THE LAST COLONY

Written by

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Based on a true story

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FADE IN:

CHRYON - IRELAND 1976

EXT. IRISH COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

A stone path winds through the green grass to a leath doras. The top is open. It's bucolic: birds chirp, bees buzz - like something out of a dream.

In the background another sound: the clipping of a plant. Each clip louder - quickly followed by another - something is wrong.

EXT. SIDE OF IRISH COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY/CONTINUOUS

A 40 year old women, BRIGID MCKENNA, harrowed, frantic, determined, clips the tops of red roses - the emblem of England - one after another.

At her feet, the green grass of Ireland is covered by a sea of English red.

INT. IRISH COUNTRY HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY/CONTINUOUS

A transistor radio on a country kitchen table plays Red is the Rose, by Liam Clancy. Sitting in a chair, MARY MCKENNA - At 18 she wears a grammar school uniform reminding us she is in her final year. She is pensive, studying.

Mary looks up to the window for a beat. Her dog, a Jack Russel, jumps onto her lap.

MARY MCKENNA
Hi you, what do you want? You're a silly dog so you are. Madra amaideach!

Mary pets and strokes the dog, kisses the dog on the head.

MARY MCKENNA (CONT'D)
Let me get you a biscuit.

The dog pulls away. Growling, barking - he jumps down, runs to the leath doras - someone is there.

MARY MCKENNA (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Mummy, mummy Aoife is here, we will have to be going soon so we will.

EXT. SIDE OF IRISH COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY/CONTINUOUS

BRIGID MCKENNA stops clipping the roses, wipes her brow.

BRIGID MCKENNA
(to herself)
Ceart go leor Mary, I'm coming.

EXT. FRONT OF IRISH COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY/CONTINUOUS

The Jack Russell runs down the front path. Mary - right behind. A MAILMAN squats, pets the dog on the head.

MAILMAN
(looking up)
Mary, I have a special letter.

MARY MCKENNA
(surprised)
Oh, I'll take it just, who is it from?

Mary takes it, looks at it for a beat, turns, and without a word walks back into the house closing the leath doras.

INT. IRISH COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY/CONTINUOUS

Leaning on the leath doras, Mary looks across the living room to a picture on a bookcase: it's her father, SEÁN MCKENNA. He cradles a fox in his arms.

BRIGID MCKENNA
(shouting)
Mary, Mary? Are you and Aoife ready? Beidh mé leat go luath.

Mary looks at the letter in her hand, walks to the kitchen window, looks out - then

CHYRON - BELFAST 1971

EXT. NEWRY CITY HIGH STREET - DAY

Thousands of civil rights protestors prepare to march to the town square. They carry BANNERS: JOBS FOR ALL, YOUNG SOCIALISTS, ONE MAN ONE VOTE, HOUSING FOR ALL.

The civil rights protestors move up the high street. Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) run towards them - menacing. It is tense. We know there is going to be trouble.

CIVIL RIGHTS MARCHERS
(to the RUC)
Seig heil, seig heil.

SOME CIVIL RIGHTS MARCHERS
One man one vote, one man one vote,
one man one vote, one man one vote.

More RUC arrive. They carry batons, shields. The protestors salute and yell others hold hands - sing...

CIVIL RIGHTS MARCHERS
Seig heil, seig heil.

OTHER CIVIL RIGHTS MARCHERS
(singing)
We shall overcome, We shall overcome, We shall overcome, some day. Oh, deep in my heart I do believe, we shall overcome some day.

SEÁN MCKENNA leads the marchers - megaphone in hand. Behind him a BANNER: NEWRY PEOPLES DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE.

A RUC DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE, a RUC SPECIAL BRANCH DETECTIVE, and a dozen or so RUC appear out of nowhere. They block Seán McKenna. The marchers press forward. Behind the Deputy Chief Constable, metal barricades are erected.

SPECIAL BRANCH DETECTIVE
Who are you?

SEÁN MCKENNA
Cé hé tú, cén fáth a bhfuil tú ag stopadh dom.

SPECIAL BRANCH DETECTIVE
Fuck off with that noise taig.
Speak the Queens English.

SEÁN MCKENNA
Is mise Seán McKenna

The Special Branch Detective writes down Séan McKenna’s name.

The DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE raises his megaphone.

DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE
Under the powers invested in me by the Public Order Act, Section 2: I ORDER that this march can not proceed along this route.

CIVIL RIGHTS MARCHERS
Seig Heil! Seig Heil! Seig Heil!

Seán McKenna raises his megaphone.

SÉAN MCKENNA
We do not recognise your government, it is illegitimate. Tá do rialtas mídhleathach, ní aithneoimid áititheoir!

The protestors roar approval, clap and chant. They sit - in.

CIVIL RIGHTS MARCHERS
One man one vote, one man one vote, one man one vote.

SEÁN MCKENNA
(over a megaphone)
I ask you, in the name of the people of Newry, let this peaceful procession proceed along our original route.

Civil rights marchers push past the DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE, the SPECIAL BRANCH MAN, and the RUC - breaking through the barrier.

SEÁN MCKENNA (CONT'D)
(over a megaphone)
In conducting this march in our city, we will act in a responsible manner, proving to the authorities that our intentions are only to secure civil rights for the people.

A dozen RUC attack SEÁN MCKENNA: the megaphone - ripped from his hand. Beaten with batons he falls: he is kicked.

From the side streets hundreds of RUC emerge, they baton charge the marchers. The marchers break ranks - everyone runs everywhere. Many fall, RUC drag many away.

SEÁN MCKENNA lifts himself off the ground - his head - bloody. He picks up his bent megaphone...

SEÁN MCKENNA (CONT'D)
We will not stop until we have rights, we will find our home, we will find our place.

EXT. STORMONT PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, BELFAST - DAY

Perched, protected by two lions, Britannia looks out to the land she rules. Under her, the Unionist legislature. A Westland Wessex XR529 helicopter warms up on the front lawn.

Three men stand at the top of the stairs, NORTHERN IRELAND (NI)PRIME MINISTER BRIAN FAULKNER points to Belfast.

Rich powerful, Falkner wears a perfectly tailored dark suit which shows off his wealth and stature. His wispy white hair frames the forehead of a diabolical thinker. His accent - English sounding, fake, posh.

The second: the GRAND MASTER of the County Grand Orange Lodge Belfast. Purposeful, powerful, the king maker is in full regalia. The third, HOME SECRETARY REGINALD MAUDLING.

N.I.PRIME MINISTER BRIAN FAULKNER
We need order, a return to a time when everyone knew their place. We need a hearts and minds campaign and the rehabilitation of the Irish community.

HOME SECRETARY MAUDLING
The Prime Minister wants to see an end to this conflict.

N.I.PRIME MINISTER BRIAN FAULKNER
Then, he needs to act. He needs to get these terrorists off our streets.

Home Secretary Maudling walks to the helicopter, stops, he hears shouting - looks back.

GRAND MASTER
(shouting)
Protect our culture Home Secretary, protect the Orange State. We will defend the King and his heirs so long as he or they support the Protestant Ascendancy.

INT. GIRLS CATHOLIC SCHOOL NEWRY, NORTH OF IRELAND - DAY

SEÁN MCKENNA sweeps a hallway floor collecting trash. Fit, tall, dark wavy hair, long sideburns, 40ish: Seán McKenna is understated as a custodian.

A self taught activist, his charisma and determination make him a natural leader.

The bell rings. Grammar school girls spill into the hallway. A young MARY MCKENNA emerges clutching books. Her gaze a searchlight. Seán McKenna turns around.

SEÁN MCKENNA
Mary!

Mary walks to her dad. Her friend AOIFE follows.

MARY MCKENNA
Da, da, how are you?

SEÁN MCKENNA
Good Mary, good. How is my daughter? Go dté mar atá tú?

MARY MCKENNA
I missed you, how was your march? Ma was raging about you...again.

SEÁN MCKENNA
Well, the Committee had me late getting home. Aiofe, conas tá tú?

AOIFE
I am fine Mr. McKenna. My da says you are brave to protest - just. He says marching is very dangerous.

Séan's touches the bruises on his cheek.

SEÁN MCKENNA
It may be Aoife. Please tell your Da from me - thank you, for his support.

Séan McKenna points to the custodian cart.

SEÁN MCKENNA (CONT'D)
Mary, can you bring me that sack?

Mary walks to the custodian cart, she grabs a heavy black denim bag with the NUMBER 8 on it.

MARY MCKENNA
This one?

Mary brings it to Seán. He brushes the NUMBER EIGHT with his hand - thinking. (beat)

MARY MCKENNA (CONT'D)
Da, Da! Can we see the rescue?...you promised so you did!

SEÁN MCKENNA
Ceart go leor, OK, I will meet you two later, say, 4:30 at the school rescue farm. Is that OK?

INT. GIRLS CATHOLIC SCHOOL ANIMAL RESCUE CENTRE NEWRY, NORTH OF IRELAND - SAME DAY/CONTINUOUS

SEÁN MCKENNA, MARY MCKENNA AND AOIFE stand around a large wooden box with a chicken wire lid. Inside, an injured fox with three cubs. Seán McKenna reaches in, pets the fox.

SEÁN MCKENNA
I found her, I was walking as I do, in a field not far from here. She was being hunted and was near death. She was not far from her den. When I was near, that's when I heard the chirps of the cubs.

Seán McKenna picks up the fox, cradles it. Aoife reaches into her bag, pulls out a camera.

AOIFE
Mr. McKenna can I take a picture for the school newspaper?

Aoife takes a picture.

MARY MCKENNA
Da, why do they hunt foxes with horses and dogs?

SEÁN MCKENNA
Well, I guess they do it because they want to be like the English.

AOIFE
They are so cruel so they are.

INT. CHEQUERS ENGLAND, GREAT HALL - DAY

The great hall, posh, large, comfortable. In front of the fireplace two sofas. Five men sit, middle aged, serious.

SECRETARY OF DEFENCE LORD CARINGTON
Where is Home Secretary Maudling?

A hereditary peer, SECRETARY OF DEFENCE LORD CARINGTON is a man of great panache and intellectual ability. Behind his large trademark glasses he expresses himself in pungent terms.

PRIME MINISTER HEATH
He should be here soon, ah, there he is.

PRIME MINISTER EDWARD (TED) HEATH: pudgy, middle aged. His smart mind and ruthless manner helped him graft his way out of the working classes to the top job in the UK.

A former feared Chief Whip, he always gets what he wants and he wants a legacy.

HOME SECRETARY REGINALD MAUDLING enters the great hall.

PRIME MINISTER HEATH (CONT'D)
Why, Home Secretary Maudling, yes, come join us. Tell us about your trip. How are things in Northern Ireland?

Home Secretary Maudling looks around the room, pushes his glasses, stares at PRIME MINISTER HEATH. You can hear a pin drop.

HOME SECRETARY MAUDLING
For God's sake, bring me a scotch. What a bloody awful country!

The Ministers all laugh.

Over weight, middle aged, HOME SECRETARY REGINALD MAUDLING is a shrewd negotiator. A cozen raconteur, he is unscrupulous in business and in his politics.

PRIME MINISTER HEATH
Ministers, this committee - GEN47, will manage the affairs of Northern Ireland. Foreign Secretary Home?

FOREIGN SECRETARY ALEC DOUGLAS HOME
Prime Minister - Ministers, over the next 20 months the governments foreign policy focus is its application to join the European Economic Committee. Ireland is attached to our application. I urge caution with the Irish.

HOME SECRETARY MAUDLING
I disagree, we need a policy in Northern Ireland that re-creates the status quo. We need stability.

SECRETARY OF DEFENCE LORD CARINGTON
The thugs, the murderers, the terrorists and those who breach the peace are the ones to go after.

PRIME MINISTER HEATH
What do we know about this new Prime Minister in Northern Ireland?

SECRETARY OF DEFENCE LORD CARINGTON
He is one of the nastier ones. A schemer - treacherous.

HOME SECRETARY MAUDLING
Whether or not Mr. Faulkner is up to scratch, we have to make the best we can of him. The problem for him is the minority and weeding out the violent and vocal elements.

PRIME MINISTER HEATH
Then lets get him here and see what he wants. I want to prosecute this insurrection before Ireland can have any say.

INT. TYRONE, HEADQUARTERS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION (NICRA) BOARDROOM, NORTH OF IRELAND - DAY

The room sparse, serves a purpose. Around the board table - activists. At the table head, PADDY JOE MCLEAN: thin, short, the consummate extrovert. Behind his propitious demeanour lurks a powerful intellect - a man hard to break.

The room is full of conversations.

PADDY JOE MCLEAN
Order, order. OK. Activists, the news from the Newry protest march: 148 arrested, hundreds more injured. 500 baton wielding RUC attended.

ACTIVIST 1
The Newry Peoples Democracy Committee is on the march again next week.

PADDY JOE MCLEAN
The vulgarity of this putrid Orange State intensifies by the day. We need to take a decision on the Enniskillen protest march.

ACTIVIST 2
Prime Minister Faulkner has declared marching illegal. (He)

ACTIVIST 1
(over)
Unless you are an Orange Man. Chair, this new law makes our protests much more dangerous. The law will embolden the RUC. The Army may even become involved.

PADDY JOE MCLEAN
If you can't fly then run, if you can't run, then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward. We will march, we will keep moving forward.

Activists pound the table.

PADDY JOE MCLEAN (CONT'D)
The future is ours. Do we stand up, or do we stand down. All those in favour of Enniskillen?

What say you? What say you?

All the activists raise their hands.

ACTIVISTS
One man, one vote. One man, one vote. One man one vote.

EXT. CHEQUERS ENGLAND, FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

A rolls Royce is parked, BRIGADIER FRANK KITSON emerges with MAJOR GENERAL FORD. They are greeted by GENERAL MICHAEL CARVER. They Salute each other.

GENERAL MICHAEL CARVER
Frank! Robert!

The men salute each other.

BRIGADIER KITSON
Why General Carver, how are you? I am surprised to see you. What the devil is going on?

GENERAL MICHAEL CARVER

Come, I have a surprise.