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Oranges and Sunshine

By Rona Munro

Sue, right now,
your baby needs to be safe
and you need a bit of support,
don't you?
I know you love her.
Of course you do.
But this will give you a chance
to sort yourself out.
I couldn't get on top of it,
with everything...
Don't, Margaret. Don't take her.
Do you want to put her down, Sue?
Just put her in the carrycot.
You all right, love?
Yeah?
Put her down.
There you go.
You'll be able to see her tomorrow.
I'll take you to her and you'll
be able to see that she's fine.
Whoa, darling.
Don't!
Don't! Please! Margaret, please!
I'll do better, I will!
The thing I love about this group
is that you don't have to
explain yourself here.
We've all been adopted as kids
and OK, we've all had different
experiences after that,
but it's a big bottom line, isn't it?
Anyway, I'm glad to be here tonight.
I don't mind telling you.
I've been getting a lot of grief at work.
Things have been
getting me down, really.
Been feeling a bit, a bit lonely.
You know, when you always think
is it because of what happened
when I was a kid?
You know,
maybe I'll never be right.
But you can't always know that,
can you?

You just...
you just always wonder...
Is this where the Triangle Group is?
Yes, that's right,
but we've finished for the night.
Charlotte. Charlotte Cooper.
Can I have a quick word?
It won't take a minute.
Well, what you're looking for
isn't really what this group does.
This is a local support group, really.
I might be able to refer you to somebody
who'd be able to offer you counselling.
I don't want counselling.
I want to find out who I am.
Well, this isn't really the way to...
I don't even know if my name
and birth date are right.
I remember leaving England...
I was four years old...
I was in a children's home
because my parents were dead.
They sent me in a boat to Australia.
All I know for certain is
I was born in Nottingham.
What do you mean
they put you on a boat?
They put us all on a boat for Oz.
Hundreds of us.
Your adoptive parents were emigrating?
No. No parents, no guardians.
Just a couple of hundred kids,
they sent us away.
- That can't be right.
- What do you mean?
It's simply not legal. There's no way
a group of unaccompanied children
would be shipped off like that.
- You calling me a liar?
No, of course not.
That is the one thing I know...
I know about who I am.
Don't you tell me that's not true.
OK, look. I can see you're upset.

Why don't you come to my office
on another day?
Take this.
That's my name,
that's all I've got to tell anyone
where I've come from.

It is 10:

I can't find anything else.
I've tried everything.
I've been everywhere.
Now, my time's running out.
I'm flying back.
So you have a look and you write
and tell me how wrong I am.
You come 10,000 miles to find home,
they call you a liar.
Wait.
You're not a bloody saint.
You were tired.
Yeah, I know,
but I should have seen it coming.
You can't always see it coming.
- Why's Ben out of bed?
- Oh, hello, miss. Ben spilled his juice.
- It wasn't my fault.
- What are you doing out of bed?
I can't sleep. Can I read?
No. Go on, go back up to bed
and I'll come tuck you up in a minute.
It's not fair, I'm older than him.
- Happens all the time.
- Come on, up you go.
I just hope I did the right thing.
Margaret, we're social workers.
There's no right thing.
There's social-work practice,
court decisions...
My professional judgement.
Which means that sometimes
you're doing the right thing,
and sometimes
you're oppressing the poor
with the middle-class values

of a reactionary government.
Don't make that face at me.
Kiss from Mummy.
Sometimes, you're just tired.
Ooh, you're heavy. Now, then.
Mum?
Mum?
Had bad dream.
Oh, sweetie. You OK?
What happened?
It was a long, long tunnel thing
and I couldn't...
You couldn't what?
Couldn't get out and I couldn't find you.
Darling, I'm here.
I lost you.
Oh, sweetie. I'm here now.
I'm not going anywhere, OK?
All right?
You going to go back to sleep?
All right.
- I think you have to talk about it.
- Exactly.
I only told my husband
just this last year.
Good for you.
What do you think, Nicky?
Um, well, I know what you mean,
but sometimes I think it sounds stupid
if I told everyone
what was bothering me.
What is it?
Um...
It's my brother, my brother Jack.
Uh...
I don't really see him, you see.
Do you want to tell everyone
who Jack is, Nicky?
Mmm...
Uh, yeah.
- That's my brother, Jack.
- That's lovely.
He found me a few years ago.
Um...

Just got a letter out of the blue.
'Dear Nicky, I think I may be
your brother Jack.'
And he was.
Well, soon as I saw him, I knew.
I mean...
I remembered. That's right.
Once upon a time,
I used to have a brother.
So where is he?
Australia.
Can you believe it?
It was the Sally Army
who found me for him.
They'd taken us both in
and put me in my first foster home
and shipped Jack off to Australia.
So, uh...
I mean, I know I have family,
I suppose,
but he's so far away,
and sometimes it's hard to feel...
Anyway.
So was he adopted
by an Australian family?
Uh, no. No.
It was just kids, Jack said.
A big ship full of kids from 5 to 13,
all being sent off to Australia.
You never told me that bit, Nicky.
Didn't I?
Well, that's what happened.
Could still all be
just coincidence.
Do you think so?
Well, if children did emigrate
to Australia in any numbers,
there must be some record of them.
I was just wondering
if you had any records
of any unaccompanied children
sent to Australia in the 1940s and '50s.
I don't think we ever had those
records in Australia House.

So there were children sent out there?
Um, do you know how many?
When? Why were they sent?
I've already told you.
We don't have any more information.
So who would know?
Why don't you ask your own government?
They're the ones
who sent the kids out there.
I know, I couldn't believe it.
I mean, I was still half thinking
that the story couldn't be true
and he just came out with it.
Yeah.
No, no. I think I'm going to...
I think I'm going to still get the later train
and I'm going to try
St Catherine's House now.
See if I can find
Charlotte's birth certificate.
If I can get her mother's
name off that,
then I can probably find out
when she died
and then when Charlotte
was placed in an orphanage.
We can start to trace her journey.
Maybe get some clues about why
Nicky's brother was sent away as well.
Charlotte's mother wasn't dead.
Lovely to see you, Merv.
How was your day?
Charlotte said
she was in an orphanage in 1950
because both her parents were dead.
Well, I found a record of a woman
with her mother's name
who got married in Nottingham in 1956,
not dead, very much alive
and eating wedding cake.
Might not be the same woman.
I've ordered up the certificate
but why would Charlotte have been sent
if she wasn't an orphan?

So if her mother was alive in '56,
she might still be alive.

- I know.

- So you going to follow that up?

Well, I'll find the address on the certificate
and follow the trail from there.

Do you think it's her?

About the right age.

Hello, Vera.

Yeah, not bad. And you?

Is that the time already?

Thanks.

Hang on, I'll finish that up.

Excuse me, are you Vera Wilson?

That's me.

How can I help you, love?

I was wondering if I could
have a word with you in private.

It's something personal.

I'll take you through.

What's it about?

It's about your family.

Oh, my God.

I knew you'd come one day.

It's you, isn't it? You're my baby.

No, Vera, I'm a social worker.

Do you know where our baby is?

Let's go somewhere

where we can talk in private.

Where is she?

Does she have a family?

Is she happy?

Charlotte's in Australia.

She grew up in a children's home
in Australia.

In Australia?

What was she doing over there?

What was she doing

in a children's home?

I went back to get her

and they told me she'd been adopted.

I went back to get her.

They told me she was better off.

She was in a real family.

What's she doing in a children's home
on the other side of the world?
This flight
is now closed and will depart.
Final call for British Airways...
All right, let me take that.
- How was your flight?
- All right.
We'll go out this way to the car.
You ready for tonight?
That's, uh, my mother.
Your grandmother.
She was very strict, you know.
Well, you've got to understand
how things were 40 years ago.
No-one wanted... the shame.
It was such a scandal.
Mother wouldn't have me in the house.
They took my baby away from me
at the hostel
and I tried to visit.
And then one day
they said she'd gone.
You had gone.
I kept this for you.
In case.
Well, I always kept it.
I'm up to my eyes at work.
I know.
And we can't afford it.
I know.
And the kids?
We'll be fine here.
Hey.
Oh!
- Nice to see you.
- You too.
Uh, Margaret.
This is my brother, Jack.
It's very nice to meet you.
I've heard a lot about you.
Good to meet you too.
How was the flight?
Uh, yeah, good.

Get these into the car.

- You all right?

- Yeah.

Still OK to come
to the reunion tomorrow?

Yeah. Yeah, of course.

You must be tired.

Yeah, a little bit.

So we are delighted
to see our usual wonderful turnout
of former Fairbridge residents.
This is a nostalgic and happy day
for all of us.

Now, just before I go,
this is Mrs Humphreys,
who has come all the way from England
to join one of our old Fairbridgians
at the reunion today.

She'd love to hear any stories
you have about your time here,
so do take the time to talk to her,
if you can.

Hello, my name's Margaret Humphreys.
I was recently contacted by a woman
who was sent here to Australia as a child
and has lost all contact
with her family in England.

And I'm here today to see if
any of you are in the same position.

If you want to talk to me,
just come and find me later.

All right. Thank you.

So is this all there is,
the bunkhouses, the farm buildings?

What about the school?

Well, you only got to go to school
if you finished your farm work first.

Jack told me some stories
about this place, didn't you, Jack?

Food was terrible, wasn't it?

What was it you used to have, Jack?

You could always tell the Fairbridge kids
because they were the ones
nicking the other kids' lunch boxes.

Do you know if all the other children
were sent out from Britain,
the same as you?

I don't know, I don't know.

Do you know who sent you?

- It's a bit hot. I'll be out by the bus.

- Yeah.

Sorry, Margaret.

This woman you were talking about.

- Did you find any family for her?

- Yes.

She was told that her mother
was dead but we found her.

- You found her mother?

- Yes.

Do you think I've got a mother?

Everybody's got a mother.

What year?

What year are we talking about?

Sorry to keep you waiting.

Any records of

who the child migrants were
would be back in the UK
or with local state authorities.

More.

Oh, there's so many of them.

These migrations...

were they organised schemes?

I can't tell you, really.

It's not my area, I'm afraid.

So, why have I never heard about it?

Why has no-one ever heard about it?

I don't suppose

anyone was really that interested.

Stay there while I get a view of you two.

What's up, Jack?

I can't stand Mother's Day.

Get the same feeling every year,
like someone's twisting a knife
inside me.

So, normally I stay inside on that day
and I draw the blinds
and I let the phone ring.

I was married, you know.

I've got three kids.
I never knew what was wrong with me.
You know,
I'd think about my mother all the time,
but I could never talk about it.
How can you talk about someone
when you've been told
they don't even exist?
I went to see this doctor.
He put me on antidepressants.
That didn't really help,
so I saved them up,
I saved them all up and then...
I mean, it wasn't my wife's fault,
you know.
There's a...
...there's an emptiness in me.
There always has been and I think...
I thought...
I think that the only thing
that could fill it is her, you know?
- Is my mother.
- Jack! Jack!
There's a very strong memory.
I was in the children's home in the UK,
I was only ten.
This man in a suit,
he came to see me and he says,
'How'd you like to go to Australia?
The sun shines every day.
You'd live in a white house,
ride a horse to school
and you'd pick oranges off the trees
for your breakfast.'
When I didn't say anything,
he says,
'Well, your mother's dead, you know,
so you might as well.'
So...
Now you're telling me that
she might not have been dead, after all.
No, I can't say that, Jack.
We just don't know.
What we can do is

we can search for her records
and see what we can find.
I don't know. Of course, of course.
I don't know.
You found your sister.
She was so happy to see you,
you know.
Nicky trusts you.
And I reckon I...
I think I should too.
There she is.
Hello, sweetie.
Hello, darling.
Good to see you.
How was the plane?
It was all right, actually.
Come on, guys.
- Did you get any sleep?
- Little bit, yeah.
You all right?
Oh, yeah. I'm tired. I'm exhausted.
But I'm very happy to be home.
That's what I found first.
By then I was desperate.
I've been searching court records,
children's panel, minutes, you name it.
No trace of the children anywhere.
I was just looking through
newspapers round about our date
and that leapt out at me.
Now you have
the name of the organisation.
- Fairbridge.
- It wasn't just Fairbridge.
All sorts of different charities
ran these schemes.
Churches, Barnardos.
Children from deprived backgrounds,
shipped off for a better
life in the colonies.
This is it.
This is all fitting together.
The scheme was run
from the 19th century

till... you won't believe this... 1970.
But there was a wave of
migrations to Australia
between the mid-'50s and the mid-'60s.
How big? How many kids?
I don't know exactly
but it must've been organised.
I mean, organised
at the level of government.
These children were in care.
Local authorities were their guardians.
For so many of them
to be systematically deported,
it must have been government policy.
The Home Secretary would have to
consent to them leaving the country.
The Australian Government
must've wanted to receive them.
White Australia, I suppose.
You're talking about the organised
deportation of children in care.
I don't have any concrete proof yet
but the evidence doesn't
leave much room for doubt.
So, who's taking responsibility for
what happened to these children
once they reached Australia?
Oh, Merv.
I've got the names of
hundreds of people in my suitcase,
who all want to know who they are.
I know.
Who do I ask? Where do I start?
Are you going to look
at all that stuff now?
Jet lag.
I thought you said you were
working in the morning.
I've got to. I've been summoned.
Merv?
I'm going to have to get back to Australia.
Well, catch your breath first, eh?
We can see you now.
...and sent it to

the other department.

Shut the door, please.

To the other department?

OK. Take a seat.

Two weeks?

OK.

Well, as you know, Rita's filled me in with what you've been up to.

I've read your report.

Look, I just want to say that

I have kept on top of my case load and I went to Australia in my own time, that was my annual leave.

- Well, I think that's appalling.

- What? What is?

That you had to use your own holiday to pursue this.

Oh.

I'm taking this to the social services committee.

Tell me. What is it you want to do?

Well, uh, the people that I've met, they want to find a record of who they are.

They just want to know where they came from.

- What do you need?

- Time.

Time to find their families.

How long?

Well... a year?

How about two?

Yes, that would be...

I'll make a recommendation to the committee.

So, are you talking about me working on this full-time?

That is what you want, isn't it?

Yes. Yes, it is.

Now, how are we going to fund you properly?

We're going to have raise your profile to try and get some public funding and we need donations.

Have you thought about
going to the press?

Merv?

It's being printed in the papers
in Sydney and Melbourne too.

- They're all the same.

- I know.

'Dear Mrs Humphreys,
I read the article in the paper.
Please could you help me
find my mother?

I was sent to Australia in 1957.

I have no birth certificate.'

I'm in trouble, aren't I?

Have I helped you understand all that, Bob?

It's a lot to take in.

They gave me the wrong name.

They'd given you the wrong name.

That's why it's taking so long
to find your birth certificate.

So, which name do I use?

Who am I?

You're the same person.

But I've got the wrong name.

You're using a different name
from the name on your birth certificate.

- Do you want to stop for a minute?

- No. No, I'm good.

So, what next?

Well, what would you like me to do next?

Thank you all very much

for your patience,

and I'll be with you as soon as I can.

- I'm very sorry to keep you waiting.

- Not a problem. I'm Dan.

Dan, please come in.

Oh, I'm Len Connelly.

I'm with Dan.

Oh, nice to meet you.

Well, I usually see people
on their own, but uh...

I'm moral support.

Right, well, Dan,

you'll be fine on your own

but if that's what you want...

- It's all right.

- It's what he wants, yeah.

Well, nice to meet you,
Mr Connelly.

- Uh... right. Shall we?

- Yeah.

So, I reckon if I do have any family,
they might be around Doncaster.

OK, right. Doncaster.

Well, from what you've told me,
I will be able to start to trace
your mother's birth certificate.

Oh, I've tried all of that. I've had
the best in the business working on it.

- Len.

- Nothing.

Can't be done.

Cost me a few bob too.

- Not that I'm short of a few bob...

- Excuse me.

I am trying to listen to Dan.

Well, I reckon you need
to see me, as well.

- Were you a child migrant too?

- I've just told you that.

Well, I'm sure that tracing your family
is very important to you.

But right now, this is Dan's time.

OK, so there are three possibilities.

We might be able to find
your mother's birth certificate,
and obviously that is what we want
and what we're hoping for.

We might find her and then discover
that she's already passed away.

We might...

we might not have any luck.

I'm really sorry. Excuse me?

What are you doing?

Could you put that down, please?

I was checking what you're up to.

I'm sorry, but if you interrupt again,
I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

When are you going to see me? I've got documents the detectives found me. They never found my mother. Well, if the world's best private detectives weren't able to trace her, I'm not really sure what you expect me to do. Well, I thought you could give it a go. I'm afraid I have a backlog of people to see on this trip and I won't be able to fit you in. But if you want to send me your documents, then I'll see what I can do. Right, now, Dan. What I'm going to need from you is any recollections that you have firstly from your early childhood... Well, you've certainly caused quite a stir, Mrs Humphreys. There's been a lot of comments since you broke this story in the newspapers. Well, I didn't exactly break the story. People are saying what happened to some of these children is an outrage. Would you care to comment on that?

- Well, I'd say it was, yes.
- That's rather a strong word, though.

I met a woman recently who was sent to Australia at five years of age and she wanted me to tell you that she lived with 15 other girls in an unheated, unventilated hut for ten years, and during that time, her only possessions were one dress and one pair of shoes. And then at age 15, she was told that she had to repay her debt of board and lodging and she was sent to work as unpaid slave labour

on a farm that was 50 miles
from the nearest road.

- So what this-

- And in all that time, she never knew
that she had a mother
still living in England
who had no idea where she was
or what had happened to her.

I'd like to know what word you would use
to describe what that mother
and daughter suffered.

Mrs Humphreys!

I've got to talk to you.

I'd like to take you to dinner.

My treat. My treat.

- I can buy my own dinner, thanks.

- Come on, what are you?

- One of those lesbian socialists?

- Shut up, Len.

He's all right.

Doesn't know what he's saying.

- She's turned crimson.

- He's all right.

Hey, Mrs Humphreys! Mrs Humphreys,

I want an appointment.

So, how long have you
been doing this work?

You know what?

I've been cleaning floors for 40 years.

First thing they did at Fairbridge
when I came off the boat,
put a mop in my hands.

'Stop your crying and clean that floor.'

How old were you?

I was eight.

I was crying too.

Didn't need to put a bucket
of water on the floor.

I was dropping enough water on it.

That was it.

Scrubbing for 40 years.

Sometimes...

...when I was shining up those floors,
I'd think, 'I wonder what my old mum

would think if she could see me now.'

So you remember your mum?

Of course.

Course I do.

Can't ever forget your mum, can you?

Just don't know where she is.

He's been in and out of the hospital
for years now,
but we've never seen him
the way he was the other night.

When your program went out on radio,
he just... he just broke down,
he just howled.

And then all he wanted to do
was get a hold of you.

- I'm glad I could be here.

- He's just over here.

I was only three.

Someone told me my parents were dead.

Then I was on a boat coming here.

I grew up in the orphanage.

You don't want to hear this, Margaret.

Yes, I do.

That's why I'm here.

It was Christmas.

I was really excited.

I... was about seven...
...by then.

I had this wonderful singing voice,
you see.

Used to give concerts at the orphanage
and this... dentist and his wife
asked if I'd come to their home
for Christmas Eve
and you know, sing for them.

- Hello?

- Hello.

Oh, Merv.

Thought I'd take a chance.

Couldn't sleep.

- What time is it there?

- Three in the morning.

- Just wondered if you were OK.

- Oh, you know. Getting by.

- What's wrong?
- Oh.
It's just...
some of the things that I'm hearing...
Get an earlier flight.
I'll come home just before
Christmas, like I promised.
It's only a week away.
They were going
to keep me over Christmas.
I was going to get presents,
proper Christmas dinner.
Come here.
They had a big party.
I sang Ave Maria.
The woman said I was a little angel.
And the dentist...
...dentist and two other men,
they took me into the bathroom
and uh, they...
...they...
Ave Maria...
- What's wrong?
- We can't have that.
We can't have any of it!
Margaret? Margaret!
Can't have this.
- We can't have any of this.
- Margaret. Hey, stop, stop!
So, what do I tell Ben and Rachel?
'Sorry, Christmas is cancelled.'
Oh, Merv, I missed you.
I missed you.
I'm sorry.
Really sorry.
Christmas back on, then?
As long as I don't have to do any
bloody carol singing.
Jack?
Oh, my God!
Well, I thought you'd never
hurry up and find my mum
unless I came and helped you out.
Come in, come in.

- So you just got here?

- Yep, yep.

Wow!

OK.

Going to this address.

Map-reading?

I think I can do that, yeah.

Yeah, it's 71 Lord Nelson Street.

Thank you.

Yeah, no. Well, I'd be grateful
if she could give me a call.

Yeah. It's Margaret Humphreys.

Yes, yes, thank you.

- So, where are we off to?

- Right.

We're picking up Nicky from work
and we're driving to Tyneside.

Righto.

You're Jack?

You're little Jack? Oh, my God.

You used to sit on my lap.

- You know me?

- Yes.

- You knew me when I was a little boy?

- Yeah, yeah, I can see you now.

And you're Nicky.

- So you knew our mother?

- Yeah.

Oh, she was lovely.

Where is she now?

Well, we don't know. We lost her.

We don't remember because
we were in children's homes.

- Oh, wait a minute, that can't be right.

- What?

Well, the woman I knew would never
have put her children in a home.

She lived for that little boy and girl.

We think that maybe her
relationship went down

and she was on her own

and she couldn't cope.

No, she wouldn't have ever

lost touch with her babies,

not while there was breath in her body.
Well, they sent us away,
so she wouldn't have been able to find us.
I see.
Oh, that would have broken her into bits.
What was she like?
What did she look like?
Let me think.
She looked a bit like you, actually.
And that was
Margaret Humphreys
from Nottingham in England.
She's claiming thousands of kids
had been deported
without their parents' consent.
Now we will be taking your calls.
today denied
allegations
surrounding their children's home
in Bindoon.
The Brothers are refuting the claims...
...the British nor the
government here in Australia
have taken any responsibility for this...
how would you describe it... deportation?
Yes, it's clearly the organised
deportation of children
from one country to another.
And neither the charities
nor the church organisations
that ran those schemes
have been prepared to admit
- that any mistakes were made?
- No. No, they haven't.
How about a speech, Margaret?
No, no, really. All right, thank you.
Well, I want to say
thank you to all of you.
This is the proper launch
of the Child Migrants Trust
and it has a home now...
this house.
And without all of the donations
and without all of you,

none of this would have been possible.
So, thank you for giving me an office in it.
And I'm really glad
I don't have to spend another day
working in that hotel room.

- Cup of tea?
- Yes, thanks.

I'm heading off.
You know, long drive home.

- Oh, are you sure, James?
- Yeah.

I don't really know any of these people.
I'm sorry.
I don't want to spoil your party.
You don't know any of them?
Well, yeah, yeah.
I know the Bindoon boys, of course.

- Right.
- See you, Margaret.

Margaret Humphreys.
Listen, you bitch.
You tell those whinging bastards
to stop talking about Bindoon.
If they tell one more lie
about the Brothers,
just one more,
we're coming over there
and I'll fucking finish you myself.
Do you enjoy running this slanderous
publicity machine of yours?
I'm afraid I don't recognise
that description of my work.
I don't represent any newspaper
or any television station.
But you'll happily declare
your wild allegations to any of them.
I haven't made any direct allegations
to the press.
Some of the boys who were sent
to your children's home at Bindoon
chose to speak to the press
when they were approached.
But none of those contacts
were initiated by me.

Well, since you've stirred things up,
the Christian Brothers have been
forced to conduct an internal inquiry
into the Boys Towns at Bindoon
and elsewhere.

Now, how have you any idea
how much distress
you have caused to elderly men
who only sought the best?
I'm hearing an awful lot about
the distress caused to the Brothers.
No-one's talking about the distress
caused to the children
who were supposed to be in their care.
You're doing all right then,
aren't you?

They paying you OK, are they?
This probably isn't the best way
to start this conversation, is it?
I don't think you like me very much,
Mrs Humphreys.

All right, I'll be honest
with you, then.

I don't know about the man
sitting opposite me.

But I'm sure that there's
a hurt little boy somewhere inside
that I'd like very much.

We're just going to have to
take the time to find him.

And how do I know that you're
qualified to do that, Mrs Humphreys?

You'll have to make your own
judgement on that, Mr Connolly.

You'll just have to trust me.

It's, uh... That's Len Connolly's
first step on Australia over there.

Then we were processed in here.

All these little kids quakin' and shakin'
and wondering what on earth
they'd been dropped into.

Brothers were sent one way,
sisters another.

They were all crying into

their sleeves, thinking,
'God. It can't be this hot
all the time, can it?'

Then we were put on the buses out here.
It was when I was
shoved onto one of them,
I realised Theresa wasn't coming with us.
She was, um, one of the girls
who looked after us on the way over.
She'd taken a shine to me.
Yeah, I was just a little scrap,
you know?
She made a bit of a pet of me
on the voyage over.
I think I charmed her.
So when I realised Theresa
wasn't coming, I went crazy.
I was bloody fighting to get to the back.
I was climbing over everything,
trying to get to her.
Anyway, by the end of that day,
I was with the Christian Brothers.
They'd taken all my clothes.
They gave me an old shirt
and a pair of shorts to wear and, uh...
I was cleaning out
the rubbish pit at Bindoon.
Yeah.
Yeah, come on.
We don't need to talk about that.
I just want to find my mother. That's it.
Help me with that if you can.
I don't need anything else.
I'm not offering anything else.
That's not my place.
All I'm asking is have you imagined
what it might be like if we do find her?
Well, let's just find her first,
all right?
OK, we'll try,
but what do you want?
To find her, to know who she is.
You know? To know who I am.
You've got absolutely no hopes

or expectations beyond that?
Look, Mrs Humphreys... Thanks, mate.
I'm sure that you see old
boys and girls day in, day out,
bawling their eyes out, telling you how
much they miss their dear old mum.
Well, the truth is,
our mums shot through, didn't they?
We didn't just fall out of our prams
and fly off with Peter Pan, did we?
No, our mums didn't want us.
That's why we're here.
Isn't that the truth?
No. The truth is actually
much more complicated in most cases.
No, she didn't want me.
She put me in a children's home.
Well, that's all right.
Let's just put a face to the old dear.
I can sit here all day if you like
and plead on about
what a hard life I had at Bindoon.
All right, let's talk about Bindoon.
Look, Mrs Humphreys,
I've paid my debts.
I've sourced the Brothers' farm tools
through my company.
I've made donations
to the Christian Brothers.
I've paid my debts.
Your debts?
What do you owe them?
Oh, I don't.
Look, they raised me, fed me,
clothed me, whatever,
and I've paid it all back.
I don't see how an eight-year-old boy,
who's working to grow his own food,
who has one pair of shorts,
one shirt and no shoes,
can be said to be running up
much of a debt.
Well, no-one can say
I owe them anything.

No, I don't think you do.
But maybe that's the monster
living in your head.
I don't like the idea of you walking around
with a monster like that in your head.

Mummy!

I'm afraid this won't do.
I'm here to give somebody
some really important news.
They'll remember this day
for the rest of their lives.
Can you show me something else?

Jack. Come in.

Take a seat.

That's... that's beautiful.

Yes.

So Merv telephoned me last night.
And we've had the results
of our latest search.
Have you found my mother?

Yes.

We were too late.

She's dead, isn't she?

- Yes, she is.

- Yeah.

Uh...

When did she die?

Last year.

Oh.

So we were just too late, then?

Mrs Humphreys,
no-one is suggesting for a minute
that the people you represent
have not suffered.

But this has to be placed
in its historical context.

What was done was done
with the very best intentions.

These children were placed
in children's homes.

Without casting any blame, their
family situations were far from ideal.
A more modern sensibility might suggest
greater effort should have been made

to keep families together.
But at the time, it was genuinely believed
to be in the children's interests
to give them a fresh start.
Ultimately, these children were in
the care of the British Government.
And it was the Government
of Australia and Britain
who were responsible for
authorising the migration schemes
and if we're talking
about historical context,
I'll remind you the last migrants
were only shipped out 17 years ago.
But we're not here for recriminations.
There's no need for that.
Now the Child Migrants Trust
has been created,
we can offer you an opportunity
to redress some of the damage
for which your organisations
were responsible.
These people were deported
as children, young children.
They've been deprived of their family,
their identity.
They need to find the families they lost.
I know that you're
all going to help them do that.
I think my organisation would be prepared
to make a contribution
if some trustee arrangement...
You can't be a trustee.
We have to be able to say
to these children... well, adults now...
that they're safe.
It has to be a neutral service.
What we are offering you,
the Government,
is an opportunity to take responsibility
for what happened to these children.
If you could at least tell us whether you have
any records of the child migrants
to which you could give us access.

...over 100 years and I can assure
you that we're doing everything...
Look, they just want
to know who they are!
Well, we said it, didn't we?
Oh, yes.
Excuse me, Mrs Humphreys.
Can I just have a minute of your time?
You say you're speaking as a mother.
But please,
take consolation in your own family
rather than meddling with all this.
I mean, how could you
possibly understand
the real circumstances
of these unfortunate children?
They were living in slums.
They were children of drunks
and degenerates.
Come away, Margaret.
So you don't accept the British
Government has a case to answer?
We have every sympathy
with the feelings of child migrants.
But you take no responsibility?
We have no
actual responsibility.
Whatever Margaret Humphreys alleges,
the fact is...
They were the responsibility
of the British Government.
The fact is this may have been
a distressing episode in history.
But there's no profit
in playing the blame game.
Right, well, thank you very much...
We've got them rattled now.
Legally, they're responsible.
They know it, we know it.
We find the paperwork that nails them.
They know we will.
- They know the paperwork's out there.
- Yeah.
I'm gonna find it, Margaret.

You know I am.
Yeah.
You all right?
Just tired. I've got an early start.
Len's flight gets in at 6.
Here, let me do that.
No, never let it be said
I didn't take care of my own family
before I started meddling with others.
Hey, hey.
Hey.
So it's just us now.
No help coming.
We keep putting them on the spot.
But right now, it is just us.
Well, as long as she accepts me,
that's all, isn't it?
As long as she doesn't turn me away.
Got a good memory, though.
I remember walking up a green hill
with grass under my bare feet.
There was someone
pulling me by the hand
because I couldn't walk very well yet.
I was angry
'cause I'd been promised a penny
or a sweetie or something
and I didn't get it.
It would have been her, wouldn't it,
holding my hand?
What's that?
It's a cheque.
You can fill in what you like.
You can decide.
You can have that or you can have
my loyalty. I don't mind which.
As long as we're square.
All right, then.
Oh, you see that?
See that? She's in there.
- Len?
- Yeah?
You want me to go in with you?
No, no, no. You'll be right.

No, get yourself a cab back.
- Or there's a cafe up there that...
- Len, I'm going to be fine.
Thank you, Margaret.
Thank you.
You're very welcome, Len.
Right.
Here we go, then.
The boys' home at Bindoon
was closed some time ago.
I understand that.
The Christian Brothers
have been victimised...
- Come back to...
- We're considering legal action
to prevent journalists
trespassing on church property.
I heard you.
Don't think you can come to Perth
and tell any lies.
Excuse me?
Good brothers and sisters
ran decent homes for those children.
I do not tell lies.
You know how much you'll hurt
the holy fathers with your lies?
I do not tell lies ever.
It's Margaret Humphreys from
the Child Migrants Trust in Australia.
Yes, he'll know what it's regarding.
We've had extensive
correspondence on the subject.
Yes.
Well, I would like him to return my call.
Um... Yeah.
And if he doesn't, I will call you back
tomorrow. Thank you.
You bitch! You fuckin' evil whore!
Fuckin' open this window! Come on!
Come on!
I'm gonna rip you apart!
Fuck, you'll get it!
I can get in any time I like!
Ahh!

Get out! Get out!
Get out!
Arggh! Bitch!
I can get you any time I like,
you bitch!
You tell lies about the Brothers
and you see what you get.
You fucking whore!
I'll get you!
Get home.
No, I can't.
Call the police.
Get out of that house.
People are depending on me, Merv.
I've got a load of appointments.
I've got to go.
I'll call you back later.
I heard Bob went out to Bindoon
with a camera crew.
Yeah.
That'll stir things up a bit.
Theo said you didn't want to go along.
No, I didn't.
Yeah. Here, stop!
I'll wait for you here.
No, you don't need to wait for me.
I'll get a taxi.
I really should get a car.
You don't need a taxi,
you don't need a car. I'll wait for you.
Thank you.
Where are we? Where are we?
Where are we?
Ah, here we go.
Oops!
Um, it's right.
Right! The other right.
- Wanker!
- Yeah, sorry, mate.
- Want a bit of classical on?
- No.
You can turn that up though.
Take good care
Hope you have a lot

of nice things to wear
Ooh, baby, baby,
it's a wild world
It's hard to get by
just upon a smile
Oh, baby, baby,
it's a wild world
I'll always remember you
like a child, girl
Right? Have a good night.
Jack, what are you doing here?
Well, Merv rang
and asked me to come over.
He thought you might
need a bit of company.
What did he say?
He said you needed me here.
Sorry, Margaret.
Just bringing your tea.
Sorry.
- You got everything you need?
- Yeah.
I thought I might sleep out
on the veranda.
Don't much like sleeping under a roof.
All right. Whatever you want.
Fuck you, bitch!
Stay away from Bindoon!
You right in there, Margaret?
Yeah.
I...
I... I can't breathe.
I can't breathe. I can't breathe.
- Oh, really?
- Yeah.
It's my heart. It's my heart.
Calm down, darling.
...sit down and eat your cereal.
Rachel, come and get your breakfast.
Rachel!
Mum?
Tell them you have to stay here.
Tell them you belong to us.
Rachel.

Rachel.

No, my darling, it's just...

I'm taking you to the doctor.

- I don't need to go.

- I'm taking you.

Oh, for God's sake,

I can get myself to the doctor.

Look, I only came

because my husband insisted.

I just wanted to set his mind at rest.

I know there's nothing wrong with me.

I think you have

post-traumatic stress disorder.

I'm sorry but that is rubbish.

Nothing happened to me,

it all happened to them.

Absorbing other people's pain

is a stress of its own.

I can't stop.

There's no-one else.

If I...

And she hasn't stopped.

Oh, Margaret. Lovely to see you.

Hello.

Margaret, hi.

Hope you don't mind

us dropping in on you.

I was just telling them, Margaret,

we had such a good day.

I really wanted to invite you

but we know you're so busy.

And they never knew I had a daughter.

She was really keen for me

to come over for the retirement party

but we didn't know

what we were going to tell people.

- Then Bill says...

- Bill's one of the regulars.

'Who's this lovely young lady, Vera?'

He's ancient, see, so...

And I said,

'This is my daughter, Bill.

My daughter Charlotte.'

- And he says...

- Never even blinked.

...'She looks just like you.'

- He could tell.

- Anyone could tell.

And there we were in front
of them all, together.

Mother and daughter.

- I tell you, Margaret...

- It was the happiest moment...

- Of my life.

- Both of us.

We just... We just felt... whole.

At last.

Nothing missing.

I said,

'We have to come and tell Margaret.'

But we didn't even know

if you'd be here, you're so busy.

So when are you back off to Australia?

Well, as soon as this lot can spare me.

There's a chilled chardonnay

on the table there for you.

Margaret River.

Bit young but hitting its stride, I reckon.

I didn't come here to drink, Len.

I thought you wanted to talk.

I do. I've got some soup too.

It's home-cooked.

I can cook, you know.

I'm sure you can.

- You look hungry enough.

- I've already eaten.

What was it you wanted to say?

You're a difficult woman to entertain,

Mrs Humphreys.

All right.

Look, um, all this TV coverage,

it's stirred everything up, Margaret.

It's got the boys talking.

And, um, I've been watching

how the boys are around you,

and, uh, not speaking out of turn,

you know what I'm talking about.

You're like a sister to them.

You're family after
everything you've done.
You know? Only family
most of us will ever have anyway.
I'm not sure that family
is really the right word.
Well, that's how we feel.
No, but you're right, it's...
it's not real.
'Cause you haven't been there,
have you?
You've heard about our childhood
but you haven't touched our childhood.
'Cause you haven't been there.
Where?
To Bindoon.
I'm, uh... I'm asking you
to come to Bindoon with me.
No.
Well, have a think about it, Margaret.
Look, Len, what you all suffered
at Bindoon, that's your history.
But it's not mine.
I have to be careful.
I...
I'm not, um... It wouldn't be appropriate
for me to get too close to all of that.
It's... Well, it wouldn't be right.
No, no, you'll be right.
I'll look after you.
No, Len, I don't want to.
I don't have to go there
and I don't want to.
OK, OK, but look at it
from the old boys' point of view.
That's like saying that
you can't look at who they are.
Is that what they're saying?
Well, you have a think about it, Margaret.
Maybe that's the monster
living in your head.
I don't like to think of you walking around
with a monster like that in your head.
Well, we should be there

in a couple of hours.
It used to take six before
they graded the road.
God. You should have seen it...
in the back of an open truck,
eating dust and flies,
crying for their mums.
We thought we'd been dropped off
at the end of the earth.
You right?
See it from here first.
Is it what you expected?
I didn't know it would be so big.
And I didn't know it would be so beautiful.
The boys put every stone
of that building together.
I know.
The cement would burn your feet.
We'd no shoes.
The cement would burn
the cuts on our feet
and the sores on our hands and knees.
All day, in blazing heat,
no rest, no water.
I was nine years old and I was lifting rocks
the size of my upper body.
And he's yelling at us, 'You weak, weak,
pitiful sons of whores.'
We built stations of the cross.
But who was crucified, huh?
Tell me that.
You all right to go down?
Suppose they don't let us in.
There's a swimming pool
at the back of the building.
I paid for it. They'll let us in.
He had this...
he had this big knobby stick.
And he would crack you
over the skull with it.
Leather belts.
Fanbelt from the tractor.
Anything that would give you
a good wallop, you know?

They'll still be having their breakfast.
Feel like a cup of tea?
Come on.
Morning, brothers.
I've brought Mrs Humphreys
to have a look around the old place
if that's all right.
Come through.
There we go.
Is there any chance of a cuppa?
We can do better than a chipped cup,
can't we, brother?
We'd hear one of the brothers coming.
Just his footsteps on the wooden floor.
You'd be lying there in the wet sheets
and you're thinking,
'Oh, please, God...
Please, God, don't let it be me.'
He would make you strip naked
and get on the tables
with everybody watching you.
Don't know where I thought I could run to,
there's nothing there for miles.
He came after me on horseback.
When he caught me...
...he tied me to a tree.
And he, uh...
He...
You probably can't believe me.
Of course I believe you.
The fucker raped me, Margaret.
Hey, I think you might have
forgotten something, brother.
I'll fix it up, shall I?
Didn't matter if he split your skull open,
he'd keep whacking away.
You just thought...
'I'm nothing now.
Nothing at all.'
Who's gonna...
Who's gonna look after me?
Who's gonna look after me?
I'm nobody.
Have I disturbed you, brothers?

Have I frightened you?
What have you got to be frightened of?
Grown men like you.
Look at that, Margaret.
Can't see another house.
Nothing but bush.
No-one would find you here.
He'd wait for me after dark,
Brother Norman.
He took a shine to me.
I was a favourite, I suppose.
I don't know.
You just think, 'I'll live through this.
It'll stop one day.'
Bloody years.
Margaret, have a look at that.
Black cockatoo.
Oh, there'd be flocks of them
over here sometimes.
They'd sound like trains
going over your head.
- You all right?
- Yeah.
You've gone a funny colour.
I'll just get you a drink.
There you go.
- You right?
- I'm fine. It's just the heat.
OK.
Know what your problem is, Mrs H?
You don't look after yourself properly.
You won't let anyone else do it either.
Len, it's not for anybody else
to look after me.
I've been loved and
looked after my entire life.
It's your turn now.
But you'll never get it.
Everybody thinks there's going to be
this big cathartic moment
when the wrongs are righted
and the wounds healed,
but it's not going to happen.
I can't give you back what you've lost.

Well, there's plenty of other people
in that boat.
Well, its not enough, is it, Len?
It's never enough.
Jeez, old Bindoon,
it shook you up all right, didn't it?
No, I'm fine.
It should shake me up.
I'm the one who should be shaking.
But even if I was lying here in the dirt
bawling like a kid,
I couldn't feel it all, could I?
Isn't that what you'd tell me?
I had to stop crying when I was eight.
I don't know how to start now.
But you feel it.
You feel it for all of us
because we can't, you do.
No, you're fighting for us, Margaret.
You're in there for us.
You're on our side.
So let the rest go.
Just let the rest go.
What you're doing is enough.
It's more than anyone else
has ever given me.
Happy Christmas.
- And happy Christmas.
- Oh!
Ooh!
Happy Christmas, darling.
Here you go, love.
Happy Christmas.
So, what are you going to give
all of us for Christmas, Ben?
I gave you my mum.
So you did.
So you did, darling,
and we love you for it.
Hear, hear.
Hey, don't do that. Don't do that.
Don't start snivelling.
Bloody hell, woman,
what are you trying to do to me?

- See you in a couple of weeks.
- See you in a couple of weeks.