Crazy Migrants lost in the outback.

LOGLINE
1960. A heavily pregnant Czech migrant convinces her husband to drive 2000 miles across Australia's hostile Top End — in the wet season. She can't drive or speak English. The baby can wait. The need to become a doctor cannot. Or she will go mad.

Based on actual events this heartwarming tale, written by D.T. Klika, explores how displacement affects migrants and the Indigenous people of the land they want to call home. It's about lying to survive.

Feedback from an application for funding:

> *The concept is distinctive as it explores the resilience of Czech migrants and First Nations characters from a female perspective. ... This is a concept with heart and aims to uncover an immigrant perspective unparalleled on screen. It also has the potential to resonate with an international audience.*

TONE and COMPS
A mix of the Czech black comedy *Closely Watched Trains* (Menzel, 1966), *Little Miss Sunshine* (Dayton, Faris, 2006), and the Polish film *Cold War* (Pawlikowski, 2018).

THE STORY

Prologue: The Road We open in the Australian outback, March 1960. Olga, thirty-eight and eight months pregnant, walks through mud alongside a bogged car. She catches her reflection in the rear view mirror — and falls. We dissolve into fragments of a life assembled across continents and decades.

Act One: The Woman Who Would Not Wait

The film moves between present-tense road movie and colour-drained flashbacks to Communist Czechoslovakia, revealing who Olga is and what she has already survived.

In 1956 Czechoslovakia, Olga is a gynaecologist under surveillance by the secret police because her husband Karel fled West years earlier. Tall, striking, and constitutionally unable to lie, she is interrogated repeatedly about Karel's wartime work with the Americans — and continues delivering babies between sessions with the secret service.

Karel, forty-two, a construction engineer with a gift for stories and a talent for women, has been living in Darwin since 1955 after his dramatic escape in 1950. He plays golf, tends an affair with Lydia, a mixed-race barmaid, and charms everyone around him. When a telegram arrives announcing Olga's arrival, he panics just enough to redecorate the house and buy a German shepherd puppy.

Olga escapes Czechoslovakia via bureaucratic comedy — a car crash involving a donkey, a forged visa, and ambushing the Australian Ambassador at a Vienna opera. She arrives in Darwin in January 1957 to a small car and a puppy urinating on her dress. She laughs. She is home.

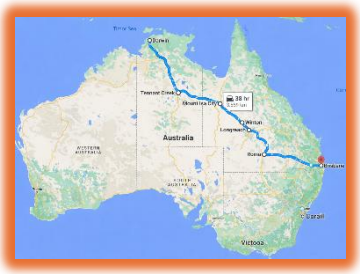
The Darwin years are genuinely happy. They spend time with their friends, Melva and Doug (a role perfect for someone like Margot Robbie, full of comic potential). At the annual Golf Club dinner dance Lydia is watching Karel, and Melva confronts him to start living a truthful life.

But a fault line opens: Darwin has no university. If Olga wants to practise medicine in Australia, she must re-qualify in Brisbane — two thousand miles away. She is also pregnant, and further along than she is willing to tell Karel, in case it jeopardises her plans.

When Olga finds Lydia's earring under the passenger seat, the confrontation gives her a bargaining chip to get to Brisbane. But the wet season is closing in, a time that sends her mad. And they can't fly — Olga is too far along – but Karel doesn't know that. So they'll drive. As Doug warns Karel over a beer: "The roads will be like quicksand" and "What about the baby?" "She's a doctor. We'll be fine." Will they?

Act Two: The Road

Karel buys a second-hand Hillman Husky from a salesman who can barely suppress his laughter. The petrol gauge is unreliable. They drive out of Darwin full of hope. A playful animated map tracks their progress — capturing the mood of each stretch: excited, cautious, bogged, exhausted, resolute.



The road delivers a series of encounters both farcical and quietly revelatory. They hit a wombat; Olga insists on burying it. Rain. A reconciliation in the flooded car: he promises to get her to Brisbane. For her he keeps his promises.

Olga, learning to drive on a lone outback stretch, manages to hit the only other car on the road. Their wrecked vehicles are towed by Max, a road train driver of wry sympathy, who mentions in passing that his Aboriginal wife could not get to a hospital for their baby. He drops the hapless couple in a small town to wait for repairs.

While Karel accidentally sets the barbeque alight — local kids had put petrol in the drum — Olga rests, and is woken by screaming from a nearby women's area. An Aboriginal woman, Rachel, is in breech labour. The women attending her are deeply wary of this sweating, heavily pregnant white stranger, but the situation is urgent. Olga, on her hands and knees in the dust, turns the baby. Rachel delivers safely.

The encounter opens something. Olga learns that the local Aboriginal community cannot access the Darwin hospital and children are at risk of removal under the policies of the era. The town's fire brigade and police force are the same two men, Thommo and Dave, in interchangeable uniforms, with neither water nor competence. Karel talks his way around them and hides two Aboriginal children in the car. Ernie and Archie, two Aboriginal men who have been watching, confirm what Olga is beginning to understand: the dispossession she witnesses is not incidental but systematic. The film's comedy, at its sharpest, understands that farce and injustice share the same postcode.

Back on the road, the car bogs in a waterhole. Ernie and Archie reappear — they have not gone far. A group of Aboriginal men fix the car with casual bush expertise. (a la Bush Mechanics, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8WfjkgqK9A). Karel attempts to help with a small shovel and breaks the side mirror. Ernie tells Karel plainly that he needs to respect his wife.

Crossing into Queensland, Olga begins to feel unwell. Karel speeds to Mount Isa. Pains having settled, Olga rests and Karel holds court at the bar downstairs. When the pains return, Olga is visited by Gladys, the publican's wife — magnificently practical — oblivious to Olga's state she exhorts about her husband's cost cutting attempts and government policy until the situation becomes undeniable. Karel bursts in and slips in a puddle, believing her waters have broken. The baby, it emerges, is due considerably sooner than he has been told. Olga has not lied — she simply declined to tell the complete truth. She learned from the best, she tells him.

Deep into Queensland, the car runs out of petrol. Karel walks for fuel. Olga, alone in the heat, is found by a group of Aboriginal women who check the baby, give her water, and move on. Karel returns with a small posy of wildflowers. She laughs. He kept his promise to come back.

Act Three: Brisbane

The birth scene is the film's set piece: a trainee nurse who confuses anatomy, a senior doctor reaching immediately for forceps, a junior doctor weeping at a pop song, and Karel arriving just in time for a jet of amniotic fluid to cross the room. Olga delivers her own daughter while the medical team reassembles from the floor. The baby is a girl. Karel is amazed.

An epilogue: Brisbane, 1966. Olga and her daughter Deborah join the University of Queensland admissions queue. The officious clerk informs Olga she is ineligible (an echo of the clerk at the Embassy in Vienna who refused to believe she was married to someone living in Darwin). There is a young Aboriginal woman ahead of them in the line— also applying to study medicine. Olga refuses to present her own papers until the clerk has dealt with her first.

In Victory, Olga takes Deborah's hand and walks toward the Hillman Husky — still alive, polished, and ready for the next adventure (there are many).

THEMES AND TONE

Czech in the Rear View Mirror is a comedy about displacement. It does not sanitise the White Australia policy era, the Stolen Generations, or the systemic exclusion of women from professional life. Its argument is that laughter is not a way of evading the real but of surviving it. As Ernie says: "You laugh or you die." The film situates the Czech migrant experience in direct dialogue with the Indigenous experience of the same period — not to collapse the difference between them, but to examine how both are shaped by the same colonial apparatus. The film is careful not to equate these histories, but holds them in a frame together.

The film's central comic engine is Olga's refusal to lie. The screenplay is sophisticated about what truth-telling means in a world where official discourse is itself a form of lying. Truth-telling reveals itself as not a simple virtue but an act of resistance requiring careful choices about which version of events to withhold.

PRODUCTION CONTEXT

The production requires substantive engagement with First Nations communities, and is integral to the film's integrity. The writer has plans to develop community consultations and engagement in the script development of those scenes, and is applying for grants. Script available, 105 pp. Look Book in development. Seeking an Australian-based production Co.

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Photos from the family archive © Klika. Map and ad for Hillman Husky sourced from the Internet.