

'Dark Lies The Island': Dublin Review

BY FIONNUALA HALLIGAN, CHIEF FILM CRITIC | 1 MARCH 2019

A small, strange Irish town is the setting for this adaptation of Kevin Barry's short story collection



**SOURCE: DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
DARK LIES THE ISLAND**

Dir: Ian Fitzgibbon. Ireland/UK, 2019. 95mins

Kevin Barry's short stories form a queasy foundation for *Dark Lies The Island*, a bleakly comic film set in a one-horse town called Dromord. Writing the screenplay himself, the Irish author has constructed a wicked little picture with a big-screen appetite courtesy of director Ian Fitzgibbon (*Perrier's Bounty*) and attractive lensing by Cathal Watters (*Papi Chulo*).

The blend of down-and-dirty dialogue with cinematic sophistication is fronted by a committed cast

The churning lake turns the heads of the inhabitants of Dromord, run almost entirely by the Mannion clan, a pleasingly vile bunch to spend time with. When a mysterious man arrives to buy the local takeaway, he inadvertently alters their future. *Dark Lies The Island* combines elements of Barry's two short story collections, stitched together with scabrous humour, and while the blend isn't entirely smooth, perseverance is rewarded with a satisfyingly bleak payoff and some killer one-liners. Although *Dark Lies The Island* isn't a completely unfamiliar proposition — audiences who savoured John Michael McDonagh's *The Guard* will feel on safe ground here — there's a sparky chemistry which makes the film a surprise.

The blend of down-and-dirty dialogue with cinematic sophistication is fronted by a committed cast, chiefly Pat Shortt as Daddy Mannion, head of the clan and husband of the surprisingly youthful Sarah (Charlie Murphy). Turns out Sarah used to be the girlfriend of his son Doggy (Peter Coonan), who now licks his wounds in a caravan in the woods where he runs many and varied local businesses via telephone. There's another brother, village idiot Martin Mannion (Moe Dunford), and Daddy's daughter with Sarah, brilliantly played by newcomer Jana Moheiden. Meanwhile, the mysterious, scarred Richie (Tommy Tiernan) arrives in town having bought the local chip shop (from Mannions estate agents, naturally, which sits alongside Mannions undertakers, Mannions pub, etc).

Each piece of the jigsaw has a strong sense of identity, even if the flow between them isn't always smooth. The mullet-haired Doggy's caravan, where Sarah still visits to do his highlights. The curly-haired brothers who spy on Sarah's sexual shenanigans with Daddy at Doggy's behest. A karaoke bar which Richie visits; the funeral home; Martin's chicken farm; the roiling lake in this "godless hole of a place". While *Dark Lies The Island* is always identifiable as a series of vignettes, it does eventually add up to a satisfying conclusion.

The two veteran actors Shortt and Tiernan help ground the piece in the face of exuberant performances by the younger Mannions. As Sarah, Murphy is very fresh-faced for her hard-bitten character, although she sashays around the village in gold lame with the requisite aplomb. Moheiden is a real find, delivering her coarse dialogue with an apposite innocence.

Production company: Grand Pictures

International sales: Independent Film Sales, mail@independentfilmcompany.com

Producer: Michael Garland

Screenplay: Kevin Barry

Cinematography: Cathal Watters

Editing: Stephen O'Connell

Production design: Jeffrey Sherriff

Music: Stephen Rennicks

Main cast: Pat Shortt, Charlie Murphy, Peter Coonan, Moe Dunford, Tommy Tiernan, Aisling O'Sullivan, Jana Moheidan

Dark Lies The Island

Production Notes

DARK LIES THE ISLAND

Production Information

DARK LIES THE ISLAND is a dark comic melodrama about a family spinning out of control in a small Irish town. In this rural gothic western, two brothers try to crawl out from the shadow of their domineering father while his young wife is trapped in a whirlpool of sexual jealousy. As the story unfolds, over the course of a week, a long-standing family feud comes to a head, forcing all participants to face up to the truth.

DARK LIES THE ISLAND comes from the fertile imagination of Kevin Barry (City of Bohane), the award-winning novelist, playwright and screenwriter. Barry penned the script, drawing inspiration from characters in his collections of short stories. This is the fifth film for director Ian FitzGibbon (Perrier's Bounty, Death of a Superhero), who has helmed TV shows such as Moone Boy, Raised By Wolves and People of Earth.

Produced by Michael Garland (The Legend of Longwood, Death of a Superhero) for Grand Pictures, the inky black comedy's ensemble cast includes Pat Shortt (Garage, Queen & Country) Peter Coonan (Penance, The Drummer and the Keeper), Moe Dunford (Handsome Devil, Patrick's Day), Charlie Murphy (The Foreigner, Philomena), Tommy Tiernan (Derry Girls, Dave Allen at Peace), and Jana Mohieden.

Key crew include cinematographer Cathal Watters (Viva, Handsome Devil), production designer Jeff Sherriff (Damned, Asylum), costume designer Leonie Prendergast (What Richard Did, Love Rosie), location manager Conor O'Carroll (Moone Boy, Amber), casting director Louise Kiely (The Lobster, Sing Street), and editor Stephen O'Connell (Viva).

DARK LIES THE ISLAND is supported by Bord Scannán na hÉireann/Irish Film Board, RTÉ, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, Quickfire (UK), Egg Studios Ltd, and Section 481. It was filmed on location in the counties of Roscommon and Wicklow, Ireland.

The Cast

Daddy Mannion
Sara Mannion
Doggy Mannion
Martin Mannion
Richie Tobin
Saoirse Mannion
Patcho Mulvihill
Tee-Jay Mulvihill
Phylis

Pat Shortt
Charlie Murphy
Peter Coonan
Moe Dunford
Tommy Tiernan
Jana Mohieden
Eoin Geoghan
Charlie Kelly
Aisling O'Sullivan

The Production Team

Director
Writer
Produced by
Executive Producers

Director of Photography
Production Designer
Editor

Ian FitzGibbon
Kevin Barry
Michael Garland
James Atherton, Jan Pace,
Gary Shortall, Gareth Young.
Cathal Watters
Jeff Sheriff
Stephen O'Connell

Synopsis

If you're going to get involved with men in the town of Dromord, they might as well be Mannions... and Sara is involved with them up to her neck. She is married to Daddy Mannion who is more than 20 years her senior and runs the town. But her first love is his estranged son, Doggy Mannion, a criminal recluse living in the woods outside the town.

Then there is the younger brother: Martin Mannion, a small-town lothario and failed chicken farmer. Yes, Sara is involved with him too. As a result of this tangled erotic web, jealousy is rife in Dromord, and it's flinging out spears in all directions.

The Mannion men have been set at each other; their long truce cannot hold. Serious violence is threatened. Will we get through the next few days without bloodshed?

Welcome to Dromord

Whatever kind of story Kevin Barry is writing - whether it be a novel, short story or screenplay - it usually begins with a location. He envisages a particular landscape, takes his cue, and his imagination takes flight. The writer imagines what events might have transpired in this environment; what misdeeds may have become absorbed by the land.

"Before any characters show up, before there is any dialogue, it's always the atmosphere given off by a particular place that makes me want to create something: that odd energy or feeling that emanates from a place," explains the writer. "I tune into that and think, that's the atmosphere of a short story, play or film."

Barry - the critically-acclaimed, award-winning author of novels *City of Bohane* (2011) and *Beatlebone* (2015), short story collections and theatrical plays - was inspired to write *DARK LIES THE ISLAND* from his time spent gazing out the window of his home in County Sligo in Ireland: "Staring into the Sligo rain and seeing the lake brooding out there. Eventually, characters started to creep in at the edges."

"I have lived in County Sligo beside a lake for the last 10 years and it has slowly crept into my work. This is the broadest expression of it yet. There's something about the atmosphere of the interior northwest: the tri-state zone, I call it, around Sligo, Leitrim and Roscommon. It has a great eeriness to it: wooded hills, dark lakes."

DARK LIES THE ISLAND is the tale of the Mannion family who live in Dromord, a fictional town located somewhere along the borders of Sligo, Leitrim, and Roscommon. The family dynamic is not positive. Daddy Mannion is an old time chieftain, explains Barry.

"He is the alpha male who runs this whole show. The central tension in the film is the fact his sons are never going to be good enough in their father's eyes."

Doggy Mannion is a crack-smoking, nostalgic agoraphobe who lives in a mobile home in the woods outside Dromord. When not running his dating agency and betting business, he is pining for his lost love: Sara, who is now married to Daddy.

Martin Mannion, meanwhile, is a hapless oaf who ruins every venture he turns to. He is one of life's losers, although his predicament is worsened by his bullying, manipulative father.

Sara, who is seeing Martin on the side, is stuck in the Mannion web. As Barry was writing the story, her character took over. "I could see the central dilemma of the story was Sara's," says the writer. "There was a sense of her being trapped in this place amidst this dysfunctional Mannion family. A central dramatic question that constantly arose was this: will she get out? Does she

want to get away? At some level does she relish this messy situation? She's our narrator; we hear her in voiceover in the film."

Sara is not alone. She is accompanied by her daughter, Saoirse, an odd child who's tuned into the strangeness of Dromord (and oftentimes the sole voice of reason). Barry added two local vagabonds to the mix: brothers Tee-Jay and Patcho Mulvihill. Rough as hell, they are perpetually outraged at their low rung in the grand scheme of things. In *DARK LIES THE ISLAND*, there is also the presence of a mysterious stranger: Richie Tobin.

Pat Shortt, who plays Daddy Mannion, lives in rural Ireland and adores the twisted world of Kevin Barry's imagination. Perhaps because it has a ring of truth to it. "There are a lot of these characters out there in the real world," reckons Shortt. "Amongst all that darkness and madness, there are some funny details going on with the characters."

Moe Dunford (Martin Mannion) recognises the themes of familial ties and oppression in Barry's work: "If you look deeper, beyond the darkness and humour, that might have something to do with the Irish sense of malignant shame, mental health, or our inability to express certain weaknesses. In Kevin's work, and in this film, there is the curse of the Irish."

Dunford continues: "If I was to meet an American tourist who came to Ireland talking about leprechauns and pots of gold, I'd tell them to read a Kevin Barry novel or short story to give them a sense of real Ireland, or an aspect of real Ireland. That dark humour is an aspect of who we are. It's darkly funny because it's tragic in ways. Sometimes it's genetic and you can't escape the gene pool. You can try to escape, but you can't get out of this dark bubble of incest, wife swapping, cheating and whoring. Kevin describes the language and writes the stage direction very richly. It's all very helpful as an actor."

According to Tommy Tiernan, the actor-comedian who plays Richie Tobin, Kevin Barry differs to other rural writers. "Kevin might show you a field, but there will be a knife in it with traces of cheap amphetamine along the blade. There might be a crying Traveller in the corner of the field and maybe a kitten with one eye and no legs. Kevin is heir to a dirty rural Ireland. It's thrilling. When you read his books, even though it's like an opera set in a Midlands psychiatric hospital, there is great heart in it. Even though the characters are unpleasant, there is something attractive about them. These are unpleasant people, but Kevin has a way of presenting them that makes them go softly into your heart."

In common with most of Barry's work, there appears to be something off kilter with the setting of Dromord. The land, rocks and water, emit a strange energy that affects its populace. Tommy Tiernan believes Dromord, its surrounding lake and landscape, dictates the narrative. "It's almost godlike," says Tiernan. "A living, breathing entity. The characters seem drawn to it. It's like a ghostly presence or energy."

Barry agrees the landscape "gives off odd energies and vibrations and sends people a bit askew. This is what I also find myself living in Sligo. DARK LIES THE ISLAND is documentary. This isn't a quiet drama. It goes into histrionic effects, violence and sex. I think people will have a ball with it."

The Development

The seeds for the motion picture DARK LIES THE ISLAND were sown when Tommy Tiernan, the Irish actor and stand up comedian, recommended the books of Kevin Barry to his friend, the director Ian FitzGibbon. Tiernan was a fan of Barry's work, such as *City of Bohane* (2011), the writer's remarkable debut novel.

"Kevin's writing is punk," says Tiernan. "It's agricultural. It's west of Ireland. It's full of the dole and magic mushrooms. It's full of regional psychiatric hospitals. It has a love of language, which sometimes doesn't amount to anything more than just enjoying words. There's a lot of bluster in it. It's a wild, un-academic presence that is wordier and more literate than most academic work. It's more Patrick Kavanagh than William Butler Yeats.

"The work of writers from the Irish east coast - John Banville, Neil Jordan, even Roddy Doyle - reads as though it was written inside a house. Kevin's work reads like it was written in a shed or an abandoned primary school with the roof blown off. Kevin, even though he's not from the same part of the country, has more in common with Pat McCabe. His writing is earthy, filthy, unmannered, bold, heedless. It has a west of Ireland, pagan, goat song to it."

FitzGibbon, an Irishman who spent his recent career in England and the U.S., directing television fare such as *Raised By Wolves* and *People of Earth*, felt the siren call of Barry's work.

"I was blown away by the stories because they were presenting me with a lot of tropes of Irish stories: a church, a funeral home, a farm, a small town in a valley, a pub," says the director. "These are familiar settings to Irish stories, but Kevin presented them in a way I hadn't seen before. It's like he had a series of postcards that I recognised, but he was saying, 'Now look on the other side of these postcards'. It drew me in."

While Tiernan and FitzGibbon were marvelling at Barry's books, a conversation began about turning his work into a movie. FitzGibbon's first port of call was Michael Garland, producer for Dublin-based Grand Pictures. Garland produced FitzGibbon's Irish television series *Paths To Freedom* (2000) and his 2011 film *Death of A Superhero*. Their friendship began in the 1990's when they both lived in London and FitzGibbon was working as an actor.

"Ian decided he didn't want to act any more, but wanted to start directing," recalls Garland. "We made a short movie about three monks on an island off Ireland. Directing came naturally to him. Then he did another short film, *Between Dreams* (1999), for a competition in Venice. Then we made *Paths to Freedom*, which was a big hit comedy show with Michael McElhatton. We hooked back up again on *Death of A Superhero*. Whenever he comes back to Ireland, we've tried to work together."

FitzGibbon, Barry, and Garland joined forces to make a short film out of one of Barry's short stories, *Breakfast Wine*. The 2013 short film was a critical triumph.

Garland: "It was a big success. None of us had made a short film for years, it's the kind of thing you do earlier on in your career. Myself and Ian decided to go back to Kevin and see if he would be interested in writing something original."

FitzGibbon: "It formed the beginning of a relationship with Kevin and we discussed doing something longer, feature-length."

Barry: "*Breakfast Wine* comprehensively proved to me that Ian has the right feel for my work and knows how to bring it from page onto the screen."

The Screenplay

The creative team faced a predicament. Which of Kevin's stories should they adapt?

"We thought, 'There's so much rich content in his short stories, why don't we amalgamate characters from one of his collections into a single narrative'," says Garland. "That's where the script came from. We called it *DARK LIES THE ISLAND* because the majority of the characters come from his collection of the same name (published 2012). He has another collection called *There Are Little Kingdoms* (2007). Inspiration came from there too."

According to the writer, penning a screenplay is a different process to writing novels or short fiction. "Writing a screenplay, compared to writing prose, feels as though you're at about 70% of your normal capacity. You are not using certain muscles. It's structured and technical compared to fictional writing, where you can go mad on the page. You're constantly reminded of your constraints: there are going to be people, trucks, cameras, equipment, that you have to consider. But I've always wanted to write for films. I've been writing scripts for a few years and making short films. My literature is influenced by film. David Lynch films are just as important to me as anything in literature. So it's great to bring it full circle."

FitzGibbon and Barry began discussing the screenplay. "We had lots of long and involved conversations about the characters," says Barry. "Who were they

and what were they up to? It's really been a learning process for me to talk with a director on a constant, ongoing basis as we try to puzzle together a new story."

"We would meet every three months," says the director. "It took two years to get the idea into a workable draft. By the end of that process, and with development help from the Irish Film Board, we finally got to a place where we were ready to shoot it."

Casting

Casting *DARK LIES THE ISLAND* did not present a problem for producer Michael Garland. Kevin Barry is one of Ireland's most eminent contemporary novelists, so actors were keen to sign up. Pat Shortt, who played a role in *Breakfast Wine* (2013), the initial collaboration between the creative team, was an obvious fit for the role of Daddy Mannion.

Shortt cemented his place in Ireland's comedy hall of fame as part of comedy duo D'Unbelievables. He proved his acting versatility in films such as *Garage* (2007). Barry was thrilled when Shortt was cast.

"Daddy has funny lines, so you need an actor with comic chops," says the writer. "Pat also has, as we know from his past work, a real depth to him. He has layers. He can go deep and dark with a performance. He needs to do that with Daddy Mannion who is a complicated and difficult piece of work: a skilful manipulator of people."

Shortt had never played a character quite so contemptible as Daddy: "I'm known for doing a lot of comedy: some heightened, some not. I've also played straight roles before. The difference with this guy is his sinister nature. There's a constant reminder that this guy is evil. Every day when I come on set, I'm going to a bad place. It can be quite draining and emotional to be constantly evil and dark."

DARK LIES THE ISLAND is an operatic story with larger than life characters. None more so than Doggy: an agoraphobe who lives in a mobile home in the woods.

"Doggy has locked himself away there and he's got all sorts of dodgy dealings going on with dating agencies and betting agencies," explains Ian FitzGibbon. "Even though he's in his 30's, he's a narcissistic teenager in a way. He's obsessed with Sara who he fell in love with as a teenager. Of course, s he has moved on."

Writing a histrionic character like Doggy Mannion is one thing, bringing him to life on screen is another. Peter Coonan, however, fitted the bill. Coonan had just finished reading the *City of Bohane*, Barry's 2011 novel, when he was presented with the screenplay.

"It's the best language I've worked with since Love/Hate," remarks the actor. "Half the work is done for you on the page. When I realised I got the job, I met Ian and we talked through the part. Neither of us had read a character like this before, and certainly never tried to bring a character like this to life. It was a unique opportunity for both of us."

"You have to take a character like Doggy right to the cusp of believability," says Barry. "He is extreme. You have to push it out and Peter manages it terrifically. I knew Peter from Love/Hate. You can see straight away he has a real bead of intensity in his eyes. He brings one of the most difficult characters I have written beautifully to life."

When Charlie Murphy's agent sent her the screenplay, the actress fell in love with the story. Daddy, Martin and Doggy are all defined by Sara in some way.

"Sara has a strange relationship with Daddy," explains FitzGibbon. "She has a mothering relationship with Doggy - she's concerned about him and his mental health. And she has an unusual relationship with Martin. At the start of the story there's something about her that feels vanquished. The more troubled her daughter Saoirse becomes, the more she feels like she needs to get out of this place. Charlie Murphy plays her brilliantly. She's got great timing. The way Charlie plays this character reminds me of the classic femme fatale: flicking her cigarette, sipping her wine, and going 'What the hell am I doing with these ne'er do wells. She's a Raymond Chandler, Barbara Stanwyck-esque character."

Tommy Tiernan plays Richie Tobin, a mysterious stranger who arrives into town. Although Tiernan is best known in Ireland for his stand-up comedy, Kevin Barry admired his acting abilities and lobbied for him to be cast in DARK LIES THE ISLAND.

"I've long considered Tommy to be a great character actor," says the writer. "I knew he had acted before he was a comic. He'd done a lot of stage acting and I'd seen him in Father Ted. Tommy has a brilliant sharp edgy energy that is perfect for this world. Richie is not necessarily the type of performance you might expect from someone who does mad hysterical stage comic shows. Tommy goes subtle and downplays the role."

Tiernan, who is appearing more frequently as a screen actor in shows such as Derry Girls, enjoyed the challenge of playing a serious role.

"The bits and pieces of acting that I've been offered are few and far between," he says. "They are usually the idiot, the wit, or the fool. I was delighted to be given something that was none of those parts. I was very insecure about acting and unsure of my abilities. I started on stage but to no high degree. I didn't prosper beyond the fringes of professional theatre. I told Ian that if I ever did try acting again, I'd need someone directing me who would speak the truth to me about my abilities. Also, they wouldn't be afraid to call me up if I was getting it wrong, or to push me to certain extremes. Ian

was able to do all those things, so this was an opportunity too good to turn down."

In casting Martin Mannion, Doggy's hopeless brother, the creative team settled upon Moe Dunford, who has been making waves in films such as *Patrick's Day* (2014) and television shows like *Vikings*. "Moe is fantastic," says FitzGibbon. "His character is such a failed, broken loser, going around with his begging bowl, being rejected and humiliated."

"Moe can do so much with small gestures and movements, and expressions," says Barry. "He's a really gifted actor. He knows how to work quietly at the edge of the frame. He embodies that small town fellow who has done well with the girls around the town, but can sense his glory days are ending. His businesses haven't worked out. There's an edge of desperation scraping into his voice. Moe nails that beautifully."

Jana Mohieden plays Saoirse Mannion, Sara and Daddy's 12 year old daughter. The young actress impressed everyone with her ability to convey an unusual presence.

"Jana plays a very tricky role and does it very well," says FitzGibbon. "She's very serious, committed and professional. That's a huge help when you're working with kids. It can be disruptive and they might not be used to the sort of concentration that you need on set. It takes a particular kind of maturity. She has buckets of that, thankfully."

Rounding up the core cast were Tee-Jay and Patcho Mulvihill, played by Charlie Kelly (*The Siege of Jadotville*) and Eoin Geoghegan (*Pilgrimage*). These are Kevin Barry's favourite characters from his short story collections.

"I could happily write Tee-Jay and Patcho scenes for the rest of my life and nothing else," admits the writer. "They are in a dilemma. They are never going to escape Dromord. They are trapped in their van, in their little world, going around in circles. They constantly have a go at each other, but you can tell they love each other helplessly. The two boys bring them to life brilliantly. There could be more to come for Tee-Jay and Patcho."

Michael Garland, producer, cannot imagine the film without the cast he helped assemble: "There's a lot of talent at work here. I owe them everything."

The Look of the Film

When Ian FitzGibbon conceived the visual aesthetic for *DARK LIES THE ISLAND*, he wasn't interested in creating a desaturated, damp, depressing monochrome world. Instead, his pitch to Cathal Watters (*Peaky Blinders*), the film's director of photography, was to imagine a small Irish town while on hallucinogenic drugs.

"I want it to look vibrant, colourful, saturated, almost kitsch," explains the director. "I wanted it to have energy and vitality, so it didn't feel like I was trying to do something naturalistic. I wanted something far more lush. I wanted the audience to ask 'What's going on in this world?'"

Colour plays a key part in the visual aesthetic, says Watters. "We wanted to use colour unapologetically. To me this world is like reality flipped on its side: an alternate reality. So I felt the film had a heightened realism. It is a different universe: another world happening underneath the naturalistic world."

Production designer Jeff Sheriff (Peep Show) was singing off the same hymn sheet. During pre-production, Sheriff and FitzGibbon referenced the work of Gregory Crewdson, an American photographer whose carefully composed works carry a sense of otherness and foreboding. "There's a sense in his work that something is about to happen, or has already happened," says Sheriff. "Ian had an amazing amount of references and ideas. I drew upon Ian's vision to design the locations in the movie."

Finding apt locations was crucial to creating the weird world of Dromord. Kevin Barry's work is fictional - an exaggeration of reality - but it has a distinct look. Conor O'Carroll, the production's location manager, settled upon Boyle, a town in County Roscommon, Ireland. FitzGibbon knew the location. He made the television series Moone Boy here. Before filming commenced, Jeff Sheriff visited Boyle to get a sense of the place. "It's incredible because it still has one foot almost in the 1970s. It has a character, which became part of the film."

FitzGibbon continues: "It's a beautiful place that feels haunted, like it's echoing with the footsteps of people who have been and gone: a transient place. We were struck by its relationship to water: the lake, the river. It rains a lot."

Barry, who lives near Boyle, was delighted with the choice of location: "It's the Dromord I had in mind. Boyle is the nearest metropolis to where I live. It's where I go to get my pint of milk every day. Dromord, as it's portrayed in the film, almost has an elegiac feel. It's a very beautiful town. I'm delighted with how it comes across in the movie."

The chip shop, which Richie Tobin has mysteriously purchased, was the main interior location in Boyle. For this setting, Sheriff and the team selected a derelict shop. "We went in there and threw everything we could at it. Richie, as a character, was very interesting. He's very enigmatic. You don't know his past or his future. He's ethereal in some ways."

The bulk of the interiors were shot in Co Wicklow. Conor O'Carroll, location manager, discovered the Lake House, a home for the ruthless Daddy Mannion, in the town of Blessington. "We wanted something that dramatically contrasted with everything else," says Sheriff. "It was a contemporary house,

nouveau riche, with lots of stone, marble, and a sweeping staircase in an American style. You could imagine the Kardashians living there."

An empty office in Wicklow was used as the setting for the funeral home where Daddy runs his business empire. Sheriff pasted patterned wallpaper onto the walls in order to give the space a sense of timelessness.

We first meet Martin Mannion on a chicken farm (his latest disastrous venture). This location posed a new set of challenges. The production team had to assemble 80 chickens and 100 cages. Cathal Watters lit the space with a red hue, adding a sense of surreality to an already strange setting. This approach to light and colour spun out onto all the sets.

"When Richie comes into the office we put a light blue light coming through from another door," says Watters. "I shone a hint of purple light into the funeral home. We tried to instil a sense of foreboding in a lot of the shots. We gathered up dead ferns and shot through them for a simple shot of a car coming down the street. In another scene, as Martin walks up to his brother, we start on a cobweb. We wanted a sense of foreboding and danger."

Doggy's Mobile Home

Creating Doggy's mobile home, where the character exists in a state of madness, regret and anger, was one of the production team's most remarkable designs. "Doggy has been living in this mobile home in the woods for a long time. He's an agoraphobe, frightened to get out, but he runs a business from there," says Michael Garland. Doggy only allows two characters to enter this world - Sara and her daughter Saoirse - explains Peter Coonan, who plays the role. "He doesn't let anyone else in. His brother visits but he keeps him outside."

Jeff Sheriff, production designer, bought a mobile home and stripped it of all its rooms in order to create an open space in which Doggy can exist. "There is a corner with his hammock, his music and his crack pipe. There's a middle section where he meets Saoirse. He tries to sleep, and escape his memories, at the other end of the trailer," says Coonan.

Cathal Watters, DoP: "Ian wanted a very specific look for Doggy's caravan. He has his own space where he does his crystal meth. That has its own look and colour. As he moves around the caravan, he moves into red light, which we explained because he has an illuminated Keep Out sign on the door. We blasted in red light when he was having conversations, so we would get a feel of moving from one colour to the next. It's like this Technicolor dream, which adds to the bizarre nature of it all."

Sheriff added padded areas where Doggy could strike the walls in moments of self-loathing. He also incorporated props - lava lamps, translucent panels,

hanging glass - to add to the heightened environment. One wall was plastered with photograph's of Doggy's yesteryears.

"He's desperately trying to cling onto the past, " explains Coonan. "Music brings back memories of a time that was important to him. It keeps him from dealing with his depression."

Testing the Waters

"There's a place you can go to ... Up in the hills ... Up in the Dromord wood ... And when you're high enough you can see the entire town reflected in the lake ... Every last rooftop and gable of it... And the way it gets me thinkin' is what if we're only the reflection? ... And what if the real town is down there in that black water?"

The lake is a central presence in the story for DARK LIES THE ISLAND. "So many characters are drawn to it for whatever reason," says Charlie Murphy, who plays Sara.

Jana Mohieden, who plays Saoirse Mannion, Sara's daughter, believes her character is fixated with the lake because it relaxes her amidst all the madness. "It's like a little bubble around me that I can sink into. I can connect with it. Not a connection like with Doggy, but a magical connection. I'm telling it all my secrets and telling it my life it's like an extra character. It's everything I never got from my family."

Water is omnipresent in the film. "You feel every time you look at the frame you're sodden, damp, or nearly drowning," says Ian FitzGibbon. "The place seems about to be flooded."

Kevin Barry: "There's a type of human who is drawn to bodies of water - rivers, lakes and the sea. I walk around the lake every day. Just as the sun is going down I go for my walk past a lonely church and onto the pier. I'm a Cancerian, the water sign. I've always been drawn to water. It's a comfort to get on it or near it. It's something that comes up a lot in my stories: bodies of water lurking, ominously, in the near distance."

The first time Cathal Watters, cinematographer, arrived at the lake location, it was shrouded with mist. He later returned to the lake to get more shots. Just as it has a bewitching effect on the characters, so Watters was continuously drawn back to its foreboding shores. "As we came to shoot it, the lake became such a character in the film," says Watters. "It's so visceral and lends itself to that world Kevin Barry has created."

At one point of the story, Richie Tobin leaps into the lake's murky waters. "Tommy was a trooper," recalls Murphy. "He didn't complain, but you could see his whole body shaking from the cold."

Tiernan modestly recalls the event. "No bother at all. I was excited by it. You read that in the script and you think 'Brilliant, I'll take a leap into the lake at 7pm. Sure what could possibly go wrong?' In the actuality of it, there are stunt people standing up to their ankles in water, trying to reassure you. There's very little acting involved when you jump into a lake. You're reacting: you're not really pushing yourself to an imagined extreme. That was the easiest and most exciting part of the whole shoot."

The shoot

DARK LIES THE ISLAND had a short filming schedule, but a close bond formed between cast and crew. The lake location was only a few miles away from Kevin Barry's home, so the author popped along to see Tommy Tiernan's leap of faith into the murky depths.

Ian FitzGibbon was a guiding presence for the film's cast. Pat Shortt, who plays Daddy Mannion, describes the director as a skilled communicator. "As an actor that's really important. He sets you into the scene before you start. You know where you're going and what you're doing. He subtly reminds you of what he's looking for, in order to get the continuity of the performance. As an actor, that's a fantastic cushion to have."

A former actor, who trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), and appeared in productions such as Prime Suspect (1991), FitzGibbon understands an actor's needs.

"Ian is an actor's director," says Charlie Murphy. "He takes his time. Because he was an actor, he has a wealth of emotion to pass on. You always feel like you're finding the character with him. That's the recipe for a great collaboration."

Peter Coonan, who plays Doggy, enjoyed working with the director: "Ian has a calmness; an ability to connect. I've learned so much from him about a vulnerable side of acting."

DARK LIES THE ISLAND has an ensemble cast. When they weren't filming, the cast and crew bonded watching football matches in local pubs and over rounds of golf. Many of them had worked together on past occasions. Shortt, Moe Dunford, and DoP Cathal Watters collaborated on 2016's comedy The Flag. Watters filmed Charlie Murphy in Peaky Blinders (2017) and Peter Coonan on Love/Hate. Coonan and Murphy were both in Love/Hate. Coonan worked with Shortt on Saltwater (2000) and upcoming film The Belly of the Whale.

But although there was a familiarity between the participants in the production, the filmmaking experience was intense. "You're up at 6am and working at 7pm or 8pm," says Tommy Tiernan. "I'm afraid I don't have any

stories of the night we all stayed up until 4am snorting angel dust and drinking poteen. I find filmmaking pressurised and intense. It's good to become immersed in it."

Tiernan and Shortt are two of Ireland's most beloved comedians. They knew each other for a long time, but had never worked together. Until now.

"For years I have been a huge fan of Pat Shortt," says Tiernan. "When I started doing comedy, D'Unbelievables were top of the tree. Twenty years later to have a scene with Pat, having seen all his film work, was a thrill."

Shortt says he "loved what Tommy did with the character [of Richie Tobin]. I think people are going to see us both in a different light after DARK LIES THE ISLAND."

Moe Dunford, who plays Martin Mannion, was on set the day when Shortt's character, Daddy Mannion, confronts Richie Tobin (Tiernan) in a chip shop. "I asked the lads if I could go down and watch on the monitors, which is something I don't normally do because I don't want to get in the way. I stood in the back room. When these two forces of energy came together, I wanted to see what might happen. It was magic."

Tiernan: "We got to the end of a scene and I said to Pat, 'After all these years it was great to be doing a scene with you. Just a pity there were no fucking laughs in it'."

In one of DARK LIES THE ISLAND's more extreme moments, Daddy Mannion dislocates Martin's shoulder as retribution for his son's affair with Sara.

"When you play a character you try and delve into their personality," says Shortt. "It's very hard with the character of Daddy because he has no endearing qualities whatsoever. He's just out for himself: self-centred, vicious and evil. What he does to his son is horrific. It's odd because he's so calm about it, so matter of fact. He's doing this to put manners on his son."

Moe Dunford portrayed Martin as a victim of his father's relentless mental abuse. "The way Moe plays it is fantastic - he just becomes submissive," continues Shortt. "He's a bigger guy than me physically. I wouldn't like to tackle Moe Dunford on a normal day. So he could take me on but he doesn't." Dunford adds: "When he asks his son to put a gag in his mouth, the son willingly does so. When you realise how messed up that is, you just go for it. My shoulder was dislocated before, so I was able to remember how painful that was."

Shortt: "This relationship has been going on for years. It's almost like someone who is constantly abused. Martin just submits to Daddy when he gets his shoulder dislocated. It's horrific. A brilliant, great scene, which Moe plays incredibly. He says 'Please Daddy stop', but he doesn't run away or hit back. He takes it. That tells you a lot about their back story."

Island Fever

For the last few years, Ian FitzGibbon has worked on television productions in the U.S. and the UK. Film is a different discipline. Filming a Kevin Barry story is another prospect altogether. "I felt I had never seen this world on an Irish screen before," says the director. "On some levels, this story is quite operatic. I tried to approach it emotionally. I wasn't interested in naturalism or social realism. I was more interested in trying to create a world, a mood, and evoke the inner psychologies and emotions of these characters."

Cathal Watters, cinematographer on *DARK LIES THE ISLAND*, believes the creative team went out on a limb to make the world different to other cinematic fare. "I have no interest in shooting stuff we've seen a million times before," he says. "The visual language needed to be heightened through colour, framing and movement. Ian took a risk and I think it will pay off. You can't take a Kevin Barry script and just make a normal film."

Charlie Murphy believes Ian and Kevin created a strange world together. "There's some beautiful comedy in it and some cracking one-liners, but it has to be played against a serious backdrop. There's a real darkness to this story. It's about balancing and walking a fine line in that world of what is and isn't funny," she says.

Pat Shortt: "I think people are going to be shocked, find it funny in parts, moved by a lot of it. It's a mishmash of emotions and a whole new world has been created."

Kevin Barry thinks *DARK LIES THE ISLAND*, the film, is a different beast to his prose.

"It has kind of become its own curious animal," says the author. "I think it's quite a new vibe for an Irish film. It has a lovely unusual weird tone. I think it's going to unseat viewers a lot. We have a fantastic ensemble cast and the actors have relished the mad, crazy, filthy lines I have given them. When the audience walk out of the cinema, I hope they have laughed all the way through. Then I hope they say, 'Jesus Christ, what were we laughing at?' That's usually the effect my stories have on the page. I hope we get something similar in the film."

The Characters

Pat Shortt on Daddy Mannion

"Daddy is the man about town: the businessman. He's the undertaker and auctioneer in the town. It's that classic country Irish village where you have the publican who is also an auctioneer, an undertaker and probably the local politician as well.

The other characters are mad, frazzled and wildish, but everybody is afraid of Daddy. Perhaps the only person who isn't is Richie, played by Tommy Tiernan,

because he's a newcomer to the town. There's an evil streak to Daddy. At some stage, he must have done something to everyone to drive the fear of God into them. So he's very controlling. He has a weakness for perverse sexual things. But that's in his own home and kept private.

There's a great line when he meets Richie. Richie asks him, 'How did I end up here?' Daddy turns to him and says, 'The last thing this place needs is another fucken loolah gone quare in the head' He's putting people straight, which shows his power.

He has a very unusual relationship with Sara. It's classic Kevin Barry in which the world has gone wrong. Sara is his partner but she was also his son's wife. He took her in after the son went mad. They have a kid together, so they must have had some sort of relationship. But at this stage, there's no connection between them. Just perverse sex.

He has no relationship with his son Doggy. He hasn't seen him in years. Martin, his other son, is a half-wit. He has no respect for Martin and he treats him grotesquely.

I think this performance has stretched me as an actor. I never really explored this kind of dark world before. This guy is dark; evil. He knows what he's doing. He has power."

Charlie Murphy on Sara Mannion

"My character is married to Daddy Mannion. She's caught in the Mannion web of brothers and sons. Sara and Daddy have an unusual marriage. There's an age gap; they have a daughter. I don't think she has all the tools to be a fantastic mother, but she does her best.

We have little clues here and there about Sara's past. She grew up with the Mannion boys, so we have a lot of hints as to what kind of teenager she was. She's a local, but still a little bit of an outsider. Her cousins - Tee-Jay and Patcho - are in the film as well.

The relationship between Sara and Doggy, Daddy's son, is strained. They've known each other since they were kids. They fell in love, had their hopes and dreams mapped out. Doggy was mentally unstable growing up and that got in the way of their plans. He was institutionalised for a few months when he was 19. So their dynamic has changed from being sweethearts to carer-patient, or even mother-child. So Sara ended up with her sweetheart's father instead. It's a strange dynamic but it fits into this world."

Peter Coonan on Doggy Mannion

"Doggy Mannion is an agoraphobe who hasn't left his den for 15 years. He's hidden himself in the woods on the outskirts of town. This happened due to a traumatic experience that brought him to his knees. He ended up in a mental institution at 19. While he was there his mother died. In the story, we are told the father and brother didn't let him out to see her.

This trauma affected his whole life. When he came out of the institution, he burrows away in the woods and pushes away everyone he knows. The woman he loves is now shackled up with his father. He plasters the walls of his abode with memorabilia of the time before he went mad: the beautiful and comfortable time when he was captain of the football team, going out with the woman he loved, when his mother was alive.

The dynamic between Sara and Doggy is sad. A lot of people are trying to drag him out of this world because he's also using drugs. So there are people who love and care for him, but he can't see that. He's obsessed with Sara: memories of falling in love when they were younger and the music that surrounded this time. That's what keeps him alive.

Sara visits him to keep an eye on him. She's a carer as opposed to a lover. So we have some lovely scenes where she comes and dyes his hair and there are gentle moments between them. He's just infatuated with her. It was lovely to do those scenes with Charlie Murphy, knowing she can inhabit this scenario at every twist and turn.

He can relate to Saoirse, Sara's daughter, better than he can anyone else. Biologically, Sara is his sister, but he adores her as if she was his own daughter. There's nothing but love for Saoirse. No emotional subterfuge. It's just very caring. She can cut to him with just a line.

It could have been so easy to make Doggy a one-dimensional, aggressive, character. But there is so much more there: he's a child one minute and an incredible businessman the next. He can keep three or four businesses afloat at a time, most of them illegal.

The biggest challenge for Ian and myself was to make Doggy real and believable: to ground his otherworldliness in truth."

Moe Dunford on Martin Mannion

"When we first meet Martin he's trying to run a chicken farm but is not getting on very well. Everything is going badly for him. He's lusting after a girl, Sara, who his father is lusting after and his brother is in love with.

Martin is the youngest brother in the pecking order. He's got a lot of his mother in him: a more sensitive side of his personality that was knocked down. I think there's a malignant shame in his character that he's not even conscious of. It's just how he's been brought up.

Once upon a time he and Doggy bunked together, lived together, played like kids and brothers do. But something happened between the two brothers when they were younger that made them estranged. The relationship has been strained ever since. It has a lot to do with the mother dying and partly because of the father's bullying behaviour.

There is a character called John Martin in *There Are Little Kingdoms* (2007), Kevin Barry's short story collection. Martin is based on him. So it was good to have a little background for the character before doing the job."

Tommy Tiernan on Richie Tobin

"Richie is a curiosity because he wakes up on a bus with no memory and in a town he doesn't recognise. Sometimes when you are building a character you research them, their accent and formative influences. But when your character doesn't know anything about themselves, you just play it from moment to moment.

Richie is covered in scars. He has an auctioneer's address in his pocket. He finds out he's bought a chip shop. It's unusual playing someone who knows nothing about themselves, in a place that doesn't know anything about him. People can't say, 'Oh look that's the doctor's son'. Or, 'There's the fellow that rode the nun'. Nobody knows anything about Richie and he knows nothing about himself.

Ian FitzGibbon's suggestion was 'Every moment is frightening for Richie. He's looking for reassurance, comfort, peace. But he has nothing to build those qualities on'."

I'm known as a stand-up comedian, but working as an actor is exciting. I missed the camaraderie of acting circles when I started doing stand-up. When you're working with other comedians on a bill, and you're all doing 18-20 minute slots, there's great to fun to be had.

But when you reach a certain stage of stand up, and touring by yourself, you get used to your own company. The fraternity of acting attracts me a lot."

Jana Mohieden on Saoirse Mannion

I would describe Saoirse as very self-contained. She's strange in a lot of strange ways: she ignores her parents. She tends to create her own little world. Deep inside she feels neglected by her parents and from her family - she doesn't really have a proper family.

My mum and my dad want me to go to the Head Doctor because they see me as some weirdo. Doggy had mental problems, so they think I am carrying on the family history. I'm almost encouraging them to bring me there by my behaviour. I zone out completely in front of my parents, but not like a normal child when you're in class and start daydreaming.

It's dark: you're imagining what life would be like if I wasn't there anymore. Saoirse's relationship with Sara is not really mother-daughter. We have a conversation every now and again. Maybe Sara secretly cares about me, maybe secretly I care about her, but we have a wall between each other. In ways we need each other, though.

Saoirse's relationship with Doggy is good. We share a connection with each other because a lot of the family just think I'm mental. Doggy loves and cares for me. We can relate because both our parents think we should go to a doctor. He spent years thinking he was crazy. Maybe he is a bit crazy but he deserves someone that cares about him.

Doggy is my only friend. In school, people don't want to talk to me. It's not as if I created this family. I would never call Sara or Daddy my friends. Doggy is the only one who has shown me he is my friend. I can trust him with anything."

BIOGRAPHIES

CAST

Peter Coonan – Doggy Mannion

Peter is a well-established Irish actor from Dublin. His most recent projects include the role of Rooster Collins in *The Belly of the Whale*, a feature directed by Morgan Bushe, the lead role of Father Eoin O'Donnell in *Penance: Aithrí* directed by Tom Collins and the role of Toss in Nick Kelly's feature *The Drummer and the Keeper*. Peter has also just wrapped filming on Ian FitzGibbon's feature *Dark Lies The Island*, in which he plays the lead role of Doggy Mannion.

Further film and television credits include the role of Pádraig in *Earthly Bonds*, a short directed by Alan Dunne, *We Have Always Lived In The Castle* directed by Stacie Passon, in which he plays the role of Bobby Dunham alongside Alexandra Daddario, Taisa Farmiga and Sebastian Stan, the TG4 series *Wrecking The Rising*, Ian Hunt Duffy's award-winning short film *Gridlock*, Ian Power's feature film *The Guarantee*, the role of Brendan Boyle opposite

Gabriel Byrne in the BBC's three-part mini-series *Quirke*, the lead role of Alex in the feature *Get Up And Go* alongside Killian Scott, and his regular and extremely popular role as Fran on the critically-acclaimed RTÉ drama *Love/Hate*. Peter won an Irish Film and Television Award for Best Supporting Actor – Television in 2014 for his portrayal of Fran.

Recent theatre work includes the role of Drum Major in Landmark Productions' *Woyzeck In Winter* directed by Conall Morrison (with performances at the 2017 Galway International Arts Festival, Olympia Theatre Dublin and the Barbican Centre, London) the role of Jerry Devine in *The Gate Theatre's* production of *Juno And The Paycock* by Sean O'Casey, directed by Mark O'Rowe, the role of Marco in Arthur Miller's *A View From The Bridge* directed by Joe Dowling also with the Gate and the role of David in *Before Monsters Were Made* directed by Ben Kidd for 15th Oak Productions.

Peter is also a fluent Irish speaker and a highly experienced voice-over artist. His voice over work includes the RTÉ radio drama production of Andy Burns's *Serenity* in which he played the lead role, *Newsbag*, a short animated adult comedy in which he voiced the role of Mr. Spuddy, *City Of Roses* directed by Andrew Kavanagh for Kavaleer, and *Deadly*, another short animated film in which he voices the role of Grim opposite Brenda Fricker's Bridie.

He is based in Dublin.

Pat Shortt – Daddy Mannion

Pat Shortt started in comedy when he left Art College. With Jon Kenny he created 'D'Unbelievables', Ireland's most popular comedy duo. Together they performed their unique brand of comedy in theatres all over Ireland, Great Britain and The United States as well as various countries across Europe. They produced four critically acclaimed and sell-out shows as well as writing and producing chart-topping Videos.

LIVE SHOWS

As a solo artist Pat's first show was a sell-out. Called simply Pat Shortt Live it played more than 250 dates around Ireland. It began at the Cats Laughs Festival in Kilkenny, where it sold out before the festival even opened, the first act ever to achieve this landmark. The undoubted hit of the Festival, Pat's work was hailed as "comic genius" by the Irish Times.

His second show "You Won't Get Away With That Here" has achieved equal success selling out shows all over the country.

Pat also toured extensively with his next Live Show 'Pat Shortt in The Hall'. The reformation of the D'Unbelievables with Jon Kenny has been extremely

popular, and they toured to packed houses with huge success in the Spring of 2011. Pat also starred at the National Concert Hall as Herod in Jesus Christ Superstar in 2010.

In the Spring of 2012, Pat began touring with his new solo Live Show 'I Am The Band', which is about the life of this country's foremost musician - Dixie Walsh.

FILM

An actor of note, Pat has appeared with Druid Theatre Company in their production of Martin McDonagh's *The Lonesome West*. Movie titles include *Angela Mooney Dies Again* (with Mia Farrow), *This Is My Father* (with Brendan Gleeson, Aidan Quinn, Stephen Rae and James Caan) *The Closer It Gets* (with Ian Harte, Niamh Cusack and Sean McGinley), *Man About Dog* written by Belfast-born Pearse Eliot, and Wheeler McCoy in the movie "Strength & Honour".

Pat played the lead role of "Josie" in the film *Garage*. *Garage* was a huge success, and is the second feature film from director Lenny Abrahamson and writer Mark O'Halloran. It picked up the CICAÉ Art and Essai Cinema Prize at the Cannes Film Festival and Pat also won awards from IFTA (Best Actor), Evening Standard (Best Actor) and the Monte Carlo Festival (Best Actor). 'Garage' screened as part of the Directors' Fortnight sidebar at the prestigious French festival.

Pat has also recently completed two films, 'Soulboy', directed by Shimmy Marcus and 'Guard', with Brendan Gleeson and directed by John Martin McDonagh.

Pat's latest appearance in Lance Daly's 'Life's a Breeze', should be due to hit the big screen later this year. Pat has recently filmed 'Moone Boy', the new series with Chris O'Dowd for Sky 1 HD and has also completed filming on 'Calvary', the new film directed by John Martin McDonagh.

TV

Television credits include Tom the Character in *Fr. Ted*, (Channel 4) and Bobby in *The Fitz* (BBC). *Killinaskully* is a hit series created by Pat for RTE, and ran for five series, the last of which was screened on RTE during 2008.

Killinaskully was nominated three times by IFTA for best Entertainment programme and was also nominated in the Best Entertainment category at the Monte Carlo Television Festival. 2009 was a busy year for Pat with two pilot programmes for RTE ('*Mattie*' and '*Inside the Crystal Ball*'), filmed in the latter part of the year and screened over the Christmas period. A two-episode of '*Mattie*' was also screened by RTE over the festive period in 2010 and two follow up episodes entitled '*Sgt Mattie*' were screened over Christmas 2011.

Charlie Murphy – Sara Mannion

Charlie's feature credits include *To Walk Invisible* directed by Sally Wainwright for BBC/PBS, *The Foreigner* directed by Martin Campbell for STX Entertainment/SR Media, the multi-award winning '71, directed by Yann Demange for Warp Films, *Philomena*, directed by Stephen Frears for Baby Cow/Weinstein Company and *Northmen – A Viking Saga* directed by Claudio Fah for Elite Filmproduktion.

Television includes *Peaky Blinders* for Tiger Aspect/BBC (currently filming), series 1 & 2 of *Happy Valley* for BBC, *Rebellion* for Element Pictures/RTE/Touchpaper, *The Last Kingdom* for Carnival/BBC, *The Village* (IFTA Best Supporting Actress nomination) for Company Pictures/BBC, *Quirke* for BBC/RTE, *Ripper Street* for Tiger Aspect/BBC, *Misfits* for Clerkenwell/Channel 4 and all 5 series of *Love/Hate* for Octagon/RTE/Netflix for which she twice won Best Actress at The Irish Film and Television Awards (2013 & 2015).

Stage work includes, for the National Theatre of Ireland/Abbey Theatre, Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* (Best Actress/Irish Times Theatre Awards), Mark O Rowe's *Our Few and Evil Days*; Enda Walsh's *Disco Pigs* at the Young Vic, Druid Theatre's *Big Maggie* and, also for Druid, *The Silvertassie* at the Lincoln Centre New York. Other productions include *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Sound Of Music*, *Cabaret*, *The Taming Of The Shrew*, *4.48 Psychosis*, *Once a Catholic*, *This is Our Youth*, *Anatomy Of A Seagull*, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo UI* and *The Colleen Bawn* and most recently *Arlington* by Enda Walsh at the National Theatre of Ireland and St. Ann's Warehouse, NY.

Moe Dunford – Martin Mannion

Moe has appeared as the recurring lead role of Aethelwulf opposite Linus Roache and Travis Fimmel in three seasons of the hit TV series *Vikings* for History Channel/MGM. He most recently appeared in Season 4 on History Channel and on RTE2 and he will appear in Season 5 in late 2017. Moe was awarded the IFTA for Best Supporting Actor, TV Drama 2015 for his work across three seasons of *Vikings*.

Moe most recently appeared in John Butler's feature film *Handsome Devil* opposite Andrew Scott, directed by John Butler and produced by Treasure Films. Moe also appeared on *The Flag* with Pat Shortt, directed by Declan Recks and produced by Treasure Films for release in 2017.

He appears in Frank Berry's feature film *Michael Inside* which premiered at the Galway Film Fleadh in 2017 and in *The Lodgers* directed by Brian O'Malley for Tailored Films which premiered at the Toronto Film Festival in 2017. He will soon appear in *Black 47*, directed by Lance Daly for Fastnet Films and starring Hugo Weaving and Jim Broadbent – which is due for release in 2018. Moe recently wrapped a leading role in *Metalheart*, the feature directing debut of Hugh O'Connor, produced by Treasure Films and he has just wrapped a recurring role on *Striking Out* Season 2, produced by Blinder Films for RTE.

Moe was chosen as a Shooting Star for Ireland at the Berlin International Film

Festival 2015. Moe was awarded the IFTA 2015 for Best Lead Actor for his role as Patrick in Patrick's Day directed by Terry McMahon. He was nominated for the prestigious Bingham Ray New Talent Award at the Galway Film Fleadh 2014 for his work on this movie which won the Best Feature Award at the same festival. Moe also won the award for best actor at the Hell's Half Mile Film Festival in Michigan amongst several other international awards and nominations. Moe also picked up Best Actor for his lead role in Patrick's Day at the 11th edition of ÉCU – The European Independent Film Festival.

Patrick's Day received critical and audience acclaim at festivals across Europe and North America and was chosen as the Irish entry for the Directors Guild Finders Series Award. Patrick's Day won the "Maverick" Grand Jury Prize winner of the 15th Woodstock Film Festival for best film.

Moe appeared in the indie feature film Traders for Coco Television directed by Peter Murphy and Rachel Moriarty. Other screen work includes season two of Game Of Thrones (HBO), Raw Series 5 in the recurring role Niall for Octagon/RTE, the recurring role of Christian in An Crisis directed by Charlie McCarthy for Wildfire Films/TG and of Richard Leland in Season 4 of The Tudors for Showtime/BBC.

Moe graduated from the Gaiety School of Acting Full Time Acting Course in June 2009. In theatre, Moe played John Hinckley in Assassins , a Rough Magic Seeds production, Dmitri in The Brothers Karamazov _ directed by Nicholas Johnson at the Samuel Becket Theatre in 2014. He appeared in _Squat directed by Oonagh Murphy, as Brutus in Text Messages and as Tybalt in Corcadorca's production of Romeo and Juliet directed by Pat Kiernan at the Cork Opera House.

Moe recently appeared in the Hozier's music video 'Cherry Wine' opposite Saoirse Ronan. This video was made to raise awareness and funds for domestic abuse charities worldwide.

Tommy Tiernan – Richie Tobin

Tommy Tiernan has been working as a stand up comedian for the past 23 years. He currently moonlights as a chat show host and newspaper columnist.

TV credits include: Derry Girls (2018), Dave Allen at Peace BBC (2018), The Tommy Tiernan Show RTE (2017/2018), Little Cracker SKY (2012), Love in the 21st Century (1999), Small Potatoes Channel 4 (1999), Father Ted (1998)

Film Credits include: Meetings with Ivor (2017), About Adam (2001), Hold Back the Night (1999), The Matchmaker (1997), The Very Stuff (1997), Angela Mooney (1996)

Jana Mohieden

Jana is a newcomer to the industry having trained at the Visions Drama and Bow Street in Dublin. A talented singer this is Jana's first professional acting

role.

CREATIVE TEAM

Michael Garland - CEO and Producer for Grand Pictures

Michael entered the film industry as Financial Controller for Palace Productions working on such projects as Neil Jordan's *The Company Of Wolves* and *The Crying Game*, and Michael Caton-Jones' *Scandal*

In 1995 he produced *This Is The Sea* starring Richard Harris and Gabriel Byrne. He also produced *Accelerator*, which screened at Cannes and Montreal. He also Executive Produced Johnny Gogan's *The Last Bus Home*.

Grand Pictures was established in early 2000 and has produced the award-winning TV series *Paths To Freedom* and *Fergus's Wedding* with Michael as Producer. *Spin The Bottle* produced by Michael, was a domestic box office hit, and won "best feature" at the Boston Irish Film Festival.

In 2006 Michael co-produced *Puffball*, directed by Nicolas Roeg and starring Miranda Richardson, Kelly Reilly and Donald Sutherland. Michael then produced *The Race* starring Colm Meaney and Susan Lynch. He also acted as Executive Producer on *Wide Open Spaces*, written by Arthur Mathews and starring Ardal O'Hanlon and Ewen Bremner.

In 2010 Michael produced *Death Of A Superhero*, starring Andy Serkis and Thomas Brodie Sangster, and executive produced *Titanic – Blood And Steel*, a co-production with the Italian company DAP. Shooting on *The Legend of Longwood*, an Irish-German-Dutch co-production, directed by Lisa Mulcahy, wrapped in January 2014. The film has sold worldwide and was released domestically in October 2015.

He is developing a slate of projects including, *The Dead Spit Of Kelly* based on the short story by Flann O'Brien to be directed by Iain Softley. He is also to co-produce *The Other Side Of The Story* based on the Marian Keyes novel of the same name with LA based Davids Canton Productions. Other projects in development include *Stolen* to be directed by Lisa Mulcahy. For television he is developing *Freedom Strasse*, a multi-part TV series based in Hamburg and London at the dawning of Rock n' Roll, and *Trade Off* a six-part drama set in the City of London in 2008.

Dark Lies The Island, written by Kevin Barry and directed by Ian FitzGibbon is set for release in 2018. International sales are being handled by Independent.

Ian FitzGibbon - Director

Ian FitzGibbon is a BAFTA nominated director who was born in Dublin and raised in Brussels, Belgium. He is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin where he took a degree in French and Spanish. He trained as an actor at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London and has a long and extensive acting career principally on English television where his credits range from *Prime Suspect* to *Father Ted*.

Between Dreams, one of his first short films was selected for competition at the Venice Film Festival. His first feature, the critically acclaimed *A Film With Me In It*, had its North American premiere at TIFF 2008. It was nominated for

numerous Irish film awards and it went on to win the special jury prize for best international film at the Istanbul International Film Festival. Perrier's Bounty, his second feature, starring Brendan Gleeson, Cillian Murphy and Jim Broadbent, received its world premiere at the Toronto Film Festival in 2010 prior to its UK and US release.

Death of a Superhero, starring Andy Serkis and Thomas Brody-Sangster, had its world premiere at The Toronto Film Fest and was acquired by Tribeca Films for distribution in America. It was awarded the audience prize and the jury prize at Les Arcs European Film Festival and best film and best director at the Irish Film and Television Awards. To date it has won over 20 international awards at European film festivals. His extensive television directing includes two seasons of Threesome, Moone Boy: Series 2, starring Chris O'Dowd, for which he won an IFTA as best television director, Trying Again written by Simon Blackwell, and The Awkward Age written by and starring Dylan Moran for Sky's Little Cracker series. His most recent work includes Nurse (BBC 2) produced by and starring Paul Whitehouse, both series of Raised by Wolves (Big Talk/Channel 4) written by Caitlin and Caroline Moran and Damned (WhatLarks!/Channel 4).

Ian was lead director on Loaded (C4/AMC). He has also directed extensively for US television where his credits include Wrecked and People Of Earth (TBS). His most recent work includes Relatively Normal, a pilot for ABC/Disney for which he was director/producer.

Cathal Watters - Director of Photography

Having shot documentaries for 15 years Cathal began to shoot short films and music videos and eventually broke into the feature film world. Cathal now mainly shoots films and TV Drama. Recent films have included Handsome Devil, A Dark Song, Viva which was shot in Cuba for which he won an IFTA for his Cinematography. He was nominated again the following year for an IFTA for his work on the TG4/Netflix period drama 'Dominion Creek'. He has just completed the fourth season of the internationally popular show Peaky Blinders. He is a member of the Irish Society of Cinematographers.

Jeffrey Sherriff - Production Designer

After graduating from Chelsea School of Art Jeffrey began his career in the film and TV industry. He worked as an Art Director in Music Videos, Commercials and Stills Photography shoots.

He decided to pursue his ambition to become a Production Designer, his work includes Independent feature films as well as a variety of pioneering award winning shows and 8 seasons of the British cult comedy Peep Show.

Jeffrey has enjoyed working with some of the U.K and Ireland's leading creative talent in film and television.

Leonie Prendergast - Costume Designer

Leonie Prendergast is an Irish costume designer based in Dublin.

Stephen O'Connell - Editor

Stephen O'Connell has spent over 20 years working across commercials, documentary but primarily drama in both Ireland and the UK.

Film credits include Peter Sheridan's *Borstal Boy*, *The Sea* – based on John Banville's novel, Andy de Emmony's *West Is West*, Sundance and Telluride hit *VIVA*, and more recently Aisling Walsh's *Maudie* starring Ethan Hawke and Sally Hawkins.

For BBC, he has edited many hit series and single films such as *Cutting It*, *A Thing Called Love* and *55 Degrees North*, *Fantabulosa*, *Recovery*, the Julie Walters film *Filth and Whistle* and *I'll Come to You* starring the late John Hurt.

In 2008 he won an Irish Film and Television Award for editing *Stardust* and most recent TV projects have been *Fortitude* and Neil Jordan's *Riviera*, both for Sky Atlantic. He has just completed editing the four-part adaptation of *Howards End* for BBC and Starz, written by Kenneth Lonergan.



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Dark Lies the Island marks a first-time pairing of director Ian Fitzgibbon (*Death of a Superhero*, *Moone Boy*) and writer Kevin Barry (*City of Bohane*, *Beatlebone*) resulting in a pitch-black and utterly unique 90 minutes. The film's focus revolves around the Mannion family in small town Ireland, consisting of Daddy, Doggy, and Martin and follows a long-standing family feud between the three psychologically fragile and damaged characters. Boasting an impressive Irish cast including familiar faces such as Pat Shortt, Charlie Murphy, Tommy Tiernan, Peter Coonan, Moe Dunford and new comer Jana Mohienden, the story of jealousy, resentment and mental illness unfolds over the space of a week and is centred around the town and lake of Dromord.

Set against the backdrop of contemporary rural Ireland, the setting has become a familiar one to Irish viewers in recent times, as has the dark-comedy. However, the theme and personalities contained within this story bring something entirely fresh and unique to the screen. Many of these characters are taken from Barry's two short story collections, *Dark Lies the Island* and his debut *There are Little Kingdoms*, both of which received critical acclaim on release. For anyone familiar with Barry's work, the Limerick native is quite at home in the utterly bizarre. This is a quality evident in his first foray into cinema.

The writer also has a passion for dialogue and location, both of which are important features throughout. Barry's screenplay captures the colloquial tongue, and coming at it from a novelist's point of view, does not fall into the trap of relying on over used and generic lines. Instead the dialogue is witty and sharp, helping to capture the essence of the area.



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Dark Lies the Island Official Trailer | #VMDIFF19



Location is also used to interesting effect. From the very start of the film, the lake the title alludes to is used almost like an extra character, a technique Barry regularly applies in his writing. The lake causes psychological strain on the population of Dromord and is described as having “turned half the place crooked in the head”. Yet while the issue of mental health is prevalent throughout, the tone of the film remains darkly quirky rather than down beat.

Stylistically, the film is (for the most part) visually pleasing and often striking. Shot on location in both Roscommon and Wicklow, the natural landscape is captured beautifully. There’s repeated shots looking out onto the lake, often shrouded in mist. These are then contrasted with low lit interiors, often relying on artificial lighting such as neon signs or a lava lamp. Played together, it results in a grotesque, almost dystopian feel to an otherwise familiar landscape. The soundtrack, which is quite minimalistic in nature, is also extremely effective in emphasising the peculiarity of the location and characters, building on the sense of utter strangeness throughout. The only area where the film feels slightly low budget is a particular fight scene near the films close, in which despite best efforts in the edit, appears choppy and fragmented.

That being said, the combination of such an experienced director and cast, combined with the natural talent and ability of Barry has come together here to create something refreshingly exciting that takes a look at Irish society under both a contemporary and gothic lens. Barry has written of an Ireland which is both familiar yet completely alien and strong performances all around have helped to transform this from page to screen. Jana Mohieden shines as a promising newcomer to watch, while both Tiernan and Shortt do considerably well in roles far more serious than what viewers are accustomed to. ↑

Barry and Fitzgibbon have created a dark, twisted and wickedly funny portrayal of small-town Ireland, one which promotes promise for Irish cinema going forward.

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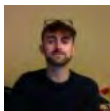
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James Holohan

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James is an English and Film graduate of UCD, where he wrote and photographed regularly for the University Observer. He has recently completed an MA in Digital Media in NUI Galway and continues to write regularly with Cold Coffee Press covering mainly literature and film. He is currently based in Dublin

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DARK LIES THE ISLAND

Synopsis

If you're going to get involved with men in the town of Dromord, they might as well be Mannions – and Sara is involved with them up to her neck.

She's married to Daddy Mannion, who is more than 20 years her senior, and who more or less owns and runs the town. But her first love, and maybe her true love, was his estranged son, Doggy Mannion, who is by now a wildly successful criminal recluse in the woods outside town. Then there's the younger brother, John Mannion, a small-town Lothario and failing chicken farmer, and yes, Sara has just got involved with him, too.

As a result of this tangled erotic web, jealousy is rife in Dromord, and it's flinging out its spears in all directions. The Mannion men have been set at each other, their long truce cannot hold, and serious violence is threatened – will we get through the next few days without bloodshed?

Dark Lies The Island unfolds inside the course of a week in a small, weird town in the interior north west of Ireland, a place of brooding woods, rustling gossip, and a dark, sinister lake.

As Sara's situation begins to spiral out of control, others might suffer collateral damage – not least her daughter, the ten-year-old Saoirse, a deeply strange kid who seems wise beyond her years, and who can sense big trouble on the near horizon.

There are other, unpredictable forces loose on the scene – the ne'er-do-well brothers, Tee-Jay and Patcho Mulvihill, are Doggy's roaming lieutenants, and they're out for their own ends. And then there's Richie, an amnesiac who has just bought the town chipper, a man who fell to earth in Dromord, and who Fate may just have sent here for a very particular reason.

Dark Lies The Island is an inky black comedy that rips with violent tension and deranged sexual energy. It's an ensemble piece that deals with family strife, the psychology of fear, and the delicious dangers of untamed desire. It brings a new language, vivacity, and tone to the realm of the small-town Irish drama.

DARK LIES THE ISLAND

Tagline & Loglines

Tagline: Family Feuds Are A Killer

Logline: Set in a small Irish town and unfolding over the course of one week, a long-standing family feud comes to a head and forces the men to face the truth.

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Stephen Porzio takes on the Mannions in *Dark Lies the Island*.

Martin and John Michael McDonagh better watch out. Another Irish literary figure has made the jump to the silver screen, bringing something fresh to the country's trademark dark comedies.

Dark Lies the Island sees author Kevin Barry (*City of Bohane*, *Beatlebone*) team up with Irish directing old pro Ian Fitzgibbon (*Moone Boy*, *Perrier's Bounty*) for a pitch-black comedy drama based on characters which appeared in various of the writer's short stories. Charlie Murphy's Sarah narrates. She is a bored, checked-out housewife to the much older and rich Daddy Mannion (Pat Shortt). Through a chain of businesses, he pretty much runs the sleepy town of Dromord in which the action takes place.

Daddy has two kids from his first marriage. There's Martin (Moe Dunford), a weak womaniser filling the Fredo role and Doggy (Peter Coonan), someone who went from having a bright future to being an agoraphobe running a dating service from a caravan in the woods. Throughout the drama, these characters – along with Tommy Tiernan's mysterious newcomer to Drumord and a pair of cousins in debt to Doggy – all converge in a climax where past histories and repressed trauma come to light.

At first, *Dark Lies the Island* feels like another *Perrier's Bounty*, an enjoyable if forgettable sub-Tarantino comedy noir given an Irish flavour. After all, the ingredients for such are in place – pulpy narration, a seemingly scary psychopath in Doggy, eccentric locals.

Yet, as the movie continues and the plot gets increasingly bizarre and dark, one realises that Barry is doing something truly different. He is taking fantastical, heightened tropes that film fans like but is using them to explore contemporary themes like mental health and how patterns of emotional abuse develop within families.

Shot dreamily by terrific cinematographer Cathal Watters, the fictional town of Dromord (its palindromic spelling reflective of its purgatorial nature) is not meant to be interpreted as a real place. Neighbouring a lake – in which we often see ominous fog rolling alongside – it's symbolic of Doggy, Martin and Sarah's mental state. These are people living under the dark cloud of the sinister tyrannical Daddy, a nasty weak man who gets his kicks making others feel small.

While these characters all seemed like clichés at the beginning of the film, Barry's script thoughtfully, as it continues, explores why these people have taken to these almost assigned roles, touching, at the same time, upon sins of Ireland's past. While the climactic event is somewhat inevitable and all the characters outside the Mannion's immediate circle feel slightly extraneous, it's to Barry's credit that by the end of *Dark Lies the Island*, the movie feels far less Grindhouse than it does Gothic. This reviewer wouldn't be surprised if the writer eventually makes the transition to director.

Dark Lies the Island screened on Wednesday, 27th February as part of the [Dublin International Film Festival \(20th February – 3rd March 2019\)](#).

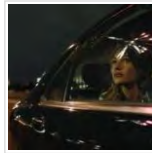
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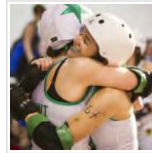
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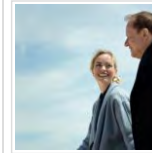
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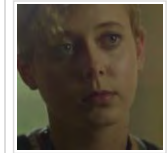
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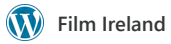
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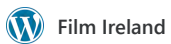


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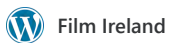
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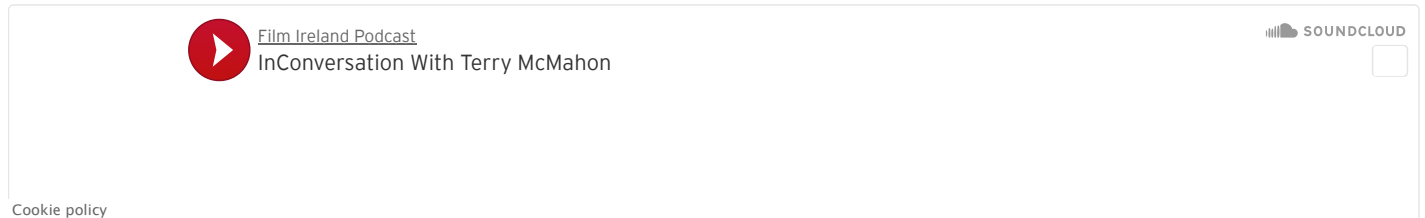


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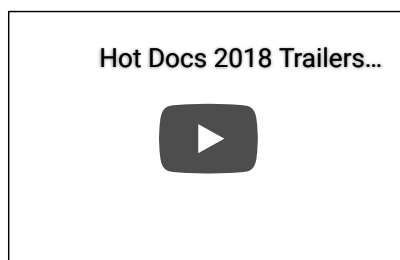
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