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Black Water

By Andrew Traucki

I wish you'd let me clean it.
- Mum, it's a rental car. Come on!
Thanks for a lovely Christmas.
- Bye, Mum.
Bye bye, my baby.
She's 22, Mum.
She's the youngest,
she'll always be my baby.
Take care.
- Thank you for coming up to visit.
See you, Pat.
- Bye bye.
You come back any time.
You're always welcome.
You two take care of each other.
- We will.
Bye, darling.
- Bye, Mum.
Two weeks on the road. Yes!
- Holidays.
Sure as shit
beats being in the office.
Where are we going to go first?
- I want to see that crocodile place.
Sounds good to me.
We almost there?
Yeah, pretty close.
Can I have the book?
- Yep. - Thanks.
"Ainsley Crocodile Adventure Park.
You can see the 'salties'
being fed and tour the croc farm."
- How do they farm them?
Same way you farm anything: Breed 'em,
raise 'em, kill 'em and sell 'em.
Which parts of the crocodile
do they sell?
"Crocodiles are harvested at
the optimum size
for the handbag market."
It says that in South-East Asia
the men believe
eating the penis will improve
their sex drive

and that you'll take on the spirit
and the aggression of the crocodile.
The power of the penis.
That's great.
Now I'll simulate a bird that's landed
on the water and is swimming across.
So this is a bird.
It's just landed on the water
and it's going knee-deep in the water.
Now it starts to muck around...
As you approach the water
with your billy or your fishing rod
a Mary River crocodile
at 12 foot... What does it
look like when I'm down there?
A dirty great, big truck
with teeth comin' at ya.
Do more than two photos, because
you stuff up the only photo you took
and you're going to be looking for me
when you get back to Sidney.
How's this?
- Smile!
"E.T."?
"Nine Months"?
"Alien"! - Yes.
- You're good at this. Drink?
No, I'm fine.
- You have to ask?
Off the booze?
- I feel fat after Christmas.
I'm just trying to lose some weight.
Here we go.
So what are we doing tomorrow. Lee?
I chose the croc place. You and Adam
choose. - There's not much on offer,
but I did discover this.

Here:

See the wildlife, catch the fish."
Didn't know you were into fishing.
I like being on the water. - If anyone
can catch it, it's Backwater Barry!
"Is that a barramundi up me bum?"

It was just an idea.
- It's okay, let's do that.
Yeah? It'll be fun.
Okay.
Well, this must be it.
Looks pretty upmarket.
- Yeah...
Come on through!
How can I help you?
- We're after Barry, to do the tour.
You just missed him.
Went about 5 minutes ago.
You want to do some fishing?
- Yeah, and see the river.
I can take you out.
Interested?
- Sure, yeah. - That'd be great.
Let's get you fitted up then, eh?
- Excellent!
What?
You're pregnant.
You are, aren't you?
I'm going to be an aunty!
- Yeah, but I haven't told him yet.
He is the father, right?
- Yeah, very funny.
I only found out last night, so
I'm just waiting for the right moment.
Hello, Little One!
This time of year the barra fishing is
only catch and release. - That's fine.
Plenty of other good fish around.
Take these. I'll meet you out there.
It's the wet season and the king tides
are running, so there's lots of water.
What's a king tide?
- Really high tides
that happen around Christmas.
- It's the best time to fish.
With all the extra water around
it's pretty lively on the river.
Is that why you brought a gun?
No.
That's just Barry's insurance policy

from the old days, before
all the crocs had moved out of here.
Now they've all either been shot
or taken to farms, so...
Who's up for a drink?

- Oh, yeah.

What was that?

Better have a look.

It's floated down from upstream.

We'll take it with us.

Let me jump back in.

Shall we go further up?

Yeah.

- Yep. Let's do it.

Get 'em in, eh?

This is excellent.

Even though the tide's running out,
there's still a lot of water up here.

It's just right.

Let's get a line in, eh?

Just out there.

Nice.

Something's there.

Take it easy.

Come on, pick it up!

What's that?

- What?

I don't know.

What happened?

- It's a fucking croc!

It's a croc. Get up the tree!

- Where's Lee?

Get up the tree, I'll get Lee

- Lee!

Get out of the water!

Just get up the tree!

Okay, okay!

Lee!

Lee, where are you?

Get out!

It's coming back!

It's the croc! Get out!

Get out now!

Please, get out!

Adam, get out!
Now!
Come on.
Come on, hurry.
Lee, get out of the water now!
Get out!
Get on the boat!
Get down. Lie down.
Over here!
Lee, hold on!
Lee, it's okay!
Get up the tree.
Get up the tree!
We've got to get her.
I think it might've gone.
- Why? - The body's gone.
Jim?
- Yep.
Before I saw it coming for you, I saw
Jim's body floating there.
- I can't see anything.
Trust me, it was there. Lee!
Are you okay?
We've got to get her out of there.
- We're also gonna need the boat.
I'll go over. - Are you crazy?
Maybe it's gone, maybe it hasn't!
Besides, the boat isn't safe.
- We can't just stay in the tree.
Why not? Someone will come
looking for us. - Who?
Who, Grace? No one saw us leave,
no one knows we're here.
The rope.
If she can get the rope to us,
we can pull her across.
Let's try that.
- Lee!
The rope at the front of the boat,
can you reach it?
Can you throw it to me?
I'll go.
- No!
Catch it, alright?

- I will.
Fuck!
- It's okay.
Can you see it?
Come on, Lee, you can do it this time.
Give yourself a bit of slack.
I'm here, darling.
Big throw.
Fuck.
- It's okay. Don't move. I'll get it.
Get us a branch. Just above you.
Here, got it?
Fuck.
I'm not going into the water again.
Wrap it around your hand.
Okay, one, two, three!
Must be stuck on a log.
It's alright.
I've tied off the rope, okay?
Get into the water slowly and use
the rope to guide yourself over, okay?
You can do it, okay?
Come on.
Better get up.
That's it!
Keep coming.
I've got you. That's it!
Right, come on.
- You've got her?
Yeah, I've got her. Okay there.
You're okay, baby, you're okay.
Grab the rope.
You got it?
- Oh, fuck. That was amazing.
Bloody amazing.
Shit...
- Your ankle, is it okay?
It's pretty sore.
- Oh my God,
it doesn't look good.
Where's Jim?
He got taken.
- What?
How did this happen?

We were in a metal boat!
Is it still here?
Can't see it.
So how are we gonna get out of here?
What are we gonna do?
Wait for someone to come for us.
- Who's going to come for us?
I don't know, but isn't that
what they say you should do?
But no one knows we're here.
There's hundreds of miles of estuary
and mangroves along the river...
No one's coming.
- I still think we should just wait.
When did we last see another boat?
We did see the petrol drum. That
could've been in the water for months.
So what's your idea?
The boat.
The boat?
Did you miss something, Adam?
It just flipped over. You think we're
safe in that? It's our best shot.
Okay. So how do you figure
we get to it, flip it,
bail it and get out of here without
being eaten? - Better than waiting
to be rescued by people
who don't know we're missing. - Help!
We'll die of malaria waiting out here.
I've still got the Rid.
You beauty!
- Come on!
It's dead.
- Fuck.
What have I got?
Car keys.
Penknife.
My wallet.
One more stamp
and I get a free coffee.
What was that?
I want to get out of here.
Maybe we can use these trees

to get out of here.

Look, guys,

even if we could get to land,

we're miles from anywhere.

The idea of getting lost here...

- "Getting lost"? We're already lost!

We go along this river

and get back to here we came from.

Really? Do you know where we are?

- We're on the river.

Do you remember every turn we took?

- I don't need to. - Whatever!

I think Grace is right.

I think we should try the trees.

Do you think it's gonna be easy

getting around in these trees?

Look at it!

I'll go check out the trees.

- It's alright, I'll go.

You've lost your glasses. You can't
put any weight on that leg. I'll go.

It's okay, I'm fine. - Adam, you're
half blind without your glasses.

I'm not blind. I can see, alright?

Just shove over.

This is crazy! - And going for
the boat isn't? - You can't go.

Why not?

- You just can't. I'm fine, I'll go.

Lee, you're not fine.

I'm going to stick to the trees.

If they run out,

I'm straight back here.

Okay?

Just be careful, alright?

- I will.

Adam!

Grace?

You alright?

- Here, Grace! - We're just here.

You're okay...

It's okay. I got you.

I got you.

Come on.

You alright?

- Yep.

What's wrong? What happened?

- Nothing, nothing.

I just got a little bit spooked,
that's all.

I'm okay.

Okay...

So... We're surrounded by water.

It's a bit of a swim to land,

but it's doable. - How far?

I don't know, like, 50 or 100 metres?

The boat's only just there.

But we can't get to it.

- We haven't tried yet.

So...

What's it to be?

The boat... or a 300-metre swim
in a croc-infested river?

It's not 300 metres.

I'm with Grace. I say if we wait
someone will come along.

What's that song that kids sing?

"The three ..."

"Three cheeky monkeys

sitting in a tree,

teasing Mr Crocodile,

'Can't catch me! '

Along comes Mr Crocodile,

quiet as can be...

Snap!"

Thank you, Adam.

I prefer "Row, Row, Row Your Boat,
Gently Down The Stream." - So do I!

Let's get the boat
and get out of here.

Okay, we'll try it your way.

For now.

I thought I was falling.

Can I please have the Rid?

Thanks.

Shit. Sorry.

It's time to get moving.

The longer we wait,

the harder it'll be to get going.
Look, we've waited,
we've waited hours
to see this fucker, and no show.
I hate to say it, but he'll probably
be chowing down on Jim for a while.
I remember, when I was a kid
I spent a day in a cupboard, thinking
my brother was gonna beat me up.
Thing is, after he chased me into the
cupboard, he went off with his mates.
It wasn't my brother keeping me in
the cupboard. It was me. It was fear.
If there's no croc down there,
what the hell are we doing up here?
Okay.
You've made your point.
So what's your plan?
Look...
I get over to the boat,
I ride it, I bring it over here
and we get out.
- That's your plan? - That's my plan.
I could go with you.
No. Look, it's best
to just risk one of us.
I'm the strongest, I have the best
chance of getting to the boat.
No, don't go.
Grace, we're not gonna be rescued.
Please. Just wait a little longer.
- It's okay, I'll be right back.
Adam...
- What?
What is it?
Gracie, it's okay.
Take care.
I'll be right back.
Give us a bit of slack.
Just need to loosen the rope.
No, no...
No, no!
- Adam!
Come up!

Adam, come up!
Come up!
Please, let him go!
Go on, you let him go.
Let him go!
It's not going
to leave us alone, is it?
We're gonna die, aren't we?
Lee...
Fuck!
- Stop it.
We're going to get out of here.
- Yeah? And how are we gonna do that?
The boat.
The boat? The boat?
That's so fucking hilarious.
You have no idea, do you?
- Shut up, Lee!
Shut up! I need you
to get over there and keep watch.
Get over there and keep a look out.
Get up!
Get up.
Hold that.
Give it to me.
It's coming!
Where?
- Quick! - I'm coming.
Are you sure you saw it?
- Yeah, I thought I saw it.
I'm going back down.
I'll get a bigger stick,
go back down and get the rope.
Okay.
Can you see it?
No.
The boat's going out.
He's just there.
- I know.
Maybe it won't go far.
It's half full of water now.
I didn't tell him, Lee.
I was going to, but I didn't.
- I know. I'm so sorry.

We didn't say goodbye.
Maybe we should say goodbye.
Goodbye.
Goodbye...
I don't know what to say.
- I know...
Goodbye, baby.
I'm so thirsty.
I just wish it would rain.
I can't see the boat.
I was thinking...
Remember when we were kids and we used
to have holidays at the beach house,
and you could always smell
when a storm was coming?
It smells like that.
- Yeah...
It does.
Remember those brothers?
The brothers
who were there every year.
Paul...
- Yeah, Mick and Paul Davies.
Those boys were always chasing you.
- And you were always saving me.
What was that?
What was that?
Oh God, it's eating him!
No, no...
Grace.
Hey, Gracie.
Are you okay?
Grace, you're scaring me. You okay?
Hey, listen...
I'm so sorry about what happened.
I really am so sorry.
But we have to help ourselves.
"Two cheeky monkeys,
sitting in a tree,
teasing Mr Crocodile,
'Can't catch me! '
Along came Mr Crocodile,
quiet as can be...
Snap, snap ..."

Thank you.
Thanks, that's being very helpful.
I'm sorry.
The boat's back.
At the wrong tree.
God, we have to do something.
I'm not going back to the boat.
Not after...
I'm just so tired!
I'm so thirsty.
Me, too.
What are we going to do, Gracie?
Well...
If a boat's gonna go past,
it's gonna go past up there.
Up where we came in.
I don't know, maybe...
Maybe we should see
if we can try and get to it.
Using the trees?
- Yeah.
I could go check it out.
- Please can we go together?
Hang on, wait.
Let's do something to try
and keep it away. - Okay.
"Go away, Croc.
Go away.
You're gonna go away. Far, far away.
Lee and Grace will be safe.
Lee and Grace will be safe.
Lee and Grace will be safe."
You alright?
- Yep.
Let's go for that one.
Okay?
- Yeah...
Are we really gonna do this?
- Don't know. Didn't we just say so?
Yep, yep.
It's gonna be okay.
I think...
- What?
I think we should go back.

- Don't. We're almost halfway there.
Okay then.
What do we do?
- Just stay tight.
Just keep tight.
Fuck off, you fuck!
Grace!
Grace!
Get up there!
You're alright. You're alright!
You're okay.
It's really not that deep.
You have to stay with me, alright?
Just have to fix your leg.
So keep breathing, okay?
Hold in there!
- Fuck, it really hurts!
You're okay.
It's a boat.
It's a boat! You'll be alright.
Wait! We're here!
Wait!
We're here!
Help!
We're here!
Wait!
No, come back!
Come back!
We're here!
Fuck!
I hate you,
you fucking shitty piece of tin!
Fucking hate you!
This is all your fault.
This is all your fault!
Grace, get your legs up!
Get your legs up!
You get away from her!
Get away!
Tuck your legs in!
I'm right here, Gracie.
I need you to get your legs up.
You gotta tuck in.
Are you okay?

Just have to change this, okay?
There was a boat.
Okay? You okay?
Just gonna get the boat, okay?
Lee.
- Be back in a minute. - Don't go.
I'll be right back.
- That's what Adam said. - It's okay.
It's not. Please.
It's okay. I love you.
I love you so much.
- Don't leave me, please!
Lee, please don't go.
Please, help us. Please, keep us safe.
I've got the boat, Grace!
Coming, Gracie.
Coming, Gracie.
Fuck!
Coming, Gracie. Coming, Gracie.
Quick, quick.
Sorry.
I'm sorry.
Come on.
Come on!
Come on!
Come on!
Come on!
Coming, Gracie.
Coming, Gracie. Coming.
I did it!
Grace, we can go.
We can go home now.
Grace, I did it! Gracie?
No...
No, Grace!