

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Dead Set Straight

by Andrea Lemon

EXTRACT

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CHARACTERS.

- DINGO - 16 y.o. Skinhead. Presently in Youth Training Centre on armed robbery charges.
- JACKIE - 16 y.o. Smack addict. Presently in Youth Training Centre on drug-related charges.
- JOHNNY - 15 y.o. Tough but amenable street kid. Less experienced with the police.
- RUTH - Late 20's. Senior Constable in the Community Policing Squad.
- MAX - Late 30's. Seargeant in the Uniformed Division.

PERFORMING SPACE.

The space should be as flexible as possible to allow for a constant change of place. The original productions incorporated scaffolding, corrugated tin and a table and chair.

SCENE 4: | JOHNNY 1.

THE SONG ENDS. MAX TURNS AND POINTS TO JOHNNY

MAX; Hey you! What are you doing?

JOHNNY; Nothin,

MAX; What's your name?

JOHNNY; Johnny.

MAX; Johnny who?

JOHNNY; Johnny Jones.

MAX; How old are you Johnny?

JOHNNY; Fifteen.

MAX; Where do you live?

JOHNNY; Kensington.

MAX; Yeh..Kensington's a big place. Whereabouts?

JOHNNY; O'Grady Street.

MAX; Oh, you live in a street, do you? What number?

JOHNNY; 25.

MAX; Does your mum know where you are?

JOHNNY; Yeh, she knows I been at the pinnies.

MAX; What time are you supposed to be home?

JOHNNY; Nine o'clock.

MAX; Do you know what time it is now?

JOHNNY; Yeh..

MAX; Well, get going.

JOHNNY AND MATES MOVE ON, DISGRUNTLED. MAX ALSO MOVES ON, KEEPING AN EYE OUT.

SCENE 3; ON THE INSIDE.

JACKIE, DINGO AND RUTH BEGIN TO MOVE SLOWLY AND RESTLESSLY THROUGH DEFINED AREAS OF THE SPACE. THEY SPEAK TO THE AUDIENCE.

JACKIE; I come in free times in two weeks. I come in on ve weekend..got out on Monday. Come in on ve Saturday..got out on ve Tuesday. Come in on ve wednesday..an vey kept me here.

DINGO; Guess I been goin fru Turana about free years now. It's bed 7.30 ere. Get woke up at 8.30. Ave a shower..do ya room..ave breakfast. Watch TV. Ave lunch. Watch TV. Ave tea. Watch TV. Go t'bed. Same f'ing every day.

JACKIE; It was a combination of bein drunk an disorderly, right? Resistin arrest..an punchin a nun. Oh..an havin nowhere t'live. Vey

brought me in as a violent youf..coz I wouldn't walk! I made em carry me! HAHA.

RUTH; I don't know why I'm in the force..

DINGO; I can't remember me real farver..but the person I grew up wiv mosta me life..he seemed alright when I was a little tacker. Then he started ..y'know..hittin mum an stuff like that. I was too scared t'do anyfing about it. Mum left, went back..left, went back..split up went back..just on an off for a coupla years. An um..I used t'go down is place every second weekend..do a bita shootin wiv im. Then e didn't wanna see me no more, coz..oh, I ad a big garbage bag'a dope in me bedroom. Oh..I was hurt..real hurt bad but, ..y'know..I got over it. An then I started runnin away from home. Me mates were teachin me how t'pinch cars..do burgs..an I jus got right into it!

DINGO THROWS HIMSELF AGAINST THE WALL WITH A SENSE OF VIOLENT FRUSTRATION.

RUTH; (with a sense of humour) Because police are big people, you know!? You feel important! And it's an exciting job..you never know what's going to happen from one moment to the next. It's variety. And you're always meeting people. Do you know how many people I'll talk to in a day? There's thousands and thousands! The criminals..the victims..the social workers..the families..the kids that get picked up and let off..and picked up and let off..and picked up and let off. Well, not all in one day!

JACKIE IS BEGINNING TO SPRAY PAINT GRAFFITI ON THE WALL..

JACKIE; Ve first time I come in ere, it was care application an all vat. Coz of me step dad..

RUTH; What about him?

JACKIE; Oh..e'd been layin inta me..an abusin me an stuff..

RUTH; What..sexual abuse?

JACKIE; Yeh..an vey found out about it at school, y'know? An so school rung ve bloody cops! An ve cops sent me ere t'Winlaton. I was locked up, right? I was treated like a bloody criminal coz of somefing e did! I fought I was worf shit! An vat arse'ole..e went t'court, right? An e bloody got off! I got locked up an e bloody got off! But I got im..

SHE FINISHES GRAFFITI.."JOE COOK MOLESTS KIDS"

An after I got out vat time..no way was I gonna go ome, right? So I jus pissed off. Headed inta ve city..saw all vese kids hangin out an havin a good time..

DINGO; Jackie mate!

DINGO AND JOHNNY JOIN HER AND HOON..

JACKIE; An I fought sweet, y'know? Vis is ome f'me.

JOHNNY; Hangin out ve steps..

JACKIE; Flinders St, y'know?

DINGO; Headin down Fitzroy St..

JACKIE; Jus havin a good time!

DINGO; (to Johnnie) Jacks mate!

DINGO AND JOHNNY LEAVE HURRIEDLY.

JACKIE; Ven I kept gettin picked up coz I didn't ave

nowhere t'sleep.

But I don't mind bein in Winlaton, right..I did a burg one time just so's I'd get back in ere. When vey didn't catch us, I was spewin! Ven somebody dobbed us in, right? An I was rapt! I was all smart arse t've coppers an everfing!

SHE TURNS TO RUTH.

Oil! Can't y'get a proper job!?

RUTH; How do you like Winlaton?

JACKIE; I love ve joint. I call it me ome!

RUTH; Well, I'm letting you off with a warning this time.

JACKIE; Ve bitch!

But I got back in a week later on drunk an disorderly. Shoulda done vat in ve first place, eh? Vat's ve fing, y'know..if a jack wants t'get ya, vey can always find somefing t'pin on ya. D an D..abusive language..vagrancy..

RUTH; What!?

JACKIE; No visible means'a support..no money in ya pocket.

RUTH; Vagrancy's been gone for years.

JACKIE; Well, it's appened t'me. Cops do it all ve time..

MAX INTERCEPTS HER.

MAX; Got any money on you?

JACKIE; I'm only goin across t've over flats.

MAX; Got any money on you?!

JACKIE; Nuh.

MAX; Then turn around and go home.

JACKIE; An what if I don't?

MAX; I'll take you down the station and charge you.

SHE WALKS AWAY.

JACKIE; Pigs!

SCENE CONTINUES..

SCENE 4; CARE APPLICATION.

RUTH; (to audience) The vagrancy stuff's probably a bluff. Get the kid off the streets..find out who they are..

JACKIE PASSES HER..

Hey..slip over here for a minute, will you?

JACKIE; What for?

RUTH; I just want to talk to you.

JACKIE; What for?

RUTH; What's your name?

JACKIE; I don't have t'tell you.

RUTH; And she doesn't. And she could be Jackie Smith, who's been missing for six weeks, right? I've had five thousand phone calls from mum and dad who are beside themselves, having visions of her in a shallow grave somewhere beside the Princes Highway..and this girl matches her description.

JACKIE; My name's Jackie Snooks..

RUTH; It's three o'clock in the afternoon, she's