

*Working For The RTA**

Words and Music Pat Drummond (4.55)

Dateline... Hay, NSW

A true story, from Hay in NSW, that provides a fascinating insight into the mentality in which all public property is 'fair game'. It's the 'Larrikin' element of the humour here which intrigues me most. There remains, at the end of the tale, a sense of wry ambivalence, which leaves the listener just a little undecided about where his sympathies actually lie.

Chorus: I guess he never got over cracker night. He must have been a mongrel of a kid.

The type that put the bungers in your mailbox and blew off all the hinges and the lid.

**I must admit I did it in my day, but most of us grow up and give it away or,
heaven forbid, like Midnight did, go working for the RTA.**

Now Midnight was a ganger at Thallangerin;

that's forty kilometres north of Hay.

He was the bloke that did the blastin'' for The Main Roads Department,

long before they ever were the RTA.

But he had his own agenda at the broken-down weekender,

where the fence was never mended. Just for fun,

nearly every Friday night, he'd liberate some gelignite

and go eradicating rabbits on the run.

Innovative, well you'd have to give him that!

He used to catch himself some bunnies in a chicken wire trap.

Then he'd throw 'em in the ute, with the cattle dog to boot,

half a dozen sticks of jelly and the caps.

Chorus.

Now we'd've never heard the story of the misbegotten sortie
if he hadn't gone and used our bloody ute;
but he took it from the depot and he headed for a burrow
where the tracks around were relatively new.

He'd take a rabbit from the trap, strap the jelly to it's back,
and fuse the whole contraption to a detonator cap.

Then he'd let the thing go, the dog'd chase it down the hole;
within a half a minute that was that!

I tell you, we're not talking little blasts.

They used to see them up in Sydney on the seismographs!

Within a week or two that eradicatin' fool had the bunny population down by half.

He'd should have given it away! It was getting on for dark;
but he had just one more rabbit and he found another mark.
But what the ganger didn't spot, as he dropped it from the box,
was that the hole that he had found had been invaded by a fox.

So he let the thing go. It zipped down the hole, and he returned to the utility to watch.

That bunny left the burrow like a bullet from a barrel,
with the flurry of the fox in pursuit.

As it came across the clearing, it was looking for some cover,
and the first thing that it spotted was the ute!

His eyes flew wide as the three of them arrived,
the bunny and the fox and old Toot.

And the last thing that he saw, as they zipped under the floor,
was the jelly as it jagged a Mallee root.

It's a miracle that Midnight wasn't killed!

There were little bits Holden scattered all over the hill.

And to cap the situation,
he claimed Worker's Compensation;
and he reckons that his ears are ringing still.

**Jim said to me "Now I was 'the bunny'
that had to explain this entire affair to maintenance division up in Rose Hill in Sydney.**

So I did the report and it said, "Dear Boss.....

I guess he never got over cracker night.

He must have been a mongrel of a kid.

The type that put the bungers in your mailbox and blew off all the hinges and the lid.

**I must admit I did it in my day, but most of us grow up and give it away or,
heaven forbid, like Midnight did, go working for the RTA.**

Yeah, little boys that never grow up...

Well, I guess they join the army...

or become economists...

or go working for the RTA."

*** The RTA is the common acronym for The Roads and Transit Authority of New South Wales**