

DIRT

Written by

Tom Dickinson

What do you call a blakfella with dandruff?

A Lamington.

Tom Dickinson Screenplays

EXT. SALTWATER RIVER (MANGROVES) - DAY

DOUG (28) and PADDY (25) - two Aboriginal boys, are fishing by the waters edge when Doug spots something beneath the surface.

DOUG

Ah! There! Paddy go! GO!

Paddy hesitates for a second. Then-SPLASH! He dives in, disappearing beneath the surface.

The water churns. Paddy wrestles with something unseen. Silence. A tense pause.

Suddenly, Paddy bursts up from the water, a pissy mud crab in his hands, raised high above his head-VICTORIOUS!

PADDY

Huahhh!!!!

The mud crab wriggles, its claws snapping in the air.

Paddy tosses it into the trunk of a red Datsun 120Y.

At that same moment, from the top of the creek, a Department of Fisheries Ranger observes Paddy.

RANGER

Oi, you can't do that!

Paddy freezes mid-move, slamming the trunk shut.

His eyes dart, scanning for the voice.

RANGER (CONT'D)

I saw what you have there. You've got a mud crab in the trunk, mate. And it ain't mud crab season.

PADDY

No way, mate.

RANGER

Open the boot up.

Paddy opens the boot.

RANGER (CONT'D)

I'm gonna have to fine you for this.

PADDY

No mate, it ain't what it look like. This my pet mud crab. His name is Marty. Every day, I take him down here for a swim.

RANGER

(in disbelief)

Alright, show us then.

Paddy hesitates, looking to Doug for an answer.

Doug's poker face is immaculate.

Paddy opens the trunk, fetches the mud crab, and tosses it back into the water.

The mud crab scuttles away, gone.

RANGER (CONT'D)

Well come on, where is he?

PADDY

Where's what?

The Ranger gives them a look, mumbles something unintelligible under his breath, then drives off

Doug and Paddy watch closely as the Ranger drives out of sight.

DOUG

Quick, where da fuck did he go.

Paddy and Doug splash back into the water, chasing after the mud crab

SPLASH, SPLASH, SPLASH.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

SLAP, SLAP, SLAP.

Doug slaps a wad of \$20s into his open palm.

DOUG

Hehehe. I told ya I knew a guy.

PADDY

Alright Mr. Connections, you got a guy for the dirt?

DOUG
I gotta guy for everything, but I
know somewhere better. Every white-
fellas favourite place.

INT. BUNNINGS - DAY

SALLY (21) -- A blonde Bunnings employee, stands by the entrance, her smile wide and mechanical. She greets customers with a practiced, hollow cheerfulness, moving through the motions like clockwork.

SALLY
Good morning! Welcome to Bunnings!

Customers walk by as if she's a cardboard cutout, just part of the Bunnings experience.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Hi there! Anything we can help you
with?

Nothing. Sally ups the volume, practically waving down the white-fellas as they stroll past, oblivious.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Hello! How are you today!

Still no response. She glances around, deflating a little.
Meanwhile...

...Doug stands to the side, hands on hips. Paddy waits with him, arms leisurely folded across his chest.

Both wearing sunnies: Doug in Oakley wraparounds, Paddy in reflective aviators -- as if they've been hired to look important, but forgot what the job was.

Finally, there's a lull in the stream of customers.

Sally SIGHS, relaxing her shoulders, her forced smile fading for just a second.

Doug leans in, noticing she still hasn't clocked them.

DOUG
Hey Darlin'--

Sally jumps in fright.

SALLY
(under her breath)
...fuck...

Doug, unfazed, flashes a grin.

DOUG
Where do you keep ya dirt?

Paddy stands still beside Doug like a bodyguard, chewin' gum, and scanning the joint.

SALLY
(confused)
Dirt? You mean... like, soil?

DOUG
Nah, mate, the good stuff.
(leans in)
You know... dirt.

Paddy firmly nods his head once in agreement.

SALLY
(slightly annoyed)
You mean potting mix?

PADDY
Ahh is that what you white fellas
are calling it these days.

Paddy, disappointed in Sally, shakes his head, still chewin'.

INT. GARDEN AISLE, BUNNINGS - DAY.

CALVIN (23), Asian, leads DOUG and PADDY down the gardening aisle. They stop in front of a wall of dirt bags, all stacked and labeled with various brands and types

CALVIN
Sally said you were after... dirt?
Do you know what type exactly?

Doug and Paddy look at the overwhelming amount of options: potting mix, compost, mulch.

They exchange a look, confused and clearly out of their element.

PADDY
Mate, I didn't know there was more
than one type. Dirt's dirt, right?

DOUG

What's the most expensive stuff ya got?

Calvin slaps a bag of potting mix like it's a prized cow.

CALVIN

That'd be our Premium Plus Superior Potting Mix at \$39.99

DOUG

...what's ya mid-range dirt?

CALVIN

Premium perlite. \$29.99.

Doug and Paddy exchange an uneasy glance. Silence.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Or... we have a cheaper option here. Bunnings Garden Soil... \$9.99.

PADDY

Nah, nah, nah, that mid-range stuff looks good... Right Doug?

DOUG

(under his breath)
Yeah-yeah-yeah...

Awkward silence.

CALVIN

Alright. Well. I'll leave ya's too it. If you need a hand, just let me know.

Calvin walks off. Doug and Paddy contemplate.

INT. BUNNINGS CHECK OUT - DAY.

Doug and Paddy stand in line, a bag of Bunnings Garden Soil in each hand.

An OLD WOMAN, white and curious, waits behind them. She eyes the dirt, then speaks up.

OLD WOMAN

Are you two boys doing some gardening?

Doug slowly turns toward her, his face dead serious behind reflective aviators.

DOUG

Nah, i'm buying my land back one bag at a time.

(beat)

And this time, i'm getting a receipt.

Doug flashes his receipt with purpose. He's deadly serious. The old woman is stunned.

EXT. AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY ROAD - DAY.

Dry Australian country. The horizon blurs in the shimmering heat.

From somewhere within the dry, sunbaked breeze comes the lively, laidback beat of Midnight Oil's "Power and the Passion.", then...

VRooooooooooooooooooooo!

A red Datsun 120Y -- wipes the screen.

AT THE WHEEL, Douglas in reflective aviators, drives with his knees. Rolling a cigarette with his hands.

Beside him, face turned to the sun, eyes closed behind wrap-around Oakleys, is Paddy -- beer in hand.

They cruise on the lone country road, until...

CHUG-CHUG... COUGH...

SPUTTER-SPUTTER... POP...

PFFFFFF... CLUNK!

The Datsun 120Y rolls to a stop.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

Douglas and Paddy sit atop of their literal dirt bag thrones. They stick out their thumbs, hitching for lift.

Suddenly, a TRUCK comes into view. The boys stand up and waves their arms to flag it down.

DOUG

Hey! Gissa lift, mate!

The TRUCKER (40s, bearded, a bit rough around the edges) slows down, confused, but pulls over. He leans out the window, looking at the boys and their dirt.

TRUCKER
What's the story, fellas?

PADDY
Need a lift, eh? Just a couple bags of dirt, nothing heavy.

TRUCKER
Sorry fellas, I'd love to help, but I've already got 20,000 bowling balls in the back. No room for ya.

DOUG
C'mon, mate. We can make it fit.

TRUCKER
(shrugs)
If you reckon. Jump in.

Doug and Paddy wrestle with the doors, somehow managing to wedge themselves and their bags of dirt into the back of the truck, squeezing between crates of bowling balls.

The doors SLAM shut.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

The truck speeds down the highway.

The TRUCKER checks his watch nervously, picking up the pace. Just as he zooms around a bend, FLASHING LIGHTS appear in his rearview mirror.

A COP CAR signals him to pull over.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The trucker steps out, looking nervous. OFFICER (30s, stern, no-nonsense) approaches.

OFFICER
You know why I pulled you over?

TRUCKER
Speeding, yeah. I'm just in a rush with this delivery.

OFFICER
What are you delivering?

TRUCKER
(snickering)
20,000 aboriginal eggs.

OFFICER
(brows furrowing)
Open the back for me. Now.

EXT. BACK OF TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

The Officer opens the back door. His eyes widen in disbelief as he spots Doug and Paddy wedged between bags of dirt and crates of bowling balls, covered in dust.

OFFICER
(under his breath)
What the hell is this?

He quickly SLAMS the doors.

The Officer rushes back to his car and immediately gets on his radio, glancing back nervously at the truck.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
(into radio, panicking)
Dispatch, I've got a situation here.
Guy says he's got bowling balls, but
I've got two blokes back here with
bags that look... suspicious. Could be
drugs. Send backup. Lots of backup.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: 3 MONTHS LATER

The sun rises over a quiet country road. Wheelie bins stand neatly in front of every house -- except one.

A Garbo truck trundles up the street, scooping up bins one by one.

Doug leans under the hood of his worn Datsun 120Y, tools in hand.

The Garbo truck slows to a stop in front of his house. Doug stays focused, tinkering.

The Garbo man rolls down his window, eyeing Doug.

GARBO MAN

Aye mate! Where's ya bin?

Doug pops his head out from under the hood, squinting, thinking for a moment.

DOUG

What's that?

GARBO MAN

Where's ya bin mate?

DOUGLAS

Ahh mate, I bin on 'olidays!

GARBO MAN

What?

(confused)

No mate, where's ya wheelie bin?

DOUGLAS

(grinning)

Ohhhh, I wheelie bin in jail but I
bin tellin' everyone I bin on
'olidays.

As the Garbo Man shakes his head and drives off, Doug turns back to the Datsun and continues tinkering away.

END