

Previously on ***Aurora? Boring All Us***. Even a whale interfering with challenge props couldn't stop the episode from being one of the dullest things I have ever seen. And I watched that episode of Viva Laughlin. Neither could Long Pole Joel spending much of the episode impersonating Matthew McConaughey. Long Pole Joel made Princess Jane sick, but won the Immunity Cure For The Common Cold and was allowed to stay in the game anyway. Lance was surprised to learn that Craig might not have been a dastardly liar when he was voted out. Supposedly, everyone else figured out about the alliance. Well-placed musical stings showed us that there were six people left in the game, and one snuffer. And also, because it was the most important thing that happened during the course of the episode, EmoHunk wet his pants. WET his PANTS.

Later that night, the remaining denizens of the Aurora tribe sit around a stark campfire. Hatie confesses that Lance was so convinced he wasn't getting voted out, that he planned ridiculously far ahead. And she would never come up with a Complicated plan for her future out there. No sirree. You will not be surprised to learn that that hypocritical confessional served no purpose to the future of the story.

Credits. Things you may not have noticed from the credits #23: In the little photo of him we see, Lance looks like an inbred version of that guy from Eli Stone.

Commercials. Tonight in the Nein Newsroom: Only three episodes left until Raceguy can move on to recapping Celebrity Survivor Vanuatu. And only another twelve after that until I can recap something good.

Moon and clouds, apparently necessary to tell us a night has passed since an episode that aired seven days ago. Some people must really be idiots.

The next morning, Long Pole Joel whispers to Sciona that he didn't know Lance was getting voted off. Sciona whispers back that she noticed that Lance also didn't know. Long

Pole Joel confesses that he wasn't a part of the plan to get rid of Lance. He says he doesn't know what to do next, because he now realises that he can't guarantee he'll get the truth out of people when he asks them. It's a pity it's too late for him, unless the Complicated Alliance Of Eternal Overplanning self-destructs, because nothing would make me happier than seeing their smug arses beaten. And not in the way WhoreBoy is probably thinking when he reads that. ["Bitch: Please. Like I would be clean-minded enough to think of bondage." – *WhoreBoy*]

Sciona wonders how Long Pole Joel could possibly be dumb enough to not notice the alliance, and: Dude, he's a total Chris. He ain't gonna figure anything out on his own unless you draw a map on the ground to help him. [In case you're wondering, by the way, I accidentally downloaded the wrong Vanuatu-based season of Survivor while preparing for the next set of recaps. I am an idiot. Also, why the hell am I finding Twila likable?] Sciona tells Long Pole Joel that it wouldn't be Survivor without an alliance. And she's completely right.

Long Pole Joel confesses that he now realises Craig wasn't lying. And, again, it's too late to do anything. At the moment, you're currently looking at fifth place, tops, depending on whether you or Princess Jane gets booted at this next Tribal Council. Had you two and Craig and Lance joined up, there would have been four votes for Craig from the Complicated Alliance Of Eternal Overplanning, and four votes for whomever the Alliance Of Dregs chose. In the tie re-vote, the two alliances would probably remain the same, and it would have to go to whoever had the most previous votes. Now, here's where it would get interesting. In the first eight Tribal Councils (up until NoMind got booted), Hatie and Sciona had never received a vote (remember, Sophie won the Immunity Clip-On Tie, and couldn't have been voted for, but she also had no previous votes). Knob had had two, both from Craig, in the votes when NoMind and Caren got snuffed. And despite all the extra Kadina visits to Tribal Council, Craig had only received one vote the entire time, from Bald Spice when he got voted out. So had the Alliance Of Dregs all voted for Knob, he would have been booted and you wouldn't be in this predicament. Long Pole Joel won the measurement challenge last week, so they could have gotten rid of potential challenge-monster Sophie then, and the final six would be Craig, Princess Jane, Long Pole Joel, Hatie, Lance, and Sciona. Sciona and Hatie in some order would likely be the next two boots; and Craig, Princess Jane, Long Pole Joel, and Lance would be the final four. Which is an infinitely more enjoyable combination than we could get out of any of the people

remaining at the moment in the real game. Not to mention that it would be a fairly even competition. It really would have depended on whether the players were thinking about possible jury opponents at that point, or whether they were still voting based on who they wanted to keep at camp. In either case, their chances of winning would be much higher than they are now.

And that is why I would suck at this game.

There are some shells cooking. Hatie bitches about how bad the mussels or whatever they are taste and how they stay in your stomach. She seems to have no problems scarfing them down, though. Interestingly, Princess Jane is not shown complaining once. Sciona tells us they taste better barbecued than boiled, and is there any food for which that is not true? She says she likes to push herself until it hurts, and by the time that happens, her "willpower" is so strong that she can't. Unfortunately, she is hurting the rest of us while she continues to insist on staying out here. And her willpower really isn't as great as she claims if she's whining and bitching non-stop.

Princess Jane stays at camp to "do the beds", while the rest of the tribe goes to gather water. She tells us that the real reason she's not going is that she feels too weak to "make the walk down there". Her cleaning of the beds appears to consist solely of shaking blankets in the wind.

We join Knob in the middle of a conversation with Hatie, in which he mentions the Thunderbirds and supposedly does the stilted marionette walk they have. It's very hard to tell the difference between that and his normal walking. Especially for Hatie, who is walking in front of him and doesn't get the displeasure of seeing his crappy impersonation.

Princess Jane scrubs dirt from a pan as the rest of the tribe walks. She also eats part of a plant (one of the same type that was visible in her Fake Field Confessionals last week). Everybody lies down when they get to the Water Windmill, because it turns out that

Princess Jane is actually the least lazy person there. She may not have walked to the windmill, but she at least didn't stop moving while she was back at camp.

Knob puts his head under the tap, and washes his hair. He also dunks his head in a full bucket of water. (WhoreBoy: "Do it! You have so little to live for!") Unfortunately for WhoreBoy, he surfaces again.

We get a new Stock Footage Animal this week, seeing a snake slithering across the ground for the first time.

It takes us to the Bucket Mail, where there is a sea star with a ribbon attached. Sophie and Princess Jane, having apparently decided getting to the Bucket Mail will be easier than getting to the Water Windmill, read the message:

*If it's contact with loved ones you do crave*

*Then to win this challenge you don't have to be brave*

*Attention to detail and a bit of class*

*Through the eye of a needle you have to pass*

*The reward is magic and one you have to snare*

*To win webcam time with those who care*

As usual, the poem sucks. Also as usual, Sophie gets unreasonably excited over the reward. We do not get to see Knob misguess what the challenge entails.

A helicopter takes us on a long flight around the cliff and to the challenge set up on the beach. It's lucky the plane didn't get lost. The tribe walks down to the challenge, with pretty much everyone almost racking themselves. There are preview shots of life rings and

assorted junk tied onto a set of ropes, with each of the six ropes conveniently having an identical bunch of crap attached. What are the odds? The tribe walks through the middle of the props to meet Link, and we cut to...

Commercials. Is Steve Hooker STILL famewhoring it up everywhere that'll have him? That's a shame, because he's practically the Knob to Matthew Mitcham's Craig.

Back at the challenge, we relive the final few seconds of the team walking to Link, along with some new preview shots showing the setup in more detail. Link greets them and tells them that today's winner gets a fifteen-minute webcam chat with their loved ones. Could they seriously have not sprung for flying six people out to Port Lincoln? Because this is extraordinarily cheap. Even by this show's standards. I notice that Link does not mention any specific brands, which at least gives me some hope.

Anyway, today's challenge is simple. Each player takes one of the six ropes. At one end is a pile of five life rings. You have to move them along the rope, figuring out for yourselves what to do about the assorted debris, to get them to the other end of the rope, where they must again be piled. The first person to get them all to the other end wins. This is another of those challenges where there's a right way and a wrong way to do it, because you do not necessarily have to do them one at a time. Which you probably shouldn't do.

Survivors ready? GO! Princess Jane, with the green-and-white rings, and Sciona, with the red-and-white rings, are the only ones to try doing it one at a time. As a result, Sciona is leading as the first graphical update. About halfway along, the players have to lift the rope off its holder to get the rings past, and Princess Jane has trouble with this. Even though she appears to be trying, Link reminds her that the rope has to go back onto its starting point before she can continue. Hatie has trouble with her yellow-and-white rings. Sciona gets her first ring finished and runs back for her next one. In the background, Long Pole Joel appears to have all of his rings lined up right before the halfway pole, so despite the graphics, he's actually in the lead. Both Knob (orange-and-white) and Sophie (maroon-and-white) are not far behind. Long Pole Joel gets the same reminder about reattaching his rope. Princess Jane finishes her first ring. Hatie gets one ring up over the halfway pole

and stupidly replaces the rope before she gets the rest over. Sciona apparently gets another one home, but we're too busy watching Knob fuck up to see. Princess Jane gets another one while we're watching a wide shot of pretty much everyone except her. Even without being shown, it's still hard to tell how everyone's doing because of the combination of the different strategies and the weird camera angles being employed here. Challenges are usually a bitch to recap, but this one is especially horrible. Which is a shame, because it's actually a very decent idea which failed in execution, just like many of the better challenges this season -- the donut platforms, the lobster hunt, and all five challenges since that one NoMind won have all been like this. So was that first Immunity, but that was a different "failed in execution". Stupid fuses. Anyway, Sciona gets another one, but Long Pole Joel is right at the end with his pile, and drops them all off together. Link actually counts them one by one to make sure he won. Yeesh.

Long Pole Joel cheers and showboats, Knob finishes his off and gets ready for another bout with self-defeatism. Long Pole Joel and Link hug like reunited lovers (really), and it would be remiss of me to not point out that Link Has Some Serious Stompers. Link asks how it'll be, and Long Pole Joel calls it "the most beautiful thing ever". Long Pole Joel's girlfriend wonders if this means he thinks she's fat.

But the bad news isn't over yet, because Link tells us that all the losers gets fifteen minutes to send SMS messages to their loved ones (no doubt over a crappy Telstra phone). Link also thinks he has to mime the concept of SMS to get the message across, and it looks like he mime-types "When can I get away from these idiots?". If I was him, I would be doing that too.

Tree branches hang over the camera, and a crow calls (And faaaaark you too, crow). Sciona carries an unrelated branch around camp. It's her security blankie. Long Pole Joel confessionals that The Secret was his ...uh, secret to winning the challenge. Ew.

Princess Jane cleans a pot with her fingernails. See, she is totally not a Princess at all!

Sophie confessionals to us that she feels happy for Long Pole Joel, but that everyone misses their family. As she talks to Joel in real-life, we hear her confessional about how winning the loser prize has made her miss her family more. Like I said ages ago, she was really the NoMind of Tipara. It's one of her kid's birthdays in three days, but apparently the birthday kid can't read. I know I shouldn't laugh, but... hee hee.

It's thundering.

Sciona and Long Pole Joel are doing something, and Long Pole Joel confessionals once again that he thinks there might be an alliance going on. One point for the finally non-clueless dimwit. He thinks the alliance is Knob, Hatie, Sophie, and Princess Jane, so I'll be taking that point back to the store. It's a good thing I kept the receipt. But he does mention that Knob's playing the hardest.

Knob confessionals that Long Pole Joel's going crazy the longer he stays out there. Well, temporary insanity is fucking hilarious, so let's keep him. And because it's only temporary insanity that's good to watch, you and Hatie can leave at any time. Sciona also confessionals that Long Pole Joel's mental health has gone down the crapper, where it joined up with Link's dreams of being taken seriously. She says it gives her the shits, but that he really does seem to have something wrong with him.

Long Pole Joel tells Hatie to go sleep. All the better to try and outplay you with, my dear.

Knob confessionals that everyone is feeling fatigued, but that Hatie's starting to crack a bit more noticeably. Well, I did call it way back when she failed to trick the Kadinis into doing what she said. One point for me. Knob says he doesn't want to deal with campfire chats about what people are going to do when they get home. Well, of course not. That would require some basic level of social skills.

Sophie and Princess Jane are talking about what they do with leftover rice. Sciona confesses that Princess Jane told everyone the previous night that she was going to cook the rice, but that she then had to ask Sciona how to do it. Rice, water, fire. Not a hard thing to do. Sciona reminds us that Princess Jane should know how, given she talks about food so much. She also thinks having to deal with Princess Jane is wearing her down. Go, Princess Jane! I know I shouldn't like you, given you have no survival skills at all even after this long out there, but you really are the lesser of six evils at the moment.

Commercials. When the hell is *The Amazing Race* coming out on DVD down here? It's been out in America for over three years now!

It's Day 32 and we get some bird calls. Unfortunately, they bring us back to Knob, who is on the beach. He confesses that he likes mornings the best because it means he's a day closer to conning these people into giving him the money. And also because he can sneak off and not have to talk to anyone else. I'm not exactly sure anyone else particularly wants to talk to you either, Knob, so cram it. He writes in his journal, because he has apparently stopped using it to light fires. He explains what he writes in his journal, which I maintain is the most boring luxury item you could possibly have.

Back at camp, Long Pole Joel tries to start a fire. Sciona comes back from a beach visit with a pot full of shells. Sciona offers to show Joel "a trick", and I briefly get the impression she might be an amateur magician, which would certainly liven up her dreary personality. But instead she tells him what he's doing wrong with the fire he's working on. She confesses that she would have kept it to herself, but that she was pissed that he didn't know what he was doing after that long out there. Long Pole Joel is sitting next to the fire, going "Can't sleep... clown will eat me... can't sleep... clown will eat me...". Wait, no he's not, he's going "She means well... she means well... she means well...". Which is really just as bad an indictment on Sciona. Sciona bitches that she keeps having to show "these kids" [by which I assume she means Long Pole Joel and Princess Jane] what to do and how they don't learn. Perhaps the better explanation, Sciona, is that you're not a particularly good teacher.

Sophie confesses that she loves Long Pole Joel (WhoreBoy thinks there was some imaginary fucking going on over at Tipara, too), but that it's hard to live with him while he's going crazy. Said going crazy seems to involve breaking the same exact tree branch twice. Stupid editors, thinking I wouldn't notice. She says she's "losing patience, big time".

Sciona starts telling Long Pole Joel something, but he basically tells her to shut up. God, FINALLY.

Cliff and time-laps clouds, because time-lapse is the new black. Seals, sealing it up both on the rocks and in the water.

At a little gazebo thingy on the cliffs, Long Pole Joel sits in front of a computer while everyone else sits off to the side. But before we get to the boring and schmaltzy crap of Long Pole Joel talking to his girlfriend, we get the even more boring crap of everyone else getting their SMS time. Link also implies that they have "15 minutes or so", which makes a mockery of the entire purpose. Yes, even more than the actual concept of everyone getting a reward even though only Long Pole Joel won the challenge. Also, did I mention: TELSTRA? Link re-explains Long Pole Joel's reward, now flanked by some carefully product placed Pepsi and Doritos. He also asks a bunch of stupid personal questions about Claudia, so that we get the feeling this is going to be much more exciting than we're expecting. It won't work. And Link's so sure it won't work, he displays even less interest in Long Pole Joel than usual. Which is hard to do, given he hasn't been shown communicating with Long Pole Joel for seven episodes now.

Apparently "through the wonders of technology", Link turns on the webcam to show Claudia on the screen. The image comes across as though someone has enlarged a low-quality Youtube video over the whole screen. Not that I've ever done that to see what it would look like or anything. Long Pole Joel bursts into tears as soon as he sees her, though, so that's disappointing. Even when we get shown the actual footage from the webcam, it still comes up a bit snowy, but strangely enough the reminders that this blunderful prize is courtesy of Intel and Telstra come through loud and clear. They cry and talk. It's supposed to be tear-jerking. Claudia wants Long Pole Joel to keep his epic failure

of a beard. She Anna Corens her way into asking how much he's missing his family, and he is, which is convenient because they're also there. Don't some of those people have real jobs they could go to instead of ruining my enjoyment of this show even more? Joel claps and squeals like a performing seal. Claudia feels the need to remind him that it's his family, because he thought they were a bunch of traveling serial killers. We do not get to see Long Pole Joel talking to his family, mercifully enough.

But we do have to put up with the SMS stuff still. Hatie points out that it's her parents' anniversary on this day. Everybody cries. You can hear Long Pole Joel talking in the background throughout this whole scene, if you listen closely enough. Sciona has on her glasses and is old-lady typing into the phone.

Back with Long Pole Joel, Claudia implies that the only way to make him happy is to invite his mother in. They must have one freaky sex life. Eventually, Link comes up and puts his hand on Joel's, reminding him that his time is up. The others are probably still texting.

The good news is that we don't care about any of the aftermath, because we get taken straight to the tribe's Bucket Mail, which contains a model ship. Ew. Knob and Sciona get it. Well, not THAT, but this:

*Today you may decide to sink or swim*

*There can only be one in the end who will win*

*Balance and poise will come into play*

*If you're good at it, it could be a long day*

*Straight and upright you'll have to be*

*To win the all-important Immunity*

Surprisingly, Knob almost predicts it correctly. And now I'm happy they gave the message as a boat, because it means he still has that zero percent track record. But Sciona gets the right word, "pontoon". In other news, I am happy they are finally testing poise in a challenge.

The previews shots show what appears to be six of those pallets they used to stack things on at the ends of supermarket aisles, each being kept afloat by barrels.

Commercials. In the words of Savage Garden, "I believe that God does not endorse TV evangelists". So shut up, that idiot on Channel Te[e]n who's always preaching by the time I finish one of these recaps.

There are clouds, and there are the pallet pontoons again. There is the tribe, and there is Link welcoming them again, as though he didn't just see them a few hours ago, before he went to go claim the five-cent refund for taking Long Pole Joel's empty Pepsi can to be recycled.

The challenge is exactly as Sciona guessed. Wade out to one of the pontoons, and stand there. Last person who can do it without falling off wins. And you can't touch the oversized platform with anything except your feet, which will hilariously come into play later on. It's an original challenge idea. It's so original, in fact, that Mark Burnett borrowed it for Survivor Marquesas after September 11 forced him to switch the location for the series from Jordan. (But on that occasion, the final ten -- it was in the merge episode -- all sucked and it was over quickly. And bringing this entire recap thing back to one of the very first sentences I wrote for this show, it resulted in the ouster of one "Boston" Rob Mariano.)

At this point, Link also assumes Craig's role by reminding everyone how vulnerable they should be, and the editors cut directly to Hatie looking nervous. I love the editors. So much so, that here's a screencap:



Everybody has already waded out and is standing on their palletoon. Link asks if everyone's ready, and of course they are, given they're all standing up already. Go. People stand, and they do it for so long that we get a graphic telling us that half an hour has elapsed just before Sophie falls off her purple raft, which supposedly happens at three-quarters of an hour. Link reminds Sophie she's out, just in case she hadn't gathered that from the weird, water-like substance now covering everything below her neck. There is yet more standing.

Knob wants Joel to perform "one of those Ice-T raps". Humorously, he says it just as he raises his arms in stereotypical gangsta pose, trying to balance. Don't do it, Long Pole Joel! Don't you remember what happened when Richard Hatch sang "99 Bottles Of Beer On The Wall"? Apparently, Long Pole Joel does not, because he soon begins both singing and White Guy Dancing. Oh, joy. You can tell it's bad when I don't even feel like making a jibe about him saying "making me so horny" in a girly voice. Also, Hatie sings along, but she doesn't dance. Which is lucky for her (but not for me), because Long Pole Joel falls off at 55 minutes. Hatie laughs at him and Knob mocks his stupidity, while the others just clap impolitely.

One hour. Princess Jane starts talking about what it would take to get her out of the game, and Link sheepishly stands on shore, wondering what she wants. Princess Jane wants a big bunch of chocolate and chips. What a shame the show isn't sponsored by, say, Lay's and Cadbury's.

...Oh, wait. Crap.

The next thing we see, there's a remote control boat, which has a small packet of those sour cream and onion chips from Episode 7 balanced on the hull. Link pilots the boat straight for Princess Jane's palleteon, which makes me think he's had experience teasing people like this. She asks Link if she can grab the chips, and Link says she can, but she'll be out if she touches her palleteon. Link gives her a chance, which she misses. He guides the boat around her, stopping again. She gets within inches of it before Link steers it away, telling her she's already had a chance. Knob reaches the boat's aerial as Link steers it near him, and grabs the chips. Link yells out like a stubborn kid that he wants his boat back (HA!) and Knob reaches down to put it into the water. As he does, his fingertips touch the platform for balance. Link correctly takes him out of the challenge, but says he can keep the damn chips. They're damaged merchandise now, anyway. It happens at one hour, fifteen minutes, because we are again getting very precise with people getting booted from the challenge.

Link comes back out with chocolate in both hands. Princess Jane tells him that she'll get off her palleteon for all the chocolate in Link's hands, and in his pockets, and a packet of chips in addition to all of that. Yeah, not going to happen. She tries again, angling for everything she said except for the chips, and Link, now almost testicle-deep in the water, tells her he can only offer her a box of Favourites. He can give Sciona a couple of Cherry Ripes. This is interesting, offering each person a different incentive to quit. On the one hand, it's a little unfair, given Sciona probably enjoys her Cherry Ripes more than Princess Jane enjoys any random chocolate you could pull out of the Favourites box, but at the same time, it's definitely an original idea, and one Probst still hasn't done to this date. Princess Jane, having successfully failed to negotiate a good deal, quits for the box of chocolates. But of course, she's not getting off without some help, so Link carries her to shore on his back, as an unusually-clear graphic tells us that the remaining two people -- Sciona and Hatie -- have been out there for one hour and fifty minutes.

At 2 hours and 15 minutes, Link asks why they're still out there, and Hatie says she wants to wear the necklace. Couldn't Sciona just let her try on the necklace, and save me having to watch people standing there? Link realises they could be there all night.

He also realises later on that over two and a half hours have passed, and wonders if either of them needs to go to the loo. WhoreBoy points out they could just drop trou and lean backwards, but Hatie takes a slightly less classless option (only just, though) and points out she hasn't got anything inside her which needs to come out. Link tells them there are still several hours until sunset.

Three hours. Lots of fading. Sciona offers to negotiate and boringly explains why she wants to win the Immunity Hypno-Disc. In the middle of explaining why she's going to give up, Hatie falls off. I still don't like her, but... that was slightly amusing. So, after 3 hours and 40 minutes, Sciona wins the Immunity Shoe Buffer. She walks in to get it, because Link has already screwed his back enough for one challenge. Knob hugs her.

Commercials. Underwater Survivor has been cancelled.

It's Day 33, and the players are woken up by a crane shot of their camp. I can't recall any other time I've ever seen a crane shot of a tribe camp. Tribal Council? Yeah. Challenges? Sure. Camp? ...Nothing. But that's not important, because Long Pole Joel is confessionaling. He says that he knows he's on the chopping block now, because he lost the challenge, and there's an alliance he's not a part of. Stupid rapping. Long Pole Joel tells us he's not going down without a fight. Yeah, he should have thought about THAT when there was a chance he could beat the alliance.

Beach. Knob is writing in his journal, no doubt about how he came "thiiiiis" close to correctly guessing a challenge for once. He confessionals that he isn't here to be "a nice bloke". Mission accomplished, several times over. He provides us that whole scamming discussion we saw in the previews for this episode, but he also asks us why he would be here when he could be with his family. Um... restraining order, perhaps? He walks up to the rest of the tribe and said he "wouldn't be messing with a 22-year-old's head" if he was a nice person. And here I was, thinking Link and NoMind had nothing better to do than provide all this show's exposition.

It looks as though Knob's idea of fucking with Long Pole Joel's mind is to just talk to him like a normal person would. I can see how that would make him think absolutely nothing is wrong. Not. Knob gets someone to come with him to collect water (later, it turns out to be Long Pole Joel, but in this scene he's quite clearly talking to Hatie, which makes no sense at all), while Princess Jane and Sophie tell everyone they're going down to the beach.

We cut to the guys finding another gecko on the ground. Well, it beats kangaroos and Travelocity Roaming Gnomes (assy things ruined my damn Race). They discuss that at this point, they could probably eat it, they're so hungry.

At the Water Windmill, Long Pole Joel tells Knob and Sciona (ahhhhh, now it makes sense) that they're his only chance to stay in the game. He tries the "But I really want to stay here" line of reasoning to get them to keep him. Well, why wouldn't you? It worked so well for Bald Spice and Jeff and Deb and Caren and NoMind and Craig and Lance, after all. Sciona tells him there's about as much chance of him surviving the vote as there is of Knob carrying a conversation with someone. "Less than zero". Knob bitches, in something which sounds like a confessional but is edited not to be, that life goes on after you get voted off, and how Long Pole Joel's only young, and blah blah Hurry-Up-And-Snuff-Me-Already-cakes. Long Pole Joel breaks into tears telling us he just wants to be strong enough to support the people in his normal life once he gets out of here, and he can't do that if he quits. Yes, that would be the crux of this discussion, wouldn't it?

Knob's arse walks across the screen. Thank Craig he's wearing pants. He sits it down next to Long Pole Joel (who's already next to Sciona). Long Pole Joel repeats his point one last time.

Waves. We see a wide shot of Princess Jane sitting on top of the rocks nearest us, and Sophie climbing up the rocks on the other side of the cove. A man's voice yells out to Sophie, just as a freak wave (caused by an unhappy Underwater Survivor contestant) soars into the sky on the other side of her rock. She scampers out of the way. Princess

Jane manages to walk along the rocks unharmed. She tells Sophie how close she came to unintentionally recreating Titanic (which Knob would probably tell you happened on a pontoon). Sophie explains that, rocks being opaque as they are, she had no idea the wave was coming. In her confessional, she tells us that the contestants aren't provided with life jackets. We get to relive the wave in slomo as Sophie tells us that "it was scary". No shit.

The Aquarians walk back to camp, and Knob prattles on and on, eventually telling Long Pole Joel that there really has been an alliance. He revisionises that Hatie is not in the alliance at all, but thinks she is, and that Sophie is under the same impression. Long Pole Joel looks surprised to learn this, even though Lance's boot tipped him off to the fact that there is an alliance, and that Craig repeatedly tried telling him this very same information (albeit without mentioning the inner alliance). Long Pole Joel passive-aggressives about how it's their decision whether to consider him (one vote) more important than Hatie and Sophie (two votes). Honestly, as much as I despise Hatie and don't care about Sophie, this was an absolutely stupid move on Knob's part. If he ditches the girls, not only does he lose the majority vote, but he will also probably lose their votes on the final night. On the other hand, if Long Pole Joel uses the information that Hatie and Sophie are on the outer to his advantage, he could team up with those two and Princess Jane, and boot either him or Sciona now -- and it would be him, because Sciona is immune.

Knob confessionals that he promised Long Pole Joel that they could use their three votes - - not a majority, as you may recall -- to get rid of Princess Jane, and then get rid of Hatie and Sophie. And he wants Long Pole Joel to agree to throw the final Immunity Challenge so that he and Sciona are guaranteed to be the final two. Why the FUCK would anyone agree to starve themselves for that much longer, and then agree that it's not worth it and throw the final challenge on purpose so they can get voted out?! This is really the stupidest idea I think I've ever heard. Even Hatie trying to sway the Kadina votes back when Caren was still around made more sense. Knob also tells us in the confessional that he trusts Long Pole Joel.

Sciona boringly confessionals about how much the game changes.

As Knob tries finalising the deal with Long Pole Joel, Princess Jane walks up behind them and weakly rustles in the bushes for no reason. I think she noticed the last time Knob made an alliance deal with everyone. She confessionals that she feels safe, because she knows that Long Pole Joel is getting booted. She continues to gather twigs.

Sciona boringly confessionals about whether she should do what Knob wants, or go with the other girls and hope Hatie loses the last challenge. Shut up, Sciona. It's only interesting when I say it. (Granted, everything you say comes out sounding more interesting when I say it, because I have this thing called emotion. You might like to try it sometime.)

Knob tells us he's telling himself he's successfully managing to justify to himself his toolish behaviour to everyone else. Well, there's a shocker. He says he'll look like a bastard for doing it, but that there's a "bigger picture". I don't think "But I'm not an irredeemable dickweed in real life!" counts as a "bigger picture". Shut up, Knob.

Knob and Long Pole Joel hug.

Sciona boringly confessionals about how half a million dollars may not be worth sacrificing your integrity for. Well, of course not. I checked against the exchange rates of the time, and given the Aussie dollar was even more firmly down the crapper than Link's career at that point, it was equivalent to about a quarter of a million American, and only eighty-five thousand pounds. The British winners both got one million pounds. These contestants have a right to complain, given they've had the harshest environment in Survivor history. But anyway.

The tribe grabs their torches. Over a black as dark as Hatie's heart, the logo comes up, and we cut to...

Commercials. I watch Supernatural, and I'll be damned if Jared Padalecki's hair isn't always the thing which freaks me out the most in any given episode.

A stunning red sunset and sky takes us to the Aurora tribe, arriving at Tribal Council. Link says what he needs to say, and then reminds us of something that he doesn't need to, namely that  $6 - 1 = 5$ . The jury comes in. NoMind is in this weird pink number. Hatie and Sophie are shocked to see that Lance shaved while he had the chance. Idiots. But in the most unfortunate development of all, it seems as though Craig has taken Link's idea of wearing only shirts in cold windy places. Ugh.

Sciona, does the Immunity Fast Forward feel slimy or smooth? She says she could get used to it. Link actually has to remind her how she won it, because he thinks that she might have cheated by falling asleep during the challenge. Or something, it's not exactly clear. His actual question has to do with whether the challenge was biased towards her. Well, she did win it, stupid. Next up, Link tries to trap Knob by asking whether his strategy changes. Knob immediately and stupidly says that his plan changes everyday, which Hatie should take as a warning, given how Eternally Overplanned her Complicated Alliance is. Sophie, you liked Lance. Does it feel strange to have (metaphorically) beaten the pants off of him? She says she misses him. Long Pole Joel, sorry to have not talked to you for the past seven episodes. How was "today" [meaning the episode has been edited out of order, AND that Telstra took forever to get their internet service fixed, AGAIN], talking to all those people from your normal life from who you were trying to escape? Joel says the reward sucked because he couldn't spend actual time with them. HA! Serves Telstra right for sucking so much. Because Link only just found out about the Long Pole, he's developed a new crush on Long Pole Joel, and even stays around for another question. Does not wearing the Immunity Amazon Bikini make you feel a little naked inside? He thinks it does. Princess Jane, are you still here? She is. Crisis averted. By the way, there has been yet another Foreshadowing Fest this episode (no, I'm not revealing what it is... yet), and it's getting ridiculous. Stop it, editors.

Time to vote. Which is weird, because right around now is when the tribe would usually be entering Tribal Council and being told where they can stick their torches. I think there's some extra reason to be around here for longer, which is disappointing, because these sequences are usually some of the worst to recap. But that doesn't matter, because

Sciona votes. Knob votes. Princess Jane votes. Sophie votes. Hatie votes. Long Pole Joel must vote at some point, but if he does, we don't get to see it. Link goes to get the votes.

Long Pole Joel shivers.

Link returns with the votes. Long Pole Joel. Insert your own joke about how it was so hard to unroll that vote. I'll wait. Done? Good. Princess Jane. Long Pole Joel. Princess Jane. Two each. Long Pole Joel. If the next vote's for anyone except Princess Jane, Long Pole Joel is getting snuffed. And... Princess Jane. Ooooooh.

So we have three votes each, meaning there's a tie between Long Pole Joel and Princess Jane, and one of the two people left I like is definitely going home. Damn it. Why couldn't we have taken the tiebreak rule from Marquesas, just this once? For those who don't know, the way it works is that basically the tribe has two minutes to decide -- unanimously -- which of the tied people is going home. And if they can't (or won't) come up with an answer, everybody EXCEPT for the people who were tied (and the Immunity winner, if there is one) has to draw rocks out of a bag. Whoever gets the purple rock is out. Here's why it would have worked here. Sciona, Long Pole Joel, and Princess Jane are safe, and thus the three people at risk would have been Knob, Hatie, and Sophie. I wouldn't exactly mourn losing Sophie from the game, and I would break out party hats and my singing voice if either of the other two got the purple rock. But instead we must lose someone decent for, like, the fifth week in a row.

Unfortunately, we're still using the very first set of rules. Long Pole Joel and Princess Jane get to explain why they want to stay, then the other four re-vote. If the tie is broken, most votes goes; otherwise, whoever has the most votes from past tribal councils goes. Which is a stupid idea, because there's every chance -- as we saw with the tribal part of this season -- one person got picked on a crappy tribe and has had more chances to get votes.

Princess Jane gets to go first, because of her troublesome vajoots. She says she's been herself (ew), and that she's given it "every single ounce of energy" she has. All two-point-six of them.

Long Pole Joel quite clearly has a much bigger dick than Princess Jane, so he gets to go second. He also says he "gave every piece of [him]self" to get as many Tiparas across the line as possible. Yawn. He feels he's played the game with as much integrity as he possibly can, which again is one of those annoying statements that's hard to disprove. In related news, I feel like I've been trying hard to not make any more Imaginary Baby jokes (and you're welcome). Interestingly, Long Pole Joel's only difference between his and Princess Jane's speech is that he replaces "being myself" with "trying not to lie".

I really hate this tiebreaker form more than any of the other ones I've ever seen. Well, aside from the one we'll see when I get up towards the end of Celebrity Survivor Vanuatu. But that's a rant for another day.

Time to vote, again. Sciona votes. Knob votes for Princess Jane, because of the Only-Slightly-Less-Complicated Plan he has with Sciona and Long Pole Joel. Sophie votes for Joel because she likes Princess Jane better. Valid reasoning. Hatie votes for Joel, holding her vote up with a bitchface even worse than usual, as if to say "yeah, I haven't change my mind about this, so just edit in my other reason if you want it". Link gets the votes, again, but not before some more Grade 1 Maths.

Princess Jane smiles nervously as Link returns, appearing to know what's about to happen. It's actually really endearing. Long Pole Joel. Long Pole Joel. Princess Jane. Princess Jane.

We're still tied, so we go to previous votes. Link asks the contestants how many votes they've gotten, "to your knowledge". Which is pointless, because Link knows the answers. And he actually corrects Princess Jane, saying she's had a vote less than she thinks. Heh.

But her four votes are still four more than Long Pole Joel's none, so she is out. She grabs her torch and is snuffed.

Damn. This makes four episodes in a row now that one of my favourite people has gotten booted. And now the only person left I don't hate is Sophie. These next couple of weeks are going to be hell, what with a 20% chance of the winner being enjoyable. Great.

Link actually provides an interesting and relevant closing remark for once, mentioning that thinking you're safe doesn't necessarily make it so. He sends them back to camp.

Next week: Hatie has managed to find even more hate in her system for Knob and Sciona. I thought she used it all up with Craig. Crap. She thinks Knob and Sciona have "betrayed" her. Yes, they have, which is why I'm so annoyed that that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" statement is complete bullshit right about now. Hatie tells Sophie to take her for granted. Long Pole Joel has the pow-AH. (Sorry, that "Bart is a faith healer" episode of the Simpsons is on in the background.) Long Pole Joel thinks he could be in the final two, not realising that whichever of the two cliques he chooses will probably boot him as soon as they don't need his vote to gain control of the game. Sigh.

Princess Jane loved that crappy challenge she won for Tipara back in the first episode. Which, now that I think about it, sort of ruins all the She Has Never Done Anything!-ness people were spouting off all the time. She goes all Bill and Ted on us and calls Survivor "the most excellent" time of her life. Awww.