

SCRIPT

Scene 1: Don Ritchie Grove at Gap Park – Daybreak, late spring.

SFX: Wind gently rustles through leaves. Early morning birdsong. Waves wash against the cliffs – calming, almost meditative. Sudden footsteps approach from behind; you hear breathless panting as a jogger runs past and into the distance. Magpies squawk. A low rumbling, like the sound before an earthquake, rises from deep in the ground beneath you.

Musical transition: The place-sound: tuning into South Head's frequency.¹

A female voice sings the harmonic series, or natural scale. It's underscored by the Schumann Resonance (the electromagnetic vibrational frequency known as 'Earth's heartbeat' at 7.83 hertz – the same frequency as the brain's alpha waves). Combined with the rumbling sound-effect, they evoke a soundscape of South Head's geological history.

You overhear a couple talking, they are sitting on either side of you, they come and go, gently steering the narrative and helping to fill in the gaps while providing a meta-discourse on the narrative

WOMAN
(sitting on your left)
Did you hear that?

MAN
(sitting on your right)
Hear what?

SFX: The rumbling gets louder, it comes from below where you're sitting.

WOMAN
(Whispers in your left ear, her voice is so close you can almost feel her breath)
Listen.

SFX: A final note, then silence. Natural atmos.

MAN
(jokes playfully)
Was that your stomach grumbling?

WOMAN
(softly)
Shhhh!

MAN
(not taking her too seriously)

¹ Ray, R. W. (2017). *Isochronic Tones in the Schumann Resonance Frequency for the Treatment of Anxiety: A Descriptive Exploratory Study* (Doctoral dissertation, Saybrook University).

What? What did you hear?

WOMAN

(whispers, curious)

Here. ... I think I could hear, here.

SFX: The wind whips up. It's disconcerting. Uneasy.

Musical transition: The place-sound reappears as a motif – each time moving up the harmonic scale.

Scene 2: Archival interview: Diana Ritch with Don Ritchie, the 'Angel of The Gap' 2012²

SFX: A helicopter approaches, it gets closer, hovers above you, the propeller whips loudly.

DIANA RITCH

Now, you're right near The Gap, aren't you?

DON RITCHIE

Yep, yeah. This is called Gap Park, just opposite here.

DIANA

Just opposite you is Gap Park. And um, this is a notorious place for suicides isn't it?

DON

That's correct.

DIANA

You have been known to help people at this time.

DON

Yeah ...

DIANA

When did you start doing this?

DON

Well, almost from the time we moved in. I mean, in those days there was a tram line that went past here down to Watsons Bay and there was a stop just over where the bus stop is now.

SFX: An old tram rattles past – almost like it's passing through you.

DIANA

What do you say to people?

² Don Ritchie interview (NLA Open Source.)
[//nla.gov.au/nla.obj-218674221/listen/1-2142](https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-218674221/listen/1-2142)

DON

Would you like to come over and have a cup of tea and talk about it?

DIANA

Have they ever come over?

DON

Oh, yes. Yes, quite a few.

DIANA

Really? It must be very emotional with some of them.

DON

Oh yeah, yeah.

DIANA

Do they tell you their stories?

DON

Yes, some do.

DIANA

It must affect you.

DON

Ah, I get used to it now.

DIANA

Oh, it must. But you keep doing it.

How many people would you say you've saved?

DON

Well, I don't know. They worked it out that over the times,
if it was four times a year, and it would be four times a year in any year, even now, it'd be
four times a year that's 160, and I'm sure it'd be a lot more than that because, as I say, I
don't keep notes on them.

Musical transition: The place-sound.

**Scene 3: Effy Nagy, owner of Rexie the dog who saved over 30 lives in the 1960s
reconstructed archival interview.³**

*SFX: Evening. The sound of waves crashing against the cliffs in the distance as if heard from
within a domestic space. Wind chimes. TV in the background. Crickets chirping.
German Shepherd barking persistently.*

³ For more information on Rexie the 'Wonderdog', see
<https://www.tsemrinpoche.com/tsem-tulku-rinpoche/animals-vegetarianism/rexie-the-australian-heroine.html>

EFFY NAGY

(Standing to the right of you, she calls out to the dog and slaps her thighs)

Rexie! Good girl, Rexie. Good girl.

SFX: The dog runs back to her owner, panting.

EFFY

Rexie seemed to have a sixth sense, if anybody put a leg over that fence Rexie sensed there was something wrong and would literally drag me up. She used to sit and watch the people and see that everything is in order and if it wasn't she would interfere and just see to it that nothing happened to anybody up there.

SFX: The sound of waves crashing against the cliffs.

Musical transition: The place-sound.

Scene 4: Archival radio broadcast: Menzies' announcement of WWII 1939⁴

SFX: Radio crackling, changing stations.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Here is the Prime Minister of Australia, The Right Honourable RG Menzies....

PRIME MINISTER ROBERT MENZIES

Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you, officially, that in consequence of a persistence by Germany and her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her and that as a result Australia is also at war.

SFX: Air raid sirens turn to fog horns. Waves, canons. Atmos continues under Woman and Man as they observe events around them.

WOMAN

You know this was a military post? There are underground tunnels everywhere.

MAN

Here?

WOMAN

Yeah, here.

Musical transition: The place-sound.

Scene 5: Sinking of the Dunbar⁵

When the passenger ship *Dunbar* crashed into South Head's cliffs on a stormy night in

⁴ Prime Minister Menzies (Open Source.)

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C280858>

⁵ Anonymous. (1857). A narrative of the melancholy wreck of the Dunbar [Pamphlet]. *Published for the proprietors by James Fryer Sydney.*

August 1857, killing 121 passengers and crew, media reports described the shipwreck as the greatest tragedy the young colony had experienced. A hundred pianos were amongst the cargo.⁶

SFX: Waves smashing, a massive storm, thunder, smashing of timber. Lightning cracks. Gulls caw from their nests in the cliff below. Destruction continues under Woman and Man speaking.

WOMAN

See down there? That's where the Dunbar sank in the 1850s.

MAN

That's a long way down.

WOMAN

Yeah. No-one could get down there to save them in the storm.
They just saw them getting smashed up against the rocks.

MAN

Or get eaten up by sharks.

WOMAN

Yeah. True.

MAN

Any survivors?

WOMAN

Just one. Then he became a lighthouse keeper.

MAN

Sounds like they needed one.

WOMAN

(scoffs)

Yeah.

121 people died. It was the worst tragedy Sydney had experienced.

ABORIGINAL WOMAN

You mean the worst tragedy the settlers had experienced.

WOMAN

(reflective)

⁶ Power, J. (2018, 20 August 2018). How one man survived 'saddest episode' in Sydney history *Sydney Morning Herald*.
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/121-dead-how-one-man-survived-saddest-episode-in-sydney-history-20180820-p4zyid.html>

Yeah.

You can dive the wreck – there were 100 pianos in the cargo and they're all still down there.

MAN

(surprised)

100 pianos?

WOMAN

100 ghost pianos lying at the bottom of the sea. And 121 ghosts.

Dunbar Underwater Eulogy – a 121 key composition

121 Piano keys are played as a eulogy for the passengers and crew who drowned.

Musical transition: The place-sound.

Scene 6: Eora Fisherwomen singing at Camp Cove⁷

EORA FISHERWOMAN

(Tuning her voice, she starts humming a tune to herself which appears again later. It is soft, tender, carefree.)

Hmmm, hmm...

WOMAN

Did you hear that?

MAN

No

SFX: Waves washing against the boat. The wind flaps through the sails and ropes.

Scene 7: First Fleet waiting at Botany Bay before sailing into Sydney Harbour.

CONVICT MOTHER

(Tenderly teaching her young child the names of the First Fleet)

Tell me the names again.

CONVICT CHILD

(Repeats names as if learning off rote)

Friendship.

Charlotte.

CONVICT MOTHER

⁷ Fishing for answers (No. S1E5) History Lab, 2018. The song was created specifically for the History Lab podcast, under the guidance of Maddison Lyn Collier, a proud Gundungurra and Darug woman and singer. Allinson, T., Kopel, N., Clark, A., Sentance, N., Ella, T., & Collier, M. L. (2018, 25 July 2018). Fishing for answers (No. S1E5) In *History Lab*. E. Lancaster & A. Clark. <https://historylab.net/s1ep5-fishing-for-answers/>

Charlotte, that's it.

CONVICT CHILD
Alexander. Um ..

CONVICT MOTHER
(Tenderly)
Very good.

CONVICT CHILD
Fishburn.
Scarborough.

CONVICT MOTHER AND CHILD
(slowly)
Prince of Wales.
Lady Penrhyn.
Borrow-dale
Golden Grove
Supply

CONVICT MOTHER
And the eleventh ship?

CONVICT CHILD
Sirius!

Scene 8: Lieutenant William Dawes' hut: An imagined conversation about smallpox⁸

During his time in the colony, Lieutenant William Dawes (1762-1836), the early colony's official land surveyor by day and unofficial astronomer by night, engaged in a cultural and language exchange with Patyegarang (c 1780s), a young Gai-mariagal woman who spoke the Gadigal language. Here Patyegarang signals the smallpox epidemic (Devil Devil) that killed so many Gadigal people in 1789.

SFX: Dawes' small hut. A fire is crackling. It's an intimate space. Patyegarang called Dawes 'Mr D'.

WILLIAM DAWES
(matter-of-factly, asking her to translate)
Smallpox?

PATYEGARANG
(patiently, slowly, she is teaching him her language)
Devil Devil.

⁸ Thorpe, N. Willis, O. & Smith, C. (2021, 28 May 2021). 'Devil devil': The sickness that changed Australia, *Patient Zero: First Outbreak*, [https://www.abc.net.au/radionalnational/programs/rn-presents/patient-zero-first-outbreak/13363830?utm_campaign=abc_radional&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_radional](https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rn-presents/patient-zero-first-outbreak/13363830?utm_campaign=abc_radional&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_radional)

WILLIAM DAWES
Devil Devil?

PATYEGARANG
(seriously)
Yes Mr D. Devil Devil.

Musical transition: The place-sound.

Scene 9: Reconstruction of Nagel's journal entry: 21 January 1788 Arrival at Camp Cove⁹

Jacob Nagel (1761-1841) was an American sailor on the First Fleet who joined Governor Arthur Phillip and a small group of officers on a recce of what would become Sydney Cove several days before the Fleet entered the harbour on January 26. They spent their first night on Australian land at Camp Cove.

SFX: Creaking of a ship offshore. The officers are in their cabins. Nagle writes in his journal – dabs nib in ink, turns page, and starts reading his entry aloud.

JACOB NAGLE
Journal entry, 21 January 1788:
We went on board three boats to go around to Port Jackson.
We arrived in the afternoon and surveyed 'round.
Then coming on dark, we landed on a beach on the south side
and pitched our tents for the night.
We named it 'Camp Cove'.

Scene 10: William Dawes' hut 2: An imagined conversation about the Fleet arriving¹⁰

Fire is crackling.

PATYEGARANG
(whispers gently)
Bir-ra Bir-ra.

WILLIAM DAWES
(repeats)
Birra Birra?

PATYEGARANG

⁹ Nagle, J. (1775). Memoir titled "Jacob Nagle his Book AD One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty Nine May 19th". Canton. Stark County, Ohio, 1802.

¹⁰ Karskens, G. (2011). The Colony. Allen & Unwin. In *The Colony*, Karskens's influential work on the early years of Sydney, she argues that a "female geography" was firmly in place and can be seen in the language used by the people of South Head to describe themselves 'Birra Birra is the Sow and Pigs Reef off Camp Cove at the entrance to Sydney Harbour. Dharawal women today still know Birra Birra, or Boora Birra, place of water, surf and fish, as a women's teaching place.' (p. 44).

These waters – around what you call Camp Cove.

WILLIAM DAWES
Birra Birra.

PATYEGARANG
Bir-ra bir-ra gal-leon.

WILLIAM DAWES
(repeats badly)
Bir-ra bir-ra gal-leon

DAWES AND PATYEGARANG
(both laugh)

PATYEGARANG
Bir-ra bir-ra gal-leon (means) her tribe.
This place of waters, around what you call Camp Cove, this is women's teaching place.

Musical transition: The place-sound.

Scene 11: Present, in Gap Park.

WOMAN
No-one talks about it.

MAN
About what?

WOMAN
(contemplative)
All the missing bodies.
The Suicides. Shipwreck. Smallpox.
There have been murders here. It's like a 230-year crime scene.

MAN
Sad.

WOMAN
Yeah. And yet it's so beautiful here at the same time.

SFX: Cockatoos and crows, a joyous cacophony of birdlife. Gentle waves lapping the shore. A boat rocking.

Scene 12: Reconstruction of Nagel's journal entry 23 January 1788: first fish¹¹

¹¹ Nagle, J. (1775). Memoir titled "Jacob Nagle his Book AD One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty Nine May 19th". Canton. Stark County, Ohio, 1802.

On 23 January 1788, Jacob Nagle caught a fish at Camp Cove. He recorded the event in his journal: "Governor [Arthur Phillip] observed the fish [and said] "you are the first white man that ever caught a fish in Sidney Cove [sic] where the town is to be built."

GOVERNOR ARTHUR PHILLIP
(Calls out to sailor at the hull in a firm manner.)
Nagle!

JACOB NAGLE
(American sailor on Sirius, respectful, to attention.)
Yes Gov'ner!

GOVERNOR ARTHUR PHILLIP
(Jolly)
You know, you are the first white man that ever caught a fish in Sydney Cove!

JACOB NAGLE
(cheekily)
First of many Gov'ner!

SFX: Men laugh. Waves gently washing up on beach

CAPTAIN DAVID COLLINS
(confounded)
Hey. Look there, have you seen the women in canoes?
Singing while fishing?

Scene 13: Eora Fisherwoman singing

Hmmm, hmm ...

WOMAN
Did you hear that?

MAN
Actually, I did.

WOMAN
(breathes relief)

MAN
Let's stay awhile.

WOMAN
Yeah. Let's.

WOMAN & MAN
(whisper in both ears)

Can we sit here with you?

The place-sound transitions to the song of the Eora fisherwoman singing and the waves from the beginning.

SFX: Zinger

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Special thanks to the team at History Lab and 2SER for permission to use the excerpt of the Eora fisherwoman singing from the *Fishing for answers* podcast.¹²

¹²Allinson, T., Kopel, N., Clark, A., Sentance, N., Ella, T., & Collier, M. L. (2018, 25 July 2018). Fishing for answers (No. S1E5) In *History Lab*. E. Lancaster & A. Clark. <https://historylab.net/s1ep5-fishing-for-answers/>