

THE BLACKSMITH

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TEASER/COLD OPENING

EXT. BALLINALEE VILLAGE - NIGHT

FROM A HEIGHT we see the village, faintly lit by the moon as the evening rolls steadily towards night. It's silent. It looks as though it's been abandoned. In the distance, the RUMBLING OF TRUCKS grows louder as they approach the village. Their headlights illuminate the village in-front of them.

CLOSER now on the village of Ballinalee, the trucks come into view. One after the other until 10 trucks filled with British enter the village. They take a right turn down the main street towards the Catholic Church.

WE SEE THIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF IRA men who lay hiding in wait, until the signal to attack is given.

The leading truck pulls up near a bridge in the village.

BRITISH COMMANDER (O.S.)  
(yelling)  
Dismount! If you see anyone, shoot the dirty ruffians. You'd be doing them a fucking favour.

Hidden out of sight and not far from the British trucks, SEAN MACEOIN monitors the situation. The men beside him look nervous, but are steady in their stances.

PHEEP! A WHISTLE blows and an eleventh British truck falls in line with the others.

PADDY CALLAGHAN  
Sean, feach (look) They are right in-front of us. We could take them all at once. Gathered like cattle on the way to be slaughtered.

Sean MacEoin assesses the situation.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Right, lads, go on. Into position.

The men scurry quietly into position. The British have now dismounted and stroll idly, monitoring the area.

As Sean MacEoin gives his order, the young IRA member SEAMUS CONWAY, hurries down to about centre-ways in the line of the trucks, taking up his position.

FROM A HEIGHT, we again see the village. It is still quiet, apart from the TRUCK ENGINES.

Seamus Conway opens his haversack and takes out two Mills No.4 Grenades. They are old in appearance, with a sort of rusted bronze colour.

Seamus Conway looks at Sean MacEoin and waits. We are still with them, hiding and watching the British from their perspective. Seamus Conway is visibly nervous as he tries to steady his breathing, sweat covering his face.

BRITISH COMMANDER  
(signalling to soldiers)  
You lot, head over to the  
crossroads and check it out.

The British soldiers oblige, and start making their way to the crossroads, towards where Sean MacEoin and his men are hiding in wait.

The British troops get closer to where Sean MacEoin lays. They get within 50 yards of their position when...

SEAN MACEOIN  
(yelling)  
Halt! Move no further!

The British soldiers come to a stop, shaken by the sudden command being yelled at them. Sean MacEoin slowly reaches for his whistle...

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Give us your unconditional  
surrender, immediately.

The British, unfortunately, do not oblige.

Sean MacEoin gives THREE BLASTS OF THE WHISTLE. PHEEP! PHEEP! PHEEP!

At the same time, Seamus Conway launches his grenades, one after the other into the centre of the halted trucks, EXPLODING and damaging some of them. With this signal, the rest of the IRA men open fire on the British soldiers.

All hell breaks lose as the British soldiers scramble for cover and return fire. Sean MacEoin and his men keep firing, ducking for cover intermittently. The British trucks cut their lights, making it incredibly difficult to see.

FROM A HEIGHT we see the village again. This time, muzzle flashes light up the village.

BACK ON THE GROUND the exchange of fire continues. Sean MacEoin's eyes fill with a sudden and very real fear.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
Take cover!

A British soldier takes control of a ferocious looking Maxim gun on the back of one of the trucks and opens fire. Bullets spray the village at a dizzying rate. Shortly after, another British soldier opens fire with a Lewis gun.

As the IRA men take cover, bullets ricochet over their heads, taking chunks of concrete out of walls and blowing holes in the ditches. They return fire as and when they get the opportunity.

The gun-fire continues mercilessly, gunning down some British soldiers by mistake in the attempt to hit anything.

After what seems like a life-time, the cracking, spitting, whizzing and spraying of bullets ceases.

PHEEP! Sean MacEoin BLOWS THE WHISTLE again.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
Cease fire! Cease fire!

BRITISH COMMANDER  
(yelling)  
Cease fire boys!

Sean MacEoin steps forward cautiously. He stands some distance from the British Commander.

SEAN MACEOIN  
I demand your surrender.

BRITISH COMMANDER  
What are your terms?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Unconditional.

BRITISH COMMANDER  
I don't think so.

There's a brief silence - both men considering what little options they have.

BRITISH COMMANDER (CONT'D)  
You won't get our unconditional  
surrender. So, what then?

Sean MacEoin stares the British commander dead in the eyes.

SEAN MACEOIN  
A fight to the finish.

Soldiers on both sides scramble to take position and, yet again, a gunfight breaks out.

END TEASER/COLD OPENING

CUT TO:

ACT I

EXT. LONGFORD COUNTRY-SIDE - BALLINALEE - DAY

The country-side is calm and serene. Green is the dominant colour as the trees and grass edge onto the narrow roads. Grass grows in the middle where horses and carts haven't touched.

Humans haven't influenced this part of the world, at least not with the same force as other places. Nature owns these parts.

EXT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - CONTINUOUS

There are horses tied up outside the small forge, where sparks can be seen flying through the windows. The large barn-like door to the right of the main entrance is open, revealing a group of men standing around talking.

We hear intermittent CLANGS of a hammer hitting iron.

INT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin's father, ANDREW MACEOIN is working away, while a couple of men chat.

MAN 1

The whole thing is a shocking mess.

MAN 2

And what would you suggest? Sure it's been the same way for years.

MAN 1

They're a bag of pricks.

ANDREW MACEOIN

Mind your language, for fuck sake.  
The young fella.

Andrew gestures towards a young SEAN MACEOIN (English version of his name is John).

SEAN MACEOIN

I don't mind.

MAN 1

Ah he's old enough.

Andrew shrugs it off. Sean MacEoin works away in the background, learning the family trade.

MAN 1 (CONT'D)

We need another like Gladstone. At least he was willing to give us Home Rule.

MAN 2

Ah would ya go away out of that ya feckless gobsheen ya. Why should we wait to be given the freedom, like a child being given permission for feck sake.

ANDREW MACEOIN

And the Land League carry on sure?

MAN 1

It got us what we wanted no?

ANDREW MACEOIN

But sure people were being killed and massacred by their own neighbours and all sorts. Ya wouldn't know your arse from your elbow and if ya did you'd probably be doing the killing!

MAN 2

That's the cost of it though isn't it? Like the Boer Wars. They only understand violence those fecking Brits.

MAN 1

(to a young Sean MacEoin)  
How about yourself then ha? Can't imagine a young fella like yourself is happy having them around?

As Sean MacEoin goes to respond, another man, HENRY WILSON, a fierce British loyalist, walks into the forge to do business. Andrew stands up to shake his hand. Andrew MacEoin COUGHS VIOLENTLY. No-one passes any heed, but Sean MacEoin notices.

ANDREW MACEOIN

Well Henry?  
(to the men)  
Henry lives up on the estate by the lake there.

Henry gives the men a nod to say hello. The men aren't too impressed.

ANDREW MACEOIN (CONT'D)

How can I help you?

HENRY WILSON

I have a gate that needs mending.  
There's a few rails gone missing  
off it.

ANDREW MACEOIN

Alright, no bother. Sure let me  
have a look at what materials I  
have here and I'll let ya know how  
long I need.

Andrew steps away and starts rooting through some scraps in the corner of the forge. The other two men turn their backs and talk to one-another.

Henry takes a step towards Sean MacEoin, who is a good few years younger than Henry.

HENRY WILSON

Your father was telling me that you  
have an interest in soldiering?

SEAN MACEOIN

I've heard a lot about it. Just  
from listening to people's stories.

HENRY WILSON

Good man. Maybe one day you'll be  
serving his majesty out on foreign  
fields.

The two men cast a condescending look towards Henry - they are clearly eaves-dropping.

SEAN MACEOIN

No sir. I'd rather fight for  
Ireland. For a free state.

A little shocked at the unexpected response, Henry looks towards Andrew to see if he is nearly ready. He shifts uncomfortably, before looking back at Sean MacEoin.

HENRY WILSON

Well, you're a good lad anyway.  
Working away.

Andrew MacEoin looks towards Sean MacEoin and smiles - he's proud of him.

EXT. PITCH - DAY

It's pouring rain. The field is marshy and muck is being thrown up by the men playing Gaelic football. They challenge each other for the ball, throwing shoulders and showing no mercy, despite it being a friendly game.

We focus on this match for a bit.

Sean MacEoin is in the thick of it. So too is Sean Connolly. TRACKING a few of the players, we're in the thick of it too, getting thrown around with them.

INT. MACEOIN'S HOME - NIGHT

Laying in bed, Andrew MacEoin is very unwell. His wife, CATHERINE, sits by the bed. Sean MacEoin cautiously opens the door, shielding the prying eyes of his younger siblings.

ANDREW MACEOIN

Come in John.

Sean MacEoin steps in and closes the door. He approaches the bed side. The room is dimly lit by an oil lamp.

SEAN MACEOIN

Jaysus Da.

ANDREW MACEOIN

It's finally caught up on me John.

(beat)

Listen, I need you to take care of the family and the forge.

Sean MacEoin nods.

SEAN MACEOIN

Of course.

ANDREW MACEOIN

There's a lot of shite going on at the moment, ya know yourself.

WE PAN closer to Andrew MacEoin, as he feverishly takes Sean MacEoin's hand.

ANDREW MACEOIN

The most important thing you can do in this life, is take care of your own. You're to take care of your own people. No matter what.

WE FOCUS on Sean MacEoin's face as his eyes fill with tears.

ANDREW MACEOIN (O.S.)

No matter what.

We remain focused on Sean MacEoin's face for a few beats

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

A grieving Catherine, followed by Sean MacEoin's siblings, PETER, JIMMY, LENA, MOLLY AND EILEEN walk behind the coffin which is being carried by Sean MacEoin, Sean Connolly, and two other men.

SOBBING and WAILING is heard as they place the coffin beside the grave.

PRIEST

Today, we celebrate the life of Andrew McKeon (English spelling of MacEoin), who has been taken from us far too soon.

SLOW PAN towards Sean MacEoin's face. There's a determination in his eyes. A switch has been flipped, he has to be the man now and take control. The SOBBING and WAILING continues in the background.

WE CONTINUE PANNING towards his face. The priest's words are slightly MUFFLED in the back-ground.

PRIEST (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Despite the tragic circumstances resulting in his death, Andrew will be remembered for his strength of character. His beliefs. His professionalism as a skilled blacksmith. He will be remembered through his children, who within, he planted his strong values.

We get closer and closer to Sean MacEoin's face until: BLACK.

PRIEST (V.O.)

Go dtuga Dia a anam. (May god grant his soul).

EXT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - NIGHT

ON SCREEN: 6 MONTHS LATER

The country-side is still apart from the occasional breeze rustling the trees.

INT. MACEOIN FORGE - CONTINUOUS

A now older Sean MacEoin works hard. His good friend, SEAN CONNOLLY, walks in.

SEAN CONNOLLY

How are ya finding it?

SEAN MACEOIN

Grand yeah.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Sorry again. It's an awful tragedy so it is.

SEAN MACEOIN

Tis. He was a fan of yours.

SEAN CONNOLLY

And who isn't, to be fair?

Sean MacEoin smirks.

SEAN MACEOIN

You're some man, ya know that?

SEAN CONNOLLY

Ah I do yeah.

Sean Connolly pulls a stool up beside Sean MacEoin.

SEAN MACEOIN

I've been thinking a lot about everything ya know. Like the state of the country. Home rule and all that. My Da talked about it a lot.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Have you thought much about the Volunteers?

SEAN MACEOIN

I have. But sure I've my brothers and sisters and the forge to mind.

SEAN CONNOLLY

You'll be still minding them. Plus as a volunteer you'll be working at something important for them too.

Sean MacEoin nods in agreement and ponders, staring at the floor. The flames from the fire still flickering in-front of him.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin's face as he lines up. AS WE PULL BACK we see the other volunteers. There must be more than twenty men, including Sean Connolly. BRIAN BRADY, an ex-British army reservist with deep wrinkles, leads the drills.

BRIAN BRADY

Ye are Irish Volunteers. Now I suppose there's no need to explain why ye are here, but in response to the shambolic Ulster Volunteer Force, we feel it necessary to organise militarily to defend our home.

Brian Brady walks up and down the line, monitoring the volunteers.

BRIAN BRADY (CONT'D)

Our country is occupied by an alien force. One that we do not want to be here and one we didn't ask to be here. Burning our homes, robbing our people and destroying our goods. Our job is to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to the whole people of Ireland. We will do so, at any cost and to our absolute best abilities, using whatever means necessary.

Sean MacEoin is listening intently. He looks determined, and the words of the leader are clearly sinking in and taking effect. He's having to grow up fast, not just at home.

EXT. BALLINALEE VILLAGE - DAY

Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly are making there way through the crowds. Something is going on as people are clamoring about, chatting.

Confused, Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly stand near a platform where a man stands.

SPEAKER

(yelling)

Everyone, listen!

The chattering continues.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

(yelling)

For feck sake, would ye shut up?!

The crowd falls silent gradually, leaving just one voice audible in the crowd...

MAN IN CROWD

Who's this bollocks?

SPEAKER

Britain is going to war in Europe.  
John Redmond has declared that it  
is the duty of the Irish Volunteers  
to take foreign service under a  
government which is not Irish.

The crowds start to chat again, anxiously, before falling  
silent.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

This of course, was announced  
without consenting the Irish  
people. We will not be forced to  
offer up the blood and lives of the  
sons of Irishmen and Irishwomen to  
the service of the British Empire.

The crowd chats again. Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly give  
each other a look.

SEAN MACEOIN

They can't be serious. I'm not  
fighting for his majesty.

SEAN CONNOLLY

I hope the rest feel the same way.

They turn their attention back to the speaker who is trying  
to, unsuccessfully, quieten the crowd who chat nervously.

EXT. FIELD - NEXT DAY

It's the day after the announcement of the First World War.  
The Volunteers are meeting to drill.

Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly are waiting patiently. Only 7  
more men turn up.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Is this it?

VOLUNTEER

I'm afraid so. Most of the fellas I  
know have taken up the call to  
fight in Europe.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Bastards. For feck sake. Who'll  
lead the drills?

They look to Sean MacEoin.

SEAN MACEOIN

Me? Sure would ya go away. I've  
enough to be doing ya bollocks.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Ah come on. You're the man for it.  
You flew through the training. Sure  
in no time you qualified as a  
Section Commander.

SEAN MACEOIN

(playfully)  
Second Lieutenant actually.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Go on. We need to keep this going.

Sean MacEoin ponders for a moment. Angst in his face, perhaps remembering the words of his father.

SEAN MACEOIN

Alright.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Good man!

SEAN MACEOIN

But the forge and the family come  
first okay?

SEAN CONNOLLY

Right.

SEAN MACEOIN

I mean that!

Sean MacEoin turns to the remaining Volunteers - all 7 of them, including SEAMUS CONWAY, SEAN DUFFY, PADDY CALLAGHAN, HUGH HOURICAN, NED TYNAN and M.F. REYNOLDS.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Okay, lads, let's run the drills.  
Carry on where we left off.

The Volunteers start marching.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Would you look at it. How many  
Volunteers have we left?

SEAN MACEOIN

Nine it is now. That's with you and  
me mind.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Why would ya want to fight in a  
fecking war with the Brits?

SEAN MACEOIN

Ya have me there. I suppose some  
couldn't resist Redmond's call.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
Will ya come for a few after?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Can't I'm afraid.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
Are you still going to those Gaelic League classes?

SEAN MACEOIN  
I am indeed yeah.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
Fair play. Though it'd take some fool to be wasting his time there every night!

Sean Connolly flashes a cheeky grin.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Sean, I'd listen but I just can't take you seriously with that advice coming from the biggest fool of them all!

SEAN CONNOLLY  
You're some man for one man!

Sean MacEoin pats Sean Connolly on the shoulder, CHUCKLES and walks away. He blends into his leadership role in a seamless fashion.

Sean Connolly CHUCKLES and follows.

INT. UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - DAY

It's what looks like a barracks, though it's not entirely clear as to where exactly it is. Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly stand to attention, in full Volunteer attire. JOHN CAWLEY of Granard, a top man in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, stands before them.

JOHN CAWLEY  
Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly.  
Through my words and my declaration, I do so invite ye both to become members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Ye shall not speak of this oath, but ye shall live by it and undertake any actions necessary to uphold the values and aims of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

(beat)

(MORE)

JOHN CAWLEY (CONT'D)  
 There's an imminent uprising  
 gentlemen, and ye are to be ready.

FADE TO:

BLACK SCREEN

The sound of artillery being fired and EXPLOSIONS can be heard. It's loud, it's persistent and it's unsettling. Following this, the sound of buildings collapsing can be heard.

People CRY - a horrible cry from the pits of a person's worst fears.

EXT. DUBLIN - DAY

Following the failed 1916 rising, Dublin lies in ruins. The streets are littered with debris. Buildings are collapsed, shells of what they once were. What is normally a bustling city lays deadly silent. Smoke still rises from fallen buildings.

EXT. KILMAINHAM GAOL - COURTYARD - EARLY MORNING

British soldiers line up opposite a wall. They are part of a firing squad. We hear the judge speaking over the scenes, as the executions are playing out before us.

JUDGE (V.O.)  
 Following the attempted rebellion  
 against the British Government,  
 throughout which many lives were  
 lost.

Two British soldiers escort three men in-front of the firing squad and step backwards.

JUDGE (V.O.)  
 In an act of deceit, they are  
 accused of plotting to overthrow  
 and seize control of the country  
 from his majesty.

The firing squad raise their guns and take position.

BRITISH OFFICER  
 Fire!

They fire their guns. All of them.

JUDGE (V.O.)  
 Patrick Pearse. Thomas MacDonagh.  
 Thomas Clarke.

The three bodies drop to the floor. Two British officers escort a further 4 men in-front of the firing squad.

BRITISH OFFICER

Fire!

They fire, and all 4 men drop to the ground.

JUDGE (V.O.)

Joseph Plunkett, William Pearse,  
Edward Daly, Michael O'Hanrahan.

We see more men being led in-front of the firing squad. One by one. Bags over their heads.

BRITISH OFFICER

Fire!

They drop to the floor.

JUDGE (V.O.)

John MacBride, Eamonn Ceannt,  
Michael Mailin, Sean Heuston, Con  
Colbert. Sean MacDiarmada.

Two British soldiers bring a man, hobbling, out in-front of the firing squad. They place him on a chair, given he is limping and cannot stand.

The firing squad take up position, ready to fire.

JUDGE (V.O.)

James Connolly.

BRITISH OFFICER

Ready!

JUDGE (V.O.)

For their actions against the  
British Government, we hereby  
sentence these men to death, by way  
of firing squad.

BRITISH OFFICER

Fire!

The firing squad open fire on the man in the chair, James Connolly. The body slumps in the chair. Smoke emits from the rifles of the firing squad. Silence ensues. The British soldiers stand to attention.

FADE TO:

INT. PUB - BALLINALEE - NIGHT

Lively Irish music plays amidst the chatter of people enjoying themselves, trying to continue living as they choose.

In the corner of the pub in a booth, sits Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly, along with the other Volunteers. Some have pulled up stools to the edge of the table.

SEAMUS CONWAY

Are we to be ready?

SEAN MACEOIN

We are. But we'll do nothing until told otherwise. We're mobilised but have to wait.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Was it not part of a larger plan though, won't we be needed for something?

SEAN MACEOIN

I'm sure we will at some stage. But we mustn't act out just yet. Our only orders are to be ready to be mobilised dya see.

(beat)

What happened to those men is disgraceful.

A couple of the Volunteers bless themselves.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Made the whole thing seem like a waste of time. It's getting worse now ya know. That kind of response is a sign things are elevating.

SEAN MACEOIN

You wouldn't be wrong.

Sean MacEoin takes a sip of his drink, to calm himself. He's passionate.

SEAN CONNOLLY

I hear the Tans have been burning villages and towns. Just for the sake of it.

VOLUNTEER 2

For feck sake.

SEAN MACEOIN

We're agreed then yeah? We'll do nothing until and if we get the orders.

The men nod in agreement and drink their drinks. The rest of the pub carries on, enjoying the music and chatting.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
Same time tomorrow then?

Sean MacEoin nods.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

The rain is coming down in this small, rural village. A group of Black and Tan soldiers are moving through, causing destruction. They, as they do, start forcefully removing residents from their homes before setting them alight.

An elderly resident resists as they pull him out of his house and violently shove him to the ground. Three Black and Tans start beating him with their rifles, mercilessly. The elderly man can't offer much resistance.

A younger man follows out of the house. Followed by, presumably, his wife.

MAN  
Hey! Would ye stop!?

One of the Black and Tans, without a shred of humanity, turns his rifle on this man.

MAN (CONT'D)  
Woah! Calm the fuck would ye?

WIFE  
Leave him alone!

BLACK AND TAN  
This your wife?

The man doesn't respond.

BLACK AND TAN (CONT'D)  
She's alright you know? For a paddy.

MAN  
Leave her alone.

BLACK AND TAN  
You don't get to talk to me like that!

The Black and Tan thrusts his gun closer to the man's face.

BLACK AND TAN (CONT'D)  
(to the wife)  
He should have more manners!

The Black and Tan kicks him to the ground so he is laying on his back. He LAUGHS.

BLACK AND TAN (CONT'D)

Pathetic.

Without a care in the world, he pulls the trigger at point blank range, killing the man. His wife SCREAMS.

HIGH LOOKING DOWN on the scene. The old man is still being beaten until another Black and Tan pulls out his revolver and shoots him in the head.

BACK ON THE GROUND NOW as the Black and Tans edge closer to the wife. She scrambles and runs into the house.

TRACKING HER as she runs up the stairs, the Black and Tan running after her. She SLAMS a door shut, which is promptly kicked in by the pursuing Black and Tan.

She SCREAMS as he bears down on her, pinning her down.

BLACK AND TAN (CONT'D)

Ssh, ssh. It's alright. It's been a hectic day hasn't it? I've been working really hard.

The wife SCREAMS again as the Black and Tan starts to undo his trousers and kiss her. We know what's going to happen next. She struggles for as long as possible before no longer being able to fight. She finally succumbs to this disgustingly vile act.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE on the wife's face. It's battered and bruised. She shivers, her eyes filled with tears.

The CRYING of unattended children can be heard.

WE PAN SLOWLY AWAY from her to reveal her house behind her, burnt and a shell of itself.

WE CONTINUE PANNING AWAY to see her husband laying dead, his head half blown off by the ruthless execution. His blood has run well into the street. The old man is also laying dead, as well as many others.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

WIDE on the field. There are significantly more volunteers now, lined up, waiting for the drills to begin.

Sean MacEoin walks down the line of men, beside him is Sean Connolly.

They continue to walk down the line of the Volunteers. Young men in their civilian clothes, flat-caps and all. They're eager, despite not knowing what they'll face.

INT. MACEOIN'S HOME - NIGHT

Sean MacEoin sits at the kitchen table. His younger brother, JIMMY MACEOIN and younger sisters, EILEEN MACEOIN and MOLLY MACEOIN are with him. His mother CATHERINE, tends to the stove.

CATHERINE

How's the drilling going John?

SEAN MACEOIN

It's grand yeah. We had a huge uptake of volunteers. Following the rising ya know?

CATHERINE

Terrible isn't it?

JIMMY

Are we safe?

Sean MacEoin CHUCKLES.

SEAN MACEOIN

We are Jimmy don't you worry.

JIMMY

How can ya be so sure?

SEAN MACEOIN

Ah I just have a feeling is all. Am I ever wrong?

Jimmy concedes, reluctantly.

JIMMY

I'd like to join ya.

Catherine shoots Sean MacEoin a look - "nip this in the bud!"

SEAN MACEOIN

There's no need. We'll be grand. Let us take care of it.

EILEEN

I'll join!

Sean MacEoin LAUGHS.

SEAN MACEOIN

Ya will not! You're the only one who stands a chance to get to college! Get your degree. Leave us ruffians to sort the rest.

The table falls silent for a moment.

CATHERINE

Have ya heard?

SEAN MACEOIN

I have. Sudden death. We're putting Joseph McGuinness forward to replace him.

CATHERINE

You're mad. He's in prison ya gobshite!

SEAN MACEOIN

When we get him elected they'll have to let him out sure.

CATHERINE

He's lucky he wasn't shot like them other fellas! And how on earth are you going to get him elected?

Sean MacEoin smiles again.

SEAN MACEOIN

Where there's a will, there's a way Mother. Don't you be worrying now. We will have Sinn Fein elected soon. And then it'll be Irish people, for Irish freedom. Mark my words!

EXT. LONGFORD TOWN - DAY

The town is bustling with people. It's alive and there's a sense of hope and optimism.

WHACK! CLOSE on a lamp-post as a picture of Joseph McGuinness is stapled on to it.

WE PULL BACK to see it's Sean MacEoin, busily making his way through the crowds, putting up posters. Never too far away, his good friend Sean Connolly accompanies him.

Sean MacEoin puts up another poster. A gentle voice comes from behind them.

ALICE COONEY

Excuse me?

Sean MacEoin turns around. There stands ALICE COONEY. Sean MacEoin stumbles on his words, ever so slightly.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Hello there.

Alice tucks a loose hair behind her ear. She smiles sheepishly.

ALICE COONEY  
I was going to ask who ye were voting for but...

Alice gestures towards the posters that Sean MacEoin had been putting up. Sean MacEoin CHUCKLES.

SEAN MACEOIN  
And yourself?

ALICE COONEY  
I'm all on board for McGuinness. Are you a Volunteer too then?

SEAN MACEOIN  
I am yes.

Sean MacEoin averts his eyes to Sean Connolly quickly. They are much more than just volunteers, after having been sworn into the secretive IRB at the end of 1914. They mustn't tell that, however.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
He actually leads the drills.

Sean Connolly nudges Sean MacEoin playfully.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Shut up will ya. Ya bollocks.

Alice LAUGHS. She can't stand still, and rocks her shoulders back and forth.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
So, eh, I don't suppose you'd fancy coming down for the results with me?

Alice smiles coyly.

ALICE COONEY  
That would be lovely, eh...

Alice realises that she hasn't even asked his name.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Sean. Sean MacEoin.

Alice puts out a hand. Sean shifts the posters in his and reaches out to shake her hand.

ALICE COONEY  
I'm Alice Cooney.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Hello, Alice. So we'll see you later then?

ALICE COONEY  
You will indeed.

They exchange smiles. Sean Connolly rolls his eyes playfully.

The crowds attention suddenly focuses as a truck arrives into the town.

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin has his eyes follow the truck. It's the arrival of Republican greats, COUNTESS MARKEVICH, EAMON DE VALERA and JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

They've heard stories about these people, who fought bravely in the 1916 rising that resulted in the executions of others. The crowds CHEER them.

Amongst the crowds, greeting and talking with people is MICHAEL COLLINS. Sean MacEoin catches a glimpse of him, while still tracking the Republican greats entering the town.

Breaking the moment of silence...

ALICE COONEY (CONT'D)  
Horrible wasn't it?

Sean MacEoin turns his attention back to Alice.

ALICE COONEY (CONT'D)  
...the executions in Dublin.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Disgraceful.

ALICE COONEY  
I don't think the Nationalist feeling has ever been stronger.

SEAN MACEOIN  
True. They certainly didn't help themselves anyway!

Alice smiles again.

ALICE COONEY  
Right, I best be off. Need to make sure the right man is voted for!

SEAN MACEOIN

Alright so! I'll see you later  
then.

Alice takes a few steps back, gives a wave and turns to walk off, into the crowd.

Sean MacEoin waves back, his smile beaming. Sean Connolly, leans in and breaks the moment.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Shall I pick your jaw up for ya  
there?

They both laugh.

SEAN MACEOIN

Ah shut up.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Leader of the drills ha? You're  
welcome.

SEAN MACEOIN

Are you trying to embarrass me?

They make their way through the crowds.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Ah no. You do a good enough job of  
that yourself!

EXT. LONGFORD TOWN - DAY

The following day, a great victory rally is being held in the town. People are in jubilant spirits.

Posters read: "Congratulations Joe McGuinness!" and "Sinn Fein in!"

People are hugging each other, change is in the air. Sean MacEoin and Alice share a hug, a moment of electricity between them as they awkwardly realise that they both feel something for each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY-ROAD - DAY

A heavy snow has fallen overnight, covering the road and surrounding fields in a beautiful scene. The landscape is insulated by the snow. The silence is blissful.

TRACKING Sean MacEoin who is walking with a horse. He turns a bend to be met by two PATROLLING BRITISH SOLDIERS.

They stand in-front of him and block the road. Sean MacEoin stops. The horse takes this moment to, ahem, go to the bathroom.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Ye startled him lads!

The patrolling British soldiers look at the horse in disgust.

PATROLLING BRITISH SOLDIER  
Where are you off to?

SEAN MACEOIN  
I'm going to MacEoin's forge. The horse needs shoes.

PATROLLING BRITISH SOLDIER  
What's your name?

SEAN MACEOIN  
J.J. Smith.

The patrolling British soldiers looks at him quizzically for a few moments. Finally, they step aside to let him pass.

Sean MacEoin, leading the horse, walks past them. They watch him closely, not completely buying his story.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Mind the shite there won't ya?  
Wouldn't want any more getting on  
your uniforms!

TRACKING Sean MacEoin from the front as he walks towards us. The patrolling British soldiers are still watching him. He can't quite believe he got away with it.

MID on the patrolling British soldiers.

PATROLLING BRITISH SOLDIER  
Keep an eye on him will ya?  
Something is -- off, about him.

CLOSE on the ground now, we see the distinct horse-shoe prints from the horse.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY-ROAD - DAY

Some time has passed and we are at the same country-road again. The same patrolling British soldiers are looking at the ground, confused., as they search for Sean MacEoin.

PATROLLING BRITISH SOLDIER  
There are two sets of horse-shoe  
prints going in the same direction.

PATROLLING BRITISH SOLDIER 2  
His go backwards...

PATROLLING BRITISH SOLDIER  
Fuck sake. We haven't got time to  
be solving bloody riddles!

FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD WE TRACK Sean MacEoin again. He's smiling to himself.

WE PAN DOWN to the horses shoes and see that they have been put on backwards!

INT. PUB - BALLINALEE - NIGHT

The pub is quiet. There are a couple of lone drinkers, and the bar man. The rain is hammering down outside.

The door opens and a man walks in, drenched from the rain.

CLOSE on the man. He removes his hat. It's MICHAEL COLLINS.

MICHAEL COLLINS  
You couldn't tell me where I'd find  
a Mr. MacEoin could ya?

An old man drinking in the corner turns to Michael Collins.

On his lapel, is a badge in the shape of a harp - a Fenian harp.

OLD MAN  
Come here now young gossan, you'd  
want to be careful asking questions  
like that around here.

The bar man continues cleaning and pretends to ignore the conversation. Michael Collins smiles. These are his people.

INT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - EVENING

Sean MacEoin sits in silence in his forge, working on some paperwork. It's dark, and the forge is dimly lit by a lantern. A sign that he is a keen worker, determined to do what he can to achieve his aims, both politically and at home.

A few moments pass, he flicks through some papers - presumably less exciting than the electioneering, but necessary all the same.

A shadow fills the door, prompting Sean MacEoin to look up from his paperwork.

Standing at the door, sure as ever, is MICHAEL COLLINS.

MICHAEL COLLINS

I'm told you're the man to speak to about getting organised in North Longford.

Michael Collins takes a step into the forge.

SEAN MACEOIN

Well, we seem organised enough, sure didn't we just win an election?

MICHAEL COLLINS

Ya did indeed, but that's not what I'm talking about boy. I'm talking about being organised for a fight. You're a grand leader, drilling those Volunteers.

Michael Collins pauses for a moment, to assess Sean MacEoin's reaction. Sean MacEoin doesn't flinch, his eyes fixated on Michael Collins, waiting for him to continue.

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

There's a fight coming, and don't let anyone tell you any different. The mood in this country has changed, you must have sensed that yourself.

Sean MacEoin puts his papers down on his desk and pushes his chair back.

SEAN MACEOIN

I have, and if it comes to it, my boys will be ready, but I have responsibilities here. I've a widowed Mother and siblings.

Sean MacEoin opens his arms, gesturing towards the forge that they are in.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

I've this forge. I'm sorry, but I do enough as it is.

Michael Collins takes a step closer to Sean MacEoin. His manner becoming a little more forceful, but not without his charm. He leans ever so closer to Sean MacEoin, his face becomes illuminated by the lantern.

MICHAEL COLLINS

You're not hearing me boy, these are orders. You must do it.

Sean MacEoin shoots Michael Collins a stern look.

SEAN MACEOIN

I must not. You'll have to be a better man than I before I agree to that.

Michael Collins grins and removes his coat.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Oh, ya see. But I am the better man!

(beat)

I'll fight ya!

Sean MacEoin shrugs - okay then - and rolls up his sleeves. The two men begin to wrestle. A metaphorical moment as these two, strong, young and ambitious men square off. The wrestling match is going MacEoin's way, as he succeeds in pinning Michael Collins. Not long after though, Michael Collins roars at the top of his voice directly into Sean MacEoin's ear.

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Ahhhh!

Startled by the this, Sean MacEoin losses his grip. A moment that Michael Collins takes full advantage of and pins Sean MacEoin to the ground.

SEAN MACEOIN

Alright, alright! Jaysus, get off, for feck sake.

Michael Collins gets up and they sit against a wall. They are exhausted. Their grins turn into smiles, and their smiles into LAUGHTER.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Jaysus, what are we like?

SEAN MACEOIN

There's something wrong with you!

They both LAUGH again.

MICHAEL COLLINS

So?

SEAN MACEOIN

So. I'm a man of my word if nothing else. What do ya want me to do?

MICHAEL COLLINS

I want North Longford to be organised into a battalion within the Longford Brigade. The time for talking is over.

(MORE)

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)  
It's time to fight for a free  
Ireland and I want you to lead the  
way out here.

Sean MacEoin nods in agreement. He ponders for a moment  
before responding with an affirmative.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Okay.

Sean MacEoin prompts Michael Collins to continue.

MICHAEL COLLINS  
I want you to command this  
battalion. Your pal, Sean  
Connolly, he'll be your Vice  
Commandant. Ye work well together,  
so I'm told.

SEAN MACEOIN  
That we do. I suppose I'll accept,  
given there's no other option. I'd  
rather ya didn't burst my other ear  
drum too!

They LAUGH and Michael Collins pats him on the shoulder.

MICHAEL COLLINS  
You need to get your men armed.  
That's of huge importance.

SEAN MACEOIN  
I'll chat to the lads tomorrow so.

MICHAEL COLLINS  
This is it boy. We're going to make  
Ireland free. Any means necessary.

They nod in agreement.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

INT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - DAY

THE CAMERA ROTATES AROUND THEM. Sean MacEoin sits at a table with Sean Connolly and the other members of his brigade, including NED TYNAN, TOMMY EARLEY and PADDY CALLAGHAN.

SEAN MACEOIN

We have orders from the big fella,  
we are to arm ourselves. We need to  
be ready to fight for our country.

NED TYNAN

How are we supposed to do that?  
We've only a .38 Revolver and a  
couple of shotguns.

SEAN MACEOIN

Ever the worrier Ned! You know when  
we've left a place, and the British  
would arrive soon after?

They nod.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Well, the arms are being kept in  
various locations, to be collected  
by the Brits.

SEAN CONNOLLY

So ya know a place?

SEAN MACEOIN

Ah, I do indeed. I know a few.

EXT. POLICE BARRACKS - EVENING

Sean Connolly and another Volunteer keep watch of the barracks.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)

Connolly, you'll keep watch on the  
barracks. Callaghan, you'll take up  
position at Hannigan's Bridge.  
Tynan and I will raid the shop.

EXT. BALLINALEE - FIELDS - EVENING

Sean MacEoin and NED TYNAN are making their way through some fields.

NED TYNAN  
What's the shop Sean?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Heraty's. They won't give them up willingly. Too afraid of what the Brits will do to them.

EXT. BALLINALEE - CONTINUOUS

TOMMY EARLEY is patrolling the town. He walks down the road and makes a turn down an old lane.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)  
Tommy, you'll patrol the town. You'll meet Ted and I down the old lane at the end of Heraty's at 9:45pm.

Sean MacEoin and Ned make it across the fields and meet Tommy as planned.

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin's hand - he is carrying the .38 Revolver.

SEAN MACEOIN  
What's the craic?

TOMMY EARLEY  
There are four policemen in Heraty's.

NED TYNAN  
Shite.

TOMMY EARLEY  
They're over the bar though. Don't look to be there for any business or anything. They have revolvers on them though.  
(beat)  
I've a message from Connolly too. He says he's withdrawn and that we should as well. He suspects treachery. Thinks there's a rat.

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin. He's thinking hard here. He can't give up now, not after having come so far.

He smirks and looks towards Ned.

SEAN MACEOIN

Sure feck it. Ned, are ya up for taking the chance raiding for the stuff?

Ned CHUCKLES, enthusiastic in his response.

NED TYNAN

Sure!

SEAN MACEOIN

Well, let's go then!

TRACKING Sean MacEoin and Ned as they make their way towards Heraty's.

As they approach the entrance, the policemen step out and walk in the opposite direction.

Barely a pause, Sean MacEoin and Ned rush into the shop and hold up the assistants. They wear two old satchels over their heads to hide their identities. The assistants raise their hands and don't resist, facing the wall with their own will. There's a strange moment of silence as nobody makes a sound. Almost as if they know what's happening, or if they are used to it.

From the back of the store, a man makes a dash for the door. Ned quickly steps in-front of him, stopping him dead in his tracks.

Spotting the ammunition, Sean MacEoin makes his way over and stashes it in a bag.

The owner, MR. HERATY, looks around the room frantically. The foreman, Volunteer O'KEEFE, notices that he looks a bit twitchy. He leans closer to Mr. Heraty.

O'KEEFE

They're our lads. Don't worry.

Mr. Heraty looks confused, but calms himself down. If O'Keefe is calm, he shall be so too.

SEAN MACEOIN

Let's go. Right, everyone, ye shall not stir for fifteen minutes, do ya understand?

Sean MacEoin scans the room for some kind of acknowledgment. Nothing.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Are we clear?

Mr. Heraty looks at O'Keefe who is nodding in agreement with Sean MacEoin. Mr. Heraty follows suit, nodding in agreement.

Sean MacEoin and Ned leave Heraty's with the ammunition. The room stays quiet for a moment. The people are in a bit of shock.

MR. HERATY

What in the shite was that?

The room relaxes a bit.

O'KEEFE

They were our lads. Look, I can't report this tonight. There are too many here that'll be interrogated.

O'Keefe examines the room, assessing those in it.

O'KEEFE (CONT'D)

Right, ye will have to all keep your mouths shut. I'll take care of this.

CUT TO:

EXT. HERATY'S - BALLINALEE - THE NEXT MORNING

It's early morning now. The village is relatively quiet.

BANG! A loud sound comes from Heraty's.

O'KEEFE (O.S.)

(yelling)

Mercy boys! Don't shoot! Please don't shoot!

INT. HERATY'S - BALLINALEE - CONTINUOUS

O'Keefe is alone inside the store. He is yelling at no-one in particular. He sweeps some dishes on to the floor and trashes the place, throwing chairs and tipping tables.

INT. HERATY'S UPSTAIRS ROOM - BALLINALEE - CONTINUOUS

The staff are gathered in the room, listening to the commotion.

STAFF MEMBER

The fella has lost his mind.

A staff member slowly pushes the door opens and steps out onto the landing which overlooks the store where she sees a faintly looking O'Keefe.

STAFF MEMBER (CONT'D)

Ah jaysus.

They look at the carnage and mess.

STAFF MEMBER 2

Lord bless us and save us. The poor little bastard is fighting his demons.

O'KEEFE

Some ruffians are after coming in here and holding me up. Two of them took the ammunition I had bundled up nicely for the police to collect.

STAFF MEMBER 1

They didn't break that painting though did they?

CLOSE on a wonderfully painted picture of an Irish landscape. It's been hanging proud in the shop for many years.

O'Keefe winks and cracks a small grin. The staff member rolls her eyes.

O'KEEFE

I must report this at once. I won't be long. I think-- I think I can walk down there me-self.

O'Keefe, badly, pretends to struggle before reaching the door and taking off.

EXT. HERATY'S - BALLINALEE - CONTINUOUS

The street is quiet. The sound of CARS REVVING in the distance gets closer before three cars appear and SCREECH to a halt in-front of Heraty's.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)

Whatever he did, he gave us a 10 hour head-start. Sound fella.

INT. HERATY'S - BALLINALEE - CONTINUOUS

O'Keefe sits at a table. He is distressed. Well, he's doing his best impression of someone who is distressed.

A policeman stands over him with a note-pad and pencil.

POLICEMAN

Bags, like what?

O'KEEFE

Satchels.

POLICEMAN

Right.

The policeman scribbles in his note-pad.

O'KEEFE

With holes in the eyes. The whole thing was just awful. I was terrified. I had the ammunition all nicely bundled up for you as well.

(beat)

With a big lovely fecking pink bow.

The policeman looks around the shop, noting everything that had been thrown around. He notes a painting on the wall, untouched.

CUT TO:

INT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - DAY

The men are still sat around the table. In the back-ground, we see the parcel of ammunition taken from Heraty's. A little sign that things are going well.

SEAN MACEOIN

Next, we'll pay a visit to Miss Sheridan up in Kilnaleck in Cavan. They haven't raided up there yet and I've good faith in the word I received that she has some arms waiting.

EXT. KILNALECK - CAVAN - DAY

Two Volunteers, SEAN TREACY and SEAMUS CONWAY, dressed as gentlemen, enter the village and start making their way to the house of MISS SHERIDAN. They park their bikes against her house.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)

Treacy and Conway, you'll go up to the house and engage Miss Sheridan in conversation to see how the land lay.

Seamus Conway KNOCKS on the door.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)

If she agrees to sell the arms, that's all well and good.

Miss Sheridan opens the door.

SEAMUS CONWAY

Ah hello Miss Sheridan, how are ya keeping?

SEAN TREACY

Are ya well?

MISS SHERIDAN

Not too bad now, how can I help you?

Miss Sheridan gestures to them to come in to the house. They oblige.

MISS SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

Come in, come in. It'll look suspicious two lads standing at my door. Nobody minds their business here.

Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly watch the house from a distance.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Right, they're in.

INT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - CONTINUOUS

We bounce back to the forge, where the men are making their plans.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)

If she doesn't sell, then the two shabbily dressed men, us, will walk in with the .38 and seize the weapons by force.

INT. KILNALECK - CAVAN - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly continue to watch the house.

SEAN MACEOIN

They must be in there half an hour now.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Let's go, come on.

Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly make their way towards the house. No-body pays them any attention.

They arrive at the door and try the handle. It's open. They slowly open the door and make their way in.

MISS SHERIDAN (O.S.)  
 Look lads, I'm in a very difficult  
 position. The RIC notified me to  
 have the stuff ready to surrender  
 to the government in a day or so.

Sean MacEoin spots a rifle and various small arms on a table. He and Sean Connolly make their way into the room where Miss Sheridan stands with Sean Treacy and Seamus Conway.

SEAN MACEOIN  
 Your difficulty is solved, Ma'am.  
 We're taking it.

Miss Sheridan swings around, startled by the statement. She recoups, and LAUGHS.

MISS SHERIDAN  
 Oh is that so? Sure take it then,  
 and good luck to the two of ya!

Miss Sheridan turns to Sean Treacy and Seamus Conway.

MISS SHERIDAN (CONT'D)  
 But I don't like ye're method of  
 matchmaking!

Sean MacEoin brings the two bicycles left outside the door into the house. He ties the parcels containing the guns to the bikes. Inside the parcels, a Lee Enfield rifle, a couple of revolvers and ammunition.

They open the door, to see 8 policemen standing on the footpath.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
 (under his breath)  
 Shite.

The men compose themselves. CLOSE on Sean MacEoin's hand in his pocket, he grips his .38 Revolver tightly.

Sean MacEoin calmly pushes his bicycle, with the parcels attached, out through the policemen, Seamus Conway followed closely behind him. Sean Treacy and Sean Conway remain in the house with Miss Sheridan.

SEAN MACEOIN  
 Good night.

SEAMUS CONWAY  
 Have a good one lads.

The police make way for them and they hop on their bikes and start cycling away.

They try their hardest to conceal their smiles, like school children having gotten away with mischief.

EXT. COUNTRY-SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin and Seamus Conway ride their bikes down the lanes away from Kilnaleck. The village disappears in the background as they descend a hill.

They are smiling, ear to ear.

SEAMUS CONWAY  
Jaysus fecking christ, my heart!

Sean MacEoin LAUGHS.

SEAN MACEOIN  
That was a close call!

SEAMUS CONWAY  
Woo!

The men LAUGH again, excited by their adventure.

SEAMUS CONWAY (CONT'D)  
I wasn't far off needing a clean pair of trousers!

They LAUGH again, ecstatic with the result.

SEAN MACEOIN  
We'll head over to an Uncle of mine. About 8 miles from here. That alright?

SEAMUS CONWAY  
Tis.

INT. SEAN MACEOIN'S UNCLE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin and Ned sit patiently. Sean MacEoin looks anxious. Something is bothering him. He notes the time.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Where are the other lads?

NED TYNAN  
They might have been caught up. Maybe ran.

SEAN MACEOIN  
We'd have heard by now.

Sean MacEoin, the Battalion Commander, couldn't sit idle knowing that he might have dragged them into a hole, and he and Ned be the only ones to escape.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
We have to go back and check for them.

NED TYNAN

What, now?

SEAN MACEOIN

(sternly)

Yes now!

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Uncle, are you alright to mind them for us?

His Uncle is half asleep in his arm chair.

UNCLE

I am yeah. No bother.

SEAN MACEOIN

(to Ned)

He's fond of the drink is Uncle.

(to his Uncle)

I said you're fond of the aul gargle aren't ya?

UNCLE

Ah yeah, I suppose.

SEAN MACEOIN

You're too modest. You'd bathe in the stuff if you bathed at all.

(to Ned)

He hasn't a notion!

EXT. KILNALECK - CAVAN - CONTINUOUS

The town is quiet.

KNOCK KNOCK. Sean MacEoin waits patiently. The door opens. An aged BAND MASTER opens the door.

BAND MASTER

Ah jaysus Sean, how are ya? Come on in.

SEAN MACEOIN

I won't no, thank you sir. I'm actually here on business.

(beat)

Have ya heard of any arrests of late?

The band master thinks long and hard. Visibly racking his brain to think.

BAND MASTER  
Arrests is it?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Yes.

Another moment passes as the band master thinks. Again.

BAND MASTER  
No, no. None of late.

Sean MacEoin breathes a SIGH of relief. He cares about his men.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Okay. Great. Thank you for your time.

BAND MASTER  
You're grand. Are you sure you won't come in?

SEAN MACEOIN  
No thank you now. We best be off.

INT. MISS SHERIDAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

There's a KNOCK on the door.

Miss Sheridan shuffles into view and opens the door to reveal Sean MacEoin and Ned Tynan.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Miss Sheridan.

MISS SHERIDAN  
Have ya come to apologise? Big men!

Miss Sheridan CHUCKLES.

Somewhat awkwardly, Sean MacEoin glosses over the jab.

SEAN MACEOIN  
The other two men.

MISS SHERIDAN  
Eegits.

Sean MacEoin composes himself.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Eh, have you seen them at all? Or what happened to them?

MISS SHERIDAN

They had just left an hour or so ago. They were grand when I saw them last.

Sean MacEoin's face shows signs of visible relief. His brow relaxes.

SEAN MACEOIN

Thank you ma'am. We'll leave ya to it so.

MISS SHERIDAN

Okay, good luck to ye both then.

Sean MacEoin and Ned nod in courtesy and the door closes on them.

OUT ON THE STREET now, just outside Miss Sheridan's house.

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin's face. Beads of sweat have formed and he controls his breathing, happy in the fact that his men are presumably okay, and hadn't been captured and put at risk by his commands.

We hear the BANGING OF METAL, CLANGING AND FLAMES FLICKERING. More sweat appears on his forehead.

The CLANGING gets louder and louder until it stops abruptly, merging with...

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL - DAY

It's a bustling scene. People are queuing up to cast their votes in the general election.

CLOSE on several different ballot sheets as several people place a tick beside Sinn Fein before dropping it in the box to be counted.

VOTER

Ya voted?

VOTER 2

I have. The Irish Parliamentary Party.

The first voter is taken-a-back.

VOTER 1

What's wrong with ya?

VOTER 2

Haven't I the right?

VOTER 1

You haven't been paying attention  
have ya. We have a real chance  
here.

VOTER 2

Sure that's what they all say.  
There's nothing these fella's would  
do that everyone else hasn't  
promised. Stick with what ya know.  
That's what I say.

Voter 1 is shaking her head angrily, in a sort of disbelief  
that someone would dare think differently to what she does.  
You know how people can be.

VOTER 1

You're just a fecking gobshite.  
Talking out your arse. Sure they're  
a shower of pricks so they are.

Triumphantly, voter 1 struts away, leaving voter 2 lost for  
words.

More people enter the hall to cast their votes - all trying  
to make a difference in their country, the only way they know  
how.

INT. BRITISH PARLIAMENT - HOUSE OF COMMONS - DAY

BANG! A gavel is slammed.

ON SCREEN: General election of 1918

SPEAKER

Silence please. Silence.

The politicians quieten down - all of them arguing over  
something - anything to make themselves feel powerful.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

The votes have been counted, for  
the party that will represent  
Ireland.

There's a silence in the room now. Not even a cough. Most  
people knew there was a disturbance in the Irish political  
landscape, but most didn't take it too seriously.

CLOSE on the speaker's face. He examines the page carefully,  
several times. He looks to his left, as if searching for some  
kind of encouragement or support. He turns his attention back  
to the page.

He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)  
 Taking the majority of the seats,  
 73 out of 105...

The speaker pauses. Not for dramatic effect, rather to prepare himself for what he is about to announce.

SPEAKER (CONT'D)  
 The Sinn Fein party.

The chamber suddenly fills with concerned voices, vying for attention.

CLOSE again on the speaker's face. He removes his glasses and looks concerned = this outcome is not good for the British Empire.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONGFORD TOWN - DAY

CLOSE on a newspaper as a hand grabs it. WE WALK with this person as we examine the front page along with them.

ON PAGE: Sinn Fein wins election.

The hand opens the newspaper.

ON PAGE: The first Dail meeting will take place today, the 21st January 1919 in Dublin, after members of Sinn Fein refuse to take seats in the House of Commons.

WIDE on the town. It's buzzing. People are smiling, some look concerned, others are oblivious as they sleep off the previous nights drinking outside the pub, waiting for it to start again.

Pouring over the newspaper, there is an air of excitement in the town.

WE TRACK a couple as they walk through the town. It's Sean MacEoin and Alice Cooney.

ALICE COONEY  
 What'll happen next?

SEAN MACEOIN  
 Well, I don't think the Brits are going to like it.

ALICE COONEY  
 What'll they do?

SEAN MACEOIN  
 Who knows? Burn down more of our homes maybe?

Alice looks to the ground.

ALICE COONEY  
Is it really a good thing then?

SEAN MACEOIN  
It is if we want to govern by  
peace. The lads will be in a  
stronger position now.

ALICE COONEY  
But the violence. It'll only get  
worse.

Sean MacEoin stops before he speaks, considering his words.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Sometimes it's part and parcel of  
becoming free.

Alice looks at him. Sean MacEoin gives her a warm smile.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
This -- this is a huge step  
forward. Let's enjoy it while we  
can!

INT. PUB - NIGHT

It's long past closing hours. A group of young men,  
presumably Volunteers are SINGING and dancing to traditional  
Irish music. One man plays the fiddle, another plays a tin  
whistle and another Ballinalee local named CHARTER is there  
too, as merry as the rest of them, banging on a bodhran  
(traditional Irish instrument).

Sean MacEoin, Sean Connolly and the rest of his men are  
there.

The men are full of drink, rowdy and spilling it everywhere,  
excited by the progress made in the election.

TAP on the window - the music immediately stops - Charter  
hits the bodhran one last time, slow to come to his senses! -  
and the men draw their revolvers. They drop to the floor.

TAP TAP on the window again.

SEAMUS CONWAY  
(whispering)  
Shite lads are we imagining this?

MARY (O.S.)  
Lads? Do ye want some tea?

A thick Longford accent assures the men they are okay. They  
stand up and LAUGH.

Seamus Conway opens the window.

SEAMUS CONWAY

Jaysus Mary sure didn't we all  
nearly start firing through the  
window!

(beat)

Charter over there is full to the  
gills a drink!

Charter is swaying from side to side waving his gun in the air. He looks as happy as any man has ever been. Sean Connolly and Sean MacEoin carefully take away his gun and pat him on the back. Sean Connolly puts his arm around him and holds him.

SEAMUS CONWAY (CONT'D)

He's a twitchy bastard as well.  
I've seen men being electrocuted  
sit more still than him!

MARY

So you're grand for tea then?

SEAMUS CONWAY

We are indeed Mary. Good woman.

MARY

Grand so. Keep it fecking down too  
will ya?

Mary walks away. Seamus Conway turns to the rest of the men and they burst out LAUGHING. The men start playing their instruments again.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Feck sake, someone nearly died over  
tea!

SEAN MACEOIN

And us worried about the Tans!

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION HOUSE - DUBLIN - DAY

It's the first meeting of Dail Eireann, the Irish government. Many are present, including Michael Collins, Arthur Griffith, Eamon de Valera, and Cathal Brugha. Arthur Griffith addresses the large crowd, as the founder of Sinn Fein.

ARTHUR GRIFFITH

Mo chairde (my friends). Our  
refusal to take seats in the  
British Houses of Parliament is a  
statement. It's one of non-  
violence.

(MORE)

ARTHUR GRIFFITH (CONT'D)  
 It's one of democracy, having been  
 placed here by the people of  
 Ireland.

PAN around the room - everyone is listening closely, their eyes fixed on Arthur Griffith.

WE STOP AND GO CLOSE on Michael Collins - who is strong in his attention.

ARTHUR GRIFFITH (CONT'D)  
 As a nation, we have the right to  
 govern ourselves, and on this  
 historic day, we start paving our  
 own way. As members of the Aireact  
 (Ministry), I would like to  
 officially announce Mr. Cathal  
 Brugha, as the first Priomh Aire  
 (Prime Minister) and the president  
 of Dail Eireann.

Arthur Griffith steps aside, as Cathal Brugha takes front and centre amidst loud APPLAUSE.

CLOSE on Michael Collins again, he doesn't look best pleased

INT. THE OFFICE OF DAVID LLOYD GEORGE - EVENING

The British Prime Minister, DAVID LLOYD GEORGE, is sitting at a desk, covered in papers. You know the scene - clearly hard at work but struggling to find a solution.

Opposite him sits his ADVISOR.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE  
 It's an absolute farce.

ADVISOR  
 It's certainly not good.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE  
 How on earth has it come to this?

David Lloyd George tosses some papers aside. He loosens his tie.

His advisor shuffles uncomfortably in his seat. He leans forward to a position that both brings him closer to the Prime Minister, but also one that would allow him to hop out of that chair in a flash if needs be.

ADVISOR  
 As well, as you may know, two  
 members of the Royal Irish  
 Constabulary were shot dead in  
 County Tipperary.

David Lloyd George SIGHS.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

IRA?

ADVISOR

Indeed, it looks that way sir. It's not the first either, and it most certainly won't be the last.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

Bloody hell. This is becoming a real pain!

David Lloyd George gestures towards the advisor's note-pad.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE (CONT'D)

Send word that we will be sending more troops over to deal with this. The RIC need reinforcements.

ADVISOR

His Majesty, sir?

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

It's his bloody Majesty's empire we are trying to keep in-tact. He'll have no choice but to approve.

The advisor nods.

CLOSE on David Lloyd George. You can see it in his eyes, he's troubled.

EXT. CHURCH - BALLINALEE - DAY

It's a quiet Sunday afternoon as most of the village are attending mass.

Outside of the church, Sean MacEoin is putting up posters on the gate.

It reads: "SUBSCRIBE TO-DAY TO DAIL EIREANN."

Sean MacEoin puts up three more posters along the gate. He steps back to look at his work when mass ends and the congregation make their way out.

An OLD MAN makes his way up to Sean MacEoin.

OLD MAN

Well John, how's she cuttin'?

SEAN MACEOIN

Not a bother now, yourself?

OLD MAN

Ah you know, sure we could all be doing a bit better. God willing now.

SEAN MACEOIN

Sure keep yourself busy and that's all you can do.

Other members of the church congregation make their way past Sean MacEoin and the old man and out onto the road.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

How's the wife?

OLD MAN

Still alive. Unfortunately. Face like a boiled shite she has.

Sean MacEoin, a bit shocked at the response, decides to change the subject.

SEAN MACEOIN

Will ya be subscribing to the Dail Eireann?

OLD MAN

I wouldn't even know what that is lad.

SEAN MACEOIN

It's a good idea now. Mr. Michael Collins himself, the new finance minister proposed it. It's to get a few bob together to help our national government.

OLD MAN

Ye are always wanting money or something. Sure I'll ask the wife and see.

(beat)

Come here, I'll be over later in the week. My mare's shoes are in bits. The poor fecker.

SEAN MACEOIN

One of us will be around. G'luck.

OLD MAN

God bless now. Chat ya after.

The old man wanders off. Sean MacEoin watches him before turning his attention back to the church where he sees SERGEANT REIDY and CONSTABLE QUIGLEY, two RIC men, coming towards him. They stop.

Sean MacEoin offers a friendly nod.

SERGEANT REIDY

I thought we told you to take those down.

Sergeant Reidy gestures to the posters.

SEAN MACEOIN

What them? No, no. They're different ones from earlier.

SERGEANT REIDY

Take them down. That's an order.

SEAN MACEOIN

I'll do no such thing. I will not take them down and ye will not take them down either.

Sean MacEoin looks Sergeant Reidy dead in the eye.

Sergeant Reidy makes a move towards a tree where one of the posters is hanging.

Sean MacEoin quickly steps in-front of him, and making a gun shape with his hands in his coat pocket, blocks the sergeant's path - there's no real gun here!

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

You take another step forward, and you'll pay the penalty.

Stunned, Sergeant Reidy stops dead in his tracks. Constable Quigley steps forward and places a hand on Sergeant Reidy's shoulder.

CONSTABLE QUIGLEY

Sir, come on. It's not worth it.

Sean MacEoin stares Sergeant Reidy straight in the eye, his hand still making the shape of a pretend gun in his coat pocket.

SERGEANT REIDY

State your name.

SEAN MACEOIN

No.

SERGEANT REIDY

That's an order. State your name!

SEAN MACEOIN

No.

The sergeant can't quite believe what is happening before him. He shakes his finger in Sean MacEoin's face.

SERGEANT REIDY

No bother. I know your name. I know who you are. You'll be hearing from us again.

The sergeant and constable turn and walk away. Sean MacEoin doesn't move, watching them leave, maintaining the pretend gun in his pocket.

The sergeant and constable eventually leave out of sight and Sean MacEoin removes his hand from his pocket, still in the shape of a gun, and LAUGHS to himself.

INT. MACEOIN'S HOME - NIGHT

Sean MacEoin enters the house and dusts the heavy snow off his clothes. His mother, Catherine approaches him and gives him a kiss on each cheek.

CATHERINE

It's a late one today John?

SEAN MACEOIN

Very.

CATHERINE

I thought ye were to sleep elsewhere?

Sean MacEoin walks further into the house.

SEAN MACEOIN

Myself and Connolly thought it not best to disturb anyone at this time.

CATHERINE

Apart from your mothers is it?

Sean MacEoin CHUCKLES. He takes out his gun and his papers and hands them to his mother who accepts them without hesitation. She knows the drill.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Do you think people are taking to the Dail loan?

SEAN MACEOIN

I do. People are a bit tentative, but things are happening.

Sean MacEoin leans towards Catherine and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Right, I'm off to bed.

CUT TO:

INT. MACEOIN'S HOME - SEAN MACEOIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sean MacEoin lays in bed, still awake.

KNOCK. There's a knock on the window.

SEAN MACEOIN  
(whispering)  
Who in jaysus' name would that be?

Sean MacEoin sits up in his bed.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
What dya want?

MAN (O.S.)  
Open the door!

Sean MacEoin shakes his head.

SEAN MACEOIN  
G'way from around me will ya!? Ya  
can break it in! I'm not hopping  
up.

There's a silence, followed by another silence. Suddenly, the  
SOUND OF A CAR PULLING UP CAN BE HEARD. It's loud, and enough  
to make Sean MacEoin hop up out of his bed.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Shite!

His bedroom door swings open. Catherine enters.

CATHERINE  
John! The house is surrounded.  
Military and police!

SEAN MACEOIN  
Go on back to bed. I'll see to it.

EXT. MACEOIN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

FROM BEHIND TWO MEN we see MacEoin's front door. It opens to  
reveal Sean MacEoin.

At the door is Sergeant Reidy and HEAD CONSTABLE CARROLL.

Constable Carroll pushes Reidy away from the door.

HEAD CONSTABLE CARROLL  
You're alright Sean, go get  
dressed. Sergeant Reidy here has a  
warrant for your arrest.

Sean MacEoin, perhaps realising there was no easy way out of  
this, doesn't run or challenge.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Alright. Provided you do not go  
into the house, or disturb anyone  
in it.

HEAD CONSTABLE CARROLL  
Agreed.

INT. MACEOIN'S HOME - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Catherine listens to the men at the door, holding Sean  
MacEoin's paperwork closely.

SEAN MACEOIN (O.S.)  
I'll get myself dressed.

INT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - COURT - DAY

Sean MacEoin stands before the Resident Magistrate, JEPHSON.

JEPHSON  
Mr. MacEoin, you are being charged  
under the Defence of the Realm Act.  
Putting up posters advocating the  
Dail Loan and impeding the RIC  
Sergeant, Reidy, in the discharge  
of his duty, are the particulars.

Sergeant Reidy looks proud of himself. Sean MacEoin does not  
acknowledge anyone in the court.

JEPHSON (CONT'D)  
I now call on District Inspector  
O'Keefe.

DISTRICT INSPECTOR O'KEEFE takes to the stand.

JEPHSON (CONT'D)  
As a police officer in the local  
area, can you tell us what you know  
of Mr. MacEoin?

DISTRICT INSPECTOR O'KEEFE  
I know him indeed. He is a  
blacksmith in Ballinalee. He's one  
of good quality and regarded as an  
excellent worker.

JEPHSON

Mr. MacEoin, I am binding you to the peace on your own security of £10, or, in default thereof, two months imprisonment in Sligo Jail. Is there any case as to why you would not do so?

SEAN MACEOIN

If any citizen felt that he was in danger or afraid of me, or that I would injure him in any way, I would gladly give an undertaking to keep the peace.

Sergeant Reidy watches Sean MacEoin intently.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

But, if on the other hand, you, the Resident Magistrate is binding me not to wage war against the King and the British forces in Ireland, I will not do so.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Sean MacEoin, hand-cuffed, sits between a couple of guards. One of which is looking him up and down. This is HEAD CONSTABLE KIDD.

The open-top van rolls along the country roads until it reaches Sligo Jail.

FADE TO:

EXT. SLIGO JAIL - DAY

ON SCREEN: 28th December, 1919

It's a snowy day. The air is crisp and the ground leaves footprints. Sean MacEoin steps out of the prison, now a free man having served his time. He takes a deep breath and looks around, his contempt for the situation evident in his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. SAFE HOUSE- DAY

The first battalion of the Longford Brigade meet in a small house, no more than three small rooms - scarcely furnished. Sean MacEoin (Battalion Commandant), Sean Duffy (Adjutant), FRANK WHITNEY (Vice O/C), PAT KIERNAN (Quartermaster) and Sean Connolly (Vice O/C, Brigade Staff) sit around a table finalising plans.

SEAN CONNOLLY

We've been through all the plans from before you were arrested.

FRANK WHITNEY

The Big Fella said we need to keep up the pressure. Keep them guessing, hit them where it hurts, and grab the arms where we can.

SEAN MACEOIN

We mustn't let them rest. If we can't get the arms, we at least destroy the barracks. Break their black hearts. Are we all happy with this?

SEAN CONNOLLY

Are you sure you're ready to jump straight back in?

SEAN MACEOIN

I'm more than ready, my friend!

FRANK WHITNEY

Okay. So we are agreed. We raid the Ballinamuck Barracks tonight.

EXT. BALLINAMUCK BARRACKS - NIGHT

It's pouring rain now as it often is - it's Longford after all. This barracks is imposing. It is like a fortress, with round turrets, one positioned at each corner.

Around the back, we see a ball alley. The barracks is quite formidable, and attacking it under fire would be foolish.

TRACKING Sean Connolly and his men as they quietly scurry through the rain towards the ball alley. As they reach the ball alley, the wall blinds one of the turrets completely, and almost blocks out another.

They watch the turret and see two policemen taking up position on either side. Sean MacEoin checks his watch.

SEAN CONNOLLY

On the money. 10pm.

SEAN TREACY opens his backpack, revealing four heavy bombs and two baskets with bottles filled with petrol. Another two have carried a small ladder. Clearly a plan is in place.

One of the Volunteers places the ladder against the wall. He's carrying a bomb. He throws it onto the roof of the turret.

BOOM! The bomb EXPLODES. The man quickly throws six bottles of petrol into the turret. Swiftly after this, another bomb is thrown. The turret is in bad shape now, and on fire.

INT. BALLINAMUCK BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers and policemen in the barracks pour out of the turret into the yard of the barracks. They start firing indiscriminately, hoping to hit something. One of the policemen SCREAMS as he fires, rather exaggerated to the onlooker.

The flames are burning high now and are climbing well into the sky.

EXT. BALLINAMUCK BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

Sean Connolly and his men watch the flames rise. Bullets occasionally WHISTLE past them, some ricochet off the wall. Sean Connolly is now atop the ladder, keeping an eye on the situation.

SEAN CONNOLLY

We won't be taking any of these arms lads.

(beat)

Fucking hell, there won't be any left. They're going mental.

Sean Connolly continues to watch.

SEAN CONNOLLY (CONT'D)

Right lads. Let's move on out of here. The damage is done. Job well done lads.

INT. BALLINAMUCK BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

The policemen are still firing.

CLICK! CLICK! These followed shortly after by another CLICK as they run out of ammunition.

Tired, confused, dazed and afraid, the policemen look around. The air has fallen silent. The flickering flames dominating the barracks.

CLOSE on SERGEANT RUDDY'S face as he monitors the situation. He too had been firing. His face is glistening from the sweat.

EXT. GAIGE ROAD - DOWN FROM BALLINAMUCK BARRACKS - NIGHT

Sean Connolly and his men arrive to meet Sean MacEoin and more volunteers who are barricading the road. It's a rural road, not very wide, one that only a single car could use at a time.

SEAN MACEOIN

Well?

SEAN CONNOLLY

We didn't capture it. No arms either.

SEAN MACEOIN

Please tell me ye at least burned it to the ground?

Sean Connolly struggles to hide his smile. Sean MacEoin reaches out and shakes his hand.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Good man! It's a message, that's better than nothing. They won't be feeling safe around here anymore!

SEAN CONNOLLY

I've never found anything quite as difficult as that. Staying quiet was the hardest part. I had all kinds of thoughts. What if the RIC fired at me and hit one of the bombs? Jaysus Christ, can you imagine?

SEAN MACEOIN

We'd be picking parts of you up in Cork! You did a grand job.

Sean MacEoin looks around him, and checks the bags.

CLOSE on the bag, it's empty aside from a couple of bombs and some ammunition.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

We need to get some more arms. We'll discuss that later. Good job tonight everyone.

Sean Connolly nods in agreement.

Sean MacEoin pats Sean Connolly on the shoulder and they walk together.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Come here, maybe not the best time.

SEAN MACEOIN

What's that?

SEAN CONNOLLY

What's the craic with Alice? Are ya together or what?

Sean MacEoin shakes his head and LAUGHS.

SEAN MACEOIN

Only you would burn down a fecking barracks and then start going on about personal relationships! You must be hitting the Devil's sauce hard my friend!

SEAN CONNOLLY

Excuse me there now. I'm just a friend showing a reasonable interest in my friend's life.

SEAN MACEOIN

You're full of it Sean, ya know that?

SEAN CONNOLLY

Full of love is it?

SEAN MACEOIN

Full of fecking shite ya are!

They CHUCKLE and the rest of the men fall in behind them as they leave the area. In the background, a couple of men finish up moving some trees that had been laid down to block the road.

INT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - DAY

A policeman makes his way into a large office. Sat at a large desk in this office is Head of the British Imperial Forces, Henry Wilson.

The policeman LIGHTLY KNCOKS on the door.

HENRY WILSON

Come in.

The policeman enters and stops on the opposite side of the inspector's desk.

POLICEMAN

I've been sent by Sergeant Ruddy sir.

The inspector GRUMBLES in acknowledgement. He seems disinterested.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)

We came under attack last night but we succeeded in protecting our arms.

HENRY WILSON

And the attackers?

POLICEMAN

Ran away sir.

HENRY WILSON

I see. So, how come I've been told that nearly all of the arms were used in the defence of the barracks? Bullet holes everywhere, not one body?

POLICEMAN

I believe it was necessary sir.

The inspector is now becoming a lot more irate.

HENRY WILSON

For fuck sake, the barracks is in bits! How does it look, when a bunch of rag-tag, fucking ruffians can successfully assault and destroy one of the county's strongest barracks? Not only that, but I have good faith that it was the same bunch who attacked Drumlish.

POLICEMAN

It was a surprise attack sir.

HENRY WILSON

Oh give me a...

(beat)

A surprise attack? What, were you all fucking sleeping? There are four turrets!

The inspector stands up.

HENRY WILSON (CONT'D)

Now you tell Ruddy, from me, to sort his shit out. These ruffians are making us look like a pack of lemons without a bloody clue!

(beat)

You're also to ramp up security. Be a bit more ruthless will ya? Take lead from the Tans. It's the only thing that works!

The policeman nods, turns and walks out of the room.

The inspector, red in the face with rage, sits back down and leans back in his chair.

HENRY WILSON (CONT'D)  
Fucking surprise attack. Give me strength.

INT. LEE'S PUB - LONGFORD - EVENING

Another bustling pub. What can I say?

TOM BANNON, sits at the bar with a British soldier named JORDY. Jordy, a staunch Scotsman is downing his drink. He throws it back and slams it on the table. He has a thick Scottish accent.

JORDY  
So?

TOM BANNON  
There's money to be made for you.

JORDY  
How much?

Tom Bannon leans closer.

TOM BANNON  
Four pound ten per rifle and bayonet. One pound per hundred rounds of ammunition.

Jordy pouts and nods - he likes what he hears.

JORDY  
I can do one or two rifles per evening and can bring out the ammo twice a week.  
(beat)  
And does the General know?

TOM BANNON  
This is his request.

JORDY  
Let's do it then.

INT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - EVENING

Sean MacEoin is working on a horse-shoe. Deep in thought, he performs the strokes of the hammer naturally, and without effort. He examines his work, striking it again where he sees necessary.

CLOSE on his face. He is focused. Determined. His actions are starting to show real consequences, and, most importantly, progression.

INT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - EVENING

Tom Bannon waits by a hole in the barracks wall. He jumps forward when he feels something poking him in his back. It's a rifle.

JORDY  
(whispering)  
I can only get you one tonight.

TOM BANNON  
(whispering)  
No bother Jordy. Sure I'll be back tomorrow.

Tom hides the rifle in his long jacket and just like that, it's out of sight.

TOM BANNON (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
What about the ammunition?

JORDY  
(whispering)  
Having a wee bit of trouble there lad. I'll get it later and walk it out.

TOM BANNON  
(whispering)  
Okay, sound. Be careful won't ya?

JORDY  
(whispering)  
Aye.

TOM BANNON  
(whispering)  
Right, I'm off so, g'luck. I look like a fecking lunatic, chatting to the wall.

EXT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - GATES - NIGHT

Soldiers are exiting the barracks, having finished their shifts.

TRACKING Jordy as he makes his way out of the barracks. He makes his way towards the gates when WHACK.

He is struck by the cane of a C.Q.M.S (company quartermaster sergeant). The cane breaks into splinters and the C.Q.M.S quickly hand-cuffs Jordy.

C.Q.M.S.

What do you know about missing ammunition?

JORDY

Aye?

C.Q.M.S.

Don't be stupid! It's no coincidence that whenever it goes missing you're the last one seen near it now is it?

JORDY

I haven't a clue what you're talking about.

WHACK, Jordy gets a boot to the face.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Jordy sits in a prison cell alone. The door slides open and a man in uniform places his meal on a tray in-front of him. It's mush, but you don't need to visualise that too much!

The man gives Jordy a slight nod, and walks away, closing the cell door behind him.

Jordy lifts his tray upside down and finds a small handwritten note that reads: "Lavatory."

JORDY

(yelling)

Guard!? I need a shit!

CUT TO:

EXT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - YARD - CONTINUOUS

A GUARD walks Jordy towards the lavatory, which is outside and close to a relatively low wall.

JORDY

Ah, I've forgotten my tissue.

GUARD

Can't you use the one in there?

JORDY

And tear a bigger hole?

GUARD

Use the tissue in there.

JORDY

I can't. Honestly. I can't hold it either.

The guard SIGHS and rolls his eyes. He turns on his heels and makes haste back towards the cell, thinking Jordy is going nowhere. Jordy watches as the guard leaves. When the guard is out of sight, he quickly turns and hops the wall, out onto the road.

Waiting for him, is Sean MacEoin.

SEAN MACEOIN

Special tissue?

Jordy laughs.

JORDY

Aye.

INT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - NIGHT

Sean MacEoin closes and locks the doors. Jordy sits with him.

SEAN MACEOIN

The heat is rising. We've been stepping up attacks in the midlands and one of two things is going to happen. The Brits will come at us harder, or they'll pack it in. The former being the most likely and we need to take more barracks.

Sean MacEoin gestures to Jordy to sit down.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

We need arms. As many as we can get. We've to be a bit braver, more...

Jordy cuts him off.

JORDY

Stupid?

Sean MacEoin smirks.

SEAN MACEOIN

In a way.

JORDY

What have ya in mind?

SEAN MACEOIN  
We're going after the Longford  
military barracks.

Jordy smiles, ear to ear, at the sheer madness of what he has just heard.

JORDY  
Count me in mate, but I'll make  
tracks fairly fast after. It won't  
take long for them to find me.

Sean MacEoin nods in agreement.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALLINALLEE - ROADSIDE - EVENING

Sean MacEoin, HARRY FLAHERTY, SEAN DUFFY, JAMES BRADY and NED TYNAN wait on a roadside. An old Ford appears in the distance. It gets closer when the men step out into the road to wave it down. It stops.

SEAN MACEOIN  
You hardly mind giving us the loan  
of your car do ya?

DRIVER  
What?

NED TYNAN  
The car, we need to borrow it.

DRIVER  
I haven't a notion now what you're  
shite-ing on about but you most  
definitely won't be having my car!

Sean MacEoin looks to Sean Duffy, who pulls out his gun and points it at the driver.

SEAN MACEOIN  
It's certainly be healthier for ya  
to give it to us.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin, dressed in regular clothing, gets out of the car and makes his way towards the gates of the barracks. He is carrying a parcel and WHISTLING the tune "Parley voo." Jordy is walking with him. They approach the gate.

SENTRY (O.S.)  
Halt!

The SENTRY looks through the peephole of the gate and stops Sean MacEoin and Jordy dead in their tracks.

SENTRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Who goes there?

SEAN MACEOIN  
I have a parcel here for  
Quartermaster Upton.

There's a silence. It feels like an age. Sean MacEoin and Jordy stay in character.

SENTRY (O.S.)  
Advance.

The peephole slams shut. The gate is opened. Sean MacEoin watches in wonder as the barracks opens itself up to them.

They step inside to be greeted by the sentry who is pointing his bayonet directly at them. A military policeman is by the sentry's shoulder, his eyes fixed on Sean MacEoin.

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin's right coat pocket - he is gripping his trusty revolver tightly. The parcel remains in his left hand.

SENTRY (CONT'D)  
Have you got a pass?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Yes, I do.

Sean MacEoin fumbles his hand in his right pocket, as if he is searching for something. As he fumbles, he moves past the point of the sentry's bayonet.

He outstretches his left hand, throwing the parcel towards the ground. In the same sweeping motion, he grips the rifle with his now free left hand.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Here's my pass!

Sean MacEoin takes his pistol from his right pocket and fixes it on the sentry. Acting out of reflex, Jordy has attacked the military policeman at the same time. He has him disarmed and is searching him for weapons.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
If you make a move or speak a word,  
you're a dead man!

The sentry opens his mouth, as if readying to sound an alarm. He looks at Sean MacEoin, who has a fierce look in his eyes. He isn't bluffing.

The sentry closes his mouth as quickly as he opened it. With the help of a little passive persuasion!

Jordy grabs the sentry and the military policeman and forces them outside of the gate. Arriving at this time, as planned, are Sean Duffy and Harry Flaherty, both armed. They take one man each and bring them away from the barracks.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Bring them to Ned.

They do as they are told. As they walk away, James Brady reverses the car up to the gate of the barracks, ready for the getaway. A smooth attack if there ever was one.

Sean MacEoin inspects the barracks and to his surprise, finds the guardroom to his left. The entrance is surrounded by sandbags.

Sean MacEoin catapults himself over the wall. Jordy follows. They hit the ground on the other side of the 4 feet barriers. The sound echoes. They stop. Looking around nervously, they are surprised that reinforcements have not yet come.

INT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - GUARD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eight men, off-duty, sit around a table playing cards. Their guns are leaning against the wall. The door is open. Sean MacEoin and Jordy burst in, guns in the air.

SEAN MACEOIN

Hands up!

The eight men oblige, their hands raised to the sky. Jordy pockets his pistol and begins picking up ammunition wherever he can. Sean MacEoin keeps his rifle fixed on the eight men.

They had made a mistake. One of the eight men, the Corporal hadn't his hands up. He lunges for Jordy, gripping him by the throat.

Sean MacEoin hesitates for a split second, but keeps his aim on the seven men at the table.

CLOSE on his hand as he considers pulling the trigger.

CORPORAL

I dare you mate! The barracks will come down on you like a ton of bricks!

Sean MacEoin maintains his position.

CORPORAL (CONT'D)

You sleazy paddy bastard, go on!

Sean MacEoin quickly takes a step to the side towards Jordy and the Corporal, reversing the gun and smacking the Corporal right between the eyes. His skull splits open and the blood pours from his wound as he hits the floor.

Sean MacEoin, as cool as you like, turns his pistol back on the seven men. Rage is in his eyes now.

PAN across the seven men, watching Sean MacEoin intently, unsure of what he might do next.

Sean Duffy rushes in the door, breaking the tension. He and Jordy start gathering arms. They bring them out of the guard room. The room remains silent. The seven men still at the mercy of Sean MacEoin's pistol.

EXT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - GATES - CONTINUOUS

Jordy and Sean Duffy load the car with the rifles, ammunition and bombs.

JAMES BRADY  
Going well in there then?

SEAN DUFFY  
He has them at gunpoint.

JAMES BRADY  
The mad bastard!

JORDY  
Right, there's more come on.

INT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - GUARD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin holds the silent room.

SOLDIER (O.S.)  
What's going on down there?

Sean MacEoin looks to the stairs and sees a head pop out from behind a wall. He points his gun at this man.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Hands up! You're all prisoners!

At this moment, Sean Duffy and Jordy rush back in.

An ALARM RINGS out from above.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
We've been discovered lads. Hurry  
it up!

Sean Duffy and Jordy grab everything they can and make for the door.

Sean MacEoin takes a few steps backwards towards the door, pistol still aimed at the men, and looks towards the car. He sees Sean Duffy and Jordy loading the car and hopping in.

Upon seeing they made it okay, Sean MacEoin turns on his heels and darts out of the guard room.

EXT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

TRACKING over his shoulder as he leaps over the sandbags and runs towards the car. Bullets start flying from above as the soldiers in the barracks try and stop them. Dust flies where they hit the path in-front of Sean MacEoin.

Sean MacEoin looks to his right, and sees a soldier bearing down on him from above. We hear the faint sound of hammer CLANGING again. It's rhythmic.

SLOW MOTION as the guard raises his gun, Sean MacEoin clearly in sight. Sean MacEoin looks to the car. Nearly there! The CLANGING continues.

The soldier pulls the trigger, the muzzle flash glaring. The bullet flies close to Sean MacEoin's chest, passing just in-front of him. At this, Sean MacEoin fires his pistol towards the soldier. The CLANGING ceases.

NORMAL SPEED AGAIN as Sean MacEoin hops into the car. James Brady puts his foot to the floor and tears down the road.

GUN-FIRE continues after the car. It's consistent, loud and inaccurate. The car fades into the distance, and the gunfire stops.

The area falls silent.

BRITISH SOLDIER (O.S.)  
(yelling)  
Casualty! We have a fatality!

INT. LONGFORD BARRACKS - UPSTAIRS ROOM

Two soldiers rush to the aid of a young soldier. This is the soldier who fired at, and missed Sean MacEoin. Sean MacEoin, however, didn't miss him. Bleeding from his throat, two soldiers perform CPR.

SOLDIER 1  
Come on mate. Come on!

It's no good. The young soldier is dead.

INT. CAR - COUNTRY ROADS - CONTINUOUS

James Brady focuses on the road. Jordy shuffles in the back.

In the passenger seat, WE PAN TOWARDS Sean MacEoin's face. He is in deep thought, and looks to be troubled.

WE GET CLOSE AND CLOSER UNTIL...

FADE IN:

EXT. COONEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Sean MacEoin knocks on the door. He's in uniform and smartly dressed.

The door swings open. MR. COONEY, blocks the door-way.

MR. COONEY

Ah, well? Young Sean MacEoin.  
What's the craic?

SEAN MACEOIN

Not much sir, yourself?

MR. COONEY

Not too bad now no. Mad isn't it?

SEAN MACEOIN

What's that?

MR. COONEY

The state of the country. It's in  
the horrors isn't it?

Mr. Cooney gives Sean MacEoin a look. He knows he has involvement.

MR. COONEY (CONT'D)

Still, it's for the right reasons I  
suppose.

SEAN MACEOIN

I agree.

Mr. Cooney shuffles on the spot. Thinking he is about to allow him in, Sean MacEoin takes a step forward, before awkwardly stepping back again when he realises that Mr. Cooney is not, in-fact, letting him in. Not just yet.

MR. COONEY

And come here, is it just yourself  
down the forge now?

SEAN MACEOIN

Tis indeed.

MR. COONEY

You're doing a grand job. Like your  
Father, God rest him. I used to do  
business with him a lot. Great man.

SEAN MACEOIN

Thank you sir. He certainly taught me well.

Mr. Cooney analyses Sean MacEoin before stepping aside. With a nod of his head, he ushers Sean MacEoin inside.

INT. COONEY'S HOUSE - SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin sits in an arm chair opposite Alice Cooney.

ALICE COONEY

I don't want to be nag, but I'm worried.

SEAN MACEOIN

Ya care that much about me then?

Sean MacEoin flashes a cheeky grin.

ALICE COONEY

Aren't there other men who can do it?

SEAN MACEOIN

I understand your concern. I do. But since I was a young lad, I knew I wanted to fight for Ireland.

ALICE COONEY

What kind of a dream is that for a young fella?

SEAN MACEOIN

More popular than you might think!

ALICE COONEY

Beating the English out of Ireland?

SEAN MACEOIN

No, no.

PAN CLOSER to Sean MacEoin's face. He pauses. Looking for the right words, as simple as they may be.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Freedom. To be free of foreign invaders. To walk down the road, and not have to step off it a foreign soldier comes towards ya. To be able to do business and to live. To be able to create a home for your family, without fear of having it burned down. Without the fear of being bet over the head for not respecting the orders of a foreign invader.

Sean MacEoin pauses again. Alice is captivated, and watches him closely.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

For every Irishman, woman and child, to be able to be free, in their own land. That's why I do it. And that's what I dream of.

Alice reaches out her hand and takes his. She smiles softly.

ALICE COONEY

Promise me you'll mind yourself. Don't do anything dangerous.

(beat)

Please don't end up in a ditch somewhere.

Their moment is interrupted by a KNOCK on the door. FRANTIC KNOCKING follows. Alice quickly gets up and opens the door.

It's Sean Connolly.

SEAN CONNOLLY

How are ya Alice?

Sean Connolly looks past Alice towards Sean MacEoin, who is now standing.

SEAN MACEOIN

What are ya at, banging the door down?

SEAN CONNOLLY

We've word from the Big Fella. We're to meet him in Athlone at our earliest convenience.

SEAN MACEOIN

Now isn't the most convenient to be fair.

SEAN CONNOLLY

The Big Fells says it is.

Sean MacEoin rolls his eyes. He looks to Alice.

ALICE COONEY

Go on so.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - GARDEN - ATHLONE - EVENING

Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly walk with Michael Collins.

MICHAEL COLLINS

I haven't disturbed ye now have I?

SEAN MACEOIN

Oh no, jaysus. Not at all.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Are ya sure? MacEoin, you look like  
I might have?

Michael Collins smiles at him.

SEAN MACEOIN

Michael, there is nowhere on this  
earth that I would rather be than  
walking with you, at eight o'clock  
in the evening.

Sean MacEoin smiles back at Michael Collins.

Michael Collins shakes his head, smiling. They know they have  
to maintain humour, particularly given the times. Michael  
Collins composes himself.

MICHAEL COLLINS

It's a risk us even being here  
boys. Athlone barracks is swarming  
with Brits.

Michael Collins winks.

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

Nothing like a bit of adventure  
though!

(beat)

I'll get right in to it. You're  
doing some fine work in the  
midlands, causing all sorts of  
bother for the Brits. They won't  
have a toilet to piss in at this  
rate.

THERE'S A DREAMLIKE SEQUENCE PLAYING OVER THE NEXT PIECE OF  
DIALOGUE - we see KELLEHER spitting orders, hitting people  
over the head with his rifle, shooting men who are  
defenseless and throwing a woman to the floor by her hair  
before stabbing her with his bayonet.

MICHAEL COLLINS (V.O.)

There's an RIC Inspector, Kelleher,  
who is making life very hard for  
us. As you may know, he burst into  
Brady's house. Tore the place up,  
shouted at the wife and children.  
He very proudly declared that he  
has been sent to Longford to spill  
blood, and spill blood he shall.

Michael Collins takes a deep breath.

MICHAEL COLLINS  
I want this fella killed.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Where do we find him?

MICHAEL COLLINS  
He's staying at the Greville Arms.

SEAN MACEOIN  
We'll sort it out.

Michael Collins exchanges his gaze between Sean Connolly and Sean MacEoin. Michael Collins nods.

MICHAEL COLLINS  
May god bless ye.

EXT. GREVILLE ARMS - GRANARD - NIGHT

Two Irish Volunteers wait outside the hotel. A PIANO can be heard playing upstairs.

VOLUNTEER 1  
There must be a party on is there?

VOLUNTEER 2  
Couldn't tell ya.

VOLUNTEER 1  
Should we wait as planned?

Volunteer 2 checks a watch.

VOLUNTEER 2  
I don't think he's coming out to be honest.

VOLUNTEER 1  
Feck it, we'll go in so.

The two Volunteers make their way into the hotel, clutching their revolvers.

TRACKING FROM BEHIND as they make their way into the hotel reception area. As they enter, coming down the stairs is the target, D.I. KELLEHER, and a lady - possibly his wife.

The Volunteers slow their pace and hide their guns in their pockets. They watch D.I. Kelleher go into the bar with the lady.

VOLUNTEER 1 (CONT'D)  
Shite! What do we do?

They watch as D.I Kelleher orders drinks.

## VOLUNTEER 2

Feck it, come on!

TRACKING OVER THE VOLUNTEERS SHOULDERS again as they turn to the bar. They draw their revolvers.

POP! POP! POP! POP!

Both Volunteers fire two shots each. They hit D.I. Kelleher who drops to the ground. The other people in the bar scramble for cover. SCREAMS ring out.

The two Volunteers run out of the bar, and then out of the hotel.

D.I. Kelleher lays on the ground, bleeding from his chest. His eyes stare blankly ahead. His blood spilling around him.

EXT. LONGFORD TOWN - DAY

Black and Tans, drunk, are parading a local business man down the street, draping him in the Union jack. Obnoxious and loud, they bully their way along, forcing people to flee from their path.

INT. TEMPERANCE HALL - LONGFORD TOWN - CONTINUOUS

British soldiers are trashing the place. Breaking windows, smashing furniture. One of them is urinating in the corner. The hall is in bits. The floors have been broken in places.

BLACK AND TAN

Right lads, let's move on. We've got Ballinalee next!

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - BALLINALEE - THE NEXT DAY

The local curate, FATHER MONTFORD, is saying mass to the congregation, of which, Sean MacEoin is a part of. Word has spread of the British intentions to invade and burn Ballinalee.

FATHER MONTFORD

While I don't want to cause any alarm, I feel it my duty to inform you, for your safety, that you disperse and clear away from your homes as quickly as possible. For I fear violence is coming our way.

Sean MacEoin immediately stands up to address the crowd.

SEAN MACEOIN

Father Montford, I mean no disrespect, but I must countermand your instruction and insist that ye all return home after mass, as normal.

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

People are leaving the church in a hurry.

Sean MacEoin stands with Father Montford.

FATHER MONTFORD

The people are going Sean. They want to be safe. They want no part in this.

SEAN MACEOIN

It's better for them that they stay. Do ya know what the British will do if they catch them on the road?

FATHER MONTFORD

We're in god's hands now. I'll be joining them.

SEAN MACEOIN

You need to be here. You'll be needed. We're likely to go into battle at any moment. You got word of it yourself.

(beat)

We're no saints, Father. Your services will be needed.

Father Montford looks a bit irritated by the predicament he is facing. He nods, reluctantly.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin and his men are lined up inside the church. Father Montford is walking down the line, blessing each one of them. There is a peaceful silence here. The men remain still and Father Montford's steps are inaudible.

His low, MUTTERING is all that can be heard as he blesses the men.

We stop here for a moment - the soldiers lined up in a religious building - whether you believe or not - it's ironic.

These men are being blessed to kill.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

WE SIT in the back of an open top truck that's filled with British soldiers. They are in convoy with ten other trucks.

It's getting dark now and their headlights light the narrow country roads ahead of them. They drive slowly, the roads not permitting any speed unless they want an accident.

The trucks reach a junction, the lights of the truck shine on two small buildings.

The leading truck comes to a halt and soldiers hop out to surround these buildings. It's Sean MacEoin's house and forge.

A British Commander approaches the door of the house and knocks forcefully.

BRITISH COMMANDER  
(yelling)  
Open up!

Ten seconds pass and there is no response. The British Commander looks through the windows. No lights and no movement. It's empty.

A British soldier jogs over to the commander.

BRITISH SOLDIER  
Sir, the forge is empty too. No sign of anyone.

BRITISH COMMANDER  
Right.

The British Commander turns and makes his way back to the convoy.

BRITISH COMMANDER (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
Let's move out, come on!

The soldiers load back onto the trucks. One of them looks behind him, certain that he has seen somebody in the bushes.

He watches this bush for a moment. THE TRUCKS ENGINES START and they continue down the country road.

EXT. BALLINALEE VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

The British convoy of trucks arrive into Ballinalee to find it quiet. They turn right towards the Catholic Church. The trucks come to a stop and the commander hops out.

He takes a few steps around and monitors the situation. There's nothing, no movement, no sounds, nothing.

BRITISH COMMANDER

(yelling)

Dismount! If you see anyone, shoot the dirty ruffians. You'd be doing them a fucking favour.

PHEEP! He blows his whistle and an eleventh truck filled with British soldiers lines up with the other ten.

WE ARE IN THIS ELEVENTH TRUCK now with the newly arrived truck. The British Commander strolls up ahead.

The soldiers dismount the trucks.

TRACKING them as they cautiously walk through the village. The trucks have been left huddled together. An easy target.

They walk a few yards, eyes peeled, trying to see anything in the darkness.

BRITISH COMMANDER (CONT'D)

(signalling to soldiers)

You lot, head over to the crossroads and check it out.

The soldiers nod, and start making their way to the crossroads at the centre of the village. The truck headlights are the only main source of light.

One of the soldiers watches the bushes again, convinced he saw something. He swallows and continues towards the crossroads.

SEAN MACEOIN (O.S.)

Halt! Move no further!

The British soldiers stop and look around. Confused, they turn in all directions, trying to find the source of the voice.

SEAN MACEOIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Gives us your unconditional surrender, immediately.

The British soldiers ignore this request and continue towards the crossroads.

There are THREE LOUD BLASTS OF A WHISTLE.

POV of the British soldiers as two grenades land amidst the parked trucks.

A MASSIVE EXPLOSION follows, damaging some the trucks. The British soldiers scramble for cover.

GUN-FIRE hails down on them from all angles.

TRACKING a young British soldier who is desperately looking for cover. He runs towards a tree, following one of his men. When the man in-front is shot down, he stops and turns back.

BREATHING HEAVILY and terrified, he runs back towards one of the lesser damaged trucks, the one that has the Maxim gun mounted.

The trucks cut their lights to try and hide their location from the relentless GUN-FIRE coming at them from seemingly invisible sources.

The young British soldier climbs on the truck and readies the Maxim gun.

POV the young soldier, he starts firing the gun in all directions. Some unfortunate British soldiers find themselves in the path of fire and drop to the floor, shot and dying.

The young British soldier continues firing. Rotating from left to right, up and down, taking chunks off of walls and out of the road.

Beside him, from another truck, another British soldier has started firing a Lewis gun.

They fire continuously until the ammunition is gone. At this stage, all GUN-FIRE has ceased. The British soldiers are taking cover and there is no return fire from the darkness.

A loud WHISTLE BLAST rings out.

SEAN MACEOIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
Cease fire! Cease fire!

The young British soldier, from the truck on the Maxim gun watches as the British Commander raises his hand.

BRITISH COMMANDER  
Cease fire boys!

Sean MacEoin steps forward into what little light shines on the village. He is some distance from the British Commander.

SEAN MACEOIN  
I demand your surrender.

BRITISH  
What are your terms?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Unconditional.

BRITISH COMMANDER  
I don't think so.

There's a brief silence. It isn't very long, but feels like a lifetime.

BRITISH COMMANDER (CONT'D)  
You won't get our unconditional  
surrender. So, what then?

PAN towards Sean MacEoin's face.

SEAN MACEOIN  
A fight to the finish.

Soldiers on both sides scramble to take position and just as quickly as the cease fire is called, the GUN-FIRE starts again.

Sean MacEoin has retreated into the darkness and the British Commander has taken cover behind one of the trucks.

BRITISH COMMANDER  
(yelling)  
Give them fucking hell boys! Get  
the max on 'em!

The young British soldier manning the Maxim gun is trying to change rounds. He fumbles and drops them. GUN-FIRE IS ringing out again.

Just as he stands back up after retrieving the ammo, a bullet tears through his forehead, dropping him to the ground.

Behind a wall, Sean MacEoin and his men are returning fire.

SEAN MACEOIN  
How many rounds have we?

Bullets whizz overhead.

SEAMUS CONWAY  
We've about sixty rounds.  
(beat)  
I'm dying for a slash sham.

Sean MacEoin looks at him with nothing but surprise.

SEAN MACEOIN  
What are ya telling me for?

Seamus Conway shrugs.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
For feck sake would ya go on then  
before I clatter ya!?

Seamus Conway nods and takes off behind a tree.

Sean MacEoin grabs another man, Thomas Earley, by the shoulder.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Go and get reinforcements, up at  
the church. Go on, quick.

Thomas Early carefully gets up, hunched down, he runs off into the darkness.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
We need to conserve our fire lads.  
Let them run theirs down.

FROM UP HIGH we see Ballinalee, GUN-FIRE blazing.

BACK ON THE GROUND, the British Commander scurries towards the truck with the Maxim gun. He takes up position, pushing the young British soldier's body out of the way with his foot, and loads the ammunition, he opens fire, shooting towards the hedges and walls.

Seamus Conway makes his way back from behind the tree.

Sean MacEoin and his men, still taking cover, duck further into the ground.

SEAMUS CONWAY  
Shite!

SEAN MACEOIN  
That fecking gun.

Sean MacEoin reaches into a pocket and removes a grenade.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Make this one count!

Sean MacEoin rolls to the side and stands up behind a wall of a building. He peeks around the corner. The GUN-FIRE is still being exchanged. The Maxim and Lewis gun dominating. Sean MacEoin spots one of his men on the opposite side.

Sean MacEoin pulls the pin, steps out from cover and lobs the grenade towards the truck with the Lewis gun. He darts back into cover.

The grenade lands just in-front of the truck, and, given the sheer loudness of the GUN-FIRE, the British Commander doesn't notice it.

Four seconds pass and the grenade EXPLODES, knocking the British Commander off his feet.

WHITE NOISE as the British Commander scrambles back to his feet. Dizzily, he looks around trying to establish his surroundings. He looks to his left and sees one of Sean MacEoin's men pointing a revolver at him from within the bushes.

CLOSE on the British Commander's face. He's lost and he knows it.

Sean MacEoin watches from the other side of the road.

POP! The trigger is pulled and the British Commander hits the ground.

Noticing this, the soldier on the Lewis gun turns his attention to the man who just shot the commander.

Sean MacEoin, still watching the situation, lines up a shot with a rifle and shoots the Lewis gun operator just before he fires into the bushes.

Sean MacEoin makes his way back to cover with Seamus Conway and the others.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Any sign of those reinforcements?

SEAMUS CONWAY

None.

SEAN MACEOIN

Bollocks it. Slow up your fire!

Some time passes and the GUN-FIRE finally starts to ease. From behind cover, Sean MacEoin and his men hear the RUMBLE of truck engines. They peak over and see that one by one, the British trucks are leaving the village.

SEAMUS CONWAY

I've spoken to the lads.

SEAN MACEOIN

And?

SEAMUS CONWAY

Five rounds each.

SEAN MACEOIN

We have to stay.

(beat)

Get comfortable lads, and keep an eye out.

The sun starts to rise over the quiet village. Sean MacEoin and his men emerge from cover, having made it through the night and survived the long battle. They make their way towards where the British trucks were.

They find pools of blood, military equipment, revolvers and thousands of rounds of .303 ammunition.

SEAMUS CONWAY

Lads?

Seamus Conway, smiling gleefully is holding up packs of chocolate and boot polish.

SEAN MACEOIN

Boys, these weren't just Black and Tans.

(beat)

They were Auxilaries.

SEAMUS CONWAY

And not one of them stuck around.

(beat)

Jaysus sure we must be fecking lakes!

Sean MacEoin smiles.

They look at the road and around the scene of the battle. Bullet cases, equipment and blood, all belonging to the enemy. A fierce fight with a monumental importance.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

It's dimly lit in here. Cigarette smoke blurs the scene somewhat. Standing in full uniform, is the Head of the British Imperial Forces. We recognise him from before, albeit somewhat older now. It's Henry Wilson. A British messenger stands with him.

HENRY WILSON

Pass this on immediately, I want an instant and ferocious response to the debacle in Ballinalee. Get more men on the streets. Tell them to put the rule book to the side for the moment.

The British messenger nods and leaves the room.

CLOSE on Henry Wilson. Stress has aged him beyond his years.

EXT. GRANARD - DAY

WE MOVE THROUGH THE STREETS as Black and Tans kick down doors and throw residents on to the street. They pour paraffin in buildings and set them alight before moving to the next building.

A young woman is thrown to the street and mercilessly stabbed through the chest with a bayonet. The Black and Tan places a foot on her stomach to wrench the bayonet back out from within her.

SHRIEKS and SCREAMS of the ordinary people being subjected to the terror fill the air. Black smoke fills the sky.

EXT. BALLINALEE VILLAGE - DAY

Sean MacEoin, Seamus Conway and the rest of his men remain in the village.

Some of his men are carrying the materials left behind by the British. Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly are patrolling the streets, keeping a look out.

SEAMUS CONWAY

Do you reckon that's the last of them?

SEAN MACEOIN

I can't imagine so. His Majesty won't take too kindly to hearing who bet them!

MESSENGER (O.S.)

(yelling)

Sir! Sir!

Sean MacEoin and Seamus Conway turn to see a messenger cycling furiously towards them. He comes to a stop before them.

SEAMUS CONWAY

Jaysus lad, what's wrong with ya?

MESSENGER

Granard is on fire. The Brits came in and tore the place to shreds. Every house, shop. All of it.

Calm as ever, Sean MacEoin responds without hesitation.

SEAN MACEOIN

Right. Okay. Go on back to Longford now. Things are getting heavy there, and we need to know their movements.

Sean MacEoin pats the messenger on the shoulder. The messenger nods, turns his bike around and sets off.

Sean MacEoin turns to Sean Connolly.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

That's not good. They'll be coming to us next. G'wan out to Roscommon, we need to let everyone know to be ready.

INT. BALLINALEE - NEW HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Sean MacEoin sets up his things in an old house. Seamus Conway and a few other Volunteers are helping him.

SEAN MACEOIN

Connolly sent word that he can offer support. He has some men out in Roscommmon.

SEAMUS CONWAY

Do we need them?

SEAN MACEOIN

I've told him to come at once. We are to defend this village at all costs.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

A calm field, with men tending to crops using sickle's and scythe's.

In the back-ground we see another two men burying what we assume to be family members.

WIDE on the scene. We see smoke in the air in the back-ground form the nearby town. It's Granard.

EXT. BALLINALEE VILLAGE - DAY

WE PAN across the village. Trucks arrive in the village with more Volunteers. Men take up positions in various locations while even more reinforcements arrive.

INT. BALLINALEE - NEW HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin sits alone at a desk in an old, well furnished house. He's writing a report.

CLOSE on the page. The heading reads: "The Plan for the Defence of Ballinalee."

WE PULL BACK to see him writing. His desk is organised very well. Everything has it's place, and everything is in it's place.

He stops for a moment and rolls up his sleeves. As he rolls up his right arm he stops to look at the small white burn marks all the way up his arm.

He ponders for a moment before bringing himself back to reality.

Ever efficient, he get's back to writing his report.

EXT. BALLINALEE VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Volunteers are still arriving and men are stationed around the village keeping a look out and waiting for instructions.

The messenger appears in to view again, cycling to the house where Sean MacEoin is stationed.

INT. BALLINALEE - NEW HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

There's a KNOCK at the door. Sean MacEoin places his pen carefully beside his paper. He then folds the paper neatly, hiding the contents.

SEAN MACEOIN

Come in.

The messenger enters.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

I hope you bring me good news this time.

MESSENGER

I'm afraid not sir.

A concerned look dawns over Sean MacEoin's face.

SEAN MACEOIN

What is it?

EXT. BALLINALEE VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin moves hurriedly through the Volunteers, who are greeting him. He is buttoning up his tunic and then throws his hat on his head. He approaches a group of Volunteers.

SEAN MACEOIN

Are ye Roscommon lads?

ROSCOMMON VOLUNTEER

We are.

SEAN MACEOIN

Where's Connolly?

ROSCOMMON VOLUNTEER

He's giving instructions up by the church there.

Sean MacEoin nods and carries on.

TRACKING HIM FROM BEHIND. The streets are busy with men in Volunteer uniform, bustling about.

He spots Sean Connolly, who has just issued instruction to a group of Volunteers. Sean MacEoin grabs him on the arm, spinning him towards him. They start walking back the way he came.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
A simple hello would've been fine?

SEAN MACEOIN  
That's a respectful greeting for a respectful person.

Sean Connolly LAUGHS.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Listen, we've something to take care of, and we have to be quick. I'm expecting an attack on Ballinalee any day now.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
So what's the story?

SEAN MACEOIN  
We've a leak that needs plugging.

INT. CHARTER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Charter - the merry drunk man from the tea scare! - and his family are sitting at the dinner table eating. There's a KNOCK on the door. One of the children get up and answer it.

SEAN MACEOIN (O.S.)  
Hello there! Would your Dad be available at all?

Charter gets up from the table, at which point Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly make their way in.

CHARTER  
Well lads, what's the story?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Not much now. Yourself?

CHARTER  
Ah you know yourself. It's all a bit mental.  
(beat)  
Do ya want any food?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Ah jaysus no. We couldn't be eating all your food now. Taking it away from the children!

The children GIGGLE. Charter's wife smiles at them.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Can we have a moment outside?

Charter nods and guides them towards the back-door.

CHILD  
Where are you going?

CHARTER  
I'll be back in a minute darling.  
Eat your dinner now.

EXT. CHARTER'S HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Charter comes to a stop, some way down his garden, a safe enough distance away from the house where his wife and children are eating dinner.

CHARTER  
What's going on lads?

SEAN MACEOIN  
I don't suppose you heard about  
three of our men in Longford being  
killed did ya?

Charter shakes his head.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Well, the thing is, they weren't in  
uniform. In fact, they weren't  
heavily involved at all.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
How do you suppose the RIC knew who  
to kill? I hear you like a game of  
cards ha?

CHARTER  
Look, lads, my family is in there.  
You're spouting an awful load of  
shite.

SEAN MACEOIN  
We know it was you.

SEAN CONNOLLY  
Why? What did we ever do to you,  
ha?

CHARTER  
I didn't say a word.

Sean MacEoin pulls out his revolver and points it at Charter's head.

INT. CHARTER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The wife and children are still eating dinner.

WE PAN ACROSS TO THE LEFT to reveal a window. In the garden, just very slightly, we can see the three men, the gun pointed at Charter.

EXT. CHARTER'S HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Charter is sweating now.

CHARTER

Please. You don't know what it's like. I was put in a bad position ya know? Slip of the tongue.

SEAN MACEOIN

No. You had a choice. Say, Sean, this act of deceit from a local man, resulting in three of our men being brutally killed...

(beat)

What punishment would be fitting?

SEAN CONNOLLY

I'd say death.

CHARTER

No! Please! My fa...

SEAN MACEOIN

I agree.

Sean MacEoin doesn't give Charter the time to finish his sentence. As he turns his head from looking at Sean Connolly to Charter, he pulls the trigger, shooting Charter through his right temple, killing him instantly.

INT. CHARTER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The wife stops eating, having heard the echo of the GUN SHOT. Tears start to well up in her eyes. She's no fool, she knows what happened.

EXT. CHARTER'S HOUSE - BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly are nowhere to be seen. Charter lays motionless on the ground.

INT. COONEY'S HOUSE - ALICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice Cooney is sitting at her desk. She unfolds a letter and studies it.

CLOSE on the letter. It's from Sean MacEoin. It reads:  
 "Dearest Alice, I hope you are keeping well, and that your family are too. We succeeded in defeating the British in Ballinalee, but I fear they will soon send reinforcements. Volunteers are here in numbers and god knows we will do everything to repel another attack. I miss you and look forward to seeing you soon. Sending my love, Sean MacEoin"

Alice holds the letter to her chest. She's concerned for his well-being, and understandably so.

EXT. BALLINALEE VILLAGE - NIGHT

Sean MacEoin, Sean Connolly and other volunteers are watching lights in the distance. They are large lights that seem to be moving. The Volunteers are tired now, they've been holding the village for a very long time.

SEAN CONNOLLY

The scouts haven't reported anything. All quiet in Longford.

SEAN MACEOIN

How's that possible? There must be thousands of them, the lights are stretching for miles! We'll need to mobilise the men as quickly as possible.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Someone may have given them information as to where we are.

They continue to watch these lights, baffled by the sheer amount of them.

SEAN CONNOLLY (CONT'D)

We need to be ready.

Sean Connolly turns to a group of Volunteers.

SEAN CONNOLLY (CONT'D)

Spread the word to the posts. The enemy are inbound!

The Volunteers nod in acknowledgment and disperse to deliver the message.

Sean Connolly turns back to Sean MacEoin.

SEAN CONNOLLY (CONT'D)  
We are fecked if they're all  
enemies.

EXT. BALLINALEE - COUNTRY-ROADS - NIGHT

Sean MacEoin and a group of Volunteers walk carefully through the darkness towards the lights. The lights occasionally flicker, but don't seem to get any closer.

Moving cautiously, they turn a corner before Sean MacEoin raises his hand to HALT.

The men stop and stare in awe at the "will-o-the-wisp" - a naturally occurring light phenomenon commonly found in marshy and bog lands. Brilliant lights, appearing to form out of thin air.

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin's face. He smiles and looks peaceful for the first time in a while. The natural phenomenon of lights is truly remarkable, and certainly more welcoming than more enemies! It provides a brief moment of respite.

SEAN MACEOIN  
I think we all need a rest lads.

They continue to watch in awe, these lights flickering over miles of land.

INT. ROSE COTTAGE - BALLINALEE - DAY

A very tired Sean MacEoin opens the door to find the messenger, again with a letter.

MESSENGER  
For you, sir.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Thank you.

Sean MacEoin opens the letter.

CLOSE on the letter, it's signed M.O.C.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - DUBLIN - DAY

Establishing shot - the city is bustling. Men in long coats and fedora's stand outside this old Georgian terraced building that blends in with those around it, watching everything and everyone.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DUBLIN - CONTINUOUS

Michael Collins stands over his desk. Beside him sits the Commander in Chief of the IRA, RICHARD MULCAHY. On the other side stand Sean Connolly and Sean MacEoin. The office is fairly lavish, with dark wood panels along the walls and a large oak desk. Statues fill gaps in the book cases, and the Republican flag stands proudly in the corner.

MICHAEL COLLINS

You've done a grand job down in Longford. The British report was all over the place, trying to point the finger and explain how a numerically inferior force, beat a much larger, better equipped British one.

Michael Collins shakes his head smiling.

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

Grand job indeed. It's the first time a village or town has been successfully defended against the British.

SEAN MACEOIN

I assume you haven't brought us up here to make our heads any bigger?

Michael Collins CHUCKLES.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Can't get anything past you!

Michael Collins sits down, slouched in his chair.

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

The British are considering moving troops from Athlone and Longford down south, where things are particularly heavy right now.

RICHARD MULCAHY

This war is entering an ever more violent phase. We must hit them hard in the midlands and the west, to convince them they can't divert any troops south. Ye are to form a Flying Column. Stay hidden, hit them hard. You've done an incredible job down there, we need to keep this up.

MICHAEL COLLINS

We may soon be facing negotiations. I want the British to know that we are a serious outfit.

(MORE)

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

I want them to know that we have men in every part of the country and I want them to know that we can inflict heavy casualties on them, any place, any time. I want more ambushes. Big ones. Ones that'll make the papers.

Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly nod in agreement. Their faces tell a story. They're tired, yet focused - determined to do whatever they can to win a Free Ireland.

RICHARD MULCAHY

Connolly, I want you to take over in Roscommon and Leitrim. Not enough is happening there. As Michael said, we can't let them think they're safe anywhere.

SEAN CONNOLLY

But sir, with the greatest respect, I think I'm better placed in Longford with General MacEoin here.

RICHARD MULCAHY

You've done good work, no doubt, but we need you out west. Can we count on you?

Sean Connolly visibly swallows his pride. He's clearly not happy with the orders.

SEAN CONNOLLY

You can, of course sir.

RICHARD MULCAHY

Good.

CLOSE on Sean Connolly's face. He's not thrilled about the decision at all.

INT. CONNOLLY TRAIN STATION - DUBLIN - EVENING

The train station is busy with activity. People hopping on and off trains. Sean MacEoin and Sean Connolly walk towards the tracks.

SEAN MACEOIN

I'll see you soon okay?

SEAN CONNOLLY

This is bollocks.

SEAN MACEOIN

It's orders pal.

SEAN CONNOLLY

And why do I get the short end of the stick? We have a good thing going in Longford. Those battles and raids weren't just you!

SEAN MACEOIN

I wouldn't for a moment say they were! Every single man has had a huge part in our success so far, particularly yourself.

Sean Connolly shakes his head.

SEAN CONNOLLY

I suppose I'll have to just get on with it.

SEAN MACEOIN

You'll be grand, Sean. And sure look it, they're as thick as they come out in Roscommon, your men won't challenge you.

Sean MacEoin winks. Sean Connolly CHUCKLES. A train comes to a stop at the track.

SEAN CONNOLLY

That's me.

SEAN MACEOIN

We'll catch up soon alright?

They shake hands.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Take it handy now, and don't get too sure of yourself hanging with the big boys will ya?!

SEAN MACEOIN

You know me.

SEAN CONNOLLY

That's what I'm worried about!

Sean Connolly pats Sean MacEoin on his shoulder and steps onto the train. He gives one last wave, which Sean MacEoin returns, and then disappears in to the carriage.

Sean MacEoin watches as the train pulls out of the station. He watches it go around the bend in the distance, to begin it's journey out of the city and off into the country.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DUBLIN - NIGHT

They are in a different room now, though it's not decorated too dissimilarly. Instead of a large desk, there is a large circular table. At this table sits, Michael Collins, Sean MacEoin, DAN BREEN (Prominent Irish Volunteer), EOIN DUFFY (Leader of the Monaghan Brigade of the IRA) and SEAN MOYLAN (IRA Commandant).

They are LAUGHING.

MICHAEL COLLINS

I had to hire a PR person there on the spot, such was the state of the report you gave me!

Sean MacEoin shakes his head, LAUGHING.

SEAN MACEOIN

Now do ya want me to fight or write?

MICHAEL COLLINS

A bit of both would be grand!

SEAN MACEOIN

Ah g'way out of that, it'd be a fine day when I pull that off!

The LAUGHTER slowly comes to a stop.

EOIN DUFFY

I'm surprised a Longford man like yourself pulled off such a feat as in Ballinalee, fair play.

DAN BREEN

I would have thought that it'd take someone as mad as Longford man to do so!

Sean MacEoin CHUCKLES.

SEAN MACEOIN

You wouldn't be wrong now.

DAN BREEN

Saying that, I'll shoot any fecker who dares step foot on my land. And I wouldn't think twice about it!

SEAN MOYLAN

You're not well in the head!

MICHAEL COLLINS

A great win of course, Sean, all joking aside.

(MORE)

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

Now we need more of that. I trust you'll keep your ear to the ground, and act accordingly?

SEAN MACEOIN

Of course. My men are good fighters. I have the utmost faith in them. And I know that they stand as strongly for this as we do.

EOIN DUFFY

Michael, have ya any idea as to the terms?

MICHAEL COLLINS

We want the Brits out. We want the right to govern ourselves. Anything less won't be acceptable.

SEAN MOYLAN

I say we keep going, till every last one of them leaves.

MICHAEL COLLINS

God willing, they'll get the message sooner rather than later.

(beat)

I'm fecking wrecked lads.

Michael Collins nods and smiles, staring at the desk. The fight for freedom has intensified, they are in deep, and must keep pushing.

EXT. COTTAGE - SELTON HILL - LEITRIM - DAY

The air is silent. A few lights can be seen flickering inside the cottage. Bicycles are resting against the wall of the cottage.

INT. COTTAGE - SELTON HILL - LEITRIM - CONTINUOUS

Sean Connolly and five other Volunteer officers are huddled over a table.

VOLUNTEER

I know of a patrol up near the Roscommon border. It could be perfect.

SEAN CONNOLLY

What's the ground like up there?

VOLUNTEER

We'd be fairly hidden.

SEAN CONNOLLY

Arms? Have we a rifle per man?

VOLUNTEER

We do. And several grenades left as well.

SEAN CONNOLLY

We have some mines stashed away, I'll grab those too.

(beat)

Lads, we are to hit them hard, we must be relentless. That's orders now. Not from me, but from the Big Fella.

The Volunteers nod in acknowledgment.

EXT. BALLINALEE VILLAGE - DAY

Sean MacEoin arrives back in Ballinalee. Ned Tynan walks with him. The village is still teeming with Volunteers.

NED TYNAN

We have the place secured. No-one has been in or out without us knowing.

SEAN MACEOIN

Lovely. Listen, I know of a patrol that comes from Granard to Longford. Do ya know it?

NED TYNAN

I don't.

SEAN MACEOIN

Well they pass through fairly regularly, or so I'm told. We're hitting them hard. I'll draw up plans. You're to be ready, as are the rest. We go at it in a day or so.

NED TYNAN

Where is this spot?

SEAN MACEOIN

Clonfin.

They stop walking.

Ned Tynan nods and Sean MacEoin pats him on the shoulder.

NED TYNAN

General? I'm sorry to say but there's been some trouble.

(MORE)

NED TYNAN (CONT'D)  
 Duffy and Connolly's. Look.  
 (beat)  
 As well as your own.

Ned Tynan points towards the distance, where smoke can be seen rising.

Sean MacEoin shakes his head in annoyance.

EXT. MACEOIN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

His house beside the forge is on fire. It's crumbling to the ground. We focus on this for some time as we see chairs and dressers burn in-front of us.

INT. CURRYGRANNE HOUSE - HALLWAY - BALLINALEE - DAY

Currygranne house sits tucked away in an estate, surrounded by trees. It's occupant, JAMES MACKAY WILSON, brother of Henry Wilson who is now the head of the British Imperial Forces. It's a well kept house - the tenants are clearly quite wealthy.

There's a KNOCK on the door. James MacKay Wilson opens it to reveal Sean MacEoin, who greets him with a big smile.

SEAN MACEOIN  
 Well James! How are ya? Have ya a minute?

EXT. CURRYGRANNE HOUSE - BALLINALEE - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin stands beside James Mackay Wilson and points towards the houses on fire in the distance. They walk a bit further down the driveway, to get a clearer view.

SEAN MACEOIN  
 Those houses over there that are on fire. Do ya see them?

James Mackay Wilson is a bit shaken.

JAMES MACKAY WILSON  
 I do. I do.

SEAN MACEOIN  
 They belong to two very good men. Sean Duffy and Sean Connolly. I've learned that my own home is in flames too. The home where my family lived.

(beat)

(MORE)

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Let me remind you that this destruction is being carried out by forces acting under Henry Wilson, your brother.

James MacKay Wilson catches a venomous look in Sean MacEoin's eyes.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

I must insist that you write to your brother, Sir Henry, and you tell him that should another house in County Longford be burned by the British...

Sean MacEoin turns back to look at the Currygranne House.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Then Currygranne House would follow up in flames, and, not only that, but you, yourself, may very well die with it.

James MacKay Wilson is sweating nervously now. Sean MacEoin stays calm and stern.

JAMES MACKAY WILSON

There's no way he would listen to me! He wouldn't hear of it!

SEAN MACEOIN

Well, in that case it will be too bad for Currygranne.

Sean MacEoin SIGHS..

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

And too bad for yourself. And if you should attempt to leave Currygranne, I will have you executed before you reach Edgeworthstown or Longford.

James MacKay Wilson's sweats have now become shakes, too.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Now, if the battle is left to the military of both sides to fight this out, I would, in the name of the Government of the Republic, guarantee protection of your life and property to you and others in this county, on condition that you remain strictly neutral.

INT. MARTIN'S COTTAGE - BALLINALEE - EVENING

It's a small cottage with a smaller building to the side of it. Nestled off the road and surrounded by fields, it's quite private.

Sean MacEoin sits at the kitchen table pouring over papers.

His mother, Catherine, is with him, as well as the elderly owners of the cottage. Two volunteers accompany him.

CATHERINE

You shouldn't be worrying about the forge.

SEAN MACEOIN

Sure who else will?

CATHERINE

One of your brothers or sisters. Me, even.

SEAN MACEOIN

I wouldn't want to burden any of you with this now. Dad would turn in his grave if I dropped this in someone else's lap!

LENA, his other sister, bursts in the door.

LENA

John!

Sean immediately stands up.

SEAN MACEOIN

What is it?

LENA

There's a load of troops heading this way.

SEAN MACEOIN

Right, go on! Get away from here. Tell your brother and sister to leave their posts too!

Sean MacEoin quickly moves to the windows and starts barricading them with whatever he can find.

He ushers his mother and the elderly ladies into a back room and closes the door. He looks around the room, checking everything is in order.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Stay in there now! It'll be grand!

He moves the kitchen table against the back room door where his mother and the elderly ladies are, barricading them in.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
 (to the volunteers)  
 Lads, at those windows, be ready!

Sean Maceoin peeks out the window to see that the British have already arrived and have the house surrounded. Sean MacEoin moves towards the front door.

CLOSE on his hand - he's gripping a grenade.

EXT. MARTIN'S COTTAGE - BALLINALEE - CONTINUOUS

TRACKING OVER THE SHOULDERS of the DISTRICT INSPECTOR McGRATH and SERGEANT RYAN who are leading the way, followed by British soldiers, who make their way up the short drive towards the front door.

Suddenly, as they approach, the front door opens and Sean MacEoin steps out. He starts SHOOTING and the British return fire indiscriminately. District Inspector McGrath drops to the ground, having been caught in the cross-fire. Sean MacEoin lobs a grenade at the advancing British soldiers. He immediately dashes back into the house and closes the door.

Sergeant Ryan and the British soldiers disperse and run for cover. The grenade EXPLODES, sending dust up into the air.

The dust settles and District Inspector McGrath lay dying.

INT. MARTIN'S COTTAGE - BALLINALEE - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin stands away from the door listening. It's quieter now.

He opens the door and steps out front to see District Inspector McGrath laying dead. He examines the area - the other soldiers can't be seen. They've ran for cover.

He bends down towards District Inspector McGrath and says a prayer in his ear.

SEAN MACEOIN  
 O my God, I am heartily sorry for  
 having offended Thee, and I detest  
 all my sins, because of thy just  
 punishment, but most of all because  
 they offend Thee, my God, who art  
 all good and deserving of all my  
 love.

He just stands up when a couple of British soldiers, returning to check the situation, spot him and start opening fire.

Sean MacEoin returns fire and takes off through the fields. The soldiers give chase.

EXT. FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin runs as fast as he can through the fields. He checks behind him to find that the British are now giving up.

He runs for some time until exhaustion gets the better of him.

TRACKING AND CLOSE on his face as he sweats and BREATHES HEAVILY. He's gasping for air, literally running for his life.

The faint sound of hammer CLANGING can be heard.

EXT. LONGFORD TOWN - DAY

It's the next day now. Longford is quiet given it's early morning. British soldiers patrol the streets, more so than usual.

CLOSE on a poster on a shop window. There is a picture of Sean MacEoin.

It reads: "WANTED FOR MURDER OF THE DISTRICT INSPECTOR McGRATH"

There are lots of these posters speckled throughout the street. He is now officially a wanted man.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLONFIN - ROAD - DAY

ON SCREEN: 1st February, 1921 - 5:00

The area is quiet, A few sheep can be heard, with the occasional cow. Most are still asleep. There's dew still on the grass and it's brisk out.

In position just off the side of the road is Captain M.F. REYNOLDS, and a few more Volunteers. He looks towards a fort in the distance that overlooks the road.

INT. FORT - CLONFIN - CONTINUOUS

In the fort is Sean MacEoin and Sean Duffy. They have a good view out over the road, hidden away. They watch the third position which is on the opposite side of the road. They are all positioned in a triangle, and in such a way that means no-one will be caught in cross-fire.

Captain HUGH HOURICAN is in command of this third position. A member of his section, PADDY CALLAGHAN, places a mine in a hole they have dug up.

EXT. CLONFIN - ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Paddy Callaghan runs the wires of the mine through a sawed off steel barrel from a gun. A Volunteer accompanies him.

VOLUNTEER

You must be raged having to cut  
that off the Queen Anne are ya?

PADDY CALLAGHAN

Ah would ya stop. It has me heart  
broken.

They both CHUCKLE. They run the wires safely back to the side of the road where they are in cover. He gives a thumbs up to the fort.

INT. FORT - CLONFIN - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin and Sean Duffy acknowledge this and return the thumbs up. Sean MacEoin looks to M.F. Reynolds and gives a thumbs up. M.F. Reynolds returns this. Good to go.

INT. FORT - CLONFIN - AFTERNOON

ON SCREEN: 1st FEBRUARY, 1921 - 15:00

Sean MacEoin keeps watch over the road. He sits with Sean Seamus Conway. They've been waiting a while now. There's a quiet moment - one for reflection.

SEAMUS CONWAY

I don't think I've ever been so  
afraid in my entire life.

SEAN MACEOIN

Ballinalee?

Seamus Conway nods, staring at the ground.

SEAMUS CONWAY

At one stage I was hoping that one  
of the bullets would just catch me  
in the head.

Seamus Conway looks up.

SEAMUS CONWAY (CONT'D)

I don't know what'll happen. I'm  
afraid for myself and for my  
family.

SEAN MACEOIN

We haven't much of a choice. If we don't do something then we lose everything.

(beat)

You're a brave lad Seamus. Ye all are. I've faith in the lot of ye.

SEAMUS CONWAY

Do ya think it'll work?

SEAN MACEOIN

I know we'll do everything we can do to make it work.

Sean Duffy quietly returns to the fort area.

SEAN DUFFY

There hasn't been any movement in Granard as far as we know. You sure we've the right spot?

Sean MacEoin looks to M.F. Reynolds in the distance who is waving to signal the approach of the British convoy.

SEAN MACEOIN

Oh I'm certain Duffy. Have a look.

Sean Duffy looks to see M.F. Reynolds waving.

Sean MacEoin signals to Hourican and Callaghan.

EXT. CLONFIN - ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Hugh Hourican, Paddy Callaghan and the other Volunteers are crouched low in the grass out of sight. It's quiet, until the RUMBLING OF TRUCKS approaches.

CLOSE on Paddy Callaghan, his hands on the exploder, ready to press at the right moment.

INT. FORT - CLONFIN - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin looks on. The first truck comes into full view.

INT. BRITISH TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

POV of the British truck driver. The road ahead is empty as far as he can see. He approaches the point of the mine.

INT. FORT - CLONFIN - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin continues to watch. The first truck is now right over the mine.

BOOM! The mine EXPLODES, tearing off the front of the truck and sending it spiralling towards the road side.

EXT. CLONFIN - ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Down by the road side, M.F. Reynolds and his men open fire on the second truck following closely behind. GUN-FIRE reigns down on the second truck from the position of the fort also.

The driver of the first lorry is wounded and lays by the road side. The passenger escapes injury and manages to grab hold of a dreaded Lewis gun that he was carrying. He aims it towards the fort and opens fire.

INT. FORT - CLONFIN - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin, Sean Duffy, and the Volunteers in the fort take cover from the hail of bullets.

There's a break in the Lewis gun firing and a brave Sean Duffy seizes the moment and quickly aims his rifle directly at the British soldier manning the Lewis gun.

POP! He shoots the soldier, leaving him dead by the Lewis gun.

EXT. CLONFIN - ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Down on the road, amidst the chaos of GUN-FIRE, another British soldier spots the Lewis gun and dashes towards it.

He quickly positions himself and continues firing towards the fort.

OVER THE BRITISH SOLDIERS SHOULDER as he fires at the almost invisible fort. It isn't long however until the WHOOSHING of a bullet is heard, striking him in the chest and knocking him to the ground.

EXT. COTTAGE - SELTON HILL - LEITRIM - DAY

British soldiers approach and surround the cottage that Sean Connolly and his men are in, preparing their ambush. The British soldiers quietly make their way towards the front door, others covering the windows.

EXT. CLONFIN - ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Some of the British soldiers are now hidden under a small bridge, returning fire where possible.

INT. FORT - CLONFIN - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin, Sean Duffy and the Volunteers continue firing. They can see the others firing as well. Eventually, the return fire stops.

A British soldier emerges from under the bridge with his hands raised. He is bleeding heavily. Wounded British lay all around the road.

BRITISH SOLDIER  
We surrender!

INT. COTTAGE - SELTON HILL - LEITRIM - CONTINUOUS

Inside the cottage, Sean Connolly is sitting with his men. A bullet bursts through the window, striking one of the Volunteers and knocking him off his chair.

Sean Connolly and the rest return fire, but the British troops file into the cottage, firing at the men. One by one the Volunteers drop to the floor.

A wounded Sean Connolly limps towards a separate room and closes the door behind him.

EXT. CLONFIN - ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin notes this surrender.

SEAN MACEOIN  
(yelling)  
Cease fire!

Sean MacEoin walks to meet the British soldier who had surrendered. This soldier is now in a heap on the ground, having died from his wounds. He looks around.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
The rest of ye, surrender, now!

The British soldiers, who could, walk show themselves, hands up. Sean MacEoin lines them up and Sean Duffy begins searching them.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Lads, start gathering the arms and equipment.

The Volunteers nod and go about their business.

One of the British soldiers approaches Sean MacEoin.

BRITISH SOLDIER 2  
Who's in charge?

SEAN MACEOIN

I am.

BRITISH SOLDIER 2

My commanding officer wishes to  
speak with you.

Sean MacEoin walks with the soldier to find the commanding officer, WORTHINGTON CRAVEN, bleeding badly. Sean MacEoin tears some fabric from a cloth and tries to staunch his wounds, to no effect.

COMMANDER WORTHINGTON CRAVEN

Don't trouble yourself lad. I'm  
past medical aid I'm afraid.

(beat)

Are you the O/C of these attackers?

SEAN MACEOIN

Yes.

COMMANDER WORTHINGTON CRAVEN

I am not worried about myself, but  
I am anxious about my boys, and  
want to know what you are going to  
do with them.

SEAN MACEOIN

If you were in our position, what  
would be the result?

COMMANDER WORTHINGTON CRAVEN

Is it as bad as that?

SEAN MACEOIN

No. No it's not. You have  
surrendered and are now disarmed. I  
will treat you as best I can, by  
attending to your wounded and  
giving one truck to take them to  
hospital.

INT. COTTAGE - SELTON HILL - LEITRIM - CONTINUOUS

A badly wounded Sean Connolly, in the corner of a room shoots aimlessly. Two British soldiers enter the room and turn their guns towards him.

EXT. CLONFIN - ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The British Commanding officer is gasping for air. Sean MacEoin stands over him, another British soldier to his right.

COMMANDER WORTHINGTON CRAVEN

If I send my man away, will you  
tell me your name?

SEAN MACEOIN

It won't be necessary to send him  
away. My name is Commandant  
MacEoin. I'm an alleged murderer  
according to the findings of a  
recent court of inquiry held by  
yourselves.

Sean MacEoin crouches down, to be at eye-level with the  
fallen British Commanding Officer.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

I'd be glad to know your name.

COMMANDER WORTHINGTON CRAVEN

Commander Worthington Craven of the  
Royal Navy. And Commandment  
MacEoin, you are, indeed, a  
murderer.

Sean MacEoin stands up again, now looking down on the British  
Commanding Officer.

SEAN MACEOIN

If you had remained in the Navy or  
in England, I would not have had  
any occasion to have shot you down.  
This is our country and we are the  
Army of the Irish people, acting  
under proper authority. Our mission  
is to purely fight our nation's  
battle for the Independence that is  
rightfully ours.

Sean MacEoin stops for a moment and ponders, choosing his  
next words.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

So long as you, an alien force,  
remain in our country...

(beat)

We will continue to shoot you down.  
We are fighting for our freedom and  
our right to govern ourselves only.  
The killing of our people by  
yourselves, that's murder. You've  
no right to be here.

Sean MacEoin, with that grit in his eyes, calms and awaits a  
response. The British Commanding Officer is looking at him  
intensely. COUGHING and WHEEZING.

COMMANDER WORTHINGTON CRAVEN  
I believe you are right. And I wish  
you success.

He COUGHS and SPLUTTERS.

COMMANDER WORTHINGTON CRAVEN (CONT'D)  
Be kind to my fellows, and remember  
your promise!

Those are his last words and he dies right before Sean  
MacEoin's eyes.

INT. COTTAGE - SELTON HILL - LEITRIM - CONTINUOUS

The British are leaving the cottage.

SLOW PAN across the room. We see a boot, motionless. We  
follow along to see Sean Connolly. He's dead. The British did  
not spare any life and Sean MacEoin's best friend is now  
dead.

EXT. CLONFIN - ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The Volunteers are busy collecting the arms. Sean MacEoin  
finds a soldier bleeding on the bridge. He approaches him and  
begins to make a tourniquet.

DYING SOLDIER  
It's a bit late mate, you should  
get moving.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Ah no, sure this won't take a  
second.

There's RUMBLING OF TRUCKS in the distance.

DYING SOLDIER  
That'll be our reinforcements, you  
should go.

Sean MacEoin speeds things up a notch.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Almost done now.

Sean Duffy runs over to Sean MacEoin.

SEAN DUFFY  
Come on, come on. They're here! We  
have to go!

Sean MacEoin ties the tourniquet and stands up.

SEAN MACEOIN  
 (yelling)  
 Open fire!

They all start firing towards the truck of reinforcements while starting to fall back. They keep firing, causing the truck to make a U-turn and head back the way it came.

INT. MURRAY'S WOOD - CLONFIN - CONTINUOUS

The men regroup having successfully managed to evade death, yet again.

SEAN MACEOIN  
 Are we all here?

TOM BRADY is holding his shoulder.

TOM BRADY  
 I got a nick on the shoulder is all.

They gather around him.

SEAN MACEOIN  
 Shite, are ya okay?

TOM BRADY  
 I'll be grand, I'll be grand.

Sean MacEoin looks back towards Clonfin, exhausted, but satisfied with the result.

A young Volunteer comes hurtling through the woods towards them.

YOUNG VOLUNTEER  
 Sean!

SEAN MACEOIN  
 What is it?

YOUNG VOLUNTEER  
 I've a letter. A report coming from Mohill.

The young volunteer hands Sean MacEoin the letter. He opens it and begins to read.

Sean MacEoin immediately hears WHITE NOISE. The people around him sound MUFFLED and the ground is swaying.

INT. COONEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Still WHITE NOISE. Alice Cooney opens the door to Sean MacEoin who falls into her arms. He is crying.

We can't hear him, but we can see that he is incredibly upset. Alice Cooney rubs his head and comforts him.

For a time, it seems as though Sean MacEoin's grief is unmanageable. We see his human side. The side that hurts, like everyone else. He cries uncontrollably.

CUT TO:

INT. COONEY'S HOUSE - DAY

It's the next day. Sean MacEoin sits on the end of the bed. Alice is sat beside him.

The WHITE NOISE has stopped now.

ALICE COONEY  
How are you feeling?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Devastated.

ALICE COONEY  
I know. There's nothing you could have done.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Don't you think I know that? I can't control every fucking thing!

Alice leans away from Sean MacEoin.

ALICE COONEY  
I'm sorry, I didn't mean...

Sean MacEoin interrupts.

SEAN MACEOIN  
I haven't even got the time to dwell. I've to go to Dublin again later. I'm in the fucking horrors and they dish it out to me!  
(beat as he calms himself)  
I've some work to do before I go.  
I'll see ya.

INT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - DAY

Sean MacEoin, the news of the death of his friend still fresh, is hammering a horse-shoe. He starts methodically, but after a few seconds he grits his teeth and starts slamming the horse-shoe, bending it well out of shape. He stands up and furiously slams it, so much so that the horse-shoe flies off the stand and on to the floor.

He lets a ROAR of emotion and launches the hammer across the room - it smashes against the wall.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DUBLIN - DAY

Michael Collins is strolling around the room, furious. It's a different house this time. It's barely furnished, it looks to be ore of a shell of a building with half a kitchen left in it.

MICHAEL COLLINS

It's absolutely unacceptable that  
you ask this of him!

The Minister for Defence, CATHAL BRUGHA, is also standing. He's also pretty angry! Richard Mulcahy stands between them, incase things go beyond words.

CATHAL BRUGHA

You don't make the fecking orders  
Michael! As Minister of Defence I  
have every right to select the men  
I want. And I've selected MacEoin.  
He's already agreed.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Of course he has, he's a soldier!  
That's your problem right there.  
Slap bang in your face. If you  
truly know what was happening, in  
the field, you wouldn't dream of  
taking him from Longford to carry  
out some fecking assassination in  
London for fuck sake!

CATHAL BRUGHA

What gives you the right then?

Michael Collins grits his teeth.

MICHAEL COLLINS

I'm president of the Irish  
Republican Brotherhood. That gives  
me the right! I know these men and  
I know where they are needed!

Richard" Mulcahy looks towards Cathal Brugha and shoots him a look - stand down." Cathal Brugha grits his teeth, steam nearly pouring from his ears. He SLAMS A TABLE.

CATHAL BRUGHA

Feck ya anyway Michael!

CUT TO:

EXT. DUBLIN MARKET - DUBLIN

Out on the street now. We see that this safe house is a small, red brick bungalow, the kind you might find in Drumcondra. Michael Collins puts an arm around Sean MacEoin. Sean MacEoin is dressed in civilian clothes. They walk through a busy market, with stalls selling fruits and vegetables. Vendors yell their offers in thick Dublin accents. Sean MacEoin and Michael Collins blend into the crowd.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Sorry for dragging you up here. You are to stay where you are.

SEAN MACEOIN

Your choice was it?

MICHAEL COLLINS

Ah yeah.

SEAN MACEOIN

Did you throw your toys out of the pram?

Michael Collins LAUGHS.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Shut up you ya gobshite ya.  
(beat)

Listen, be careful going back on that train won't ya? I've had word from D.I. Harrington that the British know you're in Dublin. He said he'll get you off the train if need be. Did you leave your pistols like I told ya?

SEAN MACEOIN

I did.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Good man. And listen, I'm sorry about Connolly. He was a good man, and a hell of a soldier.

Sean MacEoin tentatively nods in agreement. The news is still raw. Painful. But he knows that there is a war to be won.

INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY

Sean MacEoin sits in an empty carriage with another volunteer James Brady, who had travelled to Dublin with him.

SEAN MACEOIN

How'd you get on?

JAMES BRADY

Got the ammo.

Suddenly, there is a loud RUSTLING of people moving. Fifteen - yes fifteen - British soldiers board the carriage that Sean MacEoin and James Brady are in.

They look at each other in a state of panic. Sean MacEoin quickly hops out of his seat and leaves the carriage.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

The British soldiers are all very merry all of a sudden. Their officer watches them, LAUGHING. It turns out they're drunk. The officer sits down between Sean MacEoin and James Brady.

BRITISH OFFICER

You lot are very good. My boys haven't had a drop in weeks.

SEAN MACEOIN

Ah well, luckily the shop had a few nagans left.

BRITISH OFFICER

Not like the rest of those shiners in your country eh?

JAMES BRADY

Jaysus no. It's a disgrace.

BRITISH OFFICER

It is, yeah. Absolutely. Ruffians. The lot of them.

SEAN MACEOIN

Couldn't agree with you more! Bunch of bastards they are.

The train approaches Mullingar. Sean MacEoin looks out the window and sees that the train is not pulling up to the main platform, rather a side platform. To his shock, there are a large group of British soldiers waiting.

STATION ANNOUNCEMENT (V.O.)

All civilians out on the platform.

Sean MacEoin and James Brady get up and make their way to the exit of the train.

The British officer who had been sitting with them sticks his head out the window of the train.

BRITISH OFFICER  
All right in there lads!

POLICEMAN  
All civilians on the platform  
please.

The British officer TUTS and pulls his head back in the window.

EXT. MULLINGAR TRAIN PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin, looking a bit worried - understandably - lines up with the rest of the civilians.

TRACKING the policeman who are walking up and down the line, examining the civilians. One of the policemen approaches Sean MacEoin and looks at him carefully. He takes a step forward, continuing down the line, before stepping back again and giving Sean MacEoin another, thorough look.

Sean MacEoin sets his teeth and tries to calm himself.

It feels like an age, but finally the policeman, satisfied he doesn't know him, continues down the line.

Sean MacEoin draws a breath of relief.

This relief didn't last long, however, as Head CONSTABLE KIDD, who had escorted Sean MacEoin to prison in Sligo years back and stood in the court room with him, was making his way down the line.

Sean MacEoin stiffens himself and assumes the most unconscious look he can.

Head Constable Kidd looks Sean MacEoin up and down.

CONSTABLE KIDD  
State your name.

SEAN MACEOIN  
J.J. Smith. From Aughnacliffe.

CONSTABLE KIDD  
You lie! You're MacEoin of  
Ballinalee!

SEAN MACEOIN  
No, no. I assure you.

Constable Kidd calls for his superior officer, DISTRICT INSPECTOR HARRINGTON.

CONSTABLE KIDD  
This, this is MacEoin of  
Ballinalee!

District Inspector Harrington looks at Sean MacEoin, up and down. He knows it is him, but he's helping them.

SEAN MACEOIN

Superintendent, this officer of yours is drunk, and insists on making me out to be MacEoin when in actual fact, I'm J.J. Smith from Aughnacliffe!

DISTRICT INSPECTOR HARRINGTON

He doesn't look like the man we want.

Head Constable Kidd is becoming irritated now.

CONSTABLE KIDD

Send for Dunne!

DUNNE approaches them.

CONSTABLE KIDD (CONT'D)

(pointing at Sean MacEoin)  
Who is this man?

DUNNE

I've never seen him before!

DISTRICT INSPECTOR HARRINGTON

I thought so.

District Inspector Harrington turns on his heels.

CONSTABLE KIDD

I'm sorry Superintendent Harrington, but I must again tell you that this man is MacEoin of Ballinalee!

Head Constable Kidd suddenly grabs Sean MacEoin by his right hand and rolls up his sleeve, revealing the many white burnn spots.

CONSTABLE KIDD (CONT'D)

If that isn't a blacksmith's arm, then I am a liar! I declare him to be MacEoin and if you do not arrest him, I will report you in the morning!

District Inspector Harrington SIGHS, partially in annoyance but also because he has let the side down. Sean MacEoin looks at him, with a silent plea in his eyes.

District Inspector Harrington SIGHS again.

DISTRICT INSPECTOR HARRINGTON

All right, arrest him!

SEAN MACEOIN  
What? This is an outrage!

EXT. MULLINGAR - STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers and policeman who had been at the train station are now marching towards the barracks.

Sean MacEoin is part of the line, with guards beside him, in front of him and behind him.

Head Constable Kidd catches up to Sean MacEoin. He's pretty happy with himself.

CONSTABLE KIDD  
Ya nearly had us, ya sly prick. Got  
your mate too, Brady.

Head Constable Kidd points towards a man being led away in hand-cuffs up ahead. Sean MacEoin takes a look. To his surprise, it isn't James Brady at all, rather, some poor man with the same surname presumably.

Sean MacEoin smiles to himself and turns to Head Constable Kidd.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Sir, you're a fierce clever man. In-  
fact, should the opportunity arise,  
I'd put you up for a promotion!

Head Constable Kidd looks at him, slightly upset that he didn't get the reaction he wanted. You know the face - like he's just smelt something awful.

Head Constable Kidd falls back as the rest of the line marches on.

Sean MacEoin looks around. There are guards everywhere, rifles at every turn.

They approach a hill on the road - a bridge where the road passes over the train tracks - over this road, Sean MacEoin knew there was a sharp left turn.

His eyes dart around again, his breathing quickens.

With lightning speed, Sean MacEoin throws his shackled hands towards the guard on his left, delivering a swift elbow to his, well, delicate area! He collapses to the floor in agony.

With almost one motion, Sean MacEoin swings back towards his right, delivering another well placed - and unfortunately placed for the guard - blow, bringing this guard to his knees.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Down on them, lads! MacEoin is here!

This yelling brings about a commotion as soldiers, policemen and guards turn to see what is happening. In this moment, Sean MacEoin bolts over the bridge and down the road. The guards that were behind him, distracted by the commotion, trip and fall over the two guards that Sean MacEoin hit in the groin.

GUN-FIRE rings out as they fire in all directions.

TRACKING OVER Sean MacEoin's shoulders now as he runs down the street. His heavy overcoat and shackled hands don't slow him down. Bullets WHIZZ over head, just coming to high due to the hump in the road, and Sean MacEoin running down a hill.

He's in familiar territory, being shot at by the enemy and making a get away!

Sean MacEoin spots two archways to his left and makes towards them, bullets still striking the walls and road around him. He approaches them to find they are blocked off and the doors locked.

He turns direction and darts across the street to a little side street.

Dashing down this street, Sean MacEoin sees two policeman coming from the other end, right towards him.

Sean MacEoin doesn't slow down, and tries to run past them.

The policeman draw their pistols and start firing at the on-rushing Sean MacEoin.

One bullet fizzes past him, the next, smacks him on the right of his chest. It slows him momentarily, but he tries to continue running.

He breaks through the two policemen who now just watch him.

TRACKING Sean MacEoin as he runs towards us. His mouth filling with blood, he is SPLUTTERING now.

FROM HIGH we see him come to a stop and collapse on the ground. He gets up again, continues a few paces, but collapses. The policemen immediately run up to him to take him into custody.

At this moment, a group of policemen who were pursuing him come into the side street.

They surround Sean MacEoin and proceed to CURSE, YELL and beat him with the butts of their rifles.

No part of him is spared as the brutal beating continues, Sean MacEoin still bleeding profusely.

District Inspector Harrington then turns the corner.

DISTRICT INSPECTOR HARRINGTON  
(yelling)  
Stop! Stop! Immediately! Pick him  
up.

Two policemen pick up a battered, bruised and bloodied Sean MacEoin.

DISTRICT INSPECTOR HARRINGTON (CONT'D)  
Take him to the barracks.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Michael Collins, as furious as he was when we last saw him, is pointing the finger at Cathal Brugha.

MICHAEL COLLINS  
I fecking told you!

CATHAL BRUGHA  
This is hardly my fault! It's war,  
Michael, this things happen!

Michael Collins, breathing heavily, calms himself.

He softens his tone.

MICHAEL COLLINS  
I'm getting MacEoin out of there,  
no matter what. I'll use my own men  
if I have to.

Cathal Brugha SIGHS. He knows that there is no point fighting him on it.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Sean MacEoin lays on a gurney in the ambulance. His hands are still shackled. Two GUARDS sit either side of him, both armed.

GUARD  
I'm warning you, if there is any  
attempt made to rescue you, or you  
try to escape, I am putting two  
rounds through your head.

The guard presses his gun to Sean MacEoin's ear.

GUARD (CONT'D)  
To show you I am in earnest, the  
muzzle of my revolver will remain  
in your ear, from here, to Dublin.

SEAN MACEOIN  
That's incredibly consoling sir.  
(beat)  
And most certainly in line with  
British tactics. But sure, I'm  
shackled. If you remove these,  
giving me a fair chance, then I'll  
be perfectly satisfied with your  
conditions.

Sean MacEoin gives the guard a cheeky wink.

GUARD

We know you too well to take any risks, MacEoin!

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

It's the next day. Sean MacEoin is laying on a bed, ready to undergo surgery on his bullet wound.

A doctor prepares anaesthetic.

SEAN MACEOIN

No, no. I won't be having any of that!

DOCTOR

Excuse me?

SEAN MACEOIN

I won't be having that. If I go under, god knows what I'll say!

DOCTOR

You must do, it'll be incredibly painful.

SEAN MACEOIN

I'm prepared to endanger myself, but I won't risk saying anything that might endanger others.

(beat)

I insist, please do not use anaesthetic.

The doctors look at each other, perplexed to say the least.

DOCTOR

Very well. You've been warned.

INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE THE SURGERY - CONTINUOUS

The doors to the surgery are closed. A nurse sits at the station.

CRIES OF PAIN can be heard coming from the surgery.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Sean MacEoin is awoken by the CHAPLAIN, an old and miserable looking man. There is a sizeable audience surrounding Sean MacEoin's bed, consisting of nurses and soldiers.

CHAPLAIN

Are ya awake now?

Sean MacEoin nod, albeit very confused.

CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

I don't know why you were saved.  
You must realise that your actions  
deserve no other outcome than your  
death! To think, the chaos you've  
caused and people murdered! And for  
what, ha? You're laying here half  
dead!

Sean MacEoin clenches his jaw and listens.

Finally, the Chaplain stops berating him.

SEAN MACEOIN

Thank god.

The Chaplain moves a bit closer to Sean MacEoin.

CHAPLAIN

(whispering)

I come from the Big Fellow.

Sean MacEoin freezes for a moment, unsure of how to react.  
Noticing that the quiet may raise suspicion, he speaks up.

SEAN MACEOIN

Well father, maybe you are right,  
and I am the wicked ruffian you  
believe me to be! In that case, it  
might be good for my soul to have a  
private talk with you.

CHAPLAIN

Good, my child.

The Chaplain ushers the others away from the bed and pulls a  
screen around him.

CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Listen, Collins sent me in this  
morning. Six soldiers will arrive  
at eleven o'clock on Saturday night  
to move you. The officer will be  
Paddy Daly or Emmet Dalton. You are  
to force your way down to them if  
they don't make it up.

EXT. DUBLIN STREETS - NIGHT

EMMET DALTON and PADDY DALY stand on a corner watching a  
British patrol.

EMMET DALTON

Same time again.

PADDY DALY  
Like clockwork.

They watch as the soldiers dismount their trucks outside a pub, leaving them largely unattended.

EMMET DALTON  
Shouldn't be too hard. Right, come on.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A British soldier walks in to see Sean MacEoin.

BRITISH SOLDIER  
Right, MacEoin, we're taking you to Mountjoy.

Grimace falls on Sean MacEoin. The escape plan is now in trouble.

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - DAY

Sean MacEoin lays in a cell. A PRISON GUARD approaches.

PRISON GUARD  
You have a visitor.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Show them in.

To Sean's delight, in walks Alice Cooney. She looks tired, with heavy bags under her eyes - the kind you get from consistent worry. He perks up.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)  
Alice! Jaysus, you shouldn't have come all the way up here.

ALICE COONEY  
Ah would ya stop. I'm hardly not going to visit.

Alice places a hand on Sean MacEoin's cheek. She looks at his face - all of his face, taking it in.

ALICE COONEY (CONT'D)  
I'm scared, Sean.

SEAN MACEOIN  
I know. But it'll be grand, trust me. It'll work out.

Alice fights back her tears.

ALICE COONEY  
Do ya promise me?

SEAN MACEOIN  
Of course.

Alice casually takes off her overcoat and throws it on the bed. The guard glances over towards them now and then.

ALICE COONEY  
I can't have anything bad happening  
to ya.

Alice leans forward and kisses Sean MacEoin.

ALICE COONEY (CONT'D)  
Right, I'd better go. Take care of  
yourself yeah?  
(beat)  
I mo seaichead (in my jacket). A  
thuiscint? (understand?)

SEAN MACEOIN  
Is feidir liom (I do).

ALICE COONEY  
(whispering)  
Teigh go dti oifig an Gobharnoiri  
(go to the Governor's office).

Alice gets up to leave the room. The guard watches her closely. Alice stops and takes another look at Sean MacEoin.

ALICE COONEY (CONT'D)  
Sean, Is breá liom tu (I love you).

Sean MacEoin's faces warms. He feels a sense of calmness, albeit brief. He tries to mask his smile. The guard looks at them, completely confused as to what's going on! He's frustrated that he doesn't understand.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Ta me i ngra leat freisin (I love  
you too.)

Alice smiles.

ALICE COONEY  
(nodding towards the cell  
guard)  
Amadan (fool)!

Sean MacEoin CHUCKLES.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Aontaigh (I agree)!

Alice leaves the room.

CLOSE on the overcoat - there's a note in the pocket.

PAN closer to see the initials "M.O.C."

EXT. DUBLIN STREETS - NIGHT

Emmet Dalton and Paddy Daly watch the British truck pull up to the same pub. They rush towards them as they get out of the truck and without hesitation, they draw their revolvers.

The British soldiers turn and see them coming towards them. They reach for their guns.

POP! POP! POP! POP! Emmet Dalton and Paddy Daley fire two shots each, killing the British soldiers.

They drag the bodies into an alley, emerging in the British soldier uniforms. They hop in the truck and drive off.

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin is being accompanied to the Governors office by the WARDEN.

WARDEN

What the hell do you need to talk about?

SEAN MACEOIN

The mistreatment of prisoners by your men.

The warden, a bit thrown by the statement responds.

WARDEN

But you're prisoners.

SEAN MACEOIN

Regardless, I'd appreciate your help.

EXT. MOUNTJOY PRISOM - CONTINUOUS

Emmet Dalton and Paddy Daly pull up at Mountjoy. A soldier at the gate inspects them briefly before nodding to let them in. They drive the truck into the prison and dismount, making their way towards the building where the Governors office is located.

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

As the warden and Sean MacEoin approach the Governors office, a group of BLACK AND TAN GUARDS turn the corner.

BLACK AND TAN GUARD

Halt!

WARDEN

I'm taking him to the governors.

BLACK AND TAN GUARD

I don't care. All prisoners back to their cells.

The warden stutters and looks at Sean MacEoin.

BLACK AND TAN GUARD (CONT'D)

Now!

They are interrupted when GUN-SHOTS are heard ringing out downstairs. The Black and Tan guards split, with half going towards the GUN-FIRE and the others forcing Sean MacEoin back towards his cell.

EXT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Emmet Dalton and Paddy Daly are running and ducking, returning fire.

EMMET DALTON

There!

PADDY DALY

Sure feck it! The whole thing has gone to shite!

They keep shooting back towards the guards, missing them. They run towards a low wall and climb over, shooting indiscriminately towards the guards who are chasing them.

So close. But not close enough.

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CELL - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin sits in his cell. The door SLAMS SHUT. He is writing on a piece of paper. It reads: "Trust in God, go ahead, and do your best!"

INT. OLD HOUSE - DUBLIN - CONTINUOUS

We are in yet another new safe house location. They move around, so they can't be tracked. This one looks as though it is being lived in. Pictures hang on the walls - people we haven't seen before.

A Republican flag is hanging over a worn fire-place. Michael Collins sits in a large, checkered arm-chair - his head in his hands.

Emmet Dalton and Paddy Daly are with him.

PADDY DALY  
They knew some how.

MICHAEL COLLINS  
I know. I know.

EMMET DALTON  
What do you want us to do now?

MICHAEL COLLINS  
Sit tight for the moment.

PADDY DALY  
Sit tight?

MICHAEL COLLINS  
(sharply)  
Yes! Isn't that what I said?

Michael Collins is stressed. His hair not as well kept as usual.

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)  
I'm going to make this treaty work.  
I promise ye that. Mark my words.

INT. COONEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Alice Cooney's mother is hugging Alice. On the front page of the newspaper is a picture of a battered Sean MacEoin. The headline:

"SEAN MACEOIN STANDING TRIAL FOR THE MURDER OF D.I.McGRATH."

INT. COURT ROOM - DUBLIN CASTLE - DAY

Sean MacEoin stands before the judge, jury and many military policeman. He is handcuffed and two armed soldiers stand either side of him.

JUDGE  
John Joseph McKeon (Sean MacEoin),  
you are to be tried by the British  
Court Martial for the murder of  
District Inspector McGrath in  
Longford.  
(beat)  
How do you plead?

SEAN MACEOIN

As a soldier of the Irish  
Republican Army, I have committed  
no offence, either of national or  
international war. I admit no  
offence and I plead not guilty.

CUT TO:

INT. COURT ROOM - DUBLIN CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

A doctor is on the stand, giving his statement.

DOCTOR

I only looked at the body, with the  
aid of a bicycle lamp. I could not  
see how he was wounded. I simply  
looked at the body, and saw that he  
was dead. Anything that could  
puncture the skin could have caused  
the wounds I saw - two small wounds  
in the neck.

CUT TO:

INT. COURT ROOM - DUBLIN CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

An RIC man who was present at Martin's cottage takes the  
stand.

RIC SERGEANT

I was standing three feet from  
MacEoin when I fired.

MR. BEWLEY, who is cross-examining witnesses speaks up.

MR. BEWLEY

And you agree that D.I. McGrath was  
stood between yourselves and Mr.  
MacEoin?

RIC SERGEANT

Yes.

Mr. Bewley steps back towards Sean MacEoin. The judge shakes  
his head and rolls his eyes.

MR. BEWLEY

I understand that the prisoner  
would like to address the court. I  
ask that his handcuffs be removed  
while he is reading his notes.

JUDGE

Very well, remove his handcuffs.

A guard removes Sean MacEoin's handcuffs. Sean MacEoin rubs his forearms. He limbers for a few seconds.

He takes a look at the guard next to him, and notices his revolver in its holster.

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin's hand as he reaches into his pocket. He breaths deeply and removes a scrap of paper. He brings it to belly level and reads it:

"Trust in God, have patience and wait!"

EXT. EXCHANGE HOTEL - OPPOSITE DUBLIN CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Three Volunteers are watching Dublin Castle intently, perhaps for a sign of an escaping Sean MacEoin.

INT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT - LONDON - CONTINUOUS

Michael Collins and Richard Mulcahy are sitting around a table discussing the treaty. Sitting with them, are members of the British parliament.

BRITISH MP

We want peace as much as you do.

MICHAEL COLLINS

How much is it worth to you?

BRITISH MP

If we can agree terms, then we will release all prisoners.

(beat)

But not those under the death sentence.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Unacceptable.

BRITISH MP

Then what?

MICHAEL COLLINS

All of them, I want every last one of them out.

BRITISH MP

And if we don't agree?

MICHAEL COLLINS

Then we don't sign.

INT. COURT ROOM - DUBLIN CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin steadies himself, the other note would have meant a fire fight!

He CLEARS HIS THROAT and begins his speech. It's long, but critically important.

We notice a man at the back of the court room, listening and taking notes. We later learn this man to be FRANK HEMMING.

SEAN MACEOIN

You try me not as an officer but as a murderer, because I took arms in defence of my native land. The principle which is proper for the Jugo-Slavs, the Czecho-Slovaks, the Belgians, the Serbians, is equally a proper principle for the Irish.

EXT. GRANARD - CONTINUOUS

The people of Granard are working together. One lady brings food to different groups of people who are huddled outside burned homes. Others are clearing rubble, searching for personal belongings.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)

That stand has been fully approved by the Irish people.

(beat)

I am glad that, in carrying out my duty to my country, I have always acted in proper accord with the usages of war.

INT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT - LONDON - CONTINUOUS

Michael Collins, Richard Mulcahy and Eamon De Valera are leaving the room, making their way out onto the streets of London, which, in stark contrast to those of Ireland, are in good shape.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)

I was badly beaten when captured. Unnecessarily so. I was wounded and gave no resistance, yet the British soldiers and policeman continued their brutal assault. The manner by which D.I. McGrath passed is not clear, and it is perfectly reasonable to think that he may have died at the hands of his own men, as it is that he died by mine. This, clarified by the other soldiers who were present.

INT. COURT ROOM - DUBLIN CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is captivated, listening to Sean MacEoin's speech. He looks around the room, taking in everyone's reactions.

SEAN MACEOIN

I crave no favour. I am an officer of the Irish Army, and I merely claim the right, at your hands, that you would receive at mine, had the fortunes of war reversed the positions.

INT. ROSE COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Catherine, Peter, Kathleen, Lena, Molly and Alice Cooney sit around the kitchen table. There's untouched food in-front of them. Tea left to go cold. Concerned, there is a sombre mood.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)

If you don't give me that right, but execute me instead, then my last request is that you give my dead body to my relatives...

INT. COURT ROOM - DUBLIN CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin maintains his calm manner. His speech is strongly delivered.

SEAN MACEOIN

...so that my remains may be laid to rest among my own people.

Sean MacEoin looks around again. The room is quiet, captivated. It's as if they already know the outcome. It is unavoidable.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Long live the Republic!

The room falls into a complete silence for a few moments.

Mr. Bewley stands.

MR. BEWLEY

I would like to invite Cadet T.J. Wilford to the stand.

CUT TO:

INT. COURT ROOM - DUBLIN CASTLE - CONTINUOUS

The soldier, T.J. WILFORD, who had surrendered at Clonfin sits in the stand.

T.J. WILFORD

Mr. MacEoin treated us with kindness, when, quite frankly, he would have been forgiven for shooting us right there. He even treated a fallen soldier of ours, despite this putting himself at risk.

T.J. Wilford makes eye contact with Sean MacEoin.

T.J. WILFORD (CONT'D)

I have no doubt, as to the humanity and kindness of this mans spirit.

Sean MacEoin gives a thankful nod to T.J.Wilford, fully aware that his escape from this situation is ever more unlikely.

INT. DUBLIN CASTLE - CELL - DAY

Sat in his cell, Sean MacEoin sits, looking a bit defeated.

A guard approaches and hands a letter to him through the bars.

GUARD

Mr. MacEoin, the decision.

Sean MacEoin opens the letter and scans through it. His face drops, the colour drains from it.

EXT. MACEOIN'S FORGE - DAY

The members of the North Longford Flying Column, the men who have fought bravely with Sean MacEoin throughout, are huddled outside the forge, passing a letter around.

SEAN MACEOIN (V.O.)

I congratulate you on the decision not to give up arms. Even if the cost is my life. I made the decision long ago to fight for a free Ireland, and to do so by any means necessary, even if it means my death. You are all fine men, and I hope you reap the rewards of our struggles. Forever yours, your General, and your friend, Sean MacEoin.

INT. MANSION HOUSE - DAY

Michael Collins walks through the halls with Richard Mulcahy.

MICHAEL COLLINS

We're close now. The truce is a  
stones throw away.

RICHARD MULCAHY

And MacEoin?

MICHAEL COLLINS

They won't budge on his release.  
Still to be executed.

RICHARD MULCAHY

The people of Longford have been  
campaigning for him to be let out,  
even as far as campaigning to get  
him into government!

MICHAEL COLLINS

A Joseph McGuinness jobby ha? Be a  
miracle for it to work twice. That  
said, I wouldn't put anything  
beyond those Longford folk!

(beat)

I won't be signing anything until  
he's let go.

INT. DUBLIN CASTLE - CELL - DAY

Sean MacEoin sits in his cell, reading letters, presumably  
from family and friends.

A guard stands watch outside.

CELL GUARD

Bit quiet aren't you?

SEAN MACEOIN

Reflecting.

CELL GUARD

Don't you get bored?

SEAN MACEOIN

Don't you?

CELL GUARD

Nah, important job. We can't risk  
letting you slip away. Your lads  
have even given up on you now.

(beat)

I could be at home, ya know?

(MORE)

CELL GUARD (CONT'D)

But instead I'm here arguing with a bunch of paddy pricks who couldn't govern themselves if they tried.

SEAN MACEOIN

Ah sure, you can't win an argument with an opponent who knows no integrity. Might as well shout at a wall.

CELL GUARD

Still, you haven't much time left now anyway.

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - LONDON - DAY

The man from the back of the court room, Frank Hemming, is KNOCKING on the door.

It's opened by staff.

FRANK HEMMING

I'm here to see Mr. George.

STAFF MEMBER

Ah, Mr. Hemming. He is busy at the moment I'm afraid.

FRANK HEMMING

Too much so for his emissary?

The staff member SIGHS and steps aside.

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

The British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, is sitting outside. His grand-child is running around playing.

Frank Hemming steps outside.

David Lloyd George notices him.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

Can't I have a moments peace, ever?

FRANK HEMMING

This is very important sir. It concerns the truce in Ireland.

INT. DUBLIN CASTLE - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The rain is coming down heavily now.

TRACKING OVER THE SHOULDER of a man approaching the guards at the entrance to Dublin Castle. We can't see his face, but it's Michael Collins, in disguise.

GUARD

State your name please.

MICHAEL COLLINS

James Gill. Here to visit a relative.

GUARD

Who?

MICHAEL COLLINS

Mr. MacEoin.

The guard looks him up and down. We still can't see Michael Collins' face. The guard nods and lets him in.

INT. DUBLIN CASTLE - CELL - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin sits opposite this man now. He's smiling, ear to ear - beaming!

SEAN MACEOIN

You're an awful gobshite!

The man, Michael Collins in disguise, removes his hat, and now we see his face. He LAUGHS.

MICHAEL COLLINS

What a bunch of eegits!

SEAN MACEOIN

You shouldn't be in here lad.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Ah would ye stop. Look, I've information for ya. Things have been progressing on the outside.

SEAN MACEOIN

Alright...

MICHAEL COLLINS

I've been down to Ballinalee to see your mother. I told her that next time I visit, you'll be with me.

SEAN MACEOIN

I appreciate you seeing my mother. How was she?

MICHAEL COLLINS

A fecking wreck boy, what do ya expect?

Sean MacEoin smiles. Michael Collins leans closer.

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

There's something going on, or you'd have been executed by now.

SEAN MACEOIN

Oh it's on the schedule Mick.  
(to the guard)  
Isn't that right sir?

The guard turns around.

CELL GUARD

What?

SEAN MACEOIN

Ah yeah, good man.

The guard shakes his head and turns away again.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

The fella is mad to top me.

Michael Collin's mood turns sombre.

MICHAEL COLLINS

I'm sorry we didn't get ya out.

SEAN MACEOIN

You tried Mick. It was out of our control.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Maybe I should have let you win that fight ha?

SEAN MACEOIN

Let me? Have all those 24 hour workdays left your memory wanting?

They both smile.

MICHAEL COLLINS

I won't let anything happen to ya. You will be all right.

SEAN MACEOIN

I don't know of a fellow dropping six-foot-six through a hole in the floor, with a rope around his neck, to be alright!

MICHAEL COLLINS

Ah come on now Sean, don't be a doubting Thomas. There's something to be said for the underdogs.

(beat)

There's a truce on the table.

Michael Collins winks.

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

You're going to be grand.

SEAN MACEOIN

I hope you're right.

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - LONDON - DAY

David Lloyd George sits with Frank Hemming. His grand-child is still running around and playing.

FRANK HEMMING

The situation isn't as simple as you might think. I've been keeping an eye on the trial of Commandant MacEoin you see...

David Lloyd George cuts him off.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

And?

INT. CABINET OFFICES - DUBLIN - DAY

Michael Collins sits amongst the other Cabinet members including Cathal Brugha, Eamonn Duggan and Richard Mulcahy. Richard Mulcahy is reading from a page.

RICHARD MULCAHY

To promote peace in Ireland, it has been decided to release forthwith, and without conditions, all members of Dail Eireann who are at present interned, or who are undergoing sentences of penal servitude or imprisonment.

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Frank Hemming continues making his case to David Lloyd George.

FRANK HEMMING

Well he's to be executed, though, given the terms of the truce, I don't think the carrying out of his execution will be a welcomed action. The terms of the truce could be torn up, and we risk a war even greater than the one we are already in.

INT. CABINET OFFICES - DUBLIN - CONTINUOUS

The members of the Cabinet listen closely. Notably, Michael Collins and Cathal Brugha are seated fairly far apart. Richard Mulcahy continues reading from the page.

RICHARD MULCAHY

His Majesty's Government have decided that one member, John Joseph McKeon, cannot be released.

Richard Mulcahy places the page down on the desk. The room falls silent.

THUMP! Michael Collins slams the desk.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Bollocks to it!

CATHAL BRUGHA

Calm down Michael! This is progress.

MICHAEL COLLINS

I'll do no such thing! And I'll tell you this, we aren't agreeing to those terms! Put out a statement, Dail Eireann will not officially meet, until Commandant MacEoin is released!

CUT TO:

EXT. 10 DOWNING STREET - GARDEN - DAY

David Lloyd George's grand-child runs up and tugs on his shirt.

GRAND-CHILD

Grandpa, come and play!

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

I can't right now, darling. I'm trying to decide whether to let a man live or die.

His grand-child, without any hesitation, answers for him.

GRAND-CHILD

Let him live.

(beat)

Come on and play!

His grand-child, with all the enthusiasm for life, runs off to play again.

David Lloyd George turns to Frank Hemming.

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

Well, there is your answer Frank.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings comes the decision!

Frank Hemming smiles.

FRANK HEMMING

Can I get that in writing please, sir?

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - DAY

Sean MacEoin is being led down the green mile. It's execution day. The ever so friendly guard who guarded his cell is with him. He looks fairly pleased with himself.

EXT. DUBLIN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Frank Hemming, carrying a folder dashes towards a British truck occupied by two British soldiers.

FRANK HEMMING

I need a lift, right away!

BRITISH SOLDIER

Piss off, who are you?

FRANK HEMMING

Emissary to the Prime Minister.

The soldiers' demeanor changes. Funny that.

BRITISH SOLDIER

Okay, of course, sir. My apology, hop in. Where are we taking you?

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin continues with his guards towards the execution area of the prison. We hear what sounds like a hammer hitting iron. The sound grows in intensity the closer they get.

EXT. DUBLIN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The British truck tears through the streets. Frank Hemming holds on tightly as the truck weaves through traffic, as fast as it can go.

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

The guards come to a stop. One stays with Sean MacEoin, the other enters the room ahead of them.

SEAN MACEOIN

Problems?

CELL GUARD

You wish. Cheeky prick.

EXT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

The British truck enters Mountjoy prison and skids to a halt. Frank Hemming jumps out and runs towards the entrance.

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

The door opens. Inside, a rope hangs, with a noose.

GUARD

All set.

The two guards guide Sean MacEoin into the room and begin positioning him. One guard turns to watch the door. The other places the noose around Sean MacEoin's neck.

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin's face. He is afraid, but doing his utmost not to show it.

The sound of the hammer CLANGING off iron intensifies. It gets so loud we can barely hear the guards.

CELL GUARD

Too little, too late MacEoin. We got you in the end.

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - HALLS - CONTINUOUS

Frank Hemming runs through the halls. He is stopped by a British policeman.

POLICEMAN

Woah! Where are you off to in a hurry?

Frank Hemming is frantic.

FRANK HEMMING  
You must let me through  
immediately.

POLICEMAN  
And why's that?

The sound of the hammer CLANGING continues. It has a rhythm,  
about three seconds between hits.

INT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

The cell guard tightens the noose on Sean MacEoin's neck.

CELL GUARD  
You should have stuck to being a  
blacksmith. Not sure I've hung one  
of those before. It's a shame you  
won't see the Free State.

CLOSE on Sean MacEoin's face. He closes his eyes and clenches  
his jaw. The relentless hammer CLANGING continues.

GUARD (O.S.)  
Okay, we're all set!

SEAN MACEOIN  
(muttering)  
Long live the Republic!

CLANG, CLANG, CLANG! It grows in intensity still.

CELL GUARD  
Drop him!

Still on Sean MacEoin's face. The CLANGING, once every three  
seconds, suddenly becomes once a second. It's quicker now.  
The CLANGING starts to become deeper, more muffled.

Suddenly, the CLANGING becomes a FRANTIC KNOCK.

Sean MacEoin's eyes bolt open. There is someone KNOCKING on  
the door.

The guard opens it to reveal Frank Hemming, holding up a  
letter. The CLANGING sound has now stopped completely.

FRANK HEMMING  
Cease what you are doing,  
immediately!

The guard SIGHS and looks at Sean MacEoin. Sean MacEoin is  
sweating but smiles, having realised that somehow, somehow,  
he has gotten away with it.

FRANK HEMMING (CONT'D)

This man is to be released. Right away.

GUARD

Says who?

FRANK HEMMING

Read it.

The guard reads the letter. It takes him a while. He SIGHS and looks at the cell guard.

GUARD

Let him go.

The cell guard begins to remove the noose. Sean MacEoin rotates his head, stretching his neck.

The cell guard, reluctantly, steps aside and let's Sean MacEoin pass him.

Sean MacEoin stops and turns to the cell guard.

SEAN MACEOIN

Jaysus that's a turn of events isn't it? Still, you haven't long left now anyway, have ya?

Sean MacEoin smiles and winks at the cell guard, who bites his tongue.

EXT. MOUNTJOY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Sean MacEoin walks out of the prison gates, onto the streets of Dublin. He takes a deep breath and smiles to himself. Dublin is still healing from the war, physically it shows the scars of the war.

Still, there's a sense of optimism in the air.

EAMONN DUGGAN (O.S.)

Looking for a lift?

Sean MacEoin turns to see Eamonn Duggan standing by a car. He smiles and makes his way towards him.

They both hug and pat each other on the back.

SEAN MACEOIN

How long are ya out?

EAMONN DUGGAN

Not long before you to be honest!

Eamonn Duggan gestures to the car.

EAMONN DUGGAN (CONT'D)

Come on.

INT. VAUGHAN'S HOTEL - DUBLIN - CONTINUOUS

Michael Collins, Arthur Griffith, Richard Mulcahy, Cathal Brugha, Eoin Duffy and of course, none other than Alice Cooney, are congregated inside the hotel lobby.

The door opens, Eamonn Duggan leads the way, holding it for Sean MacEoin.

He looks up to see them all waiting for him. He smiles - the type of smile you can't control or subdue.

Before he can say a word, Michael Collins grabs him and lifts him slightly off the floor.

MICHAEL COLLINS

What did I tell ya!

The men LAUGH.

SEAN MACEOIN

Alright that's enough!

Michael Collins grabs him close again, and leans in towards his ear.

MICHAEL COLLINS

We did it Sean. We fecking did it!

They shake hands before greeting the others. He shakes their hands one by one, and exchanges hugs.

SEAN MACEOIN

Arthur, jaysus, it's good to see you!

ARTHUR GRIFFITH

And you Sean.

He's greeted everyone, when he gets to Alice Cooney. They both smile at each other, and stare for what seems an age. Sean MacEoin grabs her near and kisses her passionately.

The others jeer and cheer in the back-ground, but they don't notice!

SEAN MACEOIN

Alice, I'm so glad to see you. I can't tell you enough.

(beat)

I love you Alice.

ALICE COONEY

I love you too, Sean.

Sean MacEoin takes her hands. He looks deep in her eyes.

SEAN MACEOIN

Alice, I've something important to ask you. Something that can't wait any longer. Particularly given my knack for getting in to trouble.

SLOW PAN into Alice's face. She's giddy, she knows what's coming.

EXT. LONGFORD CATHEDRAL - DAY

There are jubilant scenes as newly wedded Sean MacEoin and Alice Cooney walk down the giant stone steps of the iconic Longford Cathedral.

There are huge crowds gathered. Members of his Flying Column line the walk from the church to the car. They raise their rifles as Sean MacEoin and Alice walk under them.

Arthur Griffith, Eoin Duffy and Michael Collins walk closely behind Sean MacEoin and Alice Cooney.

Sean MacEoin salutes his men. We catch a glimpse of Seamus Conway, Ned Tynan, Paddy Callaghan, Hugh Hourican, Sean Duffy and M.F.Reynolds - the men who have fought with him closely.

A moment of sadness crosses over Sean MacEoin's face.

Michael Collins, as if he has sensed this sadness, throws an arm around Sean MacEoin.

MICHAEL COLLINS

He'd be proud of you, ya know that?

SEAN MACEOIN

I do, yeah. Still be nice to have had him here.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Ah sure, he'll be looking down giving ya jip boy. Connolly was one of the best this country will ever produce.

Sean MacEoin smiles.

MICHAEL COLLINS (CONT'D)

We did it for him. We did it for the people of Ireland.

(beat)

Now enjoy your day!

SEAN MACEOIN

Oh I intend to.

Those who attended the wedding are waving and throwing flowers at them as they pass. Alice shakes hands and is hugging people.

An old man - a familiar face - steps out to get their attention.

OLD MAN

Sean, congratulations. Come here, I got those Dail loan yokes you were telling me about.

SEAN MACEOIN

Ah very good!

OLD MAN

Me wife is delighted for ya now.

SEAN MACEOIN

Thank you very much. Be sure to thank her from us.

OLD MAN

I will. She's a pain in the arse John I'll tell ya. Anyway, come here, when are ya back in the forge? I've another MARE needing shoes.

Sean MacEoin LAUGHS. Michael Collins casually and gently pushes the man back in to the crowd as they continue walking.

SEAN MACEOIN

I'll let ya know. I'll let ya know!

MICHAEL COLLINS

For feck sake, they don't give ya a minute do they!

(beat)

Speaking of, there's one more thing. We're promoting you to Divisional Commander.

Sean MacEoin stops in his tracks and turns to face Michael Collins. He shakes his hand.

SEAN MACEOIN

Honoured Michael. Really, I am.

MICHAEL COLLINS

There's no better man for it. I've your first order of business too, if you can squeeze it in.

Sean MacEoin looks at Alice, who has been walking alongside them the whole time, waving and hugging people who emerged to congratulate her from the crowd.

She shakes her head and smiles.

ALICE COONEY  
Stay out of fecking trouble!

She CHUCKLES. So too do Michael Collins and Sean MacEoin.

CUT TO:

EXT. ATHLONE BARRACKS - DAY

Hundreds of British troops are marching out of the barracks. Presiding over this, is Sean MacEoin.

On one side, the British are marching out, on the other, the Irish Free State Army are marching in to take over the barracks.

They salute Sean MacEoin as they pass him. He watches them, proud.

A British Colonel, COLONEL HOARE, walks up to Sean MacEoin, just as the last group of British soldiers leave the barracks.

COLONEL HOARE  
General MacEoin.

SEAN MACEOIN  
Colonel Hoare.

COLONEL HOARE  
Looks like you've done it.

SEAN MACEOIN  
The will of the people is what did it. Now go home and relax.

Sean MacEoin leads the way, walking with Colonel Hoare. The Irish Free State Army watch as they pass in this highly symbolic moment.

They reach the gate of the barracks.

HIGH LOOKING DOWN on Athlone barracks. The tables have turned. The barracks is occupied by the Irish Free State Army. At the gate is Sean MacEoin with Colonel Hoare. Outside of the barracks, the British soldiers continue marching away.

BACK ON THE GROUND NOW, Colonel Hoare crosses the threshold of the barracks.

Sean MacEoin watches as the last British soldier leaves Athlone barracks, for good.

EXT. ATHLONE BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

Standing at a flag pole, before the men at his command, Sean MacEoin begins to hoist the tri-colour, Republican flag.

CLOSE on the flag as it begins to rise above the barracks.

The soldiers watching salute the flag - the symbol of the Irish Free State.

Outside the gates, Colonel Hoare continues walking away from the barracks, the Republican tri-colour raised behind him in the distance.

Sean MacEoin walks up and down the line of soldiers and inspects his men before taking a position up in a small step. He looks out over his men, a proud moment.

SEAN MACEOIN

We all know what's been symbolised by Athlone, with its barracks with its castle, and its dungeons. We hated Athlone because it represented the symbols of British rule and the might of the British battalions.

His men watch him intently. Sean MacEoin, poised as ever, stands tall over the men, proud.

WE PAN THROUGH those listening, not one man hasn't his eyes fixed on Sean MacEoin.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

Well thank god. The day has now come, when I, as your representative, and representative of Ireland, and representative of the Irish nation, presented arms to the last British soldier, and let him walk out the gate.

(beat)

In other words, he skipped it!

The soldiers LAUGH. Sean MacEoin cracks a smile, and regains his composure.

SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

You men of Athlone, you men who stand dressed in the uniform of Ireland. We have it, and we will hold it. Therefore, Athlone today, for Ireland, and for the midlands, and from this day forward, shall not represent the monument of British tyranny, but it will be a guarantee to the people of Ireland of their freedom.

(MORE)

## SEAN MACEOIN (CONT'D)

A guarantee to enable them to live  
in peace, prosperity, and progress!

The soldiers watching CHEER and APPLAUD.

WE PAN slowly towards Sean MacEoin's face. A steely, brave man who fought for a seemingly impossible cause and against all odds, won.

He cracks a smile and salutes his men. The Republican flag waving in the back-ground.

CUT TO BLACK.

ON SCREEN we see real footage and images of Sean MacEoin and the locations in the film while the following text displays alongside:

"As a result of the efforts of men such as Sean MacEoin, the Anglo-Irish Treaty was negotiated, ratified by Dail Eireann on 7th January 1922.

The Irish Free State was born and Ireland had finally won the right to govern itself.

The Irish people were free.

Unfortunately, some members were unhappy with the terms of the treaty, leading to a bloody Civil War which saw Irishmen fight against one another, and divided the Irish Free State.

Sean MacEoin, part of the pro-treaty group led by Michael Collins, toured extensively to promote it. He led many successful defences against the anti-treaty forces, including a successful recapture of Sligo Town and had a huge part in shutting down a coup attempt, ultimately cementing peace in Ireland.

In 1929, Sean MacEoin, was appointed as the Lieutenant General and Chief of Staff of the Irish Army, the highest level one can achieve.

Sean MacEoin went on to achieve a distinguished political career, having spent many years as a TD in Dail Eireann, visiting the Geneva peace Conference and solidifying Ireland's Free State status.

After a long life with his wife Alice, General Sean MacEoin died in St.Bricin's Hospital on 7th July 1973, age 79."

Known as The Blacksmith of Ballinalee, Sean MacEoin was instrumental in fighting for, defending and securing an Irish Free State, shaping the very country that exists today.

FADE TO:

## INT. MACEOIN'S FORGE

Tastefully lit, with one/two chair(s) being the only things highlighted with some of the tools visible in the background. One/two chair(s) sit in the fore-ground.

In the two chairs sit one/two of Sean MacEoin's relatives (**to be decided**) who will read a quote that sums up Sean MacEoin's character.

## RELATIVE

Like Collins, Sean MacEoin was a soldier at heart, and like Collins, he risked his life and limb - even to death itself for the cause of Ireland. He suffered more than is generally known from the grim after-effects of his war injuries and prison privations, but we never heard a word of recrimination.

(beat)

Sean MacEoin's vision and generosity of mind overcame any shred of bitterness there might have been. The tragedy of the Civil war, when former comrades became bitter enemies, affected him no less than it did others.

(beat)

In the role of soldier he was gallant, and the bravest of the brave, but his steely militarism was always tempered with tenderness. He observed a strict sense of justice, of mercy, of forgiveness.

## CREDITS

AN DEIREADH (THE END)

