

HIGHWATER

by

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Television Play

Reading Script

51 pages (excluding cover)

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CONFIDENTIAL

INT DAY - THE ADVERTISING AGENCY MEETING ROOM

Hugh, Brian, Jeremy, the Creative Director, and the Client are sitting around a table. Jeremy is standing next to the story board for a luxury dog shampoo commercial. Brian is frowning with concentration, nodding in agreement with each point Jeremy makes. Hugh is paying attention, but there is an air of detachment about him. He's seen it all before.

JEREMY

The unbroken blues of the sea and sky resonate with associations of purity, cleanliness, space, and freedom. Against this we set the rich gold of the dog's coat, mirrored in the model's flowing hair. And of course gold resonates with connotations of quality and prosperity. Our retriever ripples through frame in liquid gold slow motion; when dog and model meet, its a flux of perfect golden hair. 30 seconds of canine nirvana
(brandishes
bottle)
Free 'n' Soft.

Jeremy sits down confidently, very pleased with himself.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Nice work, Jeremy. You've done a good job of developing my concept.

Jeremy's face sets at this shameless stealing of credit, but he quickly recovers his professional facade. Hugh shoots the Creative Director a look of contempt.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Steve? You're the client. What do you think?

CLIENT

What about the talking dog?
What happened to that idea?
I liked that.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

(at a loss)

Jeremy, perhaps you could
take Steve through that one.

JEREMY

Our research indicates that
personal endorsements from
animals are losing their
impact in the marketplace.

CLIENT

The talking cat worked for
us.

JEREMY

That was last year.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

As Creative Director, I have
to look at the big picture,
Steve. People just don't
take talking animals
seriously anymore.

JEREMY

This is a glamour product.
It needs a different angle.
What we're doing here is
making use of powerful,
universal symbols that
support the values of the
product.

The CD thinks Jeremy is doing rather too well.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you Jeremy.

CLIENT

Well the money I pay you
says I should trust you.
Can you make it look this
good?

JEREMY

That's where Hugh and Brian come in. As you know, high quality pet commercials are their speciality.

BRIAN

The commercial offers wonderful creative possibilities, doesn't it Hugh?

With a jolt Hugh tunes back into the conversation.

HUGH

Yeah. Yeah, very exciting.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

The dog has to glow with vitality and beauty. When you're casting the dog, think Rachel Hunter.

HUGH

Rachel Hunter?

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

I'm looking for that big, blond, bouncy, wet nosed look. When I see that dog, I want to think, 'Rachel Hunter'.

HUGH

Well, I hope we get a better performance out of the dog than they got out of Rachel on the Pantene commercials.

An awkward silence. Jeremy suddenly finds something to write on his note pad. Brian looks horrified.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Pantene was my concept, actually. I thought it worked very well.

EXT DAY - AN NORTHLAND EAST COAST BEACH

In slow-motion the retriever bounds against blue waves. Then its gone, chasing some seagulls down the beach. Cut back to real time, the crew set up on a rural beach.

HUGH
(exasperated)
Cut.
(wearily)
OK, lets try that again.

The Makeup department descends upon the dog with brushes and blow dryers and mascara for its eyelashes.

CLIENT
Its nose isn't wet and shiny enough. We have to be able to see a big, black, wet shiny nose.

A Makeup Person sighs and picks up an aerosol can and holds the dog's muzzle.

BRIAN
Time's getting on, Hugh.

In the background there is the sound of an aerosol being sprayed, then a growl from the dog and a yell of pain.

HUGH
Brian, no one is more aware of that than me.
(shouts)
Lets move it. We're running out of light

Cut back to the TVC footage. The dog turns and runs from the surf towards the model who runs to meet it with a joyous smile. The dog launches itself into the air; cut to real time as the dog and model (Deanna) meet with sickening impact and Deanna crashes back to the ground with the dog on top of her.

DEANNA
(shrieks)
Get it off me. Get it off me.

JEREMY
(to Hugh)
She's mussed up its hair.

Makeup descends on both dog and model. Hugh is looking stricken. He glances up at the sky, then at the DP

DP
I'd say this is our last
chance.

HUGH
(yells)
Forget the makeup.
Positions everyone. Now.

DOG HANDLER
(yells, offscreen)
Hold it.

HUGH
(explodes)
What is it this time?

DOG HANDLER
Dog's crapping.

DP
(wearily)
Light's gone. That's it.

Hugh sinks his face in his hands. Everybody waits.

HUGH
We'll have to stay
overnight. Finish it
tomorrow.

The crew packs up; Hugh heads for his car, Brian in
pursuit.

BRIAN
We haven't got accommodation
in the budget.

HUGH
We haven't got the shot,
Brian. Without that shot we
haven't got the commercial.
You want to run with that,
fine. You tell the Agency.

He punches 2 digits on his cellphone. Jasmine answers
the phone in her bedroom. Brian glares at him and
stalks off.

HUGH

Jaz, its me. We've had a few problems. I'm going to be stuck here overnight.

JASMINE

Hughie, you promised.

HUGH

I know. I'm really sorry.

(pauses)

I'd only be a face in the crowd anyway. You wouldn't even see me from the catwalk.

JASMINE

That's not the point.

HUGH

No. I'll see you when I get back. Good luck.

EXT EVENING - OUTSIDE THE HIGHWATER HOTEL

The crew vehicles pull up in a convoy outside the Highwater Arms Hotel. A large sign advertises its sale by tender. Hugh pulls up in his red Porsche, Jeremy next to him.

JEREMY

(unimpressed)

You have to be joking.

Hugh looks back up the main street with its handful of buildings. A lone steer grazes next to the hotel.

HUGH

Just like a 3D postcard.

INT EVENING - THE HIGHWATER BAR

The bar is big and airy. Rugby photos and stuffed fish festoon the walls. A hand painted sign made from an old bed sheet proclaims one corner as "Marg's Brassiere". The locals stare in astonishment as the crew and agency people pour into the bar. A frenzy ensues as everybody wants drinks. Hugh looks around the room, eyes alight.

HUGH

Check out the stuffed fish.

JEREMY

Yeah, they're really into
dead things aren't they?

Next to them the Dog Handler has cornered Brian.

DOG HANDLER

Tiffany has to have a room
of her own. If you want a
cheerful dog tomorrow, it
has to be a well rested dog.

Regarding the crowd as one might a swarm of rodents, Marg
approaches Jim, who furiously pulling beers.

MARG

How we gunna feed this pack
of hyenas?

JIM

(to the Barman)
Better break out the
emergency rations.

The Barman heads out back.

JEREMY

(to Marg)
What's the menu?

A rifle shot rings out from the back of the hotel. The
crew and agency people fall instantly and apprehensively
silent. The locals show no reaction at all.

MARG

(flatly)
Steak.

Outside a chainsaw starts up.

INT NIGHT - THE HIGHWATER BAR

The bar is full of people and noise and bustle and good
humour - a real community pub. A rhythm and blues band
is playing, with Jesse singing. The "film people" have
congregated at one end of the long bar and a few adjacent
tables. Hugh is moving through the room, taking it all
in with obvious pleasure. He finishes at the bar, where
Jeremy is chatting up the model, Deanna. Jesse catches
his attention; she looks familiar, but he can't quite
place her.

DEANNA

(impressed)

A film! How cool. When do you go into production?

JEREMY

(defensively)

Well, I haven't had time to actually put it down on paper yet. But its an amazing story. Hugh's going to direct.

HUGH

(good humouredly)

There is that small matter of the script first though, isn't there, Jeremy?

(looking around)

You could really do something with this place, couldn't you?

JEREMY

Yeah, nothing a good fire wouldn't fix.

Deanna laughs loudly. Jeremy slides an arm around her. Brian appears and draws Hugh to one side.

BRIAN

(shirtily)

How about a bit of client wrangling, Hugh.

HUGH

Brian, my job is to make golden retrievers look like Rachel Hunter. Yours is to oil agencies and clients.

BRIAN

Listen pal, for 7 grand a day I think you could lend a hand occasionally.

PROD MANAGER

(interrupts)

Client alert, Brian.

Brian follows her eyes to the bar, where the drooling Client has cornered the Makeup woman.

BRIAN
 (sighs)
 Tell her we'll triple her
 rate if she'll grin and bear
 it.
 (turns to Hugh)
 Now listen...

But Hugh is nowhere to be seen.

EXT NIGHT - THE HIGHWATER HOTEL BEERGARDEN

Hugh walks to the edge of the beergarden and looks out over the harbour. Jesse is there, taking a break.

HUGH
 Beautiful spot.

JESSE
 Sure is.

HUGH
 You guys've got a good
 sound. You local?

JESSE
 (nods)
 Mmm hmm.

HUGH
 I know this sounds lame, but
 I have this feeling I know
 you from somewhere.

JESSE
 (amused)
 I'm sorry, if you're looking
 for some local
 entertainment, I'm really
 not your type.

She moves off.

HUGH
 (calls after her)
 That wasn't what I meant.

Hugh turns back to the wide, dark harbour.

INT DAY - HUGH'S BEDROOM

Cut to television footage of a fashion parade. Hugh and Jasmine are on Hugh's bed watching the TV. Hugh is not very interested, but Jasmine is totally involved.

JASMINE

I'd already committed myself to modelling for Erica. I was kicking myself when I saw Stephan's outfits. So much imagination.

HUGH

Rather too much I'd say. People'd laugh if you wore those in the street.

JASMINE

This is fashion, Hugh. For a director, you are such a philistine when it comes to clothes. There's Monique. She's so overrated.

HUGH

Well, I guess that's why I do pets. You only have to worry about wet, shiny noses.

(changes tack)

I thought we might head off somewhere this weekend. Get out of town for a change.

JASMINE

Alright. What about that place in Pauanui?

HUGH

(starting to undo Jasmine's top)

Somewhere with a bit more character. Lets call it a "mystery weekend".

JASMINE

Oh good. I like surprises. What are you doing?

HUGH

Thing about Philistines,
Jaz, is that they prefer
their models with their
clothes off.

He pulls her down onto the bed.

JASMINE

(delighted
protest)

Hugh!

EXT DAY - OUTSIDE THE HIGHWATER HOTEL

Jeremy's spotless Range Rover pulls up outside the Highwater Arms, jet ski trailer plus 2 jet skis in tow. The "For Sale" has a large "Sold" sticker plastered across it. Hugh, Jasmine, Jeremy, and Deanna get out.

JASMINE

Hughie, I was thinking, we
could hire a yacht tomorrow.

JEREMY

I thought there was nowhere
else to stay around here.
Did Brian make us stay in
that dump to save his
budget?

JASMINE

Why are we stopping anyway?
How far is it from here?

HUGH

Oh, about 10 metres.

He grins. They stare at him uncomprehendingly. Jeremy looks at the sign.

JEREMY

You didn't.

JASMINE

Hugh, what is going on?

HUGH

My friends, you are here as
guests of the new owner.

The others stare at him in disbelief. Jasmine is appalled. Hugh looks at the hotel proprietorially.

HUGH

Its a sort of giant bach.

INT DAY - THE HIGHWATER BAR

The bar is virtually empty. A couple of punters watch the horse racing on TV. Hugh rings the bell and Jim appears.

HUGH

I'm Hugh Chance.

Jim gives Hugh a quick, sharp, appraising glance, then holds out his hand.

JIM

Jim Fergusson.

SIMULTANEOUS ACTION: Hugh's three companions sit numbly at the bar. Jasmine looks around the room with distaste. Conversation stops as the locals stare at the two glamorous women, beings from another planet. Marg bustles over, fixing Hugh with a suspicious, disapproving eye.

MARG

This him is it?

JIM

Hugh, this is Marg, our cook.

Hugh starts to greet Marg, but she gives him no chance.

MARG

Hope you're not going to be wanting any of that fancy city food, young fella. We like good, plain food around here.

HUGH

(disconcerted))

Well, I thought...

MARG

Anyway I can't stand here
yakking all day. Some of
us've got work to do.

She stumps back to the kitchen. Hugh watches her go,
astonished. Jim dumps on the counter a huge steel ring
with dozens of keys attached.

JIM

All yours.

Hugh stares at the keys, the first intimation that he may
have taken on more than he realised.

INT DAY - THE HOTEL ROOM

Hugh and Jasmine open the door to their room. Jasmine is
distinctly unimpressed by the ancient, motley
furnishings.

JASMINE

This is the deluxe suite?

HUGH

(grins)
Well, it probably was in
1950. This is living
history, Jaz. Pure Kiwiana.

JASMINE

(dryly)
Yes, we've come a long way
haven't we?
(pauses)
Hugh, tell me why. Why you
have done this bizarre
thing?

Hugh is unsure of the answer himself. He opens the
window.

HUGH

Place was a steal, Jaz.
Throw up some condos, do a
deal with a tour operator.
Hire boats, jet skis. Can't
lose.

Jasmine is unconvinced. She fixes him with a firm eye.

JASMINE

A giant bach. Its really
just a whim, isn't it, Hugh?
You get to direct a whole
town.

Hugh looks out into the deserted street and smiles.

EXT DAY - THE HARBOUR BEACH

In expensive fashion sunglasses and designer swimwear,
Jasmine and Deanna sit on beach towels oiling themselves.
In flash wet suits and coloured visor sunglasses, Hugh
and Jeremy look out at the harbour, their jetskis
floating in the shallows, as a battered aluminium dinghy
containing two fishermen cruises into the beach.

FISHERMAN 1

(to his friend)

Things you see when you
don't have a gun.

JEREMY

(dropping his
voice and
ruralising his
accent)

You jokers know what the
tide's doing?

The two fisherman glance at each other.

FISHERMAN 1

Coming in.

Jeremy and Hugh start up the jetskis in a screaming
racket and are gone. The Fisherman exchange
conspiratorial grins.

EXT DAY - THE PUB BEERGARDEN

Jim, Marg, and Henry Kingi watch the Jet Skis cut a
screaming swathe through the silence of the harbour.

HENRY

(to Sir Jim)

Would he listen if we talked
to him?

Jim watches the Jetskis for a moment, thinking.

JIM
Water over stone.

MARG
What?

JIM
Its an old Zen proverb.
Wearing 'em down is better
than hitting 'em head on.

MARG
I'd like to hit 'em head on
with a cement barge.

EXT DAY - THE HARBOUR

Jeremy and Hugh turn for home to be confronted by a vast
pan of mud.

HUGH
Bastards.

JEREMY
(squeaks)
What are we going to do?

He looks across the mud at the distant hotel.

HUGH
Well its either walk or wait
six hours for the tide.

He drops off the side and sinks deep into the slimy ooze.
Jeremy watches, appalled.

EXT DAY - THE BEERGARDEN

People are sitting in the sunshine, drinking beer. Then
the conversation stops dead. Staggering up from the end
of the garden are two exhausted, mud-caked apparitions.

INT EVENING - THE BAR

Whole families and clans have gathered, a good humoured
mixture of Pakeha and Maori, generations and gender.
Jasmine, Jeremy, and Deanna sit at a table in the middle
of all this, very out of place with their hip fashion
clothes and careful, stylish hair. Henry Kingi and
friends are at a table with Jesse and her son Andy.

JASMINE

The magazines can say what they like about silicon, but the designers and the people who run the shows want breasts.

Jeremy is apprehensively eyeing a Vast Maori looming above him with shaven head, wall to wall tattoos, wrap around sunglasses, leather vest. His huge Rottie leans over and takes a wet, pink tongued slurp out of Jeremy's beer. Jeremy quietly puts the beer to one side. Hugh appears with a round of drinks. On the stage, Henry has taken the microphone.

HENRY

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know, tonight is our annual wet tee shirt challenge.

JASMINE

Oh how gross. Just what you'd expect.

DEANNA

(to Jasmine,
nervously)

They wouldn't want us to go up there, would they?

HENRY

All donations at the end go to the Plunket Centre, so if you want to stop the beancounters dropping it down the same black hole as the post office, please give generously. Now, let's meet our shapely contestants.

An ancient man in his 80s steps out and flexes his muscles to the roar of the crowd. Hugh roars with laughter.

HENRY

Curly here enjoys crocheting and gutting fish, and he wants to be an air hostess.

Hoots and roars of laughter and applause from the crowd. The Vast Maori appears, grinning, in a wet tee shirt, leading his Rottie, also in a wet tee shirt and wrap

around sunglasses. Jeremy's laugh is uncertain. Jasmine is turned crossly away from the stage. Deanna looks very unhappy. Hugh is the only one enjoying himself.

JASMINE

We could have gone to
Pauanui.

HUGH

(still laughing)
Yeah, but you wouldn't see
this at Pauanui.

JASMINE

No. You wouldn't.

HENRY

Harre and his friend
Boofhead enjoy flower
arranging and cat shows.
Boofhead's hoping that the
new proprietor of the Arms
can put him in touch with a
certain female golden
retriever.

Much laughter and eyes turn to Hugh, Jesse's among them. Hugh's laugh is unconvincing. Is being laughed with or laughed at? A man covered in mud runs onto the stage.

MAN

Anyone seen me Jetski?

The smile sets on Hugh's face. The experience is still rather too fresh in the memory. The crowd erupts with laughter and applause. Hugh manages an uncertain grin and a raise of the glass.

INT DAY - JESSE'S CAFE/GALLERY

Hugh, Jasmine, Jeremy, and Deanna enter, all showing the signs of a night without much sleep. A young boy - Andy, no more than 5 - appears carrying a tray of muffins.

ANDY

Can I help you?

HUGH

We'd like some coffee. Is
your Mum...

ANDY
(briskly)
Flat white, espresso, latte,
or cappuccino?

Hugh taken aback at this articulate, confident 5 year old.

HUGH
You certainly know your
coffee. Four flat whites,
thanks. And four muffins.

Jesse appears. There is a moment of recognition.

HUGH
Hello.

JESSE
(coolly)
Hi.

ANDY
Mum, the man wants four flat
whites and these muffins.

Andy takes the muffins to the table as Jesse starts the coffees.

HUGH
I should introduce myself.
I'm Hugh. I've bought the
Arms.

JESSE
Jesse. Going to develop it
into some kind of tourist
resort, I hear.

HUGH
Should be good for you.

JESSE
Yeah? How's that?

HUGH
Well, increased business.

Jesse stops and fixes him with an uncompromising eye.

JESSE

Actually, I'd rather keep
the town the way it is.
Don't delude yourself into
thinking you're doing us all
a huge favour.

Hugh is a taken aback. He heads back to his friends.

JASMINE

Hugh, if you don't take me
home today, I'm calling
Auckland for a taxi. And
you can pay.

HUGH

(wearily)
I always pay, Jasmine.

EXT DAY - OUTSIDE THE HIGHWATER HOTEL

Hugh and Rod are outside the hotel.

HUGH

The condos are the priority.
The jetty and the interior
can wait.

Henry Kingi joins them and extends a hand to Hugh.

HENRY

How's it going? Henry
Kingi.

HUGH

(shaking hands)
Hugh. Hugh Chance.

HENRY

Got plans for the old girl,
I hear.

HUGH

One or two ideas

HENRY

The local iwi'd like to
think there'll be some
consultation before things
get rolling.

HUGH
 (more guarded)
 I'll keep you informed, of course.

HENRY
 There's a lot at stake here for the local people, Hugh. The Arms is more than just a pub.

HUGH
 (patronisingly)
 Henry, this'll be the best thing that's ever happened to this town. It'll bring money and jobs to the area, it'll...

HENRY
 (cuts in)
 It'll bring a swarm of tourists that no one wants.

A short, tense silence.

HUGH
 (tersely)
 This is the 1990s, not the 1950s, Henry. You can't live in some sort of time capsule.

HENRY
 (losing patience)
 Don't give me that bullshit. People live here because they like the town the way it is.

SIMULTANEOUS ACTION. In the Range Rover, jet skis in tow. Jeremy and the girls cruise alongside.

JEREMY
 Hugh, we outa here or what?

HUGH
 (to Henry)
 Is there a Waitangi claim on this site?

HENRY
 (surprised)
 No.

HUGH
 Then I'm sorry, I don't see
 what you've got to do with
 it.
 (heads for the
 car)
 Jesus, its not like I'm a
 Japanese consortium.

JEREMY
 (as Hugh gets in)
 Trouble with the locals?

HUGH
 Yeah, talk about being
 dragged kicking and
 screaming into the light.

Range Rover roars away. Jim, Marg and Jesse join Rod and Henry, watching the car disappear.

HENRY
 Thinks he's the new messiah.

JIM
 Hmm. Fortunately the
 tyranny of distance is on
 our side.

INT DAY - THE AGENCY

Hugh, Brian, Jeremy, and the CD are sitting around the table. Hugh holds a can emblazoned "New and Improved".

HUGH
 So what's new and improved
 about it?

JEREMY
 This commercial, so it has
 to look really good. If it
 doesn't have all those cat
 lovers salivating on behalf
 of Tibbles, its down the
 plug.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
I want the look they got for
the National Bank ad. The
ones with the horse.

Hugh stares at him.

HUGH
This is a cat.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Mmm, but I want it to really
glisten the way that horse
did.

JEREMY
(clears his
throat)
Now we should tell you that
the client wants to use her
own cat.

He hands a photo to Hugh.

BRIAN
(blurts,
perturbed)
We really should cast the
cat, Jeremy.

HUGH
Its just a backyard moggy.

JEREMY
(tersely)
Then you'll just have to
make it look like something
else, won't you?

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Think of it as a vision. A
golden vision of mutual love
between cat and cat lover

HUGH
I suppose simulated sex is
out of the question?

Nobody laughs.

EXT DAY - OUTSIDE THE AGENCY

Hugh and Brian leave the building. Brian is fuming.

BRIAN
You've got an attitude
problem.

HUGH
Well how'd I get to the be
the Petfood Man, Brian? I
didn't get into this
business aspiring to be the
Petfood Man.

BRIAN
For the money we're making,
I'd be the cockroach man.
We've got a niche. Its a
very lucrative niche. And
its easy money. There is
nothing hard about what we
do.

(gets into his
car)

If your Art School
conscience is worrying you,
go and make a couple of
video clips and get it out
of your system.

(looks at his
watch)

I got a lunch.

Brian drives off. Hugh dials on his cellphone.

HUGH
The cockroach man.

EXT DAY - BY THE HARBOUR

Rod and Jacko are loading fishing gear into their boat.
Rod answers his cellphone.

ROD
Rod Steven.

HUGH
Its Hugh, Hugh Chance.

Rod gestures to Jacko with frantic hitting movements.
Jacko seizes a hammer and a piece of four by two from the
back of the truck and starts bashing the gunwale.

HUGH
 (raising his
 voice)
 I was calling to see how
 things were going.

ROD
 Fine. Fine

Hugh gives up.

HUGH
 I can hardly hear you. I'm
 coming up on the weekend.
 I'll talk to you then.

He hangs up. Rod does likewise. Jacko downs tools.

ROD
 Man's coming up. Better
 knock up some framing. Keep
 him happy for a while.

They resume loading the boat.

EXT DAY - OUTSIDE THE HIGHWATER ARMS

Hugh cruises into Highwater and pulls up next to the
 hotel. Some framing is up, but there is no sign of the
 builders. He looks thoughtfully at the framing.

INT DAY - JESSE'S CAFE/GALLERY

Jesse appears behind the counter.

JESSE
 (coolly)
 Hi.

HUGH
 (very politely)
 Hullo. Could I have a flat
 white please?

Jesse starts making the coffee. Hugh wanders over to the
 sculptures. He is intrigued by them.

HUGH
 These are very interesting.
 Local artist?

Jesse looks up from the coffee machine.

JESSE

Yes. Me.

Hugh is surprised and impressed.

HUGH

Oh. You're a Henry Moore fan, aren't you?

Now it is Jesse's turn to be surprised. He is right.

HUGH

Certainly not what I would have expected to find out here.

JESSE

And what would you have expected?

HUGH

Paua shell key rings?

JESSE

I'm sure there'll be plenty of those once you've finished your Club Med.

HUGH

It was a joke. Good grief, it isn't going to be anything like that. Look, you have the only good coffee for a hundred and fifty kilometres. Could we possibly call a truce?

Jesse looks at him with more than a hint of amusement.

JESSE

Possibly.

HUGH

(finishes his coffee)

Thank you. Excellent coffee.

He exits. Jesse watches him go; he is not what she expected.

EXT DAY - THE HIGHWATER BUILDING SITE

Rod, Jacko, and Hugh are looking at the framing.

HUGH
So it took you two weeks to
put this up?

ROD
Framing's a complicated
business.

HUGH
(reasonably)
You're fired.

Rod and Jacko look like they've swallowed a golf ball.

HUGH
I used to work on building
sites. This is two days
work, tops. Send me an
invoice for what you've
done.

Hugh exits, leaving Rod and Jacko in stunned silence.

ROD
Be buggered.

EXT DAY - JIM'S BOAT AT THE WHARF

Jim is working on his boat, a large, immaculately
maintained yacht. Hugh stands on the wharf.

HUGH
Are there any other local
builders?

JIM
Reg Mankovich. He's got a
good reputation.

HUGH
OK, I'll give him call.

Jim finishes what he's doing.

JIM

As it happens, young Hugh,
you've arrived just in time
for the annual Highwater
Arms rugby challenge.

EXT DAY - A COUNTRY RUGBY FIELD

Marg is dwarfed by the surrounding group of players, who are all ages, shapes, and sizes. Henry, Rod, and Jacko, are among them. Jim and Hugh watch from the sidelines. Quite a crowd has gathered, among them Jesse and Andy.

MARG

Where are Fred and Joey?

PLAYER

They went to Auckland for
Joey's sister's wedding, but
they said they'd be back.

MARG

When was the wedding?

PLAYER

Last night.

MARG

Well we won't be seeing them
today, will we?

She reaches up and cuffs the Player hard on the ear.

PLAYER

Ow.

Marg marches over to Hugh.

MARG

You a rugby man?

HUGH

(uneasily)
Well, yeah, of course.

MARG

We're a man short. There's
a kit in the dressing room.

(ferociously,
marching off)
Come on you bloody
layabouts, get your legs
moving. I want to see fire
in your bellies today and
God help you if I don't.

SIMULTANEOUS ACTION AND DIALOGUE. Hugh is aghast; he looks to Jim in a mute plea for help.

JIM
You can always tell her you
don't want to play

HUGH
(looking at Marg)
I think that'd be worse.

EXT DAY - THE RUGBY FIELD

The game is underway. A scrum unravels to reveal Hugh lying motionless and face down at the bottom. He lifts his face from the turf as Henry helps him up.

HUGH
Call this a friendly?

HENRY
(grins)
Yep.

EXT DAY - THE RUGBY FIELD, LATER IN THE GAME

Hugh collects a pass and, clear, runs in a hobbling sprint for the line. A metre short, an opposing player catches up with him. The point of his elbow hits Hugh in the forehead. Hugh's legs fly up in the air and he falls back to the ground pole axed. Henry flies in, hurdles Hugh's prone form, decks Hugh's assailant, and a wild brawl erupts. Jim and Jesse pull Hugh out of the melee.

HUGH
(groggily)
Did I score?

EXT DAY - THE HIGHWATER ARMS BEERGARDEN

The garden is crowded. Rugby players from the two sides mingle jovially. A battered Hugh makes his way through the crowd towards the barbecue. Marg slaps him on the back.

MARG

Did well, boy. See what a bit of good, plain food can do for you.

Hugh grins ruefully and continues on his way.

PLAYER

Hey man, how's the head?

HUGH

Well its alright except I keep on seeing three of each of you ugly bastards.

He and his friends roar with laughter. Hugh moves on to the barbecue where Henry is manning the implements.

HUGH

They were trying to rip each other's heads off an hour ago.

HENRY

Ended the same way last year. Always worse when you're playing your mates.
(passes Hugh some tongs)
Here, make yourself useful.

They fall into a brief silence over the sizzling food.

HUGH

Look, I wanted to apologise for that crap I laid on you about the Treaty of Waitangi.

HENRY

Forget it.

HUGH

Yeah, well, I was out of order.

Henry looks up at Hugh. The apology surprises and impresses him. Andy and Jesse appear.

JESSE

How are you feeling after
your Rite of Passage?

HUGH

Well, I've discovered a
whole new range of pain
receptors.

ANDY

I really liked the way your
feet went up higher than
your head.

HUGH

(giving him a
sausage)

Glad you enjoyed it, Andy.

The band has started to play, though Jesse isn't singing.

HUGH

Not singing?

JESSE

No. I just guest sometimes.

Suddenly, Hugh knows where he has seen her.

HUGH

Jesse Linklater. You used
to sing with the Loose
Canons. I knew I'd seen you
somewhere before. You
looked a lot different.

JESSE

I was a lot different.

HUGH

No kidding. Blue hair and
black leather, as I
remember.

Hugh's cellphone rings in his pocket. Embarrassed, he
extricates the phone and steps to one side.

HUGH

Hugh.

JASMINE

Hughie, where are you?

Hugh's look says Oh shit.

HUGH

Ah... I'm still at
Highwater.

JASMINE

You're what! We're meant to
be at the restaurant in an
hour.

HUGH

I'm sorry Jaz, I clean
forgot. I've had to fire the
builder. I need to organise
another one before I can
leave.

JASMINE

Hugh, Saatchi's new CD's
going to be there. That was
the whole idea. You and
Brian have been wanting to
get in there for ages.

Hugh looks back towards Jesse and Henry and the crowd,
the harbour behind them. He makes his decision.

HUGH

I'm sorry Jaz, I just can't
leave right now.

JASMINE

(snaps)

Fine.

She hangs up. Hugh switches off his phone and joins
Jesse.

HUGH

Like a dance?

Jesse thinks, then decides she likes the idea.

JESSE

Why not?

Joining the other dancers, they sweep into a jive. Soon
they are spinning around the dance floor, exhilaration
melting reserve.

EXT NIGHT - THE BEER GARDEN

It is dark now. Hugh and Jesse are retreating with their drinks to cool down on the edge of the harbour.

HUGH
So you didn't become rich
and famous in London?

JESSE
No, we starved in a squat.

HUGH
How on earth did you end up
here?

JESSE
Long story.

A silence.

HUGH
You ever miss it? The music
scene.

JESSE
Miss what? Egos, drugs, and
bullshit?

HUGH
Sounds like advertising.

Jesse glances at him. Again, he has surprised her. Their eyes meet and hold. Hugh leans towards Jesse and kisses her. They break.

JESSE
This isn't a good idea. Not
a good idea at all.

She heads away across the lawn.

HUGH
Jess...

Hugh catches up with her and stops her.

HUGH
Jess. What's wrong?

Jesse looks at him in disbelief.

JESSE

What's wrong? You're
ruining the town single
handed, you live in
Auckland, and you work in
advertising. And you ask me
what's wrong?

She heads off again, leaving Hugh standing shell-shocked.

JESSE

And you drive a Porsche.

HUGH

Its just a car.

JESSE

No its not. Its a character
trait.

Then she's gone. He doesn't follow, just watches her go.

INT DAY - A STUDIO

The front of the studio has been set up to look like a living room, and the set is lit by a wash of golden light. The Art Director carefully pours gravy over the catfood.

JEREMY

(calls to Hugh)

Nice sparkles off the gravy.

HUGH

(to the crew)

Whip pastry around it and
you could call it Horse
Wellington. Now all we
need...

He turns to see Amber (the client) entering with a very unhappy, very obese cat in her arms. He stares, appalled.

HUGH

...is another cat.

(urgently)

Jeremy, Brian - a word.

They gather to one side.

HUGH
(panic in his
voice)
What's with the Michelin
cat? The cat in the photo
was low rent, but it wasn't
Pavarotti.

JEREMY
(urgently)
You'll just have to frame it
tight.

HUGH
I can't use that fur-lined
blimp. People will laugh,
Jeremy.

JEREMY
You're the director. That's
your problem, not mine.

He stalks off.

INT DAY - THE STUDIO

CLAPPER LOADER
3 take 15.

We cut to a glossy TVC image. The model adoringly puts
the bowl in front of the cat. The cat sniffs at it and
steps over it. We cut back to the real time set.

HUGH
(pained)
Cut.

Hugh puts his face in his hands, then turns to the
client.

HUGH
(strained
patience)
Amber, did you do as we
asked and not feed your cat
yesterday?

AMBER
(looking shifty)
I only gave him a snack.

HUGH

A snack.

(to the crew)

Great. Cat ate half a rhino
before the shoot.

Amber's face sets. Jeremy and Brian glance between her
and Hugh nervously.

HUGH

(to the crew)

OK, lunch everybody.

(to the Art

Director)

Archie, go down to the SPCA
pound and get us a young,
slim, pretty cat.

BRIAN

(joins them)

Whoa. I think we should
persevere a bit longer with
the client's cat.

HUGH

The cat is fat, it has no
talent, and it won't eat the
product. Its me or him,
Brian. I realise its a
difficult decision. I'll
give you some time to think
it over.

He stalks off.

EXT DAY - OUTSIDE THE STUDIO

Hugh is taking long drags on a cigarette when Jeremy
appears. Jeremy lights a cigarette too.

HUGH

What's your life coming to
when you have to say, as a
professional and as a human
being, its me or some fat
feline. Where's the dignity
in that?

JEREMY

I wouldn't be in advertising
if I was worried about
dignity. I just lie back
and think of the money.
Seriously, Hugh, you'd be
well advised to cut the
prima donna stuff. Don't
make the mistake of thinking
you're bigger than the game.

HUGH

(takes a long
drag)

Know what really worries me?
In this business, the cat
can win.

INT DAY - HUGH'S BEDROOM

Hugh is packing a bag. Jasmine sits on the bed.

JASMINE

So you'd rather be up there
in that fleapit again than
here with me.

HUGH

Jaz, I have a lot of money
invested in that place. And
I really would appreciate it
if you didn't keep on
calling it a fleapit.

Jasmine gets up and heads for the door.

JASMINE

Call me when you've worked
out your priorities.

She exits. Hugh pauses, then continues packing his bag.

INT DAY - JESSE'S STUDIO

The studio is cluttered with work in progress. Jesse is
working on a sculpture. She looks up as Hugh enters.

JESSE

Back to survey the realm?

Hugh ignores this. Jesse cleans her hands.

HUGH
Thought you might be
interested in this.

Hugh hands her a large, very expensive looking hard cover book on Henry Moore. Jesse's face lights up as she takes it.

HUGH
No hurry to return it.

JESSE
Thank you.

She is absorbed in the book. Hugh winds himself up.

HUGH
Look, I'm going to be around
for a while this time. I
was wondering if you'd maybe
like to have dinner one
night.

Jesse doesn't reply at first.

JESSE
This is the only restaurant
in town.

HUGH
I hear its very good.

JESSE
Do you?

A silence. Hugh waits. Jesse gives in.

JESSE
The chef will think about
it.

HUGH
(beams)
Great. See you then.

Hugh exits, leaving Jesse torn between head and heart.

EXT DAY - THE HIGHWATER BUILDING SITE

The framing hasn't progressed much since Hugh was last in town and there is no one to be seen on the site. He is

unimpressed. From the other side of the hotel he hears sounds of construction.

EXT DAY - THE JETTY

Down by the water, Hugh is astonished to find Rod and Jacko at work. Jim is working on his boat next to them.

HUGH
What are you doing here?

ROD
(jovially)
How's it going? Reg
Mankovich had too much work
on, so he asked me to help
out.

Hugh stares at Rod. He turns around, gathering himself.

ROD
You're probably wondering
why we're not working on the
condos.

HUGH
Telepathy is a great gift.

ROD
No bricks.

HUGH
(dubiously)
No bricks.
(takes out his
phone)
Alright. What's the number.

To the side, unseen, Jacko is making a call on the mobile.

JACKO
Standby for incoming.

In the cafe, the phone rings; Jesse picks it up apprehensively.

JESSE
(disguising her
voice)
Far North Building supplies.

HUGH

Its Hugh Chance from the Highwater Arms. What's the story with our bricks?

JESSE

There's a hold-up at the suppliers end. We're doing the best we can.

HUGH

(resignedly)

OK. Thank you.

He hangs up. In the cafe, Jesse has found the deception very difficult. It is a betrayal, and she knows it.

HUGH

Alright. No stuffing around this time. Otherwise, I'll just pay an Auckland operation to come up and do it properly.

Hugh and Rod exchange a look that Hugh doesn't see. They know they are running out of rope.

JIM

How'd you like to come for a cruise, Hugh? Don't know a place till you've seen it from the water.

EXT DAY - SIR JIM'S BOAT

Jim is at the helm. Hugh is next to him.

HUGH

So this wasn't just a social invitation.

JIM

Well, you've got to know the place and the people a bit now. Maybe you see it differently now. This isn't just about a pub. Its about a community, a way of life. But I'm sure I don't have to tell you that.

HUGH

The Arms is an investment,
Jim. It owes me a lot of
money.

JIM

It turns a profit. Anyway,
as I'm sure your accountant
will have pointed out, if
its a lucrative return on
your money that you want,
then you would have been
much better off investing in
the stock exchange or the
money market. Less risk,
less capital input, much
higher potential returns
over a shorter period. And
someone else does it all for
you. So its not all about
money for you either, is it
Hugh?

HUGH

What did you do before this,
Jim?

JIM

I had a business. At least
it started out mine. Later
it got too big. Americans
own it now. Sign of the
times.

HUGH

Americans? What business
are we talking about, Jim?

Jim hesitates for a moment.

JIM

Fergusson Holdings.

Hugh stares at him.

HUGH

Fergusson Holdings. Jim
Fergusson. Sir Jim
Fergusson?

Hugh can see it is true.

HUGH

Why didn't you just buy the
Arms yourself?

JIM

I don't have the money. I
kept the boat and enough for
the house. The rest I gave
away.

Hugh is trying to take all this in.

JIM

The most valuable
investments have nothing to
do with balance sheets,
Hugh. It all depends on
the kind of return you want.

The scream of a reel cuts across them.

JIM

Well don't just stand there
like a stunned mullet.

The spell broken, Hugh leaps and grabs the rod and is
caught up in the exhilaration of the fight.

EXT NIGHT -JESSE'S HOUSE (PART OF THE CAFE/GALLERY)

Jesse answers knock on her door to find an exuberant,
grinning Hugh brandishing a tuna and a bottle of wine.
She stares at him with amused disbelief.

HUGH

I brought dinner.

JESSE

Hugh, its 9:30. I've
already eaten.

HUGH

(moving past her
into the house)
Well I haven't. Where's the
kitchen.

JESSE

Shh. You'll wake Andy.

Hugh reaches the kitchen, Jesse astonished but entertained and carried along by Hugh's exuberance.

HUGH
I'll make sushi. How does
that sound?

JESSE
Unlikely.

HUGH
Well, sushi's raw fish and
this is most certainly a raw
fish, so I reckon all I need
now is a sharp knife.

Jesse laughs. He ferrets in a drawer, emerges with a corkscrew, and sets about opening the bottle of wine.

JESSE
Do you often do this?

HUGH
Do what?

JESSE
Turn up on someone's
doorstep with a dead fish
demanding to be fed.

HUGH
(hands her a glass
of wine)
I hear Brad Pitt does it all
the time. Cheers.

Jesse laughs. Hugh pulls a knife from the knife holder.

HUGH
Actually, I have to admit,
the closest I've got to
making sushi is watching a
grizzly bear eat a salmon.

Jesse laughs and takes the knife, cutting the fish, very precisely, very delicately. They are standing very close, shoulders touching. The chemistry is electric. She holds out a piece of the fish to him. Their eyes lock. Hugh makes no effort to take the offered fish.

JESSE

Of course, its a terrible
shame to have it without
wasabe.

HUGH

Really?

He leans forward and kisses her. At first she is
hesitant, then surrenders herself to the moment.

NIGHT - JESSE'S BEDROOM

Hugh and Jesse lie in each other's arms. The night air
crackles with the calls of stilts and oyster catchers.

HUGH

The sound of my childhood.
All those summer holidays at
the beach.

JESSE

I remember in London I used
to hang onto that idea, that
it was all still here,
somewhere. It was all that
kept me going sometimes.

HUGH

That bad was it?

JESSE

Some of it was.

HUGH

Do you want to tell me?

JESSE

There's not much to tell. I
was in love with someone in
the band. He developed a
habit. In the end, he died.

HUGH

Was he Andy's father?

She nods.

JESSE

I've come a long, long way
to get to this place, Hugh,
further than you can
imagine. I want you to
understand this, because I
don't know quite how you're
part of it, and if there are
choices to be made, I've
already chosen.

Hugh doesn't reply. He knows the choices will be his.

INT DAY - THE HOTEL

Hugh enters the hotel on a high, very happy and light.
Marg is at work in the "Brassiere"

MARG

Hugh, some pushy bugger from
Auckland rang for you.

Hugh sees the note and his face clouds. He dials on the
phone.

HUGH

Brian, its Hugh.

BRIAN

(excited)

Where you been, man? I've
been trying to get hold of
you.

HUGH

Yeah, I've been tied up.

BRIAN

(leerily)

Oh yeah. Found yourself
some local entertainment,
have you? Well, guess what,
pal?
You wanted to get away from
petfood? We just scored the
MacMasters Superburger
campaign.

Hugh is taken away by the enormity of this news.

HUGH

What?

BRIAN
 (laughs gleefully)
 We're up there now, man. We
 owe Jeremy a big, fat, Moet-
 lubricated lunch
 (briskly)
 Now listen, we got a meeting
 at the agency this afternoon
 at 2, so you'd better haul
 arse and get down here.

Hugh suddenly comes back to the present.

HUGH
 I've got commitments here
 tonight.

BRIAN
 Then lose 'em.

Silence. Hugh is confronted by the first of his choices.

BRIAN
 Hugh?

HUGH
 Sorry, I can't.

BRIAN
 What? Listen pal, start
 thinking with your wallet
 instead of your dick and get
 down here.

Hugh flushes with anger.

HUGH
 Like I said, Brian, I've got
 commitments.

He hangs up and heads for the door.

HUGH
 (to Marg)
 I don't want to talk to him
 if he calls again.

The phone rings immediately. Marg picks it up.

MARG

He said to bugger off.

EXT DAY - THE JETTY

Hugh is looking out over the harbour, a troubled man. He turns to look at the building site. Jim appears.

JIM

Beautiful day.

HUGH

I've decided to call a halt to the building. I need time to think things over.

JIM

I think that's a wise decision.

HUGH

Just as well those bricks didn't come. I suppose I'd better cancel the order.

JIM

I'll get Rod to call them.

HUGH

(dialling on his mobile phone)

No its alright. I put the number in the memory.

Jim pales. A disaster is unfolding.

JIM

Hugh...

But, in the cafe Jesse has picked up the call.

JESSE

Highwater Gallery Cafe.

Hugh is stunned into silence.

JESSE

Hello?

Hugh goes cold, understanding everything in one blinding, humiliating, painful flash. He hangs up.

HUGH

You bastards. This whole thing's been a set-up, hasn't it?

JIM

Hugh, it wasn't like that.

HUGH

Screw the lot of you.
Gloves are off.

Hugh exits.

INT DAY - THE HIGHWATER BAR

Hugh emerges into the bar with a packed bag. Sir Jim is waiting for him.

JIM

(briskly)

I want Rod off the site. An Auckland firm will be coming up to finish the building.

JIM

You're making the wrong decision, Hugh. You build your life around money, you end up with nothing.

HUGH

(moving to leave)

Spare me the homilies.

Jim angrily grabs his arm. For a moment there is the iron authority of the old Jim Fergusson in Jim's face and voice.

JIM

Don't you patronise me, boy. I paid for those "homilies" with a wife who died of booze and pills and despair because of me. I've got children I don't know because I never had the time. So when I talk about ending up with nothing, I know what I'm talking about.

There is a frozen moment, then Hugh recovers himself enough to move towards the door.

JIM

You think about it, Hugh.
You think about it when
you're making your next 30
second time filler. You
think about all the work
you're doing so that all
those people can reach for
the mute button and go and
make a cup of tea.

This strikes home. Hugh flinches, but he keeps on going.

EXT DAY - OUTSIDE THE HOTEL

Jesse catches up with Hugh as he throws his bag into the Porsche.

JESSE

Hugh, what are you doing?

HUGH

You were in on it all along,
weren't you?

JESSE

Don't you think you're
getting this just a bit out
of perspective?

HUGH

You see, Jess, I thought I
had found something better
than the duplicitous crap I
normally call a life. But I
guess duplicitous crap is
just the human condition, so
I might as well take the
money.

JESSE

(annoyed now)

Look, all we were trying to
do was get you to
understand...

HUGH

Oh I understand alright.
You even made the ultimate
sacrifice for the cause
didn't you?

JESSE

You bastard.

He steps into the car dialling on his phone.

HUGH

Abby, its me. Tell Brian
not to ritually disembowel
himself. I'm on my way.

He starts and he's gone, roaring off down the highway.
Only now do we see on Jesse's face the cost.

EXT NIGHT - THE STREET

Hugh hurtles down the Remuera street in his Porsche, his
bags still in the back. He pulls up to screeching halt
and climbs determinedly from the car.

EXT NIGHT - JASMINE'S HOUSE/FLAT

Hugh knocks on the door, still very wound up about what
has happened. There is no answer. He looks up at the
second floor window; the light is on.

HUGH

(shouts)

Jaz. Jaz, its me.

No response. He gives up.

EXT NIGHT - THE STREET

Hugh is about to get into his car when he notices, parked
across the road, Jeremy's Range Rover. He stops,
suspicious working in his mind, and turns back towards
the house.

INT NIGHT - JASMINE'S HOUSE/FLAT

Hugh shins up the drainpipe towards the lit window.
Inside Jasmine and Jeremy are coupling in the bed. The
window suddenly pushes open with a bang. Jasmine screams;
Jeremy turns around in horror.

HUGH

Well, I can see you've all
been missing me.

EXT DAY - HIGHWATER

Sir Jim, Marg, Henry, Rod, and Jesse, watch the machinery
of the Auckland building firm roll in.

JIM

What a mess.

Next to him, Jesse is deciding to go and see Hugh.

INT DAY - THE STUDIO

The food stylist is putting the final touches to the hero
hamburger, matching it to the photographic specifications
of the MacMasters manual. Hugh and Jeremy are standing
to one side.

JEREMY

You can't tell me you
wouldn't have done the same,
Hugh.

HUGH

No, I wouldn't have,
actually. I would have
remembered that you were,
for better or worse, my
oldest friend.

Hugh starts to move off.

JEREMY

We'll still do that film
together, eh Hugh?

Hugh stops in his tracks and turns back to Jeremy.

HUGH

Jeremy, take Jasmine by all
means, but, please, spare me
the film. If I had a dollar
for every conceited, no
talent agency writer who had
a great script inside them
just waiting to get out...

He turns on his heel and joins the crowd around the
burger, leaving Jeremy in shock. Roger, the slick young

MacMaster's executive, compares the burger to the photo in the manual. Hugh and the others wait. Roger makes a point of taking his time.

ROGER
I don't like the bun.

Hugh can scarcely conceal his exasperation.

HUGH
What's wrong with the bun?

ROGER
The seeds are uneven.

HUGH
That's the way the buns are

ROGER
(eyeballing Hugh)
Well I don't like it.

HUGH
(oozing hostility)
You don't like it...

BRIAN
(cuts in hastily)
We'll build a bun.

HUGH
You are seriously suggesting
that we spend half a day
sticking sesame seeds on a
bun?

BRIAN
(teeth clenched)
That's right.

HUGH
Fine. What's a few hours
between exorbitantly paid
friends?

INT DAY - THE STUDIO

In a montage we see the building of the hamburger: the gluing of the seeds, the construction of the filling, Hugh looking glazed with boredom, the final touches. Roger compares the burger to the photo in the manual.

ROGER
(grudgingly)
That's more like it.

HUGH
OK everybody, lets do this.

Then Hugh sees Jesse standing not far away, watching him. Their eyes meet and hold. Stunned, Hugh joins her.

HUGH
Jess. What are you doing here?

JESSE
I decided I wasn't going to let you run out on an unfinished argument.

Hugh doesn't know what to say.

JESSE
You don't think you might have overreacted just a bit?

Hugh's face hardens into a mask of brassy nonchalance.

HUGH
No, actually, I don't.

JESSE
(exasperated)
For Christ's sake, Hugh, all we were trying to do was stop our town from becoming Paihia mark II.

HUGH
Now who's overreacting.

JESSE
And you really believe I slept with you as part of this terrible conspiracy.

Eyes are turning in their direction. Hugh is acutely conscious of this.

HUGH
I really don't see the point in this, Jess.

JESSE

And now you're going make
the whole town pay for my
"treachery".

HUGH

I just want a return from my
investment, that's all.

BRIAN

Hugh, we're ready to roll
over here.

Hugh glances anxiously towards the set, but Jesse rolls
on.

JESSE

Bullshit. Hugh, when I
first met you I thought you
were a smug, supercilious
arsehole. Somewhere along
the line I changed my mind.
I'm not sure how this
happened and I still find it
surprising but it happened.
Which is why I came a
ridiculously long way in
clapped out, fuming car.

(pauses)

And who do I meet but that
same smug, supercilious
arsehole.

She turns on her heel and rapidly heads through the door.
She doesn't see that she has finally got through to him.

HUGH

Jess...

But she's gone through the door. He is on the verge of
going after her when the voice comes from behind him.

DP

Hugh, we've really got to do
this, man. The lights are
killing the burger.

Hugh is in an impossible position. His head drops
momentarily in defeat, then he turns back to the set.

INT LATER THE SAME DAY - THE STUDIO

We cut to the TVC footage of the burger. Hugh is seated Standing next to the camera, Hugh is pale and hollow eyed.

HUGH

Cut. If we haven't got it now, we never will. That's a wrap. Thank you everybody.

BRIAN

Hugh. Roger has a problem with the burger.

The crew freeze in their packing up. Hugh looks at Roger with transparent and venomous dislike.

HUGH

You didn't have a problem before.

ROGER

Well I do now.

Hugh picks up the burger.

HUGH

Can you tell us precisely the problem you have with this magnificent achievement of the twentieth century.

Roger glares at Hugh.

ROGER

The burger is just not there.

HUGH

So can you perhaps tell us just how we get the burger "there"?

JEREMY

We have to do it again, with a new burger.

HUGH

Do it again?

Brian looks stricken, but nods at Hugh.

HUGH
 (to Jeremy)
 You want us to do it again,
 even though this corporate
 Neandertal can't tell us
 what's wrong.

Roger's face sets. Brian pales. The crew looks entertained; someone sniggers. Jeremy glares at Hugh.

JEREMY
 (tightly)
 That's right, Hugh. Do it
 again. Its Roger's
 commercial, not yours.

HUGH
 (brightly)
 Good. Well I don't want to
 play in the sandpit any
 more. Roger can play by
 himself. As for this...

He reaches across and jams the hamburger into the pocket of Roger's shirt to sharp intakes of breath. Roger is paralysed with shock.

HUGH
 I can get a better burger
 from the Indian dairy on the
 corner. With real meat.

He strides from the room, stunned silence in his wake.

EXT DAY - OUTSIDE THE STUDIO

Hugh has reached his car when Brian appears, beside himself with fear and rage.

BRIAN
 (screams)
 You come back here and
 apologise and do this thing,
 or you're fucking finished,
 man.

HUGH
 (calmly, getting
 into the Porsche)
 You direct it, Brian. Prove
 you're not really a talent
 free zone after all.

Hugh starts the Porsche and pulls away.

BRIAN
 (roars)
 Hugh, come back here!

Hugh heaves his cellphone from his retreating car.

EXT DAY - THE HIGHWATER HOTEL

Hugh cruises into Highwater. The Porsche has gone, replaced by a Commodore wagon. He pulls up next to the building site and gets out. Little has been achieved and there is no one to be seen. Then a man covered in the glutinous harbour mud appears running and pulls a cellphone from the works ute.

HUGH
 What's going on?

FOREMAN
 (dialling
 frantically)
 Some bastard's parked our digger out on the mud flats. You wouldn't believe what's been going on here.

Hugh laughs.

FOREMAN
 (squawks)
 Its not funny. The bloody tide's on its way in.

Hugh walks away, still laughing.

HUGH
 I wouldn't count on it.

EXT DAY - THE HARBOUR

Hugh finds Jesse walking on the sandflats. Andy is flying a kite with another kid. Jesse sees Hugh and her face freezes.

JESSE
 What do you want, Hugh?

HUGH
I've walked away, Jess. I'm out.

JESSE
(flatly)
Really.

HUGH
No, I mean it.

JESSE
Lucky you've got your little property development, then, isn't it?

HUGH
I'm putting a stop to that too. I'm trying to put things right, Jess.

JESSE
(flatly)
Good for you.

HUGH
(exasperated)
Bloody Hell, Jess. What more do I have to do? I even sold the Porsche.
(points)
See that Commodore. You want the grand gesture. Well that's it.

Jesse looks back at the car, then at Hugh.

JESSE
I suppose that's a step in the right direction.

HUGH
(indignant)
A step in the right direction? That was major surgery.

Jesse's resolve is faltering. Hugh puts his arm around her shoulders.

HUGH

Come on, Jess. The least
you can do is give me a
little more rope.

She whips a sharp uppercut into his solar plexus. He
drops to his knees like a stone, astonished and
breathless.

JESSE

(brightly)

OK, I feel a lot better now.
I'll think about it.

HUGH

(breathlessly)

Sounds fair.

We see the characters in extreme wide shot, small figures
amidst the land, sea, and sky.