



TOILET HUMOUR HAS NEVER BEEN FUNNIER.

SACHA MOLITORISZ MEETS THE HUMBLE HERO OF *KENNY*.

Kenny, the most unlikely film star, is drinking beer and talking crap.

“When we were kids, you used to have an outhouse,” says the affable Aussie, who knows everything there is to know about toilets. “You had a milkman, you had a postman and you had a crap carter. They were an essential service.

“And my dad used to say, if he was going out for a fish, ‘The water’s as flat as a crap carter’s hat.’ That’s because they used to carry the buckets on their head. So they all had strong necks and big biceps. And fairly dirty overalls. Back then, if they didn’t turn up you were in shit. You really were. What’s that expression? You’re better off to have an empty unit than a bad tenant.”

Kenny is filmed at work at

Splashdown, a Melbourne company that supplies portable toilets for music festivals, race carnivals and miscellaneous events, and features in nearly every scene.

“Don’t worry, though,” he says. “I’m not gonna knock Tom Cruise off his perch.”

Kenny is hilarious. It isn’t just toilet humour, either. More than just *Scatology 101*, it’s the best Australian comedy in years, with compelling characters and emotional depth to complement the perfectly pitched gags.

In a fly-on-the-wall format, we see Kenny unblocking pipes, dealing with difficult colleagues, and fending off a violent mob of revellers at a race meet.

“Nobody should be set on fire trying to save one of their shitters,” he says in the film, moments after being set on fire

trying to save one of his, erm, toilets.

His personal life is revealed, too. Kenny is shown in the company of his grumpy brother, his grumpy father and his grumpy son. He also opens up about his divorce, which he believes was inevitable, given his job. That’s just what happens, he says, “when you spend more time with other people’s poo than your own missus.”

With an expert grasp of S-bends and the Aussie vernacular, Kenny is the paragon of suburban battlers. On a sunny weekday, he’s visiting Sydney to discuss the film that’s threatening to turn him into an overnight celebrity. Settling into the beer garden of the Coogee Bay Hotel, Kenny – who has an

endearing lisp and, as always, wears his uniform of overalls and a Splashdown cap – takes a sip of his schooner.

“Mate, if beer had come in a litre container I would never have discovered milk,” he says.

Last month, the beer was flowing when Kenny attended the film’s world premiere in the Victorian country town of Poowong.

“Not a lot of people have heard of Poowong,” Kenny says. “It’s about two hours out of Melbourne, and people came from towns afar. And I think they enjoyed the film.

“And it’s funny because no one’s ever been interested in my life before. Now if I’d just come back from the moon and brought back some rock samples with some weird carvings from a race before us, this attention would all make sense. But no, no one has ever crowded around me before when I’m crouching over a bowl trying to unwedge the biscuits. No one’s ever wanted to set up a scaffold and cheer squad behind me before.”

Understandably, Kenny had some concerns about being involved, particularly about his 10-year-old son.

“The director guy, I think he’s got a good heart. He always said, ‘We’re not here to make a fool of anyone.’ That’s really important to me because I was always really guarded about having my son on camera.”

Kenny was also worried about having his dad on camera, but for different reasons.

“He’s like a dog,” Kenny says. “As soon as dogs get a bone, all they can see is the bone, and I am dad’s bone. He’s at me all the time. But then he is my dad, and I wouldn’t swap him for all the tea in China. I don’t drink tea, so I wouldn’t want that. A slab of beer, I would certainly swap him for. I’d probably swap him for a pair of socks.”

Kenny is full of charm and humour. It’s crammed with wonderful turns of phrase, with Aussie sayings that are being slowly replaced by Americanisms.

“All of the older generation had a better turn of phrase than we’ll ever have,” he says.

Against all odds, Kenny emerges smelling of roses. He comes across in

the film as a genuine, likeable larrikin who loves a beer, loves his family and

doesn’t take himself too seriously.

His modest hope is that *Kenny* gives ordinary Australians a bit of a boost.

“I hope the film lets the janitors, the cleaners and the guys and girls that hold the stop-go sign stand a little bit taller. And the mechanics and the carpenters and the bloke that works behind the bar. The unappreciated. Every bus and cab driver, if they can just think, ‘What I’m doing doesn’t seem to matter, but I know it does matter.’”

That said, Kenny doesn’t expect the film to usher the dawn of a new age in which people who work with sewage will finally be treated with respect. At Splashdown, where he deals with blockages and overflows, Kenny will still encounter people’s entrenched perceptions of what he does for a living. Despite the film, poo won’t suddenly be the new black.

“I still don’t think people are really interested in what I do,” Kenny says, taking another gulp of beer. “I don’t reckon everyone will suddenly get up off their toilet before they wipe and turn around and have a damn good look at their business because all of a sudden they’ve got a newfound fascination. It’s not gonna be a new stamp collection. People aren’t now gonna be whackin’ turds in a book. And if they are, I don’t want to see it.

“It’s not gonna become some new sport, where you’re gonna see if you can get your number twos to Werribee before someone else’s. There’s not going to be a Poo World Cup.”

Director **Clayton Jacobson** Stars **Ronald Jacobson, Shane Jacobson, Simon Scott, Eve von Bibra** Rated M. Opens Thursday.

smh.com.au/metro

See the trailer and hear Kenny’s take on Bachman-Turner Overdrive’s *Takin’ Care of Business*



Jacqui