

DIRT

Written by

Tom Dickinson

Based on the humor that keeps my family laughing.

134 Perry St, Collingwood VIC 3066
0417 940 503
Tedickinson@student.unimelb.edu.au

EXT. SALTWATER CREEK (MANGROVES), NORTHERN TERRITORY - DAY

On the bank, DOUG (28) and PADDY (25)—two Aboriginal boys sit crouched near the water, fishing rods abandoned at their sides when Doug spots something beneath the surface.

DOUG
(pointing)
Ah! There, there! Quick Paddy, go!

Paddy hesitates for a second, flicks off his thongs, Then—
SPLASH! He dives in, disappearing beneath the surface.

The water churns wildly. Paddy grapples with something unseen in the depths. For a moment, the creek settles... silence.

Then suddenly... Paddy bursts up from out of the water with a pissy mud crab in his hands, raised high above his head—
TRIUMPHANT!

PADDY
Huahhh!!!!

The boys howl with victory. Doug claps his hands and lets out a whooping laugh.

The mud crab wriggles, claws snapping in the air.

Paddy drags himself to the bank, water sloshing around his legs and tosses the mud crab into the boot of an old, sun-bleached red Datsun 120Y.

As soon as the trunk SLAMS shut—

From the top of the creek, a Department of Fisheries Ranger observes Paddy.

RANGER
Oi, you can't do that!

Paddy freezes, hand on the boot. 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
(stern)
Open the boot up for me please.

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 Marty.

The Ranger gives him a long, disbelieving stare.

RANGER
(flat)
You got a pet mud crab.

PADDY
Yeah mate, every day, I take him
down here for a swim.

RANGER
(disbelief)
Alright, show us then.

Paddy looks back at Doug for backup, as if to say -- *you seeing this mate?*

Doug's expression is unreadable.

Paddy opens the trunk and fetches the mud crab. He takes a hard look at it -- then the ranger -- then back to the crab.

PADDY
Come on Marty.

He tosses it back into the water.

The mud crab scuttles away, gone.

RANGER
Well come on, where is he?

PADDY
Where's what?

The Ranger gives them a dirty 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 tha fuck did he go.

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

SPLASH, SPLASH, SPLASH.

2

EXT. BUSY STREET, PALMERSTON - DAY

2

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.

3

INT. BUNNINGS, PALMERSTON - DAY

3

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'.

4

INT. GARDEN AISLE, BUNNINGS - DAY.

4

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 and Paddy exchange an uneasy glance.

DOUG

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

CALVIN

Premium perlite. \$29.99.

Doug and Paddy exchange an even uneasier glance.

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

(dismissive)
Yeah-yeah-yeah...

5 INT. BUNNINGS CHECK OUT - DAY.

5

THUD.

Doug drops a bag of Bunnings Garden Soil onto the checkout counter.

Calvin, manning the checkout, curiously glances at the trolley behind Doug and Paddy - stacked high with even more bags of Bunnings Garden Soil.

CALVIN
That's a lot of dirt boys.

Doug adjusts his sunnies.

DOUG
Can never have too much.

Doug shifts his focus to a white employee standing next to Calvin.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Isn't that right mate!

The white employee offers an absent smile and nods, though it's unclear if he heard a word.

WHUMP!

Paddy slaps another bag onto the counter with emphasis.

PADDY
It's quality, this stuff. You can
smell it.

Calvin raises an eyebrow, skeptical but interested.

CALVIN
Right... so what's the project? New
lawn?

DOUG
Nah, mate. We're reclaiming.

CALVIN
Reclaiming... what?

Doug taps a bag with two fingers - TAP TAP - like sealing a deal.

DOUG
Our land back.

Paddy nods, deadpan, chewing his gum.

PADDY
One bag at a time.
(raises eyebrows)
And we'll keep the receipt this
time thanks.

They're deadly serious.

Calvin squints, processing, then decides not to ask more. He grabs the scanner and beeps the next bag.

BEEP.

Doug folds his arms, satisfied with how things are shaping up.

DOUG
(quietly)
We'll have it all back by
Christmas.

CALVIN
Well... Good luck with it, boys.

With the trolley squeaking under the load, they stroll out through the automatic doors, their mission clear only to them.

Calvin watches them go, still unsure if he's just witnessed the strangest garden project or something much bigger.

6

EXT. ARNHEM HIGHWAY - DAY.

6

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...

VROOOOOOMMMMMMMM!

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.

7

EXT. SIDE OF ARNHEM HIGHWAY - DAY

7

Douglas and Paddy sit atop their dirt bag thrones, sunnies perched on their sweaty noses. They stick out their thumbs, hitching for lift.

In the distance, a TRUCK barrels toward them, the engine growling. The boys hop off their dirt piles and wave their arms wildly, desperate for a lift.

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.

8 **EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER**

8

The truck roars down the highway, kicking up red dust in its wake.

The TRUCKER checks his watch nervously, picking up the pace. As he zooms around a bend, bowling balls rattle and roll in the back of the truck:

CLUNK. THUD. TUMBLE.

FLASHING LIGHTS appear in his rearview mirror.

A COP CAR signals him to pull over.

9 **EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS**

9

The trucker steps out, looking nervous. OFFICER (30s, stern, white) 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.

10 **EXT. BACK OF TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER**

10

The Officer opens the back door.

OFFICER'S POV:

Doug and Paddy are wedged awkwardly between bags of dirt and bowling balls. They're a dusty, tangled mess--faces streaked with dirt, sweat-matted hair poking in all directions, eyes wild and glassy from exhaustion.

Paddy's sunnies hang from one ear, bent. Doug clutches a bowling ball in one hand, like he's cradling it for dear life.

OFFICER
(under his breath)
What the fuck 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. I
need back up, now.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
(calm but confused)
What's the situation, Officer?

OFFICER
(stammering)
I've got a truck... says it's full
of Aboriginal eggs - two of them
have already hatched and the
bastards have drugs on them.

FADE TO BLACK.

11

EXT. FRONT LAWN - MORNING

11

SUPERIMPOSE: 3 MONTHS LATER

The sun rises over a quiet country road. Wheelie bins line the road: neat, uniform, and green. Except for one house, which doesn't have a bin out front. But it does have the most lush, overflowing garden on the street, crowned by a proud mound of dark, fragrant DIRT on the lawn.

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, trying to make sense of the question.

DOUG
What's that?

GARBO MAN
Where's ya bin mate?

DOUGLAS
Ahh mate, I bin on 'ololidays!

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
'ololidays.

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

END