

EXTRACT

RUBEN GUTHRIE



CURRENCY PRESS
SYDNEY

Brendan Cowell

First published in 2009
by Currency Press Pty Ltd,
PO Box 2287, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012, Australia
enquiries@currency.com.au
www.currency.com.au
in association with
Company B Belvoir, Sydney.
Copyright © Brendan Cowell, 2009
This edition published in 2011
Reprinted 2012 (twice)

COPYING FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

The Australian *Copyright Act 1968* (Act) allows a maximum of one chapter or 10% of this book, whichever is the greater, to be copied by any educational institution for its educational purposes provided that that educational institution (or the body that administers it) has given a remuneration notice to Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) under the Act. For details of the CAL licence for educational institutions contact CAL, Level 15, 233 Castlereagh Street Sydney NSW 2000; tel: +61 2 9394 7600; fax: +61 2 9394 7601; email: info@copyright.com.au

COPYING FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Except as permitted under the Act, for example a fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission. All enquiries should be made to the publisher at the address above.

Any performance or public reading of *Ruben Guthrie* is forbidden unless a licence has been received from the author or the author's agent. The purchase of this book in no way gives the purchaser the right to perform the play in public, whether by means of a staged production or a reading. All applications for public performance should be addressed to HLA Management, PO Box 1536, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012, email: hla@hlamgt.com.au; tel: +61 2 9549 3000.

The lyrics from 'Walking in Memphis' by Marc Cohn copyright © Marc Cohen. Reproduced by permission of Sony/ATV Music Publishing Australia. Unauthorised reproduction is illegal. The lyrics from 'Toy Soldiers' by Martika copyright © Martika. Reproduced by permission of Sony/ATV Music Publishing Australia. Unauthorised reproduction is illegal.

The publisher has made every effort to identify and gain permission of any copyright material in this work. Any queries should be addressed to the publisher at the above address.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA CIP DATA

Author: Cowell, Brendan 1976–.
Title: Ruben Guthrie / Brendan Cowell.
ISBN: 9780868199238 (pbk.)
Dewey Number: A822.4

Typeset by Dean Nottle for Currency Press.
Printed by SOS print+media, Alexandria, NSW.
Cover design by Emma Vine

Ruben Guthrie was first produced by murri fulla films in association with B Sharp at Belvoir St Downstairs Theatre, Sydney, on 17 April 2008, with the following cast:

RUBEN GUTHRIE	Toby Schmitz
ZOYA	Samantha Reed
RAY	Christopher Stollery
PETER	Lex Marinos
VIRGINIA	Megan Drury
MUM	Tracy Mann
DAMIAN	Torquil Neilson

Director, Wayne Blair
Designer, Jacob Nash
Composer, Steve Francis
Lighting designer, Luiz Pampolha

CHARACTERS

RUBEN GUTHRIE, late 20s, handsome

ZOYA, 19 or 20, and thin

RAY, 45ish

PETER, late 50s, early 60s

VIRGINIA, late 20s, or even mid-late 30s

MUM, mid-late 50s

DAMIAN, late 20s, early 30s, and fit

AUTHOR'S NOTE

A '/' (or stroke) in the text indicates an interruption or overlap in the dialogue. Two slashes indicate where the second set of interruptions take place, and so on.

ACT ONE

1.1: A HALL

RUBEN *sits in a circle. His arm in a sling.*

RUBEN: Hello my name is Ruben Guthrie and I am...

Here!

In this lovely church hall, sitting in the circle—having a ‘share’.

I um, as you can see—from my face and arm, I ahhh... had a bit if an incident. Accident.

RUBEN *sings a line about accidents from ‘You Can Call Me Al’.*

Paul Simon peaked with Graceland, he peaked. And then...

Where were we? Group—yes my arm! Right we ahhh... had the Federation of Advertising Awards on Saturday night, at which I picked up the Gong for best ad and best ad campaign fourth year in a row just quietly—and so maybe I imbibed a little on the wing of my continuing success and decided to surprise everyone at the after party by jumping off the roof of the very tall hotel.

—
The ironic thing is I created the entire ad campaign: *How will you feel tomorrow?*

I um, I’m Creative Director of ‘Subliminal’.

Which is basically an Advertising Agency, but we also Brand for companies/client, plus supply content and concept platforms for online and interactive media—our stuff is pretty raw, like say we do an ad for street wear we’ll use real street kids not actors—shit like that. For me it’s an ARTFORM—like lately I’ve been thinking Iraq you know, all those soldiers moving through civilian towns in their tanks, rolling over huts securing premises ’n’ shit—and I think bam! Whack a Coke can in that scene; do you know what I mean? And come on—I mean let’s face it, if you were a soldier in Iraq, and you’d just had a hard as fuck day controlling the chaos in that searing dry fifty-degree Iraqi heat, wouldn’t you be stinging for a cold can?

Hot soldier rolls out of the situation, wipes the dust and shrapnel out of his hair... spots a machine, frosted over and fully stacked with rows of icy-cold black *love*.

I rest my case baby. Did someone say 'Truth in Advertising'?

And it *appals* me the way other agencies produce such manufactured, contrived like replicating, representations of, not, symbolically not representing... how life is—do you know what I mean?! Anyway. So my arm.

I look down over the guttering of the hotel roof; there must be a thousand Advertising types around the pool drinking and talking in black tie. I'm thinking this will go down in history as like, one of the coolest things ever to happen in the game—and you know, this kind of action is up to me, I am the designated renegade—so be my lease.

I took a hit from a little bag of Magic I had in my shirt pocket, knocked off the half bottle of Absolut Mandarin I snatched off Hot Waitress and crouched like Carl Lewis.

'Nothing can hurt you nothing can touch you. You're Ruben Guthrie.'

I'm running. And the edge comes quick and I'm out there!

I highly recommend it by the way; combination of 'caine, vodka, and *flight*—out with the eagles man, flapping my heavy wings and soaring I can fly—I'm flying—I can fly.

And I fucking judged it perfectly, landing smack bang in the middle of what I thought was a standard adult pool but soon discovered was actually a children's wading bath.

'Crack' was the noise that stopped the party. 'Lucky not to die' was the term they used in the hospital.

Didn't phase me—it's just a break it's all part of being a renegade you take the good with the bad and fuck... that's where people like me live, out on the edge man... and I try to explain that to *certain people*, but Mum and Zoya my fiancée here thought it was symbolic or something and that I should come to this place and admit...

Admit...

That I don't know the difference between a pool and a children's wading bath?

You guys must drink a lot of tea.

Is it compulsory to wear Kmart tracksuits or is it a coincidence that all of you are... wearing umm...

So look, I really appreciate you guys listening to me and everything and you all seem like a great bunch, I'd love to use you guys in something one day if I can find the right... *the right...*

But, ahh, yeah—I mean, after hearing your stories, like your tale Janelle about hiding in the roof of the bottle shop every night, and you Jeremy, oh and you Ken... KEN!!!! About drinking Jim Beam for breakfast then driving a forklift through your ex-wife's front window. I mean you guys—you guys need to lay off the sauce for shiz. I wouldn't be offering you guys a brandy chocolate if you were over my house.

Not even!

So yeah my name is Ruben Guthrie and I am in Advertising.

1.2: A KITCHEN

RUBEN *pops the cork from a champagne bottle. Pours two glasses.*

RUBEN: Champagne Zoya?!

Zoy'?! Champagne, I got Krug here—your favourite fizz!

ZOYA *enters with a wheelie-suitcase. She gathers bags and things throughout the scene, leaving and re-entering constantly.*

ZOYA: I have to go now.

RUBEN: Right now?

ZOYA: Yep.

RUBEN: Ok.

How long is the shoot for?

ZOYA: Um. The *shoot* is for three days.

RUBEN: Cool, you'll be home in three days then!

ZOYA: The shoot is in Munich Ruben, I told you but you were drunk so /again you ask.

RUBEN: /Munich Munich Munich yes!

ZOYA: I am going to the shoot then I am going home.

I am going now.

To go home.

RUBEN: Home?

I'm confused—you are home.

ZOYA: Home no to Prague.

Home to my mother's home.

My real home.

RUBEN: To visit—on your way through?

ZOYA: To stay. *Stay*.

RUBEN: You're fucking... you're going to...

Holy shit... back up the truck—you're what!?

ZOYA: Going home to live with my mother yes...

RUBEN: Going home to live with your mother yes /and do what?

ZOYA: /Yes.

I intend to study //and

RUBEN: //Study?? HA!

ZOYA: Just what I expect, this arrogant this...

RUBEN: You have no qualifications Zoya! I mean, ha! There certainly ain't a huge swimsuit scene happening in downtown Prague is there?!

ZOYA: No Ruben there isn't.

You got me with that one.

RUBEN: Zoya, oh come onnnnnn!

ZOYA: Goodbye red face.

RUBEN: Who's a red face? I got a tan face—I tan.

ZOYA: Not so *HQ Magazine* as when I met you.

/Beer belly.

RUBEN: /You're fucking with me.

Ha! Is this—ha!

Is this all because of 'the pool incident'?

ZOYA: No, I like what the pool incident has done!

RUBEN: I don't see why you're making such a rash de/cision to leave and—

She turns on him now.

ZOYA: /All we do is box each other, in this two-bedroom ring—every night!

Me in the quiet corner—you in the drunken one.

RUBEN: I'm in meetings//now Zoya? *Meetings!*

ZOYA: //ONE meeting. You go to ONE meeting. Which your mother and I *dragged* you to!

And in that *one* meeting you went to humiliating us in front of everyone in the church hall room and now you are drinking this /// champagne and...

RUBEN *holds up his glass.*

RUBEN: ///I'm celebrating my first meeting!