

MINI DEMO PORTFOLIO

IAN CROOKS

'THE PROPMAKER'

No 09685

Condensed Edition, 2025



BLACKFORD CREATIONS

UNITED KINGDOM.
AOTEAROA

Kia Ora, G'day!

If this has found you then you may well be looking for me...

I'm Ian. I'm an experienced propmaker from the UK, now living in Manawatu. I build interesting & unusual things. It's a hobby which became a job - one which I am passionate about. I worked at Pinewood studios in England building props for Film/TV/Museums/Exhibitions etc and I'm now looking to put my creative drive into gear in Aotearoa.

As my introduction to you this is a heavily compacted version of my full portfolio and experience background. Condensed, easily digestable and without the calories!
A glimpse into my range to give you a taste on what I can offer without wasting our time.
If you like what you see then theres more info on the final page.

Oh, and don't let my location put you off -I've got that covered. I've built a self contained vehicle specifically designed to take on jobs further afield, which may now make me the most local prop guy you know. So you'll see that I'm dedicated.
And there's a twist - the vehicle itself even doubles up as a prop... read on to find out more...

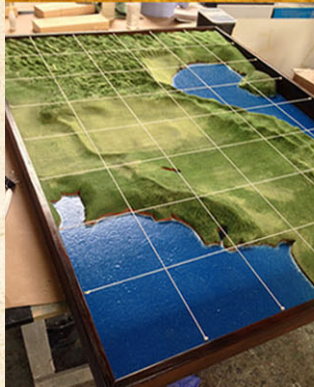
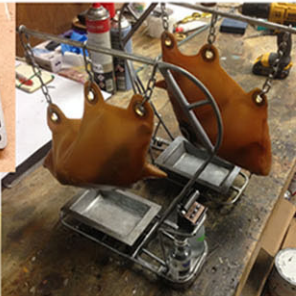
Now onto the fun part - the pictures!

Cheers, *Ian*



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MODELMAKING



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Scratch fabrication or kit built, highly detailed miniatures, full size replicas, with/without moving/puppeteered/electronically controlled parts, breakaway props, action props, hero props, background props, master models for molding, PU/resin moulded, plastic, metal, clay sculpting, mixed media etc. Experience with multiple industrial machines & materials used in modelmaking.

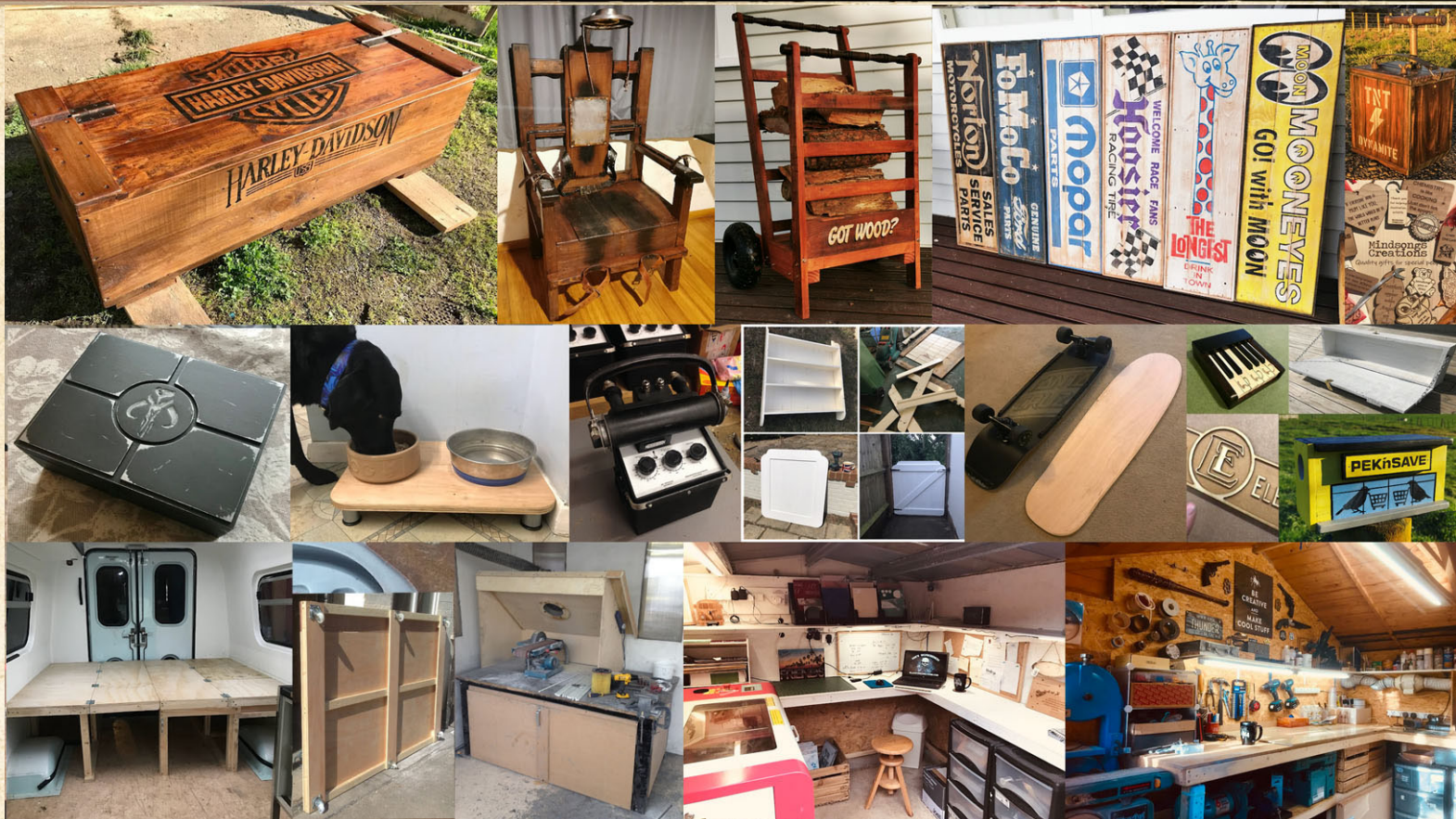


Mold prep, in-mold painting, fabricating & applying armatures & plugs. Various foams, resins & additives custom made for intended use, good understanding of pot life, mixing ratios and applying reactivation layers. Can produce multiple casts in a production-line format. I can quickly demould & deseam the finished cast and prep the mold for the next cast.



Silicon moldmaking with wood/fibreglass, single piece or multi part piece with layer routing, keys, levelling wax, vent holes, plugs pouring spouts etc. I am careful to check the volume of silicone required and I construct my molds to minimise excess silicone use/wastage. I can also conduct repairs/alterations on molds.

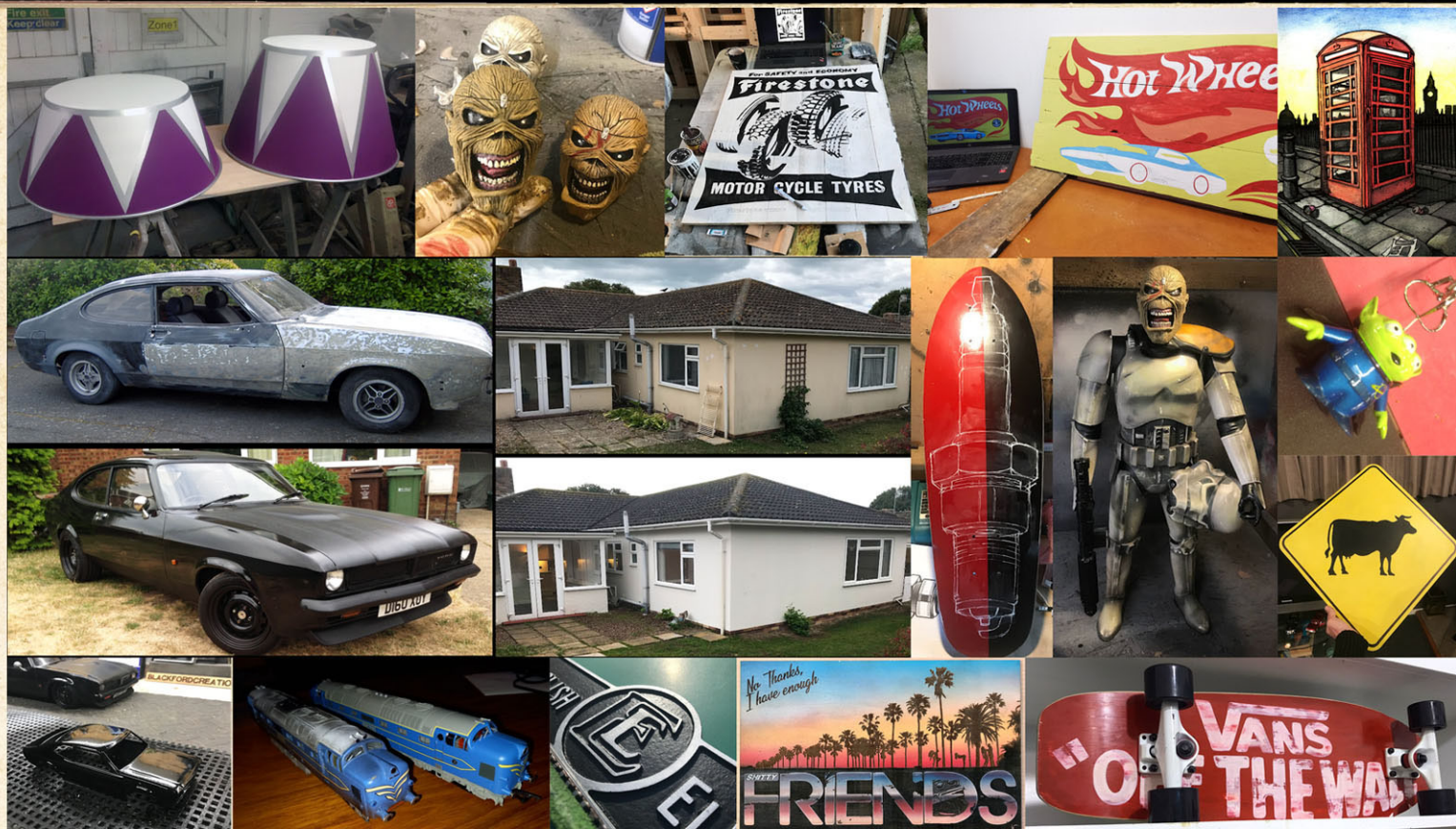
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CARPENTRY
&
WOODWORK



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Set building & installation, furniture restoration, custom workspace builds, shipping crates & transport solutions for large items, framework & structural for large or small wood builds/props, mouldmaking, custom tool jigs, finishing, varnishing, simulated effects. There aren't many thing's I can't make with wood.

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PAINT DEPT



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Thorough prep work (degreasing/masking/primer/sanding/sealing). Simulated effects (woodgrain/metal/wear/decay). Large scale painting with cellulose based paints & primers. Vehicle prep & paint. Signwriting & finelining, airbrushing & detailing, fine art, large murals & logos. Set painting & detailed prop painting large or small scale. Wide experience with paints of all kinds and excellent paint room discipline.



Ian Crooks' 'THE PROPMAKER'
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I've hand painted hundreds of signs for museums, workshops, garages, retail, and private collections. Some are replicas of existing designs and many are my original compositions. I can draw freehand, but the majority I've designed on photoshop and created templates for easy reproduction. All signs are brush painted by hand without stencils. I use prop techniques to weather/distress the wood on antique replicas. I can design, build and paint a sign quickly and to a high standard.

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GRAPHIC
DESIGN



Ian Crooks,
'THE PROPMAKER'
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I'm well versed in graphic design and I use it regularly in my work. I've created graphics and images for websites, brands, clothing, social media, gift companies, retail etc. I can reproduce a grainy reference shot from scratch, refine & edit or create a fresh design from a description or an idea. I designed my own line of laser cut merchandise (clocks, coasters, keyrings etc) and my graphics have also been laser cut and used in screen props. I make templates for signs with Photoshop and I create slides for social media videos. If a vintage label needs recreating then I can make an accurate reproduction from scratch.

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VEHICLE
 RESTORATION,
 REPAIR &
 CUSTOMISATION



Mechanical, electrical, bodywork, paintwork, welding, upholstery, detailing and part sourcing. Each vehicle above has undergone heavy work to fit the requirements of its use. To keep expenditure low I have been resourceful with restoring, retrofitting and fabricating parts. The left column shows my UK-based cars (in storage) NZ on the right. The Capri & Escort were daily driven classics and the Jeep was upgraded and modified as my Shepperton workhorse. The Bedford & the Transit (now sold) have been outfitted as self-contained vehicles for overnight work use & camping. The Avenger is my current daily driver. Each vehicle was inspected thoroughly by a qualified mechanic and given the appropriate MOT/WOF certificates without issue.

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OTHER SKILLS



CONCEPT & DEVELOPMENT

I can visualise a project and reverse engineer the build process to form a realistic digital render of what the finished product may look like according to the design brief. I can draw, and I often use Photoshop to create or modify a concept render. A visual aid has often proven useful in saving time and money to make any changes to the plan before the project reaches the workbench. I'm able to work from minimal reference images and fill in the necessary gaps. If I create a concept render then that is exactly how the finished item will look.

REPAIR & RESTORATION

Extensive experience with repairing & restoring tools, vehicles, machinery, furniture, electronics, damaged props, clothing, musical instruments, sports equipment, paintwork, buildings etc. If it's broken then I can usually fix it. I like my repair work to be thorough and often stronger than the original to ensure that it's fixed correctly and doesn't need revisiting. A good repair/restoration should leave little to no evidence that there was ever an issue.

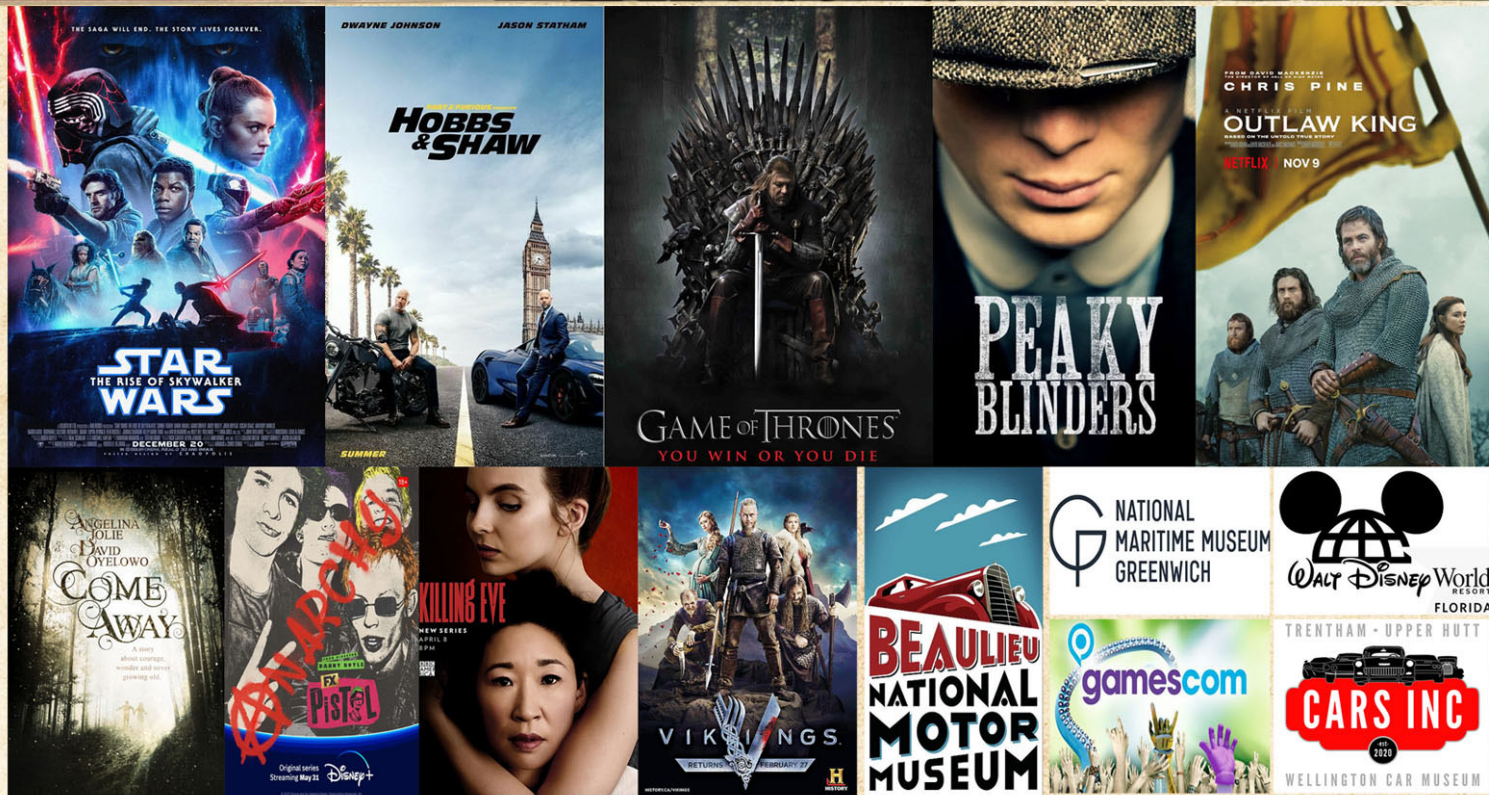
PROBLEM SOLVING & LATERAL THINKING

My approach may seem a tad eccentric, but I hope that this portfolio hints at my aptitude for thinking outside of the box. A creative industry attracts creative minds, and I like to use as much of mine as possible to move a project forward. My most frequently used strength is problem solving. If a project hits a snag then I can usually offer alternative solutions. I can step up and remain calm under pressure whether it's a logistical nightmare, a time constraint, a broken part, uncured paint, a bad reference image, a workshop machine failure, a trainee error etc. I've seen many, and I know many ways to get us out of trouble. I work only within the boundaries of health & safety and common sense, so I will only put forward and support safe solutions. No dangerous bodes or sketchy moves - no one gets hurt on my watch.

TEA

I make a cracking cuppa. It's an essential tool. For us Brits it keeps the brain lubricated!

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TITLES



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I've contributed prop & art dept work to many films, TV shows & attractions, so when someone asks me "Have you worked on anything I've seen?" I sometimes mention one of the above to move the conversation along. A border agent at LAX wanted to check that I was a genuine traveller so we had a good chat about films! I love contributing to a production and playing a small role in bringing a creative vision to life for more people to enjoy. I particularly enjoyed working on set and puppeteering a prop I had engineered for the film 'Come Away'. Ultimately though when one assignment ends, I'm just keen to get back into the workshop to start on the next one. I don't care what the project is, as long as I can make something!

ABOUT ME

My name is Ian Crooks and I'm a professional propmaker originally from The UK. I love building interesting things and I'm looking to make an Impact in Aotearoa!

My lifelong drive for creativity and craftsmanship made for an organic transfer into the Film/TV propmaking industry. I crafted a blaster replica for my Star-Wars obsessed brother as a gift, which attracted a lot of positive feedback when he shared it online. I was encouraged by friends to try the film industry since I was always creating things of interest. I visited a prop workshop with a suitcase full of demo prop weapons I had made, and after I was trialled for a week I was put to work on the JJ.Abrahams film 'Overlord'

Since then I've endeavoured to construct a considerable skills portfolio throughout multiple departments, asking questions, paying attention and adapting to the alternating techniques of different workshops. I've worked on many productions and I've been mentored and trained by some of the best propmakers in the industry at Pinewood Studios, R-Concepts and Tarver Productions LTD. I've introduced techniques and solutions from other industries and I'm always up for learning a different method or to share mine. I'm equally as happy to take the lead on a project and work alone or as part of a team in a workshop or on-set. I build rapport with my colleagues, I'm always open to learning more, pooling our strengths or helping someone less experienced. Every great team I've been fortunate to work with share the mantra; "Have fun and get it done."



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ABOUT ME

I'm 39, from London and I live a short distance from Hawera on a rural property with my partner Kassi who manages a dairy farm. I'm physically fit, strong, and healthy. I've no children or high maintenance pets and I am registered self-employed. I have a full driving license and my own vehicle, I have no criminal history and I'm fully vaccinated for Covid-19. I hold a resident visa and I have the right to live and work in New Zealand as granted by INZ. I have a purpose built self-contained vehicle (The Bedford Ambulance on the vehicle page) to be available where the work is. This was built with the intent that I can become the most local propmaker wherever the job may be.

My other hobbies and interests include classic cars, inline skating, outdoor activities, photography, reading, music, movies, comedy, history, making themed videos, hanging out with animals and exploring and enjoying Aotearoa. I'm friendly and sociable, I love a laugh and I'm always keen to make new friends.

This is an updated and compacted version of my full portfolio for reference and introductory purposes. If you would like to see my full project and production resume with build breakdown shots then I'm happy to send it - but be warned, it's extensive so you may need to book time off!

I'm keen to make my name in Aotearoa as a propmaker who can 'get it done'. If you like what you see so far then drop me a line, and let's build something awesome!

Thanks for your interest,

Ian Crooks.



VISITING A CHILDHOOD FRIEND AT WETA -2019

RATES

I'm not new to the industry, but I am a new face in New Zealand. I'm looking to build a good name and reputation here, so my rates are lower than my UK standard- which was still competitive for what I can bring to the table (or to the bench).

Previous propmasters and team-mates have considered my contributions valuable enough to request that I remain longterm after the original assignment had wrapped. Various jobs requiring alternate skills have been offered to me to retain my presense on the lot. I was even commissioned to work on and restore propmaster's classic cars on-site in between productions. The owners considered it a good way to both keep me around for the next job and get their prized cars back on the road in the meantime. A Win-Win for all!

I'm not afraid to put in the mahi and get my hands dirty. I am confident that you will find my contributions to be an asset to the project and my rates to be extremely good value!

Let's have a chat and work something out.

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FINAL SCENE:

LOCATION: IAN'S WORKSHOP, TARANAKI

Sitting pensively at his desk after days of trawling through thousands of project shots photos to show a decent range for his demo portfolio, the Englishman leans back and breathes a tired but accomplished sigh of relief.

He hits the 'send' button, feeling hopeful yet quietly confident that the recipient is a kindred spirit in creativity who can recognise another. He closes his laptop, rises from his seat and exits his small home workshop to make a cup of tea.

CAMERA PANS DOWN TO DESK, SLOW ZOOM ON A SINGLE BUSINESS CARD PERCHED TENTATIVELY NEXT TO HIS LAPTOP.

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CUE LIGHTSWITCH SOUND EFFECT & QUICK FADE TO BLACK
"TO BE CONTINUED"
END SCENE

BLONDIE'S 'CALL ME' FADES IN AND PLAYS THROUGH

CREDITS ROLL



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TARANAKI

NEW ZEALAND

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FINAL SCENE:

LOCATION: IAN'S SMALL HOME WORKSHOP

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