

**‘New Zealand Calling’
By Trish Gray, DTM**

Background:

Carla has left home for her OE.

She does not keep in touch with her parents as much as they think she should. After having heard a rumour the mother tries to ring her to find out what is going on.

It is late Saturday night. Audience only hears one side of the conversation. There is tension in the air!

Props: Table. Two chairs. Phone. Newspaper.

Audience Appeal: Parents who have children that are travelling overseas.

Characters: **Mother - Jean**

She is a middle-aged woman anxious to know the whereabouts of her daughter and the truth about the rumour. Jean is a mother who had supported the action of her daughter Carla to travel overseas.

Father - Dave

Middle-aged man who lets his wife to just get on with what she has in mind to do. He is trying to support his daughter in this instance.

New Zealand Calling – An Impromptu Play

Father is reading the paper. Mother enters the room.

Mother: I am going to ring Carla.....see how she is getting on. I'm going to ask her about the rumour going round.

Can you remember her number Dave...in London?

Father: She'll be all right.

Mother pauses while she flicks through her address book. Father continues reading the paper, not taking the bait.

Mother: Here it is...0044 5437 2198

Father: What are you ringing her for?

Mother walks over to the phone and picks up the receiver. She is muttering the number as she goes. Pen and paper are handy. She is doodling while waiting for a reply.

Mother: Oh...hello...is Carla Jones there please? It's her mother Jean here calling from New Zealand.

Pause and talks over her shoulder to the father while she waits.

Mother: Because she might need me, that's why.

Father: Come on Jean...what can you do? It's her problem...what ever it is.

Mother: *Sighing*

You are so insensitive. Don't you want to know what's going on?

Pauses. Listens to the other end.

So she got the job over in Cardiff. Is she all right?

Pauses while the answerer explains. She continues to doodle.

No I didn't get a message from her. Who am I speaking to?

Pause

Have you got Carla's new number?

Pause

Thank you.

Hangs up the phone. Worrying and thinking she addresses her husband.

Apparently she was supposed to send me a message. Wonder if it's about this rumour?

Father: Yes I would like to know, but she's a big girl. She'll sort it out. It's probably not true anyway. We'll get to hear the truth of it one way or another.

Waiting for response, but not getting an.

If you hadn't heard the rumour you wouldn't be worrying would you. When she went overseas she knew she was responsible for herself.

Mother: What can it possibly be? Hell I wish she was on email...it would be so much easier...save all these calls.

Starts dialling the new number.

Father: You're not going to make another international call are you...who do you think I am, paying for these silly calls of yours.

Mother: Oh shut up Dave and stop thinking about your pocket...think about your daughter for once...and they are not silly calls.

Father: She'll ring you if she wants you...probably won't though...you know how independent she is. It's only a rumour remember.

Mother leaves the phone and pours herself a gin and tonic. And just to make her point, lights a cigarette from her husband's pack.

What the hell do you think you are doing? Leave my fags alone. If you want to smoke get your own.

Mother: There you go again...thinking of your pocket...are you going to begrudge me a fag?

She is getting excitable. She takes several puffs and fills the room with smoke. Then takes a couple of gulps of gin.

I'm going to ring this other number. At least I might find out what that message was and what's going on.

Father: *Sensing the frustration of his wife, tries to calm things down. He thinks the gin is taking effect.*

OK, just one more call and leave it at that.

Mother starts dialling the number again.

I think you are worrying about nothing. She's quite resilient y'know. She knows what she is doing.

Phone is engaged. Hangs up.

Try again some other time...you've probably got the wrong end of the stick.....you know what rumours are like. Anyway Jean how reliable is this person you heard it from...how would anyone know over HERE.

Mother: *Irritably*

I don't know, but I want to find out.

She dials the number again. No answer.

Oh shit! Well that's just ducky isn't it? She's not there...no one answered.

Father: Good...now leave her alone and stop fussing.

Father picks up his paper again.

Mother stabs out her cigarette and finishes her gin.

Mother: I hate this...this not knowing what's going on.

She storms out of the room. There is a long silence. After a long period the phone rings.

Father: I'll get it.

Hello.

Long pause as he listens.

Thank God you've rung Carla. Your mother has heard rumours...I don't know who started it or how they know. What's going on over there?

He listens

What! Where did this notion come from?

Mother comes back into the room and pressures the father to hand over the phone, but he ignores her. She tries to snatch it from him. He pushes her away.

Mother: *whispering* Let me speak to her Dave.

Father ignores her and brushes her away again.

Father: These friends? Do we know any of them?

He listens.

But joining a commune Carla is that really necessary. Yeah...yeah...OK, I know...yes...well...but a Commune Carla...really! I'm trying hard to believe you'd even want to do that.

Mother becomes insistent. Father elbows her away from him and continues to listen. She hovers about listening.

I know but you can still have friends without belonging to a groupy set.

Listens

Well if that's what makes you happy. Hell I hope you're right.

Listens

What sort of commune is this? Why are they communing? How many of you...what ages?

Mother: Commune? God... no! What have I done to deserve this?

Tries to grab the phone again.

Father: But you have family and friends here. You know your mother will get hysterical when she hears.....by the look of her it's starting now. Can we come over and meet them.

Listens

Well I s'pose we can wait a while.....What's that?

Listens

I s'pose so...how much...?

Listens

Hell Carla that's a lot.

Listens

Well I'll think about it...let you know soon. I'll hand you over to y'mother...you'd better tell her about it yourself.

He hands the phone over to his wife and whispers:

Things are not so bad you'll see...I'll get you another gin.

[End]