck everything. I'll stay
there to they come for me. That
way it'll still be ours.

He slowly mounts the camel and rides off west. He falls again and the camels run and leave him alone in the desert to be doomed. LASSETER takes out the bottle of Lourde's water, he puts it on his eyes and sees better.

LASSETER (CONT'D)
 It might be for sandy blight, but I
 Gotta drink that Lourdes water.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE GOLD REEF -- DAY

LASSETER is dying in the sand and heat from starvation and dehydration. He thinks he is at the reef but is in fact many miles from it. In his deranged mind he sees MICKY.

MICKY
 In the dreaming now...come with
 me...no more greed here...come.

As LASSETER dies his last vision is of the time when he was a schoolboy sulking next to the school bell and OLIVE MAY comes over to him.

CUT TO

EXT. DESERT -- AFTERNOON

An old camel trader has captured the two camels. It is DOST.

DOST
 Where you from?

DOST notices some an old notebook and newspaper article tied to the camels saddle belt. He reads it and tears stream down his face.

DOST (CONT'D)
 Shortnin' I must find you.

CGI: Of accelerated days as DOST tries to find LASSETER.

DOST rides over a sand dune and sees birds and animals fighting on the ground. As he comes closer they scatter and he sees bones, tattered clothes and an unrecognizable body. He knows however who it is.

DOST (CONT'D)
 (tearfully)
 Why didn't you listen to Dost?
 Marry beautiful young lady and just
 stay happy with a little of gold.

DOST makes a grave in the sand and buries what is left of Lasseter. He bows.

DOST (CONT'D)
 Goodbye friend to we meet again in
 Paradise. Manana. Khudây pë âmân!

He mounts a camel and leaves a defeated man.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE GOLD REEF -- MORNING

The reef just glimmers with Gold as ANTOINE speaks.

ANTOINE V/O
 Despite months of searching they
 never found Shortnin'. The Central
 Australian Gold Exploration Company
 formally closed the books in late
 1932 with just under twenty pounds
 in the bank and no dividend to the
 Country or shareholders. The boys
 all had their own lies and truths
 to tell. The only one who became
 famous was John's.

CUT TO

EXT. HITLER RALLY 1938 -- EVENING

The Fuhrer is raving and ranting. JOHNS is behind the stage
 with German Shepherds looking like Dingoes.

ANTOINE V/O
 Turns out he was a Nazi spy sent to
 find a cross breed of superdog. I
 spent years as the top chef in
 France and

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT: ANTOINE FRENCH RIVERA -- MORNING

ANTOINE is lying in the sand with girls, wine, cuisine and
 books.

ANTOINE V/O
 Lived the life of the just as they
 say.

DISSOLVE BACK
 TO:

EXT. THE GOLD REEF -- MORNING

ANTOINE V/O

The Churinga, stone knife and the kulpidji all ended up at the museum and later on were returned to their rightful owners. Except for one dear person -

CUT TO

EXT OLIVE MAY'S HOUSE GOULBURN -- DAY

She is walking towards the post box and collapses and dies.

ANTOINE V/O

Olive May moved to Goulburn lived to be eighty nine years old and lived a rare life of love, kindness and honesty. She never married again after Thomas died but had plenty of suitors.

CUT TO

EXT. OLIVE MAY HOUSE GOULBURN -- EVENING

Men are lined up with flowers and chocolates. OLIVE MAY just smiles and close the door.

ANTOINE V/O

The small supply of Gold soon ran out. It was me not Shortnin' who sent it to her.

CUT TO:

EXT OLIVE MAYS FUNERAL -- AFTERNOON

ANTOINE V/O

And, she was buried with her Thomas and young Roy. She always believed in Shortnin' and to this day somewhere in Goulburn there is that bookcase worth hundred of thousands of dollars.

ANGLE ON

FULL SHOT - THE OLD ELABORATE BOOKCASE. -- MOMENTS LATER

The camera zeroes in to the books in the case and one in particular - "Shortnin' by Anonymous.

ANTOINE V/O

If that damn Shortnin' was more honest he and Olive May could have led an easy life. Whilst ordinary it'd saved a lot of trouble for folks.

CUT TO:

EXT NORTHERN TERRITORY -- DAY

Men are leading further expeditions to find the reef.

ANTOINE V/O

And, plenty of other greedy fools tried and failed to fins Shortnin's reef. I know it exists because I saw it and I am a Frenchman who never lies.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY -- DAY

Lasseter makeshift grave where sand is gently blowing.

ANTOINE V/O

And of Shortnin'? All sorts of things were said. But as you know dead is dead and you are not coming back. A lot of fools told me that they saw.

A montage of LASSETER sightings.

As a Mormon preacher in Utah.

Working with Henry Ford.

Flying with Howard Hughes.

As President of the United States.

As a Las Vegas tycoon counting gold bars.

As an old man dining in Paris at Antoinnes restaurant where he stamps his feet in front of a couple of diners. LASSETER walks up to him.

LASSETER

I tell you, you should retire to Australia the sun and sea will do wonders for your Arthritis.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTHERN TERRITORY -- DAY

Lasseter's makeshift grave where sand is gently blowing.

ANTOINE V/O

All I saw was a man who had a go in life and did not die in bed alone and bitter with regret from not trying. Maybe Micky was right the reef belongs to the earth and never should have been found. And ,so I come to the end of my little tale. Oh, one more thing. Shortnin' was right about Aeroplanes changing the world. So Nellie Melba and Olive May.

CUT TO

INT. LA SCALA OPERA HOUSE ITALY -- NIGHT

Nellie Melba does a somersault during "La Boheme"

CUT TO

EXT. ARALUEN MAIN ROAD -- NIGHT

OLIVE MAY rides a horse a la Lady Godiva.

ANTOINE V/O

Thankfully it was four in the morning and no one saw her but she would have been stunning.

DISSOLVE TO:

POINT MATCH: WE ARE BACK WHERE THE STORY BEGAN.

INT. HAMPTON HOTEL, CBD SYDNEY -- NIGHT

ANTOINE puts down his glass of DOM and looks at his ring with the tears and himself becomes teary.

ANTOINE

They are Olive May's tears. Tears
of a woman who just wanted to live
with love. Not a hard request
really.

The SUITS walk towards their cars, yelling "Lasseter's" They
are quite drunk.

EXT. HAMPTON HOTEL, CBD SYDNEY -- NIGHT

As the sports cars roar off, ANTOINE tries to start his
Villiers Motorcycle it won't start. A random breath test
catches the SUITS. ANTOINE stamps his foot and it
mysteriously starts up.

He rides off towards the Harbor Bridge. As he rides over it
the sky suddenly glows golden and ANTOINE is illuminated.

ANTOINE V/O

I prefer the old ways. Single
carburetor...a slow fable...I hope
you enjoyed my little tale about
Shortnin' By the way Today I turn
125 years of age and feel it's time
to join my friends.

APPEARING IN THE GOLDEN SKY ARE THE MAJOR CHARACTERS OF THE
TALE.

ANTOINE V/O

As I said in the beginning,
however amusing it is to speak ill
of one's enemies, it is even more
delectable to speak ill of one's
friends. I may have added a few
long ones here and there but for
what really happened that's for
another time and day.

ANTOINE suddenly dissolves and the sky becomes more golden.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE FOLLOWING EPITAPH APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

"It is not the critic who counts, or how the strongman
stumbled and fell, or where the doer of deeds could have done
better...The credit belongs to the man who is actually on the
arena.. Who knows the great enthusiasms...so that he may
never be one of those timid souls, who know neither victory
nor defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt, US PRESIDENT.

CREDITS