

THE ASSASSIN

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BELFAST STREET - NIGHT

Caption: "Northern Ireland, 1992"

A typical terrace of traditional Belfast "two-up, two-down" houses facing each other in sentinel rows, eerily illuminated by the yellow sodium street lamps. A Vauxhall Cavalier is parked at the end of the street facing into it.

INT. THE CAR - NIGHT

Two men are sitting in the car - one in the front, the DRIVER, and the other in the back, the GUNMAN.

The Gunman is dressed entirely in black, right down to his gloves and heavy wool Balaclava which covers his face apart from slits for the eyes. On his lap is a hand gun which he is polishing, running the cloth slowly up and down the barrel with long, loving strokes. The Driver is edgy.

DRIVER

Jesus, are you ready? I don't want
to be in this god-forsaken bit of
Belfast for much longer.

There is no reply. At the other end of the street an Army Saracen slips into view and grinds to a halt.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

For fuck's sake.

After what seems like an eternity to the Driver, the Saracen moves on. The Driver flips out a cigarette and lights up.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

I don't like this fucking car too
much either, I can tell you.
Vauxhalls. Not reliable. They
should have took something like a
Merc for this job. Given us a Merc.
Or a Jap. They're good. I keep
telling them, but they don't listen.
One of these days there's going to be
a problem getting the car started and
that'll be it.

(MORE)

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Stuck in the fucking Falls at four in the morning. Story ended.

(Uses his hand to simulate a gun pointed at his head and pulling the trigger.)

INT. THE CAR - LATER

The Driver has finished his cigarette down to the butt. He winds down the window as if going to throw it out, changes his mind and uses the ashtray instead. At that moment, the Gunman leans forward and taps the Driver on the shoulder.

The Driver flicks the key and to his obvious relief the engine fires into life. He engages first gear, eases his foot on the accelerator and allows the car to gently roll forward down the street to a pre-determined point.

EXT. BELFAST STREET - NIGHT

The Gunman opens his door, steps out and draws himself up to his full height. He wears a black "bomber" jacket with special padding, like an American footballer. Only his eyes, coldly staring out from the Balaclava, are exposed. Firmly gripped in his left hand is the shotgun.

EXT. BELFAST STREET - NIGHT

The Gunman is looking at a particular front door. With one sudden movement, he flings himself at it, his right shoulder ramming into the wood. He steps back and charges again and this time the timber around the Yale lock starts to split. A third attack sends the door crashing open.

INT. BELFAST HOUSE - NIGHT

Three bounds take the Gunman to the top of the stairs. A man's sleep-sodden voice calls out from the bedroom. The Gunman goes inside and in the half-light from the street lamps sees his target sitting bolt upright in bed.

He raises the gun, squeezes the trigger and fires two shots in quick succession.

The man's body stiffens, lifts slightly and is then sent thumping back against the wall behind the bed, a dark pool of blood spreading across his chest.

INT. THE CAR - NIGHT

The Driver is revving the engine. The Gunman flings himself into the back seat and slams the door. The car roars off down the street, tyres screaming on tarmac. The Gunman looks at his watch.

GUNMAN

One minute and forty-eight seconds.
Not too bad, not too bad at all.

EXT. BELFAST - DAY

An open area among rows of terraced houses, wasteland littered with rusting old household throw-outs. Children are dancing round excitedly. Fire engines appear. A car is well ablaze. It's the Vauxhall Cavalier.

EXT. THE FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The McBride farmhouse silhouetted against a moonlit sky. From the distance, the sounds of a dog barking, its growls and yelps scrambling across the fields. At the house, a light goes on in one of the bedrooms.

INT. LITTLE SEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is dark in the bedroom but we can see the face of seven-year-old LITTLE SEAN face on the pillow by the moonlight filtering in through the thin curtains. He is listening to the sounds of his parents' muffled voices in the next room. His father, BIG SEAN, is getting out of bed, grumbling to his wife, KATHLEEN.

INT. LITTLE SEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Little Sean's face is at the window now. He is looking down into the farmyard.

EXT. THE FARMYARD - NIGHT

Little Sean's POV. His father is standing at the side of a barn, the light from his torch splaying the ground and dancing vainly into the dark like the last flickers from a fading candle. Sticking out from below his father's arm is a double-barrelled shotgun. The dog begins barking again.

BIG SEAN

Fucking cur, you. Get the fuck off
my land or I'll blast your bastard
head to bits.

To Little Sean inside the house, his father's voice is slightly muffled. More yelps from the dog, and Big Sean waves the shotgun above his head, like a native spear. He turns and stamps back towards the open door of the farmhouse.

INT. LITTLE SEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Little Sean gets back into bed and pulls the collar of his pyjama top over his chest and shivers in the cold night air. He looks afraid. We stay on his face, listening to his parents' voices on the landing.

KATHLEEN (O.S.)

Sean! Sean! For pity's sake come
back to bed.

BIG SEAN (O.S.)

Bloody dog. When I find out who it
belongs to, I'll make them pay
dearly, so I will.

KATHLEEN (O.S.)

Sure, sure - now come back to bed
Sean, or you'll waken the children.
Please. Let it lie 'til tomorrow.

BIG SEAN (O.S.)

I'll send Josh out with the gun first
thing tomorrow. Sheep in the top
field were in a dreadful state
yesterday. Scared to hell. It's
been many a year since we've had
worrying like this Kathleen. I want
that dog dead - as soon as possible.

The door to his parents' bedroom slams shut and then the muffled sound of their continued talking: his father's angry tones rising and falling with the wind outside, and the soothing pleas of his mother.

INT. LITTLE SEAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Little Sean's face the following morning. He wakes, opens his eyes. Bright sunlight streaming in through the window. The noise of children - his younger brother and sister, the five-year-old twins PATRICK and DONNA - bouncing excitedly round the house. The bedside clock shows eight-ten and Little Sean is already late.

INT. FARMHOUSE BATHROOM - DAY

Little Sean splashes his face with water.

INT. LITTLE SEAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Little Sean quickly steps out of his pyjamas and throws on his school uniform.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Patrick and Donna are already there, seated at the huge stripped-pine table. They are squabbling over a cheap toy Patrick has dug out of the cereal packet, a plastic ring mounted with an astrological symbol, Sagittarius.

The radio is blaring in the background. Local news about a bomb in Londonderry, the breakdown of peace talks yet again, and another tit-for-tat sectarian killing in Belfast.

KATHLEEN

Give the ring to Donna this time.

She places tumblers of orange drink in front of each of the children.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

And hurry up. The bus'll be at the end of the lane in fifteen minutes and I want you on it.

Little Sean slides in through the door, hoping he hasn't been noticed.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

That means you too, Little Sean.
You're late. Get sat down right now.
Homework?

LITTLE SEAN

In my satchel.

PATRICK

But it was me that found the ring.
It's not fair.

Patrick clasps the cheap gift firmly in his grip, holding it as far away as possible from Donna without leaving his chair. But their mother, a veteran of these skirmishes, is too quick for him. She grabs the boy's wrist and gently squeezes it, indicating that she means business. The ring drops to the floor and is instantly snatched up by Donna.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Didn't want the stupid thing anyway.

DONNA

Can we go and see Lucy please Mummy?

KATHLEEN

No. There's no time now. You've still got to brush your teeth and pack your PE stuff. Sure it's gym today, isn't it? Yes, I thought so. Get along now, both of you. You think far too much about that lamb for your own good. Don't worry, she'll still be there when you get back from school.

Silence descends. The children finish their breakfast. Little Sean is watching through the kitchen window opposite him the early morning work routine getting under way in the cobbled yard at the back of the house.

The hesitant grinding sound of a reluctant tractor being throttled into life. His father comes into view, and then JOSH, the big-bellied boss, who nods in agreement with something his father is saying.

The double-barelled shotgun appears and is ceremoniously passed between them, then Josh tucks it under his arm and walks away.

INT. THE CLASSROOM - DAY

A young woman teacher is standing in front of the class.

TEACHER

Right then children, let's see how well you know this week's words.
Sophie - glasses.

A girl stands up.

SOPHIE

G-L-A-S-S-E-S

TEACHER

Good. Liam - adventure.

LIAM

A-D-V-E-N-T-U-R-E

TEACHER

Excellent. Sean - bridge.

Little Sean's face. He is gazing through the window and clearly hasn't heard his name being called out.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Sean McBride - bridge!

There are a few giggles round the class and someone throws a ball of paper which hits Little Sean on the head, startling him.

LITTLE SEAN

Oh - er, sorry miss.

TEACHER

Go on then. Spell it please.

LITTLE SEAN

Erm

TEACHER

Sean, were you listening to me? Did you hear what I said?

LITTLE SEAN

Yes miss.

TEACHER

Then spell bridge for me then.

LITTLE SEAN

Err . . . B-R-I-D emm J

TEACHER

Wrong. Anyone else?

A sea of hands goes up.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Colette.

COLETTE

b-r-i-d-g-e

TEACHER

Thank you Colette. Sean, write bridge out 100 times tonight. Correctly.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Little Sean and plump boy are swapping cards of soccer players. An argument begins and other children start gathering round. The argument turns into a fight.

Surprisingly - and much to the delight of the onlookers - the other boy gets the better of it and Little Sean is forced down, tearing the leg of his trousers on the tarmac.

Amid the cheers, one of the watchers, Colette, bends down to Little Sean and puts her face up to his.

COLETTE

You deserved that beating 'cos you're a bully Sean McBride. A friggin' bully!

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

The old school bus is bumping down a country road. It is packed with children who are in high spirits, including Patrick and Donna. Little Sean is sitting quietly on the back seat.

EXT. THE LANE - DAY

The three children are trudging back to the farmhouse. It starts to spit with rain. Patrick and Donna break into a run. Little Sean walks behind them.

INT. THE FARMHOUSE - DAY

The children fling down their school bags in the hallway and then rush out through the back door.

EXT. THE FARM - DAY

Patrick and Donna run past the barn and through a field into the lower meadow, a small area of which is sectioned off with wire meshing.

DONNA

Lucy! Lucy!

PATRICK

Lucy . . . where are you?

Little Sean has joined them, also wondering where their pet lamb can be. He looks behind a clump of trees and catches his breath.

There is the animal, lying like a discarded blanket, a gaping gash of red behind its head which is contorted in a grotesque angle.

As he gazes at the body Patrick and Donna join him. They scream in anguish and cling on to Little Sean's blazer. He bites his lip and screws up his eyes to hold back the tears, but his face is contorted with rage.

The children run back to the farmhouse, thick winter rain drenching their hair and mingling with the tears streaming down their faces.

INT. FARMHOUSE PARLOUR - NIGHT

Little Sean is curled up on the settee with his mother, his head resting on her lap, watching the TV.

INT. FARMHOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Big Sean is finishing a conversation with Josh at the door. Josh leaves and Big Sean comes in. He is carrying the double-barrelled shotgun which he leans against a tall cupboard partly hidden under the stairwell. The cupboard is where the gun belongs, usually under lock and key.

INT. FARMHOUSE PARLOUR - NIGHT

Big Sean comes in.

KATHLEEN

Any luck?

BIG SEAN

No. No sign of it. Josh wants to get off now. His girl's in a school concert tonight and he's promised to be there this time, come what may. Can't blame him. We'll have another go tomorrow. Are the wee'uns settled?

KATHLEEN

Aye. Just about. Poor little souls cried their hearts out.

Beat.

BIG SEAN

Fergal went to the seed merchant's in Newry this afternoon. We aren't the only ones having trouble.

KATHLEEN

Oh?

BIG SEAN

According to Fergal, Molloy's herd was scattered yesterday morning and took three hours to round in.

(MORE)

BIG SEAN (CONT'D)

And Jim Clancy lost two hens the other night. His best layers too, so Fergal says.

KATHLEEN

Dreadful. Has no-one any idea where the dog comes from? Who it belongs to?

BIG SEAN

Theory is it's attached to one of the gypsy families staked out on the common up beyond Pat Murphy's place. Only a rumour mind. Nobody can get close enough to get a proper look. Pat's been over there himself a couple of times, but they won't let him close.

KATHLEEN

Sounds like a job for the police, Sean.

BIG SEAN

Are you joking? And what d'you think they'll do about it? Probably bring in the Army, like they did over those culvert bombs in McDivitt's lane. Send For The Troops - that's always their motto when it comes to anything going on out here in the country! I'm off to take a wee peek at that sick heifer and then it's an early night for me Kathleen.

KATHLEEN

Will you be wanting a mug o'tea?

BIG SEAN

Aye.

KATHLEEN

I'll put the kettle on. And I think it's about time this young feller was on his way up the apples and pears, too.

She playfully ruffles Little Sean's hair and he reluctantly gets up from the settee. His parents take turns to give him a hug and say goodnight.

INT. FARMHOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Little Sean is about to mount the stairs when he sees the shotgun propped up against its cupboard. He goes over to the gun, reaches out his hand and gently touches it.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

It is dead of night and Little Sean is huddled against the upright of a wooden fence. His hands are thrust deep into the pockets of his anorak which covers two sweaters, his thick long school trousers and, finally, his pyjamas.

On his head is one of his father's old woolly hats pulled down over the ears almost to his eyebrows. Lying on the ground beside him, pointing out towards the field, is the shotgun. Close by, a cardboard carton of cartridges. And, for good measure, a long-bladed carving knife.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

Later on. Little Sean moves about and stretches his legs to keep the blood circulating.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

The moonlit fields from Little Sean's POV. We can make out the figures of slumbering sheep, standing motionless like huge grey boulders.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

Little Sean's face. He is struggling to keep his eyes open. Then the sound of a low growl followed by a series of short barks.

Little Sean sits bolt upright and grabs the shotgun. He tucks the handle under his armpit and brings the sight up to his eye.

The sheep are scattering now, darting about in all directions, their small legs scurrying across the spongy turf.

Howls and snarls fill the air. Two or three terrified sheep head towards him and at the last moment glance off to the left, desperate to escape their pursuer.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

The dog is in his sights now. A huge Alsatian with bared teeth, steamy saliva dripping from its jowls.

Little Sean squeezes the trigger and with a deafening boom the gun explodes against his face throwing him backwards onto the wooden post. When he opens his eyes, the dog is staring down at him.

Little Sean raises the gun and lets off another round. Undeterred, the beast lunges towards him. Now the knife is in Little Sean's hand.

He lunges out with it, and the dog falls dead over him. With one excruciating shove, Little Sean pushes its dead-weight body away from him, turns his head to one side and vomits on the ground.

INT. UFF HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A stark room above a record shop in East Belfast. This is the headquarters of the outlawed paramilitary Ulster Freedom Fighters. Loyalist regalia hangs from the walls.

Three men are sitting on hard straight-back wooden chairs round an old oak dining table. They are SAMMY DOYLE, the UFF Quartermaster, JIMMY MCIVOR, Divisional Commander in South East Armagh and another man, BILLY JOHNSTON.

On the table are some manila folders and several poorly taken photographs of men's faces. The sound of heavy beat music is thumping up from the floor below.

DOYLE

Sorry to bring you up here at short notice, Billy, but Jimmy here has come to us with some jobs he wants doing and we - well, we owe him a few favours.

MCIVOR

There's three Provies in our area that's been giving us some trouble.

DOYLE

Only three?

They smile.

DOYLE (CONT'D)

And you want them wasted, right Jimmy?

MCIVOR

Right.

DOYLE

Jimmy here thinks it's work that calls for your special skills, Billy. Something quick and clean. No need for lengthy and complicated stake-outs. No risk of witnesses. I know it's well outside our - I mean your - normal range of territory, of course. But Jimmy hasn't got any boys out there who can do that kind of thing. Not with the same speed and accuracy as you, Billy.

MCIVOR

These are the pictures. And there's more information about them in each of the folders.

JOHNSTON

Are they all Provies?

MCIVOR

Two definitely are. We're fairly sure they were the ones who ambushed that Army patrol outside Castlewellan just before Christmas.

(MORE)

MCIVOR (CONT'D)

Two young lads, eighteen and nineteen
. . . what a desperate tragedy for
their families. Right in the middle
of the season of goodwill and all.

JOHNSTON

And the third?

MCIVOR

We believe he's a sympathiser.

JOHNSTON

So why take him out?

MCIVOR

We think he's allowing the Provies to
store guns and Semtex on his farm.
And we want to making an example of
him. Discourage other filthy Fenians
in the area from doing the same, if
you get my drift . . .

JOHNSTON

Which one's he then?

MCIVOR

That one.

McIvor slides a photograph across to Johnston who picks it
up. The picture had been snatched with a telephoto lens and
the quality is poor. A man in his late thirties or early
forties. When Johnston examines it closer we see that the
man in the picture is Big Sean McBride.

INT. BUTCHER'S SHOP - DAY

Johnston is behind the counter, serving MRS MCMASTERS, a
customer.

MRS MCMASTERS

What's your frying steak like today
Billy?

JOHNSTON

Just like butter, so it is.

MRS MCMASTERS

Och well give me a good three-quarters then please.

JOHNSTON

(Weighing out the
meat)

How about that?

MRS MCMASTERS

Dead on. And I'll take a half pound of beef sausages and a pound of your best mince.

JOHNSTON

Coming up Missus McMasters.

MRS MCMASTERS

How's that wee girl of yours Billy?

JOHNSTON

Caron? Oh, she's grand, God love her.

MRS MCMASTERS

Must be nearly three now, if she's a day . . ?

JOHNSTON

Just turned. It was her birthday a couple of weeks ago. Here, look at this.

He wipes the blood from his hands on a cloth, pulls up his apron and takes out a photograph from his pocket.

JOHNSTON (CONT'D)

Taken at her party.

MRS MCMASTERS

Och she's lovely. Really lovely. That child's a real credit to you Billy.

JOHNSTON

I know. I'm a very lucky feller.

The phone rings.

JOHNSTON (CONT'D)

Would you excuse me a wee minute
Missus McMasters.

(Picks up the phone
fixed to a back wall
behind the counter)

Logans.

DOYLE'S VOICE

Billy?

JOHNSTON

Hello Sammy.

DOYLE'S VOICE

Fancy a wee run into the country?

JOHNSTON

Aye.

DOYLE'S VOICE

It's fixed for tonight. You'll get
the details later.

The line goes dead. Johnston replaces the receiver and turns
back to the counter.

JOHNSTON

(To Mrs McMasters)

Sorry about that. Now, is there
anything else I can get for you
Missus McMasters?

MRS MCMASTERS

No, that's all for today. Thanks
Billy. Cheerio now.

INT. THE FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

It is Big Sean's fortieth birthday and a party is being
prepared. Kathleen is busy putting out bowls of salad,
platters of sandwiches and trays of pork pies and sausage
rolls. Sean is in charge of setting up the bar.

The children are watching, fascinated. Little Sean has
gathered together his younger brother and sister.

LITTLE SEAN

Now remember what I've told you -
you've got to behave yourself. If
anything happens to spoil Dad's
birthday there'll be big trouble.
Understand? And if you're good, you
might get to stay up late.

DONNA

How late?

LITTLE SEAN

Dunno. Maybe midnight.

DONNA

Wow!

KATHLEEN

Now, I think that's everything. If
not it's just too bad. What's the
time Sean?

SEAN

Just after six.

KATHLEEN

Ooooooh, no! They'll be here soon
and I'm not even a bit ready!

BIG SEAN

Doesn't matter - you look beautiful
enough just as you are.

KATHLEEN

Sean McBride! You old flatterer.
And what about that brand new dress
that's upstairs in the wardrobe?
Don't you want me to wear it then?

BIG SEAN

Of course. You go and get ready now.
Here, take this up with you.

He hands her a glass of wine.

KATHLEEN

Just what's needed. Right, everyone,
listen.

(MORE)

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

I'm going upstairs and I don't want
to be disturbed at all by anyone -
and that includes you too, Big Sean.
Even if it is your fortieth birthday!

BIG SEAN

It would be more than my life's
worth, so it would Kathleen.

INT. THE FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The party is in full swing. Among those present are
GERALDINE and BERNADETTE, Kathleen's sisters from Monaghan,
and the farm workers looking awkward in their ill-fitting
best suits. One of them has brought his guitar and is
belting out traditional Irish songs.

GERALDINE

We'll not be staying too much longer
Kathleen, if you don't mind. I don't
like driving across the Border at
night.

KATHLEEN

Sure Geraldine, I understand. Have
you enjoyed it?

GERALDINE

Lovely party, so much fun.

KATHLEEN

And Bernadette?

Bernadette nods enthusiastically.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Good. It's a shame Sean's brother
couldn't be here.

Sean has come up behind them.

BIG SEAN

But two fine sister-in-laws are just
as good!

He puts his arms round Geraldine and Bernadette and pecks
them each on the cheek.

GERALDINE

How is Brendan getting on these days?

BIG SEAN

Oh, still making lots of money in Canada.

GERALDINE

Is that so?

KATHLEEN

So we're told. Marie phones occasionally, but we don't hear much from Brendan.

BIG SEAN

Well, he is away a lot, travelling round.

The children are running around, weaving in between the guests. At one point, Little Sean is stopped by local priest FATHER O'LEARY.

FATHER O'LEARY

Hello Little Sean, and how are you?

LITTLE SEAN

Fine, thank you Father.

FATHER O'LEARY

Come here, come and sit with me for a few minutes. There's something I want to talk to you about.

Father O'Leary leads Little Sean to a quiet corner of the Dining Room and pulls up chairs for both of them.

FATHER O'LEARY (CONT'D)

I, er, heard about that nasty incident you had a couple of weeks ago. With the dog. Terrible business, so I understand. I haven't mentioned it to you before, Little Sean, because I'd rather been hoping that you'd have made the first move, so to speak. Is there anything you want to tell me?

Little Sean stays silent.

FATHER O'LEARY (CONT'D)

I mean, when we are alone together.
In a different place. No? You were
quite the hero, weren't you? Killing
the dog like that. Many folk round
here were very impressed - and
grateful to you, too, of course. And
so they should be. But one thing
really worries me about it Little
Sean. Your father was very careless
to leave that gun lying around, and
no doubt he's only too aware of that
and will make sure he never does it
again.

Father O'Leary moves his face close to Little Sean's.

FATHER O'LEARY (CONT'D)

But it still doesn't condone the fact
that you took the gun and the
cartridges when you knew perfectly
well that you certainly weren't
allowed to do so.

He stays like that for a moment or so, then straightens up.

FATHER O'LEARY (CONT'D)

Well, if you do want to say anything
to me about it then don't forget that
the door at St Francis's is always
open to you at any time. Understood?

LITTLE SEAN

Yes Father.

FATHER O'LEARY

Good. That's settled between us
then.

INT. FARMHOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The last guests are just leaving. Big Sean and Kathleen
close the door and breath a sigh of relief. Party debris is
all around them.

BIG SEAN

That was great . . .

He takes her into his arms.

KATHLEEN
Happy birthday Sean McBride.

They kiss.

BIG SEAN
Come on. Let's go up.

KATHLEEN
But what about all this?

BIG SEAN
Sure it can wait 'til morning, and
anyway . . .

KATHLEEN
Anyway?

BIG SEAN
I haven't had my special present yet.

KATHLEEN
Special present, is it? Which one's
that?

BIG SEAN
The one you promised me this morning.

KATHLEEN
Oh did I now? Well . . .

BIG SEAN
Well nothing. Come here, and obey my
command, woman!

With one swift movement Big Sean sweeps her up into his arms
and starts climbing the stairs.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

Dead of night, and all is quiet. The farmhouse sits there,
dark and brooding. A car is stealthily making its way down
the lane. No lights. Hardly any sound from the engine.
Just before the entrance to the farm it rolls to a halt.

INT. THE CAR - NIGHT

Johnston, dressed in his all-black operational "uniform" is sitting in the back. He reaches into a hold-all and takes out an Army issue night sight which he trains on the farmhouse.

In the artificial light he can clearly see the front door and the downstairs and upstairs windows, all closed and curtained.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

Johnston steps quietly from the car and walks along the lane, treading softly, his trainers making minimal sound on the stony ground. He passes through the gate and makes his way up to the front of the house.

He places both hands on the front door, splaying out his fingers, applying slight pressure with the tips, delicately sensing its thickness.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

Johnston makes his way round to the back of the farmhouse where there is a rickety lean-to porch leading to the kitchen door.

He locates the knob and it yields slightly. He feels the door again, this time with satisfaction. This is where he will go in.

INT. LITTLE SEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Little Sean is fitfully asleep. Suddenly, there is a crashing sound from the kitchen below and he sits bolt upright. The next sequence is played staccato and jumbled as if through a blurred memory.

Little Sean jumps out of bed.

The sound of heavy footsteps on the stairs.

Johnston on the landing.

Johnston looking at the bedroom doors.

Johnston choosing one door and kicking it open.

Johnston sees two figures lying in the bed.

Johnston makes a decision and aims at the one on the right.

There is a loud explosion as the gun is fired.

Kathleen screams, sits up and then makes a dive for Johnston.

As she reaches him the Gunman lets off another shot which goes wide and smashes into the wall.

Little Sean emerges from his bedroom to see through the open door of his parents' room his mother grappling with Johnston.

Amid the confusion of sounds are screams from Patrick and Donna.

Johnston's arm hits out, sending Kathleen sprawling to the ground. Another shot.

Little Sean dives down the stairs.

At the foot of the stairs he reaches the long cupboard where the shotgun is kept. It is locked!

Little Sean claws at the wood with his fingernails, trying in vain to open it.

Little Sean becomes aware of someone and turns round to see the huge black figure of Johnston towering above him.

Johnston's eyes, cold and calculating, are fixed on Little Sean.

Johnston raises his hand and points the gun directly at Little Sean's head.

Little Sean watches Johnston's finger tighten on the trigger. He screws up his eyes and waits for the explosion.

Nothing happens.

When Little Sean opens his eyes again Johnston has gone. From outside comes the sound of a car engine being revved up, followed by its fading roar as it disappears down the lane.

Little Sean runs upstairs again and on the door to his parents' room he stops, halted by the hideous scene.

The wall to the right is splattered with red. Lying on the floor next to the bed is his father, a huge crimson patch on the front of his striped pyjamas.

Kathleen is kneeling beside him, cradling his head in her arms, her body swaying gently backwards and forward. Blood stains streak her white nightdress.

KATHLEEN

Sean . . . Sean . . . Sean . . . what
have they done to you my darling . .
. what have they done?

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Little Sean has the telephone receiver in his hand. A woman operator is on the other end of the line.

(Note: Traumatized by what he has experienced, Little Sean starts to stammer severely throughout this scene).

OPERATOR

Emergency . . . emergency . . . hello
. . . emergency. Hello - are you
there caller?

LITTLE SEAN

It's my Daddy.

OPERATOR

What about your Daddy?

LITTLE SEAN

Someone was here.

OPERATOR

What's happened to your Daddy?

Silence.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)

Hello . . . are you there . . .
what's your name? Tell me your name?

LITTLE SEAN

Sean.

OPERATOR

Sean what?

LITTLE SEAN

Sean McBride.

OPERATOR

Okay Sean. Just tell me what's happened to your Daddy. Is he ill?

Little Sean nods.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)

Is he poorly?

LITTLE SEAN

Yes.

OPERATOR

Why is he poorly? What's happened to him?

LITTLE SEAN

He's been shot.

OPERATOR

(Urgently)

Sean - is your Mummy there?

LITTLE SEAN

Yes.

OPERATOR

Can I talk to her please?

LITTLE SEAN

No.

OPERATOR

Could you give the phone to your Mummy please?

LITTLE SEAN

No. She's not listening.

OPERATOR

She's not listening . . . okay, tell me more about your Daddy. Is he hurt? Is he badly hurt?

LITTLE SEAN

There's a lot of blood.

OPERATOR

Right. We'll get to you as soon as we can, understand? Where are you phoning from?

LITTLE SEAN

My home.

OPERATOR

Yes, okay, but where is that? Where do you live?

LITTLE SEAN

On a farm. We live on a farm. We've got cows and sheep and some pigs. We had a lamb too, once.

OPERATOR

Where is it? Where is the farm? Sean, please tell me.

LITTLE SEAN

Along the lane.

OPERATOR

Which lane?

LITTLE SEAN

Drover's Lane.

OPERATOR

Drover's Lane where?

Little Sean mumbles something.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)

Sorry, I didn't quite catch that. Can you say again? No, no. Hold on a second.

(MORE)

OPERATOR (CONT'D)

We're getting it now What's the nearest big town to you Sean? Tell me what the nearest big town is called.

LITTLE SEAN

Newry.

OPERATOR

Newry - right! Got it! Good lad. You've done very well Sean. We'll be with you just as soon as we can.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

A British Army Land Rover has rolled up in the lane.

INT. LAND ROVER - NIGHT

Inside the Land Rover are three squaddies and the patrol commander, a young CAPTAIN. Blackened faces. Guns at the ready.

SOLDIER

What do we do now?

CAPTAIN

We wait.

SOLDIER

Fucking marvellous. First tour of duty and we end up right in the heart of Comanche Country.

The walkie-talkie starts squawking.

RADIO

Unit Five-Ten are you reading?

CAPTAIN

Reading. Over.

RADIO

Just been informed that the ambulance left Newry two minutes ago. ETA with you at o-four-seventeen. Meanwhile stand fast. Over.

CAPTAIN

Understood. Over.

SOLDIER

Another ten minutes! For fuck's sake, there's a man shot in there! Bleeding to death for all we know. Shouldn't we be getting stuck in sir?

CAPTAIN

We can't. Not just yet. We've got to wait until they make up their minds in Lisburn.

SOLDIER

What the fuck are they waiting for?

CAPTAIN

It could be dangerous to go any further. Too risky.

SOLDIER

Jesus . . .

CAPTAIN

Everything might sound as if it's kosher. Kid rings nine-nine-nine to say his Dad's been shot. Sounds very plausible - and could be a genuine emergency for all I know. But it wouldn't be the first time these sort of situations have been used to lure us into a false sense of security. You know, get us out here, trapped, and then blow our balls to bits.

The young soldiers' frightened faces.

RADIO

Okay Unit Five-Ten. You're cleared to go. Over.

CAPTAIN

Roger!

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

They burst into action. The soldier in the driving seat pushes his boot firmly down on the gas pedal and the Land Rover roars forward. It smashes through the five-barred gate and screeches to a halt at the front of the farmhouse.

In a carefully rehearsed choreography, the soldiers leap from the vehicle, two with rifles at the ready, spreading either side to provide mutual cover for themselves and the other men.

INT. THE FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The Captain rushes into the hallway, closely followed by a soldier carrying a medical bag. Little Sean screams to them from the landing.

LITTLE SEAN

Here! We're up here! Please help
us. Please help us.

INT. FARMHOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

The soldiers arrive in Little Sean's parents' bedroom. Kathleen is still cradling her husband and the two smaller children are watching, frozen in terror.

The soldier carrying the medical bag flings it down on the floor, simultaneously opening it and taking out a small white pillow which he immediately stuffs into the gaping hole in Sean's chest.

At the same time, the Captain curls his arm round Kathleen, gently trying to prise her away from the position into which she seems to have locked herself.

The medical bag is opened again and a short rubber tube is pushed down Sean's throat. The soldier begins blowing into it, pausing and then blowing again.

The Captain places his fingers on Sean's neck just under the right earlobe, holds them there for a few moments and then shakes his head slowly.

CAPTAIN

It's no good Jack. Poor bugger's gone.

From outside comes the wailing of an ambulance drawing closer as it bumps down the lane towards the farmhouse.

EXT. CHURCH GRAVEYARD - DAY

The coffin is being carried along the graveyard path, Father O'Leary walking in front reciting his incantations, the family behind, clinging on to one another, followed by the rest of the congregation.

When they reach the open grave, long leather straps are placed through the handles and the coffin is gently lowered into it. Kathleen begins weeping, Patrick and Donna whimpering at her side.

Little Sean watches as the first sods are thrown into the hole, making a hollow thud on the coffin.

He pushes his fist into his mouth to fight back the tears. His face, tortured with rage, just as it was when he discovered the dead lamb.

EXT. CHURCH GRAVEYARD - DAY

Caption: "18 Years Later"

Sean's face now, a handsome young man of twenty-five. Pull back to show Sean kneeling in front of his father's grave. It is a brittle winter's day.

SEAN

So, Da', what have I got to tell you today then? Let's see now . . . the Armagh boys won again on Saturday, so they did. Thrashed Monaghan seventeen nil - fantastic result. Watched the highlights. Great game. You'd have loved it too, you would that. Oh, and there's more good news - I got a new job at long last. Bar in Belfast. Smart place half-way along Royal Avenue no less. Only open a couple of months. And guess what?

(MORE)

SEAN (CONT'D)

It's called the Bar None - no kidding. What a bloody name, I tell you! What next, eh? But here's the best bit Da' - the manager they got was sacked last week. Just sudden, y'know. One minute he's there, the next gone. Someone said he'd been caught with his grubbies in the till, something like that anyhow. Didn't much like the guy anyway. Too much up his own arse for his own good, so he was. Anyway, who d'you think got his job? Aye. Dead on! Imagine that now - me, manager of the Bar None in Royal Avenue. So there you are now Da', something you can be proud of me for after all these years, eh?

INT. BAR NONE - EVENING

Busy city centre up-market bar. Modern minimalist style. Early Friday evening, bubbling with young, single office workers celebrating the start of weekend, plenty of primeval posturing and positioning.

Working their choreography behind the bar, deftly switching between a crush of baying customers, are Sean and a couple of girl tenders wearing trendy waistcoat uniforms.

One of them, LACEY, an attractive blonde in her early twenties, breaks the rhythm and approaches Sean who continues to dispense drinks as they talk.

LACEY

There's a guy asking for you.

SEAN

So?

LACEY

So what?

SEAN

I'm busy. Tell him I'm not on tonight.

LACEY

Can't. Think he's been here before
asking for you. Seemed to know who
you are.

She breaks away to take an order.

LACEY (CONT'D)

Okay, two vodkas and cokes, one
Bacardi breezer and a large glass of
dry white.

Lacey uses her finger to input the order on the till point
monitor screen.

SEAN

Where is he, this guy?

LACEY

Over there.

SEAN

Where?

LACEY

Far end of the bar. Standing by
himself. The guy in the long grey
raincoat.

(Serving the drink
order)

There you go. Twenty-two thirty.

LACEY (CONT'D)

(Taking the cash and
giving change from
the till)

Sure I've seen his face somewhere.
Looks familiar.

Sean glances over. Sean's POV. We see TREVOR KENNEDY, early
forties, Belfast-based TV documentary producer and presenter.
Stout build and strong, distinguished features with hair
greying just slightly at the temples.

SEAN

Tell him I'll be over when I can.

Lacey skips across to Kennedy's end of the bar.

LACEY

Hi again! Sean says he's a bit tied up at the moment and he'll be along in a wee minute.

KENNEDY

Fine. No problem.

LACEY

Want a drink? While you're waiting?

KENNEDY

Sure, why not. I'll take a mineral water.

LACEY

Bubbles?

KENNEDY

Sorry?

LACEY

D'you want bubbles - sparkling water or natural?

KENNEDY

Oh, I'm more of a natural sort of person, I think.

LACEY

Coming up.

She quickly pulls a water bottle from the fridge behind the bar, twists the screw cap, slips out a glass from the holder and passes them to Kennedy.

LACEY (CONT'D)

So, what did you say you wanted with Sean?

KENNEDY

I didn't.

LACEY

Oh. Thought you'd mentioned something. Must have been mistaken.

KENNEDY

Yes. You must.

Sean appears at Lacey's side.

SEAN
Customers waiting, Lacey . . .

LACEY
Okay - I can take the hint!

She slips away and resumes her job at the bar.

KENNEDY
Sean McBride?

Sean nods warily. Kennedy takes a smart-looking business card holder from his jacket pocket and slips one out.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)
Trevor Kennedy. You may have heard of me.

Sean shakes his head slowly. Kennedy hands him the business card which Sean takes in his fingers and holds as if it's something that's just come off the end of his shoe.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)
Face The Facts. Ulster TV, ten-thirty-five, Thursdays. Never watched it? No. Well, no matter Sean - can I call you Sean? - good - it's not important. We're putting together a new series at the moment and one of the issues I want to focus on is how people like you feel now that Northern Ireland has returned to -
(Simulates quote marks with his fingers)
- normality.

SEAN
People like me?

KENNEDY
Yeah. I mean, those like you who lost loved ones in the Troubles, all those years ago, and the culprit was never caught, never brought to justice.

Sean starts to back away.

SEAN

No . . .

KENNEDY

How you feel about that - hatred,
bitterness? The need for closure?
Or maybe revenge.

SEAN

(Breaking into a
pronounced stutter)

Look - you've asked the wrong guy
Mister - Mister Kennedy - all that
was a long time ago - it's all in the
past.

Lacey bounces up to Sean.

LACEY

Hey, Sean, we could do with a lift
over here. It's bedlam in here, in
case you hadn't noticed.

KENNEDY

(To Sean)

Okay, okay, perhaps you need time to
think it over. Just give me a call
when you've made up your mind. My
direct line's on the card. Also my
mobile number. Give me a ring. Any
time.

INT. SEAN'S FLAT - LATER

Sean's face, eyes closed. Pan back to show him lying on the
bed with a naked girl astride him. The room is sparsely.
Functional more than comfortable.

The girl is rocking forward and backward, making all the
effort in an attempt to have sex with Sean. She is MAGDA,
Sean's girlfriend of two weeks, an attractive girl in her
late twenties with long ringlets of blonde hair.

Magda's movements become increasingly jerky and agitated. Suddenly she stops, pulls away and swings her left leg over Sean to sit on the side of the bed. Sean remains on the bed, motionless, impassive.

MAGDA

Go on, what's the matter this time?

She reaches for a packet of cigarettes on the bedside table, flips one out and lights it.

SEAN

(Languid)

There's nothing wrong, Magda, believe me.

MAGDA

So how come every time we start you end up not wanting it, eh?

SEAN

Dunno. Just don't feel in the mood, that's all.

MAGDA

Not in the mood! It sure as hell didn't seem like that half an hour ago. Or the other night when you asked me to come back here after work. Same thing, all talk - no action!

There is a silence while Magda draws on her cigarette and Sean continues to stare up at the ceiling. When she speaks again, her tone is softer, more conciliatory, even slightly seductive.

MAGDA (CONT'D)

It's not as if there's no reason why you can't do it . . . I mean -

(Trailing the tips of
her finger nails
across his chest)

- it was really fantastic the first time, wasn't it Sean? So why can't it be like that again . . . what's the matter?

SEAN

(Quietly, more to
himself)

I don't know . . . I just don't know.

Sean rolls away to the other side of the bed and springs to his feet. He grabs his clothes which have been hastily flung over a chair and starts pulling them on, underpants, T-shirt, jeans.

Magda takes her cue from this and starts retrieving her own clothes and putting them on.

MAGDA

I thought you liked me, thought we
had something going for us.

SEAN

You're okay - nothing special.

Sharp intake of breath from Magda.

SEAN (CONT'D)

In fact, I'm getting a bit bored with
you Magda, and that's the truth.

MAGDA

You bored with me - that really takes
the biscuit!

She finishes getting dressed.

MAGDA (CONT'D)

Know what, Sean? There's something
wrong with you. One minute you're
all over me like a rash and the next
you don't want to know. I never know
where I am with you. Well, the way
things are going you won't have to
put up with me for much longer.

SEAN

Go on then - you can get out of my
life, for all I care.

MAGDA

Maybe I'll just do that!

Magda leaves the bedroom

SEAN

Piss off! Stupid bitch.

Sound of the front door slamming. Sean goes over to the dressing table and picks up something. We see on close-up that it's Trevor Kennedy's business card.

Caption: "10 Months Later"

INT. NURSING HOME - EVENING

All we see is a TV screen filled with the image of Sean's face. He talks hesitantly, desperately trying to control his stammer and with heavy emotion, not looking directly at the camera but to someone who is out of shot. When we hear the other person's voice it is Trevor Kennedy.

SEAN

It was in the early hours of the morning, perhaps three or four o'clock, I'm not sure now. I remember being woken by a crashing sound, and I think that must have been when he broke in through the back door which was below my bedroom. Next thing - next thing I know is that this man is standing there -

KENNEDY

It's okay Sean, it's all right. Just take your time.

SEAN

(Recovering himself)

I come out of my bedroom and on the upstairs landing I see a man standing there.

During the next exchange pan slowly back to show that the TV is sitting on top of a chest of drawers. The room is furnished in a motley mix of heavy, old-fashioned items.

Opposite the chest is an armchair in which is sitting a man who looks much older than his sixty-eight years, thin and gaunt.

His breathing is very laboured and loud, and every so often he puts to his mouth to help him an oxygen mask which is connected to a tank by the side chair.

He is Joe Morrow, a former Chief Inspector in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, now terminally ill with lung cancer and a shadow of the tough man he once was.

KENNEDY

Can you describe this man? I know it was many years ago and you were what, about seven at the time?

SEAN

He was big. To me, huge.

KENNEDY

What did he look like? I mean, did you get a look at his facial features? I suppose you told all this to the police at the time, but what do you remember now?

Sean shakes his head.

SEAN

Can't say.

KENNEDY

No? Why is that?

SEAN

He had a Balaclava pulled over his head.

KENNEDY

Okay . . . and the rest of his clothes?

SEAN

All black.

KENNEDY

What, everything?

SEAN

(Nodding)

From top to toe. All black.

Morrow's face reacting. Cross-cut between Sean and Morrow during the following exchanges.

KENNEDY

Even the Balaclava?

SEAN

Even the Balaclava. All I could see of him was his eyes through the wee holes in the Balaclava I'll never forget those eyes as long as I live - blue with cold, like ice. Merciless. Barely human. Pure evil . . .

Sean looks as if he is about to break down.

KENNEDY

Okay, now we know what happened next, that the man who broke into your house then shot your father, so we don't need to go into those details which I'm sure must be very painful for you. But tell us more, Sean, if you can, about how this monstrous act affected your family. Not at the time, of course, I think we can all imagine that, but in the months and years that followed.

Sean swallows.

SEAN

It devastated us, tore us apart.

KENNEDY

In what way? What exactly?

SEAN

My mother . . .

KENNEDY

Your mother?

SEAN

God help her, she had a breakdown. She had to sell the farm for a fraction of what it was worth. Me and my brother and sister were taken into care.

(MORE)

SEAN (CONT'D)

Brought up by foster parents. Them to one family, me another. Good people in their own way, wouldn't hear a word said against them. But it wasn't the same life we had in the farmhouse, nothing like it. And separating us like that, well it was cruel, very cruel, I think.

KENNEDY

And now? Your mother?

SEAN

We go and visit her sometimes. Me and Patrick and Donna. In the hospital unit where she still lives. But she doesn't know us now.

KENNEDY

Now, if I might Sean, I'd just like to bring up the police investigation.

Morrow's face.

SEAN

(Disdainfully)

What investigation?

KENNEDY

Well, we all know that the RUC were very stretched at the time in the early Nineties with the upsurge of sectarian killings. But that's no comfort for you personally, is it Sean?

Sean shakes his head.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

So how does that make you feel? Now. Nearly two decades later. That this man, the man you saw shoot dead your father is walking around totally free. Never apprehended by the police, never brought before a court. A cold-blooded killer. He could be anywhere. You could have sat next to him on a bus.

(MORE)

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Or stood near him in a bar. He might even be watching this broadcast at this very moment . . .

Morrow points his remote at the TV and switches it off. He reaches for a portable phone handset by his bed and with some difficulty starts punching out numbers.

INT. BAR NONE - DAY

Sean and one of the girl tenders are behind the bar looking bored. It's midweek, late afternoon and there are only a handful of customers, all of whom have been served and don't seem to be in any rush to finish up and order more drinks.

On the shelf behind him, Sean's mobile phone starts buzzing. He picks it up and is about to cut it off when he sees that the caller is Trevor Kennedy.

SEAN

Yeah.

KENNEDY

Is that you Sean?

SEAN

Yeah.

KENNEDY

Good. Did you watch the show last night?

Sean is silent.

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

No? Shame about that, but sure you've got your reasons. Anyway, it went very well, very well indeed. Just thought I'd let you know we got a call while it was being aired, from a guy called Joe Morrow. Name mean anything to you?

SEAN

No.

KENNEDY

Well, Morrow claimed he was an officer in the RUC around the time your dad was killed. And he said he's got information that he thinks could be of great interest to you.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Morrow is lying in the bed this time, Sean seated in the armchair which has been positioned close by. Morrow's voice is thin and weak and he frequently puts the oxygen mask to his face to help him breath.

MORROW

I haven't got long - as you can see. It's in the lungs. And everywhere else from what they tell me.

SEAN

You asked to see me Mister Morrow, so here I am. What did you want to speak to me about?

MORROW

A few nights ago - I saw you on TV.

SEAN

Aye - you and a fair few thousand others as I understand.

MORROW

You were speaking about something that happened. Nearly twenty years ago.

SEAN

If that's all you've asked me here for -

Sean makes to leave.

MORROW

No, no - wait. Wait and hear me out. There's something I want to tell you.

Sean sits again.

SEAN

Okay, okay - you got me. I'm all ears.

Morrow breaks into a violent coughing spasm and Sean waits, watching him while he recovers.

MORROW

I remember the particular case. The one in which your father was killed. I was on the team helping the lads out in the country. They were a bit stretched.

SEAN

(Shocked)

Oh?

MORROW

The man you described, on the TV, brought it all back.

Beat.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Dressed in black, you say?

SEAN

Aye. From top to toe.

MORROW

And he was fast. Quick in and out.

SEAN

From what I remember, yes.

MORROW

There's only one operative who worked like that. Never strayed outside Belfast before that, as far as we knew, so it was a bit unusual.

SEAN

Operative?

MORROW

Active member of a paramilitary organisation, in this case the Ulster Freedom Fighters.

(MORE)

MORROW (CONT'D)

You probably wouldn't even remember that particular group.

SEAN

Heard of it. Not nice people. Bunch of Proddie murdering bastards, so they were.

MORROW

(With sudden
unexpected strength
in his voice)

Don't be too quick to judge them Mister McBride! Members of the Provisional IRA weren't exactly nice to some sections of the community in Belfast in those days, I can assure you.

This outburst brings on another coughing fit.

SEAN

So what about this "operative" - tell me more.

MORROW

Went by the name of Johnston as I remember. Billy Johnston. Johnston's trademark MO was to dress entirely in black, just as you described him. Worked as a butcher. I mean, that was his day job. Ran a nice wee shop on the Shankhill.

(Chuckles)

Famous for its home produced beef sausages, as I recall. Got them a few times myself when I was round that way. Delicious.

SEAN

Why are you telling me all this Mister Morrow? What d'you want?

MORROW

There's nothing I want from you Mister McBride! I've not got long on this earth. There's nothing you can give me.

SEAN

So what's it all about?

MORROW

Listen - listen carefully. Johnston was known to us in the early Nineties. Well before that, too. Had a reputation for being the top hit man for the Loyalist paramilitaries in his younger days. A highly professional operator, give him that. We knew he was working for the UFF at that particular time.

SEAN

(Horrificed)

You knew! But you did nothing about it?

MORROW

That's right, we did nothing.

There is a pause while Sean digests this information.

SEAN

(Softly)

Holy Mother of Jesus . . . how the fuck could you let a murderer go free?

MORROW

You wouldn't understand.

SEAN

Try me.

MORROW

You need to appreciate what it was like at the time, during the Troubles here. Things were not normal. We were not normal people.

SEAN

Is that your excuse?

MORROW

It's no excuse, and I'm not trying to make excuses.

(MORE)

MORROW (CONT'D)

Let's just say there were certain elements in the force at that particular time. Powerful, persuasive elements. Emotions ran high. Sympathies were deep-rooted.

SEAN

And you've said nothing about it in all that time for fuck's sake!

MORROW

It's not something I'm proud of Mister McBride, believe me. That's why I've asked you here. To tell you what I know, face to face. To get it off my chest, if you like. A sort of deathbed confessional - hope you'll excuse the reference to confessional, if you get my drift.

SEAN

Well you're just about twenty years too late for me.

MORROW

There's certain things I want to settle before I go. Things have happened during my life, some things I'm none too proud of. I want to put things right. I want to make my peace with my own conscience -

SEAN

And where is he now, yer man Johnston?

MORROW

Ah now, 'fraid to say that's something I can't help you with son. Suppose you could try up at his butcher's shop on the Shankhill Road. Corner of Tennant Street, so it was. Named Logans, as I remember. Hey, here's a thing - should be quite safe now for one of your kind to walk up the Shankhill. How about that? Who'd have thought that now? How times have changed, how they've changed . . .

Sean's face filled with hatred.

EXT. SHANKHILL ROAD, BELFAST - DAY

Sean is frantically walking up and down a short stretch of the street like a man possessed. He keeps looking up at buildings and, occasionally, Loyalist partisan signs, the sight of which cause him to become more agitated.

Passers-by do just that: pass him by. Sean makes several attempts to approach some people but they give him a wide berth and he ends up talking to thin air.

SEAN

Logans. Logans butchers. D'you know where it is? D'you know anything about it? Eh? I'm looking for Logans the butchers. Can you help me? There should be a shop here called Logans. Anyone know Logans? Can anyone help me - PLEASE!

This continues for a minute or so before Sean is eventually approached by an elderly woman with a shopping bag. The woman is Mrs McMasters, nearly twenty years older.

MRS MCMASTERS

Ach, it's a great shame it's gone, so it is.

SEAN

What?

MRS MCMASTERS

Logans.

SEAN

You remember it?

MRS MCMASTERS

Course I do. It was right there, over there on that corner.

Sean looks across the junction and sees what is now a charity shop.

Sold the best beef sausages in north Belfast. And the silverside was to die for. Cut like butter, so it did.

SEAN

You remember Logans - when did it close?

MRS MCMASTERS

Oh, must be ten or eleven ago years now, maybe more. And I do miss not having Logans. Supermarket meat just isn't the same, and my Davie is always saying it's such a shame the small shops -

SEAN

What happened to the guy who ran Logans? Billy Johnston you called him.

MRS MCMASTERS

Aye, Billy Johnston, that was his name. That's taken me back a bit.

SEAN

Where'd he go? When the shop closed?

MRS MCMASTERS

Now, you've got me there young man. It was just after his wife passed on. Real tragedy that. Only in her forties. Lovely girl. Billy was heart-broken, devastated. Left to bring up their wee girl Caron all by himself. Then they just suddenly disappeared, him and the child, and the shop was shut permanent. There was talk that they'd gone to live in England, but it could have just been rumour, I don't know.

SEAN

Is there anyone who'd know, someone I could ask? Did Johnston have any friends round here?

MRS MCMASTERS

None that I know of. Billy was the type of person who kept himself very much to himself. Bit of a mystery man if you ask me.

(MORE)

MRS MCMASTERS (CONT'D)

Mind you, if there's anyone who'd know anything about Billy . . . no, perhaps not.

SEAN

Who? Who is it?

MRS MCMASTERS

I was just thinking, from what I remember, Billy seemed close with one person . . .

SEAN

Who?

MRS MCMASTERS

Sammy Doyle. Sammy was very well known round here, ask anyone. Nothing was too much trouble for Sammy. If you had a problem of any kind Sammy was the one to go to. He could fix anything - housing executive, health board, you name it. Sammy would sometimes ring Billy at the shop while I was there, so I knew they were in touch. Came as a great shock when Sammy was put away, so it did.

SEAN

Put away?

MRS MCMASTERS

Aye, jailed for armed robbery. Who'd've thought that now? Sammy Doyle - armed robbery. Of all people . . . Sammy wouldn't have hurt a fly. There's no justice in the world, I tell you, no justice.

INT. SEAN'S FLAT - DAY

Sean is on the phone.

SEAN

Trevor? Is that you?

KENNEDY

Hello Sean - what can I do for you?

SEAN

Does the name Sammy Doyle mean anything to you?

KENNEDY

From where?

SEAN

North Belfast. Shankhill. Sent away for armed robbery.

KENNEDY

Oh, that Sammy Doyle. He was thought to be a big noise in the UFF during the Troubles. Quartermaster, or whatever titles they gave themselves. Illegal organisation. Kept very much in the shadows. Ruthless lot as I recall.

SEAN

Where's Doyle now?

KENNEDY

Maghaberry last I heard, doing twenty years. Is there a reason you want to know?

SEAN

Sure, I'll tell you sometime. Meanwhile, how do I get to see Doyle?

KENNEDY

You need to book a visit. Give them a call. The number should be in the book.

EXT. MAGHABERRY PRISON - DAY

Sean arrives at the gates. Follow his progress visually through the prison as Kennedy speaks.

KENNEDY (V.O.)

The form is you get there no less than thirty minutes before the time you've booked for the visit. They'll have given you a reference number which you need to show to the guard on the gate. You'll also need some sort of ID, passport or driving licence, something like that. Once inside the prison itself you'll be taken into a room for a rub-down search. That's to make sure you're not carrying a Kalachnikov or a mortar bomb or something. Then a sniffer dog will stick its snout into places you'd rather keep private, checking for drugs. Once all that's clear you can go through into the visiting hall. It's a big barn of a place and on some days it can get very busy. Tell the guard on the door who you've come to see and he'll sit you down at a table. Then it's a matter of waiting to see if your man wants to see you or not. It's his choice.

INT. MAGHABERRY PRISON VISITING HALL - DAY

At this point, SAMMY DOYLE, is brought into the visiting hall.

KENNEDY (V.O.)

If you're in luck, they'll bring him in and sit him down opposite you. Then you've got about an hour before it's chucking out time.

Sean and Doyle face each other across the table, one sizing the other up.

SEAN

It's good of you to see me, Mister Doyle.

DOYLE

Don't flatter yourself - I wasn't doing anything else today.

(MORE)

DOYLE (CONT'D)

Thought it might be interesting to meet the TV star in person.

SEAN

You saw that?

DOYLE

Sure I did. A most moving performance if I may say Mister McBride. Impressive. Question is, why are you here? I'm curious. What is it you want from me?

SEAN

Information.

DOYLE

(Nods, sagely)

They say it's money that makes the world go round, but I'm not too sure about that. Seems to me that what everyone really wants is information. Of course, even information comes at a price.

SEAN

And that would be?

DOYLE

Depends what you want to know.

SEAN

The whereabouts of Billy Johnston.

DOYLE

Billy Johnston. Now there's a name to conjure with. I haven't heard his name mentioned in - what, must be ten years, maybe more.

SEAN

Thought you two were best buddies. Soul mates.

DOYLE

So we were, once. But, well, Billy and I had a wee difference of opinion, a disagreement. A slight falling-out as you might say.

SEAN

Over?

DOYLE

Let's just say, he's the reason I'm
here now rotting away in this
stinking place.

There is a silence. Sean waits for Doyle to break it, which
he does.

DOYLE (CONT'D)

When I saw you on TV and you talked
about the big man in black I wondered
if you'd eventually find your way
here.

SEAN

It didn't take much.

DOYLE

Perhaps not. There's many about who
prefer to see me locked up, out of
harm's way, I can tell you.

SEAN

So do you know where he is, or don't
you?

DOYLE

Oh, I know all right. Rest assured
about that. I know. Question is, do
I tell you so you know? More to the
point, what's in it for me?

SEAN

I've no money.

DOYLE

I don't want money.

SEAN

Then what?

DOYLE

I suspect you're a man on a mission
Mister McBride.

SEAN

Go on . . .

DOYLE

I think you've got something in mind.
Something that could be to both our
benefits.

SEAN

And that would be?

DOYLE

Do I need to spell it out?

SEAN

(Leans closer to
Doyle across the
table)

If necessary.

DOYLE

(Low voice)

You want to get even, Mister McBride.
You want your revenge. For your da's
murder. Isn't that so?

SEAN

Could be.

Doyle snorts with disdain.

DOYLE

(Grinning)

Could be . . .

SEAN

What's the deal?

DOYLE

Simple. I tell you exactly where you
can find Johnston - and you save me a
great deal of trouble. I think we
both want the same thing, Mister
McBride. Problem is, I'm stuck in
here for the next few years, and I'm
not a man who likes waiting. You, on
the other hand, can do it quick and
clean. And I don't have to lift a
finger.

(MORE)

DOYLE (CONT'D)

This is not a place I have any desire to rush back to in the twilight of my years, I can assure you.

Pause.

DOYLE (CONT'D)

Is it on?

SEAN

Aye - tell me.

DOYLE

Good. Blackpool. Johnston went to live in Blackpool. Bought a wee guest house on the proceeds of a project we were involved in.

SEAN

What sort of project?

DOYLE

Ah - that's for me to know, Mister McBride. Suffice to say it was after the so-called peace, when the killings were supposed to have stopped. So people like Johnston turned their talents to other - much more financially rewarding - purposes.

SEAN

And Blackpool?

DOYLE

The guest house was a dream he and his wife had had for years. Told me about it often enough, he did. Trouble was, she got ill with cancer and died. But Johnston went ahead anyway.

SEAN

What's it called, this guest house?

DOYLE

The Ravenhill Hotel. Nice name, eh?
You'll not have much difficulty
finding it. Just off the Promenade,
as I understand.

EXT. CHURCH GRAVEYARD - DAY

Sean kneeling at his father's grave.

SEAN

I'm going away tomorrow Da'. Just
for a few days. To England.
Surprised, eh? Bet you are. England
of all places. Now why am I going to
that God-forsaken place, you might
ask? Well, I've found him Da'. At
long last I've found out where he is.
Oh it's not been easy, of course.
The peace has changed things, though.
Made people less afraid to talk. I'm
not the only one looking to settle an
old score, I can tell you. Just had
to put a few feelers out. Make a few
discreet enquiries here and there.
But I've found the bastard. I know
where he is now - and I'm going to
pay him a wee visit. There's
unfinished business between us. And
when it's done, you'll be able to
rest easy. Just like I promised you
Da', all those years ago . . .

INT. ULSTERBUS COACH - DAY

The coach comes to a stop at its stand in Blackpool Bus
Station. Passengers start filing out.

Sean unfolds himself awkwardly from the cramped seat and
reaches for his Adidas bag on the overhead luggage rack. He
steps politely aside to let an elderly couple pass by.

Moving down the aisle, his path is blocked by two pretty
GIRLS already dressed for the seaside in brightly-coloured
shorts and skimpy tops. They are fussing over their various
bags and belongings.

GIRL #1

Hi there again! Here already. Can't believe it. Mind you, slept most of the way since the services, didn't I Trace?

GIRL #2

(To Sean) Here on holiday then?

Sean says nothing, pretends to check the zip on his bag.

GIRL #2 (CONT'D)

By yourself are you?

GIRL #1

Hey - maybe we can get together for a few bevvies one night? Where are you staying?

GIRL #2

Yeah, we could have a good time. I mean, it's no fun being in Blackpool on your own, is it?

Sean pushes through them and walks quickly towards the door of the coach.

GIRL #1

Well, of all the cheek!

GIRL #2

Said there was something wrong with that feller when we stopped at the services, didn't I Jess? Real weirdo. Wired up. Gives me the creeps, so he does.

GIRL #1

Mmmnn . . . quite dishy though.

EXT. BLACKPOOL PROMENADE - DAY

Sean is walking with his Adidas bag along Blackpool Promenade. An unusually warm late October has drawn the crowds of day-trippers and families with children on school half-term holiday, all keen to make the most of the good weather before the onset of winter.

It is the traditional mix of candy floss, big-bellied blokes showing off their tattoos, giggling girls in sloppy T-shirts with saucy logos and fluffy pom-poms in their hair, Bingo parlours, burger bars and fortune-tellers.

EXT. BLACKPOOL STREET - DAY

Sean is behind the Promenade now, negotiating the web of streets lined with small hotels.

As he turns a corner, he stops suddenly. He has found what he is looking for, and it is facing him right across the road.

We see the Ravenhill Hotel, a typical Blackpool guest house which has clearly seen better days. A sign saying NO VACANCIES hangs in the front window.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Sean pings an old-fashioned brass bell on the reception desk. Men's laughter can be heard coming from the front-room bar.

Sean goes to the doorway of the bar and peers inside. He sees a group of three or four men standing with drinks, all in good spirits.

They surround a man seated on a stool who appears to be the centre of attention, a big guy with a loud Ulster accent. He is Billy Johnston now aged late fifties, thin grey hair and considerably overweight with a blotchy boozier's face.

As Sean stands in the doorway Johnston swivels slowly round to face Sean and their eyes meet. Sean's face breaking into a sweat, his body visibly shaking, clearly terrified by the sight of the man.

Johnston reluctantly lifts his backside off the bar stool and ambles into the hallway.

JOHNSTON

What?

SEAN

(Stammering badly
throughout the
exchange with
Johnston)

D'you have a room for a few nights by
any chance?

JOHNSTON

Didn't you see the sign, Paddy?

SEAN

Does that mean you're full?

JOHNSTON

(Smirking)

No - I feel like closing earlier than
the other hotels round here. What it
means is that I don't want any more
guests for the time being.

SEAN

I need a room.

JOHNSTON

There's plenty of places round here
you can go.

SEAN

I can pay whatever you want. Cash.

JOHNSTON

How long?

SEAN

Four or five days. Week at most.

JOHNSTON

Why?

SEAN

Why . . . ?

JOHNSTON

Why are you here? Now. So late in
the season On your own.

Pause. Johnston eyes Sean suspiciously. Sean eventually
recovers himself.

SEAN

I manage a band back home. Nothing great, like, but we want to do an English tour. I'm over to check out gigs in Blackpool and other places around here. Liverpool. Manchester. Places like that. See how we go down and then - who knows? - it's off to the bright lights of London. Fame and fortune.

There is a pause while Johnston weighs this up.

JOHNSTON

What the hell. I've no singles though. It'll have to be a double.

SEAN

Fine by me.

JOHNSTON

Forty-five a night with breakfast. Your own sink but no TV. Three nights in advance, cash. Take it or leave it.

Sean hands over some notes to Johnston who squeezes behind the desk and rummages in a cash tin for change. He slides across a large book bound in red plastic.

JOHNSTON (CONT'D)

Register.

Sean signs. Johnston examines the entry carefully.

JOHNSTON (CONT'D)

John Maguire . . . Twelve Old Street, Armagh. Come on, I'll show you the room.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - DAY

Sean follows Johnston two floors up a narrow flight of stairs. They reach the bedroom which is sparsely and cheaply furnished.

JOHNSTON

Okay?

SEAN

No problem.

JOHNSTON

There's a bathroom down the corridor. You're the only one on this floor so you can count yourself lucky to get a bathroom all to yourself. Nice and private. Okay?

SEAN

Sure.

JOHNSTON

Breakfast is from seven-thirty to nine. Not a minute after. The bar opens and closes when I feel like it. The front door is bolted at twelve every night and there's no guarantee you'll get in after then so you're advised not to go clubbing it 'til all hours. Here's the room key.

(With raw sarcasm)

I trust you'll enjoy your stay here at the Ravenhill, Mr Maguire.

Johnston leaves. Sean opens his Adidas bag and unpacks the few clothes he's brought with him. He reaches back into the bag and pulls out a heavy object wrapped in a blue checked dish cloth which is tied round with string like a parcel. He moves around the room, trying several hiding places for it, before giving up and walking out.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

The door opens and Sean comes in. The basin has a jagged black crack in it and there are tide marks round the bath. The back panel is secured with four screws.

Using the stubby blade of his pocket knife Sean carefully turns each of the screws. Three of them come out easily but the fourth is tight and he has to use some effort. Eventually it comes free and he's able to lift the panel aside.

Working quickly, Sean places the parcel in the space under the curvature of the bath and replaces the panel and the screws. Satisfied with his work, he goes out.

INT. BLACKPOOL CLUB - NIGHT

Sean is standing at the bar of a crowded nightclub. There is the crashing sound of music and a stage area is suddenly bathed in light.

Local comic MAX BAKER staggers out and into the audience. He falls about for a minute or so, fooling with the old-fashioned stick microphone and then launches into his act.

BAKER

Hey, hey. There was this dead tight bloke that came into money - found a fiver stuck down the back of his couch at home. Know 'im? Know 'im do yer? Well, he really needs to have sex - go on, you know the feeling, don't yer - so he goes to the local brothel and tells the madam: give me your best whore! She yells upstairs: Harry, grease up Sally, and says, that'll be fifty quid. The man says, I don't have that much. The madam says, okay then, Harry, grease up Monica. That'll be thirty quid. The bloke says, oh I don't have that much. The madam says, all right, Harry grease up Katrina, that'll be twenty. The guy says, I don't have that much. So finally, finally, the madam says, well how much do you have? He says, a fiver. So the madam yells upstairs: Harry grease up!

There is a sprinkling of embarrassed laughter.

BAKER (CONT'D)

Okay then, okay. Anyone Irish? Anyone in tonight from the Emerald Oil?

Sean leans back on the bar nursing his pint of beer and says nothing. If there are others in the club they are also keeping quiet because no hands are raised.

BAKER (CONT'D)

No? Bejesus, thank the Lord for that.

(MORE)

BAKER (CONT'D)

They're all over in Liverpool tonight. They are. They are you know. To be sure, to be sure, to be sure. There's signs in every pub there saying Free Beer Tomorrow! That reminds me, did you hear about Muldoon the farmer who lived alone with a pet dog he doted on?

Sean's face, reacts.

BAKER (CONT'D)

Well, the dog finally died, and Muldoon went to the parish priest and said, Father the dog is dead, could you bury him in the parish cemetery? Father Patrick replied, No we cannot have services for an animal here, but there's a Lutheran church down the road and maybe they'll do something for the poor creature. Muldoon says, I'll go right now. Do you think ten thousand is enough to donate for the service? Quick as a flash, Father Patrick says, Good Lord Muldoon, why didn't you tell me the dog was a Catholic?

Sean's face flushed with anger. He puts his beer glass down on the bar and leaves the club.

INT. HOTEL DINING ROOM - DAY

The Dining Room is in the basement which could once have been servants' quarters or the kitchens a century ago, when the hotel was in its better days as the home of a well-to-do family.

There are about a dozen tables arranged in lines up and down, each covered with a gingham cloth. Two of the tables are occupied by an elderly couple and a family with two children noisily eating their breakfasts. Sean comes in and stands watching them awkwardly for a moment or so, uncertain where to sit.

A door at the opposite end of the room swings open and a young girl comes in carrying a tray containing pots of tea and water, small milk jug, glasses of cordial and two racks of toast which she sets down on one of the occupied tables.

She is CARON, Billy Johnston's twenty-year-old daughter. She turns to go back into the kitchen but as she does so she notices Sean and approaches him.

Caron is dressed in short black skirt and a loose-fitting fine white blouse through which he can see the shape of her body and outline of her bra. A simple gold chain hangs from her neck. Her skin appears soft and semi-translucent, like fine bone china, made even more delicate by contrasting with the long, lush locks of raven-black hair which form a frame round her face.

The girl smiles at Sean and her face glows brilliantly with a warmth that seems to radiate from deep within herself.

CARON

Yes? Can I help you?

SEAN

Yes . . . I was wondering . . . I was wondering where it would be all right to sit.

CARON

Are you a resident?

SEAN

Yes. Booked in late yesterday afternoon. Room Eleven.

Sean holds up the key with its number engraved on a long strip of plastic. She smiles again.

CARON

Sorry, I didn't know. Anywhere you like. We're not exactly full at the moment, as you can see.

SEAN

Thanks.

He sits down at one of the empty tables.

CARON

What would you like?

SEAN

Just a breakfast please.

CARON

Full English?

SEAN

That'll be dead on.

CARON

Tea or coffee?

SEAN

I don't mind . . . whatever . . . it
doesn't matter. Erm, tea. Okay,
tea.

CARON

Brown or white?

SEAN

Sorry?

CARON

Toast. Brown or white?

SEAN

Oh. White please. If that's okay.

CARON

Won't be long.

Caron goes into the kitchen. A minute or so later she re-emerges with breakfasts for the elderly pair, puts the food in front of them and returns to the kitchen. Sean's eyes follow her and when the door swings open, from where he is sitting, he can see inside.

Johnston is doing the cooking. Every so often he reaches up to a shelf and takes a swig from a bottle of beer. The relationship between Johnston and Caron is obviously strained.

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Having finished his breakfast Sean is standing outside the hotel taking the last draw on a cigarette which he then discards into a grid.

As he turns to go back inside, Caron comes out, clearly in a hurry. They exchange quick smiles. At the end of the street she goes round a corner into the main road where a bus is loading up. She runs the rest of the way to the stop and is the last to board.

EXT. BLACKPOOL SEAFRONT - AFTERNOON

Caron and her boyfriend Gareth are walking slowly along the seaward side of the Promenade, their arms locked round each other, spending some time together before Caron is due back at the hotel to help her father with the evening meals.

GARETH

I don't know how you can possibly stand it. I mean, for one thing it's like slave labour having you work in there every day. He should be bloody thankful he's got you to depend on. And what with his boozing, it's really a wonder you keep living there. Have you ever thought about it?

CARON

What?

GARETH

Leaving.

CARON

I can't . . .

GARETH

For goodness sake, why not?

CARON

Just can't. You don't understand Gareth.

GARETH

I'm trying as hard as I can 'Ron, but
no-one in their right minds would
want to stay with someone like that.

They stroll on in silence to a shelter and sit down on the
bench.

GARETH (CONT'D)

I've already told you, you can come
and stay at ours. Even if it's only
for a short while. 'Til you get
yourself sorted out.

CARON

It wouldn't work . . .

GARETH

It would -

CARON

No, he'd only come after me. It
would be awful. He'd smash his way
through the front door if necessary.
He did that once before, when I was
little and we were still living in
Belfast. It was just after Mum died
and he was drinking really badly. I
ran away to my Aunt Jean's - she
wasn't my aunt really, but I called
her that - and she let me stay there
for a couple of days and then one
night he came round and stood outside
the house in the street and shouted
things and wouldn't go away. The
next night he came back and smashed
in through the front door and lifted
me out of bed and carried me back.
It was horrible . . . horrible.

GARETH

But surely it's different now.
You're over eighteen and -

CARON

No.

GARETH

Never?

CARON

Not just yet. You know that going to catering college and getting these qualifications means so much to me right now. It's my independence, Gareth, you've got to understand that.

GARETH

And then?

CARON

Then we'll see.

A wind whips up and she shivers. They get up to go.

CARON (CONT'D)

Come on. We'd better be moving. He'll be starting to wonder where I've got to.

Gareth embraces her and they kiss.

GARETH

I love you Caron, you know that. I love you very much.

CARON

I know . . .

INT. THE DINING ROOM - DAY

Sean is sitting in the dining room on his second morning. This time the only other guests are the elderly couple at their table. Caron approaches him.

CARON

Morning. What'll it be? Same again?

SEAN

Okay. But you can leave off the mushrooms this time.

CARON

Tea?

SEAN

Aye.

CARON
And white toast?

SEAN
White. Yes.

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

Caron comes in through the swing door. Johnston is at the stove, frying eggs.

CARON
English for Table Four. No
mushrooms.

She places two slices of white bread in the toaster and fills a teapot with hot water from a geyser. Johnston continues to cook throughout the scene.

JOHNSTON
Table Four. That the Irish feller?

CARON
Uh-huh.

Johnston reaches for his beer bottle on a shelf near his head and takes a swig from it.

JOHNSTON
I don't like the look of him.

CARON
Do you have to do that?

JOHNSTON
Has he said much?

CARON
What?

JOHNSTON
Has he said much to you?

CARON
About what?

JOHNSTON

Has he talked to you? Said why he's here or anything?

CARON

Why he's here? Why shouldn't he be here?

JOHNSTON

I don't know . . . there's something about him I don't like.

CARON

Like what?

JOHNSTON

I'm not sure, there's just something odd, that's all. Can't quite put my finger on it.

CARON

You're crazy.

JOHNSTON

Don't say that! Don't talk to me like that!

There is a tense pause.

CARON

Is that for Twelve?

JOHNSTON

Aye, take it. Get out of here! Go on, get on with it!

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Sean is again standing outside the hotel. After a moment or so Caron comes out. He straightens up.

SEAN

Hello there.

CARON

Oh. Hello.

She is preoccupied, walks quickly way down the street. Sean follows her.

SEAN

Mind if I walk with you?

CARON

Depends where you're going.

SEAN

Just out for a wee walk. And you?

CARON

The seventy-four.

SEAN

Sorry?

CARON

The seventy-four bus. And I don't want to miss it.

SEAN

Oh. Where to?

CARON

My, you are the nosey one, aren't you?

SEAN

I was just wondering. Just curious.

CARON

If you must know, to catering college.

SEAN

Catering college? Where's that then?

CARON

The one in Empire Street.

SEAN

Empire Street.

They turn the corner. The bus is already at the stop.

CARON

Oh Jesus!

She breaks into a run, leaving Sean behind.

SEAN

Good luck then. See you later!

It's doubtful she's heard him. Sean watches her jump on the bus as it pulls away.

INT. SEAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sean is lying on his bed, deep in thought.

INT. THE BATHROOM - DAY

Sean is running his hand carefully over the panel he removed to hide the dish cloth parcel. He takes out his knife and gets to work on the screws.

The panel comes away and he reaches inside and pulls out the dish cloth parcel. He looks at it for a moment or so and then quickly replaces it.

The panel goes back, but the screws prove awkward again, and the knife slips, scoring the front of the panel. It doesn't quite fit snugly and he has to force it into place before the screws can be properly seated.

INT. THE HALLWAY - DAY

Sean is in the hallway, listening to voices coming from the bar. Johnston is maudlin in drink.

JOHNSTON

I tell you, I don't know what I'd do
without that wee girl of mine.
Caron's been a real rock for me over
all these years since her Ma passed
away, God rest her soul.

DRINKER

You're right there Billy.

JOHNSTON

I love her to the bones, so I do.
Nobody's going to take my Caron away
from me - nobody!

Sean moves away from the doorway towards the back of the house, where the private lounge is located, Johnston's and Caron's bedrooms, and their bathroom. He slips through the door marked PRIVATE.

INT. JOHNSTON'S LOUNGE - DAY

An ordinary room. Adequately but not overly-furnished. Clean and tidy, but lacking the female touch. Few ornaments, just three of four framed pictures on a sideboard.

Sean comes stealthily in and looks around. He picks up one of the photographs. It shows a much younger Johnston with his bride, an attractive dark-haired woman.

Another is of Johnston, the woman and a small girl, presumably their daughter. A third shows only Johnston and the girl who is older now. Caron is sitting on her father's shoulders, throwing her head back in laughter.

Sean goes through a door which leads into a small corridor, off which are three more doors. He opens one. Johnston's bedroom, stark and austere.

Another door. Caron's bedroom, typically teenage with posters, fluffy toys, dressing table littered with make-up, unmade bed, generally a mess.

He goes inside, to the bed, runs his hands gently over the sheet where Caron had lain, lowers his head to sniff her scent on the pillow.

INT. THE HALLWAY - DAY

Sean slips quickly past the open doorway.

INT. THE BAR - DAY

From Johnston's POV we see Sean leaving the hotel through the front door. Johnston intently watches Sean walk down the street.

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Sean is at the bus stop. The bus comes. He gets on.

INT. THE BUS - DAY

Various shots of Sean on the upper deck of the bus travelling through the town.

EXT. EMPIRE STREET - DAY

Sean is getting off the bus near a small park. Across the road is the Catering College. He looks at his watch and then walks to a bench where he sits down, and waits.

EXT. EMPIRE STREET - LATER

Groups of students, laughing and joking after their day's work, are beginning to file out of the college building. Sean quickly conceals himself behind a tree in the park.

After a few moments, he sees Caron coming out with a couple of girls. Sean is about to reveal himself when she suddenly breaks away from her friends and walks quickly to a man standing a little distance away. It is Gareth. He pecks her on the cheek and Sean watches them walk away together, arm-in-arm, chatting.

GARETH

Mum says it's all right.

CARON

What?

GARETH

I asked her if you could come and stay, like we said, the other day.

She breaks away from him, agitated.

CARON

You did what?

GARETH

I asked Mum if you could stay with us and she said okay. I thought it was what you wanted.

CARON

I didn't say that.

GARETH

You did - only there was something
stopping you.

CARON

What?

GARETH

You know - your Dad making a fuss.
Well that doesn't matter. We want
you to come and stay with us 'Ron.
We think you'll be better off.

CARON

So that's what you've decided? You
and your mother?

GARETH

No, not that. It's not like that.
We didn't decide anything. It's up
to you, of course.

CARON

Oh thanks very much. It's very
generous of you to allow me the
freedom to choose my own future
Gareth.

GARETH

Caron . . .

He moves forward, as if about to embrace her.

CARON

No! You're smothering me Gareth. I
don't like it. I don't like this
feeling of - of being boxed in. It's
bad enough at home, for fuck's sake!

INT. JOHNSTON'S LOUNGE - EVENING

Johnston is sleeping off his lunchtime's boozing. Caron
comes in and closes the door loudly, which rouses him.

JOHNSTON

Eh? Eh? What's that?

CARON
Nothing. It's me.

JOHNSTON
Oh, you. What time is it?

CARON
Just gone six.

JOHNSTON
Gone six! Have you started the tea yet?

CARON
No.

JOHNSTON
Where've you been then?

CARON
Where d'you think?

JOHNSTON
That college finishes at four, so it does. Don't think I'm stupid, wee girl.

The reference to 'wee girl' makes Caron wince.

JOHNSTON (CONT'D)
You should've been back by five. So where've you been since then?

CARON
For a walk. I just went for a walk.

JOHNSTON
A walk is it? Who with? Who did you go for a walk with?

CARON
No-one you know.

Johnston thinks about this for a moment.

JOHNSTON
You didn't see that Teague did you? Him that calls himself John Maguire.

CARON

Who?

JOHNSTON

Room Eleven. The young lad. The young fella with the long hair, like a girl. Says he's over here looking for places for his band to play. Some story, eh? Well I don't like the look of him. Not at all. John Maguire from Armagh. Calls himself John, not Sean. Mark my words, there's a stench of RC about him. And he's up to something. I've seen him. He creeps about the house. He's up to no good. There's Provie blood in there somewhere. As sure as eggs is eggs. I can smell it a mile off. Provie blood.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - DAY

Sean's face. Next morning. We pan back slowly and see that he's standing in the open doorway. The camera goes round behind him to reveal the whole room. It is empty. None of the tables are occupied. All is quiet. Suddenly, the swing door to the kitchen opens and Caron comes out. She is still dressed in her nightclothes.

CARON

Oh. It's you.

SEAN

Good morning.

CARON

Sorry, I didn't expect to see you.

SEAN

No?

CARON

I thought you'd left, yesterday afternoon. I must have been wrong about that.

SEAN

Yes. I'm still here. As you can see.

CARON

It's just that it's late in the season and Dad doesn't usually take any bookings much beyond the end of October, when the lights finish. That's the way he likes it.

SEAN

Everyone else?

CARON

All gone.

SEAN

So the hotel's empty?

CARON

Yes.

SEAN

Apart from me?

CARON

Yes.

SEAN

Well, who'd have thought that now.

CARON

Sorry, I should have thought . . . would you like some breakfast?

SEAN

I would. Please.

CARON

Usual?

SEAN

No mushrooms.

CARON

No, no mushrooms.

SEAN

Can I sit anywhere?

CARON

Of course. Please. I'll just get some clothes on. I'll be as quick as I can.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - DAY

Sean is seated at a table. Caron, dressed now, is busy placing cutlery, condiments, crockery etc. in front of him on the table.

CARON

Did you say brown?

SEAN

I didn't, but brown'll be fine.

CARON

And tea?

SEAN

Yes, tea.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - DAY

Caron emerges from the kitchen with a tray containing Sean's breakfast which she places on the table.

CARON

Sorry to keep you waiting.

SEAN

It's all right. No sweat. Where's your Da' today? Not in the kitchen?

CARON

Saturday's his morning off breakfasts. He likes to get a lie-in. He'll be around at eleven to open up the Bar as usual.

SEAN

And you?

CARON

Sorry?

SEAN

When's your day off?

CARON

There's no college today.

SEAN

That's not what I meant.

CARON

Here? The hotel? Well . . . as you can see, I'm not exactly run off my feet.

SEAN

No.

CARON

Enjoy your breakfast.

SEAN

So what do you do then? On a Saturday? When you're not run off your feet, of course.

CARON

Oh, I've plenty to keep me occupied, don't concern yourself about that?

SEAN

Would you show me around?

CARON

What?

SEAN

Show me the sights. You know, I've never been to Blackpool before. Heard a lot about it, of course. I'd like to have a look round. See for myself. Could you do that, do you think?

CARON

I don't know . . .

SEAN

Please.

CARON

Okay. Yes. I suppose I could spare a couple of hours to take you on a quick tour of the local attractions, if that's what you want.

SEAN

When?

CARON

Soon as you're ready.

SEAN

Dead on.

EXT. BLACKPOOL - DAY

A montage of scenes showing Sean and Caron enjoying themselves around the resort . . . on a tram, at the Pleasure Beach, walking down the Golden Mile, eating candy floss, at the top of the Tower, laughing together, plenty of friendly eye contact, slight touching every now and then, sometimes a little teasing between them.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Sean and Caron are sitting opposite each other in a typical seafront cafe, sipping from mugs of tea.

CARON

We left Belfast when I was nine. It wasn't long after Mummy died.

SEAN

I'm sorry. How did it happen?

CARON

Cancer. It was awful. Four months of sheer hell. It was then that Dad started drinking a lot. I thought he'd slow down when we came here, but it only got worse, if anything.

SEAN

What did he do, in Belfast?

CARON

He was a butcher.

SEAN

A butcher?

CARON

Yes. Ran a shop on Shankhill Road.
Logan's. It was quite famous in its
day. Heard of it?

Sean shakes his head.

CARON (CONT'D)

Well, after Mummy died the owners of
the shop were very good to him.

SEAN

Good? In what way, good?

CARON

Dad said it was them that put up the
money for him to buy the hotel.

SEAN

That certainly was good of them.

CARON

Yes. It's just such a shame he drank
so much. It could have been a little
gold mine, rather than the run-down
boarding house it really is. Dad
wants me to take it over, and let him
retire. That's why I go to catering
college. Well, that's the theory,
anyway.

SEAN

Don't you want to?

CARON

I'm not sure. I'm not sure what I
want to do. There's so much to see
in the world. I don't want to spend
the rest of my life tied to
Blackpool.

(MORE)

CARON (CONT'D)

Hotel work's hard, if you want to do it properly. Not play around with it, like my Dad does. He only does it for the beer money.

INT. SEAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Johnston is picking his way round the room, opening drawers, fingering belongings, trying to find any clues to why Sean is really there.

He looks under the bed, on top of and behind the wardrobe, he examines the edges of the carpet to see if they've been disturbed. As he does so, he mumbles to himself about Provie bastards and issues other such expletives.

INT. THE BATHROOM - DAY

Johnston is relieving himself. His eyes scour the room for anything that will give the game away. Eventually, he spots the panel at the end of the bath.

He bends down to take a closer look. There are fresh scratches and the screws have recently been tampered with.

INT. THE BATHROOM - DAY

Johnston has produced a screwdriver which he uses to carefully remove the screws one by one. With the correct tool, they turn easily.

He takes away the panel and puts his hand inside the gap under the curve of the bath. His hand touches something. He brings out the parcel and looks at it for a moment or so.

Then he picks it up and feels what's inside. His face, strained with tension. He only needs confirmation as to what it contains. The string comes away and he opens the dishcloth. His eyes stare down at what has been revealed.

The expression on his face is a mixture of shock, fascination and satisfaction. There, sitting in front of Johnston on the bathroom floor, is a small hand gun fitted with a silencer.

INT. THE CAFE - DAY

CARON

Anyway, enough about me, what about you?

SEAN

Oh there's nothing to tell.

CARON

Course there is. There must be.
What are you doing here, for a start?

SEAN

I told you.

CARON

No you didn't.

SEAN

I thought I did . . .

CARON

Well?

SEAN

Nothing much really. Just looking
for gig venues for the band I manage
back home.

CARON

But that's fascinating! What's it
called, the band?

SEAN

The Commitments.

CARON

No!

SEAN

No - only joking. Actually it's Five
Arrive. Pretty corny, eh?

CARON

You said it! Five players?

SEAN

Yeh. Singer. Two guitars, one bass.
Drums. Usual sort of set-up.

CARON

And where do they play?

SEAN

Mostly round Armagh. But we've done
a few tours, a couple of gigs in
Belfast and a biggish one in Derry.
Northern Ireland's a small place.
The lads want to branch out a bit,
get themselves known over here in
England, where it really matters.

CARON

Mmmmm . . . the singer, is that a
girl?

SEAN

How did you guess?

CARON

I don't know . . . call it female
intuition.

SEAN

You're right.

CARON

And is she your girlfriend?

SEAN

Now you've gone too far!

CARON

So? Is she?

SEAN

Not at all. So much for your
intuition. I don't have a girlfriend.

CARON

Shame. Good-looking bloke like you .
. .

Sean stretches out his arm across the table and touches her
hand very, very lightly. He fixes his eyes on hers.

SEAN

Not at the moment I don't, anyway.

Caron allows it to stay there for more than a fleeting moment, just long enough to allow a surge of electricity to pass between them, and then she pulls away.

CARON

We'd better be going. I'm meeting Gareth soon. We're going out tonight.

SEAN

Gareth? That your boyfriend?

CARON

Yes. At the moment.

INT. THE BATHROOM - DAY

Johnston is still staring at the gun.

JOHNSTON

So, John Maguire, or whatever you call yourself. That's your game is it then, son? Looks like it's going to have to be either me or you. Me - or you.

EXT. THE PROMENADE - DAY

Sean is standing on the Promenade alone, leaning on the railings, staring at the foamy sea below, waves crashing into the concrete tidal barrier, deep in thought.

INT. JOHNSTON'S LOUNGE - DAY

Sitting in his armchair, Johnston is also thinking hard. In front of him, on a coffee table, is an open bottle of whisky and a glass, from which he takes gulps of the neat spirit.

INT. SEAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Back in his room, Sean is packing his few belongings into the Adidas bag ready for a quick get-away after he's carried out the job he came for.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Heavy beat music. Strobing lights. Smoke and haze. Sean is standing at a bar overlooking the crowded dance floor, carefully watching the people coming into the club through the entrance beyond.

It is clear that he's looking out for someone. Unexpectedly, two girls in very short skirts approach him.

GIRL #1

Hi there - I know you don't I?

SEAN

Sorry?

GIRL #2

Yes, you're the bloke on the bus,
aren't you? From Belfast.

SEAN

Oh. Yes.

GIRL #1

Having a good time then?

SEAN

Sure.

GIRL #2

Fancy seeing you.

GIRL #1

Going to buy us a drink then?

GIRL #2

Mine's a rum and coke, thanks.

GIRL #1

Vodka and tonic, ta.

Sean turns to the bar, attracts the barman's attention and orders the drinks, trying as much as possible to keep the club's entrance in his sights.

GIRL #2

Great here, in'it?

GIRL #1

Yes, we've been every night. Best place in town, so they say. Thanks. Cheers.

GIRL #2

Cheers.

GIRL #1

Dance?

He pretends he hasn't heard her, keeping his vigil.

GIRL #1 (CONT'D)

Hey - didn't you hear?

SEAN

What?

GIRL #1

Dance. D'you want to dance?

At that moment, Sean looks across to the other side of the dance floor and sees what he's been watching for - Caron and Gareth pushing their way forward through the crowds.

SEAN

Sorry girls - got to go. Enjoy your drinks.

GIRL #2

Said there was something up with that guy first time I saw him.

Sean moves quickly away, leaving the girls somewhat perplexed and not a little disappointed. Caron and Gareth have navigated to an unoccupied table tucked away at the side of the club.

Sean makes his way towards them, but at the last moment diverts, as if intending to go to the toilets. His ploy works and Caron spots him.

CARON

There's someone I know! Just a minute.

She gets up and goes to intercept Sean.

CARON (CONT'D)

Hi Sean.

SEAN

Hello there. So you decided to come here after all.

CARON

Yes. Dad didn't seem to mind because the hotel's empty. Well, nearly empty! Come over here. Come and join us.

SEAN

Okay.

Caron leads him across to the table.

CARON

Gareth this is Sean. Sean this is Gareth.

The men warily exchange nods of greeting.

CARON (CONT'D)

Sean's staying at the hotel.

SEAN

Can I get youse guys any drinks?

GARETH

No, it's all right but . . .

SEAN

No, really. I'd like to.

CARON

Okay - large white wine please.

SEAN

And you?

GARETH
Pint of lager'll be fine.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

A series of scenes in quick succession.

Caron, Gareth and Sean chatting and drinking.

Caron dancing with Gareth.

Caron dancing with Sean.

The body language indicates restrained tension between Gareth and Sean.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Sean is bringing more drinks back to the table. It's their fourth round, and the effects of the alcohol are beginning to show on Caron.

SEAN
Sorry folks, you'll have to excuse me
for a wee minute.

CARON
Wee minute! That's funny. Wee
minute. Going to the loo for a wee.
Get it?

GARETH
(Sarcastic)
Yeah, I think we just about do.

Sean wanders off in the direction of the toilets.

CARON
What's the matter with you?

GARETH
I think it's time we split from here,
Caron.

CARON

No way! I'm having a really good time, for once. It's nice being with Sean. I like him.

GARETH

So I see . . .

CARON

Oh is that it? Bit jealous of the attention he's getting are you Gareth? Well you can sod off. I'm staying.

They sit in frosty silence for a while until Sean returns to the table.

CARON (CONT'D)

Hi Sean - Gareth says he's tired and wants to go home. But I want to stay. I said it's all right because we can go back to the hotel together.

(Pointedly)

I mean, it's where we both live, isn't it? You can see me back to the hotel, can't you Sean'

SEAN

Sure. That's fine with me.

Gareth stands, ready to square up to Sean

GARETH

Well it's not with me Paddy.

SEAN

Look . . . calm down mister, I don't want any trouble.

GARETH

Bugger off then. You've had your fun. I think it's time we parted company. Come on Caron.

Gareth takes Caron's arm roughly and tries to lead her away from the table.

CARON

No! Get off me! Leave me alone!

SEAN

There's your answer then Gareth.

Gareth lifts a bottle of beer from the table and points it towards Sean in a threatening manner. There is a stand-off. Gareth and Sean glare at each other, sizing-up the opposition. Eventually, Gareth flings the bottle to the ground where it smashes, and he storms off.

INT. JOHNSTON'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Johnston is sitting in his armchair dressed in his assassin's "uniform", entirely in black, including the Balaclava. Resting on his lap is a handgun with silencer fitted which he is stroking sensuously. On the table, a near-empty bottle of whisky.

EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT

Sean and Caron are walking back to the hotel. Caron is now clearly a little tipsy, and she skips along the street playfully, almost child-like.

CARON

The answer - to your - question -
Mister Sean - is that he doesn't - he
just doesn't - like me talking - to
anyone else.

SEAN

A bit possessive, eh?

CARON

Yep.

SEAN

Ah well, it doesn't do any harm to
remind him that you're you
occasionally, and he doesn't own you.

CARON

I know - and I did enjoy doing it. I
did really. And you were so shriv -
so shrivel - er, so shrivellous to
stand up for me like that.

They reach the hotel. Caron stops short when she sees it.
Her mood changes, suddenly quite sober.

CARON (CONT'D)
Oh dear. Back to the real world.

INT. THE BAR - NIGHT

The room is in darkness. At the doorway Caron switches on the lights and they both enter.

CARON
So, how about a nightcap?

SEAN
No, I don't think . . .

CARON
Go on - just a quickie. Ooops,
should I rephrase that? What'll it
be?

SEAN
All right then. I'll take a beer.

She passes him a bottle of Bud from behind the bar.

CARON
And for me . . . what should I have?
I know. A nice little brandy.

She pours herself the drink, then joins Sean on the other side of the bar where they hike themselves onto stools.

CARON (CONT'D)
Cheers.

SEAN
Cheers.

They sip the drinks.

CARON
You never did tell me.

SEAN
Tell you what?

CARON
Why you're here.

SEAN
I did.

CARON
No.

SEAN
Of course I did.

CARON
Oh that! I don't believe that for
one minute. Looking for venues. You
haven't been looking for gig venues.
Well, if you have, I don't know when
you've been doing it. Come on, Sean,
let's have the truth. Why?

There is a pause while Sean considers the enormous weight of
this question. When he replies, he does so quietly, with
some gravity.

SEAN
To kill your father.

Caron giggles.

CARON
Don't be daft.

SEAN
I'm serious.

CARON
Don't make me laugh. Why would you
want to do that?

SEAN
Because he murdered my Da.

Caron's expression gradually changes from amusement to
incredulity to growing horror.

CARON
You mean it, don't you?

SEAN

He's a murderer. I came here to execute him.

Caron gets from the stool and recoils away from Sean.

CARON

That can't be true - it isn't!

Sean moves towards her, but she backs further away, repulsed by him.

SEAN

Yes it is.

CARON

How can that be? How could it?

He puts his arms out to her.

CARON (CONT'D)

Get off me! Get away from me!

SEAN

No, no, listen to me. Just listen to me please. It was many years ago. We lived on a farm, near Newry. My mother and me and my little brother and sister. He burst into our home one night. He broke into our home in the dead of night and he shot dead my Da' dead in cold blood. In the bedroom while he slept. The fucking coward shot my Da' dead in his bed in front of my mother for fuck's sake!

CARON

But . . . why?

SEAN

That's the best of it. There was no reason. It was all a mistake. A case of mistaken identity. A tragic mistake, they said. Your Dad was an assassin in the UFF. The Ulster Freedom Fighters. A gang of Loyalist hoodlums and murderers.

CARON

No, that's not true. Dad was a butcher. On the Shankhill Road. I told you.

SEAN

That was just his day job. At night he went out killing. And he was good at it too, so they said. One of the very best.

Caron is sobbing quietly now.

SEAN (CONT'D)

But it's all right Caron. There's no need to worry.

She looks up at him, her face streaked with tears.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I'm not going to do it. I changed my mind.

CARON

You changed your mind? Just like that? But why . . . ?

SEAN

Because of you.

CARON

What?

SEAN

Because of you. When I planned all this, meticulously, down to the last detail, you were the only thing I hadn't bargained for, hadn't reckoned on.

CARON

What do you mean?

SEAN

I couldn't do it. I just couldn't do that to you. There was something about you when I first saw you that made my heart sing.

CARON

(Her voice is small
and soft, crushed by
the weight of the
words she finds
herself saying)

I know . . . I felt the same about
you, too.

They are close now and Sean suddenly kisses her, deeply and passionately, and runs his hands through her hair and down her face.

INT. SEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A dream-like sequence showing Sean and Caron naked on the bed making slow, beautiful love. They climax together, and then fall apart, exhausted.

INT. SEAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Caron is in the bed, asleep, cocooned in the sheets and blanket, Sean lying next to her. We see his face on the pillow by the moonlight filtering in through the thin curtains.

Sean swings gently from the bed and pulls on his clothes. He bends down to kiss Caron lightly on the cheek. She stirs, moans slightly, but it's in her half-sleep and she quickly snuggles down under the bedclothes again.

Sean picks up the Adidas bag he packed earlier and slips silently from the room.

EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT

Sean walks quickly away from the hotel.

INT. JOHNSTON'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Johnston suddenly leaps to his feet and leaves the room.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Once in the hallway he bounds up two flights stairs to the door of Sean's bedroom which he smashes open with his shoulder.

EXT. THE PROMENADE - NIGHT

Sean is on the rain-soaked Promenade, a wild wind sending breakers crashing over the railings, scattering water across the tarmac.

INT. SEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Johnston's POV from the open doorway. He sees the outline of someone lying in the bed, the figure entirely concealed by the sheets and blanket. Johnston raises his gun and releases two shots. The body in the bed contorts from the impact of the bullets.

He fires again, then walks forward into the room, pulls aside the blanket and sees the body of his naked daughter covered in blood.

EXT. THE BUS STATION - NIGHT

Sean has reached the Bus Station. At that hour of the night it is deserted, apart from a couple of drivers chatting, passing time. Sean approaches one of them, who points towards a bus.

INT. SEAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Johnston kneeling by the bed. Traumatized.

INT. THE BUS - NIGHT

Sean, his face emotionless, staring straight ahead, sitting on the back seat of a night coach which is taking him away from Blackpool, back to Belfast.

FADE TO BLACK