

DAMAGE

"I won't sing him till I know for sure" - mc MAR_LEE b

A music - drama in seven scenes

by

MARK DUNBAR

Book by Graham Akhurst, Carmen Attel,
Mark Dunbar & Nik Hills

Composed 2006 – 2007. Revised 2016

Scored for 4 actor/singers, SATB chorus & soloists
String orchestra (or string quintet), electric lead guitar, bass guitar,
keyboard/synth/piano, acoustic guitar (on-stage),
3 percussionists: *2 vibraphones, xylophone, glockenspiel,*
drum kit, claves, snare drum, bass drum, cymbal, triangle, tam- tam

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this work contains names of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people recently deceased that may cause distress.

Warning – This work contains strong language



Australian Government



The Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body has
assisted the creative development of this project.

'The characters in these sketches and monologues are imaginary. That is to say, they are accurately based on real people who have never lived.' Barry Humphries – A Nice Night's Entertainment

CHARACTERS

MAGDELENA (Lena)	Aboriginal woman, mid-twenties, sex worker Alto (blues, belt)
CURTLY SHIN-CRICKET (Wicket)	Aboriginal man, 17 YO, dance student Tenor
mc MAR_LEE b (Lee, mc)	Aboriginal man or woman*, 19 YO Rapper
STAFFORD (Staff)	Aboriginal man, thirties, fair skin black supremacist Baritone
MAGDELENA'S VISIONS (dust-buds)	SATB chorus
FOUR FURIES	Two soprano & two alto soloists

*A male actor played mc MAR_LEE b in 2007, however the character could be female.

TIME

A single day in 2007

PLACE

The rented share-house of Magdalena, Curtly & mc MAR_LEE b in inner suburban Brisbane. The house is a well furnished, recently renovated 'Queenslander'.

FIRST PERFORMANCE CAST

The first performance of *Damage* was produced by Brisbane Canto Coro on Thursday August 23, 2007 at Ahimsa House, West End. A further four performances were given on August 24, 25 & 26 with the following cast & crew:

mc MAR_LEE b	Mark Anderson
MAGDELENA	Georgia Corowa
STAFFORD	Dwayne Peachey
CURTLY SHIN-CRICKET	Sonny Dallas Law
FURIES	Junia Wulf, Anna Stephanos, Libby Schmidt, Kerrie Woodrow
MAGDELENA'S VISIONS	Brisbane Canto Coro
Mark Felder	Electric keyboard (Casio wk-1200)
David Kemp	Percussion 1
Jessi Dunbar	Percussion 2

FIRST PERFORMANCE PRODUCTION CREW

Musical Director/Conductor	Mark Dunbar
Directors	Nik Hills & Mark Dunbar
Assistant Director	Carmen Attel
Choreography	Nik Hills
Repetiteur	Mark Felder
Choir Tutors	Kerrie Woodrow, Mark Shortis, Mark Dunbar
Lighting & Design	Nik Hills & Mark Dunbar
Lighting Operator	Guy Moffatt
Score Copying	Carmen Attel
Graphic Design	Mark Dunbar
Program Layout	Mark Dunbar
Project Management	Mark Dunbar
Choir Ticketing	Carmen Attel
Childcare	Anastasia Lazarou
Front of House	Anastasia Lazarou

BRISBANE CANTO CORO

Sopranos	Alyson Alway, Carmen Attel, Delia Bohler, Tracey Mazzoni, Libby Schmidt, Louise Wilson
Altos	Delia Bohler-Jackson, Georgia Corowa, Kristen Duffus, Catherine Gilmour, Jenni Muche, Marta Krejci, Elisa Nichols, Anna Stephanos, Kerrie Woodrow
Tenors	Ann Baker, Mick Kerswell, Sonny Dallas Law, Tim McMaster, Junia Wulf
Basses	Mark Anderson, Nigel Cox, Mark Cronin, Dwayne Peachey, Mark Shortis

LIBRETTO

Text in *bold & italics* is sung

Text in *italics only* is spoken

SCENE 1

THE NINETY-NINE

THE PERFORMANCE SPACE IS IN NEAR DARKNESS WITH ONLY A SINGLE SHAFT OF LIGHT. THE SOUND OF THE SEA IS JUST AUDIBLE, UNDULATING, HYPNOTIC & SEDUCTIVE. THIS GENTLE LAPPING OF WAVES IS PUNCTUATED BY A SLOW STEADY BEAT ON THE CLAVES, REMINISCENT OF ABORIGINAL CLAP STICKS.

A LIGHTING SHIFT & MAGDELENA'S VISIONS CAN BE MADE OUT IN THE SHADOWS, CURLED UP ON THE FLOOR. SOME ARE LYING APART, OTHERS IN GROUPS, SOME CONTORTED, OTHERS AT PEACE. MAGDELENA SLEEPS IN HER BED TO ONE SIDE.

THE VISIONS SPORADICALLY WHISPER, SPEAK, GROAN & CALL OUT NAMES AS IF DREAMING. THE NAMES ARE FROM mc MAR_LEE b's SONG: **b.d.i.c/r(h)yme**. THEY ARE THE NAMES OF THE 99 PEOPLE INVESTIGATED BY THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY IN 1991. THE NAMING BUILDS IN VOLUME & INTENSITY, THEN PETERS OUT.

SPARSELY & SLOWLY, WITH DELIBERATE CARE THE VISIONS MOVE INTO & THROUGH THE LIGHT. THEY CREATE MULTIPLE FLEETING IMAGES OF LOVE & SEX; SOME AMBIGUOUS, SOME TENDER & SOME THREATENING.

CENTRAL IS AN IMAGE OF MONEY CHANGING HANDS. MAGDELENA SLOWLY RISES FROM HER BED TO RECEIVE PAYMENTS THAT ARE

MADE TO HER FROM HER VARIOUS (WHITE) CLIENTS. AS THIS
FINAL IMAGE IS ESTABLISHED THE VISIONS SING IN CANON &
MAGDELENA CURLS UP ONCE AGAIN ON HER BED

4 Furies: ***We are the names***
 We are people

Visions/Furies: ***We are the names***
 We are the people
 People, people
 Shhhh...

We are the names
 We are the people
 We are dead people
 People, people
(to Magdalena) ***Shhhh...Sleep***

A MUSIC & LIGHTING SHIFT AS THE VISIONS SPRING TO LIFE WITH A
SONG & DANCE THAT IS BOTH PLAYFUL & TAUNTING

Visions/Furies: ***These are names you must dread***
 We are names now unsaid
 Keep us deep in your head
 Or come and join us instead

 Not quite safe in your bed
 When we need to be fed
 Spirits our sacred bread
 With succour lavishly spread

AS THE DANCE BUILDS, A THICK, LONG ROPE IS PASSED BETWEEN THE VISIONS LINKING THEM TOGETHER. IT HOOPS & SNAKES ITS WAY THROUGH THEM LIKE A MAGICAL SERPENT WITH ITS OWN LIFE. FINALLY IT COMES TO REST, COILED UP IN A CORNER OF THE SPACE NEAR MAGDELENA'S BED.

EXHAUSTED, THE VISIONS SLOWLY EXIT, CARRYING MAGDELENA WITH THEM. AS THEY EXIT, mc MAR_LEE b ENTERS BLEARY EYED. HE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO SLEEP & IN A PRE-DAWN DAZE, HE GOES TO THE KICHEN, FILLS THE KETTLE & SWITCHES IT ON. HE THEN MAKES HIS WAY TO HIS BELOVED BOB MARLEY HANGING ON THE WALL. THIS IS HIS SACRED SITE, A PLACE WHERE HIS MUSIC THRIVES. HE STANDS, CLEARS HIS HEAD & STEELS HIMSELF...MAYBE THIS TIME, HE THINKS.

SCENE 2

BREAKFAST YARNS

THE LARGE POSTER OF BOB SMOKING A MASSIVE JOINT SMILES ENCOURAGINGLY DOWN UPON mc MAR_LEE b. HE BOWS TO BOB, TAKES A DEEP BREATH & BEGINS PRACTISING LINES & MOVES FROM HIS SONG. HE IS ALL FOCUS & CONCENTRATION.

AFTER A MOMENT, CURTLY SHIN-CRICKET ENTERS, UNSEEN BY mc MAR_LEE b. HE GOES TO THE KITCHEN & TURNS OFF THE BUBBLING KETTLE. HE THEN CURLS UP QUIETLY ON THE COUCH, ALL ARMS & LEGS IMPROBABLY COILED, AS ONLY DANCERS CAN. HE WATCHES mc MAR_LEE b's TENACITY & PERSEVERANCE WITH PLEASURE & ADMIRATION

mc MAR_LEE b: ***Charles Sydney Michael***
Bruce Thomas Leslie
Jimmy Njanji
Edward Cameron
Walter James Barney

David John Gundy
Lloyd James Boney
Craig Douglas Karpany
Edward James Murray

John Raymond Pilot
Stanley John Gollan
Keith Edward Karpany
Gregory Michael...

*So many names to remember
Gotta remember the names...*

***John Raymond Pilot
Stanley John Karpany...***

*No idiot wrong, wrong, wrong...
Stanley John Gollan*

HE HITS HIMSELF ON HIS HEAD AS HE CORRECTS HIS ERROR,
SPINS AROUND & THEN JUMPS BACK AS HE SPOTS CURTLY

mc MAR_LEE b: *Shit, you scared me my man
Curled up on the cat's divan*

Curtly (laughs): *Soz Lee
Couldn't sleep
Watcha workin' on?*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Song o' songs!
A rap to right all wrongs*

Curtly (excited): *I've been workin' on somethin' too...*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Yeah...what's happenin?
Whacha rappin'?*

Curtly: *It's a secret for Lena...I want to surprise her when she
gets home*

mc MAR_LEE b (distracted): *No fear...good idea*

Curtly: *Had a funny dream last night...real weird*

STAFFORD ENTERS NOT BOTHERING TO KNOCK AS USUAL. HE IS WELL DRESSED BUT DISHEVELLED. HE LOOKS LIKE HE HASN'T SLEPT, OR SLEPT ROUGH

Stafford: *Any black prick in here?*

mc MAR_LEE b & Curtly (in unison): *Nup!*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Only one I'm clockin'
And he's not knock, knockin'*

CURTLY & mc MAR_LEE b HIGH FIVE & LAUGH. STAFFORD IGNORES THEM, SHOOTING THEM A LOOK OF MOCK, GOOD HUMOURED DISTAIN. HE TURNS TO CURTLY

Stafford: *Not a dream Curtly...reality
As real as your sweet, black booty!*

CURTLY LAUGHS AS STAFFORD GIVES CURTLY'S BACKSIDE A QUICK BACKHAND FLIP

Stafford: *Anything to eat in here? I'm fuckin' famished...
Need to feed me other hole*

STAFFORD LAUGHS. CURTLY RESPONDS WITH EXAGGERATED DISTASTE

Curtly: *Ooh, yuck Stafford*

mc MAR_LEE b SHAKES A NUMBER OF WELL PICKED-OVER
POLYSTYRENE BOXES ON THE TABLE. HE THEN LOOKS IN
PUZZLEMENT AT THE KETTLE, UNBOILED...HE STRUGGLES OVER
THE RHYME

mc MAR_LEE b: *Left overs, Chinese*
Courtesy of Queen Bee
Kettle was a boilin'?
Your cuppa tea?

STAFFORD GIVES mc MAR_LEE b A PUZZLED LOOK, (SUCH A BAD
RHYME, EVEN FOR THIS HOUR OF THE MORNING). HE EVENTUALLY
UNRAVELS ITS MEANING & HEADS TO THE BOXES, RUMMAGING
THROUGH & TUCKING IN WOLFISHLY. A MAN USED TO
SCROUNGING

Stafford: *Umm, warm as... cum*

Curtly: *No Stafford, I'm sure that's just the oyster sauce*

STAFFORD & mc MAR_LEE b EXCHANGE A LOOK: 'IS HE FOR REAL?'

Stafford: *Got busted last night by the cops again...*

HE GRABS AT HIS CROTCH

Stafford: *Damn those infernal primal drives!*

Curtly: *Same as last time, Staff?*

STAFFORD MIMES ADJUSTING HIS SUIT & TIE, THEN IMITATES A WELL HEELED LAYWER

Stafford (posh): *Indecent Exposure in a Public Place*

mc MAR_LEE b: *That's three times this month already
You'll be makin' friends and a goin' steady
Maybe there's a big, big boy in blue
Just warmed up and ready for you!*

Stafford: *Actually it's four times, not three!
He, he, he...he*

MAGDELENA ENTERS DRESSED TO KILL WITH BAGS OF FRESH PASTRIES & A LARGE HOLD-ALL. SHE IS AGITATED. HER VISIONS SWEEP IN BEHIND HER LED BY THE FOUR FURIES (UNDERScore 1)

Visions/Furies: ***Ly, ly, ly, ly, ly***

Magdalena: *Baker's bloody Delight!
Catch...*

SHE TOSSES THE BAG WITH GUSTO. STAFFORD DUCKS & CURTLY DELIBERATELY & OSTENTATIIOUSLY JUGGLES IT THEN CATCHES IT IN HIS BEST OUTFIELD CRICKET-CATCHING STYLE

Stafford: *Whoa way to go, Wicket!
Livin' up to that name!*

Curtly: *Mm, smells great!
Thanks Lena, I'm starved*

STAFFORD WANDERS OVER & HELPS HIMSELF TO SEVERAL PASTRIES. THEN WITH HIS MOUTH HALF FULL HE GESTURES TO THE VISIONS

Stafford (to Magdalena): *Dust-Buds are active*

Magdalena: *Dust-Buds never bloody sleep.
They're just gentler when the sun's up... (BEAT)
Shoulda punched the fucker!*

Stafford (laughing): *Fair enough!*

mc MAR_LEE b SEES MAGDELENA IS ABOUT TO GO OFF. HE GIVES CURTLY A PRONOUNCED LOOK & NOD

mc MAR_LEE b: *Psst Wicket...do it now!*

CURTLY TAKES A BALLETTIC POSE & FREEZES WITH A WIDE GRIN. MAGDELENA & STAFFORD LOOK ON BEMUSED AS A DRUM ROLL SOUNDS

mc MAR_LEE b: *Ladles and Jellybeans
Give it up for dance at QUT
Introducing Mister Curtly Shin-Cricket
A one, a two, and a one two three...*

mc MAR_LEE b THEATRICALY PRESSES PLAY ON THE CD PLAYER. THE VISIONS RESPOND (UNDERScore 1, BAR 6 – 27)

Visions/Furies: ***By, by, by...*** (etc.)

THEIR SONG LAUNCHES CURTLY INTO A GORGEOUS PARODY OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE, IN MOCK HEROIC STYLE TO EVERYONE'S AMAZEMENT & MIRTH. FINALLY IT IS BROUGHT TO A DRAMATIC CLOSE WHEN mc MAR_LEE b MIMES SHOOTING CURTLY WITH A LARGE ELEPHANT GUN. CURTLY ARTFULLY DUCKS, DODGING THE FATAL BULLET, WHICH MISSING ITS INTENDED TARGET, HITS STAFFORD INSTEAD WHO, GETTING INTO THE SPIRIT, PERFORMS AN OPERATIC DEATH SCENE, THUS PARODYING CURTLY'S PARODY!

All: *Wicked!*

AS THE OTHERS LAUGH, MAGDELENA THEATRICALY PUTS HER HANDS ON HIPS & STANDS LEGS APART IN EXAGGERATED ANNOYANCE. SHE PLAYS THE FRACTIOUS AUNTY

Magdalena: *Are you guys quite finished?*
It's not all about you, ya know! (BEAT)

SHE SOFTENS

Wanna hear what happened to me this mornin'?

Curtly: *Sure Lena, wasup?*

Magdalena: *Well, as I was sayin'...*
I shoulda punched the bastard! (BEAT)

(UNDERSCORE 1, BAR 28 – 30 WITH THE FOLLOWING)

*I'm standin' ya know, yeah
Five fuckin' thirty AM, yeah man
First in dat hole man, ya know?
Not a soul came in before me, then
Three bitches come in da shop, yeah
The bitch servin's actin' like, ya know
I'm a piece a black shit, ya know not dere at all
So what she go an' do?
Turns ya know, smiling a fuckin' grin
As wide as da story bridge, yeah
An' lookin' right past me
Says in her sweet shitty voice:
(Imitating) 'Can I help you?'
Ya believe dat?
Can I fuckin' help ya? (BEAT)
To oda white cunts behind me, yeah man...*

STAFFORD: *Fair enough*

UNDERScore SUDDENLY STOPS. ALL LOOK AT STAFFORD.
CURTLY BREAKS THE MOMENT

Curtly (curiously): *So...what happened next Lena?*

MAGDELENA PERFORMS HER TIRADE WITH GUSTO

Magdalena: *What happened next....Fuck!
I start goin' off, ya know
Shit, I lean ova da counter
Ya know, as slow as shit
An' I say (BEAT)*

*Am I so black...
You can't fuckin' see me?*

ALL LAUGH BUT MAGDELENA, STILL PERFORMING

Curtly: *Nice one, Lena...that'll learn 'em!*

MAGDELENA RELAXES & BEGINS TO ENJOY THE YARN NOW

Magdalena: *Shoulda heard da 'scuses man:
(imitating) 'Sorry I thought the other ladies came in before you'
'What can I get for you?'
'Terribly sorry, it was just a simple mistake' (BEAT)
She made a fuckin' mistake orright
I grabbed the grub...*

SHE SNACHES THE BAG OF PASTRIES FROM STAFFORD & MIMES
PULLING A FIFTY FROM HER CLEAVAGE

Magdalena: *Ya know, pulled outa a fifty from me su-su's
Slammed the dosh on da counter
Yeah, shoulda seen the look on her dial
Start walkin' out...
Bitch yells: 'Your change madam'
'Fuckin' keep it for ya eye test!'
I went off!
'Next time I come in 'ere
You'll be more dan fuckin' color-blind!'*

ALL LAUGH EXCEPT MAGDELENA

Magdalena: *Shit man, came dat close ta fixin' her lights up for good!*

Stafford (still chewing): *Well I tell ya they're a lot fresher than last night's Chinese, Lena!*

Magdalena: *Happy to oblige, my man!*

Curtly: *Wow, fifty bucks for a Danish!*

mc MAR_LEE b (Rasta-voice): *Ya know it escapes me
What ya'll do for a pastry*

Magdalena: *Nah...only gammen!*

ALL GROAN

Magdalena: *Had ya goin' for a sec but!
Shop was fucken' closed...had to wait 30 minutes in
da fucken freezin' bus shelter 'till it opened so I could
feed youse vultures!
But shit like dat happens ev'ry day.
Happened to me mum just a couple weeks back...*

Stafford (laughing): *Fifty buck Danish eh?
That's about half what the tourists pay me for some of
my scrawny black...*

mc MAR_LEE b (interrupts): *Scawn n class, maybe
But black, my arse! Baby*

ALL LAUGH AS STAFFORD EXAMINES HIS WHITISH BACKSIDE.
(UNDERScore 1, BARS 31 – 33)

Stafford: *Speaking of bums...I mean mums' stories...*

STILL LOOKING AT HIS BOTTOM

Stafford: *My mum's fair skin...*

All (but Stafford): *Fair enough! Not!*

HI FIVES & LAUGHTER – AS THEY USE STAFFORD'S FAVORITE LINE

Stafford: *Okay...touché! Anyway...one day mum was on the train to Townsville. God's truth, sitting opposite this little old lady. You know the type – Anzac hubby, blue rinse, lawn bowls, meals-on-wheels, wouldn't hurt a fly. A family, our mob, is in the carriage minding their own. Couple of kids playing cards, mum and dad having a yarn over a cuppa tea from the flask...normal train stuff. Anyway, the train stops at Rocky and the family gets off. The little old lady opposite me mum leans over and, touching mum's hand gently, says: 'Lets hope the boongs don't get back on'. And smiles. Just like that. Amazing! The sheer confidence. Not even a sniff of doubt that the stranger opposite, my mum, might disagree...*

Magdalena: *Let alone be offended*

Stafford: *Let alone be a 'boong' herself, shit!*

ALL LAUGH

Stafford: *That's the blind arrogance of a decaying world...*

Curtly: *So what did ya mum do?*

Stafford: *Just sat and smiled politely. What else could she do?*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Fight for her rights?*

(UNDERSCORE 1. ENDS.) STAFFORD TURNS TO CURTLY

Stafford: *So what do ya reckon your mum'd do?*

Curtly: *Where was it? Townsville to Rocky, on the train?
Ah, that mob was probably my mum and the kids.
She visits Aunty Gwen once month in Rocky, like
clockwork...set ya watch by it!*

ALL LAUGH

Curtly: *Speakin' a family...
Youse do know it's that time of the month?*

ALL LOOK AT CURTLY CRYPTICALLY, THEN mc MAR_LEE b GETS IT

mc MAR_LEE b: *Ah...rent's due
What else is new?
219 years...
I'd say they're in fuckin' arrears*

MAGDELENA TAKES A WAD OF NOTES FROM HER CLEAVAGE &
COUNTS OUT \$2,000, LAYING IT NEATLY ON THE TABLE

mc MAR_LEE b: *Can I fix it up, say next week, Lena*
The dole's due then, so I'll be payin' ya...true!

Magdalena: *What else is new!*

SHE BLOWS HIM A 'NO PROBLEMS' KISS

Magdalena: *Can ya pop in 'n pay it today Wicket?*

Curtly: *Sure, I'll drop it in on my way to school...*
Thanks Lena, don't worry mum's sent mine

Magdalena: *Ya my sweet suga-babe!*

THE VISIONS SLOWLY GATHER AROUND MAGDELENA AS SHE
MOVES TO A CORNER & PICKS UP HER GUITAR. SHE BEGINS TO
SING. THE SONG IS HER INTERNAL SOUND TRACK, THE VISIONS
LISTEN & THEN JOIN HER

MAGDELENA'S LAMENT

Magdalena: ***Ah...alone***

Mc MAR_LEE b WATCHES & LISTENS

Magdalena: ***Ah, ah, ah***
God, here's my prayer
Hear my prayer

*If you're anywhere?
God hear my prayer*

*God here is my prayer
God hear my prayer
If you're anywhere?
God hear my prayer*

Mc MAR_LEE b RESPONDS TO MAGDELENA'S LAMENT. HIS RAP
SETS THE VISIONS' FINGERS CLICKING

Mc MAR_LEE b: *What's the matter with you?
You got somethin' ta do
A struggle to fight but
Life could be alright*

*Spendin' so much time
On the one and only
Inside that head must be awful lonely
Look so nice
So fine in that dress
Underneath the party
You're all a mess*

*Ya gotta fight for the livin'
If ya want some purpose
Money can't do it
If there ain't no surplus of
Compassion and love
For the poor and down trodden
History doesn't lie
But it can be forgotten*

***Self talkin' in the wrong direction
Better find and quick the right correction***

Magdalena: ***Ah...alone
Ah, ah, ah alone***

Mc MAR_LEE b: ***Self talkin' in the wrong direction
Better find and quick the right correction***

Mc MAR_LEE b: ***Talkin' in the wrong direction
No sympathy there
Our people still dyin', lyin'
Cold concrete blank stare
Consecration, desecration
It is all interpretation
Fightin' for the truth takes
More than imagination***

***Self talkin' in the wrong direction
Better find an' quick the right correction
Self talkin' in the wrong direction
Better find an' quick the right correction***

Magdalena/Visions: ***Ah...alone
Ah, ah, ah alone
Ah, ah, ah***

Magdalena: ***Oh God here's my prayer
Please hear my prayer
If you're anywhere?***

God hear my prayer

God here is my prayer

God hear my prayer

If you're anywhere?

God hear my prayer

Visions:

We hear you're prayer

We're everywhere

We hear you're prayer

We're everywhere

Magdalena:

Ah God here is my prayer

God hear my prayer

If you're anywhere?

God hear my prayer

Furies:

Ah...

Magdalena:

God here is my prayer

God please hear my prayer

If you're anywhere?

Please God hear my prayer

Mc MAR_LEE b:

Self talkin' in the wrong direction

Better find an' quick the right correction

Self talkin' in the wrong direction

Better find an' quick the right correction

Magdalena:

God here's my prayer

God hear my prayer

***If you're anywhere?
God hear my prayer
Oh hear my prayer***

A BEAT AS MAGDELENA PUTS DOWN THE GUITAR. THEN THE
BREAKFAST SCENE RESUMES AS BEFORE.
(UNDERScore 2, BARS 1 – 13 BEGINS)

Stafford: *Chuck us a ciggie Lena*

Visions: ***Dy, dy, dy*** (etc.)

Stafford: *Been livin' off dumpers for the past 3 days!*

HE EMPTIES HIS POCKETS OF HALF-SMOKED CIGARETTE BUTTS
ALL OVER THE RENT MONEY, WHICH IS SUBSEQUENTLY COVERED
WITH A DISGUSTING CONCOCTION OF FAG-ENDS & POCKET FLUFF.
MAGDELENA SMILES, PULLS OUT AN UNOPENED CARTON FROM
HER BAG & TOSSES IT TO HIM

Stafford (catching the box): *You're a saviour!*

STAFFORD TEARS OPEN THE CARTON HUNGRILY

mc MAR_LEE b: *Ain't things killing us enough
Without smoking all that stuff?*

Stafford: *Easy Rasta-Man!*

STAFFORD MOVES NEXT TO THE JOINT-SMOKING MARLEY POSTER

Stafford: *Never saw our beloved Bob with a durri?*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Smoking for Marley was a sacred site
Spirituality shining bright*

STAFFORD MIMES ROLLING A LARGE JOINT

STAFFORD: *Light that up Curtly, will ya?*

HE MIMES DRAWING SLOWLY ON THE EXTRA-LARGE ROLL-UP

Stafford: *That's my kinda spirituality!*

STAFFORD BEGINS TO LAUGH WHICH QUICKLY TURNS INTO A
SMOKER'S COUGHING FIT. THEY HAVE A GIGGLE AT HIS EXPENSE

Curtly: *Seriously but, like that lady on the train, why are they
so afraid of us?*

(UNDERSCORE STOPS.) VISIONS PAY ATTENTION IN SILENCE

Magdalena: *What's that, babe?*

STAFFORD JUMPS IN

Stafford: *They should fear us. 50,000 years just can't be wiped
out by a few bullets, a poisoned pond, smallpox,
gonorrhea, whooping cough, tuberculosis, syphilis,
measles, mumps some asphalt and a skyscraper.
(BEAT)*

*They are a mere grain of sand in the eye of the
serpent. They know it. They know we know it.
The serpent is stirring and swallowing...*

Magdalena: *Whatcha ya on about? You're full a shit, Staff*

STAFFORD GESTURES TO HER VISIONS

Stafford (importantly): *I know it, they know it too.*

MAGDELENA SHRUGS. SHE GOES & PUTS HER ARMS AROUND
CURTLY'S SHOULDER. (UNDERScore 2, BARS 15 – 25 BEGINS)

Curtly: *Well, I mean last week, out shopping with my
cousins...we walk into Myers and the first thing we
hear is:*

HE PARODIES A CRACKLING INTERCOM

Curtly: *'Security immediately to aisle 5'...
over the intercom*

STAFFORD SLOWLY LOOKS CURTLY UP & DOWN. THEY WAIT FOR
HIS EXPECTED LINE

Stafford: *Ah...they don't care enough!*

GROANS & LAUGHTER

Magdalena: *Ignore him, Curtly...go on*

Curtly: *Well, every big shop we go into we either hear security called or are followed by some guy in a suit and dark glasses...*

Magdalena: *Yeah, that's about right...don't ya know?
We're all drug dealers, thieves and murderers!
Must cost 'em a bloody fortune watchin' us all the time*

mc MAR_LEE b: *It's police state rules
They take us for fools
Gotta get up, stand up...*

All: *Fight for ya rights!*

Magdalena: *Spin it brother...
Ya can have some fun though.
Check this one out...*

SHE FIGHTS BACK LAUGHTER AS SHE TELLS THE YARN

Magdalena: *I was shoppin' with me sis once right, and we had the same thing...being followed by some stupid plain clothes store detective, ya know. So we look at each other and decide to have some fun, play a few little games. We would pick out a small thing ya know, like a kid's toy or some little bit of make-up and walk around the store with it, while pricin' what we were really lookin' for. Store D's would trail behind us like a bad smell... tryin' to remain...“inconspicuous”. It was always fun to pass 'em and head for the exits an' watch 'em scramble. When we got bored 'n wanted to*

*leave, ya know we'd put all the stuff back on the shelf,
grin a cheesy grin at 'em... and just walk out.
Tall, black an' proud!*

(UNDERSCORE STOPS)

Curtly: *Yeah...like the song says: 'That ole black magic' can
have its up side...like on the train, peak hour, crowded,
sardine packed...But it's as if I operate within my own
force-field that repels everything and everyone around
me...*

Stafford: *Kryptonite Curtly!*

ALL LAUGH. (UNDERSCORE 2, BARS 28 – 33 BEGINS)

Curtly: *I can always get a four-seater to myself – people are
standing in the aisles, sometimes shoulder to shoulder
yet no-one will sit next to me or even opposite me. Can
ya believe that! (BEAT)
Once, I even remember this nice white girl sitting on
the arm of the chair opposite, but with her feet in the
aisle, and trying desperately not to look at me...except
for stealin' the odd curious, nervous glance, like she
was taking some enormous risk just by even being
near me!*

Magdalena: *Or she might spontaneously combust by makin' eye
contact! (BEAT) I'll give 'em bloody eye contact!*

ALL LAUGH

Curtly: *Yeah or catch Aids or somethin'...I didn't know whether to laugh, cry, say something nasty or reach over and pat her arm and say: 'It's OK... I don't bite...'*

(UNDERSCORE STOPS)

All: *Much!*

ALL LAUGH

Stafford: *He don't bite, but he'll give you a nasty little suck!*

All (except Stafford): *Staff!*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Shit, man I'll say it once again
You'd think we'd massacred them*

Stafford: *Guilt's a terrible thing, Lee. (BEAT)
We are time. Rock art isn't archeological.
It's prophetic...*

Curtly: *Yeah, you know Aunty Gwen says there are rock paintings of the Madonna and Jesus up north that are more than ten thousand years old*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Fuck, just think on that crap
Whites back then weren't even on the map*

Stafford: *We are the originals*

Magdalena: *Yeah, the Word was here with us,
ages before it even got to Jerusalem.*

Stafford: *You seen those rock paintings up north, Wicket?*

Curtly: *Yeah, up where my mob are.
It's like a time machine up there.
So still.
I miss that stillness sometimes...*

(UNDERSCORE 2, BARS 35 – 43 BEGINS)

Visions: ***Dy, dy, dy*** (etc.)

mc MAR_LEE b: *Mum used to tell us littluns a story her mum told her.
Dunno if it's true or what...
I sure hope it's not...anyways...
When whites first invaded her land,
They would bury the black bubbas in the sand,
Right up to their tiny little necks,
Then get on their horses and play polo for kicks...
Knockin' 'em right off...for sport,
In front of their crying mother's eyes.
And I thought, what sort
of human beings are they?*

(UNDERSCORE STOPS)

Magdalena: *Ya know, ya can say what ya like about us blacks, but I
can't think of any sort of us: drunks, drug addicts,
pimps, hos, coconuts, fringe dwellers, gay, straight,*

tribal, urban, stolen generation, stolen wages, politicians, activists, revolutionaries, bureaucrats, mission blacks, femocrats, dirty rats, no-hopers, boongs, niggers, fair skin, white skin, chocolate, half-caste, quadroon, octoroon, fuckin' coon ...

Curtly (laughing): *Go sista, ya soundin' better than mc MAR_LEE b!*

Magdalena: *Wait, Curtly...
I can't imagine any group of us, any of us at all, ever being able to get a bunch of white bubbas, and knock their heads off with a fuckin' stick...
that I just can't imagine...*

Stafford: *That's coz we're finer people (BEAT)*

Curtly: *Isn't that just a little bit racist?*

Stafford (imitating white academia):
*I'd say it is a scientifically proven fact –
Verifiable through an objective and close study of
racial history*

ALL LAUGH

mc MAR_LEE b: *So much pollution
Gotta make a solution*

CURTLY HAS DRIFTED OFF SOMEWHERE ELSE. HE STUDIES HIS BICEP. HE INTERRUPTS EXCITEDLY

Curtly: *Hey youse all, I'm thinking of getting a tattoo...*

ALL LOOK CURIOUSLY AT CURTLY AMAZED AT THE PATHS HIS MIND
FINDS

mc MAR_LEE b: *Umm...a tattoo eh, Curtly*
For what reason would that be?

Curtly: *I think...I think it would look good*

Magdalena: *That's not a reason Curtly, that's a vague idea!*

ALL LAUGH

Stafford: *Proceed Sir Curtly Shin-Cricket, what would it look like,*
and where would it be?

Curtly: *I haven't got that far yet...I'm just thinking about it*

MAGDELENA & mc MAR_LEE b EXCHANGE LOOKS & SHAKE THEIR
HEADS, SMILING

Stafford: *So really you're just thinking about the idea of thinking*
about getting a tattoo...
Is that it, Curtly?

Curtly: *No, well...sort of...yeah...no!*

Magdalena: *Stop it Stafford. You're confusing him!*

Stafford (aside): *So easily done*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Come on Curt
Give us the dirt
What d'ya think
About permanent ink?*

Curtly: *I want something unique...
And small...in a hidden place*

Stafford (aside): *Like your brain?*

Magdalena: *I heard that too! Stop it Staff!*

MAGDELENA TURNS TO CURTLY

Magdalena: *You're right Curtly.
I think a tattoo should be a special thing.
A reminder of a special time...*

CURTLY WINKS AT MAGDELENA CONSPIRATORIALY & SAYS
ALMOST UNDER HIS BREATH

Curtly: *Just like yours...*

YOU TATTOO BEGINS. THE VISIONS JOIN IN THE FUN SINGING &
DANCING

YOU TATTOO

Curtly: ***Everybody has a secret
Little something try to keep it
Hidden covered under wrapping***

***Finding it will earn a slapping
I've seen her tattoo***

Visions: ***Everybody has a secret
Little something try to keep it
Hidden covered under wrapping
Finding it will earn a slapping
Tattoo just for you!***

All: ***Tattoo show us do
Your tattoo show us do***

Magdalena: ***No!***

Stafford: ***How did you ever uncover it?
Years we've known and not discovered it
That small sign the tag the scratch
A secret friend or lost love match
You've seen her tattoo?***

Visions: ***How did you ever uncover it?
Years we've known and not discovered it
That small sign the tag the scratch
A secret friend or lost love match
Tattoo just for you!***

All: ***Tattoo show us do
Your tattoo show us do***

Curtly/Visions: ***How did I spot it? / Ah...
Wouldn't you / Ah...
Like to know? / Ooo...whoa
She has kept that little mark / Ah...***

For so long whoa... / secret so long whoa

**Curtly: *I'm not telling you, anymore
That's my secret now
To be sure whoa...
I've seen her tattoo!***

**Magdalena: *I snuck into his bed one night
A little scared I'd had a fright
It was hot I kid you not
He must have peeked under my frock
Has he seen my tattoo?***

**Visions: *We snuck into his bed one night
A little scared we'd had a fright
It was hot I kid you not
He must have peeked under her frock
Tattoo just for...

What does it say is it cool?
Is it large or miniscule?
Can you see a message there?
Give us a clue now if you dare***

All: *Tat-tattoo tat tattoo*

Stafford: *Show us your tattoo*

All: *Tat-tattoo tat tattoo*

Curtly: *Please show us do*

All: *Tat-tattoo tat tattoo*

Magdalena: *It's not for you to view*

All: *Tat-tattoo tat tattoo*

Curtly: *Yes...I think it should be secret, a very special secret*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Unless when you get it you're drunk and sad
Then you'll remember how ya felt so bad
And feel like a dickhead every time you see it!*

Stafford: *And what about every time everyone else sees it?*

mc MAR_LEE b: *They're gunna think
You look like a dickhead in ink!*

Stafford: *My point exactly!*

CURTLY LOOKS A LITTLE CRUSHED

Magdalena: *How about a piercing instead?
They heal over if you have a change of heart*

mc MAR_LEE b: *So Curt-lee
What's it to be?
A living curtain rail
Or a walking gallery?*

Curtly (annoyed): *I just want one like hers!*

SCENE 3
THE DEMO

mc MAR_LEE b: *Hey, does anyone with or without a piercing
Wanna give my song...a hearing?*

Stafford: *I'm thinking I'll be disappearing!
I've heard it more times than I've been arrested!
All good, but after that many times...nobody's cheering*

Curtly: *Ah, ignore him Cuz, he loves it!
You know you do, don't ya Staff?*

CURTLY GIVES STAFFORD A HUGE KISS. ALL CHEER

All: *Go for it Cuz!*

Magdalena: *Good luck!
I just know you can make it all the way through, babe!*

ONE OF THE VISIONS BEGINS A VOCALISED BEAT-BOX BEAT. (THIS
COULD ALSO BE STAFFORD, MAGDELENA OR A DRUM-KIT BEAT)

b.d.i.c/r(h)yme

mc MAR_LEE b: ***My name is mc MAR_LEE b
To my brothers and my sisters I'm simply Lee
Remember this name for eternity
Remember my name for eternity***

*This song is for the hundred you no longer see
For countless killed, blood spilled, white prosperity
The names of our brothers and our sisters, free
Aborigine dies in custody*

*Brothers die in custody is my rhyme
But I reckon it should be called
b.d.i.c/r(h)yme, b.d.i.c/r(h)yme
These are the names the ninety-nine
b.d.i.c/r(h)yme*

*You'll find them on the net Google one, two, three
Haunted by their stories of indigenuity
All the shame is plain senseless tragedy
Aborigine dies in custody*

*They are just a blip of our history
Black men, women, bubbas killed off ruthlessly
But now their spirits are floating free
Giving strength and life to mc MAR_LEE b*

*Brothers die in custody is my rhyme
But I reckon it should be called
b.d.i.c/r(h)yme, b.d.i.c/r(h)yme
The dead, the ninety-nine
Here they come, one more time*

*Daniel Raymond Joseph Lorroway
Graham Trevor Walley
Michael Leslie James Gollan
Alistair Albert Riversleigh*

Paul Lawrence Kearney

Burrurangi

Kim Polak

Thomas Carr

Fay Lena Yarrie

Thomas William Murray

Kingsley Richard Dixon

Stanley Brown

Patrine Misi

Bernard Matthew Johnson

Ricci John Vicenti

Shane Kenneth Atkinson

Ginger Samson

Paul Farmer

Benjamin William Morrison

David Mark Koowootha

Glenn Allan Clark

Hugh Wodulan

Jambajimba

Bernard Albert McGrath

THE SONG TAKES ON AN ANTHEMIC REGGAE FEEL, A HOMAGE TO
MARLEY'S *REBEL MUSIC*

Visions: ***We are the names***
 We are the people
 The people

Ah rebel music

Ah tribulation

Mc MAR_LEE b: *Charles Sydney Michael*

Bruce Thomas Leslie

Jimmy Njanji

Edward Cameron

Walter James Barney

David John Gundy

Lloyd James Boney

Craig Douglas Karpany

Edward James Murray

John Raymond Pilot

Stanley John Gollan

Keith Edward Karpany

Gregory Michael Dunrobin

Vincent Roy Ryan

Charlie Kulla Kulla

Stanley Brown

Albert Dougal

Wayne John Dooler

Donald Chatungalgi

Peter Wayne Williams

Charles Sydney Michael

Gordon Michael Semmens

Nita Blankett
Faith Barnes
Edward Frederick Betts
Muriel Gwenda Catheryn Binks
Malcolm Charles Smith

Christine Lesley Ann Jones
Richard Frank (Charlie) Hyde
Robert Anderson
Bobby Bates
Milton Wells
Nikira Mau

Barbara Denise Yarrie
Jabanardi
Hugh Wodulan
Donald Harris
Clarence Alec Nean
Arthur Moffatt
Dixon Green
Karen Lee O'rourke

Edward Stanley West
Roy Norman Walker
Barbara Ruth Tiers
Robert Joseph Walker

John Peter Pat
Monty Charles Salt
Peter Leonard Campbell
John Clarence Highfold

Mark Wayne Revell
James Archibald Moore
Deidre Abigail Short
Steven Glenn Michael

Darren Steven Wouters
Ronald Mack Ugle
Maxwell Roy Saunders
Perry Daniel Noble

Malcolm Buzzacott
Malcolm Charles Smith
Kwementyaye Price
Darryl Horace Garlett

Patrick Thomas Booth
Ginger Samson
Misel Waigana
Robert Anderson

Daniel Alfred Lacey
Benjamin William Morrison
Barbara Denise Yarrie
Joyce Thelma Egan
Harrison Day

AS mc MAR_LEE b COMPLETES HIS RAP MARATHON, CURTLY &
MAGDELENA SMOTHER HIM WITH HUGS, BACKSLAPS & HAND
SHAKES

Magdalena: *You did it! That was ninety-nine...I was counting!*

Curtly: *Umm Lena, I only made ninety-eight.
I think he missed Jambajimba...*

mc MAR_LEE b LOOKS CRESTFALLEN, THEN GRITS HIS TEETH. HE
KNOWS WHAT HAS TO BE DONE

mc MAR_LEE b: *Shit!
Begin again...*

Curtly: *Ha, ha gotya!
Only gammin brus, Jambajimba was in there, I swear!*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Really?*

Curtly/Magdalena: *Really!*

THEY ALL LAUGH. AS THE COMMOTION DIES DOWN STAFFORD
BEGINS A SLOW HANDCLAP

Stafford: *The custodians in custody, that makes me laugh.
(BEAT) None of them are dead. They are here always.
They're our dust mothers. Each grain of sand takes a
thousand names or more to make. Now we wait.
Only we have the patience...*

Curtly: *Ee-oo-ee-oo-ee-oo...Welcome to the Stafford zone!*

ALL LAUGH

Magdalena (to mc): *Really, that was awesome, bloody deadly brus. Ya should go down to Triple AAA, now ya finally nailed it, and see if they will do a demo for ya.*

Curtly: *Yeah, or do it for Stylin' Up...could win a 'Deadly'...I'd vote for ya, for sure!*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Many thanks Brus, but no time now for that lot. Youse comin' to the demo? Remember the demo...comin' or not?*

Stafford: *Christ, not another protest. What for? It's useless.*

STAFFORD MOVES DOWNSTAGE INTO A SINGLE SHAFT OF LIGHT.
(UNDERSCORE 3 BEGINS)

Stafford: *There is only one real world. (BEAT)
My history is the unwritten truth of our reality and within this black cosmos my people are the source of all that is, all that will forever be. This dilemma, this white dilemma is a mere insect biting into something it cannot fathom in size, for its mind is so insignificantly small it cannot comprehend the thought of how enormous is our vibration. We were the first Gods on the planet and only by our graces have we let things become what they are; we are just testing our resolve because only in this way shall we know the truth of how great and almighty is our being.*

Our greatness has stood the test of time; we feel no pressure in our shortcomings because we are higher in

consciousness than their mundane reality. All that's needed is that which we have already endured – time.

*'Like sands through the hourglass
These are the end-days of their lives'...*

*The whites must perish. They're far too fair for our sun,
out of place and out of time. (BEAT)
Me and my black family...*

HE GESTURES FLAMBOYANTLY TO THE OTHERS

*My black family of Gods will bide our time, and watch
them slowly but surely melt into the dust that we
created them from. And on that day we will smile,
bored with our omnipotence, and grow them from the
dust once more.*

(UNDERSCORE STOPS)

Magdalena: *Yeah but now, Staff? What if we can't wait, or don't
have your dreamtime patience? What do we do about
now?*

Stafford: *Well if you must do something right this minute...then I
recommend we agitate for a separate state.*

All: *A what?*

Stafford: *You heard right. Our own black nation. Call it
ABORIGINALIA, The People's Black Republic of!*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Yeah, dig it eya!*
Liberation, decolonization...
Catch a fire!

Stafford: *It's nothin' new mc. A Tassie blackfella called Michael Mansell was on about it years ago. (BEAT)*
You know, I can't remember how many times I was told in school there were no Tassie blacks left...(me sittin' there thinkin' that's not how Nan tells it.)

HE IMITATES A POMPOUS TEACHER

'Unfortunately all now extinct like the Tasmanian Tiger'
White teacher tellin' us so matter of fact...like
extinction just happens by itself! (BEAT)
Then up pops this Mansell on the tellie like a spitting
serpent seriously suggesting the Top End returns
home...to us. A place for all us blacks to live
peaceably without that stupid white gaze all the time.
Delicious! To hell with white charity, white patronage,
white racism...we're not their problem, they're our
problem...still! Always have been.
That Mansell dude sure lit a fire under me, mc!

mc MAR_LEE b: *White's wouldn't do it in a thousand years give or take,*
Darwin's their biggest army base for God's sake.

Stafford: *Fuck, America has a military base on the arse end of*
Cuba – and they're sworn enemies.

Heard of Guantanamo Bay? Its been in the news lately. Anything's possible...if we truly want it

Magdalena: *Yeah, and what about all that iron, uranium, minerals and gold they got up north? They bin diggin' up that shit and floggin' it for decades. That's Aboriginal land and our people up there get SFA, nada, nuttin'*

Stafford: *Exactly, with a slice of that mineral action...*

mc MAR_LEE b: *We could be quite a nation*

Stafford: *So that's my explication
Follow my traction?*

ALL LAUGH AT THE RHYME

Curtly: *Yeah, we've got our own flag already!*

Stafford: *Now there's an excellent idea for a tattoo!*

Magdalena: *And sporting heroes a plenty*

mc MAR_LEE b: *We got martyrs too...
John Raymond Pilot...*

All (not mc): *No, not now, mc!*

CURTLY LOOKS AT HIS BICEP & BEGINS TRACING LETTERS

Curtly (slowly): *How do you spell AB-OR-IG-IN-AL-IA?*

ALL LAUGH

Stafford: *Think about it. Eventually we could be a big, brash, beautiful black country. Yeah maybe even join together with New Guinea, Timor, Irian Jaya...*

Magdalena: *Catch a fire!*

ALL LAUGH

Stafford: *We've got a damn sight more in common with our Melanesian brothers than with those white cunts who lord it over us at the moment.*

Magdalena: *That 'ud be right!*

Stafford: *So if you don't wanna be patient Lena...
That's what I'd do!*

Mc MAR_LEE b LOOKS AT HIS WATCH

Mc MAR_LEE b: *Look I'm tellin' ya for the last time
The demo starts at half nine in King George Square
I'm goin'...I'm sayin' we all should be there.
Our people are dying today, this minute right now!
More black deaths?
We gotta show the world these deaths we won't allow*

Curtly: *What's the demo about?*

Magdalena: *The cops bash a kid to death on Fern Island.
Cleave his liver in two.
They say he was drunk and accidentally fell down the
stairs on the way to the lock-up. (BEAT)
No trial, the only witnesses, you guessed it, the other
fuckin' cops!
Guess what, their word against...a split liver!
So of course, the cops walk. Just fuckin' redeployed
somewhere, Surfers Paradise I think.
People riot...Same bloody farce as usual...*

SHE LOOKS POINTEDLY AT STAFFORD

Magdalena: *I guess that's 'fair enough'?*

Stafford (defensively): *Nothing changes...until we truly want it to.*

Mc MAR_LEE b: *Revelation reveals the truth¹
It takes a revolution
To make a solution
Too much confusion
So much frustration*

Stafford (singing): *I feel like bombing a church²
Now I know that the preacher is lying!*

Mc MAR_LEE b: *Very funny. I'm outa here, no fear
Youse coming or what?*

¹ Couplet is from 'Revelation' by Bob Marley from *Natty Dread* album

² Line is from 'Talkin' Blues' by Bob Marley from *Natty Dread* album

Mc MAR_LEE b MOVES TOWARDS THE EXIT

Stafford: *Not me, but hey, mc...catch a fire!*

Magdalena: *Will come down later Lee.
Gonna get some shut eye...see ya down there*

Curtly: *Hang on, take me, take me...I'm coming, I'm coming!*

CURTLY CATCHES UP TO Mc MAR_LEE b. THEY STAND TOGETHER,
INCONGRUOUSLY SMILING. BROTHERS-IN-ARMS

Stafford: *Halleluiah! Virginity Lost!
Up the revolution!
Catch ya all later*

CURTLY & Mc MAR_LEE b EXIT ARMS DRAPED ON EACH OTHERS'
SHOULDERS. MAGDELENA LIES DOWN ON THE COUCH. STAFFORD
SITS ON A CHAIR, WATCHING MAGDELENA

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4

THE COSMOS ACCORDING TO STAFFORD

LIGHTS UP AS MAGDELENA SITS BOLT UPRIGHT ON THE COUCH

Magdalena: *I can't fuckin' sleep!*

Stafford: *Ha, ha... no rest for the wicked...*

(UNDERSCORE 4 BEGINS)

Stafford: *Have you been wicked, Lena?*

Magdalena: *What the fuck are ya getting at Staff?*

Stafford: *I know you've been wicked. They told me so...*

STAFFORD POINTS TOWARDS THE VISIONS

Stafford: *Your friends that is.*

Magdalena: *Yeah like you fucking know.*

Stafford: *But I do...you know I do.*

Magdalena: *So, why do they torment me?
Is it a blessing, a curse or sommin worse?*

Stafford: *Well they're with you for a reason. They know my
power, and they don't bother me in my sleep. I'd say its*

a message Lena. They are frustrated with your pitifulness. Wake up!

Magdalena: *I just want it to stop. I'm so scared all the time...*

Stafford: *You're afraid because you're weak.
You don't give enough Lena. You need to give more of yourself. I can help you, but you need to give me your trust.*

Magdalena: *Sleep is my enemy. And when I do sleep...
It's always the same fuckin' dream!*

Stafford (curious): *What do you dream about Lena?
You know can tell me...*

Magdalena: *I go floating off into the desert and there is a high hill right in the middle. I don't know where this place is no matter how hard I try to remember. I hear howling, pained moans of hurt people, terrible sounds, the sounds of near death. I'm at the top of the hill and the sound thickens, and the moaning starts to take shape. Then they mould together and become a face, a black man's face. He whispers somethin' to me, somethin' I don't understand and all the while he shakes his head, looking through me. (BEAT)
I die on that hill. I feel as if I am sleeping with the dead.*

Stafford: *They're testing your resolve. You feel abandoned?
They want you to let them in. Now is your time.
That's what they want you to see.*

(UNDERScore STOPS)

Magdalena: *Fuck you Stafford...what would you know?*

STAFFORD LAUGHS AS MAGEDELENA GOES TO HER ROOM. THE VISIONS SCURRY AFTER HER, SINGING THE **STRUGGLE SONG**. STAFFORD CURLS UP & DOZES ON THE COUCH

STRUGGLE SONG

Visions: *We hear you're wishin' for a second chance
A second chance to just get free*

Visions/Furies: *And life's burdens are lead to your soul
And your soul's at life's extremity*

Lead to your soul

Lead to your soul (oh yeah)

Life's burdens are lead to your soul

And your soul's at life's extremity

Visions: *Our song is sweet it gives absolution
The pain it goes try our fair solution
This night can end join our fine communion
Just one small leap to reach our reunion*

Come to us

To sleep with us

Furies: *Stop and think on your plight
Don't end it, stay and fight*

Ah...

Magdalena: **You are the only ones for me
You are the way to set me free
You are the only way for me
You are the ones to set me free**

Visions: **We are the way
To set you free**

**Our song is sweet it gives absolution
The pain it goes try our fair solution
This night can end join our fine communion
Just one small leap to reach our reunion**

Furies: **Stop and think on your plight**

Visions: **Solution, our solution**

Furies: **Don't end it, stay and fight
Ah...**

Magdalena: **They say life's a battle a war without end
God knows I'm struggling now
Perhaps He set the world in spin
Then cleared on off
Or else he's laughin' at me**

Magdalena/Visions/Furies: **Celestially**

***Lead to my soul
Lead to my soul, oh no
Life's burdens are lead to my soul
And my soul's at life's extremity***

Visions: ***Ah...***

***Lead to my soul, my poor soul
Lead to my soul, oh no
Life's burdens are...***

Furies: ***There to resolve***

Magdalena: ***My soul's at...
And my soul's at life's extremity***

EXHAUSTED & SPENT, MAGDELENA LIES DOWN & CLOSES HER
EYES

SCENE 5

THE RIOT WITHIN, THE RIOT WITHOUT

THE VISIONS ASSIST MAGDELENA IN HER SUICIDE. THE FURIES
OBJECT

Furies: ***We are Furies***
 Furious for revenge
 Because justice
 Is nothing
 Without blood

Visions: ***Simple, Simple*** (etc. continues under chorale)

THE VISIONS PREPARE A NOOSE MADE FROM THE ROPE THE USED
IN SCENE ONE. WITH GREAT CARE & AFFECTION THEY SLOWLY
PLACE A CHAIR FOR HER TO STAND ON & POSITION THE NOOSE.

(A LINK COULD BE MADE BETWEEN THIS IMAGE &
THE 33 GAOL HANGINGS INVESTIGATED BY THE ROYAL
COMMISSION INTO ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY.)

AS THE VISIONS SING THE CHORALE, MAGDELENA CLIMBS THE
CHAIR & PLACES HER NECK IN THE NOOSE. SHE WAITS A MOMENT.
SHE IS ABOUT TO KICK AWAY THE CHAIR WHEN LOUD SHOTS &
SIRENS ARE HEARD FROM THE DEMONSTRATION BOILING OVER IN
KING GEORGE SQUARE.

Visions (chorale): ***Almighty Serpent***
Take this child
And wrap her in
The warmth of time

Furies: ***Ah...***

mc MAR_LEE b's DESPERATE SCREAM OFF-STAGE BREAKS THE CHORALE'S SPELL

mc MAR_LEE b: *Magdalena!*

THE CHORALE ENDS. IN ITS PLACE IS A RHYTHMIC PULSE ON THE TRIANGLE (SCENE 5b, BAR 1 VAMP)

mc MAR_LEE b ENTERS, FRANTIC & SCREAMING

mc MAR_LEE b: *They got Wicket!*

STAFFORD WAKES WITH A START AS THE VISIONS WHISK AWAY THE NOOSE & MAGDELENA JUMPS DOWN FROM THE CHAIR

Stafford: *Who?*

MAGDELENA JOINS STAFFORD & mc MAR_LEE b

Magdalena: *Calm down, what's happened?*

mc MAR_LEE b: *They got Curtly. They got Curtly. Cops. I can't get to him. Too many people. Yelling, sirens, horses...they got Wicket. Blood. Whacking him with batons. On the*

ground. Blood...screaming all around. Stuff him in a van. Dead, he looks dead...

Magdalena: *Shit!*

Stafford: *I'm goin' to the pig farm, sort this shit out!*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Too late, too late, too late...*

Stafford: *I'm goin' anyway!*

(to Magdalena) *You do somethin' with him. I'll find Curt.*

STAFFORD EXITS. mc MAR_LEE b BRAKES DOWN, CRYING.
HE HOLDS HIMSELF, GENTLY ROCKING

Magdalena: *Calm down, Lee, please calm down. Look at me, it's me Lena. Tell me what happened?*

mc MAR_LEE b: *They fucking got him. Fucking bastard pigs!*

MAGDELENA CRADLES mc MAR_LEE b's FACE IN HER HANDS

Magdalena: *Just start from the beginning...what happened down there?*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Happened? The fucking police happened, that's what happened! It was a community demo, not even a march. Five paddy wagons fuck, talk about overkill, or a set up...I mean, what were they planning to pick us up for...disturbing the trees?*

Magdalena: *Lee, what happened with Curt?*

(**CURTLY'S PASSING** BEGINS AFTER THE LINE: 'Day was almost over' IT UNDERSCORES mc MAR_LEE b's MONOLOGUE)

CURTLY'S PASSING

Visions: ***Join us, together***
Join us, our brother
Your struggle's over

mc MAR_LEE b: *Day was almost over; just started to rain. There'd bin the usual ya know...BBQ, tea and coffee for the aunties. Some deadly speakers as well. That boy up on Fern? Well, his cousin spoke. He just got back from the funeral. Got the crowd pretty riled up too! That got the cops nervous. Any rate it got 'em to crawl out of their air-con. (BEAT)*
To finish off, one auntie got up and asked for a minutes silence to remember that one...and all the others that's died needlessly. (BEAT)
We all hear it, in the back...the snigger... It's like a match, people just exploding around us. One guy takes a swing at a cop and that's it, half the crowd is charging 'em. It's chaos. Wicket and me, we get split up. At first I fight, just to stay on my feet. I can't see him. I can't even hear myself yellin' out to him, it's so fucking loud. I finally get clear just as the riot police show up...dogs! They must a been right around the corner, just waitin'. (BEAT)

And then I see him. They have him. He is twistin' round, like doin' one of his crazy dances, lookin' for me, I can tell, but those bastards think he's strugglin'. He catches sight of me and calls out...Then he slips...(BEAT)

They haven't cuffed him yet and as he's fallin' his elbow clocks the cop in the jaw who's holdin' him. His mate puts the boot in and then the batons are out... They shove him in the back of the wagon. He looks like a rag doll. One cop gets in the back with him. He is still holding his baton...high above his head, cocked like a polo stick...

Magdalena: *Shit!*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Don't know I'm runnin' 'til I fall over some guy. When I look up, I'm too late...they're pullin' away. And all around there's this smell, I'm choking on it...spilt coffee, wet dirt, shit, grease and blood.*

(CURTLY'S PASSING ENDS)

mc MAR_LEE b: *I threw up.*

SCENE 6

EPIPHANY CONFESSION

Magdalena: *Shh...honey, take it easy, you did all you could.*
 Shhhh...

mc MAR_LEE b: *Too late, too late, too late...*

Magdalena: *Shhhh...we'll find him. Staff's down there now...*

Mc MAR_LEE b: *I shoulda done somethin'...it's my fault, too late...*

Magdalena: *Shhhh...you're not to blame. You're not to blame, Lee.*

Mc MAR_LEE b's GRIEF VIBRATES DEEP WITHIN MAGDELENA.
SOMETHING TURNS. SHE CLINGS TO mc MAR_LEE b BUT
SUDDENLY LETS GO & SOBS BITTERLY. IN ONE OF THOSE RARE,
EGOLESS MOMENTS THE CONSOLER BECOMES THE CONSOLED

mc MAR_LEE b: *Lena, what's wrong? What's goin' on? Lena!*

Magdalena: *Blame. (BEAT)*
 Do ya know I enjoy it?

mc MAR_LEE b: *Enjoy it?*

(UNDERSCORE 5 BEGINS)

Visions: *Shh... (etc.)*

Magdalena: *I hate it and I love it. Both at once; tearin' me apart.*

*I started doin' it just to get by, but then I start to like it...
I feel like it's my revenge for our people. The power it
gives me...(BEAT)*

*For one moment, I am conqueror and they're the
conquered. Dirt. I take from them and they get nothin',
not one thing that means anythin'. All these sweaty,
stupid white men playin' out this fantasy of black
arse...black gin. Well, they don't get it... beggin',
pleadin', creamin' 'emselves tryin' to put a rubber on,
like a kid...*

SHE LAUGHS, A LONG SORROWFUL SIGH

Magdalena: *Oh my God, I am in control. I am power. (BEAT)
Last night... guy walks in...
Black guy. Oh no. I freak.
I'm frozen...I can't say nothin'...
I'm fuckin' him and all I can think is: 'You slut, you
cheap, dirty, black slut. You're shit, less than shit'...
I have nothin', no control, no power, all the things that
keep me strong tumblin' down and fallin...dust... I'm
just dust...*

mc MAR_LEE b HOLDS MAGDELENA WHILE SHE CRIES. STAFFORD
ENTERS, UNNOTICED BY THE OTHERS

mc MAR_LEE b: *Oh Lena, honey...so that's why this mornin' you were
ready to kill someone?*

Magdalena: *I'm...lost...empty...suffocating...(BEAT)
I'm covered in shrapnel.*

(UNDERSCORE 5 STOPS.) SILENCE, THEN SHE CONTINUES

Magdalena: *Next booking comes in. Cocky as shit. He says straight up: 'I paid good money for a black bitch and I intend to get my money's worth.' He laughs...it's disgustin'. I'm sick to my soul, almost throw up, so I tell him: 'No, I can't do it...please... get another girl, plenty on tonight prettier than me'...But he's on me before I can move. He hits me. I know I have to stop strugglin'. This one gets a rubber on quick smart, a real pro! 'Can't be too careful with dirt like you', he says. He calls me bitch, calls me stupid black slut and says: 'You deserve it'. And all I can think of while he's slobberin' over me is: That's right, I am a stupid black slut, I deserve it, I deserve all this'... I pass out. (BEAT)
When I come to, I'm covered in shrapnel. He's chucked his fuckin' coins at me. It's a fuckin' tip...*

Stafford (gently): *That's enough now, Lena.*

mc MAR_LEE b (surprised): *Staff!*

MAGDELENA BURIES HER HEAD INTO mc MAR_LEE b

Magdalena: *Alone, alone, I'm so alone...*

mc MAR_LEE b: *You're not alone, Lena*

Magdalena (angry): *I'm a whore...a dirty, rotten, filthy...*

mc MAR_LEE b GENTLY PUTS HIS HAND OVER HER MOUTH & WIPES AWAY HER TEARS

mc MAR_LEE b: *Yeah? Well so what?
So's thousands of others...
But most of all, you're our sweet Lena!*

HER KISSES HER AND BRUSHES THE HAIR FROM HER FACE

mc MAR_LEE b: *We all knew...
Well, me and Staff knew anyways...*

Magdalena: *Youse knew? Yas never said...*

mc MAR_LEE b: *What's to say? It seemed part of the tight rope ya were walkin', us not sayin' anything.
So we didn't.
We didn't say nothin'...*

Magdalena (to Stafford): *Where's Curtly? I need Curtly...*

Stafford: *Cops wouldn't tell me fuckin' nothin'. Closed ranks.
Usual shit...(BEAT)*

mc MAR_LEE b: *I called his mum.
Told her we'd call if we hear anythin' at all...(BEAT)
We will hear somthin', won't we Staff?*

STAFF SHRUGS. MAGDELENA SITS STILL, SILENT & ALONE.

mc MAR_LEE b GENTLY SHAKES HER

mc MAR_LEE b: *Lena, you're not alone.
Ya'v got us. You've always got us.*

Magdalena: *Yeah sure, us.*

SHE GIVES A HALF LAUGH

mc MAR_LEE b: *Co'on now!
Give it up for Brother Lee, Sister Magdalena,
Brother Stafford and most of all, Brother...*

mc MAR_LEE b BREAKS DOWN. CURTLY'S NAME WON'T COME

Magdalena: *Lee, it's gonna be alright...*

mc MAR_LEE b: *I won't sing him till I know for sure!*

Stafford: *We'll find him...I know we will.*

Magdalena: *He's inside me...*

mc MAR_LEE b: *Inside us all.*

SCENE 7
RESURRECTION

THE SONG **I SEE STARS** UNDERSCORES THE SPLIT SCENE. THE TWO IMAGES OCCUR SIMULTANEOUSLY

I SEE STARS

All: *Ah, ah* (etc.)
 I see stars from Musgrave gardens
 Exploding after dark
 Each light a sacred pleasure
 Sweet joy
 A simple treasure

ON ONE SIDE OF THE SPACE, mc MAR_LEE b & STAFFORD PUT MAGDELENA TO BED, AN ACT OF TENDERNESS, UNDERSTANDING & LOVE. AS SHE LIES DOWN ON THE BED THE VISIONS EXIT HER BEDROOM CARRYING THE ROPE BETWEEN THEM.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SPACE CURTLY IS BOUND & BEATEN BY COPS TWICE HIS SIZE TOWERING OVER HIM. THEY TOSS HIM ABOUT LIKE A BALLERINA. HE COLLAPSES UNCONSCIOUS ON THE FLOOR & IS LEFT ALONE. A CRUMPLED & BROKEN CRUMB.

THE VISIONS MOVE TO CURTLY WITH THEIR ROPE & CURL IT UP BESIDE HIM. DURING THE FINAL CHORUS OF THE SONG CURTLY RISES & SLOWLY MOVES TOWARD MAGDELENA SLEEPING. HE CLIMBS INTO HER BED. THEY SPOON ONE ANOTHER WITH THE COMFORT OF HABIT. TOGETHER.

LX SLOW FADE TO BLACK

Fin.