

Psychpocalypse III

A homeless man is walking along the side of a road through a coast side industrial park with his bike. It has flat tires so he can't ride it. He's a dishevelled character with a bushy beard, an overcoat decorated with Australian badges and an embroidered emblem of a koala wearing a cork dangling Akubra giving a thumbs up. He mumbles incoherently and directs abuse at cars that drive past him, shaking his gnarly fist incessantly. The nearby coastline and expansive sky are a sulphurous pale yellow. The sky seems closer than he remembers, like he could reach out one of his busted fingers to touch it. Everywhere is loose, rocky ground littered with the corpses of birds and other wildlife caught unawares by the clouds of methane that shoot out in geysers from scattered sinkholes.

In the near distance is a ruined OzCorp plant. One could easily mistake the collapsed smoke-stacks and smashed out windows for the results of entropy and random vandalism after years of neglect if it weren't for the bodies of company executives hanging from the front gate. 'YUPPIE SCUM DOOMED US ALL!!!' reads graffiti across the entry sign. The homeless man, let's call him our protagonist, unfazed, doesn't stop or even pass a glance. Having seen it all before, he trudges along with a grim determination.

Slowly approaching, a bunch of rowdy affluent inner-city types are cruising along the same road in a station wagon. Curtains cover the back windows; the bumper overloaded with stupidly obnoxious stickers: 'honk if you're horny' and 'my other ride is your mum.' Pressing forward, they get increasingly maggot to loud electro music as they pump each other up for a rave. They were headed for the notorious Psychpocalypse III. It is one of those end of the world type of parties, except the world has probably already ended. No room for burning effigies here.

"We're gonna be at Psychpocalypse III mate! Can you believe it? This'll be the doof to end all doofs - they're saying it'll be the last one!" One of the party goers exclaims.
"Fuckin' better be aye - they've been tellin' us this shit's gonna all be over for years now."
"Wouldn'ta dropped outta Uni in such a rush if I knew I'd still be here breathin' (through a gas mask mind you) and talkin' to you dumb c*nts!" Says another, he was the most educated of the group - just weeks off finishing his first year of a communications degree. Never mind - it wouldn't've been much use where they're going.
They spot the gnarly shaking fist of the homeless man not far from the oncoming smoke-stacks.
"Oi! Who's that? Pull over a see if he wants a lift! Wonder what that drongo's doin' out here without a fuckin' mask on!"

As they approach the man pushing his bike, the driver slows the car down and the two on the passenger side lean out and try to persuade the gnarly homeless man to get in.
The station wagon slowly gurgles in front of him, he spots the mass of obnoxious bumper stickers ahead. He starts to ring his bike bell incessantly, he would honk if he could.
'Piss off!' he yells and continues shuffling along the gravel and shaking his fist. Emasculated, they drive a little further past him and pull over. Three of them jump out and approach him. Two aggressively put their arms over his shoulders in a faux-fraternal manner and the other one grabs his bike and wheels it toward the car.
"Come on mate - why don't you wanna ride with us?" The educated one exclaims.
"Yeah - why don't ya get in? Let's chuck ya bike in the back." This one always goes along with what has already been said.
The gnarly man mumbles obscenities and tries to shrug them off. The one with his bike leans over to take a closer look at it before exclaiming with delight:
"Aww man! check it out - it's a Malvern Star! I've been trying to find one of these for ages!"
"Good find! Chuck it in the back!"
The homeless man becomes more agitated, wrestles the two off him while short of breath from the sulphur in the air. He makes a pathetic, yet determined run toward the educated one.
"Oi! Gimme back me bike ya miserable cold-brew c**t!"

One of the others kicks out his heel so he falls and lands face first in the gravel. As he rolls over, he cops the blow of vintage Reebok high-tops firmly in his side. The three jeer and laugh as they kick him. He makes some futile gestures to protect his head and push his assailants away but soon a blank look of resignation falls across his face as he gives in, struggling to breathe. Losing consciousness, he is powerless to intervene as one of them tugs off his naturally distressed denim jacket.
"This thing's the real deal - bet I can swap it for some top shelf gear when we get to Party Town." Cozza was always such a cheap-skate.
"No one's going to Party Town if we don't get underground before they lock the hatch - hurry up!" Another smart remark from the educated one as he interjects with a sense of rational thought.

Only the emaciated seagulls flying overhead know how many hours have passed since the now, even gnarlier looking homeless man has been out. "Aghh Fuck" he awakes to find himself stripped bare, exposed to the sulphurous elements and laying partway down the slope of a mound of shit, at what appears to be some colossal garbage tip. It's dark and still. The sound of the highway can be heard in the distance and some faint electric light shines nearby from an anonymous source.

He let's out a gut-wrenching growl as goes to sit up. A precariously balanced assemblage of a carburettor, a broken couch, a CRT monitor and a box of VHS cassettes gives way above, leaving him covered in greenish sludge - what he recognises by smell as Valvoline engine oil - and tangled in magnetic tape. A fucked up sense of nostalgia washes over him, he attempts to shake himself loose, both literally and emotionally. After freeing himself, he looks around for something to drink - parched from the earlier ordeal and hours lying unconscious. After rummaging through a number of bags full of household waste, he looks up to see a Fisher and Paykel 330L fridge lying open, on its back, perched atop the mound. In the door is a scorching VB stubby lying at 45-degrees, open but three-quarters full.

His thirsty eyes light up as he clambers up toward it, hopping over ergonomic desk chairs, satellite dishes, disintegrating yellow-brown mattress foam and stacks of outdated media studies textbooks on the way. As he approaches arms outstretched to seize the frothy chalice, a mangy paw shoots out from the fridge toward him and scratches his hand, painfully drawing blood. Hesitating, he steps back, feeling the ground precariously shake beneath his feet. A fully-grown koala bear emerges - the gnarly homeless man wonders how the fuck a koala bear got out here into this mess in the first place- the koala hisses at him as it slowly moves forward to claim the bottle as its own. Charged by thirst and damaged pride from the earlier encounter, he goes to grab the precocious marsupial and toss it aside. Equally desperate, the koala lunges forward, digging its claws into his chest and the back of his head and proceeding to gnaw at his face.

As he spins around, screaming in a struggle to throw off the beast, he trips and falls back down the side of the mound. The vicious koala and he continue to wrestle as they slide downward in an avalanche of trash and literal shit. Having gained considerable momentum, the two become airborne when they hit a trampoline. In a slow-motion sequence both of them stop fighting for long enough to glance down and see an open 40-gallon drum full of fluorescent orange toxic waste below them before they both plunge in headfirst. The liquid bubbles and steams, oozing over the sides.

After a prolonged silence, the bubbling becomes more violent before the drum explodes...

A waste management worker, having heard the explosion, pulls up in his Hilux ute with his headlights on. A mass of pine air fresheners in 'new car smell' hanging from the rearview mirror and a Blue Heeler next to him on the bench seat. Smoke obscures his vision through the windshield, he creeps forward slowly. A gaunt, skinny bloke with a messy bowl-cut; he leans over the steering wheel and squints to see what's happening. His scrunched up expression reveals bleeding gums and crooked, decaying teeth.
"Whaddaya reckon Bruce? One o' them little turds out here makin' pettie-bombs again?"
The dog begins to growl and bark - sensing a presence outside of the vehicle.
"What is it Brucey? Spotted 'em have ya?"
The dog's barking changes to whimper and it starts scratching at the side window, visibly disturbed.

A hair raising crunch of crumpling steel as an enormous figure smashes down on his bonnet. The waste management man desperately clambers at the door handle as a furry, clawed, humanoid fist punches through the glass and clutches his neck with super human strength. A piercing scream escapes between the gingivitis between his teeth, followed by gurgling as his head is torn from his body. Blood splatters and fountains of gore gush within the cab, smothering the pine air fresheners and soiling any chance of a new car smell.

The hulking figure stands upright on the car and roars. It's thick fur drips with blood, Valvoline and toxic waste, fizzling holes in the already mangled Hilux bonnet. The creature, with all of it's newfound adrenaline and superhuman senses faintly picks up the sound of electronic music in the distance. The toxic creature aggressively tumbles it's way towards the synth music, deep in thought "I want my fuckin' jacket back."

Ned Reilly

Ned Reilly is an artist and writer based between Perth and London, having previously shown in a number of group exhibitions at Success, Fremantle and Gallery Central, Northbridge. Ned is currently working towards a Bachelor of Design in Fine Art and Art History at the University of Western Australia.

Grace Connors is a Perth based inter-disciplinary artist with her practice spanning film studies and the moving image, working across a number of screen based mediums. Completing her Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) in 2016, she is currently acting as board member for MOANA and was nominated for Hatched National Graduate Show in 2015

Connors presents *Pure Sh-ocker*, a mock-mockumentary short film, which closely examines the schlock, splatter and shock of the Australian Exploitation (Ozploitation) film genre. Pure Sh-ocker was shown as part of Seventh Gallery's annual programming in September 2017.

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