

Previously on ***Raceguy's Adventures Into Over-Analysing The Show***. The Worst Challenge Ever was combined with the Worst Reward Ever, but both were completely ignored by whoever edited the previouslies, because I am clearly not the only one with a completely rational hatred of Telstra. Craig got a bee stinger in his eye. Surprisingly enough, hilarity ensued. Supposedly, Tipara learned that feeding seven mouths would result in less food, but everybody (meaning Knob) was too busy thinking about their own weight loss to care about the others. Kadina made a stupid decision, even by their standards, and lost the damn Bell once again. Well, "lost" is wrong, since it wasn't theirs to lose, but whatever. Sylvain got to go have the rest of his breakdown in some random hotel away from all the nasty cameras. Supposedly, Kadina will attack in order to stay in the game, having not learned that their attacking skills have failed to work for them up until this point.

Credits. That bus driver is going to keep on trying until he actually crashes into the camera, isn't he?

Commercials. Tonight in the Nein Newsroom: Nein executives remind Seven they're almost due for another foreigner hosting a failed game show.

Clouds. Day 19. Kadina. The two remaining women are standing around, and they look as bored as I feel with the way this show is heading. NoMind confessionals from in between a pile of rocks about how nobody knows what's going to happen, because they assume that today is Merge Day. She expositos about the basic Reward-Immunity-Tribal Council cycle (which was such a pathetic inclusion to the episode I'm not even going to bother wasting a good snark on it), but chalks a visit to Tribal Council up to being "unlucky", rather than "fond of making repeated idiotic decisions". Caren provides her own confessional, where she explains that she's nervous, doesn't know what's about to happen, and apparently doesn't know that "apprehensives" isn't a real word. I think I can sort of see where both of these comments are coming from, even though everybody knows that the Merge will happen today. Firstly, in the three American seasons we had seen until this point, each time the Merge had happened in a different way. In the first season off of Borneo, they had Tribal Ambassadors who made the decisions about name and location and whatnot; in the

Outback, they had that Men's Night/Hen's Night setup that confuzzled me because I am stupid; and in Africa they just merged at the Immunity Challenge with no lead-up at all. So there's certainly some level of uncertainty about that on its own, but the combination of the tribes being so uneven and the producers not being Mark Burnett may lead them to trying something else entirely. (Incidentally, for those of you playing along, the Marquesas season in America, which was filmed and was aired at roughly the same time as this, recycled the same Merge format from Borneo. So one point for the producers for originality. Current producer point total: One.)

Craig burns Sylvain's name into a tree branch with all the losers already on it. Except for Jeff, because he is in a different class of loser entirely. One that should probably have been shared with Bald Spice. Craig confessionals with what will become his own little story arc for the rest of his time here, wondering why someone can't win every Immunity until the end. It certainly would be "an amazing feat", as he says, because even now nobody's done it. In fact, let's look to the past (and then-future) challenge monsters, in a little segment I like to call This Week's Adventure In Why Raceguy Needs To Get Out More.

There are four basic types of challenge monsters in Survivor. There are those who seemingly don't bother with the challenges if they know they are safe, but then will do whatever it takes to win if they know they need to in order to remain in the game. These people are almost almost always female. Kelly from the original season in Borneo, Kim Johnson in Africa, Jenna in the Amazon (who won another one by pure luck anyway), and Susie in the just-finished Survivor Gabon are examples of this.

The second type of challenge monster is the one who wins a chain of Immunities but then falters at one challenge, and is voted out while the rest of the tribe has the chance to stop them from winning their way to the final. Examples? Tammy from Marquesas, Darrah from Pearl Islands, and Erik from Micronesia.

Then there's a third kind. These are the people who are safe and who don't need to win at all, but then compete seemingly to try and stop others from winning. Rafe in Guatemala

and Boston Rob in All-Stars were like this, as was Amanda towards the ends of both China and Micronesia.

The final kind is the player who wins almost everything, just because they can. This is the most obvious kind of challenge monster to notice, and is almost always a man. Our first exposure to this type was with Colby in Outback, but since then we've had to see it several times, mostly throughout that stretch in between Vanuatu and Fiji where everybody cast seemed to have no idea what the show was about -- Tom in Palau, Terry in Panama, and Ozzy in Cook Islands are some of the most prominent challenge monsters.

So, at this point, Craig has to be a combination of the first and last types. He's gotta win, otherwise he's getting booted the first chance the Tipara alliance has. And he has to win every single challenge, unless by some fluke he, NoMind, and Caren can get the Tiparas to turn on themselves until they're 3-2 ahead. And I think we all know that that's not going to happen, unless people are smart enough to realise what Hatie is doing with Sciona and Rob, then vote those three off at the next three Tribal Councils. Which... hang on a second, I think I'm choking on the preposterousness of that statement.

And now you too know Why Raceguy Needs To Get Out More. Quite frankly, it's a wonder I'm not a virgin. But enough about me, because it's time to swing on over to Tipara, where everyone insists on the game being about themselves. The Bell hangs beneath a creaky floorboard, or so the soundtrack would have us believe. Jeff misses his family so much he returned to Tipara in the night to make sure the camera saw his sign again this morning. Joel drinks something with a spider in it, and makes a disgusted face at the taste of it before noticing. I think that it's the camera guy who actually points it out to him, because it's a male voice and it doesn't sound anything like Knob or Lance. Joel shakes his head. Joel: Providing Unintentional Humour Since He Developed A Personality Beyond Good Looks.

In what is almost certainly a different conversation soon after, though as usual it's hard to tell the way the show is edited, Sciona and Sophie (who?) are kvetching about how they can feel clean after swimming, but that their hair stays dirty and filthy. Weirdly, Knob has

to feel Sciona's hair in order to determine that it reminds him of Ray Martin. The real Ray Martin watches this and tries to get a restraining order. Sciona calls herself "the only 49-year-old in the country with dreadlocks". That can't possibly be true, considering that both Joel and Sophie tell her she doesn't have them yet, and the fact that there has to be at least SOMEONE that old still trying to hang on to their youth in a misguided attempt to seem cool. Trust me on this. If my dad wasn't bald, he'd be one of them. (Hi, Dad! I'm still getting birthday presents, right? ...Right?)

For the first time in ages, we go to Tipara's Tree Mail first. There's a note attached to a branch by a ribbon, here to remind us once again that today is Merge Day.

Gather your goods, your time here is done

Farewell your camp and prepare to run

You have just five minutes to flee

And await instructions at the dead tree

Kadina reads their entire message together, while Hatie and Joel read theirs with the rest of the tribe not caring enough to show up. Blunt metaphor alert! (Insert sirens, flashing lights, and confetti here.) Kadina runs back to their camp to start, while Hatie and Joel have already arrived back at Tipara. Joel wastes time reciting the entire message again. Idiot. There's a bunch of quick cuts here of Tipara packing, in which it's near impossible to tell who's doing what or how quickly they're clearing their camp. Like I should be surprised at this point. Knob grabs the bell, possibly thinking ahead to Survivor Thailand and considering the possibility the merge isn't actually a merge (wrong season, douchebag). Sophie says goodbye to the home (bye, Tipara! I won't miss you either!), and Knob asks if somebody gathered the torches. Quite an important thing to take, those. Not as important as the bell, apparently, but. Everybody leaves.

Kadina is packing, and we get the same sort of footage. Interestingly, Tipara got a whole heap of stuff cut together, but here we get bits and pieces slightly sped up, possibly

because Kadina may have been mostly packed anyway and thus weren't running around like crazy.

At the dead tree (there's only one in that whole area?), Link arrives at the same time as both tribes, who dump their supplies on the ground. Turns out this is a merge after all. Well, it wouldn't be an episode without Knob misunderstanding at least one Tree Mail. Link reminds us that the game has changed, and that Kadina and Tipara are no more, which I would have a lot less trouble believing if they actually gave the new tribe new buffs.

In happier news for me, it means we may be getting fewer kangaroo shots, because now we're only hanging around at one camp. In sadder news, I don't get to recap the fun of watching the tribe completing the wacky process of choosing the new tribe's name, because the producers have already done that. They've chosen Aurora, which I suppose I like, given that it's much better than some of the other names contestants have chosen. Barramundi? Balboa? Bula Bula? And a whole bunch of cutesy smooshed names like Chaboga Mogo or Xhakum or Aitutonga. What I definitely DON'T like is that the producers have also chosen gr*y (trust me, I've argued with English teachers about this for years, and it turns out A and E are both acceptable) as the new tribe's official colour. That is the absolute worst colour you could have chosen. Beige would have been more interesting. Honest to God, BEIGE.

Link gives Craig the ugly new tribe mast, because even he thinks Craig needs to be close to something worthwhile for once. Link snarks on how much Tipara loves sleeping in the dirt, and then breaks the news that they sadly won't be doing that anymore, because both tribes are headed to a new camp. And because there's only one tribe now, they don't have to alternate trips to the water and to the windmill any more. Damn. I was enjoying watching Tipara starve. In a callback to both the very first day, the tribe must retrieve a map from an odd location, this time a tree branch about ten feet off the ground. When they have it, they have to follow it to the new camp, picking up even more supplies (which Link calls "housewarming gifts"). The supplies this time? Enough rice to last the entire stay. Flour, which will help you show each other why it's much better that you don't have any food to cook. Dried fruit and nuts, because he hasn't yet revealed that these aren't the only nuts you'll be welcomed to your new tribe with. And a small amount of fresh water,

which is so fresh that all the bugs you normally need to boil out haven't even invaded yet. Amazingly, there is not a product placement amongst the gifts. Yet.

But Link has more news for our little horde of dirty stinky pigs. They also get a hot shower, complete with shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, and deodorant. See? Foreshadowing. NoMind wants to talk to her family, and the Worst Reward Ever rears its ugly head. Sciona feels dirty, and she gets a shower. I can only hope Craig's attempt to win everything actually pays off the way all this whining does. Speaking of whining, Link basically mentions to the teams that their stench has ruined his first experience as a game show host. But in any case, Link wishes them good luck and once again points out where the map is.

It doesn't help Caren, who walks past the map and has to backtrack to reach it. I'm beginning to think all of Kadina's stupid decisions were her fault. At this point, it would make sense. Caren and Sciona read the map, with Knob leaning over their shoulders and trying to look useful. It's not working. Has Knob actually done anything worthwhile this entire time? Sciona's helping everyone survive, Sophie does the cooking and is a challenge powerhouse, Lance gathers food, Hatie also gathers food, and is the strategical mastermind of the tribe, Princess Jane does a lot of work around camp, and Joel is strong, a challenge asset (well, most of the time, anyway), and provides a bunch of self-help-y moral support. Rob? I can't think of a single thing he's done except stand around, whine, have Imaginary Babies with Hatie, incorrectly predict Tree Mail, and beat himself up whenever Tipara lost. None of which helps. At all. In any case, Sciona and Caren work out which way to go on their own.<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]--> <!--[endif]-->

Later on, Lance is helping to navigate, and mentions that part of the problem is the distances are in "steps", not metres. They find the flour and dried food at some random tree. Wouldn't it have been funny if the producers made this map and then "accidentally" dropped the supplies off at the wrong tree? Rob would self-flagellate about how they fucked up (after revisionistly saying he never even pretended to help out, of course), Caren would confess that she expected the former Tipara members wouldn't listen to her, and how she was right in believing that, Sciona would look all confused at how her survival skills didn't pay off, and Lucindork would be in her hotel laughing her arse off at how they couldn't keep track of their steps. Craig points out a large tree on the horizon, and figure out that that's their final destination. We get shots of the new camp, which comes with a

boat. And it looks to be even further inland than Tribal Council. How... why... what... I'm not sure I even understand how stupid you would have to be to get a boat there and have it seem like a logical choice.

Commercials. As a general rule, I seem to start getting caught up with things either well before they get popular (The Amazing Race, Futurama), or about three days before people stop caring (Pokemon, The X-Files). So, with that in mind, I'm going to pretend I love doof-doof music, wearing pants that hang halfway off my arse, and Paris Hilton, and hopefully society can wisen up for once.

The tribe marches towards their new camp. Caren confessionals that the game has changed. Caren and Craig rest. NoMind confessionals that Kadina are outnumbered. You THINK? She says she's going to "bust her butt" to win the challenges. But then what'll Craig accidentally fuck? If I'm right about him, you're not going to be able to fool him into being excited with the other side.

When the tribe arrives at camp, they find the boat, as well as an already-burning fire. I'm sure that fire's going to come in useful right around Day 35 or 36. Sophie confessionals that this camp is so much better than the Tipara Teepee. Sciona, Princess Jane, Caren, and Sophie marvel at their new surroundings, while Knob and Hatie ignore it all and act like preschoolers. Well, aside from Knob seemingly being immune to cooties and girl germs. But you just know he went crying to his mummy as soon as this was over. Lance carefully explains that their new camp is much closer to the water than the old one, and is much nicer. I think that's weird, given that Tipara got given the camp near to the beach on Day 1. You'd think "close to the water" would actually mean "close to the water", but apparently not. Unless it rained a lot more at Tipara. Or unless the Underwater Survivor contestants visited Tipara as a reward. Which would unquestionably take over as the Worst Reward Ever. Someone wonders whether they could use the misplaced boat as shelter, which would make sense because it doesn't seem to logically serve any other purpose. Lance points out that they'd still need the tarp, because Boats Do Not Make Good Tents. And if you disagree with him, just ask the Underwater Survivor cast.

The tribe comments on their new name, and think it's nice.

Link arrives for a visit, and has a present. Unlike Survivor China, it's not the individual Immunity, but it is two full packets of chips, and a whole bunch of assorted crumbs in a basket. You just knew this episode wouldn't happen without some product placement, so hopefully this is it. Hey, a non-fan can dream, right? The tribe eats. Someone says they would kill Knob, and I wholeheartedly agree at this point. Even if it wasn't for some more chips like I'm assuming they meant. This whole "Knob death threats" thing is getting to be a recurring theme in the show. I'm all for continuity, as you know, so yay. Lance asks what weird and wacky new flavour the chips are, and we get both Sciona explaining the high-end concept of Sour Cream And Onion, and a nice visual of the chip packets. I am not pleased with this development, because now in addition to the pre-built camp, they are getting more than enough food. Screw the risk of somebody dying, I want starvation!

Link's back with more prezzies, and luckily it isn't food this time. It isn't even product placement! He says that because they're having a shower for the first time in weeks, they should get a mirror to see what they look like. Because he has to be a prick, Knob goes first and actually moves the mirror so he can look at himself twice. Jerk. Hatie calls his gr*y beard hair "adorable". Given how much I despise the pair of them, I can only hope that their Imaginary love story winds up being Romeo and Juliet. How did that end again? Hatie takes one look at herself and passes the mirror on to Joel, but not before someone (who sounds like Link, hilariously enough) mocks him for his lack of facial hair. Sadly, I paused this video to type the previous sentence at exactly the wrong time, and the shadows combined with the mirror angle and Joel's general look made him look like Hitler. One more visual image I did not need to imagine. Craig calls himself God. I tend to agree, given the alternatives with these people. But at least he removes his hat for the first time in He knows how long. NoMind looks, says whatev, and passes it on. Caren hates herself. So does Sophie, the self-described "ugly beast". Princess Jane is just excited to look at herself in the mirror. She giggles. Sciona notices the dust on her upper lip, right wear Joel's shadows got inappropriate. But she winds up looking more like a bad drag queen than Hitler. Which some people would argue is even worse. Those people, by the way, are the same ones who wind up appearing on Big Brother. (Yes, I DO remember about her nephew. Ironic, huh?) Lance is shocked, because he says he's never gone more than three days without shaving. That man must have had one boring, boring childhood.

Link explains the concept of the Individual Immunity Challenge, which will happen tomorrow, and wishes them good luck. Then, he tells them to "hit the showers", as if he is suddenly a PE teacher. And with one actual teacher and two professional athletes still in the game, that is really the only attitude you could take, isn't it?

Stereotypically Hawaiian music takes us to a makeshift shower block, complete with ♀ and ♂ symbols, as well as conveniently placed haircare crap. Ew. These symbols always used to confuse me for some reason, but then someone explained to me that the ♀ symbol is supposed to be a girl standing politely, while the ♂ is supposed to represent a sleazy guy getting excited when he sees her. So it all made sense. Then I realised I was gay, and got confused all over again. Sigh.

Anyway, everyone is showering, and oddly all the guys are facing in one direction as though they're in a step aerobics class. Naked Joel (woo!) is standing directly in front of Naked Craig (WOOOOO!). hilariously, the editors include a shot of Naked Craig raising his arm to turn the shower nozzle and then shaking it really quickly, like he's trying to tell NoMind, "Dude, guess who I'm almost accidentally fucking!" without Naked Joel noticing. On that note (but more talk about Naked Joel later, unsurprisingly enough), it's time to thank the editors for their wonderful work. It hasn't always been that great to watch, but then again the contestants haven't always been that interesting, either. I think they do the best they can. And once again, it's a very small group of people. So thank you, Allan "My Other Job Is More Permanent" Beauman, Lucinda "Eight Votes Less Than The Other One" Hamley, Aimee "Blackcurrant" Durrant, and Ben "Jack" Frost. We get some shots of the women showering, and I apologise to about half of the people reading this, but I just can't find anything worth commenting about there.

Sophie confesses that it was "unbelievable" watching the dirt wash off her body. And I think that means that this is the first time she's actually talked more than somebody in an episode. So... yay? Sciona comments that Hatie's hair is coming out in grey streaks because there's so much dirt in it. Heh. NoMind calls it a "good little bonding session", and I think that's also the first confessional of hers we've seen in which she hasn't been the Exposition Fairy. Knob flicks water at someone who I think is Hatie. How can your love be

so Imaginary when you keep showing it in such ridiculously obvious ways? Lance confessionals that the soap changed colour as soon as it touched him, because he was so damn dirty.

And then it happens. Knob confessionals that the shower was "absolutely lots of fun", because he imagined he was "in the footy room with blokes". I assume that (1) he means the locker room showers, unless they really ARE a happy team at Hawthorn, and (2) he did know before getting naked with them that they were men. And, to quote Knob, "Joel's a bigger man than [Knob thought] he was. He's quite impressive, really." I keep flip-flopping on my read of that comment, unsure if Knob means that Joel has a gigantic pole, or that Joel's pole is just huge by comparison to Knob's... uh, knob. In either case, the editors insert a shot immediately after this comment of Joel sniffing his own arm and smiling. At least, I think that's his arm.

By the way, you know how you can tell Joel's niceness isn't just an act? When the show aired the first time around, he actually joined an Australian Survivor message board and thanked a poster for naming themselves after his dick. Class act, all the way.

Knob, not satisfied with the amount of douchebaggery he has pervaded this episode with already, offers \$100 for someone to streak. I vote for Craig and Long Pole Joel, if only because I haven't seen a televised three-legged race in years. You might not even need the ropes. Sadly, it's Hatie who takes him up on his offer, but not before driving the price up by 400 per cent. Heh. Hatie might be a despicable bitch, but she's no cheap whore. In a Hatie confessional recorded after the fact, she said that her parents warned her not to get naked in front of the camera. Right on cue, the snarky editors cut to her actual nudie run. Knob tells her to run the whole way around so he can get a proper look. Not that he hasn't already, given that she's already having his Imaginary Baby. Unless she gave him written instructions for anal sex, and he misread them. Which is entirely probable. Regardless of what Knob sees, Hatie's European bits are blurred, because this is *supposed* to be a family show, despite all the unbleeped swearing. Either that, or she was wearing a full-body condom the entire time she was out there, and never actually got naked. In yet another ambiguously gay moment for him, Craig not only looks at the ground (or Long Pole Joel's arse) but also ducks away as Hatie runs around the front of the shower block. Bwah! But Long Pole Joel has a huge shit-eating grin on his face. Not the

same sort that resulted in a snail taking Knob seriously last week, but a shit-eating grin nonetheless. He actually looks sort of like Simon from Firefly. And now I have a desire... well, an even bigger desire... to see Sean Maher naked, so thanks a lot, Long Pole Joel. Knob decides that his own nudity is worth cancelling out the money he now owes Hatie, and Sophie calls bullshit. I like Sophie. In Hatie's confessional, she says she hopes it won't come back to bite her in the arse like so many bugs apparently have. Back in the shower, now her feet are dirty. Hee. Assorted shots of the sun setting and rising. According to this footage, three days pass between the shower scene and what happens after the...

Commercials. You know, all this lusting over hot guys I can't have can't possibly be good for me. But it would help to explain my dismal failure of a love life. But sadly not of my social life in general.

When we return to Aurora, it's only Day 20, according to Long Pole Joel. Apparently, he's been keeping count by marking lines on his dick. Damn stock footage. The early risers comment that they're halfway through the game. Woo! Hatie wants to wake up with breakfast already made for her one morning. NoMind asks where Lance is, and Hatie explains that Lance tends to not hang out with the tribe. On cue, Lance walks over and starts talking to Craig and Long Pole Joel.

Caren confessionals that Kadina used to call Tipara "the dirt people", because they always looked so bad. She mentions that it wasn't their fault, but then calls them "uncivilised" and laughs like a maniac. Incidentally, the little legends here are still colour-coding the players based on their old tribes. Which means that this is twice now the producers have incorrectly named the colour yellow. Seriously? Not that hard to tell the difference between yellow and gr*y.

Princess Jane looks like she's pissed that the only housewarming gift they never got from the producers was coffee.

NoMind confessionals that Craig is the biggest threat on the tribe, but is so damn charming (and boy, do I hear that) that he's already endeared himself to the former Tipara. Knob walks alone towards some kangaroos. The kangaroos hop in the other direction. Clearly, all animals in this region are smart. On a cliff top, Knob confessionals that he's always wanted to meet Craig more than the women, because he thinks Craig has "a fighting spirit". I'm not so sure whether it's Craig's fighting spirit or the fact that your own tribe seemed to have trouble with every challenge so far involving teamwork -- they won the Episode 1 immunity on Princess Jane's memory alone, Episode 2's immunity was basically random luck the way the tribes would up split on the donut platform wedges, Episode 3's challenge, the woodchopping, was just people taking turns, Ep 4's reward was the sunken treasure which was a combination of swimming and pure luck, neither of which require teamwork, Episode 5's immunity and Episode 6's reward were both because of Kadina's stupidity rather than your own non-existent awesomeness, and the last Immunity Challenge was Joel on his own. By comparison, the four non-coin-toss challenges Kadina won? The buried treasure chest log roll, the unravel-the-ropes dinghy tow, the car driving, and the lobster hunt. And they were leading in the teamwork-intensive failure of a first challenge. All of which required a fair bit of teamwork. So he can go fuck himself. Well... obviously not literally, unless he gets some quick training from Long Pole Joel. But you know what I mean.

Over shots of the rest of the tribe, Knob continues ranting that Princess Jane wants him to be the king of the island. Not that it's an island they're on, but, again, you know what I mean. He says he was surprised because he thought she liked Sophie. Apparently, either Princess Jane was inflating his ego just for the fun of watching him suffer, in which case I love her, or she was correctly under the impression that this game is about outwitting people (and is trying to outwit either Sophie or Knob), in which case I like her for finally figuring it out. First Lance, now Sophie and Princess Jane in one episode? WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?!

Of course, Knob could just be under the impression that you could only form a relationship with one person at a time in this game.

Princess Jane is actually sitting next to Sophie, as they watch Hatie try and calculate how many scoops of rice each person can have each day, taking into account that people

disappear every so often. Sciona tries to boss her around while she carefully counts up the rice. Hatie apparently managed to come up with an answer without doing anything like that before.

Long Pole Joel, Lance and Craig discuss who's going to get water and who's going to get food from the beach. Unsurprisingly, they both realise fairly quickly that nobody's going to want to get water when you can get a tan. Surprisingly, all three of them agree to go for water, as do Sophie and Princess Jane. Sadly, it's a complete shame the tribe is split this way, with two Kadina who are presumable going to try and ally with the three Tipara they have no chance of allying with while Craig gets stuck on his own trying to schmooze up to the four people who might actually feel like helping them. So in short, the women are screwing up a great opportunity for Kadina to get themselves out of the situation they're in if they go to the beach, though they don't know it yet. Anyway, Sophie wonders whether there are people who don't want to do either, and Princess Jane immediately mumble-agrees. Of course she would. As you'll see, it turns out that entire discussion was pointless, because nobody's shown getting water and half of those people wind up fishing anyway.

Sciona confessionals that she gets pissed because she's with a group of city slickers, and thus every decision seemingly has to be by a vote. I can understand the vote part of that comment, sure, but getting through a whole bunch of votes is basically the entire premise of the game. Also, I must have missed the memo where Perth made like Pluto and got demoted to "dwarf city". She reckons they should figure out what needs to be done, work out who wants to do it, and then split up that way. Which is, ironically enough, the same way everyone else was trying to figure it out before. Except with less bitching when nobody volunteers to wash Knob's underpants.

At the beach, Hatie finds a fish but shrieks when she has to touch it. She confessionals that her entire plan might be ruined by the simple fact that Craig is so damn likeable. (Seriously, if he and Princess Jane got together, I would be calling him Prince Charming. Thank you, I'm here till Thursday! Try the beef!) She says he told her that he wanted to win but got screwed by his tribe, and Hatie seems to think Craig is the sort of guy who deserves to win. It's only taken six and a half episodes on her part and almost 38,300 words on mine, but we finally agree on something. Somebody crack open the champers.

Actually, just send me the whole bottle. If I'm this snarky sober, imagine what I'll be like drunk.

Speaking of drunk, seagulls fly in random directions.

Princess Jane and Craig bring a fish of their own over, and Hatie comments that it'll be mostly guts. As you do when presented with something that might actually have some decent meat on it for once.

Craig confessionals that "we're all fighting for our own existence now". He reminds us that the game is individual, as if the entire theme of this episode hasn't been about Why Teamwork Sucks enough already. He's talking to Hatie (nooo!) down at the beach, and he mentions that he loves Phantom Of The Opera, and it seriously looks like Hatie's trying to remember if she knows someone with that name, given how slowly she nods along. she mentions Les Miserables (I think... damn waves) and then confessionals once again that Craig is so perfect she's almost willing to Imaginarily Divorce Knob and have an abortion, just so she can spend more time with him. ["It wouldn't surprise me if she never filed the Imaginary Divorce Papers just so she could Imaginarily Reunite with Knob if this Imaginary Love Story doesn't work out." -- WhoreBoy] ["Which it won't, because he likes other boys." - Raceguy] ["Are you sure?" -- WhoreBoy] ["Ryan Seacrest is straighter than this guy." -- Raceguy]

At the Water Windmill, Long Pole Joel shows Caren a photo of his girlfriend (sniff) and family. Caren calls his girlfriend "beautiful", and he agrees. He better, otherwise she's going to make him get his welcome home sex from Craig. Which wouldn't necessarily be a bad thing, unless Craig starts making quick hand signals out the bedroom window hoping you don't see. Joel voices over how he rubbed his thumb over everyone and he thought he was actually feeling them. And if it was proportional to their real-life size? Well... let's just say it would be several different kinds of illegal. Not that I'm the best person to complain about the law, what with tracking down this show and everything. Caren asks where his dad is, and Joel mentions he hasn't seen his dad in years, before sniffing. Caren reminds him that "it's a really nice photo". Nice save.

Because we haven't seen much yet, we get all the emu and kangaroos shots we could ever want, as the beach people return with their catch. Sciona holds up a stack of fish, and Long Pole Joel points to one at around waist level and exclaims "look at the size of that one!" Not going to say anything. Besides, that's what she said. Sophie calls the catch "insane" and "fantastic". And not just because Hatie and Craig were involved. Sciona mentions that fishing is better because the tide's coming in. As the fish cooks, Knob asks if people would try cannibalism if they had to. As you do. There are two even more creepy things about this, aside from the fact he asked it in the first place. Firstly, Caren has to have it clarified if he means alive or dead. Secondly, only the Kadinas answer, so Knob must have asked this at Tipara at some point, which makes me wonder why they didn't just throw a challenge and boot him for being an insufferable jackass already. They would have had the numbers going into the merge anyway. As soon as Craig says he'd be up for eating another guy (again, not saying anything), Knob comments on Craig's "nice chunky thighs". Craig says Knob can eat them if he wants, as long as he eats them one at a time. Hee.

What a pointless and ridiculous discussion.

At Aurora's new Bucket Mail (which looks like it's the same bucket Link had the car keys in back when Kadina won Immunity), Caren and Knob retrieve the message, but not before Knob mocks Caren's Darwinian roots. Clearly, up in Darwin they take the whole "selective evolution" theory very seriously, because you would be hard pressed to find someone who likes Knob more than Caren. Back at camp, they piece together the paper jigsaw message:

The time has come, now that you're one

Play for keeps and forget the fun

To win today, you need the smarts

To fit together all the parts

Elimination it will be

For one to win Immunity

Holy crap, a mail message that doesn't make me want to slap the producers. And even better, Knob doesn't guess what it's about. At all! Unless that whole cannibalism discussion was edited out of order.

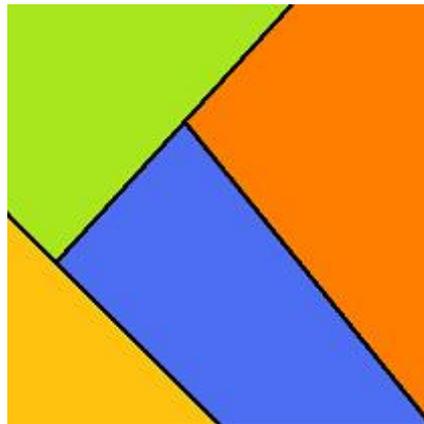
Commercials. Apparently, Americans have no idea what roast chicken even tastes like, according to Red Rooter. And yet they all seem to bitch as soon as anyone mentions the word Vegemite.

Challenge clearing. The tribes goes marching one by one, hurrah, hurrah. The little one apparently does not stop to tie his shoe, but someone stopped to tie seven nooses. WhoreBoy thinks this was done to ensure an all-Kadina final three. Apparently, he is even more morbid than I am. For no reason, there is a flag with the Australian Survivor logo on it, and we get a nice long look at it.

Link welcomes the players, and reminds us that we are at the "serious business end of things", which I assume is diametrically opposed to the "serious party end of things" and to the "hilarious business end of things". This challenge is all about brainpower rather than brawn. Which means a Kadina might actually have a chance to win, which is nice. He holds up the shark's teeth Immunity Necklace, which quite frankly looks like it was made by a Grade 2 kid in art class. A Grade 2 kid who failed art. On an unrelated note, I miss when they would call it the Immunity Talisman. And not just because this Necklace doesn't even look like a necklace. Link reminds everybody of the basic concept of how Immunity works at this point in the game, and then says the challenge has four parts. The first is simple. You run across the field to find ten small puzzles on the ground, and you use the four pieces to form a perfect square. Once you're done, you run to a yellow frame, which holds the nooses from before (though Link only calls them "ropes"), and grab one. The seven people who get the nooses move on, the three slow people are out. I like this, because it's like the world's shortest version of The Amazing Race. And, for all the criticism the producers took for being not inventive enough, it should be noted that this was the first ever Merge Episode Immunity Challenge, in the world, that didn't involve some form of staying still for

long periods of time, and is also the first ever challenge where people were eliminated at set points. So... this challenge really stands out in terms of Survivor history. (There are a few more in coming episodes which are also "firsts", and I'll try to remember them when I get up to them.)

Everybody lines up. Survivors ready? GO! They all run down, and try to solve the puzzle. The puzzle looks like this:



So, as you can tell, it's fairly difficult as far as piecing four pieces together goes, but as soon as you figure out that the orange and blue bits share that edge, it'll be nearly impossible to fuck up. One of the unfortunate aspects of this challenge, and one which makes it annoying to recap (as most challenges have been) is that it's very difficult to tell how well everyone's doing until they actually solve the puzzle. So just assume that there is puzzle assembly footage throughout this little bit. Craig solves it, extremely quickly (yay!). Sophie solves it. Knob solves it. Hatie solves it (apparently), just before Princess Jane. Long Pole Joel solves it. Lance solves it, and he moves on, meaning that Sciona, NoMind and Caren are out.

Random quick shots of... bush, for some reason.

In the second round, everyone who's left has to run to a line marked with a big blue piece of wood, stand behind it, and use their noose as a lasso to snag one of five shovels buried in the sand, which have their handles sticking out. This one's interesting, because in theory

you could all gang up and aim for the same shovel to stop someone from getting through. Not that anybody here would need to be stopped winning Immunity so badly it would fuck with the planned boot order or anything. This time, there is a bunch of rope-throwing footage. Craig gets his on the first attempt, it seems (wool!), as does Hatie (damn). Knob gets his shovel soon after. Now, Long Pole Joel and Sophie are trying for one shovel, and Lance and Princess Jane are trying for the other. Again, stupid idea. If you want to stop Craig from winning, don't have the two people who looked like challenge monsters a couple of weeks ago fighting for the same fricking handle! Idiots. Long Pole Joel gets it, and moves to the other shovel. She manages to beat Lance and Princess Jane on her first try, so Lance and Princess Jane have to move to the loser's bench. Oh, wait, I forgot this isn't Friday Night Live. Sorry, the cannibalism discussion confuzzled me a little.

Stage 3. Sand shots. Each person has a specific area on the ground marked with a rope circle, and they have to use their shovel to dig for a small wooden box. When they have it, they've got to carry it over the hill to get a flag. The first three people to grab a flag move on. Sort of a letdown, this part. There's no real way for people to screw with you like there was with the lassoing, unless you're unlucky enough to be downwind, and there's no skill involved in finding the box. Anyway. Lots of digging footage. Craig has his (!) and actually has time, it seems, to deliberate which flag he wants to take. Heh. Knob gets his. Sophie gets hers. So Long Pole Joel and Hatie are eliminated.

So, the final round. Flares are involved. So are the three boxes the finalists dug up in the final round, which conveniently matched the colours of the three flags. When Link tells them to, they have to open the box to find a compass and directions. Then, they've got to use those directions to find a flare hidden somewhere out in the surrounding scrub (is that even safe?). Once they find the flare, they've got to take it back to the start, light it on a dinky barbecue torch like you'd get at The Reject Shop, and run to the finishing platform. Yes, platform. GOD. Couldn't we just move on from them, given that this is an individual game and all now? Weirdly, where the old platforms were marked with blue and yellow (not green), the new platform is marked with orange (not gr*y). I pay wayyyy too much attention to minutiae. The first person to get on the platform with their lit flare wins Immunity. As Link reminds everyone of this, the camera's held down low to make him look powerful and all, but he really looks like a Bob Downe impersonator. Heh.

The Aurora flag gets another shot, transitioning to the moon. The tribe is gathered around a fire, where Knob points out that Craig could be the first person in history to win every reward and every challenge. I'm fairly certain that that's impossible, given that (1) I remember recapping a whole bunch of Kadina losses, and (2) I would remember recapping more of your self-defeatist whining, but don't. And since when does winning a grand total of... one consecutive challenge mean that that's the logical assumption to make? Knob points out that Craig "won every leg today", and Craig appears to not care. Heh. Craig confessionals again (apparently the next day) about how winning every challenge is a huge task, but he thinks he can do it and that "boundaries are made to be broken. And hope for the little guy, you know, here I come." Not to take anything away from him, but he is definitely not The Little Guy around camp. Unless you're comparing to Long Pole Joel's long pole.

Commercials. Call me. Call me now.

Wind and plants bring us back to Aurora, where a rust-red (not gr*y) graphic tell us it is Day 21. The gr*y tribe idea really seems pointless given how they're not using anything else -- the challenge platform, contestant confessional graphics, and now the date graphic -- with the same colour, even though they kept doing it throughout the tribal phase of the game. Sigh.

Jane giggles that she had people snoring on both sides of her. NoMind asks Lance what the weather's like "outside", because apparently the boat is now a real life house, with walls and everything. It's cool outside, but still very sunny. And windy. So fun at the beach is out. Hatie pretends to punch Knob. Sadly, she is only pretending. Caren and Princess Jane blame the snoring on Long Pole Joel. Apparently, he was choking on it. (WhoreBoy is officially going to the special hell now. The one they only reserve for perverts and people who talk in movie theaters. The one I am already signed up for for my next sixty-seven afterlives.)

Sciona strains orange water. She confessionals that she's not who she is, and that the only certainty out here is that nothing's certain, and... seriously, you see what I mean? If

you got someone like Craig to say that it would come off as a little funny. If you got Bald Spice (86) to say it, it would be creepy. With Sciona? Completely and totally boring. You could get her to say, "Knob likes horse porn with extra midgets on the side", and she would come off sounding like John McCain. And if you don't think this is the weirdest part-time hobby ever, imagine how many people have ever typed the words "John McCain", "midget", "horse", and "knob" in the same sentence. Twice.

Hatie and Knob are talking about what to do now that Craig fucked up their plan. Hatie says she'll ask Caren and she will tell her because everyone tells Hatie everything. Aside from the obvious stupidity in the plan, Rob should have taken that as a hint that Hatie was playing everyone like a bunch of out-of-tune fiddles. But Hatie confirms to him that Caren doesn't have any idea Knob and Hatie have an alliance. As far as she's concerned, and gameplay between these two is purely Imaginary. Knob confesses that Hatie's gameplaying wasn't his idea, which is how you can tell that whatever's going on will be successful, given that he's happy about it. He also says he's not going to stop her from playing the game. Which is probably a good idea, given that you'd be on your own if you didn't have her. Hatie gives a salute to Knob as she goes off to infiltrate the mob, completely unaware that it's very easy for the group to see her. Idiot.

The tribe walks to the Water Windmill, past another lizard like thing and some stock emus. In the words of the wonderful Miss Alli from over at TWP, "things are about to get awesome, so get a bowl of popcorn and sit down. And put your feet up. And put on a party hat. You may want a horn." Hatie tells the Kadinis that Lance is the biggest threat on their tribe. Caren immediately cottons on to the fact that she's lying and that Knob is the real danger (one point for Caren), and Hatie has to go all the way back to the first episode to refute this, pointing out that "Lance won the javelin for us". Which is completely wrong, because not only did NOBODY win that challenge, but CRAIG himself hit the target first, and JOEL was the only Tipara to hit the fire. Hatie really needs to work on her skills at deception, given that I wrote that first recap about five or six weeks ago, haven't watched the episode since, and still managed to notice that. For people who were actually there, one of whom is living proof that she's a bullshit artist? I'm thinking somebody should have figured it out. Craig confesses that he knew that Knob, Hatie, Jane, and Sophie were a team. He also thinks that Hatie and Knob saw Lance as a threat. Hatie is still trying to pull one over on the Kadinis, and they -- Caren in particular -- are having none of it. Kadina are clearly not as dumb as they've been looking for the previous six weeks.

In a Lance confessional, he says he thinks that nobody is forming any alliances. I like him and all, but what on earth has he been smoking out there, and where can I get me some of that?

Again, Hatie is trying to get the Kadinias to play like idiots, but Hatie is digging herself into an even bigger hole, given she's told them that it's be an advantage for them to get votes against Lance (which means that the Kadina votes aren't going to be enough to boot him, and which also means that he doesn't have existing votes they could use in a tie, and which also means that someone in the main alliance probably does -- and Jane has three, remember), and that Craig saw her whispering with Knob. It's not like they made it obvious by, say, gesturing to each other within plain sight of the rest of tribe or anything.

Rob confessionals that he doesn't want to do Hatie's job for her, considering he'd suck even worse at it (which must apparently be possible, though I fail to see how), and given that Hatie is on fire. Well, burning herself alive might actually be the only way she can get herself out of this situation without battle scars, to be honest. Not to mention that if Knob had to try actual gameplay, he would probably turn the entire discussion into some self-defeatist bitch session about how the next challenge will involve cannibals.

Craig tells Hatie that "little things don't go unnoticed", and Hatie tells him to "get out of [her] face" and that "Survivor's not a nice game". It's lucky this is Australian Survivor then, as Link keeps reminding us every week. Craig finally shuts her down once and for all, with "we might have lost, but we're not stupid". It makes you wonder how stupid Lance must be if he hasn't noticed any of this going on.

Hatie is seriously the most incompetent piece of trash in the history of reality television. And I watched *The Mole*, where people were deliberately trying to fuck up.

Craig confesses that the advantage of having Immunity is that it allows you to sit back and watch everyone else run around like fools trying to protect themselves. He tells Joel about the whole Hatie klutz-terfuck of bad lying, and Joel looks and sounds like he's pissed. And nothing would be more dangerous for a tiny professional athlete than a tall angry guy with a big dick.

At the beach, Hatie and Knob run around like they're lovers on the cover of a pornographic novel. As you do, because life is all about somersaults in skin-coloured cossies. Hatie mocks Lance's bathers, which are falling off and which now leave very little to the imagination. Sadly, Joel wears board shorts. Why is it always the people you don't want to see who always wear Speedos?

Just like we did in a previous episode, we return to the tribe camp solely to pick up the torches against sunset before we move out. I assure you, producers, people will be able to figure out that they've returned to camp, especially if they don't display their junk to Link.

Commercials. I would have a much easier time believing all those idiots on TV every morning trying to sell overglorified foundation if they didn't all look like rejected gr*y aliens from The X-Files who went and got Botoxed up.

The moon rises, and the newly formed Aurora tribe walks into their first Tribal Council on a windy, windy night. Link incorrectly decides it's time to be a poet, and tells everybody that they've all been her before, they know "the score". Link's kids have apparently decided to gangsta him up. It ain't workin', yo. We get a shot of NoMind walking over to her seat and sitting down, because they literally could not find anything else in this episode to fill the one-point-eight seconds that took.

Link welcomes "everybody to the expended version of Tribal Council", as though they renovated the ship enough so that the near-empty fire pit was big enough for a Twister mat. It would make for an interesting tiebreaker, though. Link tells them it's crowded like a

Melbourne train in peak hour, but not to worry, because the ticket inspectors are boarding, and someone didn't buy one. Except not in those words. He reminds everybody once more that the game is individual, just in case anyone was still wondering why somebody on their tribe won the Immunity Mayoral Sash and the tribe still had to bother walking over to Tribal Council.

Craig, you won the Immunity Midget Loincloth, but how hard did you want to win it? Craig rightly points out that if he didn't win it, he was going home. True that. Caren, since you're one of the only people who even have a chance of going home tonight, what was the Merge like? I have no idea how the two parts of that question are supposed to be related, but Caren apparently does, and mentions that the Merge was unexpected. It's like the editors are actively hoping for me to pull out every single piece of proof that some of these contestants didn't know what Survivor was even about. Caren also mentions that it was nice to be able to put a personality to some of the other people's faces, which must be nice for her. I'm still trying to figure out ways to tell half of these people apart, and we're seven episodes in. Just a few hours ago, I got Hatie mixed up with Sophie. Ugh. The former Kadinas all take the next question, about whether it's nice to just have more people around. Caren says it's nice to have so many slaves (but not in those words), and Craig says they thought it would be warmer but it isn't. He might want to try not sleeping on the end of the huddle, then. Knob, has the mood of the game changed now that your self-flagellating moaning can get you voted out every time? He rants on the almost completely unrelated topic of how Tipara tried to get as many people through as they could. It's one of those goals you can't really prove failed, which annoys me. After all, one of my New Year's resolutions last year was to think about joining a gym. I never did, but you can't actually prove that I even thought about it. But enough about my bloated gut, because it's time to talk about Hatie streaking. Link smiles when he asks how long the clean feeling lasted, and I'm betting it's a lot less than the 12 hours she claims, because many people felt unclean just watching you run around nude. Not as many as those who felt dirty staring at Long Pole Joel. Oh, and Hatie pimps the sponsors again. Shut up, Hatie. Knob mentions the bribe, Link says he was just GOING to ASK you THAT if you would JUST kindly SHUT your TRAP for FIVE SECONDS, and Rob says he has some 'splainin' to do to his wife. Which time? Sophie, how's the diet plan? She wonders why the fuck some idiots would pay to do starve like this, and I'd like to remind her that at the moment she's doing this for free. So, who's the real dummy in this situation?

It's time to vote, before half of the tribe even gets asked a question. Link expositos that Craig gets to vote, but doesn't vote himself. You know, I have seen this show before, but thanks for the heads up anyway. Hatie votes. Joel votes for Knob for no particular reason, but does underline his name and put an exclamation mark at the end. It's a shame he only puts one exclamation mark. I'd be filling up both sides of the voting card and three other ones as well at this point. Caren votes for Lance, saying she had to do a "deal with the Devil" to keep her in the game. Bitch, please. The Devil is much more competent. And would probably have actually stuck to his word. It might have cost you your soul and eternal damnation, but he would have done what he said. NoMind votes for someone whose name ends in NCE. I wonder who it could be. Princess Jane votes. Sophie votes. Sciona votes. Lance votes for Caren, claiming she won't take it personally. But doesn't it make more sense to vote out the people who would take it personally now, before the jury starts? Joel votes. Knob votes.

Link goes to get the votes. NoMind looks at Craig. Craig looks straight ahead, wondering how far he would have to swim to find a Survivor game with a competent tribe he could join. Everybody else focuses on Hatie and Knob playing a pointless game of Naked Twister. Just one more thing he has to explain to the wife, I suppose. But Link's back, and they don't get to put their left butt cheek on green, because he's going to read the votes. Knob!. Caren. Caren. Caren. Caren. Lance. Lance. Caren. Given the vote for Knob, five is enough this time, and she is out. She quite clearly only says goodbye to Craig and NoMind. Heh. A well-timed gong plays as she is snuffed. As she walks off into the sunset, Link reminds everyone that he is stalking them and has prepared another Fun Date! for tomorrow. Lance looks nervous, and Aurora leaves.

Next week: Craig tells Lance all about Hatie's ineptitude, and rubs NoMind's back. Only one of those two promises to be entertaining. Long Pole Joel says he can't respect someone. Has it taken him this long to notice some of these people don't deserve respect? Craig makes Knob narkier than usual. Princess Jane and Sciona are the targets of the latest attempts for Operation Make Kadina Not The Worst Tribe Ever. Princess Jane has a confessional for the first time in two weeks, where she specifically says that Knob is less likable than anyone else left. One more point for Princess Jane. She's definitely a Princess, but she has very good social skills. Knob adds to his penis envy with a triple serving of Craig envy.

Caren's final speech. She provides the basic spiel about how she loved being a part of the show, so obviously it wasn't known that the show would be cancelled at this point. She's really going to miss NoMind and Craig. Probably not for long, the way things are headed. In other news, hardly any of the seven Tiparas who voted for Caren managed to spell her name right.