

Black Friday Audition Piece

KAREN

I think we'd better talk about it now. That's why we're here for after all.

JOSH

Yes.

KAREN

You start

JOSH

Well it was Friday 13th February. A real Black Friday. The forecast was for your typical bushfire risk day – a hot dry strong westerly. There was a Total Fire Ban. It was going to get to 40 degrees. I was at work about 30 minutes away. A fire started – don't ask me how, about 2 hills to the south of our place. But it was on our RFS unit's turf so they called me in. There wasn't much doing at work so I was happy to go. While I was driving to join my unit Karen rang me.

KAREN

Hi Hon, I can see some smoke on McGregors Hill. Is this a problem?

JOSH

No Kaz, should be fine. The RFS is there and I'm on my way to join them. It's well to the south and should blow away from you in this westerly.

KAREN

OK, ring me when you've finished. Stay safe. Love you.

JOSH

I was an idiot. You know how you get this reflex urge to reassure people when they are worried? "It'll be fine" even as the boat is sinking. I should have said "Get the hell out of there as you and the kids are the most precious things in my life."

KAREN

Don't beat yourself up. I wouldn't have gone even if you had said that then. I was listening to the emergency bulletins on the radio There was no immediate threat. They were only at the "Alert" level. I was more checking what you were up to as I knew you'd be called in.

JOSH

So I arrived at the fire and all was pretty organised at first. I joined my unit putting in containment lines and so forth. It was really hot. After about an hour, the wind really started to build. If you don't know, fires can create their own winds if they get hot enough. Embers were starting to jump our containment lines. A whole bunch of little fires were starting. We had to pull out or we would have been surrounded.

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KAREN

Gee I didn't know you were in that much danger. You never said.