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GEOFF, FROM SPRINGWOOD

EPISODE THREE
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Geoff and Jeremy sit on a suburban park bench, accompanied by an extremely large yet gentle dog named SAMSON. The duo talk as Geoff reads an A4 piece of paper.

JEREMY

Yeah, yeah read it aloud?

GEOFF

Okay.

Geoff begins to read an Australian History essay aloud.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

There is little doubt that wartime history assumes an important role in contemporary interpretations of Australian history. In spite of a sea of historical evidence suggesting the convoluted events that led to the commencement of the first Great War were misguided from both Allied and Central perspectives, the beleaguered battle of Gallipoli is still regarded by many parties as the nation's greatest achievement and each year on April 25th, Australians gather in mass to commemorate the fabled Gallipoli campaign. Wartime commemorations like these are commonplace in western societies and have been used to unify fragmented communities and individuals, build national pride and dictate political rhetoric. This essay will examine primary and secondary historical and sociological evidence to address some of the perplexing questions that surround Australia's involvement in international warfare in an attempt to decipher why the nation's inaugural mobilised military campaign has been used as a source of longstanding and unwavering national pride and unification.

CUT TO:

Geoff continues to read the essay aloud. He is now reading from the concluding paragraph.

GEOFF

Is this really an achievement to be proud of? Is the engagement in an arbitrary foreign conflict and the slaughter of tens of thousands Australian, New Zealand and Ottoman soldiers really relevant to contemporary Australia? And if so, is it really something to be revered or commemorated? This essay is not trying to diminish the tragic fate of ANZAC and Ottoman servicemen and women, nor is it trying to belittle Australian wartime losses. It is simply trying to decipher how imperialistic conquests and wartime history have been used to construct Australia's national identity. Australia is a nation with a broad cultural tapestry; it is and always has been home to great people, cultures and landscapes. Its honour, integrity, spirit and identity have always been present; whether it is in the dreamtime stories of the world's oldest culture, or the resolute political rebellion of the Eureka Stockade. As a nation, Australia has produced great storytellers, musicians, poets, artists and athletes. It has championed multiculturalism and egalitarianism, yet the nation still falls back on tragic wartime conquests and defeats as a fundamental source of national symbolism. Surely with a little considered thought we can all see that the glorification of war is an archaic concept. That the death of innocent men and women sent half way across the world to engage in foreign conflicts against other equally innocent individuals is nothing to revere. So with ANZAC Day approaching, most Australians will be confronted with the phrase Lest We Forget, a phrase that has become ingrained in the Australian national psyche. This year I urge you all to dig a little deeper, below the surface of the popular vernacular, to

(MORE)

GEOFF (CONT'D)
form your own opinions and
conclusions; to end the seemingly
unconsidered and unwavering
admiration of wartime history.
After all, war, huh, yeah, what
is it good for? Absolutely
nothing.

Geoff concludes his reading.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Haha great ending. I'm also
impressed with Alex's prose.

JEREMY
Me too. She entered it into a
statewide high school history
competition. They picked it as
one of five finalists.

GEOFF
It's a very interesting paper.

JEREMY
It's pissed a few people off
though.

GEOFF
Really?

JEREMY
Yeah. She's copped a bit of flack
for it at school.

GEOFF
From who?

JEREMY
Other students mostly, but a few
members of the Springwood High
faculty have chimed in to express
their disapproval.

GEOFF
Really?

JEREMY
The headmaster hasn't been all
that supportive. My parents got a
phone call from her yesterday.

GEOFF
Gee. What did she say?

JEREMY

She just expressed a concern that the content of the essay touched on sensitive national histories that perhaps shouldn't be addressed at this time of year. She suggested that Alexandra should consider withdrawing it from the competition.

GEOFF

So what happened?

JEREMY

My parents read the essay and thought it was very a challenging text so they told Alex that the decision to confirm submission or withdraw was entirely up to her.

GEOFF

And what did she choose?

JEREMY

She submitted, of course.

GEOFF

Well good for Alex. Please tell her I thought it was a thought provoking read.

JEREMY

Will do.

GEOFF

Anyway, I better get going mate. I have to head down to Woody's.

JEREMY

Yeah I better take Samson home, he looks tired.

Samson the giant dog lies sprawled lazily on the ground next to the park bench.

GEOFF

Do you two want a lift home?

2

INT. GEOFF'S CAR. SPRINGWOOD QLD.DAY.

2

Geoff, Jeremy and Samson sit silently in the confines of Geoff's small Daewoo Lanos hatchback. Jeremy and Samson exit the vehicle in an awkward manner upon reaching Jeremy's home.

Geoff continues his drive to Woody's Automotive where he drops his car off to be serviced before setting out into the suburban Springwood streets on foot.

3

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS. SPRINGWOOD QLD. DAY.

3

Meandering through Springwood suburbia, Geoff walks past St Edwards Catholic Parish and sees a church community sign that reads: *'It doesn't matter if you're gay, straight, bi or fly, thy Lord God has time for every guy (and girl).'*

Geoff stops and silently reads the strange message on the church notice sign before entering the small Parish through the open front door.

4

INT. ST EDWARDS CATHOLIC PARISH. SPRINGWOOD QLD. DAY.

4

Once inside the parish, Geoff finds himself alone. He inspects the unremarkable interiors and walks down the centre aisle to the front of the parish, where he stands motionless. Out of the corner of his eye he sights the confessional booth, which he is drawn to. Walking over slowly, Geoff enters the booth and takes a seat. A few moments after, the small window, which separates the confessor from absolver, opens. Geoff pauses for several moments before beginning to speak.

GEOFF

Forgive me father for I have
sinned.

A long pause ensues until The PRIEST interjects.

PRIEST

Please my son, continue.

Another brief pauses ensues.

GEOFF

I don't know what to say next,
Father.

PRIEST

Do not worry my son; let your
stiff tongue loosen, anything you
say in here is covered by the
seal of confessional.

Geoff remains awkwardly silent.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

How long has it been since your
last confession?

GEOFF

Well father, I have to be honest.
This is my first.

PRIEST

Truly?

GEOFF

Yes, Father. I'm not even Catholic. Is that a problem?

PRIEST

Well, not really. But I have to ask what has drawn you into our Parish confessional.

GEOFF

I was intrigued by your church notice board, that's what brought me inside the Parish. And I guess I've always been interested by the ritual of confessional, so I just came in here to see what all the fuss is about.

PRIEST

Well I'm glad the Lord has delivered you to us my son. But let's get down to the official stuff; do you have anything to confess? We can discuss the community notice sign afterwards.

GEOFF

Oh, okay.

Geoff pauses, searching his mind for an immoral transgression.

PRIEST

Come on now my son. There must be something to confess, we are all sinners.

Geoff continues to think quietly.

GEOFF

Okay, okay I've got one. But it's a little embarrassing.

PRIEST

There is nothing to be embarrassed about. I will not pass judgement. I have heard some truly sickening admissions in this very booth. A very respected parish member once sat on the stool on which you are seated and confessed to having an unrealised sexual predilection towards his adolescent daughter. While

(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)
another told me that he had 62
kilograms of chicken nuggets in
his refrigerator but nowhere to
store them.

Geoff looks back through the confessional window puzzled.

GEOFF
Wow. Okay Father. Can I call you
Father? Is that the right title?

PRIEST
Yes, Father is the correct title.

GEOFF
Well Father, I have to admit I
have an inclination for
voyeurism.

Geoff pauses.

PRIEST
Okay. And have you acted upon
these voyeuristic urges my son?

GEOFF
Well no, not of late, Father.

PRIEST
But you have in the past?

GEOFF
Only once, about a year or so
ago.

PRIEST
Then tell me about it, this is a
confessional after all, you must
confess to something. That's why
we are here.

GEOFF
As I said, it was about a year
ago and I was driving home from
work one night. It was just a
regular Tuesday, or was it a
Monday? It was either a Tuesday
or Monday and I was just a few
streets away from my house when I
spotted a family having dinner
through their living room window.

Geoff pauses.

PRIEST

Please, please continue. There is nothing to be ashamed of.

GEOFF

Now I didn't know these people, Father. They just lived a couple of streets away from me and I assume they still do, as I have not passed by their home since. Anyhow, the view to their family dinner table was almost completely unobstructed from the roadside and something about their situation compelled me to detour from my regularly speedy homeward commute. So, after several moments of hesitation, I turned the car around, drove back to their residence and I parked my car directly across the road from them, not 20 metres from their family dining table.

Geoff pauses.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

And I am not proud to say this but under the cover of darkness I watched them as they talked, smiled and consumed their entire meal.

PRIEST

Was it a nice meal?

GEOFF

Sorry Father?

PRIEST

Was it a lavish feast, my son?

GEOFF

Well no not really, it was just an average family dinner.

PRIEST

And did you gain pleasure from this experience?

GEOFF

I guess I did, otherwise I wouldn't have done it. There is just something about watching people in their most uninhibited state that hypnotizes me. Is that a sin?

PRIEST

Yes, I suppose it is. But it is also a natural human instinct. Voyeurism is not uncommon amongst homosapiens. It's what attracts us to art forms like the novel, photography, cinema. For some reason we seem to gain pleasure from viewing the lives of others.

GEOFF

So what do you recommend?

PRIEST

I don't know. It doesn't seem like you're a peeping tom or anything. This was just an isolated incident right?

GEOFF

Yes Father, just the once.

PRIEST

So I would just remind you to be mindful of your voyeuristic tendencies.

GEOFF

And do I have to repent or ask for forgiveness?

PRIEST

Christ, no! What you told me is like a particle of plankton in a deep, deep sea of sin. I don't think our Lord thy God would be bothered by your transgression.

GEOFF

Well I suppose that is a relief. I thought I might have been in hot water with the big man. So have I received penance for my transgression Father?

PRIEST

Yes, yes my son, I grant you absolution. Now tell me, what was it about our community notice sign that compelled you to enter our Parish?

GEOFF

Well I was a little surprised by the topic of the message; that and its longwindedness.

PRIEST

I'm not sure if longwindedness is a word.

GEOFF

Perhaps not, but you get my point.

PRIEST

Yes, yes I understand. So what is it about the message of our sign that surprised you?

GEOFF

Well the topic of gay rights is not one I often associate with the church, Father.

PRIEST

It's not?

GEOFF

No.

PRIEST

Well that's a shame.

GEOFF

Would I be allowed to ask you a rather frank and personal question?

PRIEST

Of course my son, proceed.

GEOFF

I was just wondering if perhaps the context of your church community sign was a reflection of your own personal beliefs.

PRIEST

I am the one who writes the weekly sign message, so guess I have a strong influence over the content.

GEOFF

Sooooo.....

Geoff pauses awkwardly.

PRIEST

Yes?

GEOFF

I am not sure if the question I want to ask is appropriate, Father.

PRIEST

Oh please, continue. I have found that appropriateness tends to undermine from the confessional process.

GEOFF

But I thought my confession was over.

PRIEST

Well it is technically, but we are still in the booth. So please proceed.

GEOFF

If you insist, Father. The question I was so stifled to ask is if you, yourself, are a homosexual?

PRIEST

Oh no, no, son. What makes you think that?

GEOFF

The content of the sign.

PRIEST

Oh I see. I can tell you with great honesty that I am not a homosexual. I'm actually quite the ladies man. In fact, I lay with 3 women before I entered the priesthood.

Geoff raises his eyebrows.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

I, like most other men, am troubled by the sexual temptation of women, daily. But I constantly draw upon the Lord's strength to guide me through it, after all, I am a parish priest and sexual relations with males or females is neither appropriate or permitted, regardless of how tempting it might be or how humane it may feel.

GEOFF

Oh, I'm sorry if I have offended you in anyway, Father. Please forgive me.

PRIEST

No need to be sorry and you are forgiven. However, I really don't see how you thought that assumption would offend me. I do however see how the content of the sign may have confused you given the churches staunch approach to homosexuality, so I will elaborate a little. I personally acknowledge that we no longer live in a society that is heavily dependent on organised religion or its complicated rhetoric. And I simply do not think that it should influence contemporary laws, attitudes, beliefs or prejudices. After all, there is no religion higher than humanity itself.

GEOFF

That is refreshing to hear from a man of the cloth.

PRIEST

Why thank you, young man. I have never been called that before.

GEOFF

What?

PRIEST

A man of the cloth.

GEOFF

Well that's what you are right?

PRIEST

I suppose it is.

A pause ensues.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

My apologies I haven't formally introduced myself, I am Father James Wood the parish leader.

GEOFF

Nice to meet you, Father. My name is Geoff.

PRIEST

Is that short for Geoffrey?

GEOFF

It is.

PRIEST

Well it's lovely to meet you, Geoffrey. It's not often that non-believers visit our parish, let alone enter the confessional booth. It's a privilege to have you under the Lord's roof.

GEOFF

Why thank you, Father. It has been an enlightening experience.

PRIEST

I apologise if that non-believer remark sounded judgemental. I cringed as soon I said it; sometimes I get caught up in the orthodox language of the church, I hope you will forgive me.

GEOFF

Of course, it's not a problem Father. I work in a framing store, framing pictures, paintings, posters and the such and I often find myself bamboozling customers with technical lingo. When you become a part of a community, profession and/or belief, dialogue can become very insular.

PRIEST

Indeed. But that does not excuse my remark. I should be more considerate when I speak.

GEOFF

Perhaps, but judgment, whether it be major or minor, is part of human nature isn't it?

PRIEST

Well, yes. But that does not mean that we should excuse ourselves of it. Mankind is a tragically flawed beast but we should try to hold ourselves in higher regard. After all, we are made in God's image, so it is of the utmost importance that we represent him the best we can.

GEOFF

Forgive me, Father. But if we are made in God's image, does that not mean he too is a tragically flawed beast?

PRIEST

To answer your question you just have to look at the indecent world we live in. Now, I'm not talking about the profanities, murders, teenage pregnancies or abortions; that's petty stuff. I'm talking about the moral turpitude of blatant injustices, selfishness, greed and inequality that exist uncontested. They multiply on a daily basis and no one seems to be bothered by it.

Geoff and the Priest both pause for reflection.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

You know what, Geoffrey? Lately I have found myself contemplating what Christ was thinking when he was being nailed to the cross at Calvary. Leaving this earth for just those three days must have felt like heaven itself.

5 **EXT. SURBUBAN STREETS. SPRINGWOOD. QLD. DAY**

5

Geoff, once again in his own company, emerges from the Parish and continues his walk through the Springwood streets. After a short while of keen observation, Geoff suddenly stops and pauses in front of 'The Horseman's Trading Post Western Wear Store'. He stands motionless in front of the building, captivated by the large fibreglass horse that stands upon the roof. After observing the store from afar for a few moments, Geoff approaches the front door and enters.

6 **INT. THE HORSEMANS TRADING POST. SPRINGWOOD QLD. DAY.**

6

Geoff's entry into 'The Horseman's Trading Post' triggers the entry alarm bell. The sound of the entry bell alerts the middle-aged store clerk SHANNON, who arises from behind the counter where she is arranging belt buckles.

STORE CLERK SHANNON

Hey there partner, welcome to The Horseman's Trading Post.

GEOFF

Hi.

STORE CLERK SHANNON

Can I help you with anything in particular today, sir?

GEOFF

Oh no, thanks. I am just browsing, really. I've never been in a Western Wear store before; I really like the horse on the roof.

STORE CLERK SHANNON

Well that's good to hear. Anyway, my name is Shannon; just give me a yell if you need any assistance.

GEOFF

Okay. Thank you.

Geoff proceeds to peruse the store merchandise. He flicks through racks of cowboy shirts, fondles horse saddles, handles cowboy boots and gazes upon glittering buckles. Geoff soon finds himself at a gigantic wall of hats. Varying styles of Akubras, Stetsons and Tombstones line the wall. Geoff looks on at the hats in awe.

STORE CLERK SHANNON

Nice hats, aye. You can try some on if you like.

GEOFF

For true?

Shannon laughs and walks over to offer Geoff assistance.

STORE CLERK SHANNON

Yes sweetheart, for true. Now what style do you like?

Geoff's gazes contemplatively.

GEOFF

Ummmmmm. I like that one.

Geoff points to a Tombstone felt cowboy hat, a style synonymous with the cowboys of the Wild West of North America.

STORE CLERK SHANNON

Ahhh, the Tombstone, a classic. Here you go, hun. There is a mirror over there.

Shannon passes Geoff the hat and points to the mirror on the other side of the store. Geoff walks over, stands in front of the mirror and places the hat upon his head.

GEOFF

Huh, looks pretty good.

Geoff is quite clearly pleased with himself.

STORE CLERK SHANNON

Dunn'it. Feel free to try on a shirt and jeans as well, if you like.

7 **EXT. THE HORSEMAN'S TRADING POST. SPRINGWOOD QLD. DAY.** 7

Neil Young's 'Vampire Blues' plays as Geoff exits the Horseman's Trading Post projecting a look of daring. Geoff has abandoned his regular clothing and is now fully outfitted in classic 'cowboy' western wear. Carrying his regular clothes in a Horseman's Trading Post branded plastic bag, Geoff confidently gallivants the suburban Springwood streets modeling his new look. He walks past several individuals at the small strip of shops that is home to a real estate agent, chemist, butcher, café and local convenience store. All of the store patrons and employees greet him with looks of confusion. This does not deter his newfound confidence.

8 **EXT. LOGAN CITY COUNCIL BUS STOP. SPRINGWOOD QLD. DAY.** 8

Geoff, dressed in his cowboy attire, sits alone at a Logan City Council bus stop. After a short time, an ELDERLY LADY towing a small bag joins him at the opposite end of the long bus shelter seat. Once she has seated, Geoff and the Elderly Lady exchange glances.

GEOFF

Ma'am.

Geoff tips his hat to the Elderly Lady. She responds with a nod and a smile. Geoff and the Elderly Lady sit at the bus stop quietly for sometime. They remain seated on the bench as one council bus arrives to drop a passenger off who immediately departs the bus stop on foot. Suddenly, out of the blue, the Elderly Lady bursts into a fit of loud and hearty laughter, which catches Geoff off guard.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Is everything okay ma'am?

The Elderly Lady continues to laugh uncontrollably. Geoff shuffles along the seat, assuming a closer position to the Elderly Lady who coughs and gasps for air as she laughs. Geoff looks on, concerned. The Elderly Lady soon composes herself.

ELDERLY LADY

Oh, yes my dear, everything is just fine. Don't mind me.

The Elderly Lady reaches beneath the frames of her glasses to wipe a tear from her eye before faintly chuckling once more.

GEOFF

Are you sure? Is there anything I can do?

ELDERLY LADY

Oh no, I'm sorry to disturb you, young man.

GEOFF

It's not a problem. I just wanted to make sure everything is okay.

ELDERLY LADY

Oh everything is just fine.

GEOFF

What were you laughing at?

ELDERLY LADY

I was just thinking about the birth of my first child.

GEOFF

Oh. What was so funny about the birth?

ELDERLY LADY

Well he almost died during labour.

The elderly lady fights back the laughter.

GEOFF

That doesn't sound very funny.

ELDERLY LADY

Oh no, I guess not. I apologize for laughing; I just couldn't help myself. Do you want me to tell you of it?

GEOFF

Of what?

ELDERLY LADY

The birth of my first child, David?

GEOFF

Well sure.

ELDERLY LADY
You wouldn't mind?

GEOFF
Not at all.

ELDERLY LADY
Okay, pipe up if I'm boring you.

Geoff nods.

ELDERLY LADY
Please note, this is my account of the event; others may vary in length, articulation and estimation. My husband Rocky's description would be vastly different. He is a more conventional soul than myself and we often disagree on the narration of past events. Just to let you know, the story has a happy ending; everything turned out okay, well relatively okay, David is a Real Estate agent now. But the first few minutes of his little life were fairly traumatic. Anyhow, about the birth: it was after a straightforward 52-week pregnancy that I went into an induced labour at the Royal Women's Hospital of Brisbane. The birth was nothing like the pregnancy, there were some major complications during labour and Rocky and I were very lucky to have a vigorous and healthy infant son. To cut a long story short, David turned himself in the womb and was upside down when they tried to pull him out, so all the blood rushed to his head. I asked the doctor why he would do that after the birth and they said the little fella probably just didn't want to come out. They also said that he didn't breathe for the first 3 minutes of his life. Now this was the moment I was laughing at and some people may think it is peculiar, but when I look back on David's birth, I don't recall the sense of relief I felt when the nurses told me he was fine and healthy. I don't recall the first time I

(MORE)

ELDERLY LADY (CONT'D)
saw his limp little body get
rushed out of the room. I don't
even recall his loud and vicious
cries that echoed from the
adjoining room upon
resuscitation, which both calmed
and worried Rocky so much. I just
remember how odd it was that the
doctor checked his wristwatch not
thirty seconds prior to
extracting little David from my
womb. I mean, why was the time
relevant. And why was he even
wearing a wristwatch during the
delivery of a child? I was so
involved and transfixed on that
one particular moment that I
don't remember anything else
about David's birth. Everything
except that one moment is a blur.

GEOFF
Wow.

A pause in conversation ensues.

ELDERLY LADY
Sorry son, I've been rambling.

GEOFF
No, no. Its fine, it was an
interesting story to say the
least.

Another brief silence comes of the conversation.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Can I ask you a question?

ELDERLY LADY
Why of course.

GEOFF
Did you ever ask the Doctor what
he checked his watch for?

ELDERLY LADY
Oh yes, sorry, I did.

GEOFF
What did he say? Did he have
somewhere to be?

ELDERLY LADY
No, no.

GEOFF
Well what was his reasoning?

ELDERLY LADY
He told me it was a force of
habit.

9

INT. ART WORKS FRAMING STORE. SPRINGWOOD QLD. DAY.

9

Geoff dressed in his newly acquired Western Wear enters Art Works Framing Store. Upon entering, Store Manager, Charlene, scornfully gazes upon his new look. She views him head to toe, twice over.

CHARLENE
What this?

Charlene thrusts her hands forward towards Geoff.

GEOFF
What's what?

CHARLENE
This.

Charlene repeats the hand movement, this time approaching close enough to pinch the front of Geoff's 'cowboy' shirt.

GEOFF
Oh this. It's my new look. Pretty
snazzy, huh?

Charlene looks perplexed.

CHARLENE
No, it not snazzy. It stupid.
Frank! Come look at Geoff. He
look stupid.

FRANK, a diminutive Chinese man who is both Geoff's co-worker and Charlene's husband, emerges from the back room.

FRANK
Oh hey Geoff, great outfit, you
look like John Wayne.

CHARLENE
No, no, no.

Geoff and Frank look at each other confused.

CHARLENE (CONT'D)
This not appropriate dress.
Cowboy dress up is not suitable
for Art Works Springwood. This
framing and print store, not
rodeo.

GEOFF

Well this I know. But you always told me I could wear whatever I wanted to work.

CHARLENE

Yes but normally you dress bad but understated. This not understated. This novelty.

Charlene thrusts her hands towards Geoff once again.

CHARLENE (CONT'D)

Where did you get this clothes from?

GEOFF

Down at The Horseman's Trading Post on Springwood Road.

CHARLENE

Why?

GEOFF

I don't know. I went in there for a browse and liked what I saw so I thought I might give it a go. And who's to say it's a novelty? I quite like the look of it, myself. Perhaps I will dress like this always from now on.

Frank, standing timidly in the corner, looks towards Geoff and gives him a 'thumbs up'.

CHARLENE

No! This dress is not appropriate for store. You not cowboy. You are Geoff, just Geoff. You not tough like cowboy. You are a 'wussy' man. So I don't want you come to work wearing this clothes again. Okay?

Geoff wears a look of defeat upon his face.

GEOFF

Okay.

CHARLENE

Now go help Frank he has lots of jobs to do.

Geoff walks over to the backroom doorway where Frank is standing.

GEOFF

Gee, I guess she isn't too fond of western films then.

FRANK

Strangely, they are her favourite.

10

INT. YOUNGS CHINESE RESTAURANT. SPRINGWOOD QLD. DAY.

10

Geoff and Jeremy sit eating Chinese food with chopsticks at a back booth table.

JEREMY

Once again, I have to say I really like this look. It's very unique.

GEOFF

Thanks. Charlene isn't too fond of it though.

JEREMY

She isn't? I thought it would be right up her alley.

GEOFF

Sometimes I wonder if we know the same Charlene.

JEREMY

What's her objection to it?

GEOFF

That it is not a professional look, that it is not as she puts it, 'usual'.

JEREMY

Usual? Charlene's not usual.

GEOFF

I know, right.

JEREMY

Listen, I just love that hat. Can I try it on?

GEOFF

Sure.

Geoff removes his cowboy hat and hands it to Jeremy, who, after inspecting the hat, places it on his head in a comical fashion.

JEREMY
How does it look?

GEOFF
Good, but you're wearing it
wrong.

JEREMY
How?

GEOFF
It needs to sit flatter on your
head. The brim needs to sit lower
to your brow.

Jeremy refits the hat according to Geoff's
recommendations.

JEREMY
How do you know if it fits right?

GEOFF
Well is it sitting firmly?

JEREMY
Relatively.

GEOFF
Give the underside of the brim a
firm flick with your index
finger. Like this.

Geoff mimics the process by flicking his index finger
above his forehead. Jeremy repeats the gesture, striking
the underside of the brim, which pushes the hat up off his
head and down behind his back.

JEREMY
Guess it's too big.

GEOFF
Just a little.

Jeremy retrieves the hat and places it upright on the
table.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
So how is everything with your
sister? Is the essay controversy
over?

Geoff reaches across the table and turns the cowboy hat
over so it sits upside down.

JEREMY
No, far from it. It's snowballed
out of control, actually.

GEOFF

Really?

JEREMY

Yes, one of the faculty members posted a link to the article on social media, along with a strongly worded message.

GEOFF

Gee.

JEREMY

Yeah, it's caused a bit of a stir. A couple online sources reported on the controversy. The Melbourne Age were so impressed with the article they even published a hard copy of the essay in their Thursday edition, which was a nice touch, but it has just perpetuated the online debate.

GEOFF

Is the backlash pretty strong?

JEREMY

Yeah. Let me read some of the online comments.

Jeremy retrieves his Smartphone and begins to read out some of the comments directed towards Alexandra's essay.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

This is from the news.com.au website. T-Dawg84 says 'this article is absolute tripe. I am outraged that it has been selected as a finalist in a high school history competition; the entire nation should be outraged and this girl should be suspended from school, not glorified as an academic.'

Geoff shakes his head.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

SydneyMum101 says 'an unnecessary conflict? This girl is an idiot! We had to engage in World War I to help our allies contain the spread of communism!'

GEOFF

Well that's an erroneous response. Do people think before they type this stuff?

JEREMY

I don't think so. Oh here is another good one. Steven Brown From Mossman says 'the young girl that wrote this paper appears to have no idea of the trials and tribulations of the ANZAC soldiers. She appears to have no clue of what the spirit of the ANZAC is, or any idea or respect for the nation of Australia. As an ex-serviceman and a current student, and most of all an Australian, I am ashamed to think that people like you call yourselves Aussies.

GEOFF

Bit severe, isn't it Steve?

JEREMY

Oh, and my favourite one from BossHogDogg69.

GEOFF

Great name.

JEREMY

I know right. He says, well I assume it's a he, 'that's what happens when you allow young neo-liberal, femmo bitches to voice their opinion. I think you need to drop the history and focus on Home Economics, sweetheart.'

GEOFF

Oh my. Were there any positive comments?

JEREMY

Yeah there were a couple, but they faced a classy onslaught of online ridicule as well.

GEOFF

People are vicious aren't they? How is Alex taking it all?

JEREMY

About as well as a 16-year-old girl can, I suppose? The teacher who posted the article has apologized for all the hoo-ha and the Principal is going to make a formal apology.

GEOFF

Well I guess that's a start.

JEREMY

Seems like the right thing to do would have been to make sure that none of this happened in the first place. I just can't believe how far this has gone.

GEOFF

Yeah. Tell Alex I'm impressed she got published in The Age. That's a halfway reputable publication.

JEREMY

Yep.

GEOFF

So when is the principal going to apologise?

JEREMY

At the mid-semester awards night on Friday. You should come along. They always have a couple of student performances, which can be entertaining.

GEOFF

What time does it start?

JEREMY

7pm.

GEOFF

Yeah, I should be able to make it. Hey, unrelated topic, but did you know Nietzsche was buried in a church cemetery?

JEREMY

No. No I didn't.

11

EXT. SURBURBAN STREETS. SPRINGWOOD QLD. DAY.

11

Neil Young's 'Vampire Blues' plays once again as Geoff stands at the front door of his home. With a Horseman's Trading Post plastic bag in hand, Geoff projects a daring look before placing his cowboy hat upon his head, commencing to walk down the street with a cowboy swagger. The sight of an 'urban cowboy' amuses several passersby, but Geoff continues walking undeterred. Soon, he arrives at the same bus stop where he encountered the Elderly Lady. Geoff sits at the bus stop as he waits for a bus to arrive. After a few moments, the 200 Bus arrives. Geoff climbs aboard and greets the MIDDLE AGED BUS DRIVER.

MIDDLE AGED BUS DRIVER

Where to, Sherriff?

GEOFF

Just one zone, thanks.

MIDDLE AGED BUS DRIVER

One zone? Is that still in your jurisdiction?

A BUS COMMUTER who is seated behind the bus driver bursts into laughter. Geoff remains silent and hands The Middle Aged Bus Driver the money for the fare before walking down to the back of the bus to assume his seat.

Exiting the council bus, Geoff walks the same suburban streets that he explored at the beginning of the episode. He passes 'The Horseman's Trading Post' where Shannon the sales clerk is closing the main door. She stops and waves. Geoff waves back and continues walking.

Geoff's meanderings continue past a few local shops where he is watched by several passers who are all greatly amused by the sight of an 'urban cowboy'. They holler, point and laugh, much to Geoff's dismay.

Soon, Geoff emerges at the St Andrews Catholic Parish where he is amused to see a new church notice sign that reads, 'God Answers to KneEmail'.

Continuing on from the parish, Geoff finally reaches Woody's Automotive where his white Daewoo Lanos is parked outside the front door of the mechanics reception. Geoff enters the reception.

12

INT. WOODYS AUTOMOTIVE. SPRINGWOOD QLD. DAY.

12

Upon entering, the RECEPTIONIST can't help but laugh aloud when seeing 'Cowboy' Geoff.

GEOFF

I'm here to pick up the Deawoo; name's Geoff. I settled the bill over the phone.

The Receptionist, attempting to hold in her laughter, responds.

RECEPTIONIST

Yes, I remember. Here are the keys. Thanks for choosing to service your vehicle at Woody's Automotive. Please give us a call if you have any troubles.

GEOFF

Will do, thanks.

Geoff takes the keys and walks out of the office. As soon as Geoff exits, The Receptionist bursts into hysterical laughter and runs into the garage via the back door to alert the three Mechanics of Geoff's cowboy attire, which she finds so comical. The Mechanics immediately stop what they are doing and proceed to the garage door where the receptionist stands pointing at Geoff who is now reversing his car out of the car park. The Mechanics stand next to The Receptionist and watch Geoff in amusement.

Geoff, aware that he is being made fun of rolls his window down, sticks his hand out of the vehicle and makes a two fingered 'hand-gun' with his index finger and thumb which he points fiercely in the direction of the group of Mechanics as he drives off.

13

INT. AUDITORIUM. SPRINGWOOD HIGH SCHOOL. QLD. DAY.

13

Geoff, now dressed in his 'normal' casual attire, enters the crowded Springwood High School auditorium where the mid-semester awards night formalities have already begun. Geoff rather obnoxiously navigates his way down the centre aisle before spotting Jeremy and his family and the seat they have reserved for him. After clumsily climbing over a sea of spectators, Geoff assumes his reserved position.

GEOFF

Thanks for saving me a seat.

Geoff's boisterous comment interrupts the on stage announcer who pauses for a moment to glare at Geoff. Jeremy also shushes him. Acknowledging his ignorance, Geoff mouths the word 'sorry' and slumps back into his seat to view the awards night ceremony.

The awards ceremony continues uninterrupted with a number of uninspiring proceedings, which include the presentation of awards for academic excellence in Mathematics and English. The event suddenly springs to life when a group of Grade 10 dancers perform a dance routine to Madonna's 'Like A Prayer', which features a flamboyant male African student dressed as Jesus dancing with a group of female students. The performance is absurdly camp and receives a mixed reception from the audience. Afterwards, the school

band plays an instrumental performance of Glen Campbell's 'True Grit'. During the performance, Jeremy leans across and sparks up conversation with Geoff.

JEREMY

What's with the casual dress?

Jeremy points his finger at Geoff's clothes.

GEOFF

I decided to give it a rest.

JEREMY

Why? The cowboy thing looked real sharp.

GEOFF

I know, it was just a bit uncomfortable and it drew a lot of attention.

JEREMY

Fair enough.

GEOFF

Have I missed the apology?

JEREMY

Nah.

The rendition of 'True Grit' finishes and the Vice Principal MRS. MOORE approaches the podium to address the audience.

MRS. MOORE

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to thank you all for attending our mid-semester awards night. We have one final performance to conclude this evening's proceedings. But first, let's put our hands together for all of tonight's award recipients and performers.

The audience applauds.

MRS. MOORE (CONT'D)

On a side night note, I would also like to extend a formal apology on behalf of the entire faculty, student body, school community and myself to Grade 12 student Alexandra Potter.

Restrained applause ensues.

Geoff and Jeremy applaud and look at each other.

GEOFF

Is that it?

JEREMY

I guess so.

MRS. MOORE

Thank you all, again, for attending. I hope to see you all again at the end of semester and wish you all a safe trip home. Now I will hand the microphone over to Joseph Harwick who is going to conclude tonight's events.

A small, neat and nerdy redhead student, wearing a school uniform and holding a bass guitar, approaches the microphone, timidly. He is accompanied by his band, 'The Alligators', comprised of a guitarist and drummer, who are also dressed in school uniforms.

JOEY HARWICK

Hi, we're 'Joey Harwick and The Alligators'. We were going to play an original called 'The Lunch Money Blues', but the powers that be wouldn't allow it. So here's a Brissie classic.

Joey Harwick looks back at The Alligators and on the command of his drummer, the band begins to play 'Stranded' by The Saints. The song is short and sharp, lasting between 1:30 and 2 minutes. The band members remain completely restrained during the performance, focusing on providing a tight performance rather than rocking out.

The song ends and the crowd applaud. Midway through the applause, the passive looking Joey Harwick removes his bass guitar and smashes it into the ground several times. His small figure can hardly damage the heavy instrument, but nonetheless it is left damaged on the floor as he storms to the side off the stage. The other members of The Alligators both watch on. The drummer stands from his seat and laughs, while the guitarist walks over and stomps on the abandoned instrument before walking back to his position and gently resting his guitar on a nearby stand.

The Audience is shocked and the curtain is drawn on the stage. Geoff and Jeremy clap.

GEOFF

Jesus!

END