

CLIFFY

Written by

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FADE IN:

MONTAGE

- A. Old black and white photos from the early nineteen hundred's.
- B. Dozen of men work, building a railway line.
- C. Ladies work in a field.
- D. Men clear a forest.
- E. An old horse looks loaded to breaking point.
- F. A family sit in a horse and jig in their Sunday best.
- G. A steam train cuts through the bush.

Plus photos of the stern ALBERT YOUNG, local pioneer, his youthful wife, MARY YOUNG, CLIFF aged 6, then aged 10 then -

LIVE MONTAGE:

- A. - CLIFF, 13, sprints fro the single room schoolhouse ahead of his brother SYD, 5 and the other KIDS. Cliff and Syd sprint away from the other kids.
- B. Cliff and Syd run along a track through an old growth forest.
- C. The boys, with their fishing poles over their shoulders march along the river bank. Cliff in front, Syd closely behind.
- D. Cliff almost tramples a frog. He picks it up gently and admires it. He holds it out for Syd to kiss. Syd screws up his face.
- E. Giggling, they scramble to their feet and head for home. They walk quickly, then jog, run, quicker and quicker. The race is on!
- F. They tear along the river bank and head into the long grass of the paddock. Cliff steadily but surely pulls away from his younger brother...
- G. The boys run right through the middle of the grazing herd of cows, scattering them. They laugh hysterically.

2

EXT. WESTFIELD, PARRAMATTA, STARTING LINE - DAY

2

Tight in on GEORGE PERDON, 40s, lean athletic, focused. Behind Perdon, a CROWD tries to get a glimpse.

Next to Perdon is TONY RAFFERTY, 40, supremely fit, staring with tunnel vision. His trainer whispers last minute instructions.

Next to Rafferty is SIGGY BAUER, 35, coiled, oiled. His TRAINER kneads his shoulders.

The media push and jostle for the best positions.

Next is JOE RECORD, 35, tanned, muscular, long curly hair. He winks and grins and waves at spectators in the crowd.

Next to Record is Cliff, dwarfed by the athletes beside him. He looks around - lost.

His trainer, WALLY, 60, who's seen his share of hard knocks, massages his shoulders.

WALLY

Listen up, you're a one-pace pony.
If any of these show-boaters want
to hit the gas, let 'em.

PAUL, Cliff's nephew, 20, kneels before Cliff, cutting holes in his trackie dacks with scissors.

The other runners peer, bemused by the alterations.

CLIFF

(to Paul)
You done?

PAUL

Other leg yet.

He attacks the other leg. People in the crowd laugh and point.

WALLY

You need ventilation, Cliff. Or
you'll fry...

RACE STARTER (O.S.)

Runners, take your marks...

PAUL

Shit!

WALLY

Just run your own race.

Paul cuts one more hole as -

CLIFF

(nods to Wally)
I will.

RACE STARTER (O.S.)

Get set...

CLIFF

Oh, and Wal, thanks for coming along.

Wally winks.

BANG! -

3 EXT. GRAZING Paddock - DAWN 3

SUPER: The Otwey Mountains, Victoria, 1982.

Gum boots plow through a marshy paddock.

Cliff, 61, in farmer's plaid shirt, work trousers and faded terry-towel bucket hat, jogs/shuffles up a steep rise, herding three or four cows. He grins hugely as he herds the cows over the rise and down the dale.

4 EXT. Paddock - DAWN 4

A cow's hooves POUND through the bog. Cliff's gumboots follow, accelerate, and catch up with the hooves.

A BROWN and WHITE COW heads one way and veers another. Cliff, grins, slaps her rump affectionately and playfully corrals her back to the herd.

5 INT. OLD DAIRY - DAWN 5

Cliff hand milks the old Brown and White cow in a bale. Milk dribbles from her teat.

CLIFF

C'mon, girl.

A battered old bakelite radio crackles away on a shelf.

RADIO NEWSREADER

... and the Prime Minister has been drawn into Labor's leadership woes, Mr Fraser saying the leadership to Bob Hawke is "nothing but a cynical move by a party bereft of ideas"...

NED, 20s, a cheery deliverer guy, saunters in with fencing supplies on his shoulder.

NED

Where do you want 'em?

CLIFF
There's good. Thanks.

He puts them under a poster of Tony Rafferty in full flight.

NED
You do a bit of runnin'?

Cliff tries to draw milk from the cow. Nothing.

CLIFF
A bit.

Ned smirks.

NED
Where d'ya run?

CLIFF
Depends where I'm going.

Ned takes invoices from his pocket.

NED
I got your invoice here.

Cliff indicates the spike of untidy invoices on his old desk.

CLIFF
Just put it with the rest.

NED
(still cheerful, smiling)
I need it now. There's also the
little matter of last month's
account. I need that now too.

Cliff nods, deflated.

NED
By the way, I reckon your cow's
rooted.

Cliff despairs at the old cow and the near empty bucket.

6 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

6

The kitchen is rustic and unadorned and needs a lick of paint. Wind whistles through a crack in the window.

Sepia photos of PIONEERS - Cliff's DAD and GRANDAD - c 1890 gaze sternly from the walls.

A wood-burning stove CRACKLES. A blackened kettle WHISTLES.

Cliff's MUM, 89 and a spry old bird, picks up the kettle and pours water into a teapot.

MUM
It's not your fault.

CLIFF
We've been customers since...

Cliff feels the weight of his PIONEER FATHER staring sternly at him from the sepia photo.

CLIFF
... fifty years and they've cut off our credit.

MUM
The crop's looking good, love.

CLIFF
Beautiful spuds. Prices are up. We'll get back on top. I'll build up the herd.

MUM
(heard it all before)
Of course you will, love.

Mum pours his tea.

7

EXT. POTATO Paddock - DAY

7

Cliff chips the weeds between the rows of potatoes. Back-breaking work. He's a quarter way down the first row. A whole paddock to go.

Wind whistles through the barbed-wire fence which is strung between rotting fence posts.

Cliff arches his aching back and looks at the straight dirt road running by the paddock and barbed-wire fence. It stretches to the horizon.

Cliff flails at the weeds.

DES FARRANT, 50, sour-faced, local truckie, appears behind the barbed-wire fence.

DES
I reckon you're slowin' down, Cliff.

Cliff glances at the Brown and White cow in the next paddock.

8

EXT. STOCK YARD - DAY

8

The old Brown and White Cow is in the loading race. Des's cattle truck waits at the ramp.

Des opens the gate to the truck.

DES
Hunt her up, Cliff. Haven't got all
day.

Cliff hunts the cow along the race. He looks her in the eye.

CLIFF
No.

Cliff shuts the gate to the ramp.

DES
What do you mean no? I've come all
the way out here to pick her up.
And that's exactly what I'm gonna
do.

Des grabs the gate. Cliff won't yield.

DES
She's not producin'. Past it. No
good to anyone.

CLIFF
Doesn't mean we have to kill her.

DES
You're a crazy old bastard. People
have been saying it for years. Your
dad must be rolling in his grave.

Des stumps off.

Cliff cradles the cow's head in one arm and pats her.

9 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

9

Holey tennis shoes pound the dirt road.

Cliff runs off his frustration in an ungainly shuffle. He still wears his plaid shirt, work trousers and terry-cloth bucket hat. He shuffles past the barbed wire fence.

The dirt road stretches ahead to the horizon.

10 EXT. T-JUNCTION/BITUMEN ROAD - DAY

10

Cliff turns onto the bitumen cross road.

He sees MARY, 23, in the latest running gear, jogging toward him. She's no beauty, but comely enough. As they pass, Mary shyly smiles the jogger's smile of camaraderie.

Cliff looks over his shoulder and watches her run. He runs backwards and keeps watching.

A car speeds toward him, swerves, horn HONKING.

DRIVER
(shouts out window)
Look out, Cliffie!

Cliff grins wryly and waves - he's used to this.

DRIVER
And stop perving on that sheila!

Mary turns and stares. Cliff is mortified. Their eyes lock for a beat, then Cliff spins and jogs off.

A road sign reads: Apollo Bay 35 kms.

11 EXT. APOLLO BAY - DAY 11

A deserted beach. Cliff's holey tennis shoes sit on the plaid work shirt and work trousers on the sand.

A faded bucket hat surfaces in the water and floats. Cliff breaks the water and grins exultantly. He gazes at the ocean stretching to the horizon.

He wades out of the water in his sagging Y-fronts.

12 INT. WESTFIELD PRESS CENTRE - DAY 12

ANTHONY POWELL, 30s the slick PR suit and Westfield Race Organiser sits at a conference table with a bank of microphones.

A banner hangs on the wall behind him. It reads: Westfield Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon.

POWELL
I'm delighted to announce a major new event on the Australian sporting calendar. It is a great honour to inform you that we have secured Westfield as our major sponsor. The Westfield Ultra Marathon will be the most gruelling sporting event in the world. Contestants will run between Australia's two greatest cities, Melbourne and Sydney.

A buzz of murmurs from JOURNALISTS who thrust microphones at Powell. Cameras FLASH.

TV Sports Journo, RON GRIFFIN, 40s, shakes his head in disbelief.

GRIFFIN
That's eight hundred k.

POWELL
Eight hundred and seventy five.

GRIFFIN
Are you expecting anyone to finish?

POWELL
Let me introduce you to the world's very best runners. George Perdon holds the world record for twenty four hours and is also the first man to run across the Nullabor. Siggie Bauer is the world one thousand mile record holder.

Powell indicates the lean tracksuited Perdon and the trim Bauer, seated beside him.

POWELL
And one of the greatest long-distance runners in history. He's run from Perth to Sydney, and he's fresh from his record breaking run across California's Death Valley. Another world champion, Tony Rafferty.

Tony Rafferty supremely athletic, sits on the other side of Powell. He acknowledges the journos' applause with a wave.

GRIFFIN
What's the prize money?

POWELL
Ten thousand dollars. Winner take all.

Cameras flash on Powell.

13

EXT. DIRT ROAD/FARMHOUSE GATE - NIGHT

13

Cliff shuffles past the barbed wire fence and rotting fence posts. He pauses at the front gate.

He sees a pair of late model utes and a smart sedan parked beside his jalopy of a Ford in front of his old farmhouse.

14

INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

14

Cliff stands at the head of the table still in his running/work clothes but with a Birthday Boy hat perched on his head. He holds up a new plaid shirt - identical to the one he wears.

CLIFF

Thanks, mum.

He kisses Mum on the cheek.

MUM

Don't go all soft on me, Cliff
Young.

Cliff's brother SYD, 53, carves roast beef onto plates. He's like Cliff - but taller, more handsome, more prosperous. Syd's wife MOLLY, 50, sits next to Syd and hands on the plate of beef to EUNICE, 50, Cliff's sister, smartly dressed, like the teacher she is.

Cliff passes on his plate.

SYD

You still off the beef, Cliff?

MUM

(to Eunice)
He's gone vegetarian.

EUNICE

Vegetarian? Since when?

MUM

Good few years now.

EUNICE

I never knew. Why are you
vegetarian?

CLIFF

(quickly, to change topic)
I had a bad pot of stew once.

MUM

Rubbish. He says the animals trust
him. He can't kill them.

SYD

Farmers kill, Cliff. That's what we
do.

CLIFF

Doesn't seem right. Killing things.

MUM

I've eaten meat all my life. Hasn't done me any harm.

MOLLY

It'll put meat on your bones, Cliff.

CLIFF

Can't be much fun, being someone's dinner.

Syd and Molly's son, Paul shrugs - that's my uncle and he's crazy - at his girlfriend, VICKI, 19 sitting next to him.

MUM

Then there's all his running.

EUNICE

Time you gave that away, Cliff.

MUM

He ran into Colac last week - to get a haircut.

EUNICE

Colac? That's fifty kilometres.

SYD

Then he ran back.

Vicky and Paul exchange glances, suppress smirks.

Cliff opens a card.

CLIFF

Lotto ticket.

EUNICE

You might get lucky.

CLIFF

I've done real well.

Cliff indicates the plaid shirt and the pair of new gumboots on the table.

SYD

Top shelf, Cliff. Last for years.

CLIFF

Yeah. I'm still wearing the last pair you gave me.

MOLLY

Sorry, there's no card, Cliff. We've just been so busy.

CLIFF

That's all right, love. Comes a time when you want to forget birthdays.

MUM

He didn't want anyone making a fuss.

CLIFF

Don't mind a bit of a fuss.

CUT TO:

Eunice and Molly stack dirty dishes by the sink. Mum gets clean plates and cutlery.

Cliff and Syd light candles on a cake together.

CLIFF

More candles than cake.

SYD

That's what happens when you get to sixty one.

Cliff glances at the sepia photo of his father.

CLIFF

They cut off my credit, Syd.

SYD

It's not just you, Cliff. They reckon there's a credit squeeze on.

CLIFF

Did they cut off your credit?

Syd shrugs - well, no. He sees Paul and Vicki's empty chairs.

SYD

Where are those two?

15

INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

15

ON TV: a pop group play the No 1 hit on Countdown.

Paul and Vicki are entwined on the sofa, kissing hungrily. The Countdown closing theme plays.

Cliff enters. He looks wistfully at the young lovers' affectionate embrace.

Paul's hand cups Vicki's breast. Cliff blinks.

CLIFF

Catchin' up on the news, are you?

Vicky and Paul sit bolt upright.

PAUL
Yeah. Gotta keep abreast.

Vicki shoots daggers at him and Paul realises his faux pas.

CLIFF
Your dad's lighting a bushfire out there.

Paul and Vicki rise.

PAUL
Can't miss out on that, can we?

They exit.

Cliff moves toward the TV and reaches for the power knob. Syd enters as the ABC news fanfare sounds.

SYD
Ran into Des Farrant. He was complaining about that old cow of yours.

CLIFF
You know Des. Only happy whingeing.

SYD
Sell her, Cliff. Get some money for her.

CLIFF
She might come good.

SYD
Wake up, dreamboat.

Syd snaps off the volume as sports journo Ron Griffin appears on screen.

SYD
Have you sprayed, yet? There's some bug down the valley, wiping out crops.

CLIFF
You know I don't like poison on the place.

SYD
I know but if the bastard's get a hold there's no stopping them.

CLIFF
Yeah, well, I'll look into it.

SYD

Make sure you do. You can't afford to lose another crop, Cliff. Farm's been in the family a long time.

Cliff nods gloomily. His eyes turn to the Westfield press conference and Rafferty, Perdon and Bauer.

SYD

Speaking of poison, we'd better go try Molly's cake.

MOLLY (O.C.)

I heard that.

16

INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN- NIGHT

16

Cliff blows out the sixty one candles on the birthday cake.

SYD

He's got clean wind on him.

CLIFF

Oh yeah, I'm a thoroughbred. Saddle me up and I'll win the Cup for you.

SYD

Cut the cake, Cliff.

CLIFF

I'm thinkin' about my wish.

Mum leans over and confides in Eunice.

MUM

I don't know who's going to look after him when I'm gone.

EUNICE

A wealthy widow, that's what you want, Cliff.

CLIFF

Sounds good. Make sure she's a looker.

MUM

Cliff's never been interested in that sort of thing.

CLIFF

I might.

SYD

We used to go to dances when we were young bucks.

Old Cliff here never asked a girl
for a dance. Too shy.

CLIFF
Just like you.

SYD
Dunno how I ever got married.

MOLLY
I do. I'm still chasing after him.
Only now it's to clean up after
him.

VICKI
(whispers to Paul re
Cliff)
He's lived here all his life?

PAUL
(whispers back)
Sixty one years. Dad says he's
never "done it".

VICKI
Never???

PAUL
Never seen a naked girl. Never even
kissed one.

Cliff grins innocently at Vicki.

PAUL
What are you gonna wish for, Uncle
Cliff?

CLIFF
Can't tell you. Or it won't come
true.

Paul and Vicki burst into giggles.

Cliff grins at them. He plunges the knife in the cake and
makes a wish.

17

INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAY

17

Cliff and Mum sit in the battered old front seat. Cliff
wrenches the key in the ignition. The old engine turns over
and over. And over.

Cliff tries again. The engine WHEEZES asthmatically and dies.

Cliff and Mum sit silently.

18 EXT. ROAD - DAY 18

Cliff jogs, a shopping bag in each hand. He shuffles past a road sign - Colac: 40 kms.

19 EXT. COLAC MAIN ST, PUB - DAY 19

A pair of grizzled OLD LOCALS, sip beer and smoke cigarettes. They clock Cliff shuffling past. They shake their heads - it's only that crazy old coot.

CUT TO:

The shopping bags bulge. Cliff shuffles past the same pair of Locals in the opposite direction

A line of cars crawl behind him.

Cliff passes a sports store. He sees something and pulls up. The car behind him brakes. A horn BLARES.

Cliff stares at a huge poster of Perdon, Bauer and Tony Rafferty in the window. It's captioned: Westfield Sydney to Melbourne Ultra Marathon.

20 INT. SPORTS STORE - DAY 20

Cliff stands in front of a life-size cut out of Rafferty, Perdon and Bauer.

A Shop Assistant approaches. It's Mary.

MARY

Thinking of running?

CLIFF

I might. Nah, I got a farm to run.

MARY

That's a pity.

Cliff recognizes her.

CLIFF

I've seen you out running.

MARY

I'm not very good.

CLIFF

You looked good to me. Real good.

Mary indicates TED, 40, the store owner, in the latest 80s running shorts, singlet, tracksuit top, unzipped to chest. Maybe a gold medallion around his neck. He shows running shoes to a CUSTOMER.

MARY

Boss says if I was any slower I'd be running backwards.

CLIFF

Don't reckon he's as quick as he thinks he is, your boss.

MARY

He can get down the pub pretty quick.

They laugh. Ted saunters up. A sly nod at Cliff and a wink to Mary.

TED

Gonna run, Cliff? Ten thousand bucks. Buy yourself a new car. At least buy yourself a new pair of runners.

Ted shows Cliff a fancy new running shoe.

CLIFF

(looks at price)
Jeez, Ted. Can you arrange finance?

TED

They're for real runners, Cliff. Here, have a poster.

Ted hands Cliff a rolled poster. He snatches the fancy running shoe and returns it to its rack.

CLIFF

(shyly to Mary)
Might see you out running.

Cliff smiles a shy goodbye at Mary, picks up his shopping bags and exits.

MARY

Who is he?

TED

He's got a property - out the way there. Spuds. Been out there for ever. Hasn't got two bob to rub together. World's worst farmer, Cliffie Young.

They watch Cliff shuffle onto the street. A car brakes and BLASTS its horn.

TED
World's worst runner.

Mary watches Cliff shuffle into the distance.

21 EXT. VALLEY - DAWN 21

The first rays of a new dawn peek over the mountains, illuminating the dormant mist.

22 EXT. POTATO Paddock - DAWN 22

Cliff surveys the paddock - row after row of ripe potato plants.

He pulls on a plant. It comes away in his hand. He looks at the plant in disbelief. He pulls another plant and it comes away in his hand. He stares at the plant with dread.

CLIFF
Oh, no.

He rips the potato from the earth. It's black and pulpy and Cliff recoils from the stench. Cliff tears another putrid mass from the ground. And another. And another.

Black pulp sprays across Cliff's face and hands and shirt.

23 INT. CLIFF'S BATHROOM - DAY 23

Cliff rips off his plaid shirt. He scrubs the black blight off his hands and face.

24 EXT. WALLY'S COTTAGE - NIGHT 24

Cliff knocks on the door of a run down worker's cottage. An old caravan sits on cinder blocks.

WALLY, 60, had his share of hard knocks, opens the door and peers into the night.

CLIFF
G'day, Wally.

Wally stares, and finally recalls.

WALLY
And god made little green apples.
Cliff? Cliffie Young. How long's it been?

CLIFF
Too long, Wal.

25

INT. WALLY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

25

An old black and white telly sits in the corner and shows Peter Wherrett road tests a 1980s car in Torque or Marque.

Cliff and Wally sit opposite each other at the kitchen table.

Cigarette smoke curls from an overflowing ashtray. Wally offers Cliff a large bottle of beer. Cliff shakes his head and Wally refills his own glass.

WALLY

You're looking good for an old fellah, Cliff.

Wally breaks into a hacking cough. Cliff clocks the empty beer bottles collecting in the corner.

CLIFF

You're looking good too, Wal.

Wally finally stops coughing.

WALLY

I've heard you've been doing it tough.

CLIFF

We get by. Me and mum.

WALLY

She still going? Good on her. Done a lot, your mum.

Both reflect on what they've done with their lives.

CLIFF

Heard about the Sydney to Melbourne?

WALLY

There's a race. Eight hundred and seventy five k's. Geez, you wouldn't catch me driving Sydney to Melbourne, let alone running it.

CLIFF

(grins)
I'm running in it.

WALLY

Yeah and I'm running the hundred metres at the Moscow Olympics... You can't be serious.

CLIFF

Haven't lost any of my speed.

WALLY

That's a relief, 'cause you weren't
real quick to start with.

Wally swigs his beer.

WALLY

When did you start running?

CLIFF

A few years ago.

WALLY

Ever won anything?

CLIFF

No.

WALLY

You always were a dreamer.
Rafferty. Perdon. Bauer. They're
world champions, Cliff. World
record holders. When was the last
time you ran?

CLIFF

Yesterday.

WALLY

Where'd you run? The dunny?

CLIFF

Apollo.

WALLY

Apollo Bay?

CLIFF

And back.

WALLY

That's eighty k. How long did it
take you? A week?

CLIFF

A day.

Wally looks at him disbelievingly.

CLIFF

I need a trainer, Wal.

WALLY

I help out at the footy club. I'm
a glorified water boy.

CLIFF

I need a water boy then.

26 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAWN

26

A hungover Wally draws a line in the dirt road with a stick.

Cliff crouches over the line in his old work pants, yellowing singlet, holey tennis shoes and bucket hat. Wally sighs heavily and activates his stop watch.

The holey tennis shoes cross the line.

Wally watches Cliff's ungainly action.

WALLY

Oh, my sainted aunt.

Wally climbs into Cliff's old Ford.

27 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAY

27

The news plays on the car radio.

NEWSREADER

Parliament announced this morning that for the first time in Australian history it will introduce Random Breath Testing.

WALLY

Lucky I haven't got a licence to lose, isn't it?

Wally turns the key. The engine WHEEZES. Stops. Wally tries again. The engine CROAKS into life.

28 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAY

28

The car chugs along the Apollo Bay Road at 3 mph. Cliff jogs/shuffles ahead.

Wally sits behind the wheel. He groans and lights a cigarette. He glances in his wing mirror and sees a cop car behind him. He fumbles his cigarette and finally digs it out from between his legs. He sinks unobtrusively in his seat.

The cop car slows up beside the Ford. The COP signals and Wally winds down the passenger window.

WALLY

He's training.

COP

Training for what?

WALLY

The Sydney to Melbourne.

The COP stares at Cliff jogging ahead. He breaks into laughter. Wally chuckles with him.

The cop car accelerates past. He gives Cliff a quick, sharp arpeggio on the SIREN.

Cliff jumps out of his skin. The cop car speeds off.

29

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

29

The holey tennis shoes cross the "finish line" in the dirt.

Cliff pulls up and catches his breath. He looks behind him. Nothing.

Finally - headlights. The Ford's engine BANGS and expires.

30

INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

30

The TV plays news footage of a youthful Bob Brown leading the blockade of the Franklin River.

Cliff, Wally and Mum sit in armchairs and sofa. Wally shovels jam and cream onto a home-made scone.

MUM

You're both old enough to know better.

WALLY

Well, it's not cast in stone or anything. We've got some serious training. Some KPI's to hit.

MUM

What's a KPI?

WALLY

Er...

MUM

(at Cliff)

Was this your idea?

Cliff looks at Wally. Wally looks at Cliff.

MUM

You're both as mad as each other. Why would you want to run from Sydney to Melbourne?

Cliff considers, struggles for words.

WALLY

Runners run, Mrs Young. That's what they do.

MUM

Oh, he runs. He runs every day. But not from Sydney to Melbourne.

WALLY

He's a very determined athlete, Cliff.

Wally takes a bite of his scone.

MUM

Athlete? He's a stubborn so-and-so all right. And he's also sixty one years of age. This could kill him.

WALLY

He'll probably feel like dyin'. But, nah.

Wally chews on his scone.

MUM

If Cliff wants to run, I think he should run. I trust you, Wally.

(disingenuously)

I assume you're a professional trainer, Wally?

The scone turns to ashes in Wally's mouth.

31

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

31

Cliff marches after Wally.

WALLY

Forget it, Cliff. Damn fool idea.

CLIFF

She'll come round.

WALLY

You can't run. I can't train. Crack team. Look, you can't race Perdon or Rafferty. First day out you'll hit that wall so bloody hard.

CLIFF

I'm not scared of hitting the wall, Wally. 'Cause for forty years, all I've been hittin' is those bloody fences.

Cliff indicates the barbed wire fences.

CLIFF

I don't want to do it on my own.

WALLY
 You can't do it on your own...
 Jesus!!!

Wally looks at the scone in his hand. Exasperation.

WALLY
 Can you give me a lift, home?
 Second thoughts, it's only forty k -
 why don't we run?!!

32

INT. WALLY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

32

Cliff and Wally sit at the cramped kitchen table watching Ron Griffin interview Rafferty on TV.

Rafferty, looking every bit a thoroughbred stands track side with Griffin.

GRIFFIN
 Tony, you must be confident.

RAFFERTY
 Yeah, it should be fun.

Wally and Cliff - fun??

Cliff nods. Wally fishes documents out of a folder.

WALLY
 This is the official entry form. It
 has to be signed and recommended by
 an official of a registered
 athletics club.

CLIFF
 Where are we gonna find one of
 them?

Wally blows dust off a sheaf of official-looking papers.

WALLY
 Remember the old Colac Cross
 Country Club?

CLIFF
 The one about thirty years ago?

WALLY
 Yep.

CLIFF
 You were the Treasurer.

WALLY
 Yep.

CLIFF
But it went bust.

WALLY
They're not going to know that.

Cliff grins.

33 EXT. BEECH FOREST, BUSH TRACK - DAY

33

The sun dapples the beautiful old growth forest. Cliff struggles up a steep bush track.

Wally waits for him half way up. Cliff staggers and falls at Wally's feet.

WALLY
Not thinking of quitting already,
Spud?

Cliff staggers to his feet and falls again. A bit of a kick in the arse from Wally.

WALLY
Get up you weak bastard!

Cliff lurches to his feet, staggers off and slips and falls.

WALLY
Here's something to cheer you up.
(whispers in his ear)
It's gonna get a whole lot worse.

34 EXT. OLD DAIRY - DAY

34

Wally takes a potato from a sack lying on the floor. He shows it to Cliff, in his work pants and a tee.

CLIFF
King Edward. Mash 'em. Boil 'em.
Fry 'em. Best spud in the world.

WALLY
Did you have to buy them?

CLIFF
That's not funny, Wal.

35 EXT. BEECH FOREST, BUSH TRACK - DAY

35

Cliff lurches up the steep track. He falters. Falters. He loses his grip on the sack.

A handful of potatoes roll down the track.

Cliff grits his teeth and heaves the sack onto his shoulders. He reels past Wally up the hill.

Wally watches him. Admires him.

36

INT. PUB - NIGHT

36

ON TV: Bob Hawke is elected Prime Minister for his first term.

Half the bar cheers. Half the bar boos.

Ted the Sports store owner, Ned the driver, Des Farrant, the two Grizzled Old Locals, and other LOCALS which include CHOOK, 30, WAYNE, 25 and LES 50 drink and yarn.

Paul and a MATE play pool.

MERLE, the no nonsense barmaid patrols her bar.

Wally and Cliff, who carries a meat tray enter. Merle recognises Cliff.

MERLE

Cliff. Cliff Young.

It takes a beat, then recognises her.

CLIFF

Merle.

MERLE

Haven't seen you since those dances they used to throw in the town hall.

CLIFF

Yeah.

MERLE

I was always hoping you'd ask me to dance.

Wally climbs up on a chair and turns down the TV.

WALLY

All right, listen up you bastards.

Protests.

DES

That's history in the making, Wally.

WALLY

So's this. Most of you probably know Cliffie.

You've probably seen him running round. What you don't know is that Cliff is running in the Sydney to Melbourne.

A stunned silence. Chook, then Wayne, Les, Ted and Ned smirk. An embarrassed Paul melts into background.

LES

Maybe they'll teach you to grow spuds up there, Cliff.

The others chuckle. Others cry out - "Let him speak", "Give 'em a go" &c.

Cliff visibly shrinks.

WALLY

It's an expensive business. We've got petrol. We've got to sleep the crew. Feed the crew.

DES

You even got a crew?

Smirks from his cronies.

MERLE

What's your problem, Des? Some of you blokes couldn't run from the bar to the shithouse. Give me five bucks worth.

Wally accepts the five bucks and takes a dollar off a Local.

DES

I'll take a coupla bucks worth. 'Cause I'm that sort of guy. But I'll bet anyone a hundred bucks he doesn't even finish.

Hands search pockets and thrust money at Des. He's like a bookie on Cup Day with money.

VARIOUS

Twenty bucks he doesn't make Holbrook.
Fifty bucks he doesn't make bloody Parramatta.
Thousand bucks he doesn't get laid!

They laugh and joke.

Cliff looks deflated. The two Old Locals offer Wally money.

FIRST OLD LOCAL

We're in.

SECOND OLD LOCAL
You show 'em, Cliffie.

37 EXT. FOOTBALL GROUND - DAWN

37

A bitter wind whistles by Cliff and Wally who stand by the boundary line.

WALLY
OK, you've run to Apollo every day
for a week. You've run PB's -
Personal Bests -

CLIFF
I know what a PB is, Wally.

WALLY
I reckon a hundred and twenty five
clicks a day'll win it. No one runs
more than fourteen hours a day.

CLIFF
Geez, you got it all worked out,
Wal.

WALLY
Three hundred laps -

He holds and clicks a lap counter.

WALLY
- in fourteen hours.

He holds up a stopwatch in the other hand.

CLIFF
Geez, just like a professional
trainer.

Wally clicks the clicker. Wrong!

WALLY
Bugger!

He clicks the stop watch. Cliff starts running.

38 EXT. FOOTBALL GROUND - MORNING

38

An OLD LADY walks her dog and stares at -

A pair of SCHOOLBOYS on bikes giggle at -

- Cliff shuffling alone around the boundary.

39

INT. PUB - DAY

39

Les, Chook and Wayne sit at a table having a counter lunch.
Merle hangs over the bar.

Their eyes are glued to the TV.

ON TV: George Perdon glides around the Olympic-standard
athletics track.

 GRIFFIN (V.O.)

The times these gentlemen have been
running in the lead up to the
Sydney to Melbourne have been
simply astounding.

Perdon stands track side.

 PERDON

I'm feeling good. I'm moving well.
I'm ready.

BACK TO:

Chook, Wayne and Les.

 CHOOK

He looks ready.

 LES

He does look ready.

ON TV: Griffin interviews Tony Rafferty trackside.

 GRIFFIN

The record for this distance is
about eight days.

 RAFFERTY

I think I can do it in six days.

 GRIFFIN

That's a hundred and fifty
kilometres a day.

 RAFFERTY

Six days'll win it. You can count
on it.

 GRIFFIN

Tony Rafferty is the man to beat.
And with his times and his record,
is there anyone who can beat this
champion?

BACK TO:

Les, Chook and Wayne.

CHOOK
Not anyone we know.

40 EXT. FOOTBALL GROUND - DAY 40

Cliff shuffles along - slowly but surely. He darts off for the old toilet block.

CUT TO:

Wally - on the sideline - looks despairingly at his clicker and stopwatch. Des Farrant joins him.

DES
The great white hope, huh?

WALLY
Des.

BACK TO:

Cliff rattles the locked door. He heads off toward a clump of trees.

CUT TO:

Wally and Des.

DES
Why don't you stop running around in circles and start running your farm. And maybe start looking after your mum.

BACK TO:

Cliff - stung. He disappears into the trees.

41 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 41

Syd, Paul and Eunice sit at the table. Mum watches a saucepan of milk on the stove.

EUNICE
He's too old. Everyone I've spoken to reckon he's crazy.

MUM
What do you think, Syd?

SYD
They're laughing at him, mum.

Mum pours milk into a thermos.

MUM

If it's what he wants to do we are going to support him. Who's going to cook for him? Certainly not Wally.

Mum looks quizzically at Eunice.

EUNICE

No. No, not me, mum. I've got work.

MUM

He's your brother. He left school at thirteen to work this farm and help put you through school. Seven days a week when your dad was off looking for work. Then your dad died and he was on his own.

SYD

He'll need a driver.

All eyes turn to Paul.

PAUL

What are you looking at me for?

42

EXT. FOOTBALL GROUND - NIGHT

42

Cliff shuffles around the oval, the strain etched on his face. Wally follows on his push bike.

Syd joins Cliff and hands him the thermos.

CLIFF

You're a lifesaver.

SYD

You all right?

CLIFF

(teeth)

Scenery doesn't change much.

SYD

You're looking good.

CLIFF

I am good. It's Wally you should be worrying about.

Syd sees the red-faced, puffing Wally struggling on the bike. Syd pulls up.

Cliff shuffles on and sees Mary behind the fence. She waves shyly. Cliff grins and waves. He claps on the pace.

CUT TO:

Syd and a puffing Wally.

SYD
How's he doing?

Wally looks at his lap counter and the stop watch.

WALLY
He's got the heart. But I don't think he's got the pace. Not to match it with the big boys.

Syd watches Cliff sadly. His eyes narrow.

SYD
Has he picked up a yard?

WALLY
I think he has.

Their eyes turn to Mary. And they wonder.

43

EXT. FOOTBALL GROUND - NIGHT

43

Floodlights shine on Cliff shuffling determinedly around the oval.

Merle and the two Old Locals, Paul and a Mate, and Des, Ted, Ned, Chook, Wayne and Les watch.

Wally and Syd are on the boundary line nearby.

DES
How far's he run, Wally?

WALLY
(checks the lap counter)
Ninety eight k.

Des frowns as he sees his winning bets turn to losers.

WAYNE
You gotta hand it to him, he don't give in.

CUT TO:

Cliff sucks in the breaths. He falters. Falters.

CUT TO:

Wally and Syd - worried.

WALLY

He's not going to make it.

Mary, in tracksuit, joins them.

MARY

Would it help if I ran with him?

WALLY

A pacemaker... yeah, yeah it would.

CUT TO:

Mary jogs beside Cliff.

MARY

Is this where the elite athlete
Cliff Young is training.

CLIFF

Someone said he was here earlier.

MARY

Mind if I do a lap and look for
him?

CLIFF

(covering the pain)
Na, that'd be good. That'd be real
good!

CUT TO:

Des and his pals see Cliff pick up the pace.

DES

(to Ted)

Doesn't that girl work for you?
What's her caper?

Ted shakes his head - beats me.

LES

You still taking bets, Dessie?

DES

No one said anything about a
pacemaker.

WAYNE

Nothing in the laws against it.

DES

Yeah, well, there should be.

CUT TO:

Wally and Syd: check the stopwatch. Suddenly hopeful.

Merle watches Cliff and Mary jog toward them. She sees Cliff fall back.

MERLE

Go on, Cliffie. You can do it.

Wally sees Cliff fall further back as they pass. He runs after them.

CUT TO:

Mary sees Cliff falling back. She sees the pain on his face. She slows.

MARY

Cliff? Cliff?

Cliff sees Ned - grinning now.

NED

What gear is that, Cliff? Reverse?

Cliff sees the laughing gang. He slows almost to a walk. He gets the staggers. Wally joins Cliff and Mary.

WALLY

Are you hurting, Cliff?

CLIFF

Yeah.

WALLY

Where?

CLIFF

(desperately sucks in air)
Everywhere.

WALLY

It's the wall, Cliff. Don'y hit it.
Go through it. Eyes on the white
line. One step at a time.

Cliff's legs turn to jelly. Mary and Wally grab him. Paul and Syd run up.

CUT TO:

Wally and Syd help Cliff toward the boundary line. Paul and a distressed Mary follow.

Cliff sees the harsh faces of Ned and his cronies.

NED

Gee whiz, Cliff. You nearly had me
there. For a minute we almost
believed you could do it.

They drift off.

The floodlights switch off. Darkness.

44 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - NIGHT

44

Wally and Cliff sit in the front. Syd in the back. Silence. Cliff looks pain free but despondent. He breathes easily.

Merle approaches and leans in Cliff's window.

MERLE

Good on ya, Cliffie. You had a real crack. Geez, there's a lot of us'd love to see you run.

She kisses him on the cheek.

CLIFF

Thanks, Merle.

She leaves.

CLIFF

I let everyone down.

WALLY

You didn't let anyone down. You heard what Merle said. God, you even had Des bloody Farrant believin' in you.

Cliff considers this. Something goes off in his head. Syd squeezes Cliff's shoulder. Cliff grasps his hand.

WALLY

It's when you tried to pick up the pace. That's when you got in trouble.

CLIFF

I can't run any faster.

WALLY

I know, champ.

CLIFF

I'll have to run longer.

45 INT. CLIFF'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

45

Cliff sits on his old bed, watching -

- Mum fold a singlet and pack it in a battered old suitcase.

CLIFF
 (jokingly)
 When I win the ten grand we'll buy
 a new suitcase.

MUM
 You know and I know, love - this
 isn't about the money.

Mum folds underwear and packs them.

46

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

46

Cliff springs from the house, suitcase in hand. Mum follows.

MUM
 Undies. Singlets. Socks. I hope
 there's enough.

Paul takes Cliff's old suitcase and packs it in the old Ford's boot. Wally's old caravan is hooked to Cliff's old Ford. Wally finishes tightening one of the wheel nuts. Cliff joins him.

CLIFF
 (re new tyres)
 It looks good with new boots.

Paul jumps in the driver's seat, Wally climbs in beside him. Syd approaches - puts out his hand.

SYD
 One foot in front of the other.

Cliff nods. He's about to jump in the car when he sees his Mum, alone on the verandah.

CUT TO:

Cliff joins her. He takes her shoulders and kisses her.

MUM
 Don't go all soft on me, Cliff
 Young.

He hugs her. She hugs him back. He heads for the car.

MUM
 (softly)
 Come back to me, son.

Eunice appears, suitcase in hand.

CLIFF
 Where are you off to?

EUNICE
Someone's got to keep an eye on
you.

CLIFF
Where are you going?

WALLY
(winks at Eunice)
This trip suddenly got a whole lot
better.

EUNICE
(evenly)
Hello, Wally.

Paul turns the ignition. The engine WHEEZES and stops. He wrenches the key again. The engine FIRES.

47 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAY 47

The Ford and the caravan lurch off. Cliff looks through the back window at the receding farmhouse. He sees Syd wave. He sees his Mum alone on the verandah - stoic - waving.

48 EXT. SYDNEY - DAY 48

VARIOUS:

Traffic crawls over the Harbour Bridge.

The streets.

The people.

This is Sydney in the 80's.

49 EXT. WESTFIELD SHOPPING MALL, CARPARK - DAY 49

The old Ford and caravan weaves through the carpark and comes to a halt. Wally and Cliff peer up at a huge banner.

"Westfield's welcome the greatest athletes in the world".

It hits them. They both swallow.

50 INT. RACE CENTRE, DOORWAY, SYDNEY - DAY 50

Cliff, Wally, Eunice and Paul gaze up at giant posters of Rafferty, Perdon and Bauer that grace the entrance.

They gingerly make their way down the hallway.

Sporty folk who appear full of health and vitality head into the official function room. Our team decides to do the same.

A RACE OFFICIAL springs to attention.

RACE OFFICIAL
Hey, hey, hey...

They stop.

WALLY
We're... Um... One sec.

Wally fishes through his pockets. The Race Official looks over the motley bunch before him. Finally Wally hands over the paperwork. The Race Official scrutinises the document.

RACE OFFICIAL
Cliff, huh...
(looks at Paul)
So how long have you been running?

Paul points past Wally, past Eunice and to his old Uncle.

PAUL
He's the runner.

RACE OFFICIAL
(unbelieving)
Well, I guess the answer is 'a very long time'.

He steps aside and watches them pass - bemused.

51 INT. RACE CENTRE, FUNCTION ROOM - DAY 51

The room is abuzz with athletes, trainers, managers and sponsors.

Cliff sees George Perdon discussing a running shoe with two men in suits. Siggy Bauer is surrounded by other 'suits'.

Our team stand, trying to take it all in - but generating curious, and suspicious, looks.

52 INT. RACE CENTRE, REGISTRATION DESK - DAY 52

MICHELLE, 21, lithe and sporty sits at a trestle table. She hands Cliff official running shoes and logoed t-shirt. Cliff looks at them doubtfully.

PAUL
It's all right. I think they're free.

CLIFF
 (to Michelle)
 Thanks love.

Cliff grins and takes a couple more t-shirts.

53

INT. RACE CENTRE, FUNCTION ROOM - DAY

53

A PR GIRL approaches Wally and Eunice with a tray of drinks.

PR GIRL
 Champagne?

EUNICE
 Is it possible to get a cup of tea?

PR GIRL
 Er... well, I could check...

She turns to leave but Wally quick stops her and grabs a beer, on second thoughts, he grabs two.

Eunice looks disapproving.

WALLY
 Downtime is important in any
 athletic endeavour, love.

Eunice purses her lips.

Cliff and Paul join them, wearing neat new tee shirts.

WALLY
 Aren't you the duck's guts then.

CLIFF
 What the well-dressed runner is
 wearing, Wal.

A hush falls. The extremely slick outfit of Tony Rafferty and his entourage of TRAINER, DIETITIAN, and PA sweep by.

JOE RECORD
 Impressive, huh?

Cliff turns around to see Joe Record behind him.

JOE RECORD
 I'm Joe Record. Record by name...
 Unfortunately not by nature. Ha,
 ha, but you never know ha, ha. You
 must be Cliff Young. This must be
 your wonderful crew.

Joe shakes hands all round and a gentlemanly bow for Eunice.

JOE RECORD

'This is a bit of a lark, huh?

CLIFF

(doubtful)

Yeah.

JOE RECORD

(his arm around Cliff)

Ah, don't be intimidated by the suits and the fancy track gear, I've seen everyone of them on their knees and spewing..

Cliff's not sure what to make of this.

CLIFF

Oh... Good...

They spot the grim-faced Race Official looking over.

JOE RECORD

I think that's for you.

Cliff looks at Wally.

54

INT. POWELL'S OFFICE - DAY

54

ANTHONY POWELL, late 30s, a slick PR suit, sits behind his desk. Cliff and Wally stand before him.

POWELL

I'm going to level with you. I have sponsors who have invested a lot of money in this race. I have TV, radio, press - all major supporters. I have councils and governments all committing resources. I also have great athletes -

WALLY

Cliff being one of them.

POWELL

These are some of the greatest athletes in the world, and you're what, a 61 year-old potato farmer? I'm sorry gentlemen but I will not allow this race to become a farce. I cannot accept your registration.

Powell puts his head down and goes back to work. Cliff and Wally, heads sunk start to leave. Wally turns back.

WALLY

I used to have an old mongrel greyhound. Ugly bloody thing. I used to take him rabbiting. Other blokes would bring their dogs down from Melbourne or wherever... and yeah, their dogs would catch plenty. But at the end of the day when their dogs were knackered, laying under a tree panting...

Powell looks pained.

WALLY

Old... Toby was still out there... bringing home my dinner. That dog was the most determined, stubborn bastard I have ever known... But I can tell you, that dog wasn't half the athlete you see standing here before you.

But Cliff has gone.

POWELL

I don't know whether you're driving or flying back to Melbourne. But you're not running. But you can keep the tee shirts.

55

INT. RACE CENTRE - DAY

55

Cliff trudges, ashen-faced through the throng. Eunice, Paul and Joe Record see him and know something's wrong.

Ron Griffin buttonholes Cliff.

GRIFFIN

Cliff? Any chance of an interview?

CLIFF

What do you want to interview me for?

GRIFFIN

Sixty-one year old potato farmer running in the Sydney to Melbourne -

CLIFF

I'm not running!

Other JOURNOS - TV, radio, press - sense a story and gather.

GRIFFIN

You're pulling out?

CLIFF

No! I've been training for months. My crew have come with me. People back home have supported me. All we want to do is run. They accepted our registration. Now they won't accept it and they're stopping us from running.

GRIFFIN

Who?

Cliff sees Powell emerge from his office.

Journalists, their lights, cameras, recorders and microphones swing around on Powell. He freezes like a rabbit caught in a spotlight.

56 EXT. SHOPPING MALL CAR PARK - NIGHT 56

Wally's caravan is parked alone in a dark corner.

57 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN - NIGHT 57

The caravan is small and cramped. A double bed fills one end, a little single bed in the other. A light above the stove provides some light. Wally attempts to change into shorts as Cliff struggles over cases and boxes and into the double bed.

WALLY

We should have gotten you the motel with Paul and Eunice.

CLIFF

I'm all right.

Wally watches Cliff trying to get comfortable.

WALLY

Big day tomorrow.

CLIFF

Yeah.

Cliff settles in for sleep.

WALLY

Good night, flash.

CLIFF

Night, Wal.

But Cliff can't sleep.

58

EXT. WESTFIELD, PARRAMATTA, STARTING LINE - DAY

58

Tight in on George Perdon, lean athletic, focused. Behind Perdon, a CROWD tries to get a glimpse of the stars.

Next to Perdon is Tony Rafferty, supremely fit, staring with tunnel vision. His trainer whispers last minute instructions.

Next to Rafferty is Siggy Bauer, 35, coiled, oiled. His TRAINER kneads his shoulders.

The media push and jostle for the best positions.

Next is Joe Record, tanned, muscular, long curly hair. He winks and grins and waves at spectators in the crowd.

Next to Record is Cliff, dwarfed by the athletes beside him. He looks around - lost.

Wally massages his shoulders.

WALLY

Listen up, you're a one-pace pony.
If any of these show-boaters want
to hit the gas, let 'em.

Paul kneels before Cliff, cutting holes in his trackie dacks with scissors.

The other runners peer, bemused by the alterations.

CLIFF

(to Paul)
You done?

PAUL

Other leg yet.

He attacks the other leg. People in the crowd laugh and point.

WALLY

You need ventilation, Cliff. Or
you'll fry...

RACE STARTER (O.S.)

Runners, take your marks...

PAUL

Shit!

WALLY

Just run your own race.

CLIFF

(nods to Wally)
I will.

RACE STARTER (O.S.)

Get set...

CLIFF

Oh, and Wal, thanks for coming
along.

Wally winks.

Paul cuts one more hole as -

BANG!

The starter's gun ECHOES. The crowd CHEERS.

Rafferty and the others run. Cliff freezes. Then he takes off
after them in his ungainly shuffle.

As seen through the lens of a TV camera: We see everyone
clear the frame, but then we notice there's one more to come.
It's Cliff.

The cameraman looks up.

CAMERAMAN

Bloody hell. Fifty bucks says the
old guy won't make it to Melbourne.

GRIFFIN

Gawd, they shoot horses don't they?

All the runners and support crews leave the carpark.

Through the camera: The bonnet of the old Ford is up. Wally
and Paul peer in at the engine.

CAMERAMAN

(laughs)

A hundred bucks says they don't get
out of the car park!

59

EXT. CARPARK - DAY

59

Cliff looks around. All the runners have gone and his team is
nowhere to be seen.

Cliff, flustered, rushes back to the old Ford.

WALLY

(to Cliff)

Go!

Cliff hesitates.

WALLY

Go!!

Cliff turns and runs.

Eunice is behind the wheel.

Paul and Wally run to the back of the caravan and push.

Through the camera: We see them straining to push the van and car, finally there's a huge cloud of smoke as the Ford kicks into life.

60

EXT. SYDNEY ROAD - MORNING

60

Cliff jogs in his ungainly shuffle. He looks ahead but the other runners are gone.

Cliff looks around frantically but can't see his crew. He slows to a walk, confused, alone. He starts shuffling again.

Then he starts running - fast. The Ford and caravan race up the road and slow beside him. Wally sticks his head out the window.

WALLY

Slow down!

CLIFF

Where are the others?

WALLY

Don't worry about them. Slow down.

Cliff keeps running. Wally gestures to Paul.

The Ford accelerates and swerves in front of Cliff. Cliff is forced to stop. Wally leaps from the car.

WALLY

Cliff, keep up this pace and you'll be gone by lunchtime. I told you not to panic. Forget about the others. Run your own race.

Cliff nods.

61

EXT. HIGHWAY (60K FROM SYDNEY) - DAY

61

The huge expanse of land stretches forever. Sheep graze. A crow sits upon a post.

And Cliff, followed by his crew, shuffles down the highway,

62

INT. PUB - DAY

62

Merle leans over the bar and watches the TV.

Eunice emerges from the caravan with the plate of salad. She sees Cliff jog toward them.

EUNICE
Here he comes.

WALLY
Shit!

Paul quickly throws some half cooked chips onto a paper plate and squirts sauce on them.

EUNICE
You can't feed him that.

WALLY
See spuds. Eat spuds.

EUNICE
This is a salad prepared according to sound nutritional science. It's called the Pritikin Diet.

WALLY
Who's Pritikin? And has he ever run the Sydney to Melbourne? Listen, love, leave it to the experts.

EUNICE
I am a professional woman, Wally. University educated. I have taught for thirty years -

PAUL
He's here.

Cliff shuffles by. Paul and Wally run after him - leaving Eunice to fume.

WALLY
How ya feeling?

CLIFF
Not too bad.

Paul runs along one side of Cliff holding the plate of chips and Wally runs along the other.

CLIFF
Good on ya, Paul.

WALLY
I've been doing some calculations.

WALLY
And ah -

Wally clutches his side and pulls up.

WALLY
We're on track!

66 EXT. HIGHWAY, RISE - DAY 66

Cliff shuffles up the rise. His stride is short, his breath is ragged. His feet pound the bitumen. He clutches his hip. He grunts at each agonising step.

67 EXT. REST STOP - NIGHT 67

Wally's caravan is parked. A RACE OFFICIAL puts out a witch's hat to mark his stop.

68 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN - NIGHT 68

Cliff lays in his Y-fronts on the massage table. Eunice watches Wally knead his hip. Cliff cries in pain.

EUNICE
Can I get you something to eat,
Cliff?

CLIFF
Something to eat'd be good, love.

Eunice tries to get to the fridge but the massage table blocks her way. She squeezes past.

WALLY
Give it a minute, will you?

EUNICE
He needs food and he needs to keep
his fluids up.

Eunice manages to open the fridge a crack and sees it's full of beer.

EUNICE
I see you're keeping your fluids
up, Wally.

Wally twists Cliff's leg and he grimaces in pain.

He opens his eyes and sees Powell, standing before them.

POWELL
I've had a search party out looking
for you. Literally.

Eunice stretches to open a cupboard and removes a can of baked beans. She opens it.

WALLY

Here we are. You've found us.

Powell sees Cliff in his Y-fronts and shudders.

POWELL

Mr Young, the race leader is twenty eight kilometres ahead of you.

Wally twists Cliff's back and leg. Powell grimaces at the sickening crack of bone and cartilage.

POWELL

You are running last, two hours behind the second last runner.

CLIFF

We've got a bit of work to do.

POWELL

I strongly urge you to withdraw. You cannot possibly catch athletes like Rafferty or Perdon. You are risking your health, compromising the integrity of the race, and quite frankly, you're making a fool of yourself on national television.

EUNICE

Maybe you should listen to -

CLIFF

If I'm still running last tomorrow night, I'll quit.

POWELL

Wise decision, Mr Young.

Powell nods - relieved.

69 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN - NIGHT 69

Wally snores beneath a blanket on the galley bench. Eunice tosses and turns in the single bed.

70 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - NIGHT 70

Paul sleeps in the back seat of the Ford.

71 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN, BEDROOM - NIGHT 71

Cliff sleeps in his bed. The alarm clock rings.

Cliff slowly, painfully climbs out of bed. He's still wearing his running gear.

- 72 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - PRE-DAWN 72
- The Ford's engine roars to life. Headlights light up the Australian bush.
- Paul is at the wheel, Wally snoozes beside him. The Ford drives off.
- Its headlights illuminate Cliff, jogging ahead.
- 73 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 73
- A heat haze hangs on the highway. Cliff struggles in the scorching heat.
- Ahead: the highway stretches to the horizon.
- DISSOLVE TO:
- The highway still stretches to the horizon. Cliff is dwarfed in the distance.
- 74 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAY 74
- C & W music DRONES mournfully. The car beetles along at 7kph.
- Wally nods in the passenger seat. Heavy metal music BLARES, startling Wally.
- Wally snaps the C & W music back on.
- PAUL
(driving)
We've been listening to that bloody hick music all day.
- WALLY
At least it's music.
- PAUL
You want to listen to that music. You drive. I've been driving eight hours now.
- Paul hits the brakes.
- 75 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 75
- Paul and Wally climb out of the car and cross over.
- 76 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAY 76
- Wally fires up the Ford. He glances at the tripmeter.

WALLY

Two hundred k. Six hundred and
seventy five to go.

He adjusts the rear view mirror and sees Eunice's reflection. He grins and winks. Eunice purses her lips and stares out the window.

Wally GRINDS the gears. The Ford kangaroo hops.

PAUL

Jeez, Wally, what sort of bloody
driver are you?

WALLY

Bloody good one. Considerin' I
don't drive much these days.

EUNICE

Wally, you do have a licence?

WALLY

Not on me, no.

EUNICE

Stop the car! Wally, you can't
drive.

WALLY

I'm fine.

EUNICE

There are police everywhere -

PAUL

Bloody hell! Look out!

Wally hits the brakes.

77

EXT. DITCH - DAY

77

Cliff tumbles to the bottom of a ditch. Wally and Eunice scramble down the gravel slope. Cliff is in agony and clutches his shoulder. They help him to his feet.

WALLY

Jesus. It's dislocated.

Wally says a quick silent prayer and - more hope than prayer - wrenches the shoulder back in. Cliff grunts in pain.

CLIFF

You clowns are supposed to be
supporting me. Not bloody running
me over.

Wally examines the bleeding wound on his elbow.

WALLY

Look, if you've had enough, we understand, Cliff.

Paul is at the top of the slope.

PAUL

Look!

They all look down the highway, and see -

- A Support Trailer and a runner, THOMPSON, staggering.

Cliff scrambles up the embankment. The others follow.

78 EXT. HIGHWAY (200 K FROM SYDNEY) - DAY 78

Cliff jogs down the highway, chasing down Thompson.

79 EXT. HIGHWAY (202 K FROM SYDNEY) - DAY 79

Cliff claps on what little pace he has. Thompson glances over his shoulder and spots Cliff. He picks up the pace, but his legs wobble.

Cliff closes in. Thompson collapses in the arms of his TRAINER.

Cliff passes and stares into Thompson's contorted face.

80 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN - NIGHT 80

Cliff sits exhausted on the massage table. Wally, Eunice, Paul and Powell stand around him.

POWELL

You are in last place, Mr Young.

CLIFF

I passed two runners.

Wally and Eunice each remove one of Cliff's running shoes.

POWELL

They were official retirees. You are running last. And you categorically stated you would withdraw. Oh, my god.

Cliff's socks are soaked in blood. Wally eases off the socks. Blood spurts from his feet.

Eunice screams.

POWELL

You can't run on those feet.

EUNICE

We have to get a doctor.

WALLY

I've trained boxers and runners.
And I've fixed more cuts than a
doctor's had hospital dinners.

Powell almost throws up as Wally cuts away skin with
scissors. Wally takes a bottle from his bag and unscrews it.

WALLY

It's going to hurt like hell,
flash. Both of you, hold a leg.

Paul and a reluctant Powell grasp a leg.

POWELL

That is a legally prescribed
medication...?

Wally dabs the liquid on Cliff's foot. Cliff bucks violently
and bellows through gritted teeth. Wally dabs the liquid on
Cliff's other foot. Cliff suppresses a shriek.

WALLY

That oughta seal it.

Wally takes a tube from his bag. He applies liquid to Cliff's
foot.

POWELL

(sees the tube)
What is that? Superglue?!

He stares at Wally, horrified.

81 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE, NEW SOUTH WALES - NIGHT 81

A starry night. All is quiet.

82 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN, BEDROOM - NIGHT 82

Cliff is asleep in the bed. Wally squints to read the alarm
clock and sets it. He puts it on the dresser beside Cliff's
bed.

83 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN - NIGHT 83

Wally snores beneath a blanket on the galley bench.

Eunice tosses and turns on the single bed. She covers her head and ears with a pillow.

84 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - NIGHT 84

Paul sleeps in the back seat.

85 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN, BEDROOM - NIGHT 85

Cliff sleeps the sleep of the dead.

The alarm clock SHRILLS. Cliff jerks awake. He hammers groggily at the alarm.

The clock reads 2am.

86 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT 86

Cliff shuffles off. It's eerily quiet and dark.

87 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - NIGHT 87

Wally slumps in the front, more asleep than awake. Eunice curls in the back seat.

Paul, half-asleep fumbles at the gears. The Ford lurches after Cliff.

Wally looks at his watch and sees it's 2.10am.

WALLY

Shit.

PAUL

What?

WALLY

Nothin'. Nothin'.

Wally looks innocently out the window. Eunice grabs Wally's wrist and looks at his watch.

EUNICE

Wally! It's ten past two in the morning!

WALLY

I didn't have me specs. I swear, it was an accident.

EUNICE

He's had two hours' sleep. Pull over, Paul. I'm going to stop him.

WALLY

No! He's all fired up. He won't sleep now. As soon as he's had enough, we'll stop.

Eunice relents - just.

88 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

88

The Ford's lights pick out the shuffling Cliff on the deserted highway.

89 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - NIGHT

89

Wally's watch reads 4.00am.

Wally sees Cliff signalling. They draw alongside.

WALLY

You right, mate?

CLIFF

I'm bloody hungry.

EUNICE

We'll stop for breakfast.

WALLY

Breakfast at seven. As always.

EUNICE

He has to eat.

CLIFF

My mind's going. Feels like I've been running for hours.

WALLY

Stope whingeing. Have some water.

Wally offers the water bottle.

They pass a rest stop. Another trailer, witch's hat and support crew, still asleep and obscured by trees.

PAUL

Who's that?

WALLY

Bauer.

PAUL

We're in third place?

They spot a second van amongst the trees.

WALLY

Bugger me.

PAUL

That's Perdon.

EUNICE

We're in second place?

Wally grins.

90 EXT. HIGHWAY - PRE-DAWN 90

The beautiful pre-dawn light illuminates the sky.

Cliff's feet skim the surface of the asphalt.

91 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAWN 91

Eighties pop plays quietly on the radio.

Paul, Wally and Eunice peer ahead, trying to keep a lid on their excitement.

PAUL

Look!

They spot another luxurious trailer in a rest stop. Fifty metres... forty metres...

Eunice grips Wally's shoulder in excitement. Wally pats her hand. Eunice withdraws her hand.

... ten metres... They draw lever with the trailer. Quiet.

WALLY

Look out!

Paul hits the brakes. Cliff stands angrily in front of the car. Wally leaps out.

CLIFF

I've gotta eat, Wally.

Headlights appear on the road behind them.

WALLY

Sshh.

CLIFF

What do you mean, sshh?!

The headlights bear down on them. Closer.

PAUL & EUNICE

Ssshhh!

CLIFF

What sort of fool game is this?

They spot the headlights. A truck barrels towards them. It's klaxon horn BLARES, loud enough to wake the dead.

TRUCKER

On yer, Cliffie!

It hurtles into the night.

Wally's heart leaps into his mouth. He stares at the trailer. A light comes on.

Beat.

It turns off.

CLIFF

What's going on?
(re trailer)
Who's that?

WALLY

Tony Rafferty.

Cliff blinks, stunned. Wally takes Cliff and marches him one, two, three steps. Past the trailer.

WALLY

You are now the Official Race
Leader in the Sydney to Melbourne.

Cliff blinks again.

WALLY

About that breakfast, Cliff?

Cliff hares off.

92

EXT. HIGHWAY (230 K FROM SYDNEY) - DAWN

92

Cliff spoons fruit from a can as he runs.

The Ford draws up beside him. Cliff hands the empty can to Eunice and she hands him another can.

93

EXT. HIGHWAY (240 K FROM SYDNEY) - DAWN

93

Cliff approaches a rise. Headlights appear beyond it. Cliff freezes.

An OB van barrels over the rise. It swerves to miss Cliff.

- 94 INT. OB VAN, FRONT SEAT - NIGHT 94
- Griffin and Cameraman - driving - sit in the front seat. The van's lights pick out Cliff running toward them.
- GRIFFIN
Must have been something in that
beer last night. I could have sworn
that was -
- Griffin turns around in disbelief.
- 95 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY 95
- Syd's ute barrels through the gate and brakes in a cloud of dust. Syd leaps out.
- 96 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 96
- Syd bursts in.
- SYD
Mum!
- MUM (O.C.)
In here, Syd! Quick!
- 97 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 97
- Mum is on the edge of her seat, glued to the TV. Syd stands beside her.
- ON TV: Griffin runs alongside Cliff, interviewing him.
- GRIFFIN
Good morning, Australia. In case
you haven't heard, we have a new
race leader. Hang onto your
cornflakes, ladies and gentlemen.
Sixty one year old potato farmer
Cliff Young is leading the Sydney-
to-Melbourne.
- Syd chuckles delightedly.
- 98 EXT. HIGHWAY (300K FROM SYDNEY) - DAWN 98
- The cameraman films Griffin struggling beside Cliff.
- GRIFFIN
Good morning, Mr Young.
- CLIFF
G'day to you.

GRIFFIN

The question everyone is asking,
Cliff - can you make it all the way
to Melbourne?

CLIFF

No worries! Practically there
already.

GRIFFIN

Practically there? There's the
small matter of five hundred
kilometres.

CLIFF

Gee, now why'd you have to tell me
that?

99 INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

99

Mary watches Griffin running beside Cliff on the TV.

GRIFFIN

I have to tell the viewers that
Cliff's been running like this for
five hours, and I can barely keep
up.

Mary laughs.

100 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

100

A car slows down and its horn TOOTS encouragingly. The
MOTORIST winds down his window.

MOTORIST

Stick it up 'em, Cliffie.

Cliff waves cheerfully.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Cliff jogs along in his ungainly shuffle. He passes a FARMER,
herding his cows.

FARMER

On yer, Cliffie.

CLIFF

Nice herd. Cliff waves.

ERIC SWEENEY, 30, an overweight Sales Manager, jogs beside
Cliff.

SWEENEY
Eric Sweeney, Cliff.

CLIFF
G'day, Eric.

He offers Cliff his card and a can of fruit but sees Cliff is pre-occupied.

SWEENEY
We were so thrilled to see you
eating our fruit on your run.

CLIFF
Oh yeah. Love your fruit.

SWEENEY
We'd like you to endorse our fruit
in our new advertising campaign.
You'd be the face of our fruit.

CLIFF
The face of your fruit, geez.

SWEENEY
There's be an appropriate fee, of
course.

CLIFF
That'd be good.

Sweeney pulls up, pumps his fist in delight. A BLAST of the horn. Sweeney leaps out of the old Ford's path.

102 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAY

102

The Ford beetles along at 7 kph. Wally is at the wheel. Eunice - in the back - peers anxiously out the rear window but can only see their caravan behind them.

Paul watches Cliff - ahead.

PAUL
Can't we go any faster?

Wally looks at Paul witheringly. Wally nervously checks his wing mirrors - no one's behind them.

Wally checks the tripmeter: 505 kms.

103 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

103

Cliff shuffles along, blowing plumes of steam in the freezing cold. He runs off the road to a bush. He tries to pee.

The Ford pulls up.

WALLY

C'mon, Cliff, this is the fourth stop and it's not even lunch time.

CLIFF

I'm trying!

A car flies by, TOOTING merrily.

104 EXT. HIGHWAY, RISE - NIGHT 104

Cliff's breathing is ragged. His steps are short. He's in a world of his own.

Headlights approach from beyond the rise. A loaded semi barrels towards them.

Cliff is dwarfed and freezes in the glare of headlights.

105 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - NIGHT 105

Paul and Wally stare, horrified at Cliff in the semi's path.

106 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT 106

The semi's horn BLARES. It swerves past - missing Cliff by inches.

Cliff stops, shaken.

EUNICE

Cliff you've had enough.

ON: Wally - worried.

107 INT. RADIO STUDIO - NIGHT 107

Wally is on the phone.

WALLY (V.O.)

We're about half an hour out of town. It's cold out there and he's on his own and he's just about running on empty.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

All right, Albury. You've heard Wally. There's a runner out there who needs some support. Let's get out there and give him some.

112 EXT: HIGHWAY (NEAR VICTORIAN BORDER) - NIGHT 112
Griffin reports to camera from side of highway.

GRIFFIN

This is one very tired sports
reporter signing off for the day...
I can only imagine how the athletes
must feel.

113 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN - NIGHT 113

An exhausted Cliff gingerly steps up into the van. All
strength gone. His legs go out from under him.

WALLY

Grab him!

Eunice and Wally clumsily grab Cliff.

EUNICE

Ok, ok... Sit him down.

Cliff collapses onto a chair. Paul steps in.

WALLY

Quick, shut the door...

Paul slams the door shut.

Eunice turns away. Visibly shaken. Wally steadies Cliff.

WALLY

I'll get you a drink.

Eunice turns back. She fights back tears.

WALLY

(to Paul)

Get him some food.

Eunice watches Cliff and Wally and Paul - shaking her head.

EUNICE

I love you Cliff. More than you
know. But I'm not going to stand by
and watch you kill yourself.

Wally holds a jar of milk up to Cliff's lips.

WALLY

Don't gulp it mate.

Cliff takes a sip.

CLIFF
 (screws his nose up)
 It's bloody pasteurised.

Cliff takes another sip - screws up his nose again. Eunice settles. Cliff's strength is returning.

114 EXT. ALBURY REST AREA - NIGHT

114

Eunice sits alone on a wooden bench. She gazes at the stars. Wally wanders over and joins her.

WALLY
 He's asleep.

Eunice nods.

WALLY
 We'll make sure he gets a good four
 or five hours.

Good. There's an awkward silence.

WALLY
 (gently)
 I know you think I push him too
 hard... But I could never push him
 as hard as he pushes himself.

Eunice nods. Wally watches her... After a moment.

WALLY
 You know... I used to have an old
 mongrel greyhound. Ugly bloody
 thing. I-

EUNICE
 (interrupts)
 No you didn't. Cliff told me.

They both laugh a little.

EUNICE
 But I know you're not a bad man,
 Wally.

WALLY
 I'm sorry, did you just say
 something nice to me?

Footsteps.

Behind them, Wally and Eunice see a shadowy figure run up to the caravan. A HAMMER on the door.

JOE RECORD
I'm here, Cliffie! Thought you had
it won, didja? See ya in Melbourne!

Joe hares down the highway.

Wally and Eunice look at each other - shocked!

115 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN - NIGHT

115

Cliff scrambles grabbing his clothes. Wally and Eunice burst in.

WALLY
Bloody Joe Record!

CLIFF
(dressing)
Sneaky bugger.

EUNICE
What are you doing?!

WALLY
We've got a race to win.

EUNICE
Cliff, get back into bed.

WALLY
Cliff? Shoes!

Cliff stops and looks at his bare feet, confused.

Paul peers in.

PAUL
We're hooked up ready to go!

EUNICE
No we're not! Cliff, you promised
you'd rest tonight!

Cliff takes Eunice gently. Kisses her.

CLIFF
I've had two hours, love. I'm
rarin'.

Cliff pushes past and out the door. Eunice turns on Wally.
Shit! Wally rushes out the door to safety.

116 EXT. HIGHWAY (VICTORIA) - DAWN

116

Cliff shuffles quickly down the highway. No sign of Joe.

117 INT/EXT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAWN 117

Wally drives. Paul in the passenger seat. A still unhappy Eunice in the back.

Wally glances at the rear vision mirror. Eunice glares at him. He quickly looks away.

118 EXT. HIGHWAY (VICTORIA) - DAY 118

Cliff shuffles through the huge expanse of country side.

He's starting to struggle in the midday heat. His breathing is shallow.

He spots someone sitting in the grass up ahead.

It's Joe. Cliff slows up and stops.

CLIFF
(beckons)
Come on, Joe.

JOE RECORD
(shakes his head)
I'm done, mate.

CLIFF
No you're not. On your feet.

JOE RECORD
At least I can say I overtook Cliff
Young... Go!

Cliff looks down the long highway ahead. He shuffles off.

119 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 119

Mum is on the edge of her armchair, glued to the TV.

ON TV: Cliff runs along the highway waving to cheering supporters.

GRIFFIN
The race leaders are expected in
Melbourne sometime tomorrow and in
first place, still, is Cliff Young.

Mum chuckles, disbelieving but delighted.

Knuckles RAP on the front door.

120 INT. FARMHOUSE, DOORWAY - NIGHT 120

Mum opens the front door. Camera lights dazzle her and cameras and microphones thrust in her face.

FIRST REPORTER

Mrs Young -

SECOND REPORTER

Mrs Young -

121 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT 121

Mum sits at the head of the table pouring cups of tea. Cameraman trains his camera on her. The three REPORTERS chew on scones and accept their tea.

MUM

I am very proud of him but I'm also very worried.

FIRST REPORTER

(swallows mouthful of scone)

You don't think he should have run?

MUM

I don't think the human body was meant to run those sorts of distances.

SECOND REPORTER

Do you think he can win?

MUM

I certainly hope so. The sooner he's back home, where he belongs, the happier I'll be.

122 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN, BEDROOM - NIGHT 122

Cliff lays on his bed, trembling beneath a blanket.

Wally and Powell watch the RACE DOCTOR palpate Cliff's shoulder. Cliff grunts in agony. The Race Doctor closes his medical bag and put a bottle of pills on the bedside table.

RACE DOCTOR

Your shoulder is severely traumatised. You are constipated and you cannot urinate. This is a serious situation, Mr Young.

You are risking renal failure. Do you understand?

POWELL

(to Doctor)

Do you understand? We've got the whole country watching him. We're all behind you... Cliff. You can't stop now.

RACE DOCTOR

Mr Young, if you continue running, there is a very real danger you will kill yourself.

Cliff nods.

123 EXT. VICTORIAN REST STOP - NIGHT 123

Eunice sits on a picnic table. She sees the Race Doctor leave. Wally exits the caravan and approaches her.

EUNICE

How is he?

Wally shakes his head.

124 INT. WALLY'S CARAVAN - NIGHT 124

Eunice and Wally enter. Cliff's gone.

125 INT. PHONE BOX - NIGHT 125

Cliff is on the phone.

CLIFF

Hello? Mary?

INTERCUT WITH:

126 INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 126

Mary is on the phone.

MARY

Cliff?

CLIFF

Sorry it's so late.

MARY

You should be here, Cliff. The whole town's up watching you.

The pubs are staying open. It's all anyone can talk about.

CLIFF

Yeah?...

MARY

Are you, OK?

CLIFF

(no)

Yeah... You know when you hit the wall?

MARY

Dunno why you're asking me. I hit it after two k's. Is it bad?

Silence.

MARY

It's like Wally said. Eyes on the white line. One step at a time.

CLIFF

One foot in front of the other.

MARY

Music can take your mind off things. Try and think of something beautiful. Or someone.

CLIFF

I am... Everyone's been so good to me. Supportin' me. I don't want to let anyone down.

Cliff stares out the phone booth at the barbed wire fences.

MARY

You'll make it, Cliff. I'll see you at the finish line.

Cliff grins.

127

EXT. HIGHWAY (140 K FROM MELBOURNE) - DAWN

127

White line. One running shoe in front of the other.

Cliff jogs, thinking of something - or someone - beautiful.. Upbeat C & W music blares from the old Ford.

- 128 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - DAWN 128
 Paul grimaces at the hick music. So does Eunice. Only Wally's pleased.
- WALLY
 Geez, he's looking good.
- 129 EXT. REST STOPS, VARIOUS - DAWN 129
 Rafferty hits the road.
 Perdon hits the road.
 Bauer hits the road.
- 130 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN 130
 Cliff shuffles on through the mist and the rain.
 A BOY, 8, joins him.
 TEENAGERS on BMX bikes ride alongside, pat Cliff on the back.
 Three WAGS in Cliff-style trackie dacks, singlets and bucket hats shuffle along with Cliff. Cliff laughs and waves.
- 131 EXT. HIGHWAY (80 K FROM MELBOURNE) - DAY 131
 Cliff's feet POUND the road, like fists smashing flesh and bone.
 Cliff's steps shorten, his breathing is ragged.
 Wally runs with Cliff and hands him a water bottle.
- CLIFF
 Where are they, Wally?
- WALLY
 I don't know.
- CLIFF
 Are they right behind me? Or way back? Are they getting closer?
- WALLY
 I wish I knew, Cliff.
- Cliff keeps running.

132 INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 132

Mary watches the TV as she collects her handbag and puts on a jacket.

ON TV: Cliff running.

GRIFFIN

We're sixty kilometres from the finish. Tony Rafferty, Siggy Bauer and George Perdon are all gaining. All are supremely fit and have burst finishes. But I can tell you - there is only one person that can separate Cliff Young from an improbable victory. And that's Cliff Young himself.

Car keys in hand - Mary switches off the TV.

133 EXT. HIGHWAY (25 K FROM MELBOURNE) - NIGHT 133

Cliff breasts a rise. The lights of Melbourne shine.

134 INT. SYD'S UTE - NIGHT 134

Mum and Syd head for Melbourne, radio on.

GRIFFIN (V.O.)

I can see the lights of Melbourne, ladies and gentlemen. Twenty five kilometres to go and the sixty-one year old Cliff Young is still the race leader!

Mum and Syd are so quietly proud.

135 INT. PUB - NIGHT 135

The bar is full of all the usual suspects.

136 INT. PUB - NIGHT 136

Merle, Barry and all the locals watch the race on TV.

ON TV: Archive footage of crowds lining Melbourne street and cheering. Cliff waves.

GRIFFIN (V.O.)

We're three kilometres from the finish line, three kilometres from an amazing victory. There are thousands of people lining the streets. Cheering Cliff Young, willing him to win.

The pub roars encouragement - even Les, Chook and Wayne.

Des Farrant sits on a bar stool and stares sourly at the full page ad of Cliff and the canned fruit.

Ted sits beside him.

TED

Two hundred bucks. Two hundred bloody dollars.

137

EXT. DONCASTER STREET - NIGHT

137

Cliff shuffles toward the hill. He hears the crowd roar. Then silence. His heart THUMPS. The crowd's roar distorts. Faces in the crowd distort, recede.

The faces swim into view, smiling, encouraging, willing Cliff to win.

Cliff grits his teeth and pushes through. The roar, the faces return to normal. Cliff grins, waves and runs faster.

The TV CREW closes in. Too close! Cliff trips over a cable and in a jumble of noise, light and hand-held camera collapses on the road. He can't get up.

Syd fights his way through the crowd.

Wally and Eunice leap from the Ford.

Syd pushes the TV Crew away and cradles Cliff. Cliff sees Mum in the crowd. He forces a smile and struggles to his feet.

Cliff runs on.

138

INT. PUB - NIGHT

138

Merle, Barry and the locals can barely watch.

GRIFFIN

Perdon is too far back. He can't win. Rafferty and Bauer are gone. Cliff Young only has to stay on his feet to win.

Cliff staggers.

139 EXT. WESTFIELD DONCASTER, FINISH LINE - NIGHT 139

The crowds cheer. Cliff waves and shuffles toward the finish line. Then crosses it. Then keeps running.

140 INT. CLIFF'S OLD FORD - NIGHT 140

Eunice and Wally hug each other. Wally plants a big wet one on her cheek. Paul fists the air in triumph.

141 EXT. WESTFIELD DONCASTER, FINISH LINE - NIGHT 141

Wally scopes the area and frowns. No Cliff. Powell confronts Wally.

POWELL

Where the bloody hell is he? I've got the press, I've got TV cameras. The whole country is watching and he keeps bloody running.

Wally looks around anxiously.

142 INT. SHOPPING MALL, TOILET - NIGHT 142

Wally enters. He sees runners under a cubicle door.

WALLY

What are you doing in here?

Cliff sits, fully clothed on a toilet seat/lid.

CLIFF

Just catching my breath, Wal.

WALLY

You won. Cliff, you won!

Cliff shakes his head, overcome.

WALLY

You're not quittin' on me, mate. Not when we've got to the good part.

CLIFF

Did you see all those people?

WALLY

Yeah. And They want to see you. They're your adoring public. They love you. They bloody love you!

Cliff considers.

143 INT. SHOPPING MALL, STAGE - NIGHT

143

The crowd CHEERS! It washes over Cliff. He grins cheekily and waves.

Powell presents him with the oversized winner's cheque and the crowd ROARS.

Cliff sees Mum, Syd, Eunice and Paul. He grins and waves.

He sees Mary. She waves. His eyes light up.

Wally appears on stage. He shakes a bottle of champagne and showers Cliff. He drenches Powell. Then he turns it on Eunice and Paul.

144 INT. SHOPPING MALL, SIDE OF STAGE - NIGHT

144

Ron Griffin and a scrum of reporters surround Cliff. Cameras and microphones thrust in his face.

GRIFFIN

Cliff, you've run the eight hundred and seventy five kilometres in world record time. Five days, fifteen hours and four minutes.

CLIFF

It's pretty quick, isn't it?

GRIFFIN

That's more than twenty four hours off the previous record.

CLIFF

I told my trainer, Wally, before the race - I haven't lost any of my pace.

Cliff sees Mum and Syd, Eunice, Paul and Wally beaming from the crowd. He waves. His eyes search the crowd.

REPORTER

You must be tired, Cliff?

CLIFF

Nah. If they hadn't stopped me I'd be heading for Perth.

GRIFFIN

What are your plans over the next few weeks, Cliff?

Cliff spots Mary in the crowd. He waves and she smiles.

CLIFF

Don't want to get ahead of myself.
One foot in front of the other.

145 INT. PUB - NIGHT

145

Merle watches Cliff and the celebrations on TV.

Des Farrant hands over cash to a Local. Then some more.
POLICE SERGEANT enters.

POLICE SERGEANT

Merle, you were supposed to close
up four hours ago.

Merle winks, nods to the TV and pours Police Sergeant a beer.

146 INT. SHOPPING MALL, SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

146

Cliff is surrounded by well-wishers and back-slappers.
Cameras continue to flash.

Mary stands to one side. Reporters interview Syd and Mum -
looking lost - Eunice and Paul off to the other side.

A GUMBOOT REPRESENTATIVE, demonstrates a gumboot to Cliff.

GUMBOOT REPRESENTATIVE

Reinforced toe. Vulcanised rubber.
Sleek new design. We'd like to call
it the Cliff Young Signature.

CLIFF

Geez, that sounds flash.

A SALES MANAGER hustles in and thrusts his card at Cliff

SALES MANAGER

Mr Young? Cliff? We're launching a
major campaign, Mr Young. And we
want you to be our ambassador.

CLIFF

Oh, yeah.

Cliff looks to Mary - help!

SALES MANAGER

We will pay you, of course. Five
hundred dollars!

CLIFF

That'd be good.

Well-wishers continue to congratulate Cliff and pat him on
the back. Wally intervenes.

WALLY

Come on, folks, give him a break.
It's been a long day.

Cliff slips away and joins Mary.

CLIFF

Thanks for coming.

MARY

Wasn't going to miss it, was I?

Powell grabs Cliff by the arm and hustles him away.

POWELL

The race sponsors want to meet you,
Cliff. Some more interviews.

Cliff looks apologetically at Mary. She nods - it's OK.

POWELL

And the Premier of Victoria would
love to meet you.

JOHN CAIN, 60, holds out his hand and grins.

JOHN CAIN

Congratulations, Cliff. You've done
all Victorians, all Australians,
proud.

Cain pumps Cliff's hand and poses for the flashing cameras.

147 EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING 147

A Mail van departs, leaving Paul heaving a bulging mail sack
toward the farmhouse.

148 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MORNING 148

Paul upends the mail sack in the middle of the floor.
Packages and letters cascade to the floor.

The phone RINGS.

MUM

That phone never stops.

SYD

I'll get it

Syd heads for the phone.

Paul and Mum feel the packages. One is torn open. Mum holds
up a "Vote 1 - Cliff Young for Prime Minister" tee shirt.

SYD
 (on phone)
 Look, he just doesn't like killing
 things, that's all...

Vicki, sitting on the sofa, holds up a newspaper with an ad
 showing Cliff spruiking fruit juice.

PAUL
 He doesn't even drink the stuff.

Eunice, sitting beside Vicki holds up a glossy women's
 magazine with headline - Cliff's Secret Diet!

EUNICE
 Sshh!

ON TV: A "Good Morning, Australia"-type HOST interviews
 Cliff, showered and shaved but wearing running gear.

HOST
 Are you feeling rested after the
 big run, Cliff?

CLIFF
 Plenty of rest. Don't need any
 more. Too much to do.

149 INT. TV STUDIO - MORNING

149

Host interviews Cliff.

HOST
 You must be very disciplined,
 Cliff. There's no Mrs Young, to get
 you out of bed.

CLIFF
 No Mrs Young to get me into bed
 neither!

The audience laughs.

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER
 I'll marry you, Cliffie!

CLIFF
 You'd better give me your phone
 number then.

Audience ROARS.

SECOND FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER
 You can put your runners under my
 bed, Cliff.

Mary shakes her head in wonder.

TALK SHOW HOST
That's two offers. Can you handle
'em, Cliff?

CLIFF
One at a time, maybe.

150 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

150

All watch the TV.

Phone RINGS.

SYD
I'll get it.

HOST
Seriously, is there someone?

MUM
Cliff's not interested in that sort
of thing.

CLIFF
Well, you never know...

All look at each other - intrigued.

151 INT. TV STUDIO - MORNING

151

As before.

TALK SHOW HOST
You've just won ten thousand
dollars, Cliff.

CLIFF
That's a lot of potatoes.

TALK SHOW HOST
What everyone doesn't know, because
Cliff is such a modest bloke - you
split the ten thousand with the
other runners.

The audience - aaahhh.

CLIFF
Wouldn't have been a race without
the others.

The audience applauds.

152 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

152

Syd hauls the roast beef out of the oven. Molly checks the veg on the stovetop.

The table is set for a lavish lunch. Mum and Eunice lay cutlery and condiments.

Wally stocks beer in the fridge.

ON TV: Archive footage of a brass band, marching girls and Cliff, waving to crowds from the back of an open car.

COLAC REPORTER (V/O)
Colac welcomes back local hero,
Cliff Young...

MUM
If he doesn't get a move on,
lunch'll be ruined.

EUNICE
It's a replay, mum.

Des Farrant bursts in.

DES
So where's our little champion?

WALLY
What are you so cheerful about? I
heard you lost a fortune.

DES
I laid off with the bookies.
Finished a couple of hundred in
front.

WALLY
That'd be right.

Des offers a single bottle of beer.

WALLY
You gonna feed the multitudes with
one bottle of beer?

Paul bursts in.

PAUL
He's here.

153 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

153

Vicki, Paul, Syd, Molly, Mum, Eunice, Wally and Des wait expectantly on the front verandah.

A car door opens. Cliff, in neat running gear, leaps out of the passenger side.

Mum smiles proudly.

Mary alights from driver's side.

CLIFF

Everyone, this is Mary.

All gape. Cliff and Mary approach.

MUM

Say hello, Paul. You probably went to school together.

Ouch.

154 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

154

Mum, Syd, Molly and Eunice, Vicki, Wally, Cliff and Mary sit around the table, eating lunch.

MUM

It's so good to have you home, love, safe and sound.

EUNICE

And the most popular man in Australia.

PAUL

(cheeky)
Next Prime Minister.

MUM

Hopefully, things might get back to normal round here.

CLIFF

I've got to go to Sydney next week.

MUM

Why's that?

CLIFF

Open a new sports store.

MARY

And the photo shoot.

MUM

Photo shoot??

EUNICE

(cheeky)
Cleo Mate of the Month.

Wally winks at Eunice.

WALLY

How many copies will that sell?

Vicki and Paul and Mary laugh. Mum looks bewildered.

SYD

You've got a farm to run, Cliff.

CLIFF

I've promised everyone, Syd.

SYD

It's not like you haven't got a choice.

MARY

He won't have much time for farming. He's got to start training.

WALLY

Training for what?

Cliff glances briefly at the sepia photograph of his father.

CLIFF

They've asked me to run next year.

MARY

He's got his title to defend.

All look at Cliff - shocked.

155 EXT. PUB - NIGHT 155

The pub is lit up in party mode.

156 INT. PUB - NIGHT 156

It's a regular, noisy, rowdy night in the pub.

Cliff - in his neatest newest farm gear - and Wally - in his best tracksuit and tee appear. They make their way through the crowd. The odd person gives Cliff a pat on the back, but there's very little fuss.

Merle spots them, dashes out from behind the bar and beckons them over to the corner to what appears to a frame hung on the wall, covered by an easel.

She turns to the crowd.

MERLE

(calls)

Alright, listen up. Listen up! Oi!

People still chatter and laugh. A few call out 'quiet' and a couple of blokes whistle to get attention.

MERLE

(sternly)

Come on, settle down. Oi!!!

People slowly settle and listen up.

MERLE

Thank you. Now, as you can see we've got a couple of special guests.

LES

Who?

CHOOK

Where are they?

MERLE

Shut up!

(composed)

And, I just wanted to say to you both, that we're all very proud of you. It was a bloody big effort.

Merle gives Cliff a kiss. There's some applause and a couple of 'Good on ya Cliffie's'.

The crowd then starts to talk amongst themselves again, effectively ignoring the presentation.

Merle decides to not worry about them. She takes the table cloth from the frame revealing:

A large photo. It is of the pub, jam packed with all the regulars but they are leaping into the air. Their faces beaming. Fists pumped. It is a picture of total and complete joy.

Cliff and Wally stare at it. Not quite understanding what it is. Merle moves into them.

MERLE

This photo was taken at the exact moment you crossed the finish line.

The boys are stunned. They take in the picture, nearly moved to tears by the fact that these bastards all around them making all the noise were so overjoyed for them.

LES

We're only kiddin', Cliffie.

The bar bursts into clapping and cheering.

157

INT. BEER GARDEN - NIGHT

157

Merle ushers Cliff through the door. She winks and withdraws.

Party lights festoon the beer garden.

It is completely empty, except for Mary who stands in front of a table set for two. She looks beautiful.

Cliff stops. Completely speechless. Mary smiles.

A door opens.

WAYNE (O.C.)

I'm heading out for a smoke.

MERLE (O.C.)

Like bloody hell. Not out there you're not.

WAYNE (O.C.)

Why what's goin'—

The door closes again.

Cliff self-consciously pulls back Mary's chair and allows her to seat. He sits himself.

MARY

(nervously)

Do you like it?

CLIFF

It's beautiful.

Cliff flicks open his napkin and places it across his lap. He sees a caraffe in an ice-bucket and offers it to her.

MARY

Thank you, sir.

He pours their orange juice elaborately, grinning.

MARY

You're like a kid on his first date... is this your first date, Cliff?

He looks sheepish.

Mary takes his hand, leans over and kisses him tenderly.

CLIFF

I'll tell you one thing, sixty one years is too long to wait for that to happen...

Mary smiles.

MARY

How about...

She whispers in his ear. Cliff eye's widen.

CLIFF

Oh, gee...

Mary kisses him again.

158 EXT. PORTARLINGTON CHURCH - DAY

158

The doors of the Church burst open and Cliff and his new bride appear. Beaming.

The awaiting crowd goes wild, whooping and cheering. Confetti rains down on the newly weds from on high.

There are kisses and congratulations all round. Mum and the family beam proudly - as do Cliff's best men, Syd and Wally.

This seamlessly moves into:

159 INT/EXT. MONTAGE - NEWS REPORTS - VARIOUS

159

(This whole sequence is to be a seamless combination of stock footage, our footage, newspapers, magazines, music and voice over).

People pack the Church Grounds.

REPORTER FIVE (V.O.)

Hundreds packed the grounds of the Portarlinton Catholic Church in the hope of glimpsing sporting legend Cliff Young and his lovely bride, Mary...

Cliff and Mary are absolutely swamped by fans. POLICE battle to keep order.

Cliff and Mary try and push their way through the scrum. Fans claw at them as media desperately call their names.

Magazine Cover of the happy couple.

160 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

160

Mum makes a cup of tea. Eunice, Syd and Molly and Paul watch -
ON TV: A helicopter takes off.

REPORTER

The happy couple were whisked away
to the scene of their greatest
triumph.

Vicki is on the phone.

VICKI

Gordon Grainger?... Oh The Sun... I
don't know. Great Keppel, I think.

ON TV: Cliff and Mary, in full wedding gear, cut the cake on
stage.

REPORTER

Where they were greeted by
thousands and broadcast live on
national television.

Mum snaps off the TV.

VICKI

(out loud)
Is he still a virgin?

Syd angrily disconnects the phone.

161 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

161

Journo GORDON GRAINGER, listens through an empty glass
pressed against the wall. A phone is in his other hand.

GRAINGER

Gordon here. I can report that at
exactly nine forty five pm,
Australia's most famous virgin
officially broke his duck.

MONTAGE:

PHOTO: Cliff and Mary hold the keys to a rundown farmhouse.

PHOTO: Cliff wearing a birthday boy hat - hovers over a cake.

LOCAL REPORTER

It's two years since his amazing
victory and some pundits claim this
dog's had his day - However, Cliff
Young fans beg to differ.

The huge crowd at yet another race, cheers.

Mum sits in the kitchen alone. She watches the news report on TV.

162 INT. SPORTS STORE - DAY 162

People queue up for Cliff's autograph. He signs a tee-shirt. He poses for a photo with a young FAN.

A worried Mary approaches Cliff and whispers in his ear. Cliff is distraught.

163 INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY 163

A photo of mum sits on a mantle. A candle burns.

People stand around chatting quietly, cups of tea in hand.

Cliff, in a funeral suit, wanders aimlessly through the house. Lost.

164 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 164

Some children sit in front of a TV. A sports show is on. There is footage of Cliff running.

CHILD

Mr Young. You're on the tele.

Cliff stares at the TV. Bored with his own image.

165 EXT. MONTAGE, VARIOUS - DAY 165

Cliff jogs past his cows in the paddock.

He shuffles along the river bank.

He jogs through the old growth forest.

SUPER:

The "Young shuffle" has been adopted by many ultra-marathon runners because it expends less energy.

At least three winners of the Sydney to Melbourne race subsequently used the "Young shuffle".

In 1997, aged 76, Cliff attempted to raise money for homeless children by running around Australia.

He completed 6,520 kilometers of the 16,000-kilometer run but was forced to pull out when his crew retired.

Cliff and Mary were married for five years before separating. They remained close friends until Cliff's death in 2003.

FADE OUT.