

WOGBALL  
RISE OF THE SOCCEROOS



PILOT EPISODE  
(15 page sample)

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EXT. MOSTAR, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA DAY

Old stone buildings sit on cobbled stone streets. Locals walk around street markets; some wearing traditional Eastern Orthodox attire, others in suits.

TITLE: Mostar, Yugoslavia - April 1941

Suddenly an explosion rocks the town. People run in terror as Croatian nationalists (*Ustashe*) storm the markets, smashing stalls and attacking anyone in Orthodox clothing.

EXT. ORPHANAGE DAY

IVAN and STANISLAVA RASIC (40s, well dressed, Serbian) rush up to a heavy door with a small suitcase and their son RALE (5). They knock and look around to see if they've been followed. A Catholic PRIEST (60, Croatian) opens the door.

PRIEST  
Can I help you?

IVAN  
Father, please. You have to take our son.

Rale looks up at his father, confused.

PRIEST  
This is an orphanage.

STANISLAVA  
He can't stay with us. It's not safe.

PRIEST  
You cannot simply abandon a child because things get difficult.

Rale looks to his Mother and Father. Boys run behind the Priest holding a soccer ball.

IVAN  
Rale, go play.

Rale obeys and runs over to the other boys.

IVAN (CONT'D)  
(angrily)  
The Ustashe are going to kill us all if we stay.

PRIEST  
You don't know that, my son. God-

STANISLAVA  
My brother was murdered last week.  
They know who we are.

Ivan points at Rale, playing outside.

IVAN  
Do you want his blood on your hands  
as well?

STANISLAVA  
Please, this is our only option.

The Priest thinks.

IVAN  
We have money.

He takes out a stack of notes and hands them to the Priest.  
The Priest looks at Rale playing soccer with the boys.

PRIEST  
We will look after him.

Ivan looks at his watch.

IVAN  
Slava, we have to go.

STANISLAVA  
We have to say goodbye to him.

Ivan and Stanislava walk out the back where Rale is playing  
soccer with the other boys.

STANISLAVA (CONT'D)  
Zvonomir.

Rale kicks the ball past a boy. The others all cheer.

IVAN  
Rale! Come here.

Rale runs over to them.

RALE  
I scored a goal!

IVAN  
 Son, your mother and I have to  
 leave you here for a while. We  
 don't know how long.

Rale keeps looking back at the other boys.

RALE  
 Okay.

STANISLAVA  
 We promise we'll come back for you  
 when it's safe.

RALE  
 I have to go. My side doesn't have  
 enough players now.

Stanislava grabs Rale in a tight hug and kisses him.

STANISLAVA  
 We love you. Whatever happens.

RALE  
 (embarrassed)  
 Mum.

IVAN  
 Go, son. Have fun.

Stanislava and Ivan watch Rale run back to the game. This is  
 the last time they'll see him.

IVAN (CONT'D)  
 It's better if he doesn't know.

EXT. PLAYING FIELD, MELBOURNE DAY

RALE (now 35, thick Serbian accent) is wearing a yellow  
 tracksuit, coaching a team of 10-year-olds. The children kick  
 around a soccer ball with absolutely no rhyme or reason.

TITLE: Melbourne, Australia - August 1970

One of the children, COLIN, kicks a goal and cheers.

RALE  
 That's your goal, Colin.

The GOALIE angrily throws the ball back onto the field. All  
 the kids run at it. A DAD (30) walks up next to Rale.

DAD

Simon! Come on. We gotta go.

SIMON (10, blonde) leaves the ball and runs over.

RALE

Practice ends at 6.

DAD

What? Oh you must be Rail.

RALE

Rale.

DAD

Is that Greek?

RALE

Yugoslavian.

DAD

Same diff. Anyway, we've got tickets to the St Kilda game tonight. I wanna get good seats.

RALE

But we have a game this weekend. Simon is our best defender.

DAD

He'll be fine. It's just soccer.

RALE

But he is part of the team.

DAD

Come on, it's not like he can make a career out of this or anything.

RALE

I played professionally for 4 clubs in Yugoslavia and for Footscray here.

DAD

(pointing at the kids)  
So why are you doing this?

The Dad and Simon leave.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET, MELBOURNE NIGHT

A tram trundles down a quiet St Kilda street, drunk St Kilda AFL supporters singing from inside.

ST KILDA SUPPORTERS (OOS)  
 Oh when the Saints, go marching in,  
 Oh when the Saints go marching in.  
 Oh how I want to be with St Kilda,  
 When the Saints go marching in.

The tram stops. RALE pushes his way through them with a giant mesh bag full of soccer balls and plastic cones. As he reaches the doors, a young male (SUPPORTER 1) grabs the bag, yanking Rale backwards.

SUPPORTER 1  
 Play a real sport, ya dickhead.

SUPPORTER 2  
 Yeah like football. Football!

RALE  
 (pulling his bag free)  
This is football.

Rale stumbles off the tram. Supporter 1 leans out after him.

SUPPORTER 1  
 Bullshit.

SUPPORTER 2  
 Go home, ya stupid wog!

The tram pulls away.

RALE  
 This is my home.

INT. HALLWAY, RASIC HOUSE NIGHT

RALE walks through the front door and drops the mesh bag. His wife, BARBARA (30), is in the kitchen.

RALE  
 Why do Australians know so little  
 about the rest of the world?

Barbara steps into the hallway looking exhausted. She's in a tracksuit with soapy rubber gloves from washing dishes.

BARBARA  
 Shhh! The kids are asleep.

RALE  
 (whispered)  
 Sorry.

Rale walks up the hall and kisses her on the cheek.

INT. KITCHEN, RASIC HOUSE CONTINUOUS

RALE sits down at a laminex table. There's a plate of food for him with aluminium foil over it. BARBARA continues washing up.

BARBARA  
 I thought training finished at 6.

RALE  
 The under 10s did, but I had to do an extra session with Footscray.

Barbara turns around, still holding one of the plates.

BARBARA  
 You didn't tell me that.

RALE  
 It was the only time I could get them all together. Between their jobs and families, it's crazy.

BARBARA  
 What's crazy is how we never see you.

RALE  
 Oh that's right, tomorrow night I'm coaching Melbourne Hungaria.

Barbara slams the plate back in the sink.

RALE (CONT'D)  
 What?

BARBARA  
 Do you care about our kids at all?

RALE  
 Of course. That's why I work all the time. So you can have all this.

Rale points around at the (unimpressive) house.

BARBARA

But why does it have to be for so many different teams? Just get a normal job. It pays better.

RALE

I'm a professional football player.

BARBARA

You were.

RALE

And now I coach and I'm more experienced than most of the ones they have.

BARBARA

But if they can't pay you...

RALE

One team can.

BARBARA

Who?

RALE

St George Budapest. They offered me a job last week.

BARBARA

Then take it. Forget the others.

RALE

It's in Sydney.

Barbara sighs, takes off her gloves and sits.

BARBARA

You can't keep doing this to us. This has to be the last time we move, Rale. You can do this job and that's it. Understand?

RALE

Understand.

BARBARA

You finish the washing up. I'm bugged.

RALE

Anything for you, my love.

Barbara exits, shaking her head.



INT. HALLWAY, RASIC HOUSE DAY

RALE has a sports bag and is heading out the door. BARBARA is feeding the children in the kitchen; DANI (2) and SIMON (6 months). There are half packed boxes everywhere.

RALE  
I'll be back by 5.

BARBARA  
You still need to pack up the garage.

Simon spits up his food.

BARBARA (CONT'D)  
Shit.

The phone in the hallway rings. Rale picks it up.

RALE  
Hello, Rasic residence.

BRIAN (V.O.)  
Ah Mr Rasic, it's Brian Le Fevre from the Australian Soccer Federation.

RALE  
Brian! Hello, what can I do for you?

BRIAN (V.O.)  
We'd like to offer you the coaching position for the National Soccer Team.

RALE  
I thought Joe Vlasits was coaching.

BRIAN (V.O.)  
Yes but we felt he wasn't right for where we want to take the team.

RALE  
Because you didn't make the World Cup?

BRIAN (V.O.)  
(clears throat)  
We want to offer you a 4 year contract. You can have some time to think about it, if you like.

RALE

No. I accept.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Fantastic. We'll organise a flight to Sydney for you so you can meet our Federation president and sign the paperwork. Congratulations, Mr Rasic. We're excited to have you with us.

RALE

Thankyou.

INT. KITCHEN, RASIC HOUSE CONTINUOUS

RALE runs into the kitchen.

RALE

They just asked me to coach the Australian team.

BARBARA

(sighing)

And what did you say?

RALE

I said yes. Why wouldn't I?

BARBARA keeps feeding SIMON. Rale looks at DANI.

RALE (CONT'D)

Your father will be the youngest national coach ever!

Dani stares at him blankly.

RALE (CONT'D)

Why is nobody excited for me?

BARBARA

You said you weren't taking on any more teams.

RALE

This is the national team. I could be the one who finally gets them to the World Cup.

BARBARA

Or you won't and you'll miss another four years of your children's lives for nothing.

RALE

We'll be in Sydney anyway. It'll be a few weeks out of the year, that's it.

BARBARA

I know you, Rale. You'll make it more than that. You always do.

RALE

Why are you so against this? This is for the country.

BARBARA

The country doesn't care about soccer, Rale.

RALE

Well, they will. I will make them.

INT. ARTHUR GEORGE'S OFFICE DAY

ARTHUR GEORGE (55), a rotund Greek-Australian, sits behind a large wooden desk with two leather chairs opposite him. In one of the chairs JOHN BARCLAY (43), a thinner haggard-looking Scotsman sits with a whiskey, laughing. There's a knock on the door.

ARTHUR

Come in.

RALE enters and is shocked at the opulent office, with views across the city. Arthur stands and shakes his hand.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

It's not as nice as my law chambers but the view's pretty good. Arthur George.

RALE

Rale Rasic.

ARTHUR

The Victorian league's star coach. And only 34 years old.

John gets up to shake Rale's hand.

JOHN

But he knows how to get a team into line. Don't ya, Rale? Told you you'd get the job.

He winks as he shakes Rale's hand.

RALE

John.

ARTHUR

Drink?

Arthur gestures to a fully stocked drinks cabinet.

RALE

No I'm fine, thankyou.

Rale sits down and puts his briefcase on his lap.

ARTHUR

To be honest, it was between you and Leo Baumgartner. But none of us really like Germans so-

RALE

Leo's Austrian.

ARTHUR

They're all too serious. Besides John gave you a glowing recommendation. And we've seen the work you did with the Victorian squad, Footscray and the under 16s. Two titles in one year, that's got to be a record.

RALE

Well, it's all about organisation, discipline and teamwork.

JOHN

And talent.

ARTHUR

I mean, we've had Slav coaches before but they haven't been able to get what we wanted from the team.

RALE

As long as the team is committed and have the right support, it should be easy.

Arthur laughs and takes out a contract.

ARTHUR

I like your confidence. So it's a 4 year contract, part time of course. \$2000 a year for the first 2 years then \$3000 for the last 2. That's \$10,000 all up.

RALE

For 4 years?

ARTHUR

Impressive, huh?

Rale stares at him.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know much about soccer so I'll leave the day to day stuff to you.

RALE

When do I choose the team?

John laughs then realises Rale is serious.

JOHN

The federation officials do that, Rale.

RALE

But they choose the same people each time. This country has some of the best players in the world, but the team you have got knocked out in round one in '65 and round two this year. The official choices don't work.

ARTHUR

(to John)

He's got a point.

Rale pulls a mass of documents out of his briefcase and lays them on top of the contract.

RALE

If you want to beat the professional teams, you need to be professional. This is my plan. This will get us to the World Cup. But there can be no short cuts, no skimping and no excuses.

ARTHUR  
 (shocked)  
 Cocky son of a bitch, aren't you?

He smiles at John. John smiles awkwardly.

RALE  
 For the amount you're paying, no-  
 one else is going to do what I  
 will. You want Australia to be  
 proud of their football team, don't  
 you?

ARTHUR  
 Of course.

RALE  
 That will only happen if they win.  
 To start, I need a seven day  
 training camp.

JOHN  
 You've got 4. We already booked it.

RALE  
 We need seven.

ARTHUR  
 You heard the man, John. He needs a  
 week. Let's see what Rale can do.

John takes another drink, barely hiding his anger.

INT. FOX AND HOUND MOTEL FOYER DAY

RALE enters a tiny motel reception area and a stocky male,  
 ASHLEY (50), walks out.

ASHLEY  
 G'day mate, what can I do for you?

RALE  
 I spoke to your wife Linda. I'm  
 running the camp for the National  
 Football Team.

ASHLEY  
 You mean soccer?

RALE  
 (grimacing)  
 Yes.

ASHLEY  
Oh right, you must be Rail?

RALE  
Rale.

Ashley's wife, LINDA, appears.

LINDA  
I told you that's how he said it.  
Rale, I'm Linda. And this is my  
husband Ashley.

Ashley looks at the note on the counter.

ASHLEY  
Well I've never seen a name like  
that before. It's weird.

RALE  
I've only met women named Ashley  
so...

Ashley glares at Rale. Linda butts in.

LINDA  
You're not booked for another 2  
months though.

RALE  
I know. I just wanted to make some  
requests in advance.

LINDA  
Oh, absolutely. We always love  
having the boys here.

RALE  
Good. We need all 26 rooms to be at  
the back of the hotel, away from  
the highway.

ASHLEY  
Your rate doesn't cover that.

RALE  
Then we'll pay more. And the  
players need 3 meals a day.

LINDA  
Well, we usually do sandwiches,  
fruit, coffee and tea.

RALE

I mean 3 cooked meals. In the restaurant.

ASHLEY

And who the hell's going to pay for all this?

Ashley stands right up into Rale's face. Rale reaches into his jacket and pulls out a small notepad and pen. He scribbles down a number, rips off the page and hands it to Ashley.

RALE

Him.

Ashley snorts and picks up the phone. He squints at the paper then sheepishly pulls out reading glasses, looks again and dials the number.

ARTHUR GEORGE (V.O.)

Hello, Arthur George - Australian Soccer Federation president.

ASHLEY

Yeah hi, this is Ashley Gerald at the Fox and Hound Motel. I've got a Rail Rasic here and he wants to change the rooms you booked and get cooked food for everyone. It's gonna cost you a lot more. Do you want to speak to him?

Ashley smiles as he waits for the response. Arthur sighs.

ARTHUR (VO)

Just give him what he wants. He's a tough little bastard. We'll pay. Peter!

He hangs up. Ashley is shocked.

ASHLEY

Alright, you got it. Are we done?

RALE

No. I need to speak to your chef as well.

ASHLEY

Christ.

**END OF SAMPLE PAGES**