OPERATION: EMU

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NOTE TO THE READER:

The Pilot you're about to read is the first episode of the first season of a greater **anthology** series, "Operation:".

Season one will explore this historical event about Emus.

Each season beyond will explore a different unbelievable, but completely true historic event.

Much to the dismay of Emus', they are not the only interesting thing in history. Don't tell them that though...

FADE IN:

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DUSK

A dense wheat field sits in the middle of the Australian outback. A loud "**gawk**" of an Emu echos.

Text appears:

"This story is based upon real events. Some elements involving real people, characters and locations are altered, for dramatic/comedic purposes."

Text fades. New text appears.

"That said, this war is very real." Text fades.

"Western Australia, 1932, in the midst of The Great Depression". Text fades.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALKER WHEAT FIELD - CONTINUOUS - DUSK

LIONEL WALKER (30s), runs through the wheat. He frequently looks behind himself.

LIONEL
Wanker.

He stops to catch his breath, laying low amongst the crops. A bullet whizzes right past him.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
Shit!

He dashes off.

Dark figures run amongst the wheat trailing behind.

Lionel dodges another bullet as he runs out of the field onto-

EXT. WALKER FARM - CONTINUOUS - DUSK

A woman, BARB WALKER (30s), holds a gun pointed directly toward Lionel.

LIONEL
No, no!

BARB
Get down!

Lionel hits the ground. Barb fires at the emerging beasts from the wheat field. A pack of EMUS jump out and stop. Some cock their heads, others begin to eat the wheat.

BARB (CONT'D)
Go, Shoo, get out of here!

She runs at them, firing once more. They run off. She helps Lionel off the ground.

BARB (CONT'D)
You're acting like a Derro out there!

LIONEL
You almost shot me.

BARB
Almost.

LIONEL
Barb, You ALMOST shot me!

They run into the field.

EXT. DESTROYED WHEAT FIELD - CONTINUOUS - DUSK

Lionel and Barb stare on in disbelief. Lionel slowly walks amongst the destroyed crop.

LIONEL
It's all gone.

BARB
Lionel...

LIONEL
My wheat...

BARB
There's not enough to sell...

Lionel collapses to his knees.

BARB (CONT'D)
How will we afford the house?

LIONEL
My wheat!

He cries out. Barb comes over and consoles him.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
We got Emus.

TITLE CARD: "OPERATION: EMU"

CUT TO:

INT. WALKER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

An assortment of Ex-soldier farmers and their wives stand around the disordered room, chatting.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lionel and Barb arrange food in the kitchen.

BARB
Are we sure about this?

LIONEL
Of course. We all beat back the Germans from the trenches. I think we can handle some birds.

INT. WALKER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

EDMUND (40s) steps away from his wife, MARY (40s), to the front of the room.

EDMUND
G'day. Lionel is busy in there but I think we all know why he called us here.

Edmund pulls out a flyer. It reads "Anti-Secession Rally: Featuring Defense Minister George Pearce."

All the guests lean in to read, struggling to do so.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
An Anti-Secession rally! Trying to stop US from leaving this oppressive Australia.

He bunches up the flyer.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Bunch of dags. They don't care for us here in the west. Where's the subsidies they promised for the farms? Why aren't our cries heard?

He throws the flyer.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Minister Pearse, our "senator", doesn't want us splittin' off so he can keep his power. I--

LIONEL
Edmund.

Lionel and Barb appear in the doorway with food.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
You good?

EDMUND
Gold. Just kicked things off.

Edmund goes to Mary.

LIONEL
I don't know about all that. We have more pressing matters.

Mary raises her hand.

MARY
The Depression.

LIONEL
No.

JIMMY (20s), American, calls out.

JIMMY
The rise of nationalism occurring in Germany.

LIONEL
Who invited you here?

RICHARD "Dick" (30s) stands near Edmund.

DICK
Secession.

LIONEL
Bloody hell, Dick...

Lionel takes out a poster stand. It reveals a crudely drawn picture of an Emu. People stir in confusion.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
The Emus are here.

EDMUND
Emus?

LIONEL
They destroyed my field and are growing in numbers.

DICK
A couple of birds? I'll wrangle them to the ground.

EDMUND
You can barely wrangle your dic-

MARY
A few Emus run through. What's the problem?

JIMMY
What's an Emu?

DICK
Shoot the bloody things!

LIONEL
We tried.

BARB
I tried...

Edmund walks toward Lionel.

EDMUND
Maybe they got a few crops but lets not stir about. Your wheat wasn't long to last anyways.

LIONEL
What's that supposed to mean?

EDMUND
Lionel...come on. If you need some tips on farming, I'd be glad to come over. But I for one have a field to tend to.

He and Mary leave. Others begin to follow.

BARB
Wheat prices have been dropping. We can't afford any lost product. Help us before it happens to the rest of you.

Jimmy approaches Barb abruptly.

JIMMY
Anything you need, Mrs. Walker. I'm here for you.

BARB
Piss off, Jimmy.

He walks out.

LIONEL
And I am a good farmer! My wheat was incredible!

BARB
They can't hear you honey. No need to shout.

She pats his shoulder.

INT. WALKER BARN - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Lionel storms into the barn. He aggressively looks through random tools and boxes.

LIONEL
Ed can get stuffed. Bad farmer.

He grumbles under his breath. Barb walks up.

BARB
We'll figure this out. We always do.

Lionel grabs a wrench and rope.

BARB (CONT'D)
But maybe it's time for a new approach. We need money.

LIONEL
I can fix it. I always do.

BARB
Like you fixed the porch?

LIONEL
One hole is better than three!

BARB
Our bed still leans to the left.

LIONEL
I'll sleep low...or high, whichever you prefer. Barb-

He looks toward her, dirt all of his face.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
It's a couple of birds, I can handle it. I'd never let anything bad happen to you.

BARB
I love you but hun, you don't have good luck with animals either-

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

INT./EXT. WALKER HOUSE/FARM - DAY/NIGHT

- Lionel fights a snake coming out of the porch holes with a stick

- Lionel loads a bushel of wheat onto the truck, a bunch of spiders come out and all over him

- Lionel gets chased by a kangaroo. Barb watches in disbelief.

END MONTAGE

INT. WALKER BARN - CONTINUOUS

Lionel pulls a tool box off a shelf.

LIONEL
A few rare cases-

A bat screeches and flies out.

LIONEL AND BARB
Ah!

Bat flies out.

LIONEL
I told you never to come back! Hear me!

He goes back to finishing his project. Barb reveals a “Final Notice” letter to Lionel. He looks over it and pauses, but then continues working.

BARB
Li, please. I’ve been thinking, we need money and can’t wait for this to be solved. I want to work.

LIONEL
Absolutely not.

BARB
Lionel! They’re coming for the house.

LIONEL
I will not have people like Edmund thinking I can’t take care of my own. You shouldn’t have to stress about this.

BARB
But I am. We take care of each other. Always have.

LIONEL
A man provides for his family. He fixes broken pieces. He hunts Emus. Apparently.

Lionel reveals his crudely made trap. He gives a celebratory “cheer”.

BARB
What the hell is that?

LIONEL
What’ll stop the Emus.

He walks out with the trap. Barb follows.

EXT. WALKER FARM - CONTINUOUS

Lionel walks toward the field with Barb following.

BARB
We will be HOMELESS, Lionel. Stop this nonsense. If not me working, then we can ask my father...

Lionel turns around and freezes.

LIONEL
No, no, never. Please. We don't need that man.

Lionel sets the trap up.

BARB
We need to do something!

LIONEL
This!

The trap is set and ready. Lionel brings Barb back toward the house.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
Now, we wait.

Lionel sits down. Barb sighs heavily in frustration. She sits and waits alongside him. Lionel notices her anxiety and holds her hand.

EXT. EDMUND'S FARM - DAY

Edmund tends to his crops. All is calm. Suddenly, there's a rustling in the field.

EDMUND
For fu-

Emus overtake Edmund and the field instantly.

EXT. DICK'S BARN - DAY

Dick hides in his barn as Emus "Gawk" behind him.

EXT. JIMMY'S FIELD - DAY

Jimmy runs into a field after some Emus.

EXT. EDMUND’S FARM - DAY

Edmund cries out at the Emus, scaring them off. Mary watches him.

EXT. DICK’S BARN - DAY

Dick peaks out from the barn.

EXT. JIMMY’S FIELD - DAY

Jimmy remains lost in the field.

EXT. WALKER FARM - EVENING

Lionel and Barb watch as some Emus walk up to the trap. The Emus peck at it. The trap falls apart. They run off. Barb walks inside as Lionel stares ahead.

EXT. WALKER FARM - NEXT DAY

Lionel is asleep in same position. Barb walks out and wakes him. The same group of Ex-Soldier Farmers and wives walk toward them.

EDMUND
Let’s kill these fucking birds.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALKER FARM - EVENING

The men all line up with their weapons. Some have guns. Others have pickaxes, shovels, scythes, anything they could find.

Edmund dumps out a small pile of ammo.

LIONEL
That’s all?

EDMUND
Ease back, money bags.

LIONEL
Everyone. Positions.

The men all hide in several groupings around the wheat field. The women are amongst the house and high grounds, providing coverage.

Lionel hops into one of the hiding spots. He peaks his head out.

The yard and field are still. Only the sounds of nature can be heard. Small murmurs come from the groupings, followed by shushing.

Lionel, Edmund and Dick are sitting hidden together.

EDMUND
(Whisper) Any second now.

DICK
(Whisper) Make this quick. I gotta piss.

Lionel and Edmund stare at him.

EXT. WALKER ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Mary and Barb sit on the roof, watching together. Mary hands Barb a flask, which she immediately drinks.

EXT. WALKER FARM - CONTINUOUS

Lionel looks at Edmund.

LIONEL
I think I hear something.

EXT. WEST AUSTRALIAN TERRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Emus' running legs are hidden in dusk, clamoring against the ground.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lionel closes his eyes to listen harder. Barb squints in the distance.

EXT. WEST AUSTRALIAN TERRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Emus begin calling to one another.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lionel’s eyes open. He begins to load and ready his gun. Others follow.

EXT. WEST AUSTRALIAN TERRAIN - CONTINUOUS

The Emus slow down to break a fence, then begin to ravage the field. Screams can be heard in the background.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Barb’s eyes widen. Lionel stands up in arms. His gun is pointed and ready. Jimmy sprints out of the brush.

JIMMY (O.S.)
Don’t shoot!

LIONEL
Damn it! Jimmy!

Lionel slams his gun down. Edmund and Dick pop up.

JIMMY
The other farms...they...they...can I have some water?

LIONEL
NO!

JIMMY
Okay... the other farms, they’ve been attacked.

EXT. WALKER ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Barb and Mary call out from the roof.

BARB
Who is it, dear?

LIONEL
(shouting up) Saint Jimmy.

MARY
Is he the one eating our crops?

Edmund laughs. Jimmy scoffs.

JIMMY
(Shouting) Mrs. Walker, the Emus attacked other farms!

EXT. WALKER FARM - CONTINUOUS

Lionel pats Jimmy's arm.

LIONEL
Thanks, kid.

He kicks dirt. Dick looks toward the field.

DICK
Lads, Lads...

Rustling and stampeding on the ground gets louder. A dark mass gets closer.

EDMUND
We'll split up. Cover more farms.

DICK
LADS.

All turn as the Emu calls erupt. Suddenly, Lionel is knocked down. Everything goes black.

Lionel awakes disoriented. Men are all running into the field. Jimmy gets caught by an Emu and is dragged in.

They sprint toward the fleeing birds with a war cry.

EXT. WALKER WHEAT FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Edmund fires his gun. Dick follows in suit. He runs out of ammo, then sprints head first deeper. Others follow. They yield axes, pitchforks, shovels, etc.

Lionel takes a few shots as a ringing begins in his ear. He rubs his eyes. Lionel starts to breath heavier, stepping back. Edmund shakes him.

EDMUND
Cobber, you all right?

LIONEL
Yeah.

Lionel shoots at the darting away Emus. Edmund lands one shot, but the Emu barely flinches. Both run out of ammo.

Dick charges at an Emu with a stick. As he swings at the bird, a man with a scythe accidentally swings under Dick's legs. Dick jumps, missing the blade. His feet connect with the handle and he slams face first on the ground.

Lionel and Edmund help him up. Dick faces away, toward where the Emu ran off to. Jimmy appears out of the wheat.

DICK
Damned beasts! Can't even fly!
Useless as two shits!

Barb, Mary and the other women join the others.

BARB
One shit is pretty useless all
ready.

Dick turns around. He is missing a tooth, bloody and bruised.

DICK
Exactly!

ALL
Ugh!

Dick wobbles to Edmund and collapses in his arms.

LIONEL
(Sighs) Time we ask our local
senator for government assistance.

Edmund spits.

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

A large barn is filled with men (and some women), all standing facing a stage. On stage is a large banner reading: "Referendum Day vote NAY!".

A well dressed, mustached man , GEORGE PEARCE (50s) stands on stage. A reporter, ELSIE (late 20s), stands off to the side taking notes.

Lionel, Edmund, Jimmy and Dick stand in back. Dick has a bandage over part of his mouth.

PEARCE
...We must stand united, as one
Australia! We did so during The
Great War and we showed our enemies
our singular, powerful voice.
(MORE)

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Now, once more, we need to use that voice against financial depression.

EDMUND (O.C.)
Wanker!

Half the room laughs, half of it boos.

PEARCE
Stand tall, help your neighbor, be a single empire. One Australian commonwealth!

Fighting begins to break out amongst the crowd. Lionel gestures for them to head out. Edmund slams down someones pamphlet. They frown.

Elsie notices the interaction and follows.

EXT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Lionel and the rest wait outside. Pearce and his aid, BILLY (20s) come out the door.

LIONEL
Defense Minister Pearce!

Billy tries to usher Pearce away.

Lionel, Edmund and Dick chase after them.

EXT. TOWN HALL SIDE DOOR - NIGHT

PEARCE
Gentlemen, can't say I'm not both perplexed and frightened of why you are waiting outside the door.

He awkwardly tries to slink away.

LIONEL
We're Farmers, veterans from The Great War as well. We only need a few minutes of your time...

BILLY
The subsidies will arrive soon enough. Go along now.

EDMUND
Bull Shit...

BILLY
Excuse me? Wait- you were the heckler! Let’s go.

Billy gestures Pearce away.

LIONEL
Sir, it’s about the wheat! Rather lack there of...the Emus are eating it all!

Pearce and Billy freeze. Pearce turns around. Billy does so only after him.

PEARCE
But we need the money, wheats our biggest export.

INT. BACK MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Pearce and Billy sit at a table. They face Lionel, Edmund, and a poster board. Dick sits by the table. The poster is revealed. It’s a very improved drawing of an Emu.

PEARCE
Their migration?

LIONEL
Migrating inland.

PEARCE
Why?

EDMUND
Our new sources of wheat and water.

PEARCE
Couplings?

LIONEL
Hoards.

BILLY
(smirking) Their weaponry?

DICK
(with a lisp) Shit none.

Lionel jabs Dick.

LIONEL
Obsolete. They’re birds. But, big, with claws and... beaks.

Pearce sits back.

PEARCE
Fascinating.

BILLY
A couple of winged-rats? Get a scarecrow.

EDMUND
You available?

BILLY
Watch your mouth. Make fences at least. Or, just replant. You all know how. Minister, we should go.

EDMUND
What happened to one Australia? Helping your neighbor?

Billy stands. Pearce puts a hand up, signaling to stop. Billy sits.

PEARCE
Go on.

EXT. TOWN HALL SIDE DOOR - NIGHT

Jimmy stands in front of the door.

JIMMY
“Keep watch”, this is bullshit.

Elsie approaches, getting his attention immediately.

JIMMY (CONT’D)
Evening.

ELSIE
You left awful quick in there.

JIMMY
You-- you took notice?

ELSIE
Maybe...

She smiles and gets closer.

ELSIE (CONT'D)
Maybe I also noticed your friends slip away into a backroom with Senator Pearce.

JIMMY
Uh-- that's none of your business.

ELSIE
Secret plans about the secession rallies?

Jimmy snickers.

JIMMY
Classified.

Elsie pins him against the wall and physically threatens him.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Ah, it's about Emus!

ELSIE
Emus? Why?

INT. BACK MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Edmund flips the poster to an anatomical drawing of the Emu.

LIONEL
These creatures are a hard target. Ed shot one. Thing basically threw him the birdie and ran off. We need fire power. Give us some machine guns, we'll do the rest.

BILLY
A machine gun? For god's sake-

PEARCE
It's our national bird.

EDMUND
No offense, senator, but it's also a pain in the ass.

Pearce sits in thought for a moment.

PEARCE
Gentlemen, I feel your pain. We're not so different you and I.

Billy rolls his eyes.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
In my past I was a carpenter, from a very poor family.

Pearce smirks and stands.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
For the protection of our commonwealth, I agree. I'll send a small faction of ACTIVE military personal to execute this mission.

EDMUND
Don't trust us?

PEARCE
(Laughs) No.

A beat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Take care of our men out there.

Billy pulls Pearce away.

BILLY
Sir, a word.

They turn away from the rest. In the background, the others are seen celebrating.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Sir, this seems highly...ambitious. Especially over some dodos. Have you been...

Billy motions drinking. Pearce's demeanor changes, becoming blunt and dismissive.

PEARCE
Dull boy. Two birds with one stone.

BILLY
Gun.

PEARCE
The only way to stave off these radicals trying to secede from Australia is by extending an olive branch. Feels like this is the easiest way. Plus, we really need wheat.

BILLY
I thought the speech worked just fine.

PEARCE
Obviously the speech was phenomenal. But this can silence all the lambs.

BILLY
Fine. And we'll get news coverage. For the people's benefit.

PEARCE
Of course, for the people.

They turn back.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Military, weapons, all heading your way. Emus will make good target practice for the boys.

Billy whispers to Pearce.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
And a news team will join. To film this brave endeavor; it'll be fun.

All look at Lionel. Lionel nods. Pearce pats him on the shoulder, holding his head high.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
I want twenty-thousand Emus.

EXT. TOWN HALL SIDE DOOR - NIGHT

Elsie still has Jimmy in a hold.

JIMMY
...then I came back, heroically warned the others of an on coming attack-

Pearce, Lionel and the rest exit the side door. The door hits Jimmy and Elsie to the ground. Pearce rushes away quickly. They drag Jimmy along. Elsie is left in the dust.

LIONEL
Stop flirting and look alive Jimmy, we got an army.

EXT. GUN RANGE - DAY

Five targets are being fired upon. Bullets shoot up dust around the targets upon impact. The targets remain untouched.

Pearce and MAJOR MEREDITH (50s-60s) stand behind the shooters, spectating. Bullets continue to miss targets.

MEREDITH
Hault! You boys wouldn't have lasted a minute in The Great War. Shoot at those papers as if they're here to rip out your innards and bed your wives.

Meredith points at a soldier far right.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
You'd be dead.

He points at far left.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Dead.

He points at soldier in center.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Crippled. Then Dead.

He turns back forward.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Again.

The soldiers shoot again. All miss except the two lads not pointed at, SERGEANT MCMURRAY (Late 20s, 30s) and GUNNER O'HALLORAN (20s).

Meredith turns to Pearce and smiles. Pearce gestures to walk. Meredith points to those two and points to follow. The two men walk with the two boys following behind.

In the background, the other soldiers hit one target and all celebrate.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Not like we used to have but these soldiers will do. Have to, a war is coming. Not sure when but I know it will.

Meredith lights a cigarette. The smoke trail causes the boys to cough.

PEARCE
Sooner than you'd think.

MEREDITH
What's the intel? Sir, I shall not let you down. Thank you for coming to me.

PEARCE
Needed a man of wit, merit and skill, Major.

MEREDITH
At your service. Germany back at it I'm sure?

PEARCE
Not quite.

MEREDITH
Knew it was only time before America got greedy...er.

PEARCE
Nothing of the sorts. Emus.

Meredith stops.

MEREDITH
Emus...

Pearce nods.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Are they in Asia?

PEARCE
Our national bird--

MEREDITH
The BIRD?

He pauses.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Far too busy. Lads handle their Johnson better than their Lewis.

Mcmurray and O'Halloran exchange a knowing look. O'Halloran accidentally knocks into a gun rack, knocking it over. Meredith gives Pearce a knowing look.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Someone needs to babysit. Unfortunately, I was shoved away here.

PEARCE
Major, these birds are wrecking havoc. I can only trust you to carry out this operation.

MEREDITH
Any moron with a gun could be trusted.

PEARCE
Depends on which gun.

INT. GUN RANGE TENT - CONTINUOUS

The four men marvel upon the lewis gun. It has a glow around it. The men line around it as Meredith fires with glee.

MEREDITH
Top-mounted pan magazine, heat sink cooling mount attached to the barrel, firing forty-seven .303 Caliber rounds.

Mcmurray and O'Halloran applaud.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
And you want me using this God blessed killing machine on pigeons?

PEARCE
Can't be done?

MEREDITH
Just won't be much Emu left.

PEARCE
With your command? Absolutely.

MEREDITH
Thousands of krauts fear my name. Men followed me into hell and back all for the sake of honor, protection, saving our great country. And you're sending me to hunt tomorrows dinner.

PEARCE
Those veterans need you once more. I need you. Economic crumble, homes destroyed. These birds are the enemy.

Meredith nods at McMurray and O'Halloran. They move the lewis to a fresh target.

MEREDITH
Make a target and I'll go.

PEARCE
My clothes are all wrong.

Meredith stares him down. Pearce accepts his fate. He fires once, misses. He fires again, misses worse. He continues singular shots, but still hits none.

MCMURRAY AND O'HALLORAN
Sir!

Pearce looks at them. They gesture to hold and fire at will. Pearce holds the trigger. The gun takes off, bringing Pearce along with it. It fires rapidly all over, incidentally getting many bullets into the target.

Suddenly the gun jams. Pearce ascends frazzled. Meredith laughs with glee. He embraces him.

MEREDITH
Now THAT'S the lewis gun! Lads, pack up. We have a war to win!

INT. WALKER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Barbara rummages alone through the cabinets and ice box. All empty. She slumps against the counter holding back her emotions. Lionel fiddles with his trap outside. It hits him in the face.

She smiles and walks toward him.

EXT. WALKER FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Lionel nurses the injury.

LIONEL
Works on me. Gotta work on those damn birds.

She sits down and works on the trap herself.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
Careful.

Barb smirks at him.

BARB
You know what I did during the war? While you were away?

LIONEL
Yes...I think...this feels like a trap.

BARB
For a short time I worked in a factory. With my father's blessing.

LIONEL
That's surprising.

BARB
Excuse me?

LIONEL
That he gave his blessing.

BARB
He didn't have much choice. I worked there for six months. Until you came home. We got married, moved out here and made a beautiful life together. But we as a family had to survive back then. And we have to survive now. I like having a home and a full belly.

LIONEL
Barb - you just don't get it.

BARB
Help me understand.

Lionel gets up.

LIONEL
If I can't do this then -

He pauses. He looks away from her.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
The army will be here tomorrow. Everything will work out.

BARB
If it doesn't?

LIONEL
Then I'll kill every last Emu myself. Crops will grow, money will roll in!

BARB
I'm more than capable of pulling more weight. With you here, me out working, it'll be enough.

LIONEL
No!

A Emu cries out loudly.

LIONEL AND BARB
Shut up!

Lionel walks toward the house.

LIONEL
End of discussion. I love you, Goodnight.

Barb storms off and throws the trap toward the road. It lands upright and unbroken.

INT. ARMY BUNKER - NIGHT

Meredith, McMurray and O'Halloran pack and prep for the mission. Meredith cleans weapons in his boxers, in a sort of ritual. A bible and field book sit upright.

McMurray folds clothes tightly. He bounces a quarter off his bed, then sits completely still. O'Halloran wears a stylized uniform. He appears like a movie star in front of the mirror.

O'HALLORAN
This turkey...is about to be stuffed.

He pretend shoots his gun, making shooting sounds himself. As well as reenactments of the dead Emus. Meredith and McMurray stare at him.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMY BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

The three men hold shoulders in a circle and sway while repeating a chant. They psych themselves to incredible heights.

ALL
Where right and glory lead!

They cheer.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ARMY BUNKER - MORNING

Title Card: “November 1st, 1932”

The three men sprint out of the bunker in a war cry. The back of a military truck is seen speeding away.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - DAY

The same truck slams to a stop in front of the house. Dick, Barbara, Lionel, Edmund and Mary stand in a line across from them.

The three military men step out in line. Jimmy runs up out of breath. He tries joining Lionel’s line. Dick kicks him back to sitting at the house.

MEREDITH
G’day, Lucas.

LIONEL
Lionel.

EDMUND
You’re all he sent?

MEREDITH
All we need.

Everyone stares at each other in silence.

LIONEL
What’s your next stop.

The three military men look to one another. None seemed to even considered this.

MEREDITH
Wherever the Emus are!

MARY
You don't know?

O'HALLORAN
Intel on the matter is classified. Also scarce. We assume the nearest farm...

MEREDITH
Pearce just ordered us to come here. Figured we'd start by doing the ground work. So, where should we go?

LIONEL
West.

O'HALLORAN
So, left.

EDMUND
How you figure that?

O'HALLORAN
West is left.

MCMURRAY
I've heard that.

JIMMY
(From the porch) Me too!

DICK
Our livelihood is at stake here.

MEREDITH
Don't call into question our capabilities here, boy.

Everyone erupts into an argument. An Emu calls out in pain beside them. All turn to see an Emu stuck in the trap Barb had thrown away.

EDMUND
We finally got one.

DICK
I can't believe it.

JIMMY
(from porch) What's happening?

MEREDITH
First enemy captured. Color me impressed. Who made the trap?

LIONEL
I did...

Barb stares at him in disbelief and rolls her eyes. Meredith nods his head in approval.

MEREDITH
Fall out men.

O'HALLORAN
To where?

Lionel stops them.

LIONEL
Listen, you could use my help. I know everything about Emus, and know how to hunt them!

BARB AND MEREDITH
No way in hell.

O'HALLORAN
We do need the help, sir.

Meredith grunts.

EDMUND
Maybe he'll make better Emu bait then a farmer.

Lionel shoots him a dirty look.

LIONEL
Meredith, Sir, I served in The Great War. I know combat, I know what it takes to win and I know how to find these fucking birds.

BARB
Lionel...

Meredith looks around.

MEREDITH
Fine. Men, LET'S MOVE!

The soldiers get to the trunk.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Join our ranks, Linus.

LIONEL
Lionel.

MEREDITH
Fall out!

BARB
You can't...the farm, Lionel.

LIONEL
Barb, please. I can help end this all quicker. Once it's done the farm will be safe.

BARB
Until then? You're leaving me all alone. We can't even talk about this?

LIONEL
I need this, Barb. I'm useless here. Let me protect this family.

BARB
The birds aren't armed! We are safe!

LIONEL
You just don't understand. I promise to be back soon. I love you.

Barb stares at him.

BARB
Fine.

Barb turns to Meredith.

BARB (CONT'D)
He's all yours.

She goes back toward the farmers.

EDMUND
The lad is a drongo.

Lionel gets on the truck as it drives off. Jimmy comes forward and puts an arm around Barb.

JIMMY
I'll protect you with my life.

Barb swats it and him away.

BARB
Start with tending the field.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Meredith and McMurray sit in the front seat. Lionel and O'Halloran sit in the truck bed.

O'HALLORAN
So, what exactly is an Emu?

Lionel stares blankly at him, then out the side, ignoring the question.

END