

Green Alert

Coral not Coal



Chris Deggs

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The future will either be green or not at all.

Bob Brown

Foreword

It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment.

Ansel Adams

The moment the shift in consciousness began is not known. But somewhere along the way, Professor Eduardo Murray, an environmental scientist, came into the picture. He was not the most charismatic of people. Physically; he tended to resemble a gargoyle-like clown. But some people, the kinder ones saw beyond his broad face, bulbous nose and puffy lips.

He lectured at Sydney University and had come to Mt Tomah to regale the good people there with his take on what he saw to be the energy revolution and promote his book of the same name. So why Mount Tomah you may well ask? Well, Eduardo had been raised there, and he was reconnecting with his birthplace. He had attracted around three dozen locals, who were in the public library listening to the middle-aged academic talk about his energy revolution.

The townsfolk didn't know what to expect. Most of them had not seen Eduardo for many years, and some had difficulty even recognising him as the years that had not been too kind to the professor. But Eduardo, an intensely focused confirmed bachelor, did not care about his looks. He had an important message to deliver to the folks of Mount Tomah, a small Blue Mountains township. His message was really for the whole world, but he had to start somewhere.

Just the title of his new book 'The Energy Revolution Rescue Activism', an acronym of TERRA, was so dull it sent people to sleep. Eduardo thought it was perfect and explained the content accurately.

So what was it all about? The professor stated that humanity was on the brink of an energy revolution. He wiped his thick glasses, saying, 'Low oil prices are sending shock waves through the global economy.'

Some of the audience nearly nodded off during the long monologue. It was only the little furry head popping up out of the professor's top pocket, that kept the attendees puzzled and bemused as they listened with lukewarm interest.

Oblivious to the effect his pet hamster was having on his listeners, he ploughed on. 'This and other shifts are harbingers of an imminent energy revolution, which will bring the fossil fuel age to an end. And the brave new technological era will herald global reductions in our demand for oil, gas, and other non-renewable energies. This will prove more effective than current efforts to avert climate change. This will happen, but it needs to be helped along by activism in its various forms.

One member of the audience who was actually listening, as well as watching the small animal, with amusement, even had a question. 'Professor, what you're saying is all very well, but how do we get our waste of space Pollies to get on board?'

Eduardo stared myopically at the questioner. 'Our politicians have two choices where energy policy is concerned. They can either get on board and be apart of the energy revolution and its far-reaching consequences for nations, multi-national companies, and the effects of climate change. Or, with the help of protests and petitions, they will be dragged screaming into this revolution because they will

have no say in the matter, and they will have no choice but to respond.'

'Eduardo paused as he gently pushed Hamish back into his pocket. Then, as though having pets at lectures was the most natural thing in the world, he continued, 'Oil companies and energy utilities must begin to adapt their existing business models or face future irrelevancy. Oil-exporting nations, particularly in the Middle East, will be negatively impacted, whereas the United States and European countries that are investing in new technologies may find themselves leaders in the global geopolitical game.'

Eduardo took the top copy of his book from the small pile and brandished it at his dwindling audience. He stated, 'My book is both timely and controversial. It offers sound advice on what governments and businesses can and should do now to prepare for a radically different energy future.'

The remaining six people, mostly his relatives, applauded, unable to hide their relief that he had finished his speech. Three of them bought a copy of his book. It did not seem like much of a result, but it was a start.

Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.

John Muir

Chapter 1

In war, there were generally four levels of death. Skip Bott knew this from experience. The weathered soldier had a contemplative air about him and penetrating brown hooded eyes. The good kill was the removal of a hostile individual from the battle area by any appropriate means. Then came collateral damage, the consequence of unforeseeable or unavoidable circumstances that lead to the death of civilians. It also described foreseeable but acceptable deaths considering the strategic objective. Then there was the death of innocent civilians due to uncaring, reckless behaviour. The last level was outright murder. The malicious intent to seek out and kill another human being in a circumstance that is not self-defence or defence of another. As a sniper with a recon platoon, Skip knew the fourth kill very well. Some times levels three and four got clouded, especially when the target was a thousand metres away.

The three hundred metre range at the Queensland Military Rifle Club in Carina was a piece of cake for Skip, but it helped him keep his eye in. Besides a Hell's Canyon Long Range, with a twenty-six-inch barrel, although a great gun, was no match for the SR98 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle, he had used in the army. He had one stashed at home, but he didn't use it at the range because it would have drawn too much attention.

Sergeant Woody Stone had served with Skip Bott in Afghanistan. They had both enlisted around the same time, and first met as

privates in the Royal New South Wales Infantry Regiment. Woody had gone on to signals and Skip graduated as a member of a rifle platoon. After a couple of tours in Afghanistan, both Woody and Skip left the armed forces. Woody disappeared into the bush to live in a bunker off the grid. Something had happened to him in Afghanistan that gave him the night terrors, but he never spoke about it, not even to Skip, his closest friend. 'What happened in Afghanistan stayed in Afghanistan' was his motto. Unlike his friend, he never had a love of guns. For him, it was just a tool of the trade.

Every now and again Woody contacted Skip, never the other way around, and they had a drink together. On one such occasion, they met at the Camp Hill Hotel. They sat at a table, far away from the Karaoke, under the covered veranda. 'Cheers mate,' Woody said, clinking his schooner of XXXX against that of Skip's. He said, 'Mate, whatever got into you to talk to that fuckin' ABC, journo about army shit?'

Skip looked at the tall, lanky veteran with a scar on his forehead and wearing camouflage fatigues. 'I know mate. But I'm sick and tired of the fucking self-glorification that goes on at the expense of our blokes.'

'I know, mate. But you know the drill. Whatever took place in Afghanistan stays there. Jesus, mate, you haven't done yourself any favours blabbing to Auntie. We've all got our fucking psychological battles scars mate, but we keep them to ourselves.'

In some ways, Skip regretted speaking his mind in the interview, but he could not stop himself. He was trying to save lives. When the egotistical few threatened the very values special operations command stood for, it became a major contributing factor in subjecting Australian troops to unnecessarily dangerous battle

zones. He responded, 'Although. I must say I never personally witnessed this within Special Operations Command.'

Woody took a swig of beer. 'Sometimes, he wanted to talk about his demons, but he always stopped himself. 'It's just a pity you didn't have a bit more self-discipline, mate.'

Skip knocked back some beer. 'Yeah, well maybe it didn't happen in signals, mate.'

'Can't say that I noticed it, mate. Oh, there were one or two officers who bathed in self-glorification, but it was just a tiny minority.'

'Yeah, well, it became infectious in our mob at the expense of the greater reputation of special operations.'

Woody finished off his beer, He got up. 'Another one mate?'

'Bloody oath, mate, Keep them coming.'

Matthew Barker, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, introduced Sinclair George as the keynote speaker at the Brisbane Conservative Breakfast Club.

Sinclair began, 'Thank you, Mr Mayor, for your kind introduction.'

He paused, took in the audience, then said, 'What a great day to be in Brisbane. Kevin Randell has arrived home from the United States and held a press conference to announce that he is holding a press conference.'

Chuckles from the wealthy audience.

'We still don't know whether Joe Fox will be contesting the Labor leadership on Monday, but if he does Labor members will be presented with a choice between Kevin Randell, the most chaotic and disorganised prim a-donna Queensland has ever seen, and Fox, the most incompetent and dysfunctional backstabber that Australia

has ever seen.' He paused for effect. then added, 'And that is what they say about each other!'

Hoots of laughter from the haves.

'Ours is a great state in a great country. Queensland deserves better than the Labor rabble at the state level. In contrast to Labor's pitiful offerings, Mason Land is a strong leader with a united team, committed to the Queensland economy ...'

And so it went on.

Simon Felix tuned out of most of the speech, but his ears pricked up when it came to fixing Queensland's ailing economy.

'And that, ladies and gentlemen, is state Labor. Never have we witnessed such vitriolic animosity between warring factions in a political party. Now, like Napoleon, I believe you never interrupt your enemy while it is making mistakes. So I have said enough about the Labor leadership brawl, except this. Whoever wins the leadership battle on Monday, the instability, the dysfunction, the incompetence will not go away. When Queenslanders wake up on Tuesday morning, whoever the leader of the state Labor Party is, they will still endorse the crippling carbon tax Federal Labor will impose on our economy from the 1st of July.'

Sinclair George thumped the rostrum for emphasis. 'There will be no Carbon Tax under the Federal LNP. Nor under any government led by Mason Land.'

Cheers from the floor.

Simon Felix sought out Sinclair George at the breakfast buffet following the speech. 'I was heartened by your stand on this insidious and impractical Carbon tax.'

Sinclair looked at the smartly dressed man with a squarish face and large ears. 'Thank you, but who are you?'

Simon handed Sinclair his business card. 'I represent a company that wishes to invest in your great state.'

'Oh, and which company is that?'

Simon handed the politician a glossy brochure. 'This will give you a little idea of what Inada Holdings represents.'

Sinclair perused the promotional document and read: Inada is an Indian mining, energy and infrastructure company dedicated to delivering energy solutions for an advancing world. Sinclair looked at Simon and smiled, 'So, what can I do for you?'

Simon smiled also. 'I think we can do something for each other.'

Burnout Scenario Says Oil Loses \$21 Trillion By 2040 As ...
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/feliciajackson/2018/05/23/under-burnout-scenario-sees-oil-lose-21-trillion-in-revenues-by-2040-as-coal-is-phased-out/>

Australian special forces veteran breaks silence on ...
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-10/australian-special-forces-veteran-breaks-silence/8453728>

Ten percent of the big fish still remain. There are still some blue whales. There are still some krill in Antarctica. There are a few oysters in Chesapeake Bay. Half the coral reefs are still in pretty good shape, a jewelled belt around the middle of the planet. There's still time, but not a lot, to turn things around.

Sylvia Earle

Chapter 2

Davion Hawe a former Green peace activist, now a Green Party representative in the Queensland Parliament, loved snorkelling in the Great Barrier Reef. Ever since his dad taught him how to snorkel, he had been totally captivated by fish of every imaginable colour, swarming amongst the many-hued corals, as the sun's rays danced through the surface of the blue ocean. Davion loved to watch stingrays slowly drifting by, their smiley faces staring down at the ocean floor. The Great Barrier Reef was Davion's favourite place on Earth.

Was!

Because soon, If the Australian Government continued to ignore its plight, this natural wonder of the world will be gone forever. Davion joined Green Peace as it was one of the only influential bodies that actively campaigned for protection of the Reef. The Queensland Government has stood idly by while the Great Barrier Reef, the most massive living thing on the planet, deteriorates at an alarming rate. Over the past 30 years, Davion had watched helplessly as the beach lost around half of its coral. On a breakfast TV show he declared. 'We must act now if the Great Barrier Reef is to survive through future decades.'

The interviewer said, 'What is the cause of this accelerating deterioration, Davion?'

'Many things have contributed to coral bleaching. Now the Bishop Point coal port expansion poses the biggest threat.'

'Why is that the case?'

Because the proposed expansion includes three million cubic metres of dredging. This dredging involves digging up the seabed and rocks, destroying the sea grasses and the habitats of bottom-dwelling marine animals.'

'And that harms the reef?'

'Destroying the sea grasses affects the fish, molluscs and other sensitive creatures like turtles and dugongs that depend on them. Dredging also throws up fine sediments into the crystal clear waters, increasing turbidity which affects visibility and can smother benthic life. These sediments drift for kilometres, degrading water quality and covering sea grass beds and coral.'

Rhianna Walcott studied the proposal in detail. As the Co-ordinator General, it was her job to build robust and sustainable resource communities. The corporation, an Indian mining and energy company sought to make the world's biggest new coal mine in central Queensland's Jericho Basin. The Carnagee Project, a thermal coal mine in the north of the basin in Central Queensland, Australia, involved both open-cut and underground methods.

At the same time as Mrs Walcott made her decision on the proposed DA, her husband was a frontrunner for the position of Carnagee mine manager during the construction phase, if the project got approved. Adrian Walcott had a solid background in the mining industry including his role as the CEO of the massive Konkola copper mines in Zambia. This experience stood him in good stead

for the CEO job once the mine was up and running. This conflict of interest was conveniently glossed over.

Having gone through the necessary motions, Rhianna decided there was more than enough room for the Carnagee mine in Central Queensland, where there was plenty more coal in the ground. And The Deputy Premier, Sinclair George announced that the state's coordinator-general had approved the project, subject to an extensive list of environmental and social conditions. And subject to getting the project the tick at Federal level.

Gregory Hunter was impressed with the Coordinator General's glowing report. It looked as though Queensland had landed a big one. Reading the document he whistled through his teeth. The mine was going to produce up to 60 million tonnes of coal each year. The proposal also included the provision for a 189-kilometre rail line. The plan had the potential to create up to 2,500 construction and 3,900 operational jobs.

July 28, 2014

Federal Environment Minister Hunter approved the Inada project subject to 36 strict conditions focused on conserving groundwater, including returning 730 mega-litres of water to the Great Artesian Basin every year for five years.

The Greens had argued that as the water would have been used by the mine, it would be contaminated when returned to the GAB. They wanted all the water used by the mine to be thoroughly purified before it was returned. But they didn't have the numbers to make this happen, and the proposal did not see the light of day.

Mr Hunter maintained that his 36 conditions, which complemented the Queensland Government's environmental requirements, would ensure the proponent met the highest environmental standards and

that all impacts, including cumulative effects, were avoided, mitigated or offset.'

As they flew over the cattle station's vast ranges, Ossie McCarthy turned to his chopper pilot. 'Looks like Eddie was right.' He was referring to Edward Ferringdon a fellow cattle grazier, who like Ossie, owned a vast cattle station in Jericho Basin, which had been drought-stricken for seven years.

Abelard Morrelly responded, ' Well boss there's definitely something sneaky going on.' He brought the R44 Raven in lower, get a closer look at the activity going on below.

Ossie had kept up surveillance in the basin, which comprised some 247,000 square kilometres of thermal coal. Ever since the Department of State Development had seen fit to support mining development there, Ossie, like all station owners was concerned that each new project put increasing strain on the ground water's dwindling supply. Which was why Abelard Morrelly, was flying and spying the Raven chopper over the Inada property.

Abel said, 'I'd say they're definitely drilling down there.'

'I didn't think they had the green light yet.'

'The DA was knocked back once, They have an appeal next week,' Abel offered.

'So why are they drilling already?'

'Maybe they think they can get away with it.'

Abe grinned, 'Not with us on the job, boss.'

They weren't the only ones on the job. Campbell Rendall, an Indigenous Land Rights lawyer, was busy building a case for the Kimala and Jinnamoora people, who were deeply concerned that the mine project would undermine them, Trash their rights and destroy

their ancestral lands, waters and cultures. On the wall of his Townsville office, a sign read:

The native title recognises a set of rights and interests over land or waters where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups have practised, and continue to practice, traditional laws and customs before sovereignty.

It was a constant reminder for Campbell who had joined the legal profession to fight for indigenous rights. Campbell was head of the native title practice in Townsville. He was listed in Doyle's Guide to the Australian Legal Profession as one of Australia's leading native title lawyers. Over his years in practice, Campbell developed strong relationships with indigenous groups, developers and mining organisations, and had a wealth of experience in dealing successfully with government bodies, tribunals and other stakeholders concerning indigenous rights and interests. So he was the perfect choice to lead the defence for the Kimala and Jinnamoora people. Campbell knew it, and so did the Inada company lawyers.

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.

Aldo Leopold

Chapter 3

Ossie McCarthy, in his tight jeans, big boots and a characteristic wide brimmed leather Akubra, was a cattleman through and through. He and his two siblings had inherited Ulcanbah Station after his father's fatal accident whilst rodeo bull riding. Ulcanbah was the second largest station in Australia, after Anna Creek in South Australia, and the largest in Queensland. It was around six in the morning, when Ossie walked in on Sam, the camp cook, who was preparing breakfast for the station hands. 'Hi, Sam.'

The overweight Aboriginal with grey Afro-style hair paused from beating eggs. 'Hi Boss'

'I need to contact your cousin Michael.'

'Sure, Mr McCarthy. I'll get you his number.'

'Just text it to me.'

Ossie loved the great outdoors, in fact just about everything to do with running a vast cattle station. Except when there was a prolonged drought. And this one had been going on for many years. The existing coal industry in the basin was sucking the aquifers dry, as well as contaminating the groundwater. Ozzie often shook his head in disbelief. How could the Queensland Pollies be so stupid? What really galled him though was that the coal industry did sneaky deals and got their water cheap, or even free, while graziers, like him, had to pay through the nose. Well, enough was enough, and he was damned sure he would not stand by idly while Inada built their Carnagee mega-mine.

Ossie sighed, It did no good growling at the universe. Not when there was some 5,000 head of shorthorn Brahman-cross cattle to attend to. He was heading off to his ute when he received Sam's message. Ossie rang the number.

Michael Burrugoo lived in Alpha, a tiny rural town in the Barcaldine Region in Central West Queensland, Ironically, it was named after the first proposed mine, called the Alpha Coal Project. The construction camp moved west, but the township remained at the former terminus. Michael wished all the mines had gone west. He responded to Ossie's call. 'Hi Ossie, what can I do for you man?'

'How about coming for a ride in the chopper?'

'I take it this isn't just about joy riding.'

'Mate, Inada is drilling bores. Thought you might like to get some video.'

'Right mate. But why can't you record it and send it to Campbell?'

'Mike, I'm strictly a behind the scenes man. Besides, it'll be better coming from you, being a stakeholder and all.'

'OK man, but you'll have to pick me up, Gerard has got the ute.'

'I didn't know he'd got his license.'

'I don't remember mentioning that.'

Sinclair George was home with Alva his wife, half watching the ABC 7:30 Report, when an article caught his attention. It was an aerial shot video of the Inada Carnagee mine site, showing bores being drilled. It was the first he had heard of it. Then he saw an ABC commentator speaking with a tall, lean Aboriginal man with shoulder-length dark hair. When Sinclair realised it was Campbell Rendall, the Abo's land rights lawyer, he became interested and turned up the volume just in time to hear Rendall say, 'It's a flagrant

abuse of the Inada Indigenous Land Use Agreement as laid down by the Coordinator-General.'

'So, in the light of this illegal drilling what steps do you think the Queensland Government should take?

'Inada should have its mining licence revoked.'

'Do you think that is likely to happen, Mr Rendall?'

Campbell smiled, 'No. I'm not naive. But Inada should be heavily fined at the very least.'

'What the fuck are they playing at,' Sinclair mumbled, going for his phone. When he heard Adrian's voice, he said, 'Are you watching the 7:30 Report?'

'No. Why?'

'Because someone made a home movie of your guys drilling bores at your mine site.'

Adrian was silent for a moment, digesting Sinclair's words. Then he responded, 'Could you see the Inada name anywhere?'

'No, but it's too late to go down that road. Fucking Campbell

Rendall has had his say and is demanding severe penalties for Inada.' Then he asked, 'Adrian, were you aware this drilling was going on?'

'Bloody hell, Sinclair, in just a few days we'll win our appeal, and we can drill as many fucking bores as we like. You just have to keep the media hounds off my heels until then.'

'What am I supposed to tell them?'

'You're a smart politician. Say it wasn't us and simply stick to that story. That'll keep the media busy chasing its tail for a few days. Then, we're home and dry.'

'I admire your confidence, but if this drilling becomes an issue you might lose the appeal.'

'Don't worry about that, Sinclair. Australia has the best legal system money can buy.'

October 2015

The announcer on the 7:30 Report said, 'The latest evidence shows that Indian mining company Inada carried out illegal drilling on the Carnagee coal mine site. With me, in the studio, tonight is Campbell Rendall an indigenous rights lawyer from Townsville. Turning to his guest, the ABC reporter said, 'What is this new evidence, Mr Rendall?'

Campbell flicked back his shoulder-length black hair. 'Somebody had the clever idea to check the GPS coordinates in the video that showed drilling going on. Then they checked the coordinates on a plan of the proposed Carnagee coal mine. And they got a perfect match.'

'But Sinclair George was adamant that there was no drilling taking place on Inada land.'

Campbell said, 'This new evidence shows Inada lied. Not only did Inada get caught drilling it lied about it.'

The commentator turned to the camera. 'We invited the Deputy Premier to explain this new finding, but we were told he was not available. We also wanted a comment from Adrian Walcott, the Inada mine manager but we were told he is overseas at present.' Back to his guest, the ABC reporter said, 'Now we can see that

Inada has not complied with the Coordinator General's ruling, how should we go on from here?

'Now that we know Inada cannot be trusted they must be put under government scrutiny. Apart from that, Inada needs to be brought before the Land and Environment court to answer for their crime.'

The reporter turned to the camera again, 'We are now crossing live to the Department of State Development to speak with the Coordinator General. Good evening Mrs Walcott. Now that we have evidence that Inada has deliberately carried out illegal operations at the Carnegie mine site, what steps will you take to make sure such blatant disrespect to your office does not happen again?'

'My department will look into the allegations, and if we discover any substance to them, we will act accordingly.'

'How will you act? What kind of penalty will you impose?'

'That depends on the substance of the allegations. But I will say this.

Inada won its appeal today, so it can drill bores legally.'

'Well, I'm sure your husband will be very relieved.'

'We're all very relieved.'

Davion Hawe looked for any opportunity to put nails in Inada's mine project coffin. He asked a question in Parliament that made visible the elephant in the chamber. Addressing the House of Reps, he said, 'Am I the only person here to see a conflict of interest concerning Rhianna Walcott as our Coordinator General and her husband as the new Inada mine manager?'

Davion felt the mental arrows hitting his armour from the LNP side of the chamber. Thoroughly enjoying himself, he continued, 'Only recently we have seen an example of this conflict of interest when Inada, despite drilling illegally on its Jericho Basin site, lied about it

on the ABC. I find it strange that the Coordinator General never mentioned any of this during Inada's DA appeal. This shows a clear case of conflict of interest which, for the honour and integrity of this house, needs to be addressed. Mrs Walcott should resign her position right away to avoid a scandal and restore credibility to the Queensland Department of State Development.'

The House erupted in an uproar! But nobody wanted to defend the indefensible, except Sinclair George, who felt he had to comment. Sinclair stood up. Puffing out his chest, he said, 'Honourable members. It comes of no surprise to me that our Green member has got his wires crossed. Mrs Walcott was employed as Coordinator General prior to her husband becoming Inada's mine manager. Even so, it could be argued that this does represent an apparent conflict of interest. Now, if our Green friend had spent his time reading the Code of Conduct, instead of snorkelling in the Reef, he might have noticed that having a conflict of interest is not considered misconduct or a breach of the Code of Conduct.' He paused, waiting for the House to settle. 'The important thing here is being open about the conflict of interest. How it is managed to ensure that it's resolved in the public interest. Therefore I think the Coordinator General should come before the House and put this matter straight so we can get on with more important business.'

Cheers from the LNP.

Davion rose to rebut. 'Thank you to the honourable member for pointing that out. I am very interested to hear what the Coordinator General has to say about not giving evidence against Inada during the mining giants appeal.'

The Endangered Species Act is the strongest and most effective tool we have to repair the environmental harm that is causing a species to decline.

Norm Dicks

Chapter 4

With his pale skin and black hair, political cartoonists drew the Queensland Premier as a vampire. He certainly liked to get his teeth into state development projects, such as the Inada mine, the subject he was discussing in a private meeting with Sinclair George.

The Deputy Premier said, 'The Carnagee mine is our biggest and most courageous project, Mason. So we're bound to have a few hiccups along the way.'

Mason responded, 'Yes of course, but my leadership is on the line if it blows up in our face.'

'Relax, it's all under control. We've sorted out that little business with the drilling, and it's all on track.'

Mason looked at the Coordinator Generals report. 'Inada still needs finance.'

'That's to be expected with a huge 21.7 billion dollar investment.'

'Have we given Inada a deadline in which to raise funds?'

'What good would that do?' They have leased the land for 25 years.'

Mason shook his head.

Sinclair buoyed, said, 'Inada's Carnagee Coal mine will comprise six open-cut pits and up to five underground mines, to supply Indian power plants with enough coal to generate electricity for up to 100

million people. You've seen the figures. The royalties from the project alone will be enough to put us in the black. '

Mason smiled for the first time at the meeting. 'Yes, I guess you're right. We just have to make sure they stick to the agreement.'

Sinclair said, 'Talking of the Inada investment, Simon Felix wants to meet you.'

'Felix. What does he want?'

'I don't know. We just bumped into each other at the club the other day.'

'I'll get Kate to put it in my diary.'

'He'll be at the club today, at 1 o'clock.'

'Why can't you deal with it, Sinclair?'

'He expressly asked for you.'

Green Alert Australia was not just an organisation. Over the years, quietly in the background, It evolved into something of a lifestyle. Its members came from all walks of life and orientations. What made Green Alert different to other environmental organisations, is that it had no membership, as such. Alfonso Fernley, a veteran green activist, came up with the concept that anybody who wished to be part of Green Alert's concerted effort to save the natural environment for future generations, automatically became part of the movement. This intelligent approach stopped any government agencies from keeping tabs on the Green Alert database. For the last ten years, GA was able to lead the most innovative environmental actions. Most GA communication took place on social media. So whenever a green alert flag went up, people could rally around to fight for that particular cause. The Inada mine was such a cause.

Alfonso Fernley lived on Barker Road just outside Aldgate, in the picturesque Adelaide Hills. He and Ida had lived in their timber stilt home since they had built it ten years ago. He was in the middle of a Skype session with Michael Burrugoo. He looked at the bearded Kimala elder. 'So how are you guys holding out, bro?'

'Now that Inada has the green light to build their mine without our permission, we're building our case for the Land Rights Court. So we're busy with fund-raisers and collecting donations for our fighting fund.'

'Yeah. Look the reason I called is that we can mobilise through our networks and get some boots on the ground up there if that'd be a help.'

'Bro, dollars in the bank would be better. Doing fund-raisers down there would be the best help you guys can offer. And it keeps the issue alive. What do you reckon?'

'Mate, we do what we always do. Put it out there and test the response. What would be a huge help though is if you send me a run-down on your fund-raising methods and the message you want to get across.'

Michael sighed, 'This is going to be the mother of all land rights battles. And we'll see it through to the bitter end.'

'You guys are really courageous taking on the Government funded and supported coal mine project.'

'What else can we do when we're fighting for our rights to our country, bro?'

'Yeah, well all the best to you guys.'

'Knowing Green Alert is supporting us means a lot, man.'

'You're welcome, bro. We'll, do what we can at this end. Stay strong brother.'

Alfonso closed the lid of his tablet and looked at Ida. He loved her expressive brown eyes. He knew what she was about to say, but he let her say it anyway.

'Al, we have to be careful how we approach this.'

'I know that, Ida. But I want to let the Kimala and Jinnamoora Council know we are solidly behind them.'

'You know what environmentalists are like. We all have our pet things to fight for. We can't assume our whole non-membership will jump on board the "Stop Inada" train.'

'OK, we could be bold and do something we've never done before.'

Ida stared at Al, 'And what would that be?'

'We hold an online referendum. Anyone who wants to actively support the anti-Inada protests just answers yes or no.'

Ida shook her head. 'That's far too confronting. Why not just say, if you want to support the K&J people in their struggle against the mining giant Inada, organise fund-raisers, in your communities?'

Al jumped up and gave Ida a big hug. 'You're a fucking genius as usual.'

August 2015

The 7:30 Report interviewer said, 'The approval of Inada's Carnagee coal mine in central Queensland has been set aside by the Federal Court because of a bureaucratic bungle over two vulnerable species - the yakka skink and the ornamental snake. An Australian court has revoked the government's environmental approval for one of the world's biggest coal mines under construction in Australia after

environmental legal centre EDO Queensland, representing the Mackay Conservation Group, challenged the consent given by Environment Minister Gregory Hunter.

With me tonight I have Professor Murray an environmental scientist who is going to tell us about these two reptiles. 'Professor, why are these two species so important that they are holding up the Carnagee mine construction?'

Eduardo Murray, a picture of innocence, smiled, 'The Mackay Conservation Group brought it to my notice that they had launched a challenge to the mine project earlier in the year over the presence of a vulnerable species. Namely the yakka skink, a secretive animal that's active during the day. It grows up to 40 centimetres in length and has a thick tail. With a reddish-brown body, It has broad, dark brown to black stripes that extend from the back side of the neck to the tail; its survival is threatened by land clearing activities and mining.'

The interviewer could have sworn a little furry head had popped out of the professor's breast pocket. He tried ignoring it. 'And what about the other species, professor?' he asked.

'The other endangered species which the Inada project harms is the brown coloured ornamental snake which has a stout body and grows to a length of 50 cm. A dangerous animal, the ornamental snake, can compress its body and can hold itself in curves. It can attack brutally if it feels threatened.'

At this juncture, Hamish made a bid for freedom and jumped onto the interviewer's lap. Eduardo grabbed the little fellow and popped him back into his pocket before he escaped into the studio. The interviewer regained his calm. 'If that happens again we could be looking at another endangered species.'

Gregory Hunter stormed into the Coordinator General's office and tossed a newspaper, depicting a blown up picture of a reddish brown lizard on the front cover, onto her desk.

Rhianna Walcott was expecting the Federal Minister for the Environment's visit, but not such a dramatic entrance. 'Good morning, Minister.'

'There's nothing good about it at all,' he snarled. Pointing at the image of the reptile, he said, I've never heard of a bloody yakka skink. And now the Mackay Conservation Group and some smart arse professor claim it's a vulnerable species that just happens to live on the Inada mine site.'

Rhianna's skin tone matched her pearly white teeth. 'Tell me this is just a bad dream!'

'It's no dream I can assure you. And you are going to deal with this nonsense so we can keep this project on track.'

'I don't understand it, Minister. We included any vulnerable animals in the report.'

'Yes, but the data about this was never sent to my department.'

Rhianna Walcott stared at Gregory, wide-eyed and mouth open. 'Oh shit! How did that oversight happen?'

'Incompetence in your State Development Department, perhaps. All I know is that documents were not presented by your Department before we finalised the approval. It's created a technical legal vulnerability that you need to address right now.'

'I'll get right onto it, Minister.'

Davion Hawe said, in an ABC Radio interview, 'If it was not for the Mackay Conservation Group's diligence the State Department's 'oversight' may never have been discovered.'

The journalist speaking with the Green politician, said, 'Well it's good for the two vulnerable animals but not so for the delay in billions of dollars in investments and thousands of jobs.'

'Well, that's down to incompetence in the LNP's State Department.'

The interviewer looked at the Greens MP. 'Now the oversight has been addressed Inada's spokesperson said the company is confident all imposed conditions on the existing approval have been covered.'

Davion huffed, 'That may well be the case, but it does not address returning clean groundwater back to the Great Artesian Basin,'

Sinclair George sat opposite Michael Rockman as they dined at

Tattersall's Club in Brisbane. Sinclair, a long time member of the conservative establishment, popped in for a meal whenever time permitted. Or, as on this occasion, dine on expenses with a colleague, who in this case, was Michael Rockman. As they ate, in the tastefully designed Art Deco Dining Room Rockman, the Queensland Resources Council chief executive spoke between mouthfuls of trout and salad, 'It's preposterous that Walcott's technical, administrative hitch could hold up billions of dollars in investment and thousands of desperately needed jobs.'

Sinclair said, 'Yes' it's an unfortunate hold up, but Gregory assures me that Mrs Walcott is on top of it.'

Rockman looked straight at the Deputy Premier. 'The great irony of this is that Gregory included the two species, a skink and a snake, as a condition of his approval for the mine, but on some technical basis he can't demonstrate that all the right documents were in front of him at the time.'

'Well let's hope the court's irrational decision won't delay the project much longer.'

'Sinclair, I'm extremely disappointed this has happened,' Michael said, shaking his head. He added, 'Are you sure that Mrs Walcott is up to the task?'

'It's the only blot in her copybook as far as I know.'

'Well, we can't afford another technical error.'

'I understand that, but she is good at her job.'

Michael frowned a little. 'OK, Sinclair, if you're prepared to vouch for her, she gets another chance. But if she stuffs up again, it'll be on your head.'

Sinclair had been waiting his turn. 'Now, Michael, I have a question for you.'

Michael sipped an excellent red and said, 'Ask away.'

'Will Inada's mine really provide 10,000 Australian jobs?'

Michael was not surprised at the question. There had been considerable debate in parliament and the media about Inada's projection of 10,000 jobs. 'The two main figures quoted are 10,000 or 1,464.'

'There's a vast difference between those two numbers. So where does the Queensland Resources Council sit on this issue?'

Rockman began feeling a little uncomfortable. 'I have spoken with the Federal Member for the region, Geoff Christian, and we discussed the various estimates of just how many jobs will be created. His take is that the vast Green Alert network and the biased leftist ABC have perpetuated the lie that the Inada project will only net 1,464 jobs. While it's true that the mine alone will directly

employ approximately 1,464 workers during its first phase, this figure doesn't include workers needed for the construction phase, workers needed for construction and operation of the railway line from Alpha to Bowman or workers needed for the expansion of the port of Bishop Point. Nor does it include the indirect jobs that will flow on from this multi-billion dollar investment. From all this Inada came up with the 10,000 jobs figure. It's a number they're sticking with despite the extreme Greenie lies.'

When Davion Hawe was asked, by an ABC reporter about the Greens take on the Inada job numbers debacle. He said, 'In my view, the debate over Inada's jobs claims is not important. It's pointless going on about how many jobs this project will or won't create because the project isn't viable and is unlikely to proceed. So this point is largely irrelevant.'

Approval of Inada's \$16 billion Carmichael coal mine in ...
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-05/federal-court-overturms-approval-of-Inadas-carmichael-coal-mine/6673734>

Ornamental snake (Department of Environment and Science).
https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals-az/ornamental_snake.html

Fact check: Will Inada's coal mine really boost employment ...
<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/business-spectator/news-story/fact-check-will-Inadas-coal-mine-really-boost-employment-by-10000-jobs/903c1932738b1d1a1763c74e45f4d7c7>

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Chapter 5

Davion Howe was one of a hundred and fifty protesters who gathered on the steps outside Inada's head office in Brisbane, where he spoke out about the coal mining projects planned for the Jericho Basin and Bishop Point. Aboriginal elder, Marge Parry, who had helped organise the protest, hand-delivered over 2000 personal messages from concerned people, opposing the Carnegie mine project.

Police began to gather around the protesters, but the rally remained peaceful. Instead of loud, angry chants, the anti-mine attendees followed the organisers' wishes, expressing their views creatively with written messages on orange cor flutes and other materials. They held up these heartfelt messages when the media turned up to film the event.

Following the protest, in another, on-air interview, Davion Howe said, 'Rather than screaming and ranting, our protest was peaceful. This is the most effective way to get our message heard.'

The interviewer said, 'What do you hope to achieve by this protest?'

'These proposed coal mines will be the largest of their kind in the world, at a time when many nations are turning away from coal-fired power stations. To answer your question, we are helping everyone who cares about our country to become aware of how these mines will devastate the environment and destroy sacred

indigenous sites. This ill-conceived Inada project will also cause irreparable damage to the Great Barrier Reef, one of the natural wonders of the world. This will also have a devastating effect on tourism, a huge money earner for Queensland. '

'Davion, do you think the Inada mine is the biggest threat to the health of the Reef?'

'Climate change and industrialisation are certainly the greatest threats facing our Reef.'

'But surely, on the upside, Inada is going to provide huge employment and economic benefits to Australia.'

Davion responded, 'Inada has time and time again overstated the economic growth of this project and exaggerated job figures by up to 80 per cent.'

Mrs Toni Williamson of 'Reef Protectors', speaking with an ABC journalist at the rally, said, 'We have tried to get a meeting with someone from Inada, but they have not even responded to give us a chance to discuss our concerns.'

'Why do you think the mining company ignores your request?'

'Because Inada has scant regard for our environment and Indigenous native rights.'

'Will you continue to seek an audience with Inada, Ms Williamson?'

'No, I don't think there is any point. But I have this message for

Inada. Reef Protectors will not be deterred. Right across Australia communities are beginning to stand up and take action against this disastrous mining project.'

November 2015

Campbell Rendall was about to leave his office to get some lunch when he received an odd phone call.

The man at the other end introduced himself as Jeyakumar Kanajara. He said, 'I am calling about the Inada mine.'

Campbell's ears pricked up. His grumbling gut would have to wait. 'What do you know about the copper mine, Mr?'

'Call me Jeya. I am a Zambian Migrant, and I live in Sydney.'

'What has that got to do with the mine, Jeya?'

The other day on the news I heard a name I recognise from when I live in Zambia. It was Adrian, the manager of the Inada mine.'

'The manager of the Carnagee mine!'

'He was also CEO of Konkola Copper Mines when I worked there.'

'So he worked in mining in Africa. Why would that interest me?'

'Because there was big trouble when poison from the mine got into the Zambia River.'

Campbell's interest piqued. 'And this was while Adrian Walcott was the CEO of the mines?'

'Yes. That is so.'

Campbell scratched his head. 'I can't get involved, Jeya, but I can ring somebody who may be interested in meeting you. Give me your phone number, and I'll ring you back.'

Campbell stood up and stretched to relieve stiffness in his lower back. He picked up his mobile and rang Michael Burrage's, contact number. 'Hi, Mike, Campbell here. Something has just cropped up to do with Inada that might get you a heap of media coverage.'

Michael perked up. 'What are you talking about, bro?'

'I was just talking to a man who worked in a copper mine in Zambia. The boss was our good friend Adrian Walcott.'

'So what's that got to do with us and our fight?'

'Walcott was there when a lot of poisonous crap leaked into the Zambia River.'

Now, Michael was getting it. 'So, what happened. Was there an enquiry?'

'I never got that far with Jeya - that's what he likes to be called. I've got his contact details if you want to give him a ring.'

Michael rang Jeya that evening and was interested in what he had to say. As Jeya could not get time off from work, Michael agreed to meet him before work in Mt Druitt at the Zambian's favourite cafe, Espresso Warriors, a friendly place with a surprising range of vegan and vegetarian food. Michael ordered the Vegetarian Warrior kale burger and a cappuccino for breakfast.

Jeya arrived and took a seat opposite Michael.

With introductions dealt with, Michael said, 'Have you brought the info with you?'

Jeya handed over a manila folder that contained many newspaper cuttings and other pieces of information.

Michael perused the collection, making notes on his phone from time to time.

... Zambian villagers are taking a multinational copper mining firm to court in the UK, accusing it of poisoning their water. The BBC's Nomsa Maseko visited the area which has allegedly been polluted.

Women, dressed in colourful sarongs and t-shirts, the women of Hippo Pool village collected their water on the banks of the Kafue River in Zambia's copper belt. At sunset, as the day cooled, the women carried their precious water in buckets on their heads as they walked back home.

They cooked with this water, cleaned with it, drank it and irrigated their farms with it. But a tragedy loomed!

The tragic story turned out to be the same in all Zambian villages that were near the river. When Jeya went home to Hippo Pool village, he could smell and even taste the pollution. Jeya visited the communities: Kakosa, Shimulala and Hellen where he found the Mushishima stream and the Kafue had become rivers of acid.

Michael looked up from his reading. 'And you have proof this was caused by the copper mine.'

Jeya took the folder and rummaged through the cuttings until he came to what he was looking for. He took the cutting out of the pile and handed it to Michael. The newspaper report stated:

Leaked documents, that the BBC has seen, appear to show that Vedanta Resources - through it's Zambian based Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) - have been spilling sulphuric acid and other toxic chemicals into the water courses.

Jeya said, 'I worked for 15 years with KCM, and I can't stay silent any longer.'

Michael closed the folder. 'Can I study these further?'

'Yes, you can have these copies. I hope you can get justice for the victims.'

Sometimes, Rhianna Walcott wished she had not signed off on the Inada Carnegie mine so quickly. But who could have foreseen the

enormous public outcry in addition to the massive political campaign against it? The worst part was the multiple court cases, some of which had received substantial media coverage. Sinclair had told Rhianna to keep her head down and not to make any comments to the media. Rhianna felt out of her depth and thought the whole Inada business was too big to be handled at the state level.

She was sitting with Adrian relaxing by their palm shaded pool at their luxury home in Thunderbolt Drive. The Walcotts had lived in Oak Valley, on the outer fringe of Townsville, for 5 years since they got married. But with Adrian mostly absent, dealing with mine management business and Rhianna spending most of her time running the State Development Department in Brisbane, they seldom had time to do things together.

Adrian looked up from The Townsville Times. Turning to his wife, as she lay beside him on a sun lounge recliner, he said, 'Another bloody court dispute over the Carnagee mine. Christ, trying to keep this project on course is like taking one step forward and two steps backward.'

Rhianna looked at her husband. She had never seen him so stressed. Which was why she had taken time off for a few days to be with him, so they could recharge their batteries. 'Yes dear, I know. Another damned case study.'

He looked at his tall, tanned wife lying there in her bathing suit. He had to stay in the shade. Ten minutes in the hot sun and his pale skin would be burning. He slapped on yet more sun block cream as he replied. 'Yes, and this latest study involves a major dispute in the Queensland Land Court, which means a judicial review challenge to the mine's approval in the bloody Supreme Court.'

'How is Inada coping with all these delays?' Rhianna asked.

'Mahatma Inada is coming here personally to try and clear up this fucking red tape nonsense so we can get on with the job.' Adrian went back to his paper. Then he said, 'That Green trouble maker has been spouting off to the media again.'

'Which Greenie is that dear?'

'The damned Hawe fellow, listen to this rubbish here in the paper. He frowned as he read:

The Greens MP has stated, in the Townsville Times, 'Due to its enormous scale, the Inada Carnagee mine impacts heavily on the local and regional environment.' He goes on to claim, ... 'the consequences of climate change, if the mine proceeds, will be dire for all Australians and is strongly opposed by conservationists.' He goes on to say, ...' that the campaign against Inada is the biggest environmental campaign seen in Australia since the Franklin campaign in the 1980s. Inada has become shorthand for are you serious about climate change?'

'He's always mouthing off about something, dear. He can't do much damage, but the Supreme Court "can". We need to focus on that.'

Just then Rhianna's phone rang. It was from Sinclair. She was needed back in Parliament, where another Inada crisis had hit, creating a shit storm in Canberra.

December, 2015

Gregory Hunter and Sinclair George were engaged in a private, heated conversation in the Environment Minister's office. 'Where the hell has that woman got to?' Gregory growled.

Sinclair, trying to cover for her, said, 'The flight probably got held up.'

The Federal Environment Minister snapped, 'Oh come on George. Private jets carrying senior ministers do not get held up.'

Just then Rhianna Walcott arrived.

Sinclair smiled at her. 'Glad you could make it. There's a bit of a problem we have to deal with.'

She looked from one man to the other. 'What problem is that?'

'First, my dear, this is Gregory Hunter,' Sinclair said, indicating the tall severe looking man.

Turning to Gregory, she said, 'Sorry to keep you waiting. The flight got delayed. So why have you summoned me to Canberra?'

Sinclair turned to the Coordinator general, 'Another Inada problem, I'm afraid.'

'Oh!'

Gregory said, 'My department's job is to see that Inada meets the highest environmental standards.'

'That goes without saying, Minister,' Rhianna huffed, annoyed.

Gregory continued un-fazed, 'Which means all measures must be approved before mining starts. Now that we have approved it we find that it could have been premature.'

Rhianna looked at the Environment Minister wide-eyed. 'What do you mean?'

'Didn't you see the ABC news last night, Mrs Walcott?'

'No. I try not to take notice of that leftist rubbish. What was on?'

'A bloody Zambian mine worker told the 7:30 Report that KCM and its parent Company Vedanta were being taken to the High Court in London.'

'Whatever for?' Rhianna asked, genuinely puzzled.

Villagers claim they were poisoned by toxic water caused by leakage from the company's huge Konkola open-pit copper mine. Local villagers claim that the contaminated water made them ill and devastated nearby farmland, for over 10 years from 2004.'

'So what has that got to do with me?' Rhianna snapped, puzzled.

'It turns out that Inada owned those mines.'

'Even so, that's history. It doesn't affect the contract we have with Inada.'

Gregory said, 'I haven't finished. It turns out that Adrian Walcott, Inada Australia's chief executive officer was in charge of the African copper mine when a flood of dangerous pollutants from the mine poured into the Zambian river.'

Rhianna looked as though she had a close encounter with a ghost. She stood staring at the minister, no words forthcoming.'

Sinclair guided her to a seat. 'I think you ought to sit down, Rhianna.'

She collapsed on the chair. She eventually said, 'Are you saying my husband ran a copper mine in Zambia?'

'That's exactly what I'm saying.'

'But he never told me any ...'

'It seems he left there under a bit of a cloud,' Sinclair said.

Gregory said. 'He'll have to resign of course.'

'Perhaps we should at least listen to what he has to say first,' pleaded Rhianna.

'Gregory rebutted, 'Listen to him! He'll probably be called as a material witness in London any time soon. We can't be associated with the poisoning of dozens of villagers. We have to be decisive and act quickly before this government is dragged into this sordid affair.'

Rhianna said, 'At least let me be the one to tell Adrian. I don't want him to hear it first on the news.'

Gregory tutted, 'This is one god-awful mess. Understand I have the power to suspend or revoke the Carnagee mine approval and strict penalties apply if there is a breach of the licence conditions.'

Sinclair said, 'We should be involved in the new mine manager selection, so we don't have to deal with this crap again.'

But the crap in question was not over. Having received his wife's call, Adrian contacted the ABC and arranged with the national broadcaster to go on the 7:30 Report to give his version of the story.

The ABC Director of Current Affairs could not pass up such a coup. As the only TV news to host the interview, even the latest royal baby story took a back seat.

Facing his interviewer, Adrian expressed his usual haughty arrogance to mask his seething anger.

'Is it true that you were the CEO of the Konkola Copper Mines in Zambia before becoming Chief executive of Inada's Australian operations, Mr Walcott?'

'Yes, that is correct, although I did not know Vedanta Resources was owned by Inada.'

'If you had known would you have taken the job?'

'What, at KCM?'

'Yes.'

'I don't understand the context of the question,' Adrian said lightly rubbing a scar on his forehead, an affectation when feeling nervous. Then he said, 'I had no reason not to take on the job of CEO.'

'I see. Now, did you disclose your role of CEO at KCM and the fact that under your watch KCM was charged with causing a huge pollution spill that saw a toxic brew of highly acidic, metal-laden discharge released into the Zambian Kafue River?'

'Yes but ...'

'Mr Walcott It is now revealed that KCM and its parent company Vedanta Resources are being taken to the High Court in London by Zambian locals who say pollution from the company's huge Konkola open-pit copper mine made them ill and devastated nearby farmland for over 10 years, from 2004.'

'Yes, but It wasn't my fault.'

'So why did you, the man driving Australia's biggest mining project, fail to disclose that a company you ran for ten years in Africa was guilty of serious environmental breaches, despite being asked to do so, in a letter from the Federal Environment Department.'

Adrian rubbed the scar again. 'I don't recall ever having received such a letter.'

'Well let me refresh your memory. The interviewer handed the mine manager a single sheet of paper.' Here, I have a copy of a letter from Gregory Hunter requesting information about the environmental history of executive officers.'

'Oh, that letter. Yes, I remember receiving a standard form letter, but ...'

'And did you include your employment with KCM in your reply?'

Adrian forced a smile. 'Obviously not otherwise it would be mentioned in my reply, which no doubt you also have a copy.'

'Why did you not include that pertinent information, Mr Walcott?'

'Because of a slight misunderstanding. I thought it only meant my environmental history in Australia.'

'Mr Walcott, let me take you back to the form letter you received. The letter asked you to provide information about any executive office you have held that has been the subject of any civil or criminal penalties or compliance-related findings, for breaches of, or non-compliance with environmental laws and information about your roles both in Australia and in other countries.' So where is the slight misunderstanding?'

Adrian sat there open-mouthed. He rubbed vigorously at the scar. In a weak defence, he uttered, 'KCM was not subject to any prosecution while I ran the mine.' And I would like it put on record that I informed Vedanta on more than one occasion that some of the old pipes were leaking and needed to be replaced.'

'Mr Walcott, the information was needed for the Environment Minister's assessment of the Carnegie mine. Yet there was no mention of it in Inada's Land Court appeal. So let me ask you this. Did Inada tell you not to disclose your role with KCM?'

Adrian reddened. If he said no, he would have to take the fall

himself. If he said yes, Inada would deny it and cover their ass by sacking him. Either way, Adrian knew he was screwed. The clever ABC bastard had forced him into a corner. Visibly uncomfortable he mumbled. 'It appears Inada may have made a mistake in failing to disclose that it previously owned a polluting mine.'

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck! Gregory Hunter snarled as he listened, horrified to the 7:30 report. Fucking Walcott had done more damage to the Carnegie mining project than all the environment groups combined. Gregory kicked himself for not reading the riot act to Walcott himself.

Five minutes later he received a call from the Prime Minister.

'Gregory, I told you to get rid of Walcott quickly and quietly. So what the fuck is he doing spouting off on the fucking ABC?'

'I had no idea he would ...'

'Well, it's your fucking job to have an idea. Now get this shit sorted so that neither Inada and my government cop the flak from this unmitigated fucking disaster.'

'Prime Minister, with the court case against KCM and Vedanta in England and the revelation that Inada owned Vedanta I don't see how Inada can be left out of this.'

'Well you find a fucking way, or I'll be looking for a new Environment Minister.'

Sinclair George was awoken from sleep by the strains of the national anthem coming from his phone. Grabbing it, he snapped, 'Yes.'

'This is Gregory Hunter. Sorry about the late call but all kinds of shit have hit the proverbial. Did you see the 7:30 report tonight?'

'Yes. How the hell was that allowed to happen?'

'Look, we have to extricate ourselves from this mess, which means you have to clean your house as well.'

'I will speak with Mason about it tomorrow, Minister.'

'Never mind about that. You have to get rid of the Walcott woman.'

'Get rid of her! I don't understand.'

'Do I really have to spell it out. Rhianna and her husband are a fucking team. His dirtied copybook affects her, and she affects us.'

'Oh, I see what you mean. But as Mrs Walcott had nothing to do ...'

'I don't give a flying fuck about your feelings about her. Ditch her and do it right away. Have you got it?'

'Yes, Minister.'

Handwritten pledges against Inada handed in to mining
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-07-16/hundreds-turn-out-to-protest-against-Inada-in-brisbane/6625968>

Carmichael Coal ("Inada") Mine cases in the Federal Court.
<http://envlaw.com.au/carmichael-coal-mine-federal-court/>

Sooner or later, we will have to recognise that the Earth has rights, too, to live without pollution. What mankind must know is that human beings cannot live without Mother Earth, but the planet can live without humans.

Evo Morales

Chapter 6

Davion Hawe may have been a lone voice in the wilderness of the Queensland Parliament, but it was becoming louder all the time. As a regular Greens spokesperson on the ABC, he had been invited to speak out about Inada in an ABC, exclusive, 7:30 Report, called "Big Coal".

Standing over six feet lightly built and heavily tanned, Davion spoke convincingly about the massive Carnagee Mine project but from an ethical, not environmental standpoint. Although he would argue they were one and the same. He said, 'By not disclosing the water-polluting incident caused by Vedanta, an Inada subsidiary, to the Environment Minister, in the Inada mine application, the Indian mining giant is in breach of contract. And it is Gregory Hunter's job to revoke the mining licence. But this has not happened, and it leaves one wondering what other breaches the Federal Government is going to gloss over?'

The interviewer said, 'Surely we should wait until after the verdict of the case against Vedanta in England before we point the finger at Inada.'

'That really has nothing to do with it. By not disclosing its connection with Vedanta. Inada is, once more, in breach of contract.'

'It could be argued that the Inada Carnagee mine is so important for the Australian economy and jobs that there needs to be a little leeway here.'

'Then what is the point of having all these conditions that Gregory Hunter wrote into the contract with Inada if they are not worth the paper they are written on?'

Like many Queensland graziers, Ossie McCarthy lost over half of his annual income from the station due to the severe drought that had been going on for over seven hard years. He was forced to lay off some of his cow hands. And, apart from the fact most of his stock had died from dehydration leaving only ten thousand head of cattle, he had less than half his potential annual water supply.

So it made his blood boil when he thought of Inada being given 12.5 billion litres of water a year from the Suttor River. Ossie could not believe the Government would be so stupid. 12.5 billion litres was as much as that used by all the local farmers and graziers combined. And they had to pay for their water. Inada was becoming a ravenous monster that could do anything it liked.

Ossie had been funding Green Alert for many years. But now, the once active group had become just a bunch of sympathetic friends on Facebook, it had no teeth. The passive stance had not worked. If he was to stop the insidious mine, he had to become more radical. But how? That was the question.

Michael Burrigoo headed the impressive group of traditional owners attending the Federal Court to hear their case against Inada. The mining giant was trying to get the Queensland Government to permanently extinguish their native title rights before they took their case to the High Court. But the Federal Court decision upheld Inada's Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Kimala and Jinnamoorra people. This outrageous decision paved the way for

the State Government to cancel all native title over the mine site. In his 91 page judgement, Justice John Reeves claimed none of the grounds of the challenge by the mine opponents had any merit. Michael told a reporter outside the court, 'If Inada gains freehold over the site the K & J could never reclaim native title rights in the future, regardless of whether or not the controversial mine project goes ahead.'

The reporter asked, 'So what do you think of Justice Reeves decision.'

Michael snapped, 'Even you must see that is a stupid question. Do I look like I'm doing cartwheels?'

The reporter, unperturbed, said, 'What's your next move?'

'All I'm saying is we respect the ruling but maintain our position that the ILUA is bogus.'

'What do you mean by bogus?'

'Inada has split the traditional owners and set out to destroy the will of our people. The court process is weighted against us, and it has turned this bloody circus into a painful process for my people and me.'

Campbell Rendall, who was also present at the court case, was stopped on the way to his car. A young woman journalist said, 'Mr Rendall, now that Inada has their ILUA what else can you do?'

Campbell turned to the woman. 'The ILUA was a critical step for Inada to gain finance, as leading global financiers do not fund resource projects without traditional owner consent.' So, the court's ruling was not unexpected.'

'So now what will you do?'

'We will look at filing an appeal in the next few weeks. Now I really must be going.'

On the 7:30 report that night Campbell Rendall told the interviewer. 'Three weeks before the court finding the K & J tribal council had written to Mason Land, Sinclair George and Joseph Fox pleading with the Queensland Government not to rush any decision to hand over their property rights to Inada ahead of a possible High Court challenge to the Federal Court ruling.'

'How did that go for you?'

Campbell said, 'It was a tragedy for the government to wipe out the native title in favour of Inada.'

'What did you expect?'

'Well, after the Queensland Government surprisingly stopped Inada dredging the reef before they had the money, we thought there might be a chance they would protect the rights to our land.'

'Well, as we now know that did not happen. So what is your next move?'

'We are calling on the United Nations to observe what is happening here.'

'How do you think the government will react to you involving the UN.'

'Our government has to honour our human rights and leave us to protect our country, And it needs to chart a better future than coal mining.'

The interviewer asked, 'Isn't it true, Campbell, that K & J are split on Inada, with opposing groups holding rival authorisation meetings to claim or reject support for a deal with the Indian mining firm?'

'While that is correct the K & J native title representatives, which initially approved the ILUA with a 7 to 5 majority, is now split 6-6.'

'When did the vote become even?'

After Joshua Price withdrew his support for the mine. He alleged that Inada paid him and others to recruit mine supporters, including Indigenous people outside the K & J territory, with no link to the mine site.'

'Yet Inada and its K&J supporters insist the process was legitimate?'

'I'm not even going to respond to that. What I will say is the K & J letter to the State Government warned there was a substantial risk of injustice in the face of a project that appears to have little real prospects of going ahead. Therefore it would be unfair and unreasonable to act prematurely to extinguish K & J native title by any means until the litigation is fully completed.'

'Well, the letter is academic now.'

Campbell argued, 'Not necessarily. I have made it known to the indigenous clans involved that despite the court ruling the Government is under no obligation to extinguish native title by granting freehold to Inada. We shall emphasise this point to the UN when they come here to scrutinise the process.'

The ABC, to show fairness, in a separate interview, invited Joan Kennedy, head of Inada's legal team, on the show.

The interviewer said, 'Ms Kennedy, the K & J people claim that any pressure from Inada to act upon the ILUA should be resisted. Extinguishment of native title involves the exercise of the Government's statutory discretions, which can't be imposed in advance of a fair and unbiased assessment by the UN. What's your response to this?'

'These are just delaying tactics on behalf of the K & J trouble makers.'

'I see. Well, Mr Rendall also said the Government should also wait for Inada to lock in finance, pay rehabilitation bonds in full, sign royalty agreements with the state and get approval for groundwater plans before acting on the ILUA.'

'That has already been agreed upon.' Ms Kennedy smiled, 'Let me emphasise, Inada is following an open and transparent legal process.'

'I see. Then, why does Queensland's Environment Minister Leanne Leveridge have to force Inada to identify the source of the Yangingoo Springs?'

Ms Kennedy smiled, 'I don't know. You tell me.'

'The ABC has previously reported that scientists had concerns that the springs, a key cultural heritage site for the K & J people could run dry under Inada's water extraction plans.'

Joan Kennedy smiled sweetly, 'We will work with the K & J people on this.'

'I have another question for you. 'Does Inada expect the Government to extinguish native title?'

'First, the decision upheld by the ILUA was challenged by a minority group of K & J people.'

'Yes, but that does not answer my question.'

'We look forward to continuing working with the State Government and the traditional owners to take the next steps to finalise land tenure for our project.'

'Ms Kennedy, you have still avoided answering my question. Does Inada expect the Government to extinguish native title?'

'We will work with the K & J people under the guidance of the ILUA while respecting the rights, history, future intentions and requests of the traditional owners.'

'Thank you, Ms Kennedy.'

Joan was glad to leave the studio that night. As she stepped into her limo, she sighed with relief at her realisation that somehow she had dodged the interviewer's bullet.

Inada still has a long march ahead before its Carmichael
<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/Inada-still-has-a-long-march-ahead-before-its-carmichael-coal-mine-opens-20190410-p51cug.html>

Nick Tsagaris – Inada Indigenous Challenge Dismissed By
<https://www.nicktsagaris.com/nick-tsagaris-Inada-indigenous-challenge-dismissed-by-federal-court-government-could-cancel-mine-native-title/>

Climate change is a terrible problem, and it absolutely needs to be solved. It deserves to be a huge priority.

Bill Gates

Chapter 7

Ossie McCarthy had other businesses, all of which were related to the meat industry. There was McCarthy's Processed Meats, McCarthy's Meat works and McCarthy's Meat Pies. But as these industries all relied on the raw product, they were all hit hard by the drought and Inada's water extraction. Worried about his and his neighbours' future, Ossie called a Jericho Basin Farmers Action Group committee meeting to deal with their growing concerns.

Lance Craig, a third generation station owner in his mid-thirties, said, 'No rain for six years, then, when it did come two weeks back it was too much, too fast.'

'Yeah, what fucking irony,' Geoff Bickles said, 'All ready weakened starving cattle forced up to fence lines leaving me to deal with hundreds more fucking carcasses.'

Ossie said, 'Yes, it's been a heart-breaking business. But we're here to focus on what we can do to stop this fucking Carnagee mine going ahead.'

'Sammy Wallington, a fifth generation, 50-year-old grazier in the basin, said, 'The government doesn't give a fuck about us farmers. We should drop a few stinking carcasses on their doorstep. That would get the drongos' attention.'

One or two of the graziers showed amusement at the frivolous suggestion.

Ossie said, 'Now wait a minute. That's actually not a bad idea.'

Sammy reacted, 'Oh yeah, And they're not going to see us unloading smelly rotten carcasses?'

'We use refrigerated trucks, and we drop them off on the lawn in front of Parliament House in the dead of night,' Ossie argued.

'And who's going to do this?' Bickles queried.

Wallington said, 'A convoy of refrigeration trucks will be too obvious. One semi could carry enough carcasses to make the point.'

Ossie agreed, 'One of my Maxi-Cube Advance freezer vans should do the trick.'

Wallington, amazed at the response to his cynical idea, said, 'First off, we need as much media publicity about our gripes as possible.'

Bickles, a little slow on the uptake at times, said, 'If we let them know what we're going to do they'll be waiting for us.'

'Fuck, no! We don't tell them about that.' Ossie said, 'We just hit the media with our hardship story, and the fucking Inada proposed water license. So when the carcasses hit the grass, the point will become obvious to the pricks running the show in Canberra.'

'Forget the grass. Dump the dead cattle on the steps, so the bastards have to climb over them,' Craig suggested.

Bickles looked worried, 'And what will the security guards be doing while we're dropping our load? There will be security cameras all over the place.'

Ossie grinned, 'There are no cameras on the lawn, but even there we may be spotted. We have to work in silence.'

'What about the noise of the forklift?' Wallington asked.

'Forklift! What fucking forklift?' Ossie said.

'The one we need to lift the frozen carcasses from the truck. I'm not humping rotting fucking cow carcasses. Not with my back,' Sammy stated, vehemently.

Ossie had not thought of that. 'Isn't there something else we can use?' he asked.

The farmers wore blank faces.

Ossie beamed, 'Fuck it! We'll just use a tip truck.'

Sammy nodded, 'It'll be a hell of a lot quicker.'

'Yes, and a hell of a lot smellier,' Lance quipped.

'We cover the back with heavy-duty canvas,' Ossie said.

Sammy beamed, 'We can drive up and leave them at the entrance like I suggested.'

Ossie nodded, 'It makes more sense now.'

Ossie took on the role of letting the Australian public know about the Jericho Basin farmer's plight. He got the ball rolling on the ABC news. A dramatic video introduction, showing the beef carcasses rotting in mud, was followed by the female journalist's presentation, in which she said, 'With me today I have Ossie McCarthy who owns the biggest cattle station in the Jericho Basin.' Turning to him, she added, 'What we have just seen is truly disturbing, Mr McCarthy.'

'Yes, these horrifying scenes are an everyday reality for the hard-pressed, drought-stricken farmers of Central Queensland.'

'I understand that Mr McCarthy, but what do you expect to achieve? After all, a drought is a natural occurrence.'

'Yes, of course. But even more disturbing is the fact that our irresponsible government is looking at allowing Inada, with its proposed mega coal mine to draw some 12.5 billion litres of groundwater from the Great Artesian Basin, free of charge. While us station owners have to pay through the nose for ours. This stinks of double standards.'

'Are you complaining because about the price of water licences? Or are you concerned that taking another 12.5 billion from the natural water supply is unsustainable?'

'Both really. We certainly need tighter regulation of mining and exploration in the basin. Yet, we see a dramatic increase in exploration and drilling, particularly with the Inada coal mine.'

'Aren't you being a little bit over concerned, Mr McCarthy. The GAB lies under one-fifth of Australia and is estimated to hold 65 billion mega litres of water. In comparison, Inada's 12.5 billion litres seems a drop in the underground ocean.'

'Oh, the experts tell us it's all under control, but we don't have enough evidence to satisfy ourselves that this over-development, together with all the mining projects in the basin, won't jeopardise the GAB in certain areas, forever. The GAB is a huge natural asset that may be threatened by over -development in gas, oil and coal. But it's not just about how much water is available from the GAB. Some of us farmers are the fifth generation, and yet we are seeing new boys on the block, like Inada, given preferential treatment when it comes to water licences. On the one hand, a Jericho Basin grazier has been denied access to the river system while Inada plans on drawing 12.5 billion litres of water from the Suttor River each year. Where's the justice in that?'

The journalist said, 'Thank you, Mr McCarthy, and we all hope the drought breaks soon.'

January 2016

Sinclair George looked up from the document, a worried frown on his face. 'Where did you get this?'

Mason Land, snarled, 'Bloody FOI.'

'So, who accessed this from Freedom of Information, Mason?'

'Sylvie Lefèvre.'

Sinclair exhaled loudly. Why is the Treasury looking into this?'

Mason pointed at the file. 'You read it yourself. The top officials, even Lefèvre, have grave doubts about Inada's capacity to complete its Carnegie coal mine project.'

'If this shit got out it could derail the whole fucking project!'

'It's certainly making potential investors and creditors very nervous.

So we have to show we have great confidence the mine and support it to the hilt.'

Sinclair frowned, 'How?'

'That's why I summoned you here to pick your brains.'

'Bloody hell, Mason, I'm beginning to get cold feet myself.'

Mason stared at his deputy. 'That's not an option. Too much is riding on this.' He sighed heavily, 'I'm

meeting with Herve Dupont later. But we have to present at least the semblance of a plan.'

'Why the ATO?'

'What do you think about promising Inada taxpayer funds to help establish the mine?'

'And you are seriously contemplating this?'

Mason sat back and spread his hands. 'It will show our financial commitment.'

Sinclair shook his head, despondently. 'It's not a viable proposition. Not while Inada is seeking hundreds of millions of public money dollars to help construct a rail line from the mine to its coal terminals.'

Mason said, 'What if we could generate a loan?'

'It would show the banks we're serious about the mine's success.'

The Premier said, 'Inada has invited me to India.'

'Excellent, Mason. it will send the right message to potential investors.'

That night on the news, Premier Land said, 'The Carnegie mine is one of the minor miracles of our time. Our coal can improve the lives of 100 million Indians. It just goes to show what good free trade can do for the whole world.'

The interviewer said, 'Is there any truth in the rumour that your government is going to fund the Inada project with a tax-funded loan?'

Mason smiled. 'At the moment everything is on the table. I will be discussing all options to do with this golden opportunity with Mahatma Inada when I visit him in India next month.'

Climate change is the environmental challenge of this generation, and it is imperative that we act before it's too late.

John Delaney

Chapter 8

A series of events brought things to a head. It was like one of those words games where love becomes hate by changing one letter at a time. It all started with Davion Hawe, whose administrative duties had kept him from checking the state of the Reef. So, as soon as he had the time, Davion was off to the beach. But his usual exuberance while snorkelling gave way to depression. The Great Barrier Reef was being transformed at such a rapid rate, it pained Davion to swim there. The beautiful coral colours had faded to ghostly white as back-to-back bleaching events left vast areas of the reef a corpse. The poor water quality, cyclones and climate change had all further stressed the Reef. As he swam around, it seemed like a different Reef to the one he had grown up with and loved. At least two-thirds of the Great Coral Reef was devastated by bleaching. It was all too heartbreaking. He could hardly bear visiting the Reef any more.

Davion's deep sadness gave way to anger. The Queensland Government was supposed to have protected the Reef. But they had done nothing. Worse than nothing! They openly encouraged

companies like Inada to engage in industrial practices that lead to further Reef destruction.

Davion went back to Townsville to drown his sorrows in a beer or three. He was walking along the Strand Esplanade when he bumped into someone he'd known in the Green Party many years before. He

saw the man from the back. But the tall man with a warrior's build still had his elbow length frizzy black hair. Davion said, 'Alfonso.'

Alfonso looked around and spotted the familiar tall man with light grey eyes. "Is that you, Davo?"

'Yes mate. What brings you here?'

'I was about to ask you the same question.'

Davion said, 'I came up to visit the Reef.'

Alfonso saw tears glistening in his friend's eye. 'It's a fucking disgrace.'

'Tell me about it. So what's your excuse, mate?'

'Oh, I'm here to meet with a major Green Alert sponsor.'

'I could do with one of those for the Reef.' Then Davion said, 'How is he on the Reef issue?'

'We've never discussed it mate. But I can put in a good word for you.'

Davion said, 'Every green person I have met has their favourite thing to fix. Oh, they support several environmental issues, but they always have a pet project. So what's your sponsor got a bug up his arse about?'

'Water licenses. Inada's in particular.'

Davion grinned. 'So your man needs lots of water. I guess that he is a farmer. And if he's sponsoring you, he's a big wheel with a lot of influence.'

Alfonso stared at his friend. 'How the fuck do you know all that?'

'Elementary my dear Davo.'

They both laughed, which lightened the mood.

Alfonso said, 'I just need to make a call.'

'Go for it, mate.'

Al walked a short distance, so he was out of earshot. He pressed Ossie's contact. 'Ossie, it's Alfonso. He listened, then said, There's someone else with me. Davion Hawe. Have you heard of him?' A short pause then, 'Yes he is a good bloke. He's trying to save what's left of the Reef.' Another short pause. 'Yeah, I'll ask him.' Al cut off the call. He walked back to Davo. 'Have you heard of an Ossie McCarthy?'

'No. can't say I have.'

'Well, mate, you're about to.'

'Where is he then?'

'He's here mate, waiting for us at Molly Malone's.'

'Who's she then?'

'Not she, mate. An Irish restaurant.'

Ossie McCarthy was born in Kerry, but his parents left Ireland for Australia when he was three. But the residue of his Celtic heritage made Irish ballads to his liking and Guinness to his taste. Molly Malone's offered both, which was why he was there, waiting for Alfonso and his mate. Ossie sipped his stout. The pour was a tad too heady, and there was an unusual after-taste from neglected beer line cleaning. But it was cold and very refreshing. The decor, with shamrock images around the place, made it unmistakably an Irish pub. However, it was a bit run down, possibly partly due to recent flooding, which had left a stale, mouldy smell. So Ossie opted for a shaded area outside to enjoy his beer.

Then his phone rang. 'Hi Lance, have you got that tipper sorted yet?'

'Yes mate, a 2003 Iveco Power Star 6700.'

'That should get you to Canberra OK.'

'Yeah, Ossie that's what I rang about, Craig and I reckon we should drop our cargo outside Queensland Parliament instead.'

'Well, it'll certainly make the journey shorter.'

'Have you any idea what those carcasses are going to smell like by the time we get to Canberra.'

'Yeah, I take your point. Look if you think Brisbane is better, I'll leave it up to you blokes.'

At that moment Ossie's guests arrived and Davion went off to order the drinks, while Alfonso caught up with the grazier.

Ossie greeted Al, and said, 'We've got to do something to make these bastards sit up and take notice.'

'Which particular bastards did you have in mind? There's so many to chose from?'

'Bastards like George Black who are giving away our precious fucking water to Inada.'

Al eye-balled Ossie, 'So what's the plan?'

'Have you spoken to that army friend of yours yet?'

'I haven't seen him for quite a while.'

'Do you still have his contact?'

'You're really serious about this then?'

'Desperate times, mate, call for desperate measures.'

If a man walks in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer. But if he spends his days as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making the earth bald before her time, he is deemed an industrious and enterprising citizen.

Henry David Thoreau

Chapter 9

It was a fifteen hour journey from Townsville to Brisbane. Both Sam and Lance had HGV licences so they took turns driving the Powerful 14 litre tipper, south. To pass the time they came up with messages they could leave the government. They had to make sure the politicians knew why a load of rotting cattle carcasses had landed on their doorstep. Sammy suggested, 'How about, 'A gift from the Jericho Basin.'

Lance said, 'I prefer something like, 'We have a beef with you.'

'No, mate. It has to be about the drought and Inada's free water license.'

Lance thought about it, then he suggested, 'OK, what about, 'No free water for Inada's Carnagee coal mine And so the ideas kept coming. Sammy was the more cautious of the two drivers. He kept the Iveco 18 speed Road Ranger just under the speed limit. Lance was busy on his mobile, searching for vehicle inspection stations. The last thing the pair needed was government inspectors sniffing around the truck. So the intrepid pair made detours where necessary to avoid any checkpoints. This of course added extra time to the journey but caution had to come first, so the delay it could not be helped.

They stopped for a break on the outskirts of Mackay, parking their tip truck as far away as they could from any other vehicles. As the sun went down over another sizzling hot Queensland day, Sammy and Lance parked at a truck stop for the night. It had been a long and arduous day, but at least everything had gone according to plan. They broke out the camp stove and cooked up bacon and beans with bread rolls and Sam brewed some half decent coffee. After they had knocked back a tinny or six of XXXX, Sammy watched as Lance grabbed a swag from behind the seat of the truck and stepped down from the tipper. 'Where are you going mate,' he queried.

'To hit the sack, mate.'

'There's room for two in the truck, mate.'

'You have to be fucking joking. I'm not sleeping near that stench!'

'I didn't bring a swag,' Sam complained.

Lance shrugged, 'Well I'm not sharing my swag.'

'And I thought you were a good mate.'

'I am. But not that good.'

Skip Bott lined up his target through the telescopic sights of his SR98 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle. It was an Eastern grey, eating dry grass some 600 metres away. Just then his phone rang. 'You picked a really bad time to call, Alfonso, my lunch just got away.'

'You can always switch the phone off.'

'Yeah, whatever. So why are you calling?'

'An acquaintance of mine has a proposition for you.'

'Who's this acquaintance then?'

'Somebody who wants to utilise your rifle skills.'

'Tell him to fuck off. I'm not for sale.'

'Not even for fifty grand.'

'OK, you've got my attention. So who the fuck is this guy you know?'

'First you have to go to Townsville to see him.'

'I want to speak to him first and find out what all this is about.'

'I don't think he'll want to talk about it over the phone. But I'll ask him anyway.'

After the call, Skip Bott lined up behind his rifle, which rested on a stand with short adjustable legs. Now he'd just have to lie in wait for the next kangaroo to come into his sights.

Following their 15 hour drive, Sammy and Lance reached the outskirts of Brisbane. Lance pulled up in a truck lay-by near North Lakes for a final strategy meeting. As he stepped down from the tip truck he could smell the rotting animal flesh. He gagged on the stench and walked away from the truck to light a cigarette. Sammy caught up with him. 'Well, this is it mate.'

'Yeah,' Lance replied exhaling smoke.

There was an uncomfortable silence as each man thought about what they were soon going to do.

Sam, 'What if it goes wrong?'

'What's to go wrong, Mate. We back up the truck and tip all this shit as close as we can to the Legislative building.'

'I know mate. But I've got a feeling it's all going to go pear-shaped.'
Lance gave Sam a matey punch on his shoulder, grinning, 'Come on, mate, where's that ANZAC spirit?'

'We could dump this shit here and head on back home?'

Lance stared at Sam. 'We've got to leave these bastards a strong message. Something like. 'We're in the middle of a drought and you stupid bastards decide to give Inada access to free groundwater.'

Craig sighed, 'You're right mate. We have to do it.' He brightened, 'It needs to be a strong simple message. Something like, No free water for Inada.'

'Not bad mate. I reckon we could run with that. But we could tack on, From the drought-stricken farmers in the Jericho basin.' So, with the message decided on, all the intrepid pair had to do was deliver it.

At around 2 am the next morning, buoyed by a few tinnies, Lance drove the tipper to the corner of George and Alice Streets. There, in the dead of night, the truck ground to a halt. Lance selected the 18 speed manual's reverse gear and slowly backed up to a pair of bollards that prevented vehicles further entry. The growl of the powerful 14 litre diesel engine and the reversing beep sound was deafening in the quiet of the night. The pair of anarchist farmers knew the racket would soon draw unwanted attention.

Lance backed up the Iveco Power Star as close as he could get to the Legislative building. Then he activated the hydraulics to raise the tipper. As the aluminium tray became elevated, Sammy yelled, 'WE HAVEN'T UNLOCKED THE FUCKING BACK!'

Lance stared at his mate, bug-eyed. 'Fuck! He quickly returned the tray to the horizontal position, while Sam shot around the back to release the catches that secured the tail gate. He froze! Two figures with flash lights were heading his way. He quickly undid the catches and caught a full blast of the putrid flesh in the confined space, covered by the electronic tarp that had effectively sealed the cargo. Sam yelled, 'OK,' retched and vomited over his boots.

Lance worked the tipper and when the tray reached a certain point

of elevation gravity did the rest. Sammy, bent double, vomited again, as the massive weight of the carcasses slid down the tray and got caught under the tight tarp, blocking their exit.

Sam, hand over mouth and nose, rushed back to the cab and climbed in just as two security guards arrived.

Lance, hearing the whine of police sirens, took off as fast as the truck would go.

Sam stared at Lance, wide-eyed 'The fucking tray is still up!' Lance could see the police cars' flashing lights in his rear-view mirror, and they were gaining on him fast. As his lumbering truck headed up George Street the bumpy road caused the tarp to rip, allowing the rotting carcasses to spill out onto the road, inadvertently, blocking the path of the police cars. Sammy gave a huge sigh of relief, then said, 'Fuck! We forgot to leave a message.'

Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance.

Ban Ki-moon

Chapter 10

February 2016

Founded in the 15th century, Ahmedabad, the largest city in the state of Gujarat, was a vibrant business district and rising centre of education. Mason Land gained this information from his chauffeur as he was driven to the Inada estate, the family home of Mahatma Inada.

Mason Land soon found out Inada loved to lay on the entertainment for his guests. Upon arriving at the stately home, women draped him with necklaces of flowers, while Bollywood singers moved to the rhythms of rousing sitar music. Mason followed an entourage of servants across sprawling lawns, past marble fountains to Inada's new palace. Inada was a great believer in mixing business with pleasure, so once Mason had a moisture beaded glass of champagne in his hand, his host got right down to business.

Mason was not sure he had heard correctly. 'One billion dollars. You want the Australian Government to give you 1 billion dollars for the mine.'

Mahatma nodded and smiled, 'Once they see your commitment, Mr Land, the banks will see that you are committed to the project, and they will look more favourably upon us.'

Mason stared at the Indian magnate. 'I agree that the Queensland Government needs to show its commitment. It's in both our interests that the mine goes ahead.'

'Yes, Mr Land, and it's your job to make that happen.'

Mason tried covering up his shock. He had not known what to expect from the private meeting but coughing up 1 billion dollars was not it. 'Mr Inada, I will have to speak to my finance minister about how to help you financially.'

Inada grinned widely. 'We do not need your money. Let us get that straight. You just have to prove your support and commitment.'

Land backtracked, 'Oh, don't get me wrong. I didn't mean to suggest ...'

'Excellent, Mr Land. Now let us look at some other ways we can progress the project.'

Once he was settled in his air-conditioned guest quarters, Mason contacted Sinclair George.

Sinclair said, 'What's it like meeting the great man?'

'He puts on a huge show to impress his guests, but he is really down to earth and introvert.'

'Have you discussed the mine with him yet.'

'Yes, Sinclair. And I have a job for you.'

'What job?' the Deputy Premier asked, warily.

'I want you to raise some money to show the banks our support for the mine.'

'Oh! and what sort of sum are we talking about, Mason?'

'1 billion dollars.'

'Did you just say what I thought you said?'

'Yes. And I need you to work out how this can be achieved.'

'What am I supposed to do, make it appear out of a top hat?'

'Have it worked out by the time I get back.'

'But!'

'No buts. We have to show Inada we're on top of this.'

The next day, as Mason and Mahatma walked around the Inada's expansive garden, with security guards walking a few paces behind, Inada confessed, 'I am not a social person who wants to go to parties.' He laughed, 'I don't have to. Being as wealthy as I am the parties come to me.'

Mason laughed along with his host.

Mahatma continued, 'When my son Arnav married Diya Shayak, the daughter of Gautam Shayak, who founded this country's largest law firm, we invited over 22,000 people. The festivities went on for five days. There were so many private jets they almost shut down the airport.'

Mason smiled politely while wondering how much more of Inada's big noting he could stand.

'Very impressive, Mr Inada.'

The billionaire flashed a toothy grin. 'Mr, Land, my parties get me in front of the right politicians and business leaders, so I can get my message across. I am a businessman. Everything about me is business.' Then he added, 'Not bad for a poor boy who dropped out of school.'

Well, you certainly have got your message across to me, Mason thought. 'You have indeed done very well. Mr Inada.'

April 2016

The ABC news reporter turned to the camera. Tonight we have with us the Queensland Treasurer, Ms Sylvie Lefèvre.' Turning to face her guest, she said 'Thank you for being with us tonight.'

The treasurer smiled, 'Its good to be here.'

'Now, as the LNP treasurer for this state, I guess you have a good grasp of what is going on with the Inada Carnagee mine.'

'Where it has to do with the treasury, yes.'

'You have recently gone on record saying Australia's biggest coal mine will improve the environment. What do you mean by that?'

Lefèvre said, 'The ABC has given no voice to the people of north Queensland in its reports over the mine in the Jericho basin. So your ABC audiences have no idea that lack of jobs is the biggest issue in the region.'

'That's all very well, but it doesn't address the question.'

Sylvie began back-pedalling. 'They caught me out of context.'

'So the Carnagee mine isn't good for the environment then?'

Sylvie snapped, 'That's not what I said!'

The reporter replied, 'So do you or do you not think the mine project is good for the environment?'

Sylvie, regretting the interview, said, 'There are pros and cons for both.'

'OK. So what do you see to be the cons?'

The treasurer could feel herself being pushed into a corner. Staring daggers at her interviewer, she said, 'I know what you are trying to do.'

The reporter answered, 'I'm trying to get a straight answer.'

Sylvie took off her mike and stood up. 'This is a typical example of ABC bias!' And with that she stormed out of the studio, leaving a very perplexed interviewer.

The most important thing about global warming is this. Whether humans are responsible for the bulk of climate change is going to be left to the scientists, but it's all of our responsibility to leave this planet in better shape for the future generations than we found it.

Mike Huckabee

Chapter 11

After Queensland Treasurer Ms Sylvie Lefèvre's disastrous interview on the ABC, Sinclair George jumped into the breach to try and repair the damage. On a Brisbane breakfast talk show, he accused the national broadcaster of reporting fake news. George threw his considerable weight behind the energy giant Inada and, like Lefèvre, claimed the mine would be beneficial to the environment. Unlike the Treasurer, he had to case to put forward.

The interviewer asked, 'How exactly will the Carnagee Coal mine be good for the environment, Mr George?'

'By setting aside land for bird life and by returning water to the Great Artesian Basin, the project will improve the environment.'

The interviewer nodded, 'I see.' Scanning her notes, she said, 'Now that it is news that Inada is under investigation by the Indian finance ministry, is your government still fully supportive of the Jericho Basin mine project?'

Sinclair sipped some water. 'An investigation means nothing. It does not imply guilt, and it has nothing to do with us here in Queensland.'

The interviewer pressed, 'So, despite being aware of the investigation, you have no concerns about the Carnagee mine going ahead.'

Sinclair answered, 'If and when the findings suggest any wrongdoing on Inada's behalf, I will ask the state development department for advice about it. But as of yet, there are no findings at this stage of the investigation.'

The interviewer nodded again. 'I see. Now, on another matter, we hear that your government is considering a one billion dollar loan to Inada for the mine and a railway to Bishop Point. How do you justify such a massive sum?'

Sinclair sipped more water. 'You really should be talking about this with the Treasurer. But as far as I know, if it is agreed upon in Parliament, the loan could be generated through NAIF, the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund. But that's after the railway project has been assessed by the Independent Skills-based Board.'

'Mr George, will you hold off on the loan application until the Indian finance ministry investigations are completed?'

Sinclair smiled, 'That's a matter for NAIF.'

'And if NAIF does not support the loan?'

'As there is nothing in Inada's company structure that is inconsistent with Australian laws, I'm very confident that the NAIF board will approve the loan.'

'Mr George, why do you support this project?'

'I hope the Inada project will be completed because it will deliver billions of dollars to both the Queensland and Federal Governments.'

'Thank you, Mr George, for informing us about some of the Inada project issues.'

Sinclair was not finished though. 'Let me just say that these taxes will go to fund public services like the ABC and the "good work" they do. I know we all have our blind spots and the ABC has a massive one concerning the Carnagee project.'

In another interview on Channel Nine, he was asked whether the Cayman islands structure had been assessed by the government.'

He responded, 'That is no longer relevant as Inada has decided to have its headquarters in Townsville.'

'Does that mean Inada's business registration will be in Australia?'

'Absolutely. And, I might add, this contrasts the decision of the ABC of moving its video journalist from Rockhampton to the Sunshine Coast, leaving Central Queensland without ABC coverage.'

The interviewer responded, 'Rockhampton still has three ABC news reporters, plus two other broadcast journalists and a camera operator who contributes to a range of programs and platforms.'

Sinclair made a mental note to tear strips off his fact-check staff. 'That's still no excuse for the ABC to send one of its video journalists down South,' he said, weakly.

The Channel 9 interviewer, wanting to avoid any controversy regarding a broadcast rival, quickly segued to a safe but controversial topic. 'How is your government addressing public concerns about the Carnagee mine causing environmental damage?'

Sinclair, relieved to be on seemingly safer ground, replied, 'The Federal Government has placed 36 strict conditions on the Inada project, and predicts that the company would improve the environment by setting aside areas for plants and wildlife and using high-quality coal to displace lower-quality coal.'

'Mr George, what is the environmental benefit of high-quality coal?'

'It can be proven conclusively that improving coal quality contributes to an improvement in a power station's environmental performance.'

'So, we're talking about lower emissions.'

'Yes, in both the gasses and particles. But apart from this important measure, Inada is going to protect an additional 31,000 hectares for the black-throated finch,' Sinclair beamed.

Davion Hawe had something to say on the ABC news. 'The fact that Inada is using the environment card to get the caring public onside with the Carnagee mine project shows the lunatic fringe is calling the shots. For Sinclair George to suggest that the mine will be good for our environment, in contrast to all scientific evidence, shows that the lunatic fringe of the Land government is running the show.'

'What do you mean by that statement, Davion?'

'George's comments are an embarrassment for the Federal Government. If Gregory Hunter is serious about tackling dangerous climate change, he will give Australia an early Christmas present by stopping the Inada coal mine from opening and stopping Sinclair George from opening his mouth. Especially where unfounded criticism of the ABC is concerned.'

August 2016

Davion Hawe was amongst thousands of activists on Bondi Beach, as they formed into human billboards with the message "Stop Inada". A new poll had found the massive coal mine, and a proposed \$1 billion government-funded loan, was lagging in public support. This prompted the protest against the Carnagee mine and concerns about Mahatma Inada's shady business practices. Protesters, many of whom wore Land and Inada masks, had also gathered to hear from leading environmentalists who were against the building of the

massive mine. One of these was Campbell Rendall, the well known Indigenous land rights lawyer. He was to follow Davion Hawe, the main speaker, who went on first.

Davion began, 'What a fantastic turnout here today. It's heartening to see so many people here. Apart from you folk here there are also "Stop Inada" demos in forty plus locations around Australia. This is very timely as the Land government prepares for an unpredictable state election. And if the Queensland Labor Party had the guts to come out against the Carnagee mine project it stands an excellent chance of being elected. And hopefully, there will be more Greens on the backbench to keep me company.'

Some of the peaceful activists laughed at Davion's remark.

He continued. 'You people here today represent some of the silent majority who, when questioned, said the mine was bad for Australia. Research carried out by the left-leaning Australia Institute found only 30 per cent of Australians supported Inada's plans for the mine, which is backed by both sides of politics at the federal and state levels. Conversely, 44 per cent of voters opposed the project, including 49 per cent of Labor voters and 29 per cent of Coalition voters, while 26 per cent of respondents said they were not sure or did not know.' Davion added, 'Are these statistics representative of the general population? Well, I guess the Land government will find out at the coming Queensland election.'

A huge cheer went up.

'And, as if the Carnagee mine was not enough, we now have Inada's railway loan to contest. It seems the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund is preparing to reveal the first project to receive a concessional loan of \$1 billion from its \$5 billion kitty. And there are no prizes for guessing who it goes to. Despite the fact 68 per cent of voters oppose NAIF granting a taxpayer-funded loan to

support the Inada mine, including a majority of Coalition, Labor, Greens and One Nation supporters.' Forty per cent were "strongly" opposed to the loan. Just 16 per cent of respondents backed the loan, and only 5 per cent said they "strongly" supported it. A further 16 per cent were unsure.'

Another cheer filled the air.

How can the Queensland government continue to bankroll Inada after the ABC's Four Corners programme revealed Inada had unknown ties to the British Virgin Islands tax haven, as well as allegations of corruption, bribery and environmentally destructive behaviour levelled against him. The only way a government would support such a corrupt businessman is by being corrupt itself.'

Davion left the platform to massive applause.

Next, Campbell Rendall explained the case for the Kimala and Jinnamoora people and the collusion between the Queensland LNP and Inada to take away their land rights.

The third speaker at the "Stop Inada" rally was Alfonso Fernley. He stepped up onto the platform to rousing applause. He began, 'I am proud to be here today as a concerned Aussie, not as the leader of Green Alert. When we started Green Alert many years back, we were mindful of not becoming just another environmental organisation. Many members have their own pet passions when it comes to taking a stand for our planet. We encourage individuals to follow their hearts and to use our online presence to network with like-minded people. Which is why many members, including myself, are very concerned about what Inada plans to do in the Jericho Basin. I spoke with Michael Burrugoo and asked him how we could support him and his people in their David and Goliath struggle with Inada. Michael suggested we organise fund-raisers in

our communities, which is what we have encouraged. As a result, support groups have sprung up all over the place.'

Alfonso paused until the cheering died down.' Many people see this whole Inada business to be irresponsible, dangerous and downright shonky. The results of the various polls taken clearly show the major political parties are out of step with public attitudes on Inada. And they go ahead with this project at their political peril.'

More hoots and cheers.

'There are a lot of environmental concerns and lots of questions around Inada's corporate tax structure. It is a hugely controversial project, and the public has every reason to be sceptical of the wisdom of using taxpayer dollars to help fund it. Sinclair George and his LNP Inada sycophants use the employment card as an inducement to garner support for the mine and the railway. George argues that the mine will be a boon for jobs in regional Queensland after Inada announced it would base more than 1000 fly-in, fly-out workers in both Townsville and Rockhampton.'

Alfonso paused for water. Then he smiled broadly. 'But anyone with even half a brain is not going to be sucked in by that rhetoric.' Gesturing to the enormous crowd, he said, 'But look at you lot. And there are crowds attending rallies like this one at 45 locations across this mighty country right now today. Just look at all your amazing billboards with the simple message, "Stop Inada." Right now, people as passionate as you, are rallying in Canberra, Brisbane, Port Douglas, Melbourne, and many more locations. There were also significant demonstrations in Byron Bay and Coffs Harbour. And that's just to name a few.'

More rousing cheers.

'OK, let me finish by saying, 'Well done to all of you. Through your efforts, we are getting the message out there. As people become informed about the cost and impact of the Carnagee mega coal mine, they join the growing ranks who oppose both the mine and Federal Government loan. More and more voters are voicing their concerns about Inada's corporate track record and the environmental impact of the mine. We can win this fight. And we can kick the Queensland LNP out at the polls on election day. And if Labor wants our votes, they will need to shape up and kick out Inada.'

Huge cheers and applause as Alfonso left the stage.

Australians opposed to Adani coal mine and \$1 billion

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/australians-opposed-to-adani-coal-mine-and-1-billion-government-loan-poll-20171006-gyvrj5.html>

The real cure for our environmental problems is to understand that our job is to salvage Mother Nature. We are facing a formidable enemy in this field. It is the hunters... and to convince them to leave their guns on the wall is going to be very difficult.

Jacques Yves Cousteau

Chapter 12

It's generally assumed that snipers came from rural backgrounds, where, as children, they often went hunting with family adults. But that was not how Skip Bott came to be a sniper. Skippy, as his friends called him, was brought up in the Western suburbs of Sydney, and he had never fired any gun before joining the army. Skip, conscious of this, listened to everything he was told by the instructors. And he turned out to be an incredible shot. At first, Skip was self-conscious when instructors came over to watch him shoot.

Sergeant Pilkington, a firearms instructor, took Private Bott aside. The trainer was a hard-nosed Vietnam Vet who thought he had seen it all. But the rookie private had him flummoxed. 'I've seen lots of great shots in my time, but almost all of them were shooters before they joined up. But you're a fucking blank board.'

Skip looked at the sergeant. 'What do you mean, Sarge?'

'You don't have to overcome any bad shooting habits. That's why you're a fast learner.'

'What do you mean?'

'A lot of good shooters have bad habits that they find hard to break.'

Or they'll fall back on them when they get stressed. But you, you're flawless and consistent, even when we deliberately stress you.'

Skip had great respect for the weapons he used. As an army sniper, he developed the patience of a saint. He was of above average intelligence and had a calm character. Skip completed his tasks without supervision or support. He was emotionally stable and psychologically secure and had the constitution to stay in the wettest, darkest, stinkiest, foulest, most disgusting holes possible and even stay there for the night while waiting for his target to show. Skip remembered an army journo saying, 'You have been working in this field for some time now, so what exactly do you feel when you kill a man?' Skip looked at the woman reporter and grinned, 'Sniper recoil, ma'am.'

To be able to do his job effectively, he had to think like that. When he was in the "zone" all that existed was just him and the target. His function was to hit the target. It was as cold and straightforward as that. The killing had become like second nature to Skip. And now he was out of the army he missed it.

Now someone was going to pay him heaps to do what he loved and did best.

'Well, that was one almighty fuck up,' Ossie said when the Jericho Basin Farmers Action Committee finally stopped laughing.

Geoff Bickles couldn't believe it. 'And you never even left a fucking message,' he said, incredulous.

Lance defended, 'At least we stopped the cops from catching us.'

Ossie snapped, 'All you drongos achieved was to leave a mess of rotten carcasses in George Street.'

Sammy Wallington said, 'OK, it was a fucking disaster, but what are we going to do about Inada's fucking water licence darling deal?'

'What can we do about it, Sam? Charlie Black has screwed us over this.'

'Yeah, but is it legal what they're doing?' Bickles queried.

Ossie sighed, 'Look, mates, a sweetheart deal has been done, and the corrupt Indian bastard gets a year-long extension to pay for his water licence. The bastards have pulled a swifty, citing Carnagee mine timetable delays.'

'Yeah, another fucking underhand deal in Inada's favour.' Lance griped.

After the JBAG action committee had left, Ossie made his decision. He phoned Bott's number. As soon as he heard the soldier's voice, he said, 'O here. It's a go.'

It was the call Skip had been waiting for. 'Roger that, O. I'll contact you when it's done.' Skip had his gear organised, and he was ready to go. Apart from his SR98 7.62mm bolt-action sniper rifle, which he had bought on the dark web, Skip also packed specialised ammo, a bi-pod stand and industrial strength hearing protection. These items were packed into a carry bag, along with personal things that he may well need on the mission.' Skip had two days to find the best shooting location, preferably at least 1000 feet from his target. So he donned his riding leathers, loaded his gear onto his prized motorcycle and set GPS directions for the route to Mackay. Skip bought his 300 horsepower 'R' version in 2014. He was very proud of his ride, which he considered the best bike in the entire motorcycle industry. Having stowed all his gear, Skip set off on his ten-hour journey.

Skip needed a partner to help him fulfil his mission and watch his back. It had to be someone Skip trusted to make sure he was not disturbed while he went into an alpha zone state, as he waited to take his shot. So, two days previously, he rang the only person he knew would fit the bill.

Woody Stone was going about his maintenance chores when his old Nokia flip phone rang. Only a few people had his number, and he just had a handful of contacts. He was surprised to hear Skip's voice. 'What the fuck are you phoning me for?'

Skip grinned, 'I'll have to use that one for my message bank.'

'Yeah, so what's up, Skip?'

'I've got a mission, and I need you to watch my back.'

There was no messing with Woody. 'Where and when?'

'Mackay in Queensland. Be there in a couple of days.'

'Bit short notice, mate.'

'There's 10 thou in it for you.'

'Why the fuck didn't you say?'

'Can you meet me in Mackay then?'

'For that sort of dough, I'll meet you on the fucking Moon.'

'No need to go to that trouble. The Entertainment and Convention Centre will do.'

Skip felt exhilarated as his H2 SX gently growled as he rode through The Sunshine Coast.

Whereas the H2R, and its de-tuned civilian counterpart H2, were built with a focus on speed above all else, the H2 SX has been completely reworked and refined for comfort and everyday rider

friendliness. Skip felt this as he quickly left behind the beach resorts, surf spots and rural hinterland.

As he was on a mission, Skip avoided any contact with other people whenever possible. So although he stopped for a break in Rockhampton, he kept away from any hotels, cafes and restaurants.

Instead, he sat down by the Fitzroy River and ate a packed lunch he had made at home. He also drank some coffee from his Thermos. It was peaceful sitting under a sprawling fig tree, feeling the slight breeze that rustled the leaves. No one else was around, except for a pair of passing boys who were ooh-ing and ah-ing about his bike. He kept a wary eye on them, but they soon moved on, leaving Skip to his solitude.

Soon, Skip was on the M1 again, on the second half of his journey. With less than two days before the Mining and Engineering Conference ended, it did not give Skip much time to find his perch and complete his preparations. He had already reconnoitred the area on Google Earth. As Mackay only had a few tall buildings, the tallest being the one on River Street, his options were limited. The best position from which to fire was from the balcony of a River Street unit leased by a Mr Joe Brinson, a retired school teacher. He would have to be persuaded to let Skip use his place for a couple of days.

As Skip rode into Mackay, he did not feel as though he had been riding for 10 hours. The Kawasaki's ergonomic seat had been revised for a less aggressive riding position. The H2 SX had an added rear seat for a friend and 58 litres of luggage-carrying capacity for extended jaunts.

But the civilised bike quickly turned into a beast as the supercharged, 998cc inline-four engine spooled up a titanic 200hp, supplemented with a whirl from the impeller that always coaxed

Skip to use more throttle. It was well worth the \$18,000 he spent on it.

Skip saw the tall, pale-faced man, his friend, Woody, waiting by the entrance to the entertainment centre.

Woody eye-balled his friend as he approached. 'OK, you got me here. So what's it about?'

Skip took Woody out of earshot away from other people. 'A big mining and engineering conference is going on here. It finishes tomorrow, and Charles Black is going to hold a short press conference at this entrance. My employer does not want him to leave alive.'

Woody stared at his mate. 'And your job is to make sure he doesn't.'

Skip nodded.

'Fuck! You want to shoot a fucking politician - a minister of the crown, so to speak.'

'I don't want to do anything. It's just a job. A very lucrative job.'

'So what do you want me for?'

'You have to go and see a teacher. Well, a retired teacher really.'

'And why do I want to do that?'

'Because I need his place for a couple of days.'

Woody did not ask why. He knew but made no mention of it.

'So, where're your wheels?' Skip asked.

When they reached Woody's old Nissan Pathfinder with an amateurish, jungle, camouflage paint job, Skip shook his head. 'I reckon you'll have to ride pillion, mate.'