

AUDITION: *A Broadcast Coup* by Melanie Tait, directed by Christine Vale

Characters

LOUISE: (50-60): Mike's loyal and long-term radio producer

NOA: (20s): new, young, enthusiastic producer

MIKE: (60s): Popular radio host

TROY: (40s): radio station manager

JEZ: (40-50): successful podcaster

AUDITION PIECES

Noa and Louise

Preparing for daily broadcast - Pages 11 to 14

Louise and Mike

Mike's first day back from Fiji - Pages 15 to 19

Mike and Troy

Mike meeting with station manager - Pages 20 to 23

Noa, Mike, (Louise)

First meeting between Noa and Mike - Pages 24 to 27

Jez

Recording intro to podcast - Pages 27 to 28

Jez and Mike

On air interview - Pages 32 to 35

Jez and Troy

In a bar - Pages 36 to 39

Troy and Louise

Discussion Mike's behaviour - Pages 45 to 46

Mike and Noa

Mike working with Noa - Pages 47 to 50



Notes

Characters

LOUISE	(50-60)
NOA	(24)
MIKE	(60)
TROY	(30-40)
JEZ	(40-50)

Playing notes on this text

- these five characters are all media hounds. They're always on their phones. Checking their phones, holding their phones. If they're standing up, or going somewhere, or moving away from a conversation, they're checking their phones. Actors could even use their phones as a device to engage or not engage when they want to be, or when their character might be deliberately ignoring someone.
- The brief lines around the cultural background of Noa at the top of Scene Four by Troy were written to the original actor playing the role. Casting a BiPOC actor in this role is encouraged, and these lines can be altered to fit the actor cast as Noa, with approval from the playwright.
- A '—' at the end of the sentence signifies the interruption of that character's line/thought by the person they're speaking with.
- The pace of this play is fast and should play to around 90 minutes. Remember these people are always working towards the next deadline.
- There isn't an interval, please don't insert one.

A Broadcast Coup

PRELUDE

JEZ, 40, is on stage alone. She's dressed in clothes that could almost be a uniform. They're the comfortable, serious clothes of a correspondent in a war zone - khakis and navies, with sensible shoes that could run or climb. She's preparing her recording equipment as though she's preparing for battle.

Cleaning microphones as though they're gun barrels.

Testing long mics as though they're rifles.

Packing batteries as though they're bullets.

Once she's satisfied, they're strategically put in a backpack, with a smaller recorder and handheld mic slung over her shoulder.

She's ready for battle/podcasting.

SCENE ONE

NOA and LOUISE sit at their desks rifling through newspapers and writing notes. They do this a moment, then swap papers and continue writing furious notes.

This is a finely choreographed routine that happens every morning before a show starts.

NOA's phone dings.

NOA

Premier's office. Reckons he can only do 9.55.



LOUISE Bullshit. Too close to the news. Won't answer the questions in time. Sneaky ratbags. 10.05?

NOA texts, LOUISE continues her work, NOA gets a text back.

NOA 9.50?

LOUISE Fine. And tell them no pissing about. Straight into the guts.

LOUISE'S phone rings.

Louise Daley... No. No.
Wrack off, don't call again this close to show time.

She hangs up.

NOA You need a holiday. An expensive one. With day spas. Masseurs who don't talk and give you an absolute pounding.

They both continue the rifling through the papers, taking notes.

LOUISE You got the Oz?

NOA Here, take my iPad.

LOUISE flicks through the iPad and continues scribbling. Phone rings.

LOUISE Louise Daley... No PR calls before the show!

Hangs up.

Righto. You ready?

NOA Yep.

LOUISE Go.

This is their editorial meeting.

'The board', a whiteboard grid listing all the time slots for the show from 9am-12pm (ie 9.05, 9.25, 9.45, 10.05 etc) over five days is an essential part of their preparation of the show. Their job is to fill these slots. They're always thinking about filling the slots.

NOA Sexually transmitted debt — how responsible are you for the debts of the person you're banging?

LOUISE Talent?

NOA Guardian journo with fifty thousand on Twitter who'd be great —

LOUISE 9.25. Next?

NOA Bonkers Bonita has a new piece — let me read the actual headline for you — 'Feminists Have Made Middle Class Men the Most Marginalised' —

LOUISE Mike likes Bonita —

NOA Of course he does.

LOUISE Put her in at 9.05 —
Can you confirm 10.05 with Brandi Jackson's people?

NOA Brandi Jackson from that soap?

LOUISE She's doing a musical.

NOA She can sing too?

LOUISE Debatable, but she opens in Chicago next week. Mike loves her. Mike loves musicals.

NOA Of course he does.

LOUISE You write leads for 9.25 and 9.40? I'll write Bonita and Brandi. We need a 11 o'clock.

NOA Sure.



LOUISE Thank God Mike's back today.
You can do the coffee run.

NOA Why can't you text Mike to do the coffee run?

LOUISE Because he's not the junior producer.

NOA Doesn't sound like he's got much else to do.
And, actually Louise, 'coffee run' isn't in my job description
either. Coffee Procurement was so not part of my Masters in
Journalism.

LOUISE Well, 'Masters in Journalism', it should've been. Coffee is a
vital part of the morning radio ecosystem.

NOA What does he drink?

LOUISE Skim mocha, one sugar.

NOA A skim mocha?

LOUISE Yep.

NOA What sort of person has a sugar with a mocha?

LOUISE Sweet tooth. Try and think of a 11 o'clock.

*NOA gathers a couple of keep cups and exits while LOUISE
gets about making some calls.*

Bonita, hello! So well darl, how are you? Listen — Mike
loves your piece about how we really just need to give blokes
a break... really, he thinks it's wonderful.

*Enter MIKE. He's 60 years old, aware of his own charisma
and attractiveness. He goes nowhere without his well worn
contacts book. He's talking to colleagues off stage, and comes
in with a tray of takeaway coffees. In new keep cups.*

*LOUISE winds up her phone call while welcoming him
silently back to the office.*

9.05. Opening the hour darl... fabulous... Mike's going be
so excited to see you... Yes, it's his first day back... he was
in Fiji... outreach work... means a lot to him... Oh yes,
Bonita, he's a good one... See you at quarter to nine.

MIKE Louise Jane Elizabeth Daley!

They hug.

LOUISE Michael Brendan Septimus King!

MIKE Have you missed me?

LOUISE Of course. Keep cups? Noa's just gone out —

MIKE I'll pop them in the fridge, we can have them as iced
coffees later.

*He exits quickly to do this, LOUISE is perplexed. It's
obviously a New Man she's seeing.*

I heard a couple of minutes of the fill in —

LOUISE Listeners couldn't stand her. We couldn't either.

MIKE I want every detail.

LOUISE Feedback. Always wanting and giving and offering
feedback.

MIKE And the listeners?

LOUISE Texts. Constantly. 'Where's Mike?' 'We love Mike', and love
letters from the blue rinse set.
Here's one — 'When will our darling Mike be back? That
woman is so shrill.'

MIKE Ah, the internalised misogyny of the ancients. Keeping me
in a job since 1995.
Did you get all that to Troy?



LOUISE Photocopied it all and put it in his pigeonhole.

MIKE Nice one Lou. You can add my certificate.

LOUISE They give you a certificate?

MIKE Yep, if anyone says I can't handle my anger now, I've got a certificate to prove I can.

LOUISE 'Conflict management and Tension retreat' in Fiji. Please. Imagine if the Oz media section got hold of that?

MIKE It was that or be moved to Evenings.

LOUISE What do you reckon they paid for it?

MIKE Easily thirty grand.

LOUISE Idiots! That's half a junior producer! Spend the money on half a junior producer and there will be less tension for you to retreat from.

MIKE Lou — I've changed. I'm a new man. Old Mike would want to gossip. Old Mike would want to talk you through the scandals of those who were there.

LOUISE Who was there?

MIKE It was a safe space. A space of trust. Of true vulnerability. And Lou, what I've learned is this: vulnerability between men is the most sacred vulnerability of all. It's earned through sharing the deepest parts of self and being open to the deepest parts of others.

LOUISE Who was there?

MIKE If you were to guess, on a piece of paper, obviously I could corrupt the sacred space for you —

LOUISE We've never had secrets.

MIKE Never.

LOUISE Hints?

MIKE Politician. Lib. Never comes on the show. Threw a radish at a journalist.

LOUISE scribbles down a name and shows it to MIKE, who nods conspiratorially. MIKE mimes a problem with the bottle.

Home and Away actor, so full of cocaine that every time we did a breathing exercise it looked like his pants had dandruff.

LOUISE scribbles down a name.

A banking CEO, a not-for-profit comms person and a producer of Married at First Sight.
I was the least interesting person there.

LOUISE I'm sure that's not true.

MIKE I just kept my head down and did the om-shanti-oms. What's on the show today?

LOUISE Keeping in mind it's a pretty slow news day —

MIKE What's this Packer story?

LOUISE Tele's lead. Squatters at Jamie's guesthouse for three years, only just sprung. Can you imagine?

MIKE Lou we don't follow the news. We make it.

LOUISE Dr Simone will be on.

MIKE Is she coming in live?

LOUISE No, it's a phoner.

MIKE Ugh. And the Premier? Thought we weren't having him on anymore.



LOUISE He's the Premier. Has a festival to blag on about.

MIKE Free kick? [*He looks at the white board*] It's a festival of snooze, without any breaking news.

LOUISE It's a morning of relatively stimulating conversation, considering I've had to do the last three weeks with a fill in presenter, and a brand-new producer.

MIKE It's my first morning back. It needs to be a cracker.

LOUISE I tried calling you last night and you didn't pick up.

MIKE I didn't get home until late.

LOUISE I know what time you got in, Mike.
I booked your flight.
Answer your phone, then you can whinge about stories.

MIKE Righto.

LOUISE There's also a bit of a surprise.

MIKE Who?

LOUISE Not telling.

MIKE Come on.

LOUISE It's someone you'll be happy to hear from.

MIKE Lou when it comes to surprises, I love to fake it. I'm so good at faking it I should have been a footballer's wife.

LOUISE Mike...

MIKE Come on, what's up with that?

LOUISE It's sexist.

MIKE It's sexist to the footballer — it's saying the footballer is a dud root, not the wife.

LOUISE Keith Urban's playing his new single.

MIKE Before morning TV?

LOUISE He's a big fan —

MIKE We were the first national show to have him on.

LOUISE Fake it hard, please. He's been very excited about it.

MIKE That's sweet of him.

LOUISE They're a sweet pair. Saw them at the deli the other day, told them you'd been having a rough time.

MIKE is puffed up by the power.

MIKE What's the new producer like?

LOUISE She's good. Really good. Can plug any hole. Tapped in. Good story instincts.
But no one's perfect — she's super woke.
So mind your language.

MIKE Mind my language on my own talkback radio show?

LOUISE Just go easy on the footballers wives rooting jokes.

MIKE Louise — this is a creative space. We all need to feel 'safe' to express our views and ideas.

LOUISE Here's your lead for the Packer story, and Bonita's latest book is on your desk. Probably best to have a glance through it before we go to air.

A small beat.

MIKE Where did they put Kylie?

LOUISE Current Affairs.

MIKE Thanks for sorting that out, mate.
It just wasn't going to work, keeping her here.



LOUISE I found her a great gig.
Troy signed it off without much drama, so —

MIKE He didn't know about me and Kylie, did he?

LOUISE He absolutely did not.

MIKE Good.

LOUISE No more throwing mixing desks, okay?

MIKE I was still a bit off about the Kylie stuff.
And the mixing desk — it just unhinged, in my hands, and
lept through the studio right when that idiot intern gave
me the wrong information for the third bloody time that
morning.

LOUISE Even I thought that meltdown was a bit theatrical.
And I'm a veteran of the Mike King Meltdown.

MIKE I know, I know. Om shanti om. Changed man.
And mate, how's Ella going?

LOUISE Staying with Mum for a bit. Maybe you could give her a ring
sometime? She won't talk to me. I can't figure it out. It's like
she turned twenty and became a totally different person.

MIKE She'll be right, she's a good girl.

LOUISE She is.

*Enter TROY. He's around 35, immaculately dressed.
Everything tucked in just as it should be. An air of
officiousness mixed in with pure fear. Has he heard what's
just been said? Who knows. He's fighting through the fear
any way he can.*

TROY Welcome back, Mike.

MIKE Troy Kenny, bureaucrat at large.

TROY Nothing 'at large' about me, Mike.
As you can see, I'm very much in the building, right
here, right near you, watching what goes on, like my job
description dictates.

MIKE You know, my mother was a nurse at old Callan Park
Hospital for the Insane, Troy —

TROY I know, Mike —

MIKE And she reckoned she never met anyone normal with two
first names. I wonder why you don't do a little swap, you
know, call yourself Kenny Troy?
Much better name.
Much stronger.
More managerial.

TROY You've wondered that before, Mike.
Several times.

MIKE Are you saying my jokes are getting old?

TROY Never would I dream of saying anything about your jokes,
or you being old, as long as they continue to connect so
well with our audiences.

MIKE Want a biscuit Troy? I made biscuits.

TROY You made biscuits?

MIKE Yep, recipe's from my new cookbook.

TROY You've written a cookbook?

MIKE With the CSIRO — we're trying to get more blokes into the
kitchen. You know, share the domestic load.

TROY Did you fill out an external work request form for that?

MIKE Did I Louise?



LOUISE Yes.

TROY I don't remember seeing it.

MIKE Come on, try one.

TROY Mike, anything you're paid money for from outside the organisation, I need to sign off on.
We need every 'T' dotted and 't' crossed just in case Senate Estimates suddenly becomes interested in your finances.

MIKE Ginger and chocolate chip.

TROY I don't eat sugar.
I'm sure I've told you that forty times.

MIKE I thought your skin was meant to glow if you don't eat sugar?
That your eyes were meant to sparkle with good health?

TROY Just came by to induct you into the new studio. The mixing desk incident provided a perfect chance for us to finally install that standing desk you've been so excited about for so long.

MIKE My core muscles, Troy. They're suddenly, unmistakably erect.

TROY Let's get them inducted then.

MIKE Louise can induct me.

TROY No she can't, Mike.
Louise doesn't have the official OH&S training, I do.

MIKE We don't have time.

TROY You can't go to air this morning Mike, until you've been properly inducted. This is why I wanted you to fly back by last Friday.

MIKE Ten minutes till show time, you got another presenter here sufficiently inducted?

TROY Louise.

LOUISE Let's just do it after the show Troy.
TROY has learned to pick his battles. This isn't one he's decided to fight. TROY goes to exit. Before he does —

TROY I've arranged a photographer later in the week to update your photos for the website, Mike.

MIKE There's nothing wrong with my photos.

TROY They just look like they were taken fifteen years ago.

LOUISE They were taken fifteen years ago.

MIKE I think we'd all agree fifteen years ago was a great time for this face and not much has changed.

TROY We're refreshing the website, Mike. Marketing is insisting you get new photos. Friday at 3. Put it in your diary.
You, in the community.
Eating Yum Cha or salsa dancing or whatever it is you do in your spare time.

MIKE Louise?

TROY Louise isn't your secretary, Mike. Put it in your diary.
TROY exits.

MIKE He's so wound up. Do you think he's had a root in the last five years?

LOUISE Be polite to him, Michael King. It's not worth it.
And that's the third time you've mentioned rooting since you've been here.
Dial down the rooting talk.



MIKE

He hasn't got any power. He's a bureaucratic 'yes' boy who hasn't got the guts or personality to do what we do.

LOUISE

He'll be running the joint one day.
He survives every redundancy round.
He's like that [*she crosses her fingers*] with the MD.
When the world ends, you know what will survive and rule the streets of Sydney?
Cockroaches, fake plastic grass and Troy Kenny.

MIKE goes to his desk and begins leafing through his briefs for the day.

LOUISE is typing leads, making calls, rifling through the paper.

Enter NOA, with coffees.

NOA

Louise — wait until you hear who I got for 11 o'clock. An actual superstar.

MIKE

Who?

NOA

Hello to you too.

MIKE

And who are you?

NOA

Super well, thanks for asking.

MIKE

I didn't ask you how you are I asked you who you are.

NOA

I know.
I was just pointing out how a normal person with actual manners might interact with a new member of their team when they're back from an international anger management retreat.
Obviously, I'm your new producer.
Noa.
Like the arc, without the 'h'. I got you a mocha.

MIKE

I've already got one.

NOA

Now you've got two.
Lucky you.

MIKE

Lucky me.
You're very... confident.

NOA

And if you think a boomer power play like pretending not to know who I am will intimidate me 'into my place', I'm sorry but —

MIKE

I'm not a boomer.

NOA

Okay sure.

MIKE

We're not, are we Louise? Born after 1960, we're Gen X —

LOUISE

Who did you book Noa?

NOA

You know how Jez Connell dropped that new podcast last week and —

LOUISE

Mike, did you hear about it in Fiji?

MIKE

Stevo Knight the latest to fall, how about that? I knew he could be a bit 'handsy', but —

NOA

'Handsy'? 'The latest to fall'? He 'fell' because he's a rapist and Jez Connell's podcast did a four-part expose on him and his victims. A Broadcast Coup, season 2. You should listen to it. All hail the queen, who I just met at the coffee shop and discovered drinks her coffee long, and black.
So I get up the guts to approach her, and I say "I work on Mornings with Mike King — could you come on and talk radio versus podcast and how you rule the noise cancelling earphones of the world?"
She's like "I'd love to. I used to work for that dude and I'd love to sit in that studio again."



LOUISE I'm not sure she's a good fit for this show —

NOA Why not?

MIKE Come on.
Will be great to see what she's up to.

LOUISE Really, Mike? Jez?

MIKE Water so far under the bridge it's off swirling down around the Tasman Sea, Lou.

NOA I want to be her. She's incredible.

MIKE You want to be Jez?

NOA She's my home screen.
Like a talisman.
A slayer of baby boomer bullshit.

MIKE Didn't know she had it in her when she was boned from Nine, did you Louise?

NOA How many profitable media companies have you set up?

MIKE To focus on nothing but 'MeToo journalism'?
That's crusader journalism, which isn't journalism at all.
It's activism.
And, anyone can be profitable if all they do is podcasts and stories about the ten best ways to avoid giving a blow job —

LOUISE Mike!

NOA Sure, be reductive.
The podcast you're actually talking about is leading the way in teaching young women how to have some sexual agency —

LOUISE Oy. You two. Enough about Jez Connell. Noa, you've got leads to write. Mike, you've got books to skim over and pretend you've read.

Everyone back to work.

They go back to work.

MIKE I like my leads to be simple.
I don't need to know how smart you are with them —

NOA I know how to write a lead.
I know what you sound like.
My dad is like, your biggest fan.
I've only been listening to you since I was in utero.

NOA goes back to her desk after distributing the coffees and starts working.

TRANSITION ONE

JEZ is recording an intro to her podcast.

JEZ Hey buds! Jez Connell here.
You know, I get asked a lot: why do I make this podcast?
Do I hate men? Do I want to destroy them?
Here's the thing... I grew up with great men.
Kind men. A really lovely dad, and two brothers who only acted like dicks if I stood in front of the telly when the cricket was on.
I didn't even have a creepy racist uncle to fight with at Christmas. How lucky am I?
It wasn't until I was in my late teens, working my first job at a takeaway joint, I realised that not all men were like my dad or my brothers or my actual lovely uncle.
I didn't feel safe around some of them.
Some wanted more from me than I wanted to give.
So let me tell you why I make these podcasts: Today I met a young journalist producing a big national radio



show. She's like I was — full of stories and excitement and a passion for breaking news and building a big career in radio. I do what I do because of her.
So, the new series of A Broadcast Coup: it's blurry dudes, so blurry.
Can't say much more, gotta get back to work.
Watch your feed. Am hoping to drop this in the next few weeks.

SCENE TWO

MIKE is broadcasting.

MIKE Dr Simone is with us talking about... black holes. Dr Simone, I'm not entirely sure why we're doing this? No one understands black holes. We nod along like we do. You say something about the Big Bang or the hadron collider or infinite space and we're meant to suddenly get it?

DR SIMONE *[v/o on the phone]* Mike, black holes really are fascinating —

MIKE But are they, Dr Simone, are they really? Have you really got time to explain to us what gravitational acceleration really is?

DR SIMONE *[v/o on the phone]* I mean I have the time if you have the time Mike —

Fade DR SIMONE out talking while MIKE addresses the next guest with NOA.

MIKE *[Down the line]* Is the Minister ready? We need to wind this up —

NOA *[Down the line]* He's not answering —

MIKE *[Down the line]* I can hear the whole country falling asleep.

NOA *[Down the line]* I can't raise him.

MIKE *[Down the line]* I've been forward promoting him all morning.

NOA *[Down the line]* What can I say Mike? I can't get him up.

MIKE *[Down the line]* Can't get him up? There's a first time for everything, Noa, isn't there?

He's flirting. NOA rolls her eyes.

LOUISE He'll need to play a song.

NOA *[Down the line]* Song Mike.

MIKE *[Down the line]* A song?! Are you kidding? This is news radio, not Smooth FM.
Brilliant Dr Simone. You've just made black holes even more confusing for all of us.

DR SIMONE Oh Mike, you silly sausage!

NOA *[Down the line]* Forward promote Jez and podcasts. I've written something up on the screen —

MIKE *[Down the line]* When you get that Minister, he's blacklisted.

NOA *[Down the line]* Permission to tell him that on behalf of the program?

MIKE *[Down the line]* Permission granted. What a prick.
Boofing us around when —
It's a glorious morning here on Gadigal Land, I'm Mike King, with you through until midday.

Plays sting or song.



NOA exits the studio, and they're live.

It's quarter past eleven here in Sydney — Mike King with you through until midday.

Chances are, if you've listened to a podcast lately, it will have been made by Jez Connell. Not only does she own Australia's biggest independent media network, but her own *A Broadcast Coup* has had the most downloads of any Australian podcast. And guess what? We can take a bit of credit for that. Long-time listeners to the show might know... Jez started out here at the Network as a junior producer on *Mornings*. She left us for a career in *tellie*... and now she's back in Studio 204. How's it feel to be back, Jez?

JEZ Are you smaller Mike, or did I get taller?
Or am I finally all grown up?

MIKE Good to see massive success hasn't made you lose that
sense of humour.

JEZ Being rich means people are more likely to laugh at your
jokes, Mike, you know that.

MIKE We had some good times in this studio, didn't we?

JEZ We sure did, Mike, and some pretty average times too!

It's good to be here with you.

MIKE You know what they say Jez, keep your enemies close.

JEZ Mike, Mike, Mike! I'm hardly the enemy.

MIKE You're new media, Jez!
Can't you do what I do, but with a laptop and an iPhone?

JEZ I could never do what you do.

MIKE You have an enormous audience.

JEZ So do you.

MIKE Your podcast has 4 million downloads a month.

JEZ Probably about the same as your audience.

MIKE You managed to get into podcasting right at the perfect
time.

JEZ I managed to exhaust my opportunities in the mainstream
media at the right time and had no other choice.

MIKE What's different about what you do, and what I do, Jez?

JEZ You can only be in your listeners ears three hours a day,
Monday to Friday. I can be in their ears any time of day —

MIKE Here, it's a conversation. Isn't a podcast more of a lecture?

JEZ What I do is more a documentary for your ears than a
lecture.

MIKE Yet you don't really encourage a dialogue with your
listener, do you?

JEZ I absolutely do — I have a phone line set up for their input,
a Twitter account, a Facebook —

MIKE But it's not real time.
It's not a community, like we have here.

JEZ It's a different community, to be sure.

MIKE But a big breaking news story, you can't really contribute in
that realm, can you?

JEZ I don't try to Mike.
That's what you're here for, and that's what you're so terrific
at. Podcasts offer something a bit different.

MIKE You're saying, then, that podcasts aren't news?



JEZ That's not what I'm saying at all.
Would you say 4 Corners isn't news because it's not live?
60 Minutes isn't news because —

MIKE 60 Minutes isn't news and it has nothing to do with it not
being live —

JEZ My podcast is investigative journalism.
So far, one man is in jail and another is in front of the
courts.

MIKE Just looking through a list of your podcasts, you've got one
called 'Slapper' —

JEZ It gets a lot of downloads. It's about the latest trends in
make-up — how make-up is made, what it's tested on —

MIKE Hardly investigative journalism —

JEZ Depends on whether you think those things are important.
Many young people do —

MIKE And how about A Broadcast Coup?
How do you get the money to make it?

JEZ It's the most downloaded podcast in Australia, Mike.
Advertising, obviously.

A beat.

MIKE What is it you hope to get out of it?

JEZ Safe workplaces for women.

MIKE Not jail time?
Public floggings?

JEZ I'd love to see a public flogging!
Sadly, completely illegal these days Mike.

MIKE As is defaming people.

JEZ Ah, but I don't defame people.

MIKE Aren't you afraid of defaming someone?

JEZ Not at all.
I check my sources and my stories rigorously.
I learned that from you, Mike.

MIKE Why is it always men in the media?
In film? In politics?

JEZ My beat has always been media.
It's where I have my contacts.

MIKE Presumably you call it A Broadcast Coup because
traditionally a coup is the removal of a leader through brute
force?

JEZ Julius Caesar to Julia Gillard, a coup involves planning,
information gathering, consolidating relationships,
gathering numbers and striking at an opportune time.

A beat.

But, back to your original question, Mike.
Why is it always men in the media?
Of course, it's not just men in media, in film and in politics.
Men at your local cleaning company or your credit union
or your bowling alley... they can be sexual harassers or
worse too.
It's just that the men in media, in film, in politics...
everyone knows them.
They make a bigger splash.

MIKE They stay in the news for longer?

JEZ Yes. More chance of conviction.
If the public get upset enough about it, the DPP has to pay
attention.



MIKE Who's your next target?

JEZ Target?

MIKE Who's in the firing line?

JEZ You mean, whose harmful behaviour am I investigating?

MIKE Sure.

JEZ A good general never reveals her battle plan.
Especially on national radio, Mike King.

SCENE THREE

*TROY is drinking at a bar. He's had a terrible, terrible day.
JEZ scopes the place out and sits down beside him. It's a
surprise to TROY.*

JEZ What are you drinking?

TROY Aperol spritz.

JEZ The drink of summer, six summers ago.

TROY It's so rare these days that anything gives me joy, so I need to
take my bubbles and excitement when I can get them.

JEZ That's grim, bud! Want me to make it into an Aperol bomb?

TROY Why not?

*JEZ pours a shot of whisky in his drink. TROY thinks she's
bananas!*

JEZ You had a rough day.

TROY Every day's a rough day when Mike King is part of your
management remit.

A beat.

Congratulations on your last podcast series —

JEZ The Stephen Knight one? Thanks bud.

TROY What's the latest on it?

JEZ He's been in and out of police custody since I dropped it.
Which brings me bubbles and excitement.
Lots of bubbles and excitement!
I worked two years getting him.

TROY Sounded pretty cut and dry to me.

JEZ It takes a long time to get sources to go on record.
With the really bad guys, like Stephen Knight, women are
actually scared.
They've been isolated from each other.
They lack power and think their story isn't worth telling.
It's only when they get wind that another woman's at risk, I
can get them on tape.

TROY I see.

JEZ Do you really?

TROY I was abused by a manager when I was a baby technician
in the regions.

JEZ What happened?

TROY Lodged a complaint with HR.
The network moved him into management in Western
Australia.

JEZ I've heard that so many times.
The network in Perth sounds like a travel lodge at a rugby
league away game and would you like to go on the record
with that?



TROY Absolutely not.
I don't even know why I'm talking to you.

JEZ Because I'm charming and have extremely good hair.
And we're buds, remember?

A beat.

How long have you been his boss?

TROY 'His boss'? No one is Mike King's boss.

JEZ That guy, hey?

TROY It's like he's acting out scenes in the trailer of the movie of his life.

JEZ Who would play Mike King?

TROY Someone gross.
Kevin Spacey?

JEZ You want my best Mike King is a caaaaan't-say-that-word story?

TROY Yes.

JEZ It's the morning after the work Christmas party and Mike has had a breakup.

TROY Wasn't he married to Carmen for like, twenty years?

JEZ Sure, but the breakup isn't with Carmen.
It's with one of his girlfriends.

TROY Oh. Who?

JEZ Doesn't matter.
He's still munted. It's two to nine and he's behind the microphone slurring orders. No amount of coffee is sobering him up.

There's no way he can do the show. I switch the show to Melbourne.

He's livid. He grabs his keys. Heads to the car park.

Now, at the time Mike's going through a midlife crisis where he thinks zipping around Sydney on a little red vespa is gonna make him look like he's thirty again.

TROY He's such a child.

JEZ He hops on the vespa and turns it on.
He can't ride. He'll kill himself.
He starts revving it — putt putt putt putt — I jump in front of it trying to stop him.
And he presses some button and it lurches forward and runs over my toe!

TROY You're the world famous 'Toe Producer'?
I thought you were a Network urban legend —

JEZ He's so shocked he crashes the vespa into wall of the carpark.
The head of sport sees most of the drama and drags him away, as Mike's yelling that it's all my fault.
That I'm 'trouble'.
And there I am, having to sort out a crashed vespa and a broken toe, hoping no one else has seen any of it.
Have you ever broken a toe?

TROY I have not.

JEZ You just have to wait for the damn thing to heal.
For the swelling to go down.
And hope it's fixes itself eventually.

TROY That's actually very dramatic.

JEZ Very dramatic.
And you know the most extraordinary part of this?

TROY What?



where 20% of the population own all the country's property?
What can any of us do to change it?
Until then, I'm Mike King and you have a terrific day.

The news pips go.

NOA *[Down the line]* What a show! Well done Mike! That rental story with the old dear. Heartbreaker!

MIKE Let's get a call into the Minister, see if we can help?

*NOA goes into the studio and begins to pack it up.
Her and MIKE continue in there chatting while...
LOUISE is in the office, probably rolling her eyes at what she's hearing, or working the phones.
TROY enters, on the phone through his earpiece. Initially LOUISE isn't sure whether he's talking to her or not.*

TROY *[Into phone]* Diversity is a key part of change making culture, and we have a star in the making here... a brilliant young producer I found deep in the Western Suburbs... yep, Bonnyrigg... father's even a cabbie... Native American heritage... Such a unique perspective... We need to push more people like Noa on air... Be real change champions. Oh yep, okay.
Thanks James. Thanks Andrew. Thanks Richard.
Thanks Gavin. Thanks Steven.

A beat.

Thanks Tom. Thanks Shane.
Thanks Hugo.
Thanks Nicholas.

And he's back with attention on LOUISE.

You need to watch him with her.

LOUISE Troy I don't have time for this. I have to get out of here early.

TROY Look at them.

LOUISE What do you mean?

TROY You know what I mean.
I have a feed of the studio in my office.
He's commenting on what she wears a bit too much.

LOUISE I have a show to produce for tomorrow. Can we talk about this later?

A beat.

TROY Louise.

LOUISE Troy.

TROY His behaviour isn't decent.

LOUISE I'm not his mother. You tell him.

TROY You haven't seen me try?
Can I share something personal with you?

LOUISE Sounds like you're going to.

TROY Louise.

LOUISE Troy.

TROY Let's be human beings for a moment, instead of manager and exec producer.

A beat.

LOUISE Okay.

TROY Thank you.
What do you get out of being Mike's EP?

LOUISE I love working with him.



TROY

What does he give you that keeps you there year after year, survey after survey?

LOUISE

He relies on me. He needs me.
I know how he works, I know how the show works.
I know what our audience wants to listen to.

TROY

I know that. But that's not about you.
That's about him.
What does he give you?

There's an embarrassing beat as she tries to think. She's having some pretty unpleasant realisations.

You know, I got into radio because of Mike.

LOUISE

Lots of people do.

TROY

Mike's show — your show — made me feel like I was connected to something bigger than the tiny town I grew up in.
I worked at the local station for three years as a teenager on a Saturday morning for nothing before I got an actual gig as a producer.
Crying in the end toilet cubicle after Mike King has called me a 'franga wrapper bureaucrapper' is not where I expected to be at this stage in my life.
Tell me what he gives to you so I can get the same and be happy working with him.

A beat. A long one.

LOUISE

He doesn't give me anything.
Mike's all about Mike.
He always has been.
And why would he be anything else?
We've all been all about Mike. It's the job.
I use his credit card each year to buy my own Christmas present.

LOUISE'S phone dings.

LOUISE

Blast! Pre-record's at reception.

TROY

Thanks Louise. Illuminating.

LOUISE

Quite.

She exits to get the guest.

TROY also exits.

Back to the studio where MIKE is shooting the breeze, while NOA packs up around him, preps the studio for the next show.

MIKE

Talk radio's not so bad, eh?
It gets a rough go because of those festering fossils at the commercials — they fire people up to keep their ratings so they can sell incontinence pads and funeral packages.

NOA

You don't care about ratings?

MIKE

Of course I do. Why else do you think I write my books?
Do my TV show?

NOA

To be famous?

MIKE

To be famous enough to keep being able to do this job.
I wish you could have been here over the summer the bushfires were happening.
We had people listening whose homes had burned to the ground — and you know what burns with it?
The television and the computer.
At one stage, all communications — all phone and internet — were completely cut off for people from Bemboka to Bateman's Bay. Terrifying.
You know what can never be cut off?
An amplitude modulation transmission making its way into a transistor radio filled with AA batteries.
What we do — reading out the information from the fire



service, taking calls from people who've escaped or people who haven't?

It actually saves lives.

That's why we do it, it's why we're here.

So we can help them through it, calmly... rationally.

Keep them company through the good times, sure, but mostly it's so we can keep them company through the bad.

And as the world continues to heat up, burn down and drown, they're going to need us more than ever.

She's moved by this, but it's hard for her to drop her bravado in front of him.

A beat.

NOA Do you give that motivational speech to all your new producers?

MIKE I believe it.
Haven't you seen my TED Talk?

NOA "Radio is connection." Sure.
You've got the same shirt on as the video.

MIKE So I do.

NOA Really makes your eyes pop through the glass.

They laugh. There's an ease developing with them now that we didn't see in their last scene together.

Mike, would you mentor me?
Teach me everything you know about radio.
I'll do anything you want me to.

MIKE Like what?

NOA What do I have, you'd like more of?

MIKE I couldn't imagine.

NOA Skin elasticity? Life expectancy?

MIKE Social media! I need to bone up on social media.

NOA How are you not on social media?
Shouldn't you have had this conversation with your junior producer in like, 2008?

MIKE I have a silver Logie and a weekly column in The Saturday Paper. I didn't think I needed another place for people to hurl abuse at me.

They begin to make their way back to the production office.

This network, with all its responsibilities toward representation, is — rightly, mostly — trying to get rid of white men of a certain age.

They want more diversity.

Like you.

Which, I understand. Completely.

And agree with.

And support, of course.

Enter LOUISE.

LOUISE Mike — good show —

MIKE Thanks mate.

[Back to NOA] But what's the point of all this 'male privilege' without using it for good?

Get rid of it, get rid of me, and what happens?

A skill drainage that means people like you are left out to dry, on air, in front of hundreds of thousands of people, without being mentored and guided.

In terms of the audience, here's what happens Noa (and social media has barely put a dent in this) every kid wakes up at forty and realises they can't listen to a second longer of pop songs and fart jokes on commercial breakfast radio. They want issues and debate and news. And they switch



their radio over to the AM dial.
For all those reasons: I think I'm valuable to public broadcasting and I want to keep doing it until I decide it's time to go.

NOA Am I posting for you?

LOUISE Mike — you've got a —

LOUISE is ignored — NOA and MIKE are vibing. Good job she keeps being interrupted by calls, because there's no way LOUISE would put up with being ignored for so long.

MIKE Yep, to begin with, until I get the hang of it.

NOA How on earth will I master your authoritative boomer voice and insightful dad jokes?

MIKE You can be the social media reporter on the show — do a weekly segment on what's making news in the social media world —

LOUISE *(Where might this go/do we need another regular?)*

NOA Like which platforms are trending? Who's been cancelled? Who's in? Who's out?

MIKE Exactly.

NOA It's bizarre that's not already a beat in the newsroom. It makes a huge difference to people's lives.

MIKE You run my social media and you have a voice on the show and full access to my contacts book.

NOA Seriously, Mike, your 'contacts book'?
You can find anyone on the internet now.
You're the only journo I know who still lugs that thing around —

MIKE It's the most important part of being a journalist.

Is the PM's personal mobile on the internet? Russell Crowe's? His girlfriend's? We needed it the other morning —

NOA Righto, righto!

She leafs through the tattered old A4 address book, falling apart, held together by tape and string — its poverty being a big part of its value.

Oh my god, you've got numbers in here that begin with '9'! And why have you got a whole page of numbers for someone called Cheryl Kernot?
She an old girlfriend?

MIKE Cheryl Kernot was the leader of the — oh never mind. How many phone numbers have you lost when you've updated your iPhone?

NOA Heaps.

MIKE When I was starting out you were hired for jobs because of this book.
It never leaves my side.

NOA Can I do my first social media report on Friday's show?

LOUISE *(Can you check the board before making any promises?)*

MIKE Can you start work on my Twitter account today?

NOA Sure.

LOUISE MIKE!

MIKE Yes mate.

LOUISE You've got a pre-record with Anthony Warlow. Studio 105.

MIKE Why?